

AUGUST/NOVEMBER 1999



Rhode Island History

A RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION

Volume 57, Number 3 & 4



Rhode Island History



Volume 57, Number 3 & 4

Published by

The Rhode Island Historical Society
110 Benevolent Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02906-3152
and printed by a grant from the State of
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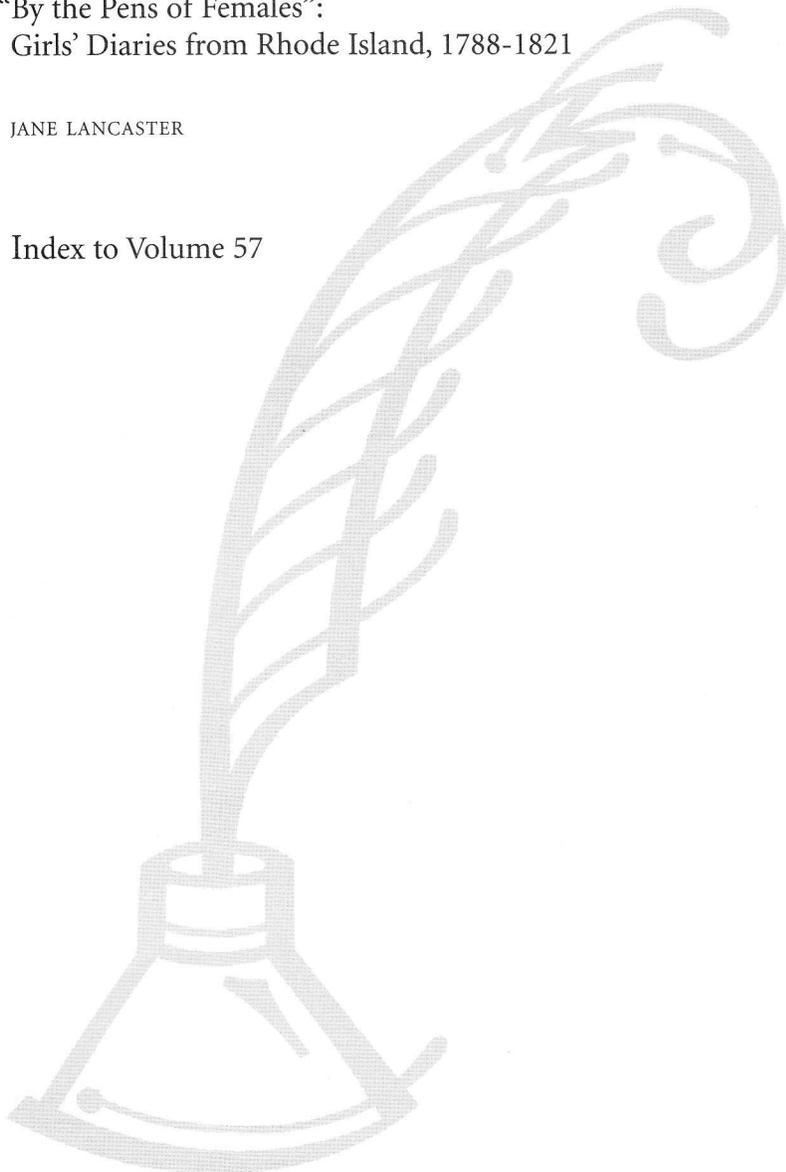
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“By the Pens of Females”: Girls’ Diaries from Rhode Island, 1788-1821

JANE LANCASTER

This issue of *Rhode Island History* looks at seven women’s diaries from the Rhode Island Historical Society’s manuscript collection. The Society owns hundreds of women’s diaries dating from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. The seven presented here share two major characteristics: they were written within the generation following the American Revolution, and they were written by teenage girls, or by women not much beyond their teenage years. “Teenage” is, of course, an anachronistic term, for adolescence had to wait a century or more to be so labeled; yet much of what these young women experienced and described might be done and felt by their descendants two hundred years later.

Reading these diaries is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope. The details may seem at first very small and insignificant, but they are part of a much bigger picture. Knowing the context in which the diaries were written helps us understand the lives of both women and men, as well as the history of Rhode Island, of New England, and, in some important respects, of the whole of the United States as the eighteenth century ended and the nineteenth century began.

These diaries reflect important changes in women’s lives, both private and public, in the early Republic. Some entries are very detailed, others are brief, but between them they give an intimate picture of the everyday world of girls within their families and within the wider society. The diaries hint at courtship and broken hearts; they record family births, marriages, and deaths; they speak of health, of ill health (one girl reports her first period, another takes laudanum), and of quilting; they tell of attendance at church, at dances, and at funerals; they talk of politics and war; they describe work and leisure.

It is clear from some of the earlier diaries—particularly that of Julia Bowen, who spent a night on a boat with a group of her friends, male and female—that chaperonage was uncommon at the time; many young women at the end of the eighteenth century had a far more active social life than their daughters and granddaughters were to enjoy. This freedom, however, was short-lived; as the nineteenth century dawned, so too did the so-called “cult of true womanhood,” whereby women were expected to be pure, pious, domestic, and submissive to their husbands and fathers. The later diarists were subject to this expectation, though their acceptance of the strictures and restrictions it imposed was sometimes painful, as in the case of Lusanna Richmond.

The United States was a very young nation when these girls were writing in their journals. The median age of the population was only 16 (it is 30 now), while fewer than one in ten people were in the 45-to-64 year age group.¹ A high birth rate, combined with high mortality among the middle-aged, furthered the emergence of a youth culture. Some young people—notably Susan Lear and Julia Bowen—began to see themselves in generational terms.

Meanwhile, the family itself was more fragile than is usually assumed. Although divorce was rare, it did sometimes occur, and the intact nuclear family was far from universal.

Jane Lancaster is an independent scholar and a fellow at the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Civilization at Brown University. She would like to express her appreciation to Rick Stattler, the Rhode Island Historical Society’s curator of manuscripts, for suggesting she look at women’s diaries, and for his continued helpfulness as she prepared this article; to Robin Flynn and Lori Salotto of the Society library’s Manuscripts Division, Allison Cywin and Jennifer Bond of the Graphics Division, and, especially, Andy Boisvert of the Reference Division for their valuable assistance; and to Donna DeFabio Curtin of the Plymouth Antiquarian Society for her close reading of the manuscript and her helpful suggestions.

Mothers died in childbirth, and fathers were away at sea for protracted periods. Families became ill or could not cope; bankruptcies or simple impoverishment meant moving from rented premises to boardinghouse; most illnesses, including depression, were largely untreatable. As a historian of childhood has noted, "dislocation of families . . . were so common as to be almost normal in the early nineteenth century."

Family dislocation and dysfunction are clear in many of the diaries. At first glance one might seem that these young women led charmed lives, but a second glance reveals the difficult family circumstances of several of them. Julia Bowen did not get on with her stepmother; Sarah Crawford Cook's mother became insane and was in and out of asylums throughout her daughter's adolescence, and her father was a prisoner of war during the War of 1812; Lusanna Richmond was profoundly depressed; thirteen-year-old Agnes Herreshoff's father had recently committed suicide. Even Sarah Brown, daughter of John Brown, "the richest man in Providence town," hints at family conflicts in her diary.

The diarists were not, of course, fully typical of Rhode Island girls. All of them were white (at a time when the black population of the state was around 10 percent), and five of the seven had fathers who called themselves merchants, although they were not all from the most prosperous part of that group. These were girls with sufficient leisure and literacy to spend time confiding their thoughts to paper. As Mary Beth Norton remarked in *Liberty's Daughters*, "City daughters from well-to-do homes were the only eighteenth-century American women who can accurately be described as leisured." Such young women went to school, often until they were seventeen or eighteen, and then helped a little with household chores, but compared with rural girls or with poorer urban girls, their duties were far from onerous. They looked after, and sometimes sewed, their own clothes; they quilted, which was as much a social activity as anything else; but the heavy work was left to washerwomen and servants. An extreme example of a leisured girl was the young Philadelphian Susan Lear, who kept a journal of her extended visit to the elite Brown family in the summer of 1788. Her diary is full of tea engagements and dances, though her astonishing encounter with a clarinet-playing "Indian Chief" takes her visit to Providence out of the realm of the ordinary.

The diaries presented here reflect changes that were then taking place in the state's economy. During the eighteenth century the economy of Rhode Island was based on commerce; but the American Revolution, and then the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century, made maritime trade much more risky, and the future now lay in industry. Although the China trade permitted some merchants to prosper in the short term, the thoughts of the canner ones among them—notably Moses Brown—were already turning to the textile industry. Two of the diaries, those of Betsey Metcalf and Sarah Crawford Cook, illustrate the beginnings of industrialization in Rhode Island: the former explains her role in the origins of the straw hat industry; the latter's father abandons the sea to become a supervisor in a mill.

Some names recur in the diaries that follow. Providence was a very small town in 1788, when our story starts; two years later the first United States census counted 6,380 Providence residents living in 1,129 families. The leading merchant families—the Browns, the Bowens, the Clarks, the Nightingales, the Powers, the Whipples, the Angells—were not only the town's leading citizens; they also drank tea together, danced together, and married each other. We will meet some of their daughters in the following pages. Meanwhile, a group of artisans, led by hairdresser John Howland and tanner Joel Metcalf, were challenging the political dominance of the merchants. Badly hurt by the inflation and depression that followed the Revolutionary War, small shopkeepers and craftsmen banded together in February 1789 to organize the Providence Association of

Mechanics and Manufacturers. These men formed the core of a new middle class, and their daughters' diaries present a very different picture from what appears in the diaries of the comparatively carefree girls of the preceding generation.

As Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has noted in her work on the diary of an eighteenth-century Maine midwife, "opening a diary for the first time is like walking into a room full of strangers. The reader is advised to enjoy the family without trying to remember every name."⁴ Although notes have been supplied to identify some of the people mentioned in these diaries, it is not necessary to know who everyone was in order to understand what was happening.

In the diary transcriptions that follow, entry dates have been set in boldface and editorial interpolations within the text have been bracketed. Otherwise, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in these transcriptions are those of the manuscript sources.

SUSAN LEAR (ca. 1770-?)

Travel diary, 1788

Susan Lear, about whom very little is known, visited Rhode Island from her native Philadelphia from 24 May to 3 August 1788. A typed copy of the travel journal she kept during that time is lodged in the Rhode Island Historical Society's manuscripts collection.⁵

Susan Lear was wealthy, and she moved in the very best society. She stayed at the home of the eldest of the four wealthy Brown brothers, Nicholas Brown (1729-1791), who had recently remarried. His new wife, Avis Binney, was the sister-in-law of Susan's traveling companion, Mary Woodrow Binney, a young widow.

Susan's visit to Providence was a round of parties; she took tea, dined, and rode out in her carriage. She called on Mrs. James Manning, wife of the president of Rhode Island College (later to be renamed Brown University), and the family of former deputy governor Jabez Bowen. She spent time with the Browns, visiting John Brown's newly completed mansion, which she called "the most elegant building in America."

Susan's trip began when she and Mrs. Binney set out for Providence from Philadelphia on 6 May 1788. After various minor adventures with strolling players and ferry crossings, they spent a week in New York. There they were joined by a Dr. Treat and by Dr. Andrew Craigie (Dr. Craige in Susan's diary), who had been apothecary general of the Northern Department during the Revolutionary War.

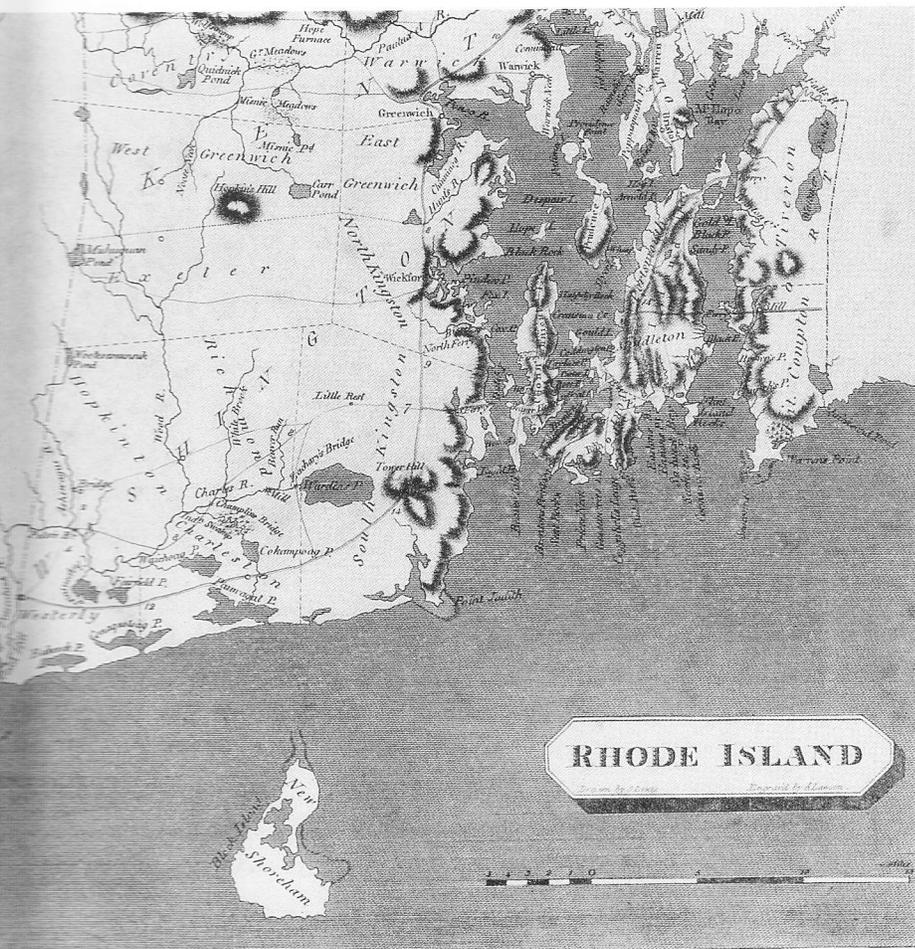
On 17 May, Susan and her companions set sail for Newport, Rhode Island. The first day on the water was pleasant, although Susan was not averse to borrowing the wrapper of a man she had just met on the boat—a Mr. Lear, who seems to have been no relation—to keep herself warm on deck.

Saturday 17th We sailed about 30 miles that evening when we were very much refreshed with a dish of Coffee, after which we dressed ourselves for the night. Mr. Lear was so polite as to offer me his wrapper which I accepted, as I could not get my own, put on my nightcap, wrapped myself in my cloak and sat up on deck until 10 o'clock and then as the sailors express it, turned in, not to sleep but to rest ourselves, however quite contrary to my expectations sleep did beguile me of all my fears and in the morning when I awoke, lo, there was no land to be seen!

Susan should have arrived in Newport on the second day, but a storm blew up and a twenty-four-hour journey stretched into four and a half days spent tossing in a small boat.

Sunday, morning, 18th Very pleasant. Ate a very hearty breakfast as the Company told me that eating would prevent my being sick. We were now 100 miles from New York and in some expectation of reaching our destined port by night. Mrs. Binney, Mr. Lear and I took turns reading which made the morning pass agreeably, but by noon my troubles began to multiply thick and fast, the clouds gathered, wind blew right ahead, waves running high, head swimming, in short I conceived we were in much danger, and wished myself on shore. Gained but 20 miles all that day. Cast Anchor, and lay by for the night. Rained so hard that we were obliged to stay down in the Cabbin.

Map by Sabin Lewis, 1804. RIHS Collection (RHICX3 9233).



Monday morning, 19th Rained still. Wind continued in North and east, so that we gained very little this day, laid in bed the greater part of the morning, but thro the kind attention of Mr. Lear, not suffered to sleep any. In the afternoon came to an anchor, about 5 o'clock off Fishers Island 50 miles from Newport. the Captain sent a boat to shore to get some milk. While they were gone Mrs. Binney and I jumped the rope, danced, walked the deck, in short did everything we could to amuse ourselves. We had by this means a good appetite for our supper which we ate as soon as the captain returned with some cream. I am now sitting surrounded by sailors who are eating their suppers while I write my journal. 'Tis now the third night since we have been on board, and cannot help remarking here how much greater all evils are at a distance than when we realize them. Had we imagined when we set off from home that we should have been tossed so long in a small vessel, raining the greater part of the time, and now at the end of three days our prospects of getting on dry land more unfavorable than it has been, we should have shrunk from the picture

and thought we could not bear it, but I have the pleasure of informing my friend that instead of being wretched (as I should have expected), we have been very comfortable the greater part of the time and I can now go to bed with as much safety as if I was on shore, which I intend to be in a few minutes when I shall not forget to return thanks to the Father of Mercies for protecting us so far. I commend all my good friends to His care and protection and wish them a good night.

Unfortunately, Susan's troubles were far from over. In addition to the unfavorable weather, she was feeling unwell. Her use of laudanum, a painkiller made from opium, reflected a common medical practice at the time.

Tuesday, the 20th Very ill with a pain in my breast. Took ten drops of laudanum, and went to bed where I remained until called to see the Town of Stonington where we now are at anchor waiting for a fair wind. Mr. Lear and the Captain have gone on shore to get some Lobsters and Mackerel. From the view we have of the town from the vessel it appears small and very lowly built. Lay there all that day and night.

Next morning, Wednesday, the 21st, 9 o'clock we got under weigh. The fog gathered so thick before we had sailed 10 miles that we could not see the length of the vessel, obliged to cast anchor off Point Judith, the sea roaring on one side and breakers on the other. The sea run so high that we could not lay in our Cabbins without being held—never passed such a night in all my life. We were all so sick we could not one help the other.

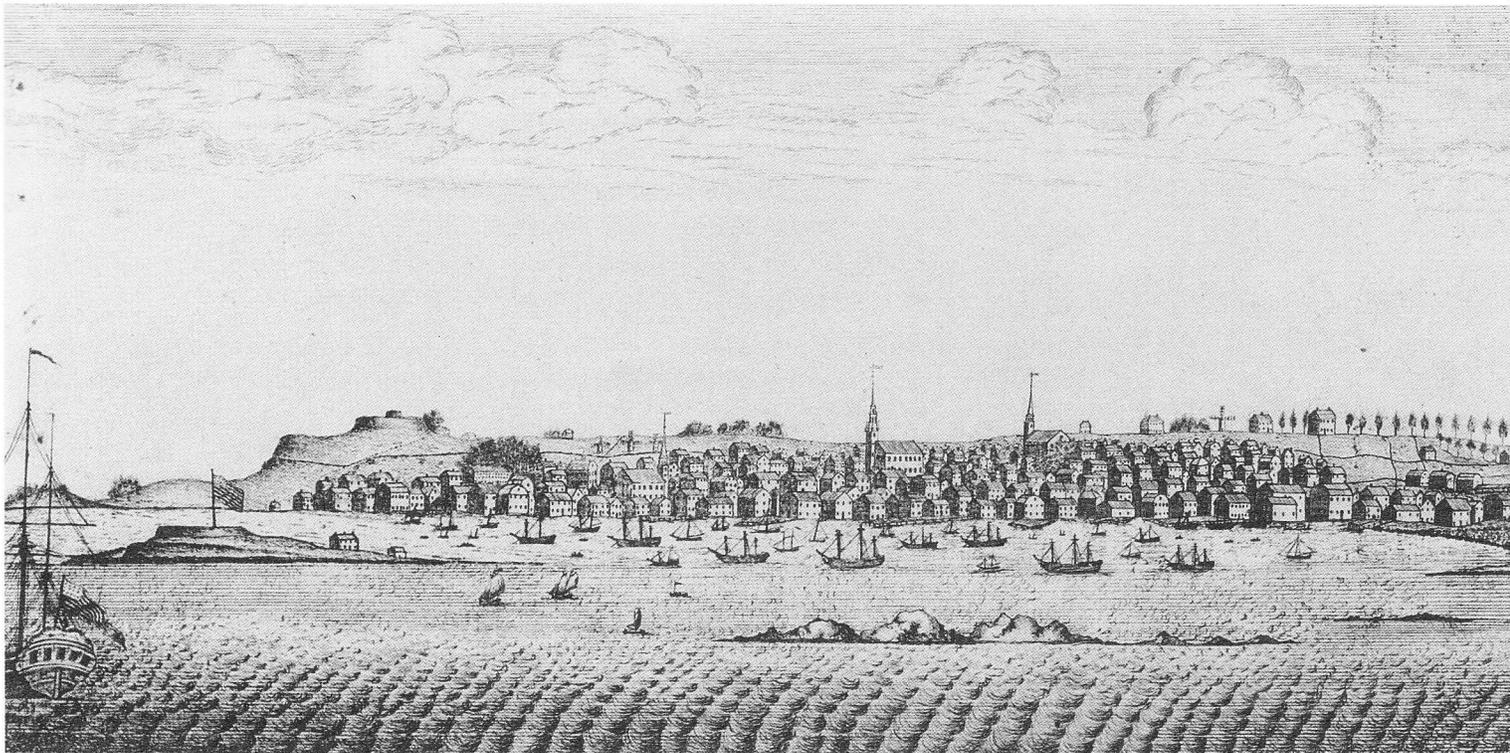
Arriving in Newport was both a relief and a disappointment. At last they were on dry land, but Susan was unable to see much of the town, which was enveloped in fog. If she had seen it, she probably would have found it a sorry sight, as it had not yet recovered from the damage caused by British troops during the war. Much of the mercantile trade had shifted to Providence, leaving poverty and unemployment behind.

Thursday, the 22nd, 9 o'clock arrived at Newport. Took lodging at a Mrs. Hambleton's, the largest and most elegant house in town. We thought it happy for us we were not possessed of any Don Quixote superstitions or we should have taken it for an enchanted castle. Walked out in the afternoon with Mr. Lear to see the town but it was so enveloped in a fog that I saw very little of it. The houses are all built of wood except the Town House and the one we boarded at. They all look like country meeting houses in my opinion. The town is built on a range with the water, the principal street called Thames street, very straight and in that particular more like Philadelphia than any I have seem. I was not so fortunate in my ramble as to see any of the beauties I had been informed this place abounded with but perhaps they were lost in the fog.

Friday morning, 11 o'clock left Newport and arrived in Providence by six in the evening. Had no opportunity of seeing any of the places we passed as the rain prevented our being on deck. Met with the most hospitable reception from Mr. Brown, his lady and all the family.

Susan started to recover her spirits as soon as she was on dry land, and she prepared herself to enjoy almost everything she saw. On her first full day at Nicholas Brown's Providence home, she met several members of the Brown extended family, including John Francis, who

A South West View of Newport. Engraving by L. Allen after a drawing by Samuel King, circa 1795. RIHS Collection (RH1 X3 213).



*was the husband of John Brown's eldest daughter, Abby, and James Brown, Abby's sociable brother, who was said to have had the "great gift of being welcome wherever he went."*²⁶

Saturday the 24th This has been a busy one. In the morning wrote to my dear Mother, then dressed for dinner. Mr. Lear, Mr. Francis and Mr. J. Brown dined with us.⁷ After dinner Mrs. Brown & I rode through the town. Am much better pleased with this place than Newport. The houses in general are better, tho built of wood, but I will leave the description to some abler pen, and will only relate the matter which concerns myself.

Just parted with my friend Mr. Lear. Will confess it has given me pain as his behavior has been such to me that I feel an uncommon friendship for him.

Sunday the 25th Been to meeting twice today, accompanied by Mr. Benson who dined with us.⁸ Find him very agreeable. I spent the evening in my chamber reading.

Nicholas Brown and his wife were good hosts; the following day they invited another group of friends to take tea with their visitors. It was a mixed group, including a recently married couple, a young widow, and a Baptist minister. Susan sometimes had a sharp pen—her observations on "Mrs. Jinks" were a little less than polite.

Monday 26th The morning taken up with preparations for company, who came in the afternoon. Our party was a Mrs. Jinks and her husband who are lately married, the Bride has no pretensions to beauty but a very large fortune perhaps supplies that defect.⁹ Mrs. Russell, a widow of about six and twenty, very agreeable but not handsome, Miss Betsy Brown, niece to the Master of the house, something mild and amiable in her manner, and I think very pretty, Mr. Stantford, a Baptist Parson completed the whole of our company.¹⁰ The ladies seemed fond of the attention he paid them, perhaps out of respect to his profession. Upon the whole, the afternoon has not been disagreeably spent.

The next day Susan went to see John Brown's new house. Designed by his late brother Joseph Brown (1733-1784) and built in 1786, it stood on Benefit Street on a hillside overlooking the harbor. The house reflected John's great wealth as one of the town's leading merchants (and slave traders). When future president John Quincy Adams visited Providence in 1789, he described the house as "the most magnificent and elegant private mansion" he had ever seen in America. Susan was equally impressed.

Tuesday 27th This morning walked out to see the most elegant building in America built by Mr. John Brown. It is situated on a very high hill and commands a prospect of the town and country for many miles with a delightful view of the river. The house is very large and furnished in the most extravagant manner. 'Tis built after the plan of some of the Noblemen's Seats in England, and far surpasses any I have seen. Twelve o'clock the lady of this elegant Mansion and her daughter waited on us and gave us a very polite invitation to dine with them on Thursday next.

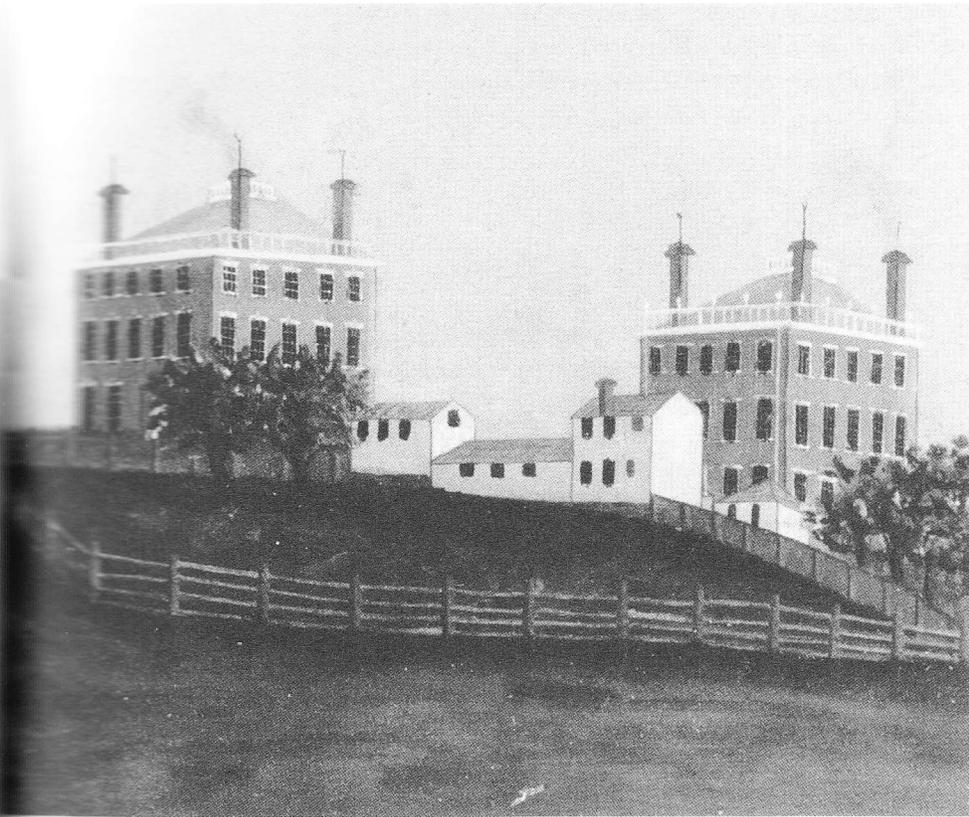
This afternoon rode out with Miss Brown. Stopped in our way at a paper mill. Was very much entertained with their process of making paper. The evening being fine I enjoyed our ride very much.

The Miss Brown with whom Susan went riding was Nicholas Brown's fifteen-year-old daughter Hope (1773-1842), who later married another of her family's business associates, Thomas Poynton Ives (1769-1835).

Wednesday the 28th Got up by six o'clock and took a delightful ride before breakfast. The family all very busy and making preparations for an entertainment they are to have today. Five o'clock dinner over and were made very happy by the arrival of a large pack of letters from our dear friends. Our party today has been very large and for a large one it has been very agreeable. Mr. Allison of Bordentown and Mr. Francis of Phi'a formed



One of the earliest known views of the Brown House. Detail from First Congress painting by an anonymous artist in the RHi X3 3036 Collection (RHi X3 3036).



One of the earliest known views of John Brown House. Detail from First Congregational Church, painting by an anonymous artist, circa 1806. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 3036).

a part of our company. In the evening we all went into Mrs. John Brown.¹¹ Spent an hour there at the Forte Piano, after which they all returned and supped with us.

The following day Susan went with some of her new friends—all members of Providence's mercantile elite, and most of them related to each other by marriage—to John Brown's country house, Spring Green, near Gaspee Point in Warwick. She traveled there and back in style, riding in the carriage that James Brown had purchased in Philadelphia six years earlier. The vehicle was widely admired for its elegance as well as its comfort; John Brown weighed close to three hundred pounds, and given the state of the roads in the late eighteenth century, James saw to it that it was constructed with the best available springs. The carriage survives and can now be seen at the John Brown House in Providence.

Thursday the 29th This morning wrote to my dear Mother, but was so hurried I had to break off in the middle as Mr. Allison

was waiting. Twelve o'clock went to Spring Green (the country seat of Mr. John Brown) to dine and spend the day. Our Party was very large, six and twenty in number. Governor Bowen and lady, Mr. and Mrs. Nightingale,¹² Mr. and Mrs. Arnold, Mr. Smith and his wife, Col. Tillinghast, Mr. Francis and the family of John Brown and myself, composed our party. Spring Green is elegantly situated about 7 miles from Providence. Commands a most charming prospect of the river and the country round. The house is very large and neat and convenient. A delightful stream of water running at the bottom of the garden and in front of the house adds much to the beauty of the place. Our entertainment was elegant. The ladies all very agreeable and polite, and in short the day was spent as agreeable as we could wish. Our amusements were singing, playing, walking, fishing &c. Returned to town in about the same order as we went, Mrs. Brown, Miss Hope Brown, Mr. James B., Susan and myself in Mr. B's carriage, the rest of the company in chairs, our ride home was very agreeable.

Having met the Nightingales and the Arnolds—two more of Providence's leading merchant families—at John Brown's country house, Susan visited them the next day. She makes it clear that drinking tea was a social activity for both men and women, and that it was perfectly acceptable for a respectable young woman to ride alone in a carriage with a man (in this case, Thomas Halsey, another of the town's wealthy merchants).

Friday the 30th Waited on Mrs. Nightingale and drank tea with her. Find her a most amiable woman in her manner. Expect to be very happy in her acquaintance. So happy to get letters from our dear friends before we were out of bed. If the day ends as it has begun it will be a happy one. Eight o'clock, just returned from visiting Mrs. Arnold, surrounded with splendour and elegance. If we had not spent an agreeable afternoon it must have been our own faults for never have people been more attentive or more polite than they have been to us. They entertain in a style different from the Philadelphians, the comparison would not be to the advantage of them.

It rained fast when I returned home but the kindness of Mrs. A. and her husband prevented my getting wet. They would have wrapped me in half a dozen cloaks if I had suffered it. Mr. Halsey, a gentleman who drank tea with us, rode home with me in the carriage and Mr. A behind so that I was well escorted.

Susan attended church dutifully.

Sunday June 1st¹³ Attended divine service three times today. In the afternoon saw upwards of fifty persons take the Sacrament. Was very much effected with the solemnity of the ceremony. Could not help wishing I had been fit to join them.

Monday the 2nd This morning sister B. and I rode around the square about 4 miles. It is impossible to form an idea of anything more beautiful than our prospect on every hand. All nature seemed to be dressed in smiles, on one side hills covered with verdure, (and such a variety of shades that the eye could never be tired of looking), on the other a plain from which we could see the town and the river for several miles, the sky looking calm and serene, not a breath of air to disturb us, in short we were charmed with our ride. We talked of our dear friends and wished them to know how happy we were. The afternoon we spent at home. In the evening I walked from one end of the town to the other with Mr. Francis. On my return found the house full of company. Some of them stayed till after eleven o'clock.

A very polite guest, Susan found almost everything she did "agreeable" and rapidly formed friendships with many of her new acquaintances. One was the elderly Hope Power Brown (1702-1792), John Brown's mother.

Tuesday the 3rd Rode out again with Miss Brown. Returned with an excellent appetite for my dinner. In the afternoon went to see Mrs. B's mother and sister, two old ladies. The mother is eighty eight years old. Her countenance and manners so interesting that I loved her the moment I saw her. The old lady is quite helpless and cannot get out of

her chair without the assistance of some kind arms, notwithstanding which there is such an appearance of cheerfulness and resignation in her whole behavior that it is impossible not to reverence her.

Susan also paid a call on Margaret Manning (1744-1815), the wife of the Reverend Dr. James Manning (1737-1791), president of Rhode Island College. The Mannings' house was to the north-west of University Hall, approximately where Robinson Hall now stands. Rhode Island College was founded in 1764 by a group of Baptists; Manning, recently graduated from Princeton, was its first president. In 1770 it moved from Warren to Providence, where it occupied the newly built University Hall on Prospect Hill. The college was renamed Brown University in 1804 after a gift of five thousand dollars from Nicholas Brown (1769-1841), a member of the class of 1786.

Wednesday the 4th Spent the morning in my chamber writing, In the afternoon Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Binney, Miss H.B. and myself went to see Mrs. Manning. After sitting some time we were shown the College. It is an elegant large building, four stories high and contains fifty six rooms. We were taken to the Library first, and owing to the good nature of our conductor (a Mr. Flint) we were suffered to tumble over the books till we were tired. After spending half an hour there very agreeably,

Providence College (later Brown University) and the home of its president. Sampler by Abigail Adams Hobart, a student at Mary Balch's Academy, Providence, 1802. Courtesy of Brown University.



we were shown some philosophical experiments with an air pump and were much entertained. From there we went to the Museum but saw very few things worth noticing. It is by no means complete. After seeing all that was worth our notice we went into the Chapple and heard Mr. Flint read prayers. This was as agreeable as any part of our entertainment. After tea we heard a sermon read by Mr. Flint that had been preached in the morning. The subject was on Charity and afforded us much pleasure. On the whole, this afternoon has been as agreeably spent as any since we have been here.

*Over the next few days Susan continued to visit her new acquaintances, take tea, and go to church. She was particularly pleased with the Bowens. Sarah Bowen (1742-1800) was the daughter of Obadiah Brown, an uncle of Nicholas, James, John, and Moses. Her husband, Jabez Bowen (1735-1815), was a lawyer with a distinguished career: the Declaration of Independence had been read from the front balcony of his house on Market Square, and he later entertained both Washington and Lafayette; from 1778 to 1780 and 1781 to 1786 he served as deputy governor of Rhode Island and was thereafter known as "Governor."*¹⁴

Thursday the 5th Spent the afternoon at Governor Bowen's. Our party very agreeable indeed. Mrs. Bowen is so agreeable in her manners that I am quite charmed with her.

Friday the 6th This afternoon spent at home. Mr. Stantford, Mr. Flint and a Mr. Patton drank tea with us. All of these were Clergymen. In the cool of the evening we walked up to the College, had some delightful music, stopped in at Mrs. Manning's, found her indisposed, made but a short stay. After our return Mrs. Nightingale and Miss Nightingale waited on us, the latter we had not seen before.¹⁵ She made us promise to spend Monday with her.

Saturday 7 The weather exceptionally warm. This afternoon visited Mrs. Russell, a very agreeable sociable woman. Walked up to the College again this evening. Strolled about on the green till near ten o'clock, listening to the most charming music I ever heard.

Sunday 8 Wrote to my friends, besides attending public worship three times today.

Monday 9th Spent the afternoon at Miss Nightingale's who had invited several of her friends to meet us, among whom were Mrs. N, Mr. Gramont and his wife, Miss Betsy Brown, Miss H. and a Mr. Ward who waited on me home in the evening.¹⁶

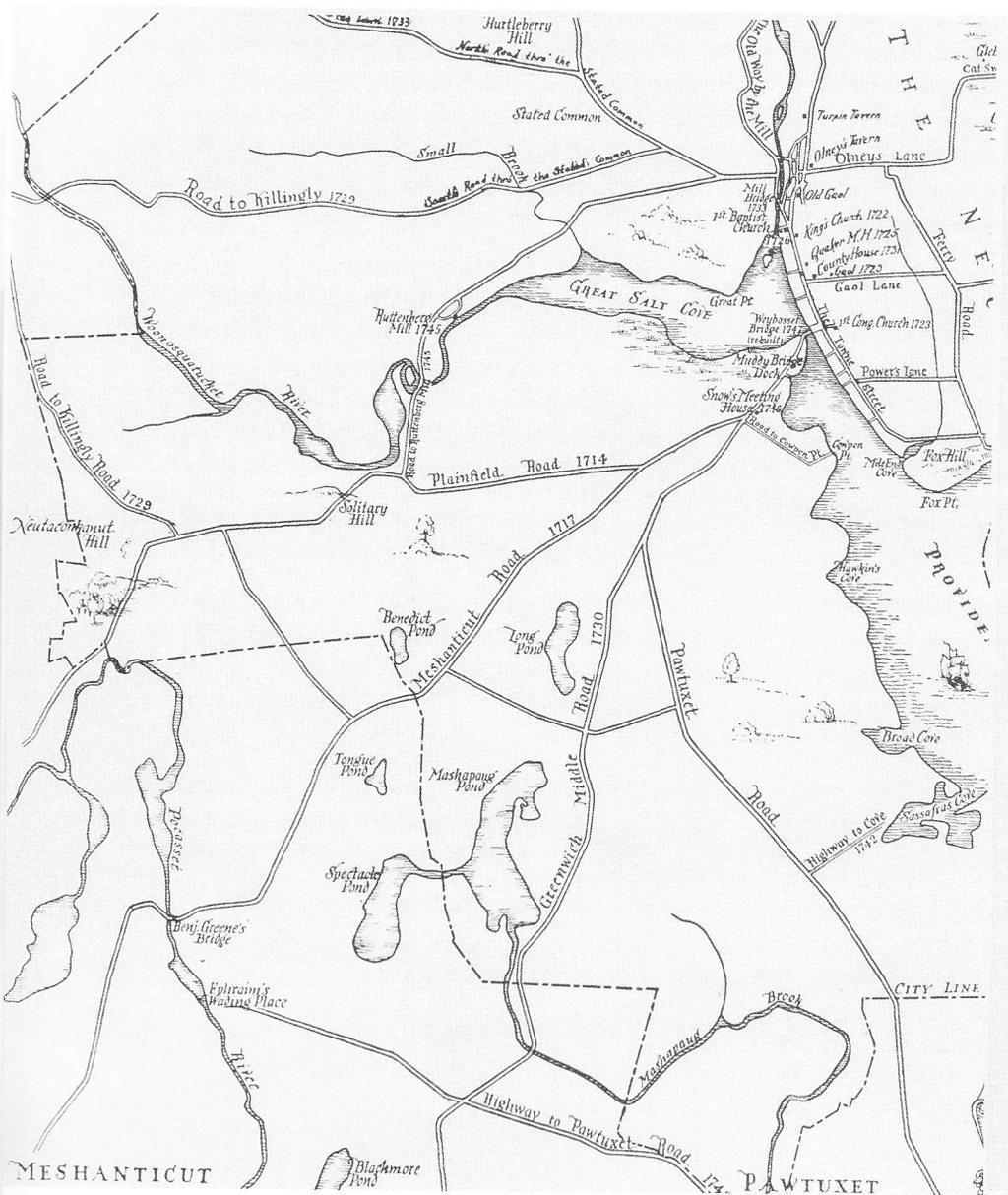
The weather played an important part among the people with whom Susan socialized; if it rained too hard, friends often stayed the night.

Tuesday 10th In the morning called on Mrs. Arnold and passed two hours with her very agreeably. Twelve o'clock Miss Polly and a Miss Whipple waited on us to engage us to spend Friday at Miss W's about 8 miles from town. Mrs. Arnold, Mrs. Nightingale, Miss P. Brown¹⁷ and Mr. A drank tea with us. In the evening we had a most violent thunder ghust. Part of our company stayed all night.

Susan frequently went riding with friends, often to see the countryside as well as to get some fresh air.

Wednesday 11th Rode out to Pawtuxet, a small village five miles from town. Had a very agreeable ride and returned by dinner time. In the afternoon a very large party of us visited Mr. Stanford, an old bachelor, and found everything in very elegant order. We might with propriety say that what we wanted in wit we made up in laughter. Never was there a merrier circle.

Thursday 12th Rode as far as the upper ferry. The pleasantest road we have seen. On each side of us was a row of Locust Trees in full bloom, which formed a most delightful shade. In short, every sense was regaled. In the afternoon we went to see Miss P. Brown and her sister, two charming girls. We were treated with the greatest politeness by the



Map of Providence in 1750, showing Pawtuxet and Pawtuxet Road. Designed by John Hutchins Cady and drawn by William A. Perry, 1936. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 4592).

the family seemed to strive who should do the most to entertain us. Their behavior really did honor to their house. Mr. and Mrs. Brown gave us a general and pressing invitation to visit them as often as we could. We stayed there nearly three hours and so hearty was their welcome that I wished to take up my abode there. Their son and daughter waited on us home. After dinner we had an agreeable little party out to Cumberland 8 miles from town.

The following week was spent riding out, visiting, and taking tea. On Thursday evening Susan attended an "agreeable little concert" at the college; unfortunately the music in the neighborhood that night was less pleasant.

Saturday 14 Visited the Misses Browns again. There was a large circle of us. Capt. Dun and his wife from Boston, Mrs. Dun is the most elegant woman I ever seen in my life. Two Mrs. Jones's, the youngest (if Mrs. Dun had not been present) I should have thought a perfect beauty, her husband a very gentle handsome man, Miss Nash a very sprightly agreeable girl but not handsome. This has not been so agreeably spent as yes-

family. In the evening our party was enlarged by the arrival of more company. Mrs. Power and her son, Mrs. Jones and her husband, Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Smith and a Mr. Tillinghast. Mrs. R., Mrs. S. and Mr. T. accompanied us home. We played and sang for them until ten o'clock.

After the Revolutionary War, power and money shifted from Newport to Providence; while Newport's trade was in disarray, some Providence merchants were becoming very wealthy. The wealthiest competed in building elegant mansions. John Innes Clark's new house (which would burn down in 1849) was on the corner of Benefit Street and what would soon become John Street. The Nightingales were currently planning their new house, which was (and is) on the corner of Benefit and Power Streets.

Friday morning We went to see a large house that Mr. Clark is building, and next to Mr. J. Browns is the most elegant in the state. It is built three stories high and has five large rooms on a floor, with an elegant hall all through it. From this we went to Mr. J. Brown's. I will not do so much injustice to this house as to attempt to describe it. I will only say it very far surpasses any idea I have ever had of grandeur and elegance. The family have but just moved in and have not got it completely furnished. We were taken from the cellar to the top of the house. My eyes never beheld such a prospect as we had from the top of it. Every part of

terday was altho the ladies were all polite, yet as they were strangers, our visit was a formal one. Mrs. D. gave us a very polite invitation to her house when we got to Boston.

Sunday 15 I went to Baptist meeting in the morning and to the Presbyterian in the afternoon with Mr. and Mrs. Arnold. Mrs. Flint and Bond Martin returned and drank tea with us.

Monday 16 Went to see Mrs. Tweedy, about five miles from town. Had a very clever ride and were treated politely by Mrs. Tweedy and her pretty daughter. Our party was small, Miss Polly Brown and Mrs. B., Miss Hope Brown and Miss Power, Mr. N. Brown and myself.

Tuesday 17 I spent the morning very agreeable at Miss P. Brown's. In the afternoon we visited Mrs. Gramont, Mr. Benson was our Gallant. Their house is furnished more gentle than any house in town. Such a profusion of elegant plates I have not seen anywhere else.

Wednesday 18 We had a violent ghust this morning. Two o'clock Mrs. Anthony arrived from Newport. Mrs. J. Brown and her two daughters, Mrs. Power and her two daughters,¹⁹ Miss P. Brown, Miss Whipple and Mr. James B. drank tea with us and spent the evening.

Thursday 19 Our family enlarged this day by two more visitors, a Mr. and Mrs. Homer from Newtown. In the evening we had an agreeable little concert up at the College. When we returned all the family were assembled at prayers and ended the day as every day of our lives ought to be ended.

Friday 20 Rose this morning after a sleepless night as we were kept awake until after three o'clock listening to music in the neighborhood. We certainly shall be the better for the company of Mr. Homer as we have family prayers morning and evening, besides grace before and after meat. In the afternoon we had a very large party to tea with us. I was so much indisposed that I did not enjoy myself.

Saturday 21 Dined and drank tea at the Widow Brown's. We met a great deal of company and all were very clever. In the evening Doctor Craige called on us and assured himself of welcome by bringing letters from our dear friend. At ten o'clock we were all assembled as usual to prayers, I think we make quite a respectable figure when we all get together as we can muster up fifteen or sixteen. I hope they all feel as devout as I do. I don't forget to join my petitions for my absent friends and often wish they could meet with us in this exercise.

Susan wanted to be devout, but sometimes tiredness overcame her good intentions.

Sunday 22 Went to meeting twice. I hope I shall become quite a good Christian by the time I leave this place, tho I must confess that the prayers this evening seemed rather tedious. I was very tired and sleepy and it was so late before all the family could be assembled that I had some thoughts of giving them the slip and going to bed, but my religion got the better and I with difficulty kept awake till it was over.

Monday 23 We went to see Mrs. Power. We found a great deal of Company, among whom was Mrs. Brown of London, a very agreeable woman. We were treated with the utmost hospitality by the whole family. They laid themselves out to please and they succeeded very well. It rained fast when we returned but as we rode home we did not get wet.

On 24 June, Susan was witness to a historic moment when Rhode Islanders received news that three days earlier New Hampshire had ratified the United States Constitution. It was the ninth state to do so, and thus the Constitution now became effective as the nation's new basic law. The continuing hesitation of Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island, however, meant that some 40 percent of the population remained outside the federal union.

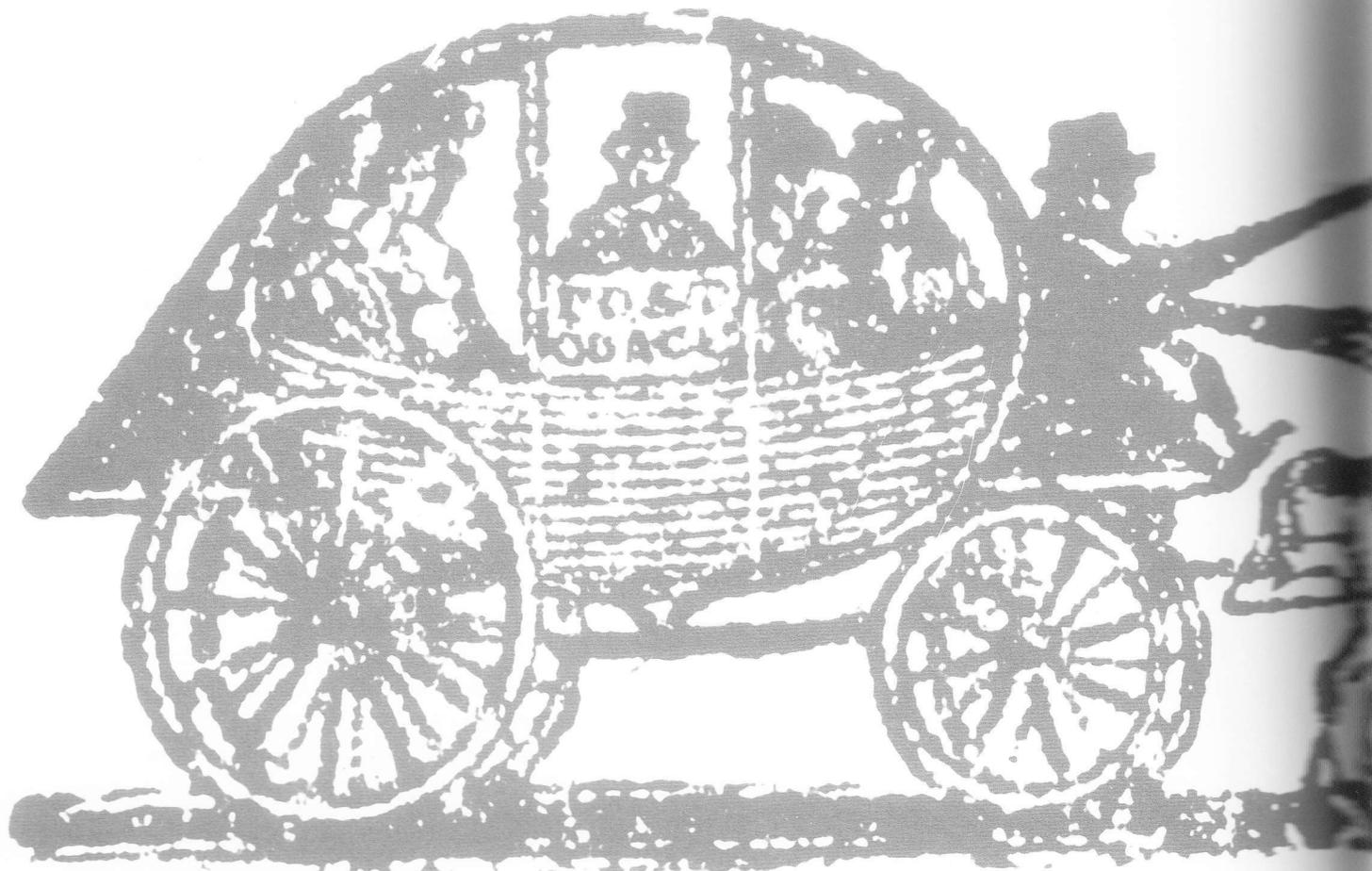
Tuesday 24 Rode round the square with Mrs. Anthony in the morning. In the afternoon we went to visit Mrs. Manning. This has been a day of rejoicing as they have received

accounts this morning that New Hampshire has adopted the New Constitution. The whole town has been rejoicing. We partook of the general joy and have been highly entertained up at the College by the proof the students gave of their joy. They marched two or three times round the green with drums, flutes and violins, each one carrying the different branches of their studies in their hands, some with globes, some with maps and some with large folios. The music was good. In fact, it has been the most interesting procession I have seen for a long time.

According to William Staples's 1843 history of Providence, the news was received "with every expression of joy. The bells of the different churches rang their merry peal during the whole day, with little interruption. The schools were dismissed, and the students in college paraded the college grounds in procession."²⁰

Although not everyone, in fact, was delighted with the news, the wealthy people with whom Susan Lear socialized in Providence certainly welcomed it. Her new acquaintances John Innes Clark and Thomas Arnold were among the group who, styling themselves "friends of the constitution," had petitioned the Rhode Island General Assembly in March 1788 to call a state convention to consider the proposed document.²¹ But the Country party, which controlled Rhode Island politics from 1785 to 1790, opposed ratification, partly because it feared that the Constitution would force the state to abandon its program to pay its war debts through the use of paper money rather than through recourse to hard money and high taxation. Under the paper-money program, creditors were repaid in depreciated paper currency, causing many of them (including some of the state's wealthiest merchants and, as we shall see, Julia Bowen's father) serious losses.²²

Illustration from an advertisement for the Pawtucket Diligence stagecoach service, Pawtucket Chronicle and Manufacturers' and Artisans' Advocate, 25 November 1826. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 2056).



Wednesday and Thursday Nothing materially happened as it rained and we were obliged to stay within doors.

Friday 27 Wrote to Phila. in the morning. Dined at Mrs. John Brown's with a very large party. In the evening went to a dance with the Misses Browns, Bond Martin and Mr. Brown. Danced with the latter and spent a very agreeable evening.

Saturday the 28th Rained hard all day. The family all engaged in making preparations for our Boston jaunt, which we expect to take on Monday.

Sunday 29th I went to a meeting in the morning. In the afternoon put up our clothes. Miss Polly Brown drank tea with us.

On June 30th Susan set off for Boston. The fifty-mile journey took eleven hours.

Monday morning, the 30th Rose at four o'clock and the appearance of the weather was very unfavorable for our journey. However, by 7 o'clock the coach was at the door. There were six passengers to go in it and there did not seem to be more than room for four to sit comfortable but we all crowded in. We all felt very stately at first, not one of us disposed to give way to the other. But by degrees the clouds dispersed and we felt more good natured. Our companions were a Mrs. Cheevers from New York, a Miss Marshall, an old maid who had been traveling for her health and had not found it. She certainly was as homely a woman as I have ever seen. A Frenchman sat on the front seat but what his name was I cannot tell as he was not very communicative. Indeed he behaved as if he were a little suspicious of his company for he kept his sword in his hand all the way. For the first four or five miles Sister Polly and I had the conversation all to ourselves, but



after a few advances on both sides we got a little more sociable. The first place we passed of any note was Pawtucket, a small village five or six miles from Providence. The next was Wrentham where we stopped to bait the horses. We rested about half an hour and then proceeded to Walpole where we dined. We stayed about two hours and felt much refreshed from our laying down until dinner was ready. By this time Miss Marshall had got as much of our history as she could. She was not the least backward in her inquiries and was full as communicative as she was inquisitive, so that by the time dinner was on the table she had learned who Mrs. Cheevers was and where she was going and what was her business. This (as soon as she knew herself) she informed us all. I dare say she did the like by us and by that means made us perfectly acquainted with each other. We left this place at half after two and reached Dedham at 4 o'clock where we stopped to rest half an hour. Nothing materially happened. From Dedham we went to Roxbury, the pleasantest little village I ever seen. There are a great many elegant houses in it and three churches. There is a row of large trees on each side of the road which makes it delightful riding. Indeed from this place to Boston was by far the most agreeable part of our journey. In my life I never beheld such prospects as we had on every side, at one and the same time. We had a view of Boston, Charleston, Roxbury (the two rivers that go round the town) and the most enchanting country my eyes ever beheld.

We reached Boston by six and met with a very friendly reception from Mrs. Lucas tho we had never seen her before. Her husband was not at home when we arrived but came in directly after. Very unexpectedly to us he came up and saluted us twice. This put us a little out of countenance but we soon got over it. They are certainly the most hospitable people I ever seen. Their behavior was so friendly that we felt as much at home in an hour as if we had lived with them a month. Mrs. Lucas has every virtue that can adorn a female character. The only weakness she has that is perceivable is her repining at the want of children. Mr. Lucas is as great an oddity as I know, but those who know him say he is benevolent to a very great degree. I can very readily believe it from what I have seen of him, His fortune is very large but he does not make a great parade of it, tho they live very gently. Yet, many with half his fortune would make a much greater show.

Susan spent the month of July in Boston. Thus she missed the excitement in Providence when Federalists and Antifederalists nearly came to blows over a proposed ox roast on the Fourth of July. Only after prolonged and delicate negotiations was it agreed that the feast would commemorate only independence; there would be no mention of the adoption of the Constitution, which was said to be opposed by some 80 percent of the state's freemen.²³

Susan's visit to Boston was varied and interesting. She spent time with General William Hull, did a great deal of shopping, "sighed to the memory" of American patriots as she passed Bunker Hill, marched in procession at the Harvard commencement, inspected Colonel William Brattle's garden and fish pond, and met (and admired) the poet Judith Sargent Murray. She also visited a factory at New Town Falls, where "each of us made a nail as it is the custom for every lady who visits the place to do."

On her way back to Providence at the end of July, Susan met an intriguing—and initially frightening—stranger. The story of the "Indian Chief" is an extraordinary one.

Thursday 31 At six o'clock the coach called to take us to Providence. From the appearance of things we promised ourselves a most terrible ride. There were four passengers in it when it arrived, Miss Chase, Mr. Flag, an old Quaker and an Indian Chief. At first I felt very much afraid of him, but he turned out to be the most agreeable of the company. We were accompanied to Dedham by Miss B. Foster, her brother and Dr. Craige in a chariot, Miss Sally Foster and Mr. Bethune in a chaise. As soon as we got out of Boston, Mr. Bethune persuaded us to get in his carriage. I very willingly accepted his invitation

for my seat in the coach was truly disagreeable, as I had not yet got reconciled to my company. We arrived at Dedham a little after eight. The thought of parting embittered the few minutes we spent with our friends.

While they stopped for breakfast and to rest the horses, the Indian proved himself a highly "accomplished" person. Susan soon discovered that he had been educated in Paris.

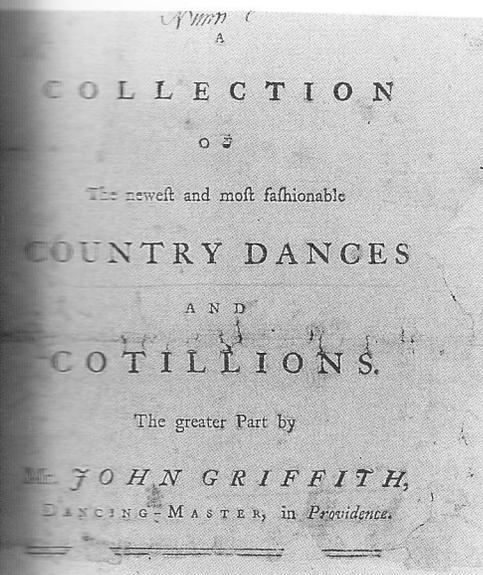
After breakfast the Indian Chief played several tunes on his Clarinet. He played very well. In short, he is quite accomplished. 'Tis about three years since the Marquis De la Fayette sent for him over to France and he has since been at the expense of giving him a very liberal education. He seems to have improved his time very well. His observations are just and his manners are very agreeable. He entertained us with a number of anecdotes he had picked up in France. He also gave us a very entertaining account of the manners and customs of his own Nation. At every place we stopped he serenaded us which made our journey quite agreeable. We arrived at Providence about sunset. He appeared very sorry when we got out of the coach and left him alone. About an hour after he sent a letter to us informing us he loved us very much and wished to see us again. We found our Providence friends well and happy.

Susan's account of the accomplished Indian inspired her hosts to invite him to dinner the next day. During that afternoon and evening he exhibited a range of dancing skills, from a fine cotillion to a war dance.

We sent an invitation to the Prince to come and dine with us. Accordingly at 2 o'clock he came dressed in a scarlet coat trimmed with gold lace. He really made a very good figure. After dinner at the request of Mr. Brown, I danced a cotillion with him. He dances by far the best of any person I ever saw attempt it. He also danced the War dance for us which was very terrible. In the evening we all went to a dance at Mr. Griffith's. He also danced the War dance at the particular request of the company. In the course of the evening he came and sat by me and paid me a number of compliments, among the rest he said I resembled the Marchioness De la F. very much. He requested me to give him my name on a paper which I did. He assured me he would not part with it while he lived. We stayed till ten o'clock in the room, when we came away he went to the window and played till we were out of hearing.

The "Prince" was a member of the Oneida tribe from upstate New York. From 1785 to 1788 he was educated in France at the Marquis de Lafayette's expense. Biographies of Lafayette mention the Indian, but they vary in a number of details, including the spelling of his name, which variously appears as Ouekchekaeta, Peter Otchikeita, Peter Otsiquette, and Kayenlaha. "I may well bring back a young Iroquois savage," Lafayette wrote to his wife in October 1784, "but that negotiation is not yet completed." The negotiations clearly took several months, for the following April Lafayette told Jeremiah Wadsworth that "There is a young Indian, Son to a french Man by the Name of Stephanus, whom I intend to take with me to France as a favourite Servant. The Young Man Has a Regard for me, as I was Spoken of to Him By His deseased [i.e., deceased] father. He went with Brant to Quebec in the fall. The whole family who are Oneidas, Consented to His Coming with me—and I would be much obliged to You to Send the Inclosed to Kirkland By Express, and to forward the Young Indian's departure By the October packet."²⁴

Saturday 2⁵ We were all invited to a party out of town. The Prince rode with us in Mr. Brown's carriage and entertained us very much. This party is a weekly one. The inhabitants of this place for want of something better assemble once a week at Mr. Tweedy's about 5 miles from town where an entertainment is provided by subscription open to all the people of character in the place. Sometimes they are very large. There were 50 persons at the last.²⁶ 'Tis an agreeable way enough of spending one's time, especially in



Cover of a 1788 pamphlet. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 9238).



Drawing by William Makepeace Thackeray, from Thackerayana, comp. Joseph Grego (London, 1875). RIHS Collection (RHi X3 2923).

a place where there are no public amusements. We did not return home till dark. The Indian Chief and Mrs. J. Brown stayed and supped with us. He regrets very much that he is obliged to leave us so soon. He says he never spent his time so happily. Indeed I don't wonder for the ladies of this place are all in love with him and are striving who shall pay him the most attention.

Sunday 3 Went to meeting morning and afternoon accompanied by Mr. Benson. The day was so warm I would willingly have been excused this close attendance, but as all the family went, I thought I could bear it as well as they tho I must confess my religion did not prevent me from feeling the heat excessively. In the evening the Chief called on us again as he had done regularly three or four times a day ever since he has been here. He stayed to supper as did Mr. Flint, Mr. Robbins and Mr. Benson. He appeared very unwilling to leave us even at eleven o'clock.

Susan's "Indian Chief" vanished as mysteriously as he had arrived, and she does not mention him again. He was, in fact, on his way to Albany, New York, where he played a part in negotiations between the Oneida tribe and Governor Clinton of New York over land titles. Elkanah Watson, who met him there, called him "probably the most polished Savage in existence." Thomas Morris, who also attended the negotiations, was similarly impressed: "I would frequently retire with Peter into the Woods, and hear him recite some of the finest Pieces of French Poetry, from the Tragedies of Corneille and Racine," he wrote. But impressed as he was, Morris could not resist returning to stereotypes of "savage" Indian behavior: "[Peter] would Drink raw Rum out of a brass Kettle, take as much delight in Yelling and Whooping as any Indian; in Fact, became as vile a Drunkard as the Worst of them."²⁷

After the excitement of her acquaintance with the exotic Peter, Susan returned to the familiar social round of tea drinking, churchgoing, and rides in the country. Three weeks later, on Saturday, 23 August, she boarded the packet for Newport and set off for home. "I think if I ever forget Providence and the kindness we have received there we shall be the most ungrateful creatures breathing," she confided to her diary. On 26 August, after many more adventures, she arrived home: ". . . got to Philadelphia after night, met all my friends, and so end my Journal."

According to the notes accompanying the Rhode Island Historical Society's transcription of the diary, written by Clara T. B. Parsons, Susan married James Duncan (1756-1844), a soldier and pioneer, within two weeks of her return, although there is no mention of a betrothal in the journal. She is believed to have moved with her husband to help settle the wilderness of Mercer County in western Pennsylvania.

Peter also ended his days in Pennsylvania. He died of pleurisy in Philadelphia on 19 March 1792 during a visit to the capital by leaders of the Five Nations. (The Oneida had been one

of the few Indian nations to take the American side in the War of Independence, and they were treated somewhat more gently by the American War Office, which oversaw Indian affairs, than other tribes were.) The Indian leaders were in Philadelphia to meet President Washington and address Congress.

According to a nineteenth-century source, when Peter died, "the Presence of many of his Nation, suggested the Policy of conducting his Funeral with extraordinary Honors." A contemporary newspaper described the scene as his body was taken from Oeller's Hotel to the Presbyterian burying ground on Mulberry Street: "The corpse was preceded by a detachment of the Light Infantry of the city, with arms reversed; drums muffled; music playing a solemn dirge. The corpse was followed by six of the Chiefs as mourners, succeeded by all of the Warriors now in this city; the reverend Clergy of all denominations; Secretary of War, and the Gentlemen of the War Department; Officers of the Federal Army, and of the Militia; and a number of Citizens." More than ten thousand people were said to have assembled for the occasion.²⁸



Sarah Brown. Miniature painting by Edward Greene Malbone, 1795. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 2679).

SARAH BROWN (1773-1846)

Diary, 1796

Sarah (Sally) Brown was the middle daughter of John Brown, Providence's wealthiest merchant, and his wife, Sarah Smith. She lived in the family mansion on Benefit Street with her parents and her younger sister, Alice. In 1796, when she kept a diary for a few weeks, she was twenty-three years old and still dependent on her parents.

The diary is brief, fragmentary, and damaged. It is a challenging document: Sarah's handwriting is difficult to read, parts are illegible through wear, and a third of a page is missing altogether. It is, however, an important document, for it illuminates a period when a professional theater was active in Providence, as well as the little details of the life of an upper-class young woman.

Sarah was said to be well educated and "especially proficient in music and mathematics," though her punctuation was somewhat erratic. Her chief interests at this time revolved around her family and her garden.²⁹

April 24th Alice & myself went to Church & sat for the first time in Mrs. Chace's pew. J. F.³⁰ planted some seeds in the Garden, in the Evg there was a refreshing Shower, the only one for four weeks past.

Sarah walked with a female friend down to India Point to see one of her father's ships. They had to pass through some very rough areas to get there.

25th M.A.A. and myself walked to India Point, the ship G. W. haul'd down the river.³¹ The Dragoons and 3 other companies paraded—asparagus today. I sow'd some radish seed.

The entry for the next day is tantalizing. Sarah alludes to a family dispute, but as the page is worn and several words are missing, it is impossible to know what she was determined to continue doing. It is tempting to speculate that there was a family row about her friendship with Charles Frederick Herreshoff, a well-educated Prussian immigrant she had met in 1792.

26th a fine day. I rode on horse back round the Square. Our conversation at dinner turn'd on a subject that is always painful and tho' I seldom meet with very pleasant incidents I am determined to go on with [illegible] what [torn] brings forth.

Thursday 24th papa set off for New York in the Stage. Alice had a large party here to tea.

29th Very cold weather for the Season.

Entries over the next few weeks concern tea parties, visits to Spring Green, the family's country home, and complaints about the cold weather. In June, however, the season began at the Providence Theater, and Sarah attended almost every performance.

The theater had opened the previous year, 1795, amidst strong opposition from certain members of the middle class who considered playhouses unrespectable. The gentry, on the other hand, were equally resolute in its support. John Brown showed the strength of his commitment during the opening season by positioning one of his cannons in front of the theater and threatening to fire on hostile trespassers.³²

The theater stood on the corner of Westminster and Mathewson Streets, on a site now occupied by Grace Church. The lot had been donated by John Brown. Prominent citizens such as Thomas Halsey, John Corliss, Cyprian Sterry, and George and Jeremiah Olney bought stock in the theater, and they managed to keep it genteel by charging high prices for seats, thereby excluding the poor. A nineteenth-century historian described the scene: "The 'dress circle' was no unmeaning name. The ladies and gentlemen of the town, the Corlisses, the Nightingales, the Halseys and others came in their carriages, and entered the boxes with powdered heads and dressed in the stately costume of the period. Between the acts their liveried servants entered the circles, bearing trays laden with wines and sherbets and served them to their masters and mistresses."³³

Sarah sometimes went with her father, sometimes with female friends. She attended at least seven performances, and watched ten plays, over the next sixteen days.

Monday June 6th 1796. The Theatre opened here with the Comedy of "A Bold Stroke for a Husband and the Lying Valet."³⁴

Wednesday 8th The celebrated Tragedy of the "Gamester was presented & Spoil'd Child."³⁵ Chambers was excellent in Tag.

Friday 10th Papa accompanied me and Miss Butler to see "Every one has his faults"³⁶ the first time little Miss Sully appeared on our Stage, an uncommon fine Child.

Monday 13 Alice returned from Spring green, in the Evening Mary A, S. P., Alice & myself went to the theatre. "The Jew was performed & the village lawyer."³⁷

Wednesday Evg 15 June. Every one has his fault was repeated, & the agreeable surprize for the first time.³⁸

Friday 17th Evg. I attended the theatre with no other view than to see my favorite Mrs. S. Powel, in the Comedy of "first love,"³⁹ every time I see this charming woman my esteem & admiration is increased.

Sarah became a strong admirer of Mrs. Powell, as were, apparently, "the wives of the principal citizens" of Providence whose drawing rooms she "adorned . . . with that grace which was always conspicuous on the stage." Born in England in 1774, she was just a year younger than Sarah Brown. She must have seemed very sophisticated to the Providence gentry; apparently of a good but impoverished family, she had performed by command before King George III and had toured with Mrs. Sarah Siddons, the most famous actress of the day. She moved to the United States in her late teens and in 1794 married Snelling Powell, a Welsh-born actor-manager. Mrs. Powell returned to Providence annually for many years, and in 1817 she became the lessee of the theater.⁴⁰

Monday 20th Mrs. Peck went with me to the Theatre, to see "better late than never."⁴¹ Mrs. Powel in the character of Augusta, appear'd uncommonly interesting.

Tuesday We hear of Mrs. Bingham's arrival with her numerous train.

By Desire of the most Ancient and Honorable Society of
Free and Accepted Mafons.
T H E A T R E,
P R O V I D E N C E.
 THIS EVENING, June 24, 1796, will be presented
 A COMEDY, called
The J E W,
 O R,
The BENEVOLENT HEBREW.
 Actors (the Year)
 Frederick, S. Powell, Elisha Bartrigg, Mrs. S. Powell,
 Charles Bartrigg, S. Peck, Thomas, Hester,
 James, S. Peck, Mrs. Condit, Hester,
 Elisha, Bartrigg, Mrs. Bartrigg, Hester,
 Mr. Stephen Bartram, Kemp.

End of the Comedy,
 AN EULOGY on MASONRY,
 By Brother Harper in Character of a MASTER MASON.
 To conclude with a MASONIC ODE,
 by Brothers Harper, S. Powell, Kenny, Hughes, Adams and Chambers.
 To which will be added, an Entertainment called
The Spoil'd Child.
 Little Pickle, (the Spoil'd Child) Mrs. Harper, Maria, Mrs. Pick,
 Tag, Chamber, Margery, Hester,
 Tom, S. Peck, Miss Harrison,
 Old Pickle, Hester, Miss Pickle, Mrs. Spinn.

In the Course of the Entertainment, "THE LITTLE BOY" By Mrs. Pick.
 And 4 SONGS by Miss Sully.
 The Public are respectfully acquainted that by particular Request, the Performance will now begin this Evening with "A Bold Stroke for a Husband."
 PRINTED BY E. WHEELER.

Monday 13th Alvin returned
from Spring goes, in
the evening Mary &
I Dr. Alvin & myself
went to the theatre
"the Jew" was performed
& the village laundress
Wednesday Aug 15th Jane
Every one has his fault
was renovated, & the appearance
surprised for the first time
Friday, 17th Every I attended
the theatre with us than
wiser than to see my favorite
Mrs S. Poul, in the Comedy
of "Jack & Love", every time
I see this charming woman
my esteem & admiration
is increased

Monday 20th Mrs Peck went with
me to the theatre, to see
"better late than never"
Mrs S. Poul in the character
of Augusta, appeared uncom-
monly interesting
Tuesday we hear of Mrs. Bing
having arrived with her
immense train
Wednesday 22nd -
drank tea
Evening I
Theatre
Juliet was
she had more
up to such
-edness as
away in
She Take
him by
Harper,

Two pages in Sarah Brown's diary. RIHS Collection
(RH: X3 9260).

Here about a third of the page was torn away, leaving much missing on both sides of it.

Wednesday 22d

drank tea
evening I
Theatre,
Juliet was
she most
up to such
-edness as
away in
She Take
him by
Harper,

extremely well, but Mrs. P so entirely engrosses all my admiration, that I have little left for the rest of the players, in short almost all the pleasure I enjoy at the Theatre is gained from that one [pers]on, she excites at once

my admiration
a large
affections
al to love
& who
reflectly amia
St. Johns
than
ose
form'd

Juliet; my only love sprung from my only hate, too easily seen, unknown & known too late! Prodigious birth of love it is to me, that I must love a loath'd enemy.

And there the diary ends. Sarah Brown married Charles Frederick Herreshoff in 1801 and bore six children over the next ten years. In 1812, soon after the birth and death of the sixth child, Herreshoff left Rhode Island to help develop John Brown's Tract, a vast area in upstate New York where Brown tried, and failed, to build an economic empire based on farming and mining. Sarah thereafter brought up her five children alone; she seldom saw her husband, who committed suicide in December 1819. All three of her daughters kept diaries, one of which—Agnes Herreshoff's—is included below.

JULIA BOWEN (1779-1805)

Diary, 1799

Julia Bowen, of Providence, kept a diary from April to September 1799. Eighteen years old at the time, she had finished her schooling, and with little to do at home except wait for marriage, she found many excuses to frolic. Her diary (the earliest substantial diary of a Rhode Island woman in the Rhode Island Historical Society's collection) is a lively and, for its period, unusually forthright document. In the extract that follows, Julia recounts her activities during a week in June.

Julia was related to several of Providence's old Yankee families—the Bowens, the Angells, and the Whipples, as well as the Clarks and the Nightingales. Her father, Colonel Ephraim Bowen, Jr. (1753-1841), was a member of the group that burnt the Gaspee in 1772, and he served as an officer in the Revolutionary War. In 1788 his wife, Sarah Angell, died at the age of thirty; six years later he married Sarah Whipple (1772-1844). Julia, then fifteen, did not take to her young stepmother.

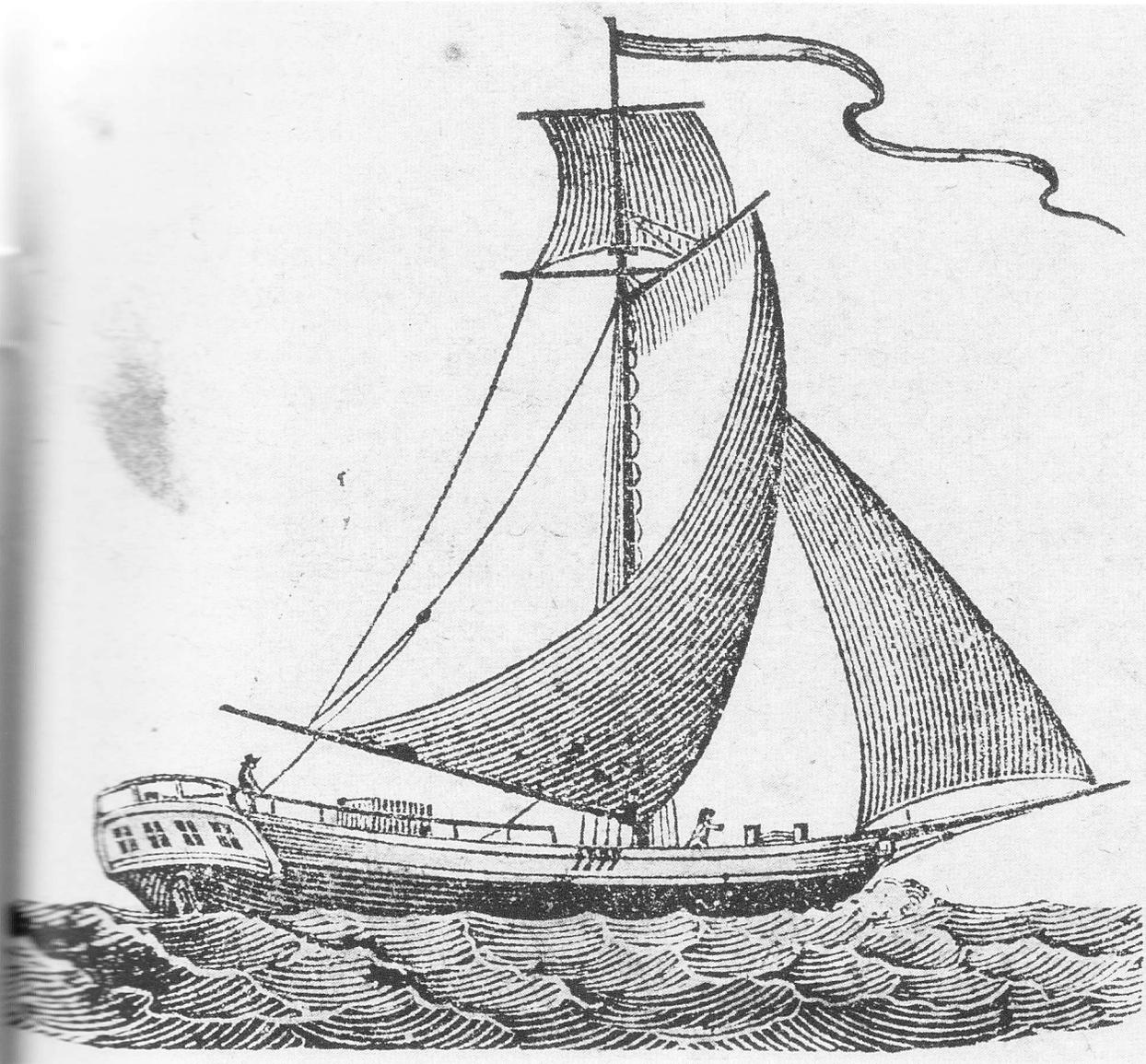
Toward the end of the 1790s Ephraim Bowen went to sea to recoup his fortunes after years of public service; like other creditors, he was tired of waiting for full repayment of money he had loaned in support of the American cause during the Revolution. While he was away, the Bowen house was rented to save money, and Julia, her stepmother, and Julia's sisters, Elizabeth and Esther, stayed with Mrs. Rebecca Power, her three daughters, and an infant grandson in a very fine house on Water and Power Streets. With Rebecca's husband, Captain Nicholas Power, and their son also away at sea, the household was almost totally female.

Julia's journal is full of people—cousins, aunts, uncles, and friends—many of whom are difficult to identify. Matters are also complicated by Julia's habit of giving her friends nicknames. As many of these people as possible are identified in the notes.

Monday June 17th Washing Day. I arose & went into the Kitchen &c. in the Afternoon the Capt. came down—spent a sociable Afternoon. Adonis came down to ask us to go to Nayatt the next day.⁴² He told us J. Kinnicutt had arrived from the Washington. I desired him to ask him to come & take tea with us—in half an hour they returned, J. Kinnicutt the same rough fellow that he ever was. In the Eve walked up Town, returned at 10.

Despite some domestic duties, Julia was able to go for a picnic with a large group of friends, male and female, at Nayatt Point, Barrington. They did not arrive back until five-thirty the following morning, having spent an unchaperoned night on a becalmed packet boat.

Tuesday 18 Unfortunately the White washer has come to day. I took down the things in the closset. At 9 Adonis called with a knife, fork & spoon, Chocolate & sugar. I repaired to Mrs. Smith's where I found Maria, Sarah Halsey, Mother, M. Whitney & Miss Jones.⁴³ We went on board the Packet at the Mr. Brown's wharf. Capt. Price, Phosphorous, Zephyrus, & Mr. Franklin from N. York, Mr. Sabin, Mercury.⁴⁴ With a fair wind we set sail for Nayate at half past 9, had a delightful voyage & arrived safe. At 3 we dined & at



Packet boat, from an 1825 bookplate. RIHS
Collection (RHi X3 5593)

6 went on board to return home. About 3 miles from Nyate we were obliged to drop anchor. The wind that there was was ahead, the tide against us, so that we were obliged to drop Anchor. Maria, Adonis, Apollo & myself with S. Cooke, B. Brown, M. Whitney, N. Allen & Hercules lay under the sail which made a very nice covering. At 9 they hoisted the sail, weighed the anchor & we set sail. B. Brown & myself took possession of a birth & tried to sleep, but found it in vain. Soon the sun peeped upon us, a beautiful Day, if not so intensely hot as yesterday. The full moon had shone beautifully all night. Mama made some plumb cake—very excellent.⁴⁵

It seems to have been an eventful night—three of Julia's friends lost their bonnets despite the lack of wind, and Julia was exhausted when she returned home. What her stepmother said about the late arrival is unrecorded, but Julia's activities for the next few days seem to have been concentrated at home.

Wednesday 19th A 1/2 past 5 we arrived at Uncle Halsey's lower wharf with the loss of 3 scoop bonnets, Maria's, N. Allen's & S. Cooke's.⁴⁶ Maria, Sally & Sophia Smith rowed up in a boat. The rest got out at the wharf. I undressed myself all but my undershirt &

laid upon the bed till 10. Rose & ate breakfast. Cleaned the lanthorns & then began the dish covers, came up & took a nap. After Diner finished the Covers & took another nap. Mary An and little Nicholas have just left my chamber.⁴⁷ A shocking cold in my head keeps me most all my time with my handkerchief in my hand. Adonis attended me, too particular to be agreeable. As a friend & Brother I esteem him. After tea went to bed.

Julia was clearly not in the mood for Adonis's attentions.

Thursday 20th A cold day—put on more cloathes. Mary An is preparing for company. I washed one window shutter in the Dining room, the Beaufat in the Parlour,⁴⁸ worked on my long short wrapper. Mama put down the scotch carpet in the dining room, in place of the old home made one.⁴⁹ In the Afternoon J. Kinicutt called for his & Phoebus's Cockade. Mary urges me to go in there—I have no inclination. Betsey & Sarah have come to Mrs. Power's, all the company I imagine they are likely to have. Horatio makes me a short visit after which I go to bed.⁵⁰

Friday 21st Written notes this morning for Mrs. Parson Clarke⁵¹ & Mrs. W. Allen to visit me. In the Afternoon Mrs. Peck, Mrs. G. Olney & Miss S. Allen invited us after which I put my hair in papers & went to bed.

After four days at home, Julia took her sister Elizabeth, aged twelve, and her half-sister Esther, aged two, to visit her grandfather.

Saturday 22d This is the longest day in the year. Nothing material occurred in the Morning. Afternoon Elizabeth, Esther & myself went up to Grandpa Angell's—heard of the arrival of Aunts Mitchell & Ward.⁵² Met Uncle on our way up town, he told us they were well. In the Evening the Capt. brought us all down town & afterwards we rode a little way Pawtucket Road. Returned. Brother Sam & S. Cooke passed the Eve with us. At 8 Adonis joined us also. Mother walked up Town for the girls to go to the post. I returned.

A page in Julia Bowen's diary. RIHS Collection (RHI X3 9251).

Rose, Parson, Sylvia Smith, & Sarah Hadell were quite merry. After we had dined we sung several Patriotic songs. Hannah found a tree of - I was all over merry. Coming down Maria made a bottle of Speer in her lap - so that she was obliged to take all her time & still I have been washed - both watch Sarah Hadell had a black shirt with her - so she put that on. After dinner I was washing & ironing out her things, I stepped on a leg which was slipping of from in with my right leg, up to my knee, I was obliged to take off my shirt & stockings washed & laid them out to dry - Betty Board of Sarah Hadell ran in the River, got all over muddy & then came out Sarah Smith washed I had some soap - I brought in the River some water to wash herself if she were to sit still, which she did a little while - we then put on the tea kettle & had coffee. Sarah Smith was good enough to come to it - I was almost madd - we drank some coffee which quite settled the girls heads - put our things in order to come home if they should about - I had me down by the side of the brook with several of quite rested myself - I looked around if we proposed going home - Sarah Cooke of the Smith called on - we saw the clouds but away I stepped under a beautiful beam of moon & intended to stay till sun set & the girls went to school a cold, when she came downing had saying time was come one coming - we all took our bundles & ran into the bar by hooks - we saw father & of Mother soon march forward - Mary Hadell would go out

Although her father was away and her mother dead, Julia remained firmly ensconced in the extended Bowen and Angell families. Both of her grandfathers were notable local figures who lived long and active lives. Her mother's father, Nathan Angell (1718-1808), was eighty-one at this time; a merchant with a store on North Main Street, he was said to be of "a highly sociable character and seemed to contribute to the happiness of all who associated with him." He was married four times. His first wife, Abigail (1723-1772), was the sister of Commodore Esek Hopkins and Governor Stephen Hopkins and the mother of all seven of his children. By the time Julia was old enough to know him, he was married to his fourth and last wife, Esther. Julia's father's father, Dr. Ephraim Bowen (1716-1814), who was eighty-three at this time, had fathered fourteen children by two wives; Julia would have known only his second wife, Lydia Mawney Bowen, who was to die in 1801 in her eightieth year. Dr. Bowen had bought a lot, with a house and barn, on the corner of Market Square and College Street in 1739, and he lived there until his death seventy-five years later. The house was described in 1798 as "House 34' by 30'; two stories; wood; barn 20' by 20'; value with land \$1000." To put that value in perspective, the Nightingale House on Benefit Street was valued at \$8,000 in the same year.⁵³

Sunday 23 June Dressed myself & rode up to Church. Parson Clarke has not yet returned so Mr. Vance preached in his

place. A very good sermon tho not delivered in a very Oratorical manner. After Church was going to walk down to Uncle Clark's to dine with Aunts.⁵⁴ Cousin Oliver told me that if I would go in with him he would carry me down in the Chaise, which I did. Ate some pease with Cousin Rebecca & then rode out with Cousin & down to Aunt Clark's.⁵⁵ Found Aunt M with Aunt W was at Grandpapa's. Introduced to Miss Mitchell, a niece of Aunt's. After Dinner went to Church with Uncle Ward, Miss Mitchell & their Capt. Lawson, a fine, handsome young man. After Church we stopped at Grandpa B's, left Miss M there & went over to Brother Sam's. In the Even Orpheus blessed us with his company. At 9 walked over to the Capt.'s, where we found everybody. Brother S & Orpheus came home with me. Mama asked Adonis at the door if he had heard of the arrival of Mr. Muncy—he replied in the negative, but would go & see if there were any letters & bring them directly down—in ten minutes he returned & brought two letters from Papa. Mr. Muncy has at last arrived & the Ship Louisa likewise by which Papa has sent a few shoes &c.

Letters from her father were a great, but very occasional, joy for Julia. After many more frolics and escapades, in October 1803 she married John Martin (whom she had mentioned very briefly in her dairy). Less than two years later she was dead; the cause, according to her obituary, was "the fever." She was twenty-five years old.

Julia Bowen Martin's diary is one of the most extraordinary journals of the late eighteenth century. It will be published in full at a later date.

BETSEY METCALF (1786-1867)

Letter, 1858; memoir, 1807-1810

In 1796, while Sarah Brown was spending her time at the theater, ten-year-old Betsey Metcalf was going to school. Two years later, by a process of trial and error, she discovered a way to braid straw and make it into bonnets, and for the next two years, while Julia Bowen was frolicking, Betsey was manufacturing straw bonnets as a small but profitable business.

Betsey Metcalf was a harbinger of the nineteenth century, upwardly mobile and interested in manufacturing and education. Unlike Susan Lear, Sarah Brown, or Julia Bowen, Betsey expected to earn money before she married, though she was not working from financial necessity; her father, Joel Metcalf, was a prominent artisan, a tanner and currier by trade, active in the Mechanics and Manufacturers' Association, a member of the Providence Town Council, and one of the founders of Providence's public school system. The seventh of nine children, Betsey lived at 64 Benefit Street, behind St. John's Church. Unlike several of the other diarists, she came from an intact family.

The document at the Rhode Island Historical Society is in two parts. The first is a copy of a letter written in 1858 by Betsey to her nephew's wife; the second consists of extracts from a memoir she wrote between 1807 and 1810, when she was in her early twenties. In both cases she was writing about her early life. The letter's recipient, Helen Rowe Metcalf (the wife of industrialist Jesse Metcalf), was an important person in her own right, for she was the prime mover in the founding of the Rhode Island School of Design, created in 1878 to train designers for work in the state's industries.

West Dedham, February 11, 1858

In compliance with your request I will write an account of my learning to braid straw.

At the age of twelve I commenced braiding. My father (Joel Metcalf) brought home some oat straw which he had just mowed, in June 1798. I cut the straw, smoothed it with my scissors and split it with my thumbnail.

I had seen an imported bonnet but never saw a piece of braid, and could not tell the number of straws. I commenced the common braid with six straws, smoothed it with a junk Bottle and made part of a bonnet but found it did not look like the imported ones; I added another straw and then it was right.

An aunt who resided in the family encouraged me while most of my friends said should never learn. She would sit and hold the braid while I braided many yards thus keeping it straight and in place.

We could not make it white by exposing it to the sun, and knowing that brimstone would whiten other things she put some in a pan with some coals of fire and set it out in the garden then standing at windward she held the braid in the smoke of it and thus bleached it. I then braided all sorts of trimming but it was difficult to ascertain the number of strands. The first bonnet I made was of seven braids with bobbin put in like open-work and lined with pink satin. This was very much admired and hundreds I should think came to see it.

Soon after I visited Dedham and learned the ladies how and made bonnets for several of them. There had been a story about that I braided enough in the stage to defray my expenses. I did braid several yards, but not enough to pay my fare. After my return to Prov. I learned Sally Richmond, a near neighbor, to braid all kinds. She went on a visit to Wrentham (the next spring, I think) and learned them there. It has been published that they first began to braid in Wrentham but it is a mistake. Mrs. John Whipple⁵⁶ after she was aged told someone that she thought it was Hannah Metcalf who first braided, but this was a mistake for she never braided. I learned them to braid from nearly all the towns around Prov. And never received any compensation for it. Learned all who came to make bonnets free of expense. Many said I ought to get a patent, but I told them that I did not work to have my name sent to congress. I could easily earn \$1.00 per day and sometimes \$1.25. It became a profitable business for several years.

Yours &c

Betsey Baker.

The first page of extracts from Betsey Metcalf's memoir. RIHS Collection (RH1 X3 9253).

Extracts from Journal written by Mrs. Betsey Baker then Betsey Metcalf. The journal commences with a review of her early life.

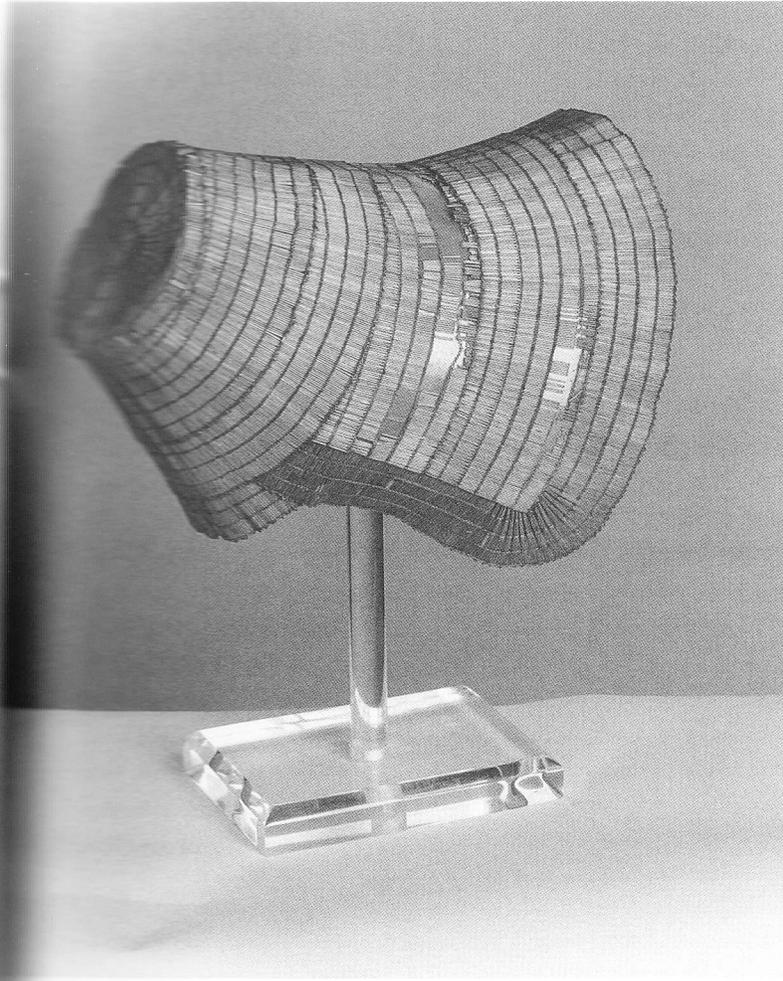
"I will now continue my history; I was then old enough to write, therefore I was sent to a Mans School, But not having patience enough to be very particular about writing, I was too neglectful, and by that means never attained that art. I was always afraid of spending too much time, and would hurry my copy, in order to get time to read and study. I was particularly fond of Figures and was easy if I could get a slate and pencil. This took my attention so much from writing that I almost totally neglected it for several years. Though I do not consider that I understood cyphering, for in my opinion a person might do a thousand sums and yet be ignorant of the first rules of Arithmetic, I however learned all the rules in the Book, which was of more use to me than the sums I did.

By 1858 Betsey Baker had clearly become very proud of the work she had done. In her memoir, however, she expressed regret that her introduction of braiding had induced some young women to work in factories rather than staying at home or going into domestic service.

The unknown person who copied parts of the memoir started with Betsey's description of her schooling. The education of girls became more of a priority in the early years of the Republic than it had been in previous generations, and Betsey began school when she was "old enough to write"; apart from "cyphering," however, she does not seem to have enjoyed her elementary school very much. This part of the memoir was written in 1807.

I will now continue my history; I was then old enough to write, therefore I was sent to a Mans School, But not having patience enough to be very particular about writing, I was too neglectful, and by that means never attained that art: I was always afraid of spending too much time, and would hurry my copy, in order to get time to read and study. I was particularly fond of Figures and was easy if I could get a slate and pencil. This took my attention so much from writing that I almost totally neglected it for several years. Though I do not consider that I understood cyphering, for in my opinion a person might do a thousand sums and yet be ignorant of the first rules of Arithmetic, I however learned all the rules in the Book, which was of more use to me than the sums I did.

Now follows an earlier version of the story that Betsey told in her letter. Here she mentions that she was out of school because of illness when she began braiding straw and making bonnets. (Irregular school attendance was common at the time.)



A straw boonet made by Betsey Metcalf, circa 1795-1800. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 9264).

I went to different masters but none of them took my attention so much as the last. Before I complete the history of my education I will write something of my work. When about 12 I engaged in a new employment which was braiding straw Bonnets, something it is not probable I should have undertaken had it not been for an Aunt who made it her home at our house. She said she was confident I could learn with a little perseverance. I began to braid in 1798. Then I was not well enough to attend school. I was pleased with the proposal and naturally fond of variety, and wishing to be a little odd from the world. I undertook the new employment with much anxiety but it was a long time before I could make a bonnet, and have reason to think now I should never have persevered had it not been for her, for my mother and sisters thought I was spending my time in a useless manner, though they did not say much about it. I got so in a few months that I could make bonnets which would do to wear. My Aunt never learned to braid herself but would still encourage me. I felt much pleased when I first made a bonnet. I then learned to braid all kinds of trimming by seeing the English Bonnets but it was rather difficult to find out the number of straws, but Perseverance and industry will accomplish anything. My sister then learned and we had considerable of a manufactory. It was about a year before people knew much about it as my Aunt insisted on our keeping it private, but that did not please me as anything useful ought to be public. The first that learned was a young lady, Sally Richmond, who lived the next door, and was one of our most intimate acquaintances. She went to Wrentham soon after where she learned several and now they make a great

business of it. It began to spread over the country by degrees as we had a numerous acquaintance who lived in all parts of the country. However for 2 or 3 years it was very profitable business. I could frequently make 1 dollar per day. The stock was very trifling, but after so many took up the business, they lowered the price, and began to make them very nice which makes it now unprofitable for it was always hard work.

I have thought of it since very different from what it appeared when I first began. Then it was thought to be a very useful employment & I received much commendation and praise which not a little flattered my vanity, but it was weakness in me to be proud of so trifling a circumstance. The consequences I fear have been more an injury than otherwise to the New England States, for girls forsook all other employments such as spinning, weaving, and all the cares of a family, and because they could get more by it continued to persevere, by which means they have neglected a necessary part of a female's employment. Instead of being dressed in the apparel of their own making, they have purchased the vanities of Europe and have brought dress more in fashion when it was quite enough so before. Thus I conclude that stopping the importation of Bonnets has left room for greater luxuries.

The Jeffersonian Embargo of 1807, in force until 1809, forbade all foreign trade to and from American ports. During that time New Englanders resorted to smuggling or to making their own substitutes for imported goods.

I mean particularly the country people, for those in sea-ports would probably have never learned to spin, so they will not lose anything by it. But I frequently hear

Gentlemen say that it is almost impossible to get a girl to do housework in the country, they are so engaged braiding straw. I think we ought to learn what is necessary, and then if we have time to spare it will do well enough to braid. It is very injurious to the health, especially, to work very steady. We used to do a great deal of business and was always hurried making bonnets, but for 1 or 2 years we have almost neglected it, having other work of more consequence.

Betsey returned to school when she was fourteen, becoming one of the original pupils in Providence's newly created free school system. Spearheading the fight for public schools was the Providence Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers, led by John Howland and Joel Metcalf, Betsey's father. In 1800 the association petitioned the General Assembly to authorize the establishment of free public schools, and despite strong opposition from some legislators, the petition was granted. The Providence Town Council appointed a committee that created the town's first public school system that same year. The four schools opened on the last Monday in October 1800. Betsey attended the one held in Whipple Hall at the north end of Benefit Street, where she supplemented her classes (geography and grammar were her favorites) with books on ancient history borrowed from the town's library.

It is now time to continue my history. About 14 I went to school to Mr. J. D. a member of the Baptist Church in this town and deserves the name of a sincere Christian. He has kept the public school, in the district where I live, ever since they were opened which is between 6 & 7 years.⁵⁷ My father (who was one of the Town Council) was always anxious to have public schools. There was great exertions made by some of the opulent citizens of the town to prevent their being established. But they got a vote of the Town, and my Father with several men of enterprising spirit was determined to carry their plan into effect. My father was so particularly engaged, that he neglected his own business, and would not rest, until the school houses were built and repaired (which were 4 in number) and fitted for 150 scholars each.⁵⁸ They soon engaged the Preceptors and had the pleasure to see them have the desired effect. There was a School Committee appointed, which visit the school every 3 months, which raises the ambition of the scholars to a high degree. I continued going to school until 17, and probably went as much as 2 years in the time. I then began to see the value of learning and my parents were not willing I should let my work take my attention from the studies of the school. I studied Grammar, Geography and the common rudiments. Geography I found the most pleasing. Grammar I consider of use when it is perfectly understood. I was fond of being first in the school and never lost my place except by absence, though my sister whom I shall call Adeline⁵⁹ and older than myself, kept the head while she went to school, but I then took the place and continued there as long as I went. The first time the Committee visited the school I think will always be remembered by me. I had formed a pleasing idea of learning, but found in reality that I knew nothing. However, we exhibited all our lessons to the Committee (who were about 20) with as much pride as if we were monarchs of an empire.

They were highly pleased with the behavior and the forms of education and voted to have it published in the public papers which raised the ambition of the scholars to such a pitch that we almost thought we knew everything (though to be sure we were much deceived.) I can say with truth that I never felt so well pleased at any period of my life as when at school. I am far from being an advocate of pride (in the manner it is generally used) but without ambition and pride in a school there would be but little learned.

How pleasing it is to reflect on that part of my life which was spent at school. Though the time is past yet fond memory often brings it to my view, and I retrace with mingled satisfaction and delight those pleasing retrospections. But after going to school so much, I was almost unacquainted with history, and had seldom read any books but those I

studied. I never was fond of reading novels, though they are the most fashionable, especially among the female sex. My father willing to give us the means, bought a right in the town library.⁶⁰ I then began to read history and have read a number of good books. Ancient History was particularly pleasing, but they gave me strange ideas of mankind. I read several books of a serious kind but they had but little effect on me as I was naturally very lively and had a large acquaintance which engaged too much of my time, and besides I was fond of work. I always had an idea that I must not lose any time and this prejudiced me against novels.

Betsey attended church regularly, although she was perhaps less than attentive there. In later life she would become a very devout woman who "read her Bible through nearly a score of times." She would also be a woman who hated wasting time, one who took her knitting with her whenever she called on neighbors.⁶¹

I always went to meeting if I was well enough, and was learned to sit still, though I think now I did not pay much attention to the preaching, or I would not be so ignorant. I went to singing school several years which was a great source of satisfaction, and used to sit with the singers in the meeting house which made me more fond of going to public worship.

In the spring of 1804, when she was eighteen years old, Betsey went on an extended visit to relatives in Massachusetts. The local school there needed a teacher for four months, and she was asked if she would take the post. Although she had no experience, she seems to have kept her seventy students under control.

At 18, I went on a visit to Dedham, Massachusetts about thirty miles, to an uncle's. I did not expect to stay but 4 weeks but I got much engaged in work, and had several cousins about my age and feeling very well contented the time slipt away ere I was aware and I stayed 2 months when they being in want of a schoolmistress persuaded me to stay and teach 4 months. I told them at first I could not undertake, as I was young and unacquainted with the business, but they insisted on my trying, and finally I told them I would stay if my parents were willing. I accordingly wrote home, and they gave me encouragement, if I was willing they thought it would be an advantage to me.

I boarded at my cousins and had a very pleasant situation both where I lived and where I kept school. I had about 70 different scholars, though about 40 at a time. I was sensible I could not govern them so I dare not have a stick in school and I think never spoke a cross word. I told the scholars they must not make me promise anything, for I was determined not to break my word. I accordingly got along pretty well.

The memoir stops here. In 1808, two years before she completed it, Betsey Metcalf married Obed Baker and moved back to Dedham, where she "reared a large family of excellent sons and daughters" and lived for the rest of her life.⁶²

Betsey's discovery of straw braiding led to the beginning of a new industry in southeastern Massachusetts. At first it was carried on in private homes; then it became industrialized. In the early years the ladies of Wrentham took to braiding in a big way. Members of the town's Congregational Society apparently made enough money to purchase a new organ for their meetinghouse and pay a large share of the minister's salary. The Dorcas Society in nearby Westwood also started braiding and raised a thousand dollars for Indian missionary work. In Attleboro, however, the local preacher, a Dr. Standley, did not approve and preached a sermon on "Vanity of Straw Hats in the Meeting House." He later published it as An Essay on the Manufacture of Straw Bonnets, Containing an historical account of the manufacture, its effects upon the Employment, Dress, Food, Health, Morals, Social intercourse, etc., of the inhabitants of the Several towns in which it has been carried on; with Moral, Political and Miscellaneous Remarks. Dr. Standley predicted that women's characters would suffer, for women would neglect their duties and their health, and young girls

Betsey Metcalf Baker. Oil painting by James Sullivan Lincoln, 1858. RIHS Collection (RH1 X3 536).



their studies. Moreover, women who earned money would become independent of men and assert their superiority.⁶³

Notwithstanding the minister's dire predictions, women continued to work for money. The Union Straw Works in Foxborough, Massachusetts, employed as many as three thousand workers, most of them women—eight hundred in the factory and the rest working at home.⁶⁴

Betsey Metcalf Baker died on 24 February 1867 in her eighty-first year. By then she was something of a celebrity; in 1864 Harper's New Monthly featured her story in an article on the state of the straw-bonnet-making industry in New England. Eight years before her death Betsey produced a replica of one of her earliest creations for the Norfolk Agricultural Society's Exposition. That bonnet is still in the Baker family.

SARAH CRAWFORD COOK (1796-1882)
Diary, 1809-1817

Born in Providence, Sarah Crawford Cook was the only survivor of five Cook children; her four brothers died as infants. Her adolescence was very difficult: her father, shipmaster Joseph Bernon Cook (1765-1850), was away at sea for much of the time; her mother, Abigail Allen Cook (ca. 1769-1828), was mentally ill and lived in institutions for most of the last twenty years of her life.

Sarah kept a diary sporadically from the age of thirteen to the age of twenty-one. Unlike many teenage diarists, she mentions such notable events as the beginning and end of the War of 1812, the destruction by fire of Providence's First Congregational Meeting House in 1814, and the Great Gale of 1815. On the other hand, she says very little about her feelings

as she was shuttled between relatives and boardinghouses while her mother was in and out of asylums and her father was imprisoned in England during the War of 1812. Sarah's family dislocations were dramatic, but with the nuclear family far from a stable institution at the time, they were hardly unusual.

Sarah's diary was transcribed and edited by a great-niece in the 1940s. What follows is the whole of the diary as it appears in that transcription.

1809

March 16 The New Light Steeple so called was torn down with the intention of building a new house for Mr. Wilson who is a congregationalist.⁶⁵

Visited Miss Thompson & [illegible] &c until

June 4 Father sailed on a trading voyage—

—10 Embargo of 18 months duration totally repealed—
guns were fired bells rung & companies paraded in honour of the day.

President Thomas Jefferson's embargo of 1807, in effect until 1809, was deeply unpopular in the New England states. A response to the British seizure of American ships and impressment of American sailors during Britain's war with Napoleon Bonaparte, it forbade all American vessels to leave for foreign ports. It was a signal failure; smuggling increased, the British

The first page in the transcription of Sarah Crawford Cook's diary. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 9249).

1809 (1809)

March 16
The New Light steeple so called was
torn down with the intention of building
a new house for Mr. Wilson who is a
congregationalist.

Visited Miss Thompson & (congregationalist) until

June 4 Father sailed on a trading voyage

= 10 Embargo of 18 months duration
totally repealed— guns were fired bells
rung & companies paraded in honour of
the day.

Oct. 8
Rode home with Uncle Fuller who
married my mother's sister to Attleborough.

— 11 With him visited Uncle Allen who is
a Physician in Berkley.

monopolized legitimate trade, and Bonaparte impounded ten million dollars' worth of American goods, claiming he was helping to enforce the embargo.

Sarah was busy for the next few months visiting relatives. Possibly she was living with an uncle in Attleboro.

Oct. 8 Rode home with Uncle Fuller (who married my mother's sister) to Attleborough.

—11 With him visited Uncle Allen who is a Physician in Berkley.

[Dec. ?] 30 Returned home visited some and ended the year in thankfulness for past blessings and praying for more to come.

1810

February 14 Father returned from sea.

Perhaps because Sarah's father thought he could care for his wife, or perhaps because the fees of Dr. Samuel Willard—who had been caring for her in Uxbridge, Massachusetts—

were too high, Sarah's mother seems to have been at home for a while. By early March, however, other arrangements had to be made.

March 5 Mother's health declining. Father carried her to Uncle Allen's.

Sarah's return to her family home in Providence was brief. With her mother taken to her Allen relatives, the house was rented, and Sarah went to board with Miss Mary Balch on George Street. Mary (Polly) Balch (1762-1831) kept the most prestigious girls' school in Providence; the samplers produced by her students have become famous, partly for their high quality and partly for the views of important Providence buildings that were incorporated into their design.⁶⁶ But Sarah did not get a chance to try her hand at these samplers; though she continued to board with Miss Balch, in May she became a pupil at another school, Stephen Rawson's academy on Meeting Street.

March 9 Mr. Richardson took possession of the house and I entered Miss Balch's family.

March 11, Sunday Dined with Aunt Allen, accompanied her to church in the P.M.

Lydia Allen was a widow in her late fifties. Her husband, Captain Philip Allen, a Revolutionary War veteran, had died sixteen years earlier.

Passed the time pleasantly at Miss B's joining in the amusements of the boarders.

May 7 Commenced a year's tuition at Mr. Rawson's Academy. Being of health Aunt Allen had the goodness to invite me often to ride with her.

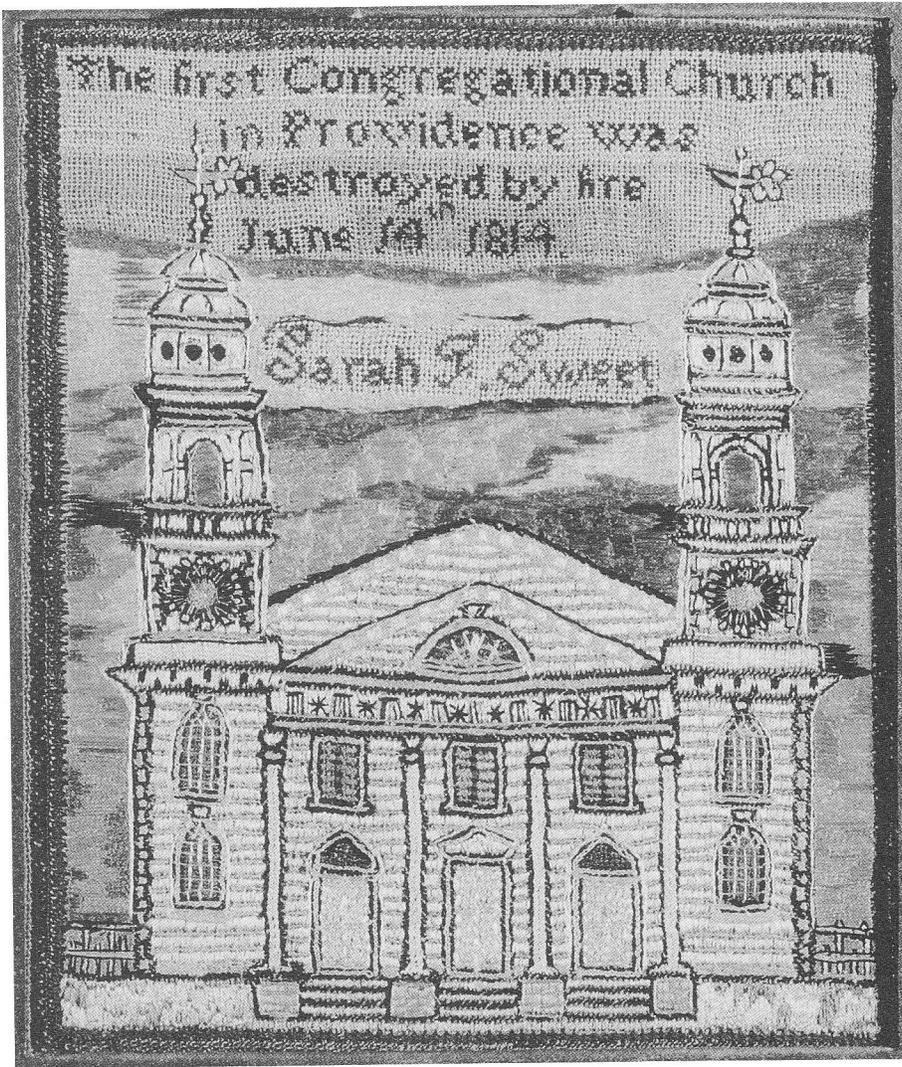
Sampler by eleven-year-old Mary Balch, 1773. RIHS Collection (RH X3 5935).



Oct. 1 Grandfather Allen was deposited in the tomb to which we are all hastening.

Sarah was careful to record deaths in the family. Her maternal grandfather, who died in his seventy-fourth year, was Captain Amos Allen (1737-1810), another veteran of the Revolutionary War.

The condition of Sarah's mother may have improved a little, or perhaps her brother was unwilling to keep her any longer. In any case, in December she moved into Miss Balch's lodging house with her daughter. It is clear that Sarah had to help look after her.



Sampler by Sarah F. Sweet, a student at Mary Balch's Academy, circa 1818. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 9239).

December 15 Miss Balch took Mother as a boarder.

December 25 Christmas celebrated in the 1st Congregational Meeting house the new church not being quite finished.⁶⁷

She added a pious hope for the future:

Another [year?] past in which having gained more instruction than the one before hope I shall profit by it to the end of my life.

1811

March 16 Met Cousin P. A. at the Town Library and walked with her to a private one over the bridge.

June 11 The new Church was dedicated.

June 12 6 A.M. Saw the first wedding in church the party Mr. Walter R. Danforth to Elizabeth Anne Carter.

July 24 Miss Balch's Mother expired about 6 this A.M. She was the first I ever saw die and I never had an idea before of the pain endured on this trying occasion—but O the pains of the body are naught in comparison to those of a guilty mind.

Sarah's comments on this occasion may be contrasted with the reminiscences of one of Miss Balch's students, who nearly seventy years later recalled Miss Balch fondly as a "good-natured, jolly woman, indulgent to

the scholars," but remembered her mother's death as "affording an unlooked-for holiday, which was a true pupil's way of viewing the affliction."⁶⁸

November 7 Began two 2 yrs tuition of dancing of Mr. Guigon.

The accomplishments required of a young lady, such as dancing, were not ignored in Sarah's education. Although noting that she "waited on Parent," her last entry of the year shows that Sarah was otherwise following a conventional female path.

Attended ball, public amusements, school, waited on Parent as usual which completes another year.

Sarah's next entry was on her sixteenth birthday.

1812

January 30 The addition of a 16th year occasions this reflection—I sincerely hope that before this day year arrives, I shall be able to assist in making our family enjoy more happiness than they have lately done—how or which way I know not at present, but will do my best endeavor in that which may be pointed out.

Times were difficult not only for Sarah and her family but for other New Englanders as well. The failure of the Jeffersonian Embargo, the continued impressment of American sailors, and

EMBARGO & WAR!

Office of the Newport Mercury, April 13, 1812.

Embargo LAW. OFFICIAL.

NEWPORT, APRIL 13, 1812.

THE ACT of Congress laying an EMBARGO on our Commerce, was finally passed by both Houses and received the signature of the President on Sunday the 4th inst. It was immediately published in the National Intelligencer extra—and was received by the Consignor of this Port accompanied by the Instructions of the Secretary of the Treasury, by the last Saturday's mail.

The following is an Official Copy of the Act—

the 2d day of March, 1799; and such penalties may be examined, mitigated or remitted, in like manner, and under like conditions, regulations and restrictions, as are prescribed, authorised and directed by the act, entitled "An Act to provide for mitigating or remitting the forfeitures, penalties and disabilities accruing in certain cases therein mentioned," passed the 3d day of March, 1797, and made perpetual by an Act passed the 11th day of February, 1800: Provided, That all penalties and forfeitures, which shall have been incurred by virtue of this act, previous to the expiration thereof, may and shall thereafter be recovered and distributed in like manner, as if this act had continued in full force and virtue.

H. CLAY,

Speaker of the House of Representatives,

Wm. H. CRAWFORD,

President of the Senate pro tempore,

April 4, 1812. Approved.

James Madison.

des affaires at London.—The English papers mention the seizure of Eleven Ships. This very conduct strange as it may appear, has probably hurried our War against England.—It is understood that it is only by War or Embargo that we can propitiate the imperial Tyrant."

In this state of affairs, we should almost despair of effecting any change in the hearts of our Rulers, were not our hopes buoyed up by those of our Friends in Congress, expressed in their letters, that a clear expression of the public opinion in disapprobation of War, may yet produce a present pause, and ultimately a change of measures.

That our readers may participate in these our hopes, and may know, that Messrs. JACKSON and POTTER are not alone in the sentiments they express upon this subject,—we publish the following extract of a letter from the Hon. WILLIAM HUNTER, Senator in Congress from this State, dated April

perhaps to ultimate defeat, if they may be saved from shame and disgrace.

FRIENDS OF RHODE-ISLAND, do you subscribe to such doctrines—do you approve of such measures, dictated by such motives—Are you ready to see your country involved in all the horrors and calamities of war, to save from shame and disgrace the nice feelings and high honors of Representatives from the State of Kentucky.

The last step, however, we hope and trust will still be withheld.—If the People, in their Elections, express their opinions against it—the majority in Congress will be more obedient to their will, than careful of the honor of their leaders, and will readily yield to their constituents the responsibility and imaginary disgrace of a change of measures.—On our Elections, therefore, rests the ultimate decision.—The question of War and Peace is put in issue to you—Your Verdict will be given in your Elections ON WEDNESDAY NEXT —In the integrity of your Hearts then

in order to ripen and bring it to perfection, we are pledged to assist in crushing the feeble exertions of Spain in defence of her liberties.

In the name of Heaven, what has become of our Constitution? The framers of that once-valued Charter endeavoured to guard most securely the dangerous power of MAKING WAR.—They knew, that if they granted that power to one man—to the Executive; that man (whatever they might call him) would be in fact a MONARCH and might, at any time he pleased, become a TYRANT. The great Convention therefore deposited the all-important power of making war, exclusively in the hands of Congress. But, in spite of all the precautions of the Convention, in defiance of the Constitution, the Executive has usurped this tremendous power, and has actually made war upon a (yet) independent nation, and seized upon part of her territory.

A LETTER

RHS Collection (RHi X3 4299).

claims that the British in Canada were arming hostile Indians on the frontier led the United States to declare war against Great Britain on 18 June 1812. In Providence, as elsewhere in New England, the declaration of war was greeted not with patriotic fervor but with expressions of grief.⁶⁹ "Mr. Madison's War" was deeply unpopular in the maritime states. By November 1812 the British blockade of the east coast would bring trade to a virtual standstill.

June 25 The most dismal rainy day I ever saw. War declared between Great Britain and America—the bells tolled mournfully all day. Took care of the house and waited on him until [blank].

The living arrangements of Sarah and her mother changed in August: the family house was rented yet again, with Sarah going to board with the new tenant, while Sarah's mother was moved to a Smithfield asylum run by the Quaker Joel Aldrich. The asylum was probably a "gentle" one, since Quakers were at the forefront of more humane treatment for the mentally ill. The alternatives at this time were grim; inmates were often locked in unheated rooms in public almshouses, and their conditions allowed to worsen through neglect.⁷⁰

Tuesday 4 [August] Dined with Mr. Benjm. J. Chandler for the first time, who took possession of the house and with whom I am to board.

Sarah continued to go on family visits.

September 16 Visited Aunt Munros in Rehoboth with Aunt A. Visited Col. Humphray in Tiverton; past through Bristol and Warren, returned—20—

December 5 Visited Mother at Mr. Joel Aldrich's Smithfield.

December 8 Came home.

Living with the Chandlers had some compensations for Sarah. The Chandlers seem to have been a lively young couple with many friends. Mrs. Chandler was receiving visitors and dancing in Pawtuxet even in the later stages of her pregnancy.

1813

January— Enjoyed myself in company with Miss Wilkinson, Eddy, Tillinghast, Miss Black, Walker, their beaux viz. Shepard, Blake &c, and company Mrs. Chandler receives viz. her cousins Mary & Thomas Edward from Keene & Chandler & Bowen from Promfret. Captain & Mrs. Stewart.

February 5 Mrs. C— Stewart, Bowen, visited Pawtuxet where danced until midnight.

February 11 Spent eve with Miss W. & Shepard at Miss Benson's.

In marked contrast to her dancing in Pawtuxet, Sarah spent a quiet winter evening with the local schoolmaster and a minister. Although she came from an old established family, Sarah was downwardly mobile because of her parents' difficulties. Here she met upwardly mobile people who were entering the middle class through their own efforts.⁷¹

February 15th Spent eve at Mr. Noyes with Miss W. Ben. & Shepherd. Mr. Blake boards there, Parson Williams lady Cushing &c of the party Henry Clark Edward Hale.

In March there was a birth in the house.

March 25 Miss Elizabeth Chandler daughter of Benjm. J. C. born 10 minutes before 12 her cousin Mary Lemuel's daughter 21 hours previously. My good wishes attend both.

Sarah kept up her acquaintance with Miss Balch.

March 20 Spent the day at Miss Balch quilting. Mr. Shepherd waited on me home.

March 26th Received company Wilkinson Ed. Jd. Godfrey.

March 27 Took tea at Godfrey's.

April 4 Dined with Aunt A; attended church with her in P.M.

April 6 Took dinner with Cousin Candace Allen, much gratified with her kindness. Zachariah gallanted me home—cousin walked to Aunt Throop's bought The Lives of the Poets by Johnson and Refusal by Mrs. West.⁷²

Sarah's relative Zachariah Allen was then eighteen years old and a student at Brown University. He went on to become one of the wealthiest industrialists in Rhode Island; among his other achievements, he developed a system of fire insurance that became the Allendale Insurance Company. Aunt Throop (1744-1814), born Mary Crawford, was a sister of Sarah's grandmother.

April 10 Left word with Cousin C. A. that Mr. C. had finished reading The Young Protector. Walked out with Miss Walker after tea. Called at Mr. Noyes. Mr. Blake accompanied us home.

Like Sarah, Mr. Blake was a lodger. He may have been part of the movement of young people drawn from rural to urban areas in search of education. Over the next few months Sarah and Mr. Blake met frequently.

April 15 Called at Miss Thompsons with Miss Susan Winson.

April 20 Mr. Blake & Walker called for me to walk, too damp to go.

(145)

THE POST.

A KISS in vain your lips impress,
Which ne'er arrives at its address.
A kiss, that's sent us by the Post,
Ere it can reach the mouth is lost.
No thanks are due for such a boon,
Which leaves one colder than a stone;
Kisses are tasteless fruits, we know,
Unless they're gather'd where they grow.

NEW COUNTRY DANCES,
For the Year 1794.

THE QUIZES.

FIRST Gentleman set to the second Lady, and turn the third;
first Lady set to the second Gentleman, and turn the third;
lead down the middle, up again one couple; hands four round.

NONE SO PRETTY.

Hands four across; the same back again; lead down two couple;
lead up, and cast off; turn corners; lead outfaces.

BRIDGEWATER CAMP.

Half right and left; the same back again; cross over one couple,
and turn; right and left at top.

THE ANTIGALLICAN DANCE.

Hey contrary sides, hey on your own sides; lead down the
middle, up, and hands fix round.

THE SPRIGS OF LAUREL.

The first and second couple set, and hands across; the same
back again; lead down the middle, up again, and cast off; allemande.

JUST IN TIME.

Allemande with your partner; the second couple do the same;
gallop down and up, cast off; right and left.

N

THE

A printed page in the diary of Rebecca Carter, a Providence teenager. RIHS Collection (RH X3 9248).

April 30 Father arrived home after imprisonment in England viz. Ashburton.

*Joseph Cook had been master of his brother-in-law Samuel Allen's brig Warren, which had been captured by the British frigates Sybelle and Fortune. The High Court of Admiralty of England decided on 8 January 1813 that the ship had belonged to the United States prior to the declaration of hostilities, but since the two countries were at war, it awarded the vessel as a prize to the king. However, Cook was permitted to keep his share in it, including any "profits or loot."*⁷³

May 2 Mr. Nieland of N. York called to see Father. He was a prisoner and came home in [cartel?] with Father.

May 14 Attended the funeral of Mrs. Patience Carpenter. F & I walked in procession to church. Tead⁷⁴ at Aunt Allen's.

May 15 Went to Aunt A. half past 7—rode to Aunt Mathersons's,⁷⁵ then past J. B. Mason's.

May 16 P.M. Cousin Abby Smith gave me a seat in church.

May 21 Walked with Miss W. & Parker then to Mr. Shaw's where she [played] some music.

June 8 —society supper at Mr. Chandler's.

June 18 Walked to Miss Kinnicut's in company with Miss Walker, Park. Mr. Shepherd treated with strawberries &c time passed pleasantly.⁷⁶

June 22 Walked out. Walk. Park. Shep. called.

June 24 Festival of St. John.—waited on me to see St. J. Hall handsomely dressed. Miss W. P. Mr. L took tea with me. Mr. Blake spent eve & Mr. Josephus Wheaton called to see Mr. Blake.

June 25 Miss Ann Eddy left our names at Miss H. Arnold's. P.M. visited St. John's & Mount Vernon Hall with Miss Wilkinson.

Sarah was on the edges of genteel society; leaving her name at Miss Arnold's was an attempt to meet the daughter of one of Providence's wealthiest merchant families.

June 30 Prepared some short cake for Mrs. Chandler's return from long visit. First attempt.

Early in July, Sarah and her friends went on a long walk to a grotto on the banks of the Seekonk River. It was a popular destination for country outings.

July 5, Monday Understood Mr. Holroyed on the anniversary of our independence. Miss W. P. & I protected by Mr. Shep— Blake walked to Grotto and other places. Walking is conducive to health but a walk of 3 or 4 miles in length in this warm weather exhausts nature though good company & good spirits prevent our being sensible of it.

July 14 Called Cousin H. Mathewson

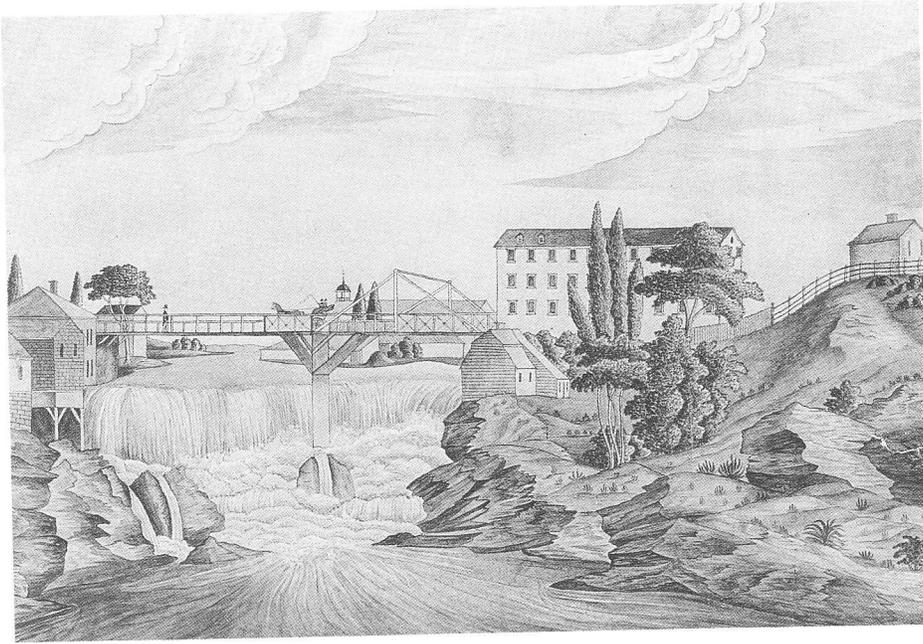
Sarah was having (at least for her) an eventful summer. She next recorded a visit to the salt-works on Nayatt Point in Barrington.

July 17 Rode Newport stage to Barrington to visit Miss Betsey Allen—company W. P & Mr. B—joined by Miss K—visited the salt works on the shore—the water is pumped into pans of a hundred feet in length—the salt collects on the top by the action to the sun &c—settles—at night.

July 18 Walked made calls P.M. commenced our pedestrian journey home half past 3 took tea at Miss Kinnicut's.

August 15 Attended church with Aunt P.M. father walked with me & spent eve with her.

August 18 Aunt had the kindness to give me a ride to Pawtucket. Ran in to Mrs. Barn's who informed me her daughter Fanny was gone.



The Pawtucket Falls and Bridge. Watercolor and ink on paper by D. B., circa 1812. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 354).

August 21 Made one of a party to Pomham in company with Father.⁷⁷ Very sultry, going down the sails did not shade us much. Dined on chowder shell fish. arrived at the wharf about 9 o'clock, very fatiguing parties.

Having survived imprisonment by the British, Sarah's father turned his back on the sea and went into industry. His wife's family connections were again helpful; he became a superintendent in the new Providence Woolen Mill, a factory owned by his young nephew Philip Allen.⁷⁸ Allen (1785-1865) would serve as governor of Rhode Island from 1851 to 1853 and as U.S. senator from 1853 to 1859.

August 25 Father engaged in Mr. P. Allen's Factory, that is to say to superintend the work people.

August 30 Miss Balch informed me of Mr. Fiske's death.⁷⁹ Saw the college illuminated with W. P. under Col. Carliles & daughter. Mr. Shepard invited us into his room.

September 1 35 students graduated today: Z. Allen, Shepherd and others.

September 5 Attended church all day. Father & I drank tea at cousin C. A's.

September 7 Aunt & I rode to Rehoboth to see Aunt Munro. Her son's family was sick. Elder Lewis prayed over them.

September 9 National Fast. Elder L. Delivered a discourse in Swanzey.

September 10 Arrived safe at night at Aunt's where I tarried. Visit has improved my health.

September 11 Spent day with Aunt.

September 12 Went to church. Dined at Aunt's.

September 19 Church.

September 23 Called at Aunt's.

September 26 Capt. Couthray from Boston dined with Mr. C.

October 10 Attended church dined at Aunt's.

October 13 Drank tea with Miss A. Hill engaged in a game of cards the first time in my life.

October 18 Called on Aunt, Cousin & Thompson.

Nov. 8 Rode to Miss Eddys farm in Johnston with her.

Nov. 14 Church

Sarah's Christmas entertainment was hearing a recitation of Hannah More's "The Search after Happiness: A Pastoral Drama," an immensely popular poem that was brought out by

different publishers almost every year in the early nineteenth century. Sarah's experience of it places her squarely in the middlebrow culture of her time.

December 25 Christmas. Attended church—called at Aunt's going and coming. In the eve with A. Gill heard some ladies recite Search After Happiness.

December 26 Church as I have done regularly.

Sarah's relatives sometimes gave her dress patterns and fabrics.

Dec. 29 Called at Aunt's & Cousins who gave me a pattern of a gown.

1814

January 2 S. Z. A. & W. Rhodes were my gallants from Aunt's.

January 4 Mr. P. Allen married Miss Phebe Aborn in eve. by Mr. Wilson.

January 5 Peter Taylor waited on A. Gill and I to dancing master Guigon's ball about 7 eve. Came home midnight or after.

January 6 Drank tea at cousin C. A. in company with Aunt Troop & had a nice piece wedding cake. Zachariah waited on me home.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen seem to have had a very up-to-date wedding, with a quiet ceremony followed several days later by a reception. Gender separation at the latter event was obvious: the bridesmaid introduced visitors to the bride, while the bridesman—in this case Zachariah Allen—took coats and welcomed the guests at the door.

January 11 Called on Miss H. Arnold's who invited me to pay the wedding visit with her to Mrs. P. Allen. I called for her at 7 eve. Richard accompanied us—found a large party there the whole about an hundred. The bride man Z assisted the ladies at the door & the bride maid Miss C. Allen introduced them to the bride. Partook of refreshments and returned at ten.

January 13 Visited Mr. Noye's school in company with other ladies and gentlemen viz. Mrs. Ward, Bowen, Thompson, Parson Edes &c &c. Performances very good.⁸⁰

Now nearly eighteen years old, Sarah began to go out in mixed company. Sleigh rides were a very popular form of both recreation and courting.

January 17 P. Taylor invited A. Gill and I to ride to Pawtucket in sleigh. Eve.—ate some pies &c rode beyond there and returned at 11 eve.

January 18 Cousin C. A. called for me rode over the bridge spent day with her & rode home with her brother Crawford.

January 22 Took tea with Aunt in company with Cousins Zach Candace and Crawford.

January 23 Church

January 26 Called on Aunt with whom I rode in sleigh a mile or two.

January 2- Called at Miss C. A. little errand at Aunt Troop's likewise.

January 30 18 years of age today—after church Miss P. A. was so kind and considerate as to present me with some muslin for a frock as I was invited to a good many parties.

Sarah's efforts to socialize with the elite were sometimes dashed by the weather.

February 1 Snow prevented my paying Miss Arnold the intended visit.

February 2d Visited Miss Abby Low in eve—a large party.

February 16 Aunt had the kindness to carry me to visit Mother viz. Smithfield in her sleigh.

Sarah's friendship with Peter Taylor seems to have come to a sudden end.

February 21 Went to a ball at Mr. Bullock's in Rehoboth gallanted by Mr. Peter Taylor.
The first and the last.

February 26 Miss Arnold and I called at Miss C. Allen's. Mr. Zachariah Allen waited on us to Mrs. Crocker's at Mrs. P. Allen's house.⁸¹

March 7 Making new silk gown Mrs. D. had the kindness to present me.

Sarah was up-to-date in her reading, even if her appreciation of what she read was a little unsophisticated. Byron's seventy-two-page poem The Bride of Abydos: A Turkish Tale had only just been published.

April 3 Mr. Edwards lent me the book of Abydos—the bride I found was never married and Abydos is not mentioned except in the title page. A greater variety of incident would be more pleasing however it is a simple tale simply told.

Over the next few months several people close to Sarah died; the sudden death of her elderly uncle Dr. Amos Throop (ca. 1739-1814) was only the first of several losses she suffered. Given the precariousness of her position, the deaths of people who gave her security must have been profoundly unsettling.

April 14 Doctor Troop expired last night, in an apoplectic fit. I called A.M. on house of mourning.

April 18 Attended the funeral with my father. The corpse was carried into church.

24 May Visited College Museum and Library.

June 14 1 Congre'l M. House destroyed by fire—all the furniture removed out of the house which providentially did not take fire.⁸² Sta. the night at Mr. Wilkinson's who was very polite.

Mary Throop (1745-1814) died soon after her husband.

October 12 Aunt Troop departed this life at 6 morn.

Three months later Benjamin Chandler died at the age of thirty-two. His death led to yet more changes in Sarah's living arrangements.

1815

Jan. 23 My kind benevolent host Mr. B. J. Chandler expired. Residing in his family some time, I have become attached to his virtues.

News of the end of the War of 1812 reached Providence on 12 February. The following few days were a time of great excitement. According to William Staples, writing nearly thirty years later, "The bells and cannons proclaimed the tidings, and it is amusing now to recall to mind the crowds that at that inauspicious season of the year, were patrolling the streets, hurrying from place to place, with no definite object in view. The 13th was thus spent, in going from place to place, and from house to house, merely repeating to each other what all had learned the day previous. In the evening, a general illumination of the town took place. Gradually the people regained their former sobriety of manners and movements and returned to their wonted occupations."⁸³ Sarah's chronology is a little different, but her account of the cold weather and the general excitement agrees with that of Staples.

Feb. 13 Peace was proclaimed.

Feb. 14 The town was generally illumin'd. The appearance was brilliant, the reflection of the lights on the snow prevented the sleighs from running over the crowd of people.

Spent the day at Miss A's. Walking bad accepted her invitation to stay the night & permitted me to stay with her until

April 29 Spent day at Aunt A & stay night. Aunt kept me until

May 25 When she brought me home to the house occupied by Capt. Jenckes.

Aug. 9 Coz Crawford drove me to the farm took tea with Mrs. P. A. who was there. Came prancing home expecting to be overturned every minute.

Sept. 2 Capt. J. vessel was wrecked in a violent gale of wind & he & 2 others were drowned. Afflicting news to his wife and 4 children.

Sarah was in Providence during the Great Gale of 1815, which began on 22 September and continued through the next morning. During that time the tide in Narragansett Bay exceeded the previous record high tide by seven feet five inches. In Providence, some fifty ships were torn from their moorings in the harbor, almost all the warehouses on both sides of the river were damaged, and two bridges were washed away, as was the Second Baptist Meeting House. The most dramatic sight was a sixty-ton sloop that swept across Weybosset Street and came to rest next to a house on Pleasant Street.

The Great September Gale of 1815. Oil painting by John Russell Bartlett, circa 1835-40. RIHS Collection (RH.15.3078).



Sept 23 A violent tempest,—it increased until eleven, when the town appeared in most imminent danger. The wind destroyed houses, trees, fences &c. Vessels were torn from their moorings, rose over wharves, and carried stones, houses, the bridge and everything that opposed the cove—landed on sand hills—high tides will not touch them.

Until the bridges were rebuilt, a ferry provided the only means of crossing from the east side to the west side of Providence.

Sept 25 Crossed the river in ferry boat with Miss A—the houses and vessels that were thrown into the street prevented our touching the ground [*illegible*]. Marveled at the upright appearance of a sloop before the front door of a handsome house, recrossed the ferry and viewed the desolation on S side of the town.

Sarah was not the only person to go sight-seeing. Joseph Legg, an actor then appearing at the Providence Theater, spent the whole day on the ferry crossing and recrossing the river "to the wonder of the citizens, who were unable to understand how any amusement could be derived from such an occupation."⁸⁴

25 December Partook a Christmas dinner with Miss A, company her connections, Parson & lady. Tarried the night. It pleased Miss A to give me a home until the last of May. I endeavored to assist her and conduct myself toward her with the gratitude a child shows a parent. She has been a parent to me & I am sensible for the last five months or any to come, shall I be able to repay her.

After staying with Miss Arnold for several months, Sarah moved back to Mrs. Jenckes's house.

1816

June In Mrs. Jenckes family visiting uptown occasionally.

December 25 Dined with Miss A who gave me \$1 to put in contribution box for her.

After six months with Mrs. Jenckes, Sarah moved back to Miss Balch's lodging house.

1817

January 25 Mrs. Jenckes moved over the bridge & changed lodgings to Miss Balch's.

March 16 Waited on Aunt to church A.M. Not well enough to go in P.M.

March 23 Called for Aunt as usual and found her on the bed of death. She was out on Wednesday but nature was exhausted & she gave up the ghost about 7 eve of the 25th.

I have lost an excellent friend but the good precepts she was continually giving me will sink deeper in my heart. She was deposited in the Church Burial Ground in P.M. of 28th.

April 4 Supt with Grandma Remington at Miss A's.

April 5 Father waited on G. to Warwick which place it is not likely she will ever leave again having seen her last sister buried & being the eldest of a large family.

April 10 Judge Dexter took possession of house.

May 1st Mr. Z. Allen married to Miss E. H. Arnold in church about 6 o'clock P.M.

May 3 Bride and Groom commenced journey to Southern W & N. States. Expect to stay three months.

The diary ends here.

Sarah's mother died in Mendon, Massachusetts, in 1828. Sarah continued living with her father until his death in 1850. In his will, Joseph Cook appointed his niece Elizabeth Rice Westcott of Warwick as his daughter's guardian, "to use her best endeavours to see that my daughter is well and comfortably maintained during her life." Sarah outlived her guardian, and responsibility for her well-being passed to John Cook Westcott.⁸⁵

When she transcribed the diary, John Westcott's daughter included with it a brief biography of Sarah:

"Sarah C. Cook was brought up in the lap of tenderness and ease until her 12 year. Her mother being then unfortunately partially deprived of her reason the family was dissolved—Sarah was sent to Apponaug Warwick to board with Judge Remington whose family consisted only of himself, lady and only amiable daughter."

A footnote here identified Judge Remington's wife as Sarah's grandmother, the widow of Silas Cook.

"Attended Mr. Chadsey's school 5 months and returned to Providence March 10 1809 after having received every kind attention from the family in which she had resided—her dear mother under the care of Dr. Willard, Uxbridge being unable to recommence housekeeping and visit her daughter in Warwick."

The transcriber explained who Dr. Willard was, citing Esther Forbes's 1942 biography of Paul Revere. "In the Blackstone Valley village of Uxbridge he ran an establishment for the insane," wrote Forbes. "It could hardly be described as an asylum or hospital, boarding-house or medical school but was something of a mixture of all of them. . . . He had enough eccentricities of his own to have some understanding of those who had gone one jump beyond him."⁶ According to Forbes, Dr. Willard treated his patients well, encouraging them to ride out in the countryside and join local churches, as well as offering an early form of occupational therapy. It is clear that Mrs. Cook was in one of the best asylums available at the time. Her fellow-patients included John Hancock's nephew and Paul Revere's son-in-law.

"Sarah Crawford Cook became deranged in mind (like her mother) but lived to old age—died October 5-1882 in the 87th year of her age," the transcriber continued. "Is buried in the family cemetery in the rear of the home in Warwick where she had been cared for many years. . . .

"Grandmother told me about her cousin Sally [Sarah]. She would not take off her bonnet, wanted to wear it in the house—also her mits on her hands.

"Aunt Eliza gave me an embroidered pocket, a needlebook she called it, which had been made for her when she was 9 years old (1811) her name E. Cook emb. on it.

"I did not know who had made it till many years after, when seeing one much like it owned by Cousin Jenny Westcott Warwick I learned it was made by her cousin Sally Cook who was six years older than herself."

LUSANNA RICHMOND (1800-1862)

Diary, 1817-1819

A collection of girls' diaries would be incomplete without an example of a spiritual diary. Lusanna Richmond's diary provides such an example, though the spiritual quest it records was in fact a complex one, complicated by Lusanna's struggle against a potentially debilitating depression.

Lusanna Richmond grew up during the Second Great Awakening, when women in large numbers (and men in smaller numbers) flocked to evangelical Protestant churches. This liberalization of Calvinism permitted free will and thus encouraged believers to achieve their own salvation. The movement gave rise to numerous efforts at social reform, while also encouraging notions of the moral superiority of women.

Lusanna's journal is very different from the previous diaries in that there is no profusion of names, no mention of friends; instead, there is earnest meditation and intense and contin-

uing self-examination. The diary also reflects a significant generational shift, a movement away from the boldness of late-eighteenth-century girls to the nineteenth-century "cult of true womanhood," whereby women were expected to be modest, pure, pious, submissive, and domestic.

Lusanna was born in Dighton, Massachusetts, on 26 May 1800, the second daughter of William and Clarissa Andrews Richmond. Her father, a Providence merchant, changed with the times; in 1800 he described himself as a "Merchant and Mariner," but he later moved into industry and commerce, becoming the owner of the Richmond Mills in Scituate and the president of the Merchants' Bank in Providence. Along with Betsey Metcalf's father, he was a member of Providence's first school committee.

At the time the diary was written, Lusanna lived in Providence with her parents and several younger sisters and brothers. She was a member of the Beneficent Congregational Church. Her much loved elder brother William (1797-1858), a graduate of Brown University, was

ordained a deacon in New York in December 1818, and he would eventually found the City Mission there.⁸⁷

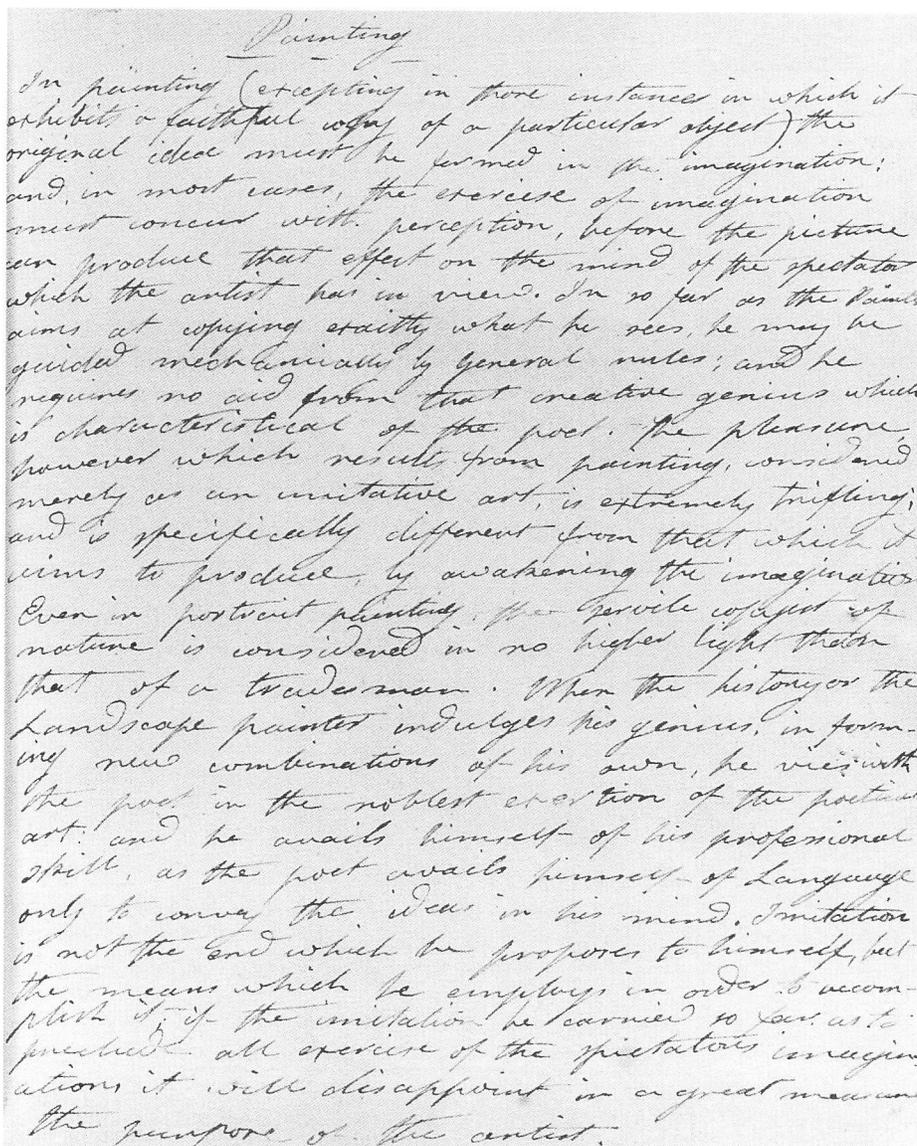
Although there are a few earlier entries, Lusanna started to keep a journal regularly when she was sixteen. In the first entry below, she recorded the birth of her mother's tenth child.

March 6, 1817 This day was added to our domestick circle a little male infant, thanks be to GOD for him, and for the comfortable health of my mother, I pray that he may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD and that it may be our care to instruct him in the truths of revealed religion and to store his mind with good and useful knowledge. May his disposition and conduct be such as well as all his brothers and sisters as will make them comforts to their parents, useful to one another, and render them good members of society.⁸⁸

Worried about having too little to think about, Lusanna was inspired by her reading to keep a regular journal, writing down her thoughts and the events of her life.

I have just read the life of Miss Elizabeth Smith.⁸⁹ I scarcely ever read so much goodness, piety and knowledge being combined in any person. She confirms me in what I have already undertaken. She says "she thinks it an excellent plan for persons to write down their thoughts

as they occur." Truly I think there is nothing which would sooner perfect one's thoughts or rather make them endeavour to banish evil thoughts from their minds and supply their place with good ones. To use her own ideas I "may for want of some such employ-



A page in Lusanna Richmond's diary. RIHS Collection (RH X3 9252).

ment dream away their lives in inactivity, and finally not having their minds fixed on anything useful and important begin not to think at all." To this plan of writing down my thoughts, I intend to add a journal, that is, note down the most important periods and circumstances which happen during my life, and also to extract from books, such sentences as peculiarly strike me for piety, goodness, elegance, sublimity, &c. &c.

Many of Lusanna's concerns centered on religion. The next entry involved a meeting of pious women, which led her to muse about sectarianism. One can only guess at the form the conversation took among the ladies of the Dorcas Society. Lusanna's second sentence is, however, significant; it suggests a hope that organized women committed to moral and social reform could transcend denominational affiliation.

March 22d Employed the morning in writing to my brother, in the afternoon attended the annual meeting of the Dorcas Society, where were many assembled, who all contributed to its support. We have need to praise Almighty GOD for putting it into the hearts of females to endeavour to contribute something for the support of their fellow creatures. There has existed in all ages, and indeed it exists to this day, much controversy about religion. One sect supposes themselves better than another, one denomination believes their doctrine and opinions to be the only true ones, and whoever departs from their belief not to be Christians, again there are some who possess charity or love, and believe Christians to exist in every sect, but finally they are all tending to the same point to eternity, and were they united, happy would it be for them.

In an undated entry she continued to muse on one of the basic components of the "cult of true womanhood," domesticity.

Oh happiness where art thou to be found, if not in domestic life, truly the glittering bubbles of this world do not afford it: the honours of emperors and kings are quite insufficient to give it; were we to range the world in search for it we should at last find it, in the bosom of our homes, surrounded by our friends; yes, domestic life connected with religion, a thirst for improvement, and a search after knowledge will render one more happy, it will give us more true felicity than all the vain pomp of this world.

Lusanna's self-improvement efforts included getting up earlier in the morning. Her somewhat grandiose language reflects the romantic literature popular at the time.

May 17, 1817 This morning I have conquered my aversion for early rising and have risen while the slumbering world are unmindful of the brightness of the rising sun, truly, it speaks forth the glory of a Being, superior to itself. Oh Morpheus I beg you not to visit me any more after the appearance of this bright luminary, while I am in health, let me no more slumber away the precious hours of this world, let me rise from a lethargy, and improve the precious time while it flies; time can never be recalled, while it yet lasts.

Later that month Lusanna celebrated her seventeenth birthday with a lengthy rumination on her sins, on how she was not yet in a state of grace and, were she to die, would not be worthy of a place in heaven.

Truly I have reason to say that Heaven has been gracious in preserving me during this year past, notwithstanding all my sins and errors, and in again bringing me to behold my anniversary day. Is it, can it be possible, that seventeen springs have blessed me with their promising blossoms, and this returning one finds me as imperfect as the preceding sixteen; oh no, I hope that in some degree I have been more mindful of the perfection's of GOD than formerly. Still my heart is cold, still I fear I am in a state should GOD be pleased to send the angel of death to strike me I should be unprepared and plunged in a gulf of everlasting woe. Oh Almighty Father may I feel thy awful presence surveying and scrutinizing all Creation, may I feel the infinity of thy power when thou speakest

Notice.

THE Members and Donors of the
DORCAS SOCIETY are requested
to meet at Mrs J. B. Woods, This
evening, at 3 o'clock. A punctual
attendance is particularly desired.
Those who wish to become
Members are requested to attend like-
wise.
March 22.

Announcement in the Providence Gazette, 22 March
1817. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 9254).

and the world sprang from chaos; and will thou be pleased to blot from memory the sinfulness of my past life, and grant that my remaining days may be spent in thy fear, and in the performance of thy commands; may I honour and obey my Parents, help me gracious Saviour to love my brothers and sisters and neighbours preferring them in honour to myself.

Still discontented with herself, Lusanna reflected in an undated entry that she was allowing her time to pass unproductively.

When I consider how much has been done and is still being done by the pens of females, I feel that I ought not permit my mind to be so slothful and inactive, yes, something within me, tells me to improve fleeting time, to be useful to the world, and to remember that I was born for eternity; now what is this something, is it conscience? alas my conscience accuses me of much misused time; it is a sense of duty which the GOD of nature hath implanted in us, to excite us to do, what hands are yet able to perform. How shall we improve fleeting time.

In her next entry Lusanna mused about the meaning of life and her efforts to live simply.

Sunday April 5th 1818 The happiness or misery that one souls enjoy in Eternity is far greater than all the happiness or misery possessed by the whole creation united. How coldly we pronounce the word happiness, and how unfeelingly that of misery. When we are told that we must be happy in Heaven if we live in the fear of God, what idea do we have of that happiness; do we put it in competition with that of the worldling's who says, give me wealth, honours, splendours, &c., and I'll be happy; do we compare it to that of Kings and Emperors, who live in continued anxiety for their subjects, or else abandon themselves to cruelty, debauchery, and fail of performing their duty (which when performed gives sweet satisfaction.)

Lusanna returned to the subject of her soul two weeks later. Here she struggled with the idea of "passion," which she saw as one of Satan's temptations. In this context, passion included any strong emotions, whether love for the opposite sex, anger, or jealousy. Lusanna was working hard on that component of true womanhood known as piety. As both this and the previous entry were made on Sundays, she may have been reflecting on the day's sermon in church.

April 19th 1818 A mind free of passion has ever been to me a pleasing subject for contemplation, that mind which admires the acquirements and virtues of their equals in age and rank which never detracts from the just praise of their superiors, nor is envious of the goodness of their inferiors, or rather of the poor, but is ever interested in the preferment of each class of beings, such a mind possesses the seeds of piety, from which will thrive the beautiful [corolla?] and the elevated tree; but alas! too few possess this mind; myself I fear am one of the too many which neglect to succore it; a mind however free from passion may be acquired, for GOD ever delights in the perfection of his creatures, and will not withhold his aid from that person who earnestly seeks to eradicate passions from his heart. A person accustomed to self-denial, to suppress any evil passion which may rise, and to inveigh against it, not the object that [illegible] it may be compared to the sun which clouds seem endeavouring to obscure, and which at intervals bursts forth and is again lost in clouds, but which finally though the morning is passed in contest for the superiority, yet the evening of the day is closed with its brightness and glory and the clouds are forced away and disappear. Satan may for a while cloud our minds with passion, but by a continual watch over them, we shall overcome one passion then another, until at length we shall possess that disinterested love for our neighbours and good will towards our enemies, which the Scriptures require of us.

While staying with relatives in Little Compton in the fall of 1818, Lusanna read about Martha Laurens Ramsay, a woman who seemed a paragon of all the virtues. After Mrs.

Ramsay died in 1812, her sorrowing husband compiled a popular memoir, which included a biographical sketch, his wife's diary, and some of her letters.⁹⁰ Lusanna's conception of Mrs. Ramsay conformed closely with the nineteenth-century definition of true womanhood. As well as teaching herself Latin and Greek, so as better to educate her eleven children, Mrs. Ramsay read all her husband's medical texts, so that she could deal with some of his patients and not disturb him if he was asleep.

September 14, 1818 I have this evening been reading the life of Mrs. Ramsay, wife of Dr. David Ramsay; naturally endowed with a strong mind, she possessed more than ordinary perseverance, and would permit no obstacle to deter her from performing what she conceived her duty. She improved her various talents for usefulness rather than shew; at the age of fourteen gave herself up to God in solemn covenant, in which she renounced the vanities of the world, implored the aid of Providence in living a serious and Godly life. She was a dutiful daughter, obedient wife, and intelligent and instructive Parent. Possessed of much firmness she would not yield to disturbances, and would not permit slight sickness to frustrate her plans. Possessed of much piety, her devotion was warm and zealous. She read much and with attention, could repeat almost the whole of Young's night thoughts, by learning such works and passages strengthened her memory so that she easily retained all that she read.⁹¹ Was well acquainted with ancient authors, and perused much solid as well as miscellaneous reading; charitable and benevolent: understood the Bible sufficiently well to quote the place of any text; in fact she was a pattern for me and every female: may I imitate her virtues, if I cannot her extensive learning.

Mrs. Ramsay's example was impossible to follow, and Lusanna's attempts to conform to the characteristics of true womanhood caused her a great deal of anguish. Although she confided her feelings in her diary, she was not specific about the causes of her melancholy, which was partly spiritual, partly temporal. In any case, her frequent praise of learned women—together

with the fact that her brothers were studying at Brown while she was left at home with her baby siblings and her needlework—does suggest that Lusanna wanted to spend her time otherwise, though she was too depressed to do so. The kind of self-torment she suffered was not unusual during the Second Great Awakening, tied in as it was with changing expectations about women's behavior.

Providence December 6th 1818 There are two things upon which I wish particularly to avoid thinking, the one as it regards my spiritual, the other my temporal welfare. I will not write them down until I have eradicated them from my mind, which I pray God may be very soon. Although of little importance in themselves, they deprive me of much usefulness, social, retired or domestic life; by continually engrossing my thoughts, they prevent me from making the progress in virtue and literature which a undivided attention, through the assistance of God, would procure me. The one shows in my discontented disposition, and want of resig-

The Little Sempstress. Illustration from Alice Morse Earle's *Child's Life in Colonial Days* (London, 1899). RIHS Collection (RH1 X3 9241).



nation to the will of my Heavenly Father, the other is a subject on which I ought not at present to dwell. For a few months past I have enjoyed the world less than the production of God ought to be enjoyed. On whatever side I turn do I not behold a Creator, in the formation of any plant has not his discriminatory eye divided the stamen from the petal and pointal, and oh! how wonderful is man, is there not virtue in him, all that is great and good, and shall I not enjoy the society of those whom he has been pleased to make in many aspects superior to myself, but yet who give me the power of rising superior to the work, and to be the companion of saints and delight in the works of God.

Returning to the topic of her depression two days later, Lusanna determined not to withdraw from society, as she had "sometimes threatened," but rather to be more cheerful in company. Unlike the famous Dr. Samuel Johnson, who suffered from chronic depression, she could not escape her melancholy by surrounding herself with family or friends; indeed, such company made it even more severe. Of the resolutions she now made, numbers four through six suggest problems within her family.

Prov. Dec. 8th 1818 Have not yet banished from my mind those two subjects before mentioned, one recurs continually by mixing with society; it is my besetting sin; I will not leave society as I have sometimes threatened, but will persevere through the assistance of Divine Providence, to eradicate from my mind what is so pernicious to my peace. For a few months past I have lost my wonted cheerfulness, I fear it does not arise from a sorrow for sin, but a spirit of discontent, which ought not inhabit the breast of one surrounded with so many blessings; this discontented mind, or rather want of resignation, arises from trifles, indeed from events so small, I dare not even commit them to paper. I must make one mighty effort to dispel the gloom; it is not of the nature of Johnson's melancholy, his was rather diminished than increased by company, mine is the reverse; continual employment and forgetfulness of self will be most effectual. I pray God to assist me in keeping the following resolutions. For the winter

1. Rise before or at eight o'clock, before or at six summer
2. Be fervent in my morning orisons
3. Never neglect to read some part of the scriptures each day
4. Be active in obeying cheerfully the requests of my Parents
5. Endeavour never to speak angrily to my little Brothers & sisters
6. Always preserve candour with my elder Brother & Sister; this will unite and make us happy & contented
7. Possess perfect charity for all my acquaintance, always acknowledging their merits, & avoid dwelling on their failings
8. Endeavour to improve in every society, be attentive to others and forget myself, this I believe is the best way to enjoy it & evening prayer. These resolutions, though simple in themselves, if kept, will tend very much to improve my heart.

The following day she was feeling a little better.

Dec. 9th. Rose quite early and in good spirits, have dwelt less than usual on those two subjects of discontent, therefore have been cheerful all day & uncommonly industrious with my needle, but from continual interruptions have not read much; however I recall to mind with pleasure, what Johnson in his Rambler says of needlework, "When I see a knot of misses together employed with their needles, I consider it as a school of virtue and as a resource against that feeling, ennui, which enervates the mind and creates disgust of life."

Dec. 11th. This has been a gloomy day without but I have felt cheerful and this to me is a great blessing since I have been so much troubled with depression of spirits, I know not the cause of it. I pray Almighty God will assist me to overcome it; I fear I have done something to displease Him, for that melancholy has seized me this evening which I so much dread. This day is the 21st anniversary of my dear Brother, an important era to him: we are separated, may there not be at this moment a sympathy in our feelings and reflections? may he not at this time have his thoughts employed on the same subject with myself? pleasing thought. The time will soon come when he will endeavour to place himself in a situation to reap the temporal fruits of his literary pursuits. O my God be thou his guide, direct and counsel him, make him humble and [discreet?]: be thou my guide I beseech thee, strengthen and support me.

Dec. 19th We received this day a letter from my brother which appears to have been written about the time I wrote the above reflections; it was a kind letter thanking our dear Parents for all their kindness to him and begging the prayers of the family for him. Grant us fervour Almighty Father. I fear that my supplications at the throne of Mary are made unfeelingly and with a wandering mind. Oh, may I not use the form, without the heart; how can I expect to be assisted in my daily occupations unless I fervently beg it. My mind for a few of the last days, that I have omitted writing has been too much depressed for the cause, for it is worldly, this evening it is calmer and active. My blessings are numerous, may I look beyond them on the misery of others. This night, whilst the wintry blasts howl through my windows I am enjoying a blazing fire am surrounded by a dear family wrapt in sweet repose (for it is almost mid-night). May these blessings soften my heart, rather than render it harder.

Dec. 29th 1818 Since I wrote the last my time has been continually employed with company. I have had but little time for reflection, and very little for reading; in the time I have wandered too far from the path of cheerfulness, my mind has yielded too much to its natural melancholy: I pray Almighty God to preserve me from it. Why is it that, although I am convinced there is much happiness in religion, that I am so loth to give up the world: alas, I fear I grow more and more attached to it and my thoughts dwell too much on the trifling parts of it, oh! may they be turned to GOD.

Still struggling with the demands of religion and social interaction, in April 1819 Lusanna made an excuse to avoid going to church. She was very depressed, and she sat in her room and cried.

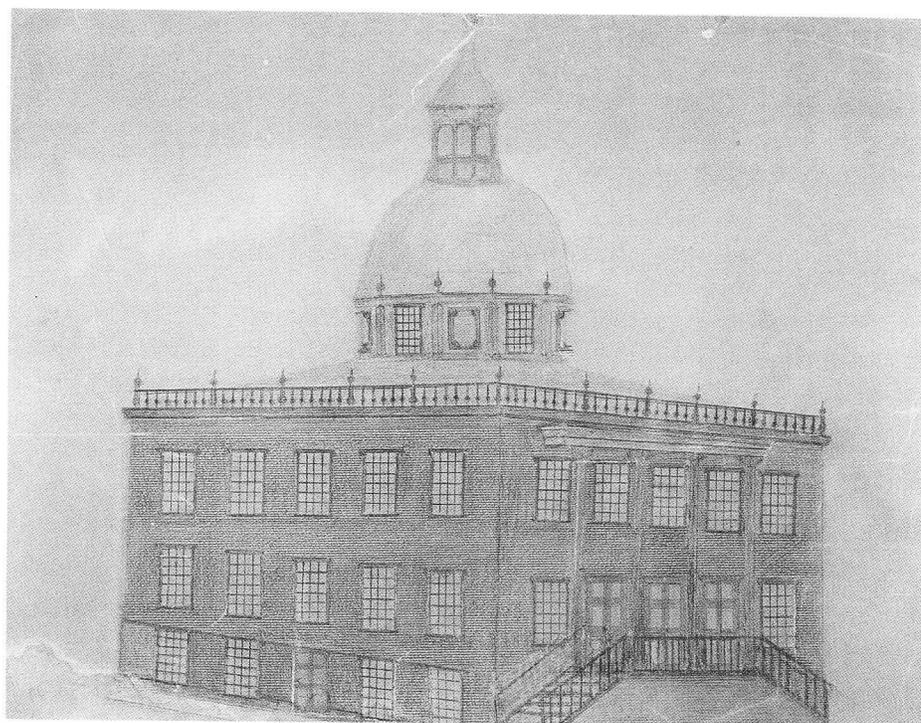
April 4th 1819, Sunday On observing the date of what I last wrote, I am shocked and surprised that the intervening time between that and the present has been so much. It seems on looking back that I have almost ceased to live so little has been my improvement, so few the accomplishments of my projects and above all so very trifling the alteration in my heart and temper. This day I have absented myself from the house of God with the excuse to my family and myself of bodily weakness, but alas! I fear it is rather a weakness and infirmity of mind. I know not the cause, but society seems a burthen, and mixing in the world does violence to my feelings, even the society of my Dear Parents and beloved brothers and sisters seem obtrusive. I delight in retirement from the world and from the scan of any human eye. I have sought for the cause, and for a long time in vain, at length two very foolish have obtruded on my mind, and I find the one that regards least my earthly or eternal happiness, I dwell on the most. I dare not commit them to paper yet, oh! dreadful, the eye of God sees the tears that fall unbidden from my eyes and knows the cause that I suggest to myself. Heaven grant that cheerfulness may resume its wonted seat in my mind and countenance for I once had it; it is requisite for the happiness of my younger brothers and sisters and to allay the concern of my mother and older sister. I now lay aside my pen to implore Divine assistance.

Like many thoughtful young people, Lusanna began to ask the most basic question of existence: What is the meaning of life? She did not find her present way of life satisfactory.

April 18th "For what was I created?" Let me inspect my present conduct: is it a correct answer to this important question: alas! far from it: I act as though I were to live for ever yet know that I must soon die. All that God has bestowed on me is to improve not with regard to this world, but for his honour and my own happiness in another world.

With the weather improving, Lusanna felt a little more cheerful.

May 1st 1819 This has been one of those days in which nature relaxes her cold and darts her effulgent beams across the earth, the green spreading grass acknowledges the influence of the Spring and the lofty trees promise a rich harvest. Brother Wm. left us today to begin his parochial duties at Philadelphia; his absence has left a void in my mind that few, very few, could fill: oh! the sweets of brotherly and sisterly affection; may it ever continue in this family. God bless him and his people.



Beneficent Congregational Church. Pencil-and-pigment drawing by Francis Read, 1825. RIHS Collection (RH1 X32 12).

The Beneficent Congregational Church was rapidly gaining new members.

Sunday May 2d. Have attended church all day. This afternoon 27 were added by Mr. Wilson. Have been reading Milton, where Eve is tempted by the serpent; it seems surprising that she could not have retained those feelings which were expressed by her when arriving at the forbidden tree. Serpent we might have spared our coming hither, but alas! how many are our transgressions when hers was only one.

Perhaps inspired by James Wilson's sermon, Lusanna's thoughts turned from consideration of female virtue to those to that traditional symbol of female vice, Eve. The following day Lusanna read about another apparently immoral woman, Madame de Maintenon. Lusanna's estimation of both women seems remarkably sympathetic.

Monday May 3d. Cloudy and unpleasant, no visitors here, read some history and the life of Madame de Maintenon by Miss Hay. It is wonderful what effect her virtues had upon the dissolute King of France Louis 14th with her conversation and society he was highly delighted it was her virtues that pleased him; an admirable stimulus for all young ladies to pay their court at the shrine of virtue.

A page was torn out here.

In the next entry Lusanna mused on the happiness of family life. Her mother bore eleven children in fifteen years, which was not unusual for the time. The survival of almost all of her children (one died at age five in 1808) was somewhat less usual, but reflected the rising standards of living and improved hygiene among better-off families that contributed to the surge in the American population in the early nineteenth century.

May 17th I think there is a great deal of happiness in a large family of brothers and sisters, where soul meets soul, and minds congenial meet, and where the happiness of one interests the whole. How shocking to be families divided from pecuniary or other causes,

Heaven grant that this may never be the case in ours, and may this little sister which was this day born, and which is the tenth surviving child (one deceased) be a blessing to this family and an honour to her parents.⁹² Oh! what society is so sweet as that of brothers and sisters? where candour and frankness prevail; and good sense and cheerfulness enliven the day.

May 26th Resolutions for my twentieth year.

Tomorrow I shall be nineteen years old, if I adhere to the following resolutions for the year, I will note it down at the end of a month. Always rise by six in the summer and eight in the winter, read a chapter in the Bible morning and evening, read my appointed ages of history, some French, some botany and miscellaneous reading; the two last may be omitted if time is wanting; be satisfied with whatever is not in my power to avoid, cheerful and never peevish.

Two pages were cut out here, and there are no further journal entries. Much later Lusanna copied some hymns, the 139th Psalm, and some poems by Burns and Byron in the remaining pages of the book.

In May 1822, shortly before her twenty-second birthday, Lusanna married Charles Foster Tillinghast (1787-1864), a lawyer. They made their home on Benefit Street in Providence. Lusanna bore four children, three of whom survived; and she died in September 1862.

AGNES HERRESHOFF (1807-1849)

Diary, 1821

Agnes Herreshoff was the daughter of the theater-loving Sarah Brown, and thus a member of one of Rhode Island's elite families. She lived part of the year with her mother on a farm on Point Pleasant, now called Poppasquash Point, in Bristol; the rest of the time she stayed with her widowed grandmother, Sarah Smith Brown, at the John Brown House in Providence and attended a school on nearby Benefit Street. Agnes's father, Prussian-born Charles Frederick Herreshoff (1763-1819), had spent many years in upstate New York, trying to make John Brown's Tract in the Adirondacks a paying proposition; on 19 December 1819 he committed suicide, shooting himself through the heart.⁹³

The fourth of six children, Agnes was the youngest of our diarists: she was thirteen years old when she kept a journal for seven weeks in January and February 1821. At that time her sister Anna was eighteen, her sister Sarah was seventeen, her brother John was fifteen, and her brother Charles Frederick was eleven. Her youngest brother had died as a baby in 1812.

Writing in her diary, Agnes described the weather (the winter of 1821 was one of the coldest in living memory) and various day-to-day events, but the most interesting entries are those that show the limitations suffered by young girls. If it was too cold or too wet, Agnes did not leave the house; aside from one attempt at learning to skate, she could only watch her brothers when they played on the ice. In Bristol, she stayed at home while they went to school, and she did not go to school, or go visiting, when she was "indisposed" with her "humours," the name she gave to her menstrual period. Since she was only thirteen, and menarche usually came later in the nineteenth century than it does now, this was almost certainly her first period, and she "took some pills . . . for the first time in [her] life" to cope with it.

Providence, January 1, 1821 Monday. Mama & Frederick attended Henry Smiths funeral.⁹⁴ extremely cold the north wind with Ice; which lasted a fortnight.

The first page in Agnes Herreshoff's diary. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 9250).

2d Mama Grandmama Uncle & cousin John & Frederic dined at Aunt Mason. Aunt F—'s and myself spent the day at home, very cold.

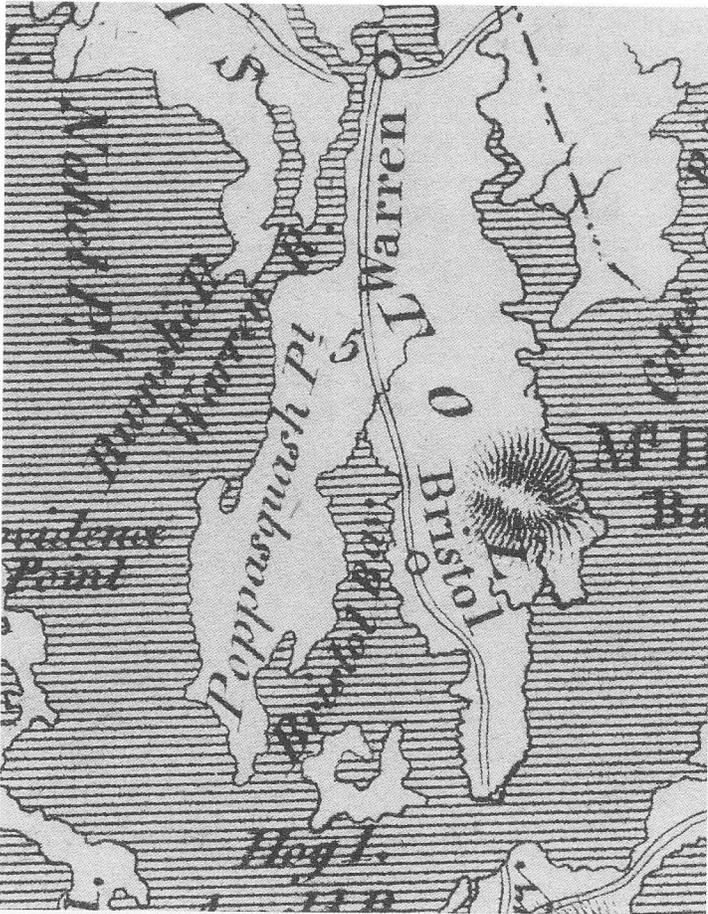
3 Still, colder, with too much Ice for Mama & F— to go home.

4th Frederic & Mama went home very pleasant and fine traveling.

5th comfortable weather.

6th John & Anna came up to Providence not very cold, not very! cold, the wind N.E.

Sunday 7th A violent snow storm the snow 18 inches deep in Newyork and Phil. about 9 in Providence, the snow very much drifted on the roads to P. Pleasant.



Detail of a map by Sabin Lewis, 1804. RIHS Collection (RH X3 9244).

Agnes returned to the farm on Poppasquash Point after a few months in Providence, where she attended a school run by Oliver Angell, a cousin of Julia Bowen. A Brown University graduate, Angell (1787-1868) had taught at Whipple Hall, one of the four Providence public schools, from 1807 to 1815; then, worn out from teaching over a hundred pupils ranging in age from six to twenty, he became a grocer for a while. In 1819 he opened a small private school (the one that Agnes attended) at 119 Benefit Street, near College Street.⁹⁵

8th Brother John & myself came home. I had been to Mr. Angell's school about 3 or 4 months.

9th The boys went to school, the wind N. West.

10th Pleasant the boys went in the slay.

11th Pleasant again the boys rode again.

12th Fine weather. JBH went to Providence in order to attend his cousin John as far as Sturbridge on his way to Phil.

13th Saturday Cloudy beginning to snow.

14th Sunday a violent snow storm wind N.E.

15th very pleasant, wind north. F. did not go to school.

16th quite cold wind Nth.Wst. Frederick at home again.

17th snow all day. Frederic went to school & returned neather tired or cold notwithstanding his walk. Mrs. Card had another Child.

18th cold wind from the north west, Fred staid at home again; in the evening composed his first piece of Composition, which was very good; & on the pleasures of country life.

Agnes's mother, Sarah, was said to be fond of country life, and "her knowledge of astronomy also afforded her pleasure during many periods of quiet life spent in the country" both after her husband left for New York State and in the quarter century she was a widow.⁹⁶

19th This morning the Thermometer was 14 degrees below zero. Frederic went to school. Brother came home this afternoon on hors back & left our Friends well. Uncle has just recovered from the gout. It is very pleasant but excessively cold.

20th wind N.W. Mrs. Bullock washed here. Old Jim has broken his arm.

21st Sunday. Warm with west wind. In the evening I learnt two pieces of Poetry. We have expected Uncle all day.

22d Brothers have just gone to School it is very cold the wind south west.

23d very pleasant & calm. we clined out the closet. Brother bought 10 pounds of butter at 20 cents a pound. The thermometer states that last Friday was colder by 3 degrees than it was on that day emphatically called the cold Friday so cold that it caused a pear tree to crack open to the center, a circumstance that was never known to happen in Providence before. Several Thermometers exposed to a northern aspect ranged as low as 18 & 20 degrees below Zero. This depression of the mercury indicates an intensity of cold which from any record of the weather had never been surpassed any wear near.

24th very cold again with a sharp N.W. wind. Brothers walk acrost the harbour from Doct. Warren's every day.

25th The coldest day we have had this winter, notwithstanding the Thermometer has been as low as 20 degrees below zero, a violent wind form the N.West. The ice made amazingly last night, down as far as we can see. If the weather continues so excessively cold there will be good slaying over to NewPort. Mama was afraid to trust the boys to walk acrost or round for fear they should freize. Oh! what must be the sufferings of the poor during such inclement weather.



Three Boys Skating. Illustration from Alice Morse Earle's *Child's Life in Colonial Days*. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 9242).

26th cold south wind. The ice has frozen hard enough in tow nights to go acrost from here to Bristol. I mean from our warf. Several boys went to Hog Island on skates. The mail was carried over the ferry to Newport. Brother John spoke for a new slay to day, it is to be finished on next Friday by a Mr. Simmons. He must be pretty smart, I think. A propos, I began a pair of pig gloves. F. did not accompany his Brother to school to day on account of the School boy's fever which he is very subject too. There are they say tow boats making to go on the ice 30 miles an Hour.

27th Not so cold as it has been wind S.W. two men were drowned down to Newport yesterday. Brother, went across & bought some bread. A man walked across from Prudence on the ice.

28 Sunday quite warm & pleasant, wind N.

29 In afternoon the boys skated over to Sarah's I walked over to Aunt Mary's on the

ice & found her very happy, stationed at the washing tub. Uncle came down this Afternoon, left—all well. Oh! little Rosa has been sick. There has been a fire in Providence.

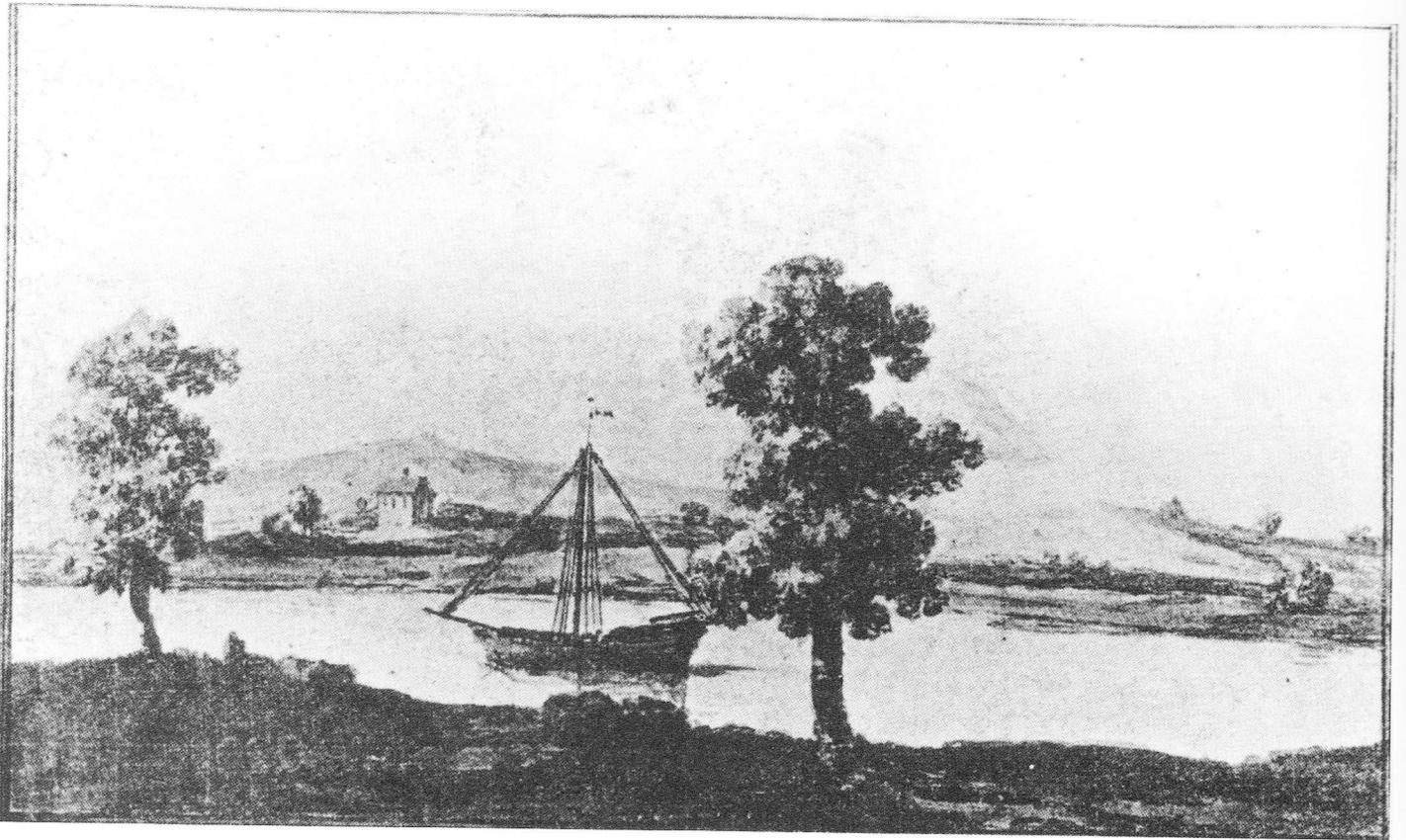
30th very pleasant. Sarah & myself have been to take a ride, I went over to Bristol & had Abraham to drive, found it very good sleighing. Uncle left here to go to dine with George Davoll Esq. Sally Francis lover carried her home this morning. The boys skated across this morning as usual.

31st Wind Westerly. Thaw'd very much. The boys got very wet feet.

February 1d The ice has thawed entirely away & the snow has almost melted. Brother John has gone to School, but Frederic stayed at home.

February 2d Frederic & John have skated across the Ice. A great quantity of rain fell on the ice yesterday & deceived my eyes, I thought it had all melted. There are now about 50 boys on the ice, some with red Caps and tippits & others in black, it looks beautifully. Sarah & I were very much alarmed about the boys when they first went down to the shore, but luckily Mama did not get up till they had gone quite over. How much pleasure the boys do take skating. I wish I could skate. Frederic said he would teach me next Saturday.

3d Frederic & I went out on a pound & I stood up on my brass skates. I mean to learn soon. In the afternoon I went over to Bristol across the ice. There was as many as 3 hundred boys on the ice. I meat Sarah half way back & returned to town with her. I left her at Mrs. Bradfords's & returned with John and F—k. J—n went back for S— & brought four large loafs of bread. We were all very much tired, at least Sarah & I were. On the ice was so glib we could hardly walk. John & F—c draged us some of the way. An old man went on skating who is a Grand-Father. He attracted the attention of every body.



View of Bristol Neck. Ink on paper, by an anonymous artist, 1765. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 8152).

4 Sunday. Snow fell last night, as much as one inch, which had spoil'd the skating. The snow has melted nearly away. Frederic is making a little sled. Frederic has finished his sled.

5th wind northerly, snow fell last night, three or four inches. The trees and bushes in the garden are cover'd with white, they look beautifully. The boys went to School notwithstanding, I cleared out the closet again, Sarah began a pair of cossets.

5 Pleasant. The boys went to School & brought the sleighs.

6 not very cold, the sleighing is almost spoild. Mr. Sam'l Read came here this afternoon to buy corn.

7th pleasant again. The boys walked across as usual. The river is open as far as can be seen except the harbour.

In the next entry Agnes remarks on the illness of Dr. Pardon Bowen (1757-1826), who was recovering from a stroke; there were family connections here, as her late uncle James Brown Mason (1775-1819) had studied medicine under Dr. Bowen. Agnes also mentions a dramatic shooting in Bristol.

8th pleasant although there is a disagreeable North W. wind. Uncle has just gone from here, left all our friends well. Doct. Pardon B—n is better. There was a man shot himself this morning on the ice by the name of Munro we have not yet heard the particulars. Some boys have cut a very wide Channel for a vessell to go through in a short time this morning & are now cutting another. I hope the boys wont come acrost to night.

It was now time for Agnes to go back to school in Providence.

9th Very pleasant, wind SW. Mama & I talk of going to Providence to day. The boys have gone across to day in spite of our admonitions. John heard yesterday that the man who was shot yesterday was a lad in his teens. He was gitting in a boat down at the private warf & putting his gun in, it turned towards him & shot & killed. He lived however untill he reatched home. His name was Silvester Munro, but no relation to our Munro. We know that we may meet Death at any time then be prepared, O! man, to die. Providence, Mama & I arrived after a pleasant ride, stopd at Kinecuts & toock a little refreshment. The horse was lame. Found all well.

10th extremely pleasant. Mama, Anna, Grandmama, Uncle & myself dined at Aunt Mason's. Mama & Ann went home from hence. Cousins A & N— Brown dined there too.⁹⁷ We passed our time very pleasantly. I expect to go again to Mr. Angell's School as there is a seat vacant.

11th Sunday, very pleasant wind NE. I went to meeting all day. Called at cousin Abby's & went with her, road with Aunt Mason from there; After Church I went down home with Aunt. Dined & passed a few hours very agreeable & then accompanied her up to Church again. Sat with Cousin Abby again, heard an excellent Sermon, the text was the 19 & 20 verses of the 20 Chapter according to the Gospel of St. John. After the Afternoon service call'd at Aunt Ward's & at Aunt Ives.⁹⁸ The walking is extremely hard.

Agnes intended to start school the next day, but her attendance was prevented by bad weather.

12th a violent rain storm wind South. The weather is so bad that I cant go to School as I expected.

12th pleasant. I began to go to School again. Very muddy walking indeed.

13 pleasant in the morning with no appearance of rain but about 11 of the Clock it began to snow very hard. At the hour of one there was sleighing & very good to. In the afternoon I staid at home. Grandmama has caught a very bad cough & cold—she is very horse.⁹⁹

14th pleasant. I went to school, thawd very much.

15th thaw'd, so that the sleighing is very much worn. In the evening I went up to Aunt Ives' played a game of chess with Cousin Phebe. A delightful evening.

Agnes seems to have been particularly fond of her widowed Aunt Mason (the former Alice Brown) and Rosa Anne Mason (1817-1872), Agnes's cousin, who was three years old at this time.

16th In the morning pleasant though cold, the ground frozen very hard. Aunt Mason & little Rosa dined here in the afternoon. A violent snow storm, wind N.W.

17 NW wind snow very deep indeed. Uncle went out in the sleigh & found it almost impassable. Called at Aunt M. She or Anna, did not experience inconveniencys from their ride yesterday in the snow storm. I believe Uncle is preparing to go to Boston.

The next day Agnes did a little baby-sitting.

18 Sunday Pleasant. Went to the Baptist Church. Went down to Aunt M's, with her dined & staid all day & night. Aunt went to Church in the Afternoon & I staid & took care of Rosa. In returning from Church—the horse fell down broke the sleigh & scraped the horse's side a little but did no further damage.

19th Monday morning John drove me up to School in the sleigh, got to School about 10 o'clock. In the afternoon Aunt Francis, Mr. [illegible] Baxter, & Uncle B— A— N— Brown drank tea at Aunt Mason's. I staid home to take care of Grandm—. Jabe Page came & passed the evening with us & brought Grandmama a present of some things raised in their garden.

On 20 February, four months before her fourteenth birthday, Agnes recorded what was probably her first menstrual period; her emphasis in noting that she had written to her mother most likely indicates that she was reporting that momentous event to her. The visit of Dibby (probably one of the Browns' black servants) to an Indian doctor shows how traditional and modern medicine coexisted at the time.

20 I did not go to school on account of having my humours break out in the morning, then in the afternoon it rained. Dibby came back—she has been to an Indian Doctor's to get a root for her Child. Aunt has gone up town to dine. I wrote to Mama this morning.

21 My Saint is out & looks very bad, but it pains! me dreadfully. Uncle has gone to Boston, he went pretty early this morning, the sleighing being gone he went in his chair. Quite pleasant.

22 Drisdled in the morning, rather damp all day. Miss Mason called here over me yesterday. I received an invitation to drink tea there but was prevented by indisposition. This is a dark & gloomy day.

23 Wind to east to-day as yesterday was with rain in the morning. I remained in my gown all day being no better. I took some pills yesterday for the first time in my life.

Like her sisters, Anna and Sarah, and her brother John, Agnes never married. She died in Bristol in 1849 at the age of forty-one.

1. Warren S. Thompson and P. K. Whelpton, *Population Trends in the United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), chap. 4.
2. Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 15.
3. Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 23.
4. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 35.
5. Susan's diary was transcribed in the 1920s; the Rhode Island Historical Society does not have the original, which is believed to be in private hands. Extensive efforts to trace its current whereabouts were unsuccessful.
6. James Brown (1761-1834), son of John Brown (1736-1803), never married. See Henry A. L. Brown and Richard J. Walton, *John Brown's Tract: Lost Adirondack Empire* (Canaan, N.H.: Phoenix Publishing, for the Rhode Island Historical Society, 1988), 30.
7. John Francis (1736-1796) was much older than his wife, Abigail Brown (1761-1821). They had been married only a few months, having been wed on New Year's Day 1788 in the newly completed mansion of her father and Francis's partner, John Brown.
8. George Benson (1752-1836) was a business partner of Nicholas Brown from 1783 to 1796.
9. Mary Bowers, of Somerset, Massachusetts, and Joseph Jenckes (1764-1818) were married earlier that year.
10. Joanna Scott Jenckes Russell (1762-1835), sister-in-law of the plain "Mrs. Jinks," was the widow of Joseph Dolbeare Russell, a Revolutionary War veteran who died two years earlier at the age of twenty-nine. Elizabeth (Betsy) Brown (1769-1845) was the daughter of the late Joseph Brown (1733-1785). John Stanford often deputized for James Manning, president of Brown University, at the First Baptist Meeting House. According to William R. Staples, "During the life of President Manning [Stanford] preached some months for this church and society." *Annals of the Town of Providence* (Providence, 1843), 407.
11. Sarah Smith (1738-1825) married John Brown in 1760. She bore six children, two of whom died young.
12. Joseph Nightingale (1749-1797) and Elizabeth Corlis Nightingale (1748-1837).
13. There was no entry for 31 May.
14. "In Memory of Jabez Bowen of Providence" (RIHS, 1933, typescript).
15. The Nightingales' eldest daughter, Polly Rhodes Nightingale (1772-1835), married Samuel Ward Greene in 1793.
16. Captain Jacques Gramont (1756-1803) was married to Mary Nightingale (1754-1803). Mr. Ward was probably the Richard Ward (1765-1808), who was to marry Betsy Brown.
17. Mary (Polly) Brown (1760-1800) married the Reverend Stephen Gano in 1799. She died a month after giving birth for the first time at the age of forty.
18. See Joseph K. Ott, "John Innes Clark and His Family: Beautiful People in Providence," *Rhode Island History* 32 (1973): 122-33. Clark's house was similar in design to the house built by his partner Joseph Nightingale, which still stands at the corner of Benefit and Williams Streets.
19. The third of Mrs. Power's daughters, Rebecca, was about eight years old at this time. She reappears in Julia Bowen's diary.
20. Staples, *Annals*, 328.
21. The other "friends of the constitution" were David Howell, Theodore Foster, and Benjamin Bourne. See Staples, *Annals*, 322-27.
22. See William G. McLoughlin, *Rhode Island: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 101-4, and Patrick T. Conley, *Democracy in Decline: Rhode Island's Constitutional Development, 1776-1841* (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1977), chap. 4.
23. Staples, *Annals*, 328-35.
24. Stanley J. Idzerda and Robert Rhodes Crout, eds., *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), 5:262, 319. Samuel Kirkland was a Presbyterian missionary to the Oneida.
25. There was no entry dated 1 August.
26. The Tweedy Mansion is in the Cranston part of Pawtuxet. In 1786 the mansion's owner, John Andrews, gave a life lease for the property to his widowed daughter, Freelove Tweedy. Cranston Land Evidence Book 4, p. 46.
27. Elkanah Watson, *History of Canals*, 16, and Thomas Morris, *Turner's Phelps and Gorham's Purchase*, 475, both quoted in Franklin B. Hough, ed., *Proceedings of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs Appointed by Law for the Extinguishment of Indian Titles in the State of New York* (New York, 1861), 1:175. See also Orasmus Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps' and Gorham's Purchase* (Rochester, N.Y., 1851), 111-18, 475.
28. Hough, *Proceedings*, 1:176. The original account was in the *American Daily Advertiser*, a Philadelphia newspaper, on 26 Mar. 1792; further information was contained in another Philadelphia paper, the *Gazette of the United States*, on 28 Mar., 4 Apr., and 11 Apr. 1792.
29. *Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island* (Chicago: J. H. Beers, 1908), 1:613.
30. John Francis, who was Sarah's brother-in-law and her father's business partner, was sixty years old at this time. He had married Sarah's sister Abigail, twenty-five years his junior, in 1788. He was to die later this year.
31. The *George Washington*, built in 1793, was one of the ships Sarah's father used in the China trade. His wharf was at India Point, where the Seekonk River flows into the Providence River. To get there, Sarah and her friends would have had to pass many wharves, ropewalks, John Brown's distillery, and the spermaceti works, an area almost as smelly as it was rough.
32. John S. Gilkeson, Jr., *Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 67.
33. George O. Willard, *History of the Providence Stage, 1762-1891* (Providence: Rhode Island News Company, 1891), 38-39. Willard may have been a little carried away here, as powdered hair and stately costume were no longer fashionable after the Revolution.
34. *A Bold Stroke for a Husband: A Comedy in Five Acts*, by Mrs. Hannah Cowley (1743-1809); *The Lying Valet*, by David Garrick (1717-1779).

Notes continued

35. *The Gamester*, by Edward Moore (1712-1757); *The Spoiled Child: A Farce in Two Acts*, attributed to Isaac Bickerstaffe (1736-1812).
36. *Every One Has His Faults*, by Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821).
37. Sarah's fellow theatergoers were probably her younger sister, Alice, and her friends Mary Anne and Sarah Power (who later shared their home with Julia Bowen; see below). *The Jew: A Comedy in Five Acts*, by Richard Cumberland (1732-1811), seems to have been a popular play; a sixth edition was printed in London in 1797. *The Village Lawyer: A Farce in Two Acts* was a translation and adaptation by Charles Lyons of the fifteenth-century French farce *Pathelin*.
38. *The Agreeable Surprise: A Comic Opera in Two Acts*, by Samuel Arnold (1740-1802).
39. *First Love: A Comedy in Five Acts*, by Richard Cumberland.
40. Willard, *Providence Stage*, 83-85.
41. *Better Late than Never: A Comedy in Five Acts*, by Miles Peter Andrews (d. 1814).
42. The Captain may have been the Captain Price referred to below. Adonis was one of Julia's admirers.
43. Mrs. Smith (whose husband, Simon, worked as a captain on John Brown's ships) was the mother of Julia's fifteen-year-old friend Sophia Smith. Maria Bowen (1782-1836) and Sarah Halsey (1770-1864) were Julia's cousins; Maria was the daughter of William Bowen, M.D. ("Uncle Billy"), Sarah the daughter of merchant Thomas Lloyd Halsey and Sarah Bowen Halsey. "Mother" was the nickname Julia gave to her nineteen-year-old friend Sarah Smith; she called her own stepmother "Mama."
44. "Phosphorous" was Julia's name for thirty-year-old William Smith; "Zephyrus" was Thomas Mathewson (1779-1829).
45. This last sentence was written in a different ink.
46. A scoop bonnet was one with a large brim. It probably got its name from its resemblance to an inverted coal scoop; Julia refers to a "cold scoop bonnet" elsewhere in her diary.
47. Mary Anne Power (1777-1840) was twenty-two years old at this time. She was looking after her infant nephew Nicholas Williams, born 12 May 1799.
48. "Beaufat" was Julia's spelling for a buffet or sideboard.
49. See the Clark letters for a "carpet wove in true Scotch taste in imitation of the Highland plaid," quoted in Ott, "John Innes Clark," 130.
50. Betsey was perhaps Julia's cousin Betsey Brown, who married John Kinnicutt in 1801. Horatio Gates Bowen (1779-1848) was another of Julia's cousins; in 1807 he married Candace Crawford Nightingale, a relative of Sarah Crawford Cook.
51. Abraham L. Clarke was the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Providence from 1793 to 1800.
52. Elizabeth (1787-1811) and Esther (1797-1841) were Julia's sisters; Anna Bowen Mitchell and Eliza Bowen Ward were sisters of Julia's father, Ephraim Bowen, Jr.
53. Avery F. Angell, *Genealogy of the Descendants of Thomas Angell, Who Settled in Providence, 1636* (Providence, 1872), 44-45; William Waterman Chapin, "Genealogy of One Line of the Descendants of Richard Bowen" (RIHS, 1911, typescript), 11. The Nightingale House is now known as the Nightingale-Brown House and houses the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Civilization.
54. The wealthy merchant John Innes Clark (who appears in Susan Lear's diary) was married to another sister of Julia's father.
55. Oliver Bowen, born in 1767, was the son of Jabez Bowen. Rebecca was Rebecca Power (ca. 1780-1860), daughter of Capt. Nicholas Power (1742-1818) and Rebecca Corey. Rebecca Power married Charles James Air in 1803; in 1815, after his death, she married Joseph Leonard Tillinghast, a relation of Lusanna Richmond's husband (see below). Franklin E. Powers, "Genealogical Record of the Power(s) Families" (RIHS, 1974, typescript).
56. Mrs. Whipple, who kept a very fashionable shop on Cheapside (now Constitution Hill) in Providence, sold Dunstable Patent straw bonnets, imported from England. The patent referred to a method of splitting coarse straw to make it braidable. Mrs. Whipple is said to have trimmed the bonnets with great skill. Roger Bowen, "Betsey Baker Was a Bonnet Maker," *Yankee Magazine*, March 1967, 108.
57. This remark dates Betsey's memoir to 1807. John Dexter was the principal of the First District School, held in Whipple Hall; his salary was \$500 a year. See Staples, *Annals*, 508-9. For an account of the founding of the public schools, see Francis X. Russo, "John Howland: Pioneer in the Free School Movement," *Rhode Island History* 37 (1978): 111-22.
58. Betsey's figures were not quite correct; according to Staples, in December 1800 there were 180 students at Whipple Hall, 230 at the Brick Schoolhouse on Meeting Street, 240 at a school on Transit Street, and 338 at a school on the corner of Friendship and Claverick Streets. Staples, *Annals*, 511.
59. Her sister's name was actually Sophia. According to Betsey's diary, she married a "gentleman of engaging manners" in 1806.
60. Established in 1754, the library had occupied a room in the colony's council chamber, where all the books were lost when the building burned down in 1758. The collection was replaced through funds raised by a General Assembly-authorized lottery, and the books were then kept in the Senate chamber of the building now called the Old State House. Staples, *Annals*, 534.
61. *Representative Men*, 2:790.
62. *Ibid.*, 796.
63. Bowen, "Betsey Baker," 108. The essay was published in Providence in 1825.
64. *Ibid.*, 109.
65. The meetinghouse built for James Wilson was the Beneficent Congregational ("Round Top") Church on Weybosset Street. Wilson, an Ulsterman, was passing through Providence in 1791 when he was asked to preach at the Congregational church that then stood on the site; his sermons were a great success, and he was engaged to assist the Reverend Joseph Snow, Jr., the church's minister. When there was a movement to ordain Wilson two years later, Snow objected, because Wilson had formerly been a Methodist minister. A majority of the church's members sided with Wilson, so Snow withdrew and set up his own church, the Richmond Street Congregational Society. Wilson remained minister of the Beneficent Church until his death in 1839 at the age of eighty. See Staples, *Annals*, 449-55.
66. Mary Balch was the daughter of Timothy Balch of Newport, who had served as an ensign in the French and Indian Wars and had left his wife, Mary Osgood Balch, with five young children to support when he died in 1776. Galusha H. Balch, *Genealogy of the Balch Families in America* (Salem, Mass.: Putnam, 1897). For information on the school and the samplers, see Betty Ring, "The Balch School in Providence, Rhode Island," *Antiques* 107 (1975): 660-71.
67. The First Congregational Church, designed by the noted architect Caleb Ormsbee and dedicated in 1795, was on the corner of Benevolent and Benefit Streets, where the First Unitarian Church now stands.
68. Ring, "The Balch School," 671 n. 22, quoting a scrapbook of articles published in the *Providence Journal* in 1883, currently at the RIHS.

66. When the news arrived in Providence, "It was received not only as a great national calamity, as war always is, but as peculiarly calculated to excite sorrow and regret. The bells were tolled and the flags floated at half mast." Staples, *Annals*, 376.
70. See David A. Rochefort, "Three Centuries of Care of the Mentally Disabled in Rhode Island and the Nation, 1650-1950," *Rhode Island History* 40 (1981): 114.
71. In 1800 Moses Noyes was first principal of the Brick Schoolhouse, on Meeting Street, one of Providence's first public schools. He later taught at the George Street Academy, where his pupils included the sons of the town's leading merchants, and in 1810 he opened his own school for "young ladies." James N. Arnold, ed., "The Old Schools of Providence," *Narragansett Historical Register* 5 (1886-87): 234-36 (facsimile edition published by Heritage Books, Bowie, Md, 1996). Thomas Williams was the beleaguered pastor of the Richmond Street Congregational Church. In perpetual dispute with members of his congregation, he finally resigned in 1816. Staples, *Annals*, 459.
72. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), *Lives of the Poets*, published 1779-81; Mrs. Jane West (1788?-1852), *The Refusal*, published 1810.
73. Jane Fletcher Fiske, *Thomas Cooke of Rhode Island* (Boxford, Mass.: J. F. Fiske, 1987), 1:220; *Ship Registers and Enrollments of Providence, Rhode Island, 1773-1939* (Providence: National Archives Project, 1941), 2:1092-93.
74. I.e., took tea.
75. Probably Mathewson's; see 14 July entry.
76. Josiah Kinnecut, a friend of the Allen family, kept a tavern about a quarter mile north of the Congregational meetinghouse in Barrington. Several of the diarists mention stopping there. See Thomas Williams Bicknell, *A History of Barrington* (Providence: Snow & Farnum, 1898), 573-74.
77. Pomham is a rocky island on the East Providence side of the Providence River, north of Sabin Point.
78. It was west of North Main Street and south of Branch Avenue, on the Moshassuck River. See Theodore Anton Sande, "The Architecture of the Rhode Island Textile Industry, 1790-1860" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1972).
79. Dr. Fiske had been one of Dr. William Bowen's trainees.
80. Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Bowen were members of the town's elite; Henry Edes was pastor of the Benevolent Congregational Church.
81. Nathan Bourne Crocker was rector of St. John's Episcopal Church.
82. See note 67. The wooden church was soon replaced by a slightly larger granite building designed by John H. Greene, which was dedicated in October 1816. It is now the First Unitarian Church.
83. Staples, *Annals*, 378.
84. Willard, *Providence Stage*, 80.
85. Fiske, *Thomas Cooke*, 220.
86. Esther Forbes, *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942; reprint, 1962), 404.
87. For genealogical information, see Joshua Bailey Richmond, *The Richmond Family, 1594-1896* (Boston, 1897).
88. The child, christened George Augustus Richmond, died in Havana on 13 November 1838.
89. Samuel Parker Hale's *Review of the Life and Fragments of Miss Elizabeth Smith (1776-1806)* was published in Boston in 1810.
90. David Ramsay, M.D., *Memoirs of the Life of Martha Laurens Ramsay who Died in Charleston S.C. on the 10th of June 1811 in the 52nd Year of her Age*, 2nd. ed. (Charlestown, Mass., 1812).
91. According to a recent authority, Edward Young's 300+-page poem *The Complaint: or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742) "was for over a century one of the most influential, praised and well-known poems in the English language. . . . It became a seminal work in a secular cult of sepulchral melancholy. . . . and, during the years of the Methodist and Evangelical revivals and throughout the early nineteenth century, the poem became a standard devotional work, reinforcing conversion as the central metaphor of Christian believing." Stephen Cornford, ed., *Edward Young's Night Thoughts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), ix.
92. Caroline Richmond died in 1886.
93. See Brown and Walton, *John Brown's Tract*, 202-58.
94. Sixteen-year-old Henry Smith, a student at Brown University, was the son of merchant Henry Smith and Abby Crawford Smith and a cousin of both Agnes Herreshoff and Sarah Crawford Cook.
95. Angell, *Descendants of Thomas Angell*, 145-47.
96. *Representative Men*, 1:613-14.
97. These were Ann Carter Brown (1795-1828), who married Agnes's cousin John Brown Francis in 1822, and Nicholas Brown (1792-1859), who married another cousin, Abby Mason, in 1820. They were children of Agnes's uncle Nicholas Brown.
98. Aunt Ives was the Hope Brown mentioned in Susan Lear's diary.
99. Grandmama, Sarah Smith Brown, was eighty-three years old at this time.

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