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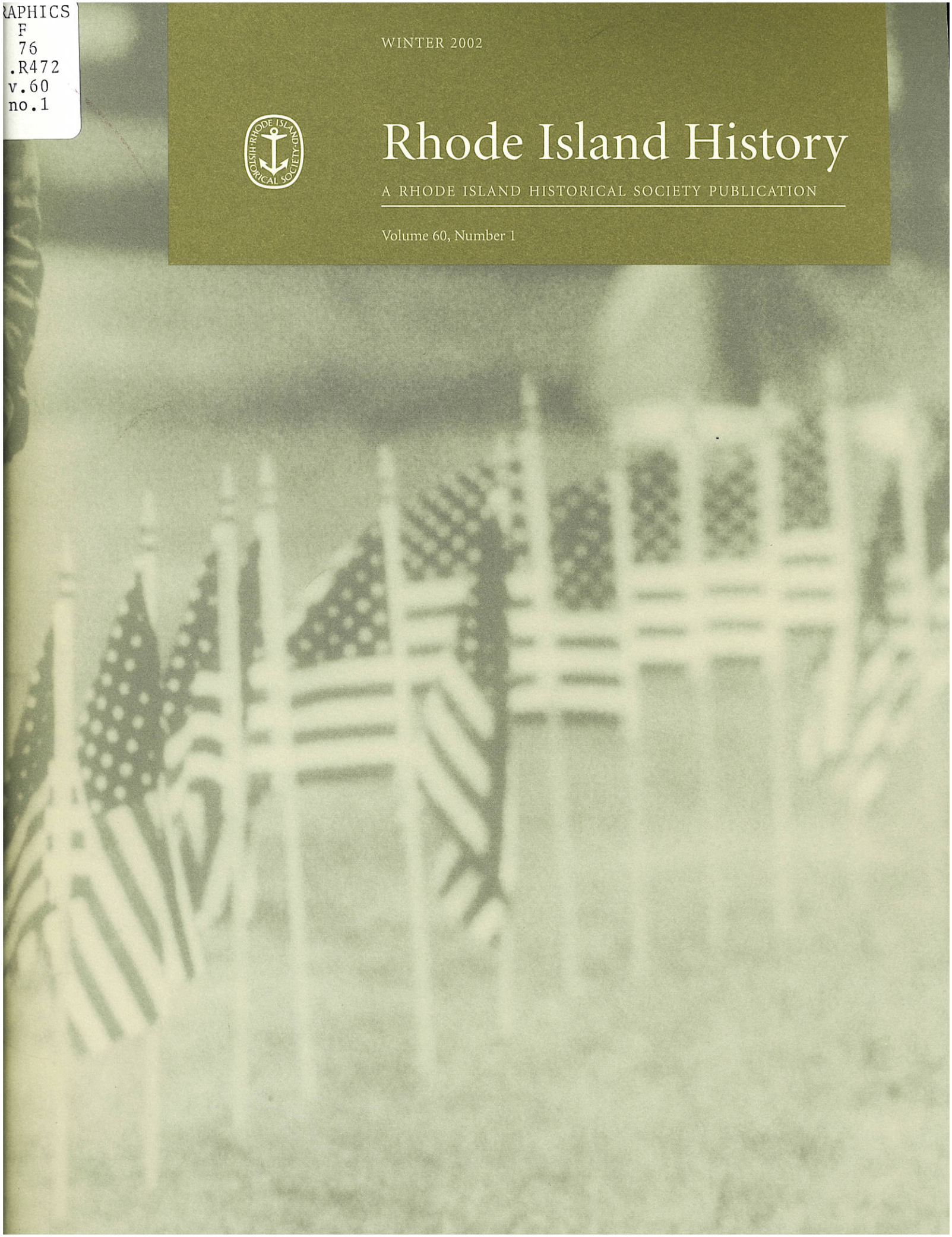

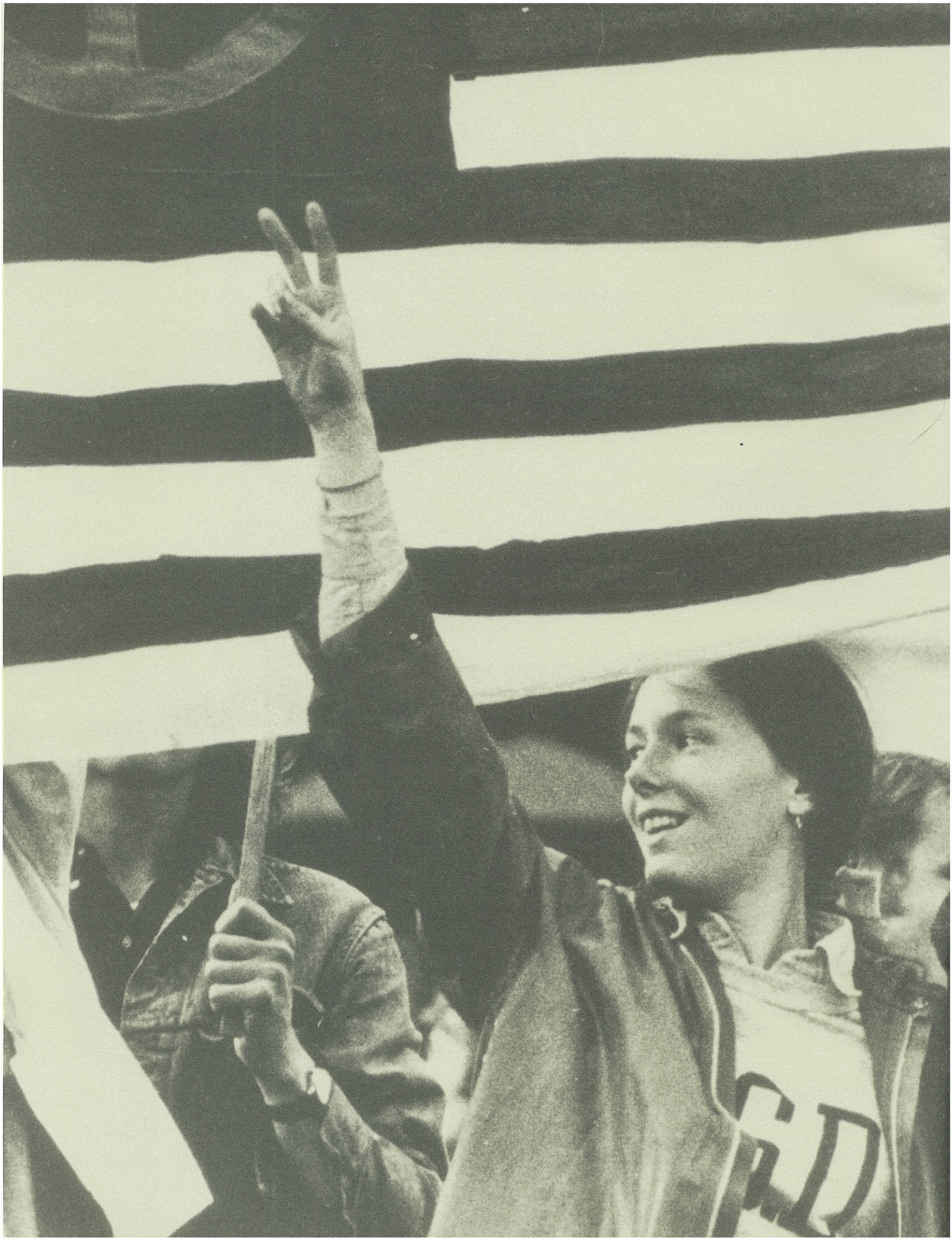

Support Unseen: Rhode Island and the Vietnam War, 1965-1973

ANDREW J. HUEBNER

On 24 January 1973, just as the United States was extricating itself from the Vietnam War, several wounded Vietnam veterans from Rhode Island gathered with a reporter to discuss their expectations of the American public.[1] Peter Monahan of Cranston had been wounded several times in Vietnam, then hit by friendly fire and rendered a paraplegic. Monahan mustered a degree of optimism as he alluded to the support he hoped would come from his country. "When I get up in the morning," Monahan told the reporter from the *Providence Evening Bulletin,* "I have to say, 'Well, society, here I come again!'" Ray Quinlan of East Providence was less sanguine as he asked a question that seemed simple, but that has produced no simple answer in nearly three decades. Quinlan wondered about the American public: "When they needed us we were there. Now when we need them will they be there?"[2]

Quinlan's question informs the central concern of this article: To what extent did Rhode Islanders publicly support American servicemen and veterans during the nation's involvement in the Vietnam War, and just what did *support* mean? Scholars, veterans, journalists, and politicians have all weighed in on the question of support, with decidedly little in the way of consensus and with much in the way of ideological baggage.

One way to approach this problem a generation later is to explore the public attitudes and actions of two groups in regard to Vietnam veterans and servicemen in Vietnam: the antiwar movement and the vocal public. Members of the antiwar movement belonged to any of the Rhode Island antiwar organizations (which varied in agenda and composition over the course of the war) or appeared alongside them during public demonstrations. The vocal public, also ideologically diverse, included citizens who made their views known in identifiable ways—through letters to the editor, letters to congressmen, public tributes to veterans, responses to polls, and so forth—but did not necessarily belong to antiwar organizations (though there was some overlapping between the two groups). Whether the views of these groups accurately reflected those of the population at large is difficult to determine. In any case, this study will focus on the *visible* and *publicly expressed* attitudes toward servicemen and veterans of the time.

What did it mean to *support* the troops? As I will interpret it, support had less to do with favoring the war effort as a whole than with engaging in activities of benefit to servicemen, veterans, or their families; for example, organizing blood drives or gift-giving campaigns for troops in Vietnam, sending letters to Congress or local newspapers expressing sympathy for the suffering of those troops, or arranging public memorial ceremonies for those killed in the war. This study, then, will be more than an account of public opinion; it will examine public action as well.

Many Americans—particularly those who believed that our intervention in Vietnam was justified—would not have accepted this notion of support. During the late 1960s

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A student demonstrator on the campus of Brown University, 1971. Courtesy of the John Hay Library, University Achives, Brown University.

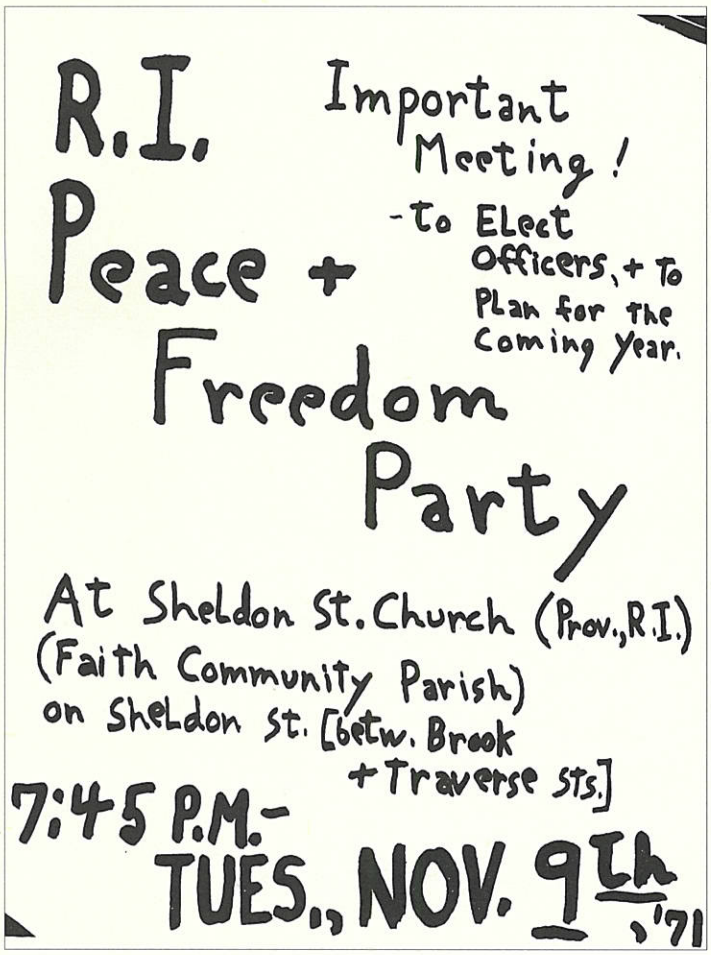
and early 1970s, as the antiwar movement became almost as unpopular as the war itself, protests against the war were increasingly seen as unsupportive of American servicemen, sapping the morale of troops in the field, demeaning their patriotic service, and encouraging the enemy to continue fighting. But even if antiwar activists were "unsupportive" in this sense, they extended other forms of support to our troops, not the least of which was the effort to bring them home from the war. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that many of the actions described here would not have been recognized as supportive by a considerable part of the American population.

Among historians, journalists, and veterans, there are essentially two schools of thought regarding America's support for its troops in Vietnam. The more conservative of the two schools has held that antiwar activists did not support the troops, and at times directly undermined them by glorifying the enemy and disparaging the American military. The other school, generally more liberal, has stressed that antiwar activists opposed the war but did not hold American soldiers responsible for it, and has rejected the notion that antiwar activists were unpatriotic or subversive. In both cases, observers have paid far closer attention to the organized antiwar movement than to the public at large.[3]

Several scholars have made the conservative argument—that the antiwar movement had myriad negative effects on the American war effort. Guenter Lewy has stressed that the North Vietnamese appreciated American dissent, and that the protesters helped to sap military morale and lead America toward withdrawal after 1970.[4] Peter Collier and David Horowitz have discussed the efforts by the American Left to "demoralize U.S. troops in the field and create disorder and disruption at home."[5] Various authors have claimed that Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, whose presidencies bracketed the main American military involvement in the war, found the antiwar movement detrimental to the war effort and disdainful of loyal American troops.[6]

Along the same ideological lines, in 1996 a columnist for the *Providence Journal* discussed a new Vietnam memorial planned for the University of Rhode Island. In his column, "Veterans Journal," Dave McCarthy thought the monument ironic, since "the college campuses were, of course, the hotbeds of antiwar sentiment during the Vietnam years." This statement implied that because antiwar activists had favored peace, they could not have favored memorializing those who died in Vietnam. Thus a new Vietnam monument at URI signaled "a huge shift in attitudes," said McCarthy. In 1999 Mackubin Thomas Owens, a professor at the Naval War College in Newport and columnist for the *Providence Journal,* echoed this view. He called the claim that antiwar protesters had supported the troops in Vietnam a "revisionist lie."[7]

A large number of Vietnam veterans from Rhode Island have also reproached antiwar protesters—and the public—for a lack of support. The war years saw increasing bitterness among veterans and American troops still in Vietnam toward stateside attitudes, especially after 1967. "The country isn't supporting the boys in Vietnam," declared a Rhode Island veteran in October 1968. "The thing that really bugged me," said a former marine from Pawtucket in late 1969, "was the protesters; a few of my old buddies now going to college and who didn't want to go to war. I'd say they are Yippies with long hair." In 1972 a veteran from Woonsocket charged that the war effort had been "sold out by a country that supported the war not too many years ago," and a reporter for the *Providence Journal* observed that a certain veteran's "fellow citizens may not be as interested in the [war] medals as they might have been five years ago."[8] In *Homecoming,* a compilation of letters from veterans, Bob Greene has collected the stories of scores of former soldiers from around the country who remember not only a lack of support but a decidedly abusive reception back home (though these stories are balanced by those of a large number of veterans who do *not* recall such abuse).[9]



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Prominent on the other side of the debate has been the late historian Charles DeBenedetti. He and Charles Chatfield have argued that the Nixon administration, motivated by a general paranoia about its real and imagined enemies, deliberately characterized antiwar protesters as hostile, anti-American radicals. As the 1960s drew to a close, members of the left-wing antiwar movement did, in fact, become increasingly anti-American and in some cases violent, contributing both to the credibility of Nixon's charges and to the demise of the Left itself. Nonetheless, argue DeBenedetti and Chatfield, Nixon exaggerated the hostility and subversiveness of the antiwar movement as a whole; "In spite of lacking concrete evidence, the Nixon administration consistently identified antiwar protesters with domestic violence and terrorism."[10] In a description of the 1967 march on the Pentagon, Marilyn Young describes the protesters as in no way hostile to servicemen: "Throughout the night, as they did on other marches, demonstrators appealed to the armed young men who faced them to join the protest, insisting that they were not protesting against them but against the warmakers who had pitted demonstrators and soldiers against each other."[11] "Most people in the peace movement did not hate veterans," writes Christian Appy.[12]

Some Rhode Island veterans have agreed that the antiwar movement and the public did not undermine or disparage the troops. Before 1968, active troops from the state occasionally expressed their gratitude for sympathy or public aid. "We Marines do honestly appreciate the thought and consideration that you people back home show for us," wrote a marine in response to a batch of letters from Cranston schoolchildren in 1966.[13] "I can't remember anyone who was not supportive of me at the time," a Rhode Island veteran recently recalled.[14] However, among a sampling of statements by Rhode Island veterans, the majority lamented the *absence* of support at home—perhaps in large measure because of continuing disagreement over what "support" actually meant.[15]

The problem with both schools of thought is that they tend to assume a monolithic antiwar movement and a monolithic American public. Many in each camp also fail to provide concrete evidence to support their positions, rely too heavily on their own memories of the period, or neglect to differentiate between different sorts of antiwar protesters. Finally, few authors, if any, attempt to define what "supporting the troops" entailed. In fact, much of the disagreement over whether or not antiwar protesters or the public supported the troops reflects debate over the merits of the war itself, and thus devolves into debate over the meaning of the word "support." In what follows, I will attempt to avoid that semantic quagmire by using the word as cautiously as possible.

In 1970 there were 948,845 people living in Rhode Island, 87 percent of them in urban areas; 97 percent of the population was white. Of those over the age of twenty-five, 46 percent had completed four years of high school and 9 percent had completed four years of college, both below the national percentages (52 percent and 11 percent respectively). Rhode Island's four-year college completion rate placed the state roughly between Massachusetts (13 percent) and Kentucky (7 percent).[16] Yet proportionally

more voting-age Rhode Islanders turned out for the 1968 presidential election than in the country as a whole: 60 percent in Rhode Island against 54 percent in the wider electorate.[17] The Democratic candidate in that election, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, submitted a bewildering and ever-changing set of proposals for limiting the war, and still garnered 64 percent of the Rhode Island vote.[18] Nationally, 43 percent of voters gave Richard Nixon, the Republican candidate, the presidency by a razor-thin margin. During the war years Rhode Islanders elected Senators Claiborne Pell and John O. Pastore, Democrats with antiwar sympathies, by wide margins.[19]

Socioeconomically, America's smallest state constituted something of a microcosm of the country during the Vietnam War. Just over half of the employed population of Rhode Island worked in blue-collar jobs in 1970. Income distribution closely resembled that of American society as a whole, with large working and middle classes and a low percentage of residents in the highest and lowest income brackets. Twenty-nine percent of families earned between $10,000 and $14,999, the state's most heavily populated income bracket. This statistic, along with Rhode Island's per capita income and median family income, mirrored national figures.[20]

In general, the vocal public, antiwar activists, and members of the military each occupied different parts of the state's socioeconomic spectrum. Those in the military usually came from the working or middle classes. Of the veterans Frank Grzyb studied for his recent book, only one in five now occupies a status higher than middle class.[21] Lawrence Baskir and William Strauss have noted that low-income draft-age Americans had a 19 percent chance of going to Vietnam, Americans of the same age from the middle-income bracket had a 12 percent chance, and high-income Americans had just a 9 percent chance.[22] Especially before 1969, when the draft was most active, selective service disproportionately tapped the working classes by exempting college students.[23]

Antiwar activists in Rhode Island, on the other hand, were generally in the middle- to upper-middle classes.[24] Occupationally, most were among the elite; depending on which organizations sponsored an event, antiwar marchers could include doctors, professors, clergymen, and college students. Others, such as high school students, single mothers, and public school teachers, also participated in such demonstrations, but only to a limited extent.

Members of the vocal public—people who acted publicly on their views of the Vietnam War but did not necessarily participate in organized demonstrations for or against it—were fairly heterogeneous, but on the whole they tended to be of the middle class. Participants in such activities as memorial services and petition drives commonly included middle-class housewives, community college students, and high school teachers, as well as families of drafted servicemen. While some elites and working-class Rhode Islanders were involved in activities of this sort, together they probably constituted no more than a minority of the vocal public.[25]

Contrary to some stereotypes about the home front during the Vietnam era, there is abundant evidence of the vocal public's sympathy and appreciation for servicemen and veterans. Senator Claiborne Pell, a vocal antiwar figure, received thousands of letters that commiserated with the soldiers,[26] and the *Providence Journal* gave voice to the same concerns more publicly in letters to the editor, feature articles, and editorials. Beyond such written expressions of compassion, Rhode Islanders made appreciative public gestures through memorial ceremonies and pro-soldier rallies, and as the troops trickled back into civilian life, citizens offered assistance in the process of readjustment. These three kinds of sympathy—rhetoric, symbolic gesture, and tangible assistance—were

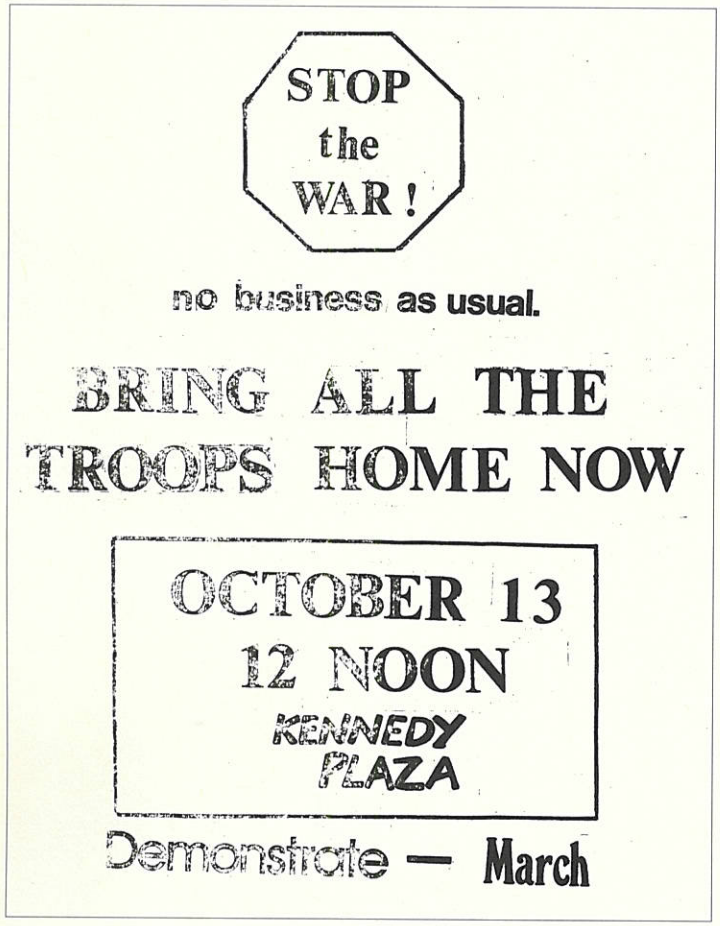
Claiborne Pell (left) interviewed by James Gleason on a WJAR television news program. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 7444).

extended to servicemen and veterans throughout the war, even when the wider public turned against the war in the last year of Lyndon Johnson's presidency.

Rhode Islanders expressed compassion for soldiers most commonly through antiwar rhetoric. Many vocal citizens demonstrated a basic interest in the well-being of servicemen by calling for an immediate military pullout from Vietnam. "It is about time our boys came back," a constituent wrote to Senator Pell as early as 1963. "Fifty-eight killed for what. . . . we know it is not many—but each family of these 58 boys feel their own sorrow."[27] By 1965 and 1966, when most Americans supported the intervention in Vietnam, some Rhode Islanders recorded their frustration with the government's "confusion" and "moral debacle," "the reckless Pentagon approach," the military's "meaningless involvement," and an official policy "difficult to understand."[28] As early as mid-1965 Pell himself concluded from letters he had received from hundreds of state residents that "intervention in Vietnam is very unpopular."[29]

A stronger kind of language sympathetic to American servicemen appeared early in the war and remained prevalent for the duration of Johnson's presidency (1963-69). This rhetoric said explicitly what simple antiwar messages had said implicitly: *Bring the troops home.* In 1966 a constituent asked Senator Pell to "Use everything in your power to save our boys and return them to useful lives" and warned that Vietnam would turn

these young men into "mental and physical wrecks." A handwritten note of the same year asked, "How many sons do Mr. Johnson, Mr. Rusk or Mr. Humphrey have fighting in the war?" and a *Providence Journal* editorial implored Rhode Islanders to turn their thoughts to "those who will be lost." One Brown student thought the government should apologize "to the youth . . . whose lives are directed by swollen draft calls." Many were careful to make a distinction between the managers of the war and those who had to fight it. A letter to the *Providence Journal* in March 1966 said it clearly: "Support and affection for young American boys is not to be confused with support of an administration and its foreign policy."[30]



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Beyond rhetoric, various sorts of memorials, often organized by distinct communities, constituted the most common appreciative gestures. In 1966 the Rhode Island House of Representatives passed a resolution urging the secretary of state to maintain a memorial honor roll for Rhode Islanders killed in Vietnam; the town council of North Providence considered inaugurating a similar honor roll for that town's residents; the Interfraternity Council of the University of Rhode Island organized a blood drive for soldiers in Vietnam; and the Roger Williams VHF Society in Providence arranged for family members to contact troops from a mobile radio in Kennedy Plaza.[31] Throughout the war the *Providence Journal* informed its readers of veterans' decorations, homecomings, injuries, and deaths, and it consistently published editorials and letters sympathetic to servicemen.[32] The *Woonsocket Call* updated its readers on the status of Rhode Islanders in Vietnam through its "In Uniform" feature.[33]

During 1967 the frequency and force of antiwar rhetoric increased just as opinion polls began to show a significant public turn against President Johnson's handling of the war—though most Americans still supported the war effort.[34] Now larger numbers of Rhode Islanders insisted that the United States remove its troops from an increasingly destructive war. In October 1967 a navy lieutenant commander's wife, formerly in favor of the war, urged Senator Pell to advocate withdrawal from Vietnam partly because of the toll on "so many of our draftees and so many of those poor Asiatics."[35] Scores of letter writers echoed her concern as the war escalated in 1966 and 1967.[36]

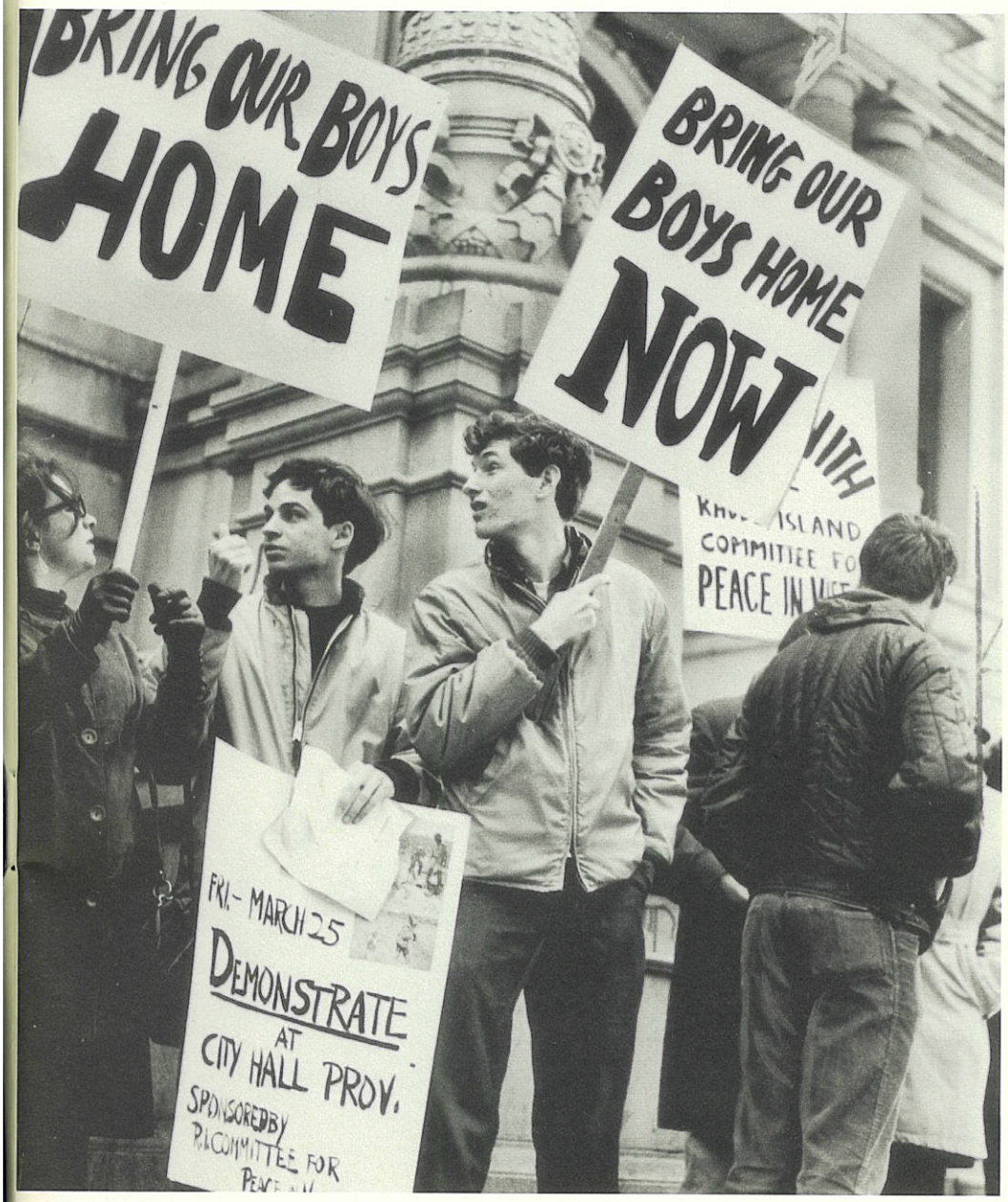
Concerns also surfaced in the press. An editorial in the *Providence Journal* in early 1967 described the damage inflicted on the Vietnamese landscape and people, but refrained from criticizing the American soldiers themselves. Reflecting on reports that the army had outfitted its troops with defective M-16 rifles, an editorial in the *Woonsocket Call* in November of that year asked how such reports would look "to the boys fighting in Vietnam." On a lighter note, late in 1967 the *Newport Daily News* printed several letters suggesting what sort of Christmas gifts might be sent to American servicemen in Vietnam.[37] During this period the *Westerly Sun* ran a daily front-page column, "Write a Letter to Viet Nam," that asked the families of servicemen to submit the addresses of soldiers in Vietnam so that "local people can write to local service men and women."

Isolated amongst all the evidence of persistent public sympathy for veterans and servicemen was a single instance of outright nastiness. Late in the summer of 1967 a short editorial in the *Providence Journal* castigated a "sad specimen of humankind" who had telephoned the family of a dead American soldier for the "wretched purpose of harass-

ment." The caller had apparently subjected the serviceman's family to a vicious diatribe against American troops. The editorial called for all "decent Rhode Islanders" to join in offering sympathy to the bereaved relatives, and it went on to reassure readers that the incident "appears to be isolated locally."[38] A detestable phone call thus became an occasion for community solidarity.

On occasion such solidarity could appear in plain view on city streets in the form of rallies in behalf of American servicemen. In late 1967 the town of Woonsocket arranged a "demonstration in support of servicemen in Vietnam," to which it invited the governor, the mayor, state legislators, state drum and bugle corps, members of the armed forces, high school bands, and "fraternal, civic, and social organizations in the area."[39]

At this point in the story—early 1968—events unfolded in Vietnam that would have a major impact on American attitudes toward the war, toward Lyndon Johnson, and toward U.S. armed forces. Although the North Vietnamese Tet offensive of January 1968 resulted in an overwhelming military victory for the American and South Vietnamese forces, the attack initially caught the Americans off guard; worse, television viewers in the United States witnessed chaotic street fighting and disturbing interviews with disgruntled American marines in the midst of battle. The fact that the North Vietnamese took enormous casualties did not prevent the offensive from eroding confidence in President Johnson and turning increasing numbers among the American public against the war.[40] Both trends had started in 1967, even as a majority of Americans still found the war (according to a Gallup poll) "morally justified," but in 1968 public confidence in Johnson crumbled.[41]

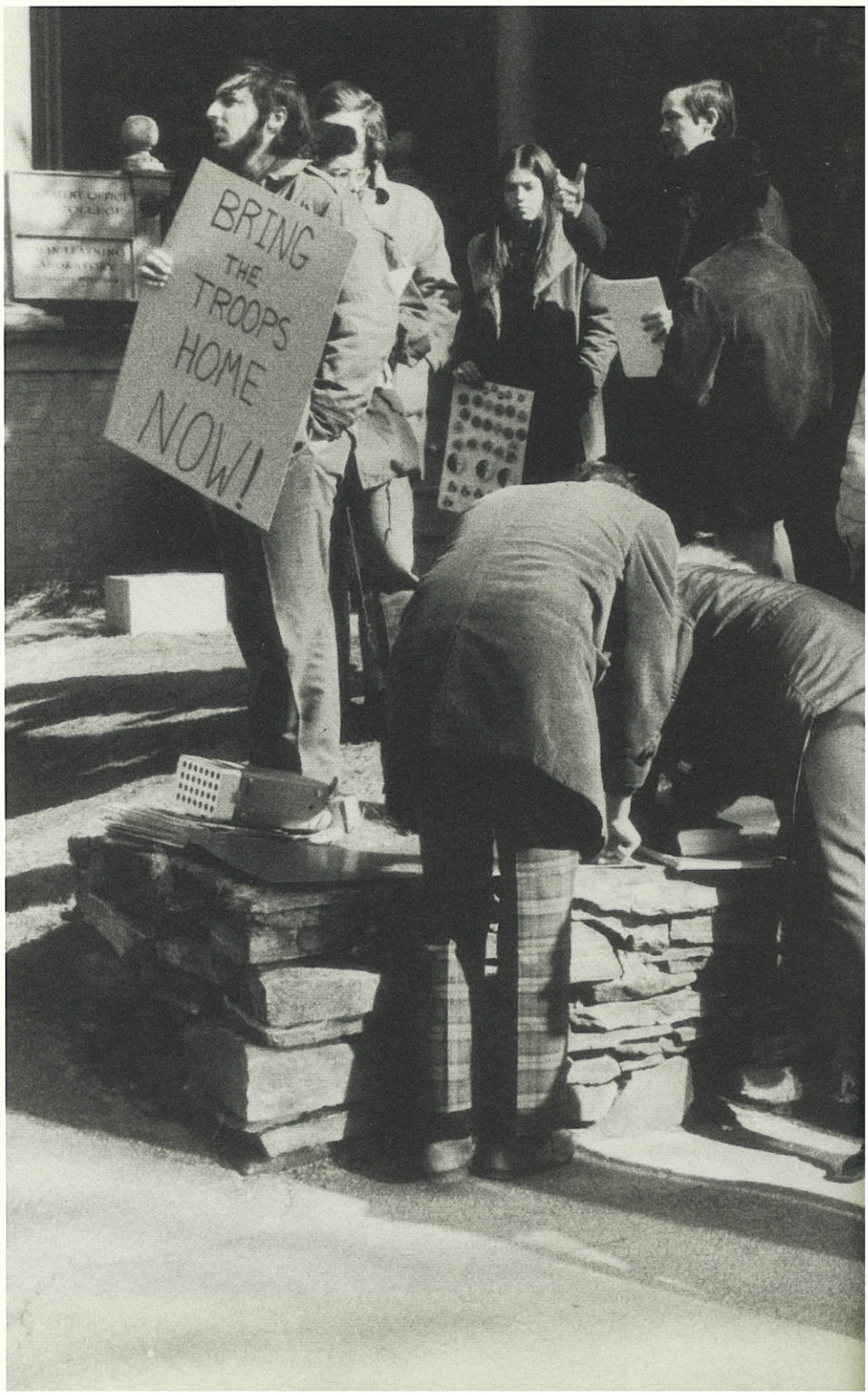


Demonstrators from the Rhode Island Committee for Peace in Vietnam, 25 March 1966. Courtesy of the Providence Journal.

Yet vocal Rhode Islanders continued to express sympathy for the troops themselves, even as they lost faith in the military or the government. After Tet, several citizens expressed their broadening dissatisfaction by calling the war "morally wrong," "a crime against humanity," and an impeachable "military take-over" (charges from a college professor, a medical student, and a family of "nine adults of voting age" from Block Island respectively).[42] Much of this opposition to military policy made a distinction between the managers of the war and the soldiers entrusted with its execution. A long, wrenching letter in early 1968 advised Senator Pell that "we Rhode Islanders are funny people when it comes to our grandsons being cannon fodder in Vietnam." Significantly, this citizen objected more to the plight of American soldiers—

subjected to reckless military strategy and substandard provisions—than to the war itself.[43] In November 1968 the *Westerly Sun* editorially lambasted President Johnson's alleged political calculation in ordering a bombing halt right before the presidential election. He should have ordered it earlier, the paper argued, simply because it would have saved "hundreds of American lives."[44] A steady stream of words, whether in support of the war or opposed to it, mourned the loss of young American lives.[45]

Some of the strongest gestures of public sympathy came in the post-Tet period, when more and more Americans believed that sending troops to Vietnam had been a mistake,



Brown University students rally against the war, 16 March 1970. Courtesy of the Providence Journal.

and when the morale of American servicemen was steadily worsening.[46] After similar initiatives in North Providence, late in 1968 two hundred residents of Cranston gathered to dedicate a memorial to marine Pfc. Kevin C. Hanley, "planned by a special Vietnam memorials committee," the second such monument erected in the town. Seventy-five people assembled in Providence for a comparable dedication the next year, trumpeted in a newspaper headline as a "Memorial Dedicated to Marine Hero."[47] In 1969 Rhode Island chapters of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Jaycees planned a monthlong program "to express citizen support for servicemen in Vietnam." A spokesman for the Military Order specifically stated that the program was "*not* designed to express support for the Vietnam War, but to boost the morale of the American servicemen who are fighting" (emphasis added).[48]

Warwick constructed its own memorial to fallen American servicemen in 1970. It was unveiled at a baseball field under the direction of the Continental Little League. Senator John Pastore spoke at the tearful ceremony, asking the gathered crowd to contemplate "the sacrifice of those who trudge the mud of the jungles of Vietnam so young boys can play ball in peace on this field." Meanwhile, a Democratic state representative had introduced a resolution asking all Rhode Island communities to fly flags at half-staff in honor of dead servicemen. The representative, Henry Pachero, claimed that such a tribute would be unique, though in fact officially mandated honors like the one he proposed were somewhat common.[49]

In an effort to involve the state government in opposition to the war, in April 1970 the Rhode Island Methodist Association passed a resolution urging the state to prohibit the deployment of its citizens into an undeclared war.[50] In March 1972 the wife of a prisoner of war commended the Rhode Island General Assembly for its bill establishing an education fund for children of POWs. By then the plight of POWs had become a major issue. In December the Quonset Point Officers' Club organized a candlelight ceremony honoring POWs and those servicemen missing in action.[51] Although some gestures of this kind evolved under the sponsorship of military organizations, such organizations consistently made an effort (almost always successful) to attract civilian participation.

Just days after the cease-fire in January 1973, the *Providence Journal* furnished Vietnam veterans with advice on readjustment to civilian life from former soldiers of World War II and the Korean War. The *Pawtucket Times* ran a series of articles on the readjustment of POWs, including one that warned wives about the difficulties of reintroducing a father to his children. That June a *Journal* article lauded the efforts of a Vietnam veteran who helped fellow veterans "cut red tape" upon returning home.[52] Reports on the efforts of Rhode Islanders who worked to smooth veterans' reentry into society—examples of both rhetorical sympathy and tangible assistance—appeared more and more frequently in the local press, culminating a decade's worth of similar actions by vocal Rhode Islanders.

During the years from 1963 to 1973, and alongside the declining popularity of the war, vocal Rhode Islanders offered consistent public sympathy for servicemen and returning veterans. By pen and by deed, these citizens provided what was most wanted: supportive words, public displays of appreciation, and material services. During the Johnson administration, sympathy was expressed mainly through increasingly forceful antiwar language; with Nixon's election came an expansion of more tangible services (such as blood drives); but sympathetic support of both types persisted throughout the conflict. When veterans complained bitterly about the lack of support, however, they pointed most accusingly at the antiwar movement. For many veterans, the mere act of protesting the war was plainly "unsupportive."

Even more so than the general public, Vietnam-era antiwar protesters have faced serious charges of unsupportive behavior. Literature on the antiwar movement often conjures up visions of Jane Fonda and Vietcong flags, evoking allegations of treason and subversion. Yet antiwar activists in Rhode Island sympathized with American servicemen just as consistently as the vocal public did, particularly through their demonstrations—even as the activists were attracting criticism from many veterans and proponents of the war for opposing the American presence in Vietnam. Antiwar protesters also expressed their appreciation for the plight of U.S. troops through pamphlets, petition drives, and newspaper advertisements.

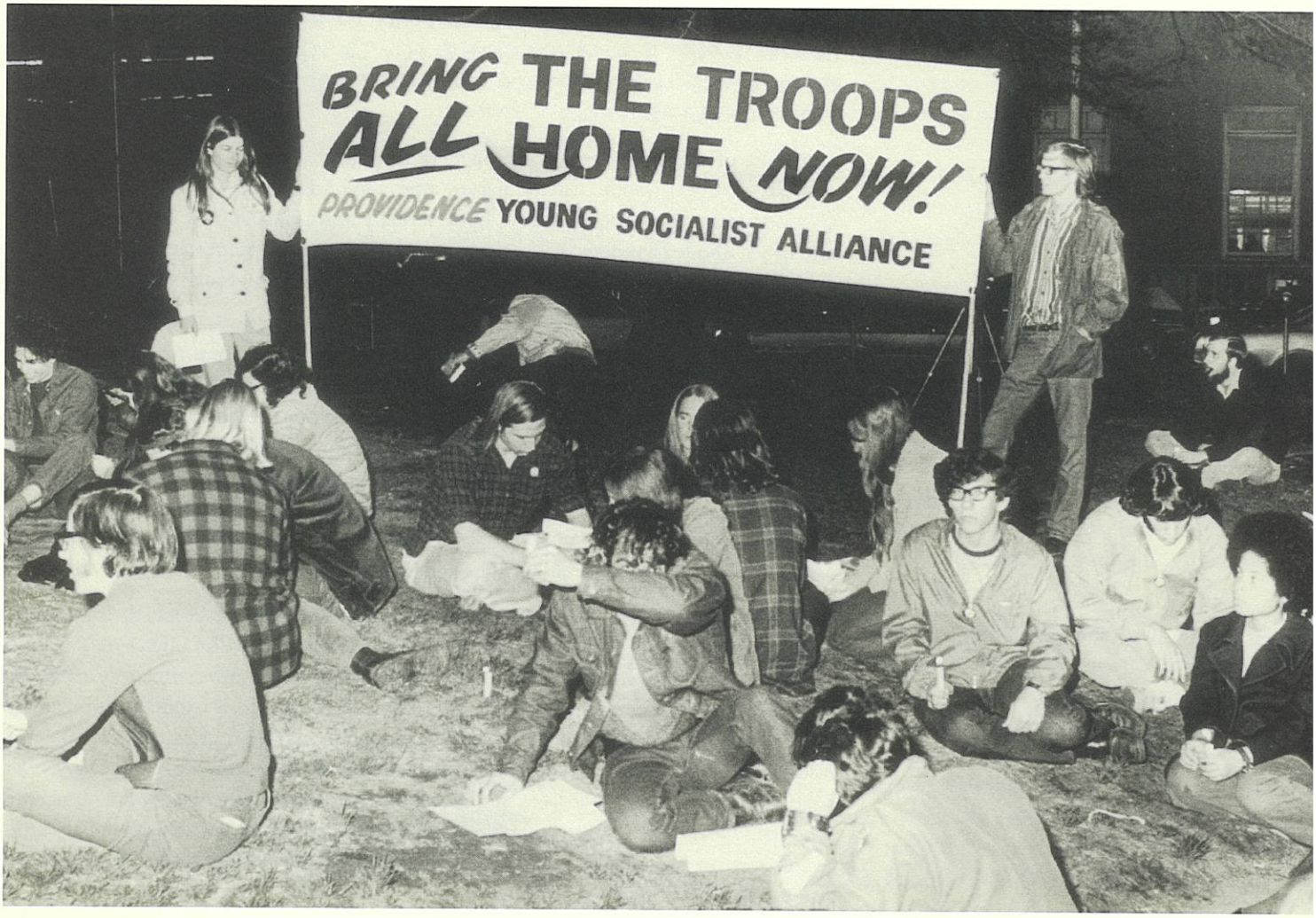
Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield have identified several stages through which Vietnam-era antiwar efforts passed. They label the period from the early 1960s to 1966 one of "gathering opposition," during which time national antiwar activities (including those in Rhode Island) gradually increased in strength. Then, from 1967 through 1970 or so, came a shift to "political confrontation" and resistance; here, too, Rhode Island followed the national model. Finally, after 1970, the movement graduated to political "normalization" through figures like George McGovern, Robert Drinan, and Bella Abzug, all of whom ran political campaigns based on opposition to the Vietnam War.[53] At this point the national model requires an adjustment for Rhode Island: in Rhode Island the antiwar movement had enjoyed some degree of political normalization, in the form of Senators Claiborne Pell and John Pastore, since the beginning of the conflict.

In general, the state's antiwar movement was not as radical, sizable, or vocal as comparable movements elsewhere.[54] The Rhode Island Committee for Peace in Vietnam and the Providence Peace Action Committee organized the majority of the demonstrations against the war,[55] which occurred more regularly on Rhode Island's streets than on its campuses. To the chagrin of many students, Brown University lagged behind some of its Ivy League counterparts in antiwar radicalism.[56] "A newly formed group is trying to prove that activism is not dead on the Brown campus," the *Brown Daily Herald* reported in 1966. The next year one *Herald* editorial referred to the "well-meaning but inept New

Left" on campus, and another bemoaned the "quiet campus."[57] Antiwar activities occurred with some frequency at the University of Rhode Island, but a sizable prowar contingent there regularly disrupted them.[58]

A beleaguered new group at Brown—the Campus Action Council (CAC)—specifically rejected association with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) for fear of "affiliating with such a 'radical' organization."[59] Brown's spotty antiwar protests were generally well-behaved, although there were some exceptions. When the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Earle Wheeler, spoke at the school in 1966, several students hissed, walked out, and eventually returned to rush the stage, and a few were arrested. The perpetrators of this widely censured protest were members of Brown's defunct chapter of SDS, which folded at the school during the latter half of 1966.[60] CAC-sponsored protests were more orderly, usually involving faculty antiwar figures like history professor William McLoughlin.[61] Otherwise, college students in Rhode Island often flocked to antiwar demonstrations in downtown Providence, or they journeyed to Boston or New York for more lively protests.

During the years of "gathering opposition," antiwar activists in Rhode Island offered servicemen tacit sympathy through the drive to bring them home. Signs at a demonstration in Providence in early 1966 advised policy makers to "Negotiate with the Viet Cong" and to heed Pope Paul VI's call for "no more war, war never again"; a peace vigil on the State House steps urged the government to "End the War in Viet Nam"; an SDS



This was one of the groups that gathered in Kennedy Plaza, Providence, on 5 May 1971 to mourn the killing of four students at an antiwar demonstration at Kent State University a year earlier. Courtesy of the Providence Journal.

member from Brown was quoted by the *Providence Journal* as declaring, "I believe we should let the Vietnamese solve their own problems."[62] As these activists made no direct mention of American servicemen, they refrained from criticizing the troops for the ruin of Vietnam. Newspaper photographs generally testify to the nonconfrontational nature of antiwar demonstrations during this period.

Other demonstrations in 1966 expressed more explicit sympathy for American servicemen. In March a peace activist carried a large sign reading "Support Our Boys; Bring Them Home." That summer, under the auspices of the Rhode Island Committee for Peace in Vietnam and the Providence Peace Action Committee, about eighty men, women, and children marched through downtown Providence with cardboard placards imploring "End the War in Vietnam, Bring Troops Home" and "Support Our Boys, Bring Them Home." Speaking at the rally, Lyncoln Lynch, national vice chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality, demanded that President Johnson "bring our sons home."[63] For these activists, the American infantryman was the central tragic figure around whom their opposition revolved—and "supporting" him meant campaigning to bring him home.

True to DeBenedetti and Chatfield's model, after 1966 Rhode Island antiwar efforts took a decidedly confrontational turn; yet sympathy for servicemen and veterans intensified along with the force of the demonstrations. During the summer of 1967 the Rhode Island Committee for Peace in Vietnam circulated a statement of purpose, which appeared in a newspaper advertisement and provided the language for a petition later that year: "This is what we say: WE SUPPORT OUR BOYS. This is why we URGE SENATOR PELL TO DO ALL IN HIS POWER TO BRING THE WAR TO AN END, TO BRING OUR BOYS HOME, AND TO RETURN VIET-NAM TO THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE."[64]

Language of this sort clearly developed in response to the backlash against antiwar activists that occurred across the nation after 1965.[65] From 1965 on, antiwar demonstrations were sometimes attacked, both verbally and physically, by Vietnam veterans and other Rhode Islanders. Such attacks may have reflected resentment against student protesters who were, until 1969, institutionally protected from the draft.[66]

Even Senator Claiborne Pell had criticized antiwar demonstrations in 1965, calling them "a disservice to the men who are fighting so bravely to preserve our interests."[67] In October 1965 a peace vigil at the University of Rhode Island had "braved rain and flying missiles"; early the following year a similar gathering in Providence ended when the protesters were set upon "by a group of about 18 high school youngsters who tore five placards." In March 1966 a group of sailors and passing motorists "heckled the group [of marchers] . . . and threw several eggs."[68] The expectation of abuse led the media to note its absence: a group of collegiate protesters "were only mildly heckled," and at another march "there were no hecklers and no counterpickets."[69]

Another antiwar group, Rhode Island High School Students for Peace, distributed its own statement of purpose three months after the January 1968 Tet offensive. The long pamphlet offered draft counseling, openly suggesting that draftees flee to Canada or finagle legal deferments. Yet alongside its unabashed resistance, it included a disclaimer aimed at countering the antidemonstration backlash common after 1965: "We're not asking you to be unpatriotic or to turn against your countrymen. We are asking you to follow American ideals. *We want you to support our boys in Viet Nam and not the ones who send them there*" (emphasis added).[70] Gathering on 27 April in Kennedy Plaza, the group saw no contradiction in urging Americans to thwart the draft, "support" the troops, and assert their patriotism.

Meanwhile, opposition to antiwar protesters increasingly took the form of incendiary verbal attacks, of a sort that would become more common during the Nixon administration. An editorial in the *Providence Journal* in November 1967 chastised the "peace boys" at Brown University for protesting CIA recruitment on campus. The following month a member of an anticommunist organization interrupted a draft protest at the state's selective service headquarters in Providence with shouts of "Bums," "Draft dodgers," and "Cowards."[71] After 1967 various Rhode Islanders accused antiwar activists of "giving aid and comfort to the enemy," "not know[ing] what they are talking about," and harboring "leftist swine."[72] For these critics, antiwar protesters were clearly unsupportive of American troops fighting the war in Vietnam.

The mid- to late 1960s saw widespread disgruntlement among working-class Americans on a number of issues—and a particular antipathy toward the antiwar movement. During the presidential campaign of 1968, both Nixon and George Wallace appealed to frustration with campus protests, urban riots, special interests, the civil rights revolution, and liberalism in general. The New Deal coalition weakened accordingly, with a shift to the right among many working-class voters who felt that the Democrats could not maintain an orderly, law-abiding society.[73] According to Gallup polls during the late 1960s, Americans felt that the most pressing problems for the country, besides Vietnam, were race relations and lawlessness.[74]

As Christian Appy has argued, attacks on antiwar demonstrations may have reflected class antagonisms rather than disagreement over the morality of the war or a perceived lack of support for serviceman and veterans.[75] Although students at Brown and the University of Rhode Island were certainly known to heckle protesters, such antagonists were more often from the lower classes. The veteran from Pawtucket who in 1969 scorned "Yippies with long hair" hinted at resentment based on class: "The thing that really bugged me was the protesters; some of my old buddies *now going to college*" (emphasis added).[76] There appears to be a sense of betrayal in these words. While personal feelings can be difficult to ascertain, this former marine seems to have resented the fact that he went to war while his friends went to college, avoided the Vietnam ordeal, and then objected to the war.

Outside Rhode Island, class conflict could manifest itself in more violent ways. In May 1970 a group of construction workers in New York City carried out a premeditated attack on antiwar demonstrators that resulted in scores of injuries.[77] Such working-class antagonism was not necessarily rooted in support for the war; it could spring, rather, from a strong animosity toward those who were protesting the war. "The hippies and the college kids. They don't work. They just collect on all the things we struggle to pay for. And they all think that we're dopes and drones for doing it," said one American worker toward the end of the war.[78] Resentment of this sort may have made it difficult for working-class veterans to recognize gestures of genuine sympathy from antiwar activists of the social elite.

Meanwhile, American military policies in Vietnam were changing along with the orientation of the antiwar movement. President Nixon replaced the draft with a lottery system late in 1969 as part of his program of Vietnamization, whereby South Vietnamese forces would assume the lion's share of the fighting. By withdrawing American troops, Nixon may have influenced (or reflected) the new agenda of the antiwar movement.[79] A combination of the restructured draft program, Vietnamization, the invasions of Cambodia and Laos in 1970-71, the disclosure of the My Lai massacre, and an intensified bombing campaign (particularly in 1969 and 1972) seems to have shifted the concerns of many antiwar protesters from the American soldier to the destruction of Indochina. During this period the national antiwar movement expanded its operations,

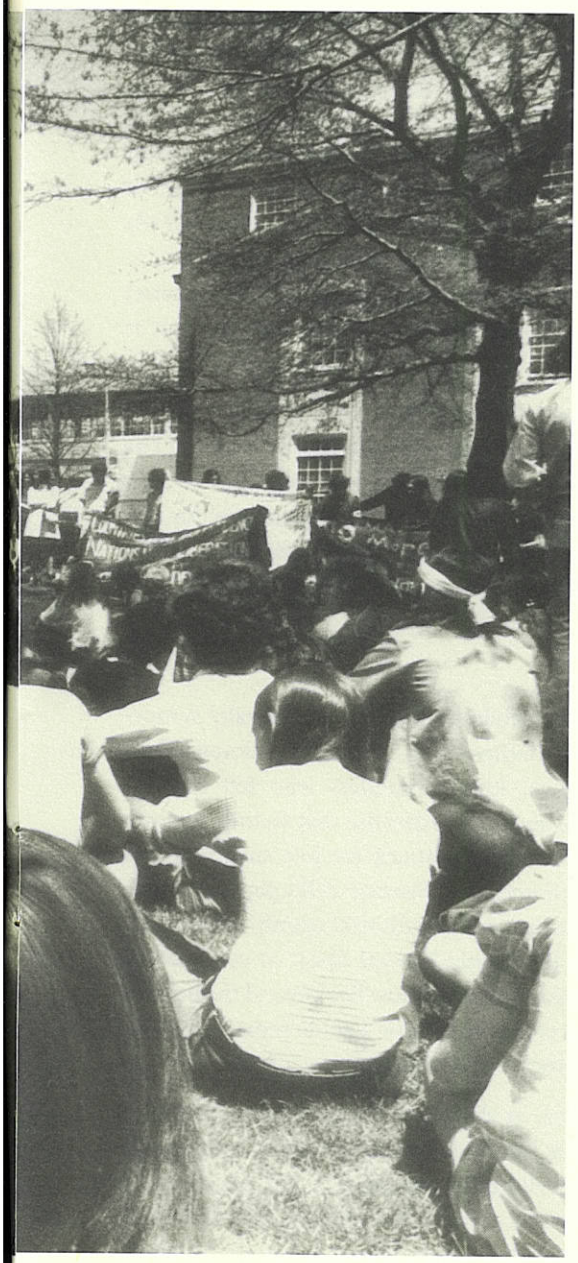
spearheaded in particular by religious groups and pacifists who stressed the immorality of the air war.[80] Radicals and some Vietnam veterans rounded out this energized network of protesters. Despite splintering and radicalization, the movement did not dissolve, as Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew hoped it would.[81] Nevertheless, Nixon's policies were to have far-reaching effects on the tenor of antiwar messages.

Protest activities in Rhode Island in 1972 illustrated the shifting priorities of the antiwar movement. Now activists appeared to abandon their focus on U.S. servicemen in favor of protests on behalf of the Vietnamese victims of America's war effort. In May a group of over six hundred University of Rhode Island students assembled to denounce the greatest escalation of the war since 1968, an escalation that entailed the mining of Haiphong harbor, a naval blockade of North Vietnam, and massive bombing raids.[82] In the midst of Nixon's Christmas bombing of 1972, the Vietnam Veterans against the War and a number of labor and church organizations sponsored a joint press conference to condemn the aerial devastation of North Vietnam as "morally wrong." While demanding

War protesters in Burnside Park, Providence, 13 May 1972. Courtesy of the Providence Journal.

that the United States end its military and economic support of the South Vietnamese regime, the group statement placed its strongest emphasis on denouncing the devastation of a battered, if stubborn, opponent.[83] In April a group at Brown University presented a slide show depicting the horrors of the bombing campaign. An editorial by a Brown student that month, commenting on a recent demonstration, encapsulated the shift of the antiwar movement's concerns: "We showed that Asian deaths are as unacceptable as American deaths."[84] Vietnamese peasants were now seen as the central tragic victims of the war.

While antiwar messages changed after 1970, the frequency of antiwar demonstrations declined in Rhode Island, with protests falling off the pace set during the escalation of 1965-68. One Brown University student lamented that he was "not ecstatic" over the turnout at a 1971 rally.[85] Once troop withdrawals and the lottery kept more and more Americans out of harm's way, Rhode Island's antiwar activists seem to have scaled back their operations, even as protests intensified nationally.[86]



Accordingly, stories on antiwar activity, which appeared frequently in Rhode Island papers from 1965 until 1970, dropped off precipitously. A telling piece, though, appeared on the front page of the *Providence Evening Bulletin* in April 1972. Under the headline "Campus Protests Cross U.S.," the article described the simultaneous demonstrations at scores of the nation's colleges and universities, including forty-five schools in New England alone. None of Rhode Island's campuses made it into the piece.[87] Although not mentioned, Brown students did muster a protest of some strength on the day of the national strike; but an editorial in the *Brown Daily Herald* the next day signaled a weakening movement: "Brown students demonstrated that the antiwar movement is alive. [But success] is going to require more than the time and energy of just a few people who bear the frustration of sitting through tedious planning meetings." Two days later the student newspaper reported that a "significantly smaller" group turned out for a follow-up meeting, with only a "dwindling crowd" remaining until the end.[88]

Contrary to what their critics charged, many antiwar activists in Rhode Island consistently expressed sympathy for the troops in Vietnam. Embedded in antiwar messages lay implicit concern for the well-being of American servicemen, a concern often made explicit through pamphlets and placards at peace rallies. Although demonstrators may once have carried a Vietcong flag down Waterman Street in Providence[89]—a decidedly unsupportive gesture—volumes of evidence from throughout the war show that that incident was the exception that proved the rule. The vast majority of Rhode Island activists sympathized with the American troops themselves and never celebrated the enemy in North Vietnam or the communist rebels in the South.

Whether they realized it or not, many antiwar activists, vocal Rhode Islanders, and, indeed, stateside veterans were united in sympathy with American troops in Vietnam. The separation of Rhode Islanders into neat categories in this study should not obscure the fact that the boundaries of these categories were highly permeable, with a wide base of appreciation for the troops extending across class lines and other divisions. Three episodes illustrated this consensus of sympathy for servicemen in Vietnam.

A student protest hike to the Quonset navy base in 1966 starkly demonstrated how two groups could express support for American servicemen even while sharply disagreeing on what form that support should take. Refused access to the base, the marchers circled the complex in front of about seventy-five jeering sailors, some of whom unfurled a sheet that proclaimed "Support Our Boys in Vietnam." In its report on the protest, the *Providence Journal* included a photograph showing a marcher holding aloft a sign reading

"Support Our Boys; Bring Them Home."[90] Although the demonstrators and the sailors held conflicting views on how best to support American troops, they were in agreement that the troops should be supported.

In early 1968 the Rhode Island Committee for Peace in Vietnam forged an explicit link with the vocal public by circulating a one-sentence petition: "We, the undersigned, support our boys and urge Senator Pell to do all in his power to bring the war to an end, to bring our boys home, and to return Vietnam to the Vietnamese people." The results—nearly five hundred signatures, with home addresses—were forwarded to Pell's office. Almost 300 Providence-area residents signed the statement, as did 187 Rhode Islanders from every other part of the state. The towns of origin and professional titles suggest a wide variety of class backgrounds, ranging from physicians and Brown faculty to residents of the blue-collar town of Central Falls.[91]

Late in 1969 the 107th Signal Company of the Rhode Island Army National Guard returned home from Vietnam to the sort of greeting unusual during the Vietnam era. Because veterans generally came back alone or in small groups, and only after staggered tours of duty, grand parades and welcoming groups were rare. The experience of the 107th showed that large contingents might enjoy a more festive homecoming. "Noisy, Joyful Greeting Welcomes 107th Home," announced the *Providence Evening Bulletin,* which reported that roughly five hundred Rhode Islanders assembled to meet the group at the Quonset Naval Air Station. The crowd showered the troops with a "din of applause, horns, and bells." Yet there was more to the story: the 107th had in fact fiercely resisted going to Vietnam at all, and had left for Southeast Asia only after the U.S. District Court in Boston rejected the unit's petition to remain stateside.[92] The Quonset group was not a gung-ho military outfit; in a sense, they were antiwar activists, but at Quonset they were greeted as heroes.

As U.S. involvement in Vietnam effectively came to an end in January 1973, a journalist in Providence reflected on the antiwar movement and the public in Rhode Island. "[The protesters] were . . . watched . . . by the usual passerby who would only come over to their way of thinking farther down the road," he wrote.[93] On the matter of sympathy for veterans, vocal Rhode Islanders and antiwar activists had come together—without always recognizing it—in the earliest days of the war, and they stayed together thereafter.

While the evidence clearly seems to show that Rhode Islanders were basically sympathetic to servicemen and veterans during the Vietnam War, it must be acknowledged that that evidence is not necessarily complete. Rhode Islanders who felt hostility towards the troops or veterans might not have sought to advertise that feeling. Antiwar activists in particular, who had come under increasing attack for just such hostility, might not have exhibited it in the forums explored here. Senator Pell's papers contain no correspondence abusive to soldiers or veterans, and no editorial openly contemptuous of veterans would have made it into the *Providence Journal.* Short of oral history, diaries, or letters, then, much of the abuse veterans describe now lies beyond the bounds of documentation. Historians cannot verify a cold shoulder or a snide remark, a spontaneous burst of anger or a drunken tirade directed at a veteran.

Some commentators have therefore concluded, or discussed the possibility, that such reports of abuse are fiction.[94] This position is hardly supportable; many veterans do remember abuse, a fact historians would do well not to dismiss as myth. This raises a key question: Given the evidence of sympathy and concern for veterans, why did many veterans not feel it? The most obvious answer is that "support" was a heavily contested

term in the Vietnam era, a term meaning different things to many protesters, veterans, and other observers. Beyond that, four other possibilities are worth taking into account in this regard: the problem of expectations, Nixon's management of the war, selective memory, and class-based resentment. These considerations may help to explain why many Rhode Island veterans have consistently reproached the antiwar movement and public for not "supporting" the troops, despite strong evidence that Rhode Islanders were sympathetically disposed toward American servicemen.

Two types of expectations seem to have fed the dark appraisals of domestic support: high expectations based on the experiences of World War II, and low expectations rooted in rumors of abusive receptions circulating in Vietnam. Vietnam veterans often draw comparisons between their experiences and the more positive treatment accorded World War II veterans. Key logistical differences, however, distinguished the demobilization processes of the two conflicts.[95] Many veterans in the 1940s came home when the war ended, arriving on large troop ships that could be greeted with elaborate welcoming ceremonies; Vietnam veterans generally came home after completing their yearlong tours of duty, often arriving alone in the impersonal confusion of crowded airports.[96] And, of course, the earlier veterans were returning from a war they had won, whereas the Vietnam veterans returned from a war in frustrating stalemate, or during the dark days of Vietnamization after 1968. It is scarcely surprising that Vietnam veterans were met with considerably less jubilation than had greeted the victorious veterans of World War II.[97]

Veterans often recall the swirl of rumors in Vietnam concerning unsupportive antiwar protesters and distressing homecoming experiences. A group of crazed hippies, one tall tale went, cornered and shot a Vietnam veteran in an American airport. "Even before returning home," Christian Appy has written, "these men anticipated rejection." "We heard a lot of bad stories about what had happened to guys when they came back," a Rhode Island veteran recently recalled. "When you are in Vietnam," said a veteran from Warren, Rhode Island, in 1968, "and every day could be your day to get killed, and you read about demonstrations and riots back home, it gives you a pretty lousy feeling. . . . Why are they so against what I'm doing?"[98] Between rumors of harsh treatment of returning veterans and comparisons with the era of World War II, it is no surprise that servicemen would decry what they saw as a lack of support back home.

Nixon's management of the war accompanied, or fueled, great changes in antiwar messages, probably exacerbating tension between veterans and protesters. In particular, withdrawing American troops and intensifying the air war shifted protesters' concerns from sympathizing with U.S. troops to opposing the destruction of Vietnam. The increasingly radical protests that greeted the troops, who returned in swelling numbers after 1968, insisted on the depravity of the U.S. war effort—and thus seemed to veterans to be aimed at them. Although veterans from Rhode Island had bristled at domestic criticism of the war effort during Johnson's presidency as well, the changing nature of antiwar messages and war policy seem to have heightened veterans' resentment after 1968.

The problem of selective memory has in all likelihood widened the gap between the evidence of sympathy and the perceptions of many veterans. Perhaps the mistreatment of veterans was not fictional but exceptional. When veterans report abuse, they usually describe one or two deeply painful incidents. After thirty years, such incidents may seem the most prominent, and they may come to dominate memories of homecoming. Christian Appy has suggested that "By the 1980s, . . . images [of distressing homecoming experiences] became widely accepted throughout American culture as literal representations of the homecoming received by most veterans."[99] Sympathetic editorials, memorials, and welcoming parties may thus have become lost to memory. This is not to say that

veterans did not feel real animosity; on the contrary, negative experiences were sometimes so painful that they linger on in vivid detail to the exclusion of anything positive. In considering the case of Rhode Island, though, it is important to place the negative experiences within the context of the state's generally sympathetic attitude toward servicemen and veterans.

A retrospective piece on antiwar protesters in the *Providence Evening Bulletin* illustrated this problem of memory in 1973. Only two demonstrations made it into the article: a criminal raid on draft records at a selective service office and a march that featured "demonstrators carr[ying] Vietcong flags down Waterman Street."[100] Even as early as 1973 the media were enabling exceptional events to overwhelm the memory of a diverse and sympathetic movement by ignoring the countless antiwar protests that supported American servicemen.

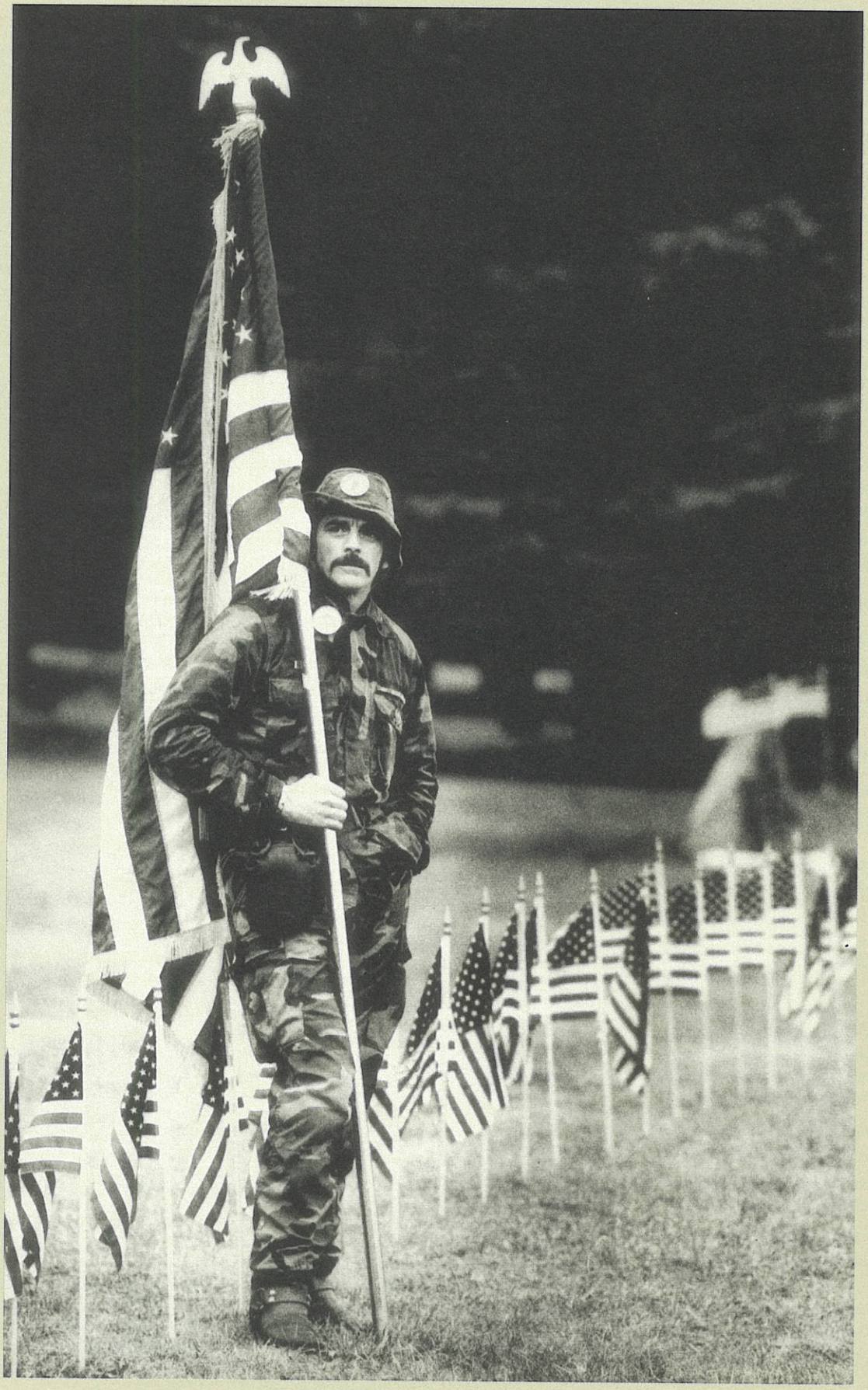
Finally, class antagonism clearly contributed to misapprehensions on all sides. A *Providence Journal* piece in 1970 (a busy year for campus antiwar protesters around the nation) provided an example of the antagonism between students, as members of the privileged classes, on one side and veterans and servicemen, as members of the working classes, on the other. The writer interviewed a nurse, just returned from Vietnam, who denounced campus activists: "To hear the students talk you'd think nothing was going on [in Vietnam] but mass destruction." She referred again and again to her conviction that the students "don't know what they are talking about," suggesting that these rich kids, wet behind the ears and unspoiled by the realities of the world, had no right to criticize those not so well placed as to avoid the draft. "My sympathy," she said, "is with the soldiers."[101]

The sympathy of antiwar activists was with the soldiers as well, but their opposition to a war they had avoided by virtue of their class status discredited them in the eyes of servicemen. For many drafted into the military, service in Vietnam reinforced the view that workers toiled while the rich educated themselves, got richer, and had time for luxuries like protest. Time and again veterans couched their Vietnam experiences in terms of "us" and "them," contrasting their own values of duty and patriotism to those of an allegedly unappreciative, spoiled upper class. On the occasion of the cease-fire in 1973, the *Providence Evening Bulletin* summarized the views of a veteran from Rhode Island: "The Cranston resident spoke of the way in which he and countless other young men were brought up, respecting authority, jumping when *anyone in power* said jump and going to Vietnam when the authorities said go" (emphasis added).[102] This veteran believed that the ruling classes had sent loyal working-class Americans into war and then betrayed them through public dissent and hostility.[103] Given the effects of unrealistic expectations, Nixon's policies, selective memory, and class antagonism, it is no surprise that many veterans today remember a lack of sympathy at home.

The 1980s and 1990s proved to be better times for Vietnam veterans both in Rhode Island and in the rest of the nation. Having seen the lavish welcome accorded the American hostages returning from Iran, many veterans in the early 1980s lobbied for their own long-neglected welcome. At the dedication of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington in 1982, thousands of Vietnam veterans marched in a parade before cheering throngs of Americans. In the 2000 Republican primaries, Vietnam veteran John McCain's experience as a POW proved to be a political asset as he garnered widespread support in his race against George W. Bush. If one looks at Rhode Island as a case study, these developments were grander echoes of the sympathy and appreciation for Vietnam veterans that had been expressed locally during the war itself.

Opposite page

Veteran Ed McGrady at the groundbreaking ceremony for a Vietnam memorial at the Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery in Exeter, 11 November 1985. Courtesy of the Providence Journal.



Notes

1. The term "veterans" is used in this article to refer to members of the military who had served in Vietnam; "troops" and "servicemen" refer to those who were still serving there.

2. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 25 Jan. 1973, 16.

3. For discussion of the conservative position, see Myra MacPherson, *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation* (Garden City, N.Y., 1984), 45-47. For the liberal view, see, for example, Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1988), 20-21, and Loren Baritz, *Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us to Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did* (New York, 1985), 317-20.

4. Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York, 1978), 434-36.

5. Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts about the Sixties* (New York, 1989), 145-46.

6. See Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973* (New York, 1998), 487-91; Larry Berman, *Lyndon Johnson's War: The Road to Stalemate in Vietnam* (New York, 1989), 7; James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York, 1996), 752-54; Baritz, *Backfire,* 203-5.

7. *Providence Journal-Bulletin,* 8 Apr. 1996, B3; 26 Feb. 1999, B7. Owens's article appeared in response to the NBC documentary *The Sixties,* which aired in early February 1999.

8. *Providence Journal,* 13 Oct. 1968, N53; 9 Nov. 1969, M31; *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 21 Apr. 1972, 1; *Providence Journal,* 30 Mar. 1972, 8.

9. Bob Greene, *Homecoming: When the Soldiers Returned from Vietnam* (New York, 1989), 17-85.

10. Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1990), 396-97. See also Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York, 1987), 261-63; Jerry Lembcke, *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York, 1998), 49-70; Patterson, *Grand Expectations,* 735-36.

11. Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York, 1991), 201.

12. Christian G. Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993), 305. See also John F. Guilmartin Jr., "America in Vietnam: A Working-Class War?" *Reviews in American History* 22 (June 1994): 324.

13. *Providence Journal,* 12 June 1966, N51.

14. Frank Grzyb, *Touched by the Dragon: Experiences of Vietnam Veterans from I County, Rhode Island* (West Lafayette, 1998), 51.

15. The statements were from the *Provide Journal* both during and after the war; *1968: The Whole World Was Watching: History Written by Tenth Graders at So Kingstown High School* (Providence, 19 from Grzyb, *Touched by the Dragon;* a my own interviews with Vietnam vete

16. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County and Data Book, 1972: A Statistical Abstract Supplement* (Washington, D.C., 1973), 16-17, 187, 223, 402-3. The Census Bu defines urban areas as incorporated or corporated places of at least 2,500 inh or other territory included in urbanize

17. Ibid., 16, 22, 402-3, 408.

18. Ibid., 408. Humphrey's tenuous positic stemmed, of course, from his status as supposedly loyal second-in-command ting (and very unpopular) president ir

19. *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Elections* (Washington, D.C., 1994), 83 closest senatorial election was in 1972, Pell garnered only 54 percent of the vo against a formidable Republican challe multiterm governor John Chafee. Desp pronounced shift to the right among t American electorate as the 1960s ende Rhode Island remained a Democratic hold. See Patterson, *Grand Expectation*

20. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County and Data Book, 1972,* 19, 405.

21. Grzyb, *Touched by the Dragon,* 289-93.

22. Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Str *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, t and the Vietnam Generation* (New York,

23. Even Nixon's lottery, implemented in 1 not fully level the playing field. See ibi

24. This conclusion derives from my study war activists described in the *Providen Journal,* the *Brown Daily Herald,* and t Papers of Senator Claiborne Pell (hous Special Collections at the University of Island library in Kingston). Although t occupations of activists could not alwa determined with certainty, and the assi of occupations to particular classes wa sarily somewhat arbitrary, the results n less pointed to an undeniably elite stat most of the antiwar protesters.

25. For this assertion I relied on the *Provid Journal* and the Pell papers. Insofar as t of members of the vocal public could b determined from their occupations (se

ceding note), these people were largely from the middle classes, engaged is such occupations as public-school teaching, mid-level management, and work for the government.

26. The Papers of Claiborne Pell include letters to and from constituents, interoffice memos, drafts of speeches, press clippings, and literature of the antiwar movement. The Special Collections staff at the URI library, particularly Kevin Logan, offered invaluable assistance in my search for relevant files. Unfortunately, Senator John Pastore's papers, which are located at Providence College, do not contain letters from constituents on the subject of Vietnam (archivist Jane Jackson was helpful in providing me with this information). The papers of Robert O. Tiernan, a congressman from Rhode Island in the late 1960s, are located along with the Pell papers at the University of Rhode Island, but as of December 2000 they were still unprocessed.

27. Constituent letter to Pell, 25 Feb. 1963, Papers of Claiborne Pell. One can only imagine how this man felt when the number of American dead had increased a thousandfold by 1973.

28. Constituent letters to Pell, 23 Feb., 28 Dec. 1965, 21, 24 Feb. 1966, Papers of Claiborne Pell; *Providence Journal,* 28 Mar. 1966, 21.

29. Pell to constituent, 2 July 1965, Papers of Claiborne Pell.

30. Constituent letters to Pell, 21 Feb., 24 Feb. 1966, Papers of Claiborne Pell; *Providence Journal,* 30 May 1966, 31; *Brown Daily Herald,* 18 Nov. 1966, 3; *Providence Journal,* 28 Mar. 1966, 21.

31. *Providence Journal,* 16 Mar. 1966, 16; 2 Aug. 1966, 29; 10 Apr., N17; 5 June 1966, N35.

32. For example, see ibid., 30 May 1966, 31; 2 Jan. 1967, 37. If the *Journal* received letters hostile to the troops, it seems to have chosen not to print them.

33. See, for example, *Woonsocket Call,* 1 Nov. 1967, 27.

34. See George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1935-1971* (New York, 1972), 2063. In 1967, 59 percent of Americans still thought U.S. involvement in Vietnam "morally justified," against 26 percent who did not. Yet on the question "Do you feel that you have a clear idea of what the Vietnam war is all about?" 48 percent answered yes, 48 percent no.

35. Constituent letter to Pell, 20 Oct. 1967, Papers of Claiborne Pell

36. See, for example, a paper sent to Senator Pell, "A Christian Ethic for Viet Nam—The Result of Group Thinking Done by the Vietnam Task Force of Beneficent Church in Providence, RI during November and December, 1966," and constituent letter and petition to Pell, 27 Feb. 1967, Papers of Claiborne Pell.

37. *Providence Journal,* 2 Jan. 1967, 37; *Woonsocket Call,* 2 Nov. 1967, 16; *Newport Daily News,* 6 Nov. 1967, 19.

38. *Providence Journal,* 25 Aug. 1967, 25.

39. Ibid., 18 Nov. 1967, 19.

40. See George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (Philadelphia, 1979), 188-94; Lewy, *America in Vietnam,* 76.

41. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll,* 2063.

42. Constituent letters to Pell, 28 Feb., 10 Mar., 12 Mar. 1968, Papers of Claiborne Pell.

43. Constituent letter to Pell, 31 Jan. 1968, Papers of Claiborne Pell.

44. *Westerly Sun,* 1 Nov. 1968, 4.

45. See, for example, constituent letters to Pell, 12 Mar., 28 Mar. 1968, 30 Sept. 1969, Papers of Claiborne Pell.

46. See Gallup, *The Gallup Poll,* 2063, 2109. To the poll's question "In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the United States made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?" 37 percent of respondents answered yes, 50 percent answered no, in April 1967. In February 1968, 49 percent answered yes, 40 percent answered no, to that question. Although those answering yes did not necessarily advocate withdrawal, the numbers pointed to the eroding support for the American presence in Vietnam.

47. *Providence Journal,* 18 Nov. 1968, 13; 29 Sept. 1969, 23.

48. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 9 Oct. 1969, 46.

49. Ibid., 8 Aug. 1970, 16; 16 Jan. 1970, 20.

50. Ibid., 27 Apr. 1970, 2.

51. Ibid., 30 Mar. 1972, 3; *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 13 Dec. 1972, 67.

52. *Providence Journal,* 4 Feb. 1973, A1; *Pawtucket Times,* 29 Jan. 1973, 21; *Providence Journal,* 17 June 1973, C1.

53. DeBenedetti and Chatfield, *An American Ordeal,* ix-x.

54. See Grzyb, *Touched by the Dragon,* 51; *1968,* 42; *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 25 Jan. 1973, 15.

55. These two groups received the most credit in the media for sponsoring antiwar demonstrations in Rhode Island during the Vietnam era. Other organizations that occasionally attracted coverage included Rhode Island Citizens Committee for a Vote on the War, Rhode Island Peace and Freedom Campaign, Rhode Island High School Students for Peace, Providence Peace Union, the Providence office of Americans for a Peaceful Society, Another Mother for Peace, Students for Democratic Action, and Students for a Democratic Society.

56. Harvard and Columbia in particular saw massive protests during this time. See Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York, 1973), 430-47, 539-40.

57. *Brown Daily Herald,* 28 Oct. 1966, 6; 1 May 1967, 1; 7 Mar. 1967, 2.

58. Although the evidence is relatively scant, I would contend that URI featured just as much "anti-antiwar" sentiment as antiwar sentiment. The only secondary source I have seen on the subject is an undergraduate paper analyzing coverage of antiwar protests in the student newspaper: see Bill Loveless, "Student Reaction to the Vietnam War, 1965 and 1969: As Reflected in the *URI Beacon*" (undergraduate paper, University of Rhode Island, 1971; now at the Rhode Island Historical Society).

59. *Brown Daily Herald,* 1 May 1967, 1. According to Kirkpatrick Sale, the nationwide SDS was the "largest student organization ever known in this country." See Sale, *SDS,* 3-11.

60. *Brown Daily Herald,* 16 Nov. 1966, 1, 2.

61. See ibid., 13 Apr. 1967, 1; 29 Feb. 1968, 2.

62. *Providence Journal,* 26 Mar. 1966, 20; 28 Mar. 1966, 1; 11 Apr. 1966, 1.

63. Ibid., 28 Mar. 1966, 1; 8 Aug. 1966, 1.

64. Rhode Island Committee for Peace in Vietnam flyer received in Pell's office, 18 Aug. 1967, Papers of Claiborne Pell.

65. See Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves,* 102-6; Berman, *Lyndon Johnson's War,* 183-84.

66. For a thorough articulation of this claim, see Andrew Levison, *The Working-Class Majority* (New York, 1974), 160-63; Appy, *Working-Class War,* 11-43.

67. Pell to constituent, 26 Oct. 1965, Papers of Claiborne Pell. Pell distanced himself from violent antiwar protests throughout the war, though it appears that incidents outside of Rhode Island attracted most of his ire.

68. *URI Beacon,* 20 Oct. 1965; *Providence Journal,* 5 Feb. 1966, 5; 28 Mar. 1966, 1.

69. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 28 Mar. 1966, 11; *Providence Journal,* 8 Aug. 1966, 1.

70. Brochure of the Rhode Island High School Students for Peace, April 1968, Papers of Claiborne Pell.

71. *Providence Journal,* 17 Nov. 1967, 33; 5 Dec. 1967, 14.

Notes continued

72. Constituent letter to Pell, 17 Mar. 1968, Papers of Claiborne Pell; *Providence Journal,* 7 July 1970, 12; *Brown Daily Herald,* 13 Apr. 1967, 1.

73. See, for example, Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 154-58, 171-232; Thomas Byrne Edsall with Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York, 1991), 47-73; Levison, *The Working-Class Majority,* 160-63; Appy, *Working-Class War,* 39.

74. See, for example, Levison, *The Working-Class Majority,* 161. A poll in May 1968 revealed that Americans considered "the most important problems" facing the United States were Vietnam (42 percent), race relations (25 percent), and crime and lawlessness (15 percent). Gallup, *The Gallup Poll,* 2128.

75. See Appy, *Working-Class War,* 11-43.

76. *Providence Journal,* 9 Nov. 1969, M31.

77. Appy, *Working-Class War,* 39.

78. Patricia Cayo Sexton and Brendan Sexton, *Blue Collars and Hard Hats: The Working Class and the Future of American Politics* (New York, 1971), 57.

79. For discussion of the antiwar movement's effect on war policy, see David McReynolds, "Pacifists and the Vietnam Antiwar Movement," in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement,* ed. Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (Syracuse, N.Y., 1992), 70; Young, *The Vietnam Wars,* 242; Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves,* 162-224; Lewy, *America in Vietnam,* 434-37; Herring, *America's Longest War,* 240, 246. Herring points out that after the major North Vietnamese offensive in March 1972, Nixon's fear of a public backlash made putting new ground forces in Vietnam an impossibility. Instead, Nixon stepped up bombing, mined Haiphong harbor, and blockaded the North.

80. See Herring, *America's Longest War,* 238-43; Lewy, *America in Vietnam,* 406-17; Richard Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers: An Oral History of the Vietnam Veterans against the War* (New York, 1997), 252-54.

81. See Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves,* 219; Baritz, *Backfire,* 203-5; Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York, 1988), 735; Patterson, *Grand Expectations,* 735-36, 752-53. Melvin Small reports that the movement declined in 1971, though opinion varies as to whether the institution of the lottery had anything to do with that decline.

82. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 9 May 1972, 25. See also Herring, *America's Longest War,* 246-48.

83. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 28 Dec. 1972, 21. The members of Vietnam Veterans against the War complicated one of the neat divisions of the Vietnam era, "veterans vs. protesters." They deserve more scholarly attention than can be given them in this essay, but they were, after all, a minority among Rhode Island's Vietnam veterans.

84. *Brown Daily Herald,* 24 Apr. 1972, 1; 22 Apr. 1972, 2.

85. Ibid., 14 Oct. 1971, 3.

86. In fact, more than 20,000 of the 58,000 Americans killed in Vietnam died during the last four years of the war. See Herring, *America's Longest War,* 256.

87. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 21 Apr. 1972, 1. Melvin Small has cited various activists who claim that such diminishing media coverage actually concealed a persistent national antiwar movement after 1970. While it is difficult to discern whether the Rhode Island media simply stopped covering antiwar demonstrations, other sources, such as the Pell papers and various interviews, indicate that antiwar activity indeed declined after 1970. See Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves,* 211-21.

88. *Brown Daily Herald,* 22 Apr. 1972, 2; 24 Apr. 1972, 1.

89. See *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 25 Jan. 1973, 15.

90. *Providence Journal,* 28 Mar. 1966, 1; *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 28 Mar. 1966, 11.

91. Results and text of petition, Rhode Island Committee for Peace in Vietnam, January-February 1968, Papers of Claiborne Pell.

92. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 9 Oct. 1969, 2.

93. Ibid., 25 Jan. 1973, 15.

94. See Lembcke, *The Spitting Image,* 71-83; Appy, *Working-Class War,* 303-4.

95. For descriptions of World War II demobilization, as well as general veteran-related comparisons between World War II and Vietnam, see Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945* (New York, 1997), 470-73; David McCullough, *Truman* (New York, 1992), 474; Herring, *America's Longest War,* 274-75; Appy, *Working-Class War,* 124-25, 219, 225, 242; Berman, *Lyndon Johnson's War,* 190; Lewy, *America in Vietnam,* 428.

96. For a discussion of such dismal homecomings, see Baritz, *Backfire,* 317.

97. It should nonetheless be noted that many World War II veterans came back traumatized by their experiences or embittered by poor stateside treatment. For a contemporaneous view of readjustment problems among World War II veterans, see Willard Waller, *The Veteran Comes Back* (New York, 1944), 92-1 For more recent treatment of those problen see *Providence Journal,* 4 Feb. 1973, A1; Herbert Hendin and Ann Pollinger Haas, *Wounds of War: The Psychological Aftermath Combat in Vietnam* (New York, 1984), 33-3 MacPherson, *Long Time Passing,* 200-201; Helmer, *Bringing the War Home,* 209-10; Patterson, *Grand Expectations,* 14-15.

98. Appy, *Working-Class War,* 303; *1968,* 51; *Providence Journal,* 13 Oct. 1968, N53.

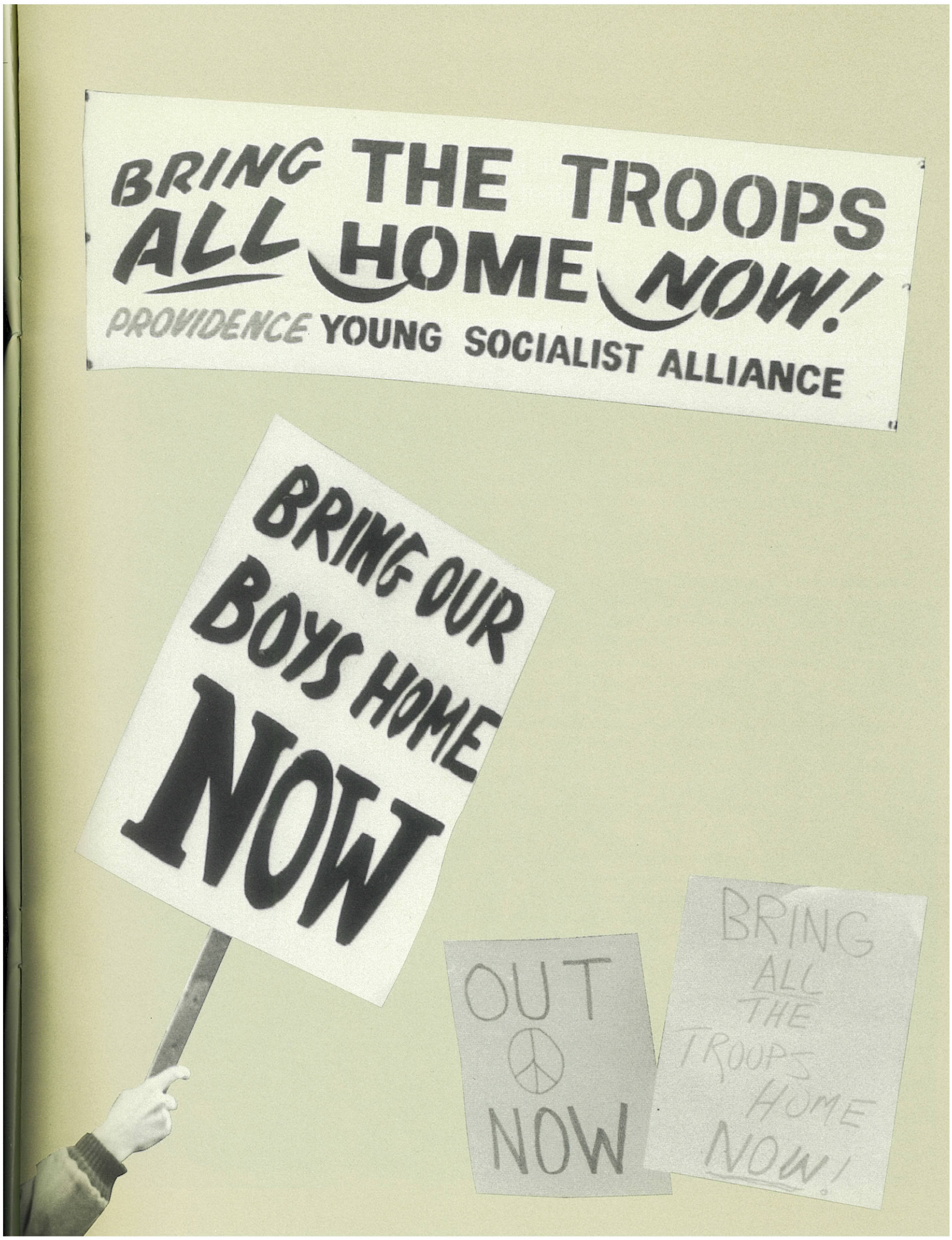
99. Appy, *Working-Class War,* 303-4.

100. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 25 Jan. 1973, 1

101. *Providence Journal,* 7 July 1970, 12.

102. *Providence Evening Bulletin,* 25 Jan. 1973, 1

103. Ironically, many radical protesters declared themselves enemies of the very draft struct that exempted them while sending working class Americans to Vietnam. See Herring, *America's Longest War,* 171.


BRING THE TROOPS
ALL HOME NOW!
PROVIDENCE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE
BRING OUR
BOYS HOME
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BRING
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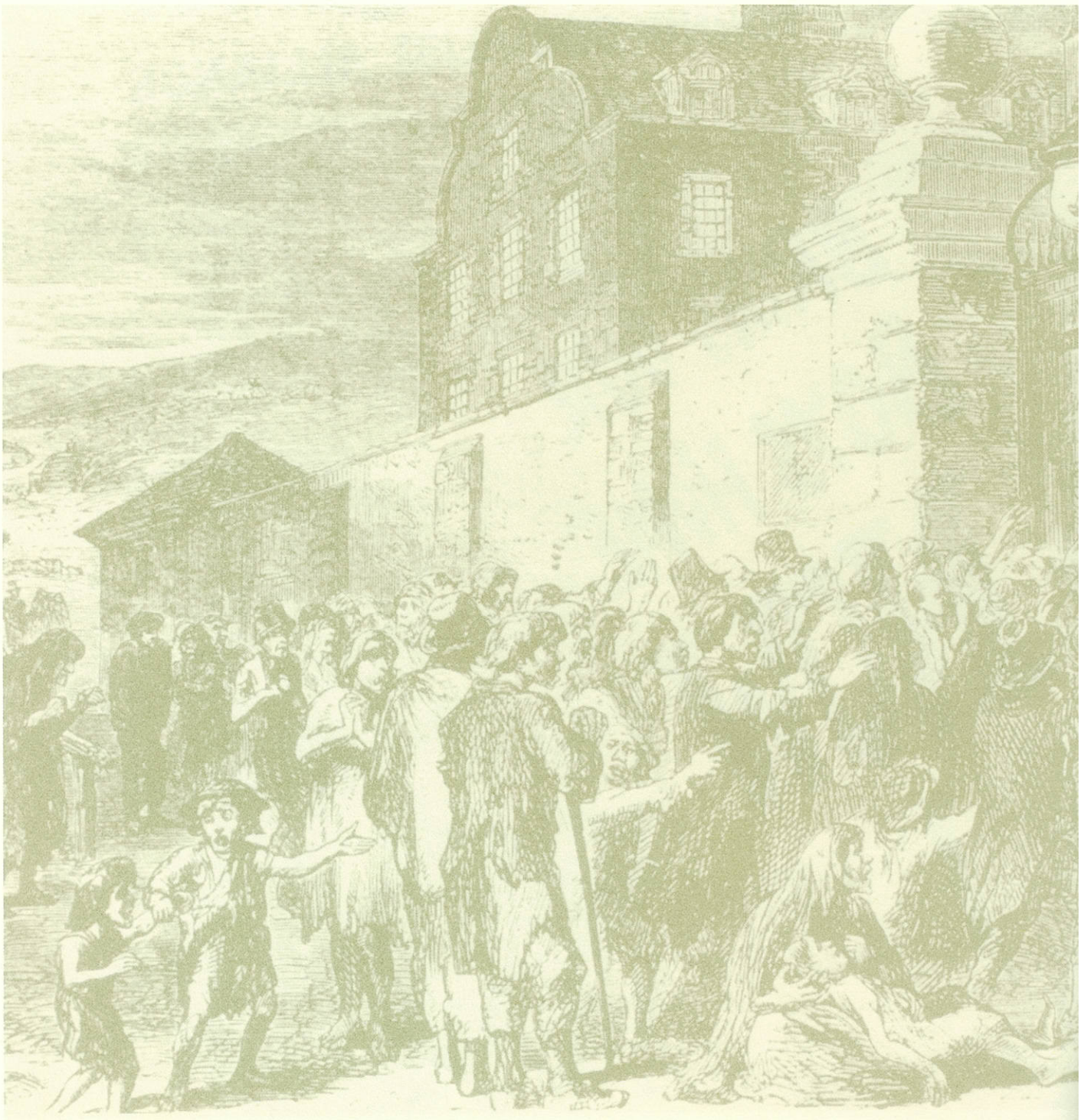
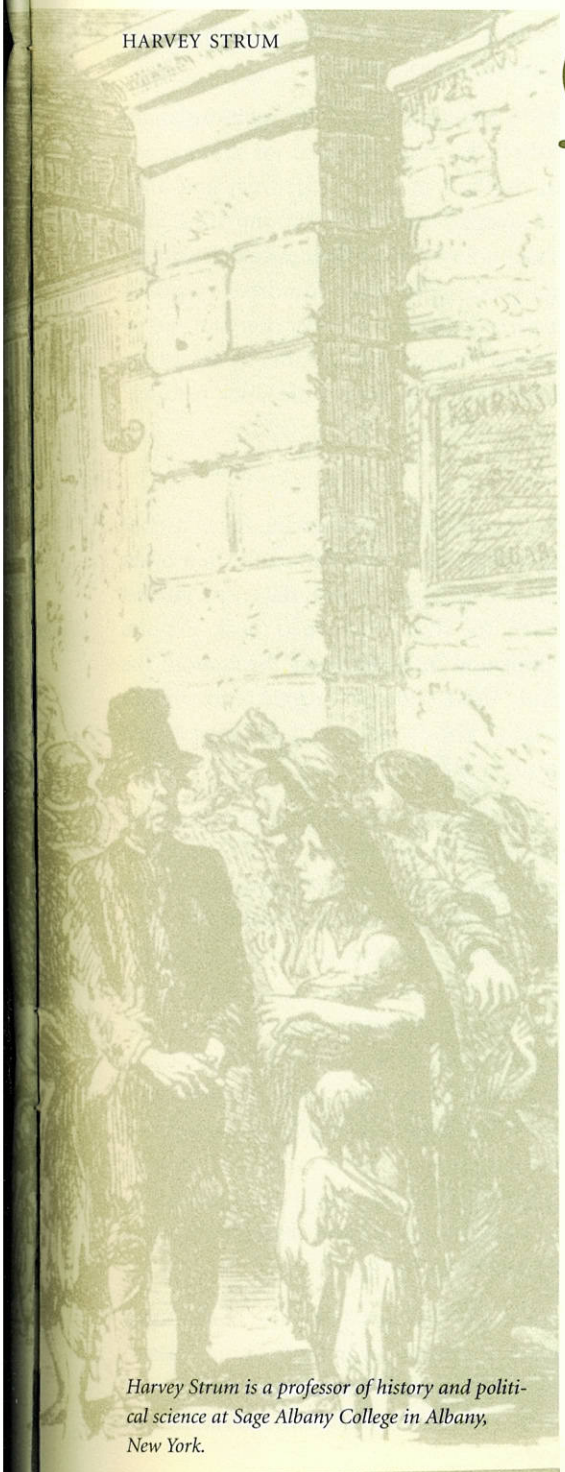
A starving crowd gathers at the gate of a workhouse in Ireland in this 1846 engraving from the Illustrated London News. *Gift of Patrick T. Conley. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 7431).*



"Not Forgotten in Their Affliction": Irish Famine Relief from Rhode Island, 1847

HARVEY STRUM



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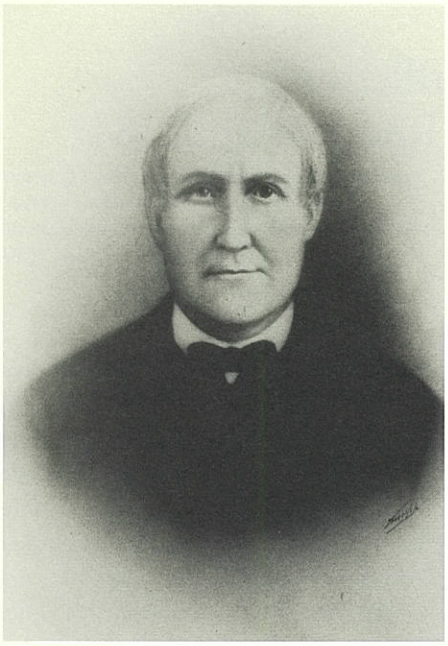
During the winter of 1846-47 the American press reported that a terrible famine was ravaging Ireland. Americans, both Irish and non-Irish, inaugurated efforts to alleviate the suffering by collecting money, food, and clothing to ship to Ireland and to Scotland, which was also stricken by famine.[1] In Rhode Island, citizens of Woonsocket, Pawtucket, Hopkinton, Newport, Providence, and other communities joined in the national effort. In February 1847 the citizens of Woonsocket donated $3,429 for Irish famine relief. Of this amount, $600 came from "the laboring Irish," many with relatives and friends in Ireland "who," said the Woonsocket Irish Relief Committee, "will thus learn that they are not forgotten in their affliction."[2]

Beginning in the 1820s, Irish Catholic immigrants had been arriving in Rhode Island in growing numbers, drawn by jobs in construction (most notably of Fort Adams, the Blackstone Canal, and the railroads), coal mining (in Portsmouth), textile manufacturing, and machine-shop production. The immigrants settled wherever jobs were to be had, but Providence increasingly emerged as the focus of the immigration. By 1842 two thousand Catholics lived in the Providence parish, almost all of them Irish. Famine-induced immigration swelled the influx, so that by 1855 Irish immigrants constituted 16 percent of the state's population, with ten thousand (22 percent of the city's population) in Providence.[3] Prior to 1838 the Irish in Rhode Island were "poor but not destitute, undereducated but not illiterate," but as the number of immigrants increased, explains an account of that time, their status and their living conditions declined. "On the whole, the Rhode Island Irish immigrants remained unskilled workers, belonging to a propertyless class."[4]

The state's Protestants were generally unsympathetic to the growing Irish Catholic community, which seemed to them dangerously alien, culturally and religiously. As early as 1830 Francis Wayland—who would later play a major role in the Irish famine relief effort in Rhode Island—delivered an address at Brown University describing the Catholic Church as the "Scarlet woman of the Apocalypse"; in 1833 Wayland characterized Irish immigration to the state as a "clever Popish plot to subvert Rhode Island."[5] Wayland's views reflected the attitudes of many Protestant religious leaders, Whig politicians, and conservative rural Democrats. During the Dorr Rebellion of the early 1840s, a coalition of conservative Democrats and Whigs, known as the Law and Order party, opposed, and defeated, proposed radical changes that would have extended the voting franchise to recent immigrants. As one historian of the rebellion puts it, Rhode Island conservatives believed that giving the vote "to the foreign-born would be equivalent to handing over power to an alien and sinister Catholic Church."[6]

The campaign for Irish famine relief took place against a contradictory background in Rhode Island. In the years prior to the famine, the state's Irish revealed both their loyalty to Ireland and their divisiveness. In the early 1840s the campaign led by Irish nationalist



The Reverend John Corry. Photo, gift of Patrick T. Conley. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 7435).

Daniel O'Connell to repeal the 1801 Act of Union with Great Britain and recreate Irish parliament found a sympathetic audience among Irish immigrants in Rho Island and throughout the United States. In February 1841 four hundred people parti pated in a meeting to establish a Providence Repeal Organization of the Friends Ireland, a group that paralleled chapters formed in a number of other Americans citie But the local effort in support of Irish nationalism, which included fund-raising f Ireland, was divided into competing factions when a rival organization, the Provider Temperance and Moral Reform Repeal Association, was created. For a time the tv repeal associations exchanged insults before the latter group, led by the Reverend Jo Corry, emerged triumphant. But conflict between the two factions flared up again mid-1843, and the subsequent removal of Father Corry from his church furth inflamed divisions within Providence's Irish Catholic community[8]

Another episode—the December 1843 murder of prominent Rhode Island industrial Amasa Sprague and the trials of three Irish Catholic brothers indicted for the crime served to unite the state's Irish population in the face of fierce anti-Irish and an Catholic prejudice. Two of the indicted brothers escaped conviction, but the third, Jo Gordon, was found guilty and hanged in February 1845. Fourteen hundred Irish re dents of Providence participated in his funeral procession, while hundreds of oth lined the streets through which the procession passed. Gordon's conviction and exec tion, an egregious example of the prejudice directed at Irish immigrants in the 184 did much to bring the state's Irish community together on the eve of the Great Famin

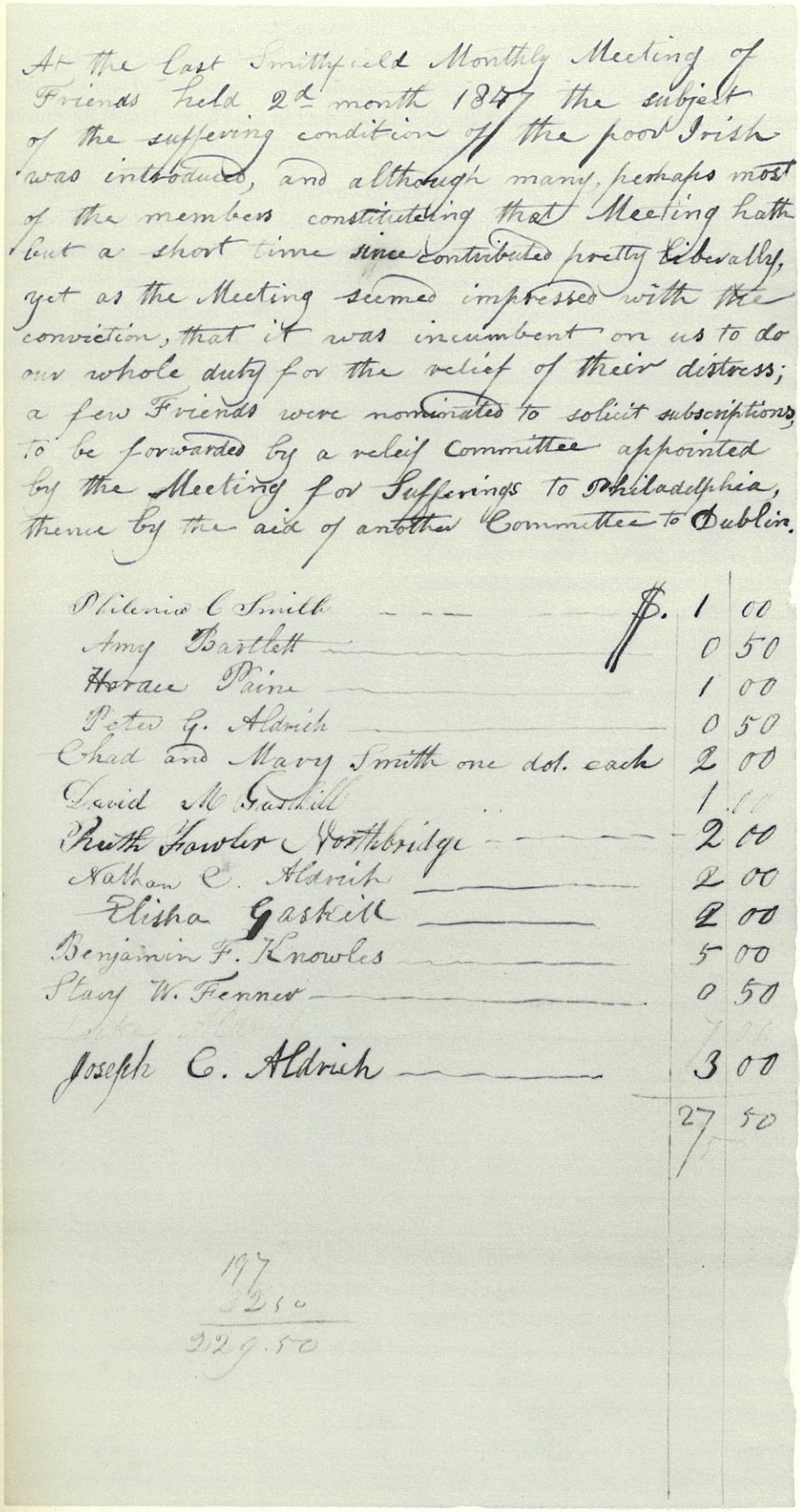
News of the potato blight in Ireland first reached the United States during the winter 1845-46. Limited efforts to raise funds then began in Boston, New York, and a few oth port cities, but when word arrived in the summer of 1846 of good potential crops, inter in aiding the Irish faded. Then, in the fall of 1846, the situation turned bleak. Repo about the desperate situation in Ireland now appeared in newspapers throughout t United States. "The news from Ireland is painful," the *Pawtucket Gazette* reported. " various districts the poor were in a wretched plight." The *Providence Republican Her* observed that "the distresses in Ireland are unmitigated."[10]

With relief organizations in Ireland, Scotland, and England soliciting contributions, November 1846 the Society of Friends (Quakers) established a Central Relief Committ in Dublin, through which most American relief would be channeled.[11] Quakers in Dub contacted New York City Quaker Jacob Harvey, who spread the news of the relief eff to Quakers in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and elsewhere. In Hopkinton, Rhode Island, t Society of Friends responded with a donation of $350.[12] Meanwhile, contributions individual Irish immigrants and funds raised in Catholic churches were sent to Irela through Catholic clerics like Bishop John Hughes in New York and John Fitzpatrick Boston. Irish immigrants also sent remittances directly by mail to family and friends Ireland; the Irish in Providence reportedly forwarded large remittances to Ireland f "their suffering friends."[13] Although news of the distress prompted public meetings New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, and a few other cities, most of the fund-raisi during this time—November 1846 to early January 1847—was confined to Irish Americ communities and Quakers responding to the appeal from Dublin.[14]

With the arrival in Boston of the packet *Hibernia* in mid-January 1847, and of the *Sar Sands* two weeks later, came grim reports of mass starvation in Ireland. Summaries these reports appeared in the Rhode Island press. The *Providence Republican Herald* a the *Providence Journal* both told their readers that many deaths from starvation ha

Opposite page

As recorded in this manuscript, "the suffering condition of the poor Irish" was discussed at an 1847 meeting of the Smithfield Monthly Meeting of Friends, and contributions were subsequently solicited for the relief effort. MSS 148 Additions, New England Yearly Meeting, Committee of Friends Relief for the Irish. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 7433).



At the last Smithfield Monthly Meeting of Friends held 2d month 1847 the subject of the suffering condition of the poor Irish was introduced, and although many, perhaps most of the members constituting that Meeting hath but a short time since contributed pretty liberally, yet as the Meeting seemed impressed with the conviction, that it was incumbent on us to do our whole duty for the relief of their distress; a few Friends were nominated to solicit subscriptions, to be forwarded by a relief Committee appointed by the Meeting for Sufferings to Philadelphia, thence by the aid of another Committee to Dublin.

Silvenio C Smith	$. 1	00
Amy Bartlett	0	50
Horace Paine	1	00
Peter G. Aldrich	0	50
Chad and Mary Smith one dol. each	2	00
David M Gaskill	1	00
Ruth Fowler Northbridge	2	00
Nathan C. Aldrich	2	00
Elisha Gaskill	2	00
Benjamin F. Knowles	5	00
Stacy W. Fenner	0	50
Joseph C. Aldrich	3	00
	27	50

197
32 50
229.50

occurred.[15] "Starvation of the most dire description stalked throughout the length and breadth of the land," declared the *Pawtucket Gazette*.[16] Some newspapers published an appeal for help from the women of Cork. "It is impossible," the *Woonsocket Patriot* admitted, "for us . . . fully to understand the severity of the sufferings which the poor of Ireland are called to experience."[17] These grim accounts acted as the catalyst that changed the public mood in the United States from "apathy to action."[18]

Meetings were called in early February in New York, Boston, and other cities. The first meeting to receive national attention took place in New Orleans on 4 February. Newspapers across the country reprinted details of the meeting and a speech by Henry Clay, a Whig leader and former presidential candidate, on behalf of famine relief for Ireland. A few days later a mass meeting was held in Washington, chaired by Vice President George Dallas. Many members of the Supreme Court and Congress attended, including Senator Albert Collins Greene, a Whig from Rhode Island, who helped organize the meeting and served as one of its vice presidents. At the meeting an appeal was made for the formation of relief committees to collect contributions for Ireland and Scotland. It was asked that major relief committees be set up in Washington, Boston, New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Charleston, and New Orleans, and that local committees be organized in other communities to funnel relief supplies and money to the major committees for shipment to the famine-stricken lands.[19]

The public endorsement of famine relief by the country's major political leaders encouraged a nationwide campaign of voluntary philanthropy, a campaign joined and led by local business, financial, political and civic leaders. The federal government did not grant direct aid to the relief effort. Congressman Washington Hunt, a Whig from upstate New York, introduced a bill in the House that would appropriate

$500,000 to purchase and ship foodstuffs to Ireland, but the bill died in committee. Tv weeks later, on 26 February 1847, a similar bill was introduced in the Senate by Jo Crittenden, a Kentucky Whig. With most Democrats (including President James K. Po opposing it on the grounds that the use of public funds for foreign relief was uncons tutional, the Crittenden bill passed the Senate but died in the House. Funds for fami relief would have to come entirely from voluntary contributions.[20]

In early March, however, Congress bowed to pressure from petition campaigns Boston, New York, Albany, and Philadelphia and a plea from New Jersey shipbuilc George DeKay and approved a proposal to allow two warships, the frigate *Macedoni* and the sloop of war *Jamestown,* to carry relief supplies, the former from New York Ireland, the latter from Boston to Scotland. The *Jamestown,* commanded by Rob Forbes of Boston, carried out its mission quickly and without conflict, but DeK became involved in a bitter fight with the New York City Irish Relief Committee, a fig that led the New York, Brooklyn, Albany, and Providence relief committees to refuse send aid via the *Macedonian* and nearly scuttled its errand of mercy. In the end, t Boston Relief Committee and New York City's Common Council provided most of t frigate's load.[21]

Meanwhile, as a result of the mass meeting in Washington, famine relief committ were being formed in hundreds of localities across the nation. In Rhode Island, Bris residents met at the State House in late February and elected a committee of twelve organize the collection of money, food, and clothing for the relief effort. Over the n month residents of the town donated $664 (including $6.44 from students at a lo school) and new and used clothing, which were forwarded to the Boston-based N England Committee for the Relief of Ireland and Scotland for shipment.[22] Residents Warren and Valley Falls sent contributions of money, food, and clothing to the N England committee early in March. Having learned of the "great and unparalleled d tress" in Ireland and Scotland, citizens of Newport gathered at their town hall in ea March and decided that they had an obligation to help "their suffering brethre Toward that end, they elected a thirty-member committee (six representatives fr each ward) to collect donations, and they asked the local clergy to take up collections well in the town's churches.[23]

Pawtucket citizens met at their town hall in late February and elected a committee of t to organize famine relief activities.[24] For the people of Pawtucket, said the *Pawtuc Gazette,* the critical situation in Ireland "disregards all limitations of distance, caste, a country," requiring all Christians to help the starving.[25] Local Whig politicians, includi a member of the school committee, the town overseer of the poor, and the town assess took leadership roles in the relief effort. To solicit donations, the committee divic Pawtucket and neighboring Central Falls among subcommittees; and in a pattern follow throughout the country, residents asked their clergy to solicit contributions at Sunc services. Reporting on a meeting of the committee, the *Gazette* urged its readers to cc tribute liberally to the "relief of Erin's famishing and perishing people."[26] The Pawtuc committee raised enough funds to purchase 125 barrels of meal, which were sent to t New York Irish Relief Committee and carried to Cork aboard the *William Dugan,* wh sailed from New York in May.[27]

Perhaps the most successful relief effort was carried out in Woonsocket.[28] On February residents convened at Armory Hall, where they elected George Wardwell president of their committee, John Osborne as treasurer, and S. S. Foss, the *Woonsoc*

Patriot's editor, as secretary.[29] "Depend on it, *Sir*," declared "J," a Woonsocket resident, in the *Providence Journal*, "Woonsocket Will Do its Duty."[30] The prediction proved accurate. Local Irish residents, who constituted a significant part of the foreign-born population in some mill villages in the area, were the principal initial contributors, but others quickly joined in supporting the cause. In remarks quoted in the *Boston Pilot*, the Reverend Charles O'Reilly, a local Catholic priest who had spoken at the Armory Hall meeting, expressed his surprise and pleasure at the cooperation of Protestants in the area.[31] The Woonsocket fund-raising effort in fact provided the best example of ecumenical support for Irish famine relief in Rhode Island.

By the time residents met for a second time at the Congregational church on 18 February, the committee was able to announce contributions of over $3,400, including $287 raised by employees of the Providence and Worcester Railroad. Large individual donations were also received: Welcome Farnum, of nearby Waterford, in Smithfield, contributed $1,000; Edward Harris, of Woonsocket, $500; Dexter Ballou and Son, of Woonsocket, $200.[32] "Let, then, the generous aids of the men of Woonsocket go forth" as a model for others to follow, proclaimed Father O'Reilly.[33] The Woonsocket committee sent the money collected to Thomas P. Cope of the Society of Friends in Philadelphia, who used it to purchase 700 barrels of cornmeal. These were shipped in early March aboard the bark *Mary and Martha* from Philadelphia via Liverpool to Limerick, where they were distributed by Irish Quakers.[34]

The Most Reverend William Tyler, first bishop of Hartford. From Thomas F. Cullen, The Catholic Church in Rhode Island *(North Providence, 1936). RIHS Collection (RHi X3 7432).*

The largest contributions from Catholic churches in Rhode Island apparently came from donations collected at two churches in Providence, St. Patrick's and SS. Peter and Paul, which contributed $756 and $500 respectively. Altogether, Catholic churches in the Diocese of Hartford (comprising Connecticut and Rhode Island) raised $3,600, of which $1,610 was raised in Rhode Island.[35] All funds thus collected were sent to William Tyler, bishop of Hartford, who forwarded them for distribution by the four archbishops of Ireland. In Woonsocket, Irish Catholics and the local clergy worked with Protestants in ecumenical and nonpartisan relief committees, but in Providence four separate channels for assistance developed: Catholic churches, the Society of Friends, a nonpartisan and nondenominational relief committee, and direct remittances by immigrants to relatives and friends in Ireland.[36]

Providence's Whig mayor, Thomas M. Burgess, "a wealthy merchant of 'rank, style and station,'" sent out public announcements calling upon the people of the city to assemble on 16 February at Mechanics Hall to discuss ways "to relieve the sufferings among our fellow-men in Ireland."[37] The local press joined the mayor's call: the Democratic *Providence Republican Herald* predicted that the citizens of Providence would "extend to the starving Irish their generous sympathy and succor"; the Whig *Providence Journal* urged the city's people to contribute what they could to the famine relief effort.[38]

When the meeting convened, it elected Mayor Burgess as its president, listened to speeches by local clergymen, including Unitarian minister Edward B. Hall and Baptist minister and Brown University president Francis Wayland, and appointed a committee of forty to solicit donations and canvass the city by wards.[39] Among the committee's members were Moses B. Ives, a cotton manufacturer who made a fortune in maritime commerce; John Howland, the president of the Providence Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers and a prominent advocate of public education; Samuel W. Wheeler, a leading Unitarian abolitionist "who kept a temperance grocery";[40] Democratic political leader Thomas F. Carpenter; entrepreneur Alexander Duncan; manufacturer Robert Knight; financier Walter S. Burges; former governor Charles Jackson; the Reverend Francis Wayland, who held nativistic anti-Catholic views;[41] Edward P. Knowles, soon to

become president of the Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers; Whig state rep sentatives James T. Rhodes and William Sheldon; and Whig Law and Order councilm Allen C. Matthewson.[42]

Within a day the committee had raised $2,150. While it solicited donations, several r dents of Providence wrote to the newspapers encouraging people to contribute. In *Republican Herald,* "W" urged that "every man from his much or little, give somethi to aid Ireland. An appeal in the *Providence Journal* from "One of the Committee" cal upon Rhode Islanders and people of Worcester County, Massachusetts, to give w they could to famine relief. The Providence Handel and Haydn Society ("many [whose members] are unable to give much money" themselves) announced tha would present a concert at Westminster Hall for the benefit of the relief effort.[43]

By early March the committee had raised $5,735 from ward solicitations. It also collec $295 in donations from nine Protestant churches in the city—two Episcopalian, th Congregationalist, and four Baptist—with the two largest amounts coming from John's Episcopal Church, $66, and the First Baptist Church, $57. Including other do tions collected and processed independently of the committee—most notably, $ raised by the Society of Friends and $1,300 by Roman Catholic churches—Providen contributions for Irish famine relief totaled about $8,400.[44]

Accepting the advice of the *Providence Journal,* the committee did not send any relief via the *Macedonian* because of the anticipated delays that would entail.[45] In the enc forwarded $6,352 to William Rathbone of Liverpool. Rathbone, a businessman, was a "a former [Liverpool] mayor, philanthropist, and well known friend of Irish natio aspirations."[46] He was instructed to send the money on to the Society of Friends Dublin, but the Quakers instead gave him a list of local people in Ireland who wo distribute it. The funds ended up being disbursed by the Reverend Edwin Thomas Kerry; Cesar Otway, the poor-law commissioner for Donegal, Mayo, and Leitrim; Industrial Society of Galway; and individuals in Cork, Tuam, Ramelton, a Londonderry. Some of the money was used to buy breakfasts for children who "it known had no other means of getting a meal in the day."[47]

While most of the famine relief efforts in the United States focused on Ireland, smal scale efforts were mounted in some cities—New York, Albany, Louisville, Cincinn and Chicago among them—to raise funds for Scotland, whose western Highlands a Western Isles were also suffering from the potato blight.[48] Accounts of the distres Scotland appeared in the American press along with those of the situation in Ireland November 1846 the *Pawtucket Gazette* reported that "in the highlands of Scotland well as in Ireland, immense destitution existed"; in January 1847 the *Republican He* told its readers that "the famine continued unabated in the highlands of Scotland" February the *Gazette* declared that "the condition of the poor in the Highlands Scotland is nearly as bad at that of the destitute Irish."[49]

By virtue of the work of Scottish benevolent societies and the British governm together with the availability of alternative food sources, the suffering in Scotl proved far less severe than it was in Ireland; while over a million died in Ireland, a millions remained at risk or fled to England, Canada, or America, no more than 150,(were at risk at any given time during the crisis in Scotland. Severe food shortages wo continue in the maritime districts of western Scotland until 1850, but the famine see to have resulted in few deaths.[50]

No record exists of Scottish-American groups organizing relief activities in Rhode Island. Rather, as in other parts of the nation, groups that were organized for Irish famine relief expanded their mission to include assistance for Scotland as well. Meetings in Bristol and Newport explicitly declared an aim to raise funds for both countries. Bristol sent part of its donations to the New England Committee for the Relief of Ireland and Scotland, which forwarded it via the vessel *Morea* to Glasgow. Providence allocated part of the donations it sent to William Rathbone for Scotland, and Rathbone sent it on to Jonathan Clow for the Glasgow Relief Committee.[51]

Meanwhile, seeing no hope for the future, many Catholic Irish left Ireland for America. The hundreds of thousands of Irish fleeing the famine between 1847 and 1854 fundamentally altered the ethnic and religious makeup of many American cities, including Providence. By 1850, immigrants—three quarters of them Irish—made up 16 percent of Rhode Island's population. In 1860 about 68 percent of the immigrants to Rhode Island were Irish. By 1855 ten thousand Irish lived in Providence, constituting 22 percent of its population.[52] For the most part the Irish newcomers arrived "destitute, without industrial skills, and feared by many Protestants for their fervent Catholicism."[53]

Although Protestant Rhode Islanders willingly contributed to Irish famine relief, most were unwilling to alter existing laws that denied naturalized citizens the vote unless they owned a specified minimum of real property. Ironically, the campaign for Irish famine relief coincided with two failed attempts to remove this restriction: in May 1846, and again in February 1847, the American Citizens' Association unsuccessfully petitioned the General Assembly for the abolition of the property qualification for naturalized citizens. The Democratic press supported the proposal, but Whigs—who joined with Democrats and Irish Catholics in support of famine relief—opposed making citizens "out of Irishmen and Dutchmen."[54] Yet for all their opposition to the immigrant Irish, the nativist Whigs could not stop the changes in the ethnic and religious mix in the population, nor could the Know-Nothing party, which dominated the state's politics in the mid-1850s.

While Protestants may well have contributed to the relief effort through a sense of Christian charity, such contributions were also a logical extension of efforts by Protestant reformers to "reform the poor while keeping them at arm's length."[55] As long as Irish Catholics remained in Ireland, Protestant Rhode Islanders saw it as their Christian duty to assist them, especially since the Society of Friends, which shared the middle-class values of the reformers, emerged as a major institution for channeling famine relief to Ireland. As elsewhere in the United States, the press and Protestant leaders in Rhode Island emphasized a shared humanity and Christianity with the famine Irish; but that identification survived only as long as Irish Catholics remained in their native land.

Protestants could not regard the Irish, when they arrived in Rhode Island, as constituting an acceptable ethnic and religious community. The combination of high numbers, poverty, and Catholicism of the new immigrants was deeply troubling to Protestants in Providence and elsewhere in the state, many of whom believed that the Irish were agents of the pope, and disloyal to America's republican institutions. Within five years of the 1847 famine relief efforts, the Providence City Council received a report from a committee on the outdoor (noninstitutionalized) poor that complained about "vast hordes of foreign paupers, thrown up on our shores from the almshouses and prisons of Europe."[56] This uneasiness, which helped spark the political success of the Know-Nothings, continued long after the Know-Nothing ascendancy had passed, with Protestants and Catholics keeping each other at a distance because of "mutual suspicion and hostility."[57]

But in 1847 Rhode Islanders of all denominations and political beliefs briefly put asid their differences to help the starving in Ireland and Scotland. As part of an outpourin of philanthropy from across the country, famine relief committees were organized i Bristol, Newport, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, Providence, Greenville, and other Rhod Island communities, as Quakers, Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalian Unitarians, and Roman Catholics all joined together, as Father Charles O'Reilly note in the spring of 1847, in "universal America," in support of a great humanitarian cause.

"Irish Emigrants Leaving Home.—The Priest's Blessing." Engraving, Illustrated London News, *10 May 1851. RIHS Collection (RHi X3 7434).*

Notes

1. For an overview of American reaction to the famine, see Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 41-64; Helen Hatton, *The Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland, 1654-1921* (Kingston [Ontario] and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 108-26; Christine Kinealy, *A Death-Dealing Famine: The Great Hunger in Ireland* (London and Chicago: Pluto Press, 1997), 111-16. For an example of a local study, see Harvey Strum, "Famine Relief from Brooklyn," *New York Irish History* 12 (1998): 16-20. Passing references to famine relief in Rhode Island are in William Byrne, *History of the Catholic Church in the New England States,* vol. 1 (Boston: Hurd & Everts, 1899), 371, and Robert W. Hayman, *Catholicism in Rhode Island and the Diocese of Providence,* vol. 1, 1780-1886 (Providence: Diocese of Providence, 1982), 81.

2. John Osborne et al., Woonsocket Irish Relief Committee, to Thomas Cope, 22 Feb. 1847, in Society of Friends, *Transactions of the Society of Friends during the Famine in Ireland,* (1852; reprint, Dublin: Edmund Burke, 1996), 235.

3. John S. Gilkeson Jr., *Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), 64-65. See also Charles Hoffman and Tess Hoffman, *Brotherly Love: Murder and the Politics of Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Rhode Island* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 21-22; Patrick T. Conley and Matthew J. Smith, *Catholicism in Rhode Island: The Formative Era* (Providence: Diocese of Providence, 1976), 24.

4. Hoffman and Hoffman, *Brotherly Love,* 24. See also Conley and Smith, *Catholicism in Rhode Island,* 114; Patrick T. Conley, *The Irish in Rhode Island: A Historical Appreciation* (Providence: Rhode Island Heritage Commission and Rhode Island Publications Society, 1986), 7-11.

5. Byrne, *History of the Catholic Church,* 1:365; Peter J. Coleman, *The Transformation of Rhode Island, 1790-1860* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1963), 242.

6. Marvin Gettleman, *The Dorr Rebellion* (New York, Random House, 1973), 146.

7. Hayman, *Catholicism in Rhode Island,* 1:41. For accounts of repeal meetings across the United States, see the *New York Freeman's Journal,* 1841-45.

8. Hayman, *Catholicism in Rhode Island,* 1:47.

9. The murder of Amasa Sprague and the subsequent trials of the Gordon brothers are the subject of Charles and Tess Hoffmann's *Brotherly Love: Murder and the Politics of Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Rhode Island* (see note 3). Hayman, *Catholicism in Rhode Island,* 1:77-79, stresses the anti-Catholic, anti-Irish nature of the Gordon execution and how it brought the Irish community together.

10. *Pawtucket Gazette and Chronicle,* 20 Nov. 1846; *Providence Republican Herald,* 21 Nov. 1846. See also the *Pawtucket Gazette and Chronicle,* 13 Nov. 1846; *Providence Daily Journal,* 18 Nov. 1846.

11. Society of Friends, *Transactions,* 235, 340, 345.

12. *Boston Advertiser,* 15 Feb. 1847.

13. *Providence Republican Herald,* 10 Mar. 1847. For similar activities in other places, see the *Pawtucket Gazette and Chronicle,* 29 Jan. 1847; *New York Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register,* 2 Jan. 1847; *New York Sun,* 26 Jan. 1847; *Chicago Daily Journal,* 5, 6 Mar. 1847.

14. *New York Freeman's Journal,* 12 Dec. 1846; *Brooklyn Eagle,* 19, 21, 22, 28 Dec. 1846; Henry Crosby Forbes and Henry Lee, *Massachusetts Help to Ireland during the Great Famine* (Milton, Mass.: Captain Forbes House, 1967), 8. See also the *Providence Republican Herald,* 17 Feb. 1847, for Quaker relief efforts.

15. *Providence Republican Herald,* 27 Jan. 1847; *Providence Daily Journal,* 13 Feb. 1847. The former based its account on news brought by the *Hibernia,* the latter on news from the *Sarah Sands.*

16. *Pawtucket Gazette and Chronicle,* 29 Jan. 1847.

17. *Woonsocket Patriot,* 12 Feb. 1847. See also the *Providence Daily Journal,* 9 Feb. 1847. For other reports of famine conditions in Ireland, see the *Newport Mercury,* Feb. through Mar. 1847.

18. Forbes and Lee, *Massachusetts Help to Ireland,* 11.

19. *Washington National Intelligencer,* 8, 12 Feb. 1847. For a summary of the Washington meeting, see the *Providence Daily Journal,* 11 Feb. 1847. See also a report by "Civic," a correspondent to the *New York Evening Post,* 11 Feb. 1847. For the original draft of the meeting's appeal, see the Daniel Webster Papers at Dartmouth College, 9 Feb. 1847, or the microfilm edition, *Papers of Daniel Webster,* ed. Charles Wiltse (Ann Arbor, Mich: University Microfilms, 1971), reel 20, 027623-36.

20. Timothy Jerome Sarbaugh, "A Moral Spectacle: American Relief and the Famine, 1845-49," *Eire-Ireland* 15 (winter 1980): 6-14. The debate in Congress over famine relief was reported in the *Providence Daily Journal,* 1 Mar. 1847. For another local study of famine relief, see John Ridge, "The Great Hunger in New York," *New York Irish History* 9 (1995): 5-12. For the original petitions and congressional resolutions on famine relief, see Records of the U.S. Senate, Petitions Laid upon the Table (Sen. 29A-H7), RG 46, and Original Senate Bills and Resolutions, 29th Cong., 2nd sess. (S. 184, Sen. 29A-B4), RG 46, National Archives.

21. Sarbaugh, "A Moral Spectacle," 14. Examining the government's very limited involvement in the relief effort, Sarbaugh concludes that Congress and Polk "failed the starving Irish" by only providing "two war-torn vessels." Actually, the *Macedonian* was built in 1837 and the *Jamestown* in 1844. For a description of the voyage of the *Macedonian,* see Phyllis DeKay Wheelock, "Commodore George DeKay and the Voyage of *Macedonian* to Ireland," *American Neptune* 13 (1953): 252-69; for a description of the voyage of the Jamestown, see Forbes and Lee, *Massachusetts Help to Ireland,* 26-34. Accounts of the congressional debate and vote on the two vessels appear in the *Providence Daily Journal,* 6 Mar. 1847; Sarbaugh, "A Moral Spectacle," 13-14; and Forbes and Lee, *Massachusetts Help to Ireland,* 26-30. See also the *Providence Daily Journal,* 30 Mar. 1847; *Boston Advertiser,* 29 Mar., 8, 10, 17, 22 May 1847.

22. *Providence Daily Journal,* 3 Mar. 1847. A second article on 23 Mar. 1847 reprinted a story from the *Bristol Phenix.* See also Undated List of Contributions, item 7, General Accounts, Records of the New England Committee, series 2, Robert Bennet Forbes Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston; contributions from some Rhode Island communities (including Warren and Valley Falls) are recorded in the list.

23. *Newport Mercury,* 6 Mar. 1847. The staff of the Rhode Island Historical Society who provided me with photocopies of articles from the *Mercury* found no additional stories about relief efforts in Newport.

24. The town of Pawtucket, on the east side of the Blackstone River, was in Massachusetts; the village of Pawtucket, on the west side of the river, was in North Providence, Rhode Island. Although politically separate, the town and the village otherwise functioned as a single community. See Robert Grieve, *An Illustrated History of Pawtucket, Central Falls, and Vicinity: A Narrative of the Growth and Evolution of the Community* (Pawtucket: Pawtucket Gazette and Chronicle, 1897), 12.

25. *Pawtucket Gazette and Chronicle,* 26 Feb. 1847.

26. Ibid., 19 Feb. 1847. The *Gazette* published an appeal by the committee on 5 Mar. 1847. See also the *Providence Daily Journal,* 20 Feb. 1847.

27. Society of Friends, *Transactions,* 345.

28. The village of Woonsocket was the largest of a cluster of mill villages, in Cumberland and Smithfield, at Woonsocket Falls. It would form the nucleus of the town of Woonsocket, incorporated in 1867. See A. P. Thomas, *Woonsocket: Highlights of History, 1800-1976* (Woonsocket: Woonsocket Opera House Society, 1976), 14-15.

Notes continued

29. *Woonsocket Patriot,* 19 Feb. 1847.

30. *Providence Daily Journal,* 16 Feb. 1847.

31. *Boston Pilot,* 6 Mar. 1847. On the immigrant population in mill villages in Cumberland, see Coleman, *Transformation of Rhode Island,* 229. For contributions from Cumberland mill villages and other communities near Woonsocket, see the *Boston Pilot,* 6 Mar. 1847.

32. *Woonsocket Patriot,* 26 Feb. 1847; *Providence Daily Journal,* 20 Feb. 1847; *Boston Pilot,* 6 Mar. 1847.

33. *Boston Pilot,* 6 Mar. 1847.

34. John Osborne et al., Woonsocket Irish Relief Committee, to Thomas Cope, 22 Feb. 1847, Society of Friends, *Transactions,* 235, 340; *Woonsocket Patriot,* 19 Mar. 1847.

35. *Boston Pilot,* 6, 3 Mar. 1847; *Providence Daily Journal,* 6 Mar. 1847.

36. *Boston Pilot,* 6 Mar. 1847; *Providence Daily Journal,* 6 Mar. 1847; *Providence Republican Herald,* 10 Mar. 1847. For contributions raised in Catholic churches and sent to Bishop Tyler, see Famine Relief Accounts, Bishop William Tyler, Hartford Archdiocesan Chancery archives, Hartford, Connecticut. Sister Marjorie Fallon, Office of the Archivist, kindly provided me with copies of accounts. Additional records sent to me by archivist Maria Medina confirm some of the figures reported in the *Boston Pilot,* especially for communities in Rhode Island. (The two Providence newspapers apparently confused funds raised in the Diocese of Hartford with those raised in Catholic churches in Providence; see note 44 below.)

37. Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence,* 34; *Providence Republican Herald,* 13 Feb. 1847.

38. *Providence Republican Herald,* 13 Feb. 1847; *Providence Daily Journal,* 18 Feb. 1847.

39. *Providence Daily Journal,* 17 Feb. 1847.

40. Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence,* 68.

41. Coleman, *Transformation of Rhode Island,* 130, 201, 287, 299; Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence,* 25-26, 74, 77-78. The Wayland Papers at Brown University do not contain records of the Providence famine relief committee.

42. *Providence Daily Journal,* 3, 9, 12, 20 Apr. 1847; *Providence Republican Herald,* 7 Apr., 15 May 1847.

43. *Providence Republican Herald,* 24 Feb. 1847; *Providence Daily Journal,* 2 Mar., 24 Feb. 1847.

44. *Providence Daily Journal,* 6, 10 Mar. 1847; *Providence Republican Herald,* 24 Feb., 10 Mar. 1847. The *Republican Herald* stated that $10,372.43 was collected in Providence, while the *Providence Journal* put the total at $10,727.43, but both figures are apparently inaccurate, since they include the $3,600 collected in the Diocese of Hartford as having come entirely from Providence. Other data included in these reports were used in calculating the $8,400 figure cited here. (This figure does not, of course, include remittances sent directly to Ireland by Providence residents; the total of such remittances is unknown.)

45. See the *Providence Daily Journal,* 23 Mar. 1847.

46. Forbes and Lee, *Massachusetts Help to Ireland,* 34. See also William Rathbone to Dr. Francis Wayland, 18 May 1847, letterbook 1, New England Relief Society, William Rathbone Papers, Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, England.

47. *Providence Daily Journal,* 9 June 1847. Copies of letters between Rathbone and Wayland are reprinted in this and the *Journal*'s 20 May 1847 issue. See also letters from Rathbone to Wayland in the *Journal,* 20 April and 24 May 1847, and Wayland to the *Journal,* 19 and 24 May 1847. Contributions from Rhode Island are acknowledged in Rathbone to Wayland, 1 July 1847; Rathbone to Manton and Hallet, 3 July 1847; and Rathbone to Henry Hyde, 17 June, 3 July 1847, Rathbone Papers.

48. Relief efforts in North America are mentioned in Tom Devine, *The Great Highland Famine* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), 13-16, 111-16. The author of this article is currently working on an article on American aid to Scotland during the famine.

49. *Pawtucket Gazette and Chronicle,* 13 Nov. 1846; *Providence Republican Herald,* 27 Jan. 1847; *Pawtucket Gazette and Chronicle,* 26 Feb. 1847. See also the *Providence Journal,* 13, 22 Feb. 1847.

50. Although neither gives exact figures on deaths, both Devine, *The Great Highland Famine,* 57-63, and Michael Flinn, ed., *Scottish Population History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 433, say that relatively few died during the famine. The same point is made in John Keay and Julia Keay, *Collins Encyclopedia of Scotland* (London: HarperCollins, 1994), 785, and Cormac O'Grada, *Black '47 and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 16, 105.

51. *Providence Journal,* 24 Apr. 1847; *Bristol Phenix,* undated, reprinted in *Providence Journal,* 23 Mar. 1847; *Newport Mercury,* 6 Mar. 1847; also, Undated Account of Contributors from Towns of Massachusetts . . . and Rhode Island Involved in NECRIS [New England Committee for the Relief of Ireland and Scotland], item 3; Undated Memorandum of Food and Clothing, item 4, General Accounts; William Rand, Glasgow Committee, to Boston Relief Committee, 17 May 1847, item 9, *Morea,* Bills, Records of the New England Committee, Forbes Papers.

52. Robert A. Wheeler, "Fifth Ward Irish—Immigrant Mobility in Providence, 1850-1870," *Rhode Island History* 32 (1973): 53-54, 56; Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence,* 65.

53. Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence,* 65.

54. *Providence Journal,* 18 Feb. 1847. For debate on the proposal to abolish the property qualification, see the report on the meeting of the American Citizens Association in the *Providence Republican Herald,* 3 Feb. 1847; that newspaper expressed its support of the proposal in its 30 Jan., 27 Feb., and 31 Mar. 1847 issues. For anti-immigrant tirades, see the *Providence Journal,* 18 Feb., 13 Mar., 24 May, 4, 15 June 1847. See also Coleman, *Transformation of Rhode Island,* 244, 250, 278, 293; Michael A. Simoncelli, "Battling the Enemies of Liberty: The Rise and Fall of the Rhode Island Know-Nothing Party," *Rhode Island History* 54 (1996): 3-19. The property qualification remained part of the state's constitution until 1888.

55. Mark S. Schantz, *Piety in Providence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 258.

56. Quoted in Schantz, *Piety in Providence,* 259.

57. Ibid, 263. For other accounts of nativism in Rhode Island in the 1850s, see Larry Anthony Rand, "The Know-Nothing Party in Rhode Island: Religious Bigotry and Political Success," *Rhode Island History* 23 (1964): 102-16, and Simoncelli, "Battling the Enemies of Liberty." On the difficulties of Irish immigrant life, see Conley and Smith, *Catholicism in Rhode Island,* 124, and Wheeler, "Fifth Ward Irish," which finds a generally low rate of occupational advancement among the population studied.

58. *Boston Pilot,* 6 Mar. 1847.

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Flags decorated the Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery in Exeter during a groundbreaking ceremony for a Vietnam memorial in 1985. Courtesy of the Providence Journal.