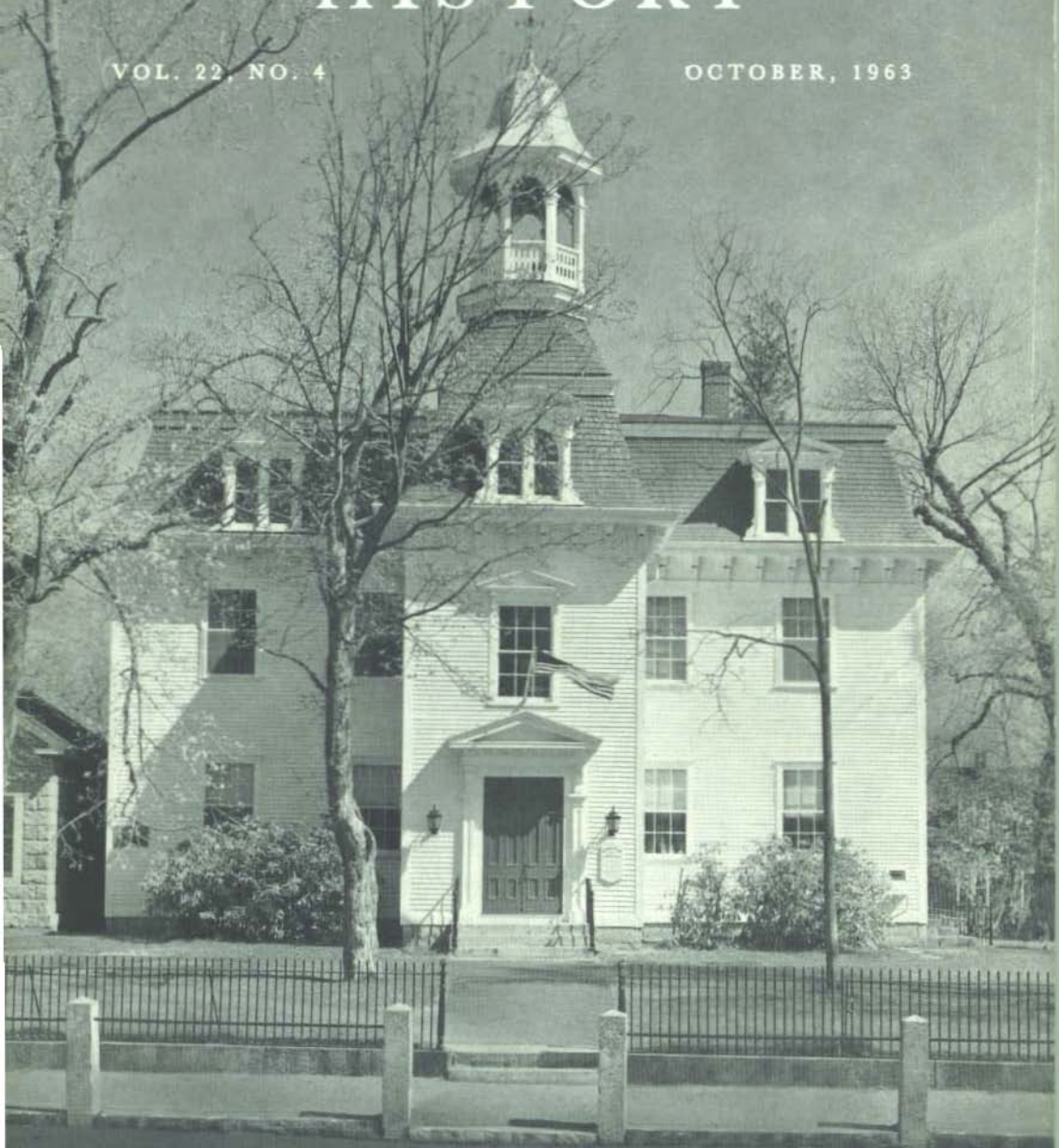


# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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[Cover]

OLD WASHINGTON COUNTY COURT HOUSE, KINGSTON

In 1752 the county seat of Kings County (now Washington County) was moved from Tower Hill to Little Rest (now Kingston), and a court house was erected there. This was succeeded by the present building in 1775. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the General Assembly occasionally met here and it was used as a court house until 1900. At present it houses the Kingston Free Library.

The building has been considerably altered.

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CHRISTOPHER A. GREENE:  
RHODE ISLAND TRANSCENDENTALIST

by LEO STOLLER

Department of English, Wayne State University

SOME YEARS AGO, browsing in the life of Garrison written by his sons, I paused over an extract from an old letter: "William Chace has gone to tilling the soil, deeming it a crime against God to get a living in any other way! This seems not less strange than his condemnation of associations." My mind was on Henry Thoreau, and the words arrested me because he too had turned to the land and he too had shunned organizations. Thoreau moved to Walden Pond in 1845. The old letter was written in 1841. Thoreau had been alone. Chace, the Garrisons added, had "a partner in husbandry, Christopher A. Greene, with whom he lived in a sort of community." Their marginal gloss referred to a publication I had never heard of, the *Plain Speaker*.

I located its seven issues in The Rhode Island Historical Society (it had been published in Providence) and in the American Antiquarian Society. Greene, the partner in husbandry, turned out to be one of the editors. The other was not Chace but a George L. Clarke. Chace was there, however, in letters and articles. The pages were full of suggestive parallels with Emerson and Thoreau — and Bronson Alcott appeared unexpectedly as a direct link to Concord.

There I stopped, busy with other matters, until I saw the name William Chace Greene, almost as if it had been in bold type, on a page of the magazine *College English*. Professor Greene, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was Christopher Greene's grandson. Through him I began to correspond with two granddaughters: Mrs. Edward W. Smith of Philadelphia and Mrs. Edward Rossmassler of Chadd's Ford, Pennsylvania, who very generously let me examine their grandfather's manuscripts.

Starting with Thoreau, I had reached Christopher Greene. Perhaps their lives were not only parallel but actually crossed. In 1850, at least, Thoreau's friend Harry Blake was teaching under Greene in the Boston suburb of Milton. But as I looked through the *Plain Speaker*, the letters from Alcott, the essay submitted to *The Dial*, and as I read the pamphlet biography by Joseph R. Webster, I became interested in Christopher Albert Greene himself. He had only a few years. He made no name for deeds or for writings. Yet his life had a symmetry. It will remind you of Miles Coverdale, the narrator of Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*. The fires of the reform movement brought out their brightest colors. Then each grayed. Coverdale retreated to genteel letters. Greene became a schoolteacher. From this decline each could look back to the brief climax whose spirit we wonder at.

## I

GREENE'S HISTORY involves a curious negation shared by one other reformer who also chanced to share his family name. Both William B. and Christopher A. Greene spent their youth at West Point and their first maturity in the United States Army fighting the Seminoles. From this extreme of support, each then went to an extreme of opposition.

Christopher Greene began to collect his recommendations for West Point in midsummer of 1830. He had turned fourteen on the twenty-seventh of June and was still a pupil at Kent Academy in his native town of East Greenwich, a few miles from Providence. His father's father, also called Christopher, was the youngest brother of the Revolutionary general, Nathanael Greene. With this connection for leverage, twelve men signed a letter asking the secretary of war to allow young Christopher to enter the military academy the following June, "at which time he will be of proper age, and of sufficient acquirements, according to our opinions, to enter said Institution." The general's brother signed first. Then came seven other Greens, of whom we need only note the boy's father, named Nathanael after his famous uncle and addressed as Captain to honor years of command in the East India trade. The remaining four included Wanton Casey, whose daughter Abby Sophia the Captain had married in 1814.

More recommendations were sent in the fall and winter, and early in March of 1831 the Greens received a letter from the secretary of war announcing Christopher's appointment. At first his career at

West Point threatened to be very short. He entered in June. About the middle of October he injured a foot and was hospitalized. Then he was excused from duty to go to New York for treatment. In December he had to resign. Another month saw his recovery, however, and again there was a letter to the secretary of war and again, in March of 1832, an appointment. This time he stayed his four years.

When Christopher was graduated, twenty-third man down in the forty-nine that made up the class of 1836, he was commissioned Brevet Second Lieutenant in the Third Artillery. He had just turned twenty. A few weeks later the Brevet was removed. And exactly six months later, on January 1, 1837, he submitted his resignation. What happened in the interval is very sparsely documented.

Lt. Greene's assignment was to the Topographical Engineers, and he seems first to have been on detached duty with a Col. Long laying out a railroad in Maine. In the fall of 1836 he was among those removed from such civilian projects and ordered to join their regiments fighting in Florida. The transfer must have displeased him, for in November a relative named Ward writes to the secretary of war asking that it be rescinded. Lt. Greene, says Mr. Ward, had been all along "designed for the Bar in Rhode Island." He had accepted his commission "with the sole intention of acknowledging the favor conferred upon him by Government for his education, . . . meaning to resign as soon as it could be done with propriety." Field service would weaken the habits of study needed in a lawyer.

Mr. Ward's letter contradicted the earlier ones that had spoken of "an ardent ambition for a military life," a "strong predilection," a "genius and predilection for tacticks." The claims that get you into an army are not the ones that get you out. Wherever the truth lay, Lt. Greene rejoined the Third Artillery in Florida. There, at Gary's Ferry, he wrote his resignation. The first officer who passed on it did not approve. The next two did. The last note on the record sheet is: "to take effect the 30th of April."

Returned to New England, Greene took a second farewell of the Army by writing three short essays on the Florida War and sending them to the editor of the Boston *Daily Courier*. His letter of official resignation had been formally unrevealing: "I hereby resign the commission of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. which I hold in the service of the United States." The more personal newspaper letters tell what was troubling him.

"Before a nation can rightfully enter into a war," so he begins, "two things must be settled — first, that the war is just; second, that it is expedient." Most of what Greene writes is about expediency.

What is the war being fought for? The territory at issue is "worthless and uninhabitable . . . a small tract which sand and water divide . . . in possession, and where fevers, agues, dysenteries, death from poisonous water, and pestilential air, are the sure doom of every settler." Moving the Seminoles across the Mississippi would only reinforce the Western tribes, buying life for Americans on one frontier at the price of death on another.

When can we win? Nature herself has made Florida for defense. "No human art could have contrived a ditch so complete as the wide swamp, — a parapet so perfect as the close and tangled hammock, — or have so skilfully arranged the whole so as to serve, at one time for defense, at another for concealment." Knowing their country perfectly, the Indians fight a guerilla war, move swiftly. When our army, "with its trains of heavy wagons, reaches a point which the Indians lately occupied, the latter are in their rear, ravaging uncontrolled." The army itself is undermined, understaffed, and supported by militia from "the undisciplined South" whom it takes a whole term of service to train to "a proper state of subordination." At best we cannot defeat these Indians with these forces in under five years.

What suffering will the victory cost us? Soldiers have been killed in battle, assassinated in ambush. But there are two enemies. Florida is a "wilderness." Food must be brought in over long hard distances. The water always carries dysentery. "The country is flat. Pine barrens and swamps, and here and there a hillock of sand, alone vary the topography. The pestilential vapor from these swamps pervades the whole atmosphere, and the sun looks down death upon the unfortunate sojourner. . . . Marching through a country never before trod by white man's foot — now wading through the deep and slimy swamp — now struggling through the tangled hammock — and now dragging their weary feet through the heavy sand of the pine barrens — at night deprived of their natural rest by the necessary 'guard'—exposed of necessity to every inclemency of the weather, [our soldiers] are perfectly open to the attacks of disease. Add to this, the anxiety of mind in looking for an enemy always on the alert, and you have before you a picture of what has been happening in Florida every day for more than a year and a half. Can we allow so much suffering for so insignificant a purpose to continue any longer?"

"For the honor of our country," Greene answered himself, "I hope not." His conclusion was much like that of other officers who resigned their commissions in this war — which the United States, let us remember, never really did win. But over and above the argument from expediency, there are hints of an argument from justice.

It begins in low key, with the suggestion that perhaps the treaty by which the Seminoles bound themselves to move West was not matter for a war. American dealings with the Indians were marked by "such universal chicanery" that the treaty was surely questionable. It raises its pitch when it questions the humanity of killing off an entire people, small though it may be. Can "an enlightened nation" fight a war to exterminate another? Can it accept the sacrifice of all these lives "merely to enforce the execution of a doubtful treaty" or to push out its own boundary? It reaches a peak when it questions not one war but all wars. By establishing peace in Florida, Greene suggests, the United States would be taking "the first step in that great and glorious work, the abolition of war."

Built into the argument from principle is a radical conception of the military oath of allegiance. Soldiers agree "to do the duty of an army." The government, by implication, agrees "to employ them in nothing that an army may not rightfully do." If this contract is broken by the government, it no longer binds the soldier. An army ought not to fight "an unjust war" or "a war against the interest and dignity of the nation" or "a war which is almost hopeless." But it is just such a war that the American state is making its army fight against the Seminoles. "Accordingly, all who could, with propriety, have resigned their commissions, and many are only waiting for opportunity to follow their example."

We catch a glimpse here of Christopher Greene's mind in motion. Part of him still thinks in terms of expediency — reality, perhaps. It talks of goals and costs and still recognizes the need for absolute discipline in soldiers facing an enemy. Another part has begun to think in terms of principle. It allows him to "come out" of an association whenever his partner betrays the absolute. Expediency keeps him under military orders for the required six months. Principle helps him resign. This is the beginning of his next phase, in which the military contract gives way to the social contract, and Christopher Greene "comes out" of American society.

## II

WHEN GREENE WROTE his letters on Florida, he was also attempting to play the man "designed for the Bar in Rhode Island." Uncle Richard Ward Greene was United States District Attorney there, and the nephew entered his office to read the law. He did not stay long. His son suggests that he "disagreed with the policy of defending a case right or wrong and was always, perhaps, too idealistic to make a success of law or business." Either reason will do. The young men of principle in New England, especially those who circled most widely around Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Lloyd Garrison, were not given to the usual ambitions.

To make a living Greene turned to teaching: in the grammar school attached to Brown University, in a private school with Thomas A. Jenckes on Benefit Street in Providence, perhaps elsewhere as well. The record's uncertainty about his jobs is not important. Unfortunately it is even less particular about his mind, and by the fall of 1840 Christopher Greene's mind had gone through a revolution. The soldier in the United States Army had become one of the "soldiery of dissent," as Emerson called them, who gathered in Boston's Chardon Street Chapel to talk reform.

The Chardon Street Convention of November, 1840, was attended not only by well-known Parkers and Garrisons and Quincys and Alcotts but also by men and women as relatively obscure as Christopher A. Greene. They represented every liberalism and every ultraism of that generous decade, and they preached at each other for three days almost without pause and almost without order. Since the convention left no record of its discourse, we cannot tell what Greene said there, if he got in anything among those seasoned exhorters. But when he left Chardon Street, he was associated with its extremists, with Bronson Alcott of the notorious and with William Chace and George Clarke and Thomas Davis of the unknown.

A month after the meeting Alcott in Concord sent a letter to Greene in Providence welcoming him into the transcendental elite. The letter opens as a sermon, teaching the ideal of the godlike man. It ends as a salute, hailing Christopher Greene as perhaps such a hero. Most men, Alcott says, are victims of conflicting instincts. They "blindly assert both their Divinity and Bestiality at once; — the Deity in the Breast, lapsed into the Satyrs of the Flesh." They are thus unequipped to "cope with the Sovereign Facts of Life and

Death." But there remains the "noble Hope to which the Days are fast admitting us," that one or another man will discover "the God that resides in his Breast" and go forth "to dethrone the Idols and overthrow the Evils of Time. And that, among my contemporaries, there lives a Young Soldier" [how Greene must have thrilled here!] "whose earlier Ambition all armed with the arts of War, is captured now by a sublimer Valor, and cheered also by Virgin Ardours, and stands, glittering in meekness, pledged to the discomfiture of all Evil and Sin, nor asking nor desiring furlough or rest from such high Duty, (even as Vigilance is the Sentinel of Heaven, and Keeper of Deity) is the grateful dream of your friend and fellow, in like service, A. Bronson Alcott." What young radical of that year would not have glowed under those words?

Yet we must remember their import. Alcott's saints and heroes, "Gods, verily, in guise of men," were the extremest of protestants: all had the oversoul within them, each was to have his own reading. Alcott was permitted to inspire, but not to direct. Young Greene had to find his own way, and his own way led to Holly Home, a mile or so out of Providence.

At Holly Home, George Clarke and Thomas Davis and Christopher Greene set up the miniscule utopia, hardly bigger than Thoreau's at Walden, where William Chace later joined them in "tilling the soil, deeming it a crime against God to get a living in any other way." We know all too little about it. Alcott spent a week and wrote his brother Junius that he was "much pleased with place and people." Very likely he confided more to his journal, but the manuscript volume for 1841 is unfortunately lost. Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, who stopped off later that year, left us its only description in a letter to the readers of his New Hampshire abolitionist paper, *Herald of Freedom*. "Out some mile distant from the thick of the city," he writes, for he was reporting a convention in Providence, "on a naked and somewhat cheerless expanse of plain, stands 'the cottage'— the oasis residence of Thomas Davis and George L. Clarke, — where they dwell in anti-slavery simplicity, in all Graham neatness, elegance and hospitality. . . . Some quarter of a mile out further, you pitch down a gentle descent into 'Pleasant Valley,'— the date-place of William M. Chace's letter in our last week's paper. The Valley is not inaptly named. It is indeed more than pleasant. There is a delightful smallness and narrowness of extent about it, as if made for a single

family of dwellings. — A clear, sweet-looking stream courses through it — and after wheeling about points of wood, and among cultivated knolls, meanders its way to a quiet little bay jutting up to welcome it from the neighboring great river. . . . Three snug cottages make up the hamlet in 'Pleasant Valley.' " Rogers goes on to say that he himself wants "no valleys — or glens — or other utopian seclusions," and this limited sympathy cuts short his description. He tells of the terrain, but not of the ideas.

For these it would be delightful to have a manifesto, and there is none to be had. The participants in Holly Home were libertarians. Each was articulate — but for himself alone. Their *Plain Speaker*, printed irregularly from January through December of 1841, announced itself a paper for "free discussion," whose editors "speak solely for themselves, individually, and will put their initials or their signatures to their articles." To be sure this is in part mere slogan, even façade. Their readings of the higher law agreed on at least two theses which William Chace phrased this way: First, "Chattel slavery will not be abolished until heavy and earnest blows have been struck at the entire system of labor for wages." Second, "The noblest man is he who works and with his own hands ministers to his wants, — the greatest, he who discards wealth and aspires to poverty, — the truest, he who obeys the conviction of his own soul." They opposed both slavery and capitalism. Their souls instructed them to eliminate the division between master and slave, employer and wage-earner, by returning to an economy of small farming and handicrafts, free of the acquisitive morality. But our immediate concern is not how these men, each separately relying on himself, combined to make a movement. Our interest is in Christopher Greene.

Greene's contributions to the *Plain Speaker* show that he unfortunately followed Alcott the writer as well as Alcott the thinker. Some are short essays. But their tendency is to become single paragraphs or even single sentences, like Alcott's "Orphic Sayings." As literature they are negligible. As ideology they add up to an intense transcendentalism, to a millennialism in which the kingdom of heaven makes its sudden appearance not for the sect but for the single worshiper.

I have previously mentioned two theses phrased by Chace but common to Greene and the others as well. These are, it seems to me, the root ideas, only a step away from their origin in the social structure. Greene would not have said so. They are too much economic

and political, too little religious. Like all the transcendentalists, he loved to think of his life as a sphere or circle, his soul the center. The moral universe too was a sphere or a circle with God the center. His primary experience was the moment when his life and the higher laws revolved about a common point. At that moment he yielded to the oversoul streaming through him, and the congruence spread an illumination that transformed every segment of his life. The religious experience had its emanations in economics and politics, but the mysticism itself remained central.

When Greene revealed his inner biography in a letter to his friend Chace, it was there that he began. From his "earliest childhood" he had been "conscious of the existence of a power greater than all other powers." But being a child and afraid to assert his instinctive identity with that force, he accepted the conventional notion that "makes God a stranger" and "an arbitrary power," till one day the inborn divine will overcame the ideas of the world and taught him God is not to be feared but loved. Then, he writes, using the plural of their common experience, then "we felt a mighty Spirit within us through which all the prophets and mighty men of Earth were related to us, and that we were the brothers and equals of Socrates and Plato and Jesus and John, — of every man who had written or spoken, or walked or worked in the name of God. Then too, we grew beyond sects, of every name and nature, and called ourselves no longer Platonists nor Christians, nor by the name of any man, feeling that our Father taught us, and in His name, and not in the name of any man should we speak. And as we were followers of no man, but walked forward in equal rank with any — so neither did we desire followers, but proclaimed to all men that they, like us, were Sons, and equal to any who are or have been."

Greene's personal millennialism is very clear. His momentary union with the oversoul catalyzes him, and he is now among those strong enough to lead "Holy and True Lives, Lives above the World, above conformity to the Customs, the Forms, the Habits of Men." It is not as though he, Christopher Greene of Providence, once of West Point and Florida, has decided to do such and such. A man cannot attain goodness by an act of will, only "from purity of Instinct." The oversoul operating from within outward, and certified by mystical experience, retrieves him from fallen mankind and impels him toward perfection. He has "come out," as New England-

ers would have put it. The kingdom of heaven which cannot arrive for all is at least here for him. He will no longer follow men, but "as God bids me I will walk, and work, and speak, give alms, marry and live."

Let us first see how he works. In 1841 the American economy was divided between slavery and a young industrial capitalism. Coming out from both, Greene would be neither master nor slave, neither employer nor wage earner nor trader. Listen to the extraordinary opening sentences of his paragraph on "Property." "There is no such thing as individual property. Every thing that is belongs to Humanity. What a man wants belongs to him to use: — No matter who has it in possession, the right to use it belongs to him who needs it. I assert this universal right of man in my life. What I need I take wherever I find it: excepting when some other has such a hold on it that to take it I should have to use force, or fraud; And what I have in possession I hold not as mine, but as Man's, or God's — for what is Man's is God's and what is God's — man's. If I have any thing which I do not need, I hold it but as the Trustee of Humanity, and shall keep it safely until the owner, or he who needs it, comes. So far I have lived. I hope for the time when I shall use nothing but what has either been given me from Love, or created by my own hands; for I see clearly that coercion corrupts every thing that it makes."

The ideal Greene suggests here is an economy beyond commodity production. Exchange would not be governed by market value. Man as producer would freely give all he made, while man as user would as freely accept what he needed. Attempting to approximate this ideal in 1841, Greene was of necessity drawn into a preindustrial utopia. Where the same man is both producer and user, the coercion of exchange cannot enter. At best this self-sufficient man can join in economic relations with a few other families equally inspired and living within easy reach — the Cottage and Pleasant Valley. Outside that circle lie only various forms of slavery.

Greene's politics is the exact counterpart of this economics. He begins by disowning the state, through which slavery and capitalism both operate, and setting in its place the higher laws sanctioned by mysticism. "A man," he declares, "should be governed by conscience. That which he sees to be right he should do, and only that." Those who speak for the state say "You shall not have a God of your

own but shall take the laws of our making for your God." This the "Free Soul" indignantly rejects. Greene thus associates himself, if we may extrapolate his words a bit, with the various strands of non-resistance, which join in signing off from the direct political activity that leads to the ballot box.

Having come thus far, however, he goes one step further. The state is only a particular instance. The more general evil is "the idea of organization itself, to wit, that man is not competent to perform all the functions of humanity, but that there must be in every community, a head, hands and feet." Here is the ideal of individual roundness become obsessive. Instead of an antislavery organization, with division of duties, Greene projects a new grouping: "that of every Earnest man in his own person." "Let those who need the aid of numbers seek it in an organization," he advises, "those who require a head, or hands or feet, organise themselves into a body in which some think, and some speak, and some work for the rest. But let us, as those who seek to perfect in our own persons the complete circle of a man, think, speak, work each for himself."

This exercise of self-perfection, by which the "Brave Man" makes himself "clean from all these polluting systems of the world," goes past economics and politics to deal with the human body. To be temperate and chaste is as indispensable as to be free of economic and political coercion, for if the devil enters in one form he will transform himself into the others. Therefore cast out "the Demons of the Flesh." For "all others are but the offspring of these, and to cast them out without casting out these is but vain labor, which must be repeated again and again." He is tyrannized by an inability to select. The circle must be completed all around him.

If Christopher Greene could have withdrawn entirely into this shell of perfection, if it had been possible to come out of the world fully, his utopia might have lasted. But no separatist community escapes conflict with the society it daily designs from. What else is in the abolitionist's letter that speaks of urging Abby Kelley, a major Garrisonian agitator, "to counteract the pernicious notions of Greene, Chace & co. respecting no-organization"? On the first of November, 1842, Greene writes Emerson: "as for me, I have gone back to the world." The last *Plain Speaker* is dated December, 1841. Six months later, in the weeks most conventional for weddings, he married William Chace's sister Sarah Anna. By then, I suspect, he had made

the return journey.

### III

THE CONFESSION to EMERSON is part of a letter accompanying an essay for *The Dial*. In the first number of the *Plain Speaker*, Greene had written a paragraph on Emerson's and Margaret Fuller's magazine. It was "the exponent of Literary Liberty, and therefore valuable: but far from being of the highest value." Of all the "Dialists" only Alcott was a genuine reformer. "But the Life that is in these men," he condescended, "will bring them out from the world, and at every step they will find themselves nearer and nearer to the stern Reformers." Now that he himself was no longer out from the world, he remembered its tolerant pages.

Emerson turned him down. "Had it come into my hands at a little earlier period," he wrote Greene, "I should probably have printed it; as its doctrines, though perhaps left a little too much unlimited for use & interest, are true, & are stated with much vigour. But Reform is a word which spoken once too often sounds very hollow, & in the *Dial* & in the circles of the *Dial* we have conjugated & declined it through all numbers & modes & tenses; and I very early decided not to publish the piece." He stretched himself to a compliment: "I am struck with the generosity & insight of the high propositions, & with the clearness of the method." But after keeping the essay a half year and reading it again, he still could not accept it.

It is a curious essay. Emerson captured its quality in the phrase "too much unlimited for use & interest." Christopher Greene the *Plain Speaker* spoke to the single person and the present moment. God's perfection could establish itself in you here and now. The Greene of the essay speaks of mankind and the future.

He divides the millennium into two stages. The more distant, for which he uses the word "Theocracy," is marked by the disappearance of all conflict and contradiction. Evil and darkness will be wholly displaced by righteousness and light. Man will be in such harmony with nature that "neither cold nor heat nor wet nor wind nor ocean shall injure him." Best of all, "the jarring discords of the Elements of Man's Nature, which now fill the world with howlings and heart piercing screams, shall perish." But as if he knew that the end of contradiction meant the end of motion and the end of life, Greene put this "Christian Age" at the end of the world. "When it has extended over the whole Earth," he concludes, "her strong founda-

tions shall melt, and the bands which bind her parts together shall be riven asunder. Her destiny will be accomplished, her work done — and she will perish forever."

The nearer phase of the millennium, which he calls "the full era of the Democratic Age," is a traditional utopia. "In that glorious time Art shall reach its highest state of perfection; Science shall accomplish its whole work; and man shall live Temperately and in the enjoyment of much Freedom. This shall be the Era of the perfection of Machines as well Social & religious as physical. Machines shall exist of which the Steam Engine & the Temperance Society are but feeble types. Comfort shall be universal. None shall suffer for want: for there shall be enough for all. Classes in Society shall be annihilated. All trades, professions, and business shall be equally esteemed. All shall labor; each in his vocation; for the Division of Labor shall have reached its ideal. Schools shall be perfected. And Intellectual Culture shall be universal."

Observe how different this hope is from the one that Greene tried to realize at Holly Home. Instead of a return to agriculture, the perfection of industry. Instead of the spherical man doing everything for himself, an ideal division of labor. Instead of libertarianism in politics and religion, new forms of social and religious cooperation in a society without classes. The locus of utopia too has undergone a radical shift. It is no longer to be found outside the unjust world and parallel to it, but beyond the unjust world and by evolution through it.

Between America in 1842 and the distant "full era of the Democratic Age" Greene saw five major roadblocks. He wrote of them in this order: "Domestic Slavery" in the South, the "Slavery of Children" to parents and teachers, the slavery of women to "whoever supports them" as well as to "Fashion, Vanity, and Public Opinion," the slavery that "man endures from his fellowman thro' the machinery of Governments," and the "more general and more galling slavery . . . which man suffers under the Property System." He gave most space and his best sentences to private property and the owning of man by man.

A generation before the Civil War Greene understood that slavery had so extended its power "that the question is at this moment between it and Liberty, Which Shall Survive. Shall these black men of the South be free," he asked, "or shall we too be Slaves?" The intensity of his attack on "that awful curse whose horrors no tongue



has yet told" can be experienced in his concluding sentences: "Accounts of Slaves being worked to death, starved, whipped, having their backs lacerated by the claws of cats, torn in pieces, & drowned by blood hounds, shot, stabbed, murdered & tortured in various ways, have reached even thro' the silent walls of fear & self-interest, & are now in authentic forms before the Northern public. The horrors of the sufferings of this miserable class on the remote & secluded cotton & sugar plantations, the tales of blood & incest, of the reckless gratification of cruelty & lust, which the fiery soil of Alabama & Louisiana could tell; these are not known. Neither can they be. For there is a point in the relation of human suffering at which imagination ceases to act; & man astounded can only cry How Long Oh Lord Shall the Oppressor Triumph. My Soul is moved, & the Spirit within me lifts up its voice against this system."

Next to slavery he was touched most by "the great unbound Satan of the times," the system of private property. He had learned from Godwin "that all the necessary business of mankind might be done in two hours work a day, if all worked who are capable of working." But private ownership "tends to accumulation," which "enables some to live on the labor of others" and forces most "to labor not only more than two hours in a day but the whole day, & every day." Moreover, the condition repeatedly duplicates itself, so that "the rich become daily richer, the poor poorer."

Greene is no theoretician. With property, as with slavery, he wishes to wake his reader through images of actual man actually suffering. Let us "look a little into the details of its operation," he says. "By it the poor man unfortunately diseased is forced still to labor, though death be the consequence; — By it the children of the poor in our manufacturing villages are forced from the proper course of youthful exercise & development, their bodies dwarfed by hard labor & want of sleep, & their minds withered for want of exercise; By it God Given intellect is corrupted into a money getting machine; By it men are driven to intemperance, & all manner of gross physical enjoyment, for excess of one kind produces corresponding excess of another, too much labor or physical exertion induces too much physical gratification; By it are the comforts & even the necessities of life rendered scarce, & want & suffering engendered; By it the Southern Slave is bound in iron bands, bands which confine Body & Soul in bitter, dreadful bondage."

But it is one thing to outline a utopia and to identify the chief obstacles that keep us from it. It is quite another to tell us how to push them aside. Greene describes his five forms of slavery more emotionally than sociologically. In his remedies too he is the man of feeling and the man of principle, unable to translate his humanity into effective daily action — "too much unlimited for use & interest."

Slavery in the South will be ended first of all. The slaves will revolt; all white people will be killed; and the new South will secede from the Union. "But in the end shall her destiny be glorious. For there the coloured race shall first rise into National dignity & the state of Civilization." Greene is among the earliest to recognize the slaves' own role in their emancipation, to accept the idea of an autonomous Negro culture, and to recognize that the South could not move from "Savagery" to "Civilization" without the activity of the Negro people. But he put a wall around the South, reducing the Northern sympathizers of freedom nearly to bystanders. The most a New England abolitionist could do would be "to swell the cry of warning" — that is, to urge the slaveholders to abolish slavery themselves by appealing to their better natures and by frightening them with revolution. Perhaps he realized that the threat would most certainly cancel out the persuasion.

The appeal to morality, though unsuccessful with slaveholders, would help free women and help bring about "the downfall of wealth." Two principles are involved. The first is temperance, "the great truth that it is wrong to eat or drink except for sustenance." The end of gluttony — for temperance is not merely being preached but "will finally prevail" — will cut down woman's kitchen duty, giving her time "for development in Imagination, Reason & Conscience." Her achievements will "demonstrate her absolute equality with man and her right to an equal share in Government, Society, and the Church." She will then take her proper place in civil life, "voting & being voted for equally with man." But acquisitiveness too, says Greene, anticipating certain later psychologists, is to some extent a "means of gratifying the Bodily Appetites. And with the subjugation of these it must be partially destroyed."

The second principle, which operates against wealth more directly, is "the equalization of wages." It is unjust that some should have more than they need, others not enough. "By being born into the world, and doing our duty in it we are entitled to food, clothing, and



A PROSPECT OF COLLEGE HILL IN THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE

In 1962 the Providence Preservation Society published in full color the Prospect pictured above in black and white. This attractive panorama of the old East Side buildings was drawn and colored by Rosalind Howe Sturges. The overall size is approximately 31" by 21" and comes without

frame for \$6.18 and \$16.48 framed (tax included). A chart identifying buildings and persons accompanies the Prospect. These may be obtained from our Society or from the Providence Preservation Society, 24 Meeting Street, Providence, R. I. 02903.

shelter. Nothing can entitle us to more, for whatever more we take detracts from the share of some other." That is the "true principle" which "cannot long remain unacknowledged," for "whoever opposes himself to it, will only succeed in creating physical disturbance." Greene accepts the role of trade unions in furthering the principle of the equalization of wages. But they are to advocate, not to fight. "Success will follow only from gentleness & forbearance, spiritual weapons which can never fail."

What are we to make of a social strategy so utterly divorced from the pragmatic? When Christopher Greene returned to the world from Holly Home, he embarked on a new analysis of American society. He succeeded, as I have already shown, in attaching his utopia to what really existed within our nation: to machinery, to division of labor, to organization. But in this area of strategy, of what to do, he still thought very much as he had when he left Providence for Holly Home. Greene the come-outer, you recall, was conscious of an inner spiritual force moving him. It was the most powerful force in his experience, arising, he felt, from his contact with the oversoul. The social strategy of persuasion is this same inner force laterally displaced. He does not expect property owners to experience the oversoul. But he can still try to make them aware of the higher law, hoping that the externally induced awareness will be as effective with them as the internal vision had been with him. At the same time, when he speaks of women voting and running for office, he shows himself accepting political action, which is surely something more than simple appeal to principle.

Once again, as with his essays on the Seminole War, we catch a glimpse, I believe, of Christopher Greene's mind in motion. It is only 1842, and he was at Holly Home less than a year ago. Greater experience with the daily demands of the liberation of woman or the overthrow of slavery or the "equalization of wages" would teach him new strategies to accompany his new experience of being inside American society.

The biographical record shows no such experience — not, at least, for the present. Greene had never been a prominent man. His personality was not that of the full-time political writer or organizer. If he engaged in social action after 1842, it must have been in a small way, to be accidentally come upon while looking in old journals for something else. There is, indeed, a family tradition that he joined

Alcott's short-lived utopia at Fruitlands, but it cannot be substantiated.

When we meet him again, it is the summer of 1843, and he is in the Massachusetts town of Tyngsborough, principal of the high school. There is still a record book in the family, a worn ledger that has lost its spine and some of the sewing, in which Greene entered a year's grades and a year's petty misconducts. How far he is from the disciple of Alcott who wrote on education for the *Plain Speaker*! He had stood in awe before the mystery of the child, come "fresh from God" with instincts "Pure and Divine." The school, he had written, while "professing to Educate, that is to draw the Soul from the grave of the Body, sinks it deeper therein." The child enters pure and then re-experiences the Fall. For the schoolroom's law is not "kindness and love" but "coercion." The master, "rod in hand, stands threateningly between the child and his impulses." In place of the lost soul, the boy or girl gets "a little arithmetic, a little grammar, a little of one and another of such unimportant things"—precisely the things Greene ranged over at Tyngsborough and in his later positions.

At Bridgewater, in Horace Mann's first Normal School, was Nicholas Tillinghast, who had been assistant professor of ethics at West Point when Greene was a cadet. He convinced Mann that the college needed the extravagance of another male teacher, for a woman could be paid half the wage, and brought in his former student at about twelve dollars a week. Greene moved to Bridgewater before the end of March, 1845, and left two years later.

Where he went then we cannot be certain. The record is confused by the fact that Christopher A. and William B. could both be called Lt. Greene. One of them, most likely Christopher, became involved with Charles V. Kraitsir, a radical physician exiled from Poland when the Czar put down its revolution in 1831. In the United States Kraitsir played politics for a while as spokesman for the refugee Poles, then organized a school. "The best teacher of languages in existence is said to be Dr. Kraitsir in Boston," wrote Emerson. The man had a difficult private life, and partly to escape its stresses, partly from conviction, crossed the Atlantic to join Kossuth, leaving the school in the hands of his assistant, "Lt. Greene." That was sometime in 1848.

At the end of that year Tillinghast wrote Greene a letter of recommendation, so we can infer that he was job hunting again. In March of 1849 he became principal of the Academy in Milton, Massachusetts. An advertisement for that school reminds us of the distance he

has traveled. "The Infantry Drill," it concludes, "will be a regular exercise of the pupils." He left Milton in 1851 after a squabble with the trustees, started a private school in Dorchester, and a few months later moved to Marietta, Georgia, to become professor of natural philosophy and chemistry at its Military Institute. It is almost as though he had come full circle.

The professorship at Marietta was Christopher Greene's last position. "His health had broken," writes his son, "and indeed he had never been entirely well since his experience in Florida, where he suffered much from bad water and exposure." He spent his last weeks in Providence, where he had once preached utopia and abolition. When he died on November 30, 1853, only thirty-seven years old, Garrison's *Liberator* allowed his passing to go unnoticed.

So for the most part has his life these hundred and more years. If we recollect him now, it is for two reasons: first, because we wish to understand Thoreau, the genius who was Greene's and Chace's and Clarke's and Davis's representative man; second, because we wish to understand ourselves, who are more Greene than Thoreau. The great man, as Emerson so truly understood him, makes fully real what is only partially realized in the lesser men who are the base of his pyramid. If we discover ourselves in him, he creates himself through us.

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#### A NOTE ON SOURCES

This essay could not have been written without the manuscripts graciously lent me by Christopher A. Greene's descendants. In addition to those mentioned in the text I wish to thank Miss Sarah A. G. Smith of Philadelphia and Mrs. Sylvia M. Bothe of Rock Hall, Maryland. The account of Greene's military career is based on photostats of his records in the National Archives. I read his letters on the Seminole War in a typescript owned by the family. The letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson, dated "Cottage Nov. 1, 1842," is quoted by the kind permission of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association. William C. Greene's sketch of his father's life is quoted in Joseph R. Webster, "Christopher Albert Greene, A Teacher in Milton from 1849 to 1851: A Paper Read before Milton Historical Society, February 5, 1913, and before Milton Teachers and Others at Mrs. Cunningham's, January 16, 1914. Reprinted from the Milton Record, July-August, 1915." This is a pamphlet with pages numbered 7 through 15 and with no other publication data.

## THE COLLINS-RICHARDSON FRACAS OF 1787: A PROBLEM IN STATE AND FEDERAL RELATIONS DURING THE CONFEDERATION ERA

by IRWIN H. POLISHOOK

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THE ELECTION OF JOHN COLLINS as governor of Rhode Island in 1786 heralded a political revolution in the Narragansett commonwealth. The new governor came to power as titular leader of a hastily organized Country party that campaigned throughout the state's twenty-nine towns and single city with the positive slogan, "To relieve the distressed."<sup>1</sup> The state was faced with the blight of a commercial depression and severe deflation in prices during these waning years of the Confederation, and this seemingly spontaneous Country coalition proposed to assuage the public's distress with an emission of paper currency, a time-honored Rhode Island remedy. Now in the spring of 1786 the freemen of Rhode Island cast their ballots in overwhelming numbers for the candidate who promised help with paper money. That candidate was John Collins.

At the time of his election John Collins was a man advanced in years, having attained the age of sixty-nine. He was throughout his life a resident of Newport and made his livelihood as a minor merchant and sea captain in a region of great commercial wealth. The new governor had first come into prominence during the early years of the American Revolution as a fervid patriot, for which the grateful townsmen of Newport County selected him to serve as one of the assistants of the colony; later Collins enjoyed the uninterrupted favor of the freemanry when they elected him to continuing service in the United States Congress between 1778 and 1782.<sup>2</sup> Added to this was the governor's abiding faith in the integrity of the majority of Rhode Island farmers, and his skepticism concerning the good will of the merchants. Writing to his friend Sam Ward in 1774, Collins said firmly, "it is the honest yeomen of the land We must finally depend

<sup>1</sup>See the collection of Eighteenth Century Election Proxies in The Rhode Island Historical Society for the campaign of 1786.

<sup>2</sup>For biographical material on Collins the most convenient authorities are the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 22 vols., eds., Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, IV, 307; and Thomas W. Bicknell, *The History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, 3 vols. (N.Y., 1920), III, 1108-1113. Important information on Collins was also collected by his grandson, John Collins Warren of Boston, and may be examined in the Warren Papers 1738-1921, Mss., Massachusetts Historical Society, I, 15, 47; III, 70-80.

on for the salvation of our Liberties"; as for the merchants, he continued, "their Religion is trade and their God is gain and they that Expect men to sacrifice their God and their Religion for the Publick will Certainly be disappointed."<sup>3</sup> With views such as these and his experience in public office, John Collins became the successful Country candidate for the state's highest office.

The very first meeting of the General Assembly under the domination of the Country majority in May of 1786 brought the promised program of public relief. An emission of £100,000 in paper bills was authorized by law and the currency was made a legal tender in all transactions, past, present and future.<sup>4</sup> Everyone was enjoined to accept the money at par with gold and silver, and those who refused were soon subjected to a variety of penalties, including the cancellation of specie debts if a creditor did not accept paper bills. The program of the Country party was thus quickly launched, but the policy to relieve the distressed would soon distress John Collins.

Soon after paper money was authorized, the question arose as to its place in state and federal accounts. Could the new currency satisfy national claims upon Rhode Island for its share of federal expenses? Or would the Country leaders insist that federal officials accept the paper bills? An answer was not long forthcoming. William Ellery of Newport, United States Commissioner of the Loan Office for Rhode Island, informed Governor Collins that he would refuse to accept the state's currency as part of the commonwealth's quota of the continental taxes. The conduct of Ellery was fully supported by the congressional Board of Treasury in New York, and later by Congress itself.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile the General Assembly was equally adamant. It declared that the paper money was a legal tender in Rhode Island and this meant the currency had to be accepted in all payments, whether federal or state.<sup>6</sup> A minor crisis in state-federal relations thus arose.

No less perplexing than Ellery's troubles were those of the federal

<sup>3</sup>Collins to Ward, Newport, July 17, 1774, Gratz Collection, Mss., Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Case 1, Box 4. A copy of this letter may be found among the Ward Manuscripts, Rhode Island Historical Society, Box II, 1771-1775.

<sup>4</sup>Notice of the statute emitting the currency is given in *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, 10 vols., ed. John Russell Bartlett (Providence, 1856-1865), X, 197; but the complete text must be examined in Rhode Island Records, 1646-1851, 29 vols., Mss., Rhode Island State Archives; or the contemporary newspapers, the *United States Chronicle* (Providence), May 11, 1786 or the *Providence Gazette*, May 13, 1786.

postal service in Rhode Island. What would be done if Rhode Islanders attempted to pay for their mail with depreciated money? And what if the state and its officials insisted that the federal postmasters accept the paper currency? Could the postal service refuse the bills without infringing the sovereign laws of the state which said they were a tender in every business transaction?

The postmaster general of the United States, Ebenezer Hazard, was fully appraised of the growing difficulties he would face because of paper money, and he was frankly apprehensive; "such Money will not answer to satisfy our Contracts with the Proprietors of the Stages," he told the President of Congress, "and yet, being a legal Tender in the States which have emitted it, the Postmasters in those States conceive that they may not refuse to receive it."<sup>7</sup> Among the postmasters who asked Hazard for advice was Jacob Richardson of Newport, who served in his place for more than a generation between 1784 and 1813. After instructions from Hazard and the resolutions of Congress, Richardson would not deliver any letter for paper money, and he demanded that the General Assembly pay its outstanding accounts in gold and silver. The Assembly refused and for a time there was a juncture in relations between the Newport postmaster and the government of Rhode Island.

Soon afterwards, early in 1787, two communications addressed to the governor of Rhode Island arrived in the post office at Newport. Governor Collins, determined to uphold the sovereignty of Rhode Island law and to receive his mail, sent his son for the letters without the necessary specie payment. Richardson refused to deliver the letters. Thus provoked, Governor Collins appeared at the post office

<sup>5</sup>Ellery to the Board of Treasury, Newport, Aug. 29, 1786; Commissioners of the Treasury to the President of Congress, Board of Treasury [N.Y.], Sept. 17; Oct. 17, 1786; Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Mss., Letters of the Board of Treasury, 1785-1788, 2 vols., The National Archives, Washington, D.C., II, 315-322, 309-310, 331-332; Ellery to ———, Newport, July 20, 1786, Gratz Coll., Mss., Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Case 1, Box 19; Ellery to the Board of Treasury, Newport, Sept. 22, 1786; Feb. 12, 1787; Ellery to Nathaniel Appleton, Newport, Oct. 2, 1786; Loan Office and Custom House Letter Book, Mss., Newport Historical Society; *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, 34 vols., eds., Worthington C. Ford, et al. (Washington, 1904-1937), XXXI, 662-665.

<sup>6</sup>Bartlett, *Records*, X, 211.

<sup>7</sup>Hazard to the President of Congress, General Post Office [N.Y.], June 19, 1786, Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Letters from Bache and Hazard, Postmasters General, 1777-1788, and Committee Reports on the Post Office, 1776-1778, Mss., The National Archives, Washington, D.C., 255.

in person and, finding the postmaster absent, demanded his official mail from Richardson's son, who, fearful, acceded to the elderly governor's request. The triumphant Collins, now desirous of a complete victory, ordered the boy to call his father, presumably to chide the man for his refusal to respect the authority of the governor's office. Richardson promptly appeared and was told that the governor had secured the letters. Undaunted, the postmaster sullied the triumph and snatched the letters from Collins's hand, upbraiding the governor with the congressional request that he pay his bills in hard money.

John Collins, a man of some emotion when aroused, was irritated beyond endurance by Richardson's recapture of the now coveted letters, and after denouncing the postmaster as a "scoundrel" and "rascal," he offered to break every bone in his body should Richardson accept a challenge and step into the street. The postmaster agreed quickly, but upon reconsideration apparently thought discretion the better part of valor and remained safely behind his counter. The governor, deprived of success not only in gaining the letters but also in getting satisfaction, eventually left the shop.

The controversy between the governor and the postmaster immediately became the talk of the town, with public opinion, even in mercantile circles, surprisingly favorable to the governor. Collins reported the whole affair to the General Assembly, and told of how he had been insulted by the federal postmaster and possibly important letters detained. Richardson was then ordered to come before the legislature, to justify the alleged insult given to the governor and the state. When the postmaster appeared, he was still roused by the heat of battle and intransigent for a time, though threatened with confinement by the assembled legislators. But the urging of the Newport deputies and prospect that the Assembly really meant business soon brought moderation to Richardson's position; he apologized for his rudeness to Governor Collins, paid the costs of his summons before the legislature and in a written statement asked for a formal pardon. So was humbled a federal postmaster in his battle with the governor of Rhode Island.<sup>8</sup>

The significance of this incident was readily apparent to contemporaries. Ebenezer Hazard took special care to inform Congress of Richardson's imbroglio with Rhode Island. He sent Richardson's heated letters to the President of Congress with the explanation that

"it contains Information respecting some Things in which the Interests of the Union in general appear to be concerned . . ." <sup>9</sup> The contest was clearly one between the nation and a state, and the state was evidently a victor. "It seems the misconduct of the postmaster," announced a Connecticut newspaper, "was his obedience to the resolves of Congress, in not being willing to receive the *paper* of that state for the postage of a letter."<sup>10</sup>

What lessons were to be learned from this amusing contretemps? Evidently the simple fact, already obvious to many Americans, that the operation of state sovereignty was a danger to the Union and the states themselves. The remedy? Perhaps a stronger Union in which the supremacy of federal law and national officers would superintend the interests of the American people.<sup>11</sup> And under such a system, the tale now told might have had a different ending, with Governor John Collins still in search of an apology.

<sup>8</sup>The whole episode of the controversy between Collins and Richardson was reported by Peter Edes in his *Newport Herald* on March 29, 1787. Edes, a vigorously partisan anti-paper money man and federalist editor who had only recently come to Rhode Island, titled this dispatch: "The history of a fracas which happened not long since, between his excellency John Collins, Esq., governor of this state, and Jacob Richardson, Esq., postmaster for this district." The article was repeated either intact or summary in newspapers throughout the American states. Among the journals that reported the incident were *The Essex Journal and the Massachusetts and New Hampshire General Advertiser* (Newbury), April 4, 1787; *The Middlesex Gazette* (Middletown, Conn.), April 16, 1787; *The New-York Packet* (New York City), April 13, 1787; *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia), April 17, 1787; and the *Virginia Independent Chronicle* (Richmond), April 25, 1787. Very important information was also found in Richardson to Hazard, Newport, March 20, 1787, Papers of the Continental Congress, Letters of Bache and Hazard, The National Archives, 307; Ellery to Hazard, Newport, April 11; May 14, 1787, Loan Office Letter Book, Newport Historical Society.

The letters in question were by now almost forgotten as the state pursued its federal postmaster; one of them proved an added embarrassment for Rhode Island. One letter was an official request from Governor Bowdoin of Massachusetts, asking Rhode Island's assistance in the apprehension of fugitives from Shays' Rebellion. Governor Collins' delay in responding, he later explained, was because of the "misconduct" of a stubborn postmaster.

<sup>9</sup>Hazard to the President of Congress, General Post Office [N.Y.], March 29, 1787, Papers of the Continental Congress, Letters of Bache and Hazard, The National Archives, 303.

<sup>10</sup>*The Middlesex Gazette* (Middletown, Conn.), April 16, 1787.

<sup>11</sup>The commentary in the *Virginia Independent Chronicle* (Richmond), April 25, 1787 is revealing; the newspaper editorialized, after reprinting Edes' original article, "From such a Government [i.e., Rhode Island] — and from despots such as these, we pray God to deliver us." Deliverance, of course, meant a renewed federal system with a powerful national government.

Mr. John H. Wells continues his invaluable work of indexing the 1865 Rhode Island census. In addition to the towns mentioned in the July, 1962, and January, 1963, issues of *Rhode Island History* he has now completed Barrington, Bristol, Cumberland, East Providence, Pawtucket, Smithfield, and Warren. Remaining to be indexed are Newport County and the City of Providence.

Another volunteer worker, Mrs. Ethel Galotta, has completed the indexing of the *Bosworth Genealogy*, compiled by Mrs. Mary Bosworth Clarke. Mrs. Galotta's index will be reproduced on micro-cards and thus made available to libraries throughout the country.

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On July 1 the Society published *A Rhode Islander Reports on King Philip's War, the Second William Harris Letter of August, 1676*, transcribed and edited by Douglas Edward Leach, Associate Professor of History at Vanderbilt University. Two versions of Harris's long letter, giving a detailed account of the war, are included: one an exact transcription and the other a modernized version with punctuation and spelling more intelligible to most readers than the seventeenth century original.

The work is thoroughly annotated and handsomely bound. Copies are obtainable from the Society at \$7.75, postpaid.

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An exhibition of material relative to Oliver Hazard Perry in commemoration of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of his victory at the Battle of Lake Erie is planned for the late fall. During the summer a number of the Society's Perry relics, including his sword and jacket, have been exhibited at the Detroit Historical Museum.

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In July the fence around the Society's property was repaired and painted, following a schedule which calls for this work's being repeated every four years.

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By the terms of the will of the late Mrs. Edward C. Moulton the Society was left two tables which had descended to her from her ancestor, Governor Nicholas Cooke, and two paintings, one an oil of the encounter of the *Guerriere* and the *Constitution* by J. O. Davison

(New York, 1881), the other a pastel of Ann Cooke, daughter of Governor Cooke, born February 23, 1751/2 (perhaps the work of William Blodgett). Mrs. Moulton was interested in genealogy and in the past has given the Society materials that she has discovered in her search. More material of this sort has come to us at this time.

\* \* \*

The library's supply of copies of the January, 1957, issue of *Rhode Island History* is extremely low. We would be glad to have as many copies as members can return. This issue is easily recognized, since it has a rose colored cover with a picture of General Burnside as a young man on the front. Any of the Society's publications, most particularly early ones, are always welcome.

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Friends and relatives of the late Robert P. Bolan sent checks in his memory to the Society at the time of his death. The library will buy books with this money and mark them with a bookplate bearing his name. Mr. Bolan was interested in The Rhode Island Historical Society, and we are glad that we shall be able to perpetuate his memory in this way.

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The portrait of Joseph Wanton by John Smibert was exhibited at the Tercentenary Exhibition at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh from March 23 to April 28. The painting will be sent to the Minneapolis Institute of Art for their Four Centuries of American Art exhibition, which will be held from November 27 to January 19.

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Beginning January 2, 1964, the library hours will be as follows: Monday, 1:00 to 9:00 p.m.; Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. These hours will be continued at the new library building as soon as we occupy it. Beginning January 2, 1964, John Brown House will be open to visitors Sunday, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.; Monday, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.; Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The library will not be opened on Sunday. The building is closed on Saturday.

JOHN SMITH, THE MILLER, OF PROVIDENCE,  
RHODE ISLAND  
SOME OF HIS DESCENDANTS

by CHARLES WILLIAM FARNHAM

[continued from July, 1963, p. 93]

45 MAJOR RUFUS<sup>5</sup> SMITH (*Capt. John*,<sup>4</sup> *Benjamin*,<sup>3</sup> *John*,<sup>2</sup> *John*<sup>1</sup>), b. 11 May 1730; d. 12 Feb. 1800 in the part of Glocester which became Burrillville; m. in Glocester by Richard Smith, justice, 12 Nov. 1751, Marcy Taft,<sup>386</sup> identified in the Root manuscript as the daughter of Israel Taft of Uxbridge, Massachusetts. *The Providence Gazette* issue of 17 April 1811 reported the death of Mrs. Marcy Smith, widow of Rufus Smith, at Burrillville, aged about eighty.

Marcy Smith made a will in 1804 in which she bequeathed to sons James, Chad, Arca, and Paul; to son James's daughter, Rhoda Smith; son Chad's daughter, Mercy Smith; to daughter-in-law Elizabeth Smith; to daughter-in-law Sarah Smith; to daughter-in-law Rowena Smith, and to daughter-in-law Prudence Smith.<sup>387</sup>

The year after Major Rufus married he received from his father, Capt. John Smith, half of the latter's homestead farm in the area of Glocester later set off as Burrillville.<sup>388</sup> This became the Rufus Smith homestead, with parts of it apportioned to his sons.

Major Rufus was deputy to the General Assembly from Glocester in the years 1759 and 1767. Rufus and members of his family were Quakers.

CHILDREN OF MAJOR RUFUS<sup>5</sup> AND MARCY (TAFT) SMITH:

- 91 I JAMES<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. 23 Oct. 1752 in Glocester;<sup>389</sup> made will in Cumberland, Rhode Island, 11 Oct. 1819, which was recorded 22 Oct. 1835; m. in Glocester 3 Dec. 1775 Drusilla Steere,<sup>390</sup> b. 10 Oct. 1754, daughter of Jonah and Lydia (Whipple) Steere; m. (2) in Smithfield 2 June 1791 Lydia, widow of David Wilkinson.<sup>391</sup> Possibly she was the Lydia, daughter of Elkanah and Elizabeth Spear, who married David Wilkinson, of Israel, in Smithfield 25 April 1773. Lydia died in Cumberland 10 Dec. 1824 at sixty-three.

<sup>386</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Glocester Marriages, 3:34. <sup>387</sup>Burrillville Probate, 1:75.

<sup>388</sup>Glocester Deeds, 5:118. <sup>389</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Glocester Births, 3:61.

<sup>390</sup>*Ibid.*, Glocester Marriages, 3:34.

<sup>391</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Smithfield Friends Records, 7:174.

James's will, recorded in Cumberland, left \$10 to son Rufus; \$10 to son Dillwyn "if he should ever return"; \$10 to son Jonah; \$50 to grandson Lawton Smith "if he lives to be 21"; to daughter Drusilla \$40, and choice of furniture to daughter Lydia Smith. Sons Warner and Jobe Smith were named executors.<sup>392</sup>

James was a Quaker, living first in Burrillville and later in Cumberland.

CHILDREN OF JAMES<sup>6</sup> AND DRUSILLA (STEERE) SMITH:

- 1 RUFUS<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. Glocester 22 May 1776;<sup>393</sup> m. 17 March 1799 Mary Smith,<sup>394</sup> daughter of John<sup>6</sup> and Sarah Smith and granddaughter of Benjamin<sup>5</sup> and Mary (Winsor) Smith. Rufus d. 8 Oct. 1860 and Mary d. 6 May 1843 at sixty-four. Both are buried in Swan Point Cemetery, Providence.

Rufus lived in the earlier years of his marriage in what is known as the Bellows place near the white schoolhouse at Tarkiln, Burrillville. Later he moved to Providence, and it was at his home on Ship Street that he died.

An obituary for Miss ELMA SMITH, daughter of Rufus and Mary, printed in 1900, gives her age at a little less than ninety-five, the fourth of eight children. Other children included CLEMENTINA, for many years manager of an employment agency in the Arcade building, Providence; Dr. JERVIS J. SMITH, for many years the leading physician in the Glocester region, who married Amanda Angell and died in Chepachet, Rhode Island, 10 March 1864 at sixty-three; S. STERRY SMITH, b. in Burrillville 26 Jan. 1804, d. Providence 15 July 1864 at sixty, an old-time cotton broker of South Water Street; MELISSA SMITH who married Daniel Parker of Providence; MAHALA ANN SMITH who died in an accident at Niagara Falls 24 Sept. 1869 at fifty-five years; MARY SMITH who was an invalid but lived to be seventy-four; and SAMUEL JAMES SMITH who died in New York 11 Jan. 1892 at seventy-two. He was for many years in the woolen trade in Boston and New York and is buried with his

<sup>392</sup>Cumberland Probate, 14:269.

<sup>393</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Glocester Births, 3:62.



wife, Mary E. Goodhue, at Swan Point Cemetery, Providence. After the death of Rufus the four sisters, Clementina, Mahala, Mary, and Elma, bought a house at Fountain and Mathewson streets, Providence, where they lived until Elma was alone. In her final days she lived with a grandnephew in Providence.

- 2 DILLWIN<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 19 Nov. 1777;<sup>395</sup> Root manuscript says he married Prussia Sayles. He was left a legacy "if he ever should return."
- 3 JONAH<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 16 Sept. 1779;<sup>396</sup> d. 23 July 1884; m. Jane Kennedy.
- 4 RHODA<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 1782;<sup>397</sup> d. 24 May 1851; m. Caleb Sayles.
- 5 WARNER MIFFLIN<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 5 Nov. 1784;<sup>398</sup> d. 25 Sept. 1838; m. 16 July 1816 Mary Bellows, b. 28 May 1798.
- 6 JOB<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 5 April 1787;<sup>399</sup> d. 30 Nov. 1848; m. in Cumberland 8 April 1813 Sarah Sayles, of Esek Sayles of Cumberland.<sup>400</sup>
- 7 DRUSILLA<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 18 June 1789. Root manuscript says she married Aaron Shepardson.

CHILD OF JAMES AND LYDIA SMITH:

- 8 LYDIA<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 7 July 1792.<sup>401</sup> Root manuscript says she married a Capron.

II RHODA<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. 22 Jan. 1755; d. 9 Sept. 1761.<sup>402</sup>

III SYLVIA<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. 13 Jan. 1757; d. 21 Nov. 1759.<sup>403</sup>

IV DACIA<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. 18 Oct. 1759; d. 5 Sept. 1761.<sup>404</sup>

- 92 V CHAD<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. 13 March 1762;<sup>405</sup> m. 20 Nov. 1783 at Swansea, Massachusetts, Elizabeth Clark, daughter of Clark Purrington,<sup>406</sup> who was b. 2 Jan. 1764; d. 23 April 1854, buried in Friends' yard, Upper Smithfield.

Chad lived in Gloucester, but on 18 March 1792 his brother Zadok sold to him thirty-two acres in Smithfield.

CHILDREN OF CHAD<sup>6</sup> AND ELIZABETH (PURRINGTON) SMITH:

- 1 MERCY<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. Swansea, Massachusetts, 10 March 1785.<sup>407</sup>

<sup>394</sup>*Ibid.*, Gloucester Marriages, 3:35. <sup>395-399</sup>*Ibid.*, Gloucester Births, 3:62.

<sup>400</sup>*Ibid.*, Cumberland Marriages, 3:58.

<sup>401</sup>*Ibid.*, Smithfield Friends Records, 7:197.

<sup>402-405</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Gloucester Births, 3:61.

<sup>406</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Swansea Friends Marriages, 7:292.

<sup>407-416</sup>Arnold, *Ibid.*, Smithfield Friends Births, 7:197.

- 2 ELIZABETH<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 18 March 1787; d. 19 Nov. 1845.<sup>408</sup>
- 3 RUFUS CLARK<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 5 Feb. 1789;<sup>409</sup> d. 26 July 1857; m. Sally Northrup.
- 4 MARY<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 12 April 1791.<sup>410</sup>
- 5 JAMES<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 31 Aug. 1793;<sup>411</sup> may have married (1) Marcy C. Brown, (2) the widow Lydia Hadley.
- 6 SARAH<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 15 Sept. 1795;<sup>412</sup> m. Samuel Smith.
- 7 ELISHA T.<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 23 Aug. 1797;<sup>413</sup> *The Providence Gazette* issue of 1 Oct. 1821 reported the death of Elisha T. Smith, son of Chad of Smithfield, at Waynesville, Ohio, aged twenty-four years.
- 8 RICHARD<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 6 Sept. 1799;<sup>414</sup> d. 20 Nov. 1833.
- 9 GIDEON C.<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 27 June 1801;<sup>415</sup> m. (1) Mary Whittier who d. 5 May 1849; m. (2) the widow Mary A. Tucker.
- 10 PHEBE F.<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 28 Oct. 1803;<sup>416</sup> d. 23 June 1833.
- 11 LYDIA<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 26 April 1807; d. 21 Nov. 1821.

- 93 VI ARCA<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. Gloucester 13 Oct. 1764;<sup>417</sup> d. Cumberland 25 Feb. 1825;<sup>418</sup> m. 2 Dec. 1784 Sarah Boyce, of William, dec., and Lydia Boyce of Dighton, Massachusetts,<sup>419</sup> who was b. 28 Aug. 1764 and d. 29 April 1824.

Arca lived until manhood in the part of Gloucester which later became Burrillville. He then moved to Cumberland, where he took up farming on Mendon Road. He died at the home of a daughter on Diamond Hill Plains. He was a Quaker.<sup>420</sup>

CHILDREN OF ARCA<sup>6</sup> AND SARAH (BOYCE) SMITH:

- 1 CONTENT<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 10 Sept. 1786; d. 9 Dec. 1826; m. in Cumberland 12 Nov. 1809 Otis Daggett, of Joab, of Attleboro, Massachusetts.
- 2 JOHN MILTON<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 25 Jan. 1788; d. 27 June 1874, buried in Arnold Mills Cemetery. He married Amanda Clark of Cumberland who died in 1861. They had EDDY C., EMILY E., JOHN MILTON, JR.,

<sup>417</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Gloucester Births, 3:61.

<sup>418</sup>*Ibid.*, Providence Friends Deaths, 7:274.

<sup>419</sup>*Ibid.*, Providence Friends Marriages, 7:174.

<sup>420</sup>Data on Arca and children from *Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island*, 2:1204.

AMY ANN, OTIS MASON and FOSTER WALCOTT, twins, and POLLY ANN SMITH.

- 3 RUTH<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 13 Sept. 1789; m. Eber Aldrich.
- 4 SABRA<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 14 May 1792; d. 28 Feb. 1858; m. in Cumberland 1 July 1810 Amassa Whipple.
- 5 PATIENCE<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 6 April 1794; m. Turner Haskell.
- 6 AMEY ELLEN<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 1 March 1796; m. Job Steere of Gloucester, of Asa and Mary (Irons) Steere.
- 7 WILLIAM B.<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 18 Aug. 1799; d. 15 March 1854; m. in Cumberland 17 June 1827 Lucy Grant, of Jabez.
- 8 ARANA M.<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 27 Nov. 1800; d. 7 Feb. 1866.
- 9 LYDIA B.<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 23 July 1809; m. Charles Metcalf.

VII SABRA<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. 22 April 1767; d. 6 Dec. 1767.<sup>421</sup>

94 VIII ZADOC<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. 1 Jan. 1770;<sup>422</sup> m. 13 May 1790 Rowena Comstock, b. 12 Nov. 1766, daughter of George and Katherine Comstock of Smithfield,<sup>423</sup> whose death is reported in the *Rhode Island American* issue of 9 June 1814. Zadoc married (2) 23 June 1819 Mary Sweet of Attleboro, daughter of Zachariah and Elizabeth Austin of Wellington, Massachusetts.<sup>424</sup> Zadoc was a Quaker and lived in Burrillville.

On 11 June 1814 Rufus Smith of Burrillville for \$225 deeded to Zadoc Smith, Robert Mowry and Willard Smith "who with grantor constitute the company known as the American Woolen Mfg. Co.," the part called the Tar Kill sawmill.<sup>425</sup> Zadoc sold to Eber Smith of Burrillville seven acres on 30 May 1811, with his wife Rowena yielding her rights.<sup>426</sup> On 30 Jan. 1822 Zadoc of Burrillville deeded to George C. Smith of Burrillville (his son) one fourth of a woolen factory near Tar Kill sawmill, with his wife Mary yielding her rights.<sup>427</sup> Then on 9 Feb. 1822 Zadoc sold forty acres, with house, the westerly part of his farm, to Coomer Smith, his wife Mary again signing off her dower rights.<sup>428</sup> A deed of 30 May 1811 recorded in Burrillville listed Zadoc "now residing in Leicester, Massachusetts" in selling more than four acres to Arca Walling. His first wife Rowena yielded her rights.<sup>429</sup>

<sup>421</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Gloucester Births, 3:61.      <sup>422</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>423</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Smithfield Friends Marriages, 7:174.

<sup>424</sup>*Ibid.*, Providence Friends Marriages, 7:241.      <sup>425</sup>Burrillville Deeds, 1:116.

<sup>426</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:168.      <sup>427</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:198.      <sup>428</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:197.      <sup>429</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:72.

CHILDREN OF ZADOC<sup>6</sup> AND ROWENA (COMSTOCK) SMITH:

- 1 WILLARD<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 15 Sept. 1791.<sup>430</sup> He and his wife Martha were of Mendon, Blackstone Village, Massachusetts, on 4 June 1838 when he sold thirty-three acres and buildings in Burrillville to Charles Brown of Mendon.<sup>431</sup>
  - 2 JOB SCOTT<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 13 March 1794; d. 3 April 1811.<sup>432</sup>
  - 3 SUSANNAH<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 7 Jan. 1798.<sup>433</sup>
  - 4 GEORGE C.<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 28 Oct. 1800.<sup>434</sup>
- 95 IX PAUL<sup>6</sup> SMITH, b. 30 Oct. 1773 in Gloucester;<sup>435</sup> m. 7 July 1797 Prudence Jillson of Uriah and Elizabeth Jillson of Cumberland<sup>436</sup> who was b. 17 March 1775. Burrillville vital records list the marriage of Paul Smith of Burrillville and Alice Barnes, of Daniel of Gloucester, 22 June 1818.<sup>437</sup> Paul lived in Burrillville and Cumberland and was a Quaker.

Rufus and Paul Smith of Gloucester deeded to James Smith of Gloucester (their brother) on 6 Dec. 1798 one hundred forty acres in Gloucester "where we live," abutting their brother Zadoc. Prudence, wife of Paul, yielded her rights. On 1 Jan. 1813 Paul Smith of Burrillville sold a house with five acres to William Luther of Burrillville.<sup>438</sup>

CHILDREN OF PAUL<sup>6</sup> AND PRUDENCE (JILLSON) SMITH:

- 1 BENJAMIN<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 8 June 1798.<sup>439</sup>
- 2 JOHN<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 26 Feb. 1800.<sup>440</sup>
- 3 PERSIS<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 24 Dec. 1802.<sup>441</sup>
- 4 CLARK<sup>7</sup> SMITH, b. 26 Oct. 1804;<sup>442</sup> d. 24 Feb. 1845; m. 20 Nov. 1828 in Cumberland Philena Clark, daughter of Silas Clark of East Woonsocket, Rhode Island, who was b. 23 March 1810 and d. 12 Aug. 1868. Their children were SILAS SMITH who died at 21; REBECCA M. SMITH, widow of John M. Hoag; VIRGIL CLARENDON SMITH who died at 32 and at the time of his death was a teacher in Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri; and ALBERT A. SMITH, b. 17 Dec. 1834, d. 19 July 1905; m. Eveline M. Sherman.
- 5 AMEY<sup>7</sup> SMITH.

<sup>430</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Smithfield Friends Records, 7:197.

<sup>431</sup>Burrillville Deeds, 1:414.

<sup>432-434</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Smithfield Friends Records, 7:197.

<sup>435</sup>*Ibid.*, Gloucester Births, 3:61.      <sup>436</sup>*Ibid.*, Smithfield Friends Records, 7:174.

<sup>437</sup>*Ibid.*, Burrillville Marriages, 3:13.      <sup>438</sup>Burrillville Deeds, 1:105.

<sup>439-441</sup>Arnold, *op. cit.*, Smithfield Friends Records, 7:197.

<sup>442</sup>*Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island*, 3:1874.

# THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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