

RHODE ISLAND HISTORY



VOLUME 39:1 FEBRUARY 1980



Photo by George Henderson, Brown University Photo Lab

Director Albert T. Klyberg and Clifford Cone, superintendent of buildings and grounds, installing the banner for the Society's first exhibition at the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House.

RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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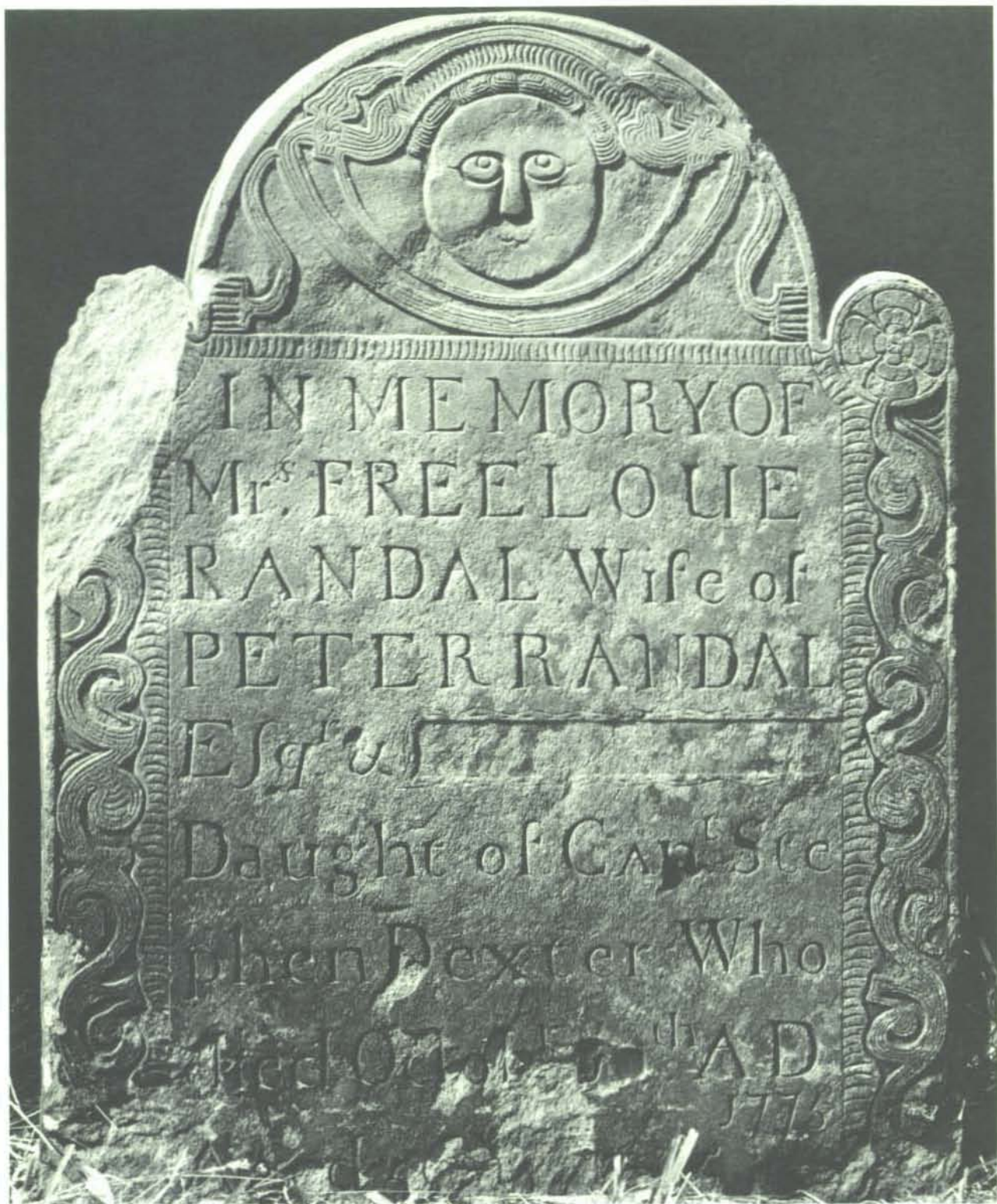
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*Freelove Randall, 1775, North Burial Ground, Providence (detail).
Stone by Seth Luther. Photograph by Daniel and Jessie Farber.*

Seth Luther, Stonecarver of the Narragansett Basin

by Vincent F. Luti*

In the quiet corners of cemeteries in Providence and in a few surrounding towns are some gravestones that have completely escaped the attention of historians and cultural antiquarians. Although these stones are clearly the work of one man, a talented and even inspired artist, they have gone unheralded. Despite this lack of recognition, the carved stones are singular and intense examples of the work of an early New England stonecarver.

The carved stones are noteworthy — striking, in fact — because they differ from other stones located in the Narragansett Basin. Artistically, the carving style is unlike other styles that were popular in the area and that have since become better known. The style of these stones is reminiscent of the massive, bold renderings of Connecticut carvers, but the geographical distribution of the stones (with a strong concentration in Providence) and the unique idiom of style point to a native carver, a Rhode Island craftsman of talent and ability.

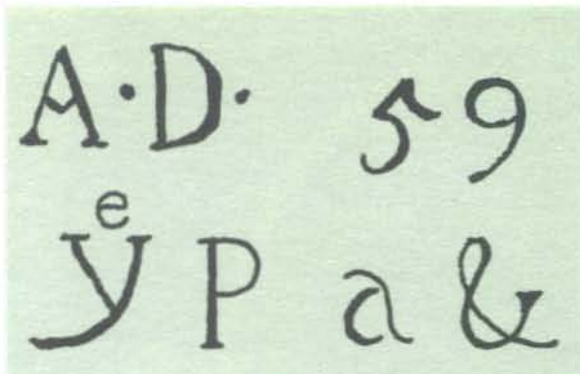
Fortunately, the identity of this carver has been recently revealed. His name was Seth Luther. Following a lead first uncovered by Harriette Forbes in her pioneering work on New England stonecarvers, I discovered Luther's name hidden in the probate records of Providence.¹ In 1756, John Anthony Angel, a Providence stonecutter, "being sick and weak of body," bequeathed his real estate and working tools to his brother-in-law, Seth Luther.² The tools were an important and valuable heirloom. In fact, when Luther wrote his own will, dated July 11, 1783, he described himself as a "housewright alias stone cutter" and left his tools to

one of his sons, Brightman, of Scituate, Rhode Island.³

Seth Luther was born in Swansea, Massachusetts, on November 23, 1709, the son of Joshua and Experience (Braman) Luther. In 1733, while living in Rehoboth, he married Mary Vorce (Vose). Apparently, he later married a Rhode Island woman, although records of this second marriage have not been found. Records do reveal, however, that he married Mrs. Esther Brightman in Portsmouth on September 25, 1740. Although he and Abiah Luther bought forty acres of land in Rehoboth in 1738, by 1742 Seth Luther had become a freeman of Rhode Island residing at Newport.⁴ Sometime during the next fourteen years, he moved to Portsmouth and probably lived there until he inherited John Anthony Angel's land in Providence.⁵ In 1757 he became a freeman of Providence and in 1764, when the boundaries of the North Burial Ground were revised, he received a grant of fifty square feet of land.⁶ During the early 1760s, his name also appeared in some Nova Scotia records as a subscriber for shares in a settlement on the Tantramar River. He may have moved to Nova Scotia, perhaps in 1763, but most likely he remained in Providence along with other subscribers who never made the journey north.⁷ He died in Providence on September 26, 1785.

Luther probably learned the art of stonecarving from John Anthony Angel, his relative and benefactor. It appears, in fact, that Angel and Luther worked together as stonecarvers, sometimes on the same stones. On certain stones dating from the

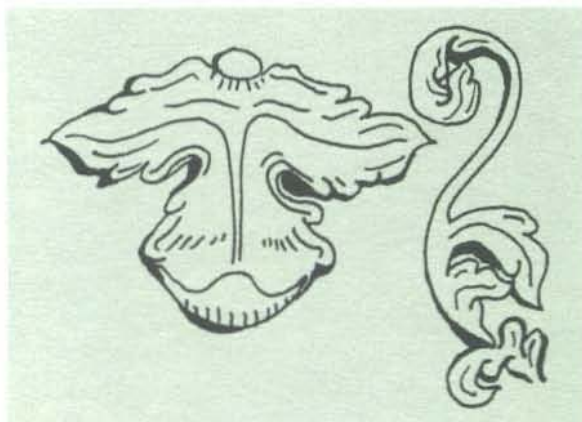
*Mr. Luti is professor of music at Southeastern Massachusetts University.



Typical lettering by John Anthony Angel. Author's sketch.

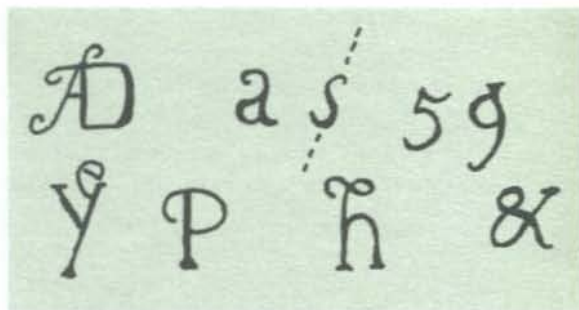
early 1750s, Angel's style is clearly distinguishable; but on some stones it is obviously combined with the style of a second carver. Some of the stones, for instance, include designs that are uncharacteristic of Angel's style. (Angel's style has been authenticated by comparing gravestones with information gleaned from probate records that list payments made to him for his services.) After 1756, the year of Angel's death, the designs of the second carver continue to appear on various gravestones until 1782, a year before Luther died. These gravestones represent a distinctive group, the work of a single carver.

More than circumstantial evidence points to Seth Luther as the carver of these stones. The gravestones of his sister, wife, and two daughters are carved in the same style as other stones in this



Spread acanthus and scroll by John Anthony Angel. Author's sketch.

"unidentified" group; Luther's own gravestone is not, nor is the stone of his son, Rial, who died in 1808. Moreover, I have identified the carvers of all large (six or more stones) groups of gravestones located in the Providence area that were carved in the period 1709 to 1783, the span of Luther's life. The remaining stones — including those of his sister, wife, two daughters, and more than eighty others — are recognizable as the work of one carver, heretofore unidentified. I believe that carver could only have been Seth Luther, "stone cutter."



Typical lettering by Seth Luther. Author's sketch.

A few extant gravestones show that he and Angel collaborated as stonecarvers. Carving what was probably a backdated stone (that is, a stone carved later than the death date) for Ensign Daniel Peck of South Attleboro (died 1750), Luther used a bold, abstracted style based on Angel's design elements: the unfolding frond-like scrollwork and the spread acanthus leaf. Angel did not, by any



Scroll and spread acanthus by Seth Luther. Author's sketch.



Photo by Vincent Luti

Daniel Peck (d. 1750), South Attleboro. Collaboration of John Anthony Angel and Seth Luther.

Below, left to right: early effigy by Seth Luther on the stone of Mehetable Olney, 1762, Providence; effigy by William Stevens on stone of Robert Gibbs, 1762, Providence; late effigy by Seth Luther on stone of Ezekial Burre, 1777, Providence. Author's sketch.

means, originate these two design elements; rather, they are two of the most common motifs dominating stones in cemeteries located throughout the middle and upper Narragansett Basin. It would appear that both Angel and Luther had a hand in carving this tympanum. The lettering is clearly Luther's. In these early efforts of combined workmanship, lettering differences are readily apparent. (See Design Dating Chart, page 10, for other stones produced by Angel and Luther.)

The stone used by Luther in his work was a weathered, grainy type that probably was light tan or light gray in color. Other carvers rarely used this kind of stone, although a few stones by the Hartshorns and George Allen bear a close resemblance in texture and color. A purple, or almost black, stain caused by time and weather has darkened most of the stones. Despite the effects and hazards of the surrounding urban environment, the stones remain in relatively good condition. Fortunately Luther used a bold cutting style that in the long run helped to preserve his artistry; his designs are plainly visible on the crumbling surfaces of the stones.

The shape of the stones Luther carved changed over time. At first, under Angel's influence, the stones were shaped like a bell curve. After Angel's death, Luther favored a tripartite, headboard shape, not unlike other stones found in colonial New England. The stones range in size from small to large, but most tend to be large, perhaps to accommodate Luther's cutting style.

Luther's own work, dating from the mid-1750s, features a kind of winged-head effigy in the tympanum or lunette arch. The effigies first appear



on stones dated just after Angel's death. (Angel never used effigies despite their great popularity.) In Luther's effigies he appropriated a wig design commonly found on stones in the Narragansett Bay area and typically found in the work of the Stevens family of Newport and in the work of George Allen of Rehoboth. The wig design consists of tiers of tight, yarn-like curls capping the head. Not until the last decade of his life did Luther depart from this design.

In the faces of the effigies, Luther carved enormous, wide, bulging eyes with tiny pupils rolled up toward the heavens. Rolled-back eyes also occur in the work of the Stevens family, George Allen, and the New family of Wrentham, but no extant example approaches the intensity of the staring, gaping eyes in Luther's effigies. However, Luther may have drawn on the work of William Stevens of Newport (1710-1794) for inspiration or ideas. Unlike John Stevens II, who had developed an ornate and elegant floral style, William Stevens in the mid-eighteenth century created strong and dramatic designs of massive shapes that accentuated light and shadings.

Although the faces of Luther's effigies reveal a similarity from one stone to the next, some variation of design did take place within the area of the lunettes on various gravestones. In earlier stones, wings with large, strongly segmented feathers crowd the space around the head, adding more intensity to the overall design of the effigies. Over time, however, this wing space was altered. In one group of stones, a halo or crown of fanned acanthus leaves was introduced. These great floral crowns weighed heavily on the heads and wings, all but crushing them in startling majesty. In a few other examples there is no effigy, just the acanthus crown. Effigies in another group of stones reveal strange transmogrifications of the wings. The wings become fluid, swirling, ribbons or bands charging around the heads with startling energy; some of the wings become totally abstracted and cryptic shapes. The intensity of the design is immediately apparent, but whether his design represented a benign or malevolent symbolism is impossible to determine. Cryptic shapes appear in wings, columns and borders of his stones. Luther had developed a private vision that defies explanation.

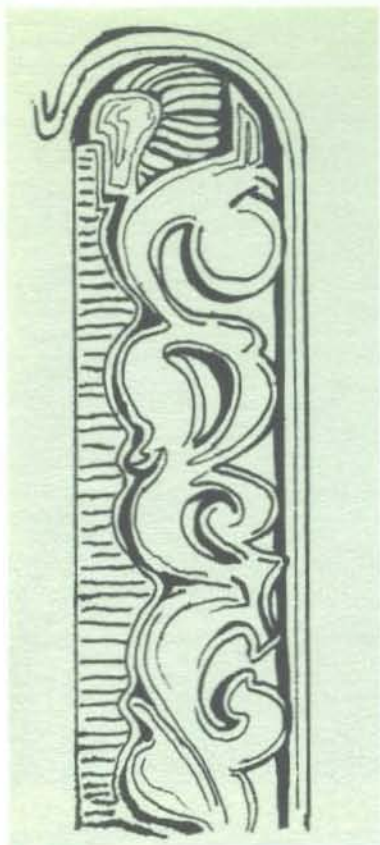
The borders and columns on Luther's earliest



Border by Luther on stone of Christopher Smith, 1762, Providence. Author's sketch.

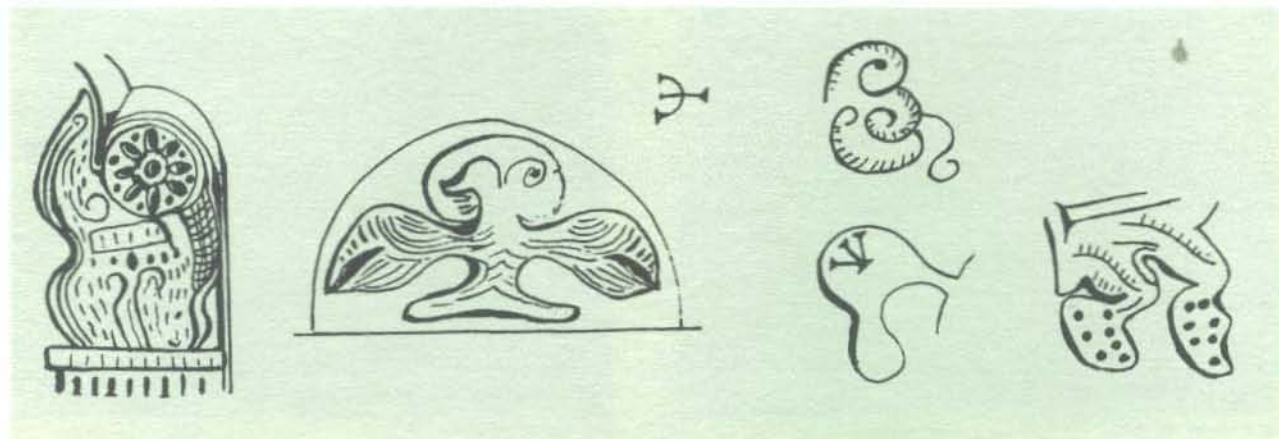
stones show an unconventional treatment of the standard floral and scroll borders found on gravestones carved by other carvers of the Narragansett Basin. Apparently he never used the naturalistic foliate style in his borders; instead, he carved increasingly stylized inventions as time went on. Perhaps his skills as an artist fell somewhat short of the mark in duplicating more popular designs; perhaps he was unable to execute the designs used by other carvers. Luther's designs appear to be abstract or geometrical approximations and interpretations of popular designs. His borders and columns are extremely original stylized shapes that wind their way in handsome convolutions up the sides of the stones.

His architectural columns on the sides of some stones are remarkable. As a housewright, he certainly knew how these architectural features should look and how they should be rendered. But the



Border by Luther on stone of Thomas Bigelow, 1775, Providence.
Author's sketch.

Below: various transmogrifications and other cryptic motifs by
Seth Luther. Author's sketch.



bizarre capitals he carved are baffling. If they were intended to be some kind of primitive interpretation of the Corinthian order, he missed the mark. Were his designs an intense manifestation of a personal and cryptic vision of divine architecture? The staring faces, the oppressive wings and crown, the electrified borders and tympanums, and the grotesque columns seem to suggest a total configuration of supercharged energy, the vision of an overwrought mind, a hint of divine madness.

Throughout the 1760s, Luther carved his stones in dramatic relief with strong, broadly conceived, abstracted or transmogrified design elements. They are astonishing to see in the bright, ranking light of midday. During the late 1770s, the relief on his work became less pronounced with design elements expressed in parallel lines and ribbon-like bands. On these later stones, leaves and panel scrolls are florid and sinuous. A curious kind of "electrical wiring" winds around the tympanum, even to the point of pushing in the skull of the effigy. Backgrounds and other shapes in the later stones are sometimes filled in with etched markings, not unlike chicken scratchings.

Whether Luther's unusual designs represented a sophisticated abstraction or whether they came about from an inability to reproduce naturalistic styles, they still have power and attraction for us today as imaginative folk art. Although he worked as a carver for nearly thirty years, he did not carve a large number of stones. After 1756, when Luther inherited Angel's land, house and shop (all located near the North Burial Ground in Providence),⁸ he worked primarily as a housewright; he never carved enough stones to support his family on stonecarving

alone. Yet the stones he did carve remain as outstanding examples of the stonemason's craft. Even during his own lifetime, when rococo style and neoclassical tastes flourished, his stones must have struck his contemporaries as strong artistic statements. Today, Seth Luther's mute, staring stones give pause for thought and admiration.

1. Harriette M. Forbes, *Gravestones of Early New England and the Men Who Made Them* (1927; reprint, New York, 1967). Seth Luther, the stonemason, should not be confused with his grandson of the same name. Although both Seth Luthers shared certain unconventional qualities, the grandson (Seth B. Luther) became the more famous of the two as a "working class rebel" of the nineteenth century. On Seth B. Luther see Louis Hartz, "Seth Luther, Working Class Rebel," *New England Quarterly*, XIII (1940), 401-418, and Carl Gersuny, "Seth Luther — The Road from Chepachet," *Rhode Island History*, XXXIII (1974), 47-55.

2. Probate Records, Wills, V, 118, Providence City Hall. Angel is also described as a stonemason in Deeds, XX, 281, Providence City Hall. It is not known how Luther could have been Angel's brother-in-law.

3. Probate Records, Wills, VI, 408-409, Providence City Hall.

4. Leslie Luther, *The Descendants of Captain John Luther* (Indianapolis, 1955), 106.

5. Probate Records, Wills, V, 118, Providence City Hall.

6. John R. Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England* (10 vols., Providence, 1856-1865), VI, 43; Horatio Rogers, George M. Carpenter, and Edward Field, eds., *The Early Records of the Town of Providence* (21 vols., Providence, 1892-1951), XVIII, 8-10 (and facing map).

7. "Records of Chignecto," Nova Scotia Historical Society, *Collections*, XV, 65. For Rhode Island's role in these northern settlements see Arthur W. H. Easton, "Rhode Island Settlers on the French Lands in Nova Scotia in 1760 and 1761," *Americana* (Jan.—Mar. 1915).

8. H. R. Chace, *Maps of Providence, Rhode Island* (Providence, 1906), plate I, 1770.



Photo by Vincent Luti

Mary Mawney, 1757, North Burial Ground, Providence. Stone by Seth Luther. Characteristic etched scroll-squiggle lines, transformed foliate shapes and early bell-curve tympanum outline (1756-1759).



Photo by Vincent Luti

Mary Angel, 1760, North Burial Ground, Providence. Stone by Seth Luther. Example of heavy-cut scrollwork, huge pinwheels (1760-1762).



Photo by Vincent Luti

Joseph Randall, 1760, North Burial Ground, Providence (detail). Stone by Seth Luther. Early appearance of bizarre capitals on columns, star rosettes, pinwheel swirl, caligraphic flourishes (1756-1759).



Photo by Vincent Luti

Experience Estabrook, 1761, North Burial Ground, Providence. Stone by Seth Luther. Example of "shrimp" scrollwork, huge stippling (1760-1762).



Photo by Vincent Luti

Esther Whipple, 1757, North Burial Ground, Providence. Stone by Seth Luther. Imaginative, but unorthodox, use of architectural features; note star rosettes, coiled wig (1756-1759).



Photo by Vincent Luti

Benjamin Smith, 1759, North Burial Ground, Providence. Stone by Seth Luther. Early winged effigy in bell-curve tympanum; rare use of bald head (1756-1759).

Design Dating Chart

A Selected List of Seth Luther Stones*

Probably done before 1756

(Joint effort with John Anthony Angel.)
 Daniel Peck, 1750, South Attleboro, Mass.
 Christopher Smith, 1752, Swan Point Cemetery, Providence.
 Hugh Cole, 1753, Warren, R. I.
 Zurial Allen, 1755.

Probably done 1756-1759

(All tympanums have variant bell-curve outlines; first appearance of winged, wiggled heads. Stones have upper and lowercase lettering problems.)
 Nathan Brown, 1750.
 James Brown, 1753.
 Caroline Olney, 1755.
 Hannah Finney, 1756.
 Mary Mawney, 1757.
 Dyer Thurber, 1758.
 Samuel Winsor, 1758.
 Benjamin Smith, 1759.
 Henry Alexander, 1758, South Attleboro, Mass.

Probably done 1760-1762

(All have winged heads; first appearance of columns, star rosettes, calligraphic flourishes and pinwheels.)
 Marston Cabot, 1756, West Thompson, Conn.
 Esther Whipple 1757.
 Sarah Wheten, 1759.
 Martha Brown, 1760.
 Joseph Randall, 1760.
 Daniel Wheten, 1760, Rehoboth, Mass.
 Mary Spear, 1761, Lincoln, R. I.
 Mehetable Olney, 1762.
 Hannah Tillinghast, 1762.

Probably done 1760-1762

(First appearance of "shrimp" scroll and huge stippling.)
 David Vanderlight, 1755.
 Elizabeth Cushing, 1761.

Experience Estabrook, 1761.
 Christopher Smith, 1762.
 Ebenezer Luther, 1763, Warren, R. I.

Probably done 1760-1762

(First appearance of heavy-cut "S" scrolls; huge pinwheels.)
 Mary Angel, 1760.
 Abigail Wheten, 1760?, Bristol, R. I.
 Jeremiah Mowry, 1762, Lincoln, R. I.
 Martha Brown, 1762.

No recorded stones for 1763-1764

Probably done 1766-1769

(First appearance of parallel fine-lines in odd border designs; return of acanthus fans with huge stipple circles and growths and effigies in the center; etched foliate scroll swirl border designs; round faces with fat jowls.)
 Mary Thurber, 1767.
 Silence Whipple, 1767.
 Primus Borden, 1768.
 Edward Thurber, 1768.

Probably done 1770-1782

(First appearance of recessed curved ribbing; parallel stringy wings; ribbon-work in place of wings; chicken scratch filler.)
 Judith Thayer, 1771.
 Marcy Winsor, 1771.
 Esther Currie, 1772.
 Anne Sallisbury, 1773.
 Freeloove Randall, 1775.
 Nathaniel Mowry, 1775.
 Ezekiel Burre, 1777.
 Marcy Alverson, 1778.
 Rachel Robinson, 1781.
 Margret Haile, 1782.

*Gravestones are located in North Burial Ground, Providence, unless otherwise indicated.



Photo by Vincent Luti

Marcy Winsor, 1771, North Burial Ground, Providence (detail). Stone by Seth Luther. Example of recessed, curved ribbing; note disintegration of feather-wings (1770-1782).



Photo by Vincent Luti

Silence Thayer, 1774, North Burial Ground, Providence (detail). Stone by Seth Luther. Example of parallel stringy wings and "chicken-scratch" filler in crown (1770-1782).



Photo by Vincent Luti

Anne Sallisbury, 1773, North Burial Ground, Providence (detail). Stone by Seth Luther. Ribbon-work as transmogrified wings, impinges on effigy's skull (1770-1782).



Photo by Vincent Luti

Ezekiel Burre, 1777, North Burial Ground, Providence (detail). Stone by Seth Luther. An insatiable inventiveness typifies Luther's carvings. With the Burre stone, carved by Luther at age 68, he introduced a new amalgam of design elements.



Photo by Vincent Luti

Marcy Alverson, 1778, North Burial Ground, Providence (detail). Stone by Seth Luther. At age 69, when he carved this stone, Luther revived the acanthus-fan crown and bell-curve, design relics of earlier carvings.



Photo by Vincent Luti

Margret Haile, 1782, North Burial Ground, Providence. Stone by Seth Luther. A year before his death, at age 79, Luther produced this perfect synthesis and balance of design elements.



Visitors at the new Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House.



RIHS photos by Marjorie L. Rotkin

The Rhode Island Historical Society

One Hundred Fifty-eighth Annual Meeting

On January 27, 1980, at 3:30 PM at Aldrich House, President Dennis E. Stark called to order the one hundred fifty-eighth annual meeting of the Society.

The minutes of the last annual meeting of January 28, 1979, were approved as printed in *Rhode Island History*, 38:1 (February 1979).

The president, treasurer, and director each presented a report (printed below). Secretary Richard Staples read the report of the nominating committee. Officers, trustees, and committee members were elected as nominated. Mr. J. Joseph Kruse, the newly elected president, was introduced.

Mr. Wendell Garrett, editor of *The Magazine ANTIQUES* delivered an address entitled "The Future of New England Historical Societies."

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
RICHARD F. STAPLES
Secretary

Annual Report of the Treasurer

The annual financial report of the Society for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 1979, reflects a decrease in permanent endowment of \$100,000. This was primarily due to transfers of \$30,000 to unrestricted funds and \$77,000 to restricted funds to cure prior year deficits. Even with these transfers, however, we are once again faced with a \$29,465 deficit in unrestricted funds as a result of our fiscal 1979 operations. The 1979 deficit is primarily due to falling short of the mark in our Friends Campaign by \$11,000, in our dues by \$4,000, and in apartment rentals by \$5,500, coupled with overruns in our salary account.

Grant income and public support increased significantly in 1979; membership support, however, declined. The relationship of membership support to other Society income has declined alarmingly over the past several years. Our dependency on grants has placed the Society in a position whereby the loss of a grant or the inability to generate new grant income could cause severe damage to the Society's programs.

Cash flow remains poor, with the Society being required to borrow from endowment from time to time throughout the year in order to fund operations. This situation,

coupled with the steady decrease in endowment (we added only \$2,209 in 1979), only makes matters worse. It eliminates flexibility in endowment management and produces less and less income every year.

If we want to maintain the current levels of programs, it is critical for membership support, both in terms of legacies and bequests, and our membership and Friends Campaign to be significantly increased in the coming years.

Respectfully submitted,
KARL F. ERICSON

Annual Report of the President

The one hundred fifty-eighth annual meeting of the Rhode Island Historical Society concludes my two-year term as president, a term I have greatly enjoyed. My term in office was particularly satisfying because it allowed me to meet and work with a large number of dedicated people who have given freely of their time and efforts in assisting the Society in its many programs. I wish specifically to express my appreciation and gratitude to the officers, the members of the Board of Trustees, and the members of our many committees who helped make so much of our work possible during the past two years. I especially want to recognize Mr. J. Joseph Kruse, who served as chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee. Mr. Kruse and his fellow committee members worked assiduously this past year to produce a detailed plan for the Society's programs over the next five years. Today, Mr. Kruse will be nominated and, I hope, elected as your new president.

Besides the pleasure I have had in working with the officers, trustees, and members of the various committees, I have also enjoyed working with Albert T. Klyberg and his competent staff. The Society is fortunate to have Mr. Klyberg as its director, a man of considerable talents and ability. I want to assure all the members of the Society that the trustees have the highest respect and regard for Mr. Klyberg, and I would hope that the members would join with the officers and trustees in their deep appreciation of his service to this Society. The staff of the Society also works with a spirit of enthusiasm and possesses extraordinary capabilities—two characteristics that make it easy for

a lay person, like myself, to work with the organization. We should all take great pride in their many accomplishments.

The Society is also very dependent upon the support and work of its members, whom you represent here today. This Society can only function with your continued support as members, as financial contributors, and as members of our Board of Trustees and committees. I should also like to thank you, the Society's members, for all your efforts during the past two years which, in no small way, made my term in office one of pleasure and satisfaction.

There is one sad note this afternoon. It is with much sorrow that I recognize the recent passing of one of our members, Mr. John Nicholas Brown. As I am sure you are all well aware, Mr. Brown took great interest in the Rhode Island Historical Society and throughout his life contributed much to the Society and its programs. The Brown family has a long and distinguished history in Rhode Island that in many ways parallels the history of this Society. Mr. and Mrs. Brown, as you know, gave the John Brown House to the Society in the 1940s and made significant contributions to the Society's collections over the years. Mr. Brown's support and counsel will be greatly missed.

I would like to review briefly the accomplishments of the Society during the past two years, with an emphasis upon activities and programs during 1979. The highlight of 1979 was the opening of the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House. The museum's first exhibition, "The Lay of the Land," has been well-received by the members, by the Rhode Island community, and by scholars and professionals. Part of the opening of the museum quite obviously included the completion of the renovations to Aldrich House. Appropriately, this annual meeting, held in the ballroom of Aldrich House, celebrates the success of the renovations and underscores the usefulness of the building. Aldrich House has proved to be a valuable asset by providing space for exhibitions and a place where lectures, meetings, audio-visual presentations, and special programs may be held. The refurbishing of this house was accomplished by many people, including members of the Society's staff who took on responsibilities for overseeing and completing much of the work. Under Mr. Klyberg's supervision, Clifford Cone and his staff worked diligently and expertly to help in the renovations and to make sure that work done by others was done correctly. Our splendid facilities here, of course, would not have been possible without the generous gift of the house by the Aldrich family, a gift we formally recognized in a special ceremony held last May. I would, however, like to take this opportunity to express once again the Society's appreciation to the Aldrich family, the Rockefeller family, and to the many foundations and organizations that helped us transform this gracious home into a showplace of Rhode Island history and culture.

During 1979 we also completed a self-evaluation project which analyzed every aspect of the Society's programs, past, present, and future. The final evaluation report was prepared by Frank O. Spinney, a former director of Old Sturbridge Village, and by Pamela Fox, a former staff member of this Society. The insightful report has helped us to determine a clearer path toward our future endeavors. It also paved the way for the work of the Long Range Planning Committee, which this past year produced a report of its own in the form of a five-year plan for Society programs. Both reports have enabled us to make the hard decisions during the past year that were necessary because

of our limited resources, and both reports have provided a framework for our programs and decisions in the future.

As we look forward to the decade of the 1980s, I see several challenges before us. First and foremost among these challenges will be the task of increasing the Society's income, a goal that requires the continuing support of the Society's members. In this effort we must work toward balancing our budget. But we must also strive to preserve, and increase, our endowment funds. It is important for us to achieve financial stability so that we may fulfill the potential of the programs we have already begun and identify new sources so that new programs may be undertaken. The burden will be shared by all of us as we continue to be members of the Society. It will be shared by all the people who come and pay admission to see our museums and to attend our various programs. All of us must continue to play an important role in the Friends Campaign, that time each year when to the best of our ability we go beyond our membership fees and give additional funds to help carry on the work of this Society. The Society will, of course, continue to explore every opportunity to receive funds from foundations and from governmental sources. In fact, the Society is fortunate to have able staff members who have a proven record in maintaining the existing levels of financial support, in identifying sources for additional funds, and in increasing income from a multitude of sources. I firmly believe that that record will continue. Nevertheless, I wish to alert you to the reality of our financial needs and to encourage your generous support. I would also like to urge you, in this regard, to think of the Society as you and members of your family make plans in the form of wills and trusts. This Society has been the beneficiary of many kind and generous gifts from many who have gone before. But the need goes on. I would encourage you to remember the Society in your will, not only by bequeathing funds but also by bequeathing historical objects which you may wish to entrust to the Society's care.

We face other challenges in the immediate future. After the resignation last year of the Society's librarian, Mrs. Nancy F. Chudacoff, we have been conducting a careful search for a new librarian. We hope to conclude the search in the next few months and to fill the vacant position by July 1980. With the appointment of a new librarian, we will turn our attention toward solving problems of space and storage at the library. We must also assess whether or not our present library will adequately serve our needs and the needs of the growing number of library patrons during the decade of the 1980s and beyond.

The Society is one of a number of organizations in the community that has been asked to find a solution to the long-term future of the Governor Lippitt House, located here in Providence. We do not believe, at this time, that it is possible for the Society to assume prime responsibility for protecting and maintaining the house, but the Society is now engaged in evaluating the house's future, and we look forward to doing our part in whatever steps are necessary to preserve the Lippitt House for future generations to enjoy.

As mentioned earlier, the Society has an excellent and competent staff. They are dedicated professionals who work long and hard to serve you, the members, and to serve countless others who seek a better understanding of Rhode Island's history. We have a challenge before us in the coming years to make sure that our staff continues to be comprised of first-rank professionals. One of the important ways we can accomplish this goal is to review our

financial priorities in such a way that will insure that we meet the needs of our staff and that we properly compensate them for all that they do.

For these challenges to be met in the 1980s, the most important ingredient will be your continued support of the Society's programs and your continued involvement in its activities. Please attend our events, visit our museums, and use our library. And bring your family and friends. Please be honored and give as much time as you can when you are asked to serve as an officer, a trustee, a committee chairman, or a member of a committee. I encourage your

participation in the Society because I believe you will find it worthwhile and enjoyable.

I would like to close on a personal note by thanking all of you for the opportunity to be your president and for the opportunity to work with you these past two years. I have enjoyed every minute of my term, and I look forward to continuing my involvement as a member of the Society's Board of Trustees. I also look forward to working with the new president and officers as we attempt to make the 1980s a glorious decade for the Rhode Island Historical Society.

DENNIS E. STARK

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Statement of Support, Revenue and Disbursements
Year Ended June 30, 1979

	Current Funds	Fixed Asset	Endowment	Total	All Funds
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Fund	1979	1978
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE:					
Public Support:					
Contributions	67,510.06	31,158.25		98,668.31	136,077.39
Comprehensive Employment Training Act Funds	7,483.08			7,483.08	21,923.79
Legacies and bequests			2,209.00	2,209.00	40,000.00
Grants	<u>156,000.00</u>	<u>165,914.33</u>		<u>321,914.33</u>	<u>183,872.84</u>
Total public support	<u>230,993.14</u>	<u>197,072.58</u>		<u>430,274.72</u>	<u>381,874.02</u>
Revenue:					
Membership dues	40,861.00			40,861.00	43,075.00
Investment income		750.00		87,859.50	89,309.35
Realized gain (loss) on sales of investments			2,260.49	2,260.49	(8,711.67)
Rental income	8,309.18			8,309.18	3,434.22
Program and service fees	11,825.19	29,970.89		41,796.08	23,101.60
Loss on sale of fixed assets			(44,929.48)	(44,929.48)	0.00
Total revenue	<u>60,995.37</u>	<u>30,720.89</u>	<u>(44,929.48)</u>	<u>89,369.99</u>	<u>150,208.50</u>
Total public support and revenue	<u>291,988.51</u>	<u>227,793.47</u>	<u>(44,929.48)</u>	<u>566,431.49</u>	<u>532,082.52</u>
EXPENSES:					
Program services					
Library program	103,399.12	51,314.25	4,289.06	159,002.43	150,683.88
Museum program	73,995.60	27,313.64	4,427.09	2,732.04	116,536.84
Publications program	68,501.04	24,971.89		93,472.93	100,795.61
Education program	<u>24,437.00</u>	<u>13,719.51</u>		<u>38,156.51</u>	<u>8,773.19</u>
Total program services	<u>270,332.76</u>	<u>117,319.29</u>	<u>8,716.15</u>	<u>2,732.04</u>	<u>399,100.24</u>
Supporting services:					
Management and general	82,379.74	42,027.34	759.24	2,998.94	128,165.26
Fund raising	<u>39,902.24</u>	<u>29,136.33</u>	<u>189.81</u>		<u>69,228.38</u>
Total supporting services	<u>122,281.98</u>	<u>71,163.67</u>	<u>949.05</u>	<u>2,998.94</u>	<u>197,393.64</u>
Total expenses	<u>392,614.74</u>	<u>188,482.96</u>	<u>9,665.20</u>	<u>5,730.98</u>	<u>596,493.88</u>
Excess (deficiency) of public support and revenue over expenses before cumulative effect of change in accounting principle	(100,626.23)	39,310.51	(54,594.68)	85,848.01	(30,062.39)
Cumulative effect of change in accounting principle	<u>2,886.93</u>	<u>13,298.68</u>	<u>4,156.39</u>		<u>14,568.14</u>
Excess (deficiency) of public support and revenue over expenses	<u>(103,513.16)</u>	<u>52,609.19</u>	<u>(50,438.29)</u>	<u>85,848.01</u>	<u>(15,494.25)</u>

Annual Report of the Director

"Public History" is a term of recent origin used to describe the work of historians in museums, historical societies, archives, research libraries, preservation agencies and publications projects. While the term is new, the employment of the historians' skills in these areas is not. The Rhode Island Historical Society has been providing historical society services to the public for over a century and a half. One possible nuance implied by the current use of the term is that this work is done for the direct benefit of the public. Expanded public programming in the humanities has become a major recent development among cultural organizations. The nineteenth-century lecture institutions of the Lyceum and the Chatauqua movement have become today's "adult education," "Continuing Education," or "Lifetime Learning" project. There is not yet agreement among the historians working in public places that they should spend less time in their traditional scholarly research roles and more time learning the technology and psychology of being story-tellers. Being the "bionic historian" or a television personality is both a challenging and unsettling prospect. Nonetheless, there are compelling arguments in favor of using every modern technique to transmit the meaning and significance of our historical

collections to even larger audiences. There are those who complain that too many museums have put all, or all too much, attention to piling up collections without a thought or a care as to how or when the collections are to be used. Others suggest that as much thought, energy and resources ought to be employed in information distribution as are expended in the enthusiastic chase after acquisitions. I believe there is much to be said for taking care that the excellence, important insights, and best intentions that originate at the highest levels of any institution are not diluted or diminished when they reach the final point of delivery to the person for whose ultimate use they were intended. This is the kind of equilibrium the Rhode Island Historical Society has sought to achieve; we think our report for the year 1979 provides concrete examples of that achievement.

The opening of the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House was not only a highpoint of the past twelve months, but the fulfillment of nearly five years of planning and hard work. The inaugural exhibition, "The Lay of the Land," accomplished our goal of providing visitors with a visually dramatic and intellectually comprehensive display. The response to it has been very encouraging; not only



Photo by Daniel Brown

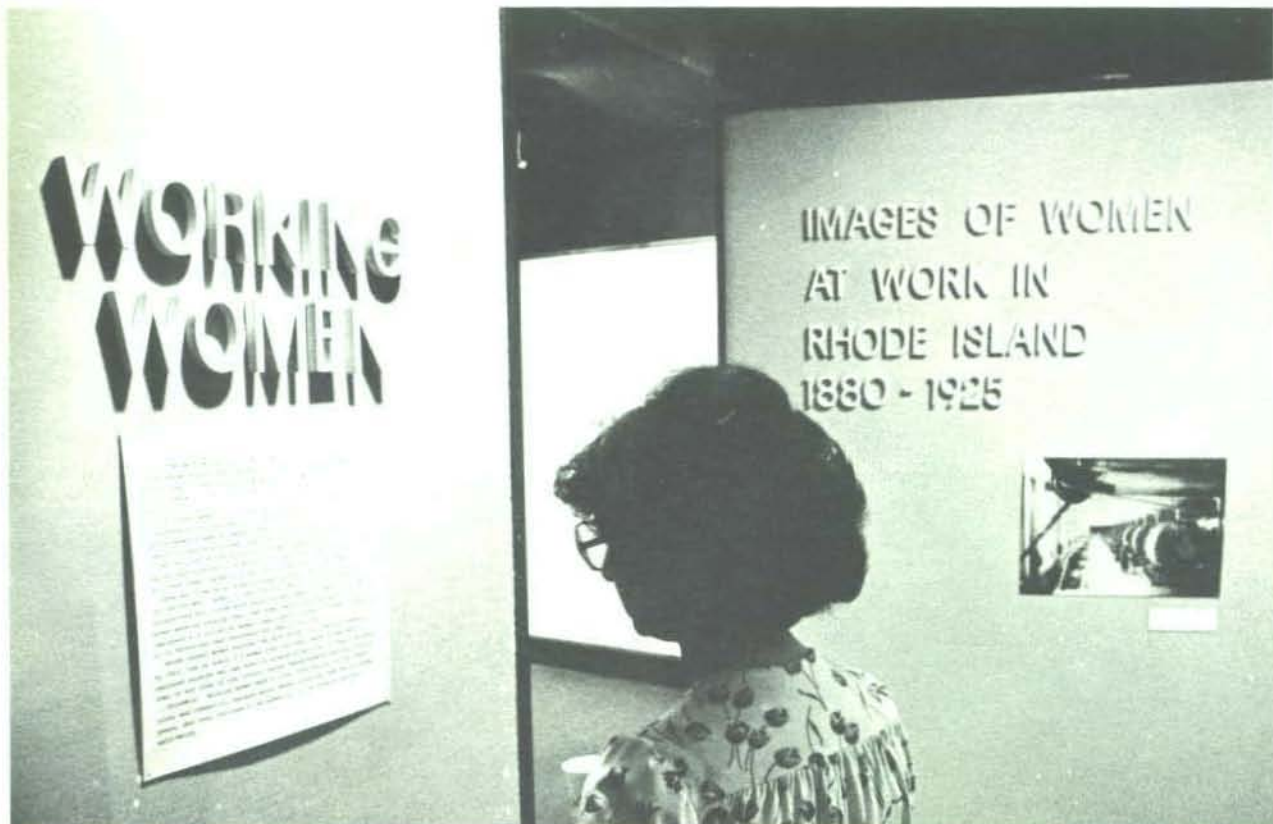
A concert on the John Brown House lawn marked the September opening of the exhibit "Strike Up the Band!"

have Rhode Islanders found it fascinating and stimulating, but it has won recognition nationally by receiving the highest award of the American Association for State and Local History. The exhibit has attracted good attendance, and many people have seen it as part of visiting Aldrich House for another event or meeting. Since May, the attendance for the exhibition has been 2,560, and the special events and program activities have drawn 3,934 for a total of 6,494. Attendance at John Brown House has been 7,513, an increase of 1,900 people over last year. These attendance figures, plus 6,729 visits to the library, make a grand total of 20,736 people who have enjoyed the public audience aspects of our programs. This is the largest number in any year of our history, and an increase of 74% over last year.

Although the opening of our new museum was a gratifying experience, it was by no means the only activity of the year. Other events filled the calendar, too. In chronological sequence, they included our annual Forum, an exhibition depicting the roles of women in Rhode Island from 1880 to 1925 entitled "Working Women," a concert and exhibition on Providence's famed American Band which delighted large crowds and brought in some rather unexpected dividends by way of band memorabilia such as scrap-books, manuscript music, photos and programs.

There was a full complement of lectures and special events such as Mayor's Day at the museum, Dividend Days for our volunteers, gallery talks for our new members, the October Days festival with the South Main Street merchants, and a Christmas party to top all Christmas parties at Aldrich House. Benefits to our members and service to the Rhode Island public reached an all-time high.

Not all of the Society's energies, however, were absorbed by the external showcase activities of public programming. The trustees or the committees of the Society met in over fifty separate meetings. A major report comprising a five-year plan was produced by the Long Range Planning Committee, while two equally significant studies on personnel policies and emergency procedures were accomplished by staff task forces. Major accessions were recorded both by the library and the museum, and substantial progress was made on both the Nathanael Greene Papers and the Roger Williams Correspondence. The newly independent education department distinguished itself both in the external public programs and in the development of information materials and volunteer guide training. Publicity about the Society increased in a dozen directions, while new development projects, such as the "Louisiana Lottery," raised essential operating funds. Sales of Society publications netted more than \$7,000 for



Journal-Bulletin Photo by Bob Thayer

A joint project of library and education department, the exhibit "Working Women" opened in March.

our publications fund. The Friends Campaign of the members brought in \$32,500 by year's end. In the area of grants and operating support from foundations and governmental agencies we raised over \$300,000 in new money. I would like to take this time to acknowledge the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute of Museum Services, the Mayor of Providence, the Rhode Island General Assembly, the State Council on the Arts, the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, the Rhode Island Heritage Commission, the United Arts Fund, the Rhode Island Foundation, the Rhode Island Society of the Cincinnati, the Rhode Island Society of Colonial Wars, the Providence Journal Company, Raytheon, the Phyllis Kimball Johnstone and H. Earle Kimball Foundation, the Mary Dexter Chafee Fund, the Caleb C. and Julia W. Dula

Educational and Charitable Foundation, the Charles Ulrick Bay and Josephine Bay Foundation, and one foundation which wishes to remain anonymous.

While celebrating the generosity of public benefactors represented by foundations and governmental agencies, there is a warning to be registered. We are raising ten times more funds from the public sector than the private sector. A long term dependence on tax dollars would seem to be a dangerous policy.

To rectify this imbalance, one of the recommendations of the Long Range Planning Committee soon to be implemented is the formation of a Development Committee. This Committee will supervise the Society's efforts in the annual Friends Campaign, the United Arts Fund and the creation of a program on wills and bequests to endowment. There has been just one gift to endowment this year, a donation from the Hope Foundation of \$2,750



Journal-Bulletin Photo by William L. Rooney

In Aldrich House's reception room, committee members planned opening events for the Museum of Rhode Island History.

in memory of John Nicholas Brown. By a vote of the trustees, the name of the permanent fund of the John Brown House was changed to the John Nicholas Brown Memorial Fund. The fund now stands at \$10,000.

The balance between public programming and behind-the-scenes development of collections and their management has been matched by a balanced effort to sustain the vitality of the Society as an organism, too. The Society is an entity beyond and superior to its component departments of library, museum, education, publications and administration. It is staff working competently and cooperatively among themselves and in partnership with the Society's officers and committee people. It is also the composite of these people acting as trustees for the general public to take care of property and possessions, but also to be guardians of the intellectual process of saving and interpreting a people's history. The ultimate test of the faithful discharge of that trust is the quality of the transmission experience between the teller and the listener, between the exhibition and the viewer, the source and the researcher, and the publication and the reader. It is to this end of achieving excellence at the point of humanistic exchange that we have set our sights for the next five years. Our goal is not necessarily to get bigger, but better. We hope to retain essentially the size of our current operation and to refine it. Our treasurer has already offered his assessment of the need to strengthen our operating income and rebuild endowment. To this end, we pledge the most prudent management it is in our power to provide. We ask of you your continued support in this venture. We shall need you all and whatever you can bring to the effort to make this enterprise a success. And now to those who depart from the ranks of our officers and trustees, we extend our thanks and welcome their replacements; to our staff, the faithful and many-talented crew, I offer my warmest personal appreciation for efforts far beyond the required performance of their tasks; and to our donors and our volunteers, we send our deepest gratitude.

ALBERT T. KLYBERG

Annual Report of the Editor

During the Publications Department's first year of operation, regular projects of the Society — such as the publication of *Rhode Island History* and the editing of the Papers of Nathanael Greene — continued apace. Efforts to promote and sell Society publications were successful. And work on a new publication, the Correspondence of Roger Williams, was begun.

RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

Since assuming the editorship of *Rhode Island History* in January 1979, I have sought to maintain the magazine's high standards as a journal of local history. New editorial policies — including the decision to publish, on occasion, edited primary documents relating to various facets of Rhode Island's history — were established; other plans were laid for expanding the scope and format of the magazine in the future. Throughout my first year as editor, I received considerable help and guidance from others. Mr. Klyberg was a constant source of encouragement and understanding. The Society's Publication Committee, under the leadership of E. Andrew Mowbray, lent support and much-needed advice. Helen Kebabian, the magazine's

picture editor, worked diligently and offered technical expertise beyond her immediate responsibilities. Nancy F. Chudacoff, my predecessor, paved the way with some helpful suggestions so that the transition from one editor to another could proceed as smoothly as possible.

One of my first tasks as editor was to develop and supervise a new arrangement for typesetting *Rhode Island History*. Through the thoughtfulness and kindness of Charles P. O'Donnell, a member of the Publications Committee, the Providence Journal Company offered to provide computerized typesetting services for the magazine on a regular basis. The winter months of 1979 were spent developing a specific typesetting format. Staff members at the *Providence Journal*, including Jim Sunshine, Dave Grey, and Ray Oakley, gave freely of their time and expertise in ironing out technical problems. Their efforts have helped to refine and expedite typesetting production. On behalf of the Society, I wish to extend sincere thanks to the Providence Journal Company for providing this outstanding cooperation and service. Marilyn Chartier, a part-time typist who works as the Society's special compositor, also deserves a word of thanks for her speedy and accurate keyboarding.

Largely as a result of this efficient typesetting service, costs for producing *Rhode Island History* have decreased during the past year. Despite an increase in the number of half-tone illustrations published in the 1979 volume, and various individual price increases for printing, paper and postage, the cost for producing a single issue of the magazine has actually decreased — from an average \$1.19 per unit issue in 1978 to an average \$0.97 per unit issue (based on costs for the first three numbers) in 1979. As printing prices continue to soar, we may expect our costs to increase in 1980. However, it appears that production costs for the magazine, at least for the time being, have stabilized.

One aspect of production, regrettably, has not been stabilized or rectified. Over the past few years, *Rhode Island History* has fallen behind in its publication schedule, with some numbers appearing five or six months late. Although delays in publication were somewhat narrowed during the early months of 1979, with some numbers of the magazine ready for press prior to publication date, late issues continue to appear — mostly as a result of unforeseeable circumstances such as printer's delays, staff absences or illnesses, or technical flukes that required time-consuming adjustments. These circumstances, I believe, are not insurmountable. The magazine's staff is committed to solving the problem of late publication; we will continue to work toward the goal of publishing on time, toward regularizing production, and toward establishing a firm publication schedule for each number of *Rhode Island History*.

During 1979, *Rhode Island History* received thirty-four manuscripts to be considered for publication. Of these, nine were accepted for eventual publication. Nine articles were published in the four numbers of the 1979 volume; some of these represented a backlog of articles that had been accepted for publication by my predecessor. Subjects for articles revealed no discernable pattern or emphasis, although it is clear that there is a growing interest in the history of modern Rhode Island (after 1865). The average interval between submission of a manuscript and the editor's decision whether or not to publish (often based on the comments of expert readers) was approximately four weeks. Normally, the interval between acceptance of an article for publication and its appearance in the pages of

the magazine was about ten to twelve months.

A number of manuscripts were returned to authors with detailed recommendations for revisions and an offer to reconsider the manuscript for publication after revisions had been completed. I also spent time meeting with students who sought advice about how they could best revise seminar papers, theses and dissertations for publication in *Rhode Island History*. I hope that I helped and encouraged them, for I learned from these meetings that research and writing in the field of Rhode Island history is experiencing something of a boom. I read many manuscripts that had great promise as future articles.

While some students looked for guidance about the ins and outs of getting published, other students expressed interest in gaining experience as editors. In 1979, three students worked as editorial assistants on the magazine. During the summer of 1979, Chris Martire served as an intern, spending part of her time on *Rhode Island History* and part of her time assisting the staff of the Papers of Nathanael Greene. In the fall, I established a formal apprenticeship program for volunteers in the Publications Department. Glenn D. Horton, a graduate of the University of Rhode Island, became the first editorial apprentice, volunteering his time as proofreader on the magazine in return for training and experience in all phases of periodical publication and production. Sarah Gleason, a graduate student at Brown University, also became an editorial apprentice and worked with great skill as a copy editor on a number of articles.

To keep up with current trends in the field of periodical publication, I attended a four-day Publications Management Symposium, sponsored by Museums Collaborative, Inc., in New York on March 19-22. Some new ideas about production and the promotion of publications were dividends of this meeting.

PROMOTION AND SALES

The Society has had a long and glorious tradition as a publisher of fine quality books and shorter works dealing with the history of Rhode Island. Although this long tradition has had its rewards, it also has had some drawbacks. The long tradition as a publisher, for instance, has meant the growth of a long list of published titles. How to advertise and sell these books became the special assignment of Ronald G. Tracey, the Society's administrative assistant for development. Working in cooperation with the Rhode Island Publications Society (formerly, the Rhode Island Bicentennial Foundation), Mr. Tracey's efforts resulted in record sales of publications in 1979. Books were distributed to thirty-two retail outlets in Rhode Island. Advertisements for the Society's publications appeared in the annual program of the Organization of American Historians and the bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association. Through the courtesy and generosity of Wendell D. Garrett, a member of the Publications Committee, an advertisement for Society publications appeared in the December issue of *The Magazine ANTIQUES*. As a result of these and other efforts, including the printing of an up-to-date list of publications for sale, the Society received \$8,260.27 in gross publications sales. Expenses for the year (\$1,128.84) produced a net sales figure of \$7,131.43.

OTHER EDITORIAL PROJECTS

One of the reasons why the Society created a Publications Department was to insure that editorial expertise

would be on hand to assist in special projects, especially those projects that included auxiliary or collateral publications. In this role, I was pleased to work as editor of the exhibit catalogue for "The Lay of the Land" exhibit that opened at the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House in May. Actually, my involvement had begun the summer before, at Mr. Klyberg's invitation, when the exhibit was being planned and researched. Working closely with Ann LeVeque, museum curator and project director, Mr. Klyberg and Nancy Grey Osterud, the catalogue's authors, and Klaus Gemming, catalogue designer, I edited and helped to supervise the publication production of *The Lay of the Land*. I also edited the exhibit's checklist, which was published as a supplement to the catalogue, and I helped to proofread text blocks for the exhibit.

In a similar capacity, I edited the catalogue for the Society's exhibit, "Working Women — Images of Women at Work in Rhode Island, 1880-1925" at the Gallery at John Brown House, March 4 to August 20. The catalogue was actually an offprint of the lead article that appeared in the February 1979 issue of *Rhode Island History*. In the fall, I edited the exhibit checklist, published as a supplement to the catalogue, for "Strike Up the Band!" — an exhibition celebrating the American Brass Band. This exhibit opened at the Gallery at John Brown House on September 9. The catalogue for the exhibit was published by the Office of Publications, Rhode Island College, one of the sponsors of the exhibit.

Work is also continuing, under the volunteer editorship of Linda Levin, to produce and publish the remaining volumes in the Rhode Island Forum publications series. I have helped to oversee the preparation of transcripts from tape recordings of lectures for the current volume in production, "Rhode Island in the Romantic Era: 1820-1860." This volume will appear in 1980.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ROGER WILLIAMS

For the last fifteen years of his life, Bradford F. Swan — an officer and trustee of the Society — devoted whatever time he could spare to editing and annotating a modern edition of the letters of Roger Williams. Before his untimely death in 1975, Mr. Swan completed a manuscript for an edition that he hoped would be published by the Rhode Island Historical Society.

In 1978, plans finally got underway toward fulfilling Mr. Swan's hope. The Providence Journal Company, Mr. Swan's employer, agreed to sponsor the publication of the letters of Roger Williams in conjunction with the Society. In the fall of 1978, I was asked to give Mr. Swan's manuscript a critical reading; another critical reading was done by Sydney V. James, a professor of history at the University of Iowa and a scholar in Rhode Island colonial history. Based on these readings, it was decided that some revisions would be necessary to prepare Mr. Swan's manuscript for the press. The Providence Journal Company and the Society arranged for funding to support the editorial work still needed to be done, while the *Journal* pledged additional funds to publish the book when it was completed. I was pleased and honored to be appointed an editor on the project.

I began work on Mr. Swan's manuscript in January 1979, after returning from a visit to London where I spent time in the British Museum looking for additional Williams materials. Before I began any substantive work on the manuscript, however, I decided to map out in detail all of the areas that required editorial revisions. Consulting

with Mr. Klyberg, who took on the job of project director, and using my own critique and that of Professor James as guides to my planning, I determined the scope of editorial work that lay ahead.

I received considerable guidance and assistance in preparing an editorial manual of style from Richard K. Showman, editor of the *Papers of Nathanael Greene*. Mr. Showman has since proved to be a steady and reliable source of help and inspiration. I also consulted numerous sources of editorial style and methods, including many of the volumes published by editorial projects sponsored by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), to acquaint myself with the latest conventions in historical editing. Establishing a general approach to the Williams project, I decided to follow a project organization and editorial method used by projects sponsored by the NHPRC. In the course of my work, I obtained additional training in editorial methods as an intern at the NHPRC's annual Institute in Documentary Editing held in Madison, Wisconsin, July 16-27.

To begin my work on Williams's correspondence, after I had determined an editorial style, I decided to assemble photocopies of every extant letter. I also began a systematic search for Williams documents that may not have been previously unearthed. Part of this search reflected my editorial decision to expand the scope of Mr. Swan's manuscript to include not only letters written by Williams, but also any letters written to him by others. Corresponding with some thirty repositories and libraries in the United States and England, and conducting my own search in the Society's library, the Rhode Island State Archives, Providence City Hall, and the libraries at Brown University, and reading widely in the printed sources of the seventeenth century, I was fortunate to discover seventy-three additional pieces of correspondence, most of which are letters addressed to Williams. Photocopies of these documents, as well as of the previously known Williams letters, were assembled and accessioned. These photocopies were then catalogued chronologically with cross-references to authors and recipients, and source information. Although my search still continues, and probably will not end until just prior to actual publication, I have so far assembled photocopies of 230 letters, which together comprise Williams's extant correspondence.

From these photocopies of originals, I then began the sizable task of transcribing each letter. Using Mr. Swan's transcripts as a point of reference, I revised each transcript according to the rules and style of the so-called expanded editorial method (Mr. Swan had originally used the "modern" editorial method). The expanded method retains, to the greatest degree possible, the spelling, punctuation and capitalization as they appear in the original document. Once each transcript was completed, it was collated for accuracy against the "original" photocopy. Then these transcripts were transferred to the *Providence Journal's* computerized typesetting system, so that clear and accurate "working copies" of the transcripts could be used as the editorial work progressed. This process will help, in the long run, to speed up the production stages of the book.

With the transcription and the initial collation phases of the project completed by the fall of 1979, I turned my attention to revising annotations to each letter, or in some cases, to writing new notes for letters I had uncovered. For instance, one result of assembling a complete collection of photocopies was the realization that many of the letters

had changed location since the time Mr. Swan had completed his research. Thus, source information had to be updated and checked for accuracy. The influx of photocopies also revealed or clarified the location of many originals that previous scholars had believed were lost. To facilitate my writing of annotations, I began extensive research on all aspects of Williams's life; this research has helped to disclose some clues about vague and sketchy passages in many of Williams's letters. Moreover, I have attempted to incorporate the most recent scholarship on Williams into the context of the annotations.

As I write this report, my work continues on the letters of Roger Williams. Annotations and another round of collation still must be completed. Once this work is finished, careful attention must be paid to proofreading page proofs against transcripts. Hence, much of the work still lies ahead. It is, however, an exciting challenge — one that I have relished and enjoyed. In the end, I hope that my efforts will do justice to Roger Williams and to Bradford F. Swan.

GLENN W. LaFANTASIE

THE PAPERS OF NATHANAEL GREENE

In 1979 the staff of the Nathanael Greene Papers continued the long process of transcribing and collating copies of the more than 10,000 documents that have been collected. Two-thirds are now completed.

At the same time, annotations, proofing, and indexing of Volume II was finished. This volume, carrying Greene's career to October 1778, will be published in May 1980. We are pleased that Volume I, which is almost sold out, will be reprinted this year. Volume III will be sent to the press at the end of 1980 for publication in the autumn of 1981.

RICHARD K. SHOWMAN



RIHS photo by Laura B. Roberts

Richard Showman, editor of the Nathanael Greene Papers.

Annual Report of the Education Department

This has been a busy year for the Education Department, one which has seen change, growth, and experiment. As 1979 came to an end, we felt overwhelmed by all that we had done and all that we did not have time to do, all that we have accomplished and all that we have scheduled for 1980 and beyond. The opening of the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House has called for new programs, and projects, while the John Brown House attracted a record number of visitors. We have tried to increase public programming and membership activities. With this growth, projects with the Library and educational publications have been delayed, but will be addressed in the coming year.

In 1979, 13,557 people visited the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House and the John Brown House, a dramatic increase over 1978. Attendance at the John Brown House rose from 5,595 in 1978 to 7,513 in 1979. In the eight months since the opening of the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House, 6,044 people have visited the exhibit or have attended various meetings and special events. Among the visitors to our museums were groups and individuals from many states and a surprising array of foreign countries including England, Scotland,

Italy, France, Gibraltar, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Israel, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Nationalist China, Japan, Venezuela, Brazil, and Puerto Rico.

Of our total group of visitors to the two museums, there were 1,949 in school groups (1,809 JBH, 140 MORIH), 2,195 in other groups (1,364 JBH, 831 MORIH), 4,894 individuals (3,305 JBH, 1,589 MORIH), 4,519 for special events (1,035 JBH, 3,484 MORIH).

The year began with an experiment: during the months of January and February, the John Brown House was open only on Saturday and Sunday. There were several reasons for the hiatus, and many subsequent benefits. Our small weekday visitation during these two months is discouraging to guides who may travel through threatening weather, only to have no one come for a tour. Also, the strain of being open six days a week begins to show in the house, and we needed some time to rotate the collections and change displays.

When we returned to the full schedule in March, there were three new exhibits at the John Brown House. The photography exhibit "Working Women: Images of Women at Work in Rhode Island," a cooperative effort of staff from graphics, business archives, and education, opened in



Above and opposite: some of the 1,800 school children who toured John Brown House in 1979.

RIHS photos by Laura B. Roberts

the first floor gallery. Susan M. Edelman, working with five college interns — Rebecca Stocking, Roger Williams College; Stephen Earle, Rhode Island School of Design; and Karolyn Krass, Kimberly Kyle, and Anne Spokas, Providence College — researched and installed an exhibit of silver and pewter on the third floor. A new selection of McCrillis dolls, including both primitive dolls and those with a strong Rhode Island history, was installed by Laura Roberts.

By March, the opening of "The Lay of the Land" was close at hand. Ms. Roberts worked with William and Jane Sprague on the production of the slide show that accompanies the exhibit, coordinating its themes with those in the exhibit. She also conducted training and orientation programs for the staff and volunteers in preparation for the opening.

Another spring project was participation in the Rhode Island Department of Education's "Arts in Education" symposium, a program designed to bring arts educators, administrators, and representatives of community resources together to develop new strategies for integrating the arts and curricula.

In June our summer interns arrived. Placing them in their positions and coordinating discussion groups, activities, and field trips for them was part of the summer

agenda. In the Education Department, we worked with Marianne Siedler, Cornell; Christine Fairchild, Connecticut College; Rebecca Wright, Vassar; and Sarah Gleason, Brown. They developed written interpretive materials for guides and teachers.

In July, Ms. Edelman, our chief tour guide, left to begin graduate studies in Art History at Tufts University. In replacing her, we chose to divide the post into two half-time positions. Two people sharing the job gives us twice as much experience and energy, as well as six-day-a-week coverage of our museums. Katharine Rodman, who holds a doctoral degree in history from Radcliffe College and who has been a member of the Society for twelve years, had been a volunteer tour guide at the John Brown House. We were delighted when she decided to return to the work force and apply for one of the posts. She has been a great asset since joining the staff this summer. Wendy Ketchum came to Providence as a student at Brown University and stayed, working for the College Admission Office and the slide library, and volunteering at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission and the Providence Preservation Society. Her knowledge of art and architecture, and of the East Side and its history, complements Ms. Rodman's expertise, and together they make a wonderful team.



Their first six months on the job has certainly taxed their talents and energies. With a second facility to monitor, and attendance soaring, we encountered a sharp drop in our volunteer force. Our entire crew is to be congratulated for continuing to do a superb job under these conditions. Volunteer recruitment will be a major priority for 1980. To help this effort, Ms. Ketchum and Ms. Rodman have developed a slide program on the John Brown House which they have shown to community groups through our Speakers Bureau. For some it has meant a glimpse at a place they cannot travel to, for others it has peaked curiosity to see it first hand. We hope that some will also want to volunteer at the John Brown House. A new feature in our guide training program is monthly "Dividend Days" at which we host speakers on topics related to the John Brown House or general Rhode Island history. This continuing education program supplements our initial guide training course.

We express our thanks to all those who volunteered this year, and a special thanks to all those still on the job: Linda Arruda, Maria Benevente, Sally Bradley, Debra Brownell, Nancy Brownstein, Dorothy Budlong, Thomas Carnevale, Susan Chapdelaine, Holly Courage, Rosiland Dacey, Margaret Deignan, Vincent Deignan, Ann D'Errico, Stephen Earle, Sally Edwards, Linda Eppich, Joanne Fay, Mary Finn, Francis Galloway, Stella Glassman, Joan Harris, Debra Hilbert, Anne Jennings, Linda Justinski, Joyce Knibb, Zelia Knowles, Ken Kupsche, Barbara Long, Evelyn McKenna, Marguerite McLaughry, Clara McQuaide, Michelle Missry, Eleanor Nelson, Lenora Olson, Carmel O'Neill, Candace Pezzer, Linda Peters, Denise Phipps, Anne Marie Piacente, Dorothy Priestman, Mary Richard, Leslie Rupp, Lisa Sargent, Sandra Scoliard, Hope Senecal, Diane Sherman, Dolly Silverstein, Pamela Simonelli, George Steiner, Sara Steiner, Jane Stiles, Richmond Sweet.

This summer, another addition to the staff was made possible by a grant from the Providence Comprehensive Employment and Training Administration. Marjorie L. Rotkin was hired as an education assistant, with special responsibilities for children's programs. Since graduating from Connecticut College, Ms. Rotkin has volunteered at the Lyman Allen Museum, New London, Connecticut, and at the Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C. This fall, Ms. Rotkin taught "Victorian Times and Pastimes" for children in grades four through six. The class learned about the history and art of the late nineteenth century through several hands-on projects, which were exhibited at our holiday party in December.

Earlier this year, Diane Douglas, an intern from Brown University, developed and taught a children's course "Exploring Your Folklife Heritage." Children in that class learned many traditional arts and crafts, and were introduced to the problems of collecting and preserving traditional ways. The Year of the Child may have passed, but these two experiments have convinced us to continue offering after-school and vacation programs for children.

This fall a major effort to reach Rhode Island educators was launched. We were the hosts for two open houses for teachers at the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House. Two new flyers: "History Update," an educator's newsletter, and a "School and Visitor's Guide" were published. Plans were drafted for creating a Teachers' Resource Center for state and local history materials at our library. Various staff members and volunteers started work on previsit materials for the John Brown House and "Lay of the Land." Special programs on Rhode

Island law and on the growth of Providence were developed and presented to students and teachers. Leslie Lindenauer, an intern from Brown University, has worked on these programs. Close cooperation with the Rhode Island Social Studies Association (RISSA) has continued as Ms. Roberts became vice president for programming in May. A workshop on environmental education, held at Aldrich House, was cosponsored with RISSA and the State Department of Education. We had a display at the Rhode Island Teachers Institute in the fall, promoting our school services and publications.

As all of this activity went on in 1979, we also had a full roster of public events. The Fifth Annual Forum on Rhode Island History, again cosponsored with the Providence Preservation Society, attracted record numbers of people. The first Forum lecture last January inaugurated the refurbished Aldrich House ballroom and reception room with a standing room only crowd. The period from 1890 to 1920 was dubbed "The Confident Years" and was discussed in lectures by William McLoughlin, William Taylor, John Cherol, Matthew Smith, Richard Chafee, Judy Smith, Paul Buhle, and Seebert Goldowsky. In June we were again standing in the aisles when George Kellner and J. Stanley Lemons's multi-media production, "Providence: A Century of Greatness," debuted. They returned in October for two more showings at Mayor's Day. Lectures by Sharon Strom on women's labor history, by Francis Marciniak on the American Band, and by Stephen Victor on waterpower in Rhode Island completed the calendar. Robert Emien of the Society's curatorial staff gave a popular course on "Three Hundred Years of American Furniture" last fall.

In preparation for some of our new programs and projects, Ms. Roberts attended a one-week seminar in Community History at the Newberry Library in Chicago



RIHS photo by Marjorie L. Rotkin

A participant in "Exploring Your Folklife Heritage," a summer workshop for children.

last March, as well as a seminar on evaluation techniques at the Smithsonian Institution in August. The National Center for Voluntary Action project on Volunteers in the Public Humanities ended locally with a seminar at the Aldrich House and nationally with a book *New Faces in Public Places*, reporting on the work in the six participating cities.

We now have a formal Speakers Bureau at the Society, which offers free presentations on our programs, facilities, and exhibits. Several community groups have invited speakers to discuss the current exhibition at the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House. The Speakers Bureau listing also identifies lecturers on topics in Rhode Island history and art.

The task for the future is to choose among all the options presented to us for public programs, educational projects, and school services. We are trying to help teachers prepare materials for teaching Rhode Island studies, while at the same time encouraging them to utilize more fully Rhode Island's cultural resources in that curriculum. We hope to interest more adults and families in our public programs, and plan to do more off-site activities this year. Also, we are meeting the challenge presented to us by special audiences who have not been accommodated in our historic structures, or through conventional media of exhibits, journals, and lectures. Through all of this, we have not lost sight of the past. The John Brown House is more popular than ever, and planning for its two hundredth anniversary will begin soon. Our attendance at lectures and other programs is increasing, and we recognize the vitality of that forum for presenting new research on Rhode Island history. Trying new approaches, while keeping popular programs, makes our work exciting and challenging, and we are fortunate that both old and new are so vital.

LAURA B. ROBERTS



RIHS photo by Laura B. Roberts

Technical services librarian Sally Gruzan at the OCLC terminal.

Annual Report of the Library

[*Editor's note:* In place of the usual annual report of the librarian (a position that will remain vacant until fiscal year 1980-1981), individual department heads at the library have submitted the following reports.]

TECHNICAL SERVICES

The number of titles cataloged during 1979 totaled 1,134, or 288 (20%) less than 1978. The decline was due to frequent changes in personnel, which resulted in more time having to be devoted to training new staff members. The number of volumes cataloged totaled 1,035 (many titles were serials or multi-volume sets). Of this number, 885 (68%) were family genealogies cataloged by Kay K. Moore, our industrious volunteer.

In my capacity as technical services librarian, I implemented our OCLC (formerly, Ohio College Library Center, but the organization is now known as OCLC, Inc.) terminal during the month of November and composed an extensive *Terminal Use Manual* for the Society. In two months of use, 54 titles were cataloged and we added 155 computer-printed cards to the card catalog. We experience a hit rate (percentage of titles found in the data base) of only 40% (most libraries have a hit rate of about 90%), but this rate is the result of the age and specialized nature of our collections. Response time (the time it takes for the central computer to poll us and feed back information) was generally excellent. We will not begin on-line original cataloging until March 1980, at which time a backlog and the intricacies of original cataloging will have to be taken into consideration. With a stabilization of personnel, including the appointment of a new librarian in 1980, the situation will certainly improve. With our present staff, however, I believe we will have to settle for a slow rate of on-line cataloging or a slightly faster one without the terminal. The latter is quicker because tasks are less specialized (ordering Library of Congress cards, for example) and terminal money could be used to hire another half-time or full-time assistant.

I recommend these two alternatives as solutions. We should retain OCLC. Under the new librarian's direction, we could obtain a grant to hire a second professional cataloger and appropriate support staff. Or we could hire a permanent shelver who would work two hours a day. This would help to free the library assistant from a task that takes up half her time. The library assistant would then be able to devote more time to cataloging projects, and primarily the preliminary checking of new accessions and reclass items against the card catalog. In turn, the assistant cataloger would be freed to assist the cataloger. Under this plan, the cataloger would restructure time to streamline searching of the National Union Catalog (NUC) at Brown University Library and use of the terminal. Until our reclass authorization in March, we could relegate all problem original cataloging into "X" designation to prevent a huge backlog. Once original cataloging is allowed, we could involve the assistant cataloger in NUC searching and cataloging procedures as much as possible.

During 1979 our serial holding (magazines, newspapers, annual reports, and other periodicals) increased dramatically by 114 titles. Libraries normally have separate serials departments because these publications present a whole set of problems and possibilities totally unrelated to anything else. The Society's library should be no exception. In our

present situation, however, the library assistant can only check-in serials. Time cannot be spared to solve problems or to administer a serials acquisition program. For the library's future needs, a grant program may help to solve our current problems in the area of serials and their acquisition. I recommend that the library assistant be relieved of shelving duties by hiring a shelver on a permanent basis. This person could also assist in serials check-in and processing.

In March I directed the staff in totally reorganizing books on the first floor and in bringing down categories of books from the second floor. Also, all reference books were classed out of Reference and into the first floor collection. The primary goal and very successful result of all this was to hold down genealogy paging and facilitate the type of "hands-on" research that genealogists must do. Red dots mark all first floor items, and red "Reading Room" sleeves are being placed over corresponding catalog cards.

A large part of my year was devoted to meetings and manuals. I wrote or rewrote the *Technical Services Manual*, *Shelving and Paging Manual*, and *OCLC Terminal Use Manual*. Obviously, I strongly believe that manuals of this type are vital to a technical services operation.

I also participated in meetings and subcommittee meetings of the Consortium of Rhode Island Academic and Research Libraries (CRIARL) and I attended an excellent seminar at Simmons College on AACR 2 (Anglo-American Cataloging Rules) and a stimulating six-week course on "Women and Management" conducted by the Rhode Island Department of Community Affairs. I was elected treasurer of the New England Technical Services Librarians Association.

Finally, I would like to thank fellow members of the library staff for their help and support, particularly Patricia Albright, Marie Harper, Maureen Taylor, Doris Sher, and James Brien for their consistent and valuable efforts in behalf of the cataloging department. I wish also to thank Albert T. Klyberg, who assumed the role of acting librarian while the search continues for a new librarian, for all his encouragement and concern.

SALLY P. GRUCAN

REFERENCE

Last year 6,729 persons visited the library. Over half of the users of the library were genealogists (56%). It is encouraging to note that these genealogists make use of the library and that generally we have the resources to satisfy their needs. About 20% of the users were students, although during the last three months of 1979 the ranks of genealogists and students have been nearly equal. I would like to see this trend continue so that the library may be justifiably termed a research library. New users of the library totaled 1,723. During the course of the year we received 3,327 telephone inquiries and 801 letters.

After the resignation of Charles McNeil in August, I became reference librarian, having formerly worked for Sally Grucan as a library assistant. Maureen Taylor, who shared her considerable knowledge of the collection during the transition from one reference librarian to the next, continues to work half-time at reference.

Ms. Taylor and I have attempted to answer reference letters as quickly as possible — generally this means



RIHS photo by Laura B. Roberts

Researchers in the library's main reading room.

within about ten days of receipt. In August and September we spent considerable time catching up on the backlog that had accumulated.

Besides answering mail and telephone inquiries, the most important responsibility of the reference department is daily patron service. More than 35% of the users of the library in 1979 were new to our facility, which meant that they had to be introduced to our policies, procedures, and holdings. To be of greater service to our patrons, the reference department compiled bibliographies and guides on various topics.

Both members of the reference department took graduate level courses this year: Ms. Taylor, a historiography course at Rhode Island College, while I have nearly completed my course work toward a Master of Library Science degree at the University of Rhode Island. I have served on two outside committees which were previously the responsibility of Mr. McNeil: CRIARL Government Documents Committee and the Providence Interrelated Library System Committee. I also spent time with Karen Light of the Westerly Public Library preparing a source guide for Rhode Island genealogists — a project sponsored by the New England Library Association that will be undertaken in each of the six New England States.

MARIE F. HARPER

MANUSCRIPTS

The manuscript division had forty-five accessions in 1979, down from last year's sixty. The difference, it will be seen, results primarily from fewer purchases, as the respective numbers of gifts in the two years vary only slightly. The majority of collections received were personal papers, followed by records of social organizations, labor

unions' locals, businesses, state and local governments, and military units. The sudden appearance of labor records resulted from years of effort by the Society's director, and the fresh impetus provided by the newly-organized committee for a Rhode Island Labor Archive.

Of the total number of accessioned manuscripts, forty-three were gifts. The largest individual gift was the records of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island, which came to us in outstanding physical condition and excellent order. The Archdiocese of Boston set an example of institutional altruism with its gift of a collection of early Newport correspondence of Asher Robins and Christopher Champlin. The presence of these letters in their files could not be explained and the archivist decided to present the manuscripts to us, resisting any temptation to put a price on his find. It is an example that I intend to follow.

Only two purchases were made in 1979. Nathaniel Shipton, the former manuscripts curator, in 1978 reported the purchase of a small quantity of Edward Spalding papers. When another set of Spalding letters became available, I purchased them, thus creating an interesting core collection. Since that time a dizzying array of Spalding material has become available, including a large private collection offered to us at a price far exceeding our ability to pay. I will continue my efforts to expand the Spalding collection because of Spalding's important role in early nineteenth-century American commerce.

Generally I have decided against further purchases of many classes of manuscript material, including business records, diaries and letters. Items I have turned down have duplicated existing holdings or have been of insufficient interest to merit their purchase.

I have made only one exception to our governing rule of declining deposits. We accepted records of the town of Narragansett, offered by the Narragansett Historical Society. Because the records are of sufficient interest, and because the Narragansett group has no storage facilities, I was happy to receive them.

We have continued to attract scholars and researchers from across Rhode Island and around the world (including researchers from Portugal, Scotland, and Switzerland). One hundred fifty-nine people filled out new research applications and made 372 visits to the manuscript reading room. I answered 113 letters and 245 telephone inquiries. A new statistic I would like to report is five tours given to individuals and groups as large as twelve people.

Of the persons visiting the reading room, 49% were students and faculty from colleges and universities; 32% were private persons (including writers, hobbyists, genealogists, and employees of businesses and publications); 6% were from museums, historical societies or the like; and 3% were from patriotic and social organizations. Their topics covered approximately sixty-four distinct subjects. Nearly everyone of the patrons found something to use in our holdings.

Four items were "called" in 1979 which could not be found. Of these, two later turned up misfiled. Two projects have been initiated which I hope will someday eliminate the need to report such a statistic. The first is a plan for reorganizing the card catalog, prepared for me by Patricia Albright. If and when help becomes available I hope to implement this plan to integrate all of the outdated segments of the catalog and reclassify the holdings according to modern library practice. I have already taken a first step toward this goal, establishing an authority file to govern all future subject headings that are to be put into the catalog. The second project is the relabeling and

repackaging of collections filed on the second floor. I have begun working on this, from back to front, and have covered all holdings from P through Z.

The Business Archives Project, begun in 1976, was ended in September. Seven of our most important collections of Rhode Island manufacturers and other business records were inventoried, along with a number of smaller collections. There remains an outside chance that additional funds will become available from the National Endowment of the Humanities for an extension of the project, in which I would hope to process two previously unprocessed industrial collections and to reprocess some important commercial collections such as the Moses Brown Papers, records of Almy & Brown, the Zachariah Allen collection, and Carrington collection.

In October we began a new grant project. Funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities will make it possible for us to process the records of the Providence and Bristol custom houses. Caroline Preston was hired as principal investigator and Patricia Albright, who assisted in completing the business records project, was hired to carry on with this new grant.

I was fortunate in having had the services of several talented volunteers in 1979. Robert Trim is processing the records of the Union Congregational Church of Providence; Katherine Frisch is cataloging Mrs. Anna Scott's collection of genealogical notes; Lucille Rosa, who previously worked as an intern for the library, began processing the Moses Brown papers; Lucinda Manning is processing the records of the League of Woman Voters of Rhode Island; Lauren Stevens, another intern, began processing the records of the A. E. Club; Mark Keller, an inexhaustible intern, has processed Edward Spalding's papers as well as the Harris papers. With the generous assistance of the Bristol Historical Preservation Society, I have inventoried the papers of Benjamin Bourne.

HAROLD KEMBLE

GRAPHICS

For the graphics department, 1979 was a challenging year as we continued to confront restrictions of time, space, and staff. During the past year 524 patrons visited the department, a decline from the number of users in 1978. One reason for the decline may have been the result of a stricter enforcement of the "appointments only" rule. The department received 117 letters and 805 telephone calls. We processed 178 photo lab orders. In the film archive, we served thirty-nine patrons and received sixty-nine telephone calls, an increase over 1978 statistics.

During the past year work continued in organizing various collections and improving overall systems and methods for the graphics department. I worked with the technical services librarian on a classification system for graphics. Sally Gruan and Marie Harper (who was serving as an intern) assisted me in developing an AACR 2 format and subject headings for architectural drawings. I also worked on graphics subject headings while reorganizing the subject file, and I devised a geographical filing system. I established a cataloging worksheet for prints and an accession form for all graphics. Although it is disappointing that many of these new methods and formats are not being put to use enough (because of lack of time), at

least decisions have been made and planning has been accomplished that will allow better access to graphics and that will bring us closer toward implementing a consistent system with other library departments — two of our major goals.

Maureen Taylor's title was changed in November from graphics assistant to assistant graphics curator. Ms. Taylor did most of the processing of photo lab orders. She worked on arranging and cataloging several collections and also separated small broadsides from those stored in the plan cases to make more room in the cases and improve preservation of the broadsides. Ms. Taylor made indexes of available copy negatives and negative photostats for maps, broadsides, and other material. Each negative photostat is now given a code number (as the copy negatives have had for several years now). She also spent many hours researching twenty-six Rhode Island photographers for an index being prepared by the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House.

The graphics department also became directly involved in exhibitions and other public events. Most important among these was the photograph exhibition and catalogue, "Working Women: Images of Women at Work in Rhode Island, 1880-1925." Laura Roberts, education curator, Kate Dunnigan, assistant business archivist, Ms. Taylor and I teamed up to choose photographs and create the exhibit, labels and text. The text and photographs of the catalogue were printed in the February 1979 issue of *Rhode Island History*. We showed slides of these photographs, with narration, at a September meeting of the Rhode Island Commission on the Status of Women. I hope to make a "Working Women" slide-tape presentation within the next six months. The graphics department also worked on "The Lay of the Land" exhibit, catalogue, and slide show, and the "Strike Up the Band!" exhibit and catalogue (in cooperation with the Rhode Island College publications department).

Important accessions during the year included: Albert Harkness architectural drawings, Rumford Chemical Works graphics, William Mills & Son nitrate negatives, and Trinity Square Repertory Theatre posters and photographs.

The graphics department worked on and attended a number of Society events, working on a regular basis with the museum, publicity, and publications departments. I served as a member of the emergency procedures and personnel policies task forces, while Ms. Taylor joined the emergency procedures task force in November. The department had the help of the following interns: James Barron (Brown University), Diane Barzman (Brown University), Cathy Coleman (Rhode Island College), John Goff (Brown University), Marie Harper (University of Rhode Island), and Mary Lou Hass (Salve Regina College).

During the year I served on the New England Document Conservation Center Advisory Committee. I attended the spring meeting of the New England Archivists and the joint fall meeting of the New England Archivists and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, where I was chairman for a panel on "Arrangement and Retrieval of Historic Photographs." I also attended meetings of the Society of American Archivists, the Rhode Island Archivists, and the Rhode Island Library Association. Ms. Taylor attended the November meeting of the Rhode Island Archivists.

HELEN KEBABIAN

Annual Report on the Museum Staff and Activities

The Rhode Island Historical Society, almost from its inception, began collecting objects related to the state's history. This acquisitive impulse was soon followed by the desire to show off what had been collected. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the Society has had a long history of exhibiting and displaying objects. Not surprising, however, is the exuberance with which our predecessors accomplished their displays. Most of us are familiar with that wonderful photograph of the reading room in the old Cabinet building at 66 Waterman Street which shows the Society's portraits stacked cheek by jowl in three tiers — those Rhode Island governors, legislators and naval heroes shouldering each other out for a good place in the front row. The enthusiasm of that display, however, was far surpassed when, in 1892, the Gaspee Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution presented a loan show to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Rhode Island Historical Society and the one hundred sixteenth anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Exactly 1,133 objects were put on display for the delectation of visitors who were charged fifty cents for the privilege of viewing the show. Printed in full-color on the back of the ticket was the American flag with its forty-four stars. Certainly all of us can appreciate the amount of love and labor that brought together so many items, painstakingly documented in a printed catalogue, for an exhibition that lasted only two days!

When the Society moved to the John Brown Mansion, the gracious parlors of the house — not so long abandoned by Marsden Perry — became the setting for a variety of changing exhibitions. One of my favorites was the 1945 exhibition of World War II souvenirs. Photographs show the lovely dining room, its walls still covered in rich damask, filled with the returned veterans' Japanese treasures. An alluring kimono, wrapped and tied with an obi, is displayed on a mannequin so that the daring neckline plunges open to the navel in a way that would have mortified the most worldly of geishas. Two large flags from the land of the rising sun are thumb-tacked to John Brown's fastidiously carved mouldings. The room that had been Perry's kitchen, which is now used as a gallery, still had a tiled floor, with walls and ceiling in gleaming white ceramic. Incongruously, in a photograph taken at the time of the exhibit, the room bristles with weaponry — bayonets, swords, machine guns. The exhibit of grand scope contained many items of curiosity — from longjohns to life boats to a pair of brass knuckles.

These early shows were merely dress rehearsals for what was to be the Society's most important exhibit: the 1965 Loan Exhibition of Rhode Island Furniture. The great pieces of furniture gathered together by Joseph K. Ott and his committee of twenty-four sat rather more comfortably in John Brown's parlors than did the machine guns and "C" rations of 1944. Alice Winchester of *The Magazine ANTIQUES* declared the loan show a landmark exhibit in the Society's 144-year history, and the enormously important catalogue, which is rapidly becoming a collector's item, has brought the Society national recognition.

Following the great furniture exhibit, the Society — under John Kirk's direction — began the task of restoring the John Brown House, eventually transforming it into the fine house museum it is today. With the rooms painted, papered and carefully furnished, space for new exhibitions had to be found elsewhere. In 1974, after a monumental job

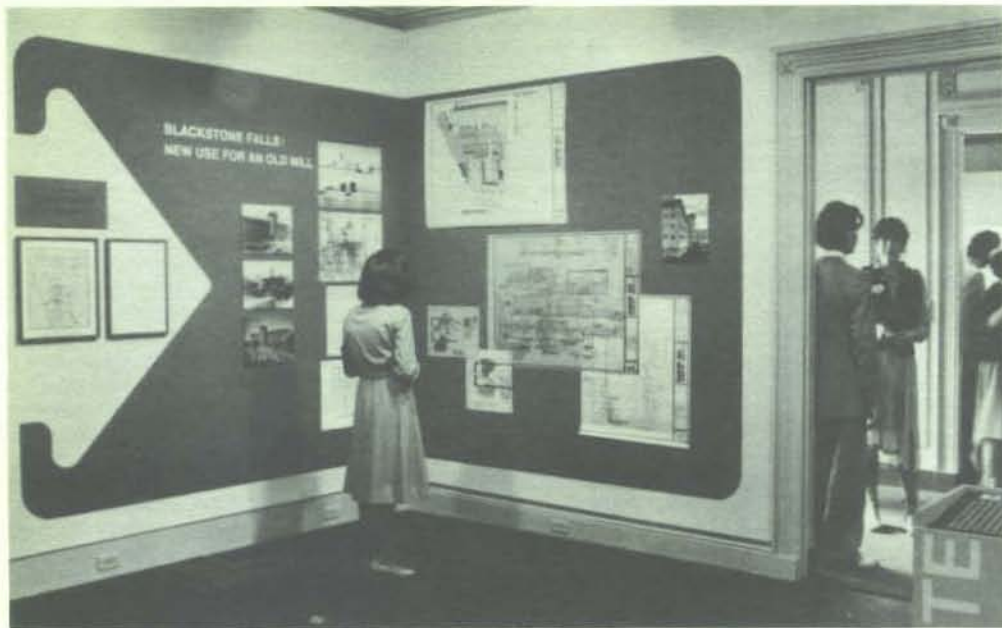


Photo by George Henderson, Brown University Photo Lab

"The Lay of the Land"

of researching and cataloguing, Frank Goodyear mounted his important exhibition of paintings from the Society's collection at the Beli Gallery of Brown University.

Now, during this past year, the Society has opened another major exhibit. The furniture and painting exhibitions were hard acts to follow, and it took a bit of help to match their standards of quality. Indeed, the Aldrich family, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rhode Island Foundation, the Tectron Charitable Trust, and the Mary Dexter Chafee Fund all contributed to accomplish the task. The Aldrich family provided the wonderful gift of the house at 110 Benevolent Street, which gave us our new exhibition galleries. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund helped finance the renovation of the house, while the other charitable organizations helped finance the exhibition. After two years of preparation, "The Lay of the Land" opened to the public on National Museum Day, May 18, 1979.

The first exhibit at the new Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House marked a departure from previous exhibitions that had justifiably focused on the Society's decorative arts collections or on materials related to the life and times of John Brown. Our new space gave us the opportunity to expand our explorations of Rhode Island history. By treating new subjects, we hoped to attract new audiences to the Society's exhibition. The subject of "The Lay of the Land" — Rhode Island's historical geography — was chosen because of its topical concern with the conservation of our environment. The exhibit tells the story of how Rhode Islanders have used their land, how they have developed, improved and changed the natural resources around them. The final gallery in the exhibition brings that story to the present, and here the visitor is challenged to think about the serious decisions facing all Rhode Islanders who ponder the future of the state's landscape.

In preparing the exhibit, the staff was aided and augmented by student researchers, consultants, a director of research, professional designers, and technicians. During the six months prior to the opening, the curators worked full-time researching, writing, painting, cutting, hanging, pasting, nailing, editing, and occasionally fretting, to bring all the components of the complex installation together. Every department in the Society participated in the project. Laura Roberts, curator of education, worked with us throughout the summer of 1978 to develop the concepts and story-line of the exhibit. The Society's library — with its valuable graphic resources, under the care of Helen Keabian, graphics curator — provided the substance of the exhibit. Without the good work of the public relations staff, no one would have known about the new exhibit or about our opening and special events. Special credit should go to Gray Osterud, consulting director of research, and to Albert T. Klyberg, who together wrote the catalogue, another work destined to become a collector's item.

We are pleased that the exhibit has been so well-received by the community. And, through educational programs, the Society continues to attract more and more people to our Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House to see and use the exhibit, which was specifically designed as a teaching tool. We look forward to more visits from school groups as the museum becomes better known. The renovated Aldrich House and the exhibit have become "study pieces" (I might even say exemplars) for other museums. We have had visits from curators, museum directors, and students from as far away as Delaware, Michigan and Minnesota. These visitors have learned about our Society's projects and have gained useful insights, based on our example, of how to turn a fine old house into an effective public facility. Others have come simply to see the exhibit that won an Award of Merit this year, the highest honor bestowed by the American

Association of State and Local History.

While the curatorial staff worked full-time on "The Lay of the Land," an exhibit program continued at John Brown House under the auspices of the Society's library and education departments. Helen Kebabian collaborated with Laura Roberts, Kate Dunnigan and Maureen Taylor to undertake one of the most popular shows ever: "Working Women: Images of Women at Work in Rhode Island, 1880-1925." The revealing and often moving photographs used in this exhibit were selected entirely from the rich collection of photographs in the library's graphics collection. An offprint of an article published in *Rhode Island History* (February 1979) served as a catalogue to the exhibit. While the "Working Women" exhibit was being prepared, Susan Edelman worked with student interns to mount a new exhibit of Brown family silver and of pewter from the Society's collections in the third-floor exhibit room of John Brown House, replacing the doll exhibit which had been on view there. The room was entirely repainted and papered for the occasion, and the group, under Ms. Edelman's direction, prepared extensive labels to explain the traditions of style and technology used in the making of pewter and silver pieces. Laura Roberts also reinstalled the third-floor showcase with a display of some of the most charming dolls in our collection.

Almost immediately after the opening of "The Lay of the Land," the curatorial staff began working on an exhibit called "Strike Up the Band," which opened in September at John Brown House. This exhibit trumpeted the history of the 142-year-old American Band that was formed in Rhode Island and that continues today as the New American Band under the direction of Francis M. Marciniak of Rhode Island College. The exhibit and a series of concerts by the band were funded by the Rhode Island Committee for the

Humanities, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, the Rhode Island Heritage Commission, and the Mary Dexter Chafee Fund. The band, chartered in 1837, had a long and illustrious history, reaching a peak of national fame under the conductor D. W. Reeves, whose compositions impressed even the great Sousa. After Reeves's death in 1900, the shift in public interest to vaudeville, the nickelodeon, and finally the movies, reduced the band's importance in the community. Band members, however, remained conscious of its traditions and began depositing band memorabilia — photographs, diaries, journals, official records, and musical instruments (several of which were made in Rhode Island of particularly unique design) — in the collections of the Society. Other material relating to the band was given to the Providence Public Library. Between the two institutions, there was a large collection from which to reconstruct the band's exciting history: its march into the Battle of Bull Run, the summer concerts before thousands at Roger Williams Park, the balls, the fireworks, the reunions, the parades. All these events flashed across the gallery walls and came to life on the lawn of the John Brown House on the exhibit's opening day when the New American Band played a rousing concert. Several people who had been associated with the old band, or whose fathers or grandfathers had been band members, attended the concert and viewed the exhibit. Later, some of these people generously donated additional band material to the Society's collections.

Because the New American Band was scheduled to give concerts all over the state as part of a wider celebration of the band's history, the Society constructed a ten-panel traveling exhibit to accompany the band around Rhode Island. The "road show" told the story of the band in much the same way as the parent exhibit, using photoreproductions of documents and old photographs. The brass band



Photo by George Henderson, Brown University Photo Lab

"The Lay of the Land"

instruments, however, could not be included in the movable two-dimensional display, so fine color photographs of the instruments by Morgan Rockhill, an imaginative and skillful photographer of reflective objects, were substituted for the actual instruments. Mr. Rockhill, who is a professional photographer, donated his valuable time to the project.

The band and the traveling exhibit have already been heard and seen at the Providence Public Library and Rhode Island College, and the exhibit was shown at the Providence City Hall. More appearances are scheduled before this joint project with Rhode Island College is completed in June. Robert Emlen was curator of the exhibit, assisted by the rest of the curatorial staff and a summer intern, Bruce Marwick, from Occidental College in California.

Candace Heald served as curator for the department's second traveling exhibit in 1979. She has been the Society's liaison with the Rhode Island Folklife Project, sponsored by the Library of Congress, and it was she who taught the project's staff members the ins and outs of exhibit preparation when, at the end of the first phase of their studies, they decided to exhibit their achievements. The show has been on display in the fourth gallery of the Museum of Rhode Island History at Aldrich House and will soon go "on the road" until it arrives at its final destination, the Library of Congress. Ms. Heald, who was exhibit assistant for "The Lay of the Land," became a permanent staff member in June when she joined the Society's roster as assistant curator. She is now the curator of textiles and has been responsible for moving our costume collection from various scattered hiding places in John Brown House to the new fresh storage space, which she designed, in the Aldrich House. She worked with consultant Alda Kaye in completing an evaluation of the costume collection, a project financed by the Phyllis Kimball Johnstone and H. Earle Kimball Foundation. Ms. Heald also directed intern Deborah Hashim of Brown University in her valuable research for the Society on early Rhode Island bed and window furnishings.

Although this has been primarily a year of exhibit activity here at home, some of the objects in our collection have been invited out. The Museum Committee, at its meetings in February, October and December of 1979, approved loans to several museums. Fabric samples from originals at the John Brown House went to Old Sturbridge Village for display at an important scholarly conference sponsored by the Decorative Arts Society. The Currier Gallery of Art borrowed our Sarah F. Sweet sampler with its needlework picture of the First Congregational Church and our model of St. Paul's Episcopal Church for an exhibition on "New England Meeting House and Church: 1630-1850," sponsored by the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife. The exhibit was held in June. Two seventeenth-century chests went to the Brockton Art Center for an important exhibit on craftsmen in southeastern New England, 1620-1770. In 1978 the Museum Committee approved the loan of the Joseph Brown secretary and bookcase to the Whitney Museum, and this year it approved the loan when the exhibit was moved to the National Gallery, where the secretary promises to be a star attraction in the exhibit entitled "In Praise of America, 1650-1825," which opens in February 1980.

Twenty-six donors have enriched our collections this year: Mr. and Mrs. William Slater Allen; Mrs. G. Grenville Benedict; Mrs. John Lloyd Brown; Virginia Catton; Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Tobey Choate; Mrs. Thomas E. Conley; Mrs. M. G. Davey, Sr.; Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Deutsch; The Estate of Nancy Dyer; Mrs. Edwin G. Fischer; Mrs. Charles Graham; Robert P. Gunn; Mrs. B. G. Jenkins; Mrs. Herbert E. Libby;



RIHS photo by Marjorie L. Rotkin

Visitors at the "The Lay of the Land"

Mrs. Mildred Longo; Mrs. Olive E. MacNeill, Misses Earlene and Raelene Mara; Mrs. Eric Moberg; the Newport Historical Society; Raymond Northup; Miss Nina B. Nuttal; Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Showman; Mrs. Evelyn Woodruff; Mr. William W. Rymer; Mrs. S. Raymond Hawthorne.

Items donated to the Society included a Quaker bonnet, a Newport sideboard, carpenter's tools, and paintings. Their acceptance reflects the interest of the Society in collecting broadly from the finest examples of decorative arts to objects representative of the everyday life of Rhode Islanders as they worked, shopped, fought, politicked, and amused themselves. Four gifts of special interest should be noted here. From as far away as California came a sampler made in 1773 by Mary Balch, age 11, of Newport. Little Mary was to become the founder and headmistress of the famous Providence girls' school which produced an assortment of excellent schoolgirl needlework. An important tall clock, dating from about 1736, with works by William Claggert and japanned case by Robert Davis, came to us from the Estate of Miss Nancy Dyer. The Society is also pleased to add to its collection a fine Newport sideboard, dating from about 1790, which was the gift of Mr.



Photo by Julia Emlen

The society offered a six-week course in early American furniture, taught by associate curator Robert Emlen.

Robert P. Gunn. A Federal-style looking glass of about 1810 was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Deutsch. It bears an extensive label by Nicholas Geoffroy, a Newport silversmith.

The curatorial department made three purchases this year which again reflect the broad collecting policy of the Society. A stoneware pickle jug with an extra wide neck is of special interest because it is marked "J. A. Budlong and Son and Co., Providence, R. I." The Budlong grocery was located on Canal Street in the 1890s when this jug was made. A trade sign of J. L. Slocum and Company, which was located on Dorrance Street in Providence in the late nineteenth century, advertises the company's lumber business with an inlay design of seventeen varieties of wood the company sold. The museum also purchased for the graphics collection eight drawings of Rhode Island theaters by Anthon F. Duman, dating from 1922 and 1931.

Each gift or purchase must be considered carefully by the curatorial staff and the Museum Committee before it becomes part of the collection, for we are not able to take in all that we would like due to the lack of storage space. Objects that come into the collection should be in a condition that is suitable for exhibition, must have a Rhode Island association or manufacture, and must contribute in some significant way to the unfolding story of the state's history. If an object cannot be accepted for one reason or another, the Society tries to suggest another appropriate museum in the state where it might be placed.

Our curators this year have traveled far and wide giving and getting information. Ms. Heald spoke to students at the Hagley Foundation in Delaware on exhibit preparation, and Mr. Emlen, the associate curator, went as far afield as Houston, Texas, to talk about recent trends in collecting American decorative arts. I stayed closer to home and attended a Harvard University seminar on resourceful planning for museums. Mr. Emlen, who fulfilled many speaking engagements, conducted a six-week course in early American furniture for the Society. Some of us appeared on television, sometimes inadvertently, while pursuing public relations duties assigned us by Kate Waterman, and all of us spoke to visitors at John Brown House and the Museum of

Rhode Island History at Aldrich House as part of programs sponsored by the education department.

As the curatorial staff looks back on 1979, we find that one of the most rewarding aspects of our work was the sharing we did with others of our collections, expertise, ideas, and projects. We are indebted to many fine museums and generous private collectors who let us borrow precious objects, and we thank them for sharing their knowledge and friendship as well. We have greatly profited from the knowledge and research of other curators and we are proud that the Rhode Island Historical Society could contribute to so many worthwhile projects and exhibitions from its important and continually growing collections. Our joint projects with Rhode Island College, the Rhode Island Folklife Project, and the many offices of state and local government that helped us with "The Lay of the Land" have enriched us just as we hope we have, in turn, enriched the community of Rhode Island.

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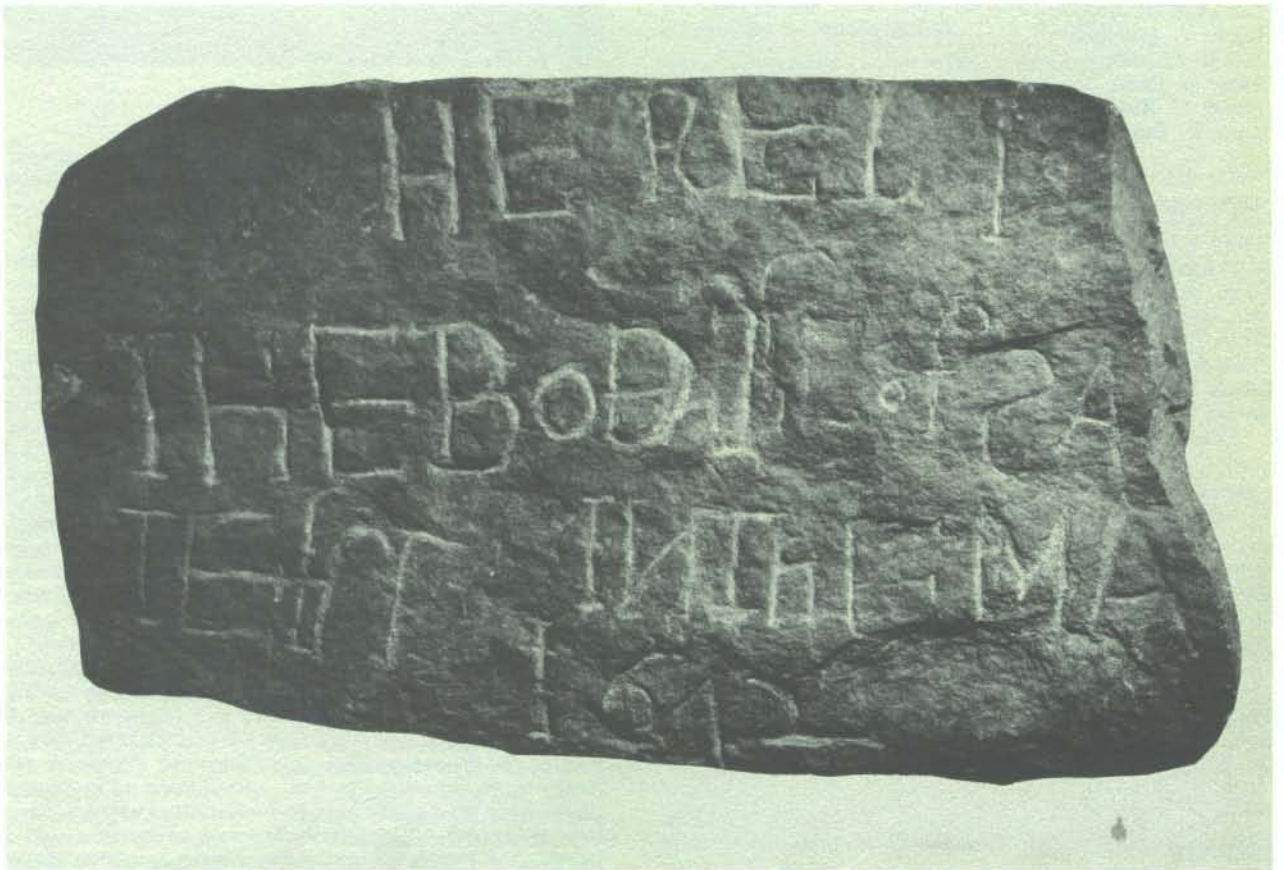
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Sara Tefit stone, 1642, Warwick. Photograph by Daniel and Jessie Farber.

From the Collections: Rhode Island History Carved in Stone

by Robert P. Emlen*

At the end of the nineteenth century Rhode Island antiquarian James N. Arnold embarked on a project to record the inscriptions of his state's early gravestones. By 1890 he had worked his way to the Warwick shoreline, where on August 17 he jotted in his notebook: "In open pasture at Mark Rock without protection a yard containing but a few graves. . . . Possibly there may have been more here [of] which time has obliterated all traces."¹

The bluff overlooking Narragansett Bay was still farm land in the 1890s. Mark Rock was better known for the curious Indian pictographs carved in a boulder at the water's edge than for the old gravestones, whose simple inscriptions Arnold noted: "Here lieth the bodie/ of / Sara Tefft. / Interred March 16, 1642, / in the 67th year/ of her age."²

Sara Tefft died the same year that Samuel Gorton and his followers settled Warwick, and her memorial bears the earliest date of any gravestone known in New England. In fact, it was considered such an important historical relic that in 1868 it was removed from the burial site and taken away for safekeeping. Arnold was quoting from a replacement stone, carefully left in place of the original. His description continues: "The above is a copy from the original Stone taken from this spot and deposited with R. I. Historical Society, Providence."³

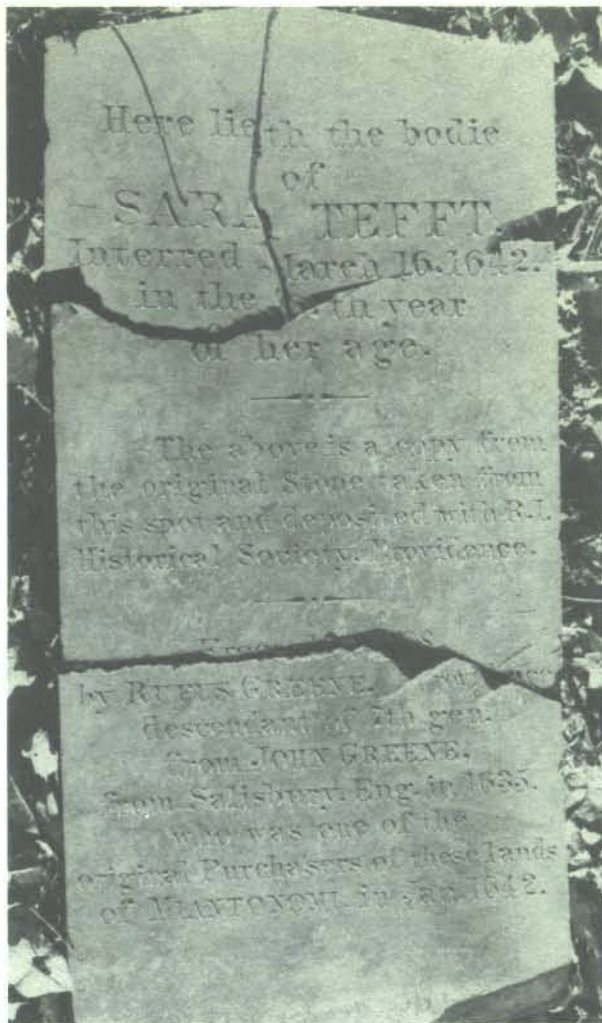
Students of American culture have long realized that the study of gravestones is an important research tool. The chiseled epitaphs and symbols are a resource for historical information that often is unavailable in any other form. For instance, Sara

Tefft's name does not appear in early Warwick records; apparently she never married nor owned land, and other than her gravestone inscription, there is no record of her settling in Rhode Island. Close examination of the stone reveals characteristics of seventeenth-century lettering — i.e., the double "f" character in "Tefft" and the re-cutting of the word "bodie" into "body." In the 1850s, when the Tefft gravestone was first documented, knowledge of these customs had been virtually forgotten, and these obscure historical details are therefore useful in verifying the Sara Tefft stone as authentic seventeenth-century work, and not a copy by a later hand.⁴

Although the Rhode Island Historical Society has demonstrated an interest in gravestone studies since at least 1868, it should not be, and does not want to be actively collecting them. There are ethical and practical questions about removing a gravestone from the site it memorializes, and the Society would rather leave them where they belong. But its decision to accept custody for the Sara Tefft stone, made well over a century ago, has proven to be the right one.

Today Mark Rock is crowded with summer cabins, the open pasture long gone. The old cemetery is hidden in a clump of brush, and only one stone remains there — the Victorian replacement for Sara Tefft's original marker, and even that has been vandalized, pulled from its cement footing and smashed. The gravestones that Arnold saw next to the Tefft memorial are now lost, probably scattered or plowed under the soil. Without a doubt,

*Mr. Emlen is associate curator of the Rhode Island Historical Society.



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Sara Tefft stone, 1868, Warwick. RIHS photograph.

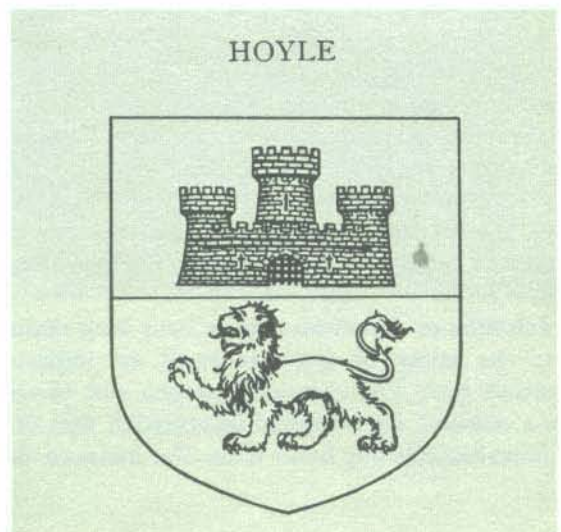
the antiquarian collector who brought the Sara Tefft marker to the Rhode Island Historical Society saved the oldest gravestone in New England from obliteration.

An institution that accepts custody of uprooted gravestones also accepts a large commitment. The burial site must be identified with a replacement marker, and the original stones — which tend to be large, heavy, fragile, and difficult to display — must be cared for properly. Understandably, the Rhode Island Historical Society has a conservative policy on collecting gravestones: it would much rather collect gravestone photographs.

“Sacred To the Memory,” the current exhibition at the John Brown House Gallery, displays the recent gift of Daniel and Jessie Farber’s Rhode Island gravestone photographs. The Farbers’ work demonstrates that photographs can often provide a clearer image of gravestone carving than do the actual stones themselves. A case in point is the gravestone of Captain Richard Hoyle.

Not much is known about Richard Hoyle’s life. After serving in the expedition against French settlements on Cape Breton in 1744-1745 he returned to Rhode Island, where in 1752 he died and was interred in the burying ground on his family’s Cranston farm.⁵ The inscription on his gravestone, thought to have been lettered by the Providence carver George Allen, is a useful study of archaic alphabet character and mid-eighteenth century Biblical reference, cut in the distinct style of a local craftsman.⁶

An exacting photograph of the carving reveals elements of the design not apparent to the naked eye. The Hoyle family seems to have had aspirations to nobility; John Hoyle, patriarch of the family, appropriated noble titles and heraldic devices with which to embellish his family’s name.⁷ When light is positioned to rake across the face of the gravestone, the details of the Hoyle family crest



RIHS Library

The Hoyle family crest, illustrated by George E. Nerney.



RIHS Library

Captain Richard Hoyle stone (detail). Photograph by Daniel and Jessie Farber.

are recognizable for the first time: what looks like a scar on the stone can now be seen as the form of a lion, which was spalled away after its outline was incised in the slate.

In addition to revealing obscure information on old gravestones, good photography also serves to record these documents, which, though carved in stone, aren't as permanent as one would first

assume. Corrosive elements in the atmosphere, a community's neglect of its old cemeteries, genteel pilferage and vandalism all take their toll, and the existence of many stones, some of them of major importance, can be documented today only by the photographs used to record them.

As the social composition of communities evolved, small family graveyards which held no



RIHS Library

Joseph Jencks headstone, 1740, Pawtucket. Photograph by Daniel and Jessie Farber.

importance for the new landowners were often abandoned, forgotten, and eventually obliterated. Captain Richard Hoyle's gravestone stood in his family lot in Cranston from 1752 until 1868, when the old Hoyle farm and the surrounding area of Elmwood and South Providence was annexed by the City of Providence.⁸ Subsequently neglected by both municipalities, the unattended graveyard became overgrown and fell into disuse. Presently bounded by Broad and Moore Streets, the site is now graced by an auto-body shop. A Hoyle descendant, however, removed her ancestors' remains to Locust Grove Cemetery on Elmwood Avenue and brought John and Richard Hoyle's stones to the Society, where they are now preserved.⁹

The 1740 gravestones of Rhode Island Governor Joseph Jencks, like the Richard Hoyle marker, no longer memorialized a gravesite when they were discovered by two construction workers in 1925. Both the headstone and footstone had been broken years earlier when the governor's remains were

disinterred from a long-abandoned burying ground in Pawtucket. His second grave site at the Mineral Springs Cemetery was marked with a new memorial, and the old stones, still useful pieces of slate, were found covering the opening of an old well when unearthed in the excavation for a new building.¹⁰

Because of their historic importance, it was thought that these deconsecrated stones should be preserved, and they were entrusted to the care of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Given their individual circumstances, the best place for the Tefft, Hoyle, and Jencks stones is at the Society. The Society has agreed to provide protective custody for this ponderous collection—which it is content to limit to only these examples. While concentrating on expanding its archival collection of gravestone photographs, the Society has proven to be an appropriate repository for the original documents, by preserving for all people and for all time, the history of Rhode Island, written in stone.

An earlier version of this article was given as a lecture at the 1979 meeting of the Association of Gravestone Studies and will be published in its proceedings, *Markers*.

1. James N. Arnold, comp., *Warwick, Rhode Island Gravestones* (Warwick, R.I., n.d.), 206.

2. *Ibid.*, 207. See also Arnold, "The Oldest Marked Grave in the State," *Narragansett Historical Register*, III (1890), 302.

3. Arnold, *Warwick Gravestones*, 207.

4. Israel Tefft to William B. Trask, May 11, 1857, quoted in *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, XXII (1868), 205.

5. Joseph Jencks Smith, comp., *Civil and Military List of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1900), 103, 109.

6. This attribution was made by Vincent Luti, whose research of Providence-area stone carvers appears in this issue.

7. Howard M. Chapin, "Colonial Heraldry," *RIHS, Collections*, XXI (1928), 73-74.

8. "City Not Owner of Lots," unidentified newspaper clipping, September 10, 1906, *RIHS Scrapbook #14*, p. 8, *RIHS Library*.

9. Horace G. Belcher, "The Old Hoyle Tavern," *RIHS, Colls.*, XXVIII (1935), 36-38.

10. *Providence Journal*, June 13, 1925.

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