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Saturday evenings also.

"The Old Stone Bank"

HALEY & BIKES CO., PROVIDENCE

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BUILDERS OF ¹³ PAWTUCKET

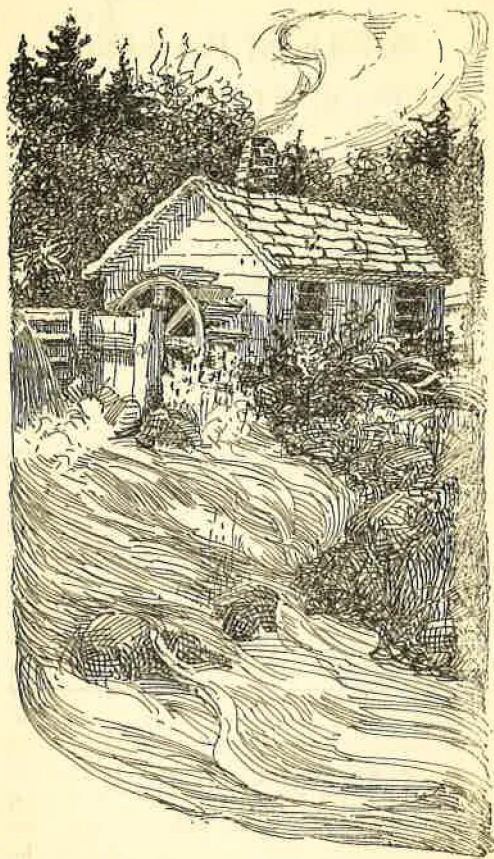
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Presented by

"The Old Stone Bank"

Providence, R. I.



Builders of Pawtucket

AMONG the names listed in the annals of the neighboring city of Pawtucket, that of the Jenks family stands out prominently. It is not only because Joseph Jenks, Jr., was the founder of Pawtucket but because his sons and daughters continued to carry the name to even greater heights. The indomitable pioneer spirit and genius of the first Joseph Jenks, the original settler who came from England to Massachusetts in 1642, passed into new fields of endeavor with his sons and grandsons.

The first Joseph Jenks was famed for his skill in working in brass and iron in England and was brought to the Colonies by Governor Winthrop, the younger, to establish iron works here. Specimens of the bog-iron, found in the swamps of Saugus, Massachusetts, had been taken to England and analyzed, and a company called the "Company of Undertakers for the Iron Works" formed to develop these natural resources. Joseph Jenks came to superintend the construction of buildings for the industry and became the first worker in iron and brass in the colonies. The iron works, under his competent tutelage, developed rapidly and supplied many of the domestic implements used by the neigh-

boring settlers. He was an inventor as well as an expert craftsman, and made the moulds and castings for many new tools and machines with his own hands. In 1646, he obtained a patent for an improved type of waterwheel. This was the first patent granted in this country.

Five years after he had arrived in New England, he set up his own shop and forge near the iron works and started to specialize in the manufacture of scythes and other tools requiring a fine edge and temper. It was he who made the dies for the famous "Pine Tree" shillings. But it is not this man with whom we are especially concerned, for he never came to Pawtucket.

While he had been making a success of the iron works in New England, his two sons Joseph and William, had been living with their grand-parents in England, for his wife had died. The older of these two boys, Joseph, who was born in 1632, in Colebrook, just outside of London, came to join his father in the new world in 1647. He worked in his father's foundry inasmuch as he had a natural aptitude for the craft. In about 1668, he married Esther Ballard, of Lynn, Massachusetts, and in the following year he went south to the Colony of Rhode Island taking his young family with him. Here, he first settled in Warwick, where it is on record that he served as foreman of the jury in the case of a drowning accident in 1670. In the previous

year he had been granted land on either side of the Pawtuxet River, upon which to set up the sawmill and machinery he had brought with him from Lynn and begin to cut pine, chestnut, and oak for Warwick customers.

However, chancing to observe the water power which existed at the falls in Pawtucket, in 1670 he bought about sixty acres of land in their vicinity from Abel Potter, with the additional right of commonage. Then, moving his family and workshop, he built his new forge just below the falls. Men who had come with him from his father's iron works helped to set up his sawmill, carpenter shop, and foundry later on. Iron ore was obtained near Mineral Springs, and timber was cut from the surrounding forests and hauled to the mill to be cut into lumber for houses of new settlers. Nearby his forge Jenks built his own home, the first house to be built in Pawtucket, on what is now East Avenue, while his men occupied rough dwellings in the vicinity.

With his acquired expert knowledge combined with great business ability, young Jenks soon created a leading place for himself in the surrounding countryside, even reaching the point where he was recognized as a sort of over-lord. The handicraft and genius that supplied the farmers, hunters, and fishermen of the locality with an unlimited number of tools, some old and

some new inventions, was very welcome in the region known as the Providence Plantations. Consequently, Jenks was given a free hand in the choice of land in the vicinity in which he settled. The men of Rhode Island were anxious to retain among them a man who was a master craftsman in iron and brass. Around his original establishment many more homes grew up, the nucleus for the great city of more than 70,000 inhabitants that covers the location at present.

Honors were pressed upon him as he reached middle age, and he rose to great eminence in the Rhode Island Colony. He really became the leader of a patriarchy which had its center at his forge. He was a member of the Providence Town Council in 1680, and Moderator of the Town Meeting in 1678-80. In April, 1679, he was elected a delegate from Providence to the General Assembly in Newport, and was the Speaker in that body from 1698 to 1699. In various periods of his life he was a deputy and justice of the peace and performed many marriages.

In 1680, he and two others were empowered by the Assembly to purchase a bell "for the public use of the Colony, and for giving notice or signifying the several times or sittings of the Assemblys and Courts of Trials, and General Courcils." The bell was purchased from Frelove Arnold (daughter of Governor Benedict

Arnold) for three pounds and ten shillings. Previously the Assembly had been called together by the roll of a drum.

In 1690, he was one of committee of seven to write a letter of congratulation and loyalty to William and Mary who had then just acceded to the British throne, and in 1695, he was chosen to run the eastern line of the Colony.

Thus far the Jenks family had advanced greatly in the community for which they formed the nucleus. But the achievements of the father were to be overshadowed by those of the sons. The family of Joseph Jenks, Jr., contained ten children, four boys and six girls. All of the boys became distinguished men. Joseph, the elder, became Governor of the Colony; Ebenezer became one of the first ordained pastors of the First Baptist Church in Providence; Nathaniel attained the rank of Major in his chosen field, the military profession, and William, who turned to law, became a deputy and a judge. The business of the father, Joseph Jenks, Jr., was inherited and conducted by the four brothers, who, in this sense, were somewhat similar to the famous "Brown Brothers" of Providence. Each built a mansion for himself, following somewhat the style of the Eleazer Arnold mansion in Lincoln, in that each had a stone chimney at one end. Nathaniel's home was located at what is now 210 Main Street, but it was demolished in 1870.

It was of particular note, because it is believed that the original home of Joseph Jenks, Jr., the father, had been moved and joined to it. The Jenks family has been engaged in some form of iron founding and iron manufacturing without a break from the time of Joseph Jenks, 1st to the present. The Pawtucket firm of Fales and Jenks, founded in 1830, is owned by descendants of the founder.

Of the four brothers, the most famous by far was Joseph, the third bearer of the family name. During the first part of the 18th century he was undoubtedly the most important individual in the whole Colony. Born in 1656, by 1691 he was deputy to the General Assembly, holding the position for twelve years and serving as speaker of the lower House for four years. He became a major in the militia of the Mainland towns during the period between 1707 and 1712. In 1705, he was appointed one of the commissioners to settle the ever present boundary question, and was reappointed several times to aid in running the line. Meanwhile his unquestioned ability in political matters and his great popularity had procured for him the office of Lieutenant-Governor, a position which he held for thirteen years under Governor Cranston. Finally, when the latter died in 1727, he became Governor, holding the office for six years. He was the first Governor to be elected outside of Newport, but, deferring to a wish

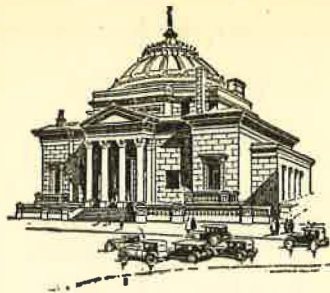
of the General Assembly, he moved his family to the seaport during the term of his governorship. He was twice married, his first wife being Martha Brown of Providence who died; his second, Alice Smith Dexter of the same town.

In every respect Joseph Jenks, 3rd, displayed the greatest sagacity and integrity while occupying such an honored place in the public eye. Under his influence his native village grew vigorously, responding well to his efforts to promote its best interests and invest capital there. When he was asked to run again for the governorship in 1733, he declined, saying wisely, "I now perceive my natural faculties abating. If I should continue longer in office, it is possible I may be insensible of their decay, and be unwilling to resign my post when I am no longer able to fill it." He died seven years later, in 1740, and was buried in the Old Jenks Burying Ground, in the middle of what is now Read Street. He was the greatest of three great men of the same name and family, and well continued the traditions laid by his forebears. on his former tombstone the latter part of the epitaph provides the most fitting summary of the man and of this story:

"He was . . . a Wise and Prudent Governor; a kind Husband and a Tender Father; Grave, Sober, Pleasant in Behaviour, Beautiful in Person, with a Soul truly Great, Heroic, and Sweetly-Tempered."

Additional Copies of this Booklet sent
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"THE OLD STONE BANK"
86 South Main Street
Providence



THE PROVIDENCE INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS, known as "The Old Stone Bank," is one of the historic institutions of the State of Rhode Island. Founded in 1819, it has since that time been a vital factor in the life of this community.

Because of its own historical significance, "The Old Stone Bank" brings to light in its educational advertising, interesting facts of Rhode Island and national history.

The story of Rhode Island that is told in these pages is selected from local history that is one long narrative of romance, adventure and deeds of accomplishment. In the hope that the lives and works of famous men and women may be interesting to review, and that their biographies may serve as inspirations to both young and old, this booklet is presented with the compliments of

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