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THE MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

WITH NOTES AND QUERIES

VOL. VII

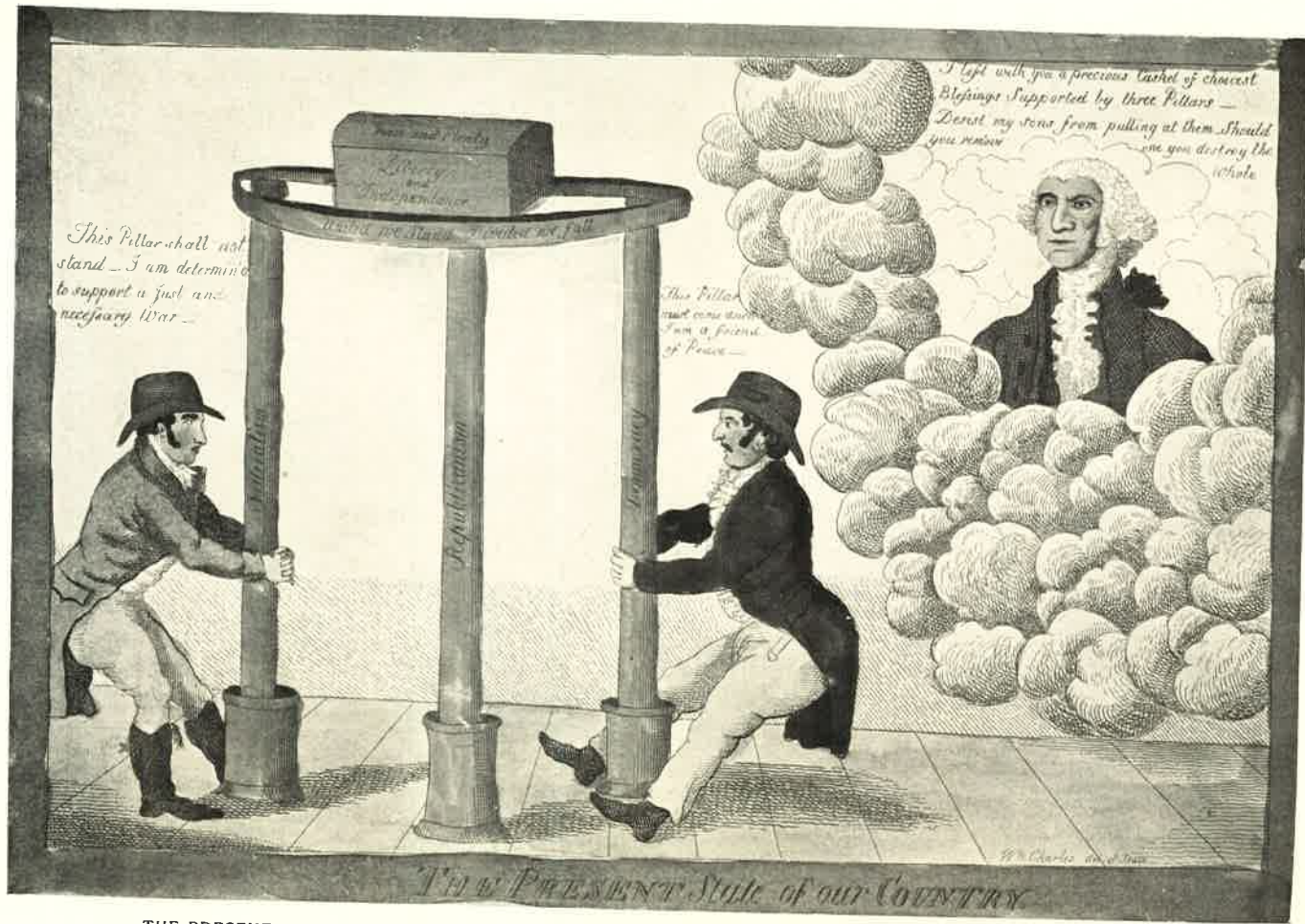
APRIL, 1908

No. 4

CONTENTS

THE ONLY WASHINGTON CARICATURE	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE FIRST COMMISSION AT SEA FROM RHODE ISLAND (<i>First Paper</i>)	JAMES N. ARNOLD 197
NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY NAMES	KEMP P. BATTLE, LL. D., (<i>President Univ. of N. C.</i>) 208
JONATHAN SMITH'S SPEECH	JOHN H. MANNING 223
WASHINGTON IN CARICATURE	227
SOME AMERICAN DIPLOMATS	S. H. M. BYERS 228
THE INDIFFERENCE OF THE TUDORS	WILLIAM C. VAN ANTWERP 233
SEVENTY YEARS AGO IN MISSOURI	239
OF HISTORY AND ROMANCE	E. S. WILCOX 242
MINOR TOPICS:	
History of the Forged Mather Letter	246
A "Beethoven Society" of 1819	248
The Naming of Pittsburg	249
John Brown not Osawatomie Brown	252
THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE: CHAPTER XL	JAMES KIRKE PAULDING 253

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THE PRESENT STATE OF THE COUNTRY (1812). The only Caricature known in which Washington's Portrait appears.

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RHODE ISLAND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

WITH NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol. VII

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No. 4

THE FIRST COMMISSION AT SEA FROM RHODE ISLAND.

I.—THE DUTCH AND RHODE ISLAND.

THE story of the Dutch explorations along the New England coast so far as our State historians have given it, is very vague. It is merely stated that they so sailed. What was learned and who did it is not given, save in one instance—that of Adrian Block giving a name to an island which is to-day known by his name. The best narrative I find is in Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America," Vol. IV, page 395. In speaking of the Dutch he recognizes that they were a commercial people; that as sailors they were daring. It is true they had a severe lesson set them to learn by the Spaniard, and true it was they faithfully learned it. They felt they had been defrauded out of a large portion of their wealth by Spain. That an opportunity was offered them was certain, which they were not slow to avail themselves of by all the means in their hands. They had taken a great interest in the India question; had established trading posts; had learned the language of the people and had become familiar with the eastern world. The long journey was studied and the various dangerous points carefully noted. Could this long journey be shortened? Ever since the voyage around the Cape of Good Hope had been made the question of a shorter passage had been discussed among the leading navigators of the time. Columbus was not original in his idea of a direct voyage to the West. The point was, who was brave enough to sail first. The voyage of Columbus had proven that land was West and nearer to Europe than was India by sea around the Cape. The west passage to India was conceded to have been solved by him. The great disappointment consisted in not finding the natives so far advanced in the arts as were those of the India with which they were familiar. To distinguish one from the other one was called East and the other West India. Columbus having made the southern voyage it was natural that the maritime nations farther north became zealous to follow the lead and began a series of voyages farther north also. Champlain and Hudson, Cabot and the other northern navigators were looking for this passage

to India. That America was a great continent of itself, extending nearly from pole to pole and united by a narrow strip of land, was not dreamed of by Columbus and the earlier voyagers. Magellan was the first to raise the doubt, which Drake, Cavendish and Dampier proved by sailing around the world. So long, however, had the idea that America was India been believed that the name given to the native tribes as Indians has clung to them ever since.

In following the eastern coast of America and in sailing across the ocean the traditions and myths about the great fishes, dragons, and other mythical characters that guarded the secrets of the sea were rudely shaken. The religion of the sea, such as had been taught for centuries by the Greek, Roman, and later schools, had now to be radically changed. No nations of Europe did more in this line than the Germans and English. In sailing along the coast in these new waters the stories learned were ever before them for proof and disproof. The Dutchman in all these voyages used his brain as well as his hands. He looked well to the practical. It is conceded the early Dutch maps were the most accurate, as far as they went, of any made in those times. They are practical, as they showed the lines sailed over.

The Spanish and Portuguese navigators had behind them in their voyages the influence of their church, which used the full extent of its power to debar other nations from participating in the profits or honors arising therefrom. When things were carried so far that the new domain of the earth was divided between Spain and Portugal, France being left out of the bargain, she protested, but the Dutch ignored it and went on in their own way and manner without asking spiritual permission.

When it had become demonstrated that there was a profit in these voyages, then it was found necessary to take steps to make them profitable as well as to have a national authority and protection over the ventures. From this point I cannot do better than to quote from Winsor's history as above noted. He says:

"The first proposition to make such an expedition was submitted to the States General in 1581 by an English sea captain named Betts and refused by them. It was undoubtedly conceived in a purely commercial spirit." This proposition was to send ships to the West Indies and the Spanish Main to prey upon Spanish commerce.

"Gradually, however, the idea of destroying the transatlantic re-

sources of Spain and thereby compelling her to submit to the Dutch conditions of peace, and to the evacuation of Belgium, caused the formation of a West India Company, which was authorized to trade and to fight the Spaniards in American waters. It appears in a light of a necessary political measure without, however, throwing in the background the necessity of finding a short route to the East Indies.

Although the scheme to form the company was broached in 1592 by William Usselinx, an exiled Antwerp merchant, it was many years before the plan could be carried out. The Greenland Company was formed in 1598. It was ships from this latter company that sailed up the North and Delaware rivers in 1598.

In 1606 the plan for an organized company was drawn up according to Usselinx's ideas. It was to remain in existence thirty-six years, the first six years to be assisted by the United Provinces, and to be managed the same as the East India Company. This plan was debated for and against; a truce having been agreed upon between Spain and Holland, it was suffered to lie in its incomplete form until after the renewal of the War with Spain, when it was again taken up in 1618.

So early as 1607 the Dutch had traded with the Indians in Canada for furs, and Hudson offered his services to the Dutch in 1609. The voyages of Hudson and others created a new interest and breathed new life into the West India Company measure. It finally passed the States General and was signed June, 1621.

In 1626 and 1627 the Dutch obtained a concession of the Narragansett Pequots and those Indian tribes living along the Sound and to the east of their settlement at New Netherland. This brought forth a remonstrance from Governor Bradford in 1627. This was further emphasized by the building of Fort Hope in 1632 at Hartford.

The Dutch were not so successful in managing the Indians living east of New Netherland, as the English. They were more cruel and would not try a compromise first. Their experience no doubt with the Spanish troops had schooled them to these tactics.

Notwithstanding their weakness in the various trading posts or forts, they continued to hold on by surrendering the most eastern ones first and the rest when the English captured New York, and the colony went under the English flag first on September 27, 1664, finally, in November, 1674, after being in the hands of the Dutch about a year."

The first serious trouble between the English and the Dutch that affected our colony was in October, 1644, when it was feared the Dutch and Indians would unite against the English settlements.

Owing to the peculiar relations between our colony and the other New England colonies it was natural that our trade should seek new channels. The Dutch at Manhattan was one of these channels. As early as September 19, 1642, arrangements were entered into for a trade with them. For the next ten years they frequented the Narragansett Bay for trade. This friendly feeling toward the Dutch was not pleasing to the two Massachusetts Colonies.

In May, 1652, occurred a personal affair at Warwick over the settlements of their accounts, which was carried to law and decided in their favor. After the declaration of war, May 19, 1652, the Dutch were forbidden to trade with the Indians in the Colony.

Some writers place the building of the Dutch fort at Westerly, now Charlestown, as early as 1626-27, but I think it was about 1640 that the Stockade or Trading Post was formed, and the fort at Fort Neck was a later affair and was more than probably built by the English in 1653. The Dutch were not successful in their trade with the Narragansetts.

May 15, 1653, the Colony took active steps to protect themselves against the Dutch. A commission was given May 17 to Captains Dyer and Underhill to go against the Dutch. As this commission is so quaint in its language and the earliest one issued by our colony it merits being given here in full:

CAPTAIN JOHN UNDERHILL'S COMMISSION

This certifiyeth whom it may concerne yt whereas we ye free inhabitants of Providence Plantations haveinge received authoritie and power from the Right honorable ye Counsell of State by authoritie of parliament to do some'g our selves from ye Dutch ye enemie of ye Commenwealth of England as also to assest them as wee shall think nessesarie as also to seize all Dutch vessels or shippes yt shall come within our harbours within our power And whereas by true information and greate complaint of ye severe condition of many of our cantonments of English natives living on long islend are subjected to by ye double soverince of ye Dutch province at ye manars there and the desperate hazard they are subjected to by ye bloody plottings of ye governor and all show who are decided and declared to

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have demand in and any ways of ye Indians by bribes and premeses to sett of and destroy ye English natives in those p^{ts} by wch exposure one cantonment is put in trouble as quite desperate hazards and in continuel feare to be sett of and murdered unlesse some speddey and defensible remedy is so provided These p^{ts} we consider and as all neighbors by our general asemblie mett the 19th of May 1653 It was agreed and is to remind by ye said asemblie yt it was nessesarie and yt for our owne defence (where if ye English there should be attacked or sett of) wee could nott long enjoy our stations chosen as before we have thought it nessesarie both to defend our selves and so sustain them to give. And wee hereby give by virtue of our authoritie provided us before full power and authoritie to Capt. William Dyer and Capt. John Underhill to take all Dutch ships and vessels as shall come into their power and so to defend themselves from ye Dutch and all enemies of ye Commonwealth of England. And doe further think it nessesarie yt they offende ye Dutch offer all inducements also to take them by indulgence and to prevent ye efusion of blood provided also yt noe violence be given nor noe detriment sustayned to them it shall submit to ye Commonwealth of England wch being wch authority thou thus may offende them at ye Expedition of Capt. William Dyer and Capt. John Underhill who by devise and counsell of three councellors one of wch councellors desentinge have power to bring ye same to conformitie to ye Commonwealth of England provided yt ye states yt so provide and all vessells taken be brought into ye harbour at Newport and accordinge to ye law to shew before and ye states yt further provided also yt these seized and authorized by us doe give account of their proceedings to ye sd Court and assistants of ye Colenie and accordingly provide further instructions to order their assignes by ye P^dent and assistants aforesaid. It is further provided yt Capt. John Underhill is constituted Commander-in-Chief upon ye lands and Captain William Dyer Commander-in-Chief at ye sea yett to joyne in Counsell to be assisted both to other for ye preparings of ye severall seizures for the honor of ye Commonwealth of England in wch they are employed.

Given under ye Seale of ye Coleny of Providence Plantations this ye Psent 27th of May, 1653.

P me, Will Lytherland, Generall Recorder.

The English fort at Fort Neck was a protection against the Dutch at this point. This military proclivity was in sharp contrast to that of the two eastern Colonies, who were more cautious if not prudent. The exposed situation of our colony undoubtedly nerved them to this step.

The step was not actually taken without some remonstrance from Warwick and Providence, which was not strongly pushed.

In a paper dated August 6, 1659, the date of the seizure of the fort at Hartford is given as June 27, 1563, and the Captain says the April following the court sequestered it from him.

In 1614 Adrian Block, after losing his vessel at New York, built him another, in which he sailed up the East River and the Connecticut to between the present Hartford and Windsor. He found an Indian fort here. (De Forest, History of Indians of Connecticut, p. 70.)

Governor Van Twiller sent Jacob Van Curler, who purchased and erected a Trading Post at what is now Hartford, 1632. He purchased it from Wapyquart or Wopigwooit the grand sachem of the Pequots, and the deed was passed June 18, 1633: "One Dutch mile along the river and $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile inland," page 72. The consideration was 26 ells of a coarse cloth called duffels, 6 axes, 6 kettles, 18 knives, 1 sword blade, a pair of shears, and some toys. (*Ibid.*)

The little territory thus purchased was made for all purposes of trade to all nations of Indians. It was to be a territory of peace. The hatchet was to be buried there. No warrior was to molest his enemy while within its lands. Van Curler erected on it a small trading fort, armed it with two pieces of cannon and named it the House of Good Hope. (*Ibid.*)

The Pequots broke these conditions by killing some Indians, their enemies, who had come here to trade. The Dutch were so incensed at this act of violence that to punish it they, in some way or other, contrived to despatch Wopigwooit and several of his men. Sassacus, his son, succeeded him in the office and a desultory war ensued between the Pequots and the Dutch. It might seem that this had some bearing on the loss of the Dutch trade and the invitation to the English at Massachusetts Bay to settle at Hartford. (p. 73.)

The Dutch were very cruel and so exasperated the Indians of Connecticut that they arose against them and drove them from the eastern end of Long Island and out of Connecticut. (*Ibid* further on.)

Captain Baxter (who afterwards brought over the Royal Charter) captured a Dutch vessel near New York and was pursued by two of their

armed vessels to Fairfield Harbor. The New England Commissioners thereupon forbade Dutch vessels entering English ports, in sharp contrast to the vigorous action of our colony.

Upon conclusion of peace between England and Holland in 1658, the law prohibiting trade with the Dutch was repealed. There were persons who claimed to hold commissions from our colony who still continued to annoy them. To prevent these from occurring in the future these acts were declared a felony.

While not belonging to this subject, this fact in relation to Narragansett Bay deserves to be recorded. In the report of the Royal Commissioners (Colonel Richard Nicolls, Sir Robert Carr, George Cartwright and Samuel Maverick), in speaking of Narragansett Bay, they pronounce it the largest and safest one in New England nearest the sea, and fittest for trade.

Does not this fact explain the activity of our colony in the Dutch War?

Champlain visited Plymouth Bay July 19, 1605, made a map of the Bay and named it Port Lewis. (Winsor, IV, p. 110.)

Verrazano stayed fifteen days at Newport Harbor, leaving May 5 or 6, 1529. He gives a very favorable opinion of the land and the natives. (*Ibid*, IV, 8.)

The Dutch appeared to have explored the coast, but Mr. Brodhead ("History of New York," I, p. 58) is inclined to the belief that Adrian Block visited Plymouth Harbor in 1614 in the *Onrust*. The Dutch Map and Champlain's book, he says, are very much alike.

The Dutch claimed that New Netherland extended from Narragansett Bay west and south as far as Maryland.

The Massachusetts English colonies early invaded the eastern section, going as far west as the Housatonic on the Sound, and covering the land north and east of the Connecticut river.

The Dutch looked on dismayed at this encroachment on their territory and protested, but no attention was paid to them, for all their claims were based on claims and historical documents that we know to be manifestly false and the truth of which can never be proved. The persons who got up the evidence for the Dutch West India Company knew evi-

dently there was a flaw in the title and the English could not be blamed for paying no attention to the claims. [Arher's "Hist. Essays," p. 36.]

The Dutch when negotiating with Cromwell drew up several statements which were audacious fictions. [*Ibid*, 37.]

The first Dutch maps of New Netherland were drawn in 1614 and 1616. [*Ibid*, 44.]

The early Dutch voyagers' sole object appears to have been to discover a shorter route to India. Of these Hudson's voyages seem to have been most persistently pursued. The claim made by both France and Holland of discovery, while they did not colonize, but merely sailed along the coast, was disputed by England. It was upon this very question of colonization the claim of England to North America rested and upon which it was fought out in the various wars for possession.

The Dutch were noted for their firmness of purpose and stubborn adherence to a right as a principle of life. They were a nation of traders, so the American settlements were managed as trading posts. The colonization plan was filled with it. The English plan, while not neglecting trade, looked deeper to entrenchment by giving more attention to a future and permanent habitation. This was what made the Dutch so unpopular with the Indians; they drove too sharp a bargain and took every advantage in their power.

In 1609 Henry Hudson made his celebrated voyage up the now famous river bearing his name. In 1613 several vessels arrived, erected small forts and carried on a fur trade with the Indians. It is probable that soon after this they pushed out exploring parties to the east. The Narragansett Indians being a prominent tribe and occupying a commanding position on the coast, there can be no doubt, soon became familiar with the Dutch.

It is said that they had a trading house on what is now known as Dutch Island. I am inclined to the opinion if they had one it was a temporary affair. We know that May 22, 1658, Governor Arnold and others purchased it of the Indians. The November session following of the General Court passed a resolution making valid these sales, and saying "they cannot now be made void or hindered." They go further and forbid strangers from purchasing lands, etc., within the lines. ["R. I. Col. Rec.," I, pp. 403-4.]

This certainly is proof that the Dutch had not a valid possession, and sustains my position that if a fort had been erected it was only a temporary affair.

September 19, 1642, a resolution was passed, giving permission to trade with the Dutch by the General Court. May 17, 1653, acting under orders from the English Government or as they call it, the "Council of State," orders were given to arm against the Dutch, and commissions were issued to prey upon their commerce.

May 18, 1652, the Dutch Governor of the Manadoes had been given notice touching the law of trading with the Indians and notified of the Prohibition Act. In May, 1647, there had been a prohibition act passed which excluded all Dutch, French or English traders from abroad from trading with the Indians within the colony limits, which act was again enacted September, 1653.

Providence Plantations protested against this activity, and in a letter to Sir Henry Vane the fact is mentioned.

After the peace between England and Holland trade was resumed, the prohibition being repealed in May, 1657. In May the next year the vessels were protected and declared not liable to seizure.

It will be seen from these above citations from the Colonial Records and in face of the fact that the Commissions issued did bear fruit in so much that Captains Underhill and Dyer did attack the Dutch Fort at Hartford, that had there been any Dutch property on the Island they would have seized it first. The Indians when they sold it later did not mention any transaction with them about it.

In the Treaty at Hartford, September 19, 1650, between the Dutch and English, it was agreed that the Dutch should remain in full possession of their lands on the fresh river at Hartford. Ratified February 22, 1655 (O'Callaghan, "Doc. Hist. of N. Y.," I., p. 611.)

Dr. Parsons, in an essay published in the *Historical Magazine*, February, 1863, says the Dutch had a Trading Station at Quotinas or Dutch Island and another at what is now Charlestown.

The Doctor goes on and speaks about this Dutch fort, which he thinks was built about 1616. He has in mind the one known on Fort Neck. This fort, as I have before stated, was built in 1653, by the

Rhode Island Colony. The stockade was really the Dutch trading house, but this was further inland and so its site is not so well known to the antiquarian. The Doctor remarks that quite a trade was had between them and the Indians. This may be conceded, and no doubt was the fact. It is also a fact that these same Indians traded with the French Jesuits and Voyageurs. It was suspected by the Doctor and other Rhode Island scholars, but no positive proof was had for some time. If I remember rightly, about 1876 Mr. Hart, a farmer in North Kingston, in removing sand from the sandbank opened an Indian grave. On the bones of a hand were seventeen rings, most of them lead, the others of base metals. On these rings were a monogram I H S the letters being united. Mr. Hart told me personally that he had given them to Dr. Daniel H. Greene, who was very much interested in them, who showed them to other antiquarians, who said they were assured this Indian had certainly seen and traded with the French. It certainly is no great stretch of assumption to assume that these Indians heard early of the Dutch and French and were curious to see them. It is not difficult to assume that this Indian with others had made a journey to the north and met these Frenchmen. That they had trading posts near the north line of Massachusetts in Vermont and New Hampshire is known, so a journey north this distance is plausible.

The most part of the Doctor's paper is taken up with a description of the articles found in the Ninegret burying yard, which he says were of Dutch manufacture. Just when these were obtained is of course unknown, but it can be safely assumed they were not all got at one time or at one place, but from time to time, as opportunity or trade offered facilities so to do.

It may be remarked here that this Dutch Trading Company was known as the West India Company in North Holland.

April 2, 1632, Captain John Mason writes to Secretary Coke: "Certain Hollanders began a trade about 1621 upon the coast of New England between Cape Cod and Delaware Bay in forty degrees North latitude granted to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1584, and afterwards confirmed and divided by agreement by King James in 1606. The plantations in Virginia have been settled about forty years, in New England about twenty-five years. The Hollanders came as interlopers between the two, and have published a map of the coast between Virginia and Cape Cod with the title New Netherlands, calling the river upon which they are planted Manhatan and giving Dutch names to other places discovered by the

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English. Sir Samuel Argall with many English planters were about to settle in those parts and the English ambassador at the Hague was ordered to complain against the proceedings of the Hollanders.

Referring now to a previous paper "December 15, 1621. In Privy Council, the King granted to particular persons by patent some years since certain parts of the north of Virginia, by us called New England." "Understand that the past year the Hollanders left a colony there and have given new names to several parts belonging to that part of the country and are now about to send six or eight ships thither with supplies. It is the King's pleasure that these things be represented to the States General and to stay the ships."

Nevertheless, the following year, under a pretended authority from the Dutch West India Company, they made a plantation upon Manhattan, have since fortified themselves in two places and built ships there, one of 600 tons sent to Holland. They were warned by the English Colony at New Plymouth neither to trade or make any settlement in those parts, but with proud and contumacious answers say: "They had commission to fight against such as should disturb their settlement," and persisted in planting, vilifying the English to the Indians and extolling their own nation. It is reported that they have exported from thence to Holland this year 15,000 beaver skins besides other commodities [British State Paper Office, "Colonial Papers," Vol. VI, No. 51.]

October 1, 1652, a letter was written to the Colony of Rhode Island in New England, to give them power to stay Dutch ships and to appoint some fit person to take care of and preserve them for the State. [British State Paper Office, "Colonial Papers," Vol. XI, No. 67.]

January, 1623. Two or three ships are now being sent by the West India Company in Holland, who design a plantation there. [*Ibid*, Vol. II, No. 18.]

June, 1632. A Dutch ship, the *Eendracht*, of Amsterdam, belonging to the West India Company of Holland, coming from Manhatan river was stayed at Plymouth in February last. The King, at the earnest request of the Holland Ambassador, released the ship, but declares if the Dutch remain there they must take the consequences. [*Ibid*, Vol. VI, No. 62.]

JAMES N. ARNOLD.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

(*To be continued.*)

Benedict Arnold of Newport on Rhode Island in New-England: I doe testify that in Anno Domini 1653 & in y^e month (Calid August) Captaine John Underhill, then of Long Island &c: Being returned to this Town of Newport from Quonochetcott, and there manifesting that he (by virtue of a Commission, or writ from the Authority in England &c:) had taken, or Seized upon the Dutch-House and Land thir to a pertaining in or near Hartford, on y^e River Quonochetcott lying or Confining, with all other y^e goods and Chattis to the sayd Dutch thir bulonging &c: The aforesaid John Underhill did in my presence hearing, & in the presence and hearing of Capt. Robert Clarke then dwelling; being an Inhabitant of Saubrook, or thereabouts near y^e Rivers mouth aforesaid: &c: Sell, Bargain and really make over all y^e said Dutch house and Land, with y^e appurtenances as before mentioned Seized by him y^e sayd John Underhill unto Ralph Earll of Ports-mouth Seniour; And thir of, & to testify his y^e sayd Bargain & Sale, y^e sayd John Underhill did give a writing unto y^e sayd Earll, & signed thereunto, & delivered y^e same in the presence of y^e aforesaid Robert Clarke and my selfe; And Both of us y^e sayd Robert Clarke, & Benedict Arnold did at y^e request of y^e sayd Underhill & Earll sitt our hands as witnesses to y^e sayd writing; which writing although it mentioned not pticuler precell of goods, house, or Land: y^ett I be on my certaint knowledge affirm y^e the Dutch-house & Land above mentioned was Expressly, via Chiefly & pticularely mentioned in thir Bargain, & intended in y^e writing: which was drawn up Short & in Generall termes; & at request of Both Underhill & Earll was written by my selfe & approved of by themselves: And furthermore, I doe testify y^e the aforesaid John Underhill, at y^e time of making y^e Bargain with Ralph Earll aforesaid for & about the Premises, did verry solemnly avouch & declare y^e he had not any ways disposed of (by promise, or any otherwise) all or any part or peill of the premises to any person or persons what soever but only to y^e sayd Ralph Earll: And moreover I doe on my certain knowledge testify y^e the sayd John Underhill accepted of & received the full & just value of twenty pouldes Sterling in good Pay at y^e hands of the sayd Ralph Earll, & owned himselfe therewith satisfied in full for & in Consideracon of y^e premises, & of every part & precell thereof. And more over I doe testify y^e I am knowing unto, & doe bear witness of many Experiences of time travill & estate that y^e sayd Earll hath bene putt upon to procure y^e Enjoyment & possession of y^e sayd House, & Land. And in pticuler on voyage he made to Hartford on purpose thirfore in Anno Domini 1660 to his no small charge & travill, in which Journey my selfe did accompany him; And at Hartford did heare the sayd Ralph Earll make demand of y^e sayd Dutch House & Land, at y^e hands of Richard Lord then dwelling in Hartford, who denyed to give him possession, pretending y^e he had a Right in it, & y^e he & William Gibson then deceased, had the Right to y^e Premises by virtue of Sale to them made by John Underhill aforesaid mentioned. But produced nothing to Certify y^e same: And that the above written is the verry tenor I doe here unto sitt my hand this y^e 12th day of May: Anno Domini 1666

This above written testimony is affirmed upon oathe
 Taken this 12th day of May 1666
 Benedict Arnold
 William Carpenter Assisant

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THE MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

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VOL. VII

MAY, 1908

No. 5

THE FIRST COMMISSION AT SEA FROM RHODE ISLAND.

II.

CAPTAIN JOHN UNDERHILL AND OTHERS.

THESE historical notes, given without strict chronological order, show the Dutch position along the southern New England coast. They show that the Rhode Island Colony had been familiar with them ever since the planting of the colony. It was the question of trade with the natives that led each one of the European nations to defame the other and misrepresent the other's contracts. The Indians could not be blamed for being suspicious when they were so taught by these same white races. Even the religious faith and emblems fell into the same school of misrepresentation and defamation. Many of these early traders acted on the motto of secure all you can to-day, for it may never occur again: in brief, act to-day and know no future.

Having given the general outlines and other historical data, it is now in order to note in more particular form the result of the first Rhode Island Commission. It would seem from the date of the Commission, as given by the Recorder, May 24, and the date of the capture of the Fort, June 27, that the Captain allowed no grass to grow under his feet. It would seem he made the utmost use of his time. In this expedition, as well as in those he had conducted in the past, he believed in a quiet and decided movement in strength, delivered in one spot; which movements, as conducted by the Captain, were successful in every instance. He laid siege to the Dutch Fort, which it seems was not prepared to stand against him, and therefore surrendered without making much of a contest. Had the Captain been more dilatory in his actions the Dutch would have had time to prepare to receive him and the affair would have had a different ending. The notice which Captain Underhill fastened on the door of the Dutch "House of Hope" in June, 1653, after its capture, was as follows, according to the testimony of Richard Lord, William Gibbons, William Whiting, John Ingersoll and others:

"I, John Underhill, doe seize this house and land for the State of

England by virtue of commission granted by Providence Plantations. The said land is about 30 acres lying in Connecticut within the plantation of Hartford. This land the Dutch claimed and possessed."

The Captain appears to have now lost his head, not in way of military or naval cunning, but in commercialism. It seems he was prevailed on by Ralph Earl to sell the property to him, which Earl claims he did. I tried very hard to learn why it was that if such a sale had been made Earl was so long before he enforced, or rather tried to enforce, his claim. It seems when he did, the property was found to have been for several years in the possession of other parties, who had been and were in full enjoyment of it.

It would further seem, from letters and other documents now extant, that a different story was known at Newport than was known at Hartford. The two testimonies here given in full from Governor Benedict Arnold and Captain William Dyer are so very straightforward and clear that I cannot resist the temptation to reproduce them here. The Governor went to Hartford with Earl as his attorney and looked over the ground with him. It would appear that Earl was not successful and that Lord and Gibbons still retained the property. Benedict Arnold's testimony, May 12, 1666, regarding Captain John Underhill's commission and conduct:

"I, Benedict Arnold of Newport, on Rhode Island, in New England, aged fifty years or thereabouts, doe upon my engagement (being hereto required) do testify that in Anno Domy 1653 & in ye month caled August, Captain John Underhill, then of Long Island, &c., Being returned to this town of Newport from Quonecticott and here then manifesting that hee (by virtue of a Commission derived from the Authority in England &c) had taken or seized upon the Dutch House and Land thereto apertaining in or near Hartford on ye River Quonecticott Lying or Consisting with all other ye goods and chattells to the sayd Dutch there belonging &c. The aforesaid John Underhill did in my presence and hearing & in the Presence and hearing of Capt. Robert Clarke (then Living being an Inhabitant of Sabrooke or thereabouts neare ye River's mouth aforesaid &c) Sett Bargaine and duly made over all yt ye said Dutch house and Land (with ye apurtenances as before mentioned Seized by him ye said John Underhill) unto Ralph Earll of Portsmouth, Senior And thereof & to testify his ye said Bargaine and Sale ye sayd John Underhill did give a writing dated August ye Second 1653

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ye sayd Earll & Signed thereunto & declared ye same in the Presence of ye aforementioned Robert Clarke and my selfe. And Both of us, ye sayd Robert Clarke & Benedict Arnold, did at ye request of ye said Underhill & Earll sett our hands as witnesses to ye sayd writeing, which writeing although it mentioned no p'ticular percell of goods, house or Lands, yet I doe on my certaine Knowledge affirme yt the Dutch house & Land above mentioned was Expressly yea Cherfuly & perticularly mentioned in their Bargaine & intended in yt writeing, which was drawn up short & in General tearmes & at request of Both Underhill & Earll was written by my selfe & approved of by themselves. And further more I doe testify yt the afore sayd John Underhill at ye time of makeing ye Bargaine with Ralph Earll afore sayd for & about the Premises Did very solemnly avouch & declare yt he had not in any way disposed of (by promyse or any otherwise) all or any part or p'cell of the premises to any person or p'sons whatsoever but only to ye sayd Ralph Earll, And moreover I do on my certaine knowledge testify yt the sayd John Underhill accepted of & received the full & just value of twenty pounds sterlling in good Pay at ye hands of the sayd Ralph Earll & owned himselfe therewith satisfied in full for & in Consideration of ye premises & of every part & percell thereof. And moreover I doe testify yt I am knowing unto & doe beare witnes of many Expenses of time, travell & estate that ye sayd Earll hath bin putt upon to procure ye Enjoyment & possession of yt sayd House & Land. And in p'ticular one vyage he made to Hartford on purpose therefore in Ano Domy 1660 to his noe small charge & travell, in which journey my self did accompany him And at Hartford did heare the sayd Ralph Earll make demand of ye sayd Dutch House & Land at ye hands of Mr. Richard Lord, then living in Hartford, who denied to give him possession, Pretending yt hee had a Right in it & yt hee & William Gibbon, then deceased, had the right to ye premises by virtue of Sale to them made by John Underhill aforementioned; But produced nothing to Certify ye same And that the above written is the very truth I doe hereunto sett my hand this ye 12th day of August Ano Domy 1666.

BENEDICT ARNOLD."

The above written testimony is affirmed upon oath.

Taken this 12th of May, 1666,

Before me,

WILLIAM CARPENTER, *Assistant.*"

William Dyer's testimony:

" May, 14, 1666.

To all whom it may concern:

I, William Dyer of Newport, in the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, being aged fiftie-foure or thereabouts, doe upon my Corporall oath Testifie and affirme that in the yeare 1653, in the month of september, Mr. Richard Lord & Mr. William Gibbons off Connecticut came to my self, being then bound for England, & told me that they had bought the Dutch house & land of John Underhill, Capt. &c., and solicited mee to procure them a good title to itt in England and they would give me fiftie pounds, as appears under their hands. And further I doe testifie that they sent these two papers for a full assurance unto mee that Capt. Underhill had so seized the sd house & land, wch papers were delivered unto me by Mr. Hopkins upon the exchange in London to my best remembrance, Major Haynes, Mr. Winslow & Mr. Hopkins owning the one paper signed by Gov. Haynes his hand, the other and the originall dated the 7th of September, signed by the very hands of Richard Lord and Wm. Gibbons, Esqs.

"I also testifie when the sd Lord & Gibbons agitated with my selfe in Newport and by letter to London I did not know that Ralph Earll had bought the said house & land &c. of Underhill; ffor had I I should not have been so base or unworthy as to goo about to deprive him or any other of their right.

"I also testifie that after my returne from England, Mr. Lord aforesd coming to the Island & discoursing about the business premised, I told him yt since my returne I understood that Ralph Earll had bought the premises before himself & Mr. Gibbons did buy itt & that Capt. Underhill had not done rite to make a double sale. Lord answered that he was in possession &c. I replyed though he new that would not vestrey the fixed purchase, but sd sale if it be for your consumption you were better compound with Earll, whom I am informed (upon good grounds) hath bought & paid for itt and hath the fixed deed of sale by wh means of purchasing his right you may probably enjoy it (for ought I know). But sd I as for the agitations in England, assure yourselfe it hath taken no effect concerning the business, for I should have been glad to have received yor agreement wh mee.

"Taken upon oath before me this 16 of may, 1666.

" WILLIAM BRENTON, *Governor.*"

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Captain Underhill, in a letter to Governor John Winthrop, Jr., dated Oyster Bay, April 12, 1665, (*Mass. Hist. Socy. Col.*, Series I, Vol. vii, pp. 191-4), says (I give his version word for word, but not in the original spelling):

"I present to your consideration the issue of my ancient controversy concerning the Dutch Land, and humbly request your valuable assistance in my low estate, not doubting but a right understanding how deceitfully matters were carried to me in my first seizure by the deceased, and afterward by Ralph Earle in the time of my indurance at Rhode Island, because I would not suffer the soldiers to despoil the well-affected Dutch farmers, I was confined and in this trouble, the said Ralph came upon me with guile to buy all my right in prizials by sea and land several negerse taken by my commission simply sold him all my right by sea and land for £20 in wampum, and this in my great stright—but when he had obtained this grant he came upon me for the Dutch land, to whom I answered it was never mentioned by him nor thought of by me, for I answered I could not sell it according to the truth intent of my seizure, but he threatened to sue me; then was I constrained to avoid trouble and that I might get clear of the Island, to pass a bill to him of all my right and interest which at that present I consist not any till determined, as will appear by the enclosed. Your wisdom will easily see my wrong suffered by the Dutch fishale (official) and Governor and for Ralph Earle and the deceased I shall forbear to mention to avoid dishonor in diverse respects, except I am necessitated by your selves. I have both affidavit and some lines under the hand of the deceased, but if your worships please to be the judges of the seizure, which I never presented to trial till now, in this you have our General's advice that the one-half of the principal and rent belongs to you and the other half to me; but I shall forbear to trouble you with further enlargement, except you shall require it of me. My proposition to you is if you shall favor me as aforesaid in my necessities with a considerable sum out of what is due to you on this island, I shall accept it and send you my seizure with other writings wherein it will appear on oath I refused one hundred and fifty pounds in good pay, and that I was by falsity dissuaded from going to England with my seizure, the land not being worth £30, and by this means and such like sattel carrise (*sic.*) means was deceived of an considerable satisfaction for my unjust sufferings, which the General, out of his clemency, hath taken one him in part to see me satisfied, and I will

not question your love and charity to follow his good precedent, for which I shall ever rest yourself to command.

“ JOHN UNDERHILL.

“ Oyster Bay, 12 of April, 1665.”

Regarding the seizure the following transcript of the notice in the handwriting of Winthrop was sent with this letter:

“ Written upon the table at Mr. Richard Lord's in the presence of him, the said Richard, and Mr. William Gibbons, Retainer to the Dutch Governor, inhabitants of Hartford, and by their advice and counsel written upon the door of the Dutch house in capital letters.

“ Hartford, this 27th of June, 1653.

“ I, John Underhill, by virtue of Commission and according to act of Parliament, seized this house, the *Hope*, with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging, as Dutch Goods belonging to the West Indian Company of Amsterdam, enemies to the Commonwealth of England, and so to remain seized untill determined by the said Commonwealth as succeeding power of England.

“ Per me JOHN UNDERHILL.

[] The Seale.

Witness:

NATHANIEL LEW,
JAMES BROCK.

In the presence of

JOHN BROWNE of *Hartford*.”

Upon the persuasion of the said Richard and William, the said seizure was renewed the 28th of the said month and the rent, £10 for seven years, adjoined in words following:

“ I, the said John, do by virtue as aforesaid seize the said rent and adjoin it to the said seizure as before specified, and so to remain seized until determined by the said power.

“ JOHN UNDERHILL.

“ [] The Seale.

“ Seized and read in the presence of us, William Whiting and John Enger, Inhabitants of Hartford.

“ Mr. Richard Lord and Mr. William Gibbons insert in a letter to me, April, '54: The General Court have sequestered the Dutch Land and the rent for the State of England.

JOHN UNDERHILL.”

RICH. LORD,
WILLIAM GIBENS.

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A true copy of that copy of the seizure which was sent by Captain Underhill in his letter of 12 of April, 1665.

Endorsed by John Winthrop, Jr.:

"Copy of seizure of Dutch land at Hartford by Capt. J. Underhill."

The Captain says in a postscript that he never was benefited a penny, but was often abused and charges made against him, lost a crop, all by reason of an obligation got under my hand in a frolic at one John Webb's, where he (Mr. Lord) and Mr. Gibbons had lodged me.

It now remains to give a description of the property so seized, and for this purpose I know nothing better than the report of the secretary, who gives the following description of the said property from the public records:

THE SECRETARY'S RECORD.

Severall percells of land which Capt. Rich'd Lord & Mr. William Gibbons purchased of Capt. Underhill, which formerly did belong to the West India Company in North Holland & was seized by Capt. John Underhill By virtue of a Commission granted him bearing date 24th May, 1653.

One percel lying in the south meadow, containing by estimation twenty-three Acres & a halfe (be it more or less) & abutteth on the great River North & on Capt. Cullet his land east & on a high way from the mead gate to the Indian land on the south & on George Steele his land west, more one percel in the South meadow, containing by estimation one Acre (be it more or less) & a butteth on the Landing place in the Little River on the east & on the little River North & on the sayd Gibbons & Gregorie Witterton their lands on the south.

more one percel of land lying in the poynt of the little meadow, containing by estimation three Acres (be it more or less) and abutteth on the little River south & west & on Mr. Haines his land North & on the great River East.

more one percell being an Island lying near the east side of the great River over against the south end of the Little meadow & containeth by estimation Two Acres (be it more or less).

Extracted out of the Book of records for Hartford this 18th of June, 1666.

P. me JOHN ALLYN, Recorder.

The result of the controversy ended in favor of Connecticut. I can find no proof that Earl attempted to enforce his claim until years after the sale of the land to Richard Lord and William Gibbons, July 18, 1655. The Captain says that he was taken advantage of by Earl, which appears to look shady from the fact that he allowed such a long time to elapse before seeing to the purchase. The Captain says he could not give such a paper, which looks as though he was in full possession of the rights of the land. The sequestration by the Colony of Connecticut, it would appear, would remove it from his power to convey. In the study of these papers, it will at once be seen that the story lacks several points to make it complete. These papers having become lost to the files leaves doubt. No doubt the authorities were very inexperienced at the time in these matters, hence did not handle the case with the smoothness they would had they but had the experience.

The case makes a very interesting incident in early maritime affairs, and as such deserves to be noted more fully by antiquarians than it has been hitherto. The Captain's career deserves a fuller notice, so I reproduce here the following sketch, from Thompson's *History of Long Island*, Vol. ii, pages 353-61:

"On a farm lately owned by one of his descendants, called by him Killingworth and by the Indians Matinecock, in the Town of Oyster Bay, Long Island, is the grave of this wonderful man, of whom so frequent mention is made in the early histories of New England and New York. 'He was,' says the Rev. Mr. Bacon, 'one of the most dramatic personages in our early history.' Having served as an officer in the British forces in the Low Countries, in Ireland and at Cadiz, he came from England to Massachusetts soon after the commencement of the colony, and was very generally employed in such expeditions as required the most extraordinary courage, energy and perseverance.

"He had an important command in the war against the Pequots in 1636 and on the second of February, 1637, was sent to Saybrook with twenty men to keep the fort against the Dutch and Indians, both of whom had manifested a design upon that place. He was a man of the most determined resolution, activity and courage, and such was the rapidity of his movements and the subtlety of attack that his enemies were almost always taken by surprise and consequently defeated.

"He was one of the first deputies from Boston to the General Court, and one of the earliest officers of the Ancient and Honorable Ar-

tillery Company. Most of the accounts of that interesting period are full of the particulars of his checkered life, and few persons were more distinguished or rendered more valuable service to the colonies than this individual, especially in their wars and controversies with the savages.

“He was a personal and political friend of Sir Henry Vane, who in 1637, at the age of 26 years, was appointed Governor of Massachusetts. Underhill was also an enthusiast in religion, so far at least as appearances were concerned, yet was a debauchee in practice. Strange as it may seem, the church did not censure him so much for his irregularities as for saying that he dated his conversion from the time he was smoking tobacco. He was eccentric in many respects and in everything he did was apt to run to extremes.

“That he was in America as early as 1632 is evident from the accounts of the treasurer of the Massachusetts colony, showing he received a pension of £30 a year for services rendered to the colony in its contests with the Indians. Hutchinson says: ‘He was one of the most forward of the Boston enthusiasts,’ and Hubbard declares that in 1636 he was in high favor with the Governor, or, as he calls him, ‘Right worthy Master Vane.’

“He went to England in 1638, where he was interrogated and finally banished on account of his adherence to Mr. Wheelwright and seduction of a female. While there he published his ‘News From America.’

“In this work he speaks of the murder of Capt. John Oldham and the proceedings then taken against the Indians.

“He speaks of his wife recommending him to wear a helmet, which he says he did and that it saved his life from an arrow shot at him, which struck it and glanced off.

“The work also abounds with much of the pious wording of the day

Winthrop gives account of his amours and of his conduct at Dover, N. H., where he was Governor for a while, and also of his confession and promise to do better in the future.

Thompson’s History continues:

“He was after his arrival here employed by the Dutch and took command in the war with the Indians north of the Sound and west of

the Connecticut settlements. This contest lasted until 1646. In Trumbull's *History* it is stated that Underhill destroyed 300 Indians north of the Sound and 120 upon Long Island, who had crossed the Sound to ravage and destroy the Dutch plantations there. At the period of this military employment he lived at Stamford. He was a delegate from that town to the General Court at New Haven in 1643 and was appointed an assistant justice.

"In 1644 he came with Rev. Mr. Denton and others of his church to Long Island, and soon after became a resident of Flushing, where he evinced the same restless temper as formerly and was anxious for military employment.

"On the refusal of the Commissioners of the United Colonies to engage in the controversy between England and Holland he applied to Rhode Island, which on the 17th of May, 1663, resolved to appoint a committee from each town 'For the ripening of matters that concerned the Dutch,' whom they styled enemies of that commonwealth, and agreed to furnish 'Two great guns, 20 men and other aid.' They also gave a commission to Underhill and William Dyer 'To go against the Dutch or any enemies of the Commonwealth of England.'

"Under this authority it is supposed he made an attack upon the Indians at Fort Neck, where he captured the fort and destroyed many of the natives. He was afterwards settled at Oyster Bay, for in 1665 he was a delegate from that town to the meeting at Hempstead by order of Governor Nicoll and was by him made sheriff of the North Riding on Long Island. The Dutch had been detected by him at a former period in corresponding with the Indians for the destruction of the English, and in consequence of his disclosures in that respect a guard of soldiers was sent from Manhattan to take him; but on his engaging to be faithful to the Dutch thereafter he was set at liberty and allowed to depart even without reproof.

"In 1667 the Matinecock Indians conveyed to him a large tract of their lands, a part of which, called Killingworth, remained in his family for nearly two hundred years. His death occurred in 1672, and his will was made the year before. [This will, a quaint affair, is given at the end of the above article quoted.]

In a small volume called the *Algerine Capture*, by Dr. Updike Underhill, claiming to be a descendant of the Captain, it is asserted that

his ancestor arrived with Governor Winthrop and was immediately promoted to offices, civil and military, in Massachusetts, but that in a few years his popularity had so far decayed that he was disfranchised and banished out of that jurisdiction. But the account denies the charge of adultery brought against his illustrious ancestor, and the fact of his ever having made a confession related by Winthrop.

This writer gives a letter written by the Captain to his friend Hansard Knowles, wherein he gives an account of this charge. By this letter it appears Mistress Wilbur came to church with a pair of "wanton gloves" on. These gloves were knitted in open work and slitted so as to admit taking snuff. He was accused of looking at her lustfully, he says, but which he denies. The Elder asked him why he did not look at sisters Newell and Upham, to which he answered, "Verily they are not desirable women as to temporal graces." The Elder cried, "That is enough, he hath confessed," and proceeded to pass excommunication upon him. The Captain asked by what law was he condemned. Winthrop said, "There is a committee to draught laws: I am sure Brother Peters has made a law against this very sin." Master Cotton read from the Bible, "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adulterie with her in his heart."

We give this choice morsel to show how zealous people can make themselves over small matters and how indifferent over greater ones. For my part I am thankful such things are so far back in the past. I do not think the Captain did right always, yet I think he was on an average with those of his time and class. That he was a very active man and one possessed of military genius is certain. His nature was adventurous, which the times encouraged and of which he took all the advantage that he was capable.

It seems the Captain for a time was in the service of the Dutch to protect them from the Indians; that the Governor, for reasons best known to himself, took from him his land, which he valued at £100, and owed him some money as well. This conduct of the Dutch Governor compelled him to quit their service and to defend the New England English settlements against both the Dutch and Indians.

In Bunker's *Genealogical History of Long Island* it is stated that the Captain was born in Warwickshire, England, about 1596, and came with Governor Winthrop and his 900 emigrants to Boston in 1630 [page 277].

A brief sketch of Captain Ralph Earle is now in order.

He was at Portsmouth 1638 and submitted with others to the government then established. April 30, 1639, he, with others, gave his oath of allegiance to King Charles I. From a record dated January 7, 1640, it would appear he and his partner, a Mr. Wilbur, had erected the first saw-mill in the town.

In 1647 he was licensed to keep a hotel, to sell wine and beer and to entertain strangers.

In 1649 he was treasurer and overseer of the poor for the town—the first office. He was re-elected to it the following years.

May 25, 1655, he was appointed by the Court of Commissioners to keep a house of entertainment. A convenient sign was to be set out in the most "perspicuous" place to give notice to strangers.

His connection with the purchase of Fort Hope we have given already, so need not refer to it again. August 10, 1667, he, with others, formed a troop of horse, and afterwards he became captain.

This so far as I know is the first cavalry in the colony.

His will, which was made November 19, 1673, was approved January 14, 1678. The exact day of his death is not known to me. His wife, Joan, died after 1680.

JAMES N. ARNOLD.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.