

LIBERTY, and no TORIES.

The Honorable
William Greene, Esq; Gov.

The Honorable
Darius Sessions, Esq; Deputy-Gov.

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RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

PUBLISHED BY THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FIFTY-TWO POWER STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02906

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ISSUED QUARTERLY AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND
(Second-class postage paid at Providence, Rhode Island)

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FRONT COVER

Prox of the Rhode Island Election of 1775

In colonial Rhode Island the ballots cast by the freemen in the annual elections were called "proxies." They were printed and distributed to the electors by the various political factions.

This ticket headed by William Greene was unsuccessful, and Governor Joseph Wanton was re-elected. However, because of his Tory leanings he was not allowed to serve.

RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

VOL. 26

OCTOBER, 1967

NO. 4

LEXINGTON AND CONCORD: RHODE ISLAND REACTS

by JOEL A. COHEN

Assistant Professor of History, University of Rhode Island

ON APRIL 18, 1775, General Thomas Gage, the governor in Massachusetts and commander of all British forces in North America, ordered Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith secretly to move his troops to Concord and destroy the cache of arms and ammunition held there by the colonials. Smith proceeded to carry out the order but his mission was not kept secret for long. The intelligence service of the Americans was quick to discern the objective of the embarking troops and the news was sent on ahead. The British were met at Lexington on the morning of the nineteenth by a small band of colonial militia. At first it appeared as though there would be no trouble but an unknown shot rang out and the fighting began. The King's troops were delayed no more than fifteen minutes in their march to Concord, but they left behind them eight dead and ten wounded Americans on the Lexington green—the rebellion had become a revolutionary war.¹

The news of Lexington and the subsequent hostilities at Concord and along the line of march back to Boston spread swiftly throughout the rest of the colonies. In Rhode Island, where the people had been casting their ballots in the annual election, the events of the nineteenth were known that evening and many individuals made preparations to proceed to the Bay colony.² The General Assembly also reacted quickly and met in an emergency session. At this meeting the colony's

¹John Richard Alden, *The American Revolution, 1775-1783*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1954, pp. 20-24; Howard H. Peckham, *The War for Independence: A Military History*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, paperback edition, 1958, pp. 7-12.

²Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., I.* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901, p. 536, hereafter cited as *Stiles, Diary*.

munition stores were ordered divided among the towns; a day for prayer, fasting and humiliation was set for May 11; and William Bradford and Nathanael Greene were ordered to attend the Connecticut General Assembly and to agree with its members on some method for defending the New England colonies.³

On the surface it seemed that Rhode Island was reacting with unanimity but this was not the case. The House of Deputies, on April 23, stated that it was in agreement with the proposal made to it by two members of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. That proposition was that Rhode Island join in co-operation with the other New England colonies for the common defense and help to raise an armed force of eighteen thousand men. The upper house, however, did not agree and said "that the above Vote is of such a Nature & Tendency that they cannot now take it into Consideration," but upon reflection they receded from that statement and referred the matter to the session which was to be held the next week.⁴

Even in the lower house there had not been unanimity on the issue of raising the eighteen thousand men. The representatives from Newport declared their allegiance to the King and dissented from the act. They were especially concerned that such legislation would result in "Dangerous Consequences" for the colony as a whole and Newport in particular.⁵ Two of these men, Thomas Cranston and John Bours, were so upset with the course of action being pursued that they left the Assembly and returned home.⁶ Considering that British warships under Captain James Wallace were patrolling the waters of Narragansett Bay, one can sympathize with the Newporters' anxiety.

The issue of raising an armed force did not wait until the next week as the assistants had requested; in fact, it was decided the day after the referral. On April 25, 1775, the deputies agreed unanimously to raise and equip "an army of observation" consisting of fifteen hundred men which would "repel any insult or violence that may be offered

³John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, VII. Providence, A. Crawford Greene, 1862, pp. 307-312, hereafter cited as Bartlett.

⁴Acts and Resolves of the Rhode Island General Assembly (Ms), XII, 64, R. I. Archives, hereafter cited as Acts and Resolves (Ms).

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁶Stiles, *Diary*, I, p. 539.

to the inhabitants." Also, if it became necessary to preserve the safety of any of the other colonies, this force could be deployed outside the colony.⁷

The upper house concurred the same day but its action was by no means unanimous. Governor Joseph Wanton, Deputy Governor Darius Sessions and two assistants, Thomas Wickes and William Potter, entered their protest to the resolve. They professed their allegiance to the King and maintained that such an act would "be attended with the most fatal consequences to our charter privileges; involve the country in all the horrors of a civil war"; and would be in violation of their oaths of office.⁸ Once again the fear of losing the colony's charter privileges was asserted but this time from the point of view of remaining amenable to British activity — a most unlikely role for Rhode Islanders to pursue.

Before long it was apparent that even the dissenters were not united. William Potter presented a memorial to the June Assembly in which he made a variety of excuses for signing the protest among which were his fears for the town of Newport and the consequences such an act would have on it. Finally, he declared his intention to work for liberty until the cause was won. With these remarks William Potter was restored to the Assembly's favor.⁹ A few months later, the former Deputy Governor Darius Sessions also presented a petition to the Assembly in which he asked forgiveness for signing the April protest. He declared himself devoted to the liberties of America and that he was determined to "co-operate with his countrymen in defending all our invaluable rights and privileges." Sessions too was welcomed back to the fold,¹⁰ but the case of Governor Joseph Wanton was another matter entirely.

Joseph Wanton, the Newport merchant, had been governor of Rhode Island since 1769 and during that period had suffered little opposition; but the election of 1775 was to be different. The year before the governor's son, Joseph Wanton, Jr., had lost his seat in the Assembly because he was accused of being a Tory, and it looked as though the same tack would be used in 1775 to unseat his father. In

⁷Bartlett, VII, pp. 310-311; Acts and Resolves (Ms), XII, p. 70.

⁸Bartlett, VII, p. 311; Journal of the Senate, 1771-1777, April 25, 1775, R. I. Archives.

⁹Bartlett, VII, pp. 347-349.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 398-399.

early April an article in *The Newport Mercury* warned Rhode Islanders about voting for those with Tory principles because if they controlled the government "the next may be the last free election we shall ever enjoy."¹¹ Governor Wanton was not mentioned specifically, but the inference was unmistakable, especially when a later broadside maintained that "a Number of Persons in *Newport* were well satisfied that he [the governor] was a Tory."¹² An opposition was formed and William Greene, from Warwick, headed the proxy which had as its motto "Liberty, and No Tories." Interestingly enough this ballot also listed Darius Sessions for deputy governor,¹³ probably without his permission because Sessions was then Wanton's deputy governor.

Wanton was quick to retort. He maintained that the stories being spread about him were without foundation and the idea that he held "Principles unfriendly to our Charter Rights, are as false as they are injurious."¹⁴ Darius Sessions also sprang to the governor's defense and stated that the malicious reports which were circulating had no basis whatsoever.¹⁵ The people decided and Wanton was re-elected, but because of the course of events which followed he did not serve his term of office.

Rhode Island's reaction to Lexington and Concord and the responses of various individuals to the raising of troops has already been noted. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Governor-elect Wanton pleading illness as an excuse to stay away from the May General Assembly which was to have sworn him into office. He was not the only one to remain away from the meeting. Most of the Newport delegation stayed home as did the representatives from Middletown and Jamestown. Ezra Stiles was undoubtedly correct when he reported that the fear of Captain Wallace and his men was the main cause for this lack of attendance.¹⁶

¹¹*The Newport Mercury*, April 3, 1775, p. 2.

¹²William Ellery, "To the Freemen of the Colony of Rhode-Island," Providence, April 17, 1775, Broadside File, The Rhode Island Historical Society.

¹³John Eliot Alden, ed., *Rhode Island Imprints, 1727-1800*. New York, R. R. Bowker Company, 1949, No. 614.

¹⁴J. Wanton, "To the Freemen of the Colony of Rhode-Island," Newport, April 12, 1775, Broadside File, The Rhode Island Historical Society.

¹⁵Darius Sessions, "To the Freemen of the Colony of Rhode-Island," Providence, April 15, 1775, *Ibid.*

¹⁶Bartlett, VII, pp. 313-314; Stiles, *Diary*, I, p. 544.

At the meeting itself the elected candidate, Darius Sessions, declined to serve as deputy governor, and Nicholas Cooke, from Providence, was chosen in his stead. Also, four assistants refused their offices and were replaced as was one who had died. The complexion of the upper house was quite different from the year before; only two of the ten assistants remained and there was a new deputy governor.¹⁷ War was certainly causing some alterations.

The case of the governor's nonattendance, however, proved to be the greatest problem facing the legislators. Even though the governor had no veto power, by remaining away from the Assembly he could effectively block the raising of the "army of observation" by not signing the officers' commissions. Wanton wrote to the legislature and said that his illness kept him from attending and that he hoped the difficulties with England could be resolved. Furthermore he protested that the raising of the fifteen-hundred-man army would be certain to bankrupt the colony and warned the colony not to do anything which would cause its charter privileges to be forfeited. Finally, he announced his intention of joining with the Assembly in its proceedings provided they were consistent with his duties and obligations "to the King and the British constitution."¹⁸

In a series of letters which followed, the Speaker of the lower house, Metcalf Bowler, asked Wanton whether or not he would accept the post of governor and if he would sign the commissions for the officers in the "army of observation." Wanton replied that he could not sign them, and thus the Assembly was left with no alternative—the governor had to be by-passed.¹⁹ The legislature declared that because of Wanton's actions no one was "to administer the oath of office" to him unless before the Assembly and with its consent. Also, anything which he performed acting as governor was to be "null and void in itself." Deputy Governor Cooke was empowered to call the General Assembly into session and the colony's secretary, Henry Ward, was directed to sign all military and civil commissions.²⁰ Joseph Wanton

¹⁷Rhode Island Colony Records (Ms), IX, pp. 97, 193, 198, R. I. Archives.

¹⁸Joseph Wanton to the General Assembly, Newport, May 2, 1775; Bartlett, VII, pp. 332-333.

¹⁹For this exchange see *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 324-326; The act for keeping the governor from taking the oath of office passed unanimously in the lower house. See Acts and Resolves (Ms), XII, p. 84.

was the elected governor, but until he saw eye to eye with the General Assembly he was to have no power whatsoever.

At the first June meeting of the legislature Wanton appeared to take his oath of office and in so doing defended his actions and his right to protest the raising of armed forces against the King. However, the legislators were convinced "that the said Joseph Wanton hath not given satisfaction to this Assembly"; and they voted, without opposition in the lower house, to keep him from taking the required oath.²¹ Through the second June and August sessions Wanton was prevented from taking the oath of office.²² Finally, in November, the governor's post was declared vacant mainly because Joseph Wanton was "inimical to the rights and liberties of America, and is thereby rendered totally unfit to sustain the said office."²³ Nicholas Cooke was engaged as the new governor while William Bradford, from Bristol, became the deputy governor.²⁴ The colony now had its full complement of officials and could now effectively continue with its role in the Revolution.

²¹Bartlett, VII, pp. 336n-337n; Acts and Resolves (Ms), XII, p. 93.

²²Bartlett, VII, pp. 355, 372; Neither of these votes, however, was unanimous. See Acts and Resolves (Ms), XII, pp. 117, 128.

²³Bartlett, VII, pp. 392-393; This vote was not unanimous although it was passed easily. See Acts and Resolves (Ms), XII, p. 158.

²⁴Bartlett, VII, p. 404; For an interesting sidelight into Cooke's reluctance to accept the post because of his advanced age see Edwin M. Stone's *The Life and Recollections of John Howland*. Providence, George H. Whitney, 1857, p. 41.

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"THE PUBLICK UNIVERSAL FRIEND"

by J. BRUCE WHYTE

Communications Specialist, Leeson Corporation

DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, America experienced an era of Reformation. Numerous new sects emerged, each protesting the doctrines of the church from which it evolved. Some of these new orders held tenets which varied little from those of other Christian faiths, while others held absurd fancies. The latter group not only bore testimony against established churches but against themselves.

Religion played a very important role in the life of the American colonists. Some of these people were not too well educated and were easily swayed by the enthusiast who offered the easiest way to Heaven. Some of the religious leaders acquired large followings by frightening the credulous villagers and country folk into accepting their ideas which on the whole were ridiculous. One enthusiast preached that no man should either buy or sell goods, for the use of money, he claimed, was sacrilegious. Another declared that everyone should revert to farming; but the use of manures for fertilization was forbidden, for these polluted the food. Societies were even formed for the protection of groundworms and mosquitoes but, as foolish as many of these movements were, many worth-while institutions resulted from them. A strong feeling of individualism was created. This feeling is perfectly exemplified by the bold citizen who learned that he was about to be excommunicated from his church. Before any action could be taken against him, the man openly and quite formally excommunicated his church. There also arose within the colonies the feeling of natural law which became such an influence upon the catalysts of the Revolution, yet perhaps the most important result of these religious movements was the exploration and settlement of the western frontier country.

Among the multitude of so-called "spiritualists" and "prophets" who preached, prophesied and lured citizens to various societies, was a provocative but most remarkable woman whose fame grew to legendary proportions, whose name was known from the coastal colonies to the upper regions of New York State, and whose influence reached not only the gullible and poor but the practical minded and wealthy as well. She was Jemima Wilkinson, the farm girl who

became the "Public Universal Friend" and founder of the United Friends.

Jemima was born on the 29th of November, 1752, the eighth child of Amy and Jerimiah Wilkinson, in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Jerimiah was a successful farmer and a member of the Colony's Council. Amy Wilkinson died in 1764, and the responsibility of performing household chores fell upon the children. According to a biography by David Hudson, Jemima always found a means to shirk her duties and to pass them on to her sisters. Jemima was a woman of great physical stature suggesting development during her childhood years by working around the house and on the farm. As a pioneer in upper New York State later in her life, she demonstrated her farming experience by helping to cut firewood, hoe and weed her garden, and pull grass for basket weaving.¹ Of her physical appearance, one who knew her said that Jemima was blessed with virtues and that her fine figure was accentuated by "a fair complexion, with florid cheeks, and dark, but very brilliant eyes."²

Around 1770, Jemima attended a sermon delivered by the evangelist, George Whitefield, and it seems that after this lecture her life began to change. She attended several other religious meetings, especially those of the newly organized "New Light Baptists," or "Separates," as they were commonly called.

By 1774, Jemima became engrossed in religion. She enjoyed literature and avidly studied Quaker theology, the works of George Fox, William Penn, and Robert Barclay's *Apology*. Her knowledge of the Bible became such that she was able to quote lengthy phrases, and these scriptural phrases became part of her conversation.³

In September 1776, the man-of-war *Columbus*, skippered by the noted privateer, Captain Abraham Whipple, arrived in Providence Harbor after a long voyage from the West Indies. Shortly after the brig had docked, typhus appeared among some of the crew members. The fever was detected too late, and epidemic spread quickly through the city, leaving many dead in its wake. On the 4th of October, "This awful, and alarming disease . . . reached the house of Jeremi

¹Herbert A. Wisbey, Jr., *Pioneer Prophetess* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1964), p. 4.

²Daniel H. Greene, *History of the Town of East Greenwich* (Providence, J. A. & R. A. Reid, 1877), p. 132.

³Wisbey, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Wilkinson, ten miles from Providence."⁴ When the dread illness, known to all at the time as the "Columbus Fever," befell Jemima, evening watches were necessary. In her delirium Jemima pointed out to her nurses strange celestial beings floating by her bedside. With fanatical thoughts of religion impressed in her mind, it is no wonder Jemima imagined such illusions.

On October 19th, the fever broke and, when Jemima awoke from her coma-like state, she claimed that she had risen from the dead. A Colonel Johnson, who visited Jemima in her later years, wrote that she had been in fever for thirty-six hours, after which time she was pronounced dead. Colonel Johnson also related that as Jemima was being carried to the churchyard, she pushed the lid off her coffin and proclaimed her resurrection.⁵ This episode may be regarded as legend, for Jemima's physician, Dr. Man, denied ever pronouncing her dead. But despite Dr. Man's denials that she died, Jemima declared that she had communicated with angels who told her that the "Spirit of Life from God had descended to the earth to warn a lost and guilty, gossiping, dying world to flee from the wrath which is to come; to give an invitation to the lost sheep of the House of Israel to come home; and was awaiting to assume the Body which God had prepared."⁶ In a later memorandum, Jemima stated that she saw "two Archangels descending from the east, with golden Crowns upon their heads, clothed in long white robes, down to the feet . . . putting their trumpets to their mouth, proclaimed saying, Room, Room, Room, in the many Mansions of eternal Glory for thee."⁷ Jemima believed that she had died, and that the person of her former body had been replaced by a "friend" from God; thus, the Public Universal Friend was brought to earth.

The Friend made her first appearance the following Sabbath. She preached outside the Quaker meetinghouse in Cumberland to a small gathering of curious onlookers. Her first sermons were simple and consisted of a few quotations from the Bible and the common moral

⁴Mrs. Walter J. Henricks and Arnold J. Potter, "The Universal Friend: Jemima Wilkinson," *Proceedings of the New-York State Historical Association*, XL (1941), p. 159.

⁵John Quincy Adams, D.D., "Jemima Wilkinson, The Universal Friend," *Journal of American History*, IX (April-May-June, 1915), pp. 249-250.

⁶Robert P. St. John, "Jemima Wilkinson," *The Quarterly Journal of the New-York State Historical Association*, XI (April, 1930), p. 160.

⁷Henricks and Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

obligations of the people but, with her charming almost hypnotic manner and persuasive speech, Jemima soon began to attract a following. Word of the Universal Friend spread throughout an extensive area in New England. Jemima held meetings in her home and was visited by many who wished to confer with her on matters of religion. Inevitably, these frequent meetings resulted in the formation of a new religious movement which Jemima called the United Friends.

The harsh words of Edgar Mayhew Bacon tell us that the Friend's following had been composed of a "few devoted dupes, people not mad enough to be confined to lunacy, nor sane enough to form just opinions."⁸ During their first years, the United Friends were somewhat "sensational" and odd in their actions. Sarah Richards, who became an ardent apostle of the Friend, and who may be given a great deal of credit in the Society's formation, professed to have prophetic powers and adopted the name "Prophet Daniel." Her ritual commenced with a mysterious trance and ended with vigorous twitching and shaking. When the "Prophet" regained her senses, she related her so-called "views." Squire James Parker also claimed to possess such powers as Sarah and regarded himself as the "Prophet Elijah." By bedecking himself in an absurd costume which he believed resembled the dress of the ancient prophets, Squire Parker's only major accomplishment was to make a fool of himself but, as eccentric as the two aforementioned may appear to have been, Jemima's following may hardly be labeled "dupes." The bulk of Jemima's society was, at first, composed of Quakers, who were easily swayed by Jemima's manners. These people were not influenced very much by Jemima's doctrines, for those differed little from the teachings of the Society of Friends. The Universal Friend is reputed with providing a home for orphans and befriending and aiding the poor.⁹ Although many of the latter may have been illiterate, it is doubtful that they were on the verge of lunacy.

To support her sect financially, the Friend attempted to influence the more prominent citizens of Rhode Island and was quite successful. Governor Stephen Hopkins was attracted to the Friend and undoubtedly contributed to the support of the sect. Another who contributed to the welfare of Jemima and her friends was Joshua Babcock, chief

⁸Edgar Mayhew Bacon, *Narragansett Bay* (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), p. 339.

⁹Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. Although there is no evidence of Judge Babcock ever formally joining the Society, his home at Westerly was always open to the United Friends. In the pleasant village of Little Rest (Kingston), the Friend found a "devoted" apostle in the person of Judge William Potter. Outwardly Judge Potter appeared to be loyal to Jemima but, unfortunately, his inner feelings were different, as will be shown in Jemima's later life.

Judge Potter had aroused feelings of resentment toward himself in 1775, when he supported Governor Wanton in a measure against the formation of an Army of Observation. He was a senator in the Colony Legislature at the time and, during the June 1775 meeting of the General Assembly, he delivered a memorial which once again restored his good name. His speech was convincing enough, for at the same session, the Assembly elected him chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas of King's County (shortly afterward changed to Washington County).¹⁰

Judge Potter persuaded the Friend to make her headquarters at Little Rest and he built a large addition to his mansion, "Old Abbey," for her accommodation. Here the Friend established her headquarters and remained for nearly six years.

During her stay at Little Rest, Jemima preached in several of the neighboring towns. For her visits to East Greenwich, George Spencer provided the sect with a meetinghouse which he built on the South County Trail, and Holden Farm was left at her disposal.

Jemima's career would not have been complete without accusations of miracle making. At Holden Farm, the Friend is reputed to have prophesied that one member of the group she was addressing would never see another dawn and, by coincidence, a Negro employee at the farm died that evening.¹¹ Some historians believe that this coincidence strengthened the faith of Jemima's followers, but there is no definite proof that this episode took place.

Most of Jemima's miracle-making life was recorded by Daniel Hudson, a New York land speculator, in his biography of the Universal Friend written shortly after her death. The entire work

¹⁰John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of The Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, VII (Providence, A. Crawford Greene, 1862), pp. 347-349.

¹¹John Williams Haley, "The Old Stone Bank" *History of Rhode Island* (Providence, Providence Institution for Savings, 1929), pp. 50-52.

might just as well be regarded as a legend, for it is filled with "facts" which are totally unsupported and has cheapened the life of a woman who may have leaned toward fanaticism but who could hardly be labeled as a wanton lunatic. Generally, these miracles had no basis for conviction. It was professed that the Friend declared she would walk upon water. Where this event purportedly occurred is highly debatable; furthermore, all enthusiasts during Jemima's time claimed that they could walk upon water. When great throngs arrived to witness the feat, the performer would ask if the gathering believed that the miracle could be done, and when they all shouted "Yea," the enthusiast would simply reply that since there was enough faith, no miracle was necessary. At one time word was supposedly spread that Jemima was going to bring back to life a girl who had recently died. The throngs appeared and all the solemn funeral rites were being carried out but, just when the Friend was about to perform, a skeptic soldier in the crowd came forth and wished to satisfy himself that the body in the coffin was really dead. He plunged his sword into the pine box, and the Universal Friend's miracle was prematurely accomplished when the shrouded girl emerged from the coffin and hastily removed herself from the meetinghouse. Such were the many "miracles" of the Public Universal Friend as recorded by Hudson.

Jemima Wilkinson was a fearless woman and stood fast to all that she believed was right. An account written by Sarah Richards in 1777 depicts the Friend's courage:

When this Nation was all in arms; and America had imbru'd her hands in human blood . . . The Friend was not stayed by guards of armed men, but went through; to visit the poor and condemn'd prisoners in their chains: naked swords shook over the Friend's head, (there) was no terror because of the mighty power of the Lord.¹²

When Martin Reed, clerk at St. Paul's in Narragansett, learned that Jemima was residing in Little Rest, it was not long before he accused her of blasphemy. Holding to her rights, Jemima proceeded to Reed's home. When they met, the Universal Friend threatened to unleash all her mighty powers on him and his family if he did not repent for profaning her name. To this Reed replied that he entertained no gods like her in his house, and that if she did not immediately take leave, he would turn her out himself. The Friend left and

¹²Henricks and Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

troubled Reed no more.¹³

Just before her departure from "Old Abbey," Jemima was supposedly apprehended in a rather precarious position with Judge Potter, by Penelope, the judge's wife. "I am simply ministering to one of my lambs," the Friend declared. The enraged Mrs. Potter replied, "Minister to your lambs all you want, but in the future please leave my old ram alone."¹⁴ This may be taken for what it is worth. According to Spencer Hall, the last surviving follower of the Universal Friend in Rhode Island, Penelope Potter was a more devoted follower of Jemima than her husband. Shortly before her death, Mrs. Potter told Hall she "meant to live and die a Friend."¹⁵

In October 1778, the Friend decided to journey to England. Due to wartime conditions, civilians needed permission from military authorities to leave the country. The Friend approached General Sullivan at Rhode Island (Aquidneck) and obtained permission for herself and her sister Marcy to go to England. The two women were reluctant to make the trip without a male escort; therefore, they asked Sullivan to allow William Aldrich to accompany them. General Sullivan refused to give Aldrich permission without prior consent from the General Assembly. A petition was presented to the Assembly, and Aldrich was granted permission to travel to England.¹⁶ For some unknown reason, the voyage never materialized, and Jemima remained in America to strengthen her sect here.

Jemima favored Mother Ann Lee's policy of celibacy and proclaimed marriage to be an "abomination to the Lord." She disregarded family and marital obligations and encouraged the separation of those already wed. Fortunately for the United Friends, Jemima was not as firm in enforcing the laws of her sect as was Ann Lee. Married couples were allowed to remain and in 1779 Jemima allowed her sister Marcy to marry William Aldrich.

The Universal Friend did manage to disrupt many households and resentment began to rise against her. To make matters worse, some members of the sect claimed that the Friend was actually Christ in

¹³Wilkins Updike, *History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett, Rhode-Island* (New York, Onderdonk, 1847), p. 285.

¹⁴Herbert A. Wisbey, Jr., "Portrait of a Prophetess," *New York History*, October 1957, p. 389.

¹⁵Wisbey, *Pioneer Prophetess*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁶Bartlett, *op. cit.*, VIII, pp. 468-469.

His second coming. The orthodox clergy in New England closed their doors to the Friend, and finally the Quakers turned against the sect. The Quakers declared that "attending Jemima Wilkinson's meeting was a cause of stumbling for which a paper of contrition had to be presented."¹⁷

In 1782, Judge Potter resigned his position in Rhode Island and accompanied the Friend to Pennsylvania. When traveling, Judge Potter usually rode beside Jemima; behind them, the Friend's followers rode two by two on horseback.¹⁸ Thus, the Friend and her retinue, composed of Judge Potter, his daughter Alice Hazard and son Benedict, Sarah Brown, Thomas Hathaway and William Turpin, arrived in Philadelphia.¹⁹ Jemima's first meeting was held at a private home where her audience regarded her coolly. After harassing Jemima during her lecture, the crowd stoned her and drove her out. Later the Friend received an invitation to speak at St. George's Methodist Church where she drew a large gathering. Evidence indicates that she was warmly received here. An account of this meeting was recorded by Francois, Marquis de Barbe-Marbois, a member of the French war commission, who was curious to see the Universal Friend:

This soul from heaven has chosen a rather beautiful body for its dwelling place, and many living ladies would not object to animate these dead remains.

Jemima Wilkinson, or rather the woman whom we call by that name, is about twenty-two years old; she has beautiful features, a fine mouth and animated eyes; her hair is parted in the middle and falls loosely on her shoulders. She washes it every day with cold water and never powders it; travel has browned her a little; she has an air of pensive melancholy; she has acquired no grace, but has all those which nature gives. She comes forward with ease and freedom and at the same time, with all imaginable modesty. She has a big gray felt hat with turned down brim that she wears, and she places it on the desk of her pulpit when she preaches. She wears a sort of frock of white linen knotted under the chin like a peignoir. It falls to her feet without marking her waist; the sleeves expose only the tips of her hands.

I was curious to hear her. I went with seven or eight French officers, and as the people were kind enough to make room for us,

¹⁷Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

¹⁸Greene, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

¹⁹Wisbey, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

we found ourselves near the pulpit. Despite our numbers and the movement that our unexpected arrival caused the assembly, she appeared not to perceive us; she continued to speak, eyes lowered, with much freedom and facility.

To us her discourse appeared to be composed of the ordinary things of the Bible and the Fathers; she enunciated so correctly, although without elegance, that I thought she was reciting a prepared sermon, and it was hard for me to conceive myself that she spoke from inspiration, or, as the profane say, extempore. Having cast her eyes upon us French, she appeared to remark us for the first time. As she was speaking of the attachment men have for the things of this world, she continued thus: —

"Among those who are here listening to me, how few have been led here by the desire for their salvation. Curiosity attracts them; they have a mind to relate extraordinary things when they return to their own country."

I swear to you that for the moment I believed her either to be a prophetess or a fortune teller, and I expected to hear her speak of my diary.

"Do they believe, these foreigners in the House of the Lord, that their presence flatters me? I disdain their honors, I despise greatness and wealth. Seek me no more, hear me no more, if you are not touched by grace; withdraw yourselves, profane no more this temple if you are still in the snares of Infernal Angel: but if you are disposed to enter in the way of salvation, if my words have softened your hearts, if I snatch a single one of you from the danger that he runs, I have not come too far to bring the light, and you have not travelled too far to seek it."

Jemima accepts nothing in the way of pecuniary alms. She and her disciples possess nothing but what is necessary to live, and they receive gifts that the piety of the faithful brings them. She lives quietly; her conduct and morals are irreprehensible.²⁰

The Friend addressed the gathering for an hour, during which time "numbers were convicted and bowed down under the power of her ministry and sighs and tears were shed in such abundance, many confessing that such preaching and praying they had never before been acquainted with."²¹

Jemima became acquainted with several people in Philadelphia, including Rachel and Margaret Malin, two sisters who were later to

²⁰St. John, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 165.

contribute much to the sect, both in finance and leadership. A short distance from Philadelphia, at Worcester, Jemima met David Waggoner, a prominent citizen who became a devoted apostle of the Universal Friend.

Opposition soon arose in Pennsylvania as it had in New England. The Friend succeeded in separating many families and stirred much resentment from the orthodox clergy. When conditions became intolerable for the Friend and her sect, they once again removed to New England.

The United Friends returned to New England in 1785, but the unorthodox beliefs of the sect continued to raise opposition, and the Friend found it almost impossible to obtain an audience. It may be worthwhile to note at this point that not all the tenets of the United Friends were unorthodox. Jemima frequently spoke of the Trinity, that there are three persons in one God, and that the three are eternal. She also preached that God introduced to the body a pure soul. The soul, she said, would remain pure until the body reaches the age of understanding good from evil, and when the body dies, the soul separates from it; if the soul knows only evil, it forfeits Heaven and eternal happiness.²² Jemima did not believe in taking oaths, and she rejected all church forms and organizations.

Newspapers of the day severely maligned the names of the enthusiasts, and Jemima was no exception. In the March 28, 1787, issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, an account is given of the attempted murder of Sarah Wilson. While she was a guest at the Waggoner home in Worcester, Sarah claimed that she awoke one evening to find Abigail Dayton trying to strangle her because of a few words spoken against the Friend. Evidence indicated that Sarah Wilson had suffered from a nightmare, but the *Gazette* published letters urging authorities to bring the Friend's followers to court to answer to the charges made against them. David Waggoner was interrogated as to the doctrines of Jemima Wilkinson. He denied that there was any such woman as Jemima Wilkinson, but he replied when questioned further, "If a man lives in a house, and another person removes into it, it is not then proper to call the house by its first name, but by that of the person who removes into it."²³

[to be continued]

²²Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

²³St. John, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

PARTY CHAOS EMBROILS RHODE ISLAND

by PHILIP A. GRANT, JR., PH.D.

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AMONG THE NEW ENGLAND STATES, Rhode Island was the least spacious in area and contained the least number of inhabitants. Although surrounded by the populous and flourishing states of Massachusetts and Connecticut, Rhode Island seemed not to be affected at all by the political currents drifting from her two neighbors and indeed was a center of more frequent and more turbulent partisan warfare. Within the two and one-half-year period between January 1833 and August 1835, the people of Rhode Island witnessed two bitterly fought contests for seats in the United States Senate, three exceedingly close gubernatorial elections, and several critically important struggles for control of the state legislature.

From the ratification of the Constitution to the termination of the War of 1812 Rhode Island had always been Federalist in her sympathies. Afterwards, James Monroe had carried the state twice as a National Republican. In 1824 Jackson was not on the ballot in Rhode Island, and John Quincy Adams overwhelmed William Crawford 2,145 to 200 in the presidential contest of that year.¹ Four years later Adams repeated his victory in Rhode Island by the reduced, yet substantial, margin of 2,754 to 821.² In 1832 Jackson tripled his total vote in Rhode Island, although losing to Henry Clay 2,810 to 2,126 in an election which found the Antimasonic candidate, William Wirt, polling 841 votes.³ Thus, by 1832 Rhode Island was a Whig state with a rapidly growing Jacksonian minority.

Next to Vermont, Rhode Island was the foremost citadel of Antimasonry in New England. Although the Antimasonic Party never succeeded in mustering a majority in Rhode Island, for many years it held the very delicate balance of political power in the state.⁴ As a

¹Svend Petersen, *Statistical History of the American Presidential Elections* (New York, Unger, 1963), p. 34.

²Florence Weston, *Presidential Election of 1828* (Washington, Rudderick Press, 1938), p. 181.

³Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁴An excellent account of Rhode Island Antimasonry during three years may be found in Charles McCarthy, "The Anti-Masonic Party," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1902*, I (Washington, GPO, 1903), pp. 552-554.

majority was necessary in order to be elected to the governorship in Rhode Island, it had become extremely difficult for either the Democrats or the Whigs to fulfill such a requirement due to the electoral strength of the Antimasons. In the regular election of 1832 the Antimasons had prevented either of the two principal candidates from attaining a majority, and continued their obstructionist tactics in four special elections during the remainder of that year.⁵ Finally, the Antimasons decided to co-operate with the Jacksonians, and in 1833 John Brown Francis, running on a Democratic-Antimason coalition ticket, defeated Governor Lemuel H. Arnold 4,025 to 3,272.⁶ This election marked the beginning of a period in which the Antimasons assisted the Democrats in their efforts to dominate the political realm in Rhode Island, while the Democrats in return strove to humiliate the Masonic Order.

An omen of the political fury that was destined to rage in Rhode Island was evidenced in the attempt of the state legislature to elect a United States senator in January 1833. The three candidates for this office were incumbent Senator Asher Robbins, ex-Congressman Elisha R. Potter, and Congressman Dutee J. Pearce.

Senator Robbins was sixty-five years of age, a former United States attorney in Rhode Island, and a veteran of eight years in the Senate.⁷ Robbins was a zealous Whig and a consistently staunch opponent of the Jackson Administration. Elisha R. Potter had spent thirty years in the Rhode Island legislature with occasional interruptions and had initially been elected to Congress in 1795, later serving four non-consecutive terms.⁸ Originally a Federalist, Potter by 1833 had embraced Jacksonian Democracy. The third candidate, Dutee J. Pearce, was a former attorney-general and United States attorney, and had already served four terms in the House.⁹ Pearce had been a National Republican, but by 1833 was regarded as a Democrat with strong Antimasonic sympathies.

On January 19, 1833, the legislature cast forty-one votes for Senator Robbins, twenty-five for Mr. Potter, and twelve for Congress-

⁵*Rhode Island Manual*, 1957-1958, pp. 201-202.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁷*Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1949* (Washington, GPO, 1950), p. 1743.

⁸*The Political Register* (Washington, D. Green, 1832-1835), p. 580.

⁹*Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, p. 1661.

man Pearce.¹⁰ Although it appeared that Senator Robbins had been re-elected by a majority of four votes, the legality of the verdict was challenged on the claim that members of the legislature who had been elected as far back as 1831 were not competent to vote for a United States Senator to be seated in 1833.¹¹ When the new legislature convened in October, Elisha R. Potter offered a resolution, declaring Robbins' election null and void, and this resolution was passed by a margin of 43 to 27,¹² unquestionably because the Democratic-Antimasonic coalition at that time possessed a majority. On the motion to elect a successor to Robbins, the Whigs refused to vote, and Elisha R. Potter was approved unanimously as Rhode Island's United States senator for the ensuing six years.¹³ Consequently, Robbins' January election, protested by the minority Democrats and Antimasons, had been eradicated by the new legislature. After many ferocious debates on the floor of the Senate, however, Senator Robbins was ultimately seated.¹⁴

As in every other New England state, the Bank controversy was to largely monopolize the political sphere of Rhode Island in 1834. The first hint of discontent in Rhode Island occurred on February 4, 1834, when more than eleven hundred citizens of Providence memorialized Congress on "the present alarming derangement of the national currency, and consequent distress among all classes of the community." As to this distress, the Providence citizens referred to

the stagnation of business in every form, without exception; the diminished import of the raw materials for manufactures, and the consequent want of employment of our extended coasting tonnage; the impossibility of a sale of our manufactured articles; the discharge of the mechanic, the artisan, and laborer from employ; and the universal decline in value of all descriptions of property.

Emphasizing that their feelings were "deeper and more solemn" than

¹⁰*Niles' Weekly Register*, XLIII (Baltimore, February 9, 1833), p. 386.

¹¹Charles Carroll, *Rhode Island: Three Centuries of Democracy*, 1 (New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1932), p. 567.

¹²*Niles' Weekly Register*, XLV (November 9, 1833), p. 161.

¹³*Newport Mercury* (Newport, November 9, 1833), p. 2; *Republican Herald* (Providence, November 6, 1833), p. 2.

¹⁴*Register of Debates*, X, 1 (Washington, Gales & Seaton, 1833). The final vote in the Senate was 27-16 in favor of Robbins. Robbins received united Whig support, while Potter was the unanimous choice of the Democrats.

was ever created by the spirit of party excitement, the memorialists opined that relief could be neither immediate nor effectual without restoration of "the hitherto accustomed confidence and intercourse between the Government and the Bank."¹⁵

On February 17 Senator Nehemiah Knight, a Whig, testified that his Providence constituents were "not actuated by party motives" and stressed that the memorial had been signed by all classes of citizens, excepting officeholders and those sharing in the spoils. Knight was especially impressed to see the signatures of presidents and directors of state banks, who realized that the removal of the deposits from the United States Bank had caused the withdrawal of funds from their individual institutions and crippled their discounts.¹⁶ After Knight finished speaking, Senator Robbins defended the Providence memorialists and criticized the fiscal policies of the Jackson Administration.¹⁷

On the same day Congressman Tristram Burges, a Whig, brought the Providence memorial to the attention of the House. Congressman Dutee Pearce, Burges's Democratic colleague, denied that this memorial spoke for the nineteen thousand residents of Providence, and charged that there was no scarcity of money in that community, insisting that certain citizens of Providence had recently loaned nearly three thousand dollars to New Bedford and New York merchants. Congressman Burges expressed embarrassment at being flatly contradicted by Pearce, supported the views of the Providence memorialists, and concluded that his Rhode Island associate could not question his statements with any propriety.¹⁸ Claiming that he had not misrepresented the Providence document, Pearce merely wished "to exhibit the views of the people of Rhode Island in a true light." Congressman Pearce believed that a majority of the people of his state were opposed to the existence of the Bank of the United States, and hoped that Congressman Burges would cease expressing regret as to his course of action as a member of the House.¹⁹ The personal and political feud between Pearce and Burges was to continue throughout the Twenty-

¹⁵*House Documents*, 23d Cong., 1st Sess., III (Washington, 1834), Document No. 109.

¹⁶*Register of Debates*, X, 1, p. 569.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 570-573.

¹⁸*The Congressional Globe*, 23d Cong., I (Washington, Globe Office, 1834), p. 182.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

third Congress, and reach its climax in the congressional elections of 1835.

On March 22 Congressman Robbins presented a memorial adopted eleven days earlier at Newport, Rhode Island.²⁰ This memorial stressed the presence of economic distress and the apprehension of even greater financial hardship in the future. The memorialists believed

that a sound and stable national currency is essential to the public prosperity, and to carry on the exchanges and commercial transactions of the country, both inland and foreign; that to secure a currency, the agency of a National Bank is indispensable; and that the safety of property, the protection of industry, and the security of the currency, absolutely require the continuance of such a Bank.

As might have been anticipated, the Newport citizens urged the restoration of the deposits to the United States Bank and either the recharter of the Bank or the creation of a corresponding institution. A special town meeting had been called in Newport on March 11, at which this memorial had been approved by a vote of 182 to 26, a margin which was later increased by the consent of fifty-eight freemen who had been absent from the gathering.²¹ The fact that nearly ninety per cent of these participants were favorable to the United States Bank was indeed noteworthy.

Early in March more than nine hundred residents of Smithfield and Cumberland, Rhode Island, memorialized Congress. Specifically, the Smithfield and Cumberland citizens declared that businessmen were unable to obtain the necessary funds for operating, that the value of property had greatly depreciated, and that laborers had no prospect for further employment. Beseeking Congress for assistance, the memorialists grieved that confidence, so "vitaly necessary" to their prosperity, was destroyed, and that, unless relief was forthcoming, an "utter prostration of business" was inevitable.²²

Senator Robbins, referring to the Smithfield and Cumberland memorial as well as to the one from Newport, indignantly stated that President Jackson's denial of the fact of financial distress, notwith-

²⁰*Register of Debates*, X, 1, p. 1107.

²¹*Senate Documents*, 23d Cong., 1st Sess., III (Washington, Duff Green, 1834), Document No. 210.

²²*House Documents*, IV, Document No. 256.

standing all the evidence to establish it, was a "moral phenomenon."²³ Congressman Pearce on the other hand produced a letter, signed by Mr. Owney Ballou, charging that the Smithfield and Cumberland memorial had been endorsed by residents of other localities and that it had been contrived for political purposes. Congressman Burges denounced this letter as a forgery, while Congressman Pearce launched into a defense of its contents as well as its authenticity. This precluded a debate "of a very lengthened and recriminatory character" between the two Rhode Island Congressmen which evolved around the local politics of the state.²⁴

Another memorial originated in Bristol County, Rhode Island, and was approved by five hundred and twenty-three citizens. These memorialists felt that the President's experiment on the currency had been "most disastrous" to their prosperity and that their prospects as a community had become "discouraging and gloomy in the extreme." The memorial continued:

... The spirit of enterprise which has hitherto characterized our citizens is checked. Contemplated adventures, and operations of importance, have been abandoned; the circulation of our local banks, and their ability to discount, are diminished; the produce of labor of every variety is losing its value, and those who require and direct its application are curtailing their business, and dispensing with its employment. Real, as well as personal estate is falling in price, from the general indisposition to make investments or incur liabilities, and the want of employment of large portions of society, distressing, of course, to themselves, is threatening to involve the whole in confusion and ruin.

Claiming that actual experience had incontestably proved that a National Bank was imperative to the welfare of the country, the Bristol petitioners advised the return of the public deposits to the United States Bank and the extension of the Bank's present charter or the substitution of another.²⁵

The authors of a memorial from the town of Bristol corroborated the testimony of their Bristol County neighbors on the tragic condition of the local economy, but blamed their troubles on the intrigues of the United States Bank "to create a belief of the necessity of its existence

²³*Register of Debates*, X, 1, p. 1110.

²⁴*Ibid.*, X, 3, p. 3327.

²⁵*House Documents*, IV, Document No. 262.

to the public prosperity," as well as the endeavors of the Bank's friends "to increase the panic." These memorialists pleaded that, if the Bank endangered the "stability and purity" of republican institutions, they would be unworthy heirs of the Revolutionary patriots, if they could be terrified by "temporary pecuniary distress." If the United States Bank was able to mercilessly exercise its enormous power and defy all measures against it, the Bristol citizens concluded that it could exist as "a perpetual corporation," while the people would hold their liberties, "if holding them at all, on the tenure of its will."²⁶ Congressman Pearce announced that this memorial was sponsored by James D'Wolf, the brother of the gentleman largely responsible for the Bristol County document, and Parker Borden and Jacob Babbitt, two bank presidents.²⁷

On April 14 Pearce presented the only really significant document, emanating from Rhode Island in 1834, which supported the fiscal policies of the Jackson Administration.²⁸ This document was a memorial endorsed by the impressive number of sixteen hundred and fifty-three citizens of Providence County. After a thorough investigation, the Providence memorialists were satisfied that the United States Bank ought not to be rechartered and cordially approved the removal of the public deposits from the same institution. They charged that the Bank

had materially embarrassed the fiscal concerns of the Government, and sought to impair public confidence in the State banks; that it has sought to accumulate distress and embarrassment among the people, and blight the prosperity of the country; that it has attempted to command for itself a recharter, and establish its own perpetuity as a right rather than a favor, in open defiance of the voice of the people and constitutional enactments.

The Providence memorialists not only protested against the restoration of the deposits, but also against the adoption of any measure, either to augment the power of the Bank or to prolong its existence.²⁹

In addition to this memorial Congressman Pearce was pleased to familiarize the House with three others.³⁰ The first of these consisted

²⁶*Ibid.*, Document No. 332.

²⁷*Register of Debates*, X, 3, p. 3642.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 3641-3642.

²⁹*House Documents*, IV, Document No. 333.

³⁰*Register of Debates*, X, 3, p. 3517.

of a series of resolutions unanimously adopted at a meeting "of highly respectable and numerous" citizens of Pawtucket. The Pawtucket residents rebuked the Bank, commended the President, and applauded the activities of Pearce in Congress.³¹ The second document was adopted at Providence, included twelve resolutions, and was substantially the same as the one from Pawtucket. These sentiments were composed in rather vivid language, especially the tenth resolution, which read as follows:

Resolved, That the Bank, by its efforts to subsidize the press, to assail and traduce the constituted authorities of the Government, to corrupt and control the freedom of elections, and to impair public confidence in the state banks, has exhibited a recklessness of character, which demands the reprobation of all free citizens.³²

The third and final document was virtually a duplicate of the other two, except for a few minor differences in phraseology, and had been drafted at a meeting of the workingmen at Providence.³³ Unfortunately none of these three documents indicated the number of people either attending the respective meetings or registering approval of the respective contents. Since the absence of accompanying signatures was quite unique, it might validly be surmised that only a small number of Rhode Islanders were responsible for the three communications presented by Congressman Pearce at this time.

A memorial, forwarded to Congress by twenty-two hundred and forty-one mechanics and artisans throughout Rhode Island, alleged that the "present unexampled distress" had immersed Rhode Island "in gloom and sorrow." According to the mechanics and artisans, more than five hundred spindles had ceased to operate in the preceding five months while at least as many more were functioning only in the hope of a favorable change in the economy. In addition, approximately two hundred and fifty of the state's three hundred workers in pig iron furnaces were unemployed, retail trade in lumber had declined as much as seventy per cent, and the consumption of anthracite coal had decreased by more than fifty per cent. Emphasizing the "universal stagnation of business" and the "deep distress" tormenting all classes throughout Rhode Island, the mechanics and artisans

³¹*House Documents*, IV, Document No. 263.

³²*Ibid.*, Document No. 264.

³³*Ibid.*, Document No. 265.

attributed their hardships to the derangement of the currency and implored Congress to effect such measures as would "restore confidence, re-animate enterprise, and open to industry its accustomed channels of action and support."³⁴

Senator Knight insisted that mechanics and artisans were "among the most useful classes of society." Deeply regretting that "so much skill, ingenuity, and capital, should be paralyzed by the hand that should have fostered and protected them," Knight prayed that the time would come when the "just hopes and expectations" of these memorialists would be realized, and that they would feel their nation's "respect and gratitude."³⁵

Senator Knight, presenting the proceedings of a meeting of over four hundred citizens of Kent County, Rhode Island, wished that it were in his power to cheer his constituents, but conceded the futility of attempting to alter the currency policies of the Jackson Administration.³⁶ Denouncing the removal of the deposits as "illegal and unjustifiable," the Kent County residents alluded to this transfer of money as "subversive of the privileges and duties of Congress, and dangerous to the rights and liberties of the people." They contended, moreover, that

the "signs of the times" require of every man who loves his country, and its admirable constitution, more than he does party, to exercise the utmost firmness in the cause of the people against misrule and usurpation, and to act with the determination of continuing his efforts until those in power, and who would at once act justly were it not for party considerations, shall take proper measures to relieve public distress.

Considering a National Bank as an absolute necessity for preserving a sound currency and for collecting and faithfully disbursing the public revenue, the Kent citizens affirmed that the restoration of the revenue "to its proper place of deposit" would result in "an immediate restoration of confidence and revival of business."³⁷

On May 9, 1834, the Lower House of the Rhode Island legislature passed five resolutions on the Bank question. One resolution merely requested the governor to forward copies of the proceedings to the

³⁴*Ibid.*, Document No. 378.

³⁵*Register of Debates*, X, 2, pp. 1717-1718.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 2029.

³⁷*Senate Documents*, VI, Document No. 477.

senators and congressmen from Rhode Island, while two others dealt with the necessity and functions of a National Bank. In addition there were two meaningful and controversial resolutions. The first of these appraised the removal of the deposits as an action "unwarranted, ill-advised, and injurious to the public interest." The second was probably of paramount importance, and read as follows:

... in the opinion of this General Assembly the public interest requires that the money of the United States shall in future be made in the Bank of the United States, and its branches; and that the said bank be allowed to perform its duties to the United States enjoined by its charter, *viz.* 'to give the necessary facilities for transferring the public funds from place to place within the United States, or the territories thereof; to distribute the same in payment of the public creditors, without charging commission, or claiming allowance on account of difference of exchange; and to do and perform the several and respective duties of commissioners of loans for the several States.'

These two resolutions were passed by the identical majorities of eighteen votes.³⁸ Assuming that all seventy-two members of the House were present at the time, the vote was probably forty-five to twenty-seven in favor of the two resolutions.

Congressman Pearce claimed that these resolutions were worthless, inasmuch as the Rhode Island Senate had refused to register its consent to them.³⁹ At no time, according to Pearce, did the Rhode Island House speak for the people, due to the prevalence of a "rotten-borough" system in that state. Pearce then cited a few instances of unequal apportionment of state representatives.⁴⁰ The Senate, however, argued Pearce, was elected by the people at large and was actually the popular branch of the legislature. Since the Senate had refused to concur with the House resolutions, it was apparent that the true representatives of the people had not spoken. Pearce informed his colleagues that one of the gentlemen sponsoring these resolutions had been a member of the Hartford Convention. He also criticized

³⁸*House Documents*, VI, Document No. 482.

³⁹The Senate had rejected the two controversial resolutions, thus weakening their over-all effect. The House then decided to ignore the Senate and promptly forwarded the resolutions to Congress.

⁴⁰Newport was entitled to six representatives; Providence, Portsmouth, and Warwick were each entitled to four, while every other community in Rhode Island, regardless of population, had two representatives. *Rhode Island Acts, Resolves and Reports*, May 1835, p. 2.

the presumption that the Bank had complied with the terms of its charter. As to the previous distress memorials from Rhode Island, Pearce evaluated them as the intrigues of "brokenwinded and disappointed politicians." A final manifestation that Congressman Pearce was not convinced in the least of the representative character of the legislative resolutions was derived from his statement that he believed two thirds of the inhabitants of Rhode Island were opposed to the United States Bank.⁴¹

Congressman Burges warned Pearce that Rhode Island would "lose the last ounce of its treasure, its last cent, its last sword, its last drop of blood," before it would agree to sustain the conduct of the Jackson Administration. Proclaiming that the Rhode Island Senate had not approved these resolutions because it wished to display its loyalty to the President and also because it was influenced by patronage considerations, Burges affirmed that in the House the resolutions had been endorsed by representatives whose constituencies accounted for more than sixty per cent of the state's population. Defending the members of the Hartford Convention from the inferences of Pearce, Burges asked that, if the members of that gathering had acted wrongly, had not others done likewise, referring to individuals who had changed certain opinions. In conclusion Burges declared that these resolutions had been sent to Congress by as "upright, respectable, and honorable men as in any State."⁴²

Congressman Pearce was pleased to learn that Burges was an avowed disciple of the Hartford Convention. Recalling that the members of the Hartford Convention had urged soldiers and sailors to decline serving their country, Pearce had always suspected that Burges had been in sympathy with this conspiracy, but had never expected him to defend it on the floor of the House. Pearce admitted that he had changed certain opinions, but asserted that these changes were always in accordance with the views of his Rhode Island constituents. Claiming that he had not sought dispute with his colleague, he nevertheless promised that he would never shrink from expressing his opinion.⁴³

It was extremely difficult, if not utterly impossible, to determine the exact number of critical signatures emanating from Rhode Island during the first session of the Twenty-third Congress. Altogether

⁴¹*Register of Debates*, X, 4, pp. 4674-4676.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 4676-4677.

⁴³*Ibid.*, pp. 4677-4678.

Rhode Island presented twelve memorials to Congress in 1834, six in opposition to the Bank policy of the Administration and an identical number in favor of the same. Excluding the mechanics' and artisans' memorial, well over two thirds of the signatures opposing the currency policies of the Jackson Administration had been accumulated in Providence, Smithfield, Newport, and Cumberland. Providence, Smithfield, and Newport were the most populous communities in Rhode Island, while Cumberland ranked fifth in population throughout the state. All four of these communities were overwhelmingly mercantile. Combined with more than twenty-two hundred mechanics and artisans, the vast majority of which resided in urban centers, it can be reasonably estimated that eighty per cent of the Rhode Island petitioners were inhabitants of the same manufacturing and commercial communities from which the Whig Party derived the nucleus of its statewide strength. The six memorials approving the conduct of the Administration were not geographically diverse, inasmuch as five of these documents originated in Providence County. Although there was undoubtedly considerable overlapping, due to the fact that some of the mechanics and artisans had probably also signed the memorials of their respective towns, it was obvious that a large majority of the Rhode Island petitioners were unfriendly to the President. Including possible duplications, the critics of the Administration mustered approximately fifty-four hundred signatures, while the Democratic supporters numbered only slightly in excess of nineteen hundred. Even if one could validly assume that all the signatures of the mechanics and artisans were duplicates and thus could subtract them from the over-all number of opposition signatures, the adversaries of the Administration's fiscal policies would still have commanded a substantial majority of the names found on the various memorials and resolutions. In view of the fact that Rhode Island was such a small state, it was somewhat surprising that so many of her citizens had seen fit to express themselves, even on an issue as provocative as the Bank dispute.

As far as the Rhode Island House resolutions were concerned, it cannot be denied that the absence of Senate concurrence greatly diminished, if not obliterated, their actual force. If these resolutions had been passed overwhelmingly, they might have been an echo of widespread disapproval of President Jackson's treatment of the

United States Bank. The two most crucial of these resolutions, however, passed by the relatively slim majority of eighteen votes, a margin which was not especially significant in a body constituted on such a disproportionate basis. The Bank resolutions, passed by both branches of the legislatures of Maine and New Hampshire, had been approved by enormous margins. The fact that nearly ninety per cent of the communities in Rhode Island had equal representation in the Lower House virtually reduced the resolutions to the status of inconsequential. Considering that both the opponents and the supporters of the Jackson Administration had petitioned Congress in relation to the Bank question and also that the House and Senate were sharply divided on the matter, it might be well to examine the verdict of the people in the Rhode Island gubernatorial election of 1834.

[to be continued]

CREW LIST OF THE PRIVATEER *INDEPENDENCE*, 1776

by CHARLES W. FARNHAM, F.A.S.G.

QUITE BY CHANCE, the writer has discovered the original articles of agreement between the owners and the officers and men of the armed sloop *Independence*, made in September, 1776, prior to a cruise for the purpose of capturing British ships.

The articles do not include the names of the owners, but the names of all officers and men taking part in the expedition appear in the agreement, with the shares in any booty from capture of enemy ships specified.

The writer had been examining original papers in Court of Common Pleas suits on file at the Providence County Court House when he discovered this document. These cases, in long tin boxes, are in a room of the Superior Court clerk's office. The papers are filed by terms, with four or five boxes for each term, and because the cases are not in order one has to search the files, one by one, until the case sought can be found.

The articles of agreement for the sloop *Independence* were found in one of the boxes for the December term, 1777, marked in pencil "Independence" on the outside of the folded paper. It may have been offered as evidence in a law suit, but if so had become detached from

the suit papers with which it was involved.

It should be mentioned that proof of descent from any of the men named in the document would qualify descendants to join such patriotic societies as the Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution.

The articles of agreement for the cruise of the *Independence*:

Articles of agreement made between the owners of the armed sloop called the *Independence* burdened about 50 tons, fitted out from Providence in the State of Rhode Island, on the one part, and the Commander, Officers, and Men of the other part, Witness: That the said (owners) shall fit the said Vessel for the Sea in a warlike Manner, and provide her with Cannon, Swivels, small Arms and C[utlass]es, with sufficient Ammunition and Provisions together with other Necessary — belonging to a Vessel of War, also a good [and] sufficient Box of Medicine, at their own Expence, for a Cruise against the Enemy of the United States of America; and all such as shall in a piratical Manner, infest, invade or annoy the States, disturb or any way molest them in the Peaceable Enjoyment of their just Rights and Liberties, and against all those who shall aid, comfort or abet the said Enemy and in an Especial Manner to Seize all British Property found on the High Seas and that the said Owners shall have One Half of all Prizes and the said Company the other half. Viz:

The Captain shall have Seven Shares, the First Lieutenant and Master four Shares each, the Second Lieutenant and Doctor three shares each, the Gunner, Boatswain, Carpenter, Quartermaster, Master's Mate, and Prize Masters and the Captain of Marines each two shares. All lesser officers One and a half share each, all Privates one share each and all Boys half a share each of all Prizes.

That all Enterprizes at Sea or on Shore shall be solely directed by the Captain.

That there shall be Five Dead Shares to be given to the most deserving Men to be adjudged by the Committee.

If any One in any Engagement should lose a Leg or an Arm, he shall receive three Hundred Dollars out of the Effects taken.

If any Person disobey his Officer's Command, desert his Quarters or absent himself for the space of Twenty four Hours without Leave of his Superior Officers or use any Female Prisoner indecently, he shall forfeit his Share or Shares to the Company and be liable to such

Corporate Punishment as the Committee shall think fit to inflict.

The said Committee shall consist of the Commander, First Lieutenant, and Master.

The said Commander, Officers and Men do enlist themselves into the aforesaid on Board said Sloop for Six Months from signing if the Cruise should last so long or until a Discharge

Providence Sept. 1776

MEN'S NAMES

John Tillinghast, Capt.	Samuel Rhodes, his mark
Samuel Westcot, Lieutenant	Philip Walmsley, his mark
Jabez Westcot, Master	Samuel Brown
Joseph Viall, 1st Prize Master	Prime Powers, his mark
Joseph Peck, 2d Lieutenant	Oliver Parke
George B. Allen, Quartermaster	Daniel Harte, his mark
Jonathan Sloan, Gunner	George Brown, Armer
Nathan Brown, Gunner's mate	Calvin Halliwell, cooper
Nathan Potter, Carpenter	William Havens prismester [sic]
James Stephenson, Boatswain	Zebedee Shaw [?]
[Next name cut out from paper]	Benajah Baker
Duncan McFarland [inked out]	Benjamin Bagley
Daniel Corey chief mate	Wm. Lindsay Master's Mate
Benjamin [inked out]	Nathaniel Jenks, Steward
Abijah Potter, Capt. of Marines	Jenja Tuttle
Olney Waterman	Peter Ingerfield [?]
William Waterman	Henry Harris
Nathan Waterman	Saml Spicer
[Name scratched out]	Salmon Carver
Jonathan Scott	John Ide
Thomas Williams [name	Elijah Ide
scratched out]	Jacob Bowen
William Davis [inked out]	Ebenezer Sonders [?]
Benjamin Sims 2d mate	Israel Hatch
John Angus, Cockswain	Abraham Angell
Joseph Sheldon,	Philip Slead Jr.
Carpenter's Mate	Oliver Slead
Pero Waterman, his mark	Joseph Cole
Cezar Blis, cook, his mark	Amos Thurber, boy
John Greene, his mark	Jos. Hewes, Doctr.

MEN'S NAMES (continued)

John Hewes	David Read prize-Master
Elisha Aldrich	Silvenos Smith
Peter Hopkins, his mark	Preserved Whipple
Peter Smith	Thos. Moore

The articles of agreement are clearly written in what appears to this writer as the hand of Theodore Foster and the first portion of the men's names are in the same handwriting, with the exception of Jonathan Scott who apparently signed by himself. Starting with Prime Powers, the signatures are by the men and some of the signatures are all but indecipherable. A question mark has been placed after each name that was questionable.

NEW MEMBERS

*February 1, 1967 to August 30, 1967**

Mrs. Frederick E. Atkinson North Providence, R. I.	Mrs. Courtland Chamberlain Warwick, R. I.
Mr. Emile Auger Cranston, R. I.	Mr. Herman B. Chase Rumford, R. I.
Mrs. Albert H. Baker Seekonk, Mass.	Mr. Melvin A. Chernick Charles E. Clapp II, Esq.
Mr. Anthony Santa Barbara	Mrs. Charles E. Clapp II
Mrs. William R. Batty III Lincoln, R. I.	Miss Rae B. Condon Pawtucket, R. I.
Mr. Kenneth M. Beaver Barrington, R. I.	Mr. Leo T. Connors
Mr. Joseph M. Bernstein	Mr. John J. Crnkovich Norwood, Mass.
Mrs. Joseph M. Bernstein	Mr. William A. Curran
Mr. John H. Blish	Mrs. Robert Spink Davis
Mrs. Palmer C. Booth	Mrs. Charles Hamilton Davison
Mrs. Thomas A. Bowers North Scituate, R. I.	Mr. Harry L. Devoc
Mr. John Fenn Brill	Mrs. Harry L. Devoc
Mrs. John Fenn Brill	Mr. Alexander J. Dimeo Peace Dale, R. I.
Mr. Howard G. Brown	Mrs. Alexander J. Dimeo Peace Dale, R. I.
Mrs. H. Glenn Brown	Mr. Andrew A. DiPrete West Barrington, R. I.
Mrs. John P. Cady North Scituate, R. I.	Miss Natalie Dunbar
Mr. Thomas P. Carroll North Scituate, R. I.	Mr. James P. Elder Barrington, R. I.
Mrs. Joseph E. Caruolo	

*New members from September 15, 1966, to January 31, 1967, were printed in the March, 1967, *PRESIDENT'S LETTER*, Volume 2, Number 2.

NEW MEMBERS (continued)

Mr. Henry P. Eldredge East Greenwich, R. I.	Miss Judith E. Hodge
Mrs. Henry P. Eldredge East Greenwich, R. I.	Mrs. Ernest C. Hoedtke East Greenwich, R. I.
Mr. John G. Erhardt, Jr. Seekonk, Mass.	Mr. Edward T. Hogan Rumford, R. I.
Mr. Philip L. Erickson Rumford, R. I.	Mrs. Edward T. Hogan Rumford, R. I.
Mr. Stephen Fales Cranston, R. I.	Miss Mary C. Hogan Pawtucket, R. I.
Mr. Francis R. Foley Ashton, R. I.	Mr. A. Trowbridge Horton
Mr. B. Albert Ford	Mrs. A. Trowbridge Horton
Mr. Lawrence S. Gates	Mrs. Charles C. Horton Rumford, R. I.
Normand E. Gauvin, M.D. Barrington, R. I.	Dr. Roswell Johnson
Mrs. Robert H. George	Mrs. Roswell Johnson
Mr. Walter F. Gibbons Warwick Neck, R. I.	Mr. V. Duncan Johnson
Mr. Thomas D. Gidley	Mrs. V. Duncan Johnson
Mrs. Thomas D. Gidley	The Hon. Alfred H. Joslin
Mr. Edward L. Gnys, Jr. Lincoln, R. I.	Mrs. Alfred H. Joslin Bristol, R. I.
Mr. Eric J. M. Godfrey	The Hon. Thomas F. Kelleher
Mr. William R. Goldberg Pawtucket, R. I.	Mr. Ambrose B. Kelly
Mrs. William R. Goldberg Pawtucket, R. I.	Mr. John T. Kirwan East Providence, R. I.
Mr. Jeremiah J. Gorin Pawtucket, R. I.	Mrs. John T. Kirwan East Providence, R. I.
Mr. John Gorham North Scituate, R. I.	Mrs. Paul R. Ladd East Greenwich, R. I.
Mrs. Clifford H. Griffin Warwick, R. I.	Francis X. LaFrance, Esq.
Mr. Bruce S. Haggerty Warwick, R. I.	Mr. Elwood E. Leonard, Jr.
Mr. Murry M. Halpert	Mrs. Newton P. Leonard
Mrs. Townes M. Harris, Jr.	Mrs. Arthur D. Levin
Mr. George A. Hawkins Barrington, R. I.	Luther R. Lewis, M.D. Barrington, R. I.
Mrs. George A. Hawkins Barrington, R. I.	Mrs. Phillips Lillibridge East Greenwich, R. I.
Mr. Arnold L. Hayes, Jr.	Mrs. Robert M. Lord
Mrs. Arnold L. Hayes, Jr.	Mrs. Charles Louschek
Mr. Ray L. Heffner	Mrs. William F. Lunnie Seekonk, Mass.
Mr. Daniel J. Higgins	Mrs. Helen M. MacGregor
Mrs. Daniel J. Higgins	Miss Helen M. Macomb
Mrs. Berton F. Hill, Sr.	Mrs. Frank H. Malley
	Mrs. Edmund C. Mayo, Jr. East Greenwich, R. I.
	Mr. Timothy J. McCarthy
	Mr. William J. McGair Cranston, R. I.
	Mr. Frank J. McGee

NEW MEMBERS (continued)

- Mrs. D. L. McGowan
 Barrington, R. I.
 Mrs. W. Henry McMaster
 Warwick Neck, R. I.
 Mr. Julius C. Michaelson
 Mrs. Julius C. Michaelson
 Mr. John Morris
 Mrs. John Morris
 Mr. Frederick Moses III
 Barrington, R. I.
 Mrs. Frederick Moses III
 Barrington, R. I.
 Mr. W. Lincoln Mossop, Jr.
 East Greenwich, R. I.
 Mr. Vincent James Nardacci
 Mr. Edmund Nickerson
 East Greenwich, R. I.
 Mr. Francis J. O'Brien
 Mr. Thomas Ouhrabka
 Warwick, R. I.
 Mr. A. Lauriston Parks
 Rumford, R. I.
 P. Joseph Pesare, M.D.
 Mrs. P. Joseph Pesare
 Mr. Vincent J. Piccirilli
 Mr. Jeffrey Pine
 Mr. Willis Poole
 West Warwick, R. I.
 Mr. Robert F. Poyton
 North Scituate, R. I.
 Mr. Evandro R. Radoccia, Jr.
 North Kingstown, R. I.
 Mrs. Evandro R. Radoccia, Jr.
 North Kingstown, R. I.
 Mr. Albert A. Remington III
 Riverside, R. I.
 Mrs. Albert A. Remington III
 Riverside, R. I.
 Mr. H. Eliot Rice
 Cranston, R. I.
 Mrs. H. Eliot Rice
 Cranston, R. I.
 Mrs. Edmund C. Rice
 Storrs, Conn.
 Mr. Gilbert T. Rocha
 Rumford, R. I.
 Mrs. George B. Roorbach
 Mr. Benton H. Rosen
 Pawtucket, R. I.
 Mr. James B. Ross
 Warwick, R. I.
 Mr. Burton Salk
 Mr. Charles Saltzman
 Mr. Bruce M. Selya
 Lincoln, R. I.
 Mr. Frank G. Shea
 Higgins & Silverstein
 Woonsocket, R. I.
 Mr. Robert Siminski
 Forestdale, R. I.
 Mr. Edward L. Singesen
 Rumford, R. I.
 Mrs. Edward L. Singesen
 Rumford, R. I.
 Mrs. Bradley L. Steere
 Rumford, R. I.
 Mr. Raymond J. Surdud
 Mrs. Raymond J. Surdud
 Mrs. Leonard Swain
 Thompson, Conn.
 Mrs. Robert P. A. Taylor
 Mr. Raymond W. Thayer
 Edgewood, R. I.
 Miss Mary T. Thorp
 Alfred Toselli, M.D.
 Mr. George F. Treanor
 Lincoln, R. I.
 Mrs. George F. Treanor
 Lincoln, R. I.
 Mr. Daniel Turner
 Cranston, R. I.
 Mrs. Theodore H. Tuzik
 Rahway, N. J.
 Mrs. Sven A. Vaule
 Rumford, R. I.
 Mr. Arthur N. Votolato
 Mrs. Charles S. Walker
 Mr. Steven Weil
 Cranston, R. I.
 Mr. Joachim A. Weissfeld
 Barrington, R. I.
 Mr. Wayne Henry Whitman III
 West Warwick, R. I.
 Mr. Nathan M. Wright, Jr.
 Charles L. York, M.D.
 Barrington, R. I.
 Mr. Coleman B. Zimmerman
 Mr. Joseph Zuckerberg