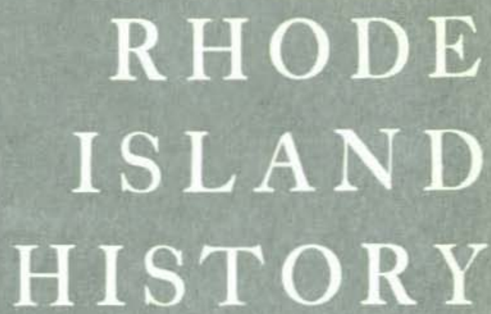

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CAPE VERDE BOUND

Photograph by Joseph M. Latham

Two familiar visitors from the Cape Verde Islands ride the cover of this issue. That's the brigantine MADALAN *being towed into the river at the start of another long 3,000-mile haul across the Atlantic to the islands at the end of her visit here, November 24, 1953. She has a 300-horsepower diesel, but a tug was needed to break her out of the Providence River mud that year. The 147-foot vessel was built in 1927 at Lussinpiccolo, Italy, for $3,500,000 as the yacht* ILLYRIA *for Cornelius Crane of Ipswich, Mass. She made a round-the-world cruise in 1928-29, served in the Coast Guard anti-sub patrol in World War II and entered the Providence-Cape Verde trade in 1947.*

Still alongside the Old Colonial Line wharf at South Water Street is the 61-year-old schooner ERNESTINA, *which started life in Essex, Mass., in 1894 as the* EFFIE M. MORRISSEY *of Capt. Bob Bartlett, the Arctic Explorer. She made thirty trips to the Arctic under Bartlett before he died in 1946. In 1947 she burned and sank in the East River at New York, was raised, and entered the Cape Verde service out of New Bedford the next year. She has been calling here regularly since 1948. Until last year, when a diesel was installed during her visit, she made the transatlantic run under canvas alone.*

At last report the MADALAN *is preparing for another passage to Providence, but when is not certain. Probably the* ERNESTINA *will return, too, although no information has been received here yet. They serve as a reminder of a day when many a vessel of these types put into Providence from distant ports.*

ROBERT C. FREDERIKSEN

RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

VOL. 14 JULY, 1955 NO. 3

TRANSCENDENTALISM AND THE PROVIDENCE LITERATI

by CHARLES R. CROWE*

§1.

THE DEVELOPMENT of Transcendentalism in Rhode Island was stimulated by magazines such as the *Dial* and by personal contacts with many of the major leaders of Transcendentalism—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bronson Alcott, George and Sophia Ripley, James Freeman Clarke, and Margaret Fuller. Emerson was a frequent visitor to Providence; he gave a series of lectures in Rhode Island almost every year[1] and was a favorite speaker for such liberal events as the dedication of the progressive Greene Street School in 1837. Emerson's circle of acquaintances included virtually every literary figure in Providence, most of whom he met through Charles Newcomb. He had only the highest praise for Newcomb, and in later years remembering him at Brook Farm, he described him as a youth of "the subtlest mind . . . the subtlest observer and diviner of character I ever met, living, reading, writing, and talking there . . . his mind fed and overfed by whatever is exalted in genius."[2]

The Newcomb family maintained a close friendship with Bronson Alcott, who often came to visit Charles's mother, Rhoda Newcomb, during the days when Alcott was struggling with Fruitlands, that strange impractical community which seemed to justify the derision of his contemporaries who regarded Transcendentalism as little more than a humorous topic of conversation. Alcott always had problems which he discussed at length with Rhoda Newcomb:[3] the community

*Mr. Crowe received his Ph.D. degree from Brown University in June, 1955.
[1]Notices of Emerson's lectures were usually printed in the *Providence Journal.*
[2]*Works* (Centenary ed., Boston, 1883), X, 362.
[3]Clara Sears, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Boston, 1915).

was on the brink of financial ruin (a perpetual difficulty); a member had been expelled for secretly eating fish in the dead of night, a violation of one of the prime rules of the community which provided that only fresh fruit and bread made from unbolted flour should be consumed by its members; or a farmer had used a plow horse in clear violation of the rule which prohibited the use of draft animals in cultivating the soil.

George Ripley, one of the editors of the *Dial* and the founder of Brook Farm, occasionally came to Providence to see Margaret Fuller and to visit Rhoda Newcomb or Sarah Whitman.[4] Ripley's wife, Sophia, was a very close friend of Sarah Whitman and the two could talk for hours about the status of women in modern society, New England Transcendentalism, or German literature and philosophy. It was the friendship between the Ripley's and the Newcomb family which led Charles Newcomb to join the Brook Farm community, where his eccentricities were to arouse a great deal of attention. James Freeman Clarke, a close friend of Ripley and one of the leaders of the western Transcendentalists, came to preach several times to enthusiastic audiences in Providence.[5]

Of all the Transcendentalists, perhaps none made as strong an impression on Rhode Island intellectuals as Margaret Fuller who lived in Providence from June, 1837, to December, 1838. Sarah Whitman accepted her without question as one of "the blood royal of intellect," and recorded the impression which Miss Fuller's arrival made on the Providence literati, who felt as

> some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken. She brought with her a flood of light on all the new and exciting topics of the day. She came enveloped in a halo of Transcendentalism—a nebulous cloud of German mysticism and idealism. On all these topics Margaret talked with inspiration and enthusiasm, always soaring above her subject, always baffling analysis and transcending expectation. If her intellectual arrogance sometimes repelled, her rapid intuitions and electric sympathies rarely failed to dazzle and attract.[6]

§2.

It was Hiram Fuller, a schoolmaster and bookseller, who was

[4]See the letters of George Ripley in the Massachusetts Historical Society and in the Boston Public Library.

[5]See James Freeman Clarke, *Autobiography* (Boston, 1891), 313.

[6]Sarah Whitman, Letter published in the *Providence Journal*, March 27, 1868.

responsible for bringing Margaret Fuller to Providence. As a progressive educator he was well acquainted with the theories of the European thinkers, DeGerando and Pestalozzi, whom the Boston Transcendentalist educational experimenters praised so highly. Fuller, who later became a New York editor and who managed a pro-Southern paper in London during the Civil War, was a curious personality and a blend of both radicalism and conservatism.[7] Although he held very strong notions of social propriety, he admired the erratic Bronson Alcott, who made no pretensions to respectability. His political ideas followed the lines of Whig conservatism, yet his progressive theories made him one of the most liberal educators of his age.[8] He was a great admirer of Transcendentalism, and read Transcendentalist writings to his classes, an unorthodox practice which attracted attention and criticism. When the time came to select a speaker for the dedication of the Greene Street School, Fuller committed his greatest heresy by inviting Bronson Alcott. Alcott declined, however, and Fuller asked Emerson, who promptly accepted.

With a background of unorthodox educational reforms at earlier schools Fuller laid elaborate plans for the further development of his experiments at the Greene Street School. It was only natural that he should choose as his assistant Margaret Fuller, who had worked with Bronson Alcott in the famous Temple School. Fuller offered Margaret a salary of one thousand dollars a year for teaching the elder girls in the school four hours a day. Torn between a desire to proceed as rapidly as possible with her translation of Eckerman's *Conversations with Goethe* for George Ripley's *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature* and the opportunity of achieving immediate financial independence, Margaret Fuller chose the latter and accepted the teaching position.[9]

The dedicatory address for the new school was given by Emerson on June 10, 1837. Hiram Fuller met Emerson at the station, took him to his lodgings in the City Hotel, and brought him at 4:00 P.M. to the Reverend Frederick A. Farley's Westminster Congregational Church, where the ceremonies were to take place. During Emerson's

[7]See Annie R. Marble, "Margaret Fuller as a Teacher," *The Critic*, XLIII (October, 1903), 341.

[8]See Henry L. Greene, "The Greene Street School," *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society*, New Series VI (January, 1899), 341.

[9]*Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, ed. J. F. Clarke, R. W. Emerson, and W. H. Channing (London, 1852).

lecture Margaret Fuller was irritated by the expressions of incomprehension on the part of her new teaching colleagues, Frances Aborn and Georgianna Nias. Margaret's reaction was unfortunate, since she was to be associated professionally with the two women. Moreover she had taken rooms at Frances Aborn's house and had arranged to share a parlor with Georgianna Nias and her children.

Later her first impressions of Providence were substantiated when she read a letter which appeared in the *Providence Journal* denouncing Emerson's lecture. The anonymous writer was not entirely unsympathetic with Emerson, but complained of being lost in the "seven folds of thrice-wreathed mysticism," and described the lecture as an unfortunate specimen of "Germano-Sartor-Resartus-ism," and proudly declared that Providence had not "acquired a taste for such verbiage."[10]

Fortunately Margaret had little time at first to think of these things and spent her first months absorbed completely in her teaching responsibilities. She found the Greene Street School a pleasant place to teach. The school was a white building with six columns and a simple cornice fronting it, surrounded by trees which were protected by freshly painted iron railings. Inside the school was a cloakroom with neat rows of pegs on either side of the room for the boys' hats and the girls' bonnets. Toward the rear of the building there was a large assembly room and two recitation rooms. The assembly room was painted white with pink borders and decorated with portraits of Hiram Fuller, the poet Percival, and others. There was a raised platform for the teacher's desk, faced by symmetrical rows of black and brown desks and chairs. A large French clock and a thick orange carpet completed the furnishings.[11]

Margaret Fuller was to teach composition, elocution, history, Latin, natural philosophy, and ethics. She solved her disciplinary problems at the outset by putting to shame a boy who had brazenly placed a sack of marbles on his desk as if he had intended to play with them. Her pupils were made to understand that they must learn to think as well as study, and talk as well as recite. The approach which Hiram Fuller and Margaret Fuller attempted was an unusual one for their time. They wished to depart from the static

[10]"Opening of the Greene Street School," *Providence Journal*, June 17, 1837.

[11]Margaret Fuller to Arthur Fuller, printed in *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society*, New Series VI (January, 1899), 371-2.

approach of the period, which stressed passive memorization and recitation, and to emphasize a creative approach to learning by stressing the necessity of solving problems.[12] A great deal of emphasis was placed on the journals which all students were required to keep, and Margaret insisted upon the necessity of thinking one's problems through to a satisfactory solution, telling her students that "journals without thoughts are as bones without flesh." When the journal project came to an end, a student, Ann Francis Brown, wrote with sad humor, "I am glad to close this bony journal."[13]

On the second day of school Ann Francis Brown declared in her school journal that Margaret was "an excellent teacher,"[14] but later wrote in her journal (which Margaret was to read) that Mr. Fuller was still her favorite instructor. Margaret told the students Greek myths, tried to talk them out of an antipathy to caterpillars and worms, and caused them to marvel at "the progressive scale of beings," which ran from the smallest animals to God according to Smellie's *Natural Philosophy*. Ann Brown felt that Smellie had committed a grave injustice in not placing the dog and the elephant next to man in the scale of being. The class read Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge, and were occasionally given brief glimpses into German literature. She encouraged them to read American writers on their own initiative and read in class the poetry of Emerson and Elizabeth Peabody. A sustained effort was made to sharpen their powers of observation and arouse their curiosity,—they were instructed to "let nothing pass in reading or conversation that you do not understand without trying to find it out."

When the time came for Margaret to leave Providence in December, 1838, she parted sadly with her pupils. She was especially fond of the English Poetry class, and Ann Brown recorded that "she talked to us so affectionately and feelingly that few could restrain their tears."[15] She made a very emotional speech in which she told her students that she was now alone in the world with poor health and no protectors and warned them against placing absolute dependence on anything in the world. She begged pardon for any deficiencies that she might have revealed, and kissed each student goodbye.

[12]"The Greene Street School," *Book Notes*, X (September 23, 1893), 217-218, 231.

[13]See Ann Francis Brown, MSS "Journal," vol. IV, John Hay Library.

[14]*Ibid., II.*

[15]*Ibid.*

§3.

During her stay in Providence Margaret Fuller did not confine herself to her teaching activities. Each day she made entries in a little album she kept titled "Notes on Goethe" and continued her extensive reading. As time wore on she became less of a recluse and began to move about in Providence society. Once when a French frigate anchored in Narragansett Bay, she went aboard and was entertained by the commander, whom she found charming. Feeling the romantic appeal of a naval officer's life, she inwardly stormed that this career, like so many others, was denied to women because of their sex. Not long afterward an English Quaker, John Joseph Gurney, who was reputed to be a great and distinguished man, came to Providence to lecture. Margaret was quite disappointed in him, for he was not only bigoted but even gloried in his bigotry. The sting of Gurney's lecture was removed a few nights later when Richard Henry Dana began his readings from the English dramatists in Providence. One evening, to the horror of Hiram Fuller, Margaret attended a Whig caucus and heard a speech by " the old bald eagle," Tristam Burgess, a Whig congressman and Rhode Island political power. She found him a magnificent looking man for his profession and a powerful orator. Margaret amused herself by drawing detailed portraits of Burgess and other Rhode Island notables. She could admire Burgess and Whipple, but did not find them sympathetic spirits. This craving for a kindred soul was satisfied by a Baptist minister, a Mr. William Hague, for whom Margaret had a great respect. She described him as follows in her journal:

> He has a very active intellect, sagacity and elevated sentiment; and feeling strongly that God is love, can never preach without earnestness. His power comes first from his glowing vitality of temperament. While speaking, his every muscle is in action, and all his action is towards one object. There is perfect *abandon*. He is permeated, overborne, by his thought. . . . He is full of intellectual life; his mind has not been fettered by dogmas, and the worship of beauty finds a place there. I am much interested in this truly animated being.[16]

She later discovered another kindred spirit in the ministry, from whom she took communion for the first time, explaining:

> I had often wished to do so, but had not been able to find a clergy-

[16]See J. F. Clarke, R. W. Emerson, and W. H. Channing, *op. cit.*, I, 243-244.

> man,—from whom I could be willing to receive it,—willing to admit me on my own terms. Mr. H [Edward Hall] did so; and I shall ever respect and value him, if only for the liberality he displayed on this occasion.[17]

Margaret Fuller found conversational acquaintances in Providence by the score; William Chace was always willing to discuss universal reform, and Sarah Pratt, who had just been elected secretary of the Providence Ladies Anti-Slavery Society, was eager to discuss abolition. As time wore on Margaret acquired many friends among the Providence literati, whom she had taken by storm. Emerson said of her reception in Providence:

> In Providence, she had won, as by conquest, such a homage of attachment, from young and old, that her arrival there, one day, on her return from a visit from Bristol, was a kind of ovation.[18]

Unfortunately the feeling was not completely reciprocal, and Margaret frequently complained to Emerson and W. H. Channing about the intellectual life in Providence. She found Albert G. Greene and Charles T. Brooks men of note, and Sarah Whitman, Ann Lynch, Ann Power, and Rhoda Newcomb women worth conversing with; however, she complained of being surrounded by women such as Frances Aborn and Georgianna Nias, whom she thought little more than half educated. Once, after listening to a group of these women discuss "Skiller" at length in an uninformed manner, Margaret snapped in exasperation: "It is Schiller, Schiller! Don't say Skiller!"[19] On more than one occasion she lost all patience with Georgianna Nias, once exclaiming in acid tones, "Why Mrs. Nias, you would have been worth educating."[20]

Margaret both enjoyed and detested Providence and displayed an equally paradoxical attitude toward the city's notables. While in Providence she wrote often of her dislike of the town, but after leaving it she reminisced nostalgically on her life there.[21]

[17]*Ibid.*, I, 262-263.

[18]*Ibid.*, I, 272.

[19]Quoted in Henry L. Greene's "The Greene Street School," *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society*, New Series VI (January, 1899), 211.

[20]Quoted by Anne R. Marble in "Margaret Fuller as a Teacher," *The Critic*, XLIII (October, 1903), 342.

[21]Margaret Fuller to Sarah Whitman, January 27, 1840, The Rhode Island Historical Society.

§4.

Providence, as Margaret Fuller saw it in 1838, was deeply stirred by the new intellectual currents, as was the rest of New England. The Rhode Islanders were occupied with a multitude of reform movements: progressive education was practiced at the Greene Street School; the Franklin Society[22] and the Rhode Island Historical Society, both of which were founded before 1830, had taken on a new vitality; Shakespeare Hall was erected for lectures and concerts in 1838; and a number of Rhode Island writers were engaged in creative work. The intellectual scene was further stimulated by visits from some of the most notable thinkers and writers in America.

There were two interlocking groups at the heart of Providence intellectual life: an informal group which met at the home of Ann Lynch and the Coliseum Club which held regularly scheduled meetings, usually at the home of Albert Gorton Greene and which often featured a speaker from outside Rhode Island. Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Julia Ward Howe, Bronson Alcott, George Ripley, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Nathaniel P. Willis, John Neal, James Freeman Clarke, F. H. Hedge, Samuel Osgood, and other distinguished writers visited these meetings and gave lectures. Providence authors such as Sarah Whitman, Ann Lynch, Rhoda Newcomb, Ann Power, Henry Giles, Charles T. Brooks, Frederick Farley, Francis Osgood, and Job Durfee read papers to the club. The Coliseum Club was well known in both New York and Boston literary circles, and there circulated in both cities a rather lame joke about it which took the form of a solemn assertion that someone had seen in the *Providence Journal* an announcement reading, "The Coliseum meets at Mrs. Nero's this evening."[23] In spite of its absurd name the club provided a setting for many evenings of brilliant conversation. The atmosphere was free and the arguments were uninhibited. On one particular evening when the members had fallen into a discussion as to just how they had come to call themselves the Coliseum Club, Albert G. Greene offered a sardonic explanation which defined the Coliseum as "a place where one Christian is set upon and torn into pieces by wild beasts."[24]

[22]See Robert Taylor's interesting article, "The Providence Franklin Society," in *Rhode Island History*, IX (April, October, 1950), 73-83, 119-129.

[23]See G. W. Curtis, "The Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's Monthly*, XXXVIII (January, 1869), 16.

[24]Clipping in the "Albert Gorton Greene Scrapbook," John Hay Library, also see *Providence Journal*, October 12, 1878.

There was one memorable meeting at which John Neal spoke on the perfect man, the "phrenological" man. Phrenology was very popular in Providence, and Neal's lecture caused a discussion which lasted for several hours in spite of the digressions of Sarah Whitman and Margaret Fuller. Sarah Whitman spoke of Samuel Larned, who had changed to a diet of crackers after existing on apples for a year. Margaret Fuller described Bronson Alcott's monastic diet as an outward indication of his spiritual and "celestial" nature. The allusion to celestial qualities led to a discussion of animal magnetism, which brought the conversaton back to Neal's topic, phrenology. Conversation on such subjects as Amativeness and Adhesiveness, Ideality and Vitaveness filled the air in spite of the attempts of Albert Greene and Hiram Fuller to turn the conversation to other topics. Neal proposed to give a phrenological reading of Margaret Fuller and began with so many elaborate preliminaries that Fuller and Greene exchanged glances of amusement. He pronounced Margaret Fuller's character "complex and contradictory," with "nobilities and frailties," and asserted that her faculties were at odds, "Parentiveness" challenging "Ideality" and "Amativeness" struggling with "Adhesiveness." He found Margaret a woman of contradictions, with man, woman, scholar, teacher, child, mother, and lover struggling for dominance. Margaret was to remember this phrenological reading the rest of her life; when he touched her head she felt a strange power—mesmerism, animal magnetism, demonology—she did not know how to identify it.[25]

The Providence literati shared a number of tastes with the Boston Transcendentalists. They read Emerson's *Nature* aloud, listened to lectures on Coleridge, Carlyle, Madame de Stael, German literature and philosophy, discussed phrenology and animal magnetism, wrote poems for the *Harbinger* (the news organ of the Transcendentalists who had been converted to Utopian socialism), and enthusiastically attended concerts by the Norwegian violinist Ole Bull, who had become a fad among the Transcendentalists.[26]

However, not all members of the Coliseum Club were advocates of the new philosophy. Papers on conventional literary subjects, such

[25]See F. B. Sanborn, "A Concord Notebook: The Woman of Concord—Margaret Fuller and Her Friends. II," *The Critic*, XXXXVIII (March, 1906), 251-257.

[26]Rhoda Newcomb's letters, on deposit in the John Hay Library, are the best source for the meetings of the Coliseum Club.

as Rhoda Newcomb's essay on Samuel Johnson, were often read at meetings. Margaret Fuller read a twenty-four page paper on the progress of society in 1838, and Albert Whipple gave a lecture on the improvements and discoveries of modern times, asking if there was more good or evil in them and if they contributed to human progress in the long run.

The most significant personality among the non-Transcendentalists was Albert G. Greene. On her first visit to Greene's home, Margaret was very much impressed with the municipal judge who not only wrote poetry, but also considered his literary life more important than his legal career. He proudly showed Margaret his library which contained twenty thousand volumes, one of the largest private libraries in America. His collection was particularly rich in poetry and they fell into a conversation on poetry during which he remarked, "You see I am the only American poet who has never—and will never—publish a volume."[27] Throughout his life Greene retained a certain reticence regarding the publication of his work, and only a very few poems were ever printed. As a student at Brown, he wrote a humorous poem, "Old Grimes," which George W. Curtis, editor of *Harper's Monthly* in an 1869 issue of the magazine referred to as the most popular poem in America.[28] In 1833 Greene founded the *Literary Journal,* which had a rather brief career. He also contributed to *The Rhode Island Book,* published in 1841, and worked perennially on a long poem which was to incorporate all the "Yankeeisms" he had collected. He frequently read excerpts from it to the Coliseum Club and other groups.

Greene was an elusive personality, and reports on him are often conflicting. George W. Curtis remembered him for his secluded scholarly habits, "habitual reserve," and "reticent manner," but Sarah Whitman recalled a different personality and was impressed with "the geniality and hospitality of his nature, the racy humor, and fine conventional power."[29] Charles C. Congdon vividly recalled an evening on which Margaret Fuller led the conversation, while Greene

> listened to all her fine theories with a quiet smile, sometimes riddling them with sharp arrows of satire, but always welcoming every positive accession of thought and experience. . . .[30]

[27]See "The Personality of Margaret Fuller," *Temple Bar,* CVIII (June, 1896), 226-232.

[28]See G. W. Curtis, *op. cit.,* 16.

[29]Sarah Whitman to the *Providence Journal,* March 27, 1868.

One of the most prominent anti-Transcendentalists was William J. Pabodie, who described Bronson Alcott's "Orphic Sayings" as "sophomoric." Pabodie was a good friend of Edgar Allen Poe and a member of the circle of Poe's admirers in Providence which included Sarah Whitman and Rhoda Newcomb.

Other members of the Coliseum Club were Hiram Fuller, Francis Osgood, Albert Whipple, and Sarah Jacobs, who was Margaret Fuller's successor at the Greene Street School. A frequent visitor to the club from out of town was George S. Burleigh,[31] one of the most notable reform writers of the period. Burleigh wrote poems, short stories, and novels on the evils of alcohol, slavery, gambling, and war.[32] He was an early advocate of improved treatment for mental disorders, and his popular poem "The Maniac" represented a pioneer effort in the drive for more humane treatment of the insane. Although modern readers can respect his efforts in the field of social reform, it is difficult to take his absurdly moralistic writing seriously. A temperance novel by Burleigh, *Mason Hodges,* is a representative example of a type of fiction which was widely popular twenty years before the Civil War.[33] The hero, Mason Hodges, was a reformed drunkard, who, after years of successfully resisting temptation, fainted from overexertion while helping to quench a fire at the Deacon's home and was given a dram of alcohol as a restorative. He became desperately ill after the fire and the doctor, secretly in league with Ben Swinger, the saloon keeper, insistently prescribed whiskey as the only possible cure. Hodges' wife, however, foiled the plot by curing her husband with clear, cold water, and Hodges converted all the saloon habitués to the temperance cause. The poverty stricken Swinger died of alcoholism under horrible circumstances.

§5.

Although a large number of the Providence literati were not Transcendentalists, a small group which included most of the talented Rhode Island writers were militant supporters of the movement.

[30]*Ibid.*

[31]The John Hay Library has a wealth of George Burleigh material: letters, journals, and three scrapbook volumes.

[32]Burleigh was born in Plainfield, Connecticut, and lived there as a young man, but he had a number of Rhode Island connections and often visited Providence. He married Ruth Burgess and settled in Little Compton.

[33]*Mason Hodges* (Boston, 1848).

There were none who attained the stature of Emerson or Thoreau, but as a group they could boast a number of interesting and talented personalities. Perhaps the best-known member of the group was Sarah Helen Whitman, one of the most popular poets of her day. Ann Lynch was the only Providence writer who rivaled her in ability. She was a school teacher who lived in Rhode Island for a few years during the height of the Transcendentalist fervor. In later years she was hostess to an intellectual group in New York, which has been called the first salon in America and which included a dazzling array of literary, academic, and political minds.[34]

Women were a dominant element in Providence intellectual life, and the four most important Rhode Island Transcendentalists were Sarah Whitman, Ann Lynch, Ann Power, and Rhoda Newcomb. Ann Power, a sister of Sarah Whitman, never married and devoted her life to a quiet literary existence. Rhoda Newcomb's literary output was less than Sarah Whitman's, but she was the most vigorous personality in the group. She possessed a genuine enthusiasm for literary and intellectual pursuits and a great ambition for her son's literary career. She shared many tastes with Boston and Concord Transcendentalists and read their books diligently. She read the German writers, Goethe, Schiller, and Kant, as well as Bronson Alcott, Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Sampson Reed[35] and other American writers. Although several national publications accepted her literary contributions, Rhoda Newcomb's most important function was to inform the intelligentsia in Rhode Island on such topics as German philosophy and literature, English Romantic literature, and New England Transcendentalism through her articles in the *Providence Journal.*

For years Rhoda Newcomb threatened to overshadow her son Charles, for whom she was so ambitious. Newcomb was a complex personality, and an examination of his life and ideas reveals extraordinary contradictions. At one time we find him denouncing Catholicism as a painted Jezebel, and on another occasion registering a passionate attraction toward it. On one wall of his room at Brook Farm there hung portraits of Saint Loyola and Saint Xavier and between them, a picture of Fanny Essler. He was frequently heard

[34]See *Memoirs of Anne Lynch Botta* (New York, 1893).

[35]Reed was a Boston pharmacist, who gained the admiration of Emerson and other Transcendentalists for his writings on Emanuel Swedenborg.

chanting Church Litany far into the night.[36] Although he was a fervent admirer of the institution of marriage, he could never bring himself to a practical proposal. In later years he was capable of simultaneously dashing off both pious Victorian platitudes on marriage and the virtues of an ethereal feminine chastity and pages of sexual opinions that many publishers would hesitate to print today.

Newcomb published only one short story during his lifetime; however, excerpts from his later journals were edited by Judith K. Johnson and published by the Brown University Press in 1949. Emerson pronounced him a genius, but the journal on which Emerson based his opinion was never published and did not even survive in manuscript. The remaining journals are interesting and frequently brilliant, but they do not fulfill the great promise which Emerson found in Newcomb's early writings.

Newcomb occasionally attended the Coliseum Club meetings with Charles T. Brooks[37] whose German translations were eagerly read by Newcomb and the other Transcendentalists. There were two other young men who sometimes came to the club meetings, G. W. Curtis, later a famous editor and essayist, and Charles T. Congdon, who was to become a famous journalist. Congdon was a young college student at the time, but Margaret Fuller and Rhode Island Transcendentalism had so profound an effect on him that fifty years later, long after he had dismissed Transcendentalism he spoke contemptuously of "the cheap understanding."[38]

§6.

Transcendentalism reached its apex in 1841 with the publication of the *Rhode Island Book.* Although only a few of the selections could be characterized as "Transcendentalist," these were among the best in the anthology. Charles T. Brooks contributed an essay on "The Impossibility of Atheism" which adopted the Transcendentalist view of religion and argued that religion was rooted in human nature and that religious ideas were innate in the human mind. Henry C. Whitaker translated a poem by the German poet Tieck.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution was an essay by Sarah Whitman in which she took up the philosophical cudgels of Trans-

[36]See Georgianna Bruce Kirby, *Years of Experience* (Boston, 1878).

[37]See Charles A. Wedte's *Memoir of Charles T. Brooks* (Boston, 1885).

[38]One of the key doctrines of Transcendentalism was the exaltation of the intuitive "reason" at the expense of the mechanical "understanding."

cendentalism. She thought that American intellectual life needed nothing so badly as "a little more of the German cosmopolitanism." She urged the overthrow of John Locke's philosophical authority and maintained that true religion and philosophy must be based on an acceptance of innate ideas and "faith in the power of the individual to discover for himself truth." She thought that the writer should be driven by the "desire to free the mind from its slavery to creed and convention." She admired Madame de Stael, and referred to Germany as "a bright land of promise."[39]

A strong interest in Transcendentalism prevailed in Rhode Island for almost a decade after 1841, but after 1850 Sarah Whitman and the other Providence writers who continued to do creative work found other sources of inspiration and enthusiasm. From 1850 to 1860 much of the energy which formerly was expended on literature and reform was absorbed by the anti-slavery cause. In Rhode Island the attacks on Lockean philosophy, the battle for Kantian ideas, the enthusiasm for Goethe and Schiller, and the whole social and literary upheaval of Transcendentalism and "the newness" which had aroused so much enthusiasm and hostility were all but forgotten.

NEWS-NOTES

The first of a proposed series of trips to nearby places of historical significance was arranged by the hostess committee of the Society for women members and their guests. On June 14 a group of thirty-eight went by bus to Concord, Massachusetts, where they had luncheon at Hartwell Farm, which was built in 1636, and then visited the outstanding period rooms of the Concord Antiquarian Society. As announced in the April issue of *Rhode Island History* these tours are open to all women members of the Society. It is hoped that the success of this first trip will result in further expeditions of the same kind and that more members will find it possible to take part.

* * *

[39]Sarah Whitman "German Literature in *The Rhode Island Book* (Providence, 1841), 50-58. For a sketch of Sarah Whitman's life, see Caroline Ticknor's *Poe's Helen* (N. Y., 1916). See also "Recollection of Sarah H. Whitman," MS. in the John Hay Library.

Mr. and Mrs. Monahon recently attended a three-day conference at Cooperstown, New York, where they were privileged to see at first-hand the recent excellent installations at Fenimore House (the headquarters of the New York State Historical Society) and the Farmers Museum. During the visit they had an opportunity to discuss problems of historical society management with others active in the field.

* * *

The Society was pleased to cooperate with The Preservation Society of Newport County by lending items for the Washington-Rochambeau Celebration. Among the articles loaned for the exhibition at Marble House from June 15 to September 15 are the *Calendrier Français*, the *Gazette Françoise*, the manuscript diary of Lieutenant Robernier, an officer under Rochambeau, and a manuscript map showing the positions of the American and British forces and of De Grasse's fleet in 1778.

* * *

There will be an exhibition this summer in the Society's headquarters illustrating life in eighteenth century Rhode Island. Examples of silver, needlework, dolls, glass, china, and wearing apparel will supplement our outstanding collection of furniture.

* * *

By the will of the late Mr. Frank Mauran of Hopedale, Pennsylvania, the Society is to receive certain historical material and $5,000 for the upkeep of the grounds of John Brown House.

BOMBARDMENT OF TRIPOLI IN 1804

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Bayard Ewing

LABOR PROBLEMS IN THE RHODE ISLAND COTTON MILLS—1790-1940

by EDITHA HADCOCK*

AT A TIME when the future for Rhode Island cotton mill workers appears gloomy, it is heartening to look back at the industry's progress through the past 150 years. Then as now mills failed, and investments were transferred to areas where there were lower wages, longer hours, and fewer labor union demands and government regulations. Limited by tradition and inadequate resources, many firms adopted price-cutting, cost-reducing measures during depression. In prosperity they sought speculative profits, not modernization. Such cyclical policies increased the insecurity and the deterioration of working conditions. Resourceful employers corrected managerial and marketing inefficiencies. Though labor saving and disturbing to work habits, their modernization programs provided improved employment facilities and set patterns for the profitable operation of the industry.

Three periods, 1790-1840, 1840-1900, and 1900-1940, represented distinct stages in the industry's growth and readjustment when failure seemed imminent. Each period was marked by worker resistance, union organization, and patterns of labor-management conflict and cooperation. Gradually the state set up minimum standards of employment and limited areas of conflict. Finally federal legislation supplemented state laws, and the problems of the industry and its workers gained national significance.

Rhode Island cotton manufacturing has always been an industry of imperfect competition. The relative ease with which small and medium-sized mills could be established intensified the sensitivity to seasonal and cyclical fluctuations. Capital investments and labor supplies were relatively immobile in spite of periodic overcapacity, unemployment, and the migration of enterprise to areas of lower wages.

Prior to 1840 there were apparently few obstacles to check expansion. Mill sites were plentiful; most of the machinery could be operated by unskilled labor; raw cotton prices were low after Whitney's invention of the cotton gin. Local merchants, shipbuilders, farmers, and mechanics readily invested their savings. Many mills were

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started by men with little or no manufacturing experience; some owners were youths of fifteen or sixteen years of age. Scant heed was given the warnings of Almy, Brown, and Slater that a cotton mill could remain profitable only when managed by men who understood sound production policies.

The depression years after 1819, 1829, and 1837 were marked by excess capacity, employment irregularity, and the deterioration of working conditions. Many plants closed temporarily; some that had failed reopened at lower overhead costs. To stabilize the industry leading manufacturers set up price schedules in 1816 and 1817, and a cooperative marketing experiment in 1836. Such controls were disrupted as new competitors entered the market, inventories accumulated and prices fell. Cost reductions were imperative; wages were cut; work loads and hour schedules were increased. Employment became especially insecure in the interior of the state where small mills were handicapped by inadequate water power and old equipment.

In the early mills only one adult was needed as overseer and mechanic. The relatively simple carding, roving, and spinning machinery could be operated by children, often under twelve years of age. Women and skilled male operators were employed after the mills began to make cloth and use heavier and more complicated machinery, but the majority of the workers continued to be children. In the 1830's more children under twelve were employed than women; and twice as many women, as men.

The mills' need for workers was quickly met through the practice of hiring family groups rather than individuals and through advertisements for large families. When the supply of local unskilled labor was depleted, the demand of the growing industry was satisfied by immigrant families from economically depressed areas, particularly Ireland.

Although adequate supplies of unskilled labor could be gathered into mill communities easily, labor did not move readily to other areas when the mills closed or imposed wage reductions. There were few other jobs available for the women and children save in domestic and agricultural employment where wages were lower. The factory workers lacked the wherewithal to move, and they often were tied to mill communities by unpaid store bills and rents. Families were

more dependent on mill village facilities than individual workers.

Skilled labor was scarce, although more mobile than the unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Mechanics were desired as the key men to make and repair machinery. Skilled men were needed to operate specialty looms, mules, and the new dyeing and finishing equipment. At first owners depended upon the few English and Scotch mechanics who before 1825 had evaded the British law prohibiting their migration. Later they trained native workers under informal apprenticeship arrangements. Skilled labor continued to be difficult to obtain and hold. Skilled workers easily found jobs in other industries or areas, were promoted to executive positions, or founded their own enterprises.

Probably the availability and cheapness of unskilled labor and the scarcity and dearness of skilled labor served to retard mechanization more than any other factor. Manufacturers questioned whether it was not more economical to use unskilled labor, old machines, and the "putting-out" system than to adopt processes which required skilled operators at higher wages. Capital was limited or tied up in machinery and real estate, and manufacturers did not dare to experiment with new machinery and products during periods of uncertainty. More than two thirds of the mills were without the machine pickers and power looms that had been adopted the decade before by leading Rhode Island plants.

When the low wage mills of New England and England dumped their products on the market, resourceful Rhode Island firms developed finer lines. New markets were found in the North, South, West, and in the 1830's in Mexico, South America, Africa, China, and the Near East. Spinning mills set up cleaning and weaving departments within their plants instead of "putting-out" cotton to be cleaned and yarn to be woven. Machine pickers, mules, looms, and dressing and warping machinery were installed. In order to secure additional funds a few firms were incorporated and consolidated in the 1830's.

Prior to 1840 little consideration seemed to be given the workers' safety or the contribution that better working conditions might have made to productivity. The long, narrow, low-studded factory rooms were poorly heated, ill ventilated, and inadequately lighted. Small windows, candles, and oil lamps provided poor illumination, and the windows were seldom opened. The mills were hot in summer and

cold in winter, and they were filled with lint, dust, and stale air.

In the late 1820's and 1830's the working day was reduced from fourteen to twelve hours. By 1832 two Rhode Island plants operated on an average eleven-hour day, while eighty-six mills ran on an average twelve-hour day. Hour reductions might have been motivated by any number of reasons: the inefficient lighting system, the costliness of whale oil, or an effort to remove the basis for labor agitation. The possible effect of long working days upon productivity may not have been noticeable, since the machinery did not require continuous attention or arduous exertion. Workers must have slackened their efforts during the day, for mill regulations were imposed that required constant attention to work and forbade interruptions.

Wage costs were not analyzed in the early mill records; nor was there any apparent consideration of a possible relationship between wages and productivity. As late as 1832 mill agents reported to the Secretary of Treasury that they did not know the general proportions into which their funds were allocated, the amount invested in buildings or machinery, nor even the gain or loss on their capital. Mill accounts were often a heterogeneous mixture of mill costs, store accounts, and personal expenses. Wage records revealed that children were given higher wages as they attained greater skill and that the wages of skilled workers were increased during periods of business expansion when their labor was in great demand. Sometimes a share of the profits was paid to mechanics, overseers, or other skilled employees whose services were prized by competitors.

For the most part the wages of women and children remained low. While men earned from $6 to $10 a week, women secured only from $2 to $4, and children from $.75 to $2 a week. Employers did not seem concerned that several or all in a family worked to secure a minimum standard of living. Nor did executives seem to realize that higher wages might provide a standard of living more conducive to efficiency.

Manufacturers regulated their employees' standards of living through their control of expenditures at the company store. Consumption habits were checked; thrift was encouraged; foolish expenditures for dress and drinking were rebuked. Saloons could not be operated in a community where the sole landlord forbade drinking either for the sake of efficiency or morality. A few employers found

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WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU CELEBRATION

Extensive plans have been completed by the Preservation Society of Newport for the Washington-Rochambeau Celebration in Newport this summer from July 1 to September 15 with added events during the July 8-10 week end.

The Hunter House will again contain a loan exhibition of furniture, silver, and paintings, exceeding in size and scope the exhibition of 1953. It will be open every day from ten to five.

Marble House on Bellevue Avenue will be the setting for an exhibition of rare historic treasures loaned by the French and American governments as well as individuals and institutions in both France and America. Marble House has never before been open to the public.

The Vernon House and the Mawdsley House will have special exhibitions as will the Redwood Library and Trinity Church. The Art Association will have (during July only) an exhibition of 17th and 18th century and modern French paintings.

On the week end of July 8-10 the 35,000-ton French battleship *Jean Bart* visited Newport. On Saturday morning a military parade and ceremony was attended by the French Ambassador, the Secretary of the Navy, and many other honored guests. The Navy Band played.

Private colonial houses on Washington Street were open to visitors from ten to five. In the evening there was a block dance and fireworks, and at half-past ten the Cornelius Vanderbilt mansion, The Breakers, was for the first time the scene of a Benefit Ball, with the proceeds going to the Preservation Society to assist in its program of restoration and preservation.

ROCHAMBEAU'S SWORD

The silver hilted sword pictured on the opposite page was presented by Rochambeau to General Nathan Miller of Warren, Rhode Island. Miller's acquaintance with Rochambeau had gradually ripened into a close friendship, and at a ball in Newport the two men exchanged dress swords.

The hilt is of exceptionally fine craftsmanship. A well executed ball pommel is surmounted by a delicate finial. On the knuckle guard, where it fits into the pommel, are the marks of an English silversmith, indicating that the sword was made ca. 1772. The grip is wound with a continuous silver wire. Below it, in bas-relief, is a child embracing a lamb. The fact that all the work is in bas-relief instead of repoussé *makes the hilt distinctive. On the upper surface of the guard are two pastoral scenes while on the under side are two different ones.*

Photograph by the Brown University Photo Lab.

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it profitable to sell liquor at their company stores. Their workers were bound to them by debts incurred through frequent purchases of liquor.

Prior to 1840 the general public rated the mill owners as benefactors, not exploiters, in spite of the employment of children, women, and newly-arrived immigrants for long hours at low wages in dark, poorly heated and badly ventilated factories. Cotton mills provided jobs for many previously not gainfully employed. Conditions of work were similar or superior to those experienced in household or agricultural labor. Heating, lighting, and ventilation were not different from those in the typical workers' homes. The factories were superior to the cellars and attics where the first spinning machinery was operated in the 1780's. Hours were no longer than work periods elsewhere, though factory labor lacked the rest periods and work rhythms of farm and home employments. While wages were low, the earnings of the women and children helped to meet living expenses. Rents and store provisions were relatively inexpensive. Though wages were often cancelled by store debts, the occasional cash payments made in balancing accounts were appreciated, for cash was scarce. The mill communities offered facilities such as company houses, stores, churches, and community centers which were not always available in the farming regions from which many of the workers had come.

In accordance with the contemporary belief in *laissez faire* the mill owners opposed any form of intervention that might interfere with freedom of contract, property rights, or initiative. They believed that their wealth and education bestowed upon them the responsibilities of paternalistic benefactors, and the right carefully to control the press, and the local, state, and national governments. Their authority was seldom challenged as detrimental. While citizens' rights had been recognized in the Bill of Rights, the value of participation had not been envisaged. The majority of the workers, the women and children, were not supposed to understand economic or social problems or to engage in politics. Few male employees could vote; property qualifications for voting were not abolished until after 1840, and sufficient real property could not be accumulated in the mill-owned villages.

Nevertheless, working conditions did not escape criticism. Individual workers resented their employers' paternalism and discipline. Overseers were blamed for favoritism in awarding premiums or in making promotions or discharges. Workers complained that the long hours deprived them of leisure. They objected to changes in work assignments, wage cuts, heavier work loads, and unemployment. Home weavers were alarmed by the decreasing demand for their labor and the 50 to 60 per cent cuts in weaving rates. Bitterness increased when the wage reductions of the 1830's proved permanent and when immigrants were hired at depression wages after business became prosperous. The development of transportation facilities made it easier for workers to learn about conditions in other industries and areas. There were more contacts with reform movements for the employees of the mechanized and integrated mills by the Pawtuxet and Blackstone rivers than for the workers in the isolated mill communities in the interior of the state.

The few strikes or "turn outs" were only short-lived emotional protests that quickly proved ineffectual. Mill owners refused to grant strikers' demands and often did not give them back their jobs. Critical workers were dismissed without a certificate of discharge, a practice which amounted to a black list. That no conspiracy laws were passed and no union leaders were arrested indicated the limited nature of the labor movement in Rhode Island before 1840.

The majority of the factory workers took no part in the labor movement. Although women conducted the first factory strike in Pawtucket in 1824, they were organized with difficulty, while children were not organized at all. The Irish immigrants hired after the depression of 1837 were not interested in unions. The few men who might have used their skill as a bargaining advantage considered their jobs as temporary training for executive work, or found work elsewhere if dissatisfied. Some may have joined the Providence Association of Workingmen in the late 1820's, or the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics and Other Workingmen in the early 1830's, but they left no records of their activities.

Prior to 1840 a small group of middle-class liberals, educators, and ministers, attacked child labor and the children's lack of education and recreation. Parents, not manufacturers, were blamed for child labor, and committees of investigation recommended that school laws be passed to force parents to send their children to school for at least twelve weeks a year.

Although liberal manufacturers believed that factory children should be educated and provided Sunday School classes in reading and writing, they opposed legislation, factory inspection, and even committees of investigation. The workers were unable to support the fight for school laws; the public was not interested. Reformers failed to persuade the legislature to enact regulations or to provide enforcement machinery.

However, the necessity for public schools and school laws had been brought to the attention of a larger proportion of citizens. Questions had been asked as to whether the social benefits of children's education might be more important to community welfare than the economic advantage which might be derived from their employment at low wage rates. Whether or not substandard mills should exist because they offered jobs to otherwise unemployed labor or whether or not child labor was economically justifiable were questions for another generation to consider.

* * *

From 1840 to 1900 leading firms mechanized, integrated, and enlarged their businesses. New machinery was installed, such as Jenk's ring spindle, the ring traveler, and stop motion devices. Steam power was adopted as more efficient and dependable than water power, and the industry shifted its location to Rhode Island ports and railroad centers to reduce the cost of transporting coal and to enjoy the coastal humidity beneficial to the production of fine cottons.

The need for more capital made it easy to start new businesses in prosperous years and encouraged consolidations. A few prominent Rhode Island families purchased, merged, and modernized competitors' plants. In the twenty years from 1870 to 1890 the number of independent establishments decreased from 139 to 87.

Work assignments were reorganized and unemployment increased as the mills were integrated, mechanized, and relocated. Only about half as many employees were hired as compared to the number of spindles installed between 1860 and 1890. Technical innovations required manual dexterity, not specialized skill. Skilled tasks were broken down into simple processes which could be mastered after relatively short periods of training. Women and immigrant workers were substituted for skilled men; women operators of spinning frames took the place of the male operators of the heavier mules. When technical changes rendered jobs too arduous for women, immigrant men were employed at the same rates paid women. More workers were dismissed and further wage reductions were granted when out-of-state firms entered the Rhode Islanders' fine goods market.

Many Rhode Island managers still hired large families of children. As late as 1900 one-tenth of the 24,000 odd cotton mill workers were children under 16 years of age. The immigrants from the economically depressed areas in French Canada and from Western and Southern Europe had many children and they needed the income from their children's labor to supplement their meager wages. The availability of cheap labor helped delay the adoption of the new technical innovations that had enabled more resourceful firms to maintain their markets and to learn that child labor was economically disadvantageous.

In the 1840's and 1850's leading employers demonstrated that speedier and more accurate production resulted from improved lighting, ventilation, and temperature. Windows were made larger, and gas lighting supplanted whale oil lamps and candles. Dust blowers were adopted to eliminate somewhat the cotton lint that annoyed the workers. Slashers were substituted for dressers, and finishing rooms became cleaner and better ventilated. Safety devices were adopted to reduce accidents.

Gradually work periods were reduced from 12 to 10 hours when it was found that shorter hours increased productivity and lessened the inefficiency and strain caused by the heavier work loads, speedier machinery, and more constant attention required for machine operators. In 1853 a group of Rhode Island manufacturers voluntarily agreed to operate on an average of 69 hours a week. In the 1870's and 1880's hour reductions were granted, possibly to offset the Knights of Labor agitation for a ten-hour day, for additional leisure, and share-the-work employment.

The majority of the workers' wage rates remained relatively low, though skilled workers' earnings increased slowly. Wage reductions of from 10 to 15 per cent in depression years were not canceled even for skilled employees. In the 1850's and 1860's the weekly earnings of adult workers averaged from $3 to $4, while in the more prosperous 1880's average weekly wages ranged from $9 to $10 for male workers, $7 to $8 for women, and $3 to $4 for children.

While executives were determined to dominate their workers, they did not express the same spirit of benevolent paternalism that characterized the earlier manufacturers. They had fewer contacts with their employees as individuals and they lacked the earlier owners' practical experiences. New investors were more concerned with the immediate financial success of their ventures than the long-run improvements beneficial to employees. Human costs were overlooked in the effort to cut labor costs. The gap between the workers and their executives widened when immigrants were hired whose social, religious, and economic backgrounds were different from the native workers and their employers.

Community expenditures were curtailed after 1870. Necessary repairs were not made during depression years and were postponed thereafter. The newer groups of immigrant workers were less critical and did not demand improvements. Their need for employment was great; their standards of living were lower than the native workers. They had their own religious and social centers and did not utilize the community churches, Sunday Schools, and company stores.

Middle-class reformers and union leaders severely criticized the long hours, low wages, and child labor. Both craft and "uplift" unions endeavored to organize the workers. In prosperous times craft unions gained bargaining advantages and sought higher wages and shorter hours. In periods of unemployment the "up-lift" unions fought for the enactment of protective labor legislation and the establishment of cooperatives. The majority of the textile workers were neither interested in nor able to join craft locals; only a few spinners, weavers, and loom fixers were unionized. But the rapid adoption of new machinery tended to level the barriers of skill that had given the craft locals bargaining power. The facility with which employers could find substitute workers encouraged interest in the legislative reforms of the national all-inclusive "up-lift" unions, such as the New England Workingmen's Association of the 1840's, the National Labor Union of the 1860's, the New England Ten Hour Association of the 1870's, and the Knights of Labor of the 1870's and 1880's. Several members of the craft locals were local leaders under the Knights of Labor in the 1880's and officials of the United Textile Workers in the next century. Some mill workers received their first lessons in union methods when the Knights tried to organize the women and unskilled workers. The highly skilled leaders of the craft locals scorned the political efforts and cooperative experiments of the "up-lift" unions, while the middle-class idealistic leaders believed that the craft unions selfishly accepted the *status quo* and neglected the well-being of the working class. Attempts to consolidate the skilled and unskilled groups were premature, for they were not ready for industrial unionism. Conflicts between each weakened both, encouraged dual unionism, and fostered the employers' anti-union programs. The unions lacked bargaining power and political strength; they seldom won strikes or political reforms.

Even though the majority of the factory workers had no immediate contacts with labor conventions or unions during much of the nineteenth century, the early union experience helped to bring reforms. It is possible that mill owners improved working conditions and shortened hours because they wished to prevent unionization patterned after the craft locals in Fall River or the Knights of Labor. The Knights' campaigns for labor legislation challenged the manufacturers' control over the press, politics, and their employees. That mill owners turned to trade associations for support of their vigilant anti-union opposition to labor reforms indicated the existence of labor agitation.

As early as the 1880's liberal reformers and labor leaders urged the government to limit hours, improve factory conditions, and enact more school laws. Because women and children were supposed to lack bargaining power, regulations were proposed to protect their health, welfare, and productivity. Men were not offered aid, as they were considered stronger bargainers and defenders of freedom of contract. By the 1880's employers were blamed for child labor as much as the parents. An 1883 law required that they keep records of their child employees' ages and education to help enforce the law that children from seven to fifteen years old go to school at least twelve weeks a year.

[to be concluded]

BLOCK ISLAND CEMETERY RECORDS

copied and arranged by

Mrs. Helen Winslow Mansfield

[concluded from April, 1955, v. 14, no. 2, inside back cover]

Harley Roy Willis, 1886— .
Eliza G. Willis, his wife, 1886— .
Hannah Clarissa, died Oct. 1910, ae. 4 mos.
Roy Willis, Jr., died June 1914, ae. 4 da.
Baby Willis died Feb. 1918, ae. 4 da.

Loren, N., 1857—1939.
Mary E. Dickens, his wife, 1875—1949.
T. Eldora, wife of Loren N. Willis and daughter of Otis P. and Hannah Sheffield Mott, died June 17, 1893, in 28th yr.
Mildred, daughter of Loren N. and Mary E. Willis, June 8, 1898—June 16, 1901.

John E. Willis, born Sept. 27, 1829, died Jan. 4, 1899.
Hannah R. Mott, his wife, Oct. 6, 1832, died Mar. 8, 1914.

Joseph H. Willis, born July 31, 1838, died June 25, 1916.

Capt. Nathaniel L. Willis, died June 15, 1891, ae. 70 yrs., 1 mo., 24 da.
Cornelia A., widow of Capt. Nathaniel L. Willis, died Oct. 26, 1898, ae. 69 yrs., 7 mos., 13 da.

Orlando F. Willis, 1857—1927.
His wife, Sybil Milliken Willis, 1860—1885.
His wife, Carrie E. Sprague, 1865—1950.

Oscar H. Willis, July 23, 1866.

Silas C. Hall, Aug. 7, 1875—July 25, 1941.
Cora E. Willis, his wife, Feb. 5, 1881.

Rufus Augustus Willis, May 1, 1850—Mar. 24, 1921.
His wife, Phebe Eliza Dunn, Aug. 24, 1858—July 16, 1920.
Their children,
Wealthy C., 1879.
Maudie H., 1883.
Vernie C. E., 1892—1893.
Rufus D., 1894.
Loyal F., 1900.
Helen L. Rose, wife of Rufus A. Willis, died Dec. 8, 1875, ae. 25 yrs.
Vernie C. E., infant son of Rufus A. and Phebe E. Willis, died Mar. 15, 1892, ae. 3 mos., and 17 da.

Capt. Sylvanus D. Willis, born May 26, 1818, died Dec. 7, 1883.
Catherine W., wife of Sylvanus D. Willis, born Apr. 13, 1820; died May 24, 1887.
Lydia M. Willis, daughter of Sylvanus D. and Catherine W. Willis, died Feb. 11, 1870, ae. 18 yrs., and 29 da.

Sylvanus Willis, Mar. 20, 1885—Oct. 20, 1936.
Abby Elizabeth Hull, his wife, Nov. 29, 1885.
Their son, Clayton Stanley Willis, Oct. 24, 1911.

William H. Willis, died May 14, 1859, ae. 32 yrs., 2 mos., 1 da.
Waty R. Mott, wife of William H. Willis, born Sept. 27, 1829, died June 4, 1901.

WILSON

Frank Gerard Wilson, born Dec. 28, 1889, died Oct. 1, 1904.

WRIGHT

John G., of William and Lucy Wright, died Mar. 26, 1816, ae. 18 mos.

In Memoriam

To commemorate the loss of the Schooner Warrior on Sandy Point, Block Island, Apr. 9, 1831.
This Tablet is erected by a friend who desires to perpetuate
the memory of that sad event and to mark the place of Interment
of those who were recovered from the sea.
Twenty one persons perished
Seven were cast on this Island
and are buried here, names unknown.

God moves in a mysterious way
his wonder to perform
he plants his footsteps on the sea
and rides upon the storm.

ALLEN CEMETERY West Side

Dea. Wanton Allen, died Mar. 21, 1856, ae. 55 yrs., 10 mos.
Phebe C., wife of Wanton Allen, died Aug. 15, 1844, in 38th yr.
Elizabeth M., wife of Wanton Allen, born May 31, 1808, died Oct. 9, 1888.

Samuel Allen, died Feb. 21, 1889, ae. 64 yrs.
Rhoda A., wife of Samuel Allen, died Jan. 6, 1864, ae. 41 yrs.

DICKENS CEMETERY West Side

Elizabeth, wife of Caleb Dickens, died Feb. 12, 1865, in 93rd yr.

Hon. Luther Dickens, died Nov. 26, 1878, ae. 56 yrs., 1 mo., 29 da.
Mary C., wife of Luther Dickens, died July 27, 1865, ae. 45 yrs., 1 mo., 5 da.
Hannah S., wife of Luther Dickens, born Mar. 24, 1845, died Apr. 12, 1893, daughter of Edmund B. and Mary A. Peckham.

Raymond Dickens, died Dec. 15, 1885, ae. 83 yrs., 4 mos., 22 da.
Isabella B., wife of Raymond Dickens, died May 2, 1850, in 61st yr.
Lucy, wife of Raymond Dickens, died June 30, 1883, in 79th yr.
Fannie, daughter of Raymond and Isabella Dickens, born Feb. 24, 1827; died Oct. 3, 1895.
Anderson B. Dickens, son of Raymond and Isabella Steadman Dickens, born Sept. 19, 1824; died Sept. 29, 1904.
Loxey A., daughter of Anderson B. Dickens, died Apr. 6, 1892, daughter of Edmund D. and Annie Sprague.

ROSE CEMETERY near West Side Church

Sacred to the memory of John R. Dodge who died Sept. 5, 1874, ae. 66 yrs., 1 mo., and 29 da.
Sacred to the memory of Nancy R., wife of John R. Dodge, died Feb. 20, 1875, ae. 64 yrs., 7 mos., and 12 da.

James O'Hara died July 1, 1912.

Rev. Ezekiel R. Littlefield, 1815, 1891, ae. 76 yrs.
Lucretia D. Littlefield, 1820—1899.
Infant son of Rev. Ezekiel R. and Lucretia Littlefield, born Nov. 19, 1850.

Thomas Littlefield died Nov. 24, 1869, ae. 86 yrs., 4 mos.
Mary, wife of Thomas Littlefield, died Apr. 16, 1866, in 83rd yr.

Caleb L. Rose, Nov. 8, 1830—Oct. 24, 1880.
Mother Pegey M. Rose, Nov. 20, 1832—Jan. 13, 1925.
Caleb Rose, Jr., Nov. 22, 1863—July 5, 1885.
Peggy R. M., daughter of Caleb L. and Peggy R. M. Rose, died Feb. 13, 1875, ae. 1 yr., 3 mos., 15 da.

John Rose, Dec. 16, 1852—June 27, 1938.
Caroline W., wife of John Rose, July 28, 1893, ae. 44 yrs., 15 da.
Molly, his wife, Mar. 15, 1875.

Rosina D. Rose, 1830—1887, ae. 57 yrs.

Montgomery Rose, 1831—1912, ae. 71 yrs.

Mimy, wife of Robert C. Rose, 1858—1901.
Infant son of Robert and Mimy Rose died Jan. 7, 1875, ae. 2 da.

Samuel D. Rose died May 21, 1861, ae. 34 yrs., 2 mos., 9 da.
Anna C. Rose, 1870—19 .
Susan L. Rose, 1872—19 .
Enoch M. Rose, 1859—1940.
Mary L. Rose, 1865—1940.
D. H. Rose Fecit, 1925.

SAND'S CEMETERY in the Neck, Block Island, R. I.

Sacred to the memory of Ray Thomas Sands, Esq.
who died Feb. 18, 1819, ae. 43 yrs., 5 mos., 13 da.
A friend to the fatherless and widows, a mind filled with philanthropy. His house was a home of Hospitality.

Sacred to the memory of Anna Sands who died Apr. 6, 1847, in her 77th yr.

In memory of Hannah T., wife of Peleg S. Thompson, who died Oct. 1, 1842, in 63rd yr.

Our Father, Peleg S. Thompson, died Dec. 1866, ae. 87 yrs.

SHEFFIELD CEMETERY in the Neck, Block Island, R. I.

In memory of Eliza Babcock who died Mar. 6, 1864, ae. 77 yrs., 10 mos.

Sarah, widow of Barber Peckham, who died Mar. 4, 1867, ae. 88 yrs., 3 mos., 10 da.

In memory of Josiah S. Peckham who died Apr. 16, 1862, ae. 68 yrs., 19 da.
In memory of Mrs. Hannah Peckham, wife of Josiah S. Peckham, who died Mar. 11, 1829, in 33rd yr. of her ae.
In memory of Ann Pickham, widow of Josiah S. Peckham, who died Feb. 27, 1887, ae. 96 yrs., 11 mos., 27 da.

In memory of Mr. Edmund Sheffield who died Sept. 14, 1812, ae. 52 yrs.
In memory of Mrs. Susanna Sheffield, relict of Mr. Edmund Sheffield, who died May 18, 1829, in 70th yr. of ae.

George G. Sheffield, son of George G. and Eliza Sheffield, born May 19, 1824, died Mar. 22, 1878.
Hannah A. Sheffield, widow of George G. Sheffield, born July 3, 1832, died Mar. 22, 1891.
Simon R. Sheffield, son of George and Hannah Sheffield, born Dec. 12, 1857, died July 30, 1899.

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RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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OCTOBER, 1955

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THE WOODEN INDIAN

by CLIFFORD P. MONAHON

ONE OF the Society's most important recent accessions is a wooden cigar store Indian presented by the Rudolf F. Haffenreffer Foundation. This figure, known as Pocahontas or the Indian Princess, guarded the door of James M. Anthony & Company's tobacco store in Providence, originally located on Weybosset and later on Westminster Street, between 1883 and 1936. She may, however, have been a familiar sight to residents of Providence for a far longer period, since James M. Anthony & Company was the successor to other firms which can be traced back at least as far as the year 1867.

The origin of the cigar-store Indian is bound up in the history of trade symbolism. Wooden figures were used in eighteenth and nineteenth century America to advertise all sorts of shops and businesses. Among the commonest were the little carved mariners, who hung outside ship chandlers' and instrument makers' shops. A unique

[continued on page 108]

RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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CARIBBEAN PORTS
IN THE FOREIGN COMMERCE OF PROVIDENCE
1790 — 1830

by EARL C. TANNER*

THE Caribbean commerce of the port of Providence dates from the seventeenth century when Rhode Island merchants, seeking sources of sugar and molasses, dispatched their vessels to the ports of the West Indies. The trade which they initiated proved so successful that for two hundred fifty years Providence sloops, schooners, brigs, and ships continued to ply the sea lanes linking Narragansett Bay with the West Indies and the Spanish Main.

The most colorful events of this long history occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These were the years when economic and political patterns in the Caribbean area passed through a series of almost kaleidoscopic changes as the nations of Europe and the European colonies in America suffered the successive shocks of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Wars for Latin-American Independence.

For the maritime history of Providence it is fortunate that these crucial decades in the development of the Caribbean coincided with a period of maximum activity in the foreign trade of the Rhode Island merchant houses. Indeed from the close of the American Revolution until 1830 the foreign trade of the port of Providence was similar in nature, if not in scale, to the foreign trade of New York, Boston, and the other major ports of the northeastern United States.

The fortunes of Providence commerce with the Caribbean, then, take on more than local significance. The geographical distribution

*Most of the material of this article is taken, with minor alterations, from the author's *Trade between the Port of Providence and Latin America 1800 to 1830* (typed Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1951), 95-122.

of Providence trade, shifting under the impact of commercial restrictions, international wars, and colonial revolutions, reflects, for this period, certain important, but little known aspects of the broader patterns of United States trade with the Caribbean. If, for example, it can be shown why the ports of Hispaniola and Surinam, favorite rendezvous of Providence shipping in the 1790's were rarely visited thereafter; or how the ports of Cuba, almost unknown to Providence shipping in 1790, came to dominate later Providence commerce with the Caribbean — then useful light will have been cast on a relatively obscure chapter in United States maritime history.

This purpose may be accomplished by an analysis of arrivals at the port of Providence from the several major political jurisdictions of the Caribbean.

The British West Indies

The British West Indies were divided administratively into subareas. For commercial purposes, however, only three divisions need to be distinguished. First in importance were the sugar producing colonies: Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, the Windward Islands, and, after it had been seized from the Dutch, Demerara. These colonies were closed to American shipping in 1783 and remained so until the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars.[1] From the table of arrivals at the port of Providence it will be seen that a change took place in 1793 and 1794.[2]

At that time the British Navy was engaged in war duties, and the British merchant marine was unable to carry on normal trade with the colonies. While opposed to sharing the lucrative trade between the West Indies and Europe, Britain was willing that the Islands should temporarily enter into direct trade with the United States

[1]The best general history of the British West Indies for this period is Lowell Joseph Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763-1833* (New York, 1928). Trade between the British West Indies and the United States is the subject of a brief account in Timothy Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America* (New York, 1835), 189-213. A more extensive review of trade between the British West Indies and the United States to 1812 may be found in A. T. Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relation to the War of 1812* (Boston, 1918), I, 1-283.

[2]The several tables of arrivals presented are based on the impost books in the Providence Customhouse papers. The first entry is for June 24, 1790. Figures for the Bahamas, 1808-1811, are further based on information from the book of entries and clearances and the incoming manifests, also in the Providence Customhouse papers—all of which, for the period, are at The Rhode Island Historical Society.

ENTRIES AT THE PORT OF PROVIDENCE

From the British Sugar Colonies

Year	Entries	Year	Entries	Year	Entries	Year	Entries
1790	0	1800	9	1810	8	1820	0
1791	0	1801	12	1811	6	1821	0
1792	0	1802	5	1812	0	1822	0
1793	3	1803	8	1813	0	1823	1
1794	13	1804	15	1814	0	1824	3
1795	14	1805	5	1815	0	1825	5
1796	11	1806	9	1816	0	1826	4
1797	4	1807	4	1817	0	1827	1
1798	11	1808	8	1818	0	1828	0
1799	15	1809	3	1819	0	1829	0

in order to avoid their complete economic ruin. Therefore a number of ports were opened to American vessels not larger than seventy tons.[3] A fleet of sloops and schooners immediately set out for Jamaica, Barbados, Tortola, St. Vincent, Anguilla, Nevis, Montserrat, Tobago, St. Kitts, and Antigua. In the course of the next nineteen years one hundred sixty-three vessels entered Providence from the British sugar colonies.

Unfortunately for American shipping the opening of the West Indian ports was only one half of a policy initiated by the British in 1793-94. The other half consisted in a drive to eliminate all neutral trade with the French West Indies and to capture as many of the French colonies as possible. Thus, while some vessels went voluntarily to the British West Indies, others, attempting to trade with the French West Indies, were seized and carried into British West Indian ports as prizes. The Spaniards, who were allied with the English from 1793 to 1795, joined in, and about one hundred fifty American vessels in all were taken.[4] The British justified their seizures by reference to a rule which had been promulgated by themselves in 1756. According to the rule of 1756 a nation might not in time of war extend to neutrals commercial privileges which were denied in time of peace. As Jay pointed out in 1794, the rule, aside from its doubtful validity, was not applicable in the present case: France had, for some years, permitted direct trade between the French West Indies and the United States, though with certain restrictions.[5] Jay succeeded in having the seizures stopped and in getting a joint British-American commission appointed to adjudge British and American claims. (The British, too, were making claims

[3]Pitkin, *op. cit.*, 193.

[4]Robert Greenhalgh Albion and Jennie Barnes Pope, *Sea Lanes in Wartime* (New York, 1942), 73-74. [5]Mahan, *op. cit.*, 90-93.

based on damage done by French privateers illegally fitted out in American ports.) This commission sat from time to time for ten years, and eventually awarded American claimants several million dollars; British claimants received about $150,000.[6] The opening of the British West Indian ports, provision for which was included in the original text of Jay's Treaty, was surrounded with so many conditions that the American Senate refused to ratify that part. However, the British continued to extend the privilege of entry to small American vessels by executive order.[7]

Jay's Treaty greatly diminished trouble with the British from 1795 to 1805. There were occasional seizures throughout this period and, more serious, a ruthless policy of impressment beginning in 1803. High profits, however, reconciled ship owners, if not sailors, to these inconveniences. In the early nineteenth century British practice seemed to go so far as to permit American vessels to sail from the French West Indies to the United States and thence to France with their cargoes of sugar. In 1808, however, the right was categorically denied by a ruling in the case of the *Essex*.[8] The *Essex* case, together with the Orders in Council, started a sequence of events which ended in the War of 1812 and a complete cessation of trade between the United States and the British sugar colonies.

When peace was restored, the Islands remained closed.[9] It was the intention of the British that they themselves should monopolize the carrying trade not only between the Islands and Europe, but also between the Islands and the United States. It was hoped that Canada would be able to supply a large part of the needs of the British West Indies.

This policy was, of course, extremely unpopular in the United States. That it was likewise unpopular in the Islands is suggested by the following notice which appeared in the *Providence Phenix:*

> The Colonial Legislature of Antigua has addressed a memorial to the British government in which they deprecate in strong terms the policy now pursued toward American vessels in their not being admitted to an entry in any of the British West Indies. They report the impossibility of their colonies in America furnishing the West Indies with adequate supplies and assert that the supplies which reach them through the depot of St. Bartholomew come charged at treble the amount at which they could be landed there direct from America — while on the other hand that Island is so glutted with the articles allowed to be exported from the British Islands as to produce a serious depreciation in their value, &c.[10]

[6]Albion and Pope, *op. cit.*, 75. [7]Mahan, *op. cit.*, 96-97. [8]*Ibid.*, 101-102

[9]A useful history of trade between the British West Indies and the United States from 1815 to 1830 is F. Lee Benns, *The American Struggle for the British West India Carrying Trade (Indiana University Studies, Study 26*, X. Bloomington, Ind., 1923). See also, Ragatz, *op. cit.*, 331-383.

The United States government soon took countermeasures, placing in 1817 a duty of $2 a ton on British vessels arriving from the British West Indies.[11] Next year British vessels from areas not open to United States vessels were wholly excluded.[12] The economic distress occasioned in the British West Indies was acute, but the United States was relentless. In 1820 American authorities cut off an indirect trade which had sprung up with the British West Indies by way of Canada.[13] In 1822 the British King and the American President were each authorized to negotiate a treaty of reciprocity. Anticipating success and anxious to halt the ruinous decline of the British West Indies, the King opened a number of ports by executive order. Congress concurred in 1823,[14] and immediately vessels began to enter the port of Providence from the British sugar colonies. In 1823 there was one; in 1824, three; in 1825, five; in 1826, four; in 1827, one. In 1822 the President had, in accordance with his authorization, revoked the law of 1818, but not the discriminating duty of 1817. In 1823 the British, dissatisfied, countered with a discriminating duty of their own. Negotiations dragged on until in 1826 the British again closed their West Indian ports.[15] From 1826 until after 1830 no vessels arrived at Providence from the British sugar colonies.

Quite unlike the British sugar colonies were the southern Bahamas.[16] Their export was salt, a commodity also produced in England. For this reason trade with the southern Bahamas was not so much cherished by England as was trade with the sugar colonies. Trade between the southern Bahamas and the United States was not seriously interfered with at any time and therefore showed a very different pattern from trade with the sugar colonies:

[10]*Providence Phenix*, Feb. 24, 1816. [11]Pitkin, *op. cit.*, 196. [12]*Ibid.*, 196.
[13]*Ibid.*, 197. [14]*Ibid.*, 197-198. [15]*Ibid.*, 198-199.

[16]Turks Island and its neighbors were settled from Bermuda in 1678. They were under the administration of the Bahamas from 1804 to 1848. After the latter date, they were transferred to Jamaica. Most Providence arrivals from the Bahamas were from Turks Island. A few were from Ragged Island, Rum Key, Long Island, East Caicos, Exuma, Nassau.

ENTRIES AT THE PORT OF PROVIDENCE

From the Bahamas

Year	Entries	Year	Entries	Year	Entries	Year	Entries
1790	4	1800	12	1810	9	1820	3
1791	5	1801	15	1811	2	1821	2
1792	9	1802	18	1812	0	1822	2
1793	15	1803	9	1813	0	1823	0
1794	25	1804	10	1814	0	1824	1
1795	26	1805	7	1815	3	1825	0
1796	22	1806	11	1816	2	1826	1
1797	12	1807	7	1817	4	1827	0
1798	17	1808	13	1818	4	1828	3
1799	6	1809	12	1819	4	1829	2
						1830	2

As may be seen, this trade held up steadily until it was cut off by the War of 1812. During this war the United States became accustomed to obtaining its salt either domestically or from other foreign producers, such as the Cape Verde Islands. The Bahamas trade was resumed immediately after hostilities ceased, but did not recover its former volume.

The third division of the British West Indies was Belize, British Honduras. Like the Bahamas, this area appears to have been left relatively free from commercial restrictions. No Providence firm, however, undertook to trade with Belize in the nineteenth century until Carpenter and Hodges entered the area in 1818. The trade lasted only until 1826 and seems to reflect rather the fortunes of two or three business houses than any commercial regulations.

ENTRIES AT THE PORT OF PROVIDENCE

From British Honduras

Year	Entries	Year	Entries	Year	Entries
1818	1	1821	4	1824	2
1819	3	1822	8	1825	6
1820	6	1823	9	1826	5

The early decades of the nineteenth century were, on the whole, a period of decline in trade relations between Providence and the British West Indies. Trade with the sugar colonies, strong at the beginning of the century, was wholly cut off by 1830 (though it was later to revive slightly). Trade with the Bahamas declined sharply, though it was not wholly to die out for some time. Trade with British Honduras, having flourished briefly, was permanently extinct.

French West Indies Exclusive of Hispaniola

On the eve of the French Revolution relations between the United States and the French West Indies differed greatly from relations between the United States and the British West Indies. By the

Franco-American alliance the United States had guaranteed French possessions in Latin America, and by a Franco-American commercial agreement American vessels were permitted to trade with specified French West Indian ports, though they were not, until war broke out, permitted to trade directly between France and the Islands.[17] In 1793 the British embarked upon a campaign to eliminate trade between the United States and the French West Indies. While attacks were launched on Martinique and Guadeloupe, American vessels attempting to trade with those areas were seized and taken into the British West Indies as prizes. Guadeloupe was occupied for a few months; Martinique, from 1793 to 1801. When Martinique was seized, forty American vessels in port were condemned.[18] Then came Jay's Treaty and the partial adjustment of British-American differences.

Jay's Treaty, though it removed one obstacle to trade with the French West Indies, created another and equally serious difficulty. The British-American reconciliation so irritated the French that they began a program of attrition against American shipping, using every pretext for seizures. The XYZ affair, the establishment of the United States Navy Department, and the Quasi-War of 1798-1801 followed. In 1798 American vessels were authorized letters of marque for use against French privateers or the French Navy, while the American Navy was assigned to protect sea lanes in the Caribbean; by such measures, the French offensive was blunted.[19] The events of these years were reflected in the number of arrivals at Providence from the French West Indies:

ENTRIES AT THE PORT OF PROVIDENCE

From the French West Indies

Exclusive of Hispaniola

Year	*Cayenne*	*Guadeloupe*	*Martinique*	*St. Martin*	*Total*
1791	0	1	0	1	2
1792	0	2	1	3	6
1793	1	1	1	6	9
1794	2	0	0	1	3
1795	1	1	0	0	2
1796	2	0	0	0	2
1797	3	0	0	0	3
1798	1	1	4	1	7
1799	0	0	1	0	1
1800	0	0	1	0	1

continued on next page

[17] Albion and Pope, *op. cit.*, 67, 73. [18] *Ibid.*, 74. [19] *Ibid.*, 80-81.

ENTRIES AT THE PORT OF PROVIDENCE, *continued*

From the French West Indies

Exclusive of Hispaniola

	Cayenne	*Guadeloupe*	*Martinique*	*St. Martin*	*Total*
1801	0	1	7	0	8
1802	0	3	7	1	11
1803	1	2	3	1	7
1804	2	3	3	0	8
1805	0	1	5	1	7
1806	0	2	7	2	11
1807	2	3	2	0	7
1808	1	0	0	0	1
1809	0	0	0	0	0
1810	1	1	2	0	4
1811	1	0	0	0	1
1812	0	0	0	0	0
1813	1	0	0	0	1
1814	0	0	0	0	0
1815	0	0	2	0	2
1816	1	1	2	0	4
1817	1	0	0	0	1
1818	0	0	2	0	2
1819	0	1	0	0	1
1820	0	0	3	0	3
1821	0	0	0	0	0
1822	0	0	2	0	2
1823	0	1	2	0	3
1824	0	0	1	0	1
1825	0	0	1	2	3
1826	0	0	3	2	5
1827	0	0	0	0	0
1828	0	0	1	0	1
1829	0	0	1	0	1
1830	0	0	1	0	1

The fairly active trade with the French Windward Islands in 1792 and 1793 practically ceased after the latter date. From 1794 to 1800, inclusive, only two vessels returned from Guadeloupe, while six returned from Martinique, which was in British hands.[20] Until the Quasi-War broke out, about two vessels a year returned from Cayenne; then none until 1803. The case of St. Martin is somewhat equivocal, as part of the island was Dutch, and ships frequently failed to specify which part had been visited. In the absence of any indication to the contrary, the arrivals from St. Martin have been classified as from French St. Martin.

In 1801 the Quasi-War was concluded with the cancellation of the United States guarantee of French possessions and the assumption by the United States government of American spoliation claims against France.[21] As may be seen from the table of arrivals, a period of relatively active trade followed. Between 1801 and the Embargo thirty-four vessels entered from Martinique; fifteen from Guadeloupe; six from Cayenne; and five from St. Martin. The Embargo was the first of a series of blows which practically put an end to Providence trade with the French West Indies. No sooner was the Embargo lifted than England again seized the French colonies. The British retained possession of Guadeloupe from 1810 to 1816; Martinique, from 1809 to 1814; and Cayenne, in the seizure and occupation of which the Portuguese cooperated, from 1809 to 1817. Meanwhile the War of 1812 intervened. When these several obstacles to commerce had finally been disposed of, Providence had established other connections. The table of arrivals indicates that trade between Providence and the French West Indies from 1808 to 1830 was desultory at best.

[20]Another reason for light trade during the 1790's was a slave revolt which reduced production for several years beginning in 1794. Slavery was firmly re-established in 1802.

Hispaniola

The western half of the Island of Hispaniola was occupied by French and British buccaneers early in the seventeenth century. By 1665 the French were effectively in possession,[22] though Spain did not cede the area until 1697. In the eighteenth century French Hispaniola was brought to a very high level of prosperity and could boast thousands of flourishing plantations. Underlying this prosperity, however, was an unstable and, as it proved, explosive social structure. The white population in 1789 numbered 35,000 to 40,000; the free colored, 25,000 to 30,000; and the slaves, 400,000 to 450,000.[23]

Trouble began when the French Revolution proclaimed its motto of liberty, equality, and fraternity. First the freed men and then the slaves adopted the principles of the Revolution and proceeded to put them into effect by means of armed uprisings. While the National Assembly in Paris wavered between supporting the blacks and the whites, the former systematically proceeded to seize control of the

[21]An account of these events as they affected Rhode Island may be found in Amasa M. Eaton, "The French Spoliation Claims and Rhode Island Claimants," *The Narragansett Historical Register*, IV (1885-1886), 202-234.

[22]C. H. Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies in the XVII Century* (London, 1910), 123, 124.

[23]T. Lothrop Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo* (Boston, 1914), 9.

western half of Hispaniola. When, in 1795, France acquired the eastern half of the island as part of a peace settlement with Spain, the black armies extended operations into that area. By 1801 the entire island was under the control of the black general, Toussaint L'Ouverture.[24]

The table of arrivals at the port of Providence indicates the effects of these events upon trade:

ENTRIES AT THE PORT OF PROVIDENCE

From Hispaniola

Year	Entries	Year	Entries	Year	Entries	Year	Entries
1790	16	1800	5	1810	0	1820	1
1791	25	1801	4	1811	0	1821	0
1792	17	1802	6	1812	0	1822	1
1793	13	1803	1	1813	1	1823	1
1794	12	1804	0	1814	0	1824	4
1795	22	1805	0	1815	0	1825	1
1796	13	1806	2	1816	1	1826	0
1797	11	1807	0	1817	0	1827	2
1798	4	1808	0	1818	1	1828	3
1799	4	1809	1	1819	0	1829	3

Trade through 1795 maintained a high level, reflecting the economic prosperity of the island under the plantation system. Then, as the slave revolt progressed, productivity fell off, and commerce was disrupted. It will be noted, however, that trade did not cease during the Quasi-War of 1798-1801; instead, there was an average of over four arrivals a year.

These arrivals are to be explained by the fact that Providence was trading with Toussaint L'Ouverture, a practice encouraged by the United States government and protected by the United States Navy.[25] Indeed, a Rhode Island naval officer, Commodore Silas Talbot, was assigned to the Santo Domingo station and carried on a friendly correspondence with Toussaint L'Ouverture.[26] The turbulent conditions prevailing on the island, however, did not favor extensive trade. Wholesale atrocities were practiced on both sides; life and property were in constant peril. Under a Santo Domingo headline the *Providence Gazette* reported in 1801, "The most horrid scenes of the reign of Robespierre are about to be realized in this unfortunate colony." The *Gazette* went on to describe mass executions. "Shiploads of whites and mulattoes are frequently sent from the Island under the pretense of transporting them to some other; but from the speedy return of the vessels, it is too evident how their cargoes have been disposed of."[27]

[24]The British contributed to the chaos of the 1790's by seizing Jeremie as a part of their program to harass the French West Indies. They remained from 1793 to 1798. When they left, Jeremie came under the control of Toussaint.

[25]An account of naval operations in the West Indies at this period may be found in Charles W. Goldsborough, *The United States Naval Chronicle* (Washington, 1824), *passim*.

[26]Talbot papers at The Rhode Island Historical Society.

In January, 1802, a new French army, under Leclerc, arrived to undertake the reconquest of Santo Domingo. By June Toussaint had been defeated and captured. Then disaster struck the French forces in the dual form of yellow fever and a counteroffensive under the new black leader, Jean Jacques Dessalines. The rout was complete, and in 1803 the remnants of the French army were withdrawn. Next year the Republic of Haiti declared its independence.[28]

Meanwhile the Quasi-War between France and the United States had been terminated. American naval protection was withdrawn from the Caribbean, and American vessels trading with the Haitians became easy prey to French cruisers. Under these circumstances very few Providence vessels ventured into Haitian waters from 1803 to 1806. Beginning in 1806 the American government undertook to suppress the trade altogether. From 1806 until the Embargo every vessel clearing for the Caribbean was required to carry a "Santo Domingo bond" by which the captain acknowledged his obligation to stay out of Haitian ports.[29]

From 1806 to 1824 there was almost no trade between Providence and Hispaniola. The Santo Domingo bonds, the Embargo, the War of 1812, and a series of uprisings on the Island made trade difficult or impossible. For a time the Spaniards regained control of the eastern half, while the west was divided between a mulatto president, Pétion, and a negro king, Henri Christophe (successor to Dessalines). Trade was possible, but did not attract many vessels from Providence. In 1822, however, the entire island was reunited under the dictatorship of Jean Pierre Boyer, mulatto successor to Pétion. The relative stability achieved under Boyer was reflected by a slight increase in the number of arrivals at Providence.[30]

[27]*Providence Gazette*, Jan. 24, 1801.

[28]Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 349.

[29]Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clarke, eds., *Commerce and Navigation* (American State Papers, Washington, 1832), I, 717.

[30]For the history of the United States relations with Haiti in the 19th century, see Rayford W. Logan, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti 1776-1891* (Chapel Hill, 1941).

Destruction of the plantation system not only reduced the volume of trade but also brought about a change in the type of exports from Haiti. In the 1790's sugar had been the major export. In the 1820's sugar had practically disappeared, and coffee was left in first place. This change can readily be understood in view of the fact that sugar cane grows only when planted and tended with regular care. The years of turmoil and the freeing of the slaves ruined the sugar plantations. Coffee, however, continues to grow and produce, though not abundantly, with little or no care.[31] The Revolution in Haiti put an end to that prosperity which had been enjoyed by a small white minority, but it gave to the people an opportunity to build a society relatively free from oppression.

[31]Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *The Rise of New York Port* (New York, 1939), 186.

[to be continued]

The Wooden Indian

[continued from inside front cover]

early nineteenth century is the society's manacled felon, which hung from the Kent County Jail in East Greenwich for many years as a warning to evildoers and certainly not as an advertisement of the trade of the thief! Another earlier trade figure is the Society's copy of the original Turk's Head, whose history is lost in legend, but may have begun as a tobacco sign, set up in front of Smith and Sabin's shop at the corner of Town Street and Market Square. Possibly the wooden Indian is one of a few types of shop signs that survived to the 20th century. Other types of signs included picturesque foreigners, representatives of America's everyday life, figures of literature and history and even prominent personages of the day.

Mr. J. L. Morrison, who wrote an article on wooden Indians in Scribner's Magazine in 1928, thinks that the first carved figures to advertise tobacco shops were called "black boys" because of their resemblance to the little Negro slaves, who were brought from Jamaica to entertain *grandes dames* and it was quite natural to connect the Negro who worked on the tobacco plantation with the finished product. Tradition has it that the first tobacco Indian was a figure of Pocahontas at the door of a Boston, Massachusetts, tobacco vendor's shop in colonial times. But it was not until the 1840's that there was evidence of many such effigies. From that time on to 1900

every small town boasted at least one resplendent trade figure, whether of Indian or other genus.

The earliest mention of ready-made wooden Indians as an article of merchandise appears in an advertisement placed in a New York paper of 1856 by Edward Hen, a tobacconist, who offered such figures for sale at his store at 23 Liberty Street.

The carving of wooden Indians in the early days seems to have fallen into the hands of the makers of ships' figureheads. Itinerant craftsmen, whose specialty was painting the wooden Indian, traveled widely. They followed the westward movement and when they reached Illinois and Michigan inspired large numbers of German and Swiss woodcarvers, already working in that area. Sizes ranged from some thirty inches to larger-than-life forms, while the bases might be crude blocks of wood or well-shaped plinths usually carrying a fitting advertisement.

The significance of the Society's acquisition of this wooden Indian is important. The flamboyant era of the 1840's to 1880's in Rhode Island history can best be set forth by such pieces of folk art, which include in addition to such trade signs: ships' figureheads, toys, circus ornaments, weathervanes, garden and house ornaments, decoys, primitive portraits and scenes, theorem and other decorative painting. Folk art is now drawing a great deal of late but well-deserved attention from collectors and museums, both in exhibitions and permanent installations. Holger Cahill, formerly the Director of the Index of American Design, sums up the case for folk art thus: "These sculptures were made by anonymous craftsmen and amateurs, carvers, carpenters, cabinet makers, shipwrights, blacksmiths, stone cutters, metal workers, sailors, farmers, and laborers. The work of these men is an expression of the common people and not an expression of a small cultured class. . . . It comes out of craft traditions, plus that personal something of the rare craftsman, who is an artist by nature if not by training. . . . There is a remarkable variety of personal styles in these carvings and castings and a great deal of vigor and inventiveness even when the technique is crude and primitive. . . . Surface realism meant nothing to them for they tried to set down not so much what they saw as what they knew and felt. . . . Their art mirrors the sense and the sentiment of a community and is an authentic expression of American experience."

LABOR PROBLEMS IN THE RHODE ISLAND COTTON MILLS — 1790-1940

by Editha Hadcock

[concluded from July, 1955, v. 14, no. 3, p. 93]

A large number of employers continued to oppose government intervention, particularly hour legislation. They justified the long hours of work on the basis that the work was not arduous and did not endanger health. They feared that shorter hours would increase costs and decrease productivity, since workers might develop habits of laziness and drunkenness during the extra leisure time. They warned that state regulations would handicap the mills in competition with the producers in unregulated low cost areas and bring about further curtailment of mill operation and employment.

Gradually the opposition to government regulation lessened. Leading employers recognized that shorter work periods and the employment of adults contributed to plant efficiency, while high working standards deserved protection. The technical innovations which had rendered child labor unprofitable proved more potent in reversing the opposition to child labor laws than the agitation for the children's educational needs.

Although school and hour laws and factory inspection regulations were enacted, they were not provided with adequate means of enforcement or supported by sustained public interest. Effective legislation was opposed. However, the concern about substandard conditions led to constructive action in the next century.

* * *

In the twentieth century the Rhode Island fine goods markets were crowded by the products of Southern firms driven from the coarse goods field by competitors in the South, the West, and Japan. Southern employers paid lower wages for heavier work loads and longer hours as long as other jobs were in the more arduous and less remunerative agricultural pursuits. Later on Southern workers secured more favorable terms of employment when the South became industrialized and subject to unionization and national minimum standard legislation. By that time, productivity had increased; humidifiers, long draft spindles, and automatic looms had been adopted; and the workers had become experienced. Technical conditions in some of

the Southern mills equaled and even surpassed those of the Rhode Island plants.

A few large holding companies were organized in the 1920's in order to secure financial resources and stronger market positions. Unfortunately the financial advantages of the holding companies were over-rated; too many obsolete plants were bought, and not enough investment was made in modernization. Firms with more than 60,000 spindles proved to be less efficient.

When the demand for cotton goods decreased sharply in the 1920's, several Rhode Island manufacturers curtailed operation and transferred part or all of their investments to Southern areas. In the depression of the 1930's many mills became bankrupt and abandoned cotton manufacture permanently. Buildings were torn down, and machinery was scrapped. By 1935 Rhode Island had lost from 24 to 30 per cent of her cotton machinery. While the scrapped machines were obsolete, the workers were employable, left in deserted mill villages without hope of further jobs.

In many of the active plants working conditions deteriorated and employment was uncertain. Technological changes threatened jobs, upset working habits, downgraded job status, and blocked promotions. Mechanical innovations simplified machine tending so as to require less skill and physical strength and shorter periods of training. Fewer skilled workers were needed even in the production of finer materials. When workers struck or threatened to strike, many mills closed; they reopened only when employees accepted heavier work loads and wage cuts.

The unemployment and wage reductions seemed more serious to the workers of the twentieth century than to the employees in the early mills. In the previous century not so many were unemployed at a time, and the jobless could turn to domestic or farm labor. In the 1930's thousands were unemployed with no other means of support.

Troubled by the tremendous relief expenditures and taxes, local business organizations and the State Rehabilitation Committee endeavored to attract new enterprises. They promoted the industrial advantages of the state and encouraged economic diversification rather than the extreme specialization of the past.

Cooperative agreements were sponsored by the Cotton Textile Institute and the National Cotton Manufacturers' Association to

eliminate substandard conditions and to stabilize employment. Small mills refused to cooperate. A cotton textile code for minimum standards was set up under the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, but the code was not effectively enforced. Its administration was blocked by confusion and delays; it pleased neither executives, workers, nor the small mills. Finally, in May 1935, the act was declared unconstitutional.

Thereafter the Cotton Textile Institute and the National Cotton Manufacturers Association confined their efforts to public relations and cooperative research programs. Both sought to attain public favor and helpful government regulations and to prevent adverse government restrictions. Both also promoted new products and advised more efficient production and merchandizing methods, functions of major importance for firms too small to afford independent research.

The permanent elimination of obsolete machinery and plants in the 1930's improved the industry's competitive position and reduced the number of substandard mills. Mechanization required larger capital investments and made difficult the establishment of new enterprises.

Throughout the difficult years of the 1920's and the 1930's managerial, marketing, and technical readjustments continued to be made by leading firms. When pessimists warned that other fabrics had supplemented cotton, these firms devised new products and found new markets. Scientific management methods and employer-employee programs were adopted to increase productivity. Although not always successful, management recognized the significance of employee attitudes. Efficient arrangements of machinery, proper lighting, and controlled ventilation and humidity were found valuable. Modern electric lighting fixtures, larger windows, and saw-toothed roofs provided better lighting and reduced imperfections. Vacuum strippers and humidifiers checked breakage, helped to produce superior yarn and cloth, and brought cleaner air and improved temperature to the workers.

The average hourly and weekly earnings of the cotton mill workers remained far below the average earnings of employees in other industries. Although productivity had increased and efficiency-winning methods of wage payment had been adopted in the leading mills, the

resulting savings led to price cuts rather than to increased wages and it was the consumer who benefited. In the 1920's and 1930's wage reductions of from 10 to 30 per cent and even of 50 per cent were imposed. As unions gained more bargaining power, the earnings of the relatively scarce skilled workers increased somewhat, but the wages of the semi-skilled and the unskilled remained relatively low.

By the late 1930's wage rates rose as a result of the combined influence of minimum standard legislation, industrial unionization, and the development of highly-paid jobs in the new war plants. Backed by impressive cost of living statistics, the Textile Workers of the CIO demanded wage adjustments to cover increased costs of living. Employers declared that the workers' productivity and the plants' financial resources would not allow wage advances, but the wages were increased. The Rhode Island Department of Labor estimated that within one year, from June 1941 to June 1942, average weekly earnings in fifty Rhode Island cotton mills increased from about $21 to almost $26, or about 24 per cent. By April 1943 average weekly earnings were over $32. Still the cotton mill workers' earnings were among the lowest paid in the state.

By the late 1930's liberal manufacturers had realized that regular and adequate income secured and held efficient workers, while low wages and irregular employment hurt workers' morale, impaired efficiency and often stirred up labor trouble that cost more than was saved through paying low wages. By that time, only a few manufacturers justified the low wages as family income which afforded adequate sustenance when the members of a family combined their earnings.

Work schedules were reduced voluntarily in a number of mills after 1900 and in all mills when the Rhode Island legislature restricted the hours of women and minors to fifty-eight in 1902, fifty-six in 1909, fifty-four in 1913, and finally to forty-eight in 1936. Though men were not affected until the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, too few were employed to allow the mills to operate on schedules longer than the legal maximum. The enactment of the national 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act helped to remove the competitive disadvantage of the state maximum hour law by requiring time and a half for overtime over forty hours.

In some mills the night shift was eliminated either because night

workers were deemed less efficient and more likely to be absent, or because the National Cotton Manufacturers Association recommended that excess capacity might be reduced thereby. Social workers had long warned that night work endangered the health and welfare of the workers, especially of the women who had duties at home during the day. During the war emergency of the 1940's night shifts were utilized again, and women and minors were occasionally allowed to work longer than the legal maximum.

Work schedules were also adjusted to allow for rest periods and longer lunch periods. A state law of 1943 directed manufacturers to provide at least a twenty minute lunch period after six hours of work. Many firms allowed thirty minutes for lunch; a few offered an hour. Rest periods of ten or fifteen minutes in the forenoon and afternoon were provided in some plants; in one firm where work assignments were heavy a ten minute rest period was required after every fifty minutes.

In other industries extensive personnel programs initiated effective hiring, training, and supervision practices. Workers were encouraged to express their ideas, air their grievances, share responsibilities, and promote team work. It was observed that workers desired recognition and security, fair working assignments and suitable living conditions, as well as higher wages and shorter hours. Attempts were made to explain changes that disturbed work habits, to give adequate notice of dismissal, and in some cases, dismissal wages if workers were no longer needed.

Because of the proved advantages of personnel work in other industries, a few cotton mill executives adopted personnel programs. Unfortunately their personnel departments were often inadequately staffed and financed and they were restricted to clerical duties. Hiring, firing, and training continued to be carried on by foremen, while general personnel policies were formulated by overseers and superintendents. In the late 1930's personnel departments were enlarged and more efficient employment, training, and follow-up techniques were adopted. Efforts were made to build up continuous contacts between management and labor, to exchange ideas about plant problems, and to settle grievances promptly.

A few employer-employee programs were installed in the 1920's often as a way to exclude outside unions. Their achievements were

limited by the competition from plants with lower employment standards. Too often the workers believed that such programs were used to reduce wages, to increase work loads, and to curb unionization. In the late 1930's the programs were modified to meet the requirements of the Wagner Labor Relations Act or were taken over by outside unions.

Recreational and welfare services were introduced during the first World War, in some cases to escape payment of war taxes or to avoid unionization. Few were continued after the War. Mill village facilities were not repaired, and most of the company housing and community buildings were sold in the 1920's and 1930's. As late as the 1940's many mills were without suitable rest rooms or cafeterias, and few offered insurance or pension programs. Well-equipped clinics and safety programs were instituted, however, as a result of the enforcement of comprehensive workmen's compensation legislation.

In the twentieth century some of the national officials of the newly organized United Textile Workers realized the need for industrial organization and protective legislation. Their craft locals clung to craft policies and pointed to the failure of the Knights of Labor as an example of the weakness of all-inclusive "uplift" methods. The labor demands of the First World War helped to perpetuate craft policies, while the unfavorable Supreme Court decisions of the 1920's discouraged the fight for protective legislation. The resulting delay in structural reorganization and neglect of political action weakened the United Textile Workers.

Dissension and secession dissipated union strength and finance. Dissatisfaction increased when the national failed to attain collective bargaining gains, strike victories, or protective legislation after the First World War. Finally, after several secessions, strike losses, and the suffering resulting from unemployment, wage cuts, and anti-union drives, both industrial unionization and political action became a permanent union program.

The strike failures during the depression years of 1922 and 1935 taught lessons in mass organization and public relations. Union leaders were toughened by their difficult experiences. They had seen their locals destroyed and the union-management programs fail. They realized that women and unskilled workers must be organized. The 1934 strike demonstrated the effectiveness of mass meetings, sound

trucks, motor cavalcades, newspaper publicity, and radio broadcasts.

The dramatic conflict over industrial unionism in the American Federation of Labor during the mid-1930's involved the cotton mill workers, for their national, the United Textile Workers, was a member of the Committee of Industrial Organization that withdrew from the American Federation of Labor. With the help of the financial resources and leadership of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the textile union leaders began an aggressive organization drive in the North and South. Because of local jealousies and disappointments, a few of the locals and their leaders returned to the American Federation of Labor and secured the old United Textile Workers' charter. The majority of the textile locals stayed with the Congress of Industrial Organizations and reorganized as the Textile Workers of America. Although the revived United Textile Workers was primarily concerned with the unionization of the woolen and worsted workers in Rhode Island, its rivalry further retarded effective organization of the cotton workers.

Meanwhile an all-inclusive Independent Trades Union successfully organized workers in a variety of industries in and near Woonsocket. The Independent's social, economic, and political programs, and its standard union management contracts not only unified heterogeneous groups of workers into a forceful union, but also won textile workers away from the older unions.

In spite of membership losses and contract terminations during the recession of 1937 the Textile Workers' union gained valuable experience. Their contracts were written agreements drawn up in accordance with basic union standards. Workers with no previous union experience were organized. Local leaders were given training in job evaluation and time studies as preparation for union management negotiations. Economic and social programs were devised to unify the workers and encourage their active support of union activities. Women workers were given a more important part in the locals, and immigrant workers were helped to become naturalized citizens, registered voters, and participants in the union programs.

Political action became a permanent union function, not just a depression technique. Steps to form a labor party in Rhode Island in 1935 and 1936 failed; too many minority groups existed, and there were not enough leaders, stirring issues, or sufficient community of

interests. A vigilant labor lobby was maintained, and strong political backing was gained. The Republican and Democratic parties did not long overlook the value of a favorable labor constituency. When a constitutional revision altered the Senate's geographical basis of representation, the workers in the densely populated cities won even more influence. By the early 1940's both state and national legislatures had enacted maximum hour and minimum wage laws, outlawed child labor, checked the arbitrary use of injunctions in labor disputes, legalized collective bargaining, and provided social security.

In the 1930's laws and court decisions declared employers' anti-union tactics illegal; in the mid-1940's they restricted labor union abuses. The Norris-La Guardia Act of 1932 and the state anti-injunction law prevented the arbitrary use of injunctions. Clause 7A in the National Recovery Act of 1933 recognized collective bargaining. The Wagner Labor Relations Act legalized collective bargaining and outlawed anti-union practices. Meanwhile the unions' mass organization tactics, jurisdictional disputes, and wartime labor disputes antagonized the public. In 1947 the Taft-Hartley Act amended the Wagner Act, outlawed union abuses, and restricted union activities.

By the 1940's leading plants had been organized. Unions had gained recognition, better working conditions, seniority rights, and pensions. Standard contracts were formulated by research staffs to stabilize working conditions and check unfair competition.

Management and unions gradually developed techniques of co-operation. Both had mutual interests in efficient business methods that would increase payrolls and profits. Both also had sharp differences of opinion. Managements resisted union infringement of executive functions and union requests for benefits that increased economic costs. Union leaders and workers resented management delays in granting long desired improvements and management's seeming disinterest in social costs. It was as important for unions to give up jurisdictional disputes, unauthorized strikes, and restrictive work practices as it was for management to understand the workers' needs, the value of collective bargaining, and the prompt settlement of grievances.

The settlement of disputes was promoted by the mediation and conciliation services offered by the state and national governments.

Efforts were made to narrow areas of disagreement and to encourage the prompt consideration of labor grievances before they culminated into major labor issues.

In the 1930's and 1940's the fight for minimum standard legislation had won the support of organizations such as the Rhode Island League of Women Voters, the Interdenominational Commission of Social Action, and both the state and national Consumers' Leagues. Consumer education and commissions of investigation attempted to counteract the common habit of shopping according to styles and prices with little thought of the standards under which purchases were produced. It was pointed out that price reductions might be the result of production under substandard and unhygienic labor conditions rather than the efficient use of resources. Social consciousness grew under the impact of unemployment, relief needs, and labor strife that upset community peace and convenience.

Although state laws had improved the standards of work for women and children, leading manufacturers concluded that state regulation offered inadequate protection. Interstate compacts were made to support minimum standards, but they proved ineffectual. States with lower standards would not join and there was no authority to enforce conformity. Employers in the Southeastern states supported proposals for national regulation when they experienced severe competition from mills in unregulated areas further South and Southwest. In 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act required that interstate business grant minimum wages, time and a half for work over forty hours, and the abolishment of child labor. A textile committee was appointed to carry on further investigation, advance wages above the minimum, and narrow the North-South wage differential.

In the depression of the 1930's Rhode Island could not cope with the burden of relief work. The need for national emergency relief demonstrated the advisability of social security, long advocated by liberal leaders. Problems of unemployment, old age, and the care of the dependent and handicapped were tackled through the national Social Security Act of 1935 and subsequent state legislation. By the mid-1940's Rhode Island had pioneered in reforming the state's administration of social security, public welfare, and workmen's compensation. Public assistance was reorganized under a uniform

and centralized administration and unnecessary record keeping was eliminated. Aid was given on the basis of need, without residence or citizenship qualifications. Workmen's compensation evolved from an inadequate program of financial relief for injured workers to a well-rounded program of financial aid and rehabilitation for workers hurt by accident or occupational disease. In 1942 Rhode Island set up a state disability insurance program.

Social Security legislation helped to keep substandard employees out of the labor market. The taxes for Social Security benefits were far more constructive than taxes for public relief or the cost of private aid to families of underpaid workers, especially when such relief indirectly subsidized substandard mills. Social Security aid for dependent children and widowed mothers kept the children at school and the mothers at home. Because of unemployment compensation benefits, unemployed workers were less willing to accept substandard conditions imposed during depressions, while they were encouraged by public employment offices to move out of areas of labor surplus.

There has been some question as to whether national minimum standards and Social Security legislation might imposed handicaps upon manufacturers in competition with low cost areas in other parts of the world, such as the Orient or South America. International agreements might maintain minimum standards of work; economic diversification of the low standard countries might help to push up their low standards. But it is dubious whether such adjustments could be attained over a wide enough area or in short enough time to be of any assistance to manufacturers in the United States.

Thus the Rhode Island mills' enduring success will continue to depend upon their sound adaptation in managerial, marketing, and production techniques, and labor relationships. The manufacturers who survived difficult periods of business depression and competition in the past proved that up-to-date and efficient use of material and human resources could effectively meet market demands and that higher standards of work were possible and profitable.

THERE is rarely a visitor to John Brown House who does not exclaim over the fine collection of furniture, mostly of Rhode Island origin, that has come to The Rhode Island Historical Society during the past few years. Realizing that these pieces are of not only local but also of nation-wide interest, the Society feels that its members as well as authorities on American cabinet making would appreciate having a detailed description of them. We propose to publish a number of photographs with comments in *Rhode Island History*. Eventually they will be collected and published as a catalog.

Mr. Ralph E. Carpenter, Jr., the compiler of the catalog, is acknowledged as an authority on early American furniture and the author of *The Arts and Crafts of Newport Rhode Island 1640-1820*, and *The Fifty Best Historic American Houses*. He has been largely responsible for the outstanding exhibitions of Rhode Island furniture in the Nichols-Wanton-Hunter House in Newport since 1953.

C.P.M.

CATALOG *of* THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY FURNITURE COLLECTION

by RALPH E. CARPENTER, JR.

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FIFTY-TWO POWER STREET, PROVIDENCE

1. EASY CHAIR

Mahogany

Newport 1750-1760

Townsend-Goddard

During the period 1750-1760, when it can be assumed this chair was made, there were at least two Goddards and six Townsends actively working in Newport. Two years ago when *The Arts and Crafts of Newport Rhode Island* was written there seemed to be sufficient evidence to attribute it "probably" to John Goddard. Today the author hesitates to even make such a guess. What can be said is that the design of both the claw feet and the turned stretchers are practically identical to those of the Sheffield side chairs (*Antiques,* July 1955 p. 44), which have a history back to John Townsend. Similar feet are found on a bed (Collection of Cornelius C. Moore) having the same history of ownership. The Sheffield side chair has on its crest rail an area of crosshatching with punch marks, a feature found on labeled pieces by John Townsend. Because of the close family relationship by marriage, or by birth, between all of eight Goddards and Townsends working 1750-1760, assumptions can be freely made as to why one might have produced work with identical design characteristics to one of the others. To mention only a few:

1. John Goddard and Job Townsend because John married Job's daughter.
2. Christopher Townsend and Job Townsend because they were brothers and only a few years apart in age.
3. John Goddard and John Townsend because they were almost the same age, and John Goddard married John Townsend's cousin.
4. John Goddard and Job Townsend Jr. because they were only a few years apart in age, and John married Job's sister.

We are sure, however, that this fine, bold easy chair bears unmistakable characteristics of Townsend-Goddard craftsmanship and it is the only such chair known to the author.

Ex-collection Henry A. Hoffman

2. SIDE CHAIR

Mahogany

Newport 1730-1750

This fine side chair is an unusual example of a usual type. Seldom is one seen that so completely displays definite and identifiable Townsend-Goddard characteristics. The shaping of the leg, the claw feet, and the turned stretchers are in the same classification as the easy chair (No. 1), as are three other side chairs:

1. The Karolik Collection in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts includes a side chair (No. 80 on page 143 of the catalogue) which differs only in that it has a pierced splat.
2. The Metropolitan Museum has on loan a chair that differs in that the knees are carved, the seat is square, the splat is pierced, and the shell on the crest rail is more highly developed.
3. The Hunter House in Newport has on loan a chair (Fig. 1, page 44, *Antiques,* July 1955) that differs in that the back is in the "Chippendale" style.

It is interesting to note that in spite of the great many chairs that can be placed in the same general category, these are the only ones with the same claw feet, turned stretchers, and except for the Hunter House chair, the same shaping of the back.

In these chairs the claw foot is webless and the leg seems a little "bent" where it joins the talons. The stretchers are turned with greater "finesse" than usual, with a fillet provided at the point where the diameter changes abruptly. The only fault one might find would be that the shape of the crest rail is accentuated just a little too much. The knees might be thought by some to be just a little bulky but to ohers the bulk in the knees would be looked upon as giving a sturdiness, so characteristic of Newport furniture.

Ex-collection Henry A. Hoffman

3. SIDE CHAIR

Mahogany

Massachusetts 1750-1760

At first glance one might attribute this chair to Newport, at least until the claw feet were observed. While there is always the possibility that a cabinetmaker might have copied the style of some other locality, the decided backward slant to the outer talons place the origin of this chair in Massachusetts. Confirmation of this attribution is found in the design of the pierced splat and the carving that appears thereon. Otherwise, the shells on the knees, the shape of the back and the shell on the crest rail are all very very similar to what we would expect to find in a Newport chair made by the Townsends and Goddards. The block at each end of the center stretcher is not usually found in Newport chairs but there are a few instances where they do appear on chairs which have all the other Newport attributes.

A chair with identical piercing of the splat, but with a "Chippendale" back is shown in Vol. II of Wallace Nutting's *Furniture Treasury* No. 2179. In fact Lockwood in his Vol. II shows on page 82 this design of splat as a typical "Chippendale" style. These other chairs are mentioned by way of pointing out that the introduction of a "Chippendale" style splat in a chair which otherwise has "Queen Anne" features would date this chair at the end of one style and the beginning of another. Some call this a transitional style. Actually design and style appear to have changed constantly by various degrees. When the indication of a change is abrupt or pronounced it is apt to be termed transitional.

Ex-collection Henry A. Hoffman

4. SIDE CHAIR

Mahogany

Rhode Island 1765-1780

During the time that the Townsends and Goddards were turning out the fine block and shell pieces for the "carriage trade" a great volume of plainer furniture was also produced for the less opulent citizens and for export. This chair is plain, sturdy, and relatively inexpensive in design. The best mahogany was often used even though the design was simple. The center of the crest rail is unadorned, the legs are plain, and the pierced splat is not embellished in any way. In Newport the stretchers seem always to have been a little thicker than they were elsewhere, as in this case. Then too, for some reason, the height of the back of the Newport chairs is not quite so great as those of other localities. Often chairs of this grade were sent as venture cargo to the ports of the southern colonies and the West Indies to bring "the best price obtainable."

With slight modifications these chairs could become more expensive models for domestic consumption. The center of the crest rail would be crosshatched or shell-carved, the legs moulded or stop-fluted, and the splat embellished with scrolls or a bit of carving. The crest rail instead of being straight would be shaped to fit the back. Since all these features would of course increase the price, fewer were made, and as a result they are less common today.

A chair of the same design has been attributed to Joseph Rawson, Sr., of Providence. Similar chairs can be attributed to various Newport cabinetmakers: the Townsends, Robert Lawton, and others.

The history of this chair: Benjamin Weeden 1778, Mary Fowler Weeden, 1818, Susan Reynolds Weeden 1858, acquired in 1910 from descendants by Elliot Flint. The early owners lived in Wickford, Rhode Island.

Ex-collection Elliot Flint

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEW MEMBERS

June 14, 1955 — August 31, 1955

Mr. Arthur W. Cate

Mr. Arthur D. Champlin, Jr.
Rumford, R. I.

Mr. Allen F. Day

Mr. Charles H. Doebler, IV
North Scituate, R. I.

Mr. Clarke Freeman, Jr.

Mr. M. Antoine Gazda
Wakefield, R. I.

Mr. John A. Graham
Pawtucket, R. I.

Mr. D. Bruce Hutchinson

Mr. and Mrs.
Duncan Hunter Mauran

Mr. Frank Mauran, III

Mr. Nicholas Picchione

Mr. Ralph S. Richmond
Little Compton, R. I.

Mrs. Ciro O. Scotti

Nino U. D. Scotti

Mr. Robinson C. Trowbridge

Mr. Thomas F. Vance, Jr.
East Providence 14, R. I.

Mrs. James F. Walsh

LECTURES

September 28, 1955, Wednesday — 8.30 p.m.
(following the Annual Meeting for members)
Usher Parsons: Perry's Surgeon at the
Battle of Lake Erie
PETER PINEO CHASE, M.D.

October 20, 1955, Thursday — 8:15 p.m.
Gilbert Stuart
JAMES T. FLEXNER, Author of *Gilbert Stuart, a great life in brief* (1955)

November 13, 1955, Sunday — 3:00 p.m.
Influence of General Rochambeau
in Rhode Island
CLAIBORNE DEB. PELL, Member, Gen. Rochambeau Commission,
State of Rhode Island