RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

SPRING 1973

By 1860 two-thirds of Rhode Island's inhabitants were city dwellers. In the midst of this urban movement was the busy port of Providence and on the river's west bank (foreground) the Fifth Ward was home and labor center for Irish immigrants. (Page 53)

Detail of lithograph by John P. Newell of a view of Providence from the west side of the Providence River ca. 1858.

RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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Conservatives expressed their views of Dorr's Rebellion with pictures as sarcastic as their words. A Whig pamphlet shows Dorr going into "retiracy" after his brief Rhode Island war.

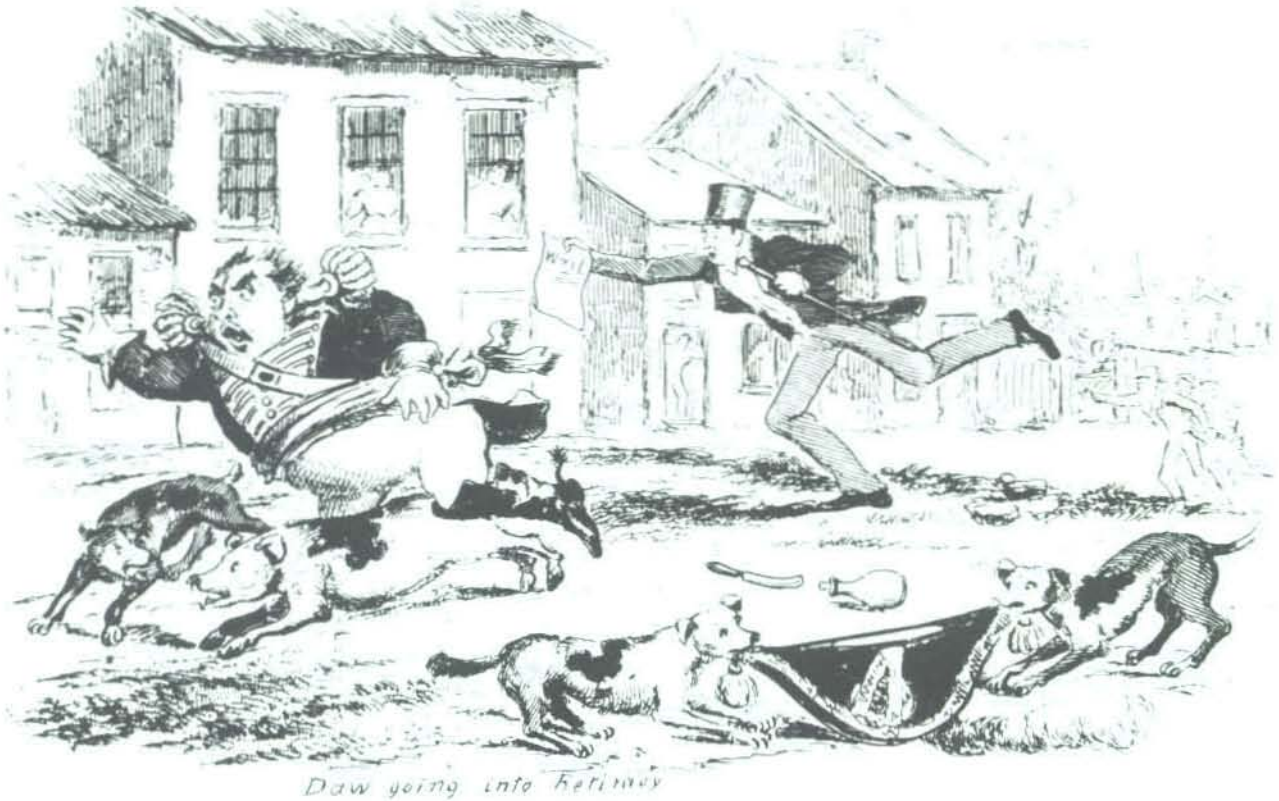


Illustration from Daw's Doings, or the History of the Late War in the Plantations *by Sampson Short-and-Fat [Samuel Kettell] (Boston, 1842).*

Popular Sovereignty in the Dorr War — Conservative Counterblast

*by William M. Wiecek**

That history is written from the viewpoint of winners and *"good guys"* in the struggles of the past is an old and familiar complaint,[1] certainly true of historical studies of the Dorr Rebellion. All recent studies implicitly assume that the suffragists' cause was superior to that of the anti-suffragists.[2] Further, the whole course of subsequent American history has vindicated the vision of those who opposed the free-hold qualification and the malapportionment of the Rhode Island legislature in the early 1840s. Rhode Island conservatives of the 1840s have been consigned to that part of the historical attic reserved for Bourbon obstructionists of progress, human rights, and libertarian democracy. With the ethical component of this judgment, most Americans would have no quarrel.

It is nonetheless worth rescuing conservative anti-suffragists momentarily from historical oblivion to reconsider their political thought on its own terms. Such a reconsideration could tell us much about processes of American constitutionalism, about perennial themes of consensus and conflict in our past, and about democratic values that conservatives so emphatically rejected in their time. As a preliminary, let us survey conservative thought on popular sovereignty, which constituted a coherent and integrated rebuttal to an idea whose time — by 1842 — had plainly come.

At the outset, we are met by inevitable definitional problems — what is conservatism? and who are conservatives? I shall not attempt to answer the first because I suspect that so diffuse a concept as American conservatism can be defined only by infinite enumeration; I do hope however to contribute one element to that enumeration. I use the label *"conservative"* to describe those Rhode Islanders and their supporters outside the state who either —

1) opposed (or were reluctant to concede) suffrage extension or reapportionment of the General Assembly or both between 1840 and June 1842; or
2) opposed, at any time after July 1841, the program of the Rhode Island Suffrage Association, specifically the calling of the extra-legal People's Convention and the drafting and adoption of the People's Constitution.

Though such usage is justified by modern definitions,[3] by the term's etymology,[4] and by choice of

*Associate Professor of History at the University of Missouri - Columbia and Author of *The Guarantee Clause of the U. S. Constitution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), Mr. Wiecek wishes to thank the staffs of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library and the John Hay Library, Brown University, for valuable assistance; to acknowledge a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that made much of the research for this paper possible; and to acknowledge a grant from the Faculty Research Council, University of Missouri, for typing funds.

[1] Herbert Butterfield, *Whig Interpretation of History* (London: Bell, 1931).

[2] Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1945) 410-417. C. Peter Magrath, *"Optimistic Democrat: Thomas W. Dorr and the Case of Luther vs. Borden,"* *Rhode Island History* 29:3 & 4 (August and November 1970) 94-112. Marvin E. Gettleman, *"Political Opposition and Radicalism in the Dorr Rebellion,"* paper read at Organization of American Historians convention 1969. Chilton Williamson, *"Disenchantment of Thomas W. Dorr,"* *Rhode Island History* 17:4 (October 1958) 97-108. John B. Rae, *"Issues of the Dorr War,"* *Rhode Island History* 1:2 (April 1942) 33-44. Charles O. Lerche, *"Dorr Rebellion and the Federal Constitution,"* *Rhode Island History* 9:1 (January 1950) 1-10. Mahlon H. Hellerich, *"Luther Cases in the Lower Courts,"* *Rhode Island History* 11:2 (April 1952) 33-45. Robert L. Ciaburri, *"Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island: Moderate Phase,"* *Rhode Island History* 26:3 (July 1967) 73-87. George M. Dennison, *"Thomas Wilson Dorr: Counsel of Record in Luther v. Borden,"* *St. Louis Univ. Law Journal* 15 (1971) 398-428. Michael Conron, *"Law, Politics, and Chief Justice Tanney: Reconsideration of the Luther v. Borden Opinion,"* *American Journal of Legal History* 11 (1967) 377-388. Patrick T. Conley, *"Dorr Rebellion: Rhode Island's Crisis in Constitutional Government,"* *American Chronicle* 1:1 (January 1972) 48-53.

[3] *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* conservative (adj.) — *"tending to favor the preservation of the existing order and to regard proposals for change with distrust."* *Concise Oxford Dictionary* conservative (adj. & n.) — *"disposed to maintain existing institutions."*

[4] Latin *conservare* — to preserve.

conservatives themselves,[5] some may object because such use is tautological or begs important questions of political theory. No other label, however, so aptly fits the ideology of the group of men whose thought we are about to examine. I use *"suffragist"* promiscuously to denote all who actively supported suffrage extension, reapportionment, or the inseparably related proposals for constitutional reform in Rhode Island in the early 1840s, and *"Dorrite"* to designate supporters of "Governor" Thomas Wilson Dorr after May 1842.

Any generalization about conservatives should be qualified at the outset by one observation — they were not monolithic in outlook or temperament. They varied widely from urbane, moderate, flexible, and relatively tolerant Elisha R. Potter, Jr.[6] to adamant reactionaries like Edwin Noyes who wrote that *"this free suffrage,"* which he called *"the mobocratic principle," "in the end will damn any community,"* or the anonymous mossback who composed this fervid prayer for a broadside: *"God, in mercy, deliver us from anarchy, civil war, conflagrations, plague, pestilence and famine, Hell and Free Suffrage. . . ."*[7]

The constitutional background of the Dorr Rebellion determined the course of debate over popular sovereignty in the rebellion. If *"constitution"* is defined as a unitary, written, constitutive document, the only constitution Rhode Island had on the eve of the American Revolution was the charter granted by Charles II in the early years of the Restoration.[8] It limited the franchise to *"freemen of the said Company"* but did not define this term. It also provided that representatives of freemen, a body that evolved into the House, should be composed of two representatives from every town, with Providence, Portsmouth, and Warwick each getting four and Newport, six.

Urbane, moderate, flexible, and relatively tolerant Elisha R. Potter, Jr.

Portrait, RIHS Collection.

Because the charter was silent on qualifications of freemen, it was left to the General Assembly to define the term and thereby determine who could vote. Its 1665 catalogue of desirable qualities of freemen anticipated Jacksonian-era conservative attitudes — freemen were to be all those *"of Competent Estates, Civil Conversation, and Obedient to the Civil Magistrate . . ."*[9] The first of these qualities was translated into monetary terms, so that by the American Revolution, a man qualified to vote if he possessed the equivalent of $134 worth of real estate. The General Assembly

[5] *Letter to Hon. James F. Simmons,* by a Rhode-Island Conservative (Providence, 1845) who defines the Law-and-Order position as *"the conservative platform"* (p. 4). William G. Goddard, *"To the People of Rhode Island: The Free Suffrage Convention," Providence Journal* 17 Jan. 1842, reprinted in *Political and Miscellaneous Writings of William G. Goddard,* 2v. (Providence, 1870).

[6] Potter (1811-1882), Harvard 1830, served in both houses of the General Assembly and was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives as Law-and-Order Whig 1843-1845. Previously a conservative Democrat, author, antiquarian, Commissioner of Public Schools 1849-1854, Associate Justice of the R. I. Supreme Court from 1868 to his death, he deserves a competent modern biography. Donald M. Freeman, *"South County Reaction to the Dorr Rebellion as Illustrated by Elisha Reynolds Potter,"* M. A. thesis, University of Rhode Island 1955, is superficial.

[7] Noyes to James M. B. Potter, 23 June 1842, in Elisha R. Potter Jr. Papers, RIHS Library. Broadside, *"The Sovereignty of the people must and shall be maintained — Thomas Wilson Dorr,"* in Sidney S. Rider, comp., *"Broadsides and Caricatures Relating to the Political Affairs in Rhode Island,"* John Hay Library, Brown University; despite its caption, this was a vitriolic antisuffragist appeal.

also provided that a freeholder's eldest son could vote without meeting the property qualification.

The Revolution neither abrogated the charter nor changed this system of suffrage qualification and apportionment. The charter was retained as the constitution of the state, and as late as 1836 evoked the high praise of so enthusiastic a Jacksonian as George Bancroft — *"nowhere in the world were life, liberty, and property safer than in Rhode Island."* That encomium was to embarrass him six years later, when he supported the suffragist cause.[10]

Bancroft's tribute notwithstanding, dissatisfaction with the charter became widespread and vocal as the nineteenth century wore on. Beginnings of industrialization in Rhode Island — coinciding with the first appearance in numbers of Catholic Irish immigrants and the rise of Providence and mill villages in the north-east sector of the state — provided the background for a determined conservative defense of the order that was passing, an order marked — at least in conservative rhetoric — by a dispersed, rural, homogenous, landowning, Protestant, Yankee population.[11] Many features of the conservative ideology of the 1840s — fervent anti-Popery, xenophobia, fear of proto-socialist doctrines — appeared in response to social tensions that grew out of the rise of manufacturing centers. These changes also resulted in widespread disfranchisement, particularly of urban industrial workers, and in severe malapportionment.

Due to unchanging apportionment provisions of the charter, the representation ratio of the house became badly skewed. At extremes, one member from Jamestown represented 182 constituents, compared to the 5,793 of his colleague from Providence.[12] This apportionment naturally favored stagnant agricultural communities of southern and western parts of the state at the expense of rising industrial towns, assuring not only control of a majority in the General Assembly by a minority of the population, but also control by a minority likely to be thoroughly out of sympathy with urban workers and their reformist friends.

Malapportionment and disfranchisement were mutually reinforcing buttresses to the structure of conservative politics. Because Rhode Island was the last state in the union to abandon the freehold qualification, its disfranchisement was egregiously severe. Estimates of white adult males excluded from the ballot by the freehold qualification vary — Peter Coleman, most authoritative student of the subject to date, accepts a figure of approximately 60%. Disfranchisement, it need scarcely be said, hit hardest those sections that suffered most from malapportionment; in Providence possibly as much as 94% of the adult male population was excluded.[13]

To state the problem in this way is to stack the deck against conservatives. What to a modern egalitarian mind is disfranchisement and malapportionment was, to antebellum conservatives, reasonable and equitable allocation of political power necessary to preserve order and stability in society. Conservatives did not see themselves as defending an evil for selfish class reasons — they considered themselves conservators of a beneficent and venerable constitutional system.

Twin evils of malapportionment and disfranchisement did not go unchallenged. They were attacked as early as 1797 in an oration by George R. Burrill.[14] Petitions to the General Assembly, requesting extension of the franchise — usually to those who paid taxes or did militia or fireman duty — were presented in 1811, 1814, 1819, 1821, 1822, 1823, 1829. Ordinarily these

[8] Charter and the three constitutions of 1841-43 are in Arthur May Mowry, *The Dorr War or the Constitutional Struggle in Rhode Island* (Providence: Preston & Rounds, 1901; reprint New York: Chelsea House, 1970).

[9] John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, 10v. (Providence, 1856-65) 2:113.

[10] *History of the United States of America from the Discovery of the Continent* (New York, 1886-91) 2:364.

[11] Joseph Brennan, *Social Conditions in Industrial Rhode Island 1820-1860* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1940) ch. 6. Peter J. Coleman, *Transformation of Rhode Island 1790-1860* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1963).

[12] Figures are from a *"Table of Population"* signed by Potter in a folder titled *"Constitutional Convention 1841-42"*, Potter Papers.

[13] Coleman, 259, n. 65. On contemporary trends in suffrage reform generally, Chilton Williamson, *American Suffrage from Property to Democracy 1760-1860* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

[14] Extracts reprinted in *"Rhode Island — Interference of the Executive in the Affairs of,"* 28 Cong., 1 sess., ser. 447, doc. 546 (1844) 271-274. This majority report with documentary appendices of the House Select Committee on Rhode Island chaired by New Hampshire Radical Democrat Edmund Burke is popularly called *Burke's Report* and so cited hereafter.

were ignored or rejected, but in 1824 a constitutional convention's proposal for modest suffrage and apportionment reform was soundly defeated by freeholders in a referendum.

Pre-1840 views of anti-suffragists were best expressed by one of their first eminent spokesmen, Benjamin Hazard,[15] in a legislative committee's response to the 1829 petitions known as *Hazard's Report*.[16] Hazard attributed suffrage agitation to *"mischievous cabals"* hatched at *"clamorous and disorderly meetings, set on foot by troublesome demagogues and noisy political agitators."* Most of the disfranchised, in his view, belonged to one of three groups: 1) propertyless native Rhode Islanders who *"have reduced themselves to that condition by their own improvidence, extravagance, or vices;"* 2) American citizens from outside Rhode Island who, almost by definition, could not have been *"substantial citizens"* in their native state — else what could have induced them to migrate? — and who must therefore be adventurers worse than the first group; and 3) alien, degraded, and vice-ridden results of a liberal immigration policy that Hazard condemned as a *"national misfortune."* Though most conservatives of the 1840s did not express themselves so candidly, they did not go much beyond this level of social analysis.

Hazard enunciated several themes later central to conservative ideology. Only the *"sound part of the community"* could be entrusted with the ballot, and the criterion that determined who constituted *"the sound part"* was property ownership. As one of the foremost leaders of Rhode Island conservatives — Elisha R. Potter, Jr. — put it in 1842, the freehold qualification was originally devised *"to secure the control of affairs to those who had a permanent interest in the prosperity of the colony." "Those who possess [property] should possess the power to protect it."*[17] Or, as the point was made by William G. Goddard, writing under the pseudonym *"A Rhode Island Man"* — *"those who own the country ought to govern the country."*[18] Historians have aptly dubbed this the *"stake-in-society"* argument.

William Giles Goddard, lawyer, newspaper editor, Brown University professor, expressed the conservative view.

Engraving. Biographical Cyclopedia. Representative Men of Rhode Island *[Providence, 1881].*

Hazard denied that men had a natural right to the ballot; the only *"right"* that the voteless could claim was the opportunity to acquire enough property to qualify themselves as freemen. The freehold qualification prevented a spoliation of private property and the rise of contending factions, *"leading straightaway to anarchy, and ultimately to despotism,"* a theme that went back at least to the years of the Revolution. Hazard insisted that restricted suffrage was entirely consistent with ideals of popular sovereignty and

[15] Hazard (1770-1841), Brown 1792, quondam Federalist, representative from Newport in General Assembly 1809-1840, a leader of the state bar, enjoyed a lucrative law practice.

[16] *"Report of the Committee on the Subject of an Extension of Suffrage," Burke's Report*, 377-401.

[17] Potter, *Considerations on the Questions of the Adoption of a Constitution, and Extension of Suffrage in Rhode Island* (Boston, 1842) 10.

[18] *Providence Journal* 10 Nov. 1841. Goddard (1794-1846), Brown 1812, lawyer, newspaper editor, belletrist, professor of moral philosophy and metaphysics at Brown.

[19] Dorr recalled 13 years later that Hazard's report was *"the most effective rebuke ever administered to the advocates of liberal suffrage in Rhode Island."* Inaugural speech of "Governor" Dorr, May 2, 1842, *Burke's Report*, 721.

[20] Seth Luther, *Address on the Right of Free Suffrage* (Providence, 1833). Marvin E. Gettleman and Noel P. Conlon, eds.,

majority rule because he defined the *"people"* simply as those having the vote. He concluded by extolling the primacy of the middle class of society, whom the freehold qualification protected from the intrigues of the rich, stepping to power on the backs of the poor.

Despite its deliberate tone of finality, Hazard's report did not squelch suffrage agitation.[19] In the 1830s, spurred on by occasional radicals like Seth Luther,[20] suffrage reformers improved their organization and created the *"Constitutionalist Party,"* a reform group seeking taxpayer-militia suffrage. The freeholders continued to turn a deaf ear, though, and grievances remained unredressed. The exciting 1840 presidential campaign electrified the populace of Rhode Island and taught reformers some techniques of popular suasion. Out of the adherents of the defunct Constitutionalist movement a new and more radical organization, the Rhode Island Suffrage Association, was formed. In response to the theories of this group conservatives elaborated their own ideas about control of the government by the people.

Elements of the suffragist theory of popular sovereignty, though at least as complex, well-thought-out, and effectively argued as the conservative position, can be stated fairly simply — they were recapitulated most concisely in the so-called *"Nine Lawyers' Opinion"* written by Dorr in 1842 as rebuttal to a condemnation of suffragist principles by the judges of the Rhode Island Supreme Court in their charge to a Bristol grand jury.[21] The sovereign power of the state, suffragist lawyers argued, resides in the people, and is superior to the legislative power, which is merely derivative from the sovereign power and which is exercised by the people's representatives as agents or servants of the true sovereigns. Only the people — the true sovereigns — can decide when the sovereign power is to be exercised; to insist that they must first get the permission of their agents, the representatives, would be to make the servant the master.[22] Suffragists believed that the sovereign power can be exercised by a majority of the whole people. Though they started out from the premise that the *"people"* meant *"all American citizens, residing permanently in the state,"* they eventually qualified the term to mean white adult males.[23]

New Hampshire Radical Democrat Edmund Burke, chairman of the U. S. House committee investigating Rhode Island's suffrage question, reflected the suffragists' views in the majority report that bore his name.

Engraving, Democratic Review, January, 1847.

For free exercise of popular sovereignty, suffragists insisted that right of suffrage not be restricted by artificial barriers like the freehold qualification or diluted by malapportionment. The right to vote is a *"natural"* right, not a conventional or artificial one, which *"attaches to the man, independent of the accidents of birth or fortune."* Both the fundamental right of exercising sovereign power and the

"Responses to the Rhode Island Workingmen's Reform Agitation of 1833," Rhode Island History 28:3 (August 1969) 75-94. Louis Hartz, *"Seth Luther: Story of a Working-Class Rebel," New England Quarterly* 13:3 (September 1940) 401-418.

[21] *"Nine Lawyers' Opinion on the Right of the People of Rhode Island to Form a Constitution,"* in Sidney S. Rider, *Bibliographical Memoirs of Three Rhode Island Authors* (Providence, 1880) 68-92.

[22] On the agency concept, see [Benjamin Cowell], *Letter to the Hon. Samuel W. King, Late Governor of the State of Rhode Island* (n.p., n.d. [1842]). Attribution to Cowell made on catalog card of this pamphlet in RIHS Library.

[23] *Democratic Catechism: Containing the Self-Evident and Fundamental Principles of Democracy* (Providence, 1846) 17. Memorial of the Democratic minority of the Rhode Island General Assembly (1844), *Burke's Report*, 2. *"Providence," Providence Journal* 11 Jan. 1842. People's Constitution, article 3, sec. 1, Appendix B, Mowry, *Dorr War*.

scarcely less fundamental one of doing so peaceably — by the ballot — may be claimed at any time as a legal right by the people whenever it seems to them necessary, and particularly where, as in Rhode Island, no mode is explicitly prescribed for constitutional revision.[24]

The conservative counterblast to these theories of popular sovereignty addressed itself to two principal issues and a number of related questions. The central issues were —1) who are *"the people"* who exercise sovereignty in America? 2) what is *"sovereignty,"* and how is it exercised?

In March 1842 the *Providence Journal* noted editorially that *"the term people has become all important in the present controversy."*[25] It certainly had. Conservatives admitted that the people were sovereign; as United States Senator William Sprague said, it was difficult to deny *"the great principle upon which our civil institutions are founded in this country, namely the will of the people."*[26] But they insisted on a highly restrictive definition of who constituted *"the people."* Sometimes they confused their categories, identifying the people with *"the state"*; at other times they insisted that some abstraction, such as *"the Law"* was sovereign; and sometimes they became distracted in denunciations of *"people"* defined as lower classes: *"Who are the sovereign people? . . . a beast with many tails and no head. A large class of them are ignorant, illiterate, and stupid . . . Another, the foulest segment or dregs . . . wish to divide among themselves, the property of others"* and *"should be stacked in heaps and shot, or burnt, to purge the moral atmosphere."*[27]

This *"final solution"* frenzy was atypical; most conservatives approached the problem in a more level-headed way. They began by reproaching suffragists for claiming to represent the people: *"A few persons get together, and call themselves the* people. *And they ask, are not the people sovereign? . . . It was certainly a lucky thought." "You seem to think that you are emphatically the people, and that there are none beside [sic] you, and that any small portion of you, wherever collected, have a right to speak and act in the name of the 'sovereign' people."* This they denied: *"A thousand men having no right to vote, cannot give to each other, by votes, what they had not themselves. A thousand cyphers cannot make a unit."*[28]

But if not the thousand cyphers, then who did make the units? Conservatives' answer to that question was grounded on a careful distinction between, on the one hand, what they called *"the natural people"* and, on the other, *"the corporate people," "the body politic," "the People, in a political sense,"* or *"the body corporate."* The natural people were the entire human population of a polity, including women, children, blacks, slaves, infidels, resident foreigners, lunatics, convicts, paupers, *et al.* No one, not even suffragists, ever suggested that *"the people"* in this sense be given the vote, and conservatives therefore argued that even suffragists conceded that suffrage must be restricted in any political society. Hence *"the people"* must be *"a specific and peculiar phrase, not comprehending 'all persons', but assuming by prescription to represent all."* Political power in a state can be exercised only by a restricted group, *"a kind of corporation, an organization, an organized body politic, a unit."*[29]

So far suffragists could have agreed, since in the People's Constitution they limited the franchise to adult males, disfranchised all Negroes, tacked on a mild residence requirement, and even added a tax-paying or property qualification for voting on tax

[24] *Preamble and Constitution Rhode-Island Suffrage Association* (Providence, 1840) 4-8. *Burke's Report*, 41. Dorr to William Allen, 14 April 1842, in Sidney S. Rider, comp., *"Dorr Correspondence: Personal and Political Letters Written to Thomas W. Dorr, with Copies of His Answers,"* John Hay Library, hereafter cited Dorr MSS.

[25] March 5, 1842.

[26] To John Brown Francis, 2 March 1842, John Brown Francis Papers, RIHS Library. Sprague (1799-1866), wealthy cotton manufacturer, speaker General Assembly 1832-35, governor 1838-39, U. S. representative 1835-37, senator 1842-44.

[27] [Francis Bowen], *"Recent Contest in Rhode Island," North American Review* 123 (1844), 371-435 at 378. Attribution to Bowen made on catalog card for pamphlet reprint of this article in RIHS Library. Francis Vinton, *Loyalty and Piety, Or the Christian's Civil Obligations Defined* (Providence, 1842) 14. [John Pitman], *Reply to Letter of Hon. Marcus Morton, Late Governor of Massachusetts, on the Rhode Island Question*, by One of the Rhode Island People (Providence, 1842) 19. Attribution to Pitman made in Bowen, 410 and in John Russell Bartlett, *Bibliography of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1864) 96. The *"beast"* quotation is from the broadside *"Sovereignty of the People Must and Shall be Maintained — Thomas Wilson Dorr,"* Rider, *"Broadsides."*

[28] Potter, *Considerations*, 18. Potter to D. J. Pearce, 20 Dec. 1841, Potter Papers. Pitman, *Reply to Morton*, 7. *Close of the Late Rebellion in Rhode-Island*, Extract from a Letter by a Massachusetts Man Resident in Providence (Providence, 1842). [John Pitman], *To the Members of the General*

A conservative pamphlet pictures Dorr's army as typifying the suffragists' idea of the sovereign people.

Illustration from Daw's Doings . . . (Boston, 1842).

issues in the towns. They parted company with conservatives, though, when the latter defined the body politic as *"those who by the state's fundamental laws possess the political power."* In other words, *"the people,"* as conservatives thought that collective noun should be correctly understood, meant those with the vote. *"Those only who possessed political power according to the provision of this fundamental law, were, in a constitutional sense, the people of Rhode Island."*[30] Conservatives conceded that sovereignty resided in the people defined strictly in this sense.[31] Those who have the suffrage exercise it on behalf of all, including those who do not, and a disfranchised white adult male has no more reason to complain than do women or children, at least in a well-ordered state where he is not oppressed — and to conservatives, Rhode Island was the epitome of such a state where *"the operation of the laws was equal, taxes were moderate, justice was impartially administered, and no person had any direct cause of complaint. He might murmur because he was not allowed to govern others, but he could not assert, that he was ill-governed himself."*[32]

To suffragists, it seemed indecent to defend oligarchic governance — rule by the *"aristocracy of dirt and gravel"* — through such specious appeals to popular sovereignty.[33] Conservatives fended this thrust in several ways. First was the *tu*

Assembly of Rhode Island (n.p., n.d. [1842]) 21. Francis C. Gray, *Oration before Phi Beta Kappa Society of Brown University* (Providence, 1842).

[29] *"Rhode Island"* No. 4, *Providence Journal* 25 Oct. 1841. *"Town Born"* and *"Extension of Suffrage"* No. 6, *Manufacturers' & Farmers' Journal* 16 Sept. 1841. *"Washington County," Providence Journal* 22 Jan. 1842. *"Charge of Hon. Chief Justice Durfee, Delivered to Grand Jury at March Term of Supreme Judicial Court at Bristol, Rhode Island, 1842," Burke's Report*, 706-717 at 710. Dorr called this *"the odious distinction between legal and illegal people." Address Adopted by Democratic Convention, Dec. 20*, 1842 (n.p., n.d.) 11. Bowen, 421, 413.

[30] Pitman, *To Members of General Assembly*, 10. Goddard, *Address to the People of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1843) 42. Of this address Justice Joseph Story approvingly noted: *"If our republic is to be saved from the misrule of demagogues and selfish adventurers, it is by drinking deeply from sources of thought like those opened by Professor Goddard." Biographical Cyclopedia of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1881) 224.

[31] A variant theory was that sovereignty resided in the natural people but could be exercised only by the body politic. John Quincy Adams, *Social Compact Exemplified in the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Providence, 1842) 16.

[32] Bowen, 389. Potter, *Considerations*, 8-9. Editorial, *Providence Journal* 28 Oct. 1841.

[33] *"Many Thousand Strong"* and *"Free Suffrage," Manufacturers' & Farmers' Journal* 20 Sept. 1841.

quoque argument: if you exclude women and blacks, what right have you to complain that we exclude non-freeholders, especially since the same social imperatives that justify your exclusion justify ours? The freehold qualification was simply *"the best practical rule of exclusion that can be adopted"* to assure that only those with a stake in society direct that society's affairs.[34]

Second, they appealed to their version of history: when the charter was sent over, freemen of Rhode Island (who, they assumed, must have constituted the overwhelming bulk of the white adult population excluding servants, who were not *"free"* anyway) acting as *"the people,"* accepted it in a solemn, sovereign, constitutive act and then proceeded to plug the loophole of the undefined term *"freemen"* with the property qualification.[35]

A third argument rested on the social compact — original settlers of Rhode Island by compact set up their commonwealth and agreed mutually that all should be bound by its provisions, including the freehold qualification. All who later were born into Rhode Island or immigrated there were perforce presumed to accept the terms of this compact. Thus the disfranchised, *"by prescription,"* consented to their disfranchisement.[36]

Not content to rest with a restricted definition of the people, conservatives were careful to circumscribe the sovereign power the people exercised. They had to begin their discussion of the meaning of sovereignty with one of the fundamental constitutional documents of Rhode Island, the Declaration of the Rhode Island convention called to ratify the federal Constitution in 1790: *All power is naturally vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates, therefore, are their trustees and agents, and at all times amenable to them.*[37]

If all power — *"sovereignty"* — is vested in the people, then how do they exercise it? The conservative answer to this question was drawn from another American state paper, George Washington's Farewell Address (1796).[38] Washington insisted that:

The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the constitution which at any time exists till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.[39]

The touchstone of conservative ideas about sovereignty was legitimacy, defined, as Washington assumed, as obedience to extant laws. *"We shall have to give up our freehold qualification,"* Judge John Pitman conceded, *"but our reforms will be made if at all I trust by a legal convention and voted for by the people in a legal way."*[40]

Only regularity and stability, products of legitimacy, *"enable men to see what they are to expect, and to regulate their conduct for the future by some fixed rules . . ."* From this, conservatives reasoned that the majority can express itself only under the forms of law — which meant that the extra-legal (and, after passage of the Algerine act, illegal) proceedings of suffragists must be invalid. *"Any irregular action, without legal authority, is no action at all . . ."* If extra-legal acts were to be

[34] *"Rhode Island Memorial,"* 28 Cong., 1 sess., ser. 447, doc. 581 (1844) — minority report submitted by two southern members of the House Select Committee on the Rhode Island Democratic memorial — usually referred to as *Causin's Report* from its author, Rep. John M. S. Causin of Maryland, and so cited hereafter. Potter, *Considerations*, 11, 31-32. *"Rhode Island"* and *"To the People of Rhode Island,"* *Providence Journal* 1 Oct. 1841. *"Town Born"* and *"Extension of Suffrage"* No. 16, *Providence Journal* 11 Oct. 1841.

[35] Potter, *Considerations*, 3.

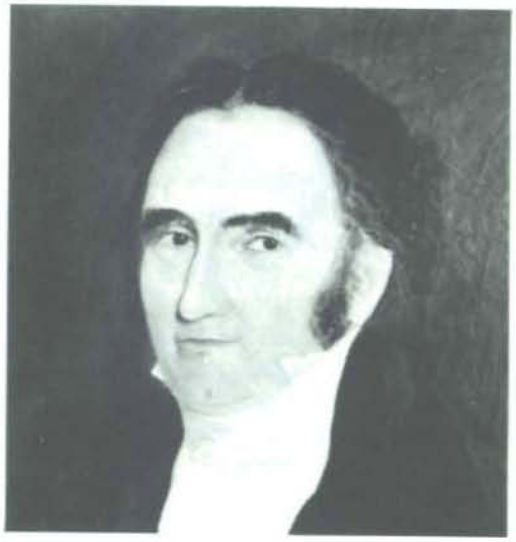
[36] Bowen, 421. Pitman, *Reply to Morton*, 13. Potter, *Considerations*, 36.

[37] Quoted in *Burke's Report*, 236-38. This statement was taken verbatim from Article 2 of the 1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights drafted by George Mason.

[38] James D. Richardson, comp., *Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897-1917) 1:205-216. The importance of this document for constitutional development is often overlooked because of scholars' preoccupation with Washington's warning against entangling alliances. The Farewell Address was relevant to much more than foreign affairs.

[39] Even God, or at least Saints Peter and Paul, were called on by conservatives to buttress Washington. From the pulpit Francis Wayland harped on the texts Rom. 13.1, Tit. 3.1, and 1 Pet. 2.13 — *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God"* — *"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work"* — *"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."* Wayland, *Affairs of Rhode*

Dr. Francis Wayland, president of Brown University, invoked Saint Paul and Saint Peter on the side of the conservatives from the pulpit of the First Baptist Meeting House on May 22, 1842.



Photograph courtesy Brown University Archives.

recognized, *"then law is at an end, and general anarchy would ensue."* Sullivan and Lydia Dorr, parents of Thomas Wilson Dorr, expressed this sentiment in an anguished appeal to their son to abandon the Dorrite cause: *"The Law must prevail, or all Government is at an end."*[41]

What this meant in practical terms in the Rhode Island of 1842 was that *"the legislative body speak the will of the people. The voice of the government is the voice of the people . . ."* Only the legislature can *"be assumed to express the consent of all."*[42] The negative side of this assertion is that the people cannot speak in any way but through the legislature. *Vox populi* may be *vox Dei*, but it must also be *vox senatus*. If the people can speak only through laws regularly enacted by their representatives, two things follow — both fatal to suffragist *modus operandi* in 1842 — 1) Any extra-legal action is void, not being the authentic act of the people. *"It is absolutely indispensable that the existing government should superintend every amendment of the fundamental law."*[43] 2) All extant laws, being the voice of the people, are the measure of the rights of all men. *"The majority have no rights except what are given them by law."* Any popular action outside legitimate channels is not only void, but also *"revolutionary," "aimed at the existence of all law and the government itself."*[44] Because suffragist theory — *"this new 'democratic principle'"* — ignored these points, it *"levels all legal and constitutional barriers, and exposes all things and all persons to the ruling demagogue of the day."* Thus conservatives concluded that *"in our country, our liberty has most to fear, not from the reign of law and order, but from the unrestrained licentiousness of the people."*[45]

This exaltation of the legislature determined the conservatives' conception of representative government. In the revolutionary era, Whig political theorists, led by James Madison and James Wilson, worked out theories of representation that were meant to secure popular political power in a republic as an alternative to autocracy. If, as Madison and Wilson assumed, direct or simple democracy — government in which the

Island, 3rd ed. (Providence, 1842) 28. For an impressive review of Wayland's reaction to the suffrage controversy, see Wilson Smith, *Professors & Public Ethics: Studies of Northern Moral Philosophers before the Civil War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956) ch. 7, *"Francis Wayland and the Dorr War."*

[40] Pitman to Justice Joseph Story, 26 Jan. 1842, Joseph Story Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan. Pitman (1785-1863), Brown 1799, Judge of the U. S. District Court for Rhode Island from 1824 to his death, did not let judicial station interfere with active support for the anti-suffragist cause. He had lived and practiced law in New York, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire before returning to his native Providence in 1820.

[41] Bowen, 421. Potter, *Considerations*, 33. Comment from the bench by Durfee, Ch.J. in *State v. Dorr* (1844) — Dorr's treason trial — reported by George Turner and Walter S. Burges, eds., *Report of the Trial of Thomas Wilson Dorr* (Providence, 1844) 38. Letter, 8 April 1842, Dorr MSS.

[42] *"Providence Plantations," Providence Journal* 5 Jan. 1842. *Causin's Report*, 18.

[43] [George Ticknor Curtis], *Merits of Thomas W. Dorr and George Bancroft as They Are Politically Connected*, by a Citizen of Massachusetts (Boston, 1844) 8. Attribution to Curtis in Marvin E. Gettleman, *"Radicalism and Party Development in Rhode Island, 1834-1845,"* unpublished paper, RIHS Library.

[44] *"Euthymachus," Providence Journal* 3 March 1842. *"Town Born"* and *"Extension of Suffrage"* No. 7, *Manufacturers' & Farmers' Journal* 18 Sept. 1841. Report of statements made by Justices Job Durfee, Levi Haile, and W. R. Staples of Rhode Island Supreme Court, *Providence Journal* 3 March 1842.

[45] Pitman, *Reply to Morton*, 19, 31-32.

whole people, or at least the franchised part of it, met regularly as the legislative body, a form of government closely approximated in New England town meetings — was impossible for territories more extensive than New England towns, autocratic or non-representative government could nevertheless be avoided by having representatives of the people act in their stead, as agents. In such a way, popular participation in government — the *"democratic element"* as Madison's contemporaries called it — could be preserved.

All constitutional doctrines and theories, however, are capable of cutting both ways. Theories of representation that, in the hands of Madison and his fellow-Whigs, secured popular control of government, could be used two generations later to restrict popular control. This is precisely what happened with conservative interpretations of representative government in the 1840s. Conservatives believed that representation replaced or superseded direct democracy. Having created a system of representation, the people thereby surrendered any role they might have claimed for themselves in the ordinary functioning of government. *"The people of this country, as a people, possess no power whatever except to appoint their rulers,"* because government in America is by representation. *"If nine-tenths of the people should meet and repeal a law, it would continue still to be a law."*[46] Representation, in other words, became a substitute for direct popular action which, if resorted to against the wishes of the representatives, was at best illegal and at worst traitorous or subversive.

This point was best articulated by Daniel Webster in his arguments before the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of *Luther v. Borden* (arguments 1848, decision 1849). Webster insisted that it was merely truistic that the legislature is the agent of the people and that the people are the sovereigns. Sovereignty could be exercised

Daniel Webster caricatured by suffragist sympathizer.

Detail from lithograph Tyrants Prostrate, Liberty Triumphant *(New York, 1844).*

only by the representatives of the people in any representative form of government. Thus representation acts as a limitation on the power of the people because their will can be ascertained only through acts of their representatives and in accordance with modes of action approved by the legislature. *"Irregular"* popular acts, like the People's Convention, cannot give any validity to popular proceedings. As Webster's colleague in these arguments, John Whipple, said, the *"whole people"* cannot make a law; only the established legislature can do that. The people cannot arrogate to themselves the function of the regular legislature. Only *"through the forms of law, do the wills of the many . . . become one sovereign will."*[47]

Perhaps unavoidably, conservatives discovered that only a slight extrapolation of this theory would wind up as a defense of virtual representa-

[46] John Whipple, *Address to the People of Rhode-Island, on the Approaching Election* (Providence, 1843) 8. Bowen, 414.

[47] *Rhode-Island Question: Arguments of Messrs. Whipple and Webster . . . January Term, 1848* (Providence, 1848) 38-43, 22. Charge of Durfee, Ch.J. to Bristol Grand Jury, *Burke's Report*, 708-9. Durfee (1790-1847), Brown 1813, was active in the anti-suffragist cause as a public speaker despite his position. A one-time member of the General Assembly and the U. S. House, he was elected to the Rhode Island Supreme Court in 1833 and served until his death. He was also a would-be poet and litterateur (published the immediately forgotten *Panidea* the year before his death) as well as an orator of some repute.

[48] Potter, *Considerations*, 42. [Goddard], *"A Rhode Island Man"* and *"Rhode Island Affairs"* No. 8, *Providence Journal* 14 Jan. 1845.

[49] Pitman, *Reply to Morton*, 31-32. Curtis, 10. Whipple, *Address*, 9. Whipple (1784-1866), Brown 1802, enjoyed a lucrative practice representing Rhode Island cotton manufacturers. He served in the General Assembly and was con-

tion, the British defense of parliamentary power over the unrepresented colonies that drove Americans into revolt two generations earlier. A few conservatives, driven by the unfolding logic of their position, did not shrink from explicitly defending a theory of virtual representation, though it was at variance with their revolutionary heritage. Representative John M. S. Causin echoed British defenders of disfranchisement: *"a majority of those legally entitled to vote, by the necessity of society, represent the whole."* Any attempt by the people to resume the exercise of some part of the sovereign power would therefore be *"revolution."*

Rhode Island conservatives would have enthusiastically endorsed a slogan of the Right that appeared in the late 1950s: *"America is a republic, not a democracy; let's keep it that way."* In fact, they anticipated it, when they condemned suffragist theory, which *"confounds republic and democratic, two very different things."*[48]

Conservatives struggled manfully but unsuccessfully with the difficulties that suffragist majoritarianism posed for them. They insisted first of all that, whatever the composition or the will of the majority might be, the rights — especially property rights — of minorities must be respected. Only in this way was it possible to *"curb the will of triumphant majorities, and give that security to minorities which will give security to all."* Because a legitimate majority exercises sovereignty, it can do so only *"if the minority are properly represented in the act"* of changing the form of government. *"No man or class of men can be bound by the acts of another man or class of men, unless he has a voice in the choice of his judges, unless he has an opportunity to be heard upon that choice, unless the proceedings of those judges are regulated by some rule or principle equally fair for all,"* insisted John Whipple, doyen of the Rhode Island bar. In contrast to the rights of individuals and minorities, a numerical majority as such has no *"rights." "We are apt to get our notions of the rights of majorities from our common practice of governing by majorities,"* explained Potter.[49]

Perhaps sensing that too stubborn an insistence on minority power would be self-defeating, conservatives devoted most of their efforts to outlining the conditions under which majority will might prevail. From their conception of who the people are, they drew an important distinction: *"there is no such thing as a majority in an inorganic mass . . . majorities only exist in corporations." "The question is not whether a majority shall rule in the legislature, but of what elements that majority shall be composed."* This fruitful insight, reinforced by their abhorrence of rule by *"King Numbers,"* led conservatives to insist that the true majority of society was not a majority of numbers, but a majority of interests.[50]

Only a majority compounded of the true *"constituent elements of society . . . persons and property"* could be legitimate. Equitable apportionment and universal suffrage were thus not essential to a representative republic; on the contrary, it was necessary that the basis of representation take into account something more than mere aggregate numerical majorities. Echoing, and sometimes explicitly citing, John C. Calhoun's evolving theories, conservatives insisted that government speak with *"the voice of the whole"* rather than the voice of a *"mere tyrannical majority."* To recognize the legitimacy only of the numerical majority would be to invite military dictatorship eventually going *"from the tyranny of the many to that of one."* Anything other than a majority of interests was *"capricious and oppressive . . . a despotism."*[51]

Suffragists contended that the right to vote was a natural one, inherent in all men and not lost by disuse. Rebutting this was easy enough, since suffragists denied the right in practice by disfranchising others in the People's Constitution

sidered by contemporaries an impressive orator. Dorr had studied law with him in the 1820s. Potter, *Considerations*, 32.

[50] *Causin's Report*, 29-30. *Providence Journal* 13 Dec. 1841. [Goddard], *"A Rhode Island Man," Providence Journal* 9 Oct. 1841. Pitman, *To Members of General Assembly* 10.

[51] *Providence Journal* 13 Dec. 1841, quoting approvingly a speech of Judge Abel P. Upshur at 1829 Virginia constitutional convention. *"A Friend of Peace and Order," Providence Journal* 24 Dec. 1841. Calhoun amply repaid the Rhode Islanders' compliment. In one of his more important political treatises — a public letter to William Smith of Rhode Island— Calhoun firmly upheld the position of the conservatives. Richard K. Cralle, ed., *Works of John C. Calhoun* (New York, 1888) 6:209-239. *"Rhode Island"* and *"To the People of Rhode Island," Providence Journal* 1 Oct. 1841. On antecedents of the theme of regression from pure democracy to anarchy to military dictatorship, see Gordon Wood, *Creation of the American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969) 19 and Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) 282-3. [Goddard], *"Country Born"* and *"The Crisis"* No. 8, *Providence Journal* 1 Jan. 1842.

on the basis of sex, race, age, and property qualifications, but conservatives went beyond merely pointing out the defects of the People's Constitution. They flatly denied any natural right to suffrage by discriminating between fundamental rights derived from natural law, such as the right to the security of one's person or property, and what might be called *"derivative"* rights — such as the right to vote — that have their origin not in natural law but in social arrangements. The former could not be infringed in any way but the latter were preeminently matters of adjustment, concession, and compromise. *"As to the abstract question of the right of every man to vote, it is all humbug."* If suffrage extension were to be made, it was purely a matter of expediency, not right. Potter believed that conservatives should have conceded extension, *"not because I believe it a natural right, nor that I think we should have been any better or more economically governed; but simply because the other states all around us have done it, and because it is in accordance with the prevailing public opinion."*[52]

Sovereignty, then, to conservatives was not some undefined primal power in the hands of the raw aggregate of the natural people, but rather a carefully defined, limited, and circumscribed power to be exercised by the people's representatives under established — i.e., legitimate — modes. It had to respect the rights of minorities, it required at some point the approbation of the legislature, it could not erupt into extra-legal channels, let alone illegal ones. It was subordinate to extant constitutions and laws, and could not violate the great principles of natural law that provided security for property and for minorities. It was inseparable from the rule of the law; any assertion of sovereign power that disregarded the will of the legislature must be disregarded because it could not be authenticated. This meant that if the franchise were to be extended and apportionment adjusted, it could be done only by the legislature. Popular movements were not expressions of the people's will, but rather illegal and revolutionary assemblies to be put down as a challenge to the primacy of law and order.

Conservatives realized, however, that their complex denial of suffragist majoritarian theory was not succeeding. Lacking the organization of society that characterized the slave states and that made Calhoun's comparable theories viable, or at least plausible, in the South, Rhode Island anti-suffragists abandoned the effort, sensing that something close to universal suffrage had to be conceded sooner or later in a northern state. Elisha Potter admitted to President John Tyler that *"in this country the majority doctrine has the appearance at least of being democratic and of course will carry with it the sympathies of the people of the other states which will react upon our own citizens. We on the other hand are subjected to the odium of being called aristocrats . . ."* He concluded resignedly *"that this doctrine of majority will ultimately prevail I think there can be no doubt."*[53]

Social tensions that beset Rhode Island in the 1840s manifested themselves in the conservatives' constitutional polemics. One of the most prominent tensions was caused by the perennial *"American Dilemma"*: the place of black people in American society. Conservatives saw the suffrage controversy's relevance to blacks in two lights: 1) in its potential impact on slavery outside the state; and 2) in the question of suffrage for Rhode Island Negroes.

Rhode Island conservatives made political capital out of the implications of suffragist political theory for the South's peculiar institution.

[52] Pitman, *To Members of General Assembly*, 15. Whipple, *Address*, 4. *Causin's Report*, 31. Goddard, *Address*, 42. Bowen, 414. *"Providence Plantations," Providence Journal* 5 Jan. 1842. Potter to D. J. Pearce, 20 Dec. 1841, Potter Papers. Potter, *Considerations*, 27. *"Rhode-Island"* and *"To the People of Rhode Island," Providence Journal*, 1 Oct. 1841. Edwin Noyes to James M. B. Potter, 23 June 1842, Potter Papers. *Speech of Mr. Potter of Rhode Island on the Memorial of the Democratic Members of the Legislature of Rhode Island* (Washington, 1844) 9 — pamphlet reprint of speech on floor of the House, March 7, 9, 12, 1844.

Attacking Freeholder Governor Samuel Ward King, an 1842 broadside titled "Governor King's Extra, Dedicated to his excellency without Permission," satirizes his mobilization of forces against suffragists.

Detail from broadside. RIHS Library.

The Providence City Guards celebrating their Victory over the Dorrites.

This was not hard, since the militant black was literally the *bete noire* of proslavery nightmares in the 1840s. Conservatives made a special and blunt appeal to southerners, playing on this fear. Potter, who served as one of Freeholder Governor Samuel W. King's emissaries to President John Tyler in May 1842 noted in an *aide-memoire* that he drew up after the interview that *"I mentioned once we leave the laws what is there . . . to prevent negroes revolutionising south?" "He agreed"*, Potter noted. (Tyler was, of course, a Virginian.) Potter's associates drummed the point home to slave-states senators: *"Sprague saw Preston [Senator William C. Preston, Whig, S.C.] — said if [the suffrage cause] succeeded the union was dissolved for they [slaveholders] could never acknowledge the principle. It would ruin South Carolina. The blacks might revolutionize them."* Southerners were so appalled at this prospect that the name of Rhode Island was becoming a byword among them: *"Cranston says a West Virginian told [him] that if this succeeded they [i.e., slaves] should* Rhode Island *Virginia."*[54] Conservatives anticipated that slave-state jurists would concur: *"The southern judges will entertain a common feeling of hostility to all radical movements."*[55]

In this matter at least, some suffragists agreed with the conservatives. William Goodell, a New York abolitionist and editor who supported the suffragist case, expressed it most succinctly:

If popular sovereignty was permitted at the North, the precedent would be dangerous to the South. If the disfranchised majority of Rhode Island could "form a constitution without leave of their masters, the disfranchised majority of South Carolina might do the same, and the peculiar institution would be overthrown. The northern laborer therefore must be put down, lest the southern laborer should rise."[56]

Conservatives' cultivation of their southern contacts in Washington had its effect. Maryland Representative John Causin, condemning the

[53]Potter to Tyler, 10 June 1842, Potter Papers.

[54]Potter, *"Memorandum"*, 6 May 1842, Potter Papers.

[55]John Brown Francis to Potter, 25 March 1842, Potter Papers. Francis (1791-1864), Brown 1808, grandson of John Brown, served in General Assembly, governor 1833-38, U. S. Senate 1844-45.

[56]Goodell, *"Rights and Wrongs of Rhode Island"* — No. 8 of *Christian Emancipator* (Whitesboro, N. Y., 1842) 51. See also Rev. Charles Woodhouse to Dorr, 11 June 1848, Dorr MSS.

suffrage cause in 1844, warned that its principles would spring up like the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, and wrote a lengthy dissent to the majority report of Edmund Burke's committee in the House assailing the libertarian implications of the suffragist position. Senator Henry Clay voiced the southern reaction to the suffrage cause in a speech at Lexington, Kentucky, in summer 1842. Identifying suffragist *"anarchy"* with the obliteration of class, race, and sex distinctions, Clay lamented that *"all the offspring of positive institutions, are cast down and abolished and society is thrown into one heterogenous and unregulated mass . . . How such a principle would operate in a certain section of the Union, with a peculiar population, you will readily perceive."*[57]

Though slavery had been abolished, Rhode Island had its own small *"peculiar population,"* in Clay's euphemism, and conservatives did not overlook them. They needled suffragists about the white qualification in the People's Constitution. *"Town Born,"* a clever satirist writing in the *Providence Journal*, put these words into the mouths of suffragists speaking to blacks: *"You may ride along in the same train of revolution with us if you please, but alas! it must be in the James Crow car . . . We must not peril the rights of man, by classing with them the rights of the colored man."* Ignoring widespread opposition to black enfranchisement among freeholders, *"Town Born"* asked: *"Are they not men — have they not the same natural rights — are they not entitled to the same equal liberty with ourselves?"*[58]

Freeholders answered that last question with a firm *"no"* by adding their own white qualification to the Freeholders' Constitution, but then reversed themselves by removing the qualification in the 1842 Constitution.[59] The race qualification was dropped partly because many conservatives felt that if Irishmen were to be admitted to the ballot, a few blacks could be no worse. Writing about the matter in 1842, Elisha Potter noted *"there is not so much scolding about letting the blacks vote as we expected. They pass it off in this way, that they would rather have the negroes vote than the d----d Irish."*[60] One of the ironies of the suffragist struggle was that suffragists, who had disfranchised the blacks in their constitution, were indirectly responsible for black enfranchisement in the wake of suffrage extension granted by the Law and Order Constitution.

In an era of nascent nativism, conservatives did not hesitate to play on xenophobia and anti-Popery, as Potter's observation just quoted suggests. *"Men were called upon not to vote for a constitution but to vote against Irishmen,"* complained one suffragist, and his accusation was substantially correct.[61] A *"Mr. Randolph"* [Richard K. Randolph?] was quoted in the *Providence Journal* as having said, on the floor of the Freeholders' Convention, that Catholic Irishmen *"are good fellows themselves, but not fit persons to be entrusted with political power."*[62] Others were less urbane in their assessment of immigrants: *"foreign mercenaries, the refuse of the diseased and polluted systems of Europe," "unreclaimed from the ignorance and superstitions of the Old World."*[63]

Conservatives were not sure just how this alien influence would make itself felt. Perhaps *"hundreds of irresponsible men from abroad"* — likely the labor force imported for the anticipated naval installation on Rhode Island — would be marched to the polls by a demagogue; or, worse yet, the puppet strings would be pulled by the Pope from Rome so that Rhode Island's public schools would be controlled by the Pope *"through the medium of thousands of naturalized foreign Catholics."* Or perhaps Catholic conspiratorial machinations would be too subtle to detect,

[57] Calvin Colton, ed., *Works of Henry Clay* (New York: Putnam's, 1904) 9:382-3.

[58] *"Town Born"* and *"Extension of Suffrage"*, *Providence Journal* 11 Oct., 15 Sept. 1841. See also Potter, *Speech*, 8.

[59] The problem of race qualifications in the constitutions of 1841-42 is complicated. Antislavery activists unencumbered by adhesion either to the militantly pro-slavery national Democratic Party or to the Rhode Island Suffrage Association condemned both Freeholders' and People's constitutions. Frederick Douglass came to Rhode Island to campaign against ratification of People's, and the Providence Anti-Slavery Office, a stronghold of Garrisonism, suggested in true Garrisonian fashion that no loaf was better than half, that is, that no extension of suffrage at all was preferable to the People's Constitution. See its letter to *Providence Journal* 3 Nov. 1841. Suffragists with antislavery sympathies, like Dorr (though his antislavery became attenuated upon his conversion to the Democracy), squirmed with discomfort at the white qualification and hoped that it might be scrapped by amendment. See discussions in J. Stanley Lemons and Michael A. McKenna, *"Re-enfranchisement of Rhode Island Negroes," Rhode Island History* 30:1 (Feb. 1971) 3-13, and in Irving H. Bartlett, *From Slave to Citizen: Story of the Negro in Rhode Island* (Providence: Urban League, 1954).

[60] Potter to John Brown Francis, 22 July 1842, Francis Papers.

[61] Joshua B. Rathbun to Dorr, 25 March 1842, Dorr MSS.

". . . every tinker and beer-man and fish-market loafer has a constitution for Rhode Island in his pocket, ready made, which he knows to be good because he made it himself."

Detail of illustration, Daw's Doings . . . (Boston, 1842).

because Irishmen *"are uniformly governed by some secret influence not known to the rest of the people."* But one thing was certain: *"every Roman Catholic Irishman in Rhode-Island is a Dorrite."*[64]

Closely related to the nativist appeal was one directed against residents of cities, principally Providence. *"The monster of anarchy," "the tyranny of the mob," "the reckless, the indolent, the licentious, the desperate, the haters of law and righteousness,"* are set loose in *"the festering sinks of our large cities." "Floating masses, often turbulent and always irresponsible . . . make great cities great sores."* In Providence *"every tinker and 'beer-man,' and 'fish-market loafer' has a constitution for Rhode Island in his pocket, ready made, which he knows to be good because he made it himself."* The cities, filled with aliens and radicals, would govern the agrarian hinterland under a system of universal suffrage. Integral to this anti-urban appeal was a moving lamentation: *"Farmers of Rhode Island — the sceptre is about to depart from you, and to depart from you, forever."*[65]

One of the most persistent themes of the conservative counterblast was what may be called — from its latter-day incarnation on bumper-stickers — the *"love-it-or-leave-it"* syndrome. *"May ministers, or men of whatever profession they may be, who come from other states, to live among us, and who dislike our institutions and censure the government which protects them, leave the state as soon as possible, and the sooner the better,"* suggested a conservative broadside. So much for *"foreign"* adventurers; as to natives, remaining in the state when they have the ability to leave is a tacit expression of consent to their disfranchisement. *"So long as all are free to come, to go or to stay, their consent is given by coming and by staying."* Those dissatisfied with their

[62] November 13, 1841.

[63] Edward W. Peet, *Sermon on the Occasion of Public Thanksgiving . . .* (Providence, 1842) 13. *"Foreign Voters!!"* undated broadside *c.* 1845, Rider, *"Broadsides"*.

[64] [Goddard], *"A Rhode Island Man"* and *"To the People of Rhode Island"* No. 4, *Providence Journal* 10 Nov. 1842. *"Native American Citizens! Read and Take Warning!"* undated broadside *c.* 1841, and *"Foreign Voters!!"* Rider, *"Broadsides"*.

[65] Peet, 11. [Goddard], *"Country Born"* and *"To the Farmers of Rhode Island," Providence Journal* 17 Dec. 1841. *"Town Born"* and *"Extension of Suffrage"* No. 10, *Providence Journal* 25 Sept. 1841. The reference to *"beer-man"* was a snide thrust at one of Dorr's prominent associates, Dr. A. J. Brown of Providence, who manufactured small beer. Goddard, *Address*, 28, 56. Potter, *Considerations*, 12. [Goddard], *"Country Born," Providence Journal* 25 Jan. 1842.

disfranchisement had one effective option: they could *"vote with their feet"* and leave.[66]

Conservatives subsumed specific opposition to Irishmen, Catholics, blacks, and city-dwellers into a more generalized fear of suffrage passing into the hands of *"the poorer class," "the idle, the ignorant, and the floating part of our population." "There exists a combination to revolutionize the country,"* complained one conservative, in which radicals like William Lloyd Garrison, Orestes A. Brownson, and William Goodell stirred up class hostility in the breasts of the poor against the forces of stability and order. All this would end in a state where *"licentiousness shall destroy all the security and happiness of regulated liberty."* Suffragist doctrine would place the *"political power of the city, not in the aristocracy of intellect or morals, or property, but in the aristocracy of the dram shop, the brothel, and the gutter; not in the 'ruffle-shirt gentry,' but in the gentry who have no shirts at all." "Insubordination, anarchy, and revolution"* would produce *"an unholy alliance between infidelity and democracy; of which coalition the issue is a bold and rabid jacobinism,"* ending in *"fearful crisis . . . pillage . . . carnage . . . atrocity . . . plunder."*[67]

Anti-suffragists saw the object of this conspiracy to be a simple and crude form of communism; in the 1840s the common word for this was *"agrarianism." "The vicious and idle"* would *"make spoil of the accumulations, whether ample or limited, of industry, honesty and enterprise." "Today it may be on the question of suffrage, tomorrow it may be on a question of property. The same person [Brownson, presumably] who came from abroad [i.e., Massachusetts] to excite our citizens on the question of suffrage . . . may again be heard among us, inculcating his agrarian doctrines on the subject of property."* Unequal distribution of property was a source of unrest in any society, but especially in one like Rhode Island's, where it was reinforced by the rural-agrarian: urban-industrial cleavage. Radicals would first destroy the right to inherit property, and then *"our property and our lives."*[68]

Agrarianism was not the only danger, however. An equally sinister one was that ambitious men of wealth would marshal the votes of the poor to carry themselves to power, whence they would oppress *"the yeomanry and . . . the middling class of citizens."* To Judge John Pitman, the yeomen were *"the great security and conservatism of our republican institutions."*[69] In conservative social analysis, the poor and the *"monied aristocracy"* were arrayed against *"the middling classes of society . . . the great producing classes, the farmers, the mechanics, and the industrious laborers."* Only the freehold qualification, the aegis of the middle class, prevented *"the idle and profligate"* from becoming *"the pliant tools of a few ambitious rich, or of designing office-holders."*[70]

Here and there a conservative admitted the class bias underlying his opposition to suffrage extension, as when Elisha Potter frankly told Dutee J. Pearce that *"an extension of suffrage so far as this state is concerned would work favorably to democratic principles and against the absolute control of [sc. by] the monied and manufacturing interests which are united to keep down the*

[66] *"Sovereignty of the People Must and Shall be Maintained — Thomas Wilson Dorr,"* undated broadside, Rider, *"Broadsides."* Whipple, *Address*, 5. Pitman, *To Members of General Assembly*, 14. *Causin's Report*, 18. *"Rhode Island"* and *"To the People of Rhode Island"* No. 5, *Providence Journal* 1 Nov. 1841.

[67] Pitman, *Reply to Morton*, 19, 31. Whipple, *Address*, 12. Mark Tucker, *Deliverance of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1842) 13. [Goddard], *"A Rhode Island Man"* and *"To the People of Rhode Island"* No. 4, *Providence Journal* 10 Nov. 1841. Peet, 6. Vinton, 23. Wayland, passim.

[68] Goddard, *Address*, 35. Pitman, *To Members of General Assembly*, 4. Durfee, Ch. J., charge to grand jury, *Burke's Report*, 713. Edwin Noyes to James M. B. Potter, 23 June 1842, Potter Papers. Pitman, *Reply* to Morton, 31.

[69] This theme was first enunciated in Rhode Island by Pitman in 1811 in a legislative committee report urging extension of suffrage because the freehold qualification was being circumvented by fraudulent conveyances, reprinted in *Burke's Report*, 206-209. The Pitman of 1811 embarrassed the Pitman of 1842 but he refused to drop the yeoman theme. *Reply to Morton*, 26.

[70] Whipple, *Address*, 12-13. *"Common Sense," Providence Journal* 25 Dec. 1841.

[71] Potter to Pearce, 20 Dec. 1841. Potter Papers. Potter conceded existence of a *"landed aristocracy"* in Washington County to John Tyler, 10 Jan. 1842, Potter Papers. Francis to Potter, June 1842, quoting a *"leading man,"* and Francis to Potter, 17 June 1842, Potter Papers. William Sprague to Francis, 12 June 1842, Francis Papers. Suffragists also claimed that economic pressure, such as withdrawals of business, evictions, and boycotts were being put upon suffragist businessmen. J. S. Harris to Dorr, 2 June 1842, Thomas Wilson Dorr Papers, John Hay Library, Brown University — a separate collection, distinct from the one cited Dorr MSS.

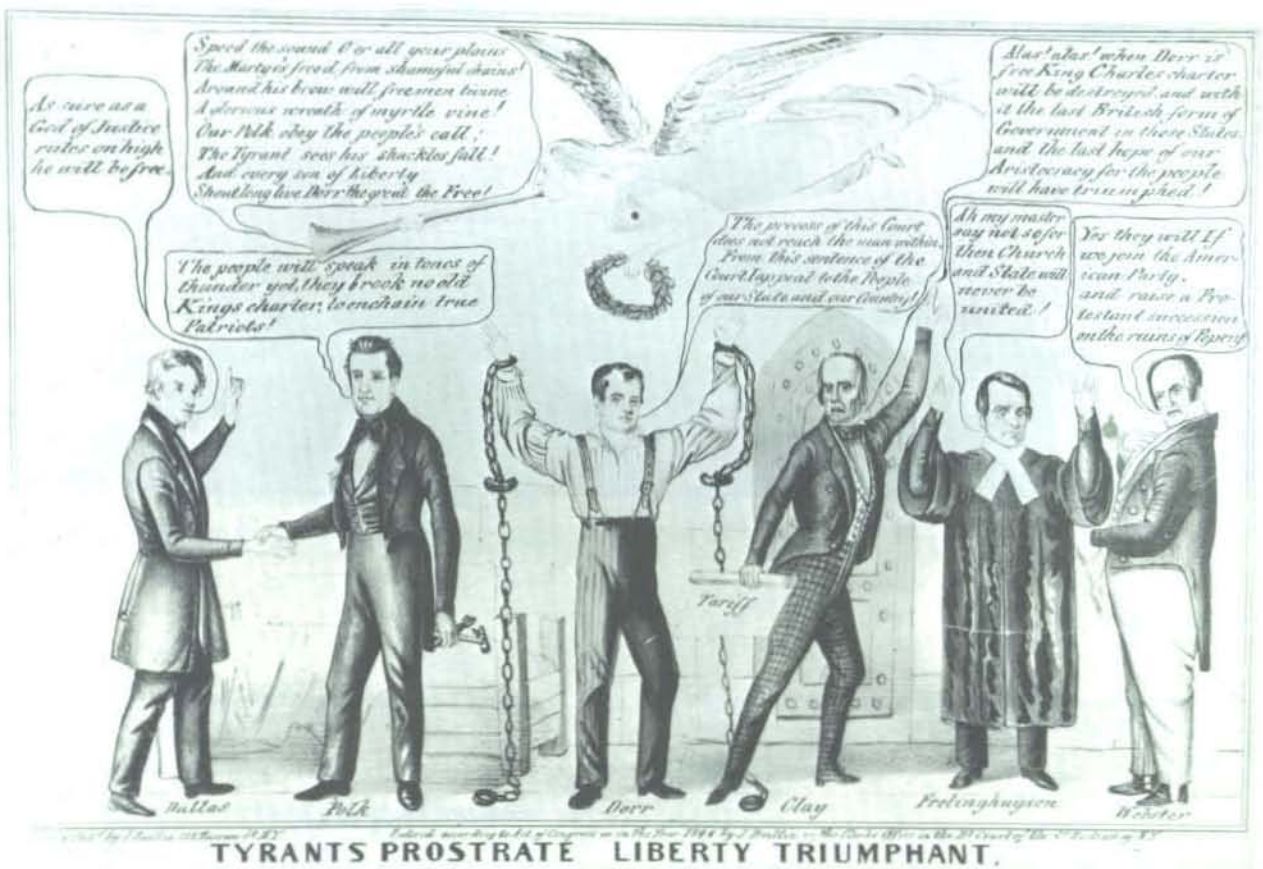
[72] Potter to Francis, 21 Oct. 1841, Francis Papers.

democratic party." Conservatives responded by suggesting an early version of a lockout in their factories. Since *"manufacturing could not be carried on in Rhode Island, if all the operatives were admitted to the right of suffrage,"* a temporary suspension of manufacturing might rid the cotton manufacturers of *"these rabid fellows,"* who would be replaced by imported Scottish labor. This idea never came to anything, but it indicates the lengths that conservatives would go in speculating among themselves about the social dislocations they saw about them.[71]

Much of the conservatives' ideological response to the suffragists' demands was grounded on considerations of the moment. One theme that cropped up in their writings, however, expressed a perennial impulse of American conservatives, from John Winthrop to John Tower — they were hostile to changes unnecessarily made in fundamental social and constitutional arrangements. The conservatives were not, as is sometimes alleged both by critics and by sympathizers, fearful of change *per se*; they recognized the inevitability of change as much as other men and accepted, even welcomed, some types of change. But they looked upon changes in the constitution or the elementary ordering of society with great suspicion. Elisha Potter, fittingly enough, since he was their most persuasive spokesman, expressed this reaction best. He regretted that the people of Rhode Island had not *"sense enough to get along without that eternal constitution tinkering which is the rage of the day."*[72] If there are any abiding continuities in the history of the American conservative thought, this surely is one — no state can survive *"eternal constitutional tinkering."*

Rhode Island's constitution-tinkering is pictured as an issue in the 1844 presidential campaign. Dorr, champion of constitutional change, is flanked by the candidates. Polk is contemptuous of the "old King's charter," while conservatives, right, deplore possible destruction of the charter which has served the state as constitution for almost two centuries.

Lithograph, RIHS Library.



On an October afternoon in 1860 the Manchester Brothers recorded this view of a corner of the Fifth Ward, Providence, from the spire of Grace Church. Here factories, wharves, and boarding houses attracted Irish immigrants.

Photograph, RIHS Library.

Fifth Ward Irish — Immigrant Mobility in Providence 1850-1870

*by Robert A. Wheeler**

Mid-nineteenth-century America is described in broad terms as the period when industrialization fed by immigration brought increasing prosperity to America as it allowed transplanted European peasants to prosper and enhance their status to a degree unattainable in their homelands. In most accounts of the era, immigrants are considered the backbone of urban industrial expansion, but this generalization deserves more careful examination. Could they prosper in this supposedly fluid social order? What were the parameters of their success? Local studies provide many clues, and the following essay is based on information concerning Irish immigrants in Providence from 1850 to 1870, especially those in the Fifth Ward.

When large numbers of Irish first came to southern New England in the 1840s and 50s, they faced a rapidly changing environment. The area had recently been connected by rail to Boston and Hartford, and local manufactures had expanded to meet increased markets. Indications of the quickening pace of the new era include doubling of the state's industrial labor force from 1840 to 1860, and quadrupling in the number of workers in such important local industries as woolens.[1] However, the transition from shops to factories was by no means complete by mid-century. Many trades, notably small machine manufactures, remained scattered in small establishments throughout the state.

Two crises hampered economic expansion from 1850 to 1870. First, the Panic of 1857 closed many cotton and woolen mills, forcing large numbers of laborers and operatives out of work. During winter 1856-57, aldermen of Providence had to provide food and fuel for the destitute as well as work for able-bodied unemployed.[2] A second crisis was precipitated by the Civil War. The years of this conflict were characterized by *"great prosperity and even greater inflation."*[3] Cotton mills were forced to curtail operations because of insufficient labor and materials. Local industry suffered less here than in many mill towns because local mills specialized in printed cloth and fine goods, materials still in demand.

As the area's industry expanded, population kept pace. Between 1840 and 1850 most of the thirty-five per cent increase occurred in towns and cities. Only a decade later two-thirds of the state's inhabitants were city dwellers.[4] In the midst of this centripetal movement was the port of Providence; population in Providence increased threefold between 1840 and 1870.[5]

The rising population rate was temporarily slowed by the Civil War but it quickly recovered. The state's population increase dropped from 18.9 in 1860 to 5.9 in 1865 (according to a state census) but returned to 17.5 by 1870. The brief deceleration was a result of the significant decline in immigration, hampered by partially blockaded seaways and relative prosperity in Europe.[6]

Throughout the quarter-century before 1865, however, immigration to the United States and Rhode Island increased greatly. Beginning in the 1840s, foreign-born workers drifted into the mills and within a few decades comprised a major proportion of the New England labor force. The first traces of the increased flow into Rhode Island appear in the 1850 census, where immigrants made up 16.2 per cent of the state's residents; three-

*Mr. Wheeler is Assistant Professor of History, Cleveland State University.

[1]Kurt B. Mayer, *Economic Development and Population Growth in Rhode Island* (Providence: Brown University, 1953) 37, 38.

[2]Welcome Arnold Greene, *Providence Plantations for Two Hundred and Fifty Years* (Providence, 1886) 81-88.

[3]Mayer, 42.

[4]Mayer, 40.

[5]Greene, 99.

[6]Mayer, 45.

quarters of these were Irish. By 1860, the foreign-born constituted one-half of the population increase.[7] Two decades later the state had the largest proportion of immigrants in the country.

Ireland supplied at least half the foreign-born population of Rhode Island before 1880. The Eighth Census (1860) indicates that sixty-eight per cent of 37,400 immigrants were Irish, but ten years later the ratio dropped to fifty-five per cent.[8] The peak obviously was reached in the early 1850s; subsequently the ratio of Irish to all other foreigners declined.

Why did the Flynns and O'Briens leave Ireland to come to America? Part of the motivation was the lure of a supposedly open society where prosperity depended on individual merit. In a more immediate sense, a series of events took place which forced Irishmen to sever ties with their homeland. In the 1830s Irish *"landlords no longer found it politically or economically profitable to keep [peasants] on the land."*[9] As the number of evictions grew, emigration began. The mid-40s witnessed the beginning of a five-year famine, caused by destruction of the potato crop. In 1846 repeal of Corn Laws obliterated Ireland's protected position in the English market. Over one million people were evicted between 1849 and 1850 and few of them remained in Ireland or England. For them, consequently, America seemed a logical choice.

It was possible even for peasants to cross the Atlantic, as competition had lowered passage price to seventeen dollars.[10] These low rates, however, did not account for the depletion of emigrant resources during the long wait before embarkation and in the lengthy voyage. Whether arriving in Boston, New York, or Providence, the usually penniless immigrant had little leisure to bargain for the best job in the area. Forced to settle in low income housing considered least desirable by native Americans, he immediately searched for work. It is likely that most of those who landed at a port remained for a while, confined to the city by their poverty and ignorance.

Without money or training the immigrant could not begin as merchant, clerk, or skilled laborer. His only occupational function was as laborer, a *"classification descriptive not of his function but of his lack of function."*[11] Chores like digging, sawing, chopping, and hauling helped the industrial progress of Rhode Island, but this irregular work afforded little opportunity for steady income or advancement. *"The uprooted Irish peasant [in Rhode Island] was completely helpless amid the confused, ruthless, industrial expansion. For his bit of bread and wretched shelter he was dependent on the people who had long had their roots in American soil."*[12]

Living conditions of the Irish were extremely inadequate. After a winter of unemployment, some of their flats were described as *"rooms [which] are absolutely bare of comfortable things, rooms into which the snow sifts as if in mockery of the feeble fire."* Their dwellings were *"black with age, the windows filled with rags."*[13]

Partially because of these conditions, Providence was forced to provide institutions to deal with the poor. In 1832 the city office of Overseer of the Poor was established, and by 1850 it was spending $7,000 on relief for those who worked on city projects for wages and meals.[14] Many of these men were Irish. It was not until after the heaviest wave of foreigners settled in the state that Providence appointed a Superintendent of Health to deal with mounting sanitation problems.

Two other city departments, Dexter Asylum and the Providence Reform School, contained disproportionate numbers of Degnans and McCartys. Of those admitted to the school in 1860, fourteen of the fifteen foreign-born were Irish, and of the eighty-two natives, thirty-two were of Irish stock. Therefore, nearly half of the children in the school were of Irish extraction.[15]

The rising city population, swollen by large numbers of immigrants, necessitated constant enlargement of the police force. In 1851 ten day policemen were added to the twenty-four night watchmen. By 1854 the night patrol had fifty-six

[7] Mayer, 41.

[8] 1950 *U. S. Census of Population*, v. 2, *Characteristics of Population*, part 39, table 24 cited in Kurt B. Mayer and Sidney Goldstein, *Migration and Economic Development in Rhode Island* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1958) 56.

[9] Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959) 43.

[10] Handlin, 48-49.

[11] Handlin, 60.

[12] Mary Nelson, "Influence of Immigration on Rhode Island Politics 1865-1910," unpublished doctoral dissertation (Harvard, 1954) 5.

Mid-19th-century resentment toward the foreign-born surfaced in caricature. A trade card presents the Irish stereotype.

Collection, RIHS Library.

men; in 1870, the police department numbered 121. One of the five police stations established in 1853 was placed in the Fifth Ward — in the middle of the Irish district.[16]

Rapid enlargement of night patrols in the early 1850s is significant, for it coincided with rising xenophobia in the city and state. Political ramifications of the *"America for Americans"* movement were important for Rhode Island. After failure of the Irish-supported Dorr rebellion in 1842, anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment grew. Irish were accused of political radicalism, drunkenness, and violence. The savage murder of Amasa Sprague, head of the Cranston Print Works, with its notorious trial in 1844 kept *"foreigners"* in the public eye. *"Circumstances pointed to the family of Nicholas Gordon, an Irishman and Catholic."* Since Gordon had attended a christening on the day of the murder, his two brothers were charged and one, John Gordon, was convicted in a more than questionable manner and hung. Regardless of the guilt of the convicted man, the incident which began and ended in blood gave special meaning to the term *"foreign desperadoes."*[17]

In 1855 Rhode Island elected William Warner Hoppin governor on the nativist Know-Nothing ticket. With the national election the next year, this anti-Catholic party disappeared, but resentment towards the foreign-born had a solid and lasting base. Perhaps some accusations of the Know-Nothings had basis in fact. Fraudulent Irish votes were relatively easy to buy. William Sprague, owner of A. & W. Sprague Company, a large cotton mill, ran for the federal Senate in 1860. He had 8,000 operatives in his mills and controlled five banks used by immigrants. Sprague's victory reportedly cost $125,000. Circulars and handbills showed where some of his power rested.

Paddy McFlynn was a Dimicrat born
And the rags that hung on him were dirty and torn
He'd nothing to eat and was clane out of tin
'Ooh, but wit is a jewel,' says Paddy McFlynn

. . . . . .

So says he, 'Mister Sprague, its myself that would vote,
But, be Jabers, I've nayther a shirt nor a coat;
And me trousers is missin, and faith 'twould be quare,
If I'd be after voting with nothing to wear.'

. . . . . .

And somehow he got him a coat and a hat
With brogans and calico shirt and all that,
'But,' says Pat, 'it's a demicrat nevertheless,
In dacent, conservative calico dress.'[18]

There were two Sprague mills in the Fifth Ward and the handbills could easily have been directed against the residents.

[13] *Providence Journal* January 13, 1889.

[14] *Providence Directory* (Providence, 1850) 258.

[15] *Providence City Documents 1860*, no. 5, Tenth Annual Report Providence Reform School, 12.

[16] Greene, 114-115.

[17] William Byrne et al., *History of the Catholic Church in the New England States*, 2v. (Boston, 1899) 1:367-8. Nelson, 14.

[18] Nelson, 27.

Many natives feared the Roman Catholicism of the incoming Irish, which was made visible to them by the sudden jump in the number of churches — from one in 1840 to eight in 1870.[19] They also noticed the rise of various societies designed exclusively to educate Catholic children and care for orphans. After 1851 the sisters of the Order of Mercy founded a convent in the Fifth Ward, near the oldest Catholic church in the city, Sts. Peter and Paul. This particular convent was the target of blatant anti-Catholic sentiment at the height of the Know-Nothing power in Rhode Island. In March 1855, *"following a Massachusetts legislative investigation of nunnery activities, similar demands erupted in Providence."* Rebecca Newell, a young woman, was said to have been forced to join a convent. Immediately, handbills were circulated throughout the city:
Greetings:

Whereas certain rumors are afloat, of a certain transaction of a certain anti-Sam [Anti-Know Nothing] party in the vicinity of the corner of Claverick and Broad Streets, every true native American-born citizen is requested, one and all to assemble there . . . One and all to the rescue.[20]
The corner mentioned in the circular was the site of the Order of Mercy convent.

Providence had not escaped the major currents of the mid-nineteenth century. Rapid industrialization supposedly aided by heavy immigration produced a burgeoning economy and also created in its wake a host of social and political problems for which city leaders gradually found institutional answers. During these years the town became a city, and by 1870 cultural clash and political reaction were subsiding.

What success did the Irish have in this hostile environment? In order to answer this question, the Fifth Ward of Providence has been examined in detail. The ward was no pastoral *"land of opportunity."* Situated on the west bank of the Providence River, its entire eastern border was industrial. The Steam Cotton Manufacturing Company, A. & W. Sprague cotton mill, Phenix Iron Foundry, Fox Point Iron Works, American Screw Company, Providence Rubber Company, and the Providence Gas Company occupied most of the dock space. On adjacent streets and ways, the Irish clustered in their dingy quarters. Many of the poorer immigrants sought houses within walking distance of their fifteen-hours work at mill or wharf. If manufacturing did not supply enough work, laborers could find intermittent employment on the piers, unloading coal or cotton. Other establishments were scattered throughout the ward. Jewellers, blacksmiths, carpenters, hostlers, grocers, and liquor dealers supplied items to the residents and employed some of them.

With the help of manuscript censuses of Providence for 1850, 1860, and 1870, detailed information can be compiled about Irish-born inhabitants of the ward. These lists contain name, sex, place and date of birth, and, after 1850, amount of real and personal property of each resident, and can supply information on geographical, occupational, and property mobility which would otherwise be unobtainable.[21]

The census data indicate that in 1850 total population of the ward was 7,299, making 1,394 family units. A decade later, the number had increased by five per cent to 7,700 and by 1870 to 8,100. In the middle decade the ward had the highest number of persons per house, 8.94, and the largest number of families per house, 1.82, in the city. Crowded conditions no doubt directly reflect large numbers of Irish residents, since many native inhabitants lived in single family houses.

[19] Greene, 158-159.

[20] Larry Anthony Rand, "Know-Nothing Party in Rhode Island: Religious Bigotry and Political Success," *Rhode Island History* 23:4 (October 1964) 111.

[21] The three manuscript censuses (RIHS Library) used in the analysis presented various problems. First, since the study would consider only one ward in the city, any attempt to delineate geographical mobility would be marred by internal city migration. To overcome this obstacle Providence Directories for 1860 and 1870 were consulted. Wherever there was a question of duplication of names and occupations, the name was accepted so as to produce a conservative estimate. Directories are the only source of their kind available but they do have one shortcoming: not all persons and especially not laborers are listed. Therefore, where some similarity existed the correlation was accepted. Second, when inter-census groups were assembled a majority of the ages did not come within a 9-, 10-, or 11-year span. Therefore, the wife and children of the immigrant were checked to validate the individual's identity. In some cases young immigrants lived in a boarding house and this method was impossible.

Therefore the figure for families per house is somewhat distorted, as the average number of Irish per dwelling would be higher.

Immigrants born in Ireland made up about twenty-eight per cent of the total population of the Fifth Ward from 1850 to 1870 — a figure generally typical of the ratio of Irish to non-Irish throughout the city. In numbers, the 1,754 Irish in 1850 increased to about 2,000 by 1870. The small increase is in keeping with the slow rise of the total population of the district and implies that it was heavily populated at mid-century.

Of the 531 Irish males who lived in the ward in 1850, only one-quarter were still living in the entire city a decade later. In 1870, only thirty-one per cent of those who first appeared in 1860 had not moved away. The same ratios are basically true for all occupational groups. It is difficult to isolate the reasons why so many immigrants moved. It seems that, whatever the financial position of the Irishman, once he had left his homeland and crossed the Atlantic he was not adverse to moving again when he found that he did not succeed as rapidly as expected.

The most striking example of geographical mobility of the Irish is that only twenty-four per cent of those who remained in 1860 were present a decade later. Even after successful men like Michael McMannis had labored for ten years and had managed to accumulate $100, unknown circumstances caused them to leave the state. One would have expected community persistence to increase because those individuals who had established themselves should have a stake in maintaining their position. The rate however, decreased more than ten per cent. To analyze mobility patterns of the settled minority therefore neglects approximately three-fourths of all the Irish who passed through the ward.

Types of information available in the census materials allow the historian to analyze *"the way individuals alter their social position"* or what is commonly called social mobility.[22] Occupations provide a useful though by no means complete key to income level and prestige of a worker. When they are compiled for all members of a particular group they indicate the general occupational level of the group.

The study of occupational mobility assumes a hierarchy of jobs. For the purposes of this study four categories were established, those of laborer, semi-skilled, skilled, and non-manual. In the highest category, non-manual, annual income was at least double that of the average laborer.[23] Occupations considered non-manual were grocers, liquor dealers, merchant tailors, and stable-keepers. Skilled workers had trades which gave them high, relatively dependable incomes. Masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, and machinists are included as members of this group. Factory operatives and teamsters were considered semi-skilled, and all those designated laborer were placed in the lowest group, for they had no specialization.

These labels can be deceptive, because often the semi-skilled and the skilled immigrant performed menial tasks connected with their specialty. The Irish of Providence seemed to follow the same pattern as Boston's immigrants. Many were servants, drivers, hostlers, and stablers; few owned the places where they worked. There were numerous carpenters, blacksmiths, and tailors on the census list, but most in these categories were apprentices.

Those few who reached the non-manual group did so by supplying their fellow countrymen with goods. *"Where they relied on the patronage of their compatriots, they prospered."*[24] Peddlers,

If the name did not appear in directories for the first entry it was dropped. Third, deaths were listed in the beginning of the report for the Fifth Ward but the records were incomplete. The percentage was about 1.5 per cent for the total population of the ward and most were children. Therefore deaths were excluded from the study. Fourth, only intra-generational mobility could be considered. It was impossible in many cases to differentiate between sisters and wives and siblings and children. Ages, particularly for the crucial 1850 census, were often too close together to be offspring. Possibly this means that younger, stronger Irish immigrated without their parents.

[22] Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964) 83. This essay owes much to Thernstrom's approach and suggestions.

[23] Thernstrom, 91.

[24] Handlin, 64-65.

boarding house and hotel managers, and especially grocers dealt with their friends and were trusted by them. Thomas Welch and Thomas Cosgrove, two dry goods merchants, amassed the largest Irish fortunes. One luxury the immigrant wanted, liquor, was amply supplied by his more affluent fellows. The fifteen dealers who distributed the commodity in the ward were very prosperous.

Thomas Welch, twenty-one in 1850, was a cigar maker. Ten years later he operated a dry goods store and was worth $10,000. By 1870 he owned the store and had a combined personal and real estate value of $28,000. Developing from a skilled workman at a very early age, Welch accumulated the largest amount of money of any Irishman who remained in the ward for the entire period of 1850 to 1870.

Patrick Cuddy, laborer both in 1850 and 1860, had acquired $400 of personal estate ten years after his first appearance on the census taker's page. By the end of the period he was a silversmith with a total value of $800. John Bly, thirty-two-year-old liquor dealer, first noted in the census of 1860, at that time owned $2,500 of real estate and had a total value of $10,500. Ten years later he was the richest Irishman in the ward with an estate of $110,000. These three men demonstrated to their fellow countrymen that it was possible to prosper in Providence.

There were only eighteen Irishmen who remained in the ward throughout the entire period, and it is instructive to examine the positions they held to see how successful they were.

Table 1 analyzes all Irishmen who stayed for two decades. Ten began and ended as laborers, but the decline over twenty years was almost twenty per cent. The gain of twenty-two per cent was not in the two other manual categories, but in the white-collar occupations which served the immigrant. The stability of the semi-skilled and skilled groups was the result of two workers falling into the laborer category, while several of their countrymen climbed into the ranks of the skilled. It should be pointed out that it is possible that the laborer who remained in the ward for twenty

Table 1. OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF THOSE WHO REMAINED FROM 1850 TO 1870

Year	Unskilled		Semi-skilled		Skilled		Non-manual		Total
		No.		No.		No.		No.	
1850	72 %	13	17%	3	11%	2	0%	0	18
1860	66⅔%	12	17%	3	7%	1	11%	2	18
1870	55%	10	17%	3	7%	1	22%	4	18

years had a permanent position and that transient immigrants listed as laborers merely did any work they could find. At any rate it is surprising even by 1870 to have more than half of the two-decade residents still in unskilled positions. Job security, coupled with ethnic discrimination, undoubtedly contributed to stability of this group.

Larger groups of Irish remained in the ward at least a decade. Table 2 indicates the lack of success which laborers in each ten-year category had in moving up the occupational hierarchy.

Of all the laborers who remained in the ward through the first decade, a majority (sixty-six per cent) remained unskilled through 1860, while one-quarter moved into semi-skilled occupations.[25]

Table 2. MOBILITY OF LABORERS IN TWO CENSUS GROUPS

Decade	Laborer	Laborer Semi-skilled	Laborer Skilled	Laborer White-Collar	Number in Sample
1850-60	64%	26%	6%	4%	50
1860-70	77%	15%	3.5%	3.5%	57

Although these figures seem to suggest that a good number of Irish were upwardly mobile, the totals for the next intercensual group indicate that there was at least a minor trend toward a drop in mobility.

Seven out of every ten Irish laborers who remained in the ward for ten years did not move beyond doing the most menial tasks.[26] As Table 3 shows the semi-skilled were even less successful in moving up. Many actually declined in status,

[25] For the same group of laborers in Newburyport, the percentages were 72 unskilled, 8 semi-skilled, 14 skilled and 6 non-manual (Thernstrom, 100). Irish in Providence seem to have been more confined in the city than did foreign-born workmen in the smaller urban area.

Table 3. MOBILITY OF SEMI-SKILLED IN TWO CENSUS GROUPS

Decade	Semi-skilled Laborer		Semi-skilled Semi-skilled		Semi-skilled Skilled		Number in Sample
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1850-60	1	9	8	73	2	18.1	11
1860-70	7	33	10	48.6	4	19	21

proving that the step forward was more difficult than the fall backwards. Other explanations of these figures must explore the possibility that hierarchical concepts of status did not motivate these men as much as did a sense of security in their work and contentment with their improved economic lot.

Now that laborers and semi-skilled have been discussed separately, the occupation of all those who remained can be studied. In 1860, fifty-seven Irishmen remained in the ward of the 531 who were present at mid-century. Of these, a large number were operatives and one in five worked at a trade. Table 4 shows the changes which took place.

Table 4. OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF 1850 TO 1860 AND 1860 TO 1870

Year	Unksilled		Semi-skilled		Skilled		Non-manual		Total
1850-60		No.		No.		No.		No.	
1850	74%	42	16%	8	10%	7	0%	0	57
1860	51%	29	25%	14	19%	11	5%	3	57
1860-70									
1860	60%	42	20%	14	11%	9	9%	7	72
1870	55%	41	15%	11	17%	12	13%	8	72

The 1850-60 group gradually improved their status, but still three-fourths did not reach skilled positions. Not only did the twenty-five per cent who improved their job level leave, but also the seventy-five per cent who remained relatively static left by 1870. The Irish who first appeared in 1860 seemed to have had less success changing their occupations than did those who came in 1850. Although there is a small increase in white-collar jobs, it is still so small that it indicates much of the hiring was directed by American-born businessmen.

One striking discovery comes from an analysis of Tables 2, 3, and 4. Although there were a large number of factories in the ward, the majority of immigrants did not work in them. It appears that even when the opportunity for change was seemingly available, most Irishmen remained unskilled. This phenomenon is probably a reflection of anti-Irish feeling complicated by willingness of many native city workers to take semi-skilled positions in factories. It strongly suggests that the immigrant residents of this highly industrialized area did not provide the backbone of the area's production. Indications are that it was difficult for the immigrant to change his occupational status. But there was a different kind of mobility — property mobility — which was a major determinant in whether or not an Irishman would settle in the ward.

This third type of movement transcends occupational limitations and establishes another scale. If a laborer set his family to work he could accumulate a cash reserve. This added security and increased borrowing power could allow him to purchase a house or at least to furnish his quarters. Patrick Muldoon recorded $500 in personal estate and $400 in real estate in the 1860 census. One unskilled Irishman accumulated a combined value of $6,300. Increases of property meant *"movement from the property-less segment of the working class to the strata of workmen who possessed a Stake in Society."*[27] Since the immigrant believed property ownership was within his reach even while poor, accumulating a small amount, after years of saving, became a reality for many of the Irish of the Fifth Ward in 1870. If this constitutes a type of success, then success was finally a reality.

What was the amount and type of this gain for the Irish workers of the period? Since the mid-century census taker did not record any amount in the property column of his tables, no information

[26] The following chart shows how similar were laborers in Providence and Newburyport 1860-1870—

	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Non-Manual
Providence	80	10	5	5
Newburyport	74	12	8	5

[27] Thernstrom, 115.

Table 5. PROPERTY OWNED BY LABORERS LIVING IN THE FIFTH WARD 1860 AND 1870

Laborers in 1860 vs. Laborers Who Remained of the 1850 Census Group

	Total	Property Holders		Value				
		No.	%	Under $201	$201 -501	$501 -901	$901 Plus	Median
Personal Property								
All laborers 1860	298	12	4	66⅔%	33⅓%	0	0	$ 200
Remained 1850-60	73	7	10	57%	43%	0	0	$ 150
Real Property								
All laborers 1860	298	18	6	28%	28%	0	44%	$ 400
Remained 1850-60	73	5	7	0	40%	20%	40%	$ 850

Laborers 1870 vs. Laborers Who Remained 1860-70

	Total	Property Holders		Value				
		No.	%	Under $201	$201 -501	$501 -901	$901 Plus	Median
Personal Property								
All laborers 1870	350	159	43	86%	7%	4%	4%	$ 100
Remained 1860-70	50	44	80	84%	8%	8%	0%	$ 150
Real Property								
All laborers 1870	350	14	4	7%	21%	7%	65%	$1,000
Remained 1860-70	50	5	10	0	20%	0%	80%	$2,000

is available until the 1860 census. In 1860, the laborers, as did all occupational groups, had more personal than real property.[28] When the property holdings of all laborers are compared with those of laborers who remained from 1860 to 1870 (Table 5) the reason for the increased persistence is obvious; they had more at stake, and were amassing small but significant caches.

In 1860 approximately one-tenth of both groups of laborers held property of any type. The only distinction was in the median value of the real property holdings which was $450 higher for those who remained. In the following census both groups increased in percentage holding both kinds of property. Less than half of the laborers in 1870 had personal property (forty-three per cent), and the ratio of real property holders declined two per cent (six to four). The laborers who remained had accumulated enough personal property in the preceding years so that four of every five members of the group valued their holdings at $150. Although few had purchased homes, the value of their real estate was twice that of the average laborer. The distinction is clear — only one-tenth

[28] Newburyport study gives only cumulative figures for both personal and real property. This seems to be a major fault with the analysis because if Fifth Ward Irish are at all representative personal property was the more important category.

[29] More of Newburyport's laborers in 1860 held a small amount of real estate. The percentage was 11 and median holding $700, compared with 7 per cent and $850 for Irish in Providence. In 1870, however, nearly one-half of Newburyport unskilled owned real property with a median value of $800, whereas in the Fifth Ward only one in ten had any real estate and the median was $2,000.

of unskilled Irish owned real estate, but four times as many laborers who remained had real property, and eight times as many accumulated personal holdings.[29] The laborer was slowly moving into the ranks of the property holders.

This information leads to one of the most interesting and unexpected conclusions of the study. Since the Fifth Ward did not contain inexpensive real estate which the Irish could purchase, they did not despair and save nothing. They managed to save for a much less tangible and more distant goal by collecting personal property.

Property holdings also explain the persistence of workers in all occupations who lived in the ward the entire twenty years. Significantly, in every category their property was higher. Nearly one-fifth entered an average personal estate of $400 in 1860. When both kinds of holdings were included, twenty-two per cent had a median value of $2,000. By the second census, these immigrants had amassed sufficient wealth to protect and increase in the following ten years. In 1870 nearly all of them (eighty-nine per cent) possessed personal property, and one-third held a median real estate value of $4,000. These men had become firmly entrenched in the district, and many of their fellows had significant combined estates.

The same prosperity was true of all Irish who stayed in the ward from 1860 to 1870 (Table 6).

Each median is more than the corresponding figure for the laborer groups who remained in the ward for at least ten years and less than the two-decade group. Many of the individuals owned combined property in 1870 worth $200. This was a vast improvement over the preceding years. The Irish of all occupations were earning more and saving more. One-fifth owned their own houses, and all who did listed a personal estate of at least $200.

In the twenty years of this study the Irish immigrants who remained experienced gradual stability. The Irish had in many senses been unsuccessful as a group in increasing their occupational status. Perhaps the reason is that this type of status is relative to other groups in society. This type of mobility was not only harder to come by but less important to the immigrant community. The correlation between property holdings and permanence in the ward suggests relative prosperity within the group is a more valuable scale.

Table 6. PROPERTY MOBILITY OF THOSE WHO REMAINED, 1860-1870

Year	Total	Property Holders		Value				
		No.	%	Under $201	$201 -501	$501 -901	$901 plus	Median
Personal								
1860	72	9	12.5	22%	22%	11%	45%	$1,000
1870	72	60	82	66⅔%	23%	0%	11%	$ 200
Real								
1860	72	10	14	0%	10%	20%	70%	$1,500
1870	72	14	19	0%	0%	0%	100%	$3,000
Combined								
1860	72	14	19	14%	7%	7%	72%	$1,800
1870	72	63	85	63%	11%	2%	24%	$ 200

Instead of enjoying the highest occupational mobility, the immigrants endured one of the lowest. Instead of forming a permanent urban proletariat, they underwent extensive geographical mobility. The typical Irish-born worker who came to Providence did not stay; the typical immigrant who stayed remained unskilled or at best moved up one occupational level. But the immigrant did successfully accumulate property which might sometime in the future allow him to fulfill his readjusted dream of what America was.

Irish-born Patrick Goodwin made his first appearance in the Fifth Ward in 1858 according to the directory. By 1870 he was advertising in its pages.

The Rhode Island Historical Society

One Hundred Fifty-first Annual Meeting

The one hundred fifty-first annual meeting held in Barus-Holley Building of Brown University on 28 January 1973 was called to order at 3:35 p.m. with Joseph K. Ott, president, in the chair.

Albert T. Klyberg, director, called to New York by the death of his father-in-law, was unable to be present.

Minutes of the 1972 annual meeting were accepted as printed in *Rhode Island History* 31:2 & 3 (May and August 1972).

Townes M. Harris, Jr., treasurer, reported a deficit of $50,582 adjusted to approximately $35,000 under the principle of total return. He noted that the figures in 1971 were $27,484 and $22,126. His report was accepted as read.

The president announced that in view of such deficits the Society would have to adopt a policy of annual giving and that further plans for such would be outlined in the future.

The nominating committee's report given by Leonard J. Panaggio, chairman, was unchanged from the form printed and circulated to the membership and, there being no nominations from the floor, the secretary was authorized to cast one ballot for the officers presented, who were declared elected.

Mr. Ott thanked Mrs. Norman T. Bolles, Bayard Ewing, and Walter R. Martin — retiring members of the Executive Board — for their services.

Amendments to the by-laws — printed and circulated to the membership in the call for the meeting — were approved by voice vote.

It is hereby proposed that the constitution of the Society be amended as follows:

Article VII, entitled Executive Board, to read: Sec. 1. There shall be an Executive Board which shall consist of the officers of the Society, and the Chairman of each of the Standing Committees, the State Librarian and if desired by the Board, it may elect members-at-large in any year not exceeding six in number [formerly three in number].

The Executive Board shall control the disposition of any objects of the Society, whether by sale, trade, or, in the case of major objects, loans, after the appropriate Standing Committee shall have referred its decision to the Board.

The Board shall also have to ratify the decisions of any standing or advisory committee that alter or improve either the exterior or interior of any buildings of the Society, or affect the tangible property of the Society in any way [two new sentences]. The balance to Article VII to remain as is.

Article VIII, entitled Standing Committees, to read: Sec. 2. Each of these Committees shall consist of no less than five nor more than seven members [formerly five members] with the exception of the Audit Committee which shall consist of three members chosen at the annual meeting of the Society in each year to serve until the next annual meeting or until their successors are chosen. The balance of Article VIII to remain as is.

The purpose of these changes is essentially to enable more members of the Society to take part in its affairs.

Mr. Ott announced acquisition of title to two lots and the buildings thereon which adjoin the Society's library on the south and face on Hope Street. The Society has a chance to obtain a grant of $15,000 from National Endowment on the Arts to publish a catalogue of our painting collection if we will match that amount, and we would also be eligible for a challenge grant of $25,000 from National Park Service for restoration of the exterior of John Brown House. Since both federal grants must be matched, they provide another reason for a fund-raising effort.

With unexpected profits from the anniversary ball, we were able to buy a silver tankard given to Sarah Brown (Mrs. John Brown) before her marriage — a notable addition to our collections.

The Executive Board established an honorary fellowship and named Carl Bridenbaugh its first recipient. In addition to the title Honorary Fellow of the Rhode Island Historical Society, the recipient is invited to lecture on a subject of his own choice.

Nancy E. Peace, librarian, reported that more than 6,000 persons used the library during the year, nearly 900 of them for the first time. She said that the reference librarian — Nancy F. Chudacoff — in addition to helping many of these visitors, answered 682 letters and 2,500 telephone calls, and *"in her spare moments managed to compile five bibliographies, a chronological index to Rhode Island newspapers, and a fire emergency plan."*

Miss Peace noted that Nathaniel N. Shipton, curator of manuscripts, reported fifty-seven new manuscript collections during the year, thirty-eight of them as gifts. Unquestionably the finest addition was the papers of Henry Marchant. Other important acquisitions — papers of Henry B. Dexter and George H. Clark — records of the engineer in charge of buildings at Quonset Point and Davisville from 1940 to 1946 — papers of Mary E. S. Root, first professional children's librarian in the Providence Public Library — records of the Rhode Island Board of Education from 1909 to 1930 — records of the Grosvenor Dale Company and of the Governor Dyer Market Garden Association — and an illuminated manuscript genealogy of the Hoppin Family, 1575-1972.

The Society purchased records of Sixth District Court 1876-1936; Providence police records of prohibition enforcement 1922-1932; papers of the Carr Family of Newport,

Carl Bridenbaugh, Honorary Fellow of the Society.

Photograph courtesy Brown University.

1666-1848; and records of Roger Williams Foundry and Machine Co.

Outstanding results of reorganizing collections already in the library were discovery of papers of Aaron Lopez in exile from Newport during the Revolutionary War and of papers of General Joseph Dwight, commander of the Massachusetts frontier during King George's War. The librarian noted that nearly 280 boxes of manuscripts were placed on the shelves during the year and that Mr. Shipton had been greatly aided in this work by Miss Irene Eddy, a volunteer for the second year.

The Society added 537 volumes during the year, seventy of them genealogies. Weeding out duplicate copies and general historical works of no special interest and selling these at public auction raised $8,000 for the library book fund. More than half the collection of books purchased from the Shepley estate in 1939 has now been processed, and the project should be completed in the coming months to make possible continuance of the re-cataloging program.

The librarian added that since termination of the grant from National Endowment for the Humanities for the Society's newsfilm archives project, Deborah D. Richardson has continued to work on the collection on a one-day-a-week basis.

Miss Peace also read the report of Susan G. Ferguson, acting curator of John Brown House, who noted that nearly 2,000 tourists from all parts of the country had visited the house during 1972, that John Brown's two camel-back sofas had been re-upholstered, and that five oil paintings, five prints, and twenty-five watercolors had been cleaned and repaired.

Richard K. Showman, editor of the Nathanael Greene Papers, gave an interesting and informative account of that project, and Mrs. Richardson introduced a program of films put together from materials in the Society's film archive.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
BRADFORD F. SWAN,
Secretary

Necrology 1972

Miss Mittie Arnold
Mr. Henry C. Aylsworth
Mr. C. Tracy Barnes
Mrs. H. P. Beck
Mr. Sidney R. Bellows
Miss Alice Brayton
Mrs. David A. Brayton
Mrs. Edward J. Capuano
Mr. E. Leonard Chaset
Mr. Allen H. Chatterton
Mr. Clarkson A. Collins 3rd
Rev. Cornelius B. Collins
Mrs. Arthur T. Costigan
Mr. Henry B. Cross
Miss Ruth Marie Field
Mr. Clarke Freeman
Mr. G. Ellsworth Gale, Jr.
Miss Alberta P. Gauvigan
Mrs. Louis C. Gerry
Mr. James D. Graham
Mrs. H. Towle Greenhalgh
Mr. Russell Grinnell III
Mr. William Grosvenor
Mrs. Robert W. Hathaway, Jr.
Mr. L. Francis Herreshoff
Mr. Charles W. Hill
Mrs. Frank L. Hinckley
Mr. Forrest R. Holdcamper
Mr. Louis H. C. Huntoon
Miss Mary Keefe
Mrs. A. Livingston Kelley
Mrs. Raymond F. Kozen
Mr. Arthur J. Levy
Mr. Edmund C. Mayo
Mr. Alfred Hudson Morse
Miss Dorothy Murphy
Mr. George Nelson
Mrs. Ralph C. Patton
Mr. William H. Plummer, Jr.
Mrs. Oliver G. Pratt
Mr. William G. Richards
Mr. Jay Francis Shiel
Mrs. Ralph W. Shuman
Mr. T. Everett Starrett
Mrs. Henry A. Stearns
Mr. Edward Field Walker
Mrs. Maurice A. Wolf

Statement of General Fund — Revenues and Expenses
Year ended June 30, 1972

REVENUES:			
Dues		$ 25,970.50	
Contributions:			
General	$ 32.00		
Corporate	325.00	357.00	
State of Rhode Island		21,000.00	
City of Providence		2,000.00	
Patriotic societies		310.00	
Admission income		1,268.75	
Outside services		2,969.59	
Miscellaneous		336.02	
Transfers from other funds for current operations:			
Consolidated endowment income	42,479.39		
Restricted funds	1,990.73		
General Fund — allocated surplus	110,590.29	155,060.41	
TOTAL REVENUES			$209,272.27

EXPENSES:		
Salaries	72,717.47	
Pension	9,380.32	
Social security taxes	4,472.41	
Director's discretionary fund	503.01	
Supplies	1,616.42	
Telephone	2,318.33	
Promotion	1,329.30	
Membership	3,925.90	
Library	2,221.01	
Investment fees	3,440.82	
Museum	1,000.00	
Lectures	943.85	
Publications	12,614.39	
Heat, light, and housekeeping	5,773.44	
Grounds	5,039.55	
Buildings	3,792.33	
Insurance	2,712.30	
Group insurance and Blue Cross	2,726.78	
Microfilm	500.00	
Outside services	4,175.72	
Professional fees	4,250.00	
Miscellaneous	1,044.21	
Equipment	2,766.89	
Special projects — General Fund allocated surplus	110,590.29	
TOTAL EXPENSES		259,854.74
EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER REVENUES		($ 50,582.47)

BEQUESTS are a way of making continuing support for the Society possible. In so doing one honors not only the past, but the future and oneself as well.

The following suggested form may be used for a general bequest:

I give and bequeath to The Rhode Island Historical Society, a Rhode Island charitable corporation with offices at 52 Power Street, Providence, Rhode Island, the sum of Dollars (and/or the securities or other properties described herein, namely,), to be used for general purposes.

Officers and Committee Members
elected at the 151st Annual Meeting to serve
until the Annual Meeting in 1974

Joseph K. Ott, *president*
George C. Davis, *vice president*
Duncan Hunter Mauran,
vice president
Bradford F. Swan, *secretary*
Thomas R. Adams,
assistant secretary
Townes M. Harris, Jr., *treasurer*
Lawrence Lanpher,
assistant treasurer

FINANCE
John W. Wall, *chairman*
Foster B. Davis, Jr.
Michael A. Gammino, Jr.
Clarke Simonds
Charles C. Horton

GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS
Clifford S. Gustafson, *chairman*
H. Cushman Anthony
Harold Ingram, Jr.
Thomas M. Sneddon
Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe
Mrs. Norman T. Bolles

JOHN BROWN HOUSE
Mrs. George E. Downing, *chairman*
Winslow Ames
Mrs. John A. Gwynne
Norman Herreshoff
Frank Mauran, III
John Nicholas Brown, *ex officio*

LECTURE
Patrick T. Conley, *chairman*
Dr. Marguerite Appleton
Richard B. Harrington
Mrs. Clifford P. Monahon
Leonard J. Panaggio

MEMBERSHIP
E. Andrew Mowbray, *chairman*
Henry A. L. Brown
Mrs. S. Bradford Tingley
Walter R. Martin
Theodore F. Low

MUSEUM
Mrs. Peter J. Westervelt, *chairman*
Winslow Ames
Norman Herreshoff
Joseph K. Ott

PUBLICATIONS
Stuart C. Sherman, *chairman*
Henry L. P. Beckwith, Jr.
Mrs. Philip Davis
Wendell Garrett
Norman W. Smith
Joel A. Cohen, *ex officio*

LIBRARY
Malcolm G. Chace, III, *chairman*
Mrs. Robert M. Sherman
Albert E. Lownes
Franklin S. Coyle
Matthew J. Smith

AUDIT
Donald W. Nelson, *chairman*
Dennis E. Stark
Robert H. Goff

The Executive Board is composed of the officers; chairmen of the standing committees; members at large: Norman T. Bolles, John Simmen; the director; and Elliott E. Andrews, state librarian, *ex officio*.