

Lymanville

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

Was it true? The report coming out of Newport that eleventh day of July, 1780, said that the French fleet and army had come at last to the rescue of the Americans and troops were disembarking at Long Wharf under the command of the Count de Rochambeau. It certainly was true. As the fleet dropped anchor one man was first on board to welcome America's first ally to these shores. His name was Major Daniel Lyman. It is with this man that this story deals, for after the war he settled in North Providence and became one of the most distinguished citizens in western Rhode Island.

Daniel Lyman was born January 27, 1756 in Durham, Conn., a son of Thomas Lyman and a brother of the late Major General Phineas Lyman, commander in chief of Connecticut forces in 1758. As a youth he went to Yale where his brother had been an instructor and had nearly completed his course when the British fired on the patriots at Lexington, and with others of his classmates enlisted to go to the aid of the provincials. In a few weeks he returned to Yale and was graduated in 1776. After that he re-enlisted and rose from captain to major after participating in a number of battles.

But it was not for his role in these history-making events that he was to be remembered, but for his participation in the hectic developments of the summer of 1780. All Rhode Island, yes, all America, for that matter, stood on edge, waiting for one single item of news—that an alliance with the United States had been signed by Louis XVI of France, making this great European power our ally. In accordance with the terms of that alliance, His Majesty was sending his armed forces to our aid in our war for independence. The troops were in command of the Count de Rochambeau; the fleet in charge of Admiral de Ternay. It was known that these forces had sailed from Brest in France, May 2. But when would they arrive?

Rhode Island was particularly concerned because the fleet was to land at Newport. Already Louis Ethis de Corne, French commissary general of war was in Providence buying supplies by the ton, and planning for a hospital to accommodate the sick who were expected to be numerous among the troops after a passage of over 87 days across the ocean. Dr. James Craik, assistant director general of hospitals for the Continental Army, was here too. Doctor Craik and de Corne had taken over the buildings of Brown University over the protests of Dr. James Manning.

Being pressed by the British at New York, General Washington could not come to Rhode Island to wait for Rochambeau. As his personal representative he sent Maj. General William Heath. Heath's instructions were to proceed to Rhode Island, call on Governor William Greene, extend greetings from the commander-in-chief, help de Corne in every way possible and stand by at Newport for America's friends to arrive. Meanwhile, a chain of expresses running around the clock were established between Rhode Island and Washington's headquarters at White Plains.

As he set out for Rhode Island, General Heath asked Major Lyman, his senior aide de camp, to come with him. It was June, 1780, when they arrived in Rhode Island. They were met at the State line in Pawtucket by Deputy Governor Jabez Bowen and other distinguished men of the town of Providence.

Major Daniel Lyman. Greets Rochambeau. Practices Law at Newport. Longs for Country. Buys Farm in North Providence.

On July 10, General Heath announced that he had to go to Providence on business and departed, leaving Major Lyman to keep the watch. On July 11, 1780, de Ternay entered the channel at Newport. Major Lyman hastily scribbled a note to General Heath giving him the joyful news, and General Heath in turn sent the announcement to General Washington. Then he hurried to Newport. It was about noon when the frigate *Amazone* sailed into Newport harbor. On board was Rochambeau and his staff. Major Lyman went on board immediately to greet the French. An hour or so later General Heath arrived also.

"I have the honor to welcome you to American soil, your excellency," General Heath said, and explained that General Washington could not leave the battle lines at New York to be here in person. Heath and his aide accepted Rochambeau's warm embrace with remarkably good grace. Accompanied by the two American officers, Rochambeau went the next day to inspect the town and plan for the location of fortifications.

Major Lyman remained stationed at Newport after that, and here he met Miss Mary Bull Wanton, only daughter of John G. Wanton, a prominent merchant of Newport. On Jan. 10, 1782, they were married. Very likely the ceremony was performed at Trinity Episcopal Church. Settling down in Newport after his marriage, Major Lyman practiced law and took an active part in the rebuilding of the town which had been so badly damaged during the British occupation. As a matter of fact he was in charge of building the Stone Bridge across the Seaconnet River, linking the mainland at Howland's Ferry with the island of Rhode Island.

In 1783 when the Rhode Island Society of the Cincinnati was formed he became a charter member with Gen. Nathanael Greene and other Rhode Island officers of the recent war and served at one time as its president.

In 1800 Major Lyman joined a group of prominent men from Newport, North Kingstown and Providence in establishing the Washington Academy at Wickford. This was one of the earliest of private schools in Rhode Island to be chartered by the legislature.

In time though he tired of the hustle and bustle of busy Newport and longed for a quiet place in the country—a place where he might have cows, an orchard, gardens and plenty of time to himself. One afternoon William F. Magee, a prominent merchant of Newport, came into Lyman's office to consult him on some legal matters. In the course of conversation Lyman revealed his secret dream of life in a small town with a farm and just enough practice to keep from rusting. Magee said he had just the place. It was a farm of 80 acres with a mansion house in North Providence.

A month later Lyman bought the farm and on Nov. 9, 1807, went there to live. Here as an attorney, Lyman found true happiness. On Jan. 19, 1809 he added a tract to his holdings, buying from Charles Whipple. From Thomas Manton on June 1, 1809 he bought still another tract touching on the Woonasquatucket River. In the meanwhile Samuel Slater had opened a cotton factory at Pawtucket and shown that fortunes awaited men who followed his example in this new industry. As a result cotton factories were going up wherever there was a stream in Rhode Island and nearby Connecticut and Massachusetts. Men were "coming down with the cotton fever" as the saying went at that time. And Lyman came down with the fever too. On July 1, 1809 he established the Lyman Cotton Manufacturing Co. and built a factory and tenement houses on the Woonasquatucket river. That village became known as Lymanville.

Lymanville

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

In May of 1812 Attorney Lyman was named Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He held that post four years when he resigned and was succeeded by Tristram Burges. By that time he had acquired great wealth. His home was a show-place and the envy of visitors.

In the meanwhile other events taking place elsewhere were to tie in with his life. In 1815 William Gilmour, a Scotsman, arrived in Boston from Edinburgh. He was an expert mechanic and had obtained his training in some of the most modern factories in Scotland. On arrival he went to see Robert Rogerson, a commission merchant selling imported cloth, to whom he presented a letter of introduction.

A few months before this Rogerson had set up a cotton spinning frame driven by a horse in the cellar of his home and had done well selling yarn when an opportunity arose to purchase a cotton mill in Uxbridge, Massachusetts. It was at this point that Gilmour arrived. Gilmour suggested that Rogerson back him up in the construction of a power loom which was then unknown in America. Rogerson, however, did not have the money and suggested that Gilmour go and see John Slater at Slatersville.

John Slater was highly receptive to the idea of a power loom. But he said he could not undertake the project on his own. His partner was his brother Samuel Slater and Samuel would have to be consulted. When Samuel Slater arrived he told Gilmour he realized the power loom sooner or later was bound to be built and placed in the cotton factories of America, and it would be a good thing for the industry.

"But we're spinners," Slater said. "To do weaving we'd have to reorganize our entire plants. That would cost a lot of money. Besides these are hard times."

That's the way the matter rested.

Slater was not exaggerating when he referred to "hard times." The war of 1812 was going on. English vessels were sailing up and down the coast picking off enemy shipping. Cotton had to be hauled overland. Prices of goods were high.

John Slater felt sorry for Gilmour and gave him a job in the factory machine shop.

In the meanwhile another Scotsman, Samuel Blydenburg, recently arrived from the old country, had come to Judge Lyman's factory and sold him the idea of building a power loom. But Blydenburg did not know as much about the loom as he claimed, for his machine did not work and was pushed one side in the Lyman mill.

Hearing about Judge Lyman's interest in weaving, Gilmour set out to see him. He and Judge Lyman had a long talk during which Judge Lyman asked a lot of questions to see what Gilmour knew about mechanics. This made Gilmour a little peeved.

"Let me build the loom," Gilmour said. "If it doesn't work right when I finish you don't have to pay me one cent."

Judge Lyman agreed. Gilmour was allowed the use of the entire Lymanville Machine Shop for his work. As for the Blydenburg loom, Gilmour dismantled that entirely and used only small parts.

"If you can build a loom that works right," Judge Lyman said, "I'll want twelve of them."

The loom which Gilmour built was the so-called Scotch loom—the Cartwright loom upon which William Horrocks of Stockport, England, had made improvements. Horrocks' patents on this loom were dated April 20, 1803; May 4, 1805 and July 31, 1813.

Turns to Manufacturing. Engages Gilmour to Build First Power Loom in America

By 1817 the Lymanville factory had combined the spinning and weaving under one roof. To Judge Lyman went the honor of being first in Rhode Island to bring the weaving into the factory alongside the spinning of yarn.

Because Gilmour was in the employ of Judge Lyman when he built the loom, Judge Lyman owned the machine and all the rights to it. He might have taken out a patent on the Gilmour loom and made another great fortune out of it.

But Judge Lyman was not like that. He had money enough; more than he could spend. In his heart he was interested in the industry and wanted to see it expand—for the good of the country.

Immediately Judge Lyman sent letters to his manufacturer friends all over the State and in nearby Massachusetts and Connecticut inviting them to come to his factory and see the combined operations of weaving and spinning under one roof. In fact, he urged them to come and copy the machine.

Among the visitors who came was David Wilkinson, Samuel Slater's brother-in-law and a superb mechanic. Wilkinson was very excited about the machine. He stopped it and started it up again repeatedly, as if he wanted to make sure that nothing would break down. At length he seemed satisfied and extended his congratulations to Gilmour.

Before the day was over Wilkinson for the consideration of \$10 obtained from Gilmour with Judge Lyman's consent the right to build the power loom from the prints that Gilmour had drawn.

In the interim Francis Cabot Lowell of Newburyport, Mass., also had built a power loom and had taken out a patent in 1815. But Lowell and his firm, the Boston Manufacturing Company of Waltham, Mass., kept the loom to themselves for years, leaving to Judge Lyman the honor of being first to advance the industry in this connection.

In later years Gilmour became almost destitute, and the manufacturers of Rhode Island in grateful recognition collected a sum of \$1500 which they presented to the inventor.

When agitation was begun for the protective tariff in 1815 Judge Lyman was foremost on the list of petitioners who succeeded in obtaining this first protective tariff in the history of our country.

Judge Lyman had nine daughters and four sons. His eldest son graduated from Yale in 1810. Among his sons-in-law were: Benjamin Hazard, graduate of Brown, 1792; Dr. George H. Tillinghast, Brown, 1814 and Governor Lemuel H. Arnold, Dartmouth, 1811.

Judge Lyman died Oct. 16, 1830, at his mansion house in North Providence. His name was to be remembered in a little hamlet on the Woonasquatucket River to the present day.

—PLEASE NOTE—

It is easy to join our Society. Send along your name and accurate address (including zone number, if any), along with check for \$1.00, or simply a one dollar bill, to Mrs. Newell C. Shippee, 417 Plainfield Street, Providence 9, R. I. Membership card and receipt will be sent to you.

—MEMBERS REMINDER—

The annual meeting date—and the starting of our new year is almost here. Are your dues up to date? Our organization depends upon such funds. Be sure you are an up-to-date member before we close the current year and start the new.

Lymansville

Elder William C. Manchester – Pioneer Church Leader

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

ELDER WILLIAM C. MANCHESTER

On the second Sunday in June the Plain Meeting House at West Greenwich will again be opened for its annual meeting. Perhaps a sketch of the first minister to be called to serve there will be timely and of interest to many who faithfully attend its service each year.

Elder William C. Manchester was the youngest son of Elder Thomas Manchester who served Mapleroot Church for over half a century. His mother was Hannah Carr, daughter of Esek Carr of West Greenwich. William was born Aug. 22, 1794 in the town of Warwick. When sixteen months old his mother died. We are not told by whom he was brought up, but at an early age he was working by the month at Warwick Neck.

In the fall of that year, 1810, he went as an apprentice to Messrs. Rhodes, Harris and Smith who were in the woolen manufacturing business. Four years later in 1814 he married Harriet Warner, daughter of Capt. John Warner of Providence. Two years later in 1816 his wife and child both died.

It took this sobering tragedy perhaps to turn William Manchester to the serious thought of joining the church. That year he became a member of his father's church at Mapleroot. In his grief and the new-found solace of his religion he felt impelled to preach the gospel to others but hesitated because of his youth and his lack of schooling.

In the fall of that year seeing an advertisement in a newspaper for an overseer in a woolen mill in Danvers, Mass., he took a stage coach to Salem and then to Danvers and sought out the mill only to find that the machinery had not yet been installed. After seeking employment in other nearby Massachusetts towns without success and his money running low, he returned to his father's house.

He accepted a justice's commission in his native town for awhile and in 1818 married Susan Harris, daughter of Andrew and Sarah Harris of Cranston. Of this union one daughter, Susan Manchester, was born.

In 1820 he removed to the western part of the State and purchased half of a cotton and woolen factory. The records do not say where this factory was but I am inclined to think that it was half of the factory his Uncle John Manchester had built a short time before at Liberty. In a business way things were working out well for him but of this period in his life he later wrote, "My mind was tossed like the waves of the sea until I became willing to take up my cross and preach Christ." He was soon to have the opportunity.

In 1750 steps had been taken by the early settlers of West Greenwich to provide an organization for public worship and the West Greenwich Baptist Society had been formed. Members of the society met at private homes and in 1764 Samuel Reynolds donated a piece of land for the society's use but no building seems to have been erected on it.

In 1822 a petition was sent to the Mapleroot Church requesting that a branch of that church might be organized for the convenience of those people in West Greenwich who were too far away to conveniently attend services at Mapleroot. The request was granted, a church building erected and William C. Manchester who, the records say, had been preaching in West Greenwich in general acceptance, was called to be the group's first minister.

On the day he was twenty-eight years old he received his ordination in the new edifice, his venerable father, then seventy-eight years old, proudly giving him the charge. The house was dedicated a few weeks later by Elders Thomas Manchester, John Westcott, Robert Knight and Pardon Tillinghast and denominated the West Greenwich Church.

Cole in his History of Kent County, says it was a Free House and that under Elder Manchester and one or two of his successors it was in a most prosperous condition. Elder Manchester is said to have baptized forty souls in the next two years. Bates Brook was used for these baptismal services.

Like other Baptist ministers of that day he doubtless served without remuneration, for besides his factory at West Greenwich, he advertised in the Providence Patriot in 1821 that he had shell combs, fgs and musical instruments, (fifes, flutes and clarinets) for sale at 2 Market Square. He also had lottery tickets, each warranted undrawn. These were shares in the Domestic Industry Lottery. The highest prize was \$10,000. (One whole ticket cost \$5. The drawing was to be held in the Representative Chambers in the State House. Lotteries were quite legal and respectable in those days and helped finance many a public project.

In 1824 William C. Manchester had moved to No. 3 Market Square, the Patriot discloses and in 1826 he must have sold out his business for the Providence directory fails to list him at all.

For three years while he was in West Greenwich he represented the town in the General Assembly.

In 1824 his factory in West Greenwich burned to ashes and in 1826 he removed to Johnston where he apparently took the pastorate of a church, for in his autobiography which he wrote in 1831 he states, "The Lord wonderfully blest the Church in that place, nearly fifty converts have been added in these last four years."

In the eight years following his ordination, though engaged much of that time in business to support his family, he preached nine hundred sermons, attended two hundred funerals and baptized one hundred and twenty-five persons, to perform which he traveled about six thousand miles.

In 1826 he is listed as a minister of Warwick in the R. I. Register of that date, so apparently served two churches at that time.

In 1829 Christian Hill in Providence, being remote from any Baptist Church, a number of persons in that vicinity engaged a private room on High St. and engaged William C. Manchester for their minister. A Church was organized March 22, 1830 composed of twelve persons, eight from the Six Principle Baptist Church in Scituate and four others from neighboring towns. This was called the Roger Williams Christian Hill Church. They subscribed to no written creed or covenant, but accepted the Scriptures as teaching them their duties of conduct and belief. This denomination was known as the Freewill Baptist Church.

Their members increasing, they were incorporated in 1831 and continued in their hired room until 1832 when they removed temporarily to a school house on Battey St. and began to build a Church on Burgess St., a wooden structure with a handsome steeple. It was dedicated on Christmas day 1833.

While serving at this church Elder Manchester at the repeated solicitation of his Christian friends, humbly presented a collection of hymns, selected and original, called the Songs of Zion, to which he added a brief sketch of his life and Christian experience. He served this church until 1837.

Sometime in those early years of his ministry he had his portrait painted. The kindly look of the dark eyes has softened the admonishing gesture of the hand as he has reminded the younger generations of his family for over one hundred and thirty years now to conduct their lives according to the teachings of the Bible which lies open there before him.

As the record of Elder Manchester fades in 1837 that of Elder John Tillinghast begins. In 1840 the Calvinist or Six Principle Baptists took over the West Greenwich Church and called Elder Tillinghast to become their pastor. He continued to serve at the Plain Meeting House as we call it today until his death in 1878, a period of almost forty years, beloved and revered by the entire community.

We are happy to pay our respect to these two men and to all the others who have made possible over two hundred years of organized worship in this rural community of western Rhode Island.

GLADYS W. BRAYTON