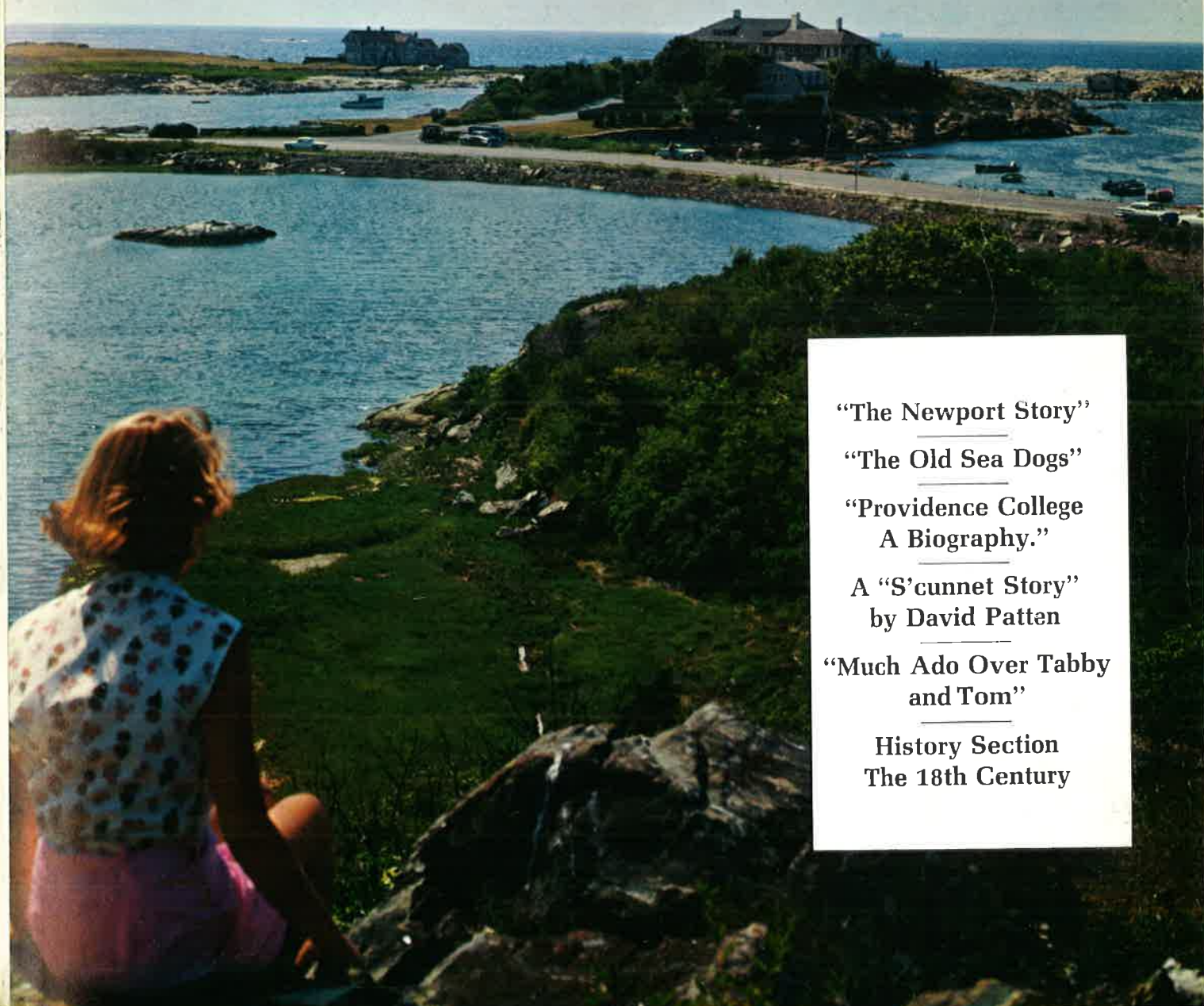


65-66

TWO DOLLARS

# YEARBOOK

RODE ISLAND, CRADLE OF LIBERTY AND LAND OF PROMISE



“The Newport Story”

“The Old Sea Dogs”

“Providence College  
A Biography.”

A “S’cunnet Story”  
by David Patten

“Much Ado Over Tabby  
and Tom”

History Section  
The 18th Century



# 18th CENTURY GOVERNORS OF RHODE ISLAND

Under the Royal Charter of 1663

*Samuel Cranston* 1698-1727

Born in Newport in 1659. His father, John Cranston, a physician, was Attorney General, Deputy Governor and Governor. Samuel Cranston succeeded his uncle, Governor Walter Clarke, the last under the Quaker regime. He married Mary Hart, a granddaughter of Roger Williams. He died in 1727, in office, after the longest term ever served by a Governor.

*Joseph Jencks* 1727-1732

Born in 1656 in Pawtucket (then Providence). His grandfather, Joseph Jencks, emigrated in 1630 and was the first man to work in iron and brass in the New World. His father came to Pawtucket in 1655 and erected a forge near the Moshassuck. Governor Jencks was over seven feet tall and lived to be 84. He died in 1740.

*William Wanton* 1732-1733

Born in 1670 in Scituate, Massachusetts. After his marriage to Ruth Bryant, the daughter of an ancestor to William Cullen Bryant, they removed to Portsmouth, Rhode Island, where he established a shipyard in 1702. During Queen Anne's War he fitted out and commanded a privateer which brought him riches. He sold his property to Daniel Howland of Tiverton and removed to Newport, where he entered politics. He died in December, 1733.

*John Wanton* 1734-1740

Brother of William. Born in 1672 in Scituate, Massachusetts. Served as Deputy Governor from 1729 to 1734. Married Ann Freeborn and secondly, Mary Stafford of Tiverton. Was a Naval Captain and Colonel of Militia during Queen Anne's War. He died in office in 1740, having lived on Thames Street opposite his brother William.

*Richard Ward* 1740-1743

Born in Newport in 1689. His grandfather was John Ward, an officer in one of Cromwell's regiments, emigrated from Gloucester, England, after the restoration of Charles II and settled in Newport. His father, Thomas Ward, was a merchant and General Treasurer of the Colony. Richard Ward, also a merchant, was Attorney General, Deputy Clerk of the Assembly, Recorder and Deputy Governor until 1740, then Governor for three years. He died in Newport in 1763.

*William Greene* 1743-1745  
1746-1747  
1748-1755  
1757-1758

Born in 1695 in Warwick, Rhode Island, the first son of Captain Samuel Greene. He was a surveyor of the line between Rhode Island and Connecticut in 1728. He was the first man in 86 years not a resident of Newport to become Governor, except Joseph Jencks who was elected on condition that he remove to



*Hon. John Wanton*



Newport. During Governor Greene's administration, the long dispute between Massachusetts and Rhode Island over boundaries was ended, and Cumberland, Warren, Bristol, Little Compton and Tiverton were brought into Rhode Island. He died in 1758.

*Gideon Wanton* 1745-1746  
1747-1748

Born in 1693 in Tiverton, the son of Joseph Wanton. He was General Treasurer of the Colony for twelve years, then succeeded William Greene as Governor for one year. In 1747, he was elected for a second time. In 1748 William Greene was again elected. He furnished troops for the war against France which took part in an expedition to Cape Breton and participated in the siege of Louisbourg. He died in Newport in 1767.

*Stephen Hopkins* 1755-1757  
1758-1762  
1763-1765  
1767-1768

Born in Providence (now Scituate) in 1707. He represented Providence in the General Assembly for six years, then was made Justice of the Court of Common Pleas and in 1755 was elected to his first of several terms as Governor. He represented Rhode Island in the General Congress in Philadelphia, and was one of the two Rhode Island signers of the Declaration of Independence, the other being William Ellery. He served Brown University as Chancellor for many years. He was one of the *great* Governors of Rhode Island. He died in 1785 in Providence.

*Samuel Ward* 1762-1763  
1765-1767

Born in 1725 in Newport, the son of Governor Richard Ward and Mary (Tillinghast) Ward. In 1745 he moved to Westerly and there began his career. A graduate of Cambridge College, he became a leader in the town and colony and was elected Governor three times. It was the exciting period of resistance to the Stamp Act. He wrote a manifesto incorporating fifteen points of complaint against England. With Stephen Hopkins, he was a delegate to the first Continental Congress in 1774 and 1775. He died in Philadelphia while on duty there in 1776.

*Josias Lyndon* 1768-1769

Born in Newport in 1704, of a wealthy and prominent family. He was Clerk of the lower house of the General Assembly at the age of twenty, and was Clerk of the Superior Court of Newport County. At the close of the ten year controversy between Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward over the Governorship, in 1768 both agreed to withdraw and Lyndon was elected. It was the period of great protest against British taxation without representation in the Parliament, and Lyndon was a leader to the protest. He died at the age of 74 in Warren, Rhode Island. His wife, Mary (Carr), lived to the age of 96.

*Joseph Wanton* 1769-1755

Born in 1705 in Newport, the fourth of the Wanton family to be Governor. He was annually re-elected from 1770 to 1775, but in that year was not confirmed by the legislature because of his opposition to the "Army of Observation" sent to Massachusetts under General Nathanael Greene. The resolution was passed over his protest and he was deposed from office by the General Assembly and



*Hon. William Greene*



the office declared vacant. During the British occupation of Newport, he lived in retirement and was unmolested after the evacuation. He died in Newport in 1780.

*Nicholas Cooke*

1775-1778

Born in Providence in 1717 and was fifty-eight when called to the Governorship to replace the deposed legal Governor, Joseph Wanton. There was danger in his acceptance of the office, for if the British were successful, he would undoubtedly be hanged. Stephen Hopkins, then about to depart for Congress, and Joshua Babcock were appointed to urge his acceptance. He finally consented because of the critical state of the country. He was an excellent War Governor, but declined re-election in 1778, retired to private life and died in 1782.

*William Greene, Jr.*

1778-1786

Born in Warwick in 1731, the son of Governor William and Catherine Greene. He was Deputy from Warwick and later first Associate Justice of the Superior Court. When the British had taken possession of the Island of Rhode Island, he was appointed to the Council of War. In 1778, he was chosen Chief Justice of the Superior Court and the same year elected Governor to replace Nicholas Cooke. Through the eventful years of the War he served with wisdom and integrity and unwavering patriotism. He was Captain General and Commander-in-Chief of the Rhode Island Militia during this period. He continued to live in Warwick after his retirement from public life, where he died in 1809.

*John Collins*

1786-1790

Born in Newport in 1717. He early espoused the cause of Independence. He and others, in 1776, were sent to see General Washington, to inform him of conditions in the colony and to ask his advice about the best methods of defense. He was among representatives of Rhode Island in the Congress several times between 1778 and 1782. When after the War two parties arose, one advocating state sovereignty and the other a Union, it was the mercantile class which favored the Union and insisted on specie money, while the agricultural class favored a Confederation and desired paper money. In spite of strong opposition, the "Greenbackers" elected John Collins as Governor and a Senate which favored their cause. Governor Collins' last act was to cast his vote to break a tie in the Senate, and succeeded in calling a convention to decide upon the ratification of the Constitution. Unpopular with his own party, he was not re-elected. He was chosen as representative to Congress, but did not take his seat. He died in Newport in 1795.

*Arthur Fenner*

1790-1805

Born in Providence in 1745, he was the son of Arthur and Mary (Olney) Fenner and the grandson of Arthur Fenner, an early settler and a member of the Town Council with Roger Williams and John Sayles. In 1774 he was one of the "Committee of Inspection" recommended by the Continental Congress which met for the first time in 1774. After Governor Collins' rejection in 1790, a coalition party was formed which elected Arthur Fenner as Governor and Samuel J. Potter, a Federalist, as Deputy Governor. Governor Fenner's popularity was so great that he was elected each year for the rest of his life. He died in Providence in 1805, the last of the Governors to have served during the 18th Century.



*Hon. Nicholas Cooke*



*Hon. Arthur Fenner*

*Source: Rhode Island Governors for Three Hundred Years, by Ralph S. Mohr.*