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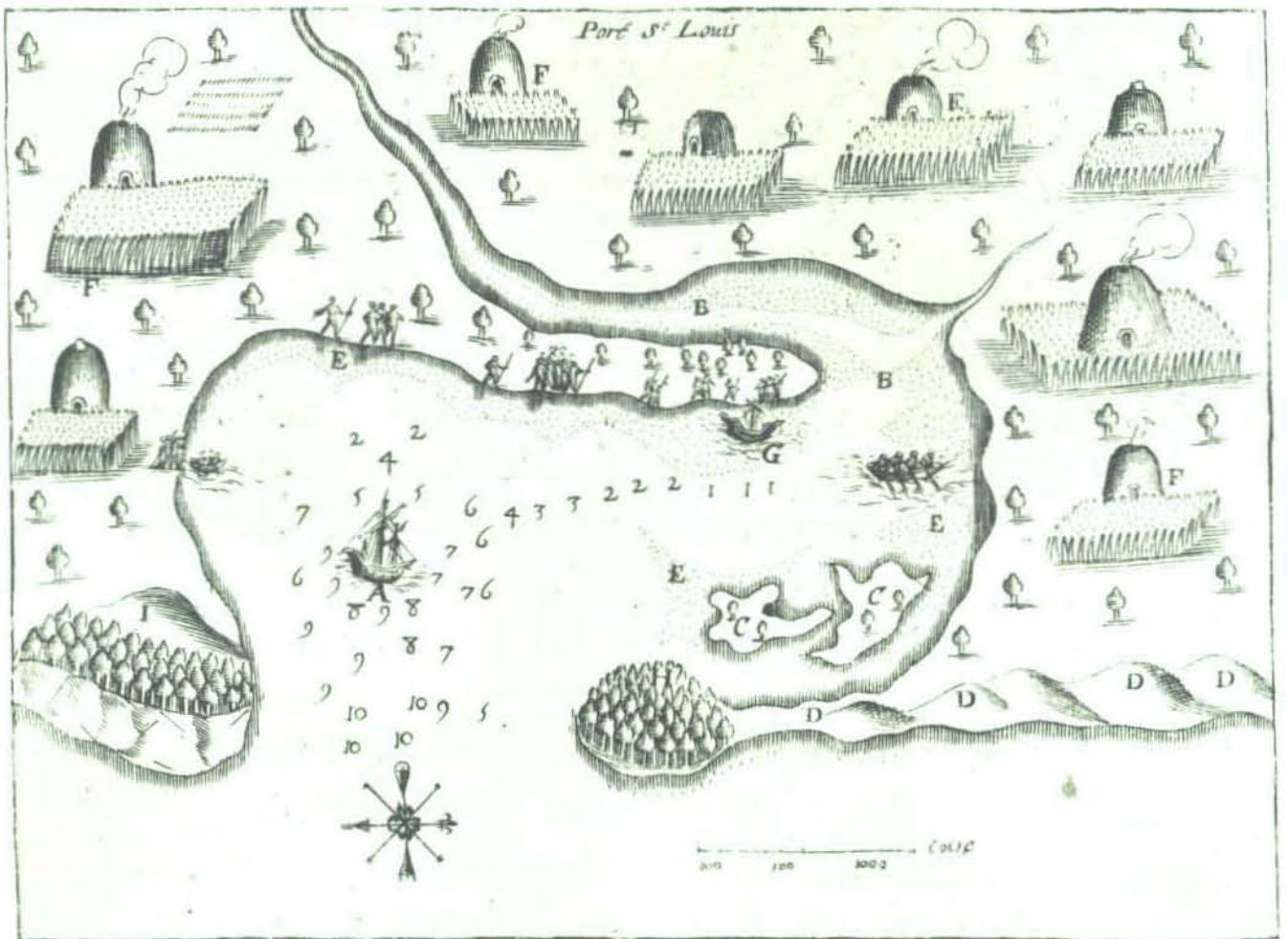


Figure 1. Champlain's chart of Port Saint Louis (Plymouth), 1605, from *Les Voyages* (1613). Photograph courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.

The Earliest Prints and Paintings of New England Indians

by William S. Simmons*

Despite the importance of Indians in early New England history and the considerable amount of historic and anthropological research that has been done on this region, very few authentic prints and paintings of early New England Indians are known to exist. This poor visual record can be attributed to several causes. Perhaps most important is the fact that Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut were colonized primarily by English men and women who had been strongly influenced by the values of seventeenth-century Puritanism. For them, the purpose of earthly life was to glorify God in a useful calling, and painting landscapes, American Indians, or even each other did not rank highly in their estimation of useful callings. Second, no prominent artist (such as John White who painted the Algonquian people of coastal North Carolina in the late sixteenth century or Louis Choris who painted the Mission Indians of San Francisco Bay in the early nineteenth century) happened to visit New England and depict Indian subjects during the initial years of European settlement and coexistence with Indians.¹ By the early nineteenth century, when professional artists began to take serious interest in recording Indian appearance and lifeways, these artists were more attracted to the colorful and autonomous nations of the far western frontier than they were to the acculturated Indian survivors of the heavily settled northeast. Such well-known painters as George Catlin, Charles Bird King, and Karl Bodmer, for example, focused mainly on midwestern and western Indians, even though King was a native Rhode Islander and Bodmer had travelled through Providence and elsewhere in New England on his way to the western prairie.²

It is unlikely that we will ever have a satisfactory record of the appearance of the seventeenth-century Narragansett, Wampanoag, Nauset, Massachusetts, Nipmuck, Niantic, Pequot, and Mohegan. Nor is it likely that we will ever know what such prominent historic-period sachems as Massasoit, Philip, Cananicus, Miantonomi, Canonchet, Sassacus, or Uncas looked like. Although the harvest of New England Indian prints and paintings is small in comparison with the visual resources available in most other regions of North America, it does include some important works as well as some interesting ones that are not widely known.

Samuel de Champlain (1567-1635) was the first European to provide a pictorial record of his travels along the New England coast (fig. 1 and

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1. Excellent descriptions and reproductions of the John White drawings can be found in Paul H. Hulton and David B. Quinn, *The American Drawings of John White, 1577-1590* . . . (London and Chapel Hill, N.C., 1964), Vols. I and II. The Choris watercolors have been reproduced in Louis Choris, *Voyage Pittoresque Authour du Monde, avec des portraits de sauvages d'Amerique* . . . (Paris, 1822), and in Vicente Santa Maria, *The First Spanish Entry Into San Francisco Bay, 1775* . . . ed. John Galvin (San Francisco, 1971). For a richly researched and authoritative overview of the earliest European pictures of North and South American Indians see William C. Sturtevant, "First Visual Images of Native America," in Fredi Chiappelli *et al.*, eds., *First Images of America* . . . (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1976), I, 417-454. Hugh Honour, *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (New York, 1975), also contains much valuable material on early prints and paintings of American Indians.

2. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels 1748-1846* . . . (Cleveland, 1906), XXII, 37-56; Herman J. Viola, *The Indian Legacy of Charles Bird King* (Washington, D.C., and New York, 1976). King painted one New England Indian, Joseph Porus (or Polis), a Penobscot of Maine, and one Stockbridge, Wisconsin, Indian of New England ancestry, John Quinney. Viola, *Indian Legacy*, 110-112. Catlin also painted the two Wisconsin Stockbridge portraits, John Quinney and Both Sides of the River.

3. Samuel Eliot Morison's *Samuel De Champlain: Father of New France* (Boston and Toronto, 1972) is the most authoritative convenient source on Champlain's New England voyages. Champlain's many charts and sketches are well reproduced in this volume. Marshall H. Saville, "Champlain and His Landings at Cape Ann, 1605, 1606," *American Antiquarian Society, Proceedings*, XLIII, (1933), Pt. 2, 447-469, contains much information on the 1605 and 1606 visits.

4. Morison, *Samuel De Champlain*, 66.

Figure 2. Champlain's chart of Mallebarre (Nauset), 1605, from *Les Voyages* (1613). Photograph courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.

fig. 2). He was not, however, the first European to visit New England: Giovanni da Verrazano had explored Narragansett Bay in the spring of 1524, and two English voyagers, Bartholomew Gosnold and Martin Pring, had reached the Massachusetts coast by 1602 and 1603, respectively. In the summer of 1605 and again in the late summer and fall of 1606, Champlain sailed from New Brunswick to Cape Cod in search of a suitable harbor for French settlement. During these exploratory journeys, he drew charts of a number of prospective sites from Maine to Cape Cod. Several of these include sketches of Indian villages, homes, and gardens. The charts of Port Saint Louis (Plymouth Harbor) and Port Mallebarre (Nauset Harbor), both of which appear in his *Les Voyages du Sieur de Champlain Xaintongeois . . .* (Paris, 1613), were drawn in July 1605, a season when the Wampanoag and Nauset Indian populations of southeastern Massachusetts were concentrated near the shoreline, where they grew corn, beans, squash, and tobacco, fished and gathered shellfish.³ Figure 1 depicts a dispersed Wampanoag village with hemispherical bark or mat-covered wigwams and nearby cornfields. Figure 2, the Nauset community, shows the two most common types of houses in use among the southern New England Indians, the hemispherical wigwam and the longer, rectangular, extended-family longhouse. In the upper right of figure 2 is an eel trap placed in the mouth of a brook, "where one takes a lot of fish."⁴ Some twelve to four-



teen years later, the dense Indian population of the Plymouth area was destroyed by disease, and when the Pilgrims landed there in 1620, they found the countryside to be eerily deserted.⁵ Champlain also depicted Indian communities at Saco Bay, Gloucester, and Stage Harbor (Cape Cod).

Although the Pilgrims wrote extensively about their experiences in America, they left no pictures of Indians that are known to have survived. For the next extant illustration, we must jump ahead to the Puritan settlement of Massachusetts Bay. The Seal of the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay was prepared in duplicate by the London silversmith, Richard Trott, in 1629. It bears the figure of an Indian holding a straight-back bow in his or her left hand and an arrow in the right, speaking the motto, "Come over and help us," which appears in a pennant alongside the head. This motto reflects Puritan missionary thinking and not Indian wishes. A second seal known as the "Leverett seal" replaced the original sometime between 1673 and 1676 and remained in use until about 1686. The Leverett seal shows the figure of a male Indian wearing a girdle of leaves with an English-style reverse-curve bow in his left hand and an arrow in the right and speaking the familiar motto. In 1672 an impression of the seal appeared which had been prepared for use in printing. This impression depicts the figure of a heavily-built female Indian holding a reverse-curve bow and an arrow and wearing a short pleated skirt. This printer's cut, although used by the Cambridge printer Samuel Green, was probably made in England. In 1676, the United Puritan Colonies prepared an engraved medal for those friendly Indians who had supported the English in King Philip's War. This medal bears the figure of an Indian woman in a feather skirt holding a reverse-curve bow in her left hand and an arrow in her right. One such medal has survived and since 1960 has been in the collections of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. The Indian engraving on this early peace medal is probably derived from the Seal of the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay and most closely resembles the 1672 printer's cut which was made in London. A second printer's cut of the colony seal appeared in 1675 (fig. 3). This woodcut was engraved on the flat side of a board by the Boston printer, John Foster, and portrays a male Indian dressed with a girdle of leaves, carrying a straight-back bow, standing above three pine trees, and speaking the conventional motto, "Come over and help us." This is the earliest *New England* depiction of an Indian in print. The copy shown in figure 3 is from page 15 of Increase Mather's *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians* . . . (Boston, 1676), published by John Foster. Although Foster was certainly familiar with the appearance of Boston-area Indians, his cut reflects English stereotypes of Indians as do all earlier versions of the seal. Although the straight bow and arrow and perhaps the hair resemble Indian prototypes, early descriptions of Indian clothing by William Wood, Roger Williams, Daniel Gookin, Edward Winslow, and others do not mention leaf or even feather girdles.

5. Dwight B. Heath, ed., *A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth: Mourt's Relation . . .* (New York, 1963), 51; S. F. Cook, *The Indian Population of New England in the Seventeenth Century*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1976), 29-40.

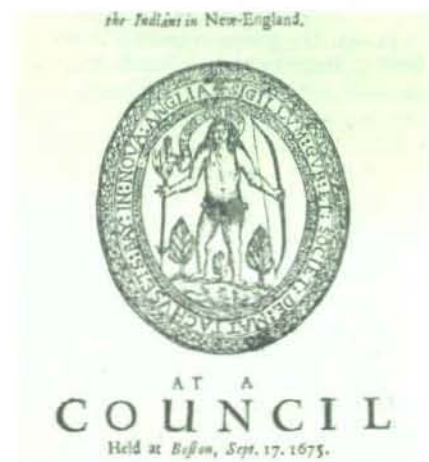
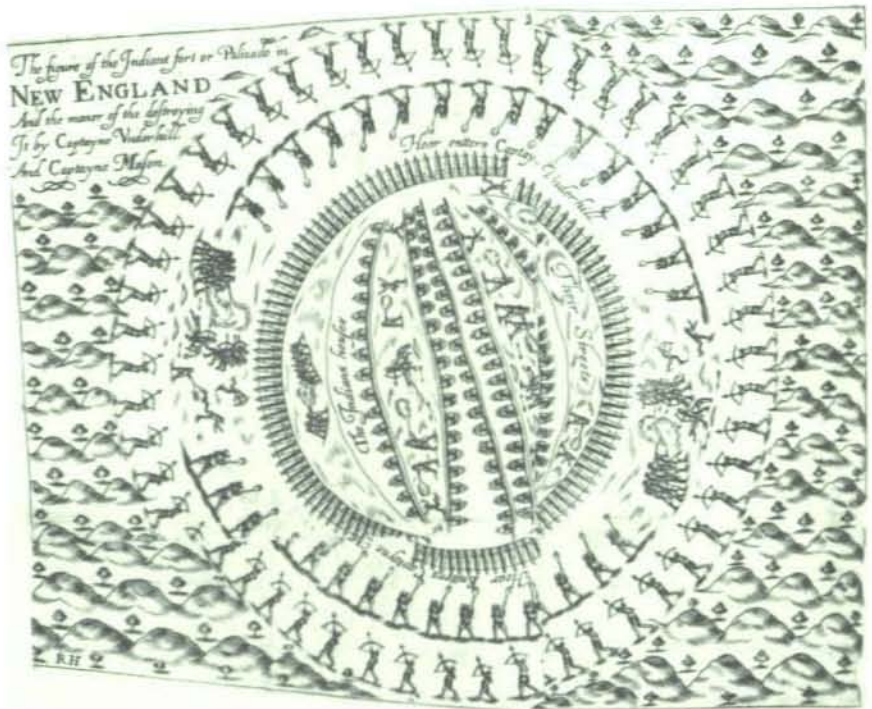


Figure 3. Male Indian from John Foster's 1675 printer's cut of the Massachusetts-Bay colony seal, from Increase Mather, *A Brief History* (1676). Photograph courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.

Figure 4. Attack on the Pequot Stockade at Mystic, 1637, from John Underhill, *Newes from America* (1638). Photograph courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.



6. John D. Cushing, "A Note Concerning the Massachusetts-Bay Colony Seal," *Amer. Antiq. Soc., Procs.*, LXXVI (1976), Pt. 1, 171–177; Matt B. Jones, "The Early Massachusetts-Bay Colony Seals With Bibliographical Notes Based Upon Their Uses in Printing," *ibid.*, XLIV (1934), Pt. 1, 12–44. The author is grateful to William C. Sturtevant of the Smithsonian Institution and William A. Turnbaugh of the Sociology and Anthropology Department at the University of Rhode Island for information regarding the 1676 peace medal at the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. See William A. Turnbaugh and William S. Simmons, "An Indian Peace Medal From King Philip's War, 1676," *Man in the Northeast* (forthcoming).

7. Christian F. Feest, "North Carolina Algonquians," in William C. Sturtevant, gen. ed., Bruce G. Trigger, vol. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 15, Northeast* (Washington, D.C., 1978), 278; Bert Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Early Period," in *ibid.*, 166; Charles C. Willoughby, "Houses and Gardens of the New England Indians," *American Anthropologist*, VIII (1906), 127–128.

According to a nineteenth-century Nantucket legend, the model for the Massachusetts Bay colony seal was an Indian sachem from that island. Since the first seal was made in London, and later versions, both male and female, seem to be derived from the original, the historical truth of this tradition is questionable.⁶

One of the most remarkable and often reprinted illustrations of a New England Indian community is that of the palisaded Pequot village at Mystic, Connecticut, which appeared in John Underhill's account of the Pequot War, *Newes from America; or, A New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England . . .* (London, 1638), published by J. D. for Peter Cole (fig. 4). On the morning of Friday, May 26, 1637, a small English army under the command of Captains Underhill and John Mason, and a large body of Narragansett, Niantic, and Mohegan allies, surrounded and destroyed the fortified Pequot village shown in figure 4. The circular walls of upright posts enclosed at least two acres of ground and contained sixty or seventy wigwams and about 300 to 400 people. As in the case of the palisaded North Carolina Algonquian village of Pomeiock painted in watercolor by John White in 1585, the Pequot stronghold also had two entrances shown at the top and bottom of the drawing. The artist, whose initials "RH" appear in the lower left corner, has not been identified, nor is it known if the illustration is based upon firsthand knowledge or written accounts of the event.⁷

In 1645, Roger Williams published a short religious tract entitled *Christenings Make Not Christians, or a Briefe Discourse concerning that name Heathen, commonly given to the Indians . . .* (London, 1645). The title page of this tract bears a small inset figure of an Indian

woman holding a double-curve bow and an arrow, wearing a tiara and standing next to a sheep (fig. 5). Tempting as it is to view the woman as a Narragansett and the sheep as symbolic of the early Rhode Island economy, a more likely interpretation is that the illustration was done by an English artist who was unacquainted with America, and that it is an Americanized image of the goddess Diana, symbol of the hunt.⁸

King Philip, or Metacomet, son of the kindly Massasoit and sachem of the Wampanoag, was killed near his home at Mount Hope in Bristol on August 12, 1676, after more than a year of warfare with the English. King Philip's War, as it was called by the English, resulted in the destruction and enslavement of most of the Narragansett, Wampanoag, and Nipmuck, and also weakened the Christian Indian "Praying Town" settlements around Massachusetts Bay. Although Puritan historians perceived Philip to be a scheming and bloodthirsty opponent of English civilization, John Callender suggests another side to the story in his *An Historical Discourse, on the Civil and Religious Affairs of the Colony of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations . . .* (Boston, 1739):

All of the histories from Mr. Hubbard and Dr. Mather, make Philip to be the spring and mover of the war; but there is a constant tradition among the posterity of the people, who lived next to him, and were familiarly conversant with him, as also with the Indians who survived the war, that both Philip and his chief old men were utterly averse to the war, and they shew the spot (Kikemuit spring, in a farm belonging to Stephen Paine, Esq., in Bristol) where Philip received the news of the first Englishmen that were killed, with grief and sorrow, and wept at the news; and that a day or two before the first outrages, he had protected an Englishman the Indians had captivated, rescued him from them, and privately sent him home safe.⁹

As Philip was misrepresented in history, so he was misrepresented in art. The earliest picture of Philip is an engraving made by Paul Revere for the second edition of Benjamin Church's *The Entertaining History of King Philip's War . . .* (Newport, 1772), printed by Solomon Southwick (fig. 6). Bradford Swan has argued persuasively that Revere's Philip is in fact a composite based upon mezzotints of two Mohawk sachems who visited London in 1710, and thus is not a likeness of Philip or even of a New England Algonquian. Most subsequent pictures of Philip, which appear in later editions of Church's *History* and elsewhere, can be traced to the Revere original. No authentic portrayal of Philip is known to exist.¹⁰ Furthermore, no contemporary picture of any event in King Philip's War is known to have been made. Figure 7 shows one of the earliest woodcuts of the Great Swamp Fight of December 19, 1675, where Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Connecticut forces overwhelmed the palisaded Narragansett retreat deep in the Great Swamp in South Kingstown. This woodcut, taken from page 235 of John Barber's *History and Antiquities of New England . . .* (Worcester, 1841),

A Briefe Discourfe concerning that
name *Heathen*, commonly given to
the INDIANS.

As also concerning that great point of their
CONVERSION.



Published according to Order.

London, Printed by Jane Cox, for I. H. 1645.

Figure 5. Female figure from the title page of Roger Williams, *Christenings Make Not Christians* (1643). Photograph courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.

8. Williams's *Christenings Make Not Christians* was reprinted by Sidney S. Rider as *Rhode Island Historical Tract No. 14* (Providence, 1881). The author wishes to thank Ronald J. Onorato of the Department of Art at the University of Rhode Island for suggesting the similarity between fig. 5 and the goddess Diana.

9. Romeo Elton, ed., *Callender's Historical Discourse*, Rhode Island Historical Society, *Collections*, IV (1838), 126-127.

10. Bradford F. Swan, *An Indian's an Indian or, the Several Sources of Paul Revere's Engraved Portrait of King Philip* (Providence, 1959); "Prints of the American Indian, 1670-1775," in Walter Muir Whitehill, ed., *Boston Prints and Print-makers 1670-1775* (Boston, 1973), 269-271.

Figure 6. Fictitious engraving of King Philip by Paul Revere from Benjamin Church, *The Entertaining History of King Philip's War* (1772). Photograph courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.



Figure 7. Nineteenth-century woodcut of the Great Swamp Fight, 1675, from John Barber, *History and Antiquities of New England* (1841). Photograph courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 2035).

11. Later descriptions of the Great Swamp Fight can be seen in William C. Bryant and Sydney H. Gay, *A Popular History of the United States* . . . (New York, 1878), II, 413; and Allan Forbes, *Other Indian Events of New England* . . . (Boston, 1941), II, 93.



was made over 150 years after the event had taken place. In some ways the illustration is accurate, for example, in its portrayal of the English advance into the fort over a fallen tree, but the cut is based upon written accounts and is not an eyewitness drawing.¹¹

The oil painting identified as *Portrait of Ninigret II* (fig. 8) was in the possession of the Winthrop family for over two centuries until 1948, when Robert Winthrop gave it to the Museum of Art of the Rhode Island School of Design. The date and authorship of the painting are unknown, and the identification of Ninigret II is purely conjectural. According to Winthrop family tradition, Ninigret I (sachem of the Niantic

who lived in what is now Westerly and Charlestown) saved the life of John Winthrop, Jr., and the painting is of the elder Ninigret who was an old man during King Philip's War (1675–1676) and who died sometime between 1676 and 1679. Considering the subject's youthful appearance, this portrait must have been painted some thirty or more years earlier, if in fact it is of Ninigret I. His son, Ninigret II, inherited the title of sachem of the combined Narragansett and Niantic sometime between 1686 and 1692 and died in 1723. Stylistic characteristics provide some basis for attributing an early eighteenth-century date to the painting which would favor the interpretation that the portrait is of Ninigret II. A copy of the original portrait was made in the nineteenth century, and the question whether this portrait is the original or the nineteenth-century copy is open to further research and debate.¹² Despite these uncertainties, it seems likely that the painting is an authentic seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century portrayal of a southern New England sachem, who is probably Ninigret I or Ninigret II. The black and white beaded hat resembles those described by Roger Williams in the *Key*: "The princes make rich Caps and Aprons (or small breeches) of these Beads thus curiously strung into many formes and figures: their blacke and white finely mixt together."¹³

12. *Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum Notes*, LXIII (No. 5, April 1977), 102–104; John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Letters of Roger Williams, 1632–1682*, Publications of the Narragansett Club, VI (Providence, 1874), 45, n. 3; Glenn W. LaFantasie, personal communication; William C. Sturtevant, personal communication.

13. Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America* . . . (London, 1643), 157.



Figure 8. Portrait of Ninigret II, oil on canvas, artist and date unknown. Photograph courtesy of the Rhode Island School of Design, Museum of Art.



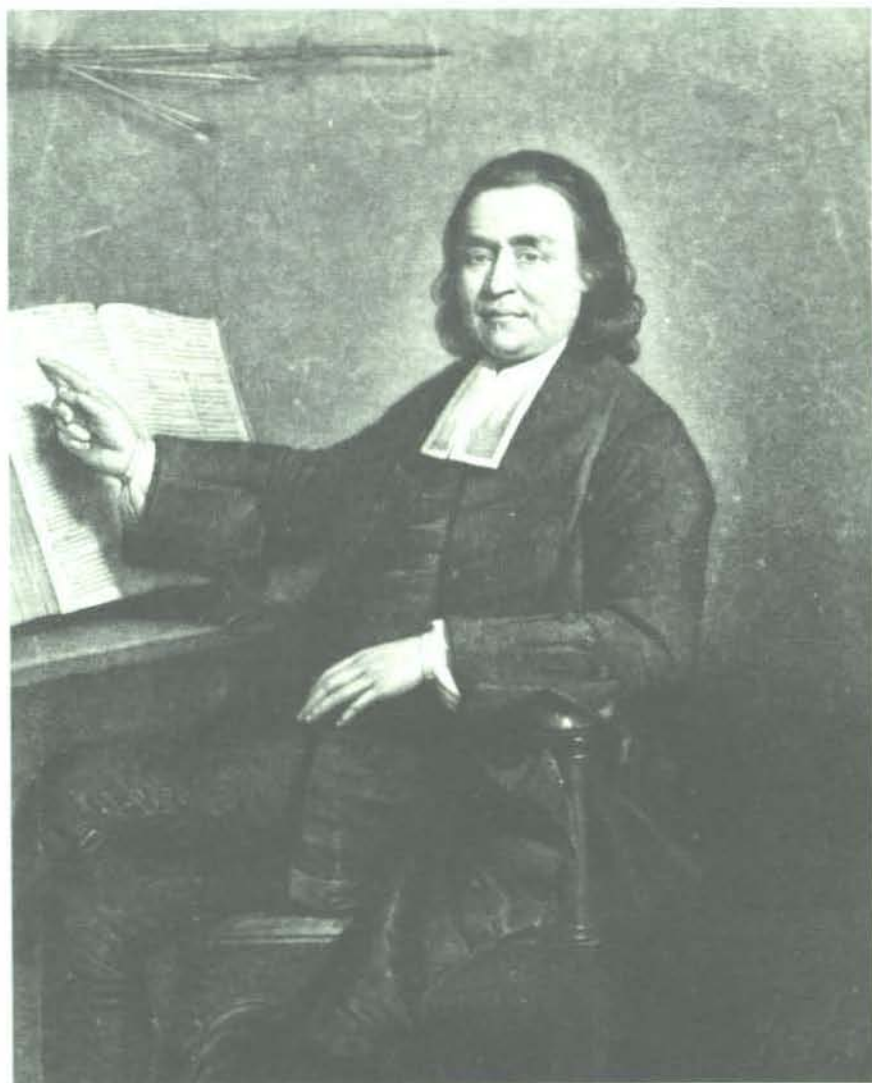
Figure 9. The Reverend Samson Occom, by Nathaniel Smibert, oil on canvas, ca. 1751–1756. Photograph courtesy of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

Figure 10. The Reverend Mr. Samson Occom, mezzotint by J. Spilsbury, 1768, after a painting by Mason Chamberlain in England, 1766. Photograph courtesy of the Print Department, Boston Public Library.



Figure 11. The Reverend Samson Occom, engraving, 1768. Photograph courtesy of the Connecticut Historical Society.

The Connecticut Mohegan, Reverend Samson Occom (1723–1792), was one of the best known Indian authors and preachers of eighteenth-century America (fig. 9, fig. 10, and fig. 11). He converted to the New Light Christianity of the Great Awakening in the early 1740s and became a schoolteacher as well as a minister and community leader among New England and New York Indians. In 1765, he travelled to England to raise money for the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock's Moor's Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut, and in his later years was influential in planning the emigration of New England Indians to Brothertown, New York, where land was more plentiful. The excellent oil painting by Nathaniel Smibert (fig. 9), originally identified as *Indian Priest*, was probably painted in Boston between 1751 and 1756, when Occom was about twenty-eight to thirty-three years of age. That Smibert's *Indian Priest* is of Samson Occom has been inferred through comparison of facial features with the mezzotint portrait of Occom by John Spilsbury, published by Henry Parker in London in 1768 (fig. 10). This mezzotint was made from an English painting (which has since



been lost) of Occom by Mason Chamberlain. The third known likeness of Occom is the eighteenth-century print, *The Reverend Samson Occom* (fig. 11), which shows him seated in his study. The caption of this print reads: "The first Indian Minister that ever was in Europe who went to Britain to obtain charities for the support of the Reverend Dr. Wheelock's Indian Academy of Missionaries among the savages of North America in 1768."¹⁴

On May 26, 1823, the visiting Swiss painter Lukas Vischer (1780–1840) met a traditionally clad Indian in Stamford, Connecticut, and painted the delicate watercolor portrait entitled *Ein Indianer aus dem Staate New York* (fig. 12). This Indian, who in addition to his long hair and feathers was wearing red and green facial paint, may have been a Connecticut Algonquian who was visiting from the New England Indian community which had emigrated to Brothertown, New York.¹⁵

Figure 13 shows an oil painting (ca. 1840) by an anonymous artist of Hepsibeth Hemenway (1763–1847), a woman of Hassanamisco (Nipmuck) and Afro-American ancestry who was active in the Worcester Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle in 1841. Her family was from the Hassana-



Figure 12. *An Indian in Stamford, Connecticut*, watercolor by Lukas Vischer, 1823. Photograph courtesy of Christian F. Feest.



Figure 13. Mrs. Hepsibeth (Cross) Hemenway, oil on canvas, ca. 1840, artist unknown. Photograph courtesy of the Worcester Historical Museum.

14. Harold Blodgett, *Samson Occom* (Hanover, N.H., 1935); W. De Loss Love, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England* (Boston and Chicago, 1899); Marvin S. Sadik, *Colonial and Federal Portraits at Bowdoin College* (Brunswick, Me., 1966), 64–69; Swan, "Prints of the American Indian, 1690–1775," 242, 277–278. The author wishes to thank Brenda Pelletier, registrar, and Dr. Katharine Watson, director of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, for helpful information regarding the Smibert portrait.

15. Ferdinand Anders, Margarete Pfister-Burkhalter, and Christian F. Feest, *Lukas Vischer (1780–1840)* . . . (Hanover, Germany: Kommissionsverlag Münstermann-Druck GMBH, 1967), 74–76, 144. The author is grateful to Christian F. Feest of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Austria for information regarding the portrait in fig. 12, and for permission to reproduce it. Vischer also sketched the profile of an adult male Penobscot (Penobscot-Indianer) in 1826. See Feest, "Lukas Vischers Beiträge Zur Ethnographie Nordamerikas," *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, 22, Museum für Völkerkunde Im Selbstverlag, 1968, 52.



Figure 14. Abraham Quarry, The Last Indian of the Nantucket Tribe, lithograph by Bufford, from original portrait now lost. Photograph courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.

16. Personal communication, David J. Corrigan, curator, Worcester Historical Society.

17. The author is indebted to Dr. Elizabeth Little of Lincoln and Nantucket for information regarding the Quarry portraits and for much valuable bibliographical help regarding Nantucket Indians. Robert A. di Curcio of Nantucket and Barbara P. Andrews of the Nantucket Atheneum also have been helpful in locating and copying Nantucket materials. A third portrait of Abraham Quarry (by Mrs. Dassell) also is in the collections of the Foulger Museum of the Nantucket Historical Association. This painting shows his head and shoulders and appears to have been done around the same time as the work shown in fig. 15. Anonymous, *Abraham Quarry* (Bridgewater, Mass., 1954); R. A. Douglas-Lithgow, *The Nantucket Indians* (Nantucket, Mass., 1911), 35; Forbes, *Other Indian Events*, II, 22–23; Elizabeth A. Little and Marie Sussek, *Nantucket Indians Who Died of the Sickness*, 1–8

Figure 15. Abraham Quarry by Hermoine Dassell, oil on canvas, ca. 1852. Photograph courtesy of Robert di Curcio from the original in the Nantucket Atheneum.

misco community of Grafton, Massachusetts. This portrait was donated to the Worcester Historical Museum by F. F. Hopkins.¹⁶

Abraham Quarry (fig. 14 and fig. 15) lived on Nantucket until his death on November 25, 1854, in his eighty-third year, and was one of the last Nantucketers who could claim substantial Indian ancestry. In the previous century, from August 1763 to February 1764, the Nantucket Indian community suffered from a devastating epidemic that swept away 222 of the 358 Indians who were living on the island. By 1809, only three or four Indians remained besides a few more of mixed English or Afro-American descent. Quarry, shown as a young man in figure 14 (a lithograph by Bufford, New York, ca. 1836–1840), based upon an earlier portrait which is now lost) lived alone in a small cottage by the shore and was allowed to cultivate any land he wished. Quarry was painted in his cottage shortly before his death by Mrs. Hermoine Dassell (fig. 15).¹⁷ According to one nineteenth-century source, “He lived the life of a recluse—sad and downhearted at being the last of his race.





Figure 16. Nantucket Indian Princess, oil on canvas, ca. 1850, by Hermoine Dassell. Photograph courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 593).

Mo.—1763 to 2 Mo.—1764, *Nantucket Algonquian Studies*, No. 1 (Archaeology Department, The Nantucket Historical Association, 1979); William C. Sturtevant, personal communication. A fine early photograph of Dorcas Honorable (1776–1855), the last Nantucketer of full Indian descent, can be seen in Joseph E. C. Farnham, *Brief Historical Data and Memories of My Boyhood Days in Nantucket*, 2nd ed. (Providence, 1923), 3, and also in Forbes, *Other Indian Events*, II, 23.

18. Forbes, *Other Indian Events*, II, 24.

19. Frank H. Goodyear, *American Paintings in the Rhode Island Historical Society* (Providence, 1974), 102; William C. Sturtevant, personal communication.

20. The author wishes to thank Rita Steele of the Millicent Library, Fairhaven, for much valuable information and assistance regarding the Martha Simon portrait. In the collections of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society in New Bedford is another painting from this area entitled, *Indian Annis and the Thomas Taber House*, which is attributed to Amelia Hawes (1830–1906) and was painted around 1850. In the foreground of the house, a stone-ender built around 1680, stands the small figure of an elderly Indian woman in European-style dress, apron, and shawl, holding a wooden bucket and a cane. Annis Sharper moved in 1851 to the Fairhaven almshouse. The author is grateful to James Deetz of the Berkeley Anthropology Department, and Elton W. Hall, curator of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum, for information about this painting.

He seldom came to town, only when in need of provisions, and when his final illness overtook him, he was brought to town and taken care of at 'Our Island Home,' where he passed away."¹⁸

Mrs. Dassell, the wife of a German physician on Nantucket, also painted a young Indian girl who worked in her family as a servant (fig. 16). This painting, *Nantucket Indian Princess*, was given to the Rhode Island Historical Society by Miss Julia Bullock in 1883.¹⁹

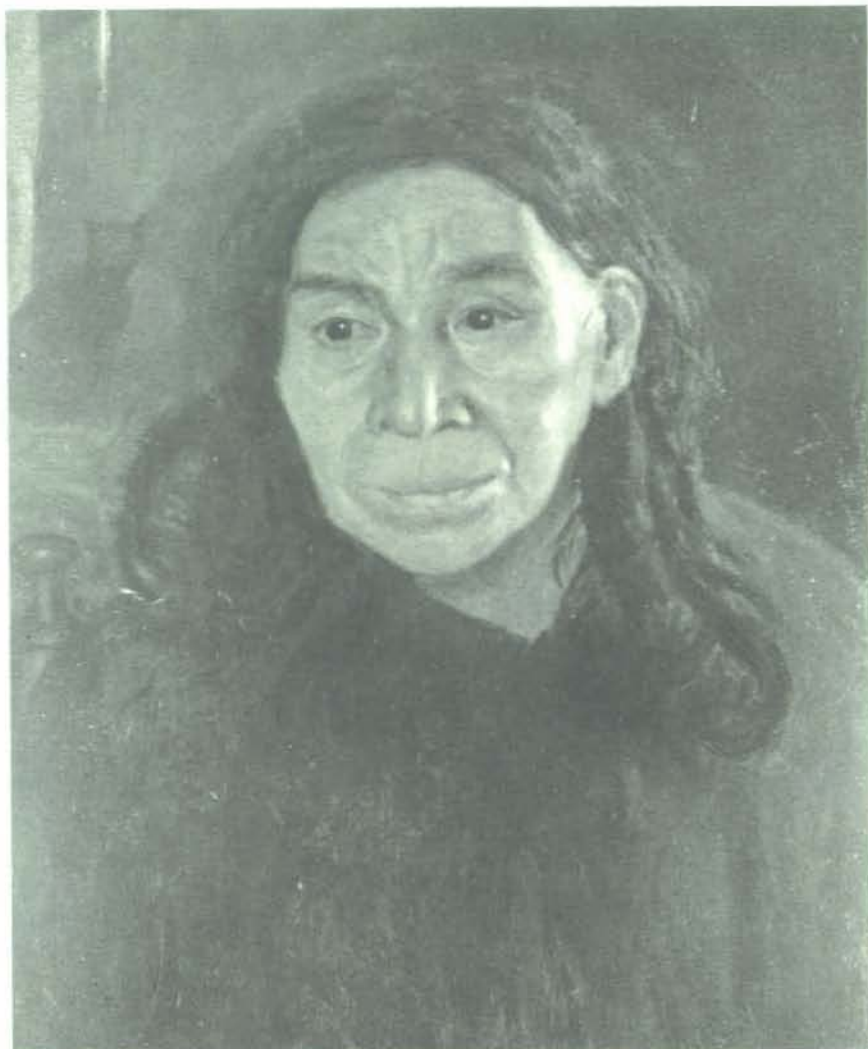
One of the finest portraits of a New England Indian is that of the elderly Martha Simon (fig. 17), painted by the prominent American artist, Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902). Martha Simon lived and died on Sconticut Neck in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, and was the last of a small Wampanoag enclave to have lived in this area. The inscription on the portrait by Bierstadt reads, "The last of the Narragansetts." Simon was a Narragansett as well as a Wampanoag family name, and it is unclear whether Martha Simon was a Narragansett who had resettled in Fairhaven or whether Bierstadt mistakenly identified her as a Narragansett. In either case, this is one of the most realistic portraits to come to light of what appears to be a full-blooded southern New England Indian. The painting is undated, but probably was done sometime between 1857 and 1862, shortly before her death.²⁰

Figure 17. Martha Simon by Albert Bierstadt, oil on canvas, ca. 1860. Photograph courtesy of The Millicent Library, Fairhaven, Mass.



Figure 18. Esther, the last of the Narragansetts, from Bryant and Gay, *Popular History of the United States* (1879). Photograph courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi X3 4428).

21. Bryant and Gay, *Popular History*, III, 115–116. The author is grateful to William C. Sturtevant for information about this picture. Howard M. Chapin, *Sachems of the Narragansetts* (Providence, 1931), 91–105, is a valuable source regarding Ninigret family history and genealogy.



Esther, the last of the Narragansetts (fig. 18) was a descendant of the royal Ninigret family of Charlestown. In 1879, some years after this ambrotype was made, she was an elderly woman living apart from her tribe in Westerly, Rhode Island. Her ancestor, Sachem Thomas Ninigret, died in 1769 and was succeeded by his sister Esther, who reigned as Queen Sachem until her death in 1777. Queen Esther married Thomas Sachem and had a son, George, and a daughter, Mary. George succeeded his mother, but after his accidental death while still a young man, the rule by sachem was abolished and Mary never inherited the title. She married John Harry and had two daughters. The Esther Kenyon in this ambrotype was probably one of her daughters. Figure 18 is taken from page 116 of the third volume of William C. Bryant's and Sydney H. Gay's *A Popular History of the United States . . .* (New York, 1879). Descendants of the royal Ninigret family still live today in the Westerly and Charlestown area.²¹

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, photographs of New Englanders of Indian descent became more numerous. Historical soci-

eties, libraries, and individual families possess large quantities of Indian photographic material, some of which has appeared in print.²² A major and rewarding project awaits the researcher who wishes to locate and identify the prodigious photographic resources on New England Indians. We have concentrated here on the earliest prints and paintings, because from these we have the best possibility of learning what the original New England Indians looked like. The overall record contains some bright spots, such as the Champlain drawings, the Ninigret portrait, the Occom portraits, Vischer's sketch of the New York Indian in Connecticut, and Bierstadt's Martha Simon. The research on early visual images of New England Indians presented here is ongoing and the author would appreciate learning of any materials that do not appear or are not mentioned in this account. Each new discovery adds to our understanding of America's earliest people and enriches the culture which more recently has taken root in New England soil.

22. Some photographic material can be seen in Anonymous, "Some Photographs of An Earlier Gay Head From the Archives," *The Dukes County Intelligencer*, XIX (1977), 57-65; Amelia G. Bingham, *Mashpee: Land of the Wampanoags*, (Mashpee, Mass., 1970); Ethel Boissevain, *The Narragansett People* (Phoenix, 1975); Laura E. Conkey, Ethel Boissevain, and Ives Goddard, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Late Period," in Sturtevant and Trigger, eds., *Handbook*, XV, 177-189; Francis G. Hutchins, *Mashpee: The Story of Cape Cod's Indian Town* (West Franklin, N.H., 1979); Frank G. Speck, *Territorial Subdivisions and Boundaries of the Wampanoag, Massachusetts, and Nauset Indians*, Indian Notes and Monographs, No. 44 (New York, 1928), and "Native Tribes and Dialects of Connecticut, A Mohegan-Pequot Diary," in *Forty-Third Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1925-1926, (Washington, D.C., 1928), 199-287; and Katharine W. Tweed, "Portraits of Some Gay Head People," *The Dukes County Intelligencer*, IX (1968), 103-113. The author is grateful to Kathleen J. Bragdon for information regarding photographs in the Smithsonian Institution of the Mitchell family of Lakeville. See also Ebenezer W. Peirce, *Indian History, Biography and Genealogy . . .* (Freeport, 1972 [orig. publ. 1878]).

*Broadside for the American
Republican party, 1859.
Photograph by William C. Gufo.
Courtesy of Rhode Island
Historical Society Library (RHi
x3 4405).*

AMERICAN REPUBLICAN MEETING

—♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦—

LESTERS' HALL

FRIDAY EVE'G, APR. 1, 1859,

Commencing at 7 1-2 o'clock. To be addressed by

Hon. CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON,

of CUMBERLAND, and the

Hon. CHARLES C. VAN ZANDT,

of NEWPORT.

Let there be a Grand Rally!

Knicker, Anthony & Co's Steam Presses.

The Threat of Radicalism: Seward's Candidacy and the Rhode Island Gubernatorial Election of 1860

by James L. Huston*

In 1860, when the delegates to the national Republican convention shocked political observers by choosing Abraham Lincoln instead of William H. Seward as their Presidential candidate, contemporaries immediately labeled the action a concession to the dictum of "availability." Historians since then have not particularly disputed this interpretation of Lincoln's nomination. Scholars who have investigated the origins of the Civil War have generally concluded that in 1860 Republicans retreated from the radicalism of their 1856 convention and followed a more conservative path. Lincoln's triumph in Chicago was simply the most obvious manifestation of this trend.¹ But the Republican rejection of Seward involved more than simply a new conservatism in the party. The politicians who selected Lincoln were primarily concerned with emerging victorious in the presidential election. Events which had taken place in Rhode Island six weeks prior to the Chicago convention had cast grave doubts upon Seward's ability to meet the one requirement Republicans demanded of their nominee: that he be able to defeat the Democratic opponent.

The Republican party in 1860 was barely out of its swaddling clothes; it was composed of such diverse elements that any misstep could lead to its dissolution. Free traders, protectionists, Barnburners, old Whigs, Conscience Whigs, Free Soilers, and political abolitionists formed an uneasy alliance for one purpose: to stop the spread of slavery into the territories.² Even though the Republicans were beset with internal problems, often characterized by bitter infighting in the state organizations between former Democrats and Whigs, the policies of the Buchanan administration and the continued vitality of the territorial question allowed the Republicans to keep their party intact and to be in a strong position to capture the presidency in 1860. The results of the 1856 election revealed that Republicans failed to elect John C. Fremont because five crucial states had given their electoral votes to Buchanan: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois, and California. As a consequence of the Lecompton Constitution struggle and the economic misfortunes that followed the Panic of 1857, the Republicans

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1. Emerson David Fite, *The Presidential Campaign of 1860* (New York, 1911), 124; James G. Randall, *Lincoln the President: Springfield to Gettysburg*, 2 vols. (New York, 1945), I, 171-173; Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Lincoln*, 2 vols. (New York, 1950), II, 252-253; James G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 2d ed., rev. (Boston, 1969), 131. For those who believe the convention had not lost its reform zeal see Carl Russell Fish, *The American Civil War* (New York, 1937), 1-2; Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York, 1970), 214; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850's* (Stanford, Calif., 1962), 156-159.

2. See Joel H. Silbey, *The Transformation of American Politics, 1840-1860* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), 28-32; Judah B. Ginsberg, "Barnburners, Free Soilers, and the New York Republican Party," *New York History*, LVII (1976), 479-500; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 103-225.

3. Nevins, *Emergence of Lincoln*, I, 400–404; David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis 1848–1861*, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York, 1976), 325–326. For simplicity's sake the traditional interpretation of the results of the election of 1858 is retained, but see David E. Meerse, "The Northern Democratic Party and the Congressional Elections of 1858," *Civil War History*, XIX, (1973), 119–137; Ronald P. Formisano, *The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827–1861* (Princeton, 1971), 277–279, 281–282, 295–296; Michael Fitzgibbon Holt, *Forging a Majority: The Formation of the Republican Party in Pittsburgh 1848–1860* (New Haven, 1969), 239–259; William Dusinger, *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia 1856–1865* (Philadelphia, 1965), 76–79.

4. Charles Cranville Hamilton, *Lincoln and the Know Nothing Movement* (Washington, D.C., 1954), 6–20; Formisano, *Birth of Mass Political Parties*, 253–268; Holt, *Forging a Majority*, 299–302. It should be noted that Formisano and Holt see the divisions between parties as representing different ethnocultural constituencies.

5. Thomas H. O'Connor, *Lords of the Loom: The Cotton Whigs and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York, 1968), 136–138; Philip S. Foner, *Business & Slavery: The New York Merchants & the Irrepressible Conflict* (reprint, New York, 1968), 158–163; Nevins, *Emergence of Lincoln*, II, 104–110.

6. Joshua Giddings to Salmon P. Chase, Mar. 26, 1860, Chase Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; R. M. Corwine to John Sherman, Mar. 7, 1860, Sherman Papers, Library of Congress; *Harrisburg Telegraph*, Dec. 5, 1859.

triumphed in the congressional elections of 1858 by sweeping Pennsylvania and obtaining the popular vote in Indiana and Illinois. With these stunning conquests in the doubtful states, Republicans realized that their chances of victory in 1860 were excellent.³

The pivotal groups augmenting Republican strength were the old-line Whigs and nativists. While recent historians have claimed that the coalition finally forged between free soil, reformist Republicans, and former American party members ultimately explained that the rise and success of the Republican party, this coalition required astute calculation to form.⁴ In 1858 the conservatives were enticed into voting for the opposition but usually under some organization not strictly Republican. Thus in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, the Republicans and nativists formed fusion parties under the name of People's parties, while in Massachusetts and Rhode Island the opposition often referred to itself as the American-Republican party. This hesitant coalition between conservatives and Republicans proved particularly weak under the stress of events in late 1859 and early 1860. John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, the non-intercourse movement initiated by southerners to protest Brown's incursion, the congressional speakership fight, and the inflammatory doctrines contained in Hinton Rowan Helper's *The Impending Crisis*, brought conservatives to a crossroads.⁵ While Old Whigs and nativists loathed the Democratic party, they also despised sectionalism and radicalism. The wavering and uncertain attitudes of conservatives toward the Republicans created anguish in the minds of Republican strategists, for the conservatives were the balance of power in the doubtful states.

Republicans announced in no uncertain terms that they required the electoral votes of the doubtful states in 1860. The political abolitionist Joshua Giddings told Salmon P. Chase that the nomination rested on the decision of Pennsylvania: "I have on looking over the whole field come to this conclusion in my own mind that if Pennsylvania goes for Seward as her second choice, he will be the nominee. If for you, then you will be the nominee [;] if she refuses in any event to go for either I doubt whether either shall be nominated." One of John Sherman's correspondents weighed the chances of Supreme Court Justice John McLean and then added, "The question is, can he carry Penna, Indiana, Ill & New Jersey? No man should be nominated who cannot [get] all [of] them, simply because he cannot do without them." Pennsylvanians understood perfectly the necessity of securing their state. As the *Harrisburg Telegraph* explained, "If the Republican nominee carry every northern State in the Union except Pennsylvania and New Jersey, they will lack two votes of an election."⁶

Determining the strategy that would bind the doubtful states to the Republican cause generated considerable friction among Republican tacticians. Horace Greeley, the omnipresent reformer and editor of the *New York Tribune*, openly sought an alliance with conservatives by advocating adoption of certain nativist measures (registration laws) and

supporting nativist candidates, such as Edward Bates of Missouri.⁷ Yet Greeley's obvious attempt to lure conservatives into the party created dissension. Illinois Republicans were not particularly enamored with conservatives, and in Maine one incensed clergyman wrote to Congressman Israel Washburn, "How utterly futile it is to think of standing on the ticket and rotten platform of Horace Greeley and Co."⁸ In discussing the rising interest in a conservative candidate, Samuel Bowles, proprietor of the *Springfield* (Massachusetts) *Republican*, cautioned, "It is of the highest consequence to secure the support of those in 'the conservative zone,' mentally and materially, who agree with more pronounced Republicans in this fundamental matter [of slavery in the territories], and no toning down of principle is required to secure them."⁹

The gubernatorial election in Rhode Island took place amidst the private and public Republican debate over the best means to obtain the doubtful states and conservative voters. The American party since 1855 had ruled Rhode Island state politics, displacing the Democrats who had controlled the region in the first half of the decade. In 1856 the American party fused with the fledgling Republican organization in support of Fremont; the ascendant party in Rhode Island was thereby dubbed the "American-Republican" party. The coalition usually worked harmoniously in congressional contests and on national issues, but there was considerable rivalry for state offices.¹⁰

The first indication that serious problems afflicted Rhode Island's ruling coalition occurred in the spring congressional elections of 1859. The Republicans demanded that the party name be changed from "American-Republican" to simply "Republican." This was largely a pretext on the part of the Republicans, for their intent was plain. They feared the rise of new economic issues, particularly the tariff, and disliked the intolerance of the nativists. They desired to keep attention focused on the slavery issue: "What is the Republican party? Precisely a union of Whigs, Democrats, Liberty men, Americans, Conservatives, and Radicals, who believe that the greatest evil of the country comes from slavery, and that no great interest dear to the Free States or to the non-slaveholders any where can be prosecuted, or even safe until the slave power be broken."¹¹

William C. Simmons wrote to his brother, Rhode Island Senator James F. Simmons, that the "Strait Republicans" were determined to "cut adrift." The prophecy was accurate. The straights held their own convention and, while supporting the American candidate in one of Rhode Island's two congressional districts, they nominated Thomas R. Davis for the other. Davis was a former Democrat who had broken with his party over the Kansas-Nebraska bill when he had been a congressman. His nomination, however, also emphasized the internal struggle between former Democrats and Whigs within the Republican party.¹²

The Americans were undaunted by the severing of the fusion and promptly nominated Christopher Robinson for the seat which Davis

7. Peter Allen Isely, *Horace Greeley and the Republican Party 1853-1861: A Study of the New York Tribune* (reprint, New York, 1965), 255; Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *Horace Greeley: Nineteenth Century Crusader* (New York, 1953), 238-243; Richard H. Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom: Anti-slavery Politics in the United States 1837-1860* (New York, 1976), 349-354.

8. Lyman Trumbull to Abraham Lincoln, Nov. 23, 1859, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress (microfilm copy in the University of Illinois Library); Gustavus Koerner to Abraham Lincoln, Apr. 4, 1859, Lincoln Papers; Rev. Amory Battles to Israel Washburn, Feb. 8, 1859, quoted in Gaillard Hunt, *Israel, Elibu and Cadwallader Washburn: A Chapter in American Biography* (New York, 1925), 63-64.

9. *Springfield* (Mass.) *Republican*, Jan. 10, 1860.

10. Mario R. DiNunzio and Jan T. Galkowski, "Political Loyalty in Rhode Island: A Computer Study of the 1850's," *Rhode Island History*, XXXVI (1977), 93-94; Charles Stickney, "Know-Nothingism in Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Historical Society, Proceedings*, I (1892-1893), 247-256; Edward Field, *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1902), I, 365-369.

11. Quote from Address of the Rhode Island State Republican Committee in *Providence Tribune*, Jan. 29, 1859. For the issue of protectionism see *Providence Tribune*, Jan. 29, Feb. 8, Feb. 28, 1859; *Providence Journal*, Apr. 3, 1859. For Republican disapproval of intolerance see *Providence Tribune*, Mar. 30, 1859. For the quarrel over the name of the organization consult *Providence Tribune*, Feb. 8, Feb. 10, 1859.

12. William C. Simmons to James F. Simmons, Jan. 15, 1859, Simmons Papers, Library of Congress; *Providence Tribune*, Feb. 16, 1859. For background on Davis see R. I. Hist. Soc., *Procs.*, n.s., IV (1896), 50-54.

13. *Providence Tribune*, Feb. 18, 1859; *Providence Journal*, Apr. 1, 1859.

14. Address of American-Republican State Central Committee in *Providence Journal*, Apr. 1, 1859.

15. *Providence Journal*, Mar. 3, 1859.

16. *Providence Tribune*, Apr. 7, 1859. Robinson won a plurality; he had 3,797 votes to Davis's 2,422 and the Democratic candidate's 1,532. The plurality victory called for a second election, in accordance with Rhode Island law, in which the Democrat dropped from the race and Robinson easily won. See *Providence Tribune*, Apr. 7, 1859; *Tribune Almanac for 1860*, 46.

17. W. C. Simmons to J. F. Simmons, Dec. 14, 1859, Simmons Papers; *Providence Journal*, Jan. 3, Jan. 25, 1860.

18. *Providence Journal*, Jan. 5, 1860; E. J. Nightingale to J. F. Simmons, Jan. 19, 1860, Simmons Papers; *Newport Advertiser*, Jan. 18, 1860.

coveted. Robinson was touted by the party as the best representative of the district and one who favored protectionism.¹³ The Americans also reminded voters that the nativist principles which had swept the state four years before were still strongly held in Rhode Island: "Now, to ignore this powerful American element in the organization of the State administration party for the ensuing year, as the straight Republicans propose by their present ill-advised movement to do, is simply an impossibility."¹⁴

During the campaign the straights insisted on the primacy of the slavery issue, a point which the Americans also stressed. But the Americans placed qualifications on the slavery question and openly deprecated the sectionalism of Davis and his radical leanings. The *Providence Journal* commented that Davis had "extreme opinions" on the subject of slavery: "Mr. Robinson passed a eulogy upon Henry Clay, whose disciple he is proud to call himself. Mr. Davis instanced William Lloyd Garrison as a man whose name would descend to posterity with greater honor than that of Clay or Webster?"¹⁵ The election results proved the Americans correct: Robinson won the district and the right to sit in Congress.¹⁶

To most observers Robinson's victory indicated the undeniable strength of American party followers in Rhode Island. The straights, however, were determined to reform the Republicans, and Davis's defeat did not sway them from this purpose. Instead of defying the Americans by continuing a separate existence, the straights sought to grab control of the party machinery. Late in 1859 the straights made strenuous efforts to have their men selected as delegates to the American-Republican convention to be held in January 1860. In light of their exertions, William Simmons wrote his brother that the meeting would have "a strong Republican cast."¹⁷

Rhode Island Republicans met on January 4 in Providence to choose state candidates and to select delegates to the national convention in Chicago. William Simmons's fears were immediately realized when Thomas R. Davis was selected president of the conclave. The convention quickly adopted a rather innocuous platform proclaiming fidelity to the Union, abhorrence of John Brown's raid, disgust at the profligacy of the Buchanan administration, and determination to exclude slavery from the territories. But when the gathering turned to the matter of state nominations and the individuals to be sent to Chicago, the animosity between the straights and the Americans erupted. Seth Padelord, a wealthy, self-made merchant, received the gubernatorial bid on the first ballot; Padelord was held to be in the radical camp. Charles Van Zandt, a state legislator and leader of the American forces, strove to postpone consideration of the Chicago delegation, but the action failed and the convention proceeded to choose the representatives. The radicals of the party again won the battle with a host of straights being selected to attend the national convention. One exception to the straights' triumph was the inclusion of Senator Simmons as a delegate.¹⁸

Conservatives left the meeting feeling both angry and bitter at what they believed were the high-handed tactics of the radicals. The Americans did not, of course, share the straights' zeal for the slavery issue, but the events of the past two months had also hardened their resolve against the radicals in the party. John Brown's raid and the threat of disunion shocked the Rhode Island Americans, and they feared the possibility of a southern boycott of northern goods which irate southerners were advocating. Moreover, at the same time the American-Republicans gathered at Providence, the congressional leaders in the House of Representatives in Washington waged a bitter contest over the selection of a Speaker. Ominously for Rhode Island party members, Republicans in Washington favored the election of John Sherman of Ohio as Speaker. But Sherman's nomination was hotly contested by southerners and northern Democrats because he had been one of the many Republican endorsers of Hinton R. Helper's *The Impending Crisis*, a work which advocated the abolition of slavery. Another endorser of the book was familiar to those in Rhode Island: Seth Padelford.

In the two weeks following Padelford's nomination, the rancor between the factions of the Republican party filled the newspapers. Conservatives called Padelford's nomination a "purchased one," and complained that money was "lavished like water."¹⁹ Besides the conservatives' anger at being outmaneuvered at the convention, they also leveled their sharpest criticism at Padelford's record. As one paper explained, Rhode Island was "Sam," and not "Sambo." The *Warren Telegraph* quickly linked outside events to Padelford's political views. The people, claimed the editor, "have drawn healthy lessons from the apostasy of Helper, and the raid of John Brown. They have learned to what enormities the embodiments of some theories may lead, and how close a connection there was between the 'irrepressible conflict' as elaborated by Seward at Rochester, and that written with bloody fingers by Ossawatimie Brown at Harpers Ferry."²⁰ Quite early Rhode Island conservatives demonstrated that they associated John Brown's raid and Helper's book with the politics of William H. Seward.

Those Republicans who decided to uphold the legitimacy of Padelford's credentials soon reacted to the conservative thrust. They argued that Padelford was nominated fairly and the cry of a purchased nomination was simply the howl of losers who could not accept defeat with grace. Supporters of Padelford spent most of their energy refuting the charge that he was a radical; he may have been selected by radicals within the party, but his record belied any deviation from proper Republicanism.²¹

What loyal party members feared most was a disruption of Rhode Island Republicanism and the influence such a division could have on national politics. The *Providence Journal* warned that the "November election, with all its important issues, is not far away." The loyalists fretted over the role the Democrats might play; the leading organ of the Rhode Island Democracy, the *Providence Post*, already had attacked



Seth Padelford (1807–1878).

Courtesy of Rhode Island

Historical Society Library (RHI

x3 4403).

19. *Providence Press*, Jan. 5, 1860; *Warren Telegraph*, Jan. 7, 1860.

20. *Newport News*, Jan. 16, 1860; *Warren Telegraph*, Feb. 4, 1860.

21. (Providence) *Manufacturers and Farmers Journal*, Jan. 5, Jan. 19, 1860; *Providence Journal*, Jan. 25, Jan. 30, 1860.

View of the auditorium of Howard Hall in Providence, constructed in 1859. Third building by that name on the site, it was razed in 1956. Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 1338).



22. *Providence Journal*, Jan. 23, 1860; *Providence Post*, Jan. 6, Jan. 7, Jan. 9, 1860; W. C. Simmons to J. F. Simmons, Jan. 28, 1860, Simmons Papers.

23. W. C. Simmons to J. F. Simmons, Jan. 20, 1860, Simmons Papers; *Newport News*, Feb. 3, 1860; *Providence Journal*, Feb. 1, Feb. 2, 1860. For background on Sprague see Field, *State of Rhode Island*, I, 347, 371–372; Peter J. Coleman, *The Transformation of Rhode Island 1790–1860* (Providence, 1963), 131, 300; *Narragansett Weekly*, Mar. 1, 1860; and an obituary in the *New York Times*, Sept. 12, 1915.

24. *Providence Journal*, Jan. 31, 1860. See also (Providence) *Manufacturers and Farmers Journal*, Jan. 23, Feb. 2, 1860.

25. W. C. Simmons to J. F. Simmons, Feb. 11, 1860, Simmons Papers. The convention report can be found in *Providence Journal*, Feb. 17, 1860.

Padelford for his radicalism and indicated the Democrats' willingness to support a conservative candidate. William Simmons reported to his brother that a breakup of the Republican party in the state seemed imminent and that a Democrat-conservative coalition could attain victory: "You know the American feeling is strong throughout the State & every thing is brought to bear against P. & it looks as tho it would beat him, with the Democratic votes."²²

On February 1 the conservative rejection of Padelford crystallized at a meeting at Howard Hall in Providence. The old Americans called for a Young Men's convention to be held in two weeks and offered William Sprague as an alternative to Padelford. William Sprague was only thirty years old in 1860, but he was the son of a cotton manufacturing magnate and reportedly the richest man in Rhode Island. While Sprague's political views were not actually known, his father, once a governor of Rhode Island, had been an impeccable Whig and there was little reason to doubt the son's conservatism.²³

In spite of the moaning of Padelford's supporters over the division of the party and their warning that a coalition of Democrats and conservatives would "destroy the harmony and weaken the strength of the Republican forces, and make a triumph in the autumn difficult, if not problematical," the conservatives held their Young Men's convention on February 16, where, true to prediction, they nominated Sprague for the governorship.²⁴ Loyal Republicans were again disheartened when, on the same day, the Democrats held their state convention and they too chose Sprague to be their candidate. The Padelford Republicans knew they faced an uphill struggle. Not only did Sprague have conservatives and Democrats supporting him, he also had his wealth. As William Simmons noted, "There will be no lack of money as he [Sprague] means to be elected."²⁵

At their convention the conservatives outlined the issues upon which they would challenge Padelford. Their first resolution read:

That some of the doctrines of Helper's book, deliberately endorsed and recommended by the nominee for Governor, of the 4th of January State Convention, are as radical and revolutionary in their tendency as any which Garrison or Wendell Phillips ever put forth, counselling, as they do, an immediate non-intercourse between the citizens of the northern and southern States in all their commercial, social, religious, and political relations, which course of action must result in confusion and injury to the business interests of all the States, and would strongly conduce to a dissolution of the federal Union.²⁶

Padelford's radicalism became the prime target of the conservative attack. The Democrats constantly tied Padelford to Harpers Ferry and Helper's *Impending Crisis*, and claimed that the Republicans "want to be able to say that *Rhode Island is an abolition State*."²⁷ The Americans did not disagree. They too linked Padelford to Brown and Helper and declared that the issue was between "true Republicanism over Radical abolitionism."²⁸

The other element in the conservative appeal was economic. Rhode Island's cotton mills produced cloth that was sold in the South, and this southern trade was important to the state's economy. In the aftermath of John Brown's raid, southerners attempted a boycott of northern goods to demonstrate how seriously they viewed the incident. Although the non-intercourse movement failed to halt southern purchases of northern wares, Rhode Island's conservatives responded to the threat. At one Sprague gathering, the participants passed a resolution condemning the "assaults of an intolerant party press upon the business interests of the State—its sneers at 'calicos' and its attempted ridicule of the enterprising men who manufacture them."²⁹

The Padelford Republicans were understandably depressed. Partisans of the regular party insisted that Padelford was no radical by pointing to the moderate platform which the convention had adopted. They likewise branded the conservatives as traitors to Republican principles because they welcomed an alliance with the Democrats. Most important, the Republicans pleaded with conservatives to understand how the troubles in Rhode Island would hurt Republicans in November. As the *Boston Advertiser* commented, "It makes no difference under what name the victory is won, it will be impossible to prevent its being understood as a substantial triumph of the democratic party."³⁰

Party loyalty was still a factor among the Padelford Republicans, and they were able to enlist the rhetorical abilities of outside speakers, such as Tom Corwin of Ohio and Abraham Lincoln.³¹ A measure of the bond of party loyalty—and at the same time an indication of the dejection of those conservatives who supported Padelford—was Senator James F. Simmons's decision to campaign on behalf of the party. While

26. *Providence Journal*, Feb. 17, 1860.

27. *Providence Post*, Feb. 24, Feb. 25, Feb. 27, Mar. 2, Mar. 6, Mar. 15, Mar. 17, 1860 [quote from Mar. 20, 1860].

28. Quote from *Newport News*, Mar. 5, 1860. See also *Newport News*, Mar. 8, Mar. 15, Mar. 26, Mar. 27, 1860; *Warren Telegraph*, Feb. 25, Mar. 24, 1860; *Newport Advertiser*, Mar. 7, Mar. 14, 1860; *Providence Press*, Mar. 3, Mar. 26, Mar. 29, Mar. 31, 1860.

29. *Providence Post*, Mar. 14, 1860; *Newport Advertiser*, Mar. 21, 1860. The same economic argument was used in Connecticut, which was also conducting a gubernatorial election. See *Boston Post*, Mar. 2, 1860; speech of Fernando Wood, *New York Times*, Mar. 21, 1860; speech of Col. Hazard, *New York Times*, Mar. 26, 1860.

30. *Boston Advertiser*, Apr. 4, 1860. See also [Providence] *Manufacturers and Farmers Journal*, Mar. 16, Mar. 20, Apr. 2, 1860; *Providence Journal*, Feb. 23, Feb. 25, Mar. 12, Mar. 13, Mar. 15, Mar. 21, Mar. 29, 1860.

31. *Providence Press*, Apr. 4, 1860; *Providence Post*, Feb. 28, Mar. 1, 1860; W. C. Simmons to J. F. Simmons, Feb. 29, 1860, Simmons Papers.

32. W. C. Simmons to J. F. Simmons, Mar. 5, 1860, Nightingale to J. F. Simmons, Feb. 15, 1860, Simmons Papers; *Providence Journal*, Mar. 20, 1860.

33. *Providence Journal*, Apr. 5, Apr. 6, 1860; *Tribune Almanac for 1861*, 30; DiNunzio and Galkowski, "Political Loyalty in Rhode Island," *R. I. Hist.*, XXXVI (1977), 94-95.

34. [Springfield] *Illinois State Register*, Apr. 11, 1860. See also *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Apr. 5, 1860; *Pittsburgh Post*, Apr. 7, 1860; *Easton [Pa.] Sentinel*, Apr. 12, 1860.

35. *Gettysburg [Pa.] Compiler*, Apr. 16, 1860; *Easton [Pa.] Argus*, Apr. 12, 1860; *Bedford [Pa.] Gazette*, Apr. 20, 1860; *Erie [Pa.] Observer*, Apr. 7, 1860.

36. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Apr. 7, 1860. See also *Boston Post*, Mar. 24, 1860; (Washington, D.C.) *States and Union*, Apr. 5, 1860; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Apr. 5, 1860.

37. *Indianapolis Journal*, Apr. 6, 1860. See also Lynn [Mass.] *News*, Apr. 11, 1860; *Raftsmen's [Coudersport, Pa.] Journal*, Apr. 11, 1860; *Washington [Pa.] Republic and Tribune*, Apr. 5, 1860; *Boston Advertiser*, Apr. 4, 1860; *New York Tribune*, Apr. 5, 1860; (Columbus) *Ohio State Journal*, Apr. 5, 1860.

38. [New York] *Evening Post*, Apr. 5, 1860; *Adams [Gettysburg, Pa.] Sentinel*, Apr. 16, 1860.

Simmons was mulling over his commitment to the gubernatorial candidate, his brother reminded him, "There are a great many of yr. strong friends in this [conservative] movement, & you know, you have nothing to hope from the radical portion of the party. They have always been opposed to you & always will be." Another of the Senators friends, E. J. Nightingale, who was responsible for Simmons's appointment to the Rhode Island delegation to Chicago, voiced his dismay at Padelford's nomination: "I cannot vote for him [Padelford] or any other man who has favored radicalism & as I was a delegate to the Convention [I] do not think it would be proper to vote against him [;] therefore I shall not vote for Governor."³²

The gubernatorial races in New England were the most exciting contests that region had seen for years. On April 2, Connecticut voters narrowly affirmed their Republicanism, but only by fewer than 600 votes. On April 4, the heated Rhode Island election climaxed. To the agony of the Republicans, although it was not an agony unforeseen, William Sprague defeated Seth Padelford and became the new governor of Rhode Island. Sprague polled 12,295 votes to Padelford's 10,835, and while Padelford's total nearly equalled the votes cast for Fremont in 1856, it was insufficient to overcome the conservative-Democrat coalition.³³ The unalterable fact was that the Republicans lost an election in their New England stronghold. And also incontestable was the reason for the defeat: the issue of radicalism had split the party and had driven off the conservatives. The Rhode Island election underscored the ease with which the frail political alliance between conservatives and Republicans could be sundered.

Not unexpectedly, northern Democrats glorified in the Republican defeat in Rhode Island. The Republicans, exulted the *Illinois State Register*, were "routed in Rhode Island! The white man can't stand too much negro. Even New England rebels."³⁴ Several Democratic editors failed to report the peculiar circumstances of Rhode Island politics and denied that Sprague was anything other than a Democrat in good standing. For many northern Democrats, the selection of Sprague by a party convention was sufficient proof of his party loyalty.³⁵ Other organs of the Democracy more faithfully recounted the political situation in Rhode Island; they nonetheless insisted, as did the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, that the Rhode Island Democrats would have chosen Sprague regardless of the actions of the conservatives.³⁶

In public the Republicans denied that Rhode Island had been lost to the Democracy or that the state would vote for anyone other than the Chicago nominee in November. As the *Indianapolis Journal* explained, "We need hardly say that it is no indication at all of the Presidential election, for Rhode Island will not be seriously claimed by any Democrat with sense enough to go in when it rains."³⁷ Most Republicans remarked that the victory of Sprague was "expected," that the result was "a foregone conclusion, and astonished nobody who had given the least attention to the matter."³⁸ The *New York Evening Post* satir-

ically editorialized that the Rhode Island election proved "very clearly that if the Republicans, Americans, Old Line Whigs, Union men, Democrats, and the rest of mankind united upon a Republican for President—they can elect him!" In Springfield, Illinois, one journalist counselled the Republicans to exhibit a "philosophical placidity" for "Rhode Island is a very small State, and we can better afford to lose her than any other."³⁹

Neither party, however, viewed the Rhode Island contest as a political aberration without meaning for the rest of the states. Both parties demonstrated an adequate knowledge of the reasons for Padelord's defeat and were prepared to apply this knowledge elsewhere. Democrats throughout the North expounded upon the central issue of the Rhode Island campaign—conservatism versus radicalism. Sprague's victory was a "signal rebuke" to sectionalism and a "signal triumph of conservatism and nationality."⁴⁰ Most of the important Democratic newspapers explained the rupture of Rhode Island Republicanism and described Sprague as a "national" man, a "conservative Union man," the "candidate of the Democracy and the Union men."⁴¹ As the Democrats praised the conservatism and nationalism of Sprague, they decried the sectionalism of Padelord. The regular Republican gubernatorial nominee was a financial backer of *The Impending Crisis*, a "known Helperite, a John Brown worshipper, and an abolitionist of the darkest dye," a "Republican of the John Brown Stamp," a "representative man, of the JOHN BROWN—HELPER stripe."⁴²

The characterization of Padelord as a sectional fanatic and Sprague as a national patriot may or may not have been the honest viewpoints of northern Democrats about the Rhode Island contestants, but there was certainly a keen awareness of presidential politics in their remarks. Democrats knew they had to halt the progress of the Republicans in the doubtful states, especially in Pennsylvania, and the one political group with the weakest bond to Republicanism was the conservatives, the old-line Whigs and Americans. By illustrating how the radicalism of the Rhode Island Republicans compelled the conservatives in that state to bolt the party, the Democrats attempted to brand all Republicans as extremists and thereby wean the conservatives in the doubtful states away from their alliance with the Republicans.⁴³

Democrats particularly sought to persuade conservatives in the doubtful states that the front-runner for the Chicago nomination, William H. Seward, upheld the same radical ideas as did Seth Padelord. The Rhode Island Democracy quickly connected the name of Seward to the kind of extremism which repulsed conservatives. In analyzing the election returns, the *Providence Post* declared that "it was this *Higher Lawism which suffered a defeat in Rhode Island*," an open reference to a phrase coined by Seward earlier in his senatorial career. The newspaper further insisted that Seward was the representative of abolitionism in the Republican party and prophesied that a Seward candidacy would result in Democratic victories in Rhode Island and Con-

39. [New York] *Evening Post*, Apr. 5, 1860; [Springfield] *Ill. State Journal*, Apr. 7, 1860.

40. *Easton* [Pa.] *Sentinel*, Apr. 12, 1860.

41. *Cincinnati Plain Dealer*, Apr. 7, 1860.

42. *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Apr. 5, 1860; *Detroit Free Press*, Apr. 6, 1860; *Democratic* [Bellefonte, Pa.] *Watchman*, Apr. 12, 1860. See also *Albany Atlas and*

Argus, Apr. 6, 1860.

43. [Washington, D.C.] *Constitution*, Apr. 7, 1860; Washington, D.C.] *States and Union*, Apr. 5, 1860; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Apr. 6, 1860. See also *Boston Post*, Mar. 24, 1860; *Detroit Free Press*, Apr. 6, 1860; *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Apr. 7, 1860.

44. *New York Herald*, Apr. 5, 1860.

William Sprague (1830–1915) was only thirty years old when he was elected Governor of Rhode Island in 1860. He enlisted in the Union army shortly thereafter and fought in the first battle of Bull Run. Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4402).



44. *Providence Post*, Apr. 6, 1860. See also *Providence Post*, Jan. 27, Mar. 2, Mar. 20, Apr. 13, 1860.

45. *New Hampshire Patriot and Gazette*, Apr. 11, 1860; [Trenton, N.J.] *True American*, Apr. 6, 1860; V. E. Piollet to William Bigler, Apr. 5, 1860, Bigler Papers, Hist. Soc. of Pa. The organizers of the Constitutional Union party also took heart at the results of the Rhode Island election sensing that they could defeat the Republicans in the doubtful states. See Washington Hunt to John I. Crittenden, Apr. 9, 1860, in Mrs. Chapman Coleman, *The Life of John I. Crittenden*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1871), II, 189–190; Alexander R. Boteler to Robert M. T. Hunter, May 18, 1860, Boteler Papers, Duke University, Durham, N. C.

necticut.⁴⁴ A New Hampshire paper described the Padelford slate as the “Seward ticket,” and in New Jersey one editor wrote: “We hope the results in Rhode Island and Connecticut may not deter the Black Republicans from putting forward Mr. SEWARD as their candidate for the Presidency.” Moreover, many Democrats actually did expect a Seward candidacy to drive the old-line Whigs and Americans from the Republicans. One correspondent of Senator William Bigler of Pennsylvania wrote that the “New England Elections have thus far demonstrated what I said to you when at the Federal City.” Bigler’s confidante expected most of the North to go Republican, the “only two States that can be carried [for the Democracy are] Penna and New Jersey.” He then added that if Seward became the Republican candidate, Pennsylvania would be safe.⁴⁵

Republicans may have publicly dismissed the Rhode Island setback, but they realized how tenuous their link with the important conservative bloc was. Virtually the entire Republican press emphasized that the victory of Sprague was due to a division of the state party, and not to any growth of Democratic sentiment. Most journalists reported the

split as between "Free Soilers and North Americans," but Republicans understood that the nature of the party rupture in Rhode Island presented a grave danger to their presidential aspirations.⁴⁶ In an editorial, the *New York Times* noted that the struggle in Rhode Island demonstrated that when the Democrats received aid from "Americans, Old Whigs, and conservative Republicans," they became unbeatable. In particular the *Times* pointed to the political situation in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, two states in which the balance of power belonged to the conservative voters. The *Times* then predicted that if the Whigs, Americans, and Democrats formed a coalition, the Republicans would be doomed.⁴⁷

In Chicago, the *Press and Tribune* warned the Republicans to pay heed to the lesson of Rhode Island: "It should teach them [Republicans] that the nomination of a *Radical* Republican for President may result in the loss of even New England States." An editor in Lynn, Massachusetts, agreed that it was politically foolish "to ignore the conservative element," and that Rhode Island Republicans would not undergo another division in November so long as the party was "under the leadership of some conservative man, like Seward, McLean, or Bates."⁴⁸ No Republican questioned the conservatism of Edward Bates or Justice John McLean, but William H. Seward was a different matter. Though Seward was essentially a conservative, he had earlier spoken several phrases in the heat of political battle which became permanent fixtures in antebellum political rhetoric and which associated the senator with the radical portion of the party: the "higher law" and the "irrepressible conflict." Furthermore, as the Chicago convention neared, more and more Republicans tried to calculate the possible effects a Seward candidacy would have on the doubtful states. Increasingly Seward was found to be deficient in the qualities necessary to attract the conservatives in those states.⁴⁹

The most important uncertain state was Pennsylvania, without which (as Pennsylvanians quickly pointed out) the Republicans could not achieve victory. Republicans in the Keystone State understood that their virtual sweep of the congressional elections in 1858 was due to a fusion with the old Whigs and nativists; they also realized how fragile were the links binding the conservatives to the party. The chairman of the state party, Alexander K. McClure, remembered the Sprague victory in his memoirs as "a shock" which added "to the many clouds which hung over the Republican horizon." The Rhode Island results also elicited strong admonitions in the Pennsylvania Republican press against radical nominees. In the Republican journals, editors found Sprague "an excellent candidate," while Padelford was "an ultra," an "Abolitionist, or nearly such."⁵⁰ The fact was that most Pennsylvania Republicans preferred the victory of the conservative Sprague over the radical Padelford. And Pennsylvanians quickly warned their compatriots in other states to learn the lesson of conservatism. As Morton McMichael of the Philadelphia *North American and United States*

46. Quote from (Chicago) *Press and Tribune*, Apr. 6, 1860. See also *Indianapolis Journal*, Apr. 6, 1860; *Newark Advertiser*, Apr. 5, 1860; Haverhill (Mass.) *Gazette*, Apr. 6, 1860; *Lynn News*, Apr. 11, 1860; *New York Tribune*, Apr. 3, 1860.

47. *New York Times*, Apr. 6, 1860.

48. (Chicago) *Press and Tribune*, Apr. 6, 1860; *Lynn News*, Apr. 25, 1860.

49. See, for example, J. R. Bulion to Lyman Trumbull, Apr. 9, 1860, Russell Hinckley to Trumbull, Mar. 28, 1860, Thomas Hanen [?] to Trumbull, Mar. 22, 1860, E. Kitchell to Trumbull, Dec. 26, 1859, Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress (photostats in Ill. Historical Survey, Urbana, Ill.); Josiah M. Lucas to Lincoln, Jan. 26, 1860, Lincoln Papers (microfilm); E. Peshine Smith to Henry C. Carey, Jan. 15, 1860, Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Hist. Soc. of Pa.; Charles A. Dana to James S. Pike, Mar. 10, 1860, quoted in Charles A. Jellison, *Fessenden of Maine: Civil War Senator* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1962), 123; Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward* (New York, 1967), 214, 221-226.

50. Alexander K. McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1905), I, 405. Quotes from *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Apr. 5, 1860; (Johnstown, Pa.) *Cambria Tribune*, Apr. 13, 1860. See also *Raftsmen's* (Coudersport, Pa.) *Journal*, Apr. 13, 1860; *Washington* (Pa.) *Republic and Tribune*, Apr. 5, 1860; *Adams Sentinel*, Apr. 16, 1860; (Towanda, Pa.) *Bradford Reporter*, Apr. 12, 1860; *Erie Gazette*, Apr. 12, 1860; *Bedford Inquirer*, Apr. 13, 1860.



Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865),
President of the United States,
1861–1865. Courtesy of Rhode
Island Historical Society Library
(RHi x3 4404).

51. (Philadelphia) *North American and United States Gazette*, Apr. 5, Apr. 6, 1860; *Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg) *Telegraph*, Apr. 10, 1860. See also *Cambria Tribune*, Apr. 13, 1860.

52. *Warren* (R.I.) *Telegraph*, Feb. 4, 1860; *Providence Evening Press*, Mar. 3, 1860.

53. W. C. Simmons to J. F. Simmons, Apr. 5, 1860, James H. Coggeshall to J. F. Simmons, Apr. 14, 1860, Simmons Papers.

54. Nightingale to J. F. Simmons, Jan. 19, 1860, Simmons Papers.

55. Joseph Medill to Trumbull, Apr. 16, 1860, Trumbull Papers (photostats); Herman Kreisman to "Friend Huth," Apr. 11, 1860, Kreisman to Joseph K. C. Forrest, Apr. 14, 1860, enclosed in John Wentworth to Lincoln, Apr. 21, 1860, Trumbull to Lincoln, Apr. 24, 1860, Lincoln Papers (microfilm).

Gazette lectured, the doubtful states were still doubtful and now the Republicans "are not sure even of Connecticut and Rhode Island, without great prudence in their nominations and great skill in their strategy." A Harrisburg newspaper added that the Rhode Island results demonstrated that not any Republican would suffice for the nomination, and particularly not in Pennsylvania.⁵¹

Conservatives in other Northern states agreed with their Rhode Island brethren that William H. Seward was a Padelford type of extremist. Conservatives connected the events at Harpers Ferry with the "irrepressible conflict" as elaborated by Seward, and attacked Seward for not repudiating the doctrines of Hinton Helper in his Senate speeches.⁵² More important, the political operatives who corresponded with Senator Simmons were emphatic that conservatives saw Seward as an "ultra." Simmons's brother warned that the Rhode Island debacle should "teach the Chicago convention a lesson, not to nominate an ultra party man for there will be no chance to elect such," and another adviser wrote that if the November contest pitted Stephen A. Douglas against Seward, "there could be no doubt of the State's going Democratic."⁵³ E. J. Nightingale was even more convinced of the necessity of nominating a conservative, and he offered Edward Bates as an appropriate candidate: "But with Seward or Chase of Ohio, or any man of that stamp I should feel certain of defeat, in my opinion our aim should be to nominate men who would be certain of uniting the opposition in Penn & N Jersey & carrying those States."⁵⁴

Nor was the probable effect of Seward's nomination on the conservatives in the uncertain states missed by friends of the Illinois candidate, Abraham Lincoln. Joseph Medill wrote to Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois that the Chicago convention "dare not nominate Seward." Medill then related that the "result in Connecticut and Rhode Island should admonish us to avoid radical issues and candidates this campaign." Lincoln also found out through his correspondence that the Republican troubles "in Connecticut and Rhode Island operates strongly against Seward," and that the Republicans were "much depressed" by the New England vote tallies. In the view of Herman Kreisman, an observer in Washington, "It is deplorable, but none the less true on that account, that the nomination of Seward would be followed by the defeat of the Republican party in both these States [Rhode Island and Connecticut]." Lyman Trumbull wrote to Lincoln of how congressmen were interpreting the New England contests: "The delegations from Conn. & R.I. say he [Seward] would lose both States, and so far as I know those from N.J. Pa. except Cameron, and Indiana, express the same opinion in regard to their States, & I must confess the letters I am daily receiving from Central & South, Ill. lead me to doubt if he could carry our State."⁵⁵

Events quickly turned contemporary, and later historical, attention away from the affect of Rhode Island's gubernatorial election upon Seward's bid for the Chicago nomination. Less than one month after

Sprague's triumph the Democrats made the election of a Republican seem nearly inevitable. Nonetheless, the Republicans had to act prudently because they still required the electoral votes of the doubtful states. Unfairly or not, Seward became entangled in John Brown's raid and Hinton Helper's doctrines because of his rhetoric, though he was basically a conservative, the old Whigs and nativists perceived him to be a radical. Of course, Seward's candidacy was in trouble prior to the Rhode Island election because in various ways he had angered conservatives. But the Rhode Island election gave a tangible illustration of what could happen to the Republican party if a radical, or one deemed a radical, were nominated. Sprague's victory was one more proof of Seward's foremost liability as a candidate: he could not win the conservative in the uncertain states. The Rhode Island election was not in itself sufficient to doom Seward's nomination, but combined with other fears and reservations about his ability to attract the conservatives it acted as a sharp reminder of the dangers his nomination entailed. In the final analysis, the doubtful states killed Seward's bid for the presidential nomination in Chicago.⁵⁶ But it should not be forgotten that the rejection of Seward was based not only on people's fears but also on the concrete voting results of the Rhode Island gubernatorial election.

56. *Power, Impending Crisis*, 429.

Book Reviews

Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England Between the Great Awakenings. By JOSEPH A. CONFORTI. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. for the Christian University Press, 1981. viii + 241 pp. Notes, appendix, bibliographical note, index. \$16.95.)

For all of his importance as the titular heir of Jonathan Edwards, theological polemicist of the first rank, and tireless worker in the cause of antislavery, it is surprising how little attention has been paid to the career of Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803) in modern scholarship. The last published biography appeared in 1852. Since then general references have praised Hopkins's stand on antislavery but dismissed his version of "strict" (predestinarian) Calvinism as a great anachronism: an obtuse theological system that lacked Edwards's genius and which exerted little public influence in an age moving rapidly in individualistic and "Arminian" directions. By so caricaturing Hopkins's theology, historians coincidentally have missed the broader public appeal of the "New Divinity" movement he championed. In *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, Joseph Conforti explodes these misconceptions and reveals how important man and movement were to late colonial and early national New England culture.

Conforti begins his study with a superb overview of the state of Calvinism in New England following the death of Jonathan Edwards. Like the Congregational "New Lights" of the Great Awakening, the "hyper-Calvinist" New Divinity successors rose in reaction to a "Liberal" clergy who emphasized the "external qualifications" of wealth and breeding instead of the "heart" and the conversion experience. New Divinity preachers typically emerged from "obscure" social backgrounds and worked in backcountry posts that were spurned by their more cosmopolitan Liberal counterparts. Differences in social background extended to broader differences in theological emphasis and pulpit style. Where Liberals tended to be "rationalistic" in their theology and preferred a "formal" fully written out sermon text, the New Divinity ministers were strict predestinarians who tended to speak extemporaneously in the pulpit. In terms of relative numbers, the New Divinity ministers were more numerous than historians previously assumed. Despite their lack of favor at the chief colonial colleges in Cambridge and New Haven, New Divinity ministers accounted for roughly one-third of the Congregational clergy in Connecticut, and a similarly high proportion in Massachusetts. As preachers these New Divinity minis-

ters tended to leave their theology behind in the study and adopted a powerful hortatory style which pleased popular audiences and reflected an Edwardian understanding of "the evangelical function of the spoken word." Individuals like Joseph Bellamy, Nathanael Emmons, or Stephen West were among the most popular preachers of their age and dominated the interior of New England. The "Second Great Awakening" of the 1780s was, in New England anyway, a New Divinity phenomenon.

More than anyone else, Samuel Hopkins was the standard-bearer of the New Divinity movement—so much so, that "Hopkinsianism" and the New Divinity were "virtually synonymous." This, despite the fact that in many ways he did not fit the standard hyper-Calvinist mold. Unlike his peers, Hopkins was never particularly dynamic in the pulpit, nor did he lead significant revivals. Although his social origins in Waterbury, Connecticut, were modest by Boston standards, they were hardly obscure. His father was a leading selectman, justice of the peace, and deputy to the General Assembly. Only after matriculating at Yale College in the midst of the Great Awakening (1740) was Hopkins's career set on a conventional New Divinity track. Like many of his classmates Hopkins caught the fever of revivalism and determined to extend his training in "Schools of the Prophets" established in the homes of evangelical ministers. For Hopkins, this meant travel to Northampton where he studied under the private tutelage of Jonathan Edwards and developed the theological skills that would later gain him fame in the New Divinity movement.

From Northampton, Hopkins travelled to the frontier parish of Great Barrington, where he would spend the next twenty-five years of his ministry. His experience there was one of almost unending frustration. Besides his own limitations in the pulpit, he faced a hostile population dominated by a vocal Dutch minority who resented his presence from the start. Such unpleasantness, however, had its compensations for it drove Hopkins to the study where, through the 1760s, he developed the major lines of his theology which would establish his reputation as theological heir to Jonathan Edwards. His system, as Conforti points out, not only extended the thought of Edwards, but also revised it in significant respects. First (and most controversially), he revised Edwards's doctrine of original sin by arguing that God not only "permitted" sin to exist, but actually "willed" it to magnify His love and mercy. Secondly he rejected Edwards's concept of "true virtue" which allowed some good to come from natural or "secondary" virtue, and argued instead that the more sanctified acts by unregenerate men appeared, the more heinous they were in the eyes of God. Thirdly, and most importantly, he redefined Edwards's concept of "disinterested Benevolence" to refer less to a self-centered aesthetic and philosophical appreciation of "Being in general" to a more socially oriented emphasis on self-denial and social reform.

The full implications of disinterested benevolence became apparent

to Hopkins only after his arrival at the Second Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1770—a controversial appointment that was achieved only through the heroic lobbying effort on Hopkins's behalf by the women's prayer group. There, in the midst of rising agitation against British "enslavement," he encountered at first-hand the magnitude and horrors of the slave trade in America and resolved to see it ended. He saw with stark clarity the inherent contradiction between republican rhetoric and African enslavement and, more than any other New England polemicist, linked the religious cause of antislavery to the meaning of the American Revolution. In widely circulated addresses to the Continental Congress (1775) and the Constitutional Convention, he reasoned from Scripture and republican logic to demonstrate the immorality of slavery, and to warn the nation that unless they repented of the sin of slavery, God would never bless their national experiment. Along with lobbying to eradicate slavery, Hopkins engaged in a parallel movement for African colonization which, Conforti observes, "compromised his commitment to social justice for American blacks," and demonstrated the limits of nineteenth-century reform. When, in the twilight of his career, Hopkins codified his beliefs into a massive *System of Doctrines* (1793), he accomplished what Jonathan Edwards never lived to complete: the first "indigenous American system of Calvinist theology." By bringing together Calvinist theology with an activist social ethic, Hopkins's *System* succeeded in postponing the eclipse of Calvinism in New England for another generation.

Conforti takes on an ambitious project and succeeds to an admirable degree. It is a work that no student of the Congregational ministry and social reform can afford to ignore. There is only one point at which this reader called out for more information. Despite the acknowledged importance of women to Hopkins's Newbury career (particularly Susanna Anthony and Sarah Osborne), and despite what we now know about the importance of women to the Second Great Awakening, Conforti fails to explore why women found Hopkins and the New Divinity so attractive. This is not to detract from Conforti's otherwise outstanding analysis, but merely to confirm his major point that, once revived, there is far more to the story of Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity than historians previously imagined.

University of Connecticut

Harry S. Stout

Old Light on Separate Ways: The Narragansett Diary of Joseph Fish 1765-1776. Edited by WILLIAM S. SIMMONS and CHERYL L. SIMMONS. (Hanover, N.H., and London: University Press of New England, 1982. xv + 184 pp. Illustrations, notes, sources. \$16.00.)

The writing of Indian mission history has long focused on initial periods of contact when missionaries played crucial roles in culture encounter. Only rarely does any study go beyond those first years to give us a glimpse of native people, both Christians and traditionalists, struggling to survive in a strange and hostile world. This is especially so in colonial New England where most discussions of Indian missions end with the chaos wrought by King Philip's War. But as William Simmons and others have recently found, Christianity did become an integral part of the lives of many Indians long after the 1670s. Examining the lives of eighteenth-century Christian Indians suggests important lessons about both mission history and the wider field of native experience.

The diary and letters of Joseph Fish provide just that sort of window into native life in the eighteenth century. As William and Cheryl Simmons make plain in their illuminating introduction, many Narragansetts had been deeply touched by the message of the Great Awakening. Narragansett converts, led by Christian Indian pastor Samuel Niles, created a native church. That church, whose faith and liturgy were closely connected to that of the Separate and Separate Baptist churches, was an important means for Narragansett cultural and political survival. When Puritan divine Joseph Fish came to preach among the Narragansett believers, he met Indians whose perceptions of Christianity and the faithful life differed dramatically from his own.

The Fish Indian materials cover the period from 1765 to 1776, a time of considerable political trouble for the Rhode Island Narragansetts. Split into two factions over the issue of land sales by Sachem Thomas Ninigret, Narragansetts led by Pastor Niles opposed further white occupation of reservation lands and looked to missionary Fish as an ally in their struggle. Fish's writings reveal several important aspects of colonial missions in general and Narragansett life in particular. But even the most hasty reading of Joseph Fish quickly points up how little he understood native life and values. While Puritan missionaries in the John Eliot era were no match for the skilled Jesuit ethnographers of New France, Puritans in an earlier time did record valuable details about southern New England native societies. But by Fish's time, curiosity had given way to other and more harsh feelings. As the editors correctly point out in their Afterword, Joseph Fish cannot be counted with Paul Lejeune or John Heckewelder as a great missionary ethnographer.

If Fish failed at field ethnography, in his diary entries and letters the sensitive reader can catch telling pictures of native people struggling to retain their tribal lands and cultural identities. Most important, in the

Fish materials one can see the outcome of the creative process whereby native people took an ideology foreign to them and made it suit their own ends and needs. This Indianization of Christianity, so familiar in places like Mexico or West Africa, has not gotten the attention it deserves from scholars looking at colonial North America. What the Narragansett Christians had done, much to the confusion of Joseph Fish, was to fashion beliefs and practices that blended together Christian and native patterns. That synthesis was a survival ideology, a coping mechanism for Narragansetts in a world that valued them and their ways little or not at all.

At a time when the scholarly market has been flooded with unimportant documents poorly edited and overannotated, William and Cheryl Simmons's edition of the Fish letters and diary is a welcome change. The text is cleanly presented without destroying its flavor and authentic character. The annotations are both useful and restrained. More important, in valuable comments before and after the documents proper, the editors provide thoughtful analyses of both Narragansett Christians and their often bewildered missionary. This is a superb book and one that deserves a wide and appreciative audience.

Youngstown State University

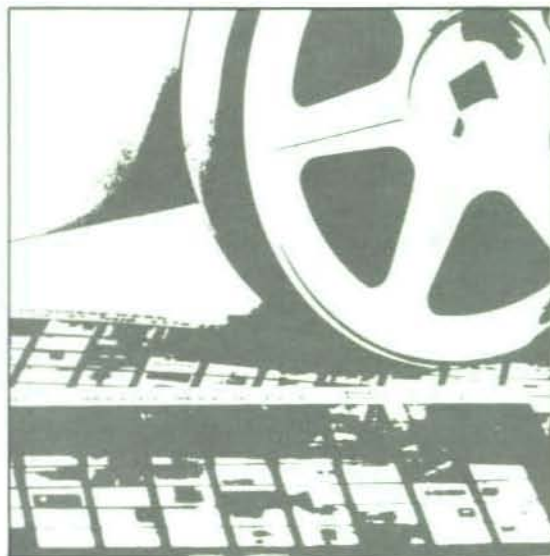
JAMES P. RONDA

Corrections

The editors regret that several printer's errors in two recent issues of *Rhode Island History* have caused some confusion for our readers. The fourth sentence of Eric C. Schneider's "Mental Retardation, State Policy, and the Ladd School, 1908-1970," in the November 1981 issue, page 133, should read: "Social science encouraged this prejudice as a series of studies including *The Kallikak Family* (1912), *The Hill Folks* (1912), *The Pineys* (1913), *The Jukes in 1915* (1915), and *The Family of Sam Sixty* (1916), purported to prove that crime, destitution, illegitimacy, and feeble-mindedness were intertwined and hereditary phenomena." In the last paragraph of the same article, page 143, another printer's error mangled the text when two lines from uncorrected proof were inadvertently repeated. There was also an error of omission in the November 1981 issue: Walter Kopek was not credited with designing the cover.

In the May 1982 issue, another serious error occurred on page 67 when a book reviewer's name was spelled incorrectly. The reviewer of Lyle Koehler's *A Search for Power* was Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. We apologize to Ms. Ulrich for this unfortunate error.

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Should you desire to include the Society as a beneficiary of an unrestricted bequest when preparing your will, the following wording is suggested:

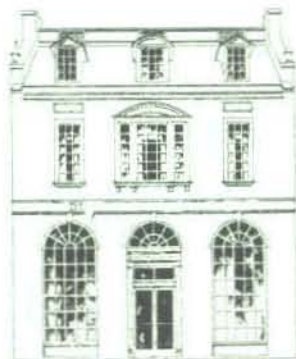
I give and bequeath to The Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations _____dollars (\$ _____) for its general uses and purposes.

The Director of the Society will be happy to discuss this matter with you. Gifts to the Society are deductible from federal estate and income taxes.



The Rhode Island Historical Society

52 Power Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906
(401) 331-8575



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