THE RHODE ISLAND COLONY

by

Clifford Lindsey Alderman

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JACKET ILLUSTRATION: The burning of the British ship *Gaspee*.

For Michael Picinich

CONTENTS

THE RHODE ISLAND COLONY

chapter 1

A WILDERNESS COLONY

"Small but mighty" is a good description of Rhode Island. Yet for many of its early years, because it was squeezed in between Massachusetts and Connecticut, this smallest of the American colonies was in danger of being gobbled up by one or both of these larger ones.

But Rhode Island never yielded. It grew and became strong. Making use of the natural gifts provided by the land, forest and sea, it prospered. It could make the proud boast that no other colony except Pennsylvania always had complete freedom for its people to worship in their chosen faith. It produced great men. And when it came to fighting for its life, its rights and its freedom, Rhode Island was as pugnacious as an angry bantam rooster. For its size it furnished as much if not more in men and money than any other colony to fight the French from Canada and their Indian allies who for many years menaced the English settlements in America. And it was in the forefront in resisting the tyranny of America's rulers in England before and during the American Revolution.

One of a number of ways in which Rhode Island was different from other American colonies was that no other

could claim it was first settled by just one man. It came about in this way:

In England, William Blackstone, a strange man indeed, was a minister of the Church of England, but he disagreed strongly with some of its principles. At that time, in the early years of the seventeenth century, anyone who did so was likely to be persecuted. For this very reason some members of the religious sect called the Separatists had already migrated to America and settled at Plymouth in what is now Massachusetts; we know them as the Pilgrims. For the same reason, William Blackstone joined a group of Puritans, who also disagreed with the ways of the Church of England, and came to America in 1623.

These people settled on the shore of what is now Boston Bay at a place the Indians called Wessagusset. But William Blackstone did not like the ways of the stern Puritans any better than he did those of the Church of England. The truth was that he was a hermit at heart and did not like to have many people around him. So about 1625 he left the Puritan settlement and moved across the bay to a peninsula jutting into it which had the Indian name of Shawmut.

There, on one of the three hills which rose on the peninsula, William Blackstone lived alone, content to meditate on the sins of human beings, to raise corn and other vegetables on the little plot of ground he had cleared with his axe, and to tend some apple trees he had set out. But in 1630, to his dismay, he had neighbors.

Another band of Puritans had crossed the sea and decided to settle on the peninsula. They renamed it Boston after the English town from which some of them came. For a few years Blackstone remained there, but as more settlers came, to his hermit's mind it seemed as crowded as that teeming city is today. In 1634 he sold his land to Puritan settlers and set out southward, driving before him a few cattle he had bought.

He was determined to get as far away from civilization as he could, and he succeeded. He plodded on until he reached a stream which flowed south and emptied into vast Narragansett Bay. Today it is called the Blackstone River, and the place where William Blackstone made his new home is in Rhode Island.

It was a desolate wilderness then. The nearest settlements were those of the Plymouth colony far to the east on Cape Cod Bay. Blackstone's only neighbors were Indians, and they did not bother him. In the solitude of the wilderness—though he did marry later—he remained for the rest of his days in Rhode Island.

Quite rightly, historians do not consider William Blackstone the true founder of Rhode Island, since he did not establish a colony there. The real founder, Roger Williams, was a very different sort of man, though a strange one too in some ways.

Williams, like Blackstone, was trained in England as a minister. Even as a boy he was brilliant. He managed to get some education and somehow he learned shorthand, a skill not often mastered in those days even by older persons. To practice it, he would go into the King's court at Westminster known as the Star Chamber and take down speeches by judges and lawyers.

This attracted the attention of Sir Edward Coke, one of the greatest lawyers England ever produced. Coke became Williams' benefactor. He placed him in the famous Charterhouse School for poor scholars, and then sent him to Pembroke College at the great English university of Cambridge. Williams was graduated from there in 1626 when he was about twenty—the record of the exact date of his birth was lost in the great fire which almost destroyed London in 1666.

Perhaps Sir Edward Coke hoped Roger Williams would follow in his own footsteps and become a lawyer, but the young man decided to be a minister. Ordinarily he would

Roger Williams expressed his religious ideas fearlessly

have been a clergyman of the Church of England, but while he was at Cambridge he met some Separatists and was impressed with their ideas about religion. The Separatists preferred a very simple form of church service to the formal rites which had been kept when King Henry VIII withdrew the Church of England from the Catholic Church, or Church of Rome, in 1534. After leaving the university, Williams refused two offers from regular English churches, and by 1630 he had become a Separatist.

At that time the most powerful enemy of all religions except his own, the Church of England, was Bishop William Laud, a great favorite of King Charles I and soon to be head of the Church as Archbishop of Canterbury. Laud mercilessly persecuted Separatists and their close religious branch, the Brownists, as well as Puritans and leaders of other religions. The time came when Roger Williams, who expressed his religious ideas fearlessly, was in danger of being imprisoned. He knew the only way to escape such punishment was to flee from England.

In some ways the Separatists were as stern and narrow-minded as the Puritans. But since those Separatists and Puritans who had gone to America had done so largely to escape religious persecution, it seemed to Roger Williams that in the new land they would surely be tolerant of all religions. He decided to go there.

Because of his ideas, Williams' friendship with Sir Edward Coke had been broken off. Yet he loved his benefactor and was deeply grateful to him. When he and his wife started across England to board a ship at Bristol, they passed Coke's home at Stoke Poges. And as Williams wrote later to the old lawyer's daughter: "It was as bitter as death to me when I rode Windsor-way to take ship at Bristow [Bristol] and saw Stoke House where that blessed man was, and then durst not acquaint him with my conscience or my flight."

Soon after he and his wife arrived in Boston early in 1631, he was offered a position in the Puritan Church there, but since he was a Separatist, he refused. Almost as quickly he was in trouble with the ministers of the Massachusetts Bay colony and the magistrates of the General Court, which enacted the laws and administered justice in the colony.

The Puritan religion strictly forbade cursing, doing any kind of work on the Sabbath or traveling anywhere except to church on that day. The magistrates severely punished all who disobeyed. Williams declared that only God had a right to do so, since such offenses were against God, not man. The ministers and magistrates were shocked and angered at this.

Roger Williams was a most lovable young man. He was always pleasant and good-natured, and never held a grudge against anyone. Even the Boston Puritans who became his enemies because of his beliefs spoke of him as a "dear fellow." But Williams' character was as rugged and immovable as the rockbound coast of New England itself. He had a conscience that drove him relentlessly to stand by his be-

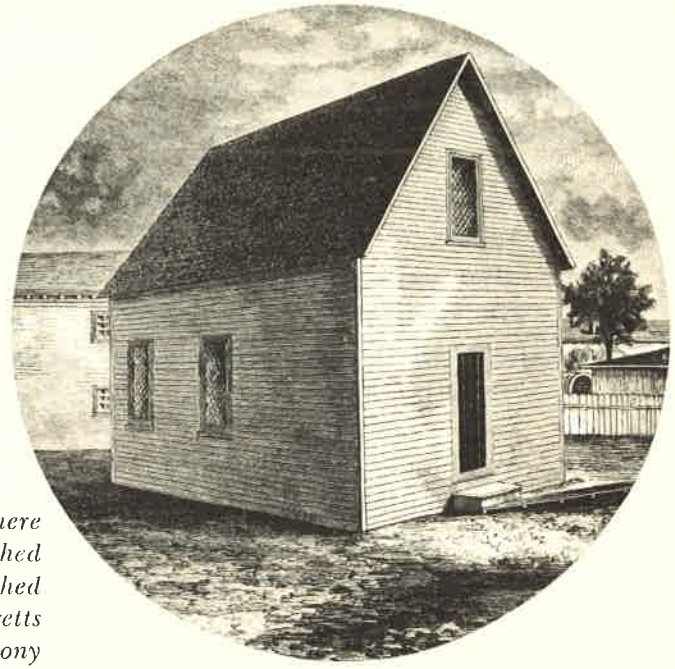
liefs. And since he went right on criticizing the ways of the church and government, it soon became plain to him that he could not remain in Boston.

Just then the church in Salem, north of Boston, asked him to become assistant pastor, and he accepted. But that did not satisfy the Boston ministers and magistrates. They wrote a letter to John Endicott of Salem, who had formerly been governor of Massachusetts Bay, expressing their amazement that such a heretic and defier of the law should have been called there. And although the people of Salem loved Williams, his enemies in Boston kept trying to have him removed. At last, when the church of Plymouth asked him to become assistant minister there, he accepted.

It was one of the most fortunate things he ever did. Not only did the Pilgrims of Plymouth like him, but they helped him start a farm so that he could raise food to help feed himself and his wife and thus eke out his scanty salary in the church. They also taught him the ways of pioneer life that had enabled them to survive the bitter winters and to improve their living conditions.

Williams then began to trade with the Indians in the region. When he journeyed to their villages he met the good friends of the Pilgrims, Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoag tribe, and Canonicus, chief of the powerful Narragansetts. Between Williams and the chiefs, friendships began which lasted as long as the two great sachems lived. And Williams also learned to speak the Indian language fluently. All these things were to be of the greatest value to him later.

The trouble was that Roger Williams could not keep still about his beliefs. One belief was that both the Pilgrims of Plymouth and the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay had robbed the Indians of land that really belonged to them. Both colonies had been founded under charters from the King of England, granting the settlers the land. They had paid the Indians nothing.



The Salem Church where Roger Williams preached before he was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony

The Pilgrims were not pleased when Williams reminded them of this. What alarmed them even more was his offending the Puritan ministers and magistrates of the larger, stronger colony to the north. They feared the Massachusetts Bay men might retaliate by persuading the King to let them take over Plymouth.

Thus they were relieved when, in the summer of 1633, the Salem church asked Williams to come back as assistant pastor. Since he was not happy over Plymouth's appeasement of Massachusetts Bay, he returned to Salem.

There the people welcomed him back joyfully. He served them and the church faithfully, and when the regular minister died, Williams was promoted to pastor. Meanwhile, he established a trading company which did business with the Indians and those great traders, the Dutch, who brought ships to Salem. There they exchanged products from abroad which the settlers could not raise or make for themselves, and took furs, grain and other colony products back to

Europe. By talking with these sea captains, Williams also learned the Dutch language.

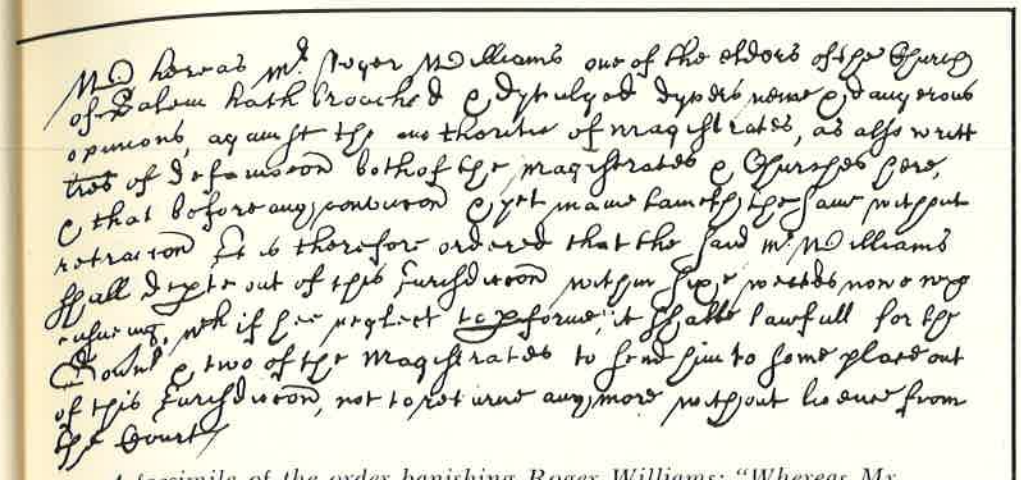
All would have been well if he could only have stopped talking and writing of his views on religion and how the colony had been started and was governed. But he wrote an attack, again charging that the Indians had been robbed of their land and that the King had no right to grant it.

Then Williams did something which was quite contrary to his character. When Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay and his Council decided he must be punished, Williams wrote them a humble letter of apology, saying he had not intended to have what he had written made public, and offered to allow it to be burned.

The Massachusetts Bay leaders were appeased. Probably Roger Williams sincerely felt he was wrong, since what he had written had become public although he had intended it to be private. But that iron conscience of his would not let him alone. It told him that what he had *said* was right. And he continued to speak and write of his principles.

In 1634 the General Court passed a measure requiring the people to take an oath to obey all its laws, and, in 1635, another forcing everyone to attend church and pay a tax for its support. Roger Williams declared he would refuse to take the oath, since he believed swearing to one was an act of worship, and the General Court had no power over religion.

The angry magistrates and ministers then tried to persuade the Salem church to get rid of him. When the independent-minded farmers, fishermen and seafaring people of Salem paid no attention, Williams' enemies tried an artful scheme. There was a dispute between Salem and neighboring Marblehead over a piece of land. The Salem settlers asked the General Court to grant it to them. But the Court refused, hoping this would make Salem think better of keeping Williams as minister.



A facsimile of the order banishing Roger Williams: "Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the Church of Salem, hath broached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions against the authority of Magistrates, |h|as also writ [letters?] of defamation both of the Magistrates and Churches here, and that before any conviction, and yet maintaineth the same without retraction, it is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks now next ensuing; which if he neglect to perform, it shall be lawful for the Governor and two of the Magistrates to send him to some place out of this jurisdiction, not to return any more without license from the Court."

The plan seemed to be succeeding. More and more people began to turn against Williams. At last he resigned as pastor, but he kept on holding services in his own home, attended by friends and loyal followers.

At last his Boston enemies summoned him to Newtown (today it is Cambridge, just outside Boston) to be tried by the General Court. For three days the governor, magistrates and ministers tried in vain to make him back down. Then he was sentenced to be banished from the colony within six weeks.

About this time he became seriously ill. His friends sent a petition to the General Court asking that his banishment be postponed until spring because of his poor health and

the approach of winter. This was granted, but at the same time the General Court ordered him not to "go about to draw others to his opinions."

But Williams continued to hold meetings in his house and to criticize the magistrates and ministers. Finally, on January 11, 1636, the new governor, John Haynes, and the exasperated General Court decided to be rid of him at once. They sent a marshal to Salem with a warrant commanding him to come to Boston immediately and board a ship bound for England.

Williams refused to go because he was too ill. Two doctors sent certificates that he was not only too sick to make the voyage across the wintry seas, but even to travel to Boston.

His enemies would have none of such excuses. Governor Haynes sent Captain John Underhill with fourteen men to Salem in a small sailing vessel called a pinnace with orders to seize Williams and take him aboard the ship bound for England.

But Roger Williams outguessed them. Fearing just such a move, he got ready to leave. In a single afternoon this energetic and purposeful man arranged for his wife Mary and their two baby daughters to be taken care of until he could send for them, put his trading business into capable hands, bade his friends goodbye and packed what he could carry on his journey.

That night he set out. He was still weak and emaciated from his illness. A blizzard howled over Salem and the wilderness to the south, and it was bitter cold. Yet Williams struggled through the drifts and the forest and at last made some sort of a shelter and built a fire to keep from freezing to death in the night.

Next day he trudged southward through the silent, snowbound forest. He fought his way through drifts, tangled underbrush and briars, places where ledges and huge boulders blocked the way, and crossed great swamps, which luck-

ily were then frozen. Four days later he reached Massasoit's village of Sowams, about sixty miles from Salem.

Sowams stood on the east side of Narragansett Bay near its upper end. Today the town of Warren, Rhode Island, is located there. In 1636 it was a typical Wampanoag Indian village. The people lived in wigwams made of saplings set in a circle in the ground, their tops bent inward and fastened together. The wigwams were covered with bark or mats woven from reeds along the shore of the bay. Inside, a fire burned on the ground in the middle. The smoke was supposed to go out through a hole in the top, but much remained to make the interior stifling.

Massasoit and the other leaders welcomed their old friend Roger Williams warmly. The Wampanoags were simple, good-hearted, generous people who never turned against a friend as long as he did not deceive or cheat them. But in war they were among the most ferocious of the New England tribes.

They gave Williams the best hospitality they could, never thinking of any payment. But life in Sowams was much different from that he had been used to in Salem. The Indians had not progressed a great deal further than the barbarians of the Stone Age in Europe in bygone centuries. They had learned to make spears and bows and arrows, and a few crude tools and utensils, but the little they knew of civilization had come from the Pilgrims of Plymouth.

At night, Williams slept in a crowded wigwam, close to warriors also huddled as near as possible to the fire. They smelled horrible because of the rancid bear's grease with which they smeared their bare chests and backs, and also because in midwinter there was little chance to wash. They slept on mats laid on the bare earth under covers of animal skins. The mats were so short that they had to lie in a cramped, half doubled-up position. The freezing wind whistled through the chinks in the wigwam walls.

Food was scarce. In summer there were plenty of fish, crabs and lobsters from Narragansett Bay, wild fowl and other game in the forest, corn, beans, peas, squash, ground nuts and berries. But in winter the Wampanoags depended mainly upon dried corn and ground nuts they had stored in the ground, and whatever game the hunters could bring in.

During bitter weather, the Indians remained in the dirty wigwams most of the time. The children cried, screamed, shouted, bickered, wrestled with each other and were always underfoot. So were the lean, mangy Indian dogs which ran loose everywhere and were valued in time of famine, when roast dog was considered a delicacy. And their fleas were just as fond of dining on human beings as upon the dogs whose fur they infested.

So the coming of spring was welcome indeed to Roger Williams. Meanwhile, five other persons had joined him at Sowams. One, John Smith, was a miller from Dorchester, just outside Boston, who had also been banished. The others were poor, destitute fellows who had no other place to go, and one was little more than a boy.

Now Williams was ready to realize his dream of starting a settlement which would be different from all others in America. It was to be based on two great principles: all settlers were to be free to worship in their own religious faith, without interference from the colony's government; and all the people were to enjoy the rights of free men.

As the warmer weather came on, Williams and his followers journeyed forth, seeking a place for their settlement. But money would be needed to start it. Williams made arrangements to raise some by mortgaging his house in Salem. Also, his mother had died in England and left him an income of £10 a year for twenty years. Comparing this amount with values of money today is difficult, but it is safe to say that £10 would buy at least thirty times as much then as now.

Williams and his friends selected a place for their settlement on the east side of the Seekonk River (its upper part was later renamed the Blackstone in honor of the first lone settler of Rhode Island). They went there and began to build their homes.

Roger Williams and his companions at the site of the future Providence settlement

Just then Williams received a letter from his old and good friend, Governor Edward Winslow of Plymouth. The place on the Seekonk was on land claimed by the Plymouth colony. The Pilgrims did not mind, but they feared that harboring an exile would cause Massachusetts Bay to retaliate against them. Williams wrote about the letter from Winslow,

> lovingly advising me I was fallen into the edge of their bounds and they were loath to displease the Bay, to remove but to the other side of the water and then, he said, I had the country free before me and might be as free as themselves and we should be loving neighbors together.

So Roger Williams and his companions got into canoes they had made, paddled down the Seekonk River and around a point between the mouths of the Seekonk and Mooshassuc rivers. They went a short distance up the Mooshassuc until they reached a place where a spring of clear, cool water bubbled up on the shore. Above it a hill rose, an ideal place for a settlement since it was well drained.

It was early June. The six men ascended the hill and began once more to build homes. The settlement, Roger Williams wrote, because of its excellent location, "and many other providences of the Most High and Only Wise, I called Providence."

It was the first real white settlement in Rhode Island. And thus Roger Williams' great and noble experiment in liberty and religious freedom began.

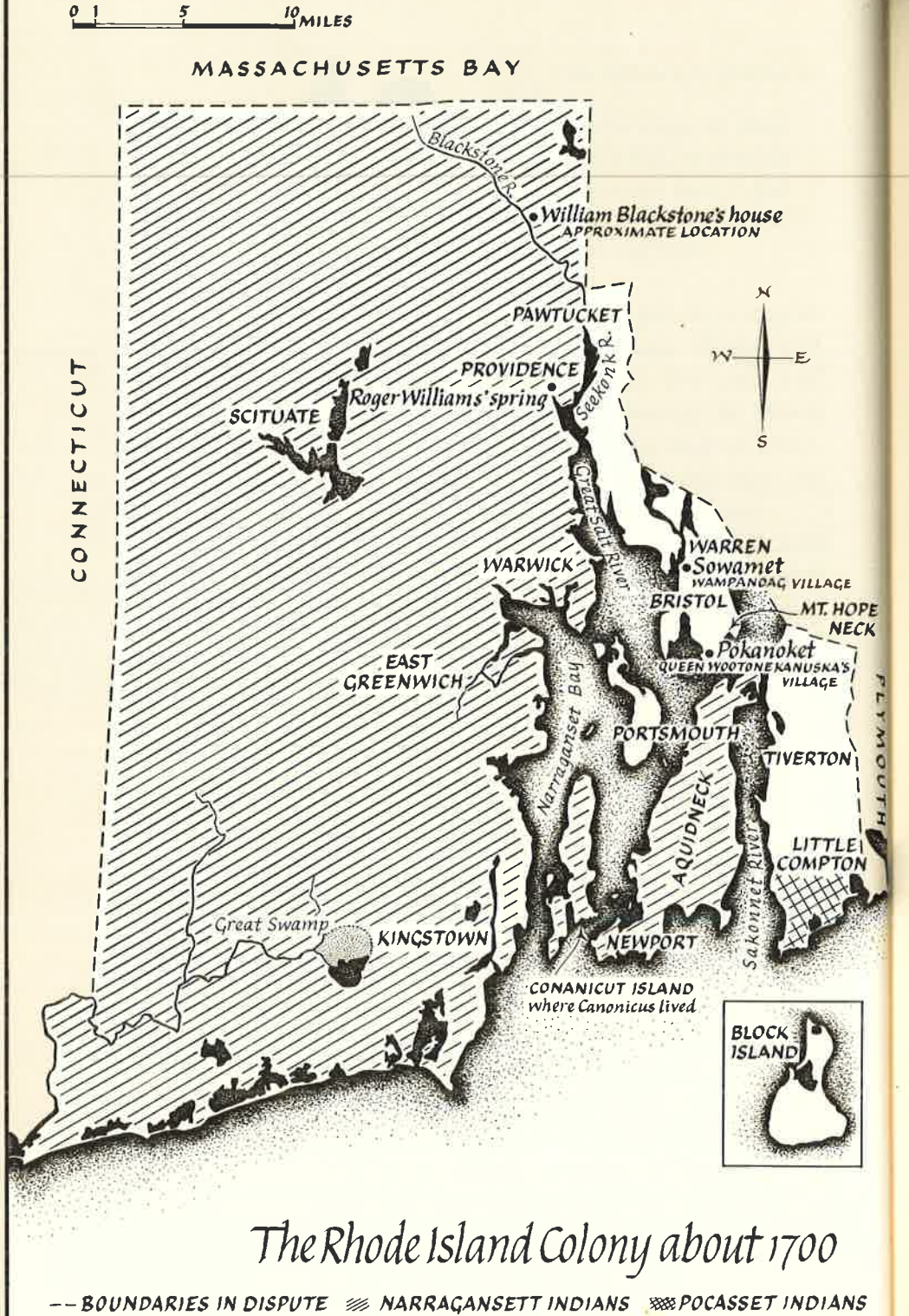
chapter 2

A DREAM OF FREEDOM

Narragansett Bay slices a great gash into what is now the state of Rhode Island. There are three large islands in the bay and a number of small ones. In fact, because of this and the sharp points of land that stick out from the shores like teeth, the bay looks a little like the gaping jaws of an alligator about to swallow three large fish, as well as a few minnows unlucky enough to be swimming there.

Roger Williams' settlement of Providence stood at the far northern end of Narragansett Bay. It was on the peninsula between the Mooshassuc and Seekonk rivers, where they flow into what the settlers called the Great Salt River. This last one was not a real river, but an arm of the bay, and today it is known as the Providence River.

The settlement had almost everything a group of pioneers in the wilderness of America could ask. There was plenty of pure fresh water. The land was suitable for raising crops. In the Great Salt River and Narragansett Bay were beds of thousands of clams and oysters. There were lobsters, some of them unbelievably large, and many kinds of salt-water fish in the bay. The rivers teemed with such fresh-water varieties as trout, pickerel and pike.



The Rhode Island Colony about 1700

-- BOUNDARIES IN DISPUTE NARRAGANSETT INDIANS POCASSET INDIANS

The vast forests beyond the settlement provided logs for fuel and timber for building houses. They also furnished the means for making all sorts of the useful wooden articles New Englanders became skillful at whittling and fashioning with their knives and the few other tools they had. The woods teemed with game—deer, moose, raccoons, foxes, wildcats, wolves—for food and clothing. There were wildfowl—pigeons, wild turkeys, partridges, quail. And of course the bay and its shores had their great flocks of ducks, geese and other waterfowl.

There was only one trouble. Before Roger Williams and his companions were forced to leave their first settlement on the Plymouth colony's side of the Seekonk River, they had planted corn and other crops to provide a store of food for the coming winter. Now they had little or no seed left and the season was late for starting new crops. They did the best they could, but food was scarce that winter. They had to depend upon shellfish from the bay, game from the forest and a little corn and beans the generous Indians gave them from their own scanty stocks.

The first thing the little group of settlers had to do was to build houses. Almost any sort of shelter would do for the time being, and some of the flimsy huts they put up may have been much like the Indians' wigwams.

Even before moving to the new place he had chosen, Roger Williams had offered to buy from the Indians the land on which Providence was to stand. Since it would be on the west side of the bay, it was in the country controlled by the Narragansetts, the second largest tribe in New England (the Abenakis, in what is now Maine, were the largest). The Narragansetts inhabited the land from Narragansett Bay westward to the Pawcatuck River, now a part of the boundary between Rhode Island and Connecticut.

Canonicus, chief of the Narragansetts, was a man of noble character, dignity and honesty. However, since he was now

about seventy years old, his nephew Miantonomo shared the leadership of the tribe and also had great authority over the people. Both were then living on large Conanicut Island in the bay. Williams and a few of his followers paddled over there in canoes and offered to buy the land for their settlement.

Probably the conference was held in a wigwam quite different from the others in the village. Council halls, used for ceremonies and feasts, were built of saplings arched to form a dome-shaped roof and were sometimes as much as a hundred feet long.

Roger Williams and his companions in their somber, dark-colored homespun coats and knee breeches, and high-crowned, wide-brimmed hats, made a strange contrast to Canonicus, Miantonomo and the lower-ranking sachems who greeted them. Indoors, the Narragansetts wore only loincloths about their middles, deerskin moccasins, and headdresses of leather ornamented with feathers and the tails of animals. The rest of their dark brown or copper-colored bodies was bare. Their faces were probably painted with bright colors in weird designs, though not those of war paint. The Narragansetts were a tall, erect, powerfully built race, and their stern and sometimes sullen expressions hid the generosity and warmheartedness underneath.

Williams, of course, was fully at ease with his old friends, speaking their language almost perfectly. He and the two great sachems had known, respected and had much affection for each other ever since the days when Williams had gone out from Plymouth on trading expeditions.

Being an experienced Indian trader, he knew the sachems always expected gifts before any business was done. He had often given them before, and now he did so again. The Indians loved trinkets, such as the looking glasses which by some strange magic showed a picture of anyone who peered into them. And they loved more useful articles, too, which

had been unknown to them before the white men came—knives, scissors, combs, hatchets of bright, sharp steel, needles, awls and hoes. Most of all they loved English-style clothing and blankets, especially red ones.

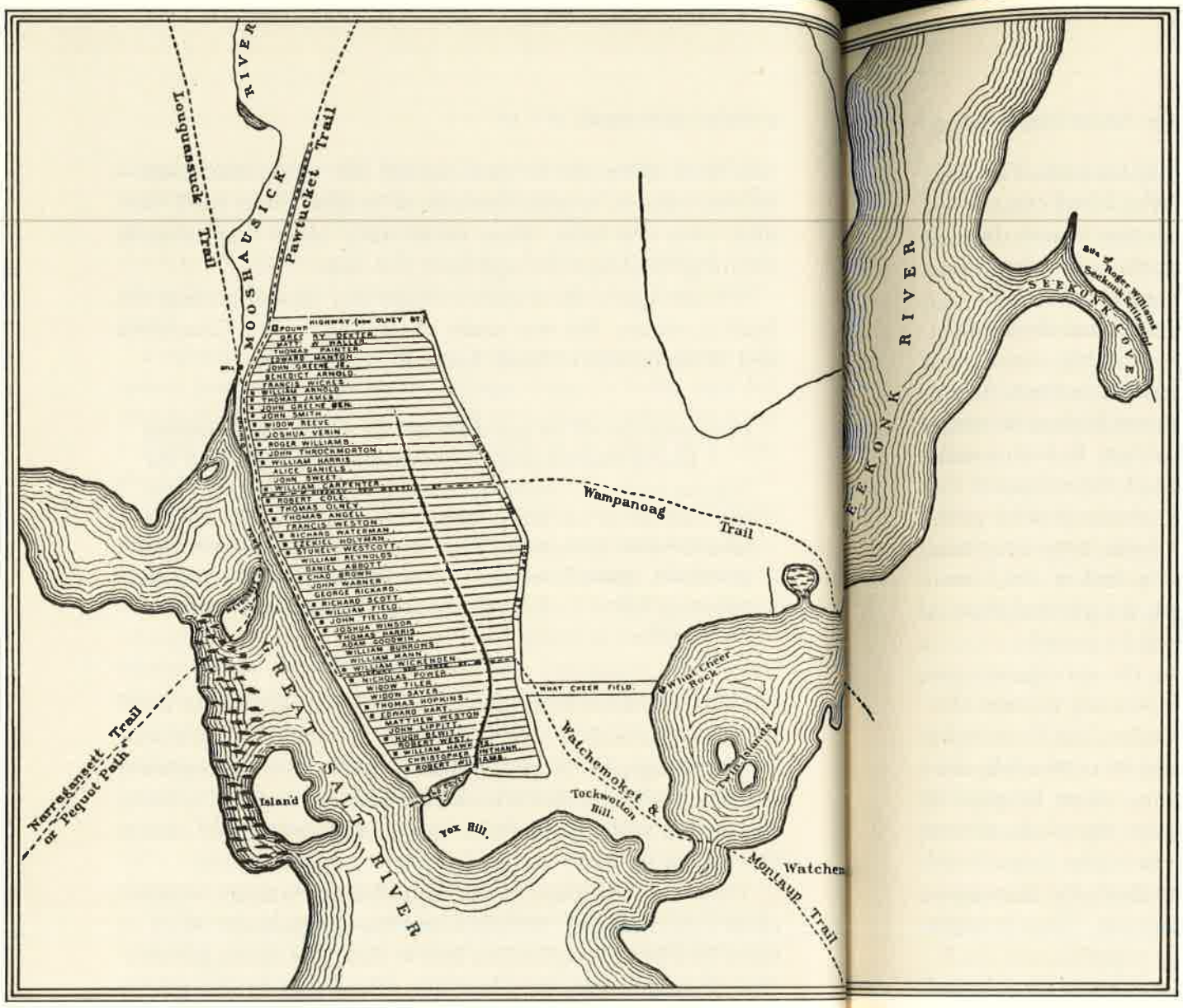
Williams gave these gifts without any idea of getting the land in return. He was ready to pay for it. But Canonicus and Miantonomo refused. Later Williams wrote,

> I was procurer of the purchase not by monies nor payment . . . but by that language acquaintance and favor with the Natives and other advantages which it pleased God to give me. Canonicus was not to be stirred with money to sell his land to let in foreigners. 'Tis true he received presents and gratuities, many from me . . . and therefor I declare to posterity that . . . I never got anything out of Canonicus but by gift.

All this was done without anything being written to show that the new settlers owned the land. A handshake, perhaps, but nothing else. Roger Williams knew the Narragansett chiefs were honest men who would keep their word. In turn, Canonicus and Miantonomo knew Williams would always treat them well and not try to cheat or oppress them.

Thus the settlement began, and with the warmer weather came others to join Williams and his companions. Most of them had fled Massachusetts Bay to escape religious persecution. Some brought their families, others sent for them later on. That summer of 1636, Roger Williams' wife Mary and their two little daughters, Mary and Freeborne, arrived from Salem. Soon there were about twenty-five inhabitants of Providence, with more on the way.

Now better houses must be built. Williams and others planned the town carefully. First they laid out what they called the Towne Street (many New England settlements had main streets by that name) . It ran from near the spring



Providence in 1664, showing the homelots and the Indian trails that led to the settlement

northward along the shore of the Great Salt River. Farther north it went part way up the hill that rose from the shore. Today North and South Main streets in Providence follow nearly the same course.

Along the east side of the Towne Street the land was divided into narrow "homelots" which ran far back until they reached a second road parallel to the Towne Street, known simply as the Highway. Each settler's homelot contained about five acres, and he also had an "outlot" of about six acres in another part of the settlement. There was still plenty of land left for new colonists.

With their axes the settlers labored mightily, felling oak

trees and hewing them into rough, heavy timbers. The timbers were fastened together with nails which had come from England and were brought from the Massachusetts Bay or Plymouth colonies. The houses were small, but far better than the rude huts in which the early comers had lived.

Generally there was one room on the ground floor called the fireroom, which served both as a living room and kitchen. Usually it had only the bare earth for a floor. Above it, under the very steep roof, built that way so that the snow would slide off easily, was the bedchamber. It was usually reached by a ladder through a trap door in the ceiling of the lower room. There was plenty of stone about, and for cooking and warmth in winter the settlers built huge fireplaces with equally huge stone chimneys at one end of the house. Sometimes there was a hole underneath the ground floor, a cellar in which some food supplies could be stored.

Roger Williams' house, located near the spring, was the largest, being about 28 by 40 feet. This was not to show that he was the most important man in the town, but because he had a pretty good idea that he was going to need a big one.

He was right about that. The Indians, whose hospitality was shown when they took Williams in for the whole winter after he had fled from Salem, saw no reason why they should not enjoy the same welcome from him. Both the Narragansetts and Wampanoags came in droves to visit. They brought their families and stayed as long as they pleased.

Roger Williams welcomed them all and never complained when the "visits" were long, and there were as many as fifty guests at one time. Fortunately they camped outside at night. But at such times he was not sorry to see them go. As Shakespeare wrote in one of his plays, "Unbidden guests are often welcomest when they are gone."

In all the houses the furniture was scanty, simple and rude. The colonists hewed timbers for solid oak chests to hold their spare clothes and other belongings. At mealtime

they sat before rough tables on benches or on chairs with very high backs called settles, which had usually been brought from England. The beds were just as rude and not very comfortable. Each day the neat housewives sanded the floor in fanciful designs.

There were no tablecloths or napkins. The settlers ate from homemade trenchers, a kind of wooden platter, and drank from wooden cups called noggins, all fashioned by the knives of the skillful colonists. There was some pottery, and those who had been well off before coming to Providence had dishes made of pewter.

Big iron kettles were hung by pothooks from the "lug pole" stretched across the fireplace above the fire. In them meat, hasty pudding made from corn meal and other food was cooked. The lug pole was made of green wood so it would not burn easily, but in time it became charred and sometimes broke with disastrous results.

There was plenty of wood to make a roaring blaze in the fireplace. Usually there was an immense "back log" which burned slowly, with the smaller logs piled in front of it. As for light to see by at night, the early Rhode Islanders used pine knots, which made a dim, tarry, sputtering illumination. Later, candles of tallow or bayberry wax were made in iron molds. The walls of the cabin were usually bare except for the owner's musket or fowling piece and a few utensils.

Each family dug a well in front of the house. In the rear were a barn and other outbuildings, then the orchard and gardens. At first the colonists had only goats and swine, but later cattle were brought in. The pasture was a large piece of open land known as the common meadows, used by all, and from this grew the "common" which is still a part of many New England villages.

As for the settlers' clothing, it was of the plainest rough homespun and deerskin. In summer, farmers and their families often went barefoot.

Now Providence needed a government. Roger Williams wanted it to be as simple as possible, and above all to provide freedom for everyone to worship as he pleased. On June 16, 1636, the heads of all the families in Providence met and signed an agreement which was called a "town fellowship."

> We whose names are hereinunder, desirous to inhabit the Town of Providence, do promise to subject ourselves in active or passive obedience to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for the public good . . . in an orderly way, by the major assent of the present inhabitants, masters of families, incorporated together into a town fellowship, and such others whom they shall admit unto them, only in civil things.

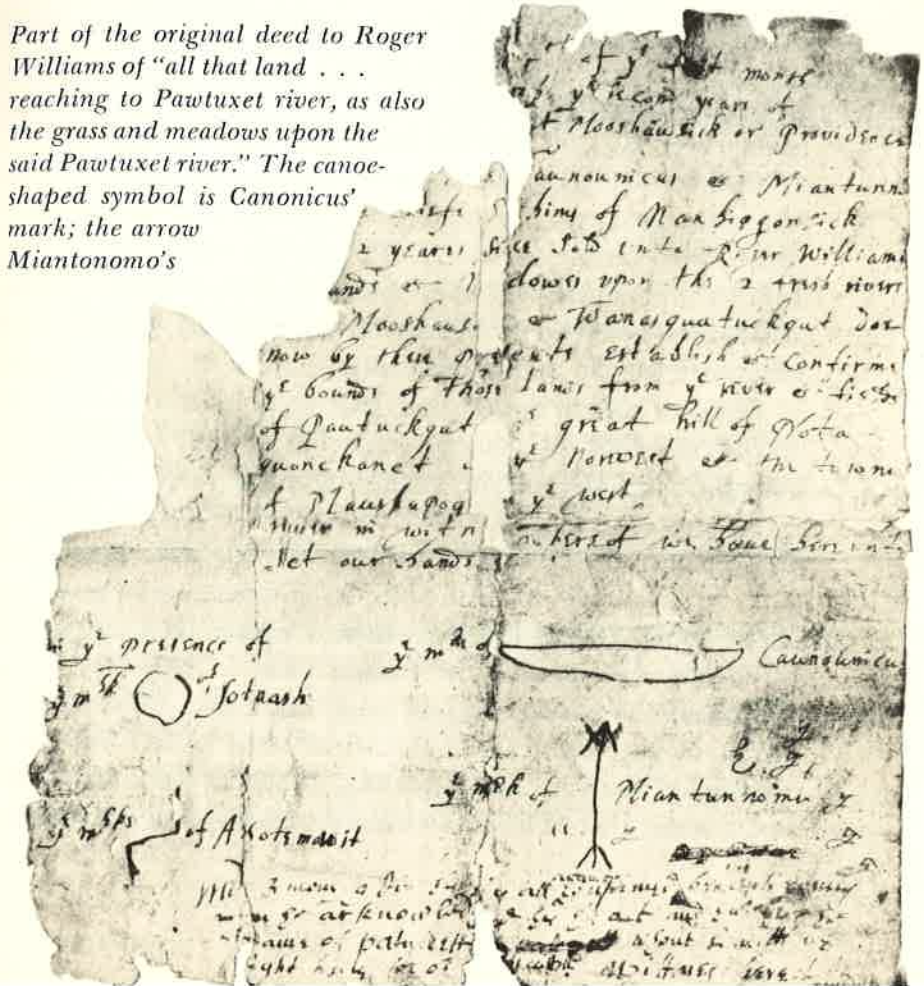
"Only in civil things" meant that there were to be no laws interfering with religion in the colony. Providence was the first settlement in America to provide for complete freedom of worship. This was considered so important that later, when the United States was established, it was made a part of the first amendment to the Constitution in 1791, and is today called "separation of church and state."

Roger Williams' simple government worked well. Every two weeks the people met, discussed the welfare of the colony and passed laws to regulate it. This was the "town meeting," a form of government adopted in other New England settlements. Anyone could speak, complain, suggest improvements and new laws. Then the people would vote whether to accept the new laws. The town meeting is one of the best examples of how true democracy works, and even today is the form of government in many a New England village and hamlet.

The time came when Roger Williams and other prominent settlers decided there must be something besides the unwritten agreement by which the Narragansetts had given

the land on which Providence stood. This was not because they had any less faith in the Narragansett sachems' promises. But since the boundaries between the various tribes were unclear, Massasoit was claiming that the land actually belonged to the Wampanoags.

Williams went to Plymouth and met Massasoit there. More gifts were given, and with the help of Williams' friend Governor William Bradford and that of the Plymouth magistrates, Massasoit agreed to have a deed drawn up giving the land to the Providence settlers. Canonicus and Miantonomo also signed it. And the deed extended the settlement's land some distance to the Pawtuxet River.



Part of the original deed to Roger Williams of "all that land . . . reaching to Pawtuxet river, as also the grass and meadows upon the said Pawtuxet river." The canoe-shaped symbol is Canonicus' mark; the arrow Miantonomo's

For all that he had the largest house in Providence, Roger Williams was poor. In developing his settlement he had spent his inheritance and the loan obtained by mortgaging his house in Salem. That summer of 1636, Edward Winslow, now governor of Plymouth, was distressed to see evidence of Williams' poverty when he came on a visit. Before he left he pressed a gold coin into Mary Williams' hand, for which both the Williamses were deeply grateful.

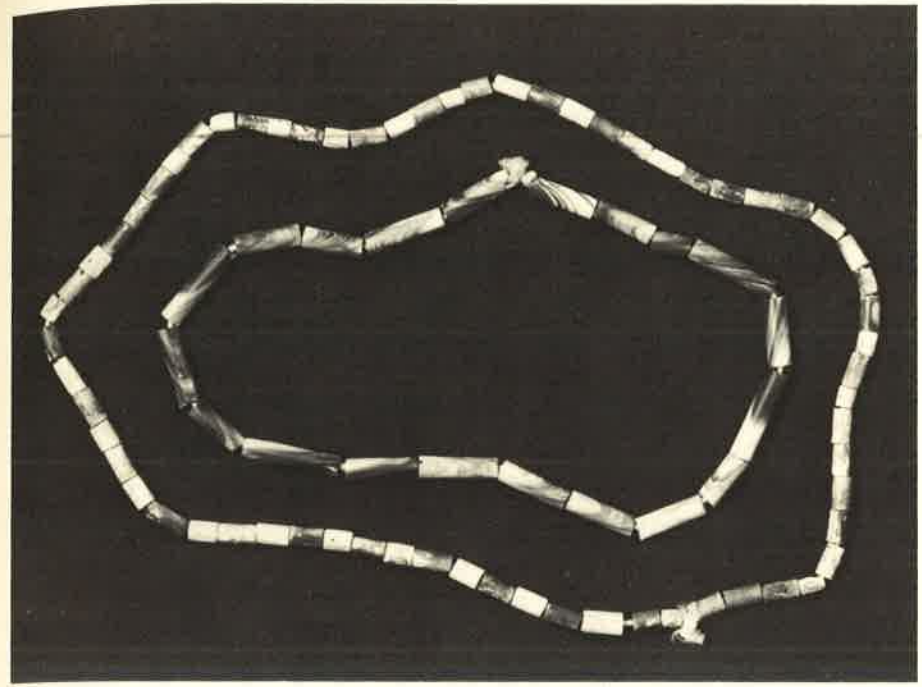
Because Massachusetts Bay had banished him, Williams was considered an outlaw there and could have no share in the profits of the trading business he had established in Salem. So he had sold it to two Boston merchants, James and Thomas Hawkins. They had never paid him, possibly because they knew the Bay colony would not help an outlaw to collect a debt.

But Roger Williams, in spite of all his differences with the authorities and his banishment, had good and powerful friends in Massachusetts Bay. One, John Winthrop, was elected its governor for the second time in 1637. He not only forced the Hawkins brothers to pay Williams what was due him, but persuaded another man to pay more than £100, which he had owed Williams for three years. Now things improved for the Williams family.

Another kind of money than gold or silver coin was in use in the New England colonies, especially Rhode Island. This was wampum, the Indian form of money.

Wampum was bead money. It was made from sea shells. Living near the shore of Narragansett Bay, the Narragansetts spent much of their time in summer collecting the shells. During the long, snowbound winter they made the wampum, and became the richest tribe in New England.

Making wampum was not easy. The beads were usually either white, made from a kind of snail called the periwinkle, or black from the quahog, a kind of clam. First the Indians cut the shells into cylinders about a quarter of an



Peage: strings of polished shells used for money

inch long and an eighth of an inch in diameter. Then they painstakingly smoothed, polished, drilled and strung them on thread of hemp or animal gut. The strings were usually six feet long with anywhere from 240 to 300 beads. These strings were called peage (rhymes with league).

Some of the peage was made into bands from an inch to five inches wide, often with designs of all kinds worked into them. These were worn as bracelets, belts or over the shoulder. Some of the largest belts contained as many as 10,000 beads.

They were used for other things besides trading. Indians captured in war could be ransomed with them, defeated tribes paid tribute to the victors in wampum and sometimes war could be avoided by gifts of wampum. If an Indian murdered another, he might atone for his crime by paying wampum to the dead man's family.

It was used by the settlers too. In Rhode Island wampum was legal money for a number of years. Although the settlers' earliest trade was mainly with the Indians, they even used wampum to pay for things from neighboring colonies. But once sea trade with the English, Dutch and the islands of the West Indies began, "hard money," as gold or silver coin was called, came in, and the use of wampum declined.

Anyone could make wampum. One would think there might have been imitations made from materials more plentiful or easier to fashion into beads, and there were. But the real Indian money was so skillfully and beautifully made that the counterfeit wampum was easily detected and the makers punished.

In the midst of Providence's growth came a dreadful threat to its existence. In Connecticut the Pequots, probably the most ferocious tribe in New England, were determined to drive out not only the Connecticut settlers, but those of all southern New England. But they needed the help of the Narragansetts and of the Mohegans, who lived a little to the north of the Pequots.

The Pequots sent emissaries to Canonicus and Miantonomo. They coaxed, threatened and poisoned the minds of the Narragansett chiefs until they believed the whites were indeed their enemies. Roger Williams heard of their scheming and set out to visit the Narragansett sachems. The Pequot representatives were still there, which did not make the task of keeping Canonicus and Miantonomo on his side any easier.

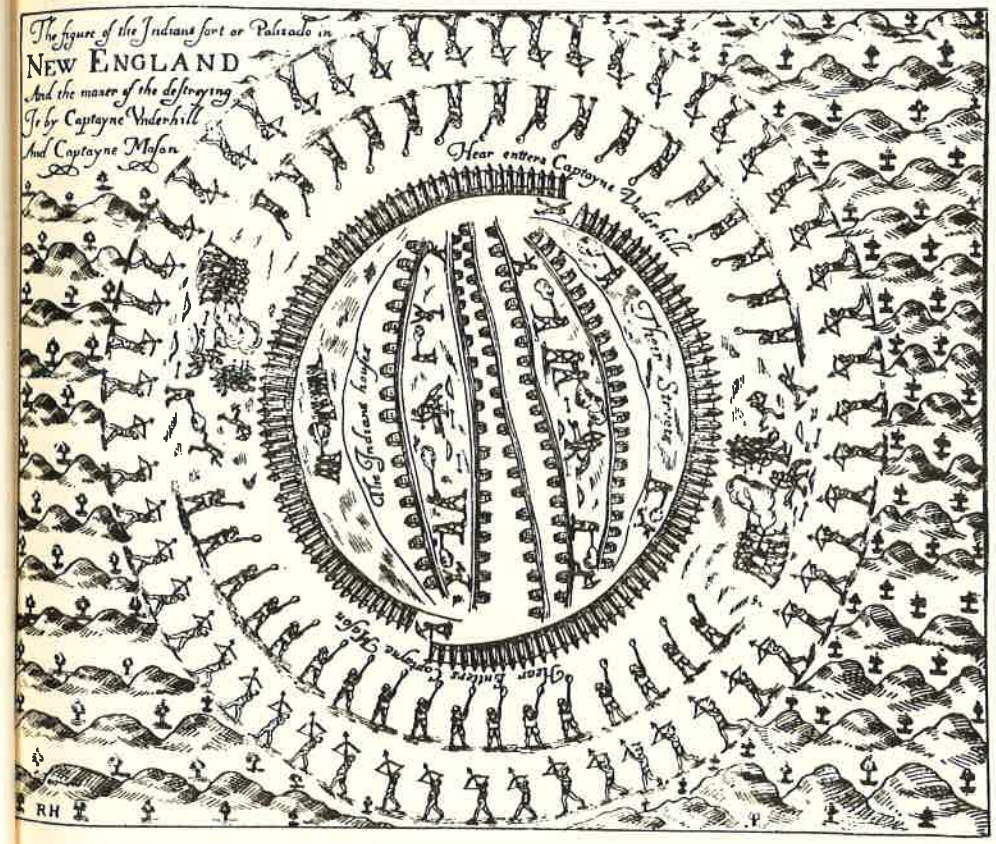
Williams wrote a letter to his good friends Governor Henry Vane and Deputy Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay describing his experiences. Canonicus, he said, was particularly sour. There was plague among the Narragansetts, a disease which sometimes killed great numbers of the Indians. The Pequots had convinced Canonicus that the whites had sent this plague.

Williams had better luck with Miantonomo, who was by now the real ruler of the tribe. Through this sachem's influence, the Narragansett leaders came to Boston for a great powwow. Williams attended and acted as interpreter. Although he is not given entire credit for what happened, he had laid the foundations for peace, and his influence at the Boston parley was strong.

The Narragansetts not only signed a treaty of peace with the New England colonies, but declared themselves the Pequots' enemies. The Mohegans also joined this alliance. The Pequots were left to fight alone.

The result was that a small Connecticut army, aided by the Narragansetts, swooped down in the dawn on the Pe-

An old print depicting the attack on the Pequot fort



quots' stronghold, killing or capturing so many of them that they never again amounted to much as a tribe. Thus, by his efforts, Roger Williams was largely responsible for saving Rhode Island and its neighbor colonies from what might well have been a long, bloody and terrible war.

With the Pequot danger past, Roger Williams and the other settlers could give their full attention to the growth and welfare of Providence. More and more people, hearing of the religious freedom there, came not only to Providence, but founded new settlements in the Narragansett Bay region.

There were more children in the colony now. Among them was a new baby born to Roger and Mary Williams, a son they named Providence. And these children must be educated. In 1640, at a town meeting in the new settlement of Newport on big Aquidneck Island, the first school was established. A hundred acres of land were set aside which could be used to raise crops or sold for homelots. The income was to be used to support the school. Four acres were also set aside as a homelot for the schoolmaster. This was one of the first public schools to be started in America. Soon afterward more were established in the other settlements.

In addition to going to school, the children had plenty to do. Almost as soon as they could toddle they were given "chores" to do. They peeled potatoes, fed the chickens, fetched water from the spring, weeded the gardens and helped make bayberry candles and soap. Girls helped with the housework, knitted stockings and shawls, made patchwork quilts, spun flax into thread and tow on the spinning wheels, and wove it into cloth. Boys chopped and split logs for the fireplaces, helped cut and gather hay, drove cattle, goats and swine to and from the pasture, ran errands and helped the men build new houses.

Yet the children found time to amuse themselves. Girls had dolls made of rags, cloth and cornhusks, some with

carved wooden heads. They made tea sets from acorn cups and filled them with the sweet nectar the bees gather from flowers to make honey. Boys dammed little brooks and made ponds for sailing homemade boats.

Children played blindman's buff, cricket, leapfrog and hopscotch. Boys played a ball game which would later develop into the national game of baseball. They also played football. When hogs were slaughtered in the fall the bladders were a great prize, for they could be blown up into footballs.

The Indians too had a game of football. Today a football field is a hundred yards long, but the red men played it on the hard-packed sand of a beach when the tide was out and the goals were sometimes a mile apart.

Indoors the still popular game of checkers was played by the settlers' children with kernels of corn as counters. There were also games played with corn called "fox and geese" and "hull gull, how many?"

Grownups had their amusements too. Women gathered at spinning and quilting "bees"; there were huskings attended by all when the corn was harvested, and "raisings," when all the neighbors helped a man raise the framework of his new house, after which refreshments were served and there were wrestling matches and feats of strength. So in spite of hardships and backbreaking work, the colonists had their good times.

But there were some evil times ahead for them, too, in Providence and other Rhode Island settlements. Because the colony had full religious freedom, members of a number of rather strange religious sects flocked there. Naturally, there were disputes over their different beliefs, and among the newcomers were a few real troublemakers.

chapter 3

THE TROUBLEMAKERS

In most stories and plays there is a hero, a heroine and often a villain. In the story of early Rhode Island there were not only one, but two villains. Their names were William Coddington and Samuel Gorton.

It is really unfair to call them villains, however. Both were good men at heart, devoted to their religion, the settlements they founded and the people who lived there. But neither showed much gratitude for Roger Williams' kindness to them and the assistance they received from him. And they caused him untold trouble.

William Coddington's fault was that because he was ambitious, he was a schemer, and his actions toward Williams proved it. Like so many others, he had fled to Rhode Island to escape persecution, though it was actually not a result of his religious activities.

As for Samuel Gorton, he had already earned the name "Firebrand of New England" because of his insolence and his terrible temper. He had gotten into so much trouble, first in Massachusetts Bay and then in Plymouth, that he had had to leave both colonies. He was like a volcano and, as the modern saying goes, he "blew his top" so often that he

got along with no one except his most devoted followers. Gorton had founded a religious sect of his own called the "Gortonites," who did not believe there was either a heaven or a hell, and he clung to his religious and other beliefs with the vicious grip of a bad-tempered bulldog to the seat of a postman's trousers.

Yet both Coddington and Gorton were able men. In time, Coddington became governor of Rhode Island, while Gorton, after years of troublemaking, the dislike of his fellow men and harsh punishment, at last settled down quietly and became a respected citizen.

Coddington, an old friend of Roger Williams, was the first to come. It happened in this way. A Massachusetts Bay woman, Anne Hutchinson, was tried before the General Court for her religious beliefs. The differences between them and those of the Puritans were very complicated, but they had to do with punishment for sin and the possibility of salvation in heaven for those who had sinned on earth. Mrs. Hutchinson's views were much less stern than those of orthodox Puritans.

Coddington, then a successful Boston merchant, defended her before the Court. After the trial most of his friends and business associates deserted him.

So with six others who left because of religious persecution, Coddington came to Rhode Island in April, 1638. They went straight to Providence, where Roger Williams welcomed them warmly and saw to it that they were provided with food and shelter.

Anne Hutchinson was found guilty and sentenced to be banished. She was also excommunicated from the Puritan Church, which meant that none of its members could have anything to do with her and, according to Puritan belief, when she died she would go to hell and be burned in its fires.

She had already thought of going to Rhode Island. At about the same time as Coddington, she too went there with

Anne Hutchinson was tried before the General Court for her religious beliefs, less stern than those of the orthodox Puritans

some of her followers. With Coddington and his party, they decided to start a settlement on Aquidneck Island.

Roger Williams arranged it. Because of his friendship and influence with Canonicus and Miantonomo, he obtained a deed from the Narragansetts giving Aquidneck to the newcomers. They settled at a place which the Indians called Pocasset, near the north end of the big island.

By the end of its first year there were about a hundred families in the new settlement. But disputes arose among them, and in 1639 William Coddington and a group of his followers moved out. They went almost to the southern tip of Aquidneck Island and founded Newport. However, the two settlements soon united under one government, whose head was called the judge and his assistants, the elders. Coddington was chosen judge.

Meanwhile, Samuel Gorton was at Plymouth. He made so much trouble there over his religious beliefs that the Pilgrims asked him to leave. He and his followers went west to Rhode Island and settled in Portsmouth. Whatever difficulties William Coddington had had with other colonists, they were as nothing to the mischief Gorton stirred up in Portsmouth.

Finally, his maidservant got into a hair-pulling fight with another woman and was summoned to court. Gorton flew into a rage and ordered her not to go. Instead, he went himself, roared defiance at the court and said it had no authority to try the girl.

As judge, Coddington was presiding. He called out, "All you that own [are loyal to] the King, take Gorton away and carry him to prison."

In reply, Gorton snarled, "All you that own the King, take Coddington away and carry him to prison. "

He was not even content with that. When the case was sent to the jury, Gorton thought he had not had a fair trial. He rose and told the judges that while they might consider themselves "justices," as far as he was concerned they were all "just asses."

That was enough to end any chance of mercy from the infuriated court. Gorton was hauled into the center of the settlement, lashed to a post and whipped before all the people, a sight they must have viewed with great satisfaction. Then they put him in jail for a time and at last released and banished him.

Gorton came to Providence, expecting that Roger Williams would stand for more of his nonsense than Coddington. He asked to become a citizen of that town, but he had already made so much trouble that Providence would have none of him, and his request was refused.

He then made a second request. The official who decided upon it, called a disposer, turned him down again. This

time he gave reasons. Gorton, he said, was an "insolent, railing and turbulent person." He added that Gorton and some of his followers had insulted the disposer, divided the town into two parties who were always at each other's throats, had aimed to drive away the founders of Providence, and had broken the peace. The disposer also told the town officials that he would sell his house and land and move away if Gorton were allowed to become a citizen.

Gorton, with his followers, then moved to the settlement of Pawtucket, on the opposite side of the Seekonk River from Providence. He soon quarreled with its leaders, and there was a riot in which blood was shed. The angry original settlers appealed to Massachusetts Bay for help.

The Bay colony was greedy for more land. It had already succeeded in taking over all of New Hampshire, and for nearly forty years that colony was a part of Massachusetts. And it had laid claim to the land in and around Pawtucket, known as the "Pawtucket Purchase."

The Bay colony told the aggrieved Pawtucket inhabitants it would drive Gorton and his people out on condition that the Pawtucket Purchase were surrendered to Massachusetts. Four of the principal inhabitants attempted to comply, and the Bay colony warned Providence not to interfere. If Pawtucket refused, Massachusetts threatened to send an army to seize the land.

But the Gortonites knew they would be persecuted if the narrow-minded Bay colony Puritans took control. They moved to a place with the Indian name of Shawomet on the western shore of Narragansett Bay, well south of Providence.

The enraged Massachusetts Bay leaders sent three commissioners, backed by a force of forty armed men, to seize Shawomet. The soldiers mistreated the Gortonites, wrecked some of their household goods, put the men in irons and marched them to Boston.

While the Gortonites were there they were allowed to go to church—the Puritan Church, of course. The minister was the famous and influential John Cotton, a bitter opponent of Roger Williams. After the sermon, Samuel Gorton stood up and defied Cotton for the religious ideas he had expressed.

They tried Gorton for heresy—having religious beliefs against those of the Puritans—and sentenced him to death. But so many members of the General Court felt this was too harsh that instead Gorton and six of his followers were put in prison. Their lands and cattle were sold to pay the costs of bringing them to Boston and trying them. A year later they were freed and banished, not only from the Bay colony, but from Providence and the Indian lands where the Gortonites had finally settled and which Massachusetts claimed.

The iron-willed Gorton was not beaten. He and some of his people went to England. There Gorton obtained the help of the Earl of Warwick, who persuaded King Charles I to issue an order forbidding Massachusetts Bay to interfere with Shawomet. In gratitude, Gorton renamed the settlement Warwick after his return to America.

There were other troublemakers for Roger Williams. One, especially, was Benedict Arnold, a man of great ability, who later was elected the first royal governor of Rhode Island. His grandson and namesake became the most infamous traitor in American history when he tried to sell out his country to the British in the American Revolution.

This earlier Benedict Arnold favored having Rhode Island accept the "protection" of Massachusetts Bay. Roger Williams, who knew all too well this would mean the end of religious freedom in the colony, and perhaps its being taken over completely, would have none of it.

Samuel Gorton insisted that even though the Indians had given the land, the new colony should have a charter granted by the King, as Massachusetts Bay did. He was right in this,

for a charter would protect weak Rhode Island from being taken over, either partly or completely, by other colonies. But for some time Williams, who could be stubborn, would not agree.

Soon Newport and Portsmouth, which had united under one government, split up again. Actually, each of the four settlements—Providence, Newport, Portsmouth and Warwick—was now a separate colony with a separate government. So for a number of years there was really no such colony as Rhode Island.

At last Williams realized that this would never do. None of the four settlements was strong enough to prevent an attempt by any other New England colony to take it over. Moreover, Massachusetts Bay (which now included New Hampshire), Plymouth and Connecticut had formed the "United Colonies of New England," an alliance which little, disunited Rhode Island could not hope to resist if it were threatened.

So in 1643 Roger Williams was appointed by Providence, Newport and Portsmouth to go to England. Because of his banishment he was not allowed to sail from Boston, and he had to go first to New York. In England he obtained a charter from the King for all three settlements, to be known as the "Incorporation of Providence Plantations on the Narragansett Bay in New England." A little later Warwick was also included.

It was a splendid charter. It gave the people great freedom, recognized that the land the Indians had given belonged to the colony, and it made no mention of religion, which meant that freedom of worship would continue.

Under the charter, in 1647, the first Rhode Island General Assembly met at Portsmouth. Its members were elected

Samuel Gorton defied John Cotton for the religious beliefs he had just expressed in his sermon

by the people, and their duty was to make the colony's laws. It elected a president, John Coggeshall of Newport, and a council of four assistants, one from each of the four settlements. Roger Williams was the assistant for Providence.

Any of the four settlements could propose a new law for the colony at its town meeting. The other three settlements would then discuss it at theirs. If they approved, it was discussed by a committee of the General Assembly. If they too approved, it became law until the whole General Assembly voted and either passed or turned it down.

All seemed well, and for a time it was. But the ambitious William Coddington was not satisfied. He dreamed of a colony of his own to include all of Aquidneck and Conanicut islands. Coddington went to England in 1649, and when he returned he brought a new charter. It was issued by the Council of State, which then ruled England, since the Puritans there had become so powerful that they had taken over the government after beheading Charles I. The Council of State had appointed Coddington governor of the two big islands for the rest of his life. It meant that little, defenseless Rhode Island had been split into two parts.

Roger Williams hastened back to England. He protested strongly to the English government, and it cancelled Coddington's appointment as governor of the two islands. It also completely restored the excellent charter Williams had obtained in 1644. Only the colony's name was changed. It was now the "Incorporation of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations." Roger Williams had renamed Aquidneck as Rhode Island, though today it is as often called Aquidneck, since the state of Rhode Island includes much more than just the big island.

As for the long name in the new charter, it gradually disappeared, and people simply spoke of the whole colony as Rhode Island. And at last, Roger Williams' colony, which had grown to four important settlements, was fully united.

chapter 4

BROTHERS IN HARMONY

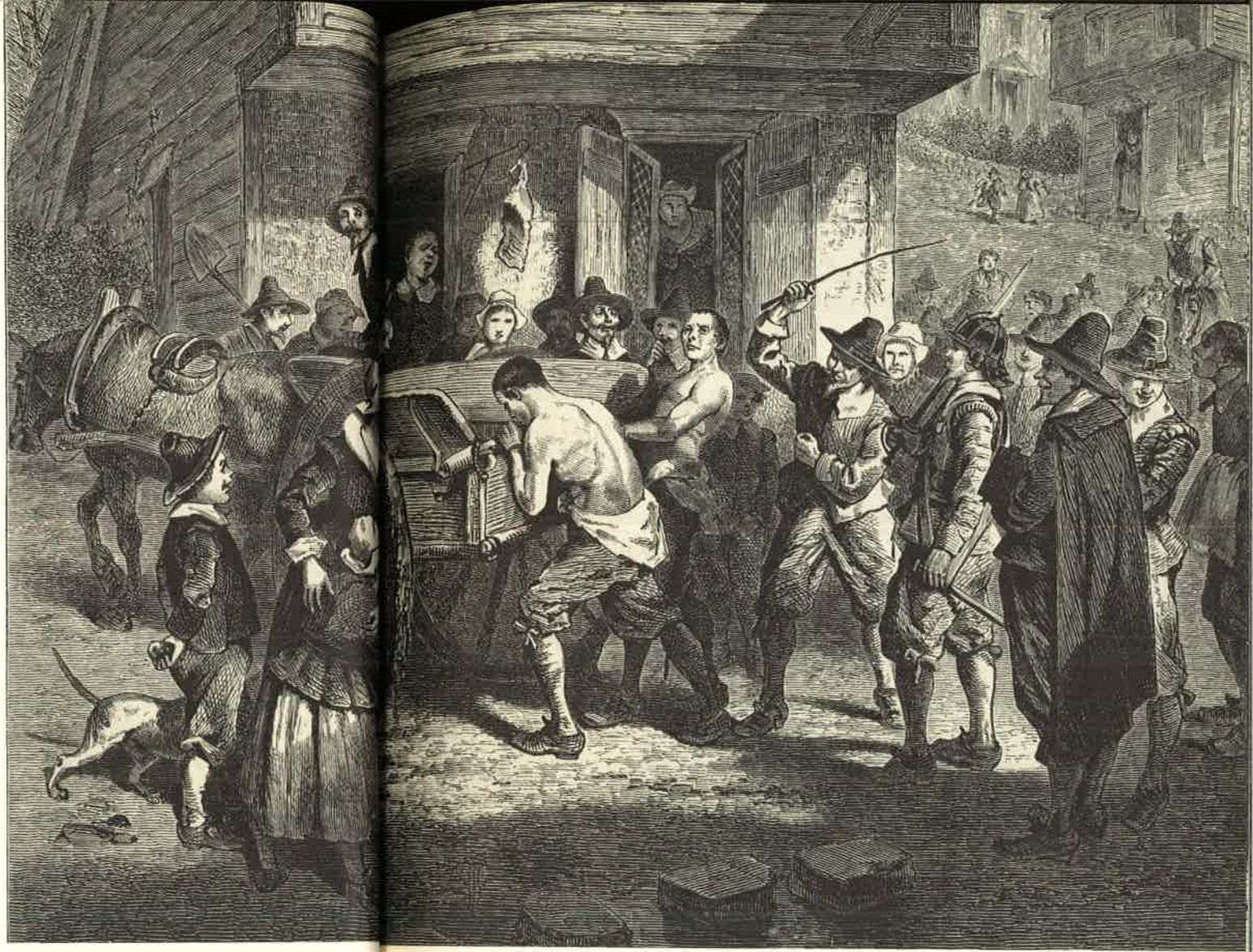
Now Rhode Island, under its fine new charter, was ready to stride ahead. Its population was bound to increase and expand. With its many natural resources it could establish a profitable trade in its products.

Many new settlers of persecuted religious faiths came. Among them were Quakers. They were peace-loving people who would have nothing to do with war of any kind, and the very foundation of their religion was brotherly love.

Their real name was the Society of Friends. There are two explanations for their being called Quakers. One is that their founder in England, George Fox, told them, "Tremble at the word of the Lord." The other is that during their religious services some of them often became so keyed-up with emotion that they quivered.

A few Quakers came to Boston in 1656, and others followed. They were set upon fiercely by the Puritans, who scornfully called them "Ranters." Quakers were insulted, railed at, publicly whipped, imprisoned, banished and four of them—one a woman—were hanged in Boston.

Unlike other sects, the Quakers were unaffected by persecution. They bore the savage cruelties without a murmur,



The Puritans whipped the Quakers in Boston

stayed and went right on worshipping in their chosen faith. But a number who were banished came to Rhode Island, and others followed.

Oddly enough, many of these mild and uncomplaining people, who loved their fellow men in spite of all mistreatment, were shrewd businessmen who became successful and rich as merchants. And their ways were peculiar. Roger Williams himself did not like them. "They are insufferably proud and contemptuous," he wrote, and he directed that their rudeness should be punished "with due and moderate restraint." But that unrelenting conscience of his would not let him refuse them a refuge, and he welcomed them to Rhode Island.

He also welcomed another group of settlers who sought a haven in Rhode Island. Jews, a race which for sixteen centuries had been persecuted and driven from one place to

another, came to Rhode Island, beginning about the year 1656 when a few families settled in Newport. It is believed that the first ones came from New Amsterdam, the Dutch colony on Manhattan Island in what is now New York City. They were Spanish and Portuguese Jews, and they had a dispute with the Dutch governor, Peter Stuyvesant, over their right to trade with Dutch settlements on the South River (today the Delaware), which were also under Stuyvesant's control.

Later more Jews came to Newport, some from the Dutch West Indian island of Curaçao, and others directly from Holland. In Newport they built the first synagogue in America. They were peaceable, decent people who became respected and distinguished citizens. In the eighteenth century a Portuguese Jew named Aaron Lopez came to Newport and became one of the great merchant princes of New England, a very rich man. Another, Jacob Rodriguez Rivera, introduced the manufacture of wax from the oil of sperm whales, the wax being used to make fine candles. This aided Rhode Island in becoming one of the leaders in the whaling trade.

Meanwhile, since the revolution in England had succeeded and Charles I had been executed, the kingdom had become a commonwealth governed by the victorious Puritan Parliament, with Oliver Cromwell as Protector in place of a king. It might seem that a colony with full religious freedom would suffer at the hands of an English Puritan government. But strangely enough, Cromwell was a tolerant man in matters of religion. Both he and his brother Richard, who succeeded him, were benevolent toward Rhode Island. Roger Williams found he had nothing to fear from either of them.

Then, in 1660, the English people overthrew the Commonwealth and Charles II was proclaimed King in the Restoration. The Merry Monarch, as he was called, held no grudge against Rhode Island for submitting to the Puritan government. He gave the colony a new charter as liberal as the old one, and which actually proclaimed religious freedom in Rhode Island.

The first synagogue in America as it was rebuilt in 1763

Under it, the new government consisted of a governor, deputy governor, ten assistants as the governor's Council

and the General Assembly of six elected representatives called deputies from Newport as the largest town, four each from Providence, Portsmouth and Warwick, and two from each of the other settlements established in the colony.

Not only had the character of the government changed, but now, a quarter of a century after the founding of Rhode Island, so had the character of the people. The original colonists were English to the core. But by this time there was a difference.

When the first settlers came, there were no roads or bridges, no long-established towns, little trade except with the Indians, no manufacturing. England had long had all these advantages, even though great masses of the people suffered intensely from poverty.

The lack of the things the original settlers had been used to in England forced them to rely upon themselves to build and develop them. Thus, for generations, the colonists had to be hardworking, clever, self-reliant people, able to withstand and overcome hardships.

In one way, however, they were no different from the people in England. For centuries, Englishmen had struggled to obtain the liberties of free men. The colonists brought that love of liberty with them and kept it. When they went to war against England in 1775, it was to obtain the rights of free Englishmen.

During the years since he had founded Providence, Roger Williams had not only become a rich man, but one of the most influential in New England. He had set up an Indian trading post near Warwick, and had taken advantage of the opportunity to trade with the Dutch, who sailed their ships into Narragansett Bay from their settlement of New Amsterdam. Even more important, Williams had bought land, a great deal of it, from the Narragansetts. As new settlers came, he sold them homelots and thus made much money.

At first, farming was the chief occupation in Rhode Island.

But soon it produced more food and other agricultural products than it could use. It began to trade by sea, first with nearby colonies, then with those to the south and with the West Indies.

Trade also began with England, though for some time it usually went through Boston. Rhode Island coasting vessels would sail there around Cape Cod, loaded with products England needed, and return with English goods which had been shipped to Boston. Some Rhode Island products went to Barbados in the West Indies, to be reshipped from there to England.

Trade with the Indians was important because of the furs obtained from animals they trapped or shot. Beaver was the most prized fur. In large towns of the American colonies and great cities of Europe a beaver hat was the mark of a prosperous man, and those who could afford it wore them. The fur of the black wolf was considered very choice, too, and the skins of otter, raccoon, fox and muskrat were also in demand. Deer and moose hides were used mostly by the colonists themselves for shoes and other clothing.

In return, the red men took trinkets, tools, utensils and clothing. Wampum, too, was often used in paying for goods, though it was difficult for Roger Williams to explain to the Indians why manufactured products brought from across the sea should cost such a great deal of the bead money.

Gradually, as "hard money" came into circulation in Rhode Island through its trade with Europe and the West Indies, less and less wampum was used. And after 1652, when Massachusetts Bay turned out the first coins ever made in America, these famous Pine Tree shillings were gradually circulated in Rhode Island.

Coins of several European nations were also circulated. Oddly, there were not a great many English coins. The most common were the Portuguese gold johannes, which the colonists called "Joes," the half-johannes ("half-Joes"), the gold

A Pine Tree shilling and a piece of eight cut into "bits"

moidore, and the Spanish gold pistoles, gold doubloons, silver pistareens, and best known and most common of all, the silver Spanish dollars, which Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of in *Treasure Island,* using their other name of "pieces of eight."

Pieces of eight gained this name because after they were minted, people would score them with lines or furrows across their faces with a knife or other sharp tool so that they could easily be broken into eight pieces and used as smaller coins. Since two of these pieces amounted to one-quarter of a Spanish dollar, the expression "two bits," which we use

today for a quarter, came into use. And when the United States became a nation it took the name of the Spanish coin as its chief unit of currency, the dollar.

To the West Indies, the southern American colonies and Europe, Rhode Island shipped beef, venison, pork, cattle, sheep, horses, dried peas, bread, butter, furs, lumber, barrel staves and pipe staves for the wine barrels known as pipes. In return, the colony received cotton, rum, molasses and sugar from the West Indies; tobacco from Maryland and Virginia; and from England cloth, silks, haberdashery, iron articles, household furnishings and a host of other things the colonists could not make for themselves.

Rather strangely, shipbuilding did not grow quickly. Massachusetts Bay was the chief shipbuilding colony, and for a time Rhode Island perferred to have its ships built there or at New Haven in the Connecticut colony.

Yet as early as 1646 a shipyard at Newport turned out a vessel of over one hundred tons, good-sized for those days. Soon other Rhode Island shipyards were established. Because of the vast seacoast which Narragansett Bay provided, Rhode Island was naturally a seafaring colony. In time it produced as hardy, daring and experienced a breed of seafaring men as any colony except Massachusetts. These men were going to be most valuable to Rhode Island later on when the existence of all the colonies was threatened during the long series of colonial wars against the French from Canada and their Indian allies.

Another industry began in Rhode Island within ten years after it was settled. At first the Providence settlers had to use the Indian way of grinding their corn into meal for making the corn meal mush, or samp, and the corn bread which were among the colonists' principal foods. The red men made a mortar by hollowing out a block of wood or a tree stump, and ground their corn by hand with a wooden pestle shaped like the inside of the mortar, and having a

handle. A little later some handmills called querns or samp mills were used.

But in time the American colonists realized that water power could be used to grind corn. They began to build gristmills, using water wheels rotated by the rushing waters of a falls or dammed-up stream to turn big millstones which ground the corn far faster and better. In 1646 the first gristmill was built near Providence at the falls of the Mooshassuc River. The miller, John Smith, took a toll of one-sixteenth of each bushel ground as payment for his work.

The days when Rhode Island settlers sweated to hew logs into timbers with their axes also ended about this time. Water power could also be used to turn a circular saw whose sharp teeth cut a log into smooth boards quickly. The settlers' homes were then much improved, and drafts blowing through chinks in the crude timbers no longer chilled the people in winter.

The more prosperous people were wearing better clothes, too, often imported from England. Men wore doublets, a kind of skirted jacket which hung below the waistline, knee breeches, long stockings, hip-length cloaks, and square-toed shoes, often with silver buckles. These garments were usually of bright colors and rich cloth. The Quakers, however, wore a somber costume. Hats were broad-brimmed, with high crowns encircled by a band of ribbon fastened with a silver buckle.

Women wore gowns of fine materials, with long, full skirts. Often the skirts were turned back in the front to show a bright-colored, embroidered petticoat underneath. Broad white linen collars with matching cuffs were worn. On their heads the ladies wore fine linen caps or had cloaks with hoods which could be pulled over the head. Some even wore hats much like the men's.

So Rhode Island grew and prospered. It had the best of all colonial charters, its people were free, and Roger Williams' dream of a colony with religious freedom for all had come to pass and endured. Except for constant disputes over its boundaries with Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut, Rhode Island was at peace with both white and red men.

But trouble was brewing—terrible, bloody trouble in which all of southern New England would be fighting for its very life.

chapter 5

TOMAHAWK AND TERROR

Roger Williams was getting old now. He had never been governor of Rhode Island. There was no such title until Charles II issued his charter to the colony in 1663. Williams had been the real ruler of Providence in its early years, and when the first charter was granted in 1644, he was its chief officer for about three years. Without doubt he could have been governor after 1663, but he modestly preferred to be an assistant or member of the governor's Council, as well as to hold some other public offices.

Keeping the colony's government as one under which all enjoyed the liberties of free men and freedom of worship was his chief interest. He had all the money he wanted now, and he sold the Indian trading post he had established in order to devote most of his time to this noble aim of his life.

More than any other man, he had been responsible for the peaceful relations with the Indians ever since he had founded Providence. But conditions were changing. Of the two great Narragansett sachems, Canonicus had died and Miantonomo was killed during an Indian war with the Mohegans. Miantonomo's son, Canonchet, became chief. For some years peace continued. But Canonchet had one quality

which was never a part of either Canonicus' or Miantonomo's character. He was treacherous.

The great Massasoit of the Wampanoags died too, in 1661, when he was about eighty years old. His son, Wamsutta, whom the English called Alexander, became chief. But he too soon died, and Massasoit's second son, Metacomet, was then sachem of the Wampanoags.

The settlers called him King Philip. He was different from his open-hearted, honest father. Like Canonchet, he was treacherous, a sullen man who brooded over the injustice of the white men in coming to America and settling on the Indians' lands.

Philip saw that if white settlers continued to come to New England and to increase, the time would come when much of the vast forested wilderness in which the red men lived, hunted and fished would disappear. He believed the Indians would be pushed out.

Where could they go? To the west? But there lived the mighty league of the Five Nations or Iroquois, warlike and powerful. They wanted no New England Indians crowding in among them. And the Five Nations themselves were threatened by the white settlers of New York. To the north? That was the country of the Abenakis. To the east was the sea; to the south more Indian tribes and many white settlements.

No, in Philip's mind either the whites or the Indians must go. He decided every white settler of southern New England must be killed or driven back across the ocean, their settlements burned and the forest allowed to blot out all traces of them.

Philip knew the Wampanoags could not do this by themselves. If possible he must get every tribe to join him, especially the powerful Narragansetts. Secretly he began to talk with other sachems, urging them to join him in a war that would rid southern New England forever of the white men.

Metacomet, sachem of the Wampanoags, was better known as King Philip

Rumors of this reached Plymouth, and Philip was summoned there. He stoutly denied that he had any evil designs upon the colony. But as time passed, the rumors continued. Again Philip was called to Plymouth, and once more he denied flatly that he was preparing to take the warpath. Finally, in 1671, Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut too became alarmed. Philip then signed a solemn agreement with the United Colonies promising there would be no war. But he went right on preparing for it.

By the spring of 1675, Philip was ready. The tribes in his league included his own Wampanoags, the Narragansetts, Nipmucks, Pocassets, Squakeags, Agawams and Nonotucks. About the only important tribes which did not join him were the Mohegans and Niantics of Connecticut, along with the few Pequots who were left there. The Sakonnets of Rhode Island had not yet made up their minds.

The war began on June 20, 1675, when a party of eight Indians swooped down on Swansea in the Plymouth colony, raided two houses and shot cattle in the fields. Four days later a second party of savages raided the village again and killed sixteen people.

The United Colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth and Connecticut raised forces which grew in size as the war became fiercer. Rhode Island never officially joined them, but many Rhode Island men fought along with them, and several of the colony's towns were attacked. Also, the most important battle was fought in Rhode Island, and the man who was responsible for ending the war was a Rhode Islander, Captain Benjamin Church.

Church was such a fantastic character that a whole book could be written about his daring adventures. He was born in 1639 at Duxbury in the Plymouth colony and became a carpenter like his father. When he was about twenty-eight he married a Duxbury girl. A few years later they moved to Rhode Island and settled in Little Compton on the east side of Narragansett Bay.

Church knew his Indians and knew exactly how to fight them in their own way, but there was one thing he did not know, and that was the meaning of fear. One of his first acts in the trouble that was about to begin, however, was as a peacemaker.

When an Indian chieftain died and left no son to succeed him, it was not unusual in southern New England for his daughter to succeed him as sachem. This had happened with

the Sakonnets, who lived in the region near Church. Their ruler was a queen named Awashonks. She had three hundred warriors led by her son Peter, and Philip wanted them. Just before the war began he sent six ambassadors to win the queen over.

Church was an old friend of Awashonks and had bought his land from her. He too set out for her village to convince her that the Sakonnets should remain at peace. When he arrived, the Wampanoag ambassadors were there and a furious war dance was going on, led by Awashonks.

The six Wampanoags were ornamented in the way of savages on the warpath. Their faces were hideous, painted in many colors and strange designs. New England warriors often stained their faces black, with green stripes running from each ear to the corners of their mouths. Some used great black circles painted around their eyes, making them look like beings from another world. Others painted their noses bright red. The Wampanoag ambassadors' heads were shaved except for a crest of black scalplock, stiff and glistening with bear's grease. Tomahawks and glittering knives hung from their wampum girdles. All had muskets, powder horns and bullet pouches.

This fearsome sight did not daunt Church in the least. He strode straight through the swaying, stomping line of braves to Awashonks and demanded a powwow. The war dance stopped and a hot discussion began, with the Wampanoag ambassadors joining in, scowling and muttering threats.

The records do not tell just how Church went about winning Awashonks over, but he probably called upon the queen to trust him as an old friend, and flattered and coaxed her to make her see that she and her people would do better to join the English.

The Wampanoag ambassadors were enraged, of course. They had already frightened the old lady by telling her that if she did not join Philip, he would send warriors to shoot

the cattle and burn the houses of the settlers in her neighborhood and then spread the word that the Sakonnets had done it.

Church gave her some blunt advice: have the six Wampanoags tomahawked, send a message to Philip saying the Sakonnets would not join him, and put her tribe under the protection of the English. Awashonks did not dare kill the ambassadors, but she did send them back to Philip with word that her tribe would go with the English.

Church went back to Plymouth very much pleased with himself. He decided to do the same thing with the Pocassets, who were closely connected with the Wampanoags; in fact, they, too, were ruled by a female sachem, Wetamoo, who was the widow of Massasoit's son Alexander and a princess of the Pocasset tribe. They lived a little to the north of the Sakonnets, around what is now Fall River, Massachusetts. Wetamoo had between three and four hundred warriors.

Church had no such luck with the Pocassets. He found Wetamoo in her village, but the warriors had already gone to join King Philip. And unfortunately, a little later, Awashonks was frightened into sending her braves to join King Philip after all.

Meanwhile, Philip's league was beginning to launch raids which were almost impossible to stop. The Indians would swoop down upon some isolated settlement, tomahawk inhabitants, burn houses, lay waste growing crops and shoot cattle. By the time an English force could get there the savages would have vanished into the forest. No one knew when and where they would strike next.

The English did gain one satisfaction. King Philip lived in a hilly section of Mt. Hope Neck, a peninsula in Rhode Island extending down into Narragansett Bay until it nearly touched the northern end of Aquidneck Island. The English army marched there and found that all the Indian inhabitants had fled. They also found eight poles stuck into the

ground, with the head of a murdered settler on top of each one. The English destroyed the entire village, including one thousand acres of growing corn.

As the summer came on, the Indian raids grew more frequent and terrible. In little hamlets deep in the wilderness all over southern New England, the inhabitants lived in constant terror. At any moment a prowling band of Indians might strike, burn houses, kill men, women and children, and then flit into the concealment of the forest. The United Colonies forces, which knew how to fight only in the English style in regular battle, were completely baffled.

Benjamin Church joined the Plymouth army as a captain. With twenty men he was sent into the Pocasset country. Near what is now Tiverton, Rhode Island, Church's scouts picked up the fresh trail of a large band of Indians leading onto Punkatees Neck, which sticks out into Sakonnet Passage between Aquidneck Island and the mainland.

The size of the enemy force meant nothing to Church. He had picked twenty men who knew Indians and their ways as he did, and were ready for a fight. Near the end of the neck they came to a clearing which Church in his memoirs called a "peas field," since it was overrun with pea vines planted by a settler who lived nearby. Except on the side toward the shore of the bay, the field was surrounded by thick forest.

It was midday and Church's men were hungry after their march. The vines were loaded with luscious peas and they stopped to eat some. Moments later the forest erupted with a hail of bullets and arrows. The party had walked into an ambush.

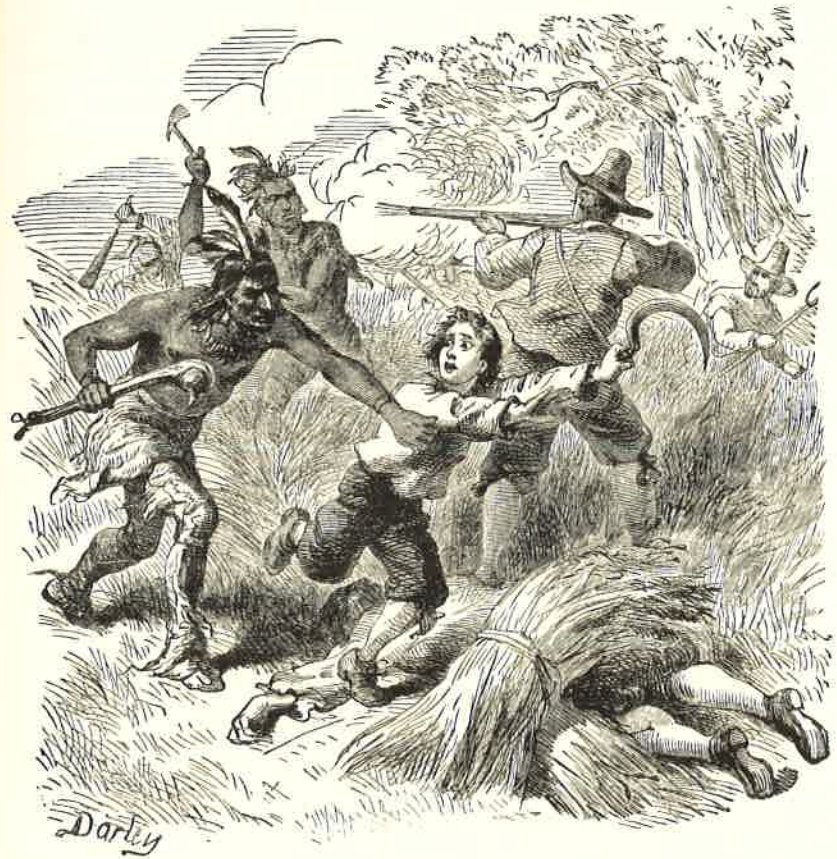
Church had hoped to find a good many Indians, but not most of the Pocasset army, for there were about three hundred of them. He ordered his men to retreat toward the shore, where they could not be completely surrounded. Also, it was rocky, and each man threw up a stone breastwork as a shelter.

The Indians closed in. But Church and his men were unerring sharpshooters, while the savages were poor shots. From behind their barricades, the white men calmly picked off warrior after warrior. Every burst of flame from the muzzles of their muskets sent a bullet carrying death straight to its mark. They made every shot count.

The dumfounded Indians retreated to the cover of the forest. But they soon decided to come on again. Twenty white men—how could they fail to wipe them out?

For six hours on that hot July afternoon, Captain Church and his men beat off the Indians. Fortunately, the settler

The Indian raids grew more frequent and terrible



who owned the land had dug a well where a spring bubbled up along the shore, and the men were able to slake their thirst.

The peas field was littered with dead Indians, yet the rest still far outnumbered the whites. And now Church's band was beginning to run short of ammunition. Worse, the sun would soon set. In the darkness the savages could sneak up and tomahawk their enemies. The situation was desperate indeed.

But luck was with Church. Just then he saw a small sloop scudding along offshore. He hailed it, pleading for help. The little vessel was manned only by Captain Roger Goulding, an old friend of Church's.

The only trouble was that the sloop could not approach close enough in the shallow water along the shore to rescue Church's party. But Captain Goulding had a small canoe aboard, large enough to hold only two men. He lashed a stout line to the little craft and let it drift ashore on the incoming tide.

Two by two, Church's men were rescued. They lay in the bottom of the canoe, out of sight, while Captain Goulding hauled in the line and brought the craft out to his sloop. The rest kept the Indians at bay. The Pocassets turned their fury on the sloop, riddling her sails and hull with bullets, but she did not sink.

Church was one of the last two to leave. Just then he remembered that he had left his hat and cutlass at the well. He calmly skulked over there in a storm of bullets and recovered them. Just as he got into the canoe, two bullets hit it, but above the water line. Another snipped off a lock of his hair.

Not a single one of Church's party was even wounded. How many Indians were killed is not known, but it was a large number. And while this was not an important victory, it shows the stuff Benjamin Church was made of.

That summer, village after village was attacked by Philip's warriors. First it was in the Plymouth colony. Then the English drove out a Wampanoag army led by Philip in the swampy Pocasset country, but the Indians then went into the Nipmuck region of central Massachusetts. There were more bloody raids upon settlements there.

Next it was western Massachusetts. A wagon train guarded by a force of soldiers was ambushed near the settlement of Deerfield, and so many of the whites were slaughtered by the Indians that the waters of a little stream where the fight took place ran red, and to this day it is known as Bloody Brook.

Then Deerfield had to be abandoned. Even the large town of Springfield on the Connecticut River had many houses burned and several inhabitants killed during a raid in which the nearby Agawam tribe took part. The English were losing the war, and there seemed to be little they could do about it.

But at last winter came, with its deep, drifted snow. The various tribes went into strongholds they had built deep in the wilderness to wait for spring. A report reached Plymouth that the Narragansetts were spending the winter in what was known as the Great Swamp. It was in the southern part of Rhode Island, about ten miles inland from the western shore of Narragansett Bay. The Great Swamp was an immense morass, impenetrable in warm weather to all but those who knew it well enough to leap from hummock to hummock of marsh grass and keep out of its stagnant, muddy waters.

In the middle of the Great Swamp was an island. On the dry land there the Narragansetts had built about five hundred wigwams. The village was a stronghold that even a large English army could scarcely hope to penetrate. First the Indians had surrounded it with a wooden palisade of high, sharpened stakes set close together. Around this barrier

The Indians ambushed a wagon train at Bloody Brook

was another wall, a hedge about sixteen feet thick, made of trees felled and piled high. Around this hedge was a deep, wide ditch.

There was only one entrance to the village. At one place a long, slender tree trunk had been put across the ditch. At its end nearest the village stood a blockhouse. Through slits in its upper story, guards always on watch could pour down a fusillade of bullets and arrows upon invaders, who would have to cross the log in single file. Beyond the blockhouse a narrow passage through the hedge and palisade led into the village.

There was one more difficulty. Only the Indians knew the lore of the swamp well enough to follow a trail through its tangle of reeds, underbrush and briars to the village. So here the Narrangansetts settled down for the winter with plenty of corn, beans, dried fish and venison, believing they were perfectly safe. There were about 3,500 braves, squaws and children in the village.

In Plymouth, Governor Josiah Winslow decided to invade this stronghold. He was appointed commander in chief of a United Colonies army of 1,000 white men and 150 Mohegans. Captain Church went along as one of Winslow's aides.

The colonists rushed for the log to storm the Narragansett defenses

As so often happens, there was a Narragansett warrior who had a grudge against Canonchet for one reason or another. He deserted the village and offered to guide the white men into the Great Swamp.

The army set out from Bull's Garrison in Rhode Island near the shore of the bay at five o'clock on the morning of December 19, 1675. A blizzard was raging, it was bitter cold, the snow two or three feet deep, with drifts through which a man could scarcely flounder. The army marched eighteen miles with nothing to eat. It reached the Great Swamp, and with the traitorous Narragansett leading, arrived outside the Indian village early in the afternoon.

A detachment of the troops at the head of the column rushed for the log over the ditch. Although the Narragansetts were taken by surprise, a number of English were

shot or transfixed by Indian arrows from the blockhouse, and fell dead or wounded into the ditch. Others were driven back by the savages' murderous fire.

Meanwhile, parties of the colonists were reconnoitering the defenses. They found a gap in the hedge, temporarily blocked by a single tree trunk. They scrambled into the ditch and clawed their way up the other side. With axes, they hewed a narrow passage through the gap in the hedge and another through the palisade. More of the army followed as they burst into the village.

For four hours a terrible hand-to-hand battle raged. The snow in the village became red with great splotches of blood. Winslow stayed outside, directing the movements of the rest of the troops into the village. As one of his aides, Church had to remain with him. But he was itching to get into the fight and at last Winslow yielded to his appeals and sent him in with thirty men.

Moments later they were in the thick of the fight. Because this was a battle in the English style, and the colonists were far better marksmen, the Narragansett warriors began to flee. Some escaped into the swamp, but many were shot down as they tried to scale the palisade and fight their way through the maze of the hedge. When the battle ended, 700 Narragansett braves lay slain and hundreds more wounded. The colonists lost 80 men killed and 150 wounded.

The English soldiers were then ordered to set fire to the wigwams. Church rushed up to Winslow and begged him to revoke the order. With the early winter night already beginning to shut down, it would be better if the soldiers spent the night in the warm wigwams and then made their way out of the swamp by daylight. Church also pointed out that the army had no food while there was plenty in the village. At first Winslow was inclined to listen, but other officers persuaded him that the village must be destroyed at once. The wigwams were all burned and their helpless occupants

either roasted alive or shot when they tried to escape.

Now the soldiers would have to march through the swamp in the bitter cold with only an Indian guide who might lose his way in the darkness. Meanwhile, escaped Narragansetts were skulking there. And the nearest English fort was at Wickford, over ten miles away.

The colonists started their march. Their progress was made slow because they had to carry their wounded, some of whom died on the way. It was two in the morning when the hungry, frostbitten, exhausted army reached Wickford. Winslow and a party of forty men got lost and did not arrive until seven. He was lucky to have escaped with the lives of himself and those with him, and might even have lost his whole army if it too had wandered off the trail and perhaps frozen to death in the Great Swamp. All this was because he had paid no attention to Benjamin Church's advice.

Much of the Narragansetts' power was now broken, a great victory for the colonists. But Philip was not beaten. He still had two thousand warriors. And in spite of the winter the raids began again. Throughout February and March, 1676, many settlements were attacked in the Plymouth colony, central Massachusetts, the Connecticut River valley in the Bay colony, and a few in Rhode Island. Indeed, several settlements near Boston itself were attacked. By April a number of isolated Massachusetts villages had had to be abandoned.

On March 29, 1676, a band of Narragansetts led by Canonchet approached Providence. Roger Williams himself went out to meet them, though not with his old firm stride, for he was now about seventy years old. He pleaded with Canonchet not to attack a town whose people had always been the brothers and true friends of the Indians.

When Canonchet refused, Williams reminded him that no matter how many white settlers the Indians killed, the mighty Great White Father, King Charles, would replace every one with soldiers from England.

"Well, let them come," Canonchet grunted. "We are ready for them. But as for you, Brother Williams, you are a good man. You have been kind to us for many years. Not a hair of your head shall be touched." That promise was, kept, although the Narragansetts burned twenty-nine houses in Providence.

As summer approached, there were more raids. Then Benjamin Church undertook a dangerous mission which would bring the war closer to an end if it succeeded. He still believed he could get the old Sakonnet queen, Awashonks, to make a separate peace with the colonists.

Church sent her a message, ordering her to meet him at Sandwich on Cape Cod Bay. But when he went there the Sakonnets did not appear. With only six companions, Church tracked the Indians across to the shore of Buzzards Bay. There, from the top of a bluff, Church's company looked down on a strange sight.

Captain Benjamin Church

On the wide, sandy beach, a host of Sakonnets were enjoying themselves in all sorts of games. They were racing each other up and down the beach, some afoot, others on horseback, and also playing the Indian game of football. Still others, including the squaws and children, were catching eels and flatfish in the shallow water and digging clams.

Two of the mounted Indians saw Church and his party on the bluff. They galloped up there. Church boldly ordered them to tell Awashonks he had come to see her, not knowing whether the next few minutes would be the last for him and his companions.

But the old queen and her sachems gave Church and his men a royal welcome. On the beach, as the Indians held a great feast, the white men were served young bass, eels and several kinds of shellfish. Then, as darkness fell, all assembled about a great fire.

A sachem in full war paint, carrying a spear and a hatchet, did a strange dance. He advanced to the fire, plucked a burning brand from it and pretended to fight with it, calling out the name of one of the tribes of King Philip's league. This was repeated until he had "vanquished" all of these tribes. Then Church was presented with a beautiful new firelock musket and told that Awashonks and her warriors were now the allies of the English. And this time the old queen did not change her mind.

The colonists were now beginning to win the war. Massachusetts Bay offered mercy to all Indians of Philip's league if they would come to Boston and surrender. Many did, including several sachems. But as long as King Philip lived, southern New England would not be safe. Winslow and his army set out to hunt him down.

Church was disgusted with the way the army went about it. They tried to bring Philip to a decisive battle, but the Wampanoag was too wily for that. Church finally got permission to organize his own band of two hundred rangers,

sixty to be white men and the rest friendly Indians, to go after Philip. The sixty colonists were all wise in Indian ways of fighting, keen-eyed, sharp-eared, expert woodsmen, scouts and marksmen. Church had full command, without having to take orders from Winslow.

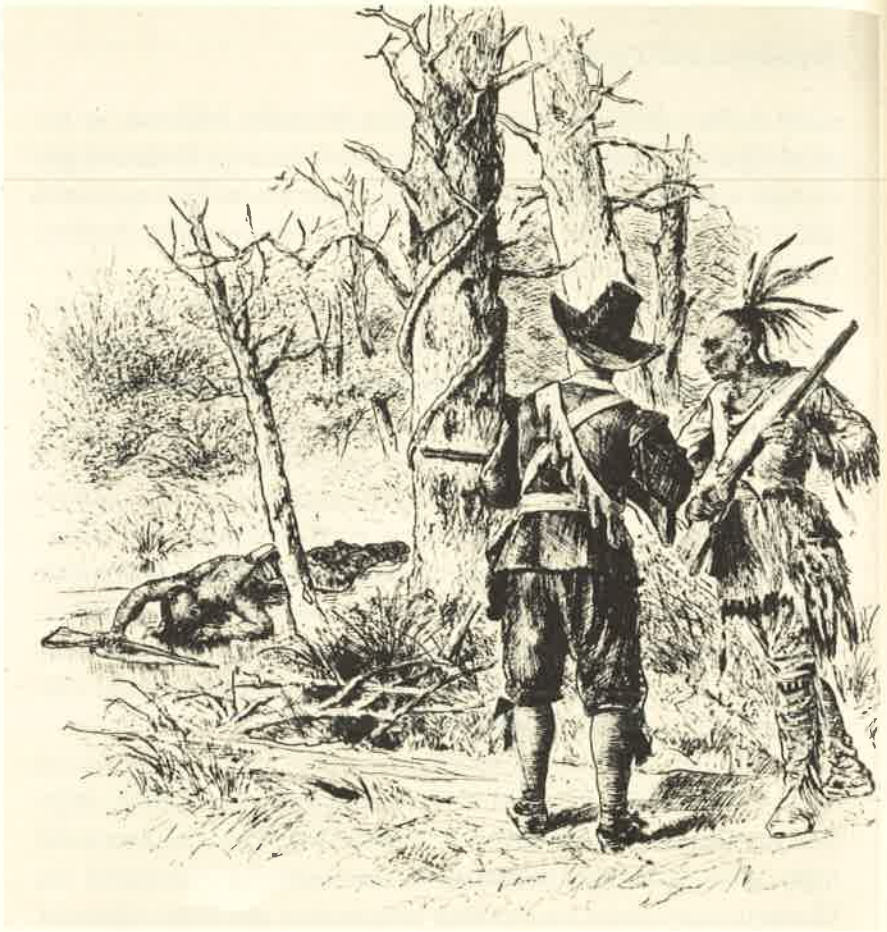
He and his men left Plymouth July 30. Two days later they picked up Philip's trail and Church barely missed killing him. At that time the Wampanoag sachem's wife, Wootonekanuska, and little son were captured. The day before, Philip's uncle, the sachem Unkompoin, had been killed.

For ten days after that Church and his scouts sought Philip in vain. Then they had a stroke of luck. A Wampanoag deserter betrayed the great sachem. He led Church and his band to Philip's lair in what was called the Mirey Swamp, near the Wampanoag chieftain's old home of Mt. Hope in Rhode Island. They crept up to the edge of the swamp and camped for the night.

It was like Church to let someone else have the glory in such a situation. His old friend, Captain Goulding, who had saved the lives of Church and his force at the peas field fight, was among the rangers. On the morning of August 12, Church repaid him by sending him with a small detachment guided by the traitorous Wampanoag to waylay Philip. He himself, with another detachment, circled around to the rear of the swamp to cut off any escape in that direction.

Goulding and his men flushed Philip out of his hiding place. Concealed in the tall grass, Goulding saw the Wampanoag running with the speed and grace of a deer, leaping sure-footedly from one little island of marsh grass to another. Goulding raised his musket and fired, but he missed. Then the renegade Indian, beside him, also fired. Philip pitched forward, face down, in the slime of the swamp, and lay still.

Metacomet, called Philip, chief of the Wampanoags, was dead, and King Philip's War then collapsed. It is sad to think of this red man's end. He had fought and died for the cause



The death of King Philip

of all Indians in America—a cause in which time would prove he was right, that the Indians would lose their lands to the whites.

Sad, too, was the fate of Philip's wife Wootonekanuska and their son. It was customary in King Philip's War to sell captive Indians into slavery, especially to the West Indies. That was what happened to Wootonekanuska and the little boy, and they were never heard of again.

chapter 6

STRUGGLE FOR A CONTINENT

Rhode Island had suffered in King Philip's War. Men had fought and died, settlements had been attacked, inhabitants killed, houses burned, cattle slaughtered. Yet the colony recovered quickly. For fourteen years there was no war to keep the settlements from growing and thriving.

There were more of them now since the early founding of Providence, Newport, Portsmouth and Warwick. The new ones included such rapidly growing towns as Pawtucket, Kingstown, East Greenwich and Bristol.

Now Rhode Island's trade really began to flourish. No longer were most of her ships built outside the colony. Shipyards sprang up at Newport, Providence and other seaport towns. They turned out fine, staunch ships which cruised along the coast and to distant seas, and the crews who manned them were real sailormen. Wharves for the vessels and warehouses for storing cargoes were built.

Seafaring in those days was a rough life, and it produced not only tough but a good many lawless men. Some turned pirates. For a number of years piracy flourished in the waters off New England, and not a few of these buccaneering vessels were from Rhode Island. There were also many smugglers because of the Navigation Acts.

The growing prosperity of the colonists is seen in this seventeenth-century room

With settlements prospering along a large part of the Atlantic seacoast, England was beginning to feel that she should get some benefit from her colonies in America. The Navigation Acts were a series of laws passed by the English Parliament in order to obtain revenue from the growing trade of the colonies.

Under these laws, the American colonies were permitted to trade in most products only with England or other English colonies. The Americans were indignant over this. For one thing, much trade was carried on with Holland and the Dutch colonies in the West Indies. Dutch ships usually charged lower freight rates for cargo than English vessels. In Holland, many merchants charged less for selling American cargoes than the English merchants who did the same thing in England.

In a number of American colonies, goods which were not English were smuggled in, in defiance of the Navigation Acts. American products were smuggled out to Holland and other European countries and their colonies. Rhode Island was a leader in this illegal trade, and its merchants and seafaring men became expert at smuggling.

Yet all this was preparing the American sailormen for a long period in which war after war was fought by England and the colonies against France and Spain. For the colonies it was to mean fighting for their very existence. And in these wars Rhode Island would be a leader in sea fighting and privateering.

Meanwhile, as the colony grew richer, prosperous people began to build better houses and improve their way of living. Houses with two full stories were common now. The

upper floors had broad eaves which projected out over the lower floor. The colonists had better household furniture and utensils, too, and tools and implements for working their farms.

Most of these things still came from England, but with the many sawmills run by water power, better building materials and furniture could be made in Rhode Island. Also, a new industry to produce some of the wares which had always before come from the mother country had been established in the colony.

Iron ore had been discovered in a Massachusetts bog and the first iron works in America established there in 1644. It was about twenty-five years later that the ore was also found in one of Rhode Island's many swamps. In 1671 Joseph Jencks, Jr., who had operated an iron works with his father in Massachusetts, established a forge near the falls of the Pawtucket River. He made hatchets, axes, hoes, plows and other iron implements. Others soon followed his example.

This was an American industry which, among others, England did not like. Her aim was to keep America agricultural and go right on selling the colonies profitable manufactured goods. This, along with the Navigation Acts, was among the grievances which were to lead to the American Revolution. Thus, more than a century before that war began, resentment against Britain's oppressive laws was already beginning to stir in the colonies.

During this time of peace, Roger Williams died. The exact date is not known, but it was sometime in the early months of 1683, when he was nearly eighty. Even his burial place is not definitely known, but it was probably in the graveyard on the slope of the hill rising from the Towne Street in Providence. With his death there passed from this world one of the very great men of American history.

Soon after Williams' death a new group of settlers came to Rhode Island. They were French Protestants called Huguenots, long persecuted in Catholic France. In 1686 about forty-five Huguenot families settled in part of Kingstown. But they were persecuted there too—not for their religion, but in disputes over ownership of their land, and in 1691 they left and settled in other colonies.

In spite of the peace that followed King Philip's War, Rhode Island had its troubles. Roger Williams spent much time in his last years trying vainly to settle boundary disputes with other colonies. In the very year of his death, Mt. Hope, claimed by Plymouth, was awarded to that colony, along with other Rhode Island lands, by a decree issued in England, although this territory was later recovered.

Much more serious was Connecticut's claim that it owned all the Narragansett country, which meant practically all of Rhode Island. King Charles II appointed a royal commission to decide the dispute. Most of its members were from Massachusetts. The Bay colony Puritans had never forgiven Roger Williams, whom it had banished as a heretic and lawbreaker, for his success in founding a colony with true religious freedom. In 1683 the commission decided that Narragansett belonged to Connecticut.

Then Charles II died, and his brother James II came to the throne. This changed everything. James decided to make one single colony out of all New England, and in 1686 he appointed Sir Edmund Andros as its governor.

Andros had been governor of New York, and an able one, but he was harsh and tyrannical. He set up his headquarters in Boston and demanded that all the New England colonies surrender their charters to him. Both Connecticut and Rhode Island hid theirs and never gave them up.

Nevertheless, Rhode Island, like the others, submitted to Andros' rule. Strangely enough, Andros treated this smallest colony gently. But his tyranny in Massachusetts caused the people of Boston to revolt, seize and imprison him and then send him to England with a demand that he be tried.

At the same time the English people revolted and drove the despotic James II from his throne. Rhode Island immediately set up its own free, temporary government under its old charter. The new rulers of England, William and Mary, then allowed the charter to remain in force. The Quakers were now so numerous and powerful in Rhode Island that they elected one of their members, Henry Bull, as governor.

Rhode Island was having boundary trouble with Massachusetts too. Charles II had finally taken New Hampshire away from the Bay colony and restored it as a separate colonly, but in 1691 William and Mary granted a new charter under which the Plymouth colony became a part of Massachusetts Bay. Massachusetts had its eye on Rhode Island, too. It kept making claims to land along the disputed boundaries between the two colonies. When Joseph Dudley became governor of Massachusetts Bay in 1702, he was appointed to command Rhode Island's military and sea forces, and he did his best to get the little colony's charter revoked, but he failed.

By this time, however, there was far more sinister danger to Rhode Island, as well as all of the American colonies. The colonial wars had begun. They were actually a part of the endless series of wars that had torn Europe for centuries. There were five of these wars in America, and they lasted, off and on, for over seventy years. The last and bitterest was called the French and Indian War, which decided the fate of England's colonies and France's Canadian possessions in America.

In America, it was the aim of the French who had settled Canada to drive out all the English settlers to the south. They hoped thus to gain all that territory, with its many natural resources, especially the rich fur trade. They had as

The Bostonians seized Sir Edmund Andros

their allies many of the tribes of the powerful Indian Algonquin nation, including the Abenakis of Maine (then a part of Massachusetts), the Micmacs of Acadia (now Nova Scotia), and also the great Huron nation. The English had the aid of the strong and warlike Iroquois of what were originally the Five and now the Six Nations by the addition of the Tuscaroras.

Most of the fighting was in New York, Canada and Pennsylvania. Rhode Island, being farthest away from all these regions, had the least to fear, except from enemy warships and privateers lurking off her coast or from an invasion from the sea. And her seafaring men were itching for a chance to fight such marauders. Yet the colony was more than generous in contributing soldiers, money and equipment.

During the first war, King William's, which began in 1689, the Abenakis and Micmacs terrorized isolated settlements in the great wilderness of Maine. Sir William Phips, governor of Massachusetts, decided to build a strong fort there at Pemaquid on the coast. From it a strong force of soldiers could rove the forests in search of the savages and be ready to respond instantly to an alarm from any settlement.

Phips, a former sea captain, was no military man, though he fancied himself one. But since he knew nothing about Indian warfare and had heard of the fabulous deeds of Benjamin Church, he invited the old Indian fighter to come along with his force of four hundred and fifty men. Church, who now had the rank of major, was delighted.

They were a well-matched pair, these two. Phips was a bold and hot-tempered sea dog, who had been born in poverty in this very region of Maine. He had become a rich man by dredging up an enormous treasure from a sunken Spanish galleon off the coast of Hispaniola in the West Indies. For this deed he had been knighted by James II and was later appointed royal governor of Massachusetts by William

and Mary. Church, too, was adventurous, bold and fearless, and loved a good fight.

In Maine, Phips sent Church and a detachment of men eastward into the almost uninhabited wilds to search for Indians while the rest of his force set to building the fort at Pemaquid. But the news that the fearsome Church was coming had traveled ahead of him. Abenakis suddenly became very scarce, most of them having fled to Canada. Church's searching party did find one Indian village, which it destroyed.

Later on, a strong fort having been built, thirteen Abenaki sachems came there. After they had received gifts and had been feasted, they burned their treaty with the French and made a new one with the English. Then the sachems marched in a solemn procession to the shore, where they threw their blood-red war tomahawks into the sea in token of everlasting friendship with the English. Unfortunately, they soon forgot about the treaty.

In Queen Anne's War, which began in 1702, the New England settlers made three expeditions against Canada. Rhode Island provided soldiers and ships for all of them, and twice levied special taxes upon the people to pay the cost.

The first expedition was led by Benjamin Church, given the title of colonel by Governor Dudley of Massachusetts. But Church was now sixty-five years old, enormously fat and not the active, bold man he had once been. His army of seven hundred colonists and friendly Indians was an untrained rabble. The plan was to capture the French fortress of Port Royal in Acadia, but it proved too strong and well defended. Church and his men sailed back to Boston, and the expedition was a dismal failure.

But Rhode Island troops and ships were in the expedition which did capture Port Royal in 1710. The same was true

of the expedition which hoped to capture the mighty French fortress of Quebec. This proved a disaster when many of the ships were wrecked in a gale in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the rest had to return.

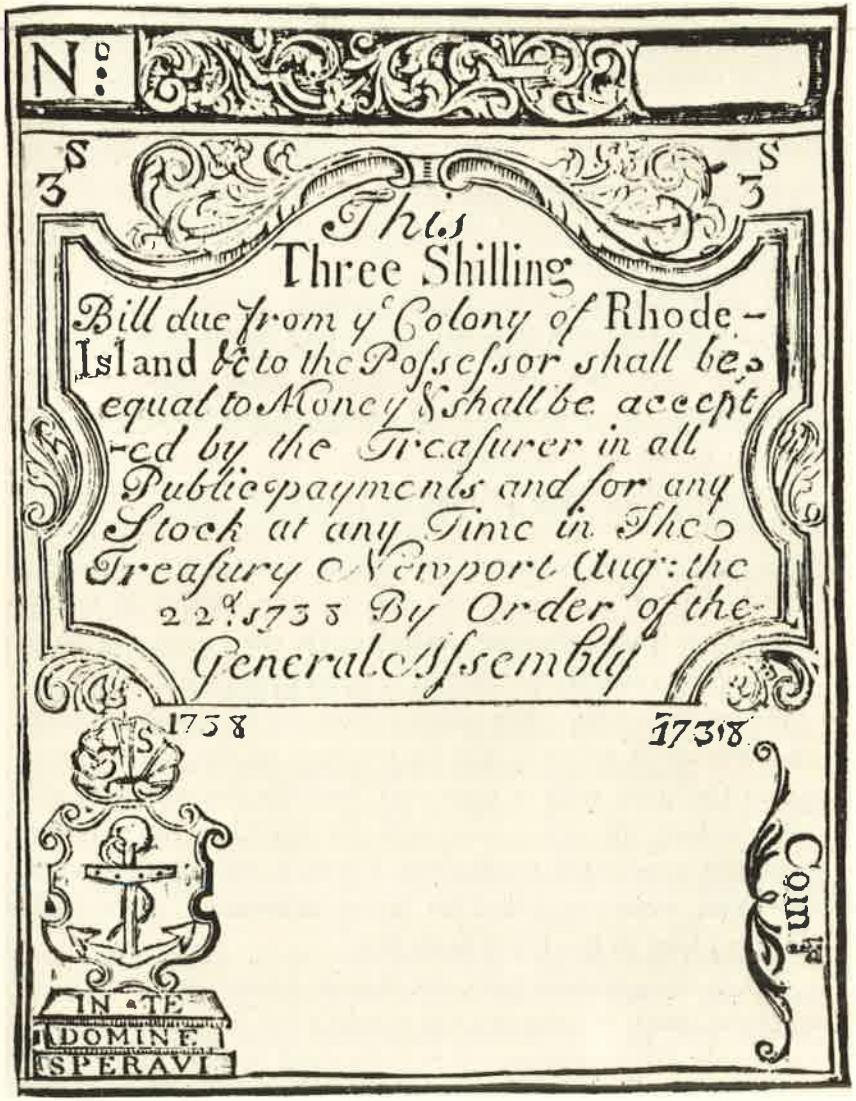
All this aid cost Rhode Island a great deal of money. The special taxes were not enough to pay for it, and the colony took to issuing paper money—£5,000 of what were called bills of credit. The trouble was that they were promises to pay "hard money" which Rhode Island did not have. Later it issued still more of this paper money. Soon its value shrank so much that it was worth very little, and it caused Rhode Island much loss of trade.

The colony's greatest success in the colonial wars was at sea. None of the American colonies had navies. Most of them used privateers to prey on enemy shipping, and even sometimes to fight much larger and more heavily armed warships. There were many Massachusetts privateers, but for its size Rhode Island far outdid the other colonies and probably sent more privateers to sea than any of the rest.

In King George's War alone, which lasted from 1743 to 1748, Rhode Island privateers captured at least one hundred French vessels. During the French and Indian War from 1755 to 1760, it has been claimed that Rhode Island never had less than fifteen hundred men at sea in any year.

Privateering was a profitable business. The vessels were built, armed and manned to take prizes. The prize might be an enemy ship or one of some neutral country trading with the enemy. Usually she would be taken into the nearest American or friendly port, where the ship and cargo would be sold. For this reason, privateers carried far more than the number of men needed to sail them, since crews had to be put aboard the prizes to take them into port.

Everyone shared in the profits. The owners, of course, got the most, the captain and other officers somewhat less, and so on down to the lowliest hand before the mast and the



Rhode Island paper money, worth three shillings in 1738

cabin boy. Merchants in Rhode Island ports became immensely rich, and even the common sailors aboard a privateer often got large sums of money after a successful cruise.

The ships were usually sloops—vessels with a single mast and a triangular mainsail. They were armed with heavy "carriage guns" and "swivel guns." The carriage guns were mounted on wheels so they could be moved about, and also so that they could recoil after firing until they were checked by lines called "breech ropes." They fired cannon balls usually weighing from four to six pounds (great frigates and ships-of-the-line of European navies had twenty-four-pounders and even heavier). The swivel guns were smaller, mounted so that they could be swung in any direction, and usually fired one-pound balls.

Privateering was not all fun and profit. A privateer might run afoul of a mighty enemy warship whose big guns could blast her to the bottom. She might herself be captured. Rhode Island privateers got into bloody battles in which many men were killed or wounded. Or they might be shipwrecked in a storm and dashed to pieces on a rocky shore.

As for the crews, they often served under harsh captains and officers. A sailor might be stripped to the waist, triced up to the mast with a rope and brutally flogged with the whip called the cat-o'-nine-tails for shirking his duty or breaking some small regulation. There is one instance when two men were punished by being marooned on a little deserted islet in the Caribbean Sea.

Yet in the colonial wars, the Rhode Island privateers did splendid work in keeping the enemy's sea forces at bay and capturing ships carrying cargo to be used by the enemy. And more than one young privateersman lived to use his experience in the young United States Navy in the American Revolution.

There are endless tales of adventure, daring and rich

prizes taken by Rhode Island privateers in the colonial wars. One captured a Spanish vessel with about 13,000 Spanish dollars or pieces of eight aboard. One Rhode Island captain's share in three prizes he took amounted to £20,000. Another took two Spanish ships which, with their cargoes, were so valuable that even the common sailors got £1,000 each.

The *Revenge,* commanded by Captain James Allen, had a desperate fight with an enormous Dutch vessel and took her with cargo worth £61,930. Unfortunately the owners took the case to court, which decided the cargo was not intended for the enemy, and the ship and cargo had to be given back. But on this same cruise the *Revenge* took twenty-three other prizes. On another cruise, Captain William Hopkins captured seven ships in the West Indies. He was one of the famous Hopkins family, a brother of Esek and Stephen, of whom more will soon be heard.

When each of the colonial wars ended, there was peace—twenty-six years between Queen Anne's War and one involving Spain. The peaceful periods between the others lasted only from four to seven years. During these times the privateersmen went back to their regular seafaring—trading, whaling, piracy, smuggling and, sad to say, slaving.

Negro slaves were in great demand by the owners of tobacco, sugar cane, rice and indigo plantations in the southern American colonies and the West Indies. Since the black people came from Africa, they were used to a hot climate and could work under the broiling sun of these southern regions. Bringing slaves there soon became one of the most important American sea trades, and in this, to her shame, Rhode Island was a leader.

Carrying these helpless, miserable human beings across the sea, packed like so much cargo into the dark holds of ships, was considered a perfectly respectable business. Many Rhode Island merchants grew rich on it. At one time 184 of

the colony's ships were engaged in the slave trade. One wonders what Roger Williams would have thought of it if he had still been alive.

What was called the Triangular Trade sprang up. One point of the triangle was Africa, where the Negroes were loaded aboard the vessels. Another was the West Indies, where the slaves were exchanged for molasses. The molasses was taken to northern American ports, where it was distilled into rum. Then the rum was used in Africa to pay for more slaves. Dozens of distilleries were built in Rhode Island, and the colony grew rich from them.

Then, in 1755, the last of the colonial wars began. Rhode Island soldiers fought all through this bloodiest and fiercest one, although the colony was in no danger from the French and Indian enemies. Altogether, little Rhode Island furnished more than one thousand soldiers.

Much of the fighting was in New York and Canada. With only two short marches over land, the St. Lawrence and Richelieu rivers, Lakes Champlain and George, and the Hudson River gave the French a water highway over which they could sail into the heart of America instead of struggling through trackless wilderness.

Little is known of the Rhode Islanders in this fighting because they moved to New York in small groups and for this reason were often combined with Connecticut or Massachusetts regiments. But they fought with valor in both the victories and defeats in the region of Lake George and Lake Champlain and in Canada.

At least one story of a Rhode Island soldier's heroism in this war is known. In 1758 General James Abercrombie, in command of the British army sent to America to aid in the war, decided to attack the French fortress of Carillon on Lake Champlain, later to become famous as Fort Ticonderoga. He was an incompetent, blundering general.

Abercrombie had more than 15,000 well-equipped troops.

About 9,000 were colonial soldiers and the rest veteran British Regulars. Inside Carillon, the famous General Louis de Montcalm had only about 3,600 men. But he had surrounded the fort with a massive breastwork eight or nine feet thick made of thousands of felled trees. Time after time Abercrombie hurled his army against this tangle of trunks and branches, and each assault was thrown back with terrible losses. It was more of a massacre than a battle. Finally, after losing nearly 2,000 men, Abercrombie's army retreated.

In one of these assaults, William Smith, a Rhode Island soldier, took up his post under the breastworks and began picking off with his musket any French soldier he could see. Finally a French defender fired down and wounded him seriously. Nevertheless, Smith managed to scramble over the breastwork, where he killed an enemy soldier with his hatchet. A British officer saw this daring feat and ordered some of his men to rescue Smith. This was done, and the Rhode Islander recovered to swear he would yet have revenge upon the French.

The French and Indian War finally ended. The famous General James Wolfe defeated Montcalm's army in 1759 and took the great fortress of Quebec. The job of capturing Montreal the following year was left to Lord Jeffrey Amherst, and Rhode Island troops fought there under his command. A peace treaty was signed in 1763, and France lost her great empire in Canada.

And now there was peace, though only for a dozen years. Already the American colonies were stirring against British tyranny. Those twelve years were to be tempestuous ones for them, including Rhode Island.

chapter 7

THE BANTAM SHARPENS ITS SPURS

The resistance to British oppression in America really began with the Navigation Acts. Those which had been enacted in the seventeenth century were pretty well ignored by Rhode Island merchant-shipowners and the men who sailed their vessels, and England did little to enforce them. What enraged the Rhode Islanders most, however, was another of these laws, the Molasses Act, passed in 1733. It put a duty of sixpence a gallon on all molasses imported from places which were not British possessions.

The honest smugglers of Rhode Island (at least this was how they thought of themselves) were infuriated, since molasses was so important to the rum distilleries. The colony sent an agent to England with a violent protest. In the quaint language and bad spelling of the time, it spoke of "levying a Subsidy upon a Free People without their Knowledg agst their consent, who have the libertys and immunitys granted them Natural born Subjects."

It was the beginning of the outcry in America against "taxation without representation," which has been called the chief cause of the American Revolution. Parliament sternly rebuked the Rhode Island General Assembly for sending such a protest.

Britain did try for a time to enforce the Molasses Act in Massachusetts, though not as strongly in Rhode Island. Perhaps the English ministers of King George II had too much respect for the vengeance the ex-pirates and tough sailormen of England's smallest colony in America might take.

Finally the Molasses Act was repealed and the Sugar Act passed in its place in 1764. It reduced the duty on foreign molasses to threepence a gallon. It did not appease the American merchants at all. But Britain nevertheless began trying to enforce the Sugar Act strictly.

By that time George III had come to the English throne, and his government was thinking of still other laws to raise money from the American colonies. Rhode Island resisted these new laws as bitterly as any colony except Massachusetts, which was the most pugnacious of all.

In 1765 the Stamp Act was passed by Parliament. All legal documents and practically everything else that was printed were taxed through stamps bought and put on these papers. Deeds, wills, ships' clearance papers and a host of other documents had to be stamped. So did newspapers. If you graduated from college your diploma was worthless without a tax stamp on it. So was your license if you wanted to get married.

Like most of the other colonies, in which several bloody riots occurred, Rhode Island fiercely resisted the Stamp Act. The people hanged a dummy representing the man appointed to sell the stamps, cut it down and burned it, then forced the man himself to resign as stamp master, and wrecked his house. The colony joined others in the Stamp Act Congress in New York, which protested to the King.

An English law was also passed which severely limited iron works in America. Rhode Island now had several, and all went right on working. The colony also resisted the Townshend Acts, which placed duties on glass, lead, paint, paper and tea.

The harbor at Newport before the troubles began

At last the British government repealed both the Stamp and Townshend acts. Nevertheless, it tried to coax the Americans into paying a tax. The colonists, like the people of England, dearly loved their tea. Britain sharply reduced its price, but the lower cost still included a levy under the Tea Act of 1773. This did not pacify the Americans. It was then that Boston had its Tea Party.

Although they are not as famous as the Boston Tea Party, similar protests took place in other colonies, and Rhode Island was among them. In Providence, after a ship had landed a cargo of the detested, taxed tea, a mob collected three hundred pounds of it from shops, warehouses and private homes and burned it in the market square. And when England punished Boston for its Tea Party by closing its port and sending in a large British army, Rhode Island was among the colonies which sent food and other goods to help the Boston people, whose supplies, which came in mostly by water, were largely cut off.

But it was the strict enforcement of the Navigation Acts which Rhode Island resisted most ferociously. Indeed, it is a wonder that the American Revolution did not start right in Rhode Island on June 9, 1772, instead of at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts on April 19, 1775.

There had been plenty of trouble before that in Rhode

Island over the enforcement of the Navigation Acts. Britain stationed warships in a number of ports along the Atlantic coast. In Narragansett Bay it was the armed schooner *St. John*. In that year, 1764, a Rhode Island brig came into the bay, discharged her cargo and put to sea again. The cargo was seized; then the *St. John* chased and took the brig as a prize. A war might have started then and there if the British had not sent a good-sized man-of-war into the bay.

Next, in 1765, another British navy vessel based at Newport, the *Maidstone,* stopped a brig coming in from Africa. All of the brig's crew were taken off and impressed by force into the navy. Serving as a sailor in the British navy was often a horrible fate, since captains of men-of-war were notoriously vicious and brutal. That night a mob in Newport seized one of the *Maidstone*'s boats, dragged it through the streets and burned it on the common.

Then, in 1769, a third British warship, the *Liberty* (her very name must have infuriated the Rhode Island patriots), captured a brig and a sloop from Connecticut in Rhode Island waters and brought them into Newport. That night a mob boarded her, forced the crew to go ashore, cut her cables and let her drift into the harbor. Then they cut down her masts and threw her guns overboard. She finally grounded on an island, where the mob set her afire and burned her.

These armed British vessels were by no means completely successful in stopping the smuggling. The Rhode Island sea captains knew Narragansett Bay far better than the skippers of the warships, and they led the Britishers a merry chase through the three main passages in and out of the bay, slipping through straits and ducking into hidden coves. More ships got their cargoes in and out of port than were stopped and searched.

Then came the incident of the *Gaspee* in 1772, which brought Britain and America close to war. She was an armed

British schooner mounting eight guns. Her commander, Lieutenant William Dudington, was a haughty, insolent officer who was determined to stop the smuggling, no matter what means he had to use.

The *Gaspee* began stopping everything afloat in Narragansett Bay. When Dudington boarded a ship he did not bother to show his authority from the British government to search her. He even stopped little boats carrying farm produce to markets on the shores of the bay and its islands. Often Dudington would seize perfectly legal cargo and send it to Boston to be investigated, so that the captain and owners would be tried there if it turned out to be smuggled goods.

The people of Newport were outraged. Governor Joseph Wanton of Rhode Island protested to Dudington's superior officer, Admiral John Montagu, commanding a British naval squadron at Boston. The admiral, a coarse, harsh man, not only approved Lieutenant Dudington's actions, but threatened to hang the people of Newport as pirates if they tried to rescue a seized ship.

That was enough for one bold, clever Rhode Island sea dog. Captain Benjamin Lindsey of the schooner *Hannah* knew every passage, strait, inlet and cove in Narragansett Bay. What was more, he knew every shoal and sand bar, and just how the tides ran so that he could have navigated the *Hannah* anywhere in its waters at midnight in the dark of the moon. He decided to "fix Dudington's clock," as the saying of that time went, and put an end to his oppressions once and for all.

Captain Lindsey brought his schooner from New York into Newport on June 8, 1772. He discharged cargo there and set out the next day for Providence in full view of the *Gaspee*. Lieutenant Dudington ordered his ship under way and gave chase.

Near Warwick, below Providence, Namquit Point sticks

out into the bay. Foxy Captain Lindsey, instead of passing it, veered his vessel toward shore as if he were seeking some refuge. The *Gaspee* followed.

Suddenly Captain Lindsey changed course and rounded Namquit Point. He knew there was shoal water there, just deep enough to let his schooner pass, but not the heavier, armed *Gaspee,* especially since the tide had been ebbing for two hours.

His plan worked perfectly. The *Gaspee,* close on his heels, ran hard aground on the sand bar, while the *Hannah* sailed blithely on into Providence. There Lindsey went to a patriotic merchant, John Brown, and told him the *Gaspee* was stuck fast off Namquit Point. She would not be free until well after midnight, when the incoming flood tide would be high enough to float her off.

Brown had eight of the biggest longboats in the harbor assembled at a waterfront wharf, their oars and rowlocks muffled. Then, after sunset, a man went through the streets of Providence beating a drum, crying the news about the *Gaspee,* and inviting volunteers to join a raiding party.

In 1839 the last survivor of the raid that night of June 9, 1772, Captain Ephraim Bowen, told the story of his part in it. Since he was eighty-six years old in 1839, he would have been a boy of nine or ten at the time of the raid. He made one or two mistakes in his story, yet taking part in such a famous affair would have made a deep and lasting impression on a boy, and his story seems clear and believable.

"About 9 P.M.," he said, "I took my father's musket and my powder horn and bullets and went to Mr. James Sabin's, the rendezvous [it was probably a waterfront tavern]. I found the southeast room full of people, where I loaded my gun." He added that in the kitchen they were melting metal (lead or perhaps pewter) and pouring it into bullet molds. About ten o'clock orders were given to embark in the longboats.

Captain John B. Hopkins (another of the famous Hopkins family, Esek's son) was in command of young Bowen's boat. Others he remembered were Captain Abraham Whipple and Benjamin Dunn.

When the boats were within about sixty yards of the *Gaspee,* a sentinel aboard her called out twice, "Who comes there?" but there was no answer. Then Lieutenant Dudington, in his shirtsleeves, appeared. He also hailed the boats, but received no answer until the second time he did so.

Then Captain Whipple roared, "I am the sheriff of this county of Kent. I am come for the commander of this vessel, and have him I will, dead or alive, so surrender!" And with each sentence he cursed Lieutenant Dudington.

A young man named Joseph Bucklin, who did not have a musket, was standing beside young Bowen. "Eph," he said, "reach me your gun and I can kill that fellow."

Bowen obeyed and Bucklin fired. Dudington fell. "I have killed the rascal!" exclaimed Bucklin.

But Dudington was not dead. The longboats came alongside the *Gaspee* and the raiding party boarded her. All her crew who were on deck fled below for their lives. The Rhode Islanders found Dudington seated in his cabin, bleeding badly. One of the patriots, John Mawney, had been studying surgery several years. He found the bullet had lodged in the British lieutenant's groin. He put compresses, pads of folded linen, into the wound to stop the bleeding, and then bandaged it.

Dudington was gently lowered into one of the longboats. Then all except one of them set out for shore. The leaders of the raid remained aboard only long enough to set the *Gaspee* afire. Then, as she burned to the water's edge, this last longboat returned to Providence.

Of course there was a great uproar over what had happened. Not only had a vessel of the British navy been destroyed, but she had been fired on and her commander

wounded, and this was an act of war. There was a long investigation. The King's Council ordered the Rhode Island government to turn over all who had taken part in the *Gaspee* affair for trial in London. But strangely, no one in all Rhode Island could remember anything about it or who was in it. Governor Wanton, who later turned out to be a Tory, loyal to England, offered a reward of £100 sterling for information leading to the raiders' arrest, but no one claimed it, and nothing was ever done about the *Gaspee*.

But war was very near now, and the patriots of Rhode Island knew it was coming. Several groups of young patriots organized volunteer companies to arm themselves, drill and get ready for war. Among these companies was one called the Kentish Guards. In its ranks marched a private named Nathanael Greene.

Nathanael was quite a distinguished young man. The Greene family owned two ironworks and he was now running one of them in Coventry, and had recently been elected

The burning of the Gaspee *off Namquit Point*

to the General Assembly. He had been proposed as an officer of the Kentish Guards, but he had a slight limp caused by a fall when he was a child. It had not kept him from becoming a star athlete and did not handicap him in any way, but some of the company leaders pooh-poohed the idea of an officer who limped. So Nathanael enlisted as a private.

Nathanael was a most unusual young fellow. He was born near Warwick, Rhode Island, had five brothers and two half-brothers, and his Quaker father owned one of the Greene family ironworks which made ships' anchors, and also a gristmill and sawmill.

Nathanael had a great thirst for knowledge. His father felt that if his sons knew the "three R's"—reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic—they would need no more to help him in his business. But Nathanael convinced his father that he should have more from a tutor in East Greenwich.

Even that was not enough. "I feel the mists of ignorance to surround me," he once wrote. In his father's forge he made little ships' anchors and other toys from cast-off scraps of iron. A shopkeeper in the big town of Newport across the bay was glad to buy all Nathanael could supply. He bought books with every penny of the money he earned. Among them were a few on military science, which he eagerly devoured.

Nathanael loved to dance, but this was forbidden by the Quaker religion. One night when he was just a lad he sneaked out to a barn dance. Coming home very late, he saw in the moonlight his father, carrying a horsewhip and striding back and forth under the open bedroom window Nathanael had forgotten to close.

Before his father saw him, Nathanael circled around and managed to reach the other side of the house unobserved. There, he remembered, was a bundle of shingles. He stuffed some of them inside the back of his shirt and breeches, then crept around to the road and advanced to meet his father.

When Nathanael confessed he had been to a dance, his father gave him a severe whipping, but the young man, protected by the shingles, did not suffer as much as he let his parent think. While he should not be praised for deceiving his father, the story shows what a resourceful young fellow he was, always able to make the best of a situation, whether it was good or bad. He was to use that ability often during a career which would make him famous.

When the Quakers found out that Nathanael had joined the Kentish Guards, he had to choose between the army and the family religion, since the Quakers did not believe in war of any kind. He respected these principles, but he decided his patriotism must come first, and he left the Quaker Church.

Private Greene would advance in his military profession, in fact probably faster to high rank in one swift jump than any other officer in the American Revolution. And now that war was about to begin.

chapter 8

RHODE ISLAND FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM

The news of the battles at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, reached Rhode Island that same evening. In Coventry, Nathanael Greene mounted a swift horse and galloped headlong through the night to East Greenwich. At daybreak the next morning the Kentish Guards were marching toward Boston.

Before they reached the Rhode Island border, however, a messenger sent by Governor Wanton overtook them and ordered them back. Wanton's excuse was that the Minute Men in Massachusetts had things well under control, and the Rhode Island troops were not needed.

The Rhode Island General Assembly had different ideas. Its members already suspected the governor of being a Tory. They promptly voted to raise a brigade of fifteen hundred militia. A little later they demanded that Wanton sign an oath of allegiance to the patriot cause. When he refused, they turned him out of the governor's office.

When the Rhode Island brigade marched for Cambridge, where the ragged, untrained American army had its headquarters, Nathanael Greene, mounted on a horse, rode at its head. He had been appointed brigadier general to command

the Rhode Islanders. Thus, in one mighty leap, he had risen from private to a general's rank.

In the American army's camp, outside Boston, Greene found a disheartening situation. The army was not only untrained and poorly equipped for fighting, but it was disobedient, thieving and shiftless. The men obeyed their officers only when they felt like it. If they tired of life in the camp they went home. They were dirty and lived in miserable, ramshackle huts. The nearest thing to a commander of the army was General Artemas Ward, head of the Massachusetts troops, but whatever allegiance and obedience the soldiers did give was to their own officers.

Greene's brigade was encamped on Jamaica Plain. He resolved that his men, at least, should be real soldiers. He had good officers. Among them were his cousin, Major Christopher Greene, his oldest and best friend, Captain Sam Ward, Colonel James Varnum, who had been captain of the Kentish Guards, and other dependable old friends. Together they set to work.

Greene enforced strict discipline, punished captured deserters, those who disobeyed orders or shirked their duties and other wrongdoers. He drilled the brigade constantly. The men were made to keep themselves clean, and their muskets and other weapons, too, ready for action. Tight, comfortable shelters were built to prepare for winter. The brigade's camp was a model of neatness.

The American army's plan was to keep General Thomas Gage's British army bottled up in Boston. When the patriot army was strong enough, it would attack the town and try to drive the enemy out by sea.

But some American officers could see no chance that this rabble of farmers, fishermen and workmen could drive battle-seasoned British Regulars out of Boston. They were too discouraged to try to put their troops in fighting trim, beaten before they started to fight. Many of them came to Nathanael

Nathanael Greene

Greene's camp to jeer at his efforts, but what they saw made them stay to ask his help and advice in training their own men.

Greene realized that there were officers in the American camp who had fought in the French and Indian War and knew far more about warfare than he did. In the councils at headquarters in Cambridge he listened rather than expressed his opinions. He learned much in this way, nor did he forget any of it.

Nathanael Greene made many new friends during the siege of Boston. One was a very fat young man, Henry Knox,

who was in charge of the artillery. He had been a bookseller in Boston, so the two had much in common in their love of books. Like Greene, Knox had learned all he knew about military science from books. They became lifelong friends, and both went on to become famous, Knox as the first Secretary of War of the United States.

Greene had a bitter disappointment when the battle of Bunker Hill was fought while he was absent on leave in Rhode Island for a few days. But most of his troops were held in reserve that day, and only a few got into action when the battle was nearly over.

Greene never forgot the day of July 3, 1775, when General George Washington took command in Cambridge of what was now called the Continental Army. Washington became his idol, and he the Commander-in-Chief's most trusted officer. Greene was generally considered the second greatest general of the Revolution after Washington himself.

Greene had another disappointment in store. In May, 1775, Ethan Allen and his band of Green Mountain Boys, from what is now Vermont, swooped down on Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain and captured it from the British, the first important American victory of the war. There were plenty of big cannon at Ticonderoga.

In the winter of 1775–76, Henry Knox and a picked detachment overcame almost insurmountable difficulties in dragging some of these heavy guns on ox sleds over the mountains, through deep snow and deeper drifts, over ledges and through tangled underbrush to the American camp, a distance of over two hundred miles. The cannon completed the ring of fortifications on the hills surrounding Boston.

That spring of 1776, General Howe, who had succeeded Gage, prepared to attack the Americans. The patriots planned a counterattack on the city. Greene and his troops were among those poised for the assault. But at the last moment, owing largely to the Americans' supply of cannon from

Ticonderoga, General Howe changed his mind, embarked his army in transports and sailed away, first to Halifax and then to New York.

The Americans had won an important victory, but Greene was still a general who had never been in action. Yet he would see plenty of fighting in the next five years, beginning soon in New York. There he would make the greatest and only serious blunder of his military career. He advised Washington that the Americans could hold Fort Washington, high above the Hudson River on Manhattan Island.

The British took it in a bloody disaster for the Americans, who lost fifty killed and two thousand five hundred captured. And it nearly lost the Revolution for America. Greene never forgot that lesson or repeated such a mistake, and he did not lose Washington's confidence.

Later, after taking command of the disorganized and beaten Southern Continental Army, he would lead the British general, Lord Cornwallis, in a chase from South Carolina all the way across North Carolina. When he had drawn Cornwallis too far from his base to obtain supplies, and the British general had destroyed most of his baggage in a vain attempt to catch the Americans, Greene turned and met him in a disastrous "victory" for the enemy at Guilford Courthouse. That started a British retreat, which ended finally when Cornwallis fell into a trap on the Virginia peninsula of Yorktown. There Washington forced his army to surrender and won the Revolution.

While Nathanael Greene was at the camp outside Boston, he had to bid farewell to his cousin Christopher and his dear friend "Sammy" Ward. Colonel Benedict Arnold arrived in Cambridge with a force of Connecticut militia. The Americans had a great plan to invade Canada. If Montreal and Quebec could be taken, the great northern empire Britain had won from France in the French and Indian War would fall into American hands.

The plan was for Brigadier General Richard Montgomery to lead an army from New York into Canada by way of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River. It was to capture Montreal and then go on down the St. Lawrence River to Quebec. Meanwhile, Benedict Arnold was to march through the unknown wilderness of Maine and Canada and meet Montgomery at Quebec.

Arnold enlarged his force in Cambridge. Tough, fearless Daniel Morgan and his sharpshooting Virginia riflemen joined him. So did some Pennsylvania troops and New England men, including several companies of Rhode Island soldiers, commanded by Christopher Greene and having Sam Ward's company among them.

All went well with Richard Montgomery's army. It came down the Richelieu, capturing two British forts there, and reached Montreal, which surrendered without a fight. Mongomery then went down the St. Lawrence to Quebec.

With Arnold's men it was a different story. They left Cambridge September 13, 1775, and went by water to the mouth of the Kennebec River in Maine. Then, on September 24, they plunged into the wilderness.

The journey was a nightmare. The expedition's flat-bottomed boats called bateaux had to be dragged around the many rapids and falls through almost impassable forest. At the upper region of the Kennebec there was a long "carry" or portage overland to the Dead River through swamps and forest choked with deadfall—brush and fallen trees. A driving rainstorm turned the Dead River into a raging flood. Boats were smashed, and much of the precious food supply lost. It became bitter cold and the first snow fell.

When their provisions gave out, the starving men chewed the rawhide of their bullet pouches. Lieutenant Colonel Roger Enos and his Connecticut troops fell behind and then vanished. They had voted to turn back and go home. But the Rhode Islanders struggled along bravely with the rest.

Benedict Arnold's men worked against the flood on the Dead River

At last they reached the River Chaudière, flowing toward the St. Lawrence. Here were farms owned by French-Canadian peasants or *habitants,* who were glad to sell food to Americans going to fight the ancient enemies of the French. On November 9 the force reached Quebec and was soon united with Montgomery's army.

Then came the long siege of Quebec in the terrible Canadian winter. The mighty fortress stood inside the walled city, perched high on a great rock above the ice-filled St. Lawrence. The American army camped on the plains outside the walls where Wolfe had beaten Montcalm. But British Lieutenant General Sir Guy Carleton, governor general of Canada, did not repeat Montcalm's mistake and march his army out to fight. The Americans could only hope to starve the British out, before spring brought ships from England with more soldiers and supplies. Meanwhile, they bombarded the city with their artillery, which was too light to do much damage.

At last Montgomery decided to storm the city. At the base of the three-hundred-foot cliff, two passages led into the Lower Town, a collection of buildings huddled into a small space between the rock and the river. Montgomery was to lead his army over the narrow passage along the river at the foot of the cliff. Arnold, with his force, would circle the other side of the rock along another narrow passage. When they met and the Lower Town was captured, the two forces would make the desperate attempt of assaulting the Upper Town, where the fortress stood, taking a steep road which went up the cliff.

On the night of December 31, 1775, the attack was launched in a howling blizzard. Christopher Greene, Sam Ward and the rest of the Rhode Island men went with Benedict Arnold through the passage to the Lower Town under the brow of the rock on the opposite side from the St. Lawrence. They struggled against the gale and the snow, driven with stinging force into their faces. Many of their

muskets became so wet they could not be fired and could be used only as clubs.

Benedict Arnold was a brilliant officer and fighter. He proved it that night, and later at the battle of Saratoga, where he was largely responsible for that great American victory. If he had not turned traitor to his country (and while it does not excuse him he had reason to be resentful when less able men were promoted over him), he and not Nathanael Greene would probably have been considered the second greatest general of the Revolution.

Arnold led his men in a reckless assault on a high barrier of heavy timber which blocked the way. They took it in a desperate hand-to-hand fight in which many Americans were killed. But Arnold, badly wounded in the leg, had to be carried back to the American camp. Nevertheless, he had a worthy successor to his command, Daniel Morgan from Virginia.

Morgan led the assault on the second and last barrier and took it. Then the Americans swarmed into the Lower Town. If the Virginian had not waited there for Montgomery's army, he and his force could almost certainly have taken Quebec themselves. The road up the cliff was blocked by another barrier, but it was not guarded. The American attack had taken the British completely by surprise. In the Upper Town there was only confusion, with Carleton's troops in no condition to fight.

But Montgomery's army never came. In the passage along the river was another barrier, with a few guards nearby. American carpenters sawed a hole in it. Heedless of his aides, who would have held him back, Montgomery was the first to burst through it. A British musket cracked and the American general fell dead. Behind him the leaderless troops hesitated; then someone shouted an order to retreat, and they did.

By the time Morgan gave up hope that the other army would come, it was too late. The British regiments had been

Abraham Whipple

organized. They poured down into the Lower Town. Morgan could only surrender or have his whole force destroyed.

Christopher Greene and Sam Ward were among the prisoners herded up to the Upper Town and jailed. They spent many weeks in prison, but were finally exchanged to rejoin Nathanael Greene and his troops in the fighting farther south in New York and New Jersey.

There was sea fighting, too, for the colonies to face in this war against Britain, and it was only natural that Rhode Island and its sea dogs should take the lead in it. Since the colonies had no navy, Rhode Island moved swiftly to build

one of its own. By July, 1775, it had two armed vessels afloat, the *Washington,* mounting ten four-pounder cannon and fourteen swivels, and the *Katy,* with twelve guns.

Captain Abraham Whipple commanded this two-ship navy. It met the armed British navy dispatch boat *Rose* off Conanicut Island and gave her a good beating. Afterward the enraged commander of the *Rose,* Captain James Wallace, wrote Whipple a letter in which he said: "You, Abraham Whipple, on the 10th June, 1772, burned His Majesty's vessel, the *Gaspee,* and I will hang you to the yardarm."

Whipple answered him in a letter that was as brief as it was defiant:

> Sir:
>
> Always catch a man before you hang him.
>
> ABRAHAM WHIPPLE.

That small sea battle was all the action on land or sea which Rhode Island was to see until 1777, after the British general, Sir Henry Clinton, captured the state in November, 1776, with six thousand troops, who remained in and around Newport for three years. The Rhode Islanders did fortify the entrance to Providence harbor, however, in the summer of 1775, and kept the harbor and town defended against possible attack by a number of British warships, which were based at Newport and controlled that town. Later that year Rhode Island troops were stationed at several places in the colony, and gun batteries were erected for defense.

But more than the little navy Rhode Island could furnish would be needed. That was going to be up to the Continental Congress. The work of convincing the Congress to create an American navy would fall largely upon one Rhode Islander, and commanding it and putting the ships into action, upon his brother. Their names were Stephen and Esek Hopkins.

chapter 9

"THESE UNITED COLONIES"

The family of William Hopkins, Jr., and his wife Ruth included four sons who lived to grow up. All but one of them followed the sea. Stephen Hopkins did not, but more than any other man he deserves the title of Father of the American Navy.

Stephen Hopkins was one of Rhode Island's most distinguished men, yet he seems to have gotten most of his education by himself. There were no schools near the farm where he was born in 1707 in the wilderness west of Narragansett Bay near Chapumiscook, which later became Scituate. One thing he was taught was surveying, by his uncle, Joseph Wilkinson, a surveyor himself.

Yet Stephen Hopkins was so well thought of for his intelligence and wisdom, that for ten years he was chosen moderator to preside over the Scituate town meeting, and also became president of the town council. Then, in 1732, he was elected one of the village's two representatives to the Rhode Island General Assembly. He continued to serve as one almost continuously until 1741, when he was chosen as its speaker or presiding officer.

More honors awaited him. He was not a lawyer, but he

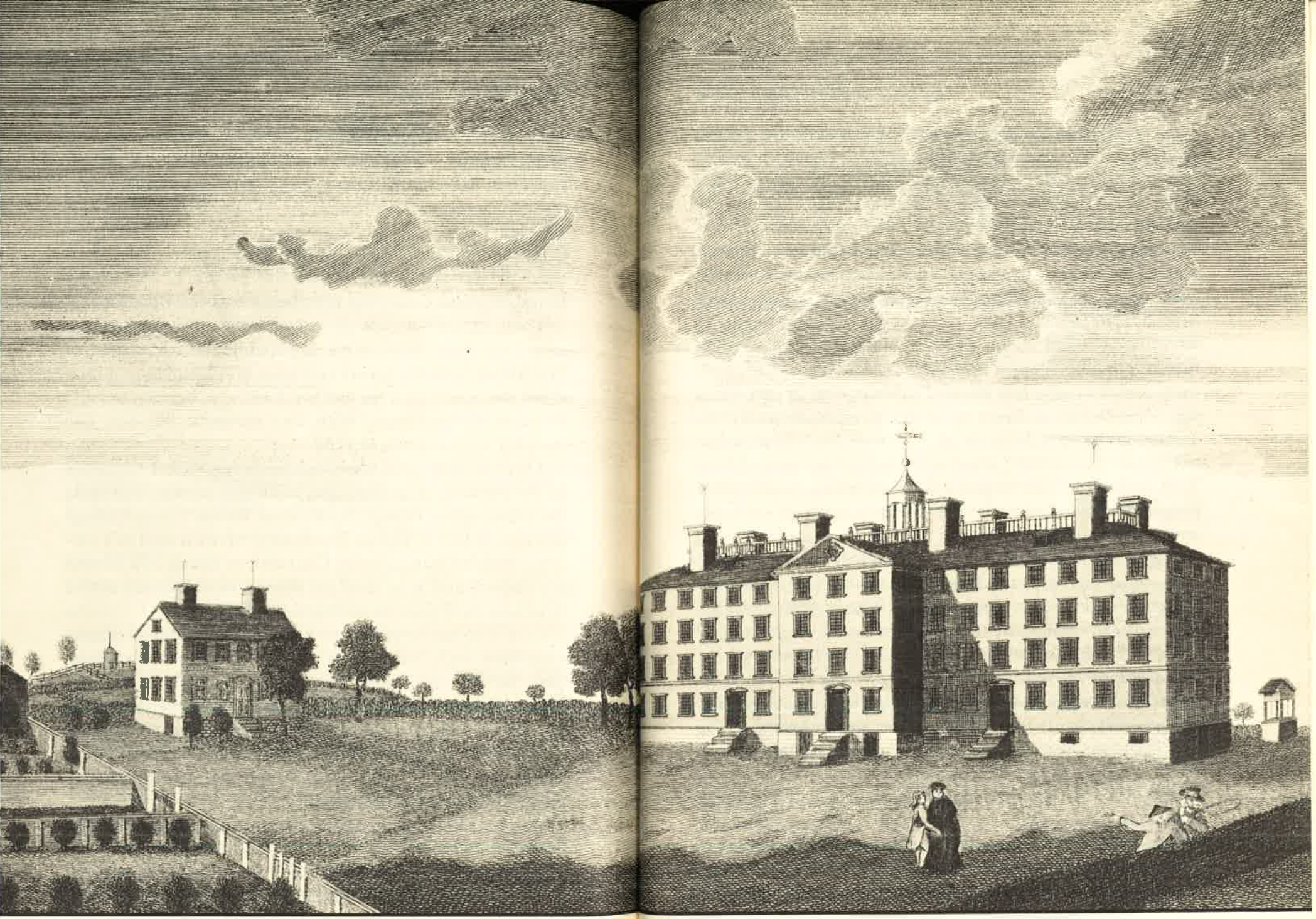
came to know the law and rose high in it. Perhaps this was partly because lawyers were not popular in New England, and there were few of them, since the people thought they did justice more harm than good. While Stephen Hopkins was still in Scituate, he became a justice of the Court of Common Pleas and also a justice of the peace. Soon afterward he was appointed an assistant justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court and later became its chief justice.

Then, in 1755, he was elected governor of the colony and served for three more terms. Meanwhile, he had moved to Providence with his family and went into business as a merchant associated with his brother Esek, who became notable in quite another way. With two partners, Stephen also founded an ironworks in 1769.

This eminent man also worked to improve Providence by the building of new bridges, roads and schools, especially the colony's first college, then called Rhode Island College and now famed as Brown University. And his skill as a surveyor enabled him to prove Connecticut wrong in a boundary dispute and save land for Rhode Island which would otherwise have gone to its neighbor to the west.

So it was not strange that when Committees of Correspondence were established in the colonies to exchange ideas on how to oppose English tyranny and gain their rightful liberties, Stephen Hopkins was named chairman of the Rhode Island committee. Nor was it strange that he, with former Governor Samuel Ward, father of Nathanael Greene's best friend, should be Rhode Island's delegates to the First Continental Congress.

The letters which made the rounds of the Committees of Correspondence proved so successful in bringing the colonies closer together that a meeting of delegates from all of them was suggested. The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in September, 1774. It was attended by representatives of all the colonies except Georgia.



Rhode Island College, which later became Brown University

Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward left Rhode Island, each in his own carriage with his personal servant. Such a journey in those days was no easy one. Even the main highways were frightful—rough, with deep ruts, dusty in dry weather, morasses of mud in wet. The springless carriages bumped, jolted and rattled. Some streams had to be forded; others were crossed on rickety wooden bridges or by ferries. Some inns had excellent accommodations, while others ranged from fair to awful, and a traveler was often forced to sleep two in a bed with a stranger. No doubt such eminent travelers as Hopkins and Ward were well taken care of, however. And at last the two Rhode Islanders were ferried across the broad Delaware River to the great city of Philadelphia.

They must have been awed, for while Philadelphia was not founded until 1682, it had outdistanced Boston and New York to become the largest city in America, with 30,000 people. It also led as the largest center of trade, as a seaport and in shipbuilding.

Hopkins and Ward would have been half deafened by the busy, noisy city with its clatter of cargo-laden wagons over the cobblestones of the waterfront. The elegance of rich merchants in coats, waistcoats and breeches of bright-colored satin, velvet and broadcloth would have outshone anything they had seen in Boston or in passing through New York. So would that of the ladies, some rolling by in fine coaches, chariots and chaises with wheels whose spokes flashed in the sun. But there would have been many Quakers, too, in their somber dress and broad-brimmed hats.

The First Continental Congress met in splendid, newly built Carpenters' Hall. It was a great experience for both Rhode Islanders, for now they could become personally acquainted with distinguished patriots from all over America—men like Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, Christopher Gadsden of South Carolina, and the Adamses of Massachusetts—John, the lawyer, who would

one day be President of the United States, and Samuel, who had been called the Great Incendiary because the fierceness of his writings had lighted and kept alive the fire that was to bring on the Revolution and independence.

Once the Congress was organized, Stephen Hopkins was appointed to a committee which was to "state the rights of the colonies in general and the several instances in which those rights are violated or infringed, and the means most proper to be pursued for a restoration of them." In this first Congress, the question of independence from Britain was not brought up. All the delegates wanted was to gain for Americans their rights and liberties as English subjects, and an end to the laws which were choking American trade. Although independence was in Sam Adams' mind, he did not mention it.

Stephen Hopkins, who was never afraid to speak out, and could be blunt sometimes, was probably not thinking of independence when he told the delegates:

> Powder and ball will decide this question. The gun and bayonet alone will finish the contest in which we are engaged, and any of you who cannot bring your minds to this mode of adjusting the question had better retire in time.

The war he predicted would begin before the next Continental Congress met.

Stephen Hopkins had written a pamphlet, *The Rights of the Colonies Examined,* and had sent copies to most of the colonies. The declaration of rights drawn up by his committee and approved by the Congress was pretty much the same as what Hopkins had written. It said that the colonists had the same rights and liberties as all freeborn Englishmen, and recommended a strong protest against the laws which required the colonies to trade only with Britain and British possessions, the oppressive enforcement of the Sugar Act,

Stephen Hopkins

and the imposing of taxes upon the colonies without their consent, since they were not represented in Parliament.

Both Rhode Island delegates voted for this declaration, for a petition to the King asking him to restore their rights, and for another petition to the people of England. They also supported the most important action of the Congress, establishing the Continental Association. Under it the colonies represented at the Congress agreed not to import British goods or to use any imported after December 1, 1774. Also, they would not export anything to Britain or British possessions if their grievances had not been satisfied by September 10, 1775.

The Rhode Island General Assembly staunchly supported these actions. When Hopkins and Ward returned and reported to the Assembly, it promptly voted to approve them all.

By the time the Second Continental Congress met on May

10, 1775, the colonies were already at war with Britain. The siege of Boston had begun, and on that very day, May 10, Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys captured Fort Ticonderoga. There was still no strong movement for independence in Congress, but it was coming, and the State House in Philadelphia, where the second Congress met, would come to be known as Independence Hall.

Now Congress had to raise an army from all the colonies, equip, arm, feed and pay it, and most difficult of all, to raise the money for all this. The trouble was that while the colonies were all involved in the war, they were not united as a nation. Congress could not impose taxes upon all of them to pay for the war. Each still had to decide what its own share should be.

Meanwhile, the colonies still had no navy. It was Rhode Island that prodded Congress into doing something about it. On August 26, 1775, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a resolution directing its two delegates to use their influence with Congress to have a fleet of cruisers established to protect the colonies' sea trade. It was badly needed, for England's navy was a mighty one, well able to prey upon defenseless merchant ships.

Congress appointed a committee to look into it. Its members included Stephen Hopkins and John Adams.

From the first, Stephen Hopkins had liked short, chunky John Adams, whose quick temper could turn his ruddy complexion brighter red and make his eyes seem to shoot sparks of blue fire. And although he was only forty, Adams had taken a special liking to the distinguished, fine-looking, sixty-eight-year-old Rhode Islander, whose gray hair fell to his shoulders. Hopkins, too, could speak plainly and with great force when necessary. A lifelong friendship between them began in those days of the Continental Congress, though Hopkins would not live to see John Adams become President.

Later, Adams wrote:

> The pleasantest part of the labors for the four years I spent in Congress from 1774 to 1778 was on the Committee on Naval Affairs. Mr. Lee and Mr. Gadsden were sensible men, but Governor Hopkins of Rhode Island . . . kept us all alive. Upon business, his experience and judgment were very useful.

Indeed, Stephen Hopkins was a power on this committee, and John Adams his most influential supporter in getting an American navy started. The committee recommended that thirteen warships be built, and Congress approved the measure on December 13, 1775. Eight vessels were immediately assigned to shipyards. Two were to be built in Rhode Island.

When it came to choosing a commander in chief of the new navy, the seafaring Hopkins family of Rhode Island could hardly be overlooked. Stephen Hopkins favored the most famous of them, his brother Esek. On December 22, 1775, Esek Hopkins was appointed Commander in Chief of the Navy. In this position he would hold equal rank with General George Washington, Commander in Chief of the Army.

Except for Stephen, the boys on the Hopkins farm in Scituate left home when they were quite young, since they could not stand a life in which there was no adventure or even excitement. All went to sea, but it was Esek who became the best known.

He was now fifty-seven and most of the forty years since he had left Scituate had been spent at sea. He had shipped out as a hand before the mast, but he was soon captain of his own ship. He sailed in merchant vessels on long voyages to Africa, the Far East and the West Indies. He commanded privateers which took valuable prizes.

Esek Hopkins

In short, Esek Hopkins was a real tarpaulin, as the saying went in those days about a long-experienced sailorman. He puts one in mind of the old sailor's ditty:

> *Every hair of me head's a rope yarn,*
> *Every bone in me body's a spar,*
> *Every tooth in me head's a marlinspike,*
> *And when I spits, I spits tar!*

Yet there is nothing of the tough, bullying ship's officer, often called a bucko, in a portrait made of Esek Hopkins while he was still quite a young man. It shows him as a handsome fellow with long, dark, curly locks flowing out from under his three-cornered hat. From his strong mouth and

resolute look, he seems like a man of firmness, determination and courage.

In January, 1776, the first eight warships were ready. They were the full-rigged ships (square sails on all three masts) *Alfred,* mounting twenty 9-pounder and four smaller guns, and the *Columbus,* twenty 9-pounder guns; the brigs (two masts with square sails) *Andrew Doria* and *Cabot,* with fourteen 4-pounder guns each; the sloops *Providence,* twelve 8-pounder and six 1-pounder guns, and *Hornet,* ten guns; schooners (triangular sails with two or more masts) *Wasp,* eight 4-pounders, and *Fly,* a tender carrying the extra provisions and ammunition and mounting eight guns. The captain of the *Columbus* was that tough and able sailor Abraham Whipple. The *Cabot* was commanded by Esek Hopkins' son John.

On a cold morning of that January, Esek Hopkins took command of his flagship, the *Alfred,* in Philadelphia. A young man of twenty-eight, the ship's first lieutenant, hoisted a yellow flag to the masthead. Both the flag and the officer were destined to become famous. The flag had a coiled rattlesnake on it and the words, "Don't Tread on Me." The first lieutenant's name was John Paul Jones.

The fleet sailed southward and attacked the capital of the British-held Bahama Islands, Nassau, on New Providence Island. A landing party of two hundred marines and fifty sailors easily captured the smaller of its two forts. Then Hopkins issued a proclamation to the people promising them no harm if they yielded, and forced the governor to surrender the larger fort.

It was a treasure-trove of what America needed most in the war. The victors captured 88 cannon (nine were enormous 36-pounders), 15 of the deadly, short-barreled cannon called mortars, 5,458 shells, 11,000 rounds of shot and 15 barrels of gunpowder.

Then the fleet sailed for Newport to land some of the

John Paul Jones and his flag

spoil. In Long Island Sound it captured two armed British ships and two merchantmen. Later, during the night, an unknown ship replied to a hail with a smashing broadside. In turn, the *Cabot, Alfred* and *Andrew Doria* fought with her, although it was too dark to see their target well. The *Cabot* was disabled by the stranger's broadsides.

When dawn broke they saw she was the *Glasgow,* a British frigate, of the second most powerful class of warships, mounting twenty-four big cannon. The *Alfred* then closed in, aided by some of the others. For a time they slugged it out and might have sunk the enemy ship, for she was badly damaged, was forced to flee, and finally had to be sent to England for repairs. But no doubt Hopkins knew Britain could more easily afford to lose several of her frigates than America a single one of her fleet. So he gave up the chase, though the Americans did capture the *Glasgow*'s tender, and put into Newport with her and the other prizes.

The American colonies went wild at the news of Hopkins' capture of New Providence. He became a great hero. In April, 1776, Congress commended him. But within two months it summoned him to answer charges that he had not done his duty properly on the cruise.

His troubles came mainly from the owners of privateers. Since these ships offered their crews larger rewards than the navy could pay its sailors, Hopkins had had a great deal of trouble enlisting men for the fleet; and because the colonies now had a navy, he tried to stop privateering. This made him enemies, and the tales they circulated caused people to begin asking why all his warships could not have sunk the *Glasgow*.

Captain Dudley Saltonstall of the *Alfred* and Abraham Whipple were also tried before the Marine Committee. They were acquitted, but Hopkins' case was referred to Congress, which publicly censured him, although he was allowed to keep his command.

What finally happened to Esek Hopkins came after the time covered by this book, but it should be mentioned that his enemies later brought more charges against him. He was investigated for neglecting his duties in not manning his ships quickly enough and, because he was too disgusted to answer the summons to appear before Congress, for disobeying orders. In 1778 Congress dismissed him from the naval service, a disgrace and the ruin of his career which naval historians are generally agreed he did not deserve.

While the stirring adventures of the new navy were going on, the Second Continental Congress had something even more important to consider. Tom Paine, a poor Londoner and a great lover of freedom, sailed for America in 1774. Early in 1776 he wrote a pamphlet called *Common Sense*. In it he urged the American colonies to separate from Great Britain and the "royal brute," as he called King George III. On the last page in large, heavy type were the words: THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES OF AMERICA.

Common Sense was read everywhere in the colonies. Now, wherever people gathered in Philadelphia, there was talk of independence. In the Continental Congress, John Adams was the leader of a group which favored it, and Stephen Hopkins one of his loyal supporters. Samuel Ward had died in Philadelphia on March 25, 1776, of smallpox, but his successor, William Ellery of Newport, also supported independence.

But Rhode Island did not wait for Congress to act. On May 4, 1776, the General Assembly declared the colony free and independent from Britain, two months before the Congress met.

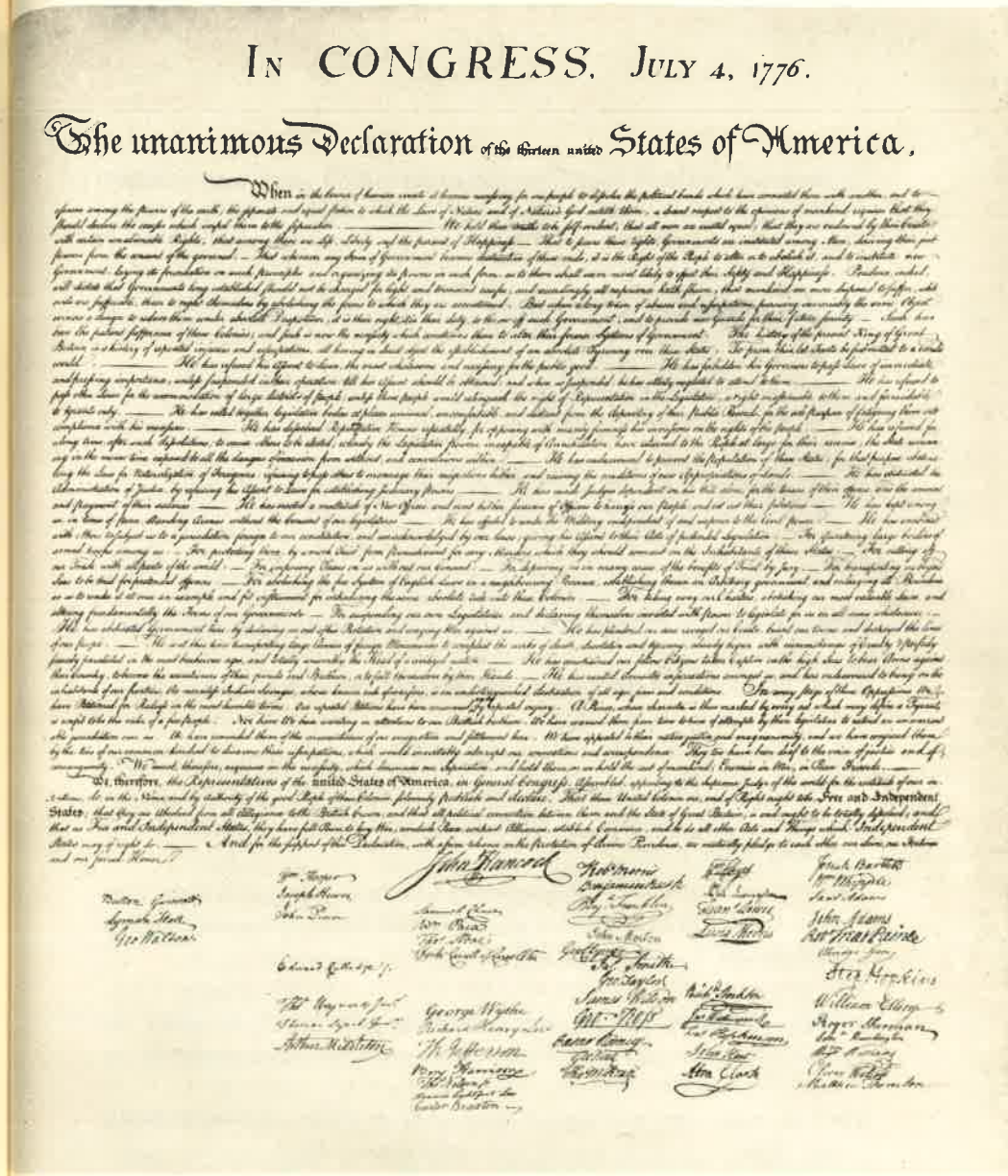
Many delegates to the Congress opposed independence. They wanted to settle the war and let the colonies remain under Britain. But at last a resolution for independence was introduced. Thomas Jefferson drew up a declaration of independence, with a committee to assist and advise him. On

July 2, 1776, a final vote was taken. Each of the thirteen colonies voted separately (Georgia was now represented in the Congress). In every case a majority of each colony's representatives voted for independence.

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence, under which the thirteen colonies became the United States of America, was proclaimed. Hopkins, who was now sixty-nine, signed it "Step. Hopkins" in a hand that was shaky but easily read. William Ellery signed in a precise, neat script with a curlicue at the end. Now Rhode Island, like the other twelve, was a state of the United States.

Some years ago a popular song was published called "Poor Little Rhode Island." Little she was, but never to be pitied. As a colony she had a record as proud as any other. There were two black marks on it—piracy and the slave trade—but other colonies had their causes for shame. From the very first, Rhode Island had always had freedom in her government and complete religious freedom by law, of which only one other colony, Pennsylvania, could boast throughout its existence.

No, not to be pitied. As one of the thirteen new states of the United States, little Rhode Island could hold her head high.



IN CONGRESS. JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

Step. Hopkins' and Wlliam Ellery's signatures on the Declaration of Independence are in the last column

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IMPORTANT DATES

1634—First settler of Rhode Island, William Blackstone, arrives.

1636—Roger Williams, banished from Massachusetts Bay, goes to Massasoit's village of Sowams.
—Williams and five companions settle on the Seekonk River.
—Forced to move, Williams obtains a gift of land on the other side of the Seekonk from the Narragansett sachems.
—Williams and his companions found Providence.
—Settlers of Providence sign a town fellowship under which they are to be governed.
—Williams' efforts for peace with the Narragansetts and Mohegans succeed when these tribes sign a peace treaty with the New England colonies, deserting the Pequots.

1637—Narragansetts and Wampanoags officially deed the land at Providence and the surrounding country to the settlers.
—Pequot War. Connecticut army, aided by the Narragansetts, attacks the enemy's stronghold and destroys the Pequots' power.

1638—William Coddington founds Portsmouth.

1639—Coddington founds Newport.

1643—Samuel Gorton and his followers settle at Shawomet.
—Gorton and others seized and marched to Boston.
—Gorton and six others convicted of heresy by the Maasachusetts Bay General Court and jailed.

1644—Gorton and the others released.
—Roger Williams, in London, obtains a charter for Providence Plantations.
—In England, Gorton obtains an order directing Massachusetts Bay not to interfere with Shawomet; on his return he renames it Warwick for his benefactor, the Earl of Warwick.

1647—First General Assembly meets under the new charter.

1651—Coddington, in England, appointed governor of Aquidneck and Conanicut islands.
—First of Navigation Acts passed by English Parliament.

1652—In England, Williams obtains a revocation of Coddington's appointment and restoration of the original charter.

1656—First Jews to settle at Newport.

1657—Quakers come to Rhode Island.

1660—Second Navigation Act passed by Parliament.

1663—Charles II grants a new charter, reorganizing the government and officially proclaiming religious freedom in Rhode Island.

1671—First ironworks established in Rhode Island.

1675—King Philip's War begins.
—Great Swamp Fight destroys Narragansett enemies' power.

1676—Benjamin Church hunts King Philip down and the Wampanoag sachem is shot dead, ending the war.

1683—Roger Williams dies.
—All of Narragansett country, most of Rhode Island, awarded to Connecticut.

1684—All of New England united as one province.

1686—Sir Edmund Andros appointed governor of New England.

1689—Andros seized in revolt by Boston people. Revolution in England ousts James II. William and Mary allow Rhode Island's charter to stand.

1689–1697—King William's, first of colonial wars.

1702–1713—Queen Anne's War.

1733—Molasses Act passed by Parliament.

1739–1745—War with Spain.

1743–1748—King George's War.

1755–1763—French and Indian War.

1764—Sugar Act passed by Parliament, replacing the Molasses Act.

1765—Stamp Act passed by Parliament. Rhode Island resists it.

1766—Stamp Act repealed.

1767—Townshend Acts passed by Parliament.

1770—Townshend Acts repealed, except for tea tax.

1772—British naval armed schooner *Gaspee* seized, her commander wounded and vessel burned by Rhode Island patriots.

1773—Tea Act passed by Parliament.

1774—Rhode Island has its Tea Party in Providence.
—Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward attend First Continental Congress.

1775—American Revolution begins. Rhode Island brigade commanded by Nathanael Greene marches for Cambridge.

—Rhode Island General Assembly directs Hopkins and Ward to use their influence for establishment of an American navy.
—Rhode Island troops march with Arnold for Quebec.
—Rhode Island General Assembly declares the colony's independence.
—Largely through Hopkins' efforts, Congress authorizes a navy of thirteen warships.
—Esek Hopkins appointed first Commander in Chief of U.S. Navy.
—Rhode Island troops take part in unsuccessful assault on Quebec.

1776—Esek Hopkins assumes command of the first eight warships of the American navy.
—British evacuate Boston as the Americans, including Rhode Island troops, prepare to assault the city.
—American fleet captures New Providence in the Bahama Islands.
—American fleet engages in a battle with the British frigate *Glasgow* in Long Island Sound.
—Declaration of Independence debated in Second Continental Congress, with both Rhode Island delegates staunchly supporting it.
—Declaration of Independence voted on July 2.
—Declaration of Independence proclaimed on July 4.

PLACES TO VISIT

Among the many historic sites in Rhode Island which readers of this book will find of interest are:

Bristol's Colonial Homes. Many of them, going back to colonial days, stand along Bristol's streets.

Clemence-Irons House, Johnston. Built in 1679, one of the oldest Rhode Island houses still standing. Restored. Open May to mid-October. Admission 25¢.

Daggett House, Pawtucket. Built in 1685 and furnished with antiques. Open Sundays, 2–5 P.M., June through September.

Eleazar Arnold House, Lincoln. Built in 1687 and used as a tavern and court, now restored. Open June 15–October 15, closed Sunday and Monday. Admission 25¢, children 10¢.

Friends Meetinghouse, Lincoln. One of the early Quaker meetinghouses in America, built in 1703 and still in use.

Gaspee Room, Providence. Where the raid on the *Gaspee* was planned. Open Friday 2–5 P.M., except in summer.

General Varnum House, East Greenwich. Built in 1773 by Nathanael Greene's friend and colonel in his brigade. Open during summer season, Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday, 3–5 P.M., and by appointment.

Great Swamp Monument, South Kingstown. Commemorates the Great Swamp Fight in King Philip's War.

Haffenreffer Museum, Bristol. Has fine collection of Indian relics. Open June 1–August 31, Tuesday–Sunday, 1–4 P.M.; September 1–May 31, Saturday, 10 A.M.–4 P.M., Sunday, 1–4 P.M.

Nathanael Greene Homestead, Anthony. Built in 1770 by Greene when he ran the ironworks in nearby Coventry. Open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 2–5 P.M., and by appointment Closed December–February.

Old State House, Providence. Built in 1762. Here Rhode Island's General Assembly declared the colony independent from Britain on May 4, 1776, two months before the other colonies. Open weekdays.

Roger Williams Landing Spot, Providence, at Power, Williams and Gano streets. Where Williams and his followers stepped ashore to found Providence.

Roger Williams Spring, Providence. Near it, Williams' settlement was established.

Silas Casey Farm, Saunderstown. A New England farm of about 1750, preserved. Open June–September, Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, 2–5 P.M., except holidays. Admission 25¢.

Smith's Castle at Cocumscussoc, Wickford. The colonial army returned to the fort here after the Great Swamp Fight. The castle was built several years later. Open weekdays except Thursday, 10 A.M.–5 P.M., Sunday, 1–5 P.M. Admission 50¢, children 10¢.

Stephen Hopkins House, Providence. Built about 1743 by the famous governor and signer of the Declaration of Independence. Open Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.

Tomaquag Indian Museum, Hopkinton. An Indian village preserved to show how they lived.

Touro Synagogue, Newport. Oldest Jewish synagogue in America, built in 1763, replacing a still earlier one. Open June 29–Labor Day, daily except Saturday, 10 A.M.–5 P.M., Sunday until 6 P.M.

Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House, Newport. Oldest house in Newport, built in 1675, restored and furnished in seventeenth-century style. Open daily July 2–Labor Day, 10 A.M.–5 P.M. Admission 50¢, children 25¢.

Times and admission prices are subject to change without notice.

INDEX