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J. FRANKLIN JAMESON, AMASA M. EATON,
EDWARD FIELD.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Officers of the Rhode Island Historical Society	I
Proceedings, 1899-1900	3
Address of the President	9
Report of the Treasurer	24
Report of the Committee on Grounds and Buildings	28
Report of the Library Committee	29
List of Institutions and Corporations from which gifts have been received	37
List of Persons from whom gifts have been received	39
Report of the Lecture Committee	41
Report of the Publication Committee	42
Report of the Committee on Genealogical Researches	44
Necrology	46
Note on Roger Williams's Wife	67
Francis Brinley's Briefe Narrative of the Nanhiganset Countrey	69
British State Papers relating to Rhode Island	96
The Adjustment of Rhode Island into the Union in 1790	104
Sir Thomas Urquhart and Roger Williams	135
Editorial Notes	137, 195, 278
Ten Letters of Roger Williams, 1654-1678	141, 277
Benefit Street in 1798	161
Papers relating to Fantee	190
Papers of William Vernon and the Navy Board	197
The Ancestry of Patience Cook	278
Index	279

AMASA M. EATON
J. FRANKLIN JAMESON
EDWARD FIELD

No. 1496. Oct. 31, 1687. Journal of Lords of Trade and Plantations. Sir Edmund Andros's letter of 31 August read (see No. 1414, above). Agreed to lay the proposals as to revenue before the King. The reports on the Narraganset Country and Pejebscot were referred to the Attorney-General. Memorandum of documents sent and received. [*Col. Entry Bk.*, Vol. CIX., pp. 108-111.]

THE ADJUSTMENT OF RHODE ISLAND INTO THE UNION IN 1790.

A VAST amount of attention has been bestowed on the history of the ratification of the Federal Constitution by Rhode Island; almost none at all upon the history of the events immediately ensuing in her history, the process by which she became adjusted into the Union. Historical students have proceeded as if, once Rhode Island had agreed to enter the Union, nothing more remained to be done, and her constitutional history came to an end, not to recommence until the times just before the Dorr War. No doubt the main question was settled, a question whose importance far transcended that of any questions which remained. Yet there is a considerable degree of interest in the minor settlements and adjustments which ensued. This is true in all the states. A complete adjustment into the Union could not be effected all at once. Not only did friction between the federal government and the states occur here and there during a long period, but the very terms of the Constitution, transferring to the federal government many powers which hitherto had belonged to the states, gave a violent wrench to the systems which the states had established, and produced difficulties and required readjustments which it is now difficult for the mind to realize. An instance is the transfer of the power to impose customs duties from the state governments to that of the

Union; a transfer which at one blow deprived most states of one of their chief sources of revenue.

The following documents, chiefly derived from the Theodore Foster Papers, possessed by the Society, will help to carry Rhode Island history a little way into this somewhat neglected period, though it be no farther than to the end of the year 1790. The first two letters exhibit the anxiety of Federalist senators in Congress for reinforcements from Rhode Island. Foster having been elected senator, the remaining letters are mostly written to him while at New York in attendance upon the sessions of the Senate, by various friends in Rhode Island.

It will be seen that the federal measure which most excited the attention of Rhode Island politicians in the summer of 1790 was Hamilton's project for the assumption of state debts by the federal government. In his famous and comprehensive funding scheme he had included a provision whereby the state debts were to be assumed. This proposal had been, by a close vote, rejected in the House, which, at the time when Rhode Island joined the Union, was just about to pass a funding act not including the state debts.¹ Meantime the plan for the location of the federal capital had met with difficulty, owing to the rival interests of Pennsylvania and Virginia. Hamilton made use of Jefferson's influence to arrange a compromise, by which, in return for votes in favor of assumption, the capital, after ten years at Philadelphia, was to be permanently located on the Potomac. Then the Senate, on July 16, inserted in the Funding Bill a provision for assuming certain specified amounts in the certificates of the debts of the several states. The amount fixed upon for Rhode Island was only \$200,000, out of a total of \$21,500,000 assumed, and Senators Foster and Stanton voted against the bill on its final passage². But it passed both houses, and

¹ *House Journal*, June 2.

² *Journals of the Senate and House*, May - July.

became law August 4, 1790. The other measures spoken of in the letters require no explanation at this point; but, reverting to the subject of Rhode Island's adjustment into the Union, a few words may be said concerning those federal laws which had a part in effecting that adjustment.

Four acts were passed by the First Congress, at their second session, after Rhode Island's ratification of the Constitution, which may be regarded, in whole or in part, as consequences or corollaries of that event, and as steps in the process of union. First, an act of June 14, 1790, (Chap. XIX.), extended over Rhode Island the provisions of the Tariff Act of July 4, 1789, the Tonnage Act of July 20, the act to regulate the collection of customs and tonnage duties passed July 31, and the registry act of September 1, 1789. It provided for two customs districts and for two ports of entry, Newport and Providence, with a collector, naval officer and surveyor at each. There were also to be surveyors at the seven ports of delivery, one in the latter district, at Pawtuxet, and five in the former, at North Kingstown, East Greenwich, Westerly, Bristol and Warren,—the last named official serving the two ports of Warren and Barrington. Secondly, an act of June 23, 1790, (Chap. XXI.), brought Rhode Island within the scope of the Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789, and established there a United States district court, a district judge, and regular sessions of the circuit court. Thirdly, an act of July 5, 1790, (Chap. XXV.), extended over Rhode Island the Federal Census Act of March 1, 1790, and assigned to the marshal of the district court the munificent salary of one hundred dollars for making the enumeration. The fourth act alluded to, approved August 11, 1790, (Chap. XLIII.), related to the River Machine Company, which is the subject of several of the following letters. The General Assembly had incorporated that company in January, 1790, for the purpose of dredging the Providence River and improving its navigation, and, in order that

it might reimburse its expenditure of one thousand dollars in constructing "a Machine called a Mud-Engine," had provided that the collector of the port of Providence should levy a duty of two cents per ton on every vessel of over sixty tons (except those laden with wood and lumber) arriving in the port, and should pay this over to the treasurer of the company.¹ This privilege, which was to last twenty years, was now found to conflict with the acts of Congress respecting tonnage duties. Accordingly Congress, by act of August 11, 1790, consented that the provisions respecting tonnage duties, contained in the state act incorporating the River Machine Company, should remain in force until January 10, 1791; subsequent acts² prolonged their operation till June 1, 1796.

No small part of the work of reorganization and adjustment resulting from Rhode Island's entrance into the Union,—and certainly no small part of the friction produced by that process,—arose from the necessity of filling the offices called into existence by the above-mentioned acts of Congress. President Washington had made his nominations to consular offices on June 4, and Rhode Island was naturally not "recognized" in this particular. The questions related solely to appointments to office within the state. It was Washington's general practice to regard only the qualifications and personal merits of the applicants, their services during the Revolutionary War, and in certain cases the fact that a candidate had been holding an analogous office under the state government. In Rhode Island, however (and perhaps also in New York), he seems to have taken into account considerations of party politics also. He did not wish to appoint to office under the Constitution men who had opposed its ratification.

Rhode Island seems to have contained, in proportion to population, about as many office-seekers in General Washing-

¹ *Acts and Resolves* for January session, 1790.

² Acts of January 10, 1791, and March 19, 1792.

ton's administration as in that of President McKinley. Several of the following letters relate to the subject. A few of the applications for office in Rhode Island addressed to President Washington have been printed in an excellent article on "Office-Seeking during Washington's Administration" by Mr. Gaillard Hunt, an official of the Department of State.¹ Mr. Hunt prints, for instance, a letter from Governor Collins, who, explaining that he had given the casting vote for calling the final convention and had lost his office for doing so, asked to be made collector of the port of Newport; also one from John Brown and John Francis, warning Washington against the Anti-federalists and suggesting a list of proper persons for customs appointments; and a letter of Judge Henry Marchant to Secretary Hamilton respecting appointments in 1793.

There is so much curious matter in these applications for office in Washington's administration that Mr. Hunt has prepared a calendar of them, from proof-sheets of which, extending from A to G, we have been permitted by his kindness to extract the portions relating to Rhode Islanders. These summaries we print after the letters derived from the Foster Papers. They are arranged in alphabetical order of the names. We hope to be able at a later time to print the remaining portions of the alphabet from this calendar, of which immediate publication is not expected.

It may be convenient that the appointments actually made by President Washington should be named, and also the incumbents of the analogous offices in the state organization now superseded. At the time when the Federal Constitution went into effect in Rhode Island, Ebenezer Thompson was collector of the port of Providence, Theodore Foster naval officer, and William Tyler surveyor. At Newport, John Wanton was collector, Gideon Wanton naval officer, and Edward Thurston surveyor. The other surveyors were: at Pawtuxet, Zachariah Rhodes; at East Greenwich, Job Com-

¹ *American Historical Review*, I. 270-283.

stock; at North Kingstown, Robert Eldred; at Pawcatuck River (Westerly), Thomas Brand; at Bristol, Samuel Bosworth; at Warren and Barrington, Samuel Miller.¹ Washington on June 14 nominated William Ellery for collector at Newport, Robert Croke for naval officer, Daniel Lyman for surveyor; for Providence, Jeremiah Olney for collector, Theodore Foster for naval officer, William Barton for surveyor. These nominations were, under suspension of the rules, confirmed the same day, that the system might go at once into operation. A few days later, when it appeared that Foster had been elected a senator from Rhode Island, Ebenezer Thompson, the former collector, was made naval officer in his place. The other surveyors nominated were: John Anthony Aborn for Pawtuxet; Job Comstock for East Greenwich; Daniel Eldridge Updike for North Kingstown; George Stillman for Pawcatuck River; Samuel Bosworth for Bristol; and Nathaniel Phillips for Warren and Barrington. These nominations (including Thompson's) were not made until July 2, a week after the arrival of Senators Foster and Stanton at the seat of government. Some comparison of these dates and names with those connected with the letters summarized in Mr. Hunt's calendar and with the letters here printed will make tolerably clear whatever of politics there was in these nominations. Suffice it to say that all of them were immediately confirmed except that of Updike, which, at first "postponed for want of information," was confirmed a month later. Aborn and Comstock declining their appointments, Zachariah Rhodes and Thomas Arnold were appointed in their places. For the judicial appointments, Henry Marchant was made district judge, William Channing district attorney, and William Peck marshal. Jabez Bowen was made commissioner of loans.²

¹ *Acts and Resolves*, May session.

² *Executive Journal of the Senate*, I. 51-57. See also Updike's *Memoirs of the R. I. Bar*, pp. 89, 101.

FROM THEODORE SEDGWICK.¹

NEW YORK I. June 1790.

Dear Sir,

I have had the pleasure to receive your favor of 21st of may.

You will now please to accept my most cordial congratulations on the happy result of your convention. Every true american will partake in your joy.—

Permit me, Sir, to suggest the great importance of having your State represented in Senate at as early a period as may be. To the commercial States in general, and to your's which is peculiarly so in particular, the funding the debt, and thereby providing a medium of commerce, is immensely important. It is not improbable that this consideration may be a foundation of opposition in some parts of the united States. The assumption is so indispensable a part of the funding system that I have no apprehension that any man who can discern the obvious interests of Rhode Island will oppose it; I shall therefore most cordially welcome your Senators here. I am with great regard, Dear Sir

Your most obed^t Serv^t

THEODORE SEDGWICK

Mr. Foster,

[Addressed]:

Theodore Foster Esq^t

Providence

R. Island

¹ Theodore Sedgwick (1746-1813) was a member of Congress from Massachusetts, and afterward Speaker. In the session of June 1 the Senate received a message from the President stating that he had received official information of the accession of Rhode Island. *Senate Journal*, I, 148.

FROM CALEB STRONG.¹New York June 3^d 1790.*Dear Sir*

I have this moment rec^d your letter of the 29th of may. We had before the very agreeable News of the Adoption of the Constitution by your State and I am happy to be informed of the Probability that the State will be represented in the Senate in a very short Time, and I hope and trust the Persons chosen will be men of enlightened Minds and liberal Policy. Should they be of a different Character they may oppose an Assumption of the State Debts which to me appears necessary to the Peace and Happiness of this Country.

The House a few Days since sent us a Resolve that the next Session of Congress should be holden at Philadelphia. previous to this a Bill had been brought into the Senate to fix the permanent Residence of Congress. The Bill and Resolve are both committed in the Senate and the Committee will probably report to morrow or on Monday. An Effort will be made to fix the permanent Residence on the Potomack. you will undoubtedly wish that your State may be represented when this Question is settled. if they are the Senators must be here soon. I am Sir with Esteem and Regard your most obed^t Serv^t CALEB STRONG.

[Addressed]: The Honble Theodore Foster Esq^t ²
Providence

¹ Senator from Massachusetts, and afterward governor.

² An act providing for the election of senators and a representative to represent the state in Congress was passed at the June Session of the General Assembly. It provided that senators should be chosen by ballot by the General Assembly sitting in grand committee, and that the representative should be chosen according to the general election law of the state, by the freemen in town-meetings legally assembled, on the last Tuesday of the next August. At this same session Theodore Foster of Providence and Joseph Stanton of Charlestown were chosen as senators. The *Providence Gazette* of June 19, after mentioning these elections, says, "Mr. Foster, we learn, proceeds for the Seat of General Government this Day, and Mr. Stanton on Monday next," the 21st. They took their seats in the Senate on June 25. *Senate Journal*, I, 166. The representative chosen was Benjamin Bourne.

FROM WELCOME ARNOLD.¹PROVIDENCE, July 12th 1790*Gentlemen*

Undoubtedly you have been apprised of an Act of the Legislature of this State having some time since passed for incorporating Sundry of the Citizens of this State by the name of the "River Machine Company" for the purpose of rendering the River leading to Providence more navigable. The General Assembly convinced of the importance and utility of the objects of the Association were pleased to grant a duty on tonnage of Vessels of specified burthens for the carrying into effect the purposes of the Company. The proceedings of the Legislature referred to we have the honor herewith to enclose. By the Accession of this State to the Union the company are deprived of the benefit of the tonnage duty granted by our Legislature, The exclusive right of levying such duties being vested by the constitution in the Legislature of the United States; as the completion of the objects of the aforementioned Association are absolutely necessary to the safe navigation of this River and as those objects cannot be effected without a continuance of the Tonnage levied by the Legislature of this State, the Proprietors of the Machine have instructed me to write you on the subject and to solicit your assistance in the procurement of an Act of Congress for the Imposing of similar duties of Tonnage to those which were granted them by our Gen^l Assembly I have to acquaint you that the Machine is compleated and now actually employed in deepening the Channel; but unless the company shall receive some aid from the Public, the objects of their association will become entirely frustrated. having no doubt of your being fully convinced that the object of our present Application is highly Interesting to the trade and Navigation of the United States as well as to that of this State in particular I rest

¹ President of the River Machine Company.

assured of your immediate and Most effectual effort to obtain an Act of Congress for a continuance of the Tonnage formerly granted by the Legislature of this State and to be in like manner appropriated to Compleat the purposes of the General Assembly in passing the afores^d Act for incorporating the company. The cost of the Machine far exceeded the expectations of the company, the expence of the materials and erecting the Machine Amounts to twelve Hundred dollars and the money collected in Virtue of the Act of Assembly previous to our accession is only sixty dollars, the daily expence of working the Machine is four dollars exclusive of wear and tear.

It is needless to suggest that in the Act which Congress may pass on the subject it will be proper that the collection of the duty should be vested in the Collector of this District.

In behalf of the Providence River Machine Company.

I have the Honor to be with Great
Respect and Esteem Gentlemen
Yr mo. Obedient and very Hhb Serv^t:

WELCOME ARNOLD, Presid^t:

[Addressed]: Hon^{ble} Jos. Stanton }
and Theodore Foster Esq^{rs} }

FROM ARTHUR FENNER.¹

PROVIDENCE July 17 1790

Dear Brother. I rec^d your two letters with the Newspapers and am much Obliged by the information through the Channel of your Letters and Papers. I am very sorry that you

¹ Governor of Rhode Island from 1790 to 1805, and brother-in-law of Senator Foster.

was so unfortunate in the *Lottery*¹ however I shall exert my little influence to get you re-elected. it is said that J. Hazard has a mind to try again. it will be in vain in my opinion. your chance I think to be good. The Representative is not fully settled yet. Holden, Comstock and Arnold are talked of by the Majority. I am informed that J Bowen intends to try his Luck. The Newport Gentlemen say they have no Person in View to serve in that Capacity. if that is really so there will be no difficulty in getting in one of the Majority, And in my opinion, J. Comstock stands the foremost or in other words the most likely to succeed²

The Congress is looked upon generally as the minority looked upon our general Assembly. you will see by some of the Boston and Connecticut Papers that they are uneasy. The removal from New York is considered here as a Partial and ungrateful *Act* such as [a] Body like Congress ought Not to know. You mentioned in your letter that you intended to lay a plan before the Senate respecting the Public Debt in which you expected considerable support. Permit me to Caution you respecting the matter. The motions made are generally known by whom made. let your plan be such as will have a tendency to lessen the Value of the Public Sureties and it will answer, but even if it will have that effect in the End, and at the first View it appears to Establish them, it will render you unpopular. You must be very Cautious how you proceed. if you could be the means of giving the securities an Irish Hoist it will help you in your re-election. I never see the Minority so much Cast down as they now appear to be. They are very complasent and Free, wish to lay all party a side &c &c. you know them — be you not deceived by them if they should correspond with you by Letter. The

¹ When Foster and Stanton drew lots for the terms of two, four and six years by means of which the constitutional rotation in the Senate was begun, Stanton drew the four-year term and Foster the two-year term, which expired March 4, 1791.

² Benjamin Bourne was chosen.

Appointment of our worthy Friend Thompson has given some of the Minority (I mean those who used to run goods) a Violent Shock. They are disappointed. if Peck had been appointed in my Oppinion the Revenue would not have been worth to Congress so much as it is now by thousands of Dollars. The appointment is a perfect Check upon their designs and has put them out more than any thing that has taken place. I am so much unwell that I cannot attend half my time to my Buisness. I am in hopes of getting beter so that I can secure your Election. my efforts shall not be wanting but it is a Lottery almost you know, but I have heretofore been rather fortunate than otherways in those Lotteries. Please to give my love to your worthy Colleague and inform him, I rec^d his Letter and shall answer it as soon as I have any thing that I can communicate. I have nothing now but what I have communicated to you which you can communicate to him or that of it which you please. he wished to know how we were going on in the Representative way.

Your Family, Mine and all our Friends are well. You must excuse this broken letter as I have not time to enter into a proper Chain of the Business I wish to communicate, have therefore only given hints. I shall in my next perhaps attend to the Substance

A. FENNER.

P. S. This was my Rough draught but the Post is waiting therefore I cannot copy it. excuse imperfections

A. F.

FROM ARTHUR FENNER.

PROVIDENCE July 17 1790

Dear Brother — I had made a rough draft of a short letter to you before I rec^d yours of the 14th the post left providence before I finished it. you will see by that my sentiments

respecting the Motion you mention. I have inclosed that letter for want of time to Copy it. Your letter of the 14th contains matters of Consequence too great to answer immediately. You are sensible of the Situation of this State or the People. The assumption will alarm them very much and how far it will do for you to proceed in that matter I am at present at a Loss. Your standing requires great caution. it is my opinion at present that you had better wave every matter that can be waved and not very essentially effect the Interest of the State. it appears to me however that it will be to the Interest of the State if the Assumption is finally carried for the State to take a share in the matter as most certainly we shall pay our proportion of the other State demands out of the Monies arising from our Revenue etcet., but as long as you can postpone the matter do it by all means. I shall take opportunities to consult our Friends in the Country and communicate to you their sentiments as soon as possible. This is post morning and I cannot write you but a short sketch of my mind. I rec^d your letter on sunday evening and have been so much engaged in my Farming Buisness that I could not attend to write you fully but will attend to the subject of your letter and give you an Answer fully as soon as I have consulted Friends.

I want you to write a few lines to some of our country friends — among the rest to Ray Sands of new Shoreham. it will please him. he intends to be a Deputy the next choice.¹

I seem at present strong in the Faith that you will be re-elected but as I mentioned in my other letter here inclosed it is a Lottery. perhaps you will be here timely. if you come home before the Sitting of the Assembly it may help some. I suppose the choice can be had or made at September Sessions and perhaps it may be the best to make it then.

¹ In the General Assembly of 1790 and also of 1791 New Shoreham was represented by *John Sands*.

This letter you must also excuse. it is Wrote as fast as I can talk almost and have not time to copy it —

your Brother

A. FENNER.

[Addressed]: Honb^l Theo Foster Esq
New York.

[Endorsed]: Letter from Governor Fenner Dated July 17th 1790. Rec^d from the Post Office Saturday Evening July 24th 1790. Delivered to Me by the Honorable Abiel Foster Esq.

FROM EBENEZER THOMPSON.¹

PROVIDENCE, July 17, 1790.

Dear Sir

My last was by the post which hope is safe to hand, Since which have had the pleasure of perusing your last letter to the Governor. I cannot see the propriety of the Senates apportionment of the several sums to be assum'd of the State Debts. Massachusetts they say shall be 4,000,000 Dollars. in the same proportion Rhode Island should be 500,000. New York is 1,600,000 Dollars and by the best account they do not at present owe half the sum, and I understand Maryland is in the same predicament. most of the other States except Rhode Island is apportioned nearly in proportion to former requisitions of the Old congress. I have not had any opportunity to talk in particular of this matter with the governor: but I think in case the State Debts are assum'd in whole or in part by the General Government, which I hope will not be done, it will be most prudent to Insist that this State shall be put nearly on the same footing with regard to the money

¹ Naval officer (formerly collector) of Providence, and recently elected president of the town council (*Gazette of June 12*).

that may be loaned from its inhabitants holding State Evidences as Massachusetts and the other States (New Hampshire an exception) which will make our State full 500,000 Dollars. but in any instance it will be very impolitic for our Senators to Vote for the assumption: on the contrary to oppose it in all its Stages. from what principles the committee of Senate apportioned to our State only 200,000 Dollars, I cannot Devine nor do I see what led them to the particular sums as express'd in the report. it could not be from Estimate of the Debt due from each State to individuals if so Conneticut and some other States would have been much larger sums. Since writing the above I have had some conversation with the governor and his Sentiments on the aforegoing appeared to be nearly Similar with my own

I am Dear Sir with Sentiments of high
Regard and Esteem

Your most Obedt Hum^l Servant

EBENEZER THOMPSON

[Addressed]: Honb^{le} Theodore Foster Esquire

New York

FROM NICHOLAS BROWN.

PROVID: — Late Munday Night, the 26th
of July 1790.

Dear Sir

As You was so friendly as to Mention to me before you Went from this Town that you Should be glad to here from your Old Friend Occationally I now take pen in hand Just to shew You my Opinion in Sum late proceedings of Congress, which if not Attended to may prove Injurious to your Political Charractor here by way of Neglect or Inattention to the

Interest of this State. It is in This. I observe in the N York papers is Mentioned the Report of a Com^{te} of the Sennett for the Sum each State is to have Assum'd of there Debts Sum of which seems more and Sum less Tha[n] what will be There due proportions of Debts. What method that Com^{te} went upon is yet Unknown here without You have Wrote the reason to sum of your friends which have not Communicated it. I am well acquainted with your Situation as to the Assumption, but You must Note that I go upon the Supposition that the assumption *will* take place at all events and Tho' You may Consider Yourself Oblig'd to Oppose it in every Stage Nevertheless this State who will probably pay by Impost &c at least as much, and I doubt not but more than her proportion into the Publick Chest and it was well known by the former Congress that this State Loand more money to Congress than Any State in the Union and had kept up there full Quota and Will be found to have advanc'd the full proporⁿ. According to there Bigness. This I have Often and very lately been told by Our Members of the former Congress has ben publickly Asserted on the floor of Congress and Could not be denied. but suppose we had done but little or Nothing as was the case of Sum States why should not this State have her full proportion of the Sum Assum'd, as We must and Shall raise within this State Our proportion of the Millions that Other States will have Assum'd. This is a Matter that does not Affect my Interest any farther than as a single Member that Might Suffer In proportion of What The State may Suffer by not hav^g our proporⁿ with Other States, As the Overplus Sum That may not be subscribed for is to be paid into the State Treasury, and There to draw Interest till the State Aud^{ts} are Settled with Congress, for we are morrally Sure this State will have a *Grait* Balance due to her, therefore as it may be a length of Time, If ever, before those State Acco^{ts} are all clos'd, it is Well known that those who have Carried in there Securities and taken the

paper mo. When it was part of the Time as much as 15 for 1, Under par, those persons, Generally, that Now hold the Government, will Not long sit and see those who Uniformly refused giving Up there Securities for the paper Money and In Consequence of the Assumption receive the Interest of the Same and principle Secur'd, But will most Certainly have those payments Liquidated according to the Value of the paper When rec^d towards S^d Notes. This has you know ben don for the Invalleads, and will doubtless be Adjusted accordingly, as it is not to be suppos'd But people in Power will do as Well for themselves as for the Invalleads and Those who have Complain'd ag^t The Laws for forfitting there Securesities, as honestmen Can but Joyn the Majority in doing Justice to the Widow orphans &c so as to give those an equal Chance That Others have by the funding or assuming debts. But in this Case where is the Means that is Necessary to pay of[f] Such Demands if we get no more of the assumption than what will be Subscribd for; for Those Others who may have there Notes Consollidated, There will be Nothing to pay them with till the State receives it in a Bal^e from the Union. Will not this Cause grait Complaints Ag^t Those who tamely Sit Still and forget (as may be said) there own States, *who have an eaqual right to there full proportion.* I am told this State is graitley in Debt more than the Assum'd sum for this State, even on the Supposition, that all the Notes taken in for paper mo. will ever remain as Discharg^d. This is a matter that will be as much Ag^t my Interest as My proportion of all those Securesities or other debts that may be so Setled, but as An Honest Man and Your friend I mention this matter. I find the people Uneasy at puting the Interest so low and especially the Indents, and I think Publick Credit will not be fully established by the doings of Congress according as we here they will most likely agree to pay there Debts Contracted in the War. In a late meeting of the mudd massheen Company it was talked over as Exceeding Injurous to said Comp^y if

not Ruinous, not to have Liberty from Congress to Collect moneys from the Navigation to support the working of it to Clear out the Channel according to Its Intention. it is Now all done ready to begin in the Crook, but want of funds prevents. we hope You Will Attend to this Matter and get it done before Congress Rises. We Consider this as an Interesting Matter to the Publick as it will graitley tend to Increase the Trade of this State and Consequently will Increase the Publick Revenue.

Sum Other Things Should have mention'd but Time will not permit. My compliments to M^r. Stanton, and beleave me Most Sincerely Your very esteem'd

Hum^{bl} Serv^t

NICHOS BROWN

[Addressed] : Theadore Foster Esqr.

FROM EBENEZER THOMPSON.

PROVIDENCE, July 27th 1790. —

Dear Sir

The inclosed letters have been wrote some days but no oppertunity offering you will receive them herewith.

Our holders of Publick Securities of this State's have for sum days past been Clammerous about the Congress not having Assumed our proportion of the State debt. they say that if the states Debts are assumed our Senetors aught to Exart themselves in order to get as large a preportion as possible. in case the Assumption cannot be avoided I think it best to have our full proportion. Our State in the time of the War maid as great or grater Exartions then aney in the Union and Our Advances will appear to be larger then aney when Ever our State Acc^t is settled. I can sea no reason why we should not have our full preportion. By all meanes

keep back the Assumption if possible to the End of this Congress which terminates in march and it will never be done afterwards. if the Assumption takes place the Duties must be increased so much that there will be great fear of Clamour from the mercantile Interest.

I am Dr Sir in haest

Your most ob^d Humb Serv^t

EBENEZ THOMPSON

[Addressed]: Hon^{ble} Theodore Foster Esquire
New York

FROM EBENEZER THOMPSON.

PROVIDENCE July 31 1790

Dear Sir

My last was by Cap^t Curry which hope by this time is to hand, since which there has nothing occurred of any material consequence within the limits of our Circle this way.

The speculators in our State funds appear to be disturbed at congress not having Assumed a larger proportion of our State Debts. they Urge that our Senators should have been earnest for a larger Sum. I think their complaint is nothing more than Parlemtentearing and to try if Possible to strengthen themselves in order to get in a senator of their own kidney, but in this I think they must fail. however if their should happen to be any opportunity I would advise to have the Sum increased as much as possible as no injury can arise to the State on that Score.

The Governor has just Shewn me your letter to him by Godfrey. if their should be an opportunity to accomplish what you hint at, with regard to the office of the Excise without giving up the Naval Office I should like it much and

it will add to the many obligations I am already under to you and as it is probable that the System of the Excise may make it necessary to have a Number of Under officers in Subordination it may put in my power to help our Friend Tylor which I should Wish to Do if in my power. I must say that I have never Experienced anything in him but what has been manly and in Character. please to present my most respectful Compliments to Genl Stanton and believe me at all times to be with sincerity —

Your Friend and ob^d Humble Serv^t

EBEN. THOMPSON.

[Addressed]: Hon^{ble} Theodore Foster Esq^r

Member of Congress

New-York

[Endorsed]: Letter from Ebenezer Thompson Esq. Dated July 31st 1790. Rec^d by the Hand of Capt John Tillinghast in the Lobby of the Senate Chamber in New York Monday August 9th 1790.

FROM ARTHUR FENNER.

PROVIDENCE 31st July 90.

Dear Brother

I rec^d your letter of the 24th Yesterday I am much obliged by the information I thereby rec^d The Assumption of twenty one Millions of Dollars is not understood by any of us. Some suppose it to be the whole that is intended to be assumed of the State Debts and of those are N Brown J. Bowen &c &c- They complain very much at our 200,000 Dollars and say that our proportion is Double that amt and we shall loose the remain[ing] part or sum and seem very willing to blame the Senators. I give them my Opinion in this way. That the twenty one Millions is supposed by Congress to be the amount of the demands the States may

have ag^s the United States after deducting the several sums rec^d by Particular States heretofore that after the settlements with the several States that State which is found to be in Advance or has demands more than their proportion of the sum assumed must have credit therefor. That the reason why this State had not its full proportion or *fiftieth* (?) part was on Account of the large sums of Mony this State rec^d in the time of War. They do not seem to be willing to agree with me. it seems they want to complain of your Conduct, whether I am right or they is for you to inform me (that I may fight as good a fight as I can) which I beg you to do as soon as Possible and let me into the whole plan and if you can get a larger sum added perhaps it may be no disadvantage especially if they are right and I am wrong, but I cannot think they are right for what means the Assumption is it taking only part of the Debt, consider the confusion it would make in the several States among the State Creditors one to receive all and the other nothing.

I am exceeding Anxious that you should exert yourself in the appointment of the Excise officers.¹ if you can get Judge Thompson appointed he can make such under appointments we think best. next to him I beg you to remember W^m Tyler Esq. who stands in need of help. you are sensible he is qualified and I believe must do as well as when employed by the State. if any under app^s are made by Congress R^{em}ber Z Rhodes Alfred Arnold. The Country are so much engaged that I have not seen any of the leading men to converse with them but shall attend to what I think necessary for your Interest. dont delay Writing to those you mention and if you know any in the County of Bristol and Newport think of them. M^r Stanton can inform you of the Newport County. I think you had better Write a short letter to Jonathan Gorton and Gideon Arnold both of Warwick.

¹ The nominations to the offices under the new excise law were not submitted till March 4, 1791. Then John S. Dexter was nominated and confirmed as supervisor for the district of Rhode Island. *Executive Journal of the Senate*, I. 81.

I have heard but little said respecting our representative, but suppose Job to stand as fair as any one. You must excuse this letter also for I have no time to correct or Copy the boat being ready to Sail and I had not timely information. my health is bad. my Daughter Sally very poorly. the rest Well

With esteem from your Friend

A FENNER.

P. S. It is to be understood that if Judge Thompson gets the appointment he is to hold the Naval Office also. Remember John Wanton of Newport. give my kind love to M^r Stanton and he must receive this letter in part with you I not having time to Write to both.

A. F.

[Endorsed]:— "Letter from His Excellency Arthur Fenner Esq Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Dated July 31st AD. 1790

Rec^d by the Hand of Capt. John Tillinghast in the Lobby of the Senate Chamber at New York Monday about One o Clock P M. August 9th 1790"

FROM WILLIAM TYLER.¹

PROVIDENCE Aug^t 2nd 1790

Honorable and Dear Friend

I had the Honour of Paruseing your last Letter to His Excellency Our Govenor, as well as all your former Letter to him and Judge Thompson, and should have wrote to you before this, could I have given you any more inteligence concerning matters &c &c than you Rec^d in their Several Answers, as you well know our sentiments Unite upon the true Republican Principles.

¹ Surveyor of the port of Providence under the late government.

I have the Hapiness to inform you that I have Conversed with many Leading Carrictors in our Party respecting your re-Election as a Senator who, one and All say, they are Perfectly Satisfyed, and approve of your Conduct, and will Exert themselves in your Intrest, so long as you remain a friend to the Rights of the People at Large, and it is my Candid Opinion, by the Exertions of your Friends, *your Election will be sure.* You may Depend on Every Exertion in My power in your favour, and I shall be as Anxious to succeed as I was in your first Appointment, so that you may Depend on My Might.

I Observed you Mentioned in your last Letter to His Excellency, "Now the Assumption had taken place, there would be an Excise and of Course be Several Vacancies for Appointments and it would be in your Power to Serve any of his frie[n]ds." I include myself in that number, and hope you do also, and hope you think at least I am one of your fast friends, tho I am not Mentioned Particular, and Judge Thompson is. the Judge is Provided for, I am not. half the Exertions I should think Mad by you and my Friend Gen^l Stanton¹ that you made for Judge Thompson (Which God knows I am happy in his Appointment) Will secure me of Success, but However you are on the Ground, and know the Recommendations, that I have had from the Gov^t &c also from Gov^t Bowen to the President, &c &c

Sir if you will but be kind enough to Exert your self half so much in secureing an appointment for me, That I have and shall for you, I make no dout of Success

Sir you^l Pardon my importunity and anxiety, when you Reflect of my being out of Business and a Family to Support, a son at Colledge,² and business Much Duller than when you left here,

¹ Senator Stanton was major-general of the militia of Rhode Island.

² No student named Tyler was graduated from Rhode Island College at this time; nor did William Tyler succeed in getting any federal office.

Sir Perhaps you have not heard who is in Nomination for a Federal Representative to Congress Job Comstock Esq^r is Much in Vouge in our Party, it Mortifies the Great Brige to the Soul, which Spurs us on and from the best information I can gett from Different Quarters of the State, he will Succeed,

Sir Please to give My Best Respects to Gen^l Stanton and beg his Assistance in any Appointment you Shall think Proper to ask for Me I saw M^{rs} Foster and Dotia¹ yesterday and they were very well but want to see you very Much

I Remain Sir with the Greatest Esteem your friend and most Obedient and Hum^l Serv^t

W^m TYLER

FROM OBADIAH BROWN.

PROVIDENCE, 2^d August, 1790;

Theodore Foster Esq,

Sir;

I am requested by the River Machine Company of this Town, to advise you of the unprosperous State of our Affairs, and to solicit the Fav^r of your Attention, in procuring us the Earliest releif from the Congress of the United States.

You well know, that a Number of the Merchants of this Town, finding that the River Shoaled perceivably every year or two; and that it had been several feet deeper within the memory of man than at present; procured a Charter from the Legislature of this State, incorporating them into a Body politic, for the purpose of deepning the River: and were allowed by them a Revenue of two Cents Ⓕ Ton, for all Vessels entering the harbour, of Sixty Tons and above.

The Company after advancing a Considerable Sum, in procuring the Machine and Scow to be Built, find that from

¹ Theodosia, Senator Foster's daughter, who afterward married Stephen Tillinghast.

their otherwise agreeable Situation in the Union, their whole design lays dormant: and must be intirely frustrated unless Congress do Confirm their Charter, or grant the[m] one Simular.

There are now three horses Subsisted at the Companies expence.

The Machine and Scow now lay Idle in this very wormy River, while this and the month following, are the Extent of the Season for Working: the whole Fall Season afterwards being generally too boisterous.

The Company were in hopes of having a Number more of Subscribers, but the present State of our affairs, as it has already abated the Ardency of the first promoters, will if it Continues put an Effectual Bar to the Increasing the Number of Shares in the Company, and of Course to the Increase of Stock, which is much wanted particularly for Building more Scows.

These, and more Ilconveniencies we suffer, wholly for the want of a Confirmation of the Revenue by Congress.

You are aware that all large Vessels are obliged to unload part of their Cargo at the Crook, which in the Icy Season is dangerous: the Scows sometimes taking in Water to the Damage of the Goods, and sometimes Sinking with the whole property on Board.

That there are a greater Number of Vessels belonging to this port, than belong to New York.

And that it is a place of more Navigation than any of its Size in the Union.

Perhaps it need not be mentioned to you, that this port will probably afford a greater Revenue than this whole State besides, and it is really no Chimera, that the Exertions of Art Excepted the time is fast approaching when Providence can be a port no longer.

The Company when met this afternoon, was very desirous of hearing what was done, and what it was likely might be done for their Assistance.

Their Letter to you, and your Colleague, inclosing an official Copy of their Charter; they had not much doubt was received.

A Line from you, or even an Intimation through some of your Friends, would greatly oblige.

Your Early attention to this Affair, will greatly increase the Regard of the members of the River Machine Company, by whose Order, and in their Behalf:—

I have the Honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obd^t,

very hum^l Ser^t,

OBADIAH BROWN,

Secy^r to the Company.

APPLICATIONS FOR FEDERAL OFFICE, 1789—1796.

ALLEN, PAUL (Captain). Providence, June 12, 1790. Recommended for appointment as naval officer of the port of Providence by Samuel Nightingale, John D. Torrance, Nicholas Power, and John Spurr. He supplied the army with stores during the war and lost his property in consequence.

— Providence, June 18, 1790. Applies for appointment as naval officer of Providence. He was master of the second vessel bringing warlike stores into Providence, and furnished rations and ammunition.

— Providence, February 14, 1791. Recommended for appointment as a revenue officer by Jabez Bowen, Enos Hitchcock, John Brown, and others. He is well qualified, and was a friend of the Revolution and the new Constitution.

ALLEN, WILLIAM. Providence, June 10, 1790. Applies for appointment as surveyor of customs for the port of Providence. He served through the war.

ANONYMOUS. Providence, March 16, 1789. Application for appointment as collector in Rhode Island.

BARTON, WILLIAM. Providence, September 3, 1789. Applies for some office in the custom service at Providence. The wounds he received in the war incapacitate him for business pursuits; refers to Dr. Manning, who is the bearer of the letter to the President.

BOURNE, BENJAMIN. Newport, June 13, 1789. Recommended for appointment as judge of the Western Territory by Nicholas Bowen (Brown?) and fifteen others, as a committee of the proprietors of the Ohio Company.

— Providence, June 15, 1790. Recommended for appointment as attorney to the district court by Brown and Francis and six others.

— Newport, December 9, 1793. Henry Marchant recites that it was thought at first he should be appointed attorney for the United States for the district of Rhode Island, but he may not be willing to leave Congress. ("Private and confidential" to Alexander Hamilton.)¹

— Providence, September 30, 1796. Recommended for appointment as district judge of Rhode Island by Jabez Bowen. He is now a member of Congress.

BOWEN, JABEZ. June 13, 1790. Recommends for naval officer of the port of Newport his son, Oliver Bowen. Refers to Colonel Leonard, member of Congress. Recommends Col. Jeremiah Olney for collector of the district of Providence, Col. William Peck for some office, and William Tyler for searcher of the port of Providence.

— Providence, June 14, 1790. Recommended for appointment as commissioner of loans in Rhode Island by John Brown and seven others. They recite his meritorious services in the war and in contributing to the accession of Rhode Island to the Union.

¹ Printed in *American Historical Review*, I, 281, 282.

— Providence, June 15, 1790. Recommended for an office by Brown and Francis. He would have been elected Senator, except that there was a decided majority of "the Anties" in the assembly.

— Providence, June 19, 1790. Recommends for office of district judge Governor Bradford or Mr. Marchant. Recites that the appointment of either is desired by the Federalists; they are good Whigs and firm for the establishment of the federal government. Recommends Benjamin Bourne for office of district attorney and John S. Dexter for marshal; states that he sends these names because Governor Fenner and his friends are sending on names of candidates who will not be proper persons for office, their conduct having been uniformly opposed to the general government.

— (No date.) Reports on candidates for office in Rhode Island. Judiciary: William Bradford, late lieutenant-governor of the state, a warm friend of the general government; David Howell, has been a member of Congress, but is not considered a uniform steady character; Henry Marchant, a judge previous to the late system of politics, a member of Congress, and a uniform friend of the general government; William Ellery, a judge before the late system of paper money, a supporter of the general government; William Channing, attorney-general previous to the paper money system, has been a member of the general assembly from Newport; Col. William Peck, served in the late war, part of the time in the family of General Sullivan, would make a good marshal, has suffered much from the war and politics of the State. The present judges are not known to Mr. Bowen, except Chief Judge West, a man of infamous character; is informed his associates are but little better. Revenue: E. Thompson, collector of Providence, a friend of the late measures of the state, is not agreeable to the people of Providence; Th. Foster, the present naval officer, has the reputation of being an intriguing man, and is much opposed to the general govern-

ment; Mr. Tyler, present surveyor of Providence, is spoken of as not standing very high for integrity.

CARTER, JOHN. Providence, February 22, 1790. Applies for appointment as naval officer of the district. He is now postmaster, but owing to the dearth of coin has lost money on account of his position; he was a typographer in his youth, under Franklin, and is now a printer, but his Anti-Federal competitor has received some of his business.

CHANNING, WALTER. Philadelphia, Mar. 6, 1790. Recommended for appointment as collector at Newport, R. I., by Joseph Anthony. He is vouched for by George Gibbs, a strong Federalist.

— Newport, June 18, 1790. Recommended for appointment in the customs by his brother, William Channing.

COLLINS, JOHN, Newport, May 24, 1790. Applies for appointment as collector for the port of Newport. He has favored the Constitution and caused the appointment of a convention to adopt it, and since then has been deprived of every public trust and emolument.¹

CORNELL, GEORGE. Portsmouth, R. I. (no date.) Applies for appointment in the customs service. He served in the army during the French and Indian war.

— November 5, 1789. Renews application. If the state does not accede to the Constitution he will move to Massachusetts.

— July 1, 1790. Renews application in a long petition.

— August 1, 1790. Renews application. Will accept any place.

CRARY, ARCHIBALD. State of Rhode Island, February 2, 1790. Applies for appointment in the collection of the revenue. He was in either the military or civil service from the beginning to the end of the late war and up to 1786, since which date the proceedings in Rhode Island have been disgraceful and injurious to many individuals.

¹ Printed in *American Historical Review*, I, 279, 280.

— New York, June 21, 1790. Renews application.

— New York, June 29, 1790. Applies for appointment as marshal. Owing to the jealousy between Providence and Newport, his appointment from East Greenwich would be satisfactory.

— Newport, R. I., June 1, 1790. Recommended for appointment in the revenue department at Newport by William Bradford, William Greene, Jabez Bowen, and others. His zeal in the cause of independence and his services in inducing an accession to the Constitution entitle him to the office.

— Philadelphia, February 12, 1791. Applies for appointment as inspector of excise in Rhode Island. Refers to his previous applications.

CROOKE, ROBERT. Newport, June 3, 1790. Applies for appointment as collector of impost or naval officer of Newport. He was appointed collector for county of Newport in 1783 and continued in that office till 1787, when he was removed because of the emission of paper money and the opposition to the new Constitution.

— Newport, May 24, 1790. Thomas G. Hazard, John Cook, Jabez Brown, and William Bradford, of Newport, and Henry Ward, notary public at Providence, certify to the same effect.

DEXTER, JOHN SINGER. Providence, June 15, 1790. Recommended for appointment as marshal of the Rhode Island district by Brown and Francis, and six others. He was a major and assistant to the adjutant-general in the Continental Army.

— Philadelphia, March 2, 1791. Recommended by Benjamin Bowen (Bourne?) for appointment as collector of the additional duties on spirits in Rhode Island. His appointment would give general satisfaction.

ELLERY, WILLIAM. New York, June 14, 1790. Recommended for appointment as commissioner of loans, district judge, or collector of the port of Newport, R. I., by Abiel Foster and Benj. Huntington.

— Newport, R. I., December 16, 1793. Recommends Ray Greene for district attorney in preference to Mr. Howell or Mr. Barnes. (To Alexander Hamilton.)

FEN, WILLIAM. Newport, R. I., January 18, 1790. Applies for appointment as surveyor of customs for port of Newport. He entered the service as captain in 1775 in Col. Thomas Church's regiment; in 1776, in Colonel Hitchcock's; in 1777, in Col. Israel Angell's, and resigned January 1, 1781. Refers to Colonel Sherburne and Colonel Olney.

— May 29, 1790. Renews application.

FLINT, ROYAL. New York, June 14, 1790. Writes to Alexander Hamilton relative to Rhode Island appointments. Knows little of Mr. Littlefield; Edward Thurston has been opposed to the government during and since the war; Colonel Barton has much influence in Providence. Gives list of surveyors: Saml. Aborn, for Pawtuxet; William Arnold, Sr., for Greenwich; Manuel Case, for Wickford, North Kingstown; Walter White, Pawcatuck River; Jos. Whitmarsh, Warren; Shearjashub Bourne, Bristol. An unsigned memorandum among his recommendations gives: Colonel Olney, universally popular; Mr. Thomson, honest, but crabbed and unpopular; Mr. Foster, an intriguing man of great weight, thought to have been bought by Anti-federalists, very popular in Providence, and his appointment would greatly please the paper-money people; Mr. Tyler, indifferently spoken of; Colonel Barton, popular among the lower class of people; Colonel Perth, stands high at Newport; Mr. Crooke is much respected; Colonel Sherburne, good, except where money is concerned; Dr. Oliphant, an old inactive man;

Colonel Lyman, respectable; Walter Channing, a good Federalist, much respected; Governor Bradford; Mr. Marchant may well be employed in the judiciary; Mr. Ellery would give satisfaction in the revenue department.

FOSTER, THEODORE. Providence, R. I., February 18, 1790. Applies for continuance in office as naval officer of the district of Providence. He now holds the office under state appointment, is a friend of the new Constitution, and served in the state assembly during the war. Recommends, also, Ebenezer Thompson for collector and William Tyler for surveyor. Both are competent, but belong to the party opposed to the adoption of the Constitution.

SIR THOMAS URQUHART AND ROGER WILLIAMS.

IN the *Nation* of June 7, 1900, Mr. Albert Matthews of Boston points out a passage relating to Roger Williams which has perhaps escaped attention hitherto. It is from the epilogue to *Logopandecteision, or an Introduction to the Universal Language*, published in 1653, by Sir Thomas Urquhart, the learned, fantastic and eccentric translator of Rabelais. Urquhart, captured with other royalist Scotsmen at the battle of Worcester, September 3, 1651, was imprisoned in Windsor Castle, but in the next July was permitted to go to Scotland on parole. Williams was in England in 1652 and 1653. We print the passage, characteristic of both men; the service to which it alludes probably had reference to Urquhart's release. It is given as from Urquhart's *Works*, Maitland Club edition, pp. 408-409.

"The enumeration of these aforesaid courtesies will not permit me to forget my thankfulness to that reverend preacher, Mr. Roger Williams of Providence in New England, for the

manifold favours wherein I stood obliged to him above a whole month before either of us had so much as seen other, and that by his frequent and earnest solicitation in my behalf of the most special members both of the Parliament and Council of State; in doing whereof he appeared so truly generous, that when it was told him how I, having got notice of his so undeserved respect towards me, was desirous to embrace some sudden opportunity whereby to testify the affection I did owe him, he purposely delayed the occasion of meeting with me till he had, as he said, performed some acceptable office, worthy of my acquaintance; in all which, both before and after we had conversed with one another, and by those many worthy books set forth by him, to the advancement of piety and good order, with some whereof he was pleased to present me, he did approve himself a man of such discretion and inimitably-sanctified parts, that an Archangel from heaven could not have shewn more goodness with less ostentation."

NOTES.

The *Providence Sunday Journal* of June 17, 1900, contained an article of several columns, with illustrations, on the Rhode Island Historical Society and its cabinet.

No. 8 of the *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* contains a short article by Rev. W. Willner on "Ezra Stiles and the Jews." In part it rests on books already familiar; but a part is derived from the diary of Dr. Stiles, possessed by Yale University and shortly to be published by that institution, and on his miscellaneous notes. There are a number of interesting items, from Dr. Stiles's Newport days, concerning the Jews of that town and the services of their synagogue. The doctor's account of the petition of the Jews for naturalization in 1762 and its treatment by the Supreme Court and the General Assembly is quoted in full. No. 6 of this valuable journal, published three years ago, contained an article on the Jews of Newport by Mr. Max J. Kohler.

The *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Volume XIII., Part 2, contains the announcement of two autograph letters of Roger Williams presented to the society by Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr. These are original letters, one written to Governor John Winthrop in June, 1637, the second to John Winthrop, Jr., June 25, 1675. They have both been printed in the *Publications of the Narragansett Club*, Vol. VI., pp. 32 and 366, and also in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Fourth Series, Vol. VI.

The *Monthly Bulletin of the Boston Public Library* for March, 1900, prints an interesting letter from Mr. Auchmuty, Judge of the Admiralty in New England, to the Board of Admiralty in London, dated November 23, 1743, and relat-