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**THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORICAL  
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GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN RHODE ISLAND

Jane Fletcher Fiske

Rhode Island presents to the genealogist a challenge quite out of proportion to the diminutive size of this smallest of all the New England colonies. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Quakers rubbed shoulders with Congregationalists, Anglicans, and several varieties of Baptists, and it was not unusual for ministers to preach in pulpits of denominations other than their own. The worldly, bustling, slave-trading society of Newport bore little resemblance to the stony, hilly communities in the western part of the colony, and yet another contrast was provided by the gracious plantation life of the Narragansett country. In the nineteenth century, a developing industrialized society brought immigrant waves of Irish and French Canadians and introduced two very distinct Catholic cultures. Since a search for Rhode Island ancestry may lead in one or more quite different directions, determining where to begin may seem a formidable problem.

Some historical background is always of use in genealogy, but for Rhode Island a working knowledge of the colony's history is essential to understand what records were kept and in what manner. The purpose of this article is to show how present-day Rhode Island evolved from a few tiny settlements; to describe what material is available to the genealogist for various periods and groups; and to explain how best to approach it. To supplement the necessarily simplistic treatment here of the history, readers should consult further background material. There are several standard multi-volume works worth noting.<sup>1</sup> However, for the genealogical researcher who prefers a shorter account, volume two of Charles M. Andrews's *The Colonial Period of American History* (New Haven, 1938), provides a genealogically oriented overview. A lengthier, but equally readable, picture is presented in *Colonial Rhode Island - A History*, by Sydney James (New York, 1976), which contains an excellent bibliography. People with ancestry on early Aquidneck should certainly look at *Fat Mutton and Liberty of Conscience: Society in Rhode Island, 1636-1690* by Carl Bridenbaugh (Providence, 1974), a short and lively social history offering an unequalled view of the seventeenth century on the island that was the original "Rhode Island." In order to gain understanding of the early Narragansett settlements with their gracious, aristocratic society under the spiritual leadership of the Episcopal Reverend Dr. James McSparran, one might read *Plantation in*

1. These include Samuel Greene Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, 2 vols. (New York, 1859-1860); Edward Field, *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1902); Thomas Bicknell, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, 5 vols. (New York, 1920); Charles Carroll, *Rhode Island, Three Centuries of Democracy*, 4 vols. (New York, 1932); and Irving B. Richman, *Rhode Island, Its Making and Meaning*, 2 vols. (New York, 1902).

*Yankeeland* by Carl Woodward (Chester, Conn., 1971).<sup>2</sup> While none of these books requires any great background of historical knowledge, all help to provide a context within which the genealogist may more surely work.

Because of its size, Rhode Island presents in its history a personal element for the genealogist that is missing in the other colonies. In 1708 the entire population numbered only 7,181 people. Most of the original settlers founded families there, and most at one time or another were actively involved in government, religious, or commercial affairs. Behind many a yeoman farmer who migrated to New York State following the Revolution are ancestral lines reaching back to colonial governors, the tempestuous Samuel Gorton, Quaker martyr Mary Dyer, or even Roger Williams. In reading about the history of Rhode Island, many of us are reading specifically about our own ancestors.

In 1636 the whole body of the lands now forming the State of Rhode Island was owned by the Indians then dwelling upon them.<sup>3</sup> The Massachusetts Bay Colony, on the other hand, was already sufficiently established to persecute those who did not subscribe to its own variety of religious freedom. The first white settlement in Rhode Island was begun that year by Roger Williams, who did it not so much out of conscious intent to establish a haven of religious liberty as from necessity, a decree of banishment having been issued against him in Boston. Warned by Governor John Winthrop of impending deportation, and forced to flee his Salem home in midwinter, he was only the first of many men and women who left to take refuge in the nearest place where they felt safe to follow their own consciences in peace and the hope of future prosperity.

It has been said that Rhode Island owed her very existence to the intolerance of Massachusetts and Connecticut, but it is equally true that the new colony was in part the product of Narragansett Indian policy.<sup>4</sup> Roger Williams had little choice available to him, for to the southeast was Plymouth Colony, where Governor Winslow, largely out of fear of Massachusetts Bay, issued a warning against trespassing, and to the southwest stood Connecticut, another Puritan theocracy. Between these two civilized yet ideologically hostile areas lay country owned and occupied by the Narragansetts, who very well understood the advantages of having a friendly buffer zone between themselves and their enemies to the east, the Wampanoags. That Roger Williams earned their respect by dealing fairly and intelligently with them from the beginning set a fortunate course for the future of the Rhode Island colony.

Accompanied by the eighteen-year-old Thomas Angell, Williams made his way south to Sowams, now Barrington, where they stayed with the

2. This book is not unbiased in its presentation of the first families of Narragansett, glossing over the associations with Connecticut rather lightly.

3. Sidney S. Rider, *The Lands of Rhode Island as They Were Known to Cannonicus and Miantunnomu (1636)* (Providence, 1904), 61.

4. Sydney James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 8.

Indians for the remainder of that winter. A first settlement was begun at Seekonk, but when he learned that this was claimed by Plymouth, Williams left crops already planted and moved across the Great Salt River to begin a new settlement at the junction of two smaller rivers, the Moshassuc and the Wanasquatucket. There he obtained land from the Indians and distributed it to others who joined him, naming the place Providence Plantations in appreciation of God's mercy. William Harris, Francis Wicks and John Smith, a miller from Dorchester, who had also been banished from Boston, were among the first to arrive, followed by Joshua Verin and William Arnold.

A second settlement was made in the spring of 1638 on the northern end of Aquidneck Island, at a place the Indians called Pocasset, renamed Portsmouth by the English. It was founded by a group of people who had been exiled from Boston because of their association with Anne (Marbury) Hutchinson, labelled "Antinomian" for holding mystical religious beliefs which did not conform to Puritan doctrine in that they emphasized the importance of continued inspiration by the Holy Spirit. These families included the households of William Coddington, Dr. John Clarke, John Coggeshall, William Dyer, Randall Holden, John Sanford, Henry Bull, and others whose names have come down in Rhode Island history and genealogy. With the help of Roger Williams, Coddington bought the Island from the Indians and renamed it "Rhode" Island. Although the name is mentioned in Richard Hakluyt's account of the 1524 voyage of Giovanni di Verrazano, a more precise explanation of its origin is found in a letter written in 1666 by Roger Williams, in which he states that "Rode Island (in the Greeke language) is an Ile of Roses," referring probably to Aquidneck's native rhododendrons.<sup>5</sup> Until a bridge was built in the nineteenth century, it was known as the "Island," as opposed to the "Main," and many a Rhode Island Revolutionary pensioner later described his war service using those terms.

The Island had its own internal problems almost immediately. Samuel Gorton, a man of strong opinions who managed to stir up trouble wherever he went, precipitated a minor revolt in Portsmouth; Coddington and others withdrew to the southern end of Aquidneck, where they founded the third settlement, Newport. For one winter the two towns functioned separately, but then united with Coddington as governor and did not again separate until 1648. In the meantime more families, attracted by opportunity as much as necessity, arrived from Taunton and other Massachusetts and Plymouth towns.

A fourth settlement was made in 1642 at Shawomet by Samuel Gorton, who had earlier been expelled from Plymouth, refused freeman status by Providence, and finally forced to leave Portsmouth. He first attempted to settle at Pawtuxet, but finding that place already claimed by the Arnolds, who were scheming to have it annexed to Massachusetts, he

5. *Rhode Island Historical Society Proceedings, 1900-1901*, 16, 17.

and Dr. John Greene bought land from the Indians at Shawomet, just to the south. This was renamed Warwick in 1644 in honor of the Earl of Warwick, who was instrumental in helping to obtain its first royal charter.

By this time it had become clear to her neighbors that the new settlements represented, if not a danger, at least a threat to their peace of mind. The New England Confederation, formed in 1643, left out Rhode Island, on the grounds that she had no stable government and held anarchistic principles shocking to the other colonies. Roger Williams went to England to obtain a charter, returning in September 1644 with a patent authorizing the union of Providence, Portsmouth and Newport under "The Incorporation of Providence Plantations." After a bitter dispute with Massachusetts over ownership of the Shawomet land, during which Gorton, Randall Holden and others were dragged off to jail in Boston, Warwick obtained its own charter and joined the government of the others. The charter declared the colony's subjection to King Charles, but guaranteed the right of religious liberty for all.

One historian has observed that the four original towns in Rhode Island were all founded so that their inhabitants would not have to live with other people<sup>6</sup>; it might also be said that they had agreed to disagree. The Compact signed by the first inhabitants of Providence in 1636 clearly stated that the government was to have jurisdiction "only in civil things," and the Portsmouth Compact of 1638 stipulated that none was to be held accountable for his religious beliefs.

Many of the earliest surviving records for the four original towns are available in print: *Early Records of the Town of Portsmouth*, edited by Clarence S. Brigham (Providence, 1901), *Early Records of the Town of Warwick*, edited by Howard M. Chapin (Providence, 1926), and the *Early Records of the Town of Providence* in twenty-one volumes, edited by Horatio Rogers (Providence, 1892-1915) with an index published in 1949 by Richard LeBaron Bowen. The records of Newport are included in the first volume of *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, edited by John Russell Bartlett (Providence, 1856-1862; reprint ed., New York, 1968). Volumes I through VII of this work contain the records of the Court of Commissioners and then the General Assembly, from 1636 to 1776, along with numerous other documents. A second set of volumes, *Records of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, continues to 1792.<sup>7</sup> This work is often called "Colonial Records of Rhode Island" or simply, "Bartlett." It contains, scattered among records of legislation and foreign affairs of the colony, many references to ordinary inhabitants. The General

6. James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 13.

7. Much of the original material is in the R.I. Archives, but some of it was copied from the British Public Record Office and other British sources, a transcript of which is at John Carter Brown Library of Brown University.

Assembly was made up of six representatives from each town, and during its earliest years especially, it dealt with many matters of individual concern which are of genealogical interest.

Commercial opportunities of the Narragansett Bay area had been early recognized by Roger Williams, and it was with the development of a trading post at Cocumscussoc, near present day Wickford, that settlement on the west side of the Bay began. Richard Smith, a wealthy planter with interests also in New York and Boston, built there a home which became known as "Smith's Castle." His daughter Catherine married Gysbert op Dyck, a Hempstead, New York, physician, and they became the progenitors of the prominent Updike family of Rhode Island. Making their fortunes in trade with New York, Boston, and the West Indies, these families maintained social and business relationships with both Roger Williams and Connecticut Governor John Winthrop, Jr. They laid the groundwork for a slavery-based plantation life which flourished in Narragansett from the late seventeenth century until sent into decline by the Revolution.

The unifying factor in Rhode Island's diversity became trade, which for many years depended upon the sea. Unable to produce great quantities of anything to export, Rhode Islanders learned to make a profit carrying goods produced by other people. "A surprising number of the first settlers became traders at least part time, and many more dabbled in small ventures; others tied their lives to commerce by fitting out or commanding vessels that carried the goods."<sup>8</sup> With a natural position as a seaport, Newport grew rapidly, developing a rather mobile population; by 1729 Antigua planters were using it as a summer resort. It is characteristic of genealogical research in colonial Newport that one turns up names of many people who appear not to have settled there for any length of time, but are shown in probate or court files as merchants, mariners, or craftsmen, then pass out of written records without a trace. Until the Revolution, Newport easily maintained its economic and cultural prominence over the stodgier town of Providence.

In the latter half of the seventeenth century, hunger for land broke loose in the colony as men in the settled towns joined together to purchase large areas of land from the Indians. The Conanicut Purchase agreement of 1657, led by William Coddington and Benedict Arnold, was signed by a great number of men, mostly from Portsmouth and Newport, some in for only 1/900th of a share. In 1657 the Pettaquamscutt Purchasers, headed by Samuel Wilbore, Thomas Mumford, John Porter, Samuel Wilson and John Hull, bought rights to the southeast quarter of the area since known popularly as "South County." At the same time the powerful William Harris was intriguing to get control of much of what became Providence County by obtaining "confirmatory deeds" from the Indians, siding with Connecticut in land disputes when it suited his purpose.

8. James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 50.

Connecticut claimed all the territory south of Warwick east to Narragansett Bay, and in an attempt to make good the claim it established the town of Wickford; Rhode Island immediately countered by establishing the area as King's Province in 1666. Except for the trading post at Cocumscussoc, however, settlement on the west side of the Bay remained limited to a few dwellings like the garrison house of Jireh Bull, not far from the shore, and all were swept away in 1675 and 1676 by King Philip's War.

Both Rhode Island and the Narragansett Indians had tried to maintain their neutrality in that conflict, which originated with the Wampanoag Indians in Plymouth Colony. Indians in Connecticut and central Massachusetts were quickly involved, prompting those colonies to join forces with Plymouth, and Rhode Island was called upon to give naval support by transporting soldiers. The Battle of the Great Swamp Fight, which took place in December 1675 near Wickford, destroyed most of the Narragansetts who had been drawn into the conflict by the Wampanoags. Metacomet, or King Philip, the Wampanoag leader, was hunted down near Mount Hope by Benjamin Church, who, though his origins were in Plymouth Colony, became the ancestor of many Rhode Islanders. Captured Indians were sold into slavery. A few Narragansetts who, with their leader, Ninegret, had managed to remain neutral, continued to live in South County, and there are today many people who can trace some ancestry back to these Indians. The Rhode Island Archives contains manuscript material on the Narragansetts. *A Report of the Commissioners on the Affairs of the Narragansett Indians* (Providence, 1858) lists 122 persons claiming Indian descent and 75 who were occupying Indian land; a similar report of 1881 includes valuable genealogical material on descendants living at that date. The Westerly Public Library has several of these reports in one bound volume.

George M. Bodge's *Soldiers of King Philip's War* (Boston, 1906; reprint ed., Baltimore, 1976) describes that war and the period leading up to it and includes in the text numerous muster rolls and lists. Many men who fought from Massachusetts later settled in Rhode Island, particularly in East Greenwich, incorporated in 1677, where land was put up for sale by the colony. The end of the war made safe settlement possible throughout King's County, although the dispute with Connecticut was not settled until 1703, when the boundary was fixed at the Pawcatuck River, and some problems persisted another forty years.

As early as 1660, some Portsmouth people, including branches of the Wilcox, Slocum and Cornell families, had moved across the Sakonnet River into neighboring Plymouth Colony. After 1686, when Plymouth became part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Rhode Island men joined in the Pocasset Purchase to open up and develop the area which became Tiverton, some buying land also in Little Compton, which had earlier been laid out in lots for Plymouth people. Although part of present day Rhode Island, these towns remained in Massachusetts Bay until 1746/7.

While both Bartlett and Bodge may contain information about ancestors, genealogists will find that for actually tracing families in the Rhode Island of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, there are two basic printed sources, both published a century ago. John O. Austin in 1887 (Albany, N.Y.) published his *Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island*, stating confidently on the title page that "any intelligent person is capable of becoming interested in family history." This cumbersome book, often relegated to back shelves of libraries because of its size, represents years of the compiler's life spent digging information out of ancient probate, land, town council and court records. It was reprinted (Baltimore, 1969) with additions and corrections by Mr. Austin himself and an appendix containing material written by G. Andrews Moriarty, a more recent authority on Rhode Island genealogy, which was published originally in *The American Genealogist* from 1943 to 1963.<sup>9</sup> This remains the most comprehensive and useful record of early Rhode Island people, covering 485 families in the first three or four generations. The greatest drawback of this work is its lack of references, for Mr. Austin never recorded where he found any particular bit of data. He did give place of residence for each family, however, and from the concisely stated information it is usually possible to deduce the likely source, enabling a check of the original document.

Mr. Austin also published *The Ancestry of Thirty-Three Rhode Islanders* (Albany, 1889; reprint ed., Rutland, Vt., 1970) and *One Hundred and Sixty Allied Families* (Providence, 1893).<sup>10</sup> The Rhode Island Historical Society owns one large notebook in which he was collecting material for a projected second volume of his *Dictionary*; this includes information on later generations of some families treated in the earlier volume, as well as some data on families omitted from the first.

The other basic reference work in print for earlier Rhode Island genealogy, covering the period up to 1850, was compiled by James N. Arnold during the same years that Austin was working. Arnold began his work as editor of *The Narragansett Historical Register*, a quarterly devoted to genealogy and history of southern Rhode Island, published from 1883 until 1891. Included in that journal are vital records of various Rhode Island towns, and when it ceased publication he brought these out in book form. The complete series totals twenty-one volumes, although only the first six are actually vital records, entitled *The Vital Record of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1891-1912)<sup>11</sup>. Its title is singular, subtitled by Mr. Arnold "A Family Register for the People," but over the years it has

9. Additions and corrections to Austin by Robert S. Wakefield and others have continued to appear in *The American Genealogist*; see Appendix B.

10. These and other books by Austin were reprinted in their original form, without corrections, and should therefore be used with some caution.

11. Photocopy reprints of the various individual volumes of Arnold have been available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan since 1973.

come to be known in the plural as Arnold's "Vital Records" or more simply just by the name of its compiler, as "Arnold."

The first six volumes contain the vital records of Rhode Island towns from the earliest recorded event up to 1850. These are arranged by county and town, with first marriages and then births and deaths listed alphabetically by surname. For most towns, each entry is preceded by a hyphenated number, i.e. "2-39," which refers to the volume and page of the town record from which the entry was taken.<sup>12</sup> With marriages, it is advisable to check the entry under the groom's name, since more complete information is often given there than under the name of the bride.

Unfortunately, Arnold did not abstract most of the information himself. It is legend in Rhode Island that he would visit with local officials while clerks copied off material for him. Many of the copyists were unfamiliar with early handwriting as well as with some of the names, resulting in numerous errors, worse for some towns than for others. Jamestown records in particular are badly done. If no corroborating evidence for an entry in Arnold exists elsewhere, or if there is the slightest doubt as to its accuracy, the original record should be sought out and checked.

Within the past few years a series of books entitled *The New Vital Record of Rhode Island* (Princeton, Mass., 1975- ), compiled and edited by Alden G. Beaman, has begun publication and at the time of writing totals nine volumes. To date only Washington and Kent counties have been covered. Beaman has extracted from probate and gravestone records information about many births and marriages never actually recorded and therefore not included in Arnold. These are arranged alphabetically and because they incorporate records of several towns are helpful in locating families within the areas covered. The method of presentation, however, prevents the reader from evaluating the references without examining the actual documents cited.

There are many excellent printed genealogies of Rhode Island families and both the Society and the Rhode Island Historical Society have collections of manuscript material of varying degrees of completeness. More difficult to locate are the articles buried in various periodicals, past and present, which contain genealogical material. Specifically Rhode Island journals are *The Newport Historical Magazine* (1880-1884) and its successor, *The Rhode Island Historical Magazine* (1884-1887); *The Narragansett Historical Register* (1882-1891); *Rhode Island Historical Tracts* (1877-1896) edited by Sidney S. Rider; and the publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society, which include *The Rhode Island Historical Society Collections* (1827-1941), *Rhode Island Historical Society Proceedings* (1872-1914), and *Rhode Island Historical Society Publications* (1893-1900). Current publications are *Rhode Island History*, the quarterly of the Rhode Island Historical Society, which is now printing articles

12. North Kingstown entries are not thus cited.

of chiefly historical interest; *Rhode Island Roots*, the journal of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society, which began publication in 1975; and *Rhode Island Genealogical Register*, edited by Alden G. Beaman, which has been issued quarterly since July 1978. Many articles on Rhode Island families have appeared in the *Register* and *The American Genealogist*, some in the *New York Genealogical & Biographical Record* and *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, and a few in the *Magazine of the Detroit Society for Genealogical Research*.

In an appendix to his *Index of the Early Records of the Town of Providence*, Richard LeBaron Bowen includes a list of articles of Rhode Island relevance appearing in the *Register*, *The American Genealogist*, and *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections* through 1949. Articles appearing in the first two journals from 1950 to 1975 were listed by Robert S. Wakefield in *Rhode Island Roots*, 1 (1975-1976): 1, 3-5, and those in *Rhode Island History* from 1950 to 1960 were indexed by Henry L. P. Beckwith, Jr., in *Rhode Island Roots*, 2 (1976): 6. *Index to Genealogical Periodicals* by Donald Lines Jacobus is an excellent finding aid for further material, and should be supplemented by the various annual indexes to genealogical periodicals which have appeared since 1953.

In making the transition from printed material on the early colonial period in Rhode Island to primary source material for that time, the genealogist is inescapably headed for something known as the town council book. In colonial times, as even today, almost all matters were handled by and in the towns. Counties in Rhode Island serve as geographical definitions within which the towns exist and as judicial districts, but nothing other than court records have ever been kept on a county-wide level. The freemen of each town met in town meeting to choose from among their own number various officers who included deputies to the General Assembly, constables, surveyors of highways, pound keeper, fence viewers, jurymen, councillors and a town clerk.

The town council took care of the probating of wills, licensing of public houses, welfare matters, and all manner of other business. It was the job of the town clerk to keep the records and to enter births and marriages which were brought to him, as well as to record deeds. He also kept track of ear marks, used by each man in town to distinguish his own livestock. Since paper was not plentiful, all these things are likely to be found jumbled together in the earliest town council book of any town. Sometimes books were begun from both front and back, perhaps for different kinds of business but not necessarily so, and many have been rebound over the years with pages from something else inserted somewhere in the middle. Blank spaces were filled as need arose, usually with records of births or marriages, which are unlikely to appear chronologically. To expect any order in these early records is to invite frustration, yet they contain much of genealogical importance that has never been extracted and published.

James writes, "the towns without penalty disregarded laws on many

subjects, from collecting taxes to recording land titles and vital statistics. In fact, town government proceeded largely on its own, conducting public business of many kinds, while the colony feebly tried to manage what was left to it."<sup>13</sup> Given that situation, it is perhaps understandable that the researcher is faced with systems of record keeping that vary from town to town. In 1647 the General Assembly passed an act requiring that marriage intentions be published, but with no penalty for not doing so, many ignored the rule. It is not unusual to find a marriage recorded years after the event by means of a deposition from someone who had been witness to it. When births were recorded, the usual method was for a parent to carry to the town clerk a Bible record or piece of paper on which was written the names of all children in the family born up to that date, in which case later children born in the same family might never be recorded. Sometimes it is stated in the record book that the information was written "as told me by the mother," a lengthy list with many scratches indicating that mother's memory was not infallible. One occasionally finds children born to a woman by more than one marriage recorded on the same page, providing a juxtaposition that is lost in the alphabetized record given by Arnold.

Most genealogical searches proceed from vital records to probate and land records, and in Rhode Island both of these are also found in the town hall. The town council admitted wills to probate and appointed administrators to distribute the estates of those who died intestate. It ordered the taking of inventories, and in some Rhode Island towns the date of death of the decedent was noted on the inventory when it was presented, often providing the only exact record of that event. In the late seventeenth century are found a few cases where a man died without a will but leaving a large family; one of the heirs might request the town council to "make a will," which amounted to ordering a lawful distribution of the estate.<sup>14</sup> Such was the case with Captain Thomas Cooke who died in Portsmouth in 1670 and with John Spencer of East Greenwich who died in 1684. Some towns, like Charlestown, were more careful than others about recording receipts from heirs; when found, these provide helpful information about relationships and places of residence.

Most towns did keep town meeting books separate from town council books from the beginning; the former usually contain records of officers chosen for various responsibilities and such matters as laying out of highways, but sometimes one does find in them the kind of business usually reserved for town council books. It is wise to consult both. Few

13. James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 71.

14. The misleading statement in the recent edition of *Genealogical Research: Methods and Sources*, Vol. 1, revised, that in Rhode Island a man's neighbors sometimes made his will, is traceable to a statement in the earlier edition by Edward H. West which was taken out of context. Mr. West was making the point that because early Rhode Island towns were small, the town council members who performed this function were undoubtedly neighbors or friends of the deceased.

towns kept their "Will Books" separate from town council books from the first, and it is common to find the earliest books labelled "Town Council & Probate." Intestate proceedings are almost always found in the town council book. In East Greenwich and Portsmouth a few probates are found in the earliest deed books. New Shoreham at first combined everything in one book. It was standard procedure in Rhode Island to give original wills back to the family, but Portsmouth has a large book, long known as "The Scrapbook," in which are pasted some original wills and inventories found in 1903 in the basement of the town hall. Many of these date from the seventeenth century and were unknown to Austin when he compiled his *Dictionary*.

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that there is no hard and fast rule for early Rhode Island town records. When visiting a town hall, it is wise to take time enough to look around and become acquainted with the arrangement of records before plunging into a search. If something is not found in the logical book, look somewhere else. Clarence S. Brigham's compiled "Report on the Archives of Rhode Island" was published in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for The Year 1903* (Washington, 1904). It is to be hoped that this will be reprinted in a more readily available form, for it remains the most complete and accurate inventory and description of all records in each town hall and every other public repository in the state, including everything up to the date of its publication. Except for court records, most of the records are now where they were then, although many town halls have moved to more modern quarters.<sup>15</sup> By recent legislation, town clerks are forbidden to dispose of any old records without first notifying the Division of Community Affairs, but no measures have yet been taken to enforce the ruling.

While considering the original records kept in the towns, it must be pointed out that these are in the care of each town clerk, who may or may not be kindly disposed towards genealogical inquiry. Most are occupied with the daily business of registering deeds and issuing beach permits and have little interest in or knowledge about the earliest records in their custody. A few tend to be overprotective, while a few others may seem rather careless to those who realize the value of the old books. When going on a field trip to a town hall, it is a good idea to take along photocopies of references from Arnold or other sources, for it may otherwise be difficult to locate a particular entry. Some towns have good indexes, others do not. A few have copies of Arnold's volume pertaining to their own records and a few have copies of Beaman's books but do not usually know how to interpret the references. It is best not to expect the staff to know how to read handwriting of the seventeenth and eighteenth

15. Two exceptions are the early town council records of Smithfield, which in 1903 were in a basement vault in the Central Falls City Hall and cannot now be located, and the early vital records of Warren, which have disappeared within the past few years.

centuries, though occasionally they can recommend a local historian who may be able to help.

Those genealogists able and willing to take the time to browse through town council records of the early years may find there more obscure references to families who seem to have dropped out of sight. Each colonial Rhode Island town was a tiny welfare state which took care of its own people, and the town council was in charge of all welfare matters.<sup>16</sup> Individuals wishing to settle in town were required to present to the council some proof of ownership of land or other means of support, lest they become "chargeable" to the town, that is, dependent upon public support. Strangers staying in the homes of town residents were suspect, as were all transients. Gregory Cooke, desirous of settling in South Kingstown in December 1767, informed the council that he was born in Philadelphia and was given until the following June to obtain a certificate from that city or leave town.<sup>17</sup> In some cases bonds were given by relatives to enable people to stay; these may provide clues to otherwise unknown relationships. If suitable means of support could not be proven, the persons concerned were "warned out," or ordered to return to the communities to which they belonged; if necessary the town constable was ordered to remove them to the last place of residence. Litigation between towns sometimes arose over such matters as which held responsibility for support of an illegitimate child.

On the other hand, legal inhabitants of a town who wished to move elsewhere might request from the town council a certificate identifying themselves. Those people who belonged there but fell on hard times were taken care of out of the town treasury. In cases of need, a family member might apply to the council for aid, and would be given food, clothing, or lodging, as called for in any particular situation. Death records sometimes are found in references to a few shillings granted someone for making a coffin or digging a grave. With a parent's permission, children might be bound out, or apprenticed, to suitable people. Andrew Pitcher of East Greenwich, whose father deserted the family in 1698, was bound out to a Potowomut weaver named Greene at the age of three.<sup>18</sup> When a person or family known to have lived in a particular town disappears without explanation from other records, the town council books should always be searched.

Although deeds are recorded on the town level in Rhode Island, some land evidence for the earliest years may also be found in the State Archives. Certain deeds for one reason or another ended up among the Colony records, and these have been collected into four volumes called "Rhode Island Land Evidence"; an abstract of the first volume is in print

16. See also Bruce C. Daniels, "Poor Relief, Local Finance, and Town Government in Eighteenth-Century Rhode Island," *Rhode Island History*, 40 (1981): 75-87.

17. South Kingstown Town Clerk's Office, Town Council & Probate Book, 5:194.

18. East Greenwich Town Clerk's Office, Town Council, 1:52.

as *Rhode Island Land Evidence, Volume 1* (Providence, 1921; reprint ed., Baltimore, 1970).<sup>19</sup> Further volumes at the Archives include also notarial papers, such as powers of attorney, protests by ship captains, and even an occasional apprenticeship indenture. There is a typed abstract, inaccurately termed an index, to each volume, made by the late Archivist, Miss Mary T. Quinn.

Early Proprietors' records in some cases have survived in town halls like East Greenwich and Jamestown, but in other instances are part of private collections like the Harris Papers at Rhode Island Historical Society. James in the bibliography of his *Colonial Rhode Island* provides a thorough list and description.

Most towns have overall indexes to their deeds, though some, like Coventry, use a difficult, archaic system said to have been marketed to town clerks at one time. Others, such as Glocester, index only by the first letter of surname and, since entries are not chronologically arranged, it is necessary to continue to the end of the letter in order to pick up even all early entries for any particular name. Some old books have individual indexes in the front of each book, and where these have survived wear and tear and rebinding, they may provide unexpected genealogical help. In Glocester a deed was recently found indexed as "Obadiah Inman's deed from his father," and in Charlestown one to "James Ladd from his father John,"<sup>20</sup> although the deeds themselves make no mention of any relationship. Since the index in each of these cases was in the handwriting of the clerk who recorded the deed, it may safely be assumed to be contemporary evidence.

Until 1747, the Colony consisted of only the island of Aquidneck, tiny Block Island, Providence, and the area south of the Blackstone River; the territory to the east was part of Massachusetts. In that year, by royal decree, the towns of Tiverton, Little Compton, Bristol, Warren and Cumberland became part of Rhode Island, increasing its population by 5,000. It is important to remember that earliest records for these towns do not conform to the pattern set in other Rhode Island communities before that date, but rather to the rule in Massachusetts, where probate and land records are kept in the county. At the time of the separation Taunton replaced Bristol as county seat of Bristol County, Massachusetts, and there both deeds and probates up to 1747 are preserved, along with some of the early court records. The Fall River District Deeds Registry has handwritten copies of deeds relating to the Tiverton area before the separation.

Other early records for these towns will be found in the Massachusetts Archives and among the court records kept by Suffolk County Superior

19. The index to the one volume in print includes only grantees and grantors, omitting witnesses and other names. Newport Historical Society has manuscript abstracts of the first three volumes of land evidence.

20. Glocester Town Clerk's Office, Deeds, 9:501; Charlestown Town Clerk's Office, Deeds, 3:79.



Court on the fourteenth floor of the court house in Boston. From 1686 to 1688, a short-lived attempt was made by King James II to unite all of New England, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania as one colony under Governor Edmund Andros, and during this time all estates over £50 were required to be probated in Boston. Rhode Island wills and administrations falling into this category were those of Philip Jones, Richard Barns, Bartholomew Hunt, Sr., John Peabody, Mary Sisson, John Williams and Joshua Coggeshall.<sup>21</sup> At that time it was also necessary to obtain marriage bonds in Boston; two good Quakers, Christopher Allen of Newport and Elizabeth Leyouge of Little Compton were in 1687 married "in Boston according to the canons and constitutions of the Church of England."<sup>22</sup> The original bonds are among Suffolk County court papers.

Record books of the Superior Court of Judicature held in Bristol County, from 1693 to 1782, are among the court records kept by the clerk of the Supreme Court of Suffolk County. These include many land cases involving Tiverton and Little Compton people, and the files often contain informative depositions. Reports of inquests are also found in these court papers, which are kept in large bound scrapbooks. There are surname and case indexes. The books themselves are kept in locked glass-doored cupboards reaching from floor to ceiling, and any one search may involve several volumes.

The Massachusetts Archives also contain interesting material on Rhode Island families, such as the documents which tell a swashbuckling tale of how Christopher Almy, Jr., with accomplice Nathaniel Warren, both of Tiverton, in 1696 attempted to defraud privateer George Mountjoy of Boston out of an impressive amount of plate and pieces of eight by staging a fake robbery in that town. Depositions were made by several neighbors from which it appears that Mountjoy got back his treasure, and in typical Rhode Island style no one was really any the worse for the incident.<sup>23</sup>

Moving into the eighteenth century, the genealogist gradually leaves the period covered by Austin, but Arnold remains a basic printed resource until 1850. The town records, as time progresses, become better organized and easier to read with deeds and probates in properly separated books, although vital records are still likely to be found mixed in with town council matters. As the populations of the older towns increased, new towns were set off.<sup>24</sup> If a family lived for several

21. See Winifred Lovering Holman and Mary Lovering Holman, "Suffolk County Probate (1686-1692)," *The American Genealogist*, 12 (1935-1936): 175-177, 13 (1936-1937): 98-106, and 14 (1937-1938): 34-45, and also G. A. Taylor, "Stray Wills at Suffolk County, (Mass.) Probate Registry," *The American Genealogist*, 13 (1936-1937): 55-56.

22. South Kingstown Town Clerk's Office, transcript of North Kingstown Town Council, Book 1, p. 32b (from back of the book).

23. Massachusetts Archives, 40:592-604.

24. In 1723 Kings Towne was divided into North and South Kingstown, in 1731 Smithfield, Gloucester and Scituate were set off from Providence and incorporated as towns, in 1741 Coventry was taken from Warwick and West Greenwich from East Greenwich, in 1738

generations in a town that was taken from an older one, its records would be found in the parent town up to the date of separation. For instance, to properly document the history of a family who lived in Foster in 1800, one would have to search not only the Foster records, but those of Scituate and of Providence for the appropriate periods of time, taking into consideration also that deeds may have been recorded some time after the actual date of transaction and may therefore be somewhere other than the logical place.

Although almost all records are kept in the office of each town clerk, there are a few exceptions. Early Smithfield records, along with those of Lincoln, are kept at the city hall in Central Falls. Early North Providence records are kept at Pawtucket City Hall. The early probate, town council, and town meeting records of Johnston, which was set off from Providence in 1759, are in the probate office at Providence City Hall; Johnston's deeds are in its own town hall. In a few cases there are some transcriptions of records in other town offices; these will be noted in Appendix A.

Newport is a special situation. The British occupied the entire island for three years during the Revolution, and when they retreated to New York in 1779, the Tory sheriff, Walter Chaloner, took with him the town records. The ship carrying them sank in New York Harbor. Through the efforts of General Washington, alerted to the loss by General Nathaniel Greene, the records were salvaged after a few days in the water, but they were left in a storehouse for three years before being returned to Newport. Researchers were then permitted to use them, reducing many papers to fragments; eventually what survived was preserved by the then popular Emery process, in which documents were placed between layers of fine silk. They were then bound into scrapbooks. The Newport Historical Society has two sets of these volumes, one for deeds and one for town council records, along with a card index to each; but because of fragmentation and fading, the original papers are very difficult to read.

Newport records for the period after the Revolution to the present day are at the city hall, where there is a separate office for probate. Deeds are in the office of the city clerk, and quite well indexed although a few appear to have been missed.<sup>25</sup> The city clerk also has a card index to births, marriages and deaths.

If searches through Austin, Arnold, and the records available in town offices prove negative or incomplete, there are other resources to consider. The kind of church records which exist in Massachusetts or Connecticut are simply not available for Rhode Island, where, except for

Charlestown from Westerly, in 1743 Exeter from North Kingstown, in 1747 Richmond from Charlestown, in 1757 Hopkinton from Westerly, in 1770 Barrington from Warren, and in 1781 Foster from Scituate.

25. In a recent effort to film deeds for microfiche, pages were cut from some deed books; when discovered, it was found that margins were not sufficient for rebinding, but some restoration is reportedly planned.

New Shoreham, people from the beginning "thought otherwise." There are a few Congregational church records at the town halls in Bristol and Little Compton, dating from the years when those towns were part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and among the Suffolk court records are a couple of lists censuring some Bristol residents for not attending meetings of public worship. The Massachusetts Archives has a petition from the inhabitants of Tiverton in 1709 protesting a tax levied on them for support of a minister. As the early fervor for individuality of beliefs faded, it left behind a diversity of creeds with widely varied systems of record keeping.

The first Quaker missionaries arrived from England in 1657 and found waiting for them a large number of Rhode Islanders who already believed in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit but who badly needed some kind of religious structure. Quakerism thus gained a quick foothold, providing yet another bone of contention with Massachusetts. Many Aquidneck families like the Eastons and Coggeshalls became Friends, and Mary Dyer, wife of William Dyer of Newport, was hanged on Boston Common for her repeated insistence on preaching her beliefs there.

Quakers are traditionally known for the fine records they keep. Their marriage records often state names of parents and places of residence, and include a list of witnesses which can usually be counted on to contain the names of some relatives. The minutes of their monthly meetings record such matters as dismissals of members for having taken part in military endeavors or for marrying out of meeting, censures to parents who permitted their children to marry out, and certificates given members to travel to or settle in other parts of the country or brought by members from other meetings. Few Friends lived so quietly that they were not noted in the records at one time or another.

Volume 7 of Arnold's *Vital Record* contains births, marriages and deaths for Rhode Island Friends and Narragansett Friends, arranged alphabetically. It is unfortunate that he did not include the names of witnesses to marriages, which add so much to the value of the Shrewsbury, New Jersey, Friends records as published by John E. Stillwell in Volume 1 of his *Historical and Genealogical Miscellany* (New York, 1903). These New Jersey records will be of interest to many with early Rhode Island ancestry, for there was a close sea link between Newport and New Jersey in the late seventeenth century, and one of the earliest migrations out of Rhode Island was that of a number of Quaker families from Newport and Portsmouth who settled in Monmouth County. Records of the Allens, Parkers, Cooks, Bordens, Tallmans and Greenes are but a few found in both places.

The original Friends records for Rhode Island, which included Newport, Portsmouth, and some Jamestown records, are at the Newport Historical Society. Those for the rest of the colony are in the manuscripts department of the Rhode Island Historical Society, where a special

curator who is a member of the Society of Friends is available one day a week for researchers who want to consult with her or to use the records. There are microfilm copies of these in the main reading room of the library, along with microfilm of Friends records from all over New England.

Quakers tended to travel a good deal. Early Rhode Island was closely linked by trade with Barbados, and some Quaker families like the Rodmans lived there before coming to New England; others moved back and forth. For records on these families, see G. Andrews Moriarty's "Barbadian Notes" in the *Register*, 67 (1913): 360-371. Many Quakers migrated out of Rhode Island, not only to New Jersey but to Dutchess County, New York; a few, like Ephraim Bull and William Borden, joined Nantucket Quakers in a small migration to North Carolina about 1750. Even before the Revolution, many moved into New York State and may be followed in records of Friends meetings there, presently kept at the Haviland Records Room of the Society of Friends in New York City.

Two Anglican churches were established in Rhode Island in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Trinity Church had a congregation at Newport for some time before an actual church was built, as did St. Paul's at Narragansett. With the home government in England lending an encouraging hand, both soon gained members from among the wealthy merchant families, some of whom were already Quakers. Gabriel Bernon, a prominent Huguenot merchant, was instrumental in founding a third Anglican Church, St. John's, in Providence in 1727. The earliest surviving baptismal record of Trinity Church is 1709; baptisms and marriages have been printed in Arnold's volume 10, but like his other abstracts have lost the value to be found in chronological order. The original Trinity records have recently been deposited at Newport Historical Society. *Annals of Trinity Church, Newport, R.I., 1698-1821*, ed. George C. Mason (Newport, 1890) provides a history of that church with references to members, but of more value to genealogists is the three-volume *History of the Narragansett Church* by Wilkins Updike (Boston, 1907), which includes a literal transcript of the parish register from 1718 to 1774 and fairly complete genealogical notes on the various families mentioned. Records of this church, which was physically moved in 1800 to the town of Wickford from its original location, are included in Arnold's volume 10 and cover the period 1718 to 1875.

Those Rhode Islanders who fell heir to Roger Williams's "Biblicist" approach to religion, as opposed to the mysticism of Anne Hutchinson and her followers, soon divided into several varieties of Baptists who differed from one another on certain and often rather fine points of doctrine. The Seventh Day, or Sabbatarian, Baptists, who observed the Sabbath on Saturday, the "seventh day," established a church in Newport about 1661 under the leadership of Samuel Hubbard. Families who joined this group included the Maxsons, Burdicks and Crandalls, and a second Sabbatarian Church was soon founded at Westerly, which for a long time

had no other church. The records of both churches are now at Newport Historical Society and may be of interest to genealogists although, like other Baptists, they did not practice infant baptism and considered spiritual events in the life of an individual of more interest than the physical events which genealogy strives to reconstruct.

Baptist ministers traditionally considered records of marriages performed by them to be personal property which they retained if they moved to other churches. Many such records were included by Arnold in volumes 7, 8, 10 through 13, and 21 of his *Vital Record*, under the names of the ministers concerned, such as "Michael Eddy's Marriages" or "Gardner Thurston's Marriages." The originals of many of these are in the Newport Historical Society, as are early records of Newport's Congregational churches, the First Baptist Church, and a Moravian church founded there in 1749. The Rhode Island Historical Society has some original church records, and some records are still with the churches, as is the case with the Stone Church (Six Principle Baptist) in Tiverton and the Second Baptist Church of Newport. The Westerly Library, which had held the records of some churches in that area, returned them a few years ago to the churches concerned.

There have been several attempts to inventory the church records of Rhode Island,<sup>26</sup> but the most up-to-date list of such records and their whereabouts is held by the State Archives and was made when the Church of Latter Day Saints was microfilming in Rhode Island. It includes all churches up to about 1970, indicating what records were located for each and where the originals were kept, some of them in private hands. Information may be obtained by contacting the Archivist.

Colonial Newport had a substantial Jewish congregation, most of its members of Portuguese or Spanish origin who arrived by way of New Amsterdam, Holland or Curaçao. The General Assembly in 1684 accorded them the same protection extended to other strangers, and many later became freemen of the colony. An early group who had arrived in Newport about 1656 had dispersed by 1700, and a new influx took place in the 1750s. The Touro Synagogue, designed by Peter Harrison of Newport, an Anglican, and built with the help of contributions from Jews throughout the British Empire, was dedicated in 1763 at Hannukah. Families like those of Aaron Lopez, the Riveras and Naphtali Hart played a vital role in Newport's commercial life until the Revolution. The Newport Historical Society has a large collection of Lopez's correspondence and papers. For an account of the Jews in Newport, see

26. Earlier inventories of church records include: Rhode Island State Record Commissioner, Annual Report (1906): "Church Records, Abstract from Returns of Custodians of Records on File in State Record Commissioner's Office"; original questionnaires now at R.I. Archives; Historical Records Survey, *Directory of Churches and Religious Organizations of Rhode Island*, (Providence, 1939); Historical Records Survey, Division of Community Service Projects, Works Project Administration, *Inventory of the Church Archives of Rhode Island*, (Providence, 1941).

"The Israelites in Rhode Island" by Reverend Frederic Denison, in *Narragansett Historical Register*, 4 (1885-1886): 301-317. *A Biographical Dictionary of Early American Jews, Colonial Times through 1800* by Joseph R. Rosenbloom (Lexington, Ky., 1960) includes much specific genealogical information about the early Newport Jewish families.

A French Huguenot settlement was attempted at East Greenwich in the 1680s, but rival land claims soon forced these people to leave that area. A few, like their leader, Daniel Ayrault, remained in Rhode Island, where they were assimilated into the population; some names became anglicized, i.e. Lemoine to Mooney or Mawney, Ganeaux to Gano, Targé to Tourgee. "Records of the French Church at Narragansett, 1686-1691," translated by Effingham de Forest, were printed in the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 70 (1939): 236-241, 359-365, and 71 (1940): 51-61. See also Elisha Potter Reynolds, "Memoirs Concerning the French Settlements in Colonial Rhode Island," in Rider, *Historical Tracts*, first series, no. 5 (1879); reprint ed., Baltimore, 1968.

Diaries are often useful in genealogical research, and Rhode Island is fortunate to have had a number of people who left journals of value to the genealogist as well as the historian. John Comer, pastor of the First and then of the Second Baptist Church of Newport until 1732, kept a diary which was published as volume 8 (1893), *Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society*. Better known is *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles* (ed. Franklin B. Dexter; 3 vols., New York, 1901), minister of the Second Congregational Church of Newport who later went on to become president of Yale. Dr. Stiles kept records of his pastoral visits, and his wide interests brought him into contact with many from other congregations.

Peleg Burroughs, a Baptist minister who was born in Newport but lived and worked in Tiverton and Little Compton from 1774 until his death in 1800, kept a remarkably frank and open diary of most of those years which has been published by the Rhode Island Genealogical Society as *Peleg Burroughs's Journal, 1778-1798: The Tiverton, R.I., Years of the Humbly Bold Baptist Minister*, edited by Ruth Wilder Sherman (Warwick, R.I., 1981). Because he lived among the ordinary people of that rural area, his comments and observations about his neighbors both add to our historical knowledge of the times and provide much genealogical information not available elsewhere.

Jeffrey Watson, a South Kingstown Friend, kept a diary from 1740 to 1784; manuscript copies by Caroline E. Robinson are in several libraries and genealogical abstracts were printed in the *Rhode Island Genealogical Register*, 3 (1980-1981): 1-17. Thomas Benjamin Hazard, also a Friend, kept *Nailor Tom's Diary* from 1778 to 1840 (Boston, 1930), including thousands of references to births, marriages and deaths of people he knew. It lacks an index, but the Rhode Island Historical Society has several handwritten notebooks of abstracted genealogical items from it. Redwood Library at Newport has most of the original diary, except for a

small portion which is at the Newport Historical Society. The almanacs of Harris Smith covered much of the nineteenth century in South Kingstown and nearby areas; the Rhode Island Historical Society has a typed index of genealogical items from these.

One of the foremost difficulties in Rhode Island genealogical research is to determine an ancestor's specific home town. The most direct way to attack this problem is through use of census records. Although the first Rhode Island colony census was ordered in 1706 by the General Assembly, the earliest known to be extant today is the 1730 census for the town of Portsmouth and for part of South Kingstown. These list the number of inhabitants, both black and white, in each household. The Portsmouth schedule, discovered in the Portsmouth Scrapbook, was published in *Rhode Island Roots*, 7 (1981): 16, 17, and it is hoped that the 1730 lists for some other towns may yet be found. Many towns have tax lists dating from before the Revolution, either in the town offices, in the State Archives, or at the Rhode Island Historical Society.

The first actual census that has survived almost in its entirety is that of 1774, which has been printed with an index (Baltimore, 1969); the original is in the Archives. Returns for the town of New Shoreham (Block Island) are missing. Listed are heads of households, with other members of the family enumerated by sex and whether under or over sixteen years of age. The number of Blacks and Indians in each household is included. This census is particularly valuable in that it caught at home many people who had moved elsewhere by the time the next full census was taken in 1782. The population of Rhode Island, which had increased almost 50 percent from 1755 to a high of 59,678 in 1774, declined to 55,011 by 1776 and still further to 51,869 by 1782.<sup>27</sup> Some Loyalists left during this period, but much of the decline reflects the waning economy which drove Newport merchants and tradesmen to seek opportunity elsewhere and farmers to migrate into newly opened western lands.

Although earlier censuses appear not to have survived, it is possible to locate individuals within the colony by means of an index of freemen that is kept at the State Archives. This card index includes every man who appears on the various lists turned in by the towns over the years. A freeman normally was a man at least twenty-one years of age who owned some real estate in town and was thus both privileged to vote in town meetings and obligated to hold town office if chosen to do so.<sup>28</sup>

In 1746 the General Assembly passed an act requiring that all freemen take an oath against bribery and corruption, which meant that all freemen in the colony at that time had to take the oath and be readmitted

27. Coleman, Peter J., *The Transformation of Rhode Island, 1790-1860* (Providence, 1969), p. 21.

28. Occasional exceptions to this formula are seen. Sometimes a young man who had inherited land from a deceased father would be admitted freeman before he was 21, and one also finds cases where the son of a prosperous landowning father was allowed freeman status even though no deed for land appeared in his own name.

in 1747, thus creating what amounts to a census of men entitled to vote at that date. For a list of those men admitted from 1747 through 1755, along with a careful explanation of the evolution of qualifications for freeman status from 1638 to 1760, see Bruce C. MacGunnigle, *Rhode Island Freemen, 1747-1755* (Baltimore, 1977). The original lists for the entire colonial period are at the Archives, arranged chronologically by each town; many are included in Bartlett.

Another extremely valuable resource for locating people in Rhode Island and discovering what matters they were involved in are the petitions to the General Assembly, also kept at the Archives. These were placed in bound volumes many years ago and a thorough card index made to the whole set. Each volume also has a typed index bound in the front, as well as an abstract showing the date and nature of each petition. These cover a variety of concerns both public and private; most are petitions by inhabitants of a particular town, like those of Glocester who in 1750 requested that the bridge across the river at Chepachet be mended.<sup>29</sup> As the population of the towns increased, members of their trained bands petitioned that new bands be established so that some men would not have so far to travel in bad weather. Townsmen petitioned to have counterfeiting neighbors released from jail, or to ask that a new grist mill be permitted in town, and petitions for new banks and issues of paper money were commonplace. From these lists of signatures one learns who lived where and with whom, as well as what their immediate concerns were, all items of interest to the genealogist.

In 1777, by order of the General Assembly, a military census was taken to determine the number of men in the colony able to bear arms. Within each town, all men are listed in age groupings: from 16 to 50, able or unable, from 50 to 60, able or unable, and from 60 up. If for some reason a man considered it against his conscience to serve, as was the case with Quakers, he might take an affirmation of loyalty to the government or present a certificate from his Friends Meeting, and that fact was duly noted. The census included Negroes, Indians, and Mustees, the name in common use for those who were half Indian and half Negro. Residences of men belonging to towns other than that in which they were enumerated were listed; many Aquidneck men went from the Island during the British occupation to serve from nearby towns on the mainland. There are no returns for the occupied towns, Portsmouth, Middletown and Newport, and none appears to have survived for Exeter, Little Compton and New Shoreham. This census is currently being published for the first time in *Rhode Island Roots*, 7 (1981): 43-51 and ongoing, transcribed by Mildred Mosher Chamberlain from the original manuscript in the Rhode Island Archives. At present the only index to it is the card file on revolutionary soldiers and sailors, kept at the Archives, which will be discussed along with other military records.

29. Petitions to the General Assembly, Rhode Island Archives, 7:165.

The next census was taken in 1782 and listed within each town the heads of households, numbers of males and females under 16, from 16 to 22, from 22 to 50, and over 50, as well as numbers of Indians, mulattoes, and blacks. The original manuscript is at Rhode Island Historical Society along with a microfilm copy and a typewritten copy, containing some errors<sup>30</sup>, which was transcribed by Katherine V. Waterman and printed in the *Register*, 127 (1973): 3-17, 138-150, 216-229, 302-312; 128 (1974): 49-63, 124-135, 214-224, 293-304; and 129 (1975): 53-67, 270-277, 379-387. The entire census is now in print alphabetically in book form, edited by Jay Holbrook (Oxford, Mass., 1979), incorporating data from tax lists to supply information for the towns of Smithfield and North Providence, which were missing from the original schedules.

The first federal census of Rhode Island, made in 1790, has long been in print with an index. Recent indexes for succeeding federal censuses up through 1850 have been published by Accelerated Index Systems of Provo, Utah, and are available at the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Society, and many other libraries with genealogical collections.<sup>31</sup> In 1865 the state began taking decennial censuses, which will be described in connection with other records available for research in the nineteenth century.

There are for Rhode Island numerous collections of cemetery records, more properly called gravestone inscriptions, but these are scattered; for a definitive guide, see David Dumas, "Rhode Island Grave Records," *Rhode Island Roots*, 3 (1977): 1-6. One of the largest collections is that made by James Arnold, working in the last decades of the nineteenth century; this is divided between the Rhode Island Historical Society and Knight Memorial Library (also known as the Elmwood Library) in Providence. Toward the end of his life Arnold had a disagreement with one of the officers of the Rhode Island Historical Society and left his remaining records to the Knight Library with the provision that they remain there, where a small room has been set aside for them; it contains also some other genealogical material, mostly printed books. There is a complete card index to the gravestone records, which are typed and fill several loose-leaf notebooks, arranged by town; they include complete inscriptions and often descriptions of the stones, many of which have long since disappeared. The Rhode Island Historical Society has a five-volume handwritten set of Scituate gravestones copied by Arnold from 1891 to 1904, and also sets of inscriptions for Warwick, Cranston, Lincoln, and Coventry, all with indexes prepared by John H. Wells.

Another important collection of gravestone inscriptions, by Charles and Martha Bennis, is in typescript at the East Greenwich Public Library.

30. In the 1782 census as printed in the *Register*, all residents of Jamestown are listed in Tiverton, all residents of Portsmouth in Middletown, and some residents of Scituate in Foster.

31. It should perhaps be noted that these computerized indexes contain a fairly high number of errors and omissions.

The index is divided into several sections, each of which should be examined. The Rhode Island Historical Society has a copy of the index and a microfilm copy of the records; there is a copy also in the Library of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington. This collection covers stones from all over Rhode Island and also neighboring towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The Rhode Island Historical Society has three volumes of handwritten records made many years ago by George J. Harris, entitled "A Visitation to the Cemeteries of Ancient Kingstowne." These are not indexed, and although scanning through them is a time-consuming business, it is well worth the effort for someone working on a family that lived in King's (now Washington) County.

The Newport Historical Society has an extensive collection of records of gravestones on the island of Aquidneck, most in manuscript. These include copies made by Dr. Henry Turner of stones in the Newport Common Burial Ground, the large and very old cemetery sprawled over the hill in the heart of the city. Many attempts have been made to record the inscriptions in this historic burial ground but no one list appears to be complete. Typescript versions at the Society do not include all the stones recorded in other compilations, and still others are described in *Newport Historical Society Bulletin*, no. 10 (Dec. 1913): 3-46. Newport Historical Society has a huge map of the cemetery, made in 1903, divided into grids, with an attempt to map the stones then standing; a recent index to the grid map made by Edwin Connally provides the best chance of locating specific stones in that interesting and ancient cemetery.

An alphabetized list of inscriptions from Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth appeared in a Newport paper many years ago, and a copy of these clippings, without date, is included in one of Arnold's notebooks, labelled "Newport," in the Knight Library. Some of the finer examples of early gravestone art in Newport are included in the photograph collection of Daniel Farber at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, and although this is not designed for genealogical purposes, the searcher may well find pictured there the stone of an ancestor.

The Historic Graves Commission for Rhode Island in 1970 listed all cemeteries and family burying grounds designated "historical," alphabetized the names by which they are known, and correlated the names with the numbers which appear on the square white signs placed years ago in historical cemeteries. The Archives and Rhode Island Historical Society have copies of the master list. Unfortunately, some small old grounds, among them the plot off Glen Road in Portsmouth where John Cook (1630-1691) and his wife Mary Borden are buried, were never designated historical and have thus been omitted. Each town clerk has a map of historical cemeteries within the town. A unique problem exists for Tiverton and Little Compton, however, in that stones in these two towns were copied some years ago by three very capable genealogists, Grace (Stafford) Durfee, Waldo C. Sprague and Benjamin F. Wilbour, who assigned to them numbers of their own which do not

correspond to numbers given to them as historical cemeteries. These transcripts were printed in the *Register*, 1961-1964 (see Appendix A), with typescript copies deposited at the Society and the Rhode Island Historical Society. In order to locate any of the burial grounds concerned, it is best to consult the directions given in the transcript by Durfee, Sprague and Wilbour before examining the map at the town hall.

Providence has two large cemeteries, North Burial Ground and Swan Point, to which were made removals from small family burying grounds. The Rhode Island Historical Society has some inscriptions from North Burial Ground, made about 1925 by Dr. Frank T. Calef, who also copied stones in the smaller Locust Grove Cemetery. Actual records of interments in North Burial Ground are kept at the cemetery office, but these are chronological and unindexed; to find a particular entry one must have an approximate date. Providence City Archives has the business records of that cemetery, which contain information on owners of lots; some of these records are somewhat incongruously included in volumes 18 and 19 of the printed *Early Records of the Town of Providence*. The more modern Swan Point Cemetery has excellent records, useful to genealogists, and these are on microfilm at Rhode Island Historical Society.

Military records for Rhode Island men are available both in print and in manuscript. A listing of men who served in both military and civil capacities is provided by Joseph J. Smith, *Civil and Military List of Rhode Island, 1647-1850*, 3 volumes (Providence, 1900-1907); for the Revolutionary War, however, this names only officers of state units. The original index, which included only surnames, was replaced by a full name index published in 1907. In addition to Bodge's *History of King Philip's War*, another source for the period up to 1700 is Ebenezer W. Pierce's *Colonial Lists: Civil, Military and Professional Lists of Plymouth and Rhode Island Colonies* (Boston, 1881; reprint ed., Baltimore, 1968).

Because of her commercial dependence upon the sea, Rhode Island was actively drawn into the struggles between England and other European countries known broadly as the colonial wars. A great number of men served on privateering ships. Many a Rhode Island ancestor marched off to Canada or Crown Point, sometimes at a more advanced age than seems reasonable today, and many more lent their horses for shorter journeys. There are in the State Archives a series of volumes containing original documents such as muster rolls, pay receipts, and disbursements for services and goods supplied for the troops; the only index for these is in each volume. Of interest to those seeking information about this period are three books by Howard M. Chapin, *Rhode Island in the Colonial Wars: A List of Rhode Island Soldiers & Sailors in King George's War, 1740-1748* (Providence, 1920), *Rhode Island Privateers in King George's War, 1739-1748* (Providence, 1926), and *A List of Rhode*

*Island Soldiers and Sailors in the Old French and Indian War, 1755-1762* (Providence, 1918). See also Society of Colonial Wars, Rhode Island, *Nine Muster Rolls of Rhode Island Troops Enlisted During the Old French War* (Providence, 1915), and Clarkson A. Collins, *A Muster Roll of Newport County Troops Sent Toward Albany in 1757* (Providence, 1961). "Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops, 1755-1764," *New York Historical Society Collections*, vol. 24 (1891), includes names and physical descriptions of many men who gave Rhode Island as birthplace when enlisting in New York regiments during that period.

For Revolutionary service records, the best printed source is Benjamin Cowell's *Spirit of '76 in Rhode Island* (Providence, 1850; reprint ed., with index Baltimore, 1973), originally indexed in Arnold's Volume 12. There is in the State Archives a card index to Revolutionary soldiers made by the late Miss Mary T. Quinn. This may contain more than one card or slip of paper for the same man, since information was drawn from a variety of sources which are noted on each card. These include the military census of 1777, the Cowell Collection, the Shepley Collection, now at the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Pardon Gray Seabury Papers at New Bedford Public Library, and a number of small private collections not easily accessible today. Also used in compiling the index were federal pension records, more readily available now by means of the National Genealogical Society's *Index to Revolutionary War Pensions* (Washington, 1976). The Rhode Island Historical Society has a growing collection of microfilm reels of pension records, initiated by Rhode Island Society of Mayflower Descendants, to which further contributions may be made by interested persons or groups. The Benjamin Cowell Collection at John Hay Library, Brown University (catalogued under the Rider Collection) contains original correspondence having to do with pension applications; you may find there two versions of a deposition, the one that was done "off the cuff," containing some interesting side lights on the pensioners and their families, and the official version which was edited and sent off to Washington. There are eight volumes, each with an index of sorts.

Throughout the history of Rhode Island a relationship with the sea was the one thing shared by almost everyone. The sea was the mainstay of the colony's economic life; directly or indirectly everyone was to some extent dependent upon it. Much of the travel within the colony was by water, the predominant routes being east and west across Narragansett Bay and the Sakonnet River by ferries rather than north and south. *A History of Rhode Island Ferries 1640-1923* by Anna Augusta and Charles V. Chapin (Providence, 1925) reveals that many Rhode Island families were directly involved at some time, either as ferry keepers, or as proprietors of one of the licensed public houses which stood near the wharves for the comfort and entertainment of travelers who waited for the next boat.

Privateering was everybody's business in early Rhode Island, with

prize shares distributed to each member of the crew down to cabin boy; many young men shipped on such vessels before settling down, just as later men might sign on trading ships for a couple of voyages in order to make enough money to buy a good farm. Ships often were owned by several men in shares, the master included, in order to divide the risk. The genealogist should remember that there may be maritime records which contain information relevant to any Rhode Island family. The State Archives has manuscript material on maritime affairs and some for masters of vessels. The Works Progress Administration produced a series of volumes, fully indexed, describing ships built and fitted out at various ports, including Newport, Providence, Bristol and Warren. Volume 2 of Field's *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the Turn of the Century* contains a list of Rhode Island ships with names of their masters. Howard W. Preston, *Rhode Island and the Sea* (Providence, 1932) also lists privateer ships active during the colonial wars. Information on crews of privateering vessels is included in some of the sources given above for military records.

After the Revolution, impressment into the British Navy became a problem and the Seaman's Protection Registration was instituted to provide mariners with identification papers. These certificates, issued through the customs houses in various ports, are of genealogical value, often including place and date of birth. There are collections of these in both the Newport Historical Society and Rhode Island Historical Society. The New Bedford Public Library also has an immensely valuable index to crews of whaling ships from that port, by means of which it is possible to find a physical description of a sailor ancestor and to follow his career on different ships up to the Civil War period. Men came from all over Rhode Island and from areas as far away as New Jersey and western New York State to ship on the whalers, and in these lists may occasionally be found clues to the whereabouts of families who had left Rhode Island a generation or so earlier.

Newport's wealth depended upon the sea, and when her trade was cut off by the British occupation during the Revolution, her position slipped rapidly and never recovered. Merchants moved elsewhere, many settling in southern seaport cities, others in New Bedford or Providence, both of which continued to grow. Rhode Island's population declined as western lands opened up and people began migrating out in large numbers, some to western Massachusetts and Vermont and even Pennsylvania and Ohio, but especially to New York State. For many genealogists this period presents the greatest difficulty, for once a family left Rhode Island the name of the town from which they came was likely to be obscured, with later records of them stating birthplace as simply "Rhode Island," or sometimes even "Providence," the two being almost synonymous to people who were unfamiliar with both.

Although in such cases a search must begin with the records of the place to which the family migrated, there are sources in Rhode Island

that may help to locate the town of origin. One of the better aids in tracing both merchants who moved to other cities and yeomen farmers who went westward are newspaper records. Several papers in Providence and Newport regularly printed brief death and marriage notices which included items from all over the country having to do with people formerly of Rhode Island. Arnold, in his volumes 12 through 21, published abstracts of such notices, arranged by newspaper and time period, then alphabetically. The newspapers themselves may be consulted on microfilm at Rhode Island Historical Society, but often give no more information than that included by Arnold.

The Newport Historical Society maintains a large card index arranged alphabetically by surname which includes, among many other things, references to such notices which appeared in the *Newport Mercury*. The Society has some original copies of early newspapers, as well as photostats and microfilm of others. The *New Bedford Morning Mercury* also noted marriages and deaths, 1807-1874, covering nearby Tiverton and Little Compton areas, and there is in the New Bedford Public Library a typed index to these.<sup>32</sup> Occasionally events were noted in Boston newspapers as well, so that it may be worthwhile to consult the widely available indexes to the *Columbian Centinel* and the *Boston Weekly News-Letter*.

Another aid to locating emigrant Rhode Islanders may be found in a new quarterly, *The Rhode Island Genealogical Register*, in a continuing series of articles entitled "They Left Rhode Island," consisting of references found in deeds and probates of various Rhode Island towns to people then living in other places. This is valuable for clues, but the original document cited must be checked to learn the full content. Town deed books contain many such references, usually in cases where the grantors were already living elsewhere when they sold their land back home. Probate records sometimes include receipts for legacies which show where the heirs were then living. The same series includes names of people listed in the 1850 census of other states as born in Rhode Island.

One old tactic helpful in solving this kind of genealogical problem is to examine the names of neighbors and friends with whom the ancestor associated in his new place of settlement. People did not usually migrate alone, and hopefully there will be among the population of the new home town a name which can be easily located on the 1774 census of Rhode Island. Its small size, combined with the fact that certain names tend to be concentrated in particular towns, makes this approach unusually valid for Rhode Island research.

Records of the sizable migration of Rhode Island people to Canada which occurred about 1758 were printed in an article by Ray Greene Hul-ling in "The Rhode Island Emigration to Nova Scotia" in *Narragansett*

32. The Society and Rhode Island Historical Society each have copies of death index 1807-1845.

*Historical Register*, 7 (1889): 89-136. This involved families from Portsmouth, Newport, and the Narragansett Country who moved into Nova Scotia, which had been recently recovered from the French, and had nothing to do with political sympathies; some men returned to fight in the Revolution. A more recent article by Thaire H. Adamson in *Rhode Island Genealogical Register*, 3 (1980-1981): 145-148, discusses the Nova Scotia settlers and material available on them. This and other early migrations are briefly covered by G. Andrews Moriarty in "Migrations from Rhode Island in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, 47 (1959): 70, 71, 197.

The nineteenth century brought industrialization to Rhode Island, with a shift of capital from maritime operations into manufacturing that began before the War of 1812.<sup>33</sup> Along the Blackstone River northwest of Providence and also in Fall River, which soon overshadowed Tiverton on the east side of the Sakonnet, good water power encouraged the development of the textile mills which became the primary source of wealth in Rhode Island. As the mills grew, so did the population of Irish and Canadian French who came to work in them. When Central Falls was incorporated in 1895, nearly half its population was foreign born, from French Canada, England and Ireland.<sup>34</sup> By the end of the century, Rhode Island had the highest proportion of foreign-born of any state in the Union, one in every three inhabitants, and it had become a predominantly Catholic state.<sup>35</sup> Italians, Portuguese and other nationalities added to its diversity.

It is suggested that genealogists interested in Catholic records and history look at *Catholicism in Rhode Island: The Formative Era* by Patrick T. Conley and Matthew J. Smith (Providence, 1976). As this work notes, at first there were two distinct Catholic groups, the Irish and the French Canadians, and they did not voluntarily mix. Printed accounts of the Irish in Rhode Island have emphasized the early colonists who were of Irish origin rather than the working Irish who came to help in building projects like that of Fort Adams in Newport about 1820. Unlike their predecessors, the Irish of the nineteenth century were Catholic and required the services of a circuit priest who came from Boston once a month. The records of these earliest baptisms and marriages are now in the Chancery Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston. It was 1844 before the Irish in Rhode Island had a church of their own.

A French settlement was begun at Woonsocket as early as 1815, and although these people tended to hold themselves aloof, thus preserving their own culture, illiteracy in the early years resulted in the Anglicization of many French names, i.e. Balcon to Balcom, a name more familiar to Rhode Island ears, or Morin to Mowry. After the Civil War, when they

34. Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission, *Central Falls* (Providence, 1978), 40.

35. Coleman, *Transformation of Rhode Island*, 301.

had priests and churches of their own, the French founded schools and institutions which have survived until the present day. There is an active American French Genealogical Society in Pawtucket, and the Mallet Library in Woonsocket may be used by anyone interested in tracing French Canadian ancestry. French church records from Woonsocket and Central Falls are being steadily published by Quintin Publications in Pawtucket; copies are on the shelves of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

Records of individual Catholic churches remain in the parishes, with permission to make genealogical searches depending upon the priest in charge. The Archives of the Diocese of Providence holds microfilm copies of all parish registers within its jurisdiction and will make searches on request; the records are considered sacramental and are not open to the public. The Diocesan Cemetery Office has records for all Catholic cemeteries in the Diocese and will respond to specific requests for information.

The National Archives has a "Soundex" index which includes Federal District Court naturalizations at Providence, 1842-1904, and a few from county courts as early as 1789. The clerk of the United States District Court in Providence has a master index to naturalizations in federal courts, which may be used also as a guide to several books of naturalization petitions and declarations, 1842 to 1945, held by the Federal Records Center at Waltham, Massachusetts. Locating naturalizations in state records may be more difficult. There is an index to the naturalizations and petitions of the Supreme Court records, 1842-1854, but many people were naturalized through the various Courts of Common Pleas, which have no indexes. A card index for later Supreme Court records is estimated to contain only about one tenth of all original entries; common practice at one time was for clerks to hand over to inquirers the card from the file; many were lost in that way. Most of the existing records are now at Providence College Archives along with other Rhode Island court records. These are presently being organized and catalogued.

Census records for the nineteenth century and later include not only federal censuses through 1900 (except for the burned 1890 census), but also state schedules which were made every ten years from 1865 through 1935, with the exception of 1895, which is missing. The Rhode Island Historical Society has a microfilm copy of the 1865 census for the entire state, with a card index that includes every name; the original is at the Archives. The City Archives of Providence has a copy of the books for Providence, and some town offices have copies of their own schedules. The State Archives has the 1875 census and is preparing an index to it. The censuses of 1885 and 1905 through 1935 are at the State Records Center in Providence.

Arnold's coverage of vital records ends in 1850, and there was a three-year gap before registration of births, marriages and deaths became



statewide in 1853. Vital records from 1850 to 1853 will be found only in the towns. From 1853 to 1921, each town sent a copy of its records to the Department of Health, but more recently the originals have been sent, the copies kept in the towns. Until a few years ago all the state records were kept at the Health Department, whose director is staunchly opposed to opening them for genealogical inquiry despite a state law permitting it. Marriage and death records have now been moved to the Records Center, where they may be used in what amounts to a warehouse setting but with a friendly staff. Indexes cover 1853-1900 for marriages and births, but the birth records are still at the Health Department, which also, inexplicably, retains the index to deaths. These indexes are arranged by surname for each year; a search may be rather time consuming unless one already has some specific dates in mind. Indexes for records 1901-1920 are easier to use. The Records Center does not have complete indexes after 1920, and it is unable to provide certified copies, which must be obtained either from the Health Department or the clerk of the town in which the event occurred. If the town is known, it may still be the easiest place to search for a late record.

An index to the vital records of the City of Providence from 1850 to 1945 is available in print in several volumes. The Westerly Public Library has a set of scrapbooks labelled "Westerly Vital Statistics" which in fact contain indexed death and marriage notices from local newspapers arranged by year to 1908; these include references from as far away as Dartmouth, Massachusetts. The Rhode Island Historical Society has several indexed collections of newspaper obituaries.

The 1865 census lists as soldiers many men who were in Civil War service at that time. To learn more, one may consult *Rhode Island Adjutant General's Office, Annual Report . . . for the Year 1865 (Official Register, Rhode Island Officers and Enlisted Men, U.S. Army & Navy, 1861-1865)*, 2 vols. (1893-1895). The State Records Center also has Civil War material.

Court records in Rhode Island present a special problem. Since 1729, there have been Inferior Courts of Common Pleas and a Superior Court in each county, in addition to the Supreme Court. Divorces were processed through any of the courts and are thoroughly mixed in with other business. Many cases were simple actions of debts due "by book," i.e. for goods sold or services rendered, or on promissory notes, which rarely provide genealogical information. There were also a fair number of trespass cases involving suits over land; these often produced informative depositions along with evidence of ownership or relationship of several generations.

There are some court record books and indexes at the Law Library in the Providence County Court House, in an attic room without much light or any working space. These include a fine set of King's County (now Washington County) record books, early Bristol County record books, and an index to some Providence County books. The Newport

County Court Clerk has a card index to plaintiffs and defendants, which includes the date and nature of each case.

Until recently each county had custody of its own court records; Brigham in his 1903 report listed what was then extant. The files of Washington County have since suffered water damage and those of Newport were thoroughly scrambled. Many were collected at the Records Center, and eventually the entire state collection was transferred to the archives of Providence College, where a staff of several people spent a year putting them in boxes in some order. One archivist is now attempting to further organize and catalogue them, beginning with Providence County, working backwards from later to earlier records. These are open to serious researchers, but it must be emphasized that they will not be in any condition to be useful for genealogical research for a long time. The College cannot now handle any but the most straightforward inquiries.

Those interested in Black or Indian genealogy will find varied resources in Rhode Island. Many Indians were enslaved following King Philip's War, and many Negroes were imported during the colony's long history of slave trading. Probate records contain many specific references to slaves or indentured servants, both Indian and Black, and it is sometimes possible to trace such families through documents left by their white owners. Deed books record the sale of slaves and also manumissions, indexed under the owner's name. When freeing a slave, the former owner often was required to post a bond to protect the town should the slave prove unable to maintain himself, and sometimes free Negroes brought legal action to preserve their rights. Court records show that many free Blacks and Indians were involved in trade, crafts and commerce. Blacks and Indians appear in vital, church, and cemetery records. Since many assumed their owner's surname, it is wise to first search records of white families. The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, organized in 1975 under the auspices of the Rhode Island Historical Society, has as its goal the research and preservation of the history of Blacks in Rhode Island.

Genealogical research in Rhode Island, as elsewhere, requires some attention to geography. In 1936 the State Planning Board issued a series of maps showing territorial bounds at various time periods from 1659; these have been widely reprinted and are helpful in understanding territorial disputes and changes which occurred over the years. A valuable map prepared by Richard LeBaron Bowen and printed in Volume 1 of his *Early Rehoboth*, 4 vols. (Concord, N.H., 1945-1950) sets Rhode Island towns within the context of surrounding towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The 1746/7 boundary change added five towns to Rhode Island; a later adjustment in 1862 returned to Massachusetts the northern part of old Tiverton, Fall River, along with some land in eastern Tiverton which became part of Westport, Massachusetts. At the same time part of

Seekonk, Massachusetts, was ceded to Rhode Island and incorporated as East Providence. Fall River, a growing mill town, attracted many Rhode Islanders, and its records should not be overlooked. Its Oak Grove and North cemeteries have records that help in tracing some Rhode Island families. An index to the unpublished Fall River vital records to 1844 is in the Fall River Public Library.

New Bedford, also late to develop, was not set off from Dartmouth until 1787; it gained momentum as Newport declined. Like Fall River, much of its population was drawn from nearby Rhode Island. When the *Vital Records of New Bedford*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1932-1941) were published, gravestone inscriptions were used to supplement the few surviving birth records; thus one finds in *New Bedford Births* many people who happen to have died in that town but who were born elsewhere. Good cemetery records kept at New Bedford's Rural Cemetery office may be of help. Collections such as the Leonard Papers at the New Bedford Public Library contain much material on Rhode Island families.

Other border areas with neighboring states should not be neglected. Westerly people often appear in records of Stonington, Connecticut, and people from northern towns like Burrillville moved in and out of the nearby Worcester County, Massachusetts, mill towns.

This article has emphasized the use of available records, but something must be added about the various libraries in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence has by far the largest collection of printed books and manuscript material on Rhode Island families and towns. It is important to be aware of an unusual distinction that library makes between manuscripts and genealogical manuscripts. The Friends Records, Providence Town Records, and many other collections useful to the genealogist are found in the second floor manuscripts department, but they are catalogued only there and are not considered genealogical manuscripts. The orientation in this department is historical and may confuse any researcher who does not have a clear objective. Genealogical manuscripts, on the other hand, are classified as such in the main catalogue downstairs, and must be accessed by call slips at the main desk. These include Austin's notebook and the several books and boxes of genealogy on the descendants of Randall Holden. The open shelves contain many typed or handwritten works in bindings, while some rare printed books are stored upstairs, blurring the distinction between manuscript and other genealogical material.

The Rhode Island Historical Society has copies of the annual reports of the Genealogical Records Committee of Rhode Island Daughters of the American Revolution, with a card index. These contain Bible and cemetery records, abstracts of probates from various towns, copies of census and mortality schedules, and other miscellany. Several collections left by individual genealogists over the years include the Louise Prosser Bates papers, now available only on microfilm because of their fragility, and a Sweet card index with hundreds of references to that family. Of

interest to those with ancestry in Kent County is a copy of Arnold's *Vital Record*, Volume 1, annotated in pencil by the late Amanda Spencer Briggs, who knew personally many of the people listed.

The Rhode Island Historical Society also has microfilm of important collections like the Barbour Records for Connecticut, the Nova Scotia Archives, New Bedford Library manuscripts, probate and town records for some Rhode Island towns, and the collection of Revolutionary Pension records. The indexed Pierce Collection covers North Kingstown land records.

The Newport Historical Society has a fair collection of printed material for Rhode Island, but its strength is in its manuscripts for Newport and the rest of the Island of Aquidneck. These include the Rhode Island Friends Records, the surviving early town records of Newport, and innumerable church, cemetery and family records. Material left by Dr. Henry Turner includes information on many early Newport families; the story goes that when called to visit a home, he would ask to see the Bible before he saw the patient. The manuscripts curator, Mrs. Peter Bolhouse, has held that position since 1946; both her knowledge of the collections and interest in Newport's past are extraordinary.

The Newport Historical Society has a card index to names which covers notices in newspapers, Customs House oaths, references to the many scrapbooks of the late G.H. Richardson, and other sources. It has a growing collection of microfilm material for other parts of Rhode Island, and a good selection of early Newport newspapers. The late Gilbert H. Doane, F.A.S.G., for many years editor of the *Register*, lived most of his retirement years in Newport and was active in the Society.

The Providence Public Library has the principal printed works on Rhode Island newspapers, microfilm of the early Providence town records, and the index to the *Providence Journal* known as the Rhode Island index. Two smaller libraries in Rhode Island have better genealogical collections. The East Greenwich Public Library has the original Bennis cemetery records as well as a good selection of printed material on Rhode Island. The Westerly Library has a manuscript genealogy of the Jeffrey Champlin family, manuscript material on the Bliven and York families, and a copy of the typescript Saunders genealogy by N. B. Vars, compiled 1880-1902. Other resources here include a few notebooks kept by Ray Greene Huling, a vertical file on Rhode Island families, the collection of death and marriage notices called "Westerly Vital Statistics," and a very good collection of printed material not only for Rhode Island but for neighboring areas and places to which Rhode Islanders migrated as well.

In 1975 the Rhode Island Genealogical Society was formed. This active group is working to collect and distribute genealogical data, and to promote sound techniques through workshops held twice a year at varying locations throughout the state. In 1981 it brought out its first published

book, *Peleg Burroughs's Journal*. The society's quarterly publication, *Rhode Island Roots*, prints articles of genealogical interest and source material, many of which have been cited in this article.

Town histories, so important in other New England states, are not of much use to Rhode Island genealogy. Most of those in print are relatively superficial and do not include sections on local families. Genealogies given in the printed histories of the various counties tend to be unreliable, although they do contain items of nineteenth-century interest.

The only book of town scope in Rhode Island, *Little Compton Families* by Benjamin Franklin Wilbour (Little Compton, R.I., 1967; revised 1974), thoroughly covers the genealogies of people who lived there, though it is not a town history. R. L. Bowen's *Early Rehoboth* is an important work to Rhode Island genealogists. Parts of Rehoboth were incorporated into Rhode Island in the boundary changes, under other names, and the early history of that town and of Rhode Island can hardly be separated.<sup>36</sup> Elisha Potter's *The Early History of Narragansett*, first published in 1835, includes genealogies of some of the families of that region. Wilkins Updike's treatment of Episcopal families in his *History of the Narragansett Church* is also noteworthy. *Débuts de la Colonie Franco-Américaine de Woonsocket*, by Marie-Louise Bonier (Framingham, Mass., 1920), presents, in French, histories of some of the early families of that town. One book of distinctly limited scope is R. L. Bowen's *Rhode Island Colonial Money and its Counterfeiting, 1647-1726* (Providence, 1942), which contains good genealogical material on the families who engaged in that old-fashioned Rhode Island pastime.

There are of course many other sources for and ways of approaching genealogy in Rhode Island. It should be evident that, although working there does present some problems, no serious genealogist need feel intimidated. If Rhode Island research is approached without expectation of finding the order which prevailed in the Puritan colonies, one soon learns to appreciate and enjoy the diversity of materials available. Though tiny, this state has excellent historical societies and libraries which provide endless opportunities for exploring material gathered by other genealogists over the years. Primary resources in town offices hold a wealth of information above and beyond what has been transcribed; working with them provides practice in reading the handwriting of past centuries, a skill so important to a realistic comprehension of those times. The effort required to reach for an understanding of the colorful and varied background of the people who settled here and kept these records is a small price to pay for the reward of bringing one's ancestors into close perspective.

36. Robert S. Trim of Rehoboth has made extensive transcriptions of Rehoboth and Swansea cemeteries, some of which are at Rhode Island Historical Society; more are in progress.

Jane Fletcher Fiske resides in Boxford, Massachusetts, and is currently vice-president of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society.

#### APPENDIX A: Towns and Cities in Rhode Island

CR = Church Records      TC = Town Council  
VR = Vital Records      TM = Town Meeting  
RIHS = Rhode Island Historical Society

Vital records, deeds and probates for each of the following towns or cities will be found in the town house or city hall, unless otherwise noted. *The Rhode Island Genealogical Register (RIGR)*, published quarterly July 1978 to date, contains abstracts of early wills for most towns and deeds for some; these should be used with care. Brigham's 1903 report, already cited, defines existing records for each town, and may be supplemented by the several volumes of *Inventory of the Town and City Archives of Rhode Island* prepared by the Rhode Island Historical Records Survey Division of Community Service Projects, Work Projects Administration (Providence, 1942). The relevant volumes of Arnold's *Vital Record of Rhode Island* are listed below for each town, along with pertinent material which has been printed in other journals. Records of the Society of Friends, in Arnold, volume 7, may contain vital records not found in town records.

*Barrington*, inc. from Warren 1770. Probate and land records before 1747 are in Taunton, from 1747 to 1770 at Warren. Town clerk has TM 1718-1744 and other town records from 1718; proprietors' records, 1652-1797, and some Congregational Church records. Two volumes of TM records, 1770-1776 and 1808-1814, listed in Brigham's 1903 report, are now missing. VR Arnold vol. 6; CR vols. 8 and 10.

*Bristol*, annexed 1747 from Massachusetts; originally inc. by Plymouth Colony 1681; part annexed to Warren 1873. Records after 1746 are in the town hall, also some private records of marriages, burials, and gravestones. RIHS has militia and tax lists for Bristol, 1819-1827, and a transcript of VR 1683-1817. Deeds and probates before 1747 are in Taunton, but town clerk has abstracts of early deeds. VR Arnold vol. 6; CR vol. 8.

*Burrillville*, inc. 1806 from Gloucester; town house at Harrisville. Arnold vol. 3.

*Central Falls*, inc. 1895 as city, from Lincoln. Exception in that city clerk has records of parent towns of Lincoln and Smithfield, q.v. Records accessible but in deteriorating condition. Early records listed by Brigham in 1903 as in basement vault have disappeared.

*Charlestown*, inc. 22 Aug. 1738 from Westerly. Richmond taken off 1747. Town hall on country road; some early books have been photocopied. VR Arnold vol. 5.

*Coventry*, inc. 21 Aug. 1741 from Warwick. Town house at Anthony; VR Arnold vol. 1; CR vol. 10.

*Cranston*, inc. 14 June 1754 from Providence; part reannexed to Providence 1868 and 1873. City Clerk's office has good indexes, including TC records. Providence Deeds Registry has photocopy of Cranston deed indexes. Arnold vol. 2.

*Cumberland*, annexed 17 Feb. 1746/7 from Mass.; known before that date as Attleboro Gore. Woonsocket set off 1867. Records from 1747 are at the town house in Valley Falls. Records before 1747 at Taunton; some may be found in Suffolk Co., Mass. Arnold vol. 3.

*East Greenwich*, inc. 31 Oct. 1677; divided 1741 to form West Greenwich. Records at town house include some proprietors' records. Some records for period 1762-1823 at RIHS, including 1778 tax list. VR Arnold vol. 1; CR vols. 10, 11; see also annotated vol. 1 at RIHS.

*East Providence*, annexed 1 March 1862 from Massachusetts. Land and probate before 1862 at Taunton; TM and VR to 1812 are at Rehoboth, 1812-1876 at Seekonk. VR

1841-1862 also at Massachusetts Registry of Vital Statistics, Boston. Arnold vol. 10. Recent compilation cemetery records (unpublished) by Robert S. Trim, Rehoboth.

*Exeter*, inc. 8 March 1742/3 from North Kingstown. Some records 1740-1870 are at RIHS, including tax lists, militia, poor records, bonds, etc., described in *Rhode Island Historical Society Proceedings*, 4:35, 6:43. Cemetery records, *RIGR*; good abstracts of wills and transcription of VR and Friends Records in R.G. Huling notebooks, Westerly Library. VR Arnold vol. 5; CR vol. 10.

*Foster*, inc. 24 Aug. 1781 from Scituate. VR Arnold vol. 3.

*Glocester*, inc. 20 Feb. 1730/1 from Providence. Burrillville taken off 1806. Town house at Chepachet has 1778 tax list. Arnold vol. 3.

*Hopkinton*, inc. 19 March 1757 from Westerly. Cemetery records currently in *R.I. Roots*. VR Arnold vol. 5; CR vols. 10, 11.

*Jamestown*, inc. 4 Nov. 1678. Records at town house include some proprietors' records. Cemetery records and VR transcript at the Society; Arnold vol. 4.

*Johnston*, inc. 6 March 1759 from Providence; in 1898 most was reannexed to Providence. Deeds at town clerk's office, but early TC, TM, and probate records are at Providence City Hall. Early tax and school records in Providence City Archives. Arnold vols. 2 and 3.

*Lincoln*, inc. 8 March 1871 from Smithfield; Central Falls set off 1895. Records before 1895 are at Central Falls. Town clerk has copy of deeds from 1871-1898.

*Little Compton*, annexed 27 Jan. 1746/7 from Massachusetts; originally inc. by Plymouth Colony in 1682. Settled by Plymouth people; some Congregational Church records in office of town clerk. Records at town hall have good indexes, but some additions were made by early town clerk, so they should be used with care; copy of Proprietors' Records 1673-1755. VR Arnold vol. 4; CR vol. 8. See Benjamin F. Wilbour, *Little Compton Families*; "Cemetery Inscriptions in Little Compton," *Register*, 15 (1961): 169-180, 257-268; 116 (1962): 45-56, 121-126, 213-220.

*Middletown*, inc. 16 June 1743 as the "Middle Town" on Aquidneck, from Newport. Records at town hall include Newport Proprietors' records 1701-1756. Abstracts of first 4 vols. of wills, by Mrs. Oliver W. Cushman, "Abstracts of Wills: Probate Records of the Town of Middletown, R.I.," *Register*, 122 (1968): 100-107, 211-215, 295-301. Arnold vol. 4.

*Narragansett*, inc. 22 March 1888 from South Kingstown as a district, 1901 as town.

*New Shoreham*, purchased and occupied April 1661; admitted to the colony as Block Island 4 May 1664; name changed and inc. 6 Nov. 1672. Part of Newport County until Sept. 1963 when joined to Washington County. Records at town offices on the island. RIHS has transcript of first two TC books. Arnold vol. 4. "Block Island Cemetery Records," *Rhode Island History*, 12 (1953): 90-97, 122-128; 13 (1954): 25-33, 56-65, 88-97, 125-129; 14 (1955): 25-33, 59-65, 94-97. G. Andrews Moriarty, "Notes on Block Island Families," see Appendix B.

*Newport*, settled 1639, boundary with Portsmouth est. 14 Sept. 1640; Middletown set off 1743; records after 1783 are at City Hall, well indexed, including VR. Pre-Revolutionary records which survived the salt water in 1779 are in the care of the Newport Historical Society. Abstracts of early town records (probates) by Edith M. Tilley in *The Grafton Magazine*, 2 (1909-1910): 216-223. Birth and mortality list 1760-1764, *Register*, 62 (1908): 283-291, 63 (1909): 51-58; "Sons and Daughters of Newport," *Register*, 125 (1971): 171-183, 236-245; 126 (1972): 20-25. VR Arnold vol. 4; CR vols. 7, 8, 10, 11, 12.

*North Kingstown*, inc. 28 Oct. 1674 as Kings Towne; name changed to Rochester in 1686 but renamed Kings Towne 1689; divided into North and South Kingstown in Feb. 1722/3; Exeter set off 1743. Town house at Wickford; a fire in 1870 damaged all the town books, which have been repaired using Emery process. Some tax lists, militia records, etc. 1784-1823 at RIHS; South Kingstown has copies of record books before the 1722/3 separation. 1687 tax list *Register*, 35 (1881): 124-127. VR Arnold vol. 5; CR vols. 7, 8, 10, 11.

*North Providence*, inc. 13 June 1765 from Providence; small portion returned to Providence 29 June 1767 and more 28 March 1873; divided 27 March 1874, when part annexed to Providence and part to Pawtucket. Records for 1765-1874 are at Pawtucket City Hall. Arnold vol. 2.

*North Smithfield*, inc. 8 March 1871 from Smithfield. Town clerk's office is in Slatersville.

*Pawtucket*, inc. as city 27 March 1885; comprises (1) Massachusetts town of Pawtucket, separated from Seekonk 1828, ceded to Rhode Island 1862, inc. as RI town 1 March 1862, and (2) village of Pawtucket in North Providence, which was annexed to town of Pawtucket 1 May 1874. Vital records at City Hall are well indexed and include North Providence. VR 1841-1862 also at Massachusetts Registry of Vital Statistics in Boston. Deeds and probate records before 1862 at Taunton, Mass. VR Arnold vols. 9, 10, 11; CR vols. 9, 10.

*Portsmouth*, settled 1638. Good indexes. Portsmouth Scrapbook contains records found in basement in 1903, including original wills, inventories, census of 1730 and miscellaneous papers. Town records 1638-1639 in Bartlett 1:45-69. First book of records 1639-1697 printed 1901 as *Early Records of the Town of Portsmouth*, indexed. See also Bartlett 1:70-85, made from transcript in town clerk's office, for records 1639-1647. "Diary of Elisha Fish 1785-1804," *Register*, 56 (1902): 121-132; VR Arnold vol. 4.

*Providence*, original town, settled 1636, inc. as city 5 Nov. 1831; originally comprised whole of present Providence County; Gloucester, Scituate and Smithfield set off 1731, Cranston 1754, Johnston 1759, North Providence 1765; inc. as city 5 Nov. 1831. Portions of North Providence annexed 1767, 1873, and 1874, portions of Cranston in 1868, 1873 and 1892, and part of Johnston 1898. Early records in print in 21 volumes as *Early Records of the Town of Providence*. Wills and probate records are in the Probate Registry in City Hall, which also has Johnston probates. Land evidence is in the Deed Registry in the same building; indexes are in main room, but older deed books are in a back room, not in good order and with no working space available. VR are at Registry of Vital Statistics on the main floor of City Hall, but are not open to genealogists, a situation which may be circumvented by using the printed indexes to the Providence records, available at the City Archives and other libraries, and the records at the Records Center. Providence has recently established a City Archives in the City Hall with facilities for research; earlier records here include tax lists from 1778, Poor Records, and state censuses (for the city only). Copies of relevant books and printed material available; staff will assist researchers who have problems with other departments. VR Arnold 2; CR vol. 10.

*Richmond*, inc. 18 Aug. 1747 from Charlestown. Two books were lost in 1812 (see *RIHSP* 1:161), but many deeds were re-recorded afterwards. Early books photocopied. Town clerk has some local genealogical records, old Bibles, etc. Some records at RIHS, including tax lists 1798, 1823, militia list 1810. VR Arnold vol. 5; CR vols. 10, 11.

*Scituate*, inc. 20 Feb. 1730/1 from Providence; Foster set off 1781. Town house at North Scituate. Cyrus Walker, "The History of Scituate, R.I. from the Acquisition of the Territory in 1659, to the Close of the Nineteenth Century" (manuscript, microfilm RIHS); Charles W. Farnham, "Scituate, R.I. Removals 1784-1811 and Where They Went," *The American Genealogist*, 44 (1968): 40, 41. "Scituate, R.I. Census, 1779" (actually a tax list), *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, 14 (1925): 30-31. Arnold vol. 3.

*Smithfield*, inc. 20 Feb. 1730/1 from Providence; divided 1871 into Smithfield, North Smithfield and Lincoln, with small part annexed to Woonsocket. Records to 1871 are in Central Falls City Clerk's office, but the earliest TC records, described by Brigham in 1903 as unbound in a basement vault, have disappeared; RIHS has early abstract of some of these. An index kept in the office has recently vanished, but there are in Drawer E three small books of abstracts of early records which provide some indexing (included RI DAR 1938-1939). Later records are at the town hall in Greenville. VR Arnold vol. 3; CR vols. 7, 10.

*South Kingstown*, settled Jan. 1657/8; inc. 22 Feb. 1723 in division of Kings Towne. Records at town house in Wakefield include transcript of North Kingstown records before the separation; good collection of early tax lists. Copies of Arnold and Beaman available. VR Arnold vol. 5; CR vol. 7, 8, 10, 11.

*Tiverton*, annexed 17 Jan. 1746/7 from Massachusetts; originally inc. 1694 by Massachusetts; as annexed to R.I. it included small parts of Dartmouth and Freetown. Northern part inc. as Fall River, R.I. 1856, transferred to Massachusetts 1 March 1862. Deeds and probate records before 1747 in Taunton, Mass. "Cemetery Inscriptions in Tiverton, R.I.," *Register*, 117 (1963): 18-27, 133-139, 208-221, 283-295; 118 (1964): 64-67, 147-153. "Inscriptions from the Pleasant View Cemetery, Tiverton, R.I.," *Register*, 118 (1964): 308-311. "Deaths from the Records of Constant Hart, of Tiverton, R.I.," *Register*, 105 (1951): 213-217. VR Arnold vol. 4; CR vol. 8.

Warren, inc. 27 Jan. 1746/7 when annexed from Massachusetts; Barrington set off 1770. Deeds and probates before 1747 at Taunton. Original VR before 1850 now missing. VR Arnold vol. 6; CR vol. 8. "Inscriptions in Kickemuit Cemetery, Warren, R.I.," *Register*, 120 (1916): 24-33.

Warwick, est. 1642 as Shawomet, renamed Warwick 1644; Coventry set off 1741. Most records are at City Hall, Apponaug, but a couple of TC books are at RIHS, which also has a recently discovered 1798 property tax list describing each dwelling in town, listing both owner and occupant. Arnold vol. 1.

West Greenwich, inc. 1741 from East Greenwich. Records at new town hall on Route 102. VR Arnold vol. 1; CR vol. 10.

Westerly, inc. 14 May 1669; named Haversham during Andros period. Charlestown set off 1738; Richmond 1746; Hopkinton 1757. Records at town hall at Westerly; see Robert C. Anderson's detailed guide to record books, *Rhode Island Roots*, 7 (1981): 25-27. Cemetery records included in Rev. Frederick Denison, *Westerly and Its Witnesses* (Providence, 1878). VR Arnold vol. 5; CR vol. 11.

Woonsocket, inc. 31 Jan. 1867 from Cumberland; inc. as city 13 June 1888. Records at city hall include transcript of Smithfield and Cumberland deeds 1847-1867. CR, Quintin Publ. Co., Pawtucket, at RIHS. M. L. Bonier, *Débuts de la Colonie Franco-Américaine de Woonsocket* (Framingham, Mass. 1920).

#### APPENDIX B:

##### A Bibliography for 100 Colonial Rhode Island Families Compiled by Gary Boyd Roberts

Listed below are the major printed sources for 100 colonial Rhode Island families—most of those for whom a major monograph, often a journal article, identifies an immigrant's English origin and immediate ancestry, and for whom in addition one or more book-length genealogies cover American progeny. The list is alphabetical by surname. Immigrants sharing the same family name are grouped together, whether related or not, listed towns are each immigrant's principal residence, and asterisks indicate known origins, in a few cases non-English. Many immigrants of unknown origin with sizable and at least fairly well covered Rhode Island progeny are included as well, as are a few immigrants to Massachusetts whose sons migrated to Rhode Island. Deliberately excluded, however, are those families with Rhode Island connections the bulk of whose descendants, at least until the mid-eighteenth century, are associated with Bristol County, Massachusetts—especially Taunton, Rehoboth, Dartmouth and New Bedford; Stonington, Connecticut; or Monmouth County, New Jersey. For various Rhode Island-connected Rehoboth and Monmouth County families see Richard LeBaron Bowen, *Early Rehoboth, Documented Historical Studies of Families and Events in this Plymouth Colony Township*, 4 vols. (Rehoboth, 1945-1950), and John Edwin Stillwell, *Historical and Genealogical Miscellany: Data Relating to the Settlement and Settlers of New York and New Jersey*, 5 vols. (New York, 1903-1932; reprint ed., Baltimore, 1970).

For any seventeenth-century Rhode Island family, researchers should first check Clarence Almon Torrey, *New England Marriages Prior to*

1700, microfilm (Boston, 1979) (see the *Register*, 135 [1981]: 57-61), Meredith B. Colket, Jr., *Founders of Early American Families: Emigrants from Europe, 1607-1657* (Cleveland, 1975), and the already cited *Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island* (especially the additions and corrections by G.A. Moriarty and R.S. Wakefield), *160 Allied Families*, and bibliographies of journal articles by R. LeB. Bowen, R.S. Wakefield, and H.L.P. Beckwith. G.A. Moriarty, the greatest Rhode Island genealogist after J.O. Austin, was the author not only of the major series to date of additions to the *Genealogical Dictionary*, and of many of the immigrant origin *Register* articles cited below. He also contributed a series of "Barbadian Notes," with outlines of many Rhode Island connections, to the *Register*, 67 (1913): 360-371 and 68 (1914): 177-181, a "Genealogical Section" and a set of "Portsmouth, Rhode Island Genealogical Gleanings," to *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections*, 11 (1918): 26-28, 62-63, 68, and 21 (1928): 126-132, and a survey of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Block Island families to the *Register*, 105 (1951): 162-182, 249-272. This last includes extensive notes on the Ray, Rathbone, Dodge, Sands, Guthrie, Niles, Mott, Williams, Mitchell, Dickens, Rodman, Kenyon, and Card families of the seventeenth century, and the Champlin, Franklin, Gardiner, Hull, Littlefield, Sheffield, and Westcott families of the eighteenth. Earlier Mr. Moriarty had compiled genealogies of five Block Island families in his own ancestry, also published in the *Register*—those of Thomas Mitchell (82 [1928]: 456-464); John Payne and Richard Card (83 [1929]: 84-93); Ichabod<sup>5</sup> Clarke (85 [1931]: 417-423); and Caleb<sup>3</sup> Littlefield (86 [1932]: 71-77). In addition, moreover, to the Rehoboth volumes and bibliography of pre-1950 articles, R. LeB. Bowen also compiled *The Providence Oath of Allegiance and Its Signers, 1651-2* (Providence, 1943), which contains full biographical and genealogical accounts of its subjects.

The only Rhode Island town all of whose residents through 1850 or so are treated in a single work is Little Compton, many of whose early settlers belonged to families largely associated with Massachusetts. Benjamin Franklin Wilbour's *Little Compton Families* (Little Compton, R.I., 1967; rev. ed., 1974), contains four or more pages on residents with the following surnames: Almy, Bailey, Briggs, (Nicholas) Brown, Brownell, Burgess, Case, Chase, Church, Clapp, Coe, (Thomas) Cook, Davenport, Davol, Dyer, Gifford, Gray, Grinnell, Hart, Head, Hilliard, Howland, Hunt, Irish, Little, Manchester, Pabodie, Palmer, Pearce, Peckham, Richmond, Seabury, Shaw, Simmons, Sisson, Snell, Soule, Southworth, Stoddard, Tabor, Taylor, Tompkins, White, Wilbor, Wilcox, Wood, and Woodman. Among Rhode Islanders of royal descent, Jeremiah Clarke, Mrs. Anne (Marbury) Hutchinson, Mrs. Catherine (Marbury) Scott, and John Throckmorton, all listed below, are also treated in Frederick Lewis Weis and Walter Lee Sheppard, Jr., *Ancestral Roots of 60 Colonists Who Came to New England Between*

1623 and 1650, 5th ed. (Baltimore, 1976), lines 11, 14 (for the Marbury sisters) and 208 respectively; and Clarke, John Cranston, the Marbury sisters and Throckmorton are treated also in Weis, Arthur Adams, and Sheppard, *The Magna Charta Sureties, 1215*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore, 1979), lines 100, 41, 34 (for the Marbury sisters) and 117 respectively. The only other Rhode Island immigrants of proved royal descent are the three Dungans—Thomas Dungan of Newport, later of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and his sisters, Mrs. Barbara (Dungan) Barker and Mrs. Frances (Dungan) Holden, both listed below.

The following bibliography is an attempt to consolidate many of the sources listed by Torrey, Colket, Bowen, Wakefield and Beckwith, to include as well the best journal articles and Rhode Island genealogies of the past ten years, and to designate major typescripts at the Society (all those whose location is not designated), the Rhode Island Historical Society (henceforth RIHS), and, to some extent, the Library of Congress. Manuscripts, more difficult to locate, examine, and evaluate, have been purposely excluded; those acquired before 1913 by the Rhode Island Historical Society, however, are listed in the *Register*, 67 (1913): 299-301. For the smallest New England state the materials cited below and the more general items listed above cover together a sizable portion of its entire colonial population.

1. GEORGE ALDRICH, Mendon, Mass. (father of Joseph Aldrich of Providence)—Alvin James Aldrich, *The George Aldrich Genealogy*, 2 vols. Decorah, Iowa, 1971.
- \*2. WILLIAM ALMY, Portsmouth—*Register*, 71 (1917): 310-324; 78 (1924): 391-395; Charles Kingsbury Miller, *Historic Families of America: William Almy of Portsmouth, 1630, Joris Janssen De Rapalje of Fort Orange (Albany), New Amsterdam, and Brooklyn, 1623*. Chicago, 1897; Elva Lawton, "The Descendants of William Almy of Portsmouth, Rhode Island." Seattle, Wash., 1977 (typescript at RIHS); *Almy Family Newsletter*, 1975-
3. THOMAS ANGELL, Providence—Avery F. Angell, *Genealogy of the Descendants of Thomas Angell Who Settled in Providence, 1636*. Providence, 1872.
4. JOHN ANTHONY, Portsmouth—Charles L. Anthony, *Genealogy of the Anthony Family from 1495 to 1904*. Sterling, Ill., 1904.
- \*5. THOMAS and WILLIAM ARNOLD, Providence—*Register*, 69 (1915): 64-69; *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections*, 14 (1921): 33-49, 68-86; *Rhode Island History*, 13 (1954): 111-123 (progeny of Thomas); Elisha Stephen Arnold, *The Arnold Memorial: William Arnold of Providence and Pawtucket, 1587-1675, and a Genealogy of His Descendants*. Rutland, Vt., 1935.
6. ROBERT AUSTIN, Kingstown—Edith (Austin) Moore, *A Genealogy of the Descendants of Robert Austin of Kingstown, Rhode Island*. St. Petersburg, Fla., 1951.
7. JAMES BABCOCK, Westerly—Stephen Babcock, *Babcock Genealogy*, New York, 1903; Cyrus H. Brown, *Genealogical Record of Nathaniel Babcock, Simeon Main, Isaac Miner, Ezekiel Main*. Boston, 1909.
8. WILLIAM BAILEY, Newport—Hannah Clarke (Bailey) Hopkins, *Records of the Bailey Family: Descendants of William Bailey of Newport, R.I., Chiefly in the Line of His Son, Hugh Bailey of East Greenwich, R.I.* Providence, 1895.
9. MATURIN BALLOU, Providence—Adin Ballou, *An Elaborate History and Genealogy of the Ballous in America*. Providence, 1888; Myrtle M. Jillson, *An Addendum to the Original History and Genealogy of the Ballous in America*. Woonsocket, R.I., 1942.

- \*10. JAMES BARKER, Newport, and Mrs. BARBARA (DUNGAN) BARKER, his wife—*New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 41 (1910): 59; Alfred Rudolph Justice, *Ancestry of Jeremy Clarke of Rhode Island and Dungan Genealogy*. Philadelphia, 1922; *Forebears*, 15 (1972): 103-106, and *The Colonial Genealogist*, 8 (1977): 200-212 (royal descent of Barbara Dungan); Elizabeth Frye Barker, *Barker Genealogy*. New York, 1927.
- \*11. RICHARD BORDEN, Portsmouth—*Register*, 75 (1921): 226-233; 84 (1930): 70-84, 225-229; Hattie (Borden) Weld, *Historical and Genealogical Record of the Descendants As Far As Known of Richard and Joan Borden Who Settled In Portsmouth, Rhode Island, May, 1638, With Historical and Biographical Sketches of Some of Their Descendants*. Los Angeles?, 1899?
12. FRANCIS BRAYTON, Portsmouth—Clifford Brayton, *Brayton Family History*. vol. 1, Albion, N.Y., 1978.
13. JOHN BRIGGS, Portsmouth—Bertha B. B. Aldridge, *The Briggs Genealogy, Including the Ancestors and Descendants of Ichabod White Briggs, 1609-1953*. Victor, N.Y., 1953; Lilla (Briggs) Sampson, "John Briggs of Newport and Portsmouth, Rhode Island." 3 vols. n.p., 1930? (typescript at the Library of Congress).
14. REV. CHAD BROWNE, Providence—*Register*, 80 (1926): 73-86, 170-185; 105 (1951): 234; 128 (1974): 152-153, 306-308; Abby Isabel (Brown) Bulkley, *The Chad Browne Memorial*. Brooklyn, N.Y., 1888; James B. Hedges, *The Browns of Providence Plantations: Colonial Years*. Cambridge, Mass., 1952, and *The Browns of Providence Plantations: The Nineteenth Century*. Providence, 1968.
- \*15. THOMAS BROWNELL, Portsmouth—*The American Genealogist*, 36 (1960): 126-127; George Grant Brownell, *Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Thomas Brownell*. Jamestown, N.Y., 1910.
16. NATHANIEL BROWNING, Portsmouth—Edward Franklin Browning, *Genealogy of the Brownings in America From 1621 to 1908*. Newburgh, N.Y., 1908?
17. ROBERT BURDICK, Westerly—Nellie (Willard) Johnson, *The Descendants of Robert Burdick of Rhode Island*. Syracuse, N.Y., 1937, and "Supplement to The Descendants of Robert Burdick of Rhode Island." Norwich, N.Y., 1952-1953 (typescript).
- \*18. ROGER BURLINGAME, Warwick—Nelson Burlingame, "Burlingham-Burlingame Family." 8 vols. n.p., 1971 (typescript at RIHS).
19. RICHARD CARD, Jamestown—*Rhode Island Genealogical Register*, 3 (1980-1981): 193-202, 303-313; 4 (1981-1982): 18-29, 112-122, 273-282, 347-354 (ongoing); Thomas A. Card, *The Descendants of Richard<sup>a</sup> Card in Kings County now Hants County, Nova Scotia, Canada*. Riverside, Calif., 1973; Maxine (Phelps) Lines, "Descendants of Job Card of Charlestown and South Kingstown, R.I." Mesa, Ariz., 1976 (typescript).
20. RICHARD CARDER, Warwick—Robert Webster Carder, "Richard Carder of Warwick, Rhode Island, and Some of His Descendants." Stamford, Conn., 1965 (typescript).
21. CALEB and ROBERT CARR, Newport—*Register*, 102 (1948): 203-218; Edson I. Carr, *The Carr Family Records*. Rockton, Ill., 1894; Arthur A. Carr, *The Carr Book: Sketches of the Lives of Many of the Descendants of Robert and Caleb Carr*. Ticonderoga, N.Y., 1947.
22. JEFFREY CHAMPLIN, Westerly—*The American Genealogist*, 20 (1943-1944): 106-109; *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 46 (1915): 324-330; David W. Dumas, "Samuel Champlin of Exeter, Rhode Island, and His Descendants." Providence, 1973 (typescript).
- \*23. JEREMIAH CLARKE, Newport, and JOSEPH CLARKE, Westerly (not related)—*Register*, 74 (1920): 68-76, 130-140 (Jeremiah); 75 (1921): 273-301; 91 (1937): 249-252; 92 (1938): 61-65 (Joseph); Alfred Rudolph Justice, *Ancestry of Jeremy Clarke of Rhode Island and Dungan Genealogy*. Philadelphia, 1922; George Austin Morrison, Jr., *Clarke Genealogies: The "Clarke" Families of Rhode Island*. New York, 1902.

- \*24. JOHN COGGESHALL, Newport—*Register*, 73 (1919): 19-32; 76 (1922): 278-295; 79 (1925): 84; 86 (1932): 257; 99 (1945): 315-322; 100 (1946): 14-24; 103 (1949): 182-183; Charles P. and Thellwell R. Coggeshall, *The Coggeshalls in America*. Boston, 1930.
25. JOHN COOKE, Warwick, and \*THOMAS COOKE, Portsmouth (not related)—*The American Genealogist*, 52 (1976): 1-10 (John); 56 (1980): 93-94 (Thomas); *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections*, 26 (1933): 59-61 (Thomas), and forthcoming Thomas Cooke genealogy by Jane (Fletcher) Fiske.
- \*26. THOMAS CORNELL, Portsmouth—John Ross Delafield, *Delafield, The Family History*, vol. 2. New York, 1945, 647-650; *The American Genealogist*, 35 (1959): 107; 36 (1960): 16-18; 51 (1975): 115-116; 54 (1978): 25-30; John Cornell, *Genealogy of the Cornell Family, Being An Account of the Descendants of Thomas Cornell of Portsmouth, R.I. New York, 1902*; Prentiss Glazier, "Thomas Cornell (or Cornwell) (1594-1655/6) of Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island, His English Origin and His Family in America." Sarasota, Fla., 1975, (typescript).
27. JOHN CRANDALL, Newport—John Cortland Crandall, *Elder John Crandall of Rhode Island and His Descendants*. New Woodstock, N.Y., 1949.
- \*28. DR. JOHN CRANSTON, Newport—*Register*, 79 (1925): 57-66, 247-268, 344-358; 80 (1926): 30-54, 138-169, 232-265, 336-337, 447-449; 87 (1933): 74-80; 90 (1936): 296-297.
29. ROBERT DENNIS, Portsmouth—*Register*, 49 (1895): 441-444; Elaine (Dennis) Young, *Some Descendants of Robert Dennis of Portsmouth, Rhode Island*. Norwalk, Ohio, 1957.
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