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The Greene Street School, Providence, 1837. Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 690).

Margaret Fuller's Row at the Greene Street School: Early Female Education in Providence, 1837–1839

Judith Strong Albert

Progressive coeducation was only a glimmer in the eye of a few New England educators like Bronson Alcott and Hiram Fuller in the 1830s. Even rarer then was an interest in women's training, for it was maintained that a woman's place was in the home and that scholarship led to headaches, digestive problems, fainting and falling spells, and possible blood disorders.¹ Once in school, despite reliance on "mind training" through long sessions of rote recitation, reinforced by rod and ruler, a few maverick schools managed to promote human welfare. Based on a theory of the goodness rather than the depravity of mankind, schoolmasters like Alcott and Fuller, and teachers like Margaret Fuller, worked with young men, and more uniquely with young women, to cultivate healthy minds and characters, insisting on a well-rounded curriculum that included diversions from study, although the main emphasis remained fixed on the intellect. These few educational experiments were erratic and short-lived but their impact was a fundamental part of contemporary coeducational practices. For young women, these exemplars included the presence of female teachers whom they wished to emulate, as well as subject materials geared specifically to their interests.

Serving as a model and rendering complex interpretations in a gamut of current and historical contexts, Margaret Fuller became a proponent of individual feminine growth and education by discussion and by doing. Her divergent and unorthodox views of the limits of the "woman's sphere" encouraged reaction to traditional responses and set the Greene Street School, where she was developing her own formative attitudes, apart from others of the era. Together with her row of pupils—adolescent girls from the village of Northboro, Massachusetts, and the city of Providence, where the Greene Street School was located—Fuller anticipated several related aspects of early progressive education for young women. These included a collegial setting of teacher and students rather than the older hierarchy that set an instructor apart from his pupils; an intimate and non-competitive association between classmates that was a manifestation of growing feelings of sorority and

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1. Edward H. Clarke, *Sex In Education: A Fair Chance for Girls* (Boston, 1889). Clarke advocated special instruction for young women, insisting that too much intense training was responsible for "neuralgia, uterine disease, hysteria and other derangements of the nervous system." *Ibid.*, 18. His motto was "Educate a man for manhood, a woman for womanhood, both for humanity." *Ibid.*, 19.

2. See Judith Strong Albert, "Transition in Transcendental Education: The Schools of Bronson Alcott and Hiram Fuller," *Educational Studies*, XI (1980), 209-219.

kinship between women; and the fusion of these into a particular academic environment composed of physical, social, and cognitive elements. These relationships, which are now so basic to education, were novelties in the early nineteenth century, and set into motion aspects of a liberating tendency that transformed art, literature, science, theology, and philosophy at that time.

Fuller joined the small staff of the school in late 1837. She was the third female teacher employed by Hiram Fuller, whose interest in pre-progressive attitudes was linked to Alcott's practices of Transcendental education in Boston. Her decision to move to Providence, then a backwater refuge with only a passing interest in the seeds of Transcendental thought and Unitarian principles that were gestating in Massachusetts, was something of a calculated risk. Hiram Fuller had offered her a substantial teaching salary, which he probably neglected to pay her, and time for her writing, which he conveniently overlooked as he added poetry to history lectures, philosophy, and social studies to lessons in moral science, and a thorough investigation of DeStael's *Corinne* to the study of French. Margaret Fuller tolerated these conditions because, at the age of twenty-seven, she had reached a certain level of maturity and uncommon independence, and now had to hold to her self-appointed quest as scholar, educator, and as-yet-undefined defender of woman as man's equal. The two other women on the staff were less erudite than Fuller, and were more typical of the "Dame School" teachers of the era. Georgianna Nias was beautiful, graceful, and possessed of a "swanlike neck," a model nineteenth-century woman-as-flower figure. Frances Aborn was quiet, plain, hardworking, single, and likely to remain so. Fuller clearly outclassed and outshone her colleagues, including the Byronic headmaster who hoped to model his school after Alcott's famed Temple School, in appearance, if not in kind.² Yet each teacher had an impact on the girls of the "row"—benchmates in the school—and each was representative of a curious blend of character that mirrored nineteenth-century society in its initial transition from a rational, compact, agrarian culture to one composed of romantic, pre-industrial, urban dwellers. While Fuller also remained her row's inspirational center, Nias, Aborn and Hiram Fuller, added to its understanding along more traditional paths. Thus, a unique educational experience in Providence left its mark on the face of woman's intellectual growth. Departing from the status quo in both centuries, Margaret Fuller's dedication to reflection, observation, and a need to speak clearly and act forthrightly influenced the quality of female instruction, moving it from a rarefied "hothouse" atmosphere in which dilettantism was promoted to an environment in which inquiry, debate, and cognition were essential. These were offset by a conventional insistence upon decorum and rectitude by Hiram Fuller, Nias, and Aborn. In this way, old and new approaches confronted one another.

When Fuller had first met with her pupils that December, she had made the decision to give a special class that combined philosophical archetypes of idealism and realism with literature, poetry, and history.

Designing the class around a wider study of the foundations of education and its impact especially on women throughout the ages, she invited a lively group of girls to join the discussions. These included two girls from Northboro, Mary Ware Allen and Anna Gale, who had grown up together and whose stay at the school was to be recorded in copious school journals and lucid letters home. Mary and Anna were, perhaps, natural leaders for the row because they were eager to learn and quick to respond to Fuller's intellect, Nias's gentility, and Hiram Fuller's dapper interest in their welfare. Mary was placid and bright whereas Anna was agile and somewhat more temperamental; both were sixteen. Others along the bench were Providence's daughters, including Ann Frances Brown, at twelve the youngest member, Juliet Graves, Louise Hunt, Sarah Humphrey, and the three Metcalf sisters, Matilda, Evalina, and Caroline. This coterie quickly became friends, studying and drawing together, and writing to one another when Anna left school early in the spring. Their friendships continued until 1840 when Mary became engaged and the remaining row lost its mainstay; the friendship between Anna and Mary lasted through their married lives.

Fuller may have asked these girls to join her because she already had visions of education by conversation, imagining herself something of an "*improvisatrice*," in the manner of DeStael, although her serious pursuit of this teaching method would not occur for another year. Sensing that dialogue created a more dynamic relationship between herself and her students than that offered in the traditional teacher-student relationship, she wrote a brief but consummate description of the row to her brother, Arthur, a sketch that enumerated qualities she would require of her female scholars first at the Greene Street School and then in her Boston conversations: "They are . . . as lively as birds, affectionate, gentle, ambitious in good works and knowledge. They encourage one another constantly to do right; they are rivals but never jealous of one another."³

Seeking to encourage ambition in young women, Fuller openly set aside the quality most in demand, a subtle and persistent reticence. Instead, she asked for candor and self-awareness, traits disparaged by parents and teachers under colonial and Puritanical rule and still present in rural Rhode Island. These traits were advocated by Fuller because she was developing a concept of female citizenship that included characteristics of independence and detachment which marked her own departure from the fold. Deviating from the customs of her sex, she wished to make the row alert and capable as scholars. At a deeper level, she was after the creation of a disposition that had seldom been associated with New England women: "General activity of mind, accuracy in process, constant looking for principles, and a search after the good and the beautiful, are the habits I strive to develop. . . . Young persons can be best guided by addressing their highest nature."⁴

The Greeks of ancient Athens, whose philosophers' love of the simple within the complex had encompassed both Platonic and Aristo-

3. Margaret Fuller to Arthur Buckminster Fuller, Feb. 19, 1838, Fuller Manuscripts, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

4. About Fuller's aversion to rote learning and its philosophical source (i.e., inductive thinking as practiced in the late eighteenth century by John Locke), Mary Ware Allen wrote: "One of the class asked if we were to get our lessons by heart—Miss Fuller said she never wished us to get our lessons by heart . . . for nothing could be further from getting it by heart—it was oftener only getting it by body.—No, she wanted us to get our lessons by mind—to give our minds and souls to the work." Allen, Greene Street School Journal #1, Dec. 20, 1837, in the possession of Leonard Ware Johnson, Amesbury, Mass. Fuller, noted Allen, required that "lessons required thought as well as study, and conversation as well as recitation." *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1838.

5. Ann Frances Brown, Greene Street School Journal, Oct. 8, 1838, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, R.I.

telian values within a single teaching generation, influenced Fuller and her relationship with her students. Such diversity and range were evident in her teaching; she imparted academic knowledge and social insights to her students without worrying about her "proper" stance as educator. Also sensing Hiram Fuller's less intuitive and idealistic emphasis at the Greene Street School, she no doubt recognized that he preferred good manners and congenial behavior to Grecian certainties. Having taught first at Alcott's school and then at Fuller's, she had discovered something lacking with each headmaster. Philosophically Alcott appeared woolly and abstract; in contrast Hiram Fuller seemed a merchant of education, marketing current forms without paying heed to their intrinsic significance. Departing from them, Fuller now deliberated her growth in comparison with the fashion-plate virtue and submissiveness demanded by the age, seeking historical counterparts in *Aspasia*, *Sappho*, and *Diotimas* of an earlier epoch.

Hers were singular thoughts, unconventional in origin and construction. Cut adrift from adherence to rigid dimensions of formal lectures and recitations, Fuller departed from classical standards and familiar classroom procedures. In her classes, a sense of informality was enhanced by ideas that demanded her students to begin thinking for themselves. Their responses were also to be unorthodox, for they quickly came to realize that Margaret Fuller was different, that her method and meaning alike were opposed to quiescence, that she demanded more than stock-in-trade replies. No doubt they only subconsciously realized a difference between a collegial relationship and the more common association that was based on authoritarian principles. Yet her students were to discover that their teachers were in no way alike, and that whereas *Nias* and *Aborn* represented convention, Fuller symbolized reform. Certainly they had reason to believe that she possessed genius, a contrast to the talent of their other instructors. Striving for a little of Fuller's high human standard, they became aware that they had far to go to obtain her stature. The atmosphere was charged with currents of intellectual camaraderie that was little understood in the remote community. The resulting relationship was not really as isolated as they then thought, for a great wave of fresh thought was moving toward New England from more sophisticated European cultures, and to which Fuller was receptive.

In working with each of their instructors, the row met representatives of the range of figures in that era. Their headmaster was youthful, handsome, and intelligent—in a word, *Byronic*—a forerunner of Romanticism who was idolized by most of the row, and whose academic interests were accented by courtly manners and a personal desire to see his female students happy in their model school. Ann Frances Brown's reaction typified nineteenth-century innocence and impressionable awe, for she found him able to discriminate "from the folds in a note whether it was from a *lady* or not."⁵ She worried about whether the headmaster approved of her attire, although in meetings with Margaret Fuller she had been told that it was inward character that mattered, and

that concern for the psyche and spirit were higher pursuits than those of the material self. Giving the matter second thoughts, she had come to the point of maintaining that "better than being graceful as Mr. F. would have us be first, I would have us be *natural*."⁶ Thus did Margaret Fuller's ponderings reach her youngest pupil. Similarly, Anna Gale described the headmaster as preoccupied with etiquette and polish, intent on quiet in the rooms and in being on time to school. Whispering, "communication" of any kind, and tardiness were "inexcusable faults." Sympathizing with his wishes, she docilely copied the motto of the school into her journal: Order Is Heaven's First Law. The school's maxim was also society's, and the headmaster represented part of a club that directed Anna's growth, a set of masculine rulers that already included her father and brother. Margaret Fuller's "first law," that of female self-reliance, would interfere with this hierarchy.

In contrast, the row's most meteoric member, Juliet Graves, rendered a belle's description of Hiram Fuller, concentrating on his appearance and his unpedagogical nature. She overlooked anything scholarly about him and conjured a dashing knight who rescued damsels like Mary Ware Allen from danger, even those within the strict security of the school: "I looked at Mary and then I turned my eyes toward Mr. Fuller. There was a most curious expression on his countenance and it seemed as if he was endeavoring to keep [it] smooth."⁷ Evalina Metcalf viewed him as "not quite so bashful this term,"⁸ and like Juliet she sensed a link between her friend Mary and the headmaster. In her view, he was pleased because "Mary is here, for you know she is one of his favorites. But you know we have always thought him almost *perfect* and we must not impute partiality to him for he loves us *all* when we do our duty."⁹ These portraits reveal a nineteenth-century hero, a stern yet appealing figure who both roused devotion to the school's interests and excited girlish imaginations beyond the confines of scholarship: "I cannot look up but what his piercing, searching, shining, bright roguish, smiling lustrous dark eye is upon me. You know he has that faculty of looking everywhere at the same time!"¹⁰ Margaret Fuller would have a way of looking through him as well.

The comments on Hiram Fuller indicate that the row enjoyed a scholarly and also a fanciful relationship with him, although much of the latter was confined to school journals and to letters, as well as to exchanges in the social hall. These were part and parcel of the age's insistence on clinging females and indomitable males, kept one-dimensional in books and in life. While the girls responded to him with warmth and support, the young men at school baited him, knowing that at the Greene Street School spiritual punishment consisted of ostracism and not beatings, and that Fuller would not resort to ungentlemanly actions. Removing the old-fashioned rod from his classes, he saw problems of discipline become unmanageable over the months, no doubt confirming its critics' notions that the school lacked deportment and that a moral education included physical chastisement. Ann Frances Brown wrote that on several occasions Fuller was provoked un-

6. *Ibid.*

7. Juliet Graves to Anna Gale, May 11, 1838, Gale Family Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

8. Evalina Metcalf to Anna Gale, May 11, 1838, Gale Family Papers.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*



Margaret Fuller Ossori (1810–1850). Engraving from Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Margaret Fuller Ossori* (Boston, 1884). Photograph courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4730).

11. Brown, *Greene Street School Jour.*, Oct. 9, 1838, John Hay Lib.

12. Anna Gale to Frederick Gale, Dec. 30, 1837, Gale Family Papers. A scathing letter from Frederick to his sister, written from Florence in 1849 when he had seen Margaret Fuller, ends with these words regarding his sister's favorite teacher: "Now that the scornful, manhating Margaret of 40 has got a husband, really no old maid need despair, while there is life in her body." Frederick Gale to Anna Gale, Dec. 11, 1849, *ibid.*

13. Brown, *Greene Street School Jour.*, Aug. 3, 1838, John Hay Lib.

mercifully and that in consequence, morning prayers were being discontinued: "Prayers seem a mockery, when the majority by their actions and looks forbid anything of the kind. The boys played all the time Mr. Fuller was reading. He did not speak to them and I suppose it would not do any good."¹¹

An apparent lack of form was a flaw in the school's armor, leading to a disregard of authority by errant students whose lives before spiritual education had been guided by instruction, recitation, and browbeating. Perhaps in the end, Margaret Fuller's assessment of the Rhode Island headmaster was correct, for she thought him too much a gentleman disciplinarian. In fact he was not the proverbial scowling tyrant who too often drilled facts into unwilling heads, for his interest was in Alcottian tenets in addition to a personal commitment to humane educational ends. These were juxtaposed to what he knew of Providence and its resistance to progressive thinking. Yet it was this concern that had led him to hire Margaret Fuller in the first place, and to embrace a notion of equal education for both sexes. Sadly, while the young women responded to his aims, the less mature males abused a rare challenge, seeming to invite the end of their short-lived independence. Cautioned by Margaret Fuller that they might leave the room if they could not control themselves, these boys could not be as easily dismissed from school. It was a situation that has been replayed many times since.

Georgianna Nias taught art and represented all that was soft, graceful, and feminine in New England. She was admired by the row for her beauty and an exotic past, and she was the antithesis to Margaret Fuller, who was said to have acidly remarked after a conversation with her that she might have once been worth educating. Anna Gale described Nias to her brother, Frederick, shortly before he was to visit the school, in the obvious interest of making a match between the demure English woman and Anna's admired older sibling: "She is a most lovely woman, she has the most perfect manners, no one more graceful ever existed. She is an English lady; she has lived in France—Married a worthless man, she has three small children which she has to support by her own exertions."¹² Anna's reaction replicated the age's insistence on charm and what Margaret Fuller called an emphasis on "women with swanlike necks," by which she meant the typical languishing siren of the era. Mary Ware Allen despaired that their "dear Mrs. Nias" was often confined at home with a sickly infant who was "taken with convulsive fits." But while she worried for her teacher, who was an ideal mother figure, Mary also added that part of her distress was based on her admiration of great beauty. Mixing its metaphors, the row felt a certain sympathy for Nias while also wishing her to marry an eligible bachelor, one who promised security and complacency instead of the single life. The death of her child led to sober reflections by the row, assuaged by the headmaster, who told the subdued girls that the infant was "happier in heaven than it would be here."¹³ Thus Georgianna Nias became the symbol of domesticity and anticipated married life in a way that Margaret Fuller could not.

The last member of the school's staff, Frances Aborn, received perfunctory attention from the row, since she was in charge of younger children and because she taught mathematics, which no one particularly cared about. Anna Gale noted that she was "not remarkably handsome," which detracted even more from her already limited potential. Plain looks and uninspired lessons caused Ann Frances Brown to remark that she "never could and never shall love mathematics."¹⁴ Of course it was not expected that girls were to consider the subject seriously, since it was part of the male domain and not relevant to the life of most women. Even so, Aborn was sensitive to her lack of influence and tried on occasion to reassure the young ladies in her class that "every mathematician was a deep thinker and a good reasoner," and that "everyone had *some* influence."¹⁵ The sentiment had significance but the teacher lacked Fuller's imagination and verve. The row tolerated Aborn; it adored Margaret Fuller.

Curiously, Fuller was neither graceful in Georgianna Nias's soft way, nor uninteresting as they found Frances Aborn and countless other teachers in their training. Fuller was by turns brilliant, scholarly, and emotional. The row talked and wrote a great deal about her, both as educator and then as mentor, critic, and even friend. As the keenest judge of her character, Mary Ware Allen early observed her teacher's faculty for making them aware of their "deficiencies." She had written to her parents after her arrival in Providence that it was "worth a journey to [Providence] just to hear Miss Fuller talk,"¹⁶ but she had added that she would "not for a great deal offend her in any way, for she is very satirical, and I should think might be very severe."¹⁷ Fear, awe, and love characterized Fuller's relations with each of the row, although intimidation gave way to determination when each student began the hard work she required. Thus their teacher could "cut them into bits," which was "pleasant when she does it in a lump, but woe to the one whom she cuts by herself."¹⁸ Coming to grips with Fuller's eloquence, honesty, and sarcasm, Mary Ware Allen was lured into untried ways that were new to instruction. Each aside intrigued the young girl, who occasionally became downcast and perplexed by what she heard in class: "Our lesson referred to the great doctrine of atonement. Miss Fuller stated the two different views which were taken of it, saying she did not wish to influence us in favour, or against either, or hurt anyone's feelings."¹⁹ Mary's Unitarian background had prepared her for a commitment to human works and hardships of this world as preparation for a greater life beyond. With most of her generation she believed that Jesus was divine, the son of God, a mortal and immortal light for humanity. She maintained that man's unity with Jesus was a sign of divine guidance. However, Fuller and other New England intellectuals were verging on a disturbing interpretation of old doctrine, questioning the godlike nature of Jesus as Christ and redefining the institutional necessity of the Church itself. These concerns were part of a religious reappraisal that set the stage for pre-existential thought, which in due course wrestled with the foundations of belief. As a scholar first and a

14. *Ibid.*, Nov. 6, 1838.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Harriet Hall Johnson, "Margaret Fuller as Known By Her Pupils," *Christian Register*, Apr. 21, 1910, 427; Allen to her parents, Dec. 30, 1837, in the possession of Leonard Ware Johnson. Harriet Hall Johnson was the daughter of Mary Ware Allen Johnson. A paper dealing with five generations of Henry Ware's descendants is in progress by the author. Henry Ware was a founder of the American Unitarian Church and served as acting president of Harvard University in 1810 and 1828.

17. Allen to her parents, Dec. 30, 1837, in the possession of Leonard Ware Johnson. For a detailed study of Margaret Fuller and Mary Ware Allen see Judith Strong Albert, "Margaret Fuller and Mary Ware Allen: A Different Kind of Nineteenth-Century Relationship," *Thoreau Journal Quarterly*, XII (1980), 9-22.

18. Allen to her parents, Jan. 1, 1838, in the possession of Leonard Ware Johnson.

19. Gale, *Greene Street School Journal*, Jan. 12, 1838, Gale Family Papers.

20. Graves to Gale, Aug. 10, 1838, Gale Family Papers.

21. Louise Hunt to Gale, Nov. 8, 1838, Gale Family Papers.

22. Brown, Greene Street School Jour., Dec. 19, 1838, John Hay Lib. Fuller had earlier written that she was sorry to leave the school, commenting that "there is room here, if I mistake not, for a great move in the cause of education, but whether it is I who am to help move, I cannot yet tell." Fuller to James Freeman Clarke, July 3, 1837, Fuller-Higginson Papers, Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass.

23. Gale, Greene Street School Jour., Dec. 20, 1837, Gale Family Papers.

woman next, Fuller was reading Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Goethe in Providence, carrying initial reactions into her classes. No doubt most of her students found her observations unsettling at best and unorthodox at least. Fuller was in the throes of uncertainty, for in questioning God's supremacy she opened a Pandora's box of other values and commitments limiting the age. Speaking variously of slavery, atonement, urbanization, and tradition, she joined these with a common thread of skepticism that became the start of her own intellectual rebellion throughout the next decade. This posture was virtually unheard of in academe, giving her feelings of anxiety and uncertainty that she could hardly keep hidden from her students.

Among the students in the row, Juliet Graves was perhaps the most dramatically affected by Fuller's talks, which were forerunners of the Boston conversations. When Fuller left the Greene Street School at the close of 1838, Juliet would also go, because the school seemed only as good as the meetings with her teacher. Her letters to Anna Gale of this period frequently refer to her discovery of "something which she knew not Miss Fuller possessed before,"²⁰ indicating an emotional involvement that was part of the age's sense of sisterhood and a personal response to Fuller's stressful demands. Juliet was a youthful version of the nineteenth-century heroine, a girl whose thoughts and glance were restrained but who yearned for greater freedom. Unable to venture far from the limitations of an insufficient education and a static childhood, she found her sentiments agitated by Fuller's pursuit of meaning. It was something of an ordeal for both teacher and pupil.

With similar intensity, Louise Hunt confessed that she "adored Miss Fuller," writing that she would "miss her nearly as much out of school as in,"²¹ striving to achieve a little of her teacher's keen writing and conversational appeal. For the row, the association was unique, culminating on the last day of her stay at the Greene Street School with Ann Frances Brown's poignant journal entry in which she described Fuller as having "talked to us so affectionately and feelingly that few could restrain their tears. I never loved her so much as I did then, and do now."²² Apart from her academic ability, Fuller had produced tears, avowals, and confessions of adoration, a series of ardent, spiritual friendships. The girls' journals captured some of Fuller's largely overlooked warmth, for she was not at heart a remote bluestocking but a close associate with wit, vulnerability, and above all, sensitivity. Through her teaching, the row gained a greater understanding of the range of feeling possible within the female, not through Fuller's knowledge of books, which was profound, but through daily interchange and contact. This recognition was no doubt the essential ingredient of her classroom, an element too often lacking in education.

Fuller's classroom was open and collegial, and her pupils' relationships with her were close-knit. Early in Anna Gale's journal she reflected on the joy of being in Providence, among friends, finding satisfaction not in a search after "honors, distinctions, wealth or pleasure," but in getting to know herself: "These alone do not, cannot yield any

real, pure, substantial happiness. It depends mostly upon ourselves, to make any condition, any situation, *happy*."²³ Experiences of this kind were the outcome of an education that combined classical content with fresh perceptions of self-worth. Fuller was intent on her own growth and willing to discuss trivial and incomplete thoughts with her pupils; thus she was able to develop a relationship between academic subject matter and self-awareness. As a result, her students were to sense a little of her dissatisfaction with the confines of American life for women, not only in Providence but from within. Fuller's desire to expand was imparted to Anna, who wrote: "I know it is foolish to despair because I cannot be or do what I wish, but that will not prevent me from thinking myself out of place here, and occasionally withholding myself at home."²⁴

For better or worse, Fuller's influence had led to spontaneous reappraisals of the rigid limits of the "woman's sphere." Good teaching did not reinforce old customs but diverged into untried avenues that lacked easy returns to well-defined social routes. Fuller documented her own inner struggle. She kept a journal during the winter of 1838, noting a growing frustration with the life she now wished to discard, namely the daily routine of limiting classes and extremes of self-control. It was during this period that she wrote James Freeman Clarke asking for teaching posts in Cincinnati, having decided to leave Providence. It was also then that her work on Eckerman's translation of *Conversations with Goethe* was completed.

The end of the Greene Street School experiment began the term before Fuller's departure, and was recorded in a series of letters to Anna Gale. These revealed a love of the school, tenderness toward each of the staff members, and close interest in one another. Juliet Graves and Sarah Humphrey both found that the approach of the end of school was a realization that adult life had actually just begun. "Until today," Juliet wrote to Anna, "I have not realized I was so soon to leave, but today I have realized the truth—realized that I have left that happy place to return to it no more as a scholar. . . . Yet I have so long connected this school with all I have done, and said, and thought, that it seems to me almost as if I am parting from my house."²⁵ Sarah painted a bleak picture of sadness when she wrote to Anna about the school's closing: "There were but few today at school, and these looked sad. The sun was obscured by clouds, and nature seems to mourn. But why need I tell you of the last day,—you have been there, and know how gloomy it is."²⁶

The notes contain the usual nineteenth-century embroidery on the simplest of feelings, expressions of flowery remorse that also characterize the growing sentimentality in women's pulp literature written during that time. But in another light, such candor can be construed as a healthy release of sentiments expressing new realms of individuality. These feelings had been curtailed during the rational, reason-centered eighteenth century. Introspection, born early in the age and now permissible, was not to be buried again. The pervasive sense of sorority

24. *Ibid.*, Jan. 22, 1838.

25. Graves to Gale, Aug. 10, 1838, Gale Family Papers.

26. Sarah Humphrey to Gale, Aug. 10, 1838, Gale Family Papers.

27. Evalina Metcalf to Gale, Aug. 10, 1838, Gale Family Papers.

28. Hunt to Gale, Feb. 13, 1839, Gale Family Papers.

and unity fostered in schools like that in Rhode Island was part of a greater movement toward self-reliance and educational pragmatism. At this point in her development, Margaret Fuller contended with the idea in limited terms, asking her students to contemplate the nature of woman's historical place within a largely academic context. Actions in response to this "study" were delayed or avoided, but the concept itself affected their lives.

As forerunners of women's studies groups, Fuller and her pupils initiated a form of personal learning, in which they contrasted themselves with other contemporary female poets, writers, and educators. Fuller used the writings of Maria Edgeworth and Catherine Sedgewick, the criticism and travel commentary of Harriet Martineau, and the classic *Corinne* by DeStael as examples of woman's wisdom and perception. Dealing with women as spokesmen, she led her students with energy and determination, often carrying them further along intellectual paths that were new to them: "I still have an ignorant head and a bad heart to improve and if I cannot [figuratively] see those on our little row, I will fix my eyes steadily on my book and try to drown every other thought in the intensity of my study."²⁷ There was no safety in numbers for Fuller's students, no refuge in sitting along the same row. Each student dealt individually with Fuller.

As the term progressed and drew to a close, the girls began their farewells and to make plans for reunions in Providence and Northboro. Their journals reflect an increasing awareness of the short-lived and tranquil classroom atmosphere each had known and that was now giving way to an unknown future. In a letter to Anna Gale, Louise Hunt conveyed her unsettled feelings about what lay ahead: "Mary is drawing and it is time I began, though I would feign stay . . . but when I look up and see your place, [to be] filled by another, the hard reality rushes upon me and the vision vanishes."²⁸ Sensing the end of their solidarity as a group, the girls wrote of cherished moments together. But with the unexpected death of Mary Ware Allen's youthful aunt the already fragile climate at the beleaguered school changed. They were to be separated not only from one another but from the safety of girlhood.

Familiar with illness, sickness, and death, girls in the nineteenth century were accustomed to harsh conditions of survival. Trained to attend sick members of the community, to care for infants and the aging alike, the girls became more aware of alternatives that might exist for them through education. Not denying the realities faced by their sex, Margaret Fuller provided her students with an intellectual choice, offering them the challenge of responding to their potential as thinkers and doers. Drawing upon Transcendental tenets of individuality, she taught them that self-consciousness was a manifestation of soul, and that virtue and wisdom relied neither on church nor ceremony. Fuller maintained a view of Man as part of nature, and Nature as a fragment of a vast, unknown universe. For her, faith and education were necessary ingredients in one's awareness of the human condition. Neither could be rigid or doctrinaire; both were intuitive and avoided pedagogy. The

GREENE-STREET SCHOOL.

THERE will be a vacation in the Greene-Street School, commencing August 10th.

The Fall Term will begin on Monday, the 10th of September. Applications for admission should be made some time previous to the commencement—and if possible, immediately. Parents are requested to give at least four weeks notice, when scholars are to be removed from the school, that their seats may not be reserved from others. If such information be not given, it will in most cases, be just to charge tuition for another quarter.

Studies in the Higher Department; Wayland's Moral Science, Herschel's Treatise on Philosophy, Whateley's Rhetoric, History, Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar and Composition—also, Latin and French. The latter is taught by Mrs. NIAS, who having lived several years in France, is perfectly competent to teach her pupils not only to translate the language, but also to pronounce and speak it correctly. Lessons are given in Music, Dancing, Drawing and Needle-work, to those whose parents desire it. Tuition from 10 to \$15 per quarter. Music extra.

Tuition in the Primary School, from \$3 to 5. Children are received from 4 to 8 years of age. The School is open at all hours to visitors. Parents are particularly invited to call and see how their children are situated and employed.

H. FULLER, PRINCIPAL.

N. B. A few young ladies can be accommodated with good Rooms and Board, in a family with one of the Teachers, near the School.

Providence, Aug. 7.

Advertisement for the Greene Street School. From the Providence City Directory, 1838–1839. Photograph courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4729).

subjective nature of Fuller's "church" relied on human history, literature, philosophy, and the realization of an earthly heaven. Dogmatic faith, like archaic classroom conventions, lacked meaning and made inquiry impossible. In Fuller's quest, the very meaning of a religious education was at issue.

By early 1839, Margaret Fuller and most of the row had left the Greene Street School. Louise Hunt wrote that she had quit "partly on account of the distance and partly because of Miss Fuller,"²⁹ but she continued her French lessons with Georgianna Nias, who continued to teach private pupils after the doors of the school had closed. In the spring, Louise and Juliet Graves had visited the school, and in alarm had written that they found the "beloved place" in deep trouble, their defeated headmaster preparing to quit the country, and their friends gone: "[Since] Miss Fuller is no longer there, many of the scholars have left. Mr. Fuller of late has been much troubled by the boys. The number of scholars is diminished and a new school has lately been opened not far from there."³⁰ The closing of the school was not the end of a renaissance in New England, however, which affected the kind of education to be given to young women henceforth. Similarly, relationships like those experienced by the row were to become more typical of those experienced by the next generations.

At the start of 1840, Mary Ware Allen visited Providence, where she wrote Anna Gale that she had seen the school again, "beholding the abode of learning wither we once were accustomed to turn our steps each day."³¹ She had not gone inside, for the school was no longer oper-

29. *Ibid.*

30. Graves to Gale, May 24, 1839, Gale Family Papers.

31. Allen to Dr. Joshua Johnson, Nov. 3, 1839, in the possession of Frederick Hosmer Johnson, Colebrook, N.H.

32. On the Allen School see Judith Strong Albert, "The Allen School: An Alternative Nineteenth-Century Education, 1818-1852," *Harvard Educational Review*, LI (1981), 565-576.

33. Humphrey to Gale, Oct. 3, 1839, Gale Family Papers.

34. Allen to Gale, Nov. 10, 1839, Gale Family Papers.

35. Hunt to Gale, Nov. 18, 1859, Gale Family Papers.

36. Allen to Johnson, Nov. 8, 1839, in the possession of Frederick Hosmer Johnson.

ated by Hiram Fuller; yet impressions remained. Perhaps following in Fuller's footsteps, several members of the row taught for a while rather than marrying. Louise Hunt lived with Mary's parents in Northboro for a time, where she assisted at a parsonage school that Mary's parents had established through the Unitarian church.³² Louise's stormy feelings, first held for Margaret Fuller, were showered on Mary and her fiancé. In due course, Sarah Humphrey wrote that she had seen their tempestuous friend, who "seemed to enjoy teaching very much and was much happier than a year ago."³³ It would seem, based on the experiences of the girls in the row, that the trend among educated young women was moving toward a career in the classroom instead of the older status of motherhood and confinement in the nursery. One of the key rewards for having received an education was in becoming a teacher. Here the question of emulation arose and Margaret Fuller's hard-won choice became clear. In due course, however, marriages were clearly on the horizon. Mary confided that she had become engaged, and hoped her friend, Anna, would approve of her choice and "sympathize" in her feelings: "I know that many will be surprised and some perhaps will disapprove but for myself I feel perfect trust and confidence in him who is to share with me the joys and sorrows of life. . . . I feel happy, very happy, but seriously so. It is not such happiness as I ever felt before."³⁴

Most members of the row acquired husbands, children, and duties unrelated to their studies at the Greene Street School. One or two, however, deviated from this pattern; Louise Hunt wrote that she "truly rejoiced to hear of Mary's engagement," but there remained in the tone of the letter somewhat of a desperate attempt at camaraderie that was no longer possible: "As Mary has seen fit to withdraw from our little circle where 'freedom' is the watchword . . . we will be 'the Maiden trio,' and devoting ourselves to each other, disdain the attractions of any knight errant who presumes to approach us. Ha! ha! It will be capital!"³⁵ Similarly, the Greene Street School itself changed. Sarah Jacobs replaced Fuller as instructor and within the same year decided to manage the venture. With good intentions but more conventional responses than her predecessor, she substituted the old-fashioned "dame school" method for Fuller's dynamic form of education. But the concept of experimental schooling was established and a generation of young women had been educated in the Fuller manner. Here one would find, as Mary Ware Allen did, "a great deal of intelligence among the young ladies, who do not live to dress and visit, and gossip and get married. They are studious to improve themselves, to do good, to live for their higher nature."³⁶ Her words reflect an awareness in which reticence and charm were no longer the only educational aims. Understandings like this were still rare in 1840, precisely because most young women were reared to "dress, visit, gossip and marry." In contrast, the Greene Street School and one of its unique teachers had asserted that young women should think, read, and engage themselves beyond ordinary ex-

pectations of the day. The perishable quality of the school, its tenuous position in a rather quiescent era just beginning to feel the surge of thought from across the Atlantic, and its tolerance for individuality, were rare attributes. These were duplicated and re-created throughout the next decades, permanently influencing women's education.

Through 1850, when Margaret Fuller died in a shipwreck off Fire Island on her return to America, most training for young women continued to be based on a repetition of skills and tidy measures of content parceled out to docile rows of listeners. But in preparation for a challenging call, a handful of schools like the one in Providence picked up where the Greene Street School had left off, and other teachers with Fuller's energy and insight taught from a perspective that no longer insisted on barriers between pupils and educators. In this setting, progressive values were fostered and woman's education advanced. Fuller's philosophy of instruction insisted that the desire to know should be the goal of all education: this view was to outlive her century.



Al Smith's popular appeal is apparent in this photograph taken during his campaign for the presidency in 1928. Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4731).

Alfred E. Smith's Rhode Island Revolution: The Election of 1928

John K. White

Mill owners had turned on their steam for candidate Hoover, had kept every whistle in full toot as long as he was in hearing. Now [when Smith visited Rhode Island] the mill hands left their piecework, ran to the windows and yelled, forcing numerous mills to shut down from five minutes to an hour.¹

[A] Providence tailor named Salvatore Pastore rented a store and enthusiastically started an Al Smith for President club. His oldest stepson, Lucio, became the club's secretary, but another stepson, John, would have no part of the venture. Studying law at night John was uncertain whether he wanted to be a Republican or a Democrat.²

These vignettes tell much of the story of the 1928 election in Rhode Island. Never has a presidential contest had a more dramatic impact upon the state's politics. And, yet, the foundation of Alfred E. Smith's "Rhode Island Revolution" was not in a series of campaign-related events but rather in an ethnocultural upheaval that had been brewing for over eighty years.

A scan of the 1928 Rhode Island election results highlights their significance. For the first time since 1912—when Theodore Roosevelt's third-party candidacy split the Republican vote—Rhode Island sided with the Democrats. Until 1928, the state had been a bedrock of Republican strength, as "solid" for them as the Old Confederacy was for the Democrats; indeed, that year marked only the second time since the establishment of the Republican party in 1854 that Rhode Island voted for the Democratic presidential nominee.

Although Smith carried the state by a slender margin of 51 to 49 percent, the returns point to a highly polarized electorate—a division based upon religious and ethnocultural differences (see Table I). For example, while Smith carried Providence with a hefty 58 percent of the vote, his percentages in the city's heavily Catholic and Jewish districts

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1. "Battle of the Atlantic," *Time*, Nov. 5, 1928, 13.

2. Samuel Lubell, *The Future of American Politics* (New York, 1965), 80.

TABLE I Percentage of Democratic Presidential Vote, Selected Areas of Providence, 1916-1932*

Area	1916	1920	1924**	1928	1932
Irish	66	52	58	71	76
Italian	44	29	52	79	70
Yankee	33	35	32	42	38
Jewish	63	49	56	68	76
Providence	51	38	46	58	62
Statewide	47	34	40	51	56

Derived from: *Providence Journal Almanac*, 1917-1933.

*Districts selected: Irish, Eighth Representative District
 Italian, Fourteenth Representative District
 Yankee, Second Representative District
 Jewish, Twenty-third Representative District

** Percentages represent the combined Democratic and Progressive vote.

3. Jewish voters, many of whom were relative newcomers, often sided with the Catholics in "voting issue" positions and party affinities. Jewish residents, however, constituted only a small percentage of Rhode Island's population; therefore, references to opposing ethnocultural pulls of Protestant and Catholic interests include Jewish voters under the Catholic banner.

4. The ethnic origins of Providence mayors were identified by Leo E. Carroll, "Irish and Italians in Providence, Rhode Island, 1880-1970," *Rhode Island History*, XXVIII (1969), 67-74.

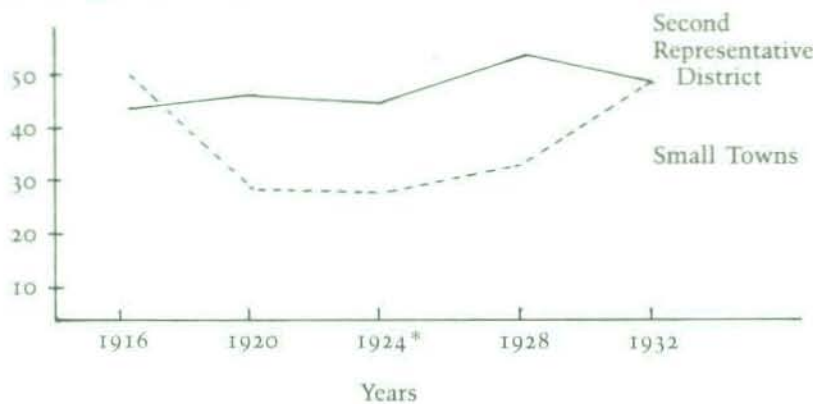
were even higher. In one Irish district, he won 71 percent; in an Italian district, 79 percent; in a Jewish district, 68 percent—gains over the 1924 returns of 13, 27, and 12 percentage points, respectively.

While Smith did well in predominantly Catholic and Jewish areas, he fared poorly in Protestant areas. For example, in a Yankee district in Providence, Smith received only 42 percent of the vote. In other Yankee areas, his showing was much worse: combined election totals in towns of 3,500 people or fewer show that he received only 21 percent of the vote. Fear of the growing immigrant populace appeared to be paramount to voters in these rural Yankee enclaves. That fear is exemplified in the difference in the election results between a largely white Anglo-Saxon Protestant neighborhood in Providence and the rural Yankee towns. Such divergence in voting patterns was relatively new and was not repeated in subsequent elections. In 1916 Woodrow Wilson's rural vote actually *exceeded*, in percentage terms, his vote in the Yankee area of Providence. In 1920, a major variance in the Democratic presidential vote emerged; the gap persisted in 1924 and widened in 1928, but closed significantly in 1932 (fig. 1).

Rural-urban disparities appear to be a result of the opposing Protestant and Catholic ethnocultural pulls.³ Animosities between the Providence Irish and established Yankee Protestants were pervasive. Increments of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europeans intensified the feelings. Eventually, the Irish, with the help of the newer immigrants, were attaining electoral majorities in the capital. In 1864, the city elected its first Irish mayor—interestingly enough, a Republican. By 1928, Providence had elected six Irish mayors, who, all told, had held office for forty-three years (in 1928, James Dunne had served only one year of his twelve-year tenure).⁴

Unlike their brethren in the small towns, Providence's white Protestants accepted the presence of the immigrants as a fact of life; politically, they themselves were part of a permanent minority and they

FIGURE 1 Percent of Democratic Presidential Vote, Second Representative District in Providence and Rhode Island: Towns of 3500 Population or Less, 1916-1932



Derived from: *Providence Journal Almanac*, 1917-1933.

*Percentages represent the combined Democratic and Progressive vote.

knew it. Thus, it is not surprising that in 1928 they cast a proportionately higher percentage of the Democratic vote than did their rural counterparts. The salience of the ethnocultural conflict that dominated the contest between Smith and Hoover was diminished somewhat in 1932. Rural Protestants probably did not feel as threatened by the candidacy of old-stock-American Franklin D. Roosevelt as they had felt by the candidacy of Alfred E. Smith in 1928.

Among the several explanations of Smith's remarkable victory in Rhode Island offered by historians and political scientists is that his gains over 1920 and 1924 were understandable, given the weakness of the two Democratic predecessors, James M. Cox and John W. Davis.⁵ Of the top ten presidential landslides in this century, 1920 and 1924 rank first and second, respectively, in terms of the winner's percentage margin over the loser.⁶ Further, in 1924 Robert LaFollette's third-party candidacy lured some Democrats away from the national ticket, and Republican strength in Rhode Island was enhanced by Calvin Coolidge's status as a fellow New Englander. In the absence of such short-term factors, the Democratic ticket could expect to do better at the polls in 1928 than it had in 1920 and 1924. But what is striking is the enormous gain of the Democracy. Smith's outperforming of Wilson by 35 percent in an Italian district in Providence indicates that something other than a more credible candidate than Cox or Davis was at work.

Some have argued that the worsening economic plight of many Catholic Americans accounted for much of Smith's gains.⁷ Before the Great Depression certain industries in Rhode Island began to flash warning signals. Many textile firms were faced with liquidation when several mill-owners moved their enterprises to the South. Rhode Island's commissioner of labor reported in 1928 that "the textile indus-

5. Jerome M. Clubb and Howard W. Allen note that in 1920 Harding was elected in a Republican landslide, while in 1924 Robert LaFollette's Progressive Party siphoned many votes away from the Democrats. Clubb and Allen, "The Cities and the Election of 1928: Partisan Realignment?" *American Historical Review*, LXXIV (1969), 1208. For other comments on the weakness of the 1920 and 1924 Democratic presidential nominees see Wilfred Ellsworth Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York, 1954), 371-372; David Burner, *The Politics of Provincialism: The Democratic Party in Transition, 1918-1932* (New York, 1968), 231-235; Edgar Litt, *The Political Cultures of Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 31-32.

6. The 1928 Hoover landslide ranks eighth. See Everett Carl Ladd and Charles D. Hadley, *Transformations of the American Party System* (New York, 1978), 308.

7. See Lubell, *Future of American Politics*, 50; Neal Peirce, *The New England States: People, Politics and Power in the Six New England States* (New York, 1976), 148; Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York, 1970), 228. J. Joseph Huthmacher notes that while Smith's advances in Massachusetts were most marked in those areas experiencing severe economic difficulties, Chicopee, Massachusetts, saw a significant Democratic gain in 1928 despite improved economic conditions. See Huthmacher, *Massachusetts: People and Politics, 1919-1933* (New York, 1969), 157-160, 183, 189.

8. *Report of the Commissioner of Labor Made to the Rhode Island General Assembly for the Year 1928* (Providence, 1929), 32.

9. Rhode Island Democratic State Platform, 1928.

10. *Providence Journal*, Apr. 23, 1928.

11. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, D.C., 1975), 135.

12. Peirce, *New England States*, 64.

13. Oscar Handlin, *Boston Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 46.

14. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850; Population of the United States in 1860; The Ninth Decennial Census of the United States: 1870; The Tenth Decennial Census of the United States: 1880*; U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on the Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890*.

try was in very unsatisfactory condition, attended by curtailment of employees and the number of working hours per week."⁸ Nationally, unemployment stood at four million persons. Most of those looking for work were relative newcomers to the United States who had been on the payrolls of the textile, jewelry, apparel, and other "immigrant" industries.

Rhode Island Democrats seized upon the unfavorable economic trends as material for the 1928 platform: "We denounce the hypocritical attitude of the Republican party in trying to make the people of Rhode Island feel that there is unbounded prosperity when so many of them are without employment."⁹ Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland, a Smith surrogate, ridiculed Republican claims of prosperity at a Rhode Island Democratic rally:

I suppose your textile mills are running day and night. No doubt your woolen mills have so many orders already that they can run for the remainder of the year at a huge profit without taking another order. Your silk mills, no doubt, are sending orders to big industrial plants to help take care of the vast quantity of business.¹⁰

Undoubtedly, economic concerns were a factor in the voting in 1928. But an economic voting hypothesis does not fully explain why the Democrats would not then have made even larger gains in 1932, three years into the Great Depression, when nationwide unemployment had increased sixfold over what it had been in 1928.¹¹ In one Irish district in Providence, for example, the 1932 Democratic vote was only 5 percent more than in 1928; in a Yankee district, 2 percent. Despite the parlous times, the Democrats in 1932 simply failed to register the expected gains in Rhode Island.

To focus solely on the candidates and on economic conditions as an explanation of the 1928 results is to overlook a massive transformation in Rhode Island's ethnocultural makeup—a shift unprecedented in the state's history and unequalled since. Beginning in the 1840s, Rhode Island experienced its first massive influx of immigrants, most of them from Ireland. Their exodus was a flight from economic and social distress. In the wake of the failures of the potato crop, famine and disease were rife in Ireland.¹² The troubles of the peasants were compounded when landlords found it financially and politically profitable to turn out tenants; from 1849 to 1851 there were approximately 260,000 evictions that displaced some one million people, a process that continued until 1870.¹³ Hope for a better life lay in crossing the Atlantic; from 1841 to 1850, over three-quarters of a million emigrated to the United States, bringing with them memories of their hard lot in farming. Virtually penniless, most remained in their port of entry and took whatever jobs they could find. In the next several decades hundreds of thousands settled in the eastern cities.

Rhode Island was a "front-line" state for the new waves of immigrants. In 1850, there were 16,000 foreign-born Irish in the state; in 1890, just under 39,000.¹⁴ By 1875, 28 percent of the populace had been

born in another country, principally Ireland,¹⁵ but the altered ethnic composition was not uniformly distributed. The 1865 Rhode Island census showed a 225 percent increase in the foreign-born residents of Providence since 1845.¹⁶ According to the census figures, if children with foreign parentage were counted as aliens, 44 percent of the city's people would be classified as foreign born; in North Providence, it would be even higher, 56 percent.¹⁷ The impact of this social transformation was profound, and was compressed into a relatively short time. In the twenty-five-year period, from 1850 to 1875, the number of foreign-born residents in Providence had tripled, and the city population itself had doubled.¹⁸ The ethnic homogeneity of the state was gone.

Just as the Irish immigration crested in 1890, a new wave of immigrants from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe hit Rhode Island. The forces behind the jettisoning of these peoples by their homelands were unproductive soil and overpopulation. In most of Europe extensive acreage was required to support one family, and by 1900 much of the Continent was economically depressed, with Southern Italy particularly hard hit. The choice was between emigration and starvation, which dictated that many Italians and other nationals leave their birthplaces.

Overpopulation also prompted many Europeans to search for a better life. Simply stated, they were pushing themselves off the land. For example, in Italy at the turn of the century, the average population density was approximately 300 persons per square mile. The excess number of births over deaths was some 350,000 per year, a figure equal to the population of one province.¹⁹ Diminished social status, precarious livelihoods, and fecundity precipitated decisions to try the New World: from 1890 to 1930 more than 15 million people left Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, a number roughly equal to the number who had come to the United States from *all* countries between 1820 and 1890.²⁰

In 1890, there were 500 foreign-born Italians living in Rhode Island; by 1930, 32,500 resided in the state—an increase of over 1200 percent.²¹ Providence was the home of 19,000 of these foreign-born Italians, and many, like Salvatore Pastore, lived in the Federal Hill section.²² The shift from Irish to Italian migration is reflected in the origins of foreign-born whites living in Providence. In 1890, 47 percent of the city's aliens were of Irish descent; only 4 percent were Italian. By 1930, these figures were reversed: 30 percent were Italian; 12 percent, Irish.²³

The transformation of the Republican bailiwick of Rhode Island from a homogeneous Protestant enclave to a Catholic polyglot was so complete that one could speak of the "conquest" of Rhode Island by the immigrants.²⁴ This conquest explains much of Smith's gains. By 1928 the newer Catholic arrivals had "come of age" politically. Although some had been in Rhode Island since 1890, as a group many needed time to learn English, to acquaint themselves with the political process, to establish party loyalties, and to perceive the desirability of voting. By 1928, they were ready to make their debut—an event that

15. Rhode Island Census, 1875.

16. Rhode Island Census, 1865.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Rhode Island Census, 1875.

19. Oscar Handlin, *Immigration as a Factor in American History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1959), 29.

20. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, 105–106.

21. *Report on the Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890*; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*.

22. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*.

23. *Report on the Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890; Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*.

24. One writer did exactly that. See Daniel Chauncey Brewer, *The Conquest of New England by the Immigrant* (New York, 1926).

25. On the increased participation of urban migrants in the 1928 election see also Carl N. Degler, "American Political Parties and the Rise of the City: An Interpretation," *Journal of American History*, LI (1964), 56; Lubell, *Future of American Politics*, 49.

26. This was the Fourteenth Representative District.

27. This was the Second Representative District.

28. Figure derived from *Providence Journal Almanac*, 1925, and *ibid.*, 1929.

29. Quoted in Huthmacher, *Massachusetts*, 154.

30. Everett Carl Ladd, *American Political Parties: Social Change and Political Response* (New York, 1970), 146.

31. "A Law with Fangs," editorial, *Providence Visitor*, Sept. 19, 1924; and "The Aim," editorial, *ibid.*, Apr. 24, 1924.

32. Emphasis added.

33. The 1842 Rhode Island Constitution had excluded nonproperty owners from voting for the office of city councillor in Providence. The Bourn Amendment prohibited nonproperty owners from voting in *all* councillor elections.

was reflected in the substantially larger voter turnouts in the ethnic districts.²⁵ One Italian district in Providence, for example, recorded a 32 percent increase in voter turnout.²⁶ By contrast, a Yankee district registered only a 2 percent gain.²⁷ Overall, there was an 11 percent increase in voter turnout in Providence, the Democratic nominee being the prime beneficiary.²⁸

Certainly, Smith's ethnic origins contributed to the sizeable voter turnout. During his long career he personified the eastern, "wet," urban, and Catholic elements of the Democracy. He was born on New York City's East Side, the son of an Irish immigrant. A Roman Catholic and former fishmarket worker, he ran for governor of New York five times, losing only once, in the Republican landslide of 1920. In 1924, he sought the Democratic presidential nomination despite the vehement opposition of the southern and western wings of the party. His nomination in 1928 was more than a personal triumph; it signified acceptance at last of the group of which he was a member. The *New Republic* said "for the first time a representative of the unpedigreed, foreign-born, city-bred, many-tongued recent arrivals on the American scene has knocked on the door and aspired seriously to the presidency seat in the national council chamber."²⁹

Coupled with Smith's immigrant heritage was considerable agreement among Rhode Island Democrats and their ethnic supporters on three important "voting issues": immigration and electoral discrimination, Prohibition, and economic concerns.

Republicans in Congress, led by Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, spurred passage of several restrictive immigration laws—a move many immigrants opposed. In 1921, Congress limited entry of all nationalities to a yearly quota not to exceed 3 percent of those foreign-born persons already living in the United States, as established by the 1910 census. An even more restrictive measure was adopted in 1924: an annual quota of 2 percent, based upon the number of foreign-born persons living in the United States in 1890, as determined by that census.³⁰ The intent of the legislation was clear: to *stop* the flow of immigrants. The limitations angered many Roman Catholics in Rhode Island. The *Providence Visitor*, official newspaper of the Diocese of Providence, decried the "fangs" in the new law as "a sop to labor, balm to the prejudiced, and the first practical measure proclaiming an ascendancy of the Anglo-Saxon race."³¹

Within Rhode Island, Republicans often antagonized Catholics by their blatant attempts to put the voting franchise off limits to the largely Catholic newcomers. The Rhode Island Constitution of 1842 gave the franchise to "every male *native* citizen" who paid at least one dollar in taxes per year.³² The Bourn Amendment of 1888, approved by the Republican-controlled General Assembly, removed the voter qualification for "native" males and excluded nonproperty owners from voting in elections for city councils.³³ According to Duane Lockard, the amendment was "a shrewd move from the point of view of the tight little oligarchy that led the Republican party. In local politics the Dem-



Rhode Island's immigrant population helped to transform politics in the state during the early twentieth century. Here, in a photograph taken in 1906, French-Canadian immigrants celebrate St. Jean Baptiste day in Woonsocket. Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHI X3 4397).

ocrats might win mayoralty elections but the city councils remained in Republican hands.³⁴ Murray and Susan Stedman estimated that "nearly sixty percent of those who could vote for mayor [in Providence] were disqualified in councilmanic elections."³⁵ Between 1896 and 1906, Stedman and Stedman estimate, the average vote for mayor was 20,435, but only 8,163 in council elections.³⁶ Thus, although immigrants could vote for the mayor, it was the councilman who often ruled and dispensed patronage.

In 1928, a constitutional amendment passed by the Republican-dominated Rhode Island General Assembly ended the property qualification for voting in city council elections. The Republicans prevented immigrant participation in some town meetings and referenda, however, by continuing the property qualification as a condition for voting "upon any proposition to impose a tax or for the expenditure of money in any town, as distinguished from a city."³⁷

Such Republican machinations angered many Catholic migrants and were not quickly forgotten. Judge Frank E. Fitzsimmons, chairman of the 1928 Democratic state convention, warned Rhode Island Republicans that

minorities, whether natural by the actuality of numbers or artificial through the arbitrary application of oppressive laws . . . are certain to consider with even more alert interest and clearer mental sight political problems and the effect of their solution for good or ill on the body social. The free man or woman conscious of a grievance *thinks*, and if the grievance is serious enough he or she longs for a remedy.³⁸

34. Duane Lockard, *New England State Politics* (Princeton, N.J., 1959), 174.

35. Murray S. Stedman, Jr., and Susan S. Stedman, "The Rise of the Democratic Party of Rhode Island," *New England Quarterly*, XXIII (1951), 339.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Rhode Island Constitution. The 1901 Brayton Law was another Republican-sponsored device to frustrate Catholic interests. Realizing that the Catholic-dominated Democratic party might win the governorship more often in the twentieth century, Republican boss Charles R. Brayton pushed for legislation stripping the governor of all appointive power and vesting it in the Republican-dominated State Senate. Under the law, if the Senate did not confirm gubernatorial appointments within three days, it could designate its own choices for the positions.

38. *Providence Journal*, Apr. 24, 1928. Emphasis added.

39. "The Future of Prohibition," editorial, *Providence Visitor*, Nov. 9, 1928.
 40. Rhode Island Republican State Platform, 1928.
 41. Rhode Island Democratic State Platform, 1928.
 42. "Battle of the Atlantic," *Time*, Nov. 5, 1928, 13.
 43. Quoted in Huthmacher, *Massachusetts*, 158.
 44. *Ibid.*, 154.
 45. *Boston Globe*, Oct. 25, 1928.

Other matters strengthened Catholic-Protestant animosities. In 1928, Prohibition became a major national issue in the presidential campaign; Hoover termed it "noble in motive,"³⁹ while Smith firmly opposed it. Rhode Island Republicans sided with their presidential candidate: "We pledge ourselves to the support of the Federal Constitution including the Eighteenth Amendment and to the faithful and impartial execution of the laws by which they are made effective."⁴⁰ Rhode Island Democrats, on the other hand, took a "state's rights" view, cognizant of how Catholics would vote on it.⁴¹ The issue was prominent during Smith's visit to Providence. One Catholic bystander carried a placard: "Remember November 6—BEER!"⁴²

Economic concerns reinforced the immigrant commitment to the Democracy. Rhode Island Democrats consistently favored economic proposals designed to improve the lot of their "have-not" Catholic constituents.

During an appearance in Boston, Smith derided the Republican claims of prosperity by linking the average paycheck of millworkers to Republican claims that Americans were moving into the "silk-stocking class": "Now just draw upon your imagination for a moment and see if you can picture a man at \$17.50 a week going out to a chicken dinner with his silk socks on."⁴³

After watching the 1928 presidential campaign, political scientists Roy Peel and Thomas Donnelly claimed that the political rhetoric of Smith and Hoover had little effect; what counted was whether one "felt" with one of the candidates.⁴⁴ In Rhode Island, the combination of eighty years of migration to the state, "voting issue" agreement, and Smith's immigrant past produced an explosion of favorable feeling for him and his party. So many of the rank and file wanted to go to the Democratic national convention that it was decided to give each delegate a half-vote, thereby doubling the size of the contingent. The composition of the delegation was primarily Catholic, with names like Quinn, Dunne, DePasquale, O'Neill, Donahue, and Archambault responding to the roll calls. The state's delegation to the Republican national convention, on the other hand, was overwhelmingly Protestant; the Metcalfs, the Vanderbilts, the Sharpes, and the Hazards were dominant.

The Smith visit to Providence in October produced an even greater outburst of "feeling" for the Democracy. As the *Boston Globe* put it, "no such triumphant procession was ever witnessed in the minds of close political observers of the situation in Little Rhody."⁴⁵ According to the *Providence Journal*, it was pandemonium:

Fire engines screeched, band instruments blared, torpedoes tossed by youngsters exploded, tickertape floated in a sinuous maze from the windows of tall buildings, automobile horns blasted, shrill whistles and locomotives screamed, confetti and shredded newspapers descended in blinding drifts, and an airplane marked with

TABLE II Percentage of Democratic Presidential Vote, Selected Areas of Providence, 1928-1948

Area	1928	1948*
Irish	71	67
Italian	79	83
Yankee	42	34
Jewish	68	76
Providence	58	67
Statewide	51	58

Derived from: *Providence Journal Almanac*, 1929, 1949.

* Combined Truman and Wallace vote.

words of welcome swooped an aerial salute as the governor's procession passed slowly along.⁴⁶

The *Providence Journal* also noted a revealing incident: Providence police tried to remove a flag display, claiming that a city ordinance permitted use of flags only on national holidays. Mayor Dunne intervened. He contended that the Smith visit was of national significance, and ordered the flags replaced.⁴⁷

Mayor Dunne's ascribing national significance to Smith's visit to Rhode Island may have been somewhat shaky, but the ethnocultural tide that had been gathering long before 1928 hit with full force in that year. The ethnocultural forces changed the face of Rhode Island politics—a transformation that still echoes in the state's political corridors.⁴⁸ To be sure, there have been other dramatic presidential elections in Rhode Island history. For one, Theodore H. White describes the tumultuous visit of Lyndon Johnson to Providence in 1964, when "one could see in the streets of his route more people than the census gave for the entire population of the city."⁴⁹ But no subsequent election has had such a long-lasting effect as the 1928 contest.

Twenty years after the Smith-Hoover battle, Rhode Island returns continued to mirror the 1928 results. In one Italian district in Providence, Truman pulled only 4 percent more of the Democratic vote than Smith did in 1928; in a Yankee district, Truman lost 7 percent; in a Jewish district, a Truman gain of 8 percent; in an Irish district, a 4 percent loss (see Table II).⁵⁰

Continuity—not change—has characterized the state's politics in the post-Smith era. The result has been an unprecedented string of Democratic presidential victories. Only three times in the thirteen elections since 1928 has Rhode Island turned its back on the Democratic nominee.⁵¹ (And in three instances—1960, 1964, 1968—Rhode

46. *Providence Journal*, Oct. 26, 1928.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Others who agree with this assessment are Burnham, *Critical Elections*, 114; V. O. Key, Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, XVII (1955), 1; James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States* [Washington, D.C., 1973], 178.

49. Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1964* [New York, 1965], 365.

50. Combined Truman and Wallace vote.

51. In 1952 and again in 1956, the state sided with Eisenhower. In a relatively close contest in 1972, Rhode Island voted for Richard Nixon over George McGovern. McGovern ranks as the third weakest Democratic presidential candidate in this century, just below Cox and Davis.

52. Despite the Reagan landslide, Rhode Island ranked sixth in the nation (excluding the District of Columbia) in its support for Jimmy Carter in 1980.

Island led the nation in the percentage of the vote given to the Democratic presidential candidate.)⁵² By taking issue positions that delivered the Catholics into the Democrat's hands, the Republicans seem to have been possessed by an unwillingness to face facts. It was not until decades later that the Rhode Island Republican party tried to expand its base, but it was too late. The party has contributed, in part, to its minority status.

A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The use of General Assembly House districts is warranted because ward returns for the 1916 to 1932 period are not available. According to Roland A. Dumont, secretary of the Providence Board of Canvassers and Registration, the 1928 records of ward results were damaged by sea water during Hurricane Carol in 1953; they became moldy and were ordered destroyed by the superintendent of health in 1955. The only returns now available are those published in the *Providence Journal Almanac* for House districts.

A redrawing of the General Assembly House district lines in Providence in 1930 and 1938 complicated the analysis. The only change pertinent to the inquiry, however, was the joining of the Eighth District with parts of the Seventh and Ninth Districts; the Second, Fourteenth, and Twenty-third Districts remained largely intact. In each of these instances election data were gathered to fit the patterns delineated by the older house district lines. Another redistricting in 1938 left the aforementioned districts essentially the same.

The ethnic composition of the House districts was found by determining in which wards the districts were situated and by comparing them with ethnicity patterns in the federal census of 1920. In instances where it was difficult to determine the ethnicity of a given district, former Providence City historian Joseph Chrostowski was of invaluable assistance.

From the Collections: An Ordinary Chair

Robert P. Emlen

Although the high-style furniture made in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Rhode Island has been well documented over the years, comparatively little is known about its less elegant counterparts, the kind used by the great majority of Rhode Islanders. Not only is the more common work overshadowed by the brilliance of Newport cabinetmaking at its zenith, but at the same time, documented examples of vernacular Rhode Island furniture are surprisingly few. It is with great satisfaction, therefore, that the Rhode Island Historical Society has located, identified, and added to the museum collection a most ordinary side chair bearing the original paper label of Thomas M. Parker, Providence chairmaker.

Following his father's death in 1828, Thomas Maxwell Parker gathered his widowed mother and nine siblings from the family farm in Rindge, New Hampshire, and brought them with him to Providence,¹ where, at the age of twenty-five, he set up business painting chairs in a shop at the corner of Westminster and Snow streets.² For the next four years Thomas Parker made, painted, and sold chairs in a series of shops in that neighborhood.³ Several furniture shops and ware rooms were located within the same few blocks, and Parker appears to have been one of many young craftsmen whose employment migrated around the district every year or two.

In 1832, eighteen-year-old Ira Parker joined the business, gilding and painting the chairs his older brother built. They settled down together in a new shop at the corner of Westminster and Greene streets,⁴ where, according to the address on its label, the Society's chair was made.

The stylized scroll on the back of the crest and the chair's outward-flaring front legs are characteristics of what nineteenth-century Americans referred to as the "Grecian" style of furniture. Adapted from the klismos chairs pictured on ancient Greek vases, the style had been popular in Rhode Island for thirty years when Thomas Parker produced this chair. In this simplified version, ornament was reduced to a minimum: a few turned rings on the back posts have been substituted for expensive decorative carving and a woven cane seat used in place of more luxurious upholstery. In fact, with its surface painted to resemble the elegant grain of rosewood, Thomas Parker's side chair has as much in common with the kind of inexpensive and popular furniture produced by Lambert Hitchcock and his contemporaries in the second

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1. Augustus G. Parker, comp. and ed., *Parker in America, 1630-1910* (Buffalo, N.Y., 1911), 338.

2. *Providence Directory* (Providence, R.I., 1828).

3. *Providence Directory* (Providence, R.I., 1830).

4. *Providence Directory* (Providence, R.I., 1832).



Thomas M. Parker's printed paper label (detail):

"Manufactured/ By Thomas M. Parker./ Green-Street, Providence, R.I. Warranted to do good service, or the money refunded. Chairs made to order./ Old Chairs repaired, painted, and regilt." Photograph by Helga Photo Studio. Courtesy of The Magazine ANTIQUES.

5. *Providence Directory* [Providence, R.I., 1848].

6. For Nutting's comments on a Parker chair see Wallace Nutting, *Furniture Treasury* (New York, 1933), 450.

7. For information on furniture makers working in Rhode Island during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries see Wendell D. Garrett, "The Newport Cabinetmakers: A Corrected Checklist," *The Magazine ANTIQUES*, LXXIII (1958), 558–561; Garrett, "Providence Cabinetmakers, Chairmakers, Upholsterers, and Allied Craftsmen, 1756–1838," *The Magazine ANTIQUES*, XC (1966), 514–519; Joseph K. Ott, "Recent Discoveries Among Rhode Island Cabinetmakers and Their Work," *Rhode Island History*, XXVIII (1969), 3–25; Ott, "More Notes on Rhode Island Cabinetmakers and Their Work," *R.I. Hist.*, XXVIII (1969), 49–52; Ott, "Still More Notes on Rhode Island Cabinetmakers and Allied Craftsmen," *R.I. Hist.*, XXVIII (1969), 111–121; Ott, "Lesser-known Rhode Island Cabinetmakers: the Carliles, Holmes Weaver, Judson Blake, the Rawsons, and Thomas Davenport," *The Magazine ANTIQUES*, CXXI (1982), 1156–1163.

quarter of the nineteenth century as it does with the stylish Greek Revival furniture that served as its model.

In addition to identifying chairs of his own manufacture, the label Thomas Parker pasted inside their front seat rails advertised: "Old Chairs repaired, painted, and regilt." One could surmise from this that the business of making chairs was not flourishing for Thomas Parker, and that he and Ira had to mend their customers' old furniture in order to augment their income.

Ultimately, Thomas Parker's chair-making business was not particularly successful: sometime in the mid-1840s Ira left Providence, and Thomas abandoned the trade to become a grocer.⁵ Few traces of his workmanship survive to bear witness to his craft. In 1933, Wallace Nutting, the furniture historian, mentioned having seen a chair labeled by Thomas Parker—probably of this type, or a close variant, for a set of labeled Parker chairs with a stylized urn splat have also come to light—but this is the first time Parker's work has been documented and published.⁶

Chairs of this kind from the shops of numerous furniture craftsmen were probably used to furnish many a Rhode Island home.⁷ Considered at the time to be unremarkable in style or workmanship, they escaped special note, doing yeoman service and then passing from sight. The discovery of such commonplace objects as Thomas Parker's Grecian chair leaves us better informed in our attempt to learn more about the everyday lives of average Rhode Islanders.

Side chair made by Thomas M. Parker (1803–1884), Providence, Rhode Island, 1832–ca. 1846, in the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Photograph by Helga Photo Studio. Courtesy of The Magazine ANTIQUES.



Book Reviews

Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650-1750. By LAUREL THATCHER ULRICH. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982. xviii + 296 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliographic essay, and index. \$17.50.)

Good Wives is a well written, informative book about women in northern New England between 1650 and 1750. There are very few accounts which explore the perimeters of women's life at that time, and it is interesting that the two latest studies come to opposite conclusions. In *Good Wives*, Laurel Ulrich suggests that the needs of early New England society encouraged women to contribute to the economic well being of the community more than we previously assumed. Yet Lyle Koehler's provocative book, *A Search for Power: The Weaker Sex in Seventeenth Century New England* (1980) indicated that the repressive atmosphere of Puritanism molded the New England female character and prevented women from participating in society as fully as they might have. But even though Ulrich and Koehler are discussing women in roughly similar circumstances, it is probably the geographic differences within those boundaries that lead the authors in different historical directions. In a word, Puritan society in Boston was very different from Puritan society in the small towns and countryside of northern New Hampshire.

Ulrich's study is an excellent introduction to, and overview of, daily life in colonial America. Her research shows massive effort, and she has blended literary and quantitative material in a way that makes interesting reading without the distraction of too many numbers in the text. Her work on women held captive among the Indians is particularly noteworthy, and some of her insights are quite revealing, as when she asserts that the question of how much responsibility a woman had in the colonial period is as important a consideration as her economic opportunity.

It is not difficult to agree with Ulrich that women's contribution to colonial America was more pervasive—and crucial—than has been generally acknowledged. Yet the author does not take into consideration the paradoxes and inconsistencies inherent in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century society, and she leaves several unanswered questions. For example, although many, probably most, women married in the seventeenth century, it is not accurate to say that "almost all females who reached the age of maturity married" (p.6). It is even less true of the eighteenth century when a distorted sex ratio in the older New England seacoast towns prevented many eligible women from

marrying. The whole emphasis of the book is on married women, and we are left wondering about those other women who were brought up in a society which created expectations of marriage, but who were unable to marry because of the demographic imbalance.

A similar historical contradiction appears at the beginning of Part I where Ulrich prints a section of the Bible from Proverbs 31. The author tells us that the Puritans called this passage "Bathsheba," and it is presented as the colonial ideal of the virtuous wife. Yet a careful examination of the lines suggests that what was an acceptable activity for a biblical wife was not necessarily acceptable in New England—despite the Puritan devotion to the Bible. In other words, although the virtuous woman in Proverbs could buy a field and plant a vineyard, the Puritan woman, by common law and custom, could not. Not only did the biblical woman make linen, but she sold it. Did this transaction require the approval of her husband, as it did in Puritan New England? And if the Bible indicated that this same virtuous woman "openeth her mouth with wisdom," Puritan society was less certain that the female tongue transmitted anything worth hearing. It would have added to the richness of the analysis if Ulrich had addressed these conflicts.

Tables 1 and 2 also raise questions which Ulrich might have considered. The number of spinning wheels listed in household inventories is surprisingly low throughout the period. At least half the households show an absence of a wheel. Does this mean there were no women in these households? If there were, did they learn to spin? Where were their clothes made? Did they buy or barter for fabric? If, like Magdalen Wear, some women offered "to spin for a day" in other people's households (p. 32), did they take their children with them or was some other arrangement made whereby the father, perhaps, might care for them?

Ulrich's book is a fine addition to the study of women in colonial New England. Its only drawback is that it does not come to grips with some of the knottier questions the research evokes. Of course, in the end that may not be a drawback at all, since historians are obligated to raise questions as well as answer them.

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ELAINE F. CRANE

Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675–1715. By RICHARD R. JOHNSON. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1981. xx + 470 pp. Map, bibliography, and index. \$30.00.)

Empire is back, or, at least, political and institutional studies of the early British empire are back. The course of imperial history has not been smooth, nor has it always been popular. Once the intellectual and social historians got hold of New England, they kept a death-like grip

on it, and those not convinced that Puritanism and town studies were the only way to interpret historical development north and east of New York laid low, or seemed to. But they and their scholarly descendants are up and at it again, and historians' interests in colonial policy and the colonists' role in it, or along side it, are undergoing a minor revival. This is a good sign because they bring to it a variety of approaches not as well appreciated in the days of G. L. Beer and C. M. Andrews. Mercantilism has taken a beating lately in recent studies which may annoy some of us who usually found it a useful handle to explain the heart of colonial policy. But mercantilism, we are learning, is only one of several concepts which historians have utilized in explaining policy and the course of events in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Richard R. Johnson has written a rich full study of the course of political and imperial events in New England between the Restoration and 1715. He has not chosen one side of the Atlantic to emphasize at the expense of the other as a main theme but has skillfully related imperial policy, international conflict, colonial needs, desires, and interests into a well-knit whole. What is new is apparent in the title. This is no Whig history about how colonists laid the bases in the seventeenth century for bigger and better things in the eighteenth. This is a book about how New England colonies and colonists got along with the Mother Country, and according to Johnson, they got along better than we had thought. Not only did they tend to adjust to the way things were going, in their own way they had some effect upon the direction of them—that the course of events was not mere reaction to policy, uneven as it was, but a working out of problems. Certainly Massachusetts was stubborn on occasion, but surprisingly Johnson shows us that the English government was often sensitive to this stubbornness.

There is no doubt that revocation of the Massachusetts charter in 1684 was a shock, and the Dominion of New England an even greater one, except maybe for those who "adjusted." But after the rebellions—whose causes, Johnson believes, were of less importance than their long-term significance—and after the disillusionment of the early 1690s (witchcraft and all), the new charter prefaced eventually an evolution in politics that was positive rather than destructive. It emphasized stronger ties with London through able agents and a continuity in governors which lent stability: Joseph Dudley in Massachusetts, Samuel Cranston in Rhode Island, and Gurdon Saltonstall of Connecticut. More favorable circumstances helped to produce a resurgence of confidence which was felt in court systems, in defense, and in general professionalization of government, touching taxation and finance, the use patronage, and executive power. Along with these new, more positive conditions came what Johnson calls "pragmatic adaption" and "creative synthesis" in New England's imperial relationship.

The burden of this study is chiefly Massachusetts, although other members of the New England family have their moments, among them

Rhode Island's occasional anarchy and resistance to outsiders. This is a long book; Johnson sets a slow unhurried pace while telling all. There is a tremendous amount of detail, much of it from manuscript sources, but the scheme is well organized. If this work epitomizes a revival of interest in imperial history, let us hope other books are as solid and as good.

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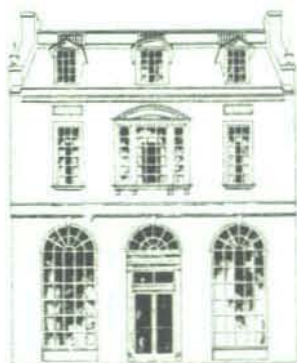


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