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MOSES BROWN, 1738—1836

The oil painting of Moses Brown reproduced on the front cover was given to the Society in 1907 by Obadiah Brown Hadwen. It was painted by Henry E. Kinney of Worcester, and Mr. Hadwen, who retained a clear recollection of Moses Brown, regarded it as a very good likeness.

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MOSES BROWN'S "ACCOUNT OF JOURNEY TO DISTRIBUTE DONATIONS 12th MONTH 1775"

with an Introduction by

MACK E. THOMPSON*

FOR DECADES the Society of Friends has been famous for its willingness to assist victims of natural or man-made disasters. In the twentieth century the most notable instance of Quaker relief activity occurred during the first World War when English and American Friends cooperated to provide aid for thousands of refugees and other non-combatants. During the first three years of the war Friends' relief work was carried on by English Quakers through the War Victims Relief Committee. Shortly after the United States joined the Allies in 1917 the American Friends Service Committee was organized to conduct relief work from this country.

One of the interesting things about Quaker relief activity is that it is strictly non-sectarian and non-political. Relief is not contingent upon adherence to the principles of the Society of Friends or to any religion; nor do those who wear the red and black double star, a symbol adopted during relief work in the Franco-Prussian war, inquire into the political beliefs of those in need. While the institutions for the administration of non-sectarian, non-political relief are relatively new, the idea itself is not: its origin may be traced back to 1775, the eve of the American Revolution.¹ In December of that year Friends in Rhode Island organized the New England Meeting

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¹For a survey of Friends relief activities see Frederick B. Tolles, "Heralds of the Red and Black: Episodes from the Earlier History of Quaker War Relief," *Friends Intelligencer*, C (1943), 535-36, 557-58, 574-75.

for Sufferings, collected donations from Friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and went on a relief expedition to the northeastern region of Massachusetts where they distributed aid to the starving and freezing refugees from Boston and to other victims of the war between England and her colonies. The only qualifications for assistance were need and non-participation in the fighting.

The occasion for the relief expedition was provided by the conditions resulting from Britain's retaliatory acts following the Boston Tea Party. To demonstrate to the other colonies that resistance to the Royal authority could only result in disaster, the North Ministry, in the spring of 1774, pushed through Parliament a number of acts seriously affecting the government and economy of Massachusetts Bay. Americans referred to them as the Intolerable Acts; and intolerable they were. The port of Boston was closed and blockaded, the colony's charter was wrecked, persons indicted for a capital offense committed in connection with revenue laws could be sent to another colony or to England for trial, and the king's officers were authorized to quarter troops in the town.

Americans thought this was a pretty stiff price to pay for a tea party. Before long the business life of the largest port in America with its 20,000 inhabitants became paralyzed; the warehouses, wharves, shipyards, counting houses, most businesses in fact, came to a dead stop.² Unemployment became a major catastrophe for thousands, and had it not been for the generous supplies sent into Boston by other towns and colonies many people would surely have starved.

Throughout the summer and winter of 1774 Americans and the British troops maintained an uneasy truce around Boston. In April 1775 the truce was broken by skirmishes at Lexington and Concord; in June American Minute Men and British troops clashed in a full-scale battle for Bunker Hill. General Gage, commander of British forces, occupied Boston, and the newly created American army threw a cordon of troops around the city.

As winter closed in, conditions for the citizens in Boston became even more serious. The food and fuel supply dwindled, prices soared, and the unemployed soon ran out of money with which to buy even bare necessities. Among those suffering from cold and hunger were a few Quakers and news of their plight soon reached the ears of

²Allen French, *The First Year of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), pp. 11 ff.

Friends in Rhode Island. At first the Monthly Meetings in and about Boston gave assistance to suffering Friends and the Smithfield Monthly Meeting in Rhode Island sent a committee into the town with donations. But the relief was deficient and sporadic; there was no reliable organization or leadership to do the job.

By December 1775 both problems had been solved: the New England Yearly Meeting had created a relief organization and a man had come forward to lead an expedition to Boston. The organization was the New England Meeting for Sufferings; the man was Moses Brown of Providence.³

The episode established a precedent for systematic, large scale, non-partisan distribution of relief to war victims. Over the years, the original precedent was reinforced by additional incidents until, by the twentieth century, the tradition was firmly established.

This was not the sole significance of the expedition of 1775. It had made necessary the establishment of the New England Meeting for Sufferings, which marked an important stage in the development of Quakerism itself. As an institution in Quaker church government the Meeting for Sufferings originated in England during the early years of the Society — in the 1670's. While its original purpose was to provide legal defense for persecuted Friends, it soon broadened its activities to include general relief for needy members. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Meeting in England had ceased to be merely a social service agency, it had developed into an influential and powerful institution for the control of regular meetings and of members' lives. There was scarcely anything which did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Meeting for Sufferings.⁴

In America Quaker institutional development lagged far behind that in England. In fact, until the New England Meeting for Sufferings was established there were only two organizations like it in the colonies and they were of recent origin: the Philadelphia Meeting

³Fragments of the correspondence concerning the expedition have been published by Henry J. Cadbury in "Quaker Relief During the Siege of Boston," *Colonial Society of Massachusetts Transactions*, XXXIV (Boston, 1943), 39-61.

⁴There is no complete study of the Meeting for Sufferings. But for an excellent account of its origin and early development in England see Arnold Lloyd, *Quaker Social History 1669-1738* (London, 1950), pp. 32-47. Auguste Jorns discusses the subject in *The Quakers as Pioneers in Social Work* (New York, 1931), trans. T. K. Brown, Jr. See also Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (London, 1921), pp. 814-15.

founded in 1756 and the New York Meeting created the following year. Their jurisdiction and function was extremely limited; they were used almost exclusively to distribute relief to Friends, particularly those on the frontier. It is true that occasionally Friends, through these meetings, came to the assistance of non-Quakers who had suffered from war or some other catastrophe, but until 1775 Friends confined their relief work pretty much to taking care of their own.

After that date the importance of the institution developed rapidly. As in England it soon began to deal with a wide range of subjects touching on Friends' lives including military service, taxation, dress, language, censorship, marriage, temperance, slavery and the slave trade, treatment of Indians, an attempt to rewrite and enforce the Discipline. Although Friends' interest in these subjects had existed from the very beginning of the Society, attempts by some Friends to bring the actions of members into line with their testimony reached such proportions that it can legitimately be called a reformation, and was so referred to by its disciples.⁵ The reform movement within the Society resulted in part from re-emphasis of an ever-present aspect of Quakerism: the concern for the material and spiritual welfare of human beings, particularly, but not exclusively, of Friends; and in part from a response to the long powerful wave of reform in England which produced the Methodist movement and resulted in an evangelical revival among many other religious groups. The reforming spirit first touched Quakers in the middle colonies during the late 1750's — contacts between Friends in that area and Friends in England were more frequent and numerous; local conditions in Pennsylvania gave an impetus to the reformation, and it spread throughout the Society during the next decade. Agitation between the American colonies and England gave an added stimulus to the reform movement and it gained in momentum as the Revolution approached, drawing more and more elements into its vortex until it became extremely broad, almost universal. Quakers were concerned about the total man, not just a part of him.

As the reformation developed one of the problems facing Friends was what form should it take. Before the Revolution reform con-

⁵For a detailed discussion of the reformation see Rufus M. Jones, *Quakers in the American Colonies* (London, 1911), II, 571-79, and Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House, The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia 1682-1763* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1948), pp. 230-243.

sisted primarily in withdrawal from politics and emphasis upon those characteristics which had identified Friends as a "peculiar people." In its early phases great emphasis was placed on social reform: education, slavery and the slave trade, and temperance were among the most important subjects dealt with. Leadership in these matters came not so much from institutions such as the Yearly, Quarterly, or Monthly Meetings, or from the newly founded Meetings for Sufferings in Pennsylvania and New York, as from a few energetic members: John Woolman and Anthony Benezet are the most famous of these early reformers. There was little if any conflict between those whose primary interest seemed to be withdrawal from the world and strict adherence to the Discipline and those, like Woolman and Benezet, who placed great emphasis upon social reform; in fact, the distinction would have been meaningless to them. Characteristically, Friends moved slowly and cautiously in their demands that errant members conform to the testimony of Truth.

But the shock of the American Revolution destroyed the unity of the reform movement. The Society began to split into two conflicting groups. Numerous Friends began to reject the external control of members or meetings and claimed that the inner light — the promptings of their own consciences — was the only true guide to conduct. These people emerged as an identifiable group about the time that the earlier reformers passed from the scene or their influence waned; they threatened to take control of the reformation. Resistance to their demands came primarily from the more conservative, orthodox members who, in their zeal to preserve the unity of the Society, began to insist upon conformity to the accepted Truths, and they apparently thought that they were the best judges of what these Truths were. Members of this group seemed to be in the majority in most meetings; at any rate they began to use their influence to bring about conformity within the Society.

The most important single instrument of control contributing to orthodoxy and stability was the Meeting for Sufferings. Its growth as the guiding agency in the reform movement was perhaps natural. An executive body representing the Yearly Meeting between sessions, the Meeting for Sufferings was composed of members who were leaders of their own Monthly and Yearly Meetings. They not only had great influence in shaping policies in the Meeting for Worship,

but as members of the Meetings for Sufferings they had the responsibility and the power to see that these policies were obeyed by the Meetings and by the individual members. In this way the reformation became, to a remarkable degree, institutionalized; the reformation during and after the revolution passed under the control of the Meeting; the role of the individual was subordinated.

That the Meeting for Sufferings could be an effective instrument to direct the reformation was not immediately recognized. Not until the New England Meeting was formed in 1775 and Friends saw how effective it could be as an agency for relief did they realize how valuable it could be in other ways. Once aware of its usefulness, orthodox members quickly put it to the service of their reformation, and for almost half a century, until the Hicksite separation in 1827-28, it greatly assisted in retarding — it could not stop — serious divisions within the Society.

The man who provided inspiration for the establishment of the Meeting for Sufferings and the energy for the relief expedition to Boston was Moses Brown of Providence.⁶ Brown was not a birthright Quaker; in fact, he had been a member of the Society for less than two years. He came to Quakerism from the Baptist faith to which all his ancestors had belonged. The first Browns came to Providence in 1638 shortly after Roger Williams founded the colony, and from that day until this, members of the family have been leaders in Providence and the Rhode Island communities. But few, if any, of the successors of the first settler have contributed more to their development than Moses.

For the first decade of his mature life Moses was a member, with his three brothers, Nicholas, Joseph, and John, of the famous colonial shipping firm of Nicholas Brown & Company. In addition to their extensive commercial activities, the Brown brothers operated one of the largest spermaceti candle plants in America and built and managed a successful iron furnace. These and numerous other business enterprises contributed greatly to the economic growth of Providence which, by the time of the Revolution, had eclipsed Newport as Rhode Island's leading port. Of the four brothers, Moses was the most active in political affairs. A representative from Providence he served for eight years in the Rhode Island General Assembly where he

⁶There is a sketch of his life in the *DAB*, III, 146-47.

rapidly assumed a commanding position and became one of the colony's leading political figures. During this same period Moses was also a leader in the fight between Newport and Providence over the location of Rhode Island College (now Brown University), and it was largely through his efforts that Providence acquired the College. In the struggle between England and the colonies he supported the American cause consistently until he became a Friend in 1774. Although he was thereafter neutral in action, he was always pro-American in thought.

When Moses became a Quaker he curtailed his business activities and took up the crusade against slavery and the slave trade which the Society of Friends was conducting. That became one of his main interests for the rest of his life. If any one man deserves the credit for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery in Rhode Island, that man is surely Moses Brown. In his unrelenting struggle against slavery, and his interest in numerous other social reforms, he was in the tradition of John Woolman, whom he knew by reputation, and Anthony Benezet, one of his contemporaries whom he knew as a friend as well as a religious colleague.

Moses' interest in the fate of Friends caught in the tentacles of the undeclared war between England and the colonies was of long standing. As early as December 1774, writing for the New England Yearly Meeting, he commented that "It would doubtless [have] been well had our Yearly Meeting appointed a Committee for Sufferings, and furnished them for the Relief of the Distressed, in this time of difficulty, but it was not done."⁷ The lack of an organization and funds in New England forced Friends there to call for help from Philadelphia. The appeal met with a rebuff. "It does not appear to us," wrote Israel Pemberton, an influential Friend in the Quaker city, "to be time yet to send anything that will give cause to any to think we approve of their conduct."⁸ Israel thought that giving assistance to people in Boston, even Friends in need, would be misrepresented by

⁷J[ohn] H[adwen] and C[aleb] C[arpenter] to Israel Pemberton, [Newport], Dec. 1, Moses Brown Papers, misc. papers, K-AB. The MBP are in the RIHS Library. The letter was signed by John Hadwen and Caleb Carpenter, but they had merely touched up and passed on a letter sent to them by Moses. See MB to John Hadwen and Caleb Carpenter, Providence, Aug. 27, 1774, MBP, II, 21.

⁸Letter to John Hadwen, Caleb Carpenter, and Moses Brown, Jan. 16, 1775, MBP, misc. MSS, B-814, Box 6. See also John Townshend to John Pemberton, London, Sept. 11, 1775, Pemberton Papers XXVIII, 59.

others as approval of the rebellious Bostonians, and there were plenty of Friends who agreed with him. Moses was not discouraged by this news, and continued to send reports to Philadelphia that Friends in Boston were in need of assistance; help from the south would be gratefully accepted.⁹ In March, passing along some letters from the north to John Pemberton, Moses noted that he would raise the subject of relief for sufferers in Boston at the Preparative Meeting the next week. "Friends thinking it best to do what is done for them as a Meeting and not as private members."¹⁰ In this way he announced Friends' intention in Rhode Island to go ahead with the relief regardless of Philadelphia Quakers' antipathy toward the Bostonians.

Philadelphia Friends were also reluctant to send help to Boston because there was no officially constituted Meeting for Sufferings in New England to handle the money or supplies if they were sent. In June the Meeting for Sufferings in Philadelphia urged New England Friends to establish a permanent committee and to get up a local subscription. Then, if circumstances demanded, the Philadelphia Meeting would "join our endeavors with yours in contribution to their assistance."¹¹ Even before receiving this suggestion from Philadelphia Moses Brown and other Friends had decided to push ahead; at Newport on June 9, 1775, eight days before the Battle of Bunker Hill, the Yearly Meeting established a permanent Meeting for Sufferings with a committee of twenty-six members drawn from various Monthly Meetings in New England. The committee was to meet once a month or oftener if the need arose, and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer was to supply the funds for its operation.¹²

Moses was the committee's most energetic and influential member. He rapidly became the center of a wide correspondence and placed his services and his modest fortune at the disposal of the committee to help the poor, the sick, and the persecuted Friends. He saw

⁹Moses was in close touch with Friends in and about Boston. James Purinton to MB, Lynn, Feb. 19, 1775, MBP, II, 27.

¹⁰Quoted in Cadbury, "Quaker Relief," 8.

¹¹Ibid. See Arthur J. Mekeel, "New England Quakers and Military Service in the American Revolution," *Children of Light. In Honor of Rufus M. Jones* (New York, 1938), pp. 244-46, for a somewhat different explanation of the establishment of the New England Meeting for Sufferings.

¹²New England Yearly Meeting Records, p. 310; Epistle from NEYM at Newport, June 9-13, Minutes, Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings, pp. 8-9.

the work of the Meeting for Sufferings as creating the conditions under which Quakers could remain loyal to their principles. But to Moses its most important function in 1775 was that it could be used to relieve general suffering — relief was not to be restricted to Friends. Of secondary but by no means of minor importance, was his hope that such generosity would increase the reputation of Quakers in the eyes of all Americans. Neutralism in 1775 was beginning to be associated with Toryism; non-partisan relief would, perhaps, go far to dispel this notion from suspicious minds.

Even though New England Friends had established a Meeting for Sufferings, Friends to the south were still reluctant to act.¹³ For two months Moses time and time again needled his friends to send aid to Boston, which was now not only occupied by the British but was under siege by the Americans. In his correspondence Moses emphasized the idea that the motive for relief should be one of "benevolence only," and that it should be publicized as such, because he wanted to do as much as he could to convince people that Friends were not Tory in their attitude toward the "commotions," but were really neutral. In August, Thomas Lapham, Jr., clerk of the New England Meeting for Sufferings, at Moses' suggestion wrote to the Philadelphia Meeting that the distribution should be made on a charitable basis only "to remove and prevent the Jealousies which have arose, or may arise in the minds of any, that is disigned or applied to any other."¹⁴ The New Englanders were even more explicit in an Epistle dated September 12, in which they pointedly remarked:

how far you mean to consider others, or whether to make any preference, we cannot say, but we apprehend you mean to make no distinction of religious sect, or political party, which will cause care in those who distribute the Donation to avoid occasion of offence, and indeed from the misconstructions of your Charitable intentions already made that Care will be greatly increased in order to stop the Mouths of the censorious of both Parties.¹⁵

Meanwhile, in July 1775, the Pembertons, finally convinced by Moses' arguments, got the subscriptions for the relief of sufferers in New England under way and in a short time they could report that

¹³Israel Pemberton to MB, Philadelphia, July 9, MBP, misc. MSS, B-814, Box 6; Minutes, PMS, June 29, p. 9.

¹⁴Epistle, Committee of NEYMS to PMN; Providence, Aug. 14, NEYMR, 24.

¹⁵NEYMR, pp. 27-29.

a sufficient sum had been raised to send to the committee for distribution. "It is not our intention," they wrote, "to limit the distribution to the members of our own or any other Religious Society nor to the places of their present or former residence. It seems probable many who never lived in Boston may be as proper objects as those who have."¹⁶ The principle of non-sectarian relief which Moses and others in New England had called for from the beginning had finally been adopted by Friends in the middle colonies. By November over £4,000 Pennsylvania currency had been raised.¹⁷ There was some disagreement over how much of this sum should be forwarded to New England. Some members in Pennsylvania and New Jersey Meetings were dead set against sending any money at all. In addition to doubting the wisdom of distributing relief to non-Quakers, especially to Boston radicals, they had been frightened by a recent experience of the Mennonites in the western part of the colony who had raised a large sum for similar purposes only to have a treacherous treasurer apply it to military purposes.¹⁸ Fortunately the majority of the members were convinced of the necessity of supporting the project, and, finally, the Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings decided to send half the amount which had been raised — £2,000 — to New England. Moses advanced £500 of his money for the cause.

The original subcommittee to distribute the donations was appointed on November 21 at the Meeting for Sufferings in Providence. It was made up of Moses Farnum, Isaac Lawton, David Buffum, Theophilus Shore, Jr., and Jeremiah Hacker. By December, when preparations for the pilgrimage had finally been completed, all the members except Buffum had been forced to withdraw because of illness or business. In their places were appointed Thomas Steere, Thomas Lapham, Benjamin Arnold, and Moses Brown. The committee members left Providence on December 13 expecting to be gone only two or three days; they did not return home until December 29.

During the planning phase of the relief movement Friends had

¹⁶Israel Pemberton to MB, Philadelphia, Nov. 4, MBP, misc. MSS, B-814, Box 6. See the appeal distributed by the PMS, July 7, 1775, reproduced in Cadbury, "Quaker Relief," facing p. 47.

¹⁷Minutes, PMS, pp. 37-41.

¹⁸Israel Pemberton to MB, Philadelphia, Nov. 4, MBP, misc. MSS, B-814, Box 6.

thought only of providing relief for sufferers within Boston. And in December, although they knew that hundreds of people had left the city during the summer and fall, they did not think their condition was serious; the committee's chief objective still was relief of Boston. By the time the small band had reached General Washington's headquarters in Cambridge circumstances were such that a change in plans was required. From what information they could gather Moses and his companions concluded that the severity of conditions in Boston had been exaggerated or had improved. In any case they were unable to get permission from either General Washington or General Howe to enter the city. They wisely decided to distribute their relief funds to the needy scattered throughout the towns and villages north and south of Boston. Relief could not have come at a more propitious moment, for many people were now in desperate need.

During the eighteen day trip Moses and his friends managed to give away three-fourths of the £2,500 Lawful Money they had started with. The donations were eighteen shillings on an average to a family and would have been larger had the committee known in advance the number of people in need. Three days after the committee returned to Providence, Moses wrote letters to the Pembertons and to William Wilson giving them an unofficial synopsis of the trip and remarking to Wilson that "The name of Quaker though little known in these parts will be remembered and perhaps some may no more think it reproach."¹⁹ Israel Pemberton replied, sending his congratulations on a job well done. He had one mild criticism: the committee had "been much too sparing" in the size of the donations and he expressed the "hope you have ere this made a farther distribution as the poor people most certainly want much in this very cold season." The Pembertons had at first been hesitant about raising money to give to the Bostonians, but once they had committed themselves to the project they became tireless workers for the cause, and when it was over they knew how to use the results to good advantage. Israel wrote a long letter to Moses telling him of the criticism that had been leveled at the project in the beginning, and how it had been quieted by the news of the mission's success. "We had before obtained from William Wilson a copy of thy letter

¹⁹MB to William Wilson, Providence, Jan. 2, 1776, Letter Book, William L. Clements Library. It is reprinted in Cadbury, "Quaker Relief," 54-57.

to him" reporting the trip, he informed Moses, and had made several copies of it and sent them to meetings "which had not proceeded in Subscribing to the Contributions intended for the poor in your Country and as a Summary of all the intelligence we have received is now directed to be sent to our quarterly and monthly meetings." Israel was quite sure that the "Summary" would stimulate "those who have not subscribed and . . . some who had not contributed so freely" to open their purses wide. "Friends in general are well satisfied and some of us," he continued,

who were principally concerned in the moving for and promoting the service, are confirmed with thankfulness in the assurance, that the time and cause of our engaging therein was right, . . . The people in general especially the lower class are much distressed, . . . Many here have objected to the contribution because it was not limited to . . . poor Friends. I am sorry to find such narrow souls among us, but we must labour to keep united as much as possible in all our proceedings especially in these perilous times and when the full accounts come of the distribution, no doubt it will appear that Friends as well as others have partaken of our donations. The clear intelligent manner you have observed in keeping the accounts is fully satisfactory, as it is now to all that the last money was sent and when your meeting informs ours that more is wanting and send the farther accounts of the distribution to convey you a farther supply, as there's a considerable sum remaining in our Treasurer's hands and more coming in.²⁰

Pemberton also noted that some of the newspapers had printed accounts of the distribution and he remarked to Moses that "Some farther hints of that kind in other papers might not be unseasonable, if rightly given for there are many here who deny anything." Clearly Pemberton fully recognized the importance of the relief extended to the Bostonians as a means of softening criticism aimed at Quakers.²¹ This motive has, to a degree, always been present in Quaker relief work.

Throughout most of 1776 the Meeting for Sufferings, under Moses' direction, continued to distribute donations to sufferers in New England. He headed another expedition "westward and Northward"

²⁰Feb. 2, 1776, MBP, misc. papers, K-AB.

²¹Israel Pemberton wrote to Moses on May 8, 1776 that the relief work he had done was a "service both to the distressed poor and to open the Eyes and soften the hearts of some that were prejudiced against for want of knowing us and our principles." MBP, misc. MSS, B-814. Box 6.

from Boston, and this time donations averaged thirty-two shillings for each family. The committee aided about 160 more families in 14 towns within a distance of 40 miles of Boston. At the end of the trip Moses had between £60 and £70 Lawful Money and he wrote Friends on Nantucket telling them to draw on him for that amount if there were any families in need. Additional money received from Philadelphia was sent to committees in Salem and Lynn to be distributed at Marblehead, Cape Ann, Falmouth, and other towns in the area. Sufferers in Newport and Plymouth were also given assistance.²² By September, £3,195 Lawful Money had been received from Philadelphia and almost the entire amount had been distributed to about 700 people by the New England Meeting for Sufferings.

The clear detailed reports of the distributions that Moses sent to the Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings were important: they dispelled any apprehensions that many Friends had had about supplying funds; they served as models for reports of similar future projects; and they provided historians with important source material for studies of Quaker humanitarianism.²³ The praise which Moses received from his Friends in Philadelphia was well deserved. The Pembertons henceforth considered him to be the most reliable, trustworthy, and principled Friend in New England; they directed most of their correspondence concerning affairs of the Society to him. Although he had been a member of the Society for less than two years, there was no doubt now about his position as the leading Quaker in the northern colonies. He was so well thought of by the leaders in Philadelphia that he was invited to visit them and receive their thanks personally.

In a large measure the problem of providing relief for sufferers in New England on an extensive scale was solved by circumstances beyond the power of Quakers to control or even to influence. In March 1776 General Howe decided that Boston was not worth the sacrifice it would cost to hold. He loaded his army and 1,100 Tories on Admiral Shulldham's ships and sailed out of the harbor, leaving the town to Washington's triumphant American army and a jubilant

²²[MB] to Jonathan Macey, Joseph Mitchell, and William Rotch, Providence, Mar. 13, MBP, Austin MSS, III, "History of Friends." See also Minutes, PMS, Feb. 15, pp. 61-64; Apr. 4, p. 74.

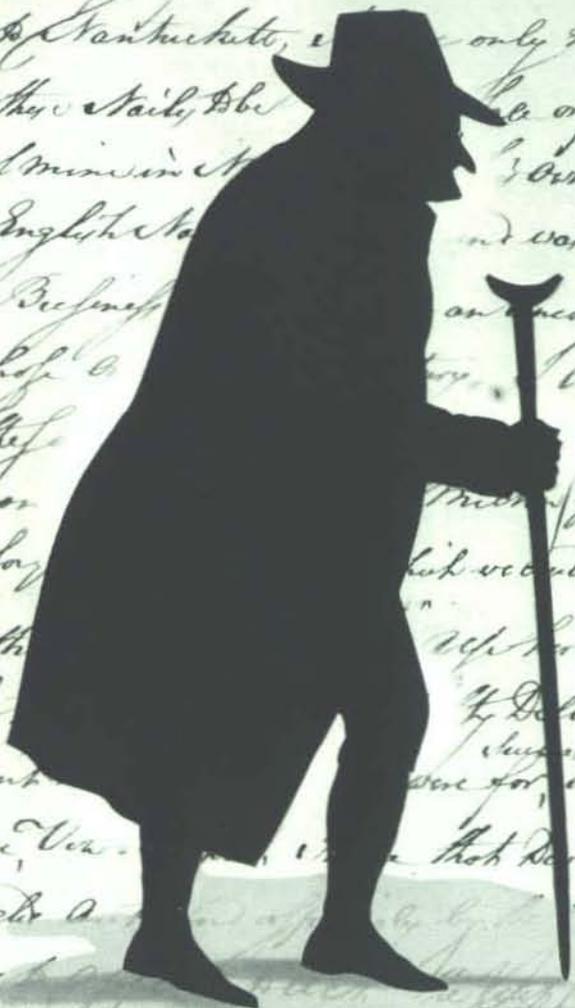
²³Israel Pemberton to MB, Philadelphia, Feb. 20, 1776, MBP, misc. papers K-AB.

Providence 19th of 3rd Mo^o 1776

May the Gov.

on coming to town this morning

was unexpectedly informed, that a vessel of sail
 and goods from Newbury, was only to inform the
 hope for the sail, to be the support of winter for
 kind of mission in New England, who then could
 we got English to and was selling up the
 lining Business an encouragement to him
 The Chief of Advanc'd a sum in
 on to the by the paper in part
 the poor money of man having 2^d mo
 taken for which we had complaint of
 what if the up here the money ought
 said for by Dollars, but a sum be
 appointed for the same for, and sail, are to
 off here, New that David's John Bro, no
 we single a woman, who had
 the word, then
 ed a, the any public
 ord of money to paid a sum, I had then have some order
 Sign My friend
 I am with respect thy
 affund friend
 M. Brown



populace. As the war moved south conditions in New England improved, even for Quakers. There were times when the Meeting for Sufferings had to come to the aid of poor or distressed Friends, particularly during the severe winter of 1777-78, but for the remainder of the war they fared about like the other members of the community; in fact, they might have been better off because of the well-organized system of poor relief that operated in each Monthly Meeting.

During the war the Meeting for Sufferings did not restrict its activities to the relief of Friends; it also served as a regional executive committee to secure for Quakers exemption from military service and from money payments in lieu of personal service. After 1776 it devoted a large part of its time to preserving the unity of the Society by enforcing the Discipline among the members, and its work was carried forward by a few individuals, of whom Moses was the most conspicuous.

Moses Brown's diary is in the Manuscript Collection of The Rhode Island Historical Society Library and was called to my attention by Mr. Clarkson Collins. It has been transcribed from the original and is here printed in full for the first time, although the brief summary of it made by Brown and sent to Friends in Philadelphia early in January 1776 has been printed. The addresses presented to Generals Washington and Howe, the letters sent to James Raymor and Ebenezer Pope, and fragments of additional correspondence relating to the expedition have also been published elsewhere.

The manuscript is in a small, unbound, homemade notebook (about 6 x 4 inches), containing sixteen numbered pages. In editing the original spelling and punctuation have been retained except in a few cases periods and capital letters have been supplied where they are obviously needed. As was customary in that day Brown used a great many abbreviations in writing his account and these have been expanded.

◁ SILHOUETTE OF MOSES BROWN made by William Henry Brown in 1833 when Moses was ninety-five years old. It is superimposed on a letter showing Moses Brown's signature and handwriting. Both the silhouette and manuscript are in the Society's collections.

MOSES BROWN'S ACCOUNT OF JOURNEY TO
DISTRIBUTE DONATIONS, 12TH MONTH 1775

13th of 12th month 1775. Set off with David Buffum to Distribute the Donations sent by Friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Thomas Steer, Thomas Lapham and Benjamin Arnold¹ met us at MANS by Appointment, after Dinner went to Gays and Lodged. 14th 5th day Week. Breakfasted at / / and went to Cambridge and Waited on General Washington² with the Address from Our Meeting for the Sufferings. He received us kindly But he having made a Rule to Let none into Boston except a man or his Wife that had been sepprated, the Small Pox being there and a great many poor being lately sent out³ and Apprehending Our Intention might in good Measure be Accomplished by Sending into some of our friends to meet us on the Lines to Effect which he would do anything

¹The four men were from Smithfield, Rhode Island where they were members of the Monthly Meeting. Buffum, descended from one of the oldest Quaker families in the colony, was a lifelong minister in the Society and one of the original members of the New England Meeting for Sufferings, a position he held until his death in 1829. In 1791 he moved to Newport and became a member of the Rhode Island Meeting at Portsmouth. He and Moses were lifelong friends and worked together on many projects, notably anti-slavery legislation and the founding of the Friends Boarding School. In addition to the material in the Moses Brown Papers in the Rhode Island Historical Society touching on his life see *Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island* (Chicago, 1908), I, 571, and *Memorials of Deceased Friends of New England Yearly Meeting* (Providence, 1841), pp. 58-61. Thomas Steere, Jr., was also an original member of the New England Meeting for Sufferings. He was active in the anti-slavery crusade and was a strong temperance advocate. His father had been active in political affairs, serving as a member of the Town Council in Smithfield and as a deputy in the General Assembly. *Rhode Island Colony Records*, V, 64, 85, 166; VI, 432, 578-79. Thomas Lapham was clerk of the Smithfield Monthly Meeting for years and one of the early leaders in the anti-slavery movement in Rhode Island. In 1774 he had been appointed to the famous Yearly Meeting Committee charged with agitating against slavery in the General Assembly. *Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island*, I, 101; Mary W. Peckham, "Concerning John Lapham and some of his Descendants . . .," MS in the RIHS. Benjamin Arnold had been employed by Nicholas Brown & Company during the 1760's when Moses was part owner of the company and during the Revolution he worked for Moses.

²Washington had been elected unanimously by the Continental Congress the previous June to command American forces. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, II, 91. He arrived in Cambridge on July 2 to take command of the troops which had laid siege to Boston following the Battle of Bunker Hill.

³In November over 350 poor left Boston and in December another 150 departed. They were not forced to leave or "sent out," but left of their own free will after General Howe gave his permission.

he could. We concluded to adopt that method and desiring leave to Write General How⁴ and Inclose him a Copy or Duplicate of the Address which we had and a Letter to James Raymor and Ebenezer Pope⁵ which he concented to and proposed our shewing what we wrote to General Nathanael Greene⁶ as if he approved of it it was likely he should and so perhaps save us the Trouble of an Alteration which we approveing. Waited on Nathanael and there Wrote to James Ramor and Ebenezer Pope as follows viz — and allso to General How incloseing the Meetings Address to him and the Letter to Pope and Raymor, as follows Viz⁷ — Presenting these to General Washington in the evening and he approveing Directed his Aid De Camp to Inclose these in the morning to General Ward at Roxbury with an Order for a flagg.⁸ We dined at Nathanael Greens where was James M. Vernon⁹ and several other Officers and in the course of Conversation Green seemed to Mannifest an Inclination that Friends should Keep to their Religious Principles (not withstanding

⁴Sir William Howe succeeded General Thomas Gage as commander of British Troops in America in October 1775. He evacuated Boston in March 1776, before Washington could launch an attack to capture the city, proceeding first to Halifax, Nova Scotia and then to New York. Over a thousand loyalists left Boston with Howe.

⁵They were members of the Society of Friends living in Boston who had written to Friends in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania about conditions in the city.

⁶Greene was from Warwick, Rhode Island where he had been a member of the Society of Friends until 1773, when he had been read out of the Meeting for engaging in military activities. Although crippled he had been elected a brigadier general to command the state's troops by the Rhode Island General Assembly in June 1775; later in the same month the Continental Congress elected him to the same rank in the Continental army. Moses and Greene had known each other for years. *DAB*, VII, 569-73.

⁷The letter is printed in Cadbury, "Quaker Relief."

⁸Artemas Ward had been elected by Congress to be the first Major General in the American Army. He was General and Commander-in-Chief of the Massachusetts troops and had been in command of the Boston siege before Washington arrived. *DAB*, XIX, 415-16.

⁹Moses meant here James Mitchell Varnum, colonel of the 1st Regiment, Rhode Island Infantry. Born in Dracut, Massachusetts, Varnum attended Harvard, but was expelled in 1768 following student disorders, and finished his education at Rhode Island College (now Brown University) in Warren where he graduated with honors with the first class in 1769. At the commencement exercises he defended the thesis that America should not become independent although it is doubtful that he spoke with much enthusiasm and probably would have preferred to take the opposite side. *DAB*, XIX, 277-78.

his Departure) saying if they did and meddled not in the Dispute by promoting of Parties etc they would meet with protection from both but if they did not they must Expect to suffer. And on Vernon speaking something favouring Independency and my manifesting my sentiments that we ought (and I hoped every one Did that were principles in this unhappy controversy) to keep an Eye to a Peaceable Union and not think of Independency, which from some circumstances the people of England had too much reason to suspect particularly for Adamses Letter etc.¹⁰ Upon which Green joined and said he believed in the beginning of this Unhappy Warr no one Entertained Such an Idea but if the Warr Continued he Could not promise for the Consequence etc.

We conversed some upon the probability of getting Leave to carry or send in some fresh provisions for the poor sick etc. to which Vernon seemed to Consent Saying if General Howe would give his Word it should be Distributed among the sick poor etc it could be depended on. Green said Little but on 6th day morning the 15th David Buffum and myself being willing to go through the Trouble of buying and sending in provisions and Risque of Consequence from the people if we could get the Generals Permission We Waited on Thomas Mifflin Quartermaster General to Advise with him upon the subject, he seemed to Express a willingness in his own account but thought as General Washington was a stranger and it might give offence to the people although his Humanity would make him Willing yet he thought it would be Attended with such Difficulties that we concluded upon the whole to Drop the further Endeavors to Effect it, and Thomas Steer, Thomas Lapham and David Buffum set off for Roxbury to get a flag and send it while Benjamin Arnold and I went to Waterstown where the Assembly was setting to get further Intelligence respecting the poor Inhabitants of Boston and Charlestown. We sent in to the Speaker with Whoom I had some Acquaintance, (James Warren) he came but not knowing so well as William Cooper the town Clerk of Boston and now a Member of Assembly he Caled him out who gave us a minute of the Names etc of the

¹⁰The reference is to the letters that John Adams wrote to his wife, Abigail, and to James Warren, in July 1775, and which fell into the hands of the British in Boston who published them. Adams expressed himself in terms that left no doubt where he stood concerning independence and his views had alarmed many people who were not yet prepared to break with England.

Committee of the province to Inspect and Take care of them as they come out of Boston. We also saw Joseph Palmer one of the Council to whom I read the Meeting for Sufferings Address to the Generals which he approving offered any assistance and kindly Envited us to his Lodgings.¹¹ I desired if he got any particular Intelligence of any Necessitous to Communicate it to Jeremiah Hacker of Salem. To Return to the Evening at Cambridge, we were unable to get any Beds at any of the Houses there, being much crowded and had to Lodge in a Room by the fire with only an old underbead of straw covered with a blanket for 3 of us one only /had/ a blanket on the floor, another, on a bench without any covering but our great coats. However I lay Quietly although without much Sleep and thought it was a preparation of us to a suitable sympathy for the poor where we were to Vissit and I observed to my companions it was Necessary for us to partake of the Sufferings of the Times for that purpose. We were much better off than thousands around in the Camps and Else Where as will afterward appear having a Warm Room and fire for which (although poor fare to what I had been and Indeed all of us Used to) I desire to be thankful and particularly so having my mind preserved from the least murmuring and health continued so as to do Business Comfortable the next Day. — — a Remembrance of Some of our friends Lodging in the woods Covered only with Bows of Trees even in Rainy weather was present with me.

Benjamin and I returning from Watertown went to Roxberry and found our friends had sent in the Letters and Expecting an Answer which soon appearing Thomas Lapham and I went to meet them and received a Letter from the Generals Aid Decamp that our pro-

¹¹James Warren was from Plymouth where he was a merchant, gentleman farmer, and county sheriff. He sat in the lower house of the Massachusetts General Court and was president of the Provincial Congress until its dissolution in 1778, whereupon he became speaker of the House of Representatives in the new state government. Warren also served as paymaster for the Continental army while it was in the vicinity of Boston. Warren and Moses were old friends, having corresponded with each other before the revolution about politics and farming. *DAB*, XIX, 478-79. William Cooper was the Boston town clerk for fifty-nine years and had been an early supporter of the Revolution as clerk of the Boston Committee of Correspondence. *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York, 1886), I, 733. Joseph Palmer was born in England but migrated to America in 1746, settling in Germantown where he first became a card-maker for wool-carding, and later built glass, chocolate, candle, and salt factories. *DAB*, XIV, 189.

posed Conference could not be granted but that the Sherriff Loring¹² would wait on us when We would appoint the Officer who said he was Sir Henry Colden not haveing known our Business and on Informing him a little into it seemed willing to write to the General that Evening and know his further answer in the Morning and Send to Majors Sherriff and Small with whom I had some Knoledge.¹³

7th day morning 16th. In the morning at 9 o'clock, after going to General Ward and getting a New order for a flagg we went in with Colonel Kyes a Drum and an officer with a white Handkerchef on a staff, which was soon Answered by the appearance of Three officers the one mentioned, Major Small and the Sherriff Lowering. We met and shook hands Major Small appeared glad to see me as I was him haveing conceived a favourable opinion of him from his mild and Kind Treatment of me when I was in Boston in the Spring. Major Sherriff he Informed me was well. We had wrote the Evening before and drew on Henry Lloyd¹⁴ for £100 Lawful Money rather than send in the money by the Sherriff whom we knew not but in seeing and converseing with him he appearing Candid and willing to assist us. We proposed in Case they would give us their opinion that a further Sum would be useful among the Sick Poor etc (within our limits which we manifested by Reading the Address to the General the Letter to Pope and Ramor etc) we would send in a further sum which we had with us. Major Small declined saying his circle was not among such nor did he know of any in Distress if he did he could not Live in affluence without assisting them etc. /He/ Referred us to the Sherriff, Who said Though £100 could not go a great way in Such a town yet upon the Whole could but advise us

¹²Loring had been appointed vendue master and sheriff when the British occupied Boston. French writes that "The meanness of his character is shown by the fact that his wife became Howe's mistress and Loring, intent on profit, accompanied her as she travelled with the army." Allen French, *The First Year of the Revolution*, pp. 341-42. But see E. Alfred Jones, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts their Memorials, Petitions, and claims* (London, 1930), p. 200, who suggests that the evidence against Loring should be used with caution.

¹³Majors William Sherriff and John Small were known to Moses as a result of his trip to Boston in 1774 to secure the release of his brother, John Brown, who had been seized by the British at Newport, allegedly for attempting to supply the colonial army.

¹⁴Lloyd had for many years served as the Brown family business agent in Boston. He remained loyal to the Crown and when Howe evacuated Boston, went to Nova Scotia.

not to send in any more at present but Write our friends to make the Distribution and Send us Out an Account on our Return with a State of the poor etc by which we could Judge and kindly offered his Assistance to bring out their Letters Accounts etc. and we Left them after Some conversation about their (our friends) coming out which they said might be when they pleased and they would assist them etc. They also sead any others that had not made them selves busy and particularly obnoxious might with Their Housestuff agreeable to Proclamation. — — — — We Returned acknowledged the civility of the main guard etc and went to Lynn called at Silvanus Husseys who being absent from home with his wife went to Samuel Collins and Lodged.

1st day 17th. The Next day went to meeting and in the afternoon went to Salem to Jeremiah Hackers and found him well.

2nd day the 18th. We vissited Marblehead upon the Business of Distributing the Donation to the poor, on the Road found signs of their Poverty in meeting a Number of Poor children out Begging Saying Master give me a Copper to buy a Biskett etc etc. We collect- ing the Select Men at an Inn where we dined concluded to divide into Three Companies, Jeremiah Hacker and Samuel Collins being with us. Two of our company and one of their Select men went together from House to House (of the poor) and Distributed according to the Several Circumstances till about 5 oclock Releiving between 60 and 70 famyls who appeared realy Necessitous and Such Scenes of Poverty I had before been a stranger two. Not being able to go through the town referred the completion to Jeremiah and Samuel at an other Time and with Satisfaction of mind returned to Salem.

3d day the 19th. Assembled the Select Men of Salem communi- cated our Errand and Divided into 4 divisions to Visit the poor there a Select Man accompanying Each. Found many real objects of Charity although not in all Respects so misserable as at Marblehead. Not finishing Left the Work to Thomas Steer and Jeremiah Hacker and proceeded on the Afternoon for Cape Ann past the ferry and got to Manchester relieving Two families from Boston by the Way and that Evening making Known our Business to the House Keeper and Major Lee, a woman from Boston wass sent for who appearing a humble Desarveing object we Relieved and in the Morning of

the 20th proceeded to Gloucester on Cape Ann about 8 miles further and 16 from the Ferry at Beverly, got there sent for the Select Men and informed them of our Business. Dined and divideing into 4 companies a Select man with Each we proceeded upon the Business, the Town being Scattering some 4 or 5 miles off we Rode the weather Extreem Cold yet the Necessitys of the Poor were such as prompted us to go through much sufferings on that Account without complaint and I may say scarce a Relenting thought. In this days travel I saw the Depth of the Poverty of many poor Widows and Fatherless exceeding Marblehead for the want of the Necessaries of Life, many aged among them. Returning at Night we met Each other with Declarations of what Each other had seen expecting our own prospects could not have been equaled by others but allas one scene of Want appeared generally. Lodged at the Inn and in the Morning of the 21th went to Captain — Allens to Breakfast on our way on the Business which the Select men attended. The weather yet colder than before we Set out however upon the truly acceptable Errand to the poor Many of whom appeared humbly Thankful and contrited in Spirit by our Vissits and we were sometimes favoured with Words of Consolation, Council or Reproof as Ocations offered to their and our own Sattisfaction. Nearly Compleating the Business here returned to John Lows to Dine, he wass calld both Coll & Decon Low. He appeared to be a much Tender respectable Man and to whom We found great Nearness.* The Rest that attended appeared kind and friendly endeavoring to assist us to Keep to the Limits of our Restrictions in the Distribution of the Donations. Their names were Jacob Allen, James Porter and Samuel Rogers beside Low and Doctor Samuel Plumber allso attended. We Lodged at Lows and in the Evening the Preacher to the Parish came in and in Conversation put some Question respecting our principle of not fighting etc to which we answered but one of the Company disapproveing his Questioning upon our Religious Principles. Seeing Our Benevolent Errand he stopt although we told them we were willing to give account of our principles in that Respect. His Name John Rogers and sead he Descended from John that was burnt as a Marter in Smithfield and was the 9th in a Direct Line all Johns and preachers and he had a son John but he

*NB he was called, both Colonel and Decon Low.

had not yet received Light Enough to take upon him that Calling. He appeared much more to approve our Errand than we did him as a preacher of the GossPELL. He left us with *his* blessing and we bid him farewell. Our friend Low for such I may call him had left his wife about 3 months. /He/ owned Several Negros one of which, Mother to the Others he had let go to house Keeping on her Request and had thought of Freeing the others. I gave him Some account of my exercise in that Respect and we endeavoured to inforce it upon him and Spent the Evening in Good Measure Sattisfactory. And in the Morning of the 22nd riseing before Sunrise got Breakfast and took leave of the Family. The Children seemed near to me. We went to Allens who with Porter and Low went on our way stoping at Sundry places Releiving the Necessitous at the last House in Town. Toward Manchester we all met Warmed and Conversed some upon the State of the town etc, I giving my advice freely to apply to the Assembly and get a bill started to send for some corn this Winter.

We parted in good Will to Each Other they Expressive of Gratitude for the Donations and our Care in it and we for their civilities. I improved the last moments with my friend John Low Letting him know my Loss of a Companion the usefulness of Affliction and Expressed a desire he might with me rightly Improve upon it. We Tenderly and Affectionately bad Each other Farewell he is Still near me at Writing this. I had and Still propose Sending him Barclays Apology.

Went to Major — Lees at Manchester to Enquire if any poor had occurred to his memory since we saw him. He had been to Dinner but had Victuals brought in and kindly Envited us to Eat. His wife appeared a smart sensible Woman Distinguishing well between objects of charity and those that were not. He sent for John Edward a Select Man who with me went to Several places Assisting some one family very Necessitous, an aged Woman 96 or 97, /a/ man upwards of 89 and /a/ maden Daughter by whom they were supported but now Business failing they were real objects of Charity. The House very uncomfortable the man and woman seemed sensible and Tender not withstanding their great age. I desire to Remember this Vissit in particular. Called at Lees to acknowledge their civility and went forward toward Salem the Select man with us several miles to Vissit some on the Road. We

got to Salem in the Evening and met our friends Thomas Gothrop and Paul Osborn at Jeremiah Hackers. Next day 23d 7th day Week I haveing something of headache and feeling not very well went not out on Business but a Number of poor Women Comeing In I was Some imployed there while the others were abroad upon the Business. 1st Day 24th. A stormy Day of Wind and Snow, the first Meeting Silent. Afternoon Thomas Spoke of the prospect he had and the Tables he had seen filed with various things amongst them wass blood etc. In the Evening at Jeremiah Hackers he also Spoke from Beware of the Leaven of the Pharises also of Davids being pursued by Saul yet when he had him in his power he did not Wound or Slay him but took of his Shirt only etc.

2d the 25th. Went to Lynn to Samuel Collins. Thomas had a meeting there beginning at 3 oclock. Incouraging to the Seekers, mentioning the passages or speaking of some that had that Language Tell me o thou Beloved where thou makest thy flocks to Lay down at Noon etc., and, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed the Kid beside the Shepards tents, Enjoining to Keep Close to the Shepard of Israel etc. Benjamin, David, Thomas Lapham, Samuel Collins and I set out 26th very Early Leaving Thomas Steer with the Friends at Daniel Newhales, we wrode 4 miles from Samuels House before Sunrise, very cold. David Samuel and I went into Chelsy Benjamin and Thomas forward to send into Boston for the account of the Distribution. I went (with Samuel Collins) on to Point Shirley. Winter Gray one of the Colonys Committee Accompanying found another there Captain Siggille. We went round from Room to Room found some very Nedy which we assisted dined there and getting through a Little before Sunset set off found David at the Inn 6 miles off he had been Employed at a house where a Number removed to from the point /Point Shirley/ after waiting for the Small Pox to break out 21 days and Clearing up were to be Transported into the Country as fast as Teams could be gott. This was a very Unpleasant scene to see people going from the place of Birth, where they knew not depending upon the Benevolence of the publick and unknown Individuals without the Necessaries of Life etc. But what added to the scene was the Inequitious Treatment they met from the people while on ship bord, (about 4 Days) haveing mostly as we were informed been Robbed of money close or furniture and much of the Latter Damaged in heaving out etc. I

hope General Howe will be duly Informed of this and provide against it by giveing the Direction to a man of Virtue and not Trust such a Vagabond Priest as its Sead Morrison the man that Com-manded is.¹⁵ I was told by a person there he had lost near 600 Dollars by his tacking it after he had agreed it should be carreyed safely. We went to Malden and Lodged at — where were the Select men upstairs on business and below a Noisey Company of Soldiers fidling and Danceing after supper. David and I proposed to see the Select Men and Inform them of our Business went up stairs and I spoke to them of the Noise etc not being sufferable it was not only rong in itself but contrary to Every prospect of the present time and Even the Congress Discouraged it by Resolves. They allowed it was not agreeable but thought as they were Soldiers it must be allowed. It was what they called a Christmas frolich and they had been up all the Night before, were principaly of the Riflemen. The Select men haveing one of the poor with them Soliciting Assistance and another haveing been there wass sent for and we Distributed to both Families and another of an aged wooman. Left the House in the Morning 27th. Rode to Cambridge Breakfast, received a Line from Thomas Lapham that they had received Directions from General Washington to go to General Ward for a flagg but was so late we thought no answer could get out that Day so Kept along and got to Nehemiah Shermans in Billingham and Lodged. In the Morning went 4 miles to Seth Arnolds found George Recovering Sister Mary and Mary Olney¹⁶ there by whome we heard from home the first News I had after I left it. They are generally well and I was made glad, went to monthly meeting. 5th day 28th. The Business not finished met the 29th and got home that Night about Nine oclock. May I be duly thankful upon Every Remembrance of the favourable Assistance of Divine Goodness and presarvation through this journey through which I have been Presarved to Return to my Family and friends in Health and a good Degree of Satisfaction.

Wrote the 3d of 1st month 1776 or finished then for my Recollection hereafter which with the Assistance of the List I took must if rightly Improved by me be useful.

¹⁵Morrison was an American who deserted to the British and supplied Gage with military information. He was apparently in charge of evacuating the poor from Boston. French, *op. cit.*, p. 545.

¹⁶Moses later married Mary Olney.



17. HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS

Walnut

Massachusetts 1750-1775

A comparison of this high chest of drawers with the two illustrated in Joseph Downs' *American Furniture* (no. 190 and no. 191) shows the similarity of certain features which indicate Massachusetts origin.

The elongated flame finials, with a disc-like top to the urn shaped base, is almost always a Massachusetts characteristic. Compare these finials with the typical Newport style shown in the catalog of the M. and M. Karolik Collection.

The mouldings of the bonnet, and of the base where it joins the top section, should be compared with those of the Newport high chest on the following page to determine the differences that exist between these two regions.

The fan or sunburst is of a type frequently found throughout New England.

Ex-collection Henry A. Hoffman



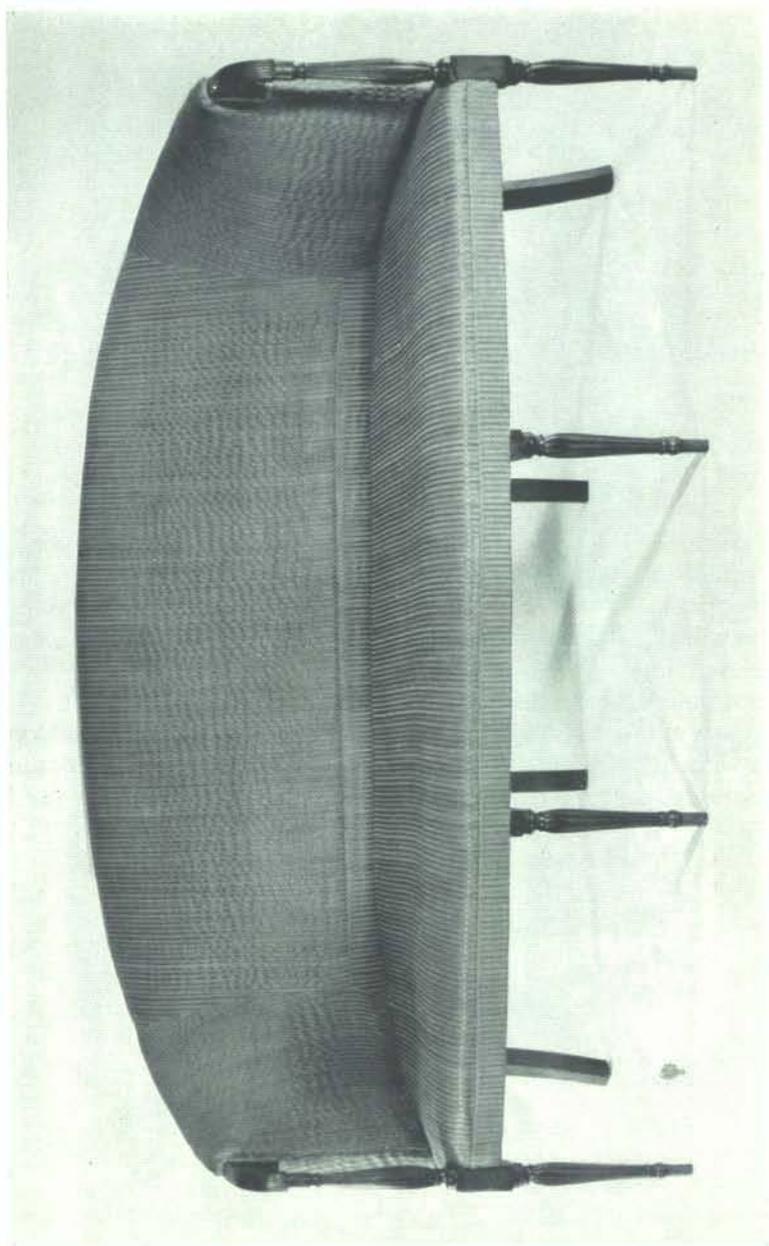
18. HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS

Cherry

Newport 1750-1775

While among collectors a high chest with a broken arch pediment (bonnet top) is preferred over the "flat top" design shown here, an appraisal of this example from the viewpoint of line and proportion will give it a very high rating. It has the sturdy proportions and clear-cut lines of the better Newport pieces. The brass pulls are very handsome and furnish a desirable form of embellishment. The shaping of the legs shows the sharp edges and square section so popular with the Newport cabinetmakers. The shaping of the foot and ankle adds a delicate touch to an otherwise robust piece.

Ex-collection Julia D. and Franklin R. Cushman



19. SOFA

Mahogany

Salem 1790-1810

In England and Colonial America the sofa, which has today become a part of every home, had its beginning in the upholstered benches and settees of the William and Mary and Queen Anne periods. Very large and beautiful sofas were made during the Chippendale period, particularly in Philadelphia, where the roll of the arms and the shaping of the crest of the back produced a truly elegant design.

The subsequent delicacy of the Hepplewhite and Sheraton periods is clearly displayed in this example, which is also illustrated in *Fine Points of Furniture* by Albert Sack and is described there "as a choice example of perfect symmetry." While many different designs of fabric were used to upholster these pieces, the most pleasing result is obtained by a narrow striped fabric such as the one used on this sofa.

Ex-collection Henry A. Hoffman



20. UPHOLSTERED ARMCHAIR

Mahogany

New England 1785-1795

This style of chair has, for some obscure reason, been referred to in recent years by collectors and dealers alike as a "Martha Washington" armchair. They are available in a great variety of sizes and shapes. Some have plain, some have moulded, and some have inlaid legs and arms.

This chair may be described as a modest example of this type, simple in its design and execution, and lacking the fine proportions and adornment found in the more sophisticated specimens. The crest rail of the back lacks the pleasing curves which are sometimes found but the shaping of the arms is good.

Ex-collection George C. Barton

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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LECTURES

October 17, 1956, Wednesday 8:15 p.m.

The Role of the State University in Rhode Island

JAMES P. ADAMS, Chairman of the Board of Trustees
of State Colleges
(formerly vice president of Brown University)

November 18, 1956, Sunday 3:30 p.m.

Military Dress in Rhode Island From 1775 to 1890

MRS. JOHN NICHOLAS BROWN