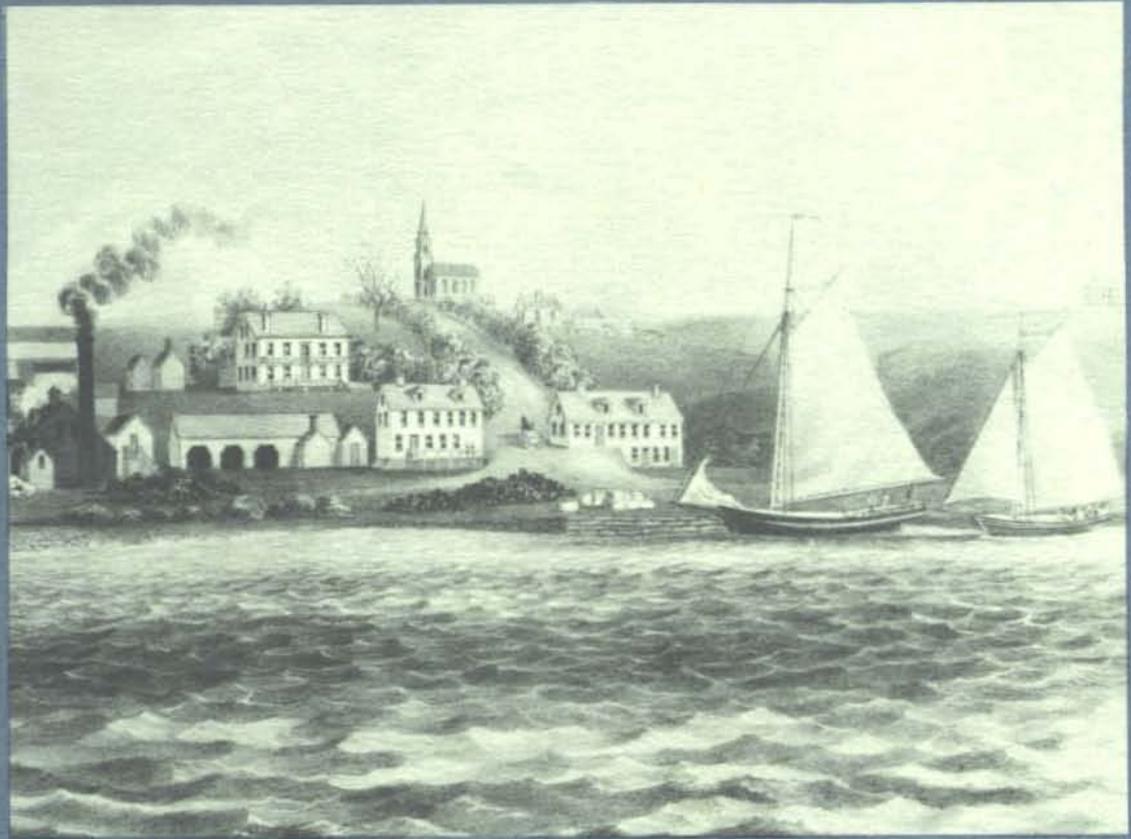




# Rhode Island History

Volume 43, Number 3 August 1984





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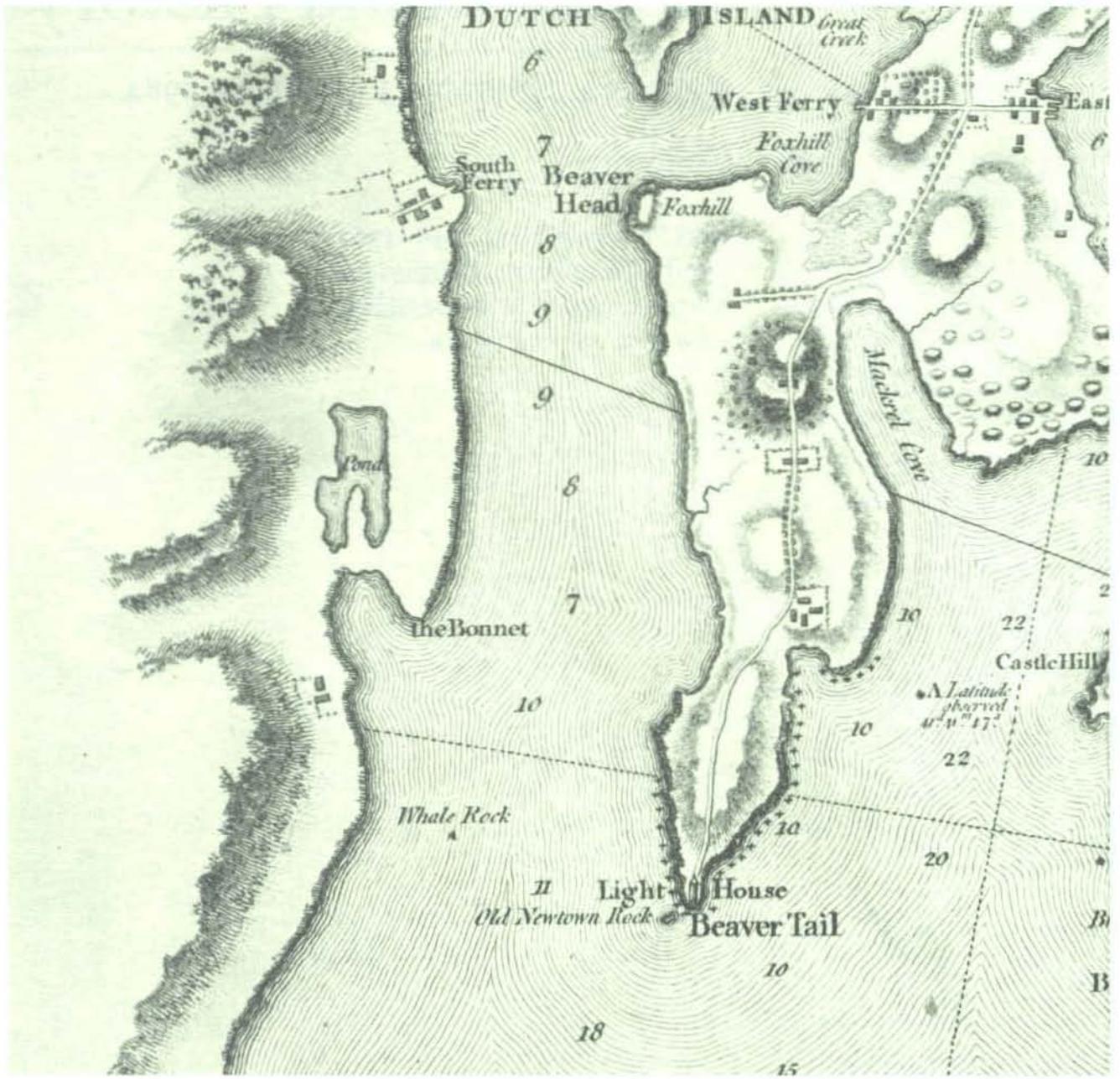
# Rhode Island History

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## Contents

Jeffry Watson's Diary, 1740-1784:  
Family, Community, Religion and  
Politics in Colonial Rhode Island  
EDWARD M. COOK, JR.

79



# Jeffry Watson's Diary, 1740-1784: Family, Community, Religion and Politics in Colonial Rhode Island

Edward M. Cook, Jr.

From its beginning colonial Rhode Island has had the reputation of embodying social conditions that differed sharply from those in neighboring colonies of New England. Its early espousal of religious freedom meant that publicly supported churches could not develop as a central focus for local communities. Its politics, after emerging from the state of virtual anarchy that preceded the chartering of the colony, soon developed a factionalized character that made the state a by-word for partisan strife during the later eighteenth century. Its small size and the sparseness of its resources, especially in the rural towns, suggested an egalitarian society that lacked much of the wealth and social diversity of its larger and richer neighbors. What these aggregate characteristics fail to make clear, however, is how the patterns of local life in Rhode Island differed from those elsewhere in New England. How did Rhode Islanders express their religious feelings without the publicly supported framework that most colonials expected? How did political partisanship, so divisive at the state level, affect local relationships? And finally, what mechanisms did local societies, lacking unifying influences of common churches and common lands, evolve to give structure and coherence to the desires of their members for sociability and collective action?

In answer to all three questions, a diary kept by Jeffry Watson of South Kingstown from 1741 to 1744, and intermittently thereafter until his death in 1784, provides important clues. The diary went through three phases. The early phase recorded Watson's activities on a daily basis and is the richest, providing a wide variety of observations on the life of Watson's family and on the social dynamics of his neighborhood. During the second phase from 1746 until about 1761 the diary takes the form of a journal of remarkable occurrences with notes on public affairs and on Watson's practice of religion largely supplanting the narrative of local activities. After 1761 the diary shifts abruptly into a record of local deaths with only an occasional entry to suggest its earlier concerns.

Jeffry Watson, the diarist, was born August 3, 1712, the second son and fourth recorded child of John and Hannah Watson.<sup>1</sup> John was a prominent man in the public affairs of South Kingstown, and was a

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1. Genealogical information is largely drawn from Caroline E. Robinson, *The Gardeners of Narragansett* (Providence, 1919), from Carder Henry Whalley's type-written "Watson Genealogy" at the Rhode Island Historical Society, and from notes in the diary itself.

*Detail from a "Chart of the Bay of Narragansett," by Charles Blaskowitz, 1777, showing the location of South Ferry in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4898).*

2. The Pettaquamscot Purchase included most of the later town of South Kingstown, as well as parts of North Kingstown and Exeter. The lands John Watson gave to Jeffrey can be traced in South Kingstown Land Evidences, 3:582, 4:344, 6:78, Town Clerk's Office, South Kingstown, R.I.

3. John O. Austin, *Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island*, rev. ed. (Baltimore, 1969), 183-184, 217; Anna Augusta and Charles V. Chapin, *A History of Rhode Island Ferries, 1640-1923* (Providence, 1925), 250-275.

4. Watson's children and their spouses are listed in his Family Memorandum at the back of the diary [see pp. 112-116, below]. Most are also mentioned in the daily entries.

man of great landed wealth through his mother Dorcas Gardner Watson who had been an heir to John Porter, a partner in the Pettaquamscot Purchase of 1659. Jeffrey's share in this patrimony was a farm of 300 acres near MacSparren Hill in the northern part of South Kingstown deeded to him in four installments between 1733 and 1757.<sup>2</sup> During much of the period covered by the diary, however, Jeffrey rented out this farm (he refers to it as "t'other place") and lived at the "Ferry Farm" at South Ferry, which he managed for several years. His connection with the Ferry was a natural outgrowth of his marriage in 1732 to Bathsheba Smith. Bathsheba was the granddaughter of John Smith of Prudence Island, who in partnership with his brother Jeremiah, had purchased 661½ acres in Boston Neck and the adjacent ferry from FitzJohn Winthrop. By 1741 Bathsheba's father, also John Smith, owned the northern half of the land and his father's half interest in the ferry, while Jeremiah's southern share had been divided between his sons Ephraim and Ebenezer.<sup>3</sup>

The diary is quite revealing about Watson's family life and about the larger kin network that encompassed his social activities and dominated the neighborhood. Indeed, during the years when the diary is fullest Jeffrey's dealings with neighbors and business contacts dominate the entries. This focus clearly reflects his status as a household head. In the early modern conception of the family, dealings with the larger society were preeminently the province of the husband and father, while the internal management of the household was more properly the sphere of the wife and mother. Jeffrey observed this division by saying little about his immediate domestic life. That Watson's family excited strong emotions in him is clear from his moving eulogy to his daughter, Dorcas (September 11, 1741), and from his obvious estrangement from his son Jeffrey (January 30, 1757 and March 24, 1757). But in his mind immediate family affairs were not the proper subjects for regular treatment in a man's diary.

Involvement in extended family and community affairs was the appropriate focus. Of his six siblings living in 1741, five (or their spouses) figure prominently in the diary. These were his only brother John Watson, Jr., "brothers" Ezekiel Gardner, Benjamin Allen, and John Lillibridge, and his younger sister Freelove, or "Filly." All lived in the northeastern part of South Kingstown and within easy visiting distance. Among other kin were "Esquire" John Sweet, brother-in-law of "brother" Ezekiel Gardner, father-in-law John Smith and his son William, justices Ephraim and Henry Gardner, and cousin William Gardner. Relations with the Gardner clan were intimate and complex, having their origin in the close association of Jeffrey's grandfather, John Watson, with his Gardner in-laws, and receiving reinforcement through new marriages in each generation. Four of Jeffrey's six children who are known to have married, married Gardners.<sup>4</sup> During the part of 1741 when he recorded social calls most consistently, Jeffrey visited or dined with such intimates as Ezekiel Gardner, John Lillibridge, John Sweet, and his father and his brother John on almost a weekly basis,



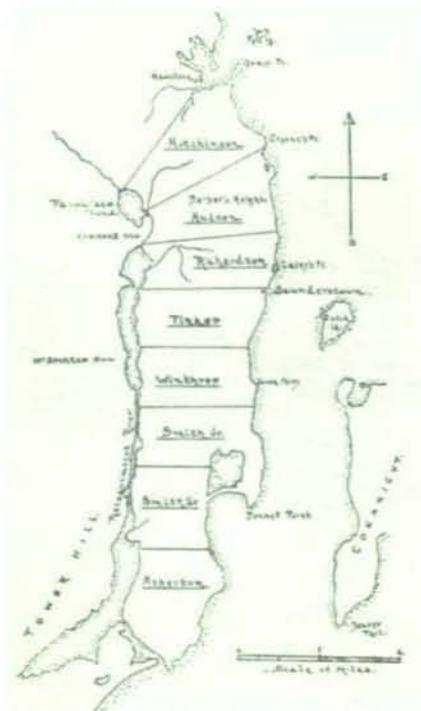
*"Narragansett Village, South Ferry, South Kingstown, Rhode Island," a nineteenth-century lithograph by J. D. Newell. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4898).*

besides recruiting them to help with tasks such as witnessing documents and surveying. To maintain such a pace, he dined with company or away from home as often as four times a week. By contrast, his socializing with non-kin was far less intense. The only unrelated person with whom he visited more than twice was Squire Daniel Coggeshall of North Kingstown, although the neighborhood contained a number of families of suitable social status. Most dealings with non-relatives were on a business basis.

Watson was able to maintain such a visiting schedule because his circumstances freed him from the necessity of working for a living. In deeds and other documents he consistently described himself as a "yeoman," as did many Rhode Islanders of similar means, but by most eighteenth-century standards his situation was that of a gentleman. Genealogical notes at the back of the diary list the births of six slave children born between 1748 and 1758, and in the 1774 census the Watson household included six blacks as well as Jeffry, Bathsheba, six unmarried children, two unidentified white boys, and an unidentified white woman. Throughout the diary, it is clear that when farm or ferry work was performed, Jeffry's efforts were largely supervisory. Thus on March 4, 1741, he stopped by the part of the farm "where my people was at work," and on many occasions he records sending his boat away on errands. Occasional entries do seem to record active involvement in haying and driving cattle from place to place, and he certainly never expressed distaste for farm work, as did his neighbor, the Reverend Mr. MacSparren.<sup>5</sup> But even these entries may record oversight rather than effort. In July 1741, for example, Watson and John Sweet went to the sawmill in Exeter, where they loaded a cart, then sent "them" away, and stayed behind to drink wine in a tavern.

The diary reveals clearly the lines of social inequality that gave structure to society even at the town level. Watson's high status was clear not just in the management of his farm, and in the unequal rela-

5. James MacSparren, *A Letter Book and Abstract of Out Services*, ed. Daniel Goodwin (Boston, 1899), 34. Dr. MacSparren was the Anglican minister at North Kingstown.



Map of Boston Neck, showing the division of lands in the seventeenth-century. From William Davis Miller, *A Brief Account of the William Withington Plat of Boston Neck* (Providence, 1924). Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4901).

6. Paper Money Mortgages, Vol. 1-8, Town Clerk's Office, South Kingstown. Smith mortgaged three parcels in 1731, 1733, and 1734, for a total of £442½. See South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:44, 4:144, 4:146, 4:156, 4:199, 4:229/329, 4:250/450, 4:350/550.

7. Rhode Island Petitions, 4:109, Rhode Island State Archives, Providence; Ebenezer Smith File, R. I. State Arch.; South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:144, 4:290, 4:293, 4:297, 4:197, 4:270, 4:272, 4:275.

tionships he experienced with a variety of workmen who performed services for him, but also in the status of the men with whom he enjoyed easy association. Several of the intimates with whom he casually rode around the countryside were justices or esquires, men of prestige. Watson could freely approach great men of the colony such as Colonel Daniel Updike of Wickford and Thomas Ward, secretary of the colony. A classic episode is Watson's facing down of "Mr." Francis Willett, former speaker of the General Assembly, who had given "himself the Liberty to Talk [disparagingly] about one that was no ways Inferior to him but Stood in Equal footing with him. My Dealing So plain with him he grew moderate and went home with Me" (March 30, 1741). Such instances illustrate not only how the rules of social decorum could limit the spread of contention, but also how general acceptance of the public standing of gentlemen could provide a means of integrating society at the colony level.

While records of social life and farm management reveal the bonds of family and social rank that bound society together, the remarkable account of Watson's land dealings with John Gardner and the Smiths shows a darker side to local life. Throughout the 1730s and 1740s the family of Ebenezer Smith, kinsman of Bathsheba Watson and part owners of the South Ferry, experienced hard times and slowly watched their once gentlemanly estate dwindle away. During the early 1730s, Ebenezer Smith Sr.—along with most of his neighbors—mortgaged parts of his estate to the colony in return for a share in the emissions of paper money, but unlike Jeffry Watson and other prosperous farmers, Smith found it difficult to repay the loans when they fell due. Perhaps he was having difficulty managing his farm; certainly a series of leases and deeds of gift to his sons, Ebenezer Jr. and Ephraim, between 1736 and 1739 reveal a desperate desire to induce them to remain at home. To make ends meet Smith not only borrowed from the colony, but mortgaged parcels of land to Watson, to John Gardner of Boston Neck, his wealthy neighbor to the south, and perhaps to Daniel Dawley, who was managing the farm to the north for Smith's minor nephew, Ephraim Smith.<sup>6</sup>

Watson and Gardner appear in the diary as greedy neighbors fighting for the spoils of the Smiths' estate. Their rivalry had begun as early as 1737, when the Smiths were forced to sell 27½ acres to Gardner, and 1739, when they sold sixteen acres and their share of the ferry to Watson. By spring 1741 the Smiths owed Watson more than £3,000, in addition to their debts to the colony and others, and the scramble for their land was on in earnest. The process was complicated by the revelation that the Smith estate was entailed under the will of Ebenezer's father, so that living members of the family had no power to mortgage or sell the land. The Smiths claimed that the entail had occurred inadvertently "by the Unskillfulness of the Scribe that wrote the Last Will & Testament of Jeremiah Smith," and that they had always thought they had clear title.<sup>7</sup> Whether or not that was true, their deeds were technically invalid, and the creditors struggled for control of the legal

process by which the entail might be "docked" and the Smiths empowered to grant new deeds that would cover their debts. The diary records frequent trips to Newport by Watson and Gardner to influence the course of Smith's petition through the General Assembly and the courts, and intensive efforts to persuade the Smiths to give preferential deeds to one party or the other. The whole affair took on the color of a local feud, with local notables such as Francis Willett and justices John Sweet and Daniel Coggeshall choosing sides.

In their desperation, the Smiths appear both scheming and feckless. Besides the affair of the entail, they altered dates to cloud the meaning of deeds, fell under the influence of some creditors and caballed to cheat others, and "hid" to avoid acknowledging their contracts. In June 1741, Ebenezer Smith (probably Jr.) was impressed for service on the colony's man-of-war, a sad predicament for a man whose estate would once have shielded him from such treatment. By 1742 Watson's prediction that "all they have will be Gone" (June 8, 1741) was confirmed when he witnessed Gardner's purchase of "all the Remaining part of [Smith's] home Stead farm" and Smith's plaintive insistence that there must be more land than Gardner would acknowledge (July 13, 1742). Events also bore out Watson's claim that Gardner would prove the more aggressive land seeker. Watson finally obtained 89 acres and the ferry from the Smiths, while Gardner gained the remaining 100 acres. Using similar methods, Gardner also swallowed most of the adjacent 189 acre farm of Ephraim Smith before 1754.<sup>8</sup>

The diary shows that as social ordering and family ties integrated society in the face of contention, a spirit of non-sectarian piety mitigated the divisive potential of religious fragmentation. During the eighteenth century, South Kingstown contained four main religious groups—Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers. In 1760, Ezra Stiles, the Newport minister and later president of Yale College, obtained a list of the affiliations of some 142 heads of families in the town, and the list shows that at least some patterns of contention followed sectarian lines.<sup>9</sup> In the dispute over the Smiths' lands, Stiles's list shows that Jeffry Watson, his father and brother, his father-in-law John Smith, and several of his Gardner kinsmen were Quakers, while his adversary John Gardner and his ally Willett were Anglicans. Other sources identify Watson's friend, Daniel Coggeshall, as a Quaker and Gardner's friend, Daniel Updike, as an Anglican. A more complex pattern of religious identities emerges from an examination of the proceedings of the South Kingstown Monthly Meeting of Friends.<sup>10</sup> In those records of membership and participation, Jeffry Watson and many others of Stiles's Quakers receive no mention. John Watson, Jr., is mentioned only for telling members of the meeting who visited him on the occasion of his daughter's wedding to a non-Quaker that he did not consider himself a Quaker. Jeffry Watson would have been open to the same objection in 1757 when his son Jeffry was married to his cousin Hannah by a Baptist elder (March 24, 1757). Clearly South Kingstown Quakers were divided between an orthodox inner group, and a large



*Samuel Ward (1725-1776), Governor of Rhode Island, and member of the Continental Congress. From Rhode Island Portraits, vol. I. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 628).*

8. South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:321/421, 4:247/447, 4:349/549, 4:227/327, 4:224/324, 4:260/360, 4:654/856, 5:209, 5:449, 5:522.

9. Ezra Stiles, *Extracts from the Itineraries*, ed. Franklin B. Dexter (New Haven, 1916), 9-11.

10. South Kingstown Monthly Meeting Records, R. I. Hist. Soc.

11. In addition, he attended services conducted by local "public friends," such as Samuel Aldrich, James Scriven, Robert Knowles, Patience Green, and "Carr."

12. Isaac Backus, *A History of New England, with Particular Reference to the ... Baptists*, 2 vols. (Newton, Mass., 1871), II, 105, 509-510; Richard Knight, *History of the General or Six Principle Baptists* (Providence, 1827), 267-278; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 2 vols. (reprint, Freeport, N.Y., 1971), II, 382-89; Historical Records Survey, *Inventory of the Church Archives of Rhode Island: Baptist* (Providence, 1941), 29, 34, 63, 70. Little is known about the remaining elder, Lawrence Albro, but his activity in North Kingstown, where Sprague's dismissal had left a Six Principle Church without preaching, makes it likely that he was a General Baptist.

group of nominal Quakers who took formal doctrine and strict discipline lightly.

That such institutionally detached Quakers were not (in Stiles's phrase) "nothingarians" is evident in Jeffry Watson's two-decade long record of religious observance. During the early 1740s and again from 1754 to 1760, Watson recorded attendance at (and usually the sermon texts from) twenty-five services, exclusive of a large number of funerals and weddings. His off-hand references to Friends' observances he attended as "meeting" marks his ancestral association with that sect. During these years he went to hear the noted Quaker minister, Samuel Fothergill, and other visitors from England and from Philadelphia.<sup>11</sup> More frequently, however, he went to hear one of the numerous Baptist elders of the area. These ministers held theological views that differed sharply from one another as well as from the Quaker position. Elder David Sprague of North Kingstown and later Exeter, his son, Doctor and Elder Solomon Sprague of Exeter, and Elder James Rodgers of South Kingstown were Calvinist, or New Light Baptists, who believed that God predestined particular people to salvation. Elder Gardner Thurston of Newport, by contrast, was a Six Principal Baptist who believed that salvation was open to mankind in general.<sup>12</sup> Even more spectacular from a layman's point of view were their differences over ceremonial practices. All of the Baptists, of course, advocated baptism by immersion in water, which was anathema to Quaker orthodoxy. Rodgers and the Spragues further put emphasis on music in the service, while Thurston insisted on the necessity of the laying on of hands after baptism.

Whether Watson's piety drew inspiration from the Great Awakening that began in 1740 is uncertain because his diary begins during the revival. But his sudden initiation of recording sermons halfway through 1741, and the evangelical tone of the sermons he heard at North Kingstown (presumably preached by Elder David Sprague) support such an interpretation. His religious practices certainly shared the propensity to submerge sectarian distinctions that characterized the Great Awakening. On one occasion he attended Baptist meeting during the day and Quaker meeting at night. On another remarkable occasion he missed his son's wedding, performed by a Baptist of probable General views, by returning late from a New Light Baptist service. There is some indication in the diary that the supposedly Quaker Watsons, Gardners, and Smiths were moving toward Baptist beliefs. Such a conclusion follows from the baptism of Bathsheba Watson's sister Margaret following a meeting at Watson's house (Nov. 2, 1743) and from the fact that Baptist elders presided at the funeral of Watson's kinsman, Gideon Gardner (March 1, 1757), and at Watson's own funeral in 1784. On the other hand, the diary shows that funeral preaching partly depended on availability and did not necessarily follow sectarian lines. At the least, however, Watson's experience shows that rural laymen in Rhode Island found a piety that tolerated differences in



*An eighteenth-century engraving of farmers haying in the fields.*

*Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.*

doctrine an attractive response to the absence of publicly supported religious orthodoxy. Sectarian differences existed, but they did not split towns as sharply as either contemporary observers or later historians have thought.

A phenomenon that clearly did divide Rhode Islanders was political factionalism, about which Jeffry Watson provides some terse, but valuable comments. Although the diary does not suggest it, Watson was a prominent figure in both town and colony politics. At the town level, he served nine terms as moderator between 1746 and 1773, four terms as town clerk from 1749 to 1752, and fourteen terms as town councilman between 1767 and his death in 1784. His career in colony politics had begun even earlier, with two terms as a deputy to the General Assembly in 1739. He then served as an assistant (in the Upper House) in 1746, 1748 to 1754, and 1758, and as justice of the King's County Court in 1765, 1766, and 1768.<sup>13</sup> In the absence of any other information, this career pattern would mark him as a stalwart of the Ward political faction: he won election during the years when William Greene or Samuel Ward held the governorship and was out of office when Gideon Wanton or Stephen Hopkins headed the government. Both the diary and other sources further identify Watson as a primary Ward party political spokesman in King's County. In particular, the diary shows that he sustained a long association with Elisha Brown of North Providence, who was Ward's principal spokesman in the northern part of the state and served as deputy governor under Ward. During 1759 and 1760, Watson and Brown wrote and visited back and forth with some regularity. What took place at these meetings is not mentioned, but it was clearly politics. During a subsequent meeting at Watson's house in 1769, the two men, together with Daniel Coggeshall, wrote to Samuel Ward to ask him to run for governor in 1770 and to schedule campaign meetings in Newport.<sup>14</sup>

Other entries illustrate how politics operated at the town level. On two occasions Watson records meetings held to "set up" candidates for the General Assembly (August 5, 1743 and June 26, 1760), and later described the "parliamenting" that accompanied local elections (August 11, 1743 and August 26, 1760). At both levels, political organization followed gentlemanly forms, with leading men meeting pri-

13. Town Meeting Records, Town Clerk's Office, South Kingstown; John R. Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island*, 10 vols. (Providence, 1859-1864), IV-IX. On politics in the Hopkins Ward era, see David S. Lovejoy, *Rhode Island Politics and the American Revolution, 1760-1776* (Providence, 1958).

14. Elisha Brown and Jeffry Watson to Samuel Ward, Oct. 29, 1769, Ward Papers, R. I. Hist. Soc.

15. Harriette Forbes, *New England Diaries, 1602-1800: A Descriptive Catalogue of Diaries, Orderly Books, and Sea Journals* (n.p., 1923), 302.

vately to choose candidates and plan strategy. Significantly, in view of this style of politics, the only election issue mentioned involved family rivalry between the Hazard family, which held numerous offices during the administration of Wanton and Hopkins, and the Watsons, Helmes, and others who allied themselves with the Ward and Green interests (August 5, 1743). That politics should have a family dimension in South Kingstown is hardly surprising in view of the place of rivalry between the Wantons and the Wards in Newport politics. But the salience of jockeying for family status rather than concrete issues in colony politics, together with the absence of evidence of overt conflict in the more sensitive arena of internal town politics, underscores the nature of the ground rules that allowed Rhode Island to maintain social peace in the face of institutionalized political rivalry. Politics provided a process through which ordinary Rhode Islanders could gain a sense of participation and an opportunity to express antagonisms, but gentlemen were careful to suggest a set of issues that did not threaten the order of society or the position of men of rank in it.

It is intriguing to speculate about why and how Jeffrey Watson kept his diary as he did, but such questions are clouded by the inaccessibility of Watson's manuscript. The location of the original diary is not known. A handwritten copy of the diary was owned by Louise Prosser Bates in the 1920s, and has since disappeared from view.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately, the Rhode Island Historical Society owns a typewritten transcript made by Caroline E. Robinson, from which the version published here is taken. Marginal notes in the transcript suggest that the original consisted of a series of small notebooks, of which the present text filled at least four. The initial entries contain no indication of a resolution to begin a diary and create a suspicion that earlier notebooks may once have existed to bring the diary up to its abrupt beginning in March 1741.

In the early years of his diary, Watson's purpose was to keep a daily log of his activities. Eighteenth-century diarists often organized such an effort by keying a notebook, or sheets of paper that could be hand-sewn into a notebook, to a published almanac. Association of the diary with an almanac provided the discipline of spaces to be filled each day. Watson's practice in the early years, when he repeatedly reported being at home all day, suggests that he had daily lines to fill, even though the text sometimes shows that he brought the diary up to date after skipping several days. In later years, Jeffrey abandoned the effort to record any but the most noteworthy events, but the form of entry suggests an almanac format until 1768. After that the entries abruptly shift form as if he no longer had a calendar before him.

Throughout its existence, the diary served purely personal purposes and recorded the author's passage through the cycle of life. The young Watson recorded daily dealings in his neighborhood, as if to confirm his status as a household head and independent gentleman. As his public responsibilities grew, the regular entries slackened, and then broke off.

The middle-aged Watson placed more emphasis on religious concerns, and then, as if to underscore his growing awareness of his own mortality, turned to recording the passing of his neighbors and long-time acquaintances. But never did Jeffry view his diary as a public document, or give thought to eventual publication.

Because the diary was kept without regard for formal usage or publication, and because the intervening transcript introduced spelling variations that could not be checked against the original, I have modernized spelling and punctuation throughout. I have maintained as much of the original capitalization as possible. A few instances remain in which neither internal evidence nor further research could clarify the meaning of a phrase. In addition, I have omitted a series of genealogical notes added after Watson's death by later owners of the diary. I have reported all dates as found, except that the year has been accounted as beginning January 1.

## JEFFRY WATSON'S DIARY

## March 1740/41

1. The First Day I was at John Lillibridge's and from thence to father [Jeremiah] Wilson's to Dinner and then home. It was a raw Cold Day with wind North East.
2. The Second Day I went to Ezekiel Gardner's to Dinner and from thence to Cook's and Carried my Desk home. The wind was Still North East.<sup>16</sup>
3. The third Day was at North Kingstown quarter meeting. I came back with Daniel Coggeshall to his house to Dinner and then home. It Snowed with the wind South East.<sup>17</sup>
4. I went Ephraim Smith's and So out in the farm where my people was at work and thence home. The wind was west and Blew Very hard So the boats Could not Pass tide.
5. I went to John Lillibridge's to dinner and so by father Smith home. It was Cloudy weather with the wind west. No boats passed.
6. I was at home all Day. It was Cloudy and the wind west and the weather moderate.
7. I was at home the Chief of the Day with Esquire John Sweet and when he went away I went to father Smith and from thence home. It Snowed Great part [*torn*].
8. I was at home all Day. It was fair weather with a Great body of Snow on the Ground.
9. I was about home all Day and this Day Ebe and Eph Smith tried to Cheat me by altering the Date of their Deed.
10. I was at Lillibridge's and there went to dinner, and from thence home. Thomas Scranton [Cranston?] had brought home a boat borrowed, for mine was not in order.
11. I was up at Ebenezer Smith's for Ebenezer Smith Jr. to acknowledge a Deed he had signed to me but John Gardner advised him not to do it and he would Give him more for the Land, this day many People there. The snow three foot deep on a level. It mired cattle so they Could not pass.<sup>18</sup>
12. I was about home all Day. The wind was Southwest.
13. I was at home all Day and Eph Smith Gave me a Deed of a certain piece of Land for the payment of a certain Sum of money Set forth in Said Deed.<sup>19</sup>

16. John Cook was a joiner, who did carpentry work for Watson.

17. Quarter meetings were quarterly town meetings at which freemen were admitted, and other business conducted.

18. The comments on weather in these entries apply to a winter that was legendary as one of the hardest in New England history. Governor William Greene reported that for much of the winter Narragansett Bay was frozen as far south as Newport, and that for periods the ice extended beyond Block Island. The snow stood three-feet deep on the level in Warwick on Mar. 10. William Greene's Memorandum of the Hard Winter in the Year 1740, Ward Papers, R. I. Hist. Soc.

19. This is evidently the mortgage recorded in South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:229/329.

20. "Mr." Douglass, a blacksmith, lived on Tower Hill Road near the corner of the road to the Gilbert Stuart mill. MacSparren, *Letterbook*, 127.

21. The Pettaquamscott River lay between South Ferry, where Jeffry was living, and the other Watson lands. "The Bridge" that Watson frequently mentions crossed the river west of the Ferry.

22. This entry refers to the docking (voiding) of the entail on the Smith farm, which required a special petition to the General Assembly. Watson found the legislators so favorable to his position that he did not feel special gratitude to particular supporters.

23. Coddington, a member of a prominent Newport family, was the tenant at Watson's other farm. See Aug. 1, 1741.

14. I was at home all Day. John Watson Jr came from Portsmouth. It rained Very hard.
15. I went to Ezekiel Gardner's and there went to Dinner and from thence by Father Watson's home.
16. I went to Newport and there stayed a while and then home. Got my Dinner and then back to Jamestown and at night home. Mr. Cranston was at work on my boat.
17. I was at Mr. Douglass's to Get Irons for my boat and then home. The wind was South.<sup>20</sup>
18. I was at Mr. Cook's to Get him to make me a boat's mast and then home. The wind was Small.
19. I was at home all Day.
20. I was at home all Day. The wind was North.
21. I was at home all Day, and It was So Cold the Carpenters Could not work.
22. I was at Lillibridge's and so home. The weather abated.
23. I was at home all Day. It snowed all Day.
24. I was at Father Smith's and then home. Justice Gardner and father came to our house. The Snow was knee Deep. Ebenezer Smith was hid and would not be seen to acknowledge a Deed he gave me.
25. I was at Lillibridge's and Eph Smith's and about home all Day.
26. I went out in the farm to fetch Some Cattle and there was Mr. Willett and Gardner at Smith's and they Came out to Desire me to go into Smith's. They wanted Some advantage but I would not Go in.
27. I was about home the Chief of the Day. In the afternoon I went over the River with Brother John.<sup>21</sup>
28. I was at home all Day and heard that Ebenezer Smith, Ebenezer Smith Jr., and Ephraim Smith all was at Willett's Contriving to Give John Gardner Some writing of their Land that they had mortgaged to me So as to cheat me of my money by Destroying my Security the mortgage Deed. Cranston finished mending my boat.
29. I was at home all Day. It was pretty Calm and warm.
30. I went to Esquire Coggeshall's and there I heard Mister Willett had been a Running out against me and I went Directly to Mr. Willett's to talk with him to know the reason he Gave himself the Liberty to Talk so about one that was no ways Inferior to him but Stood in Equal footing with him. My Dealing So plain with him he Grew moderate and went home with me.
31. I went to Newport to make interest with the Deputies not to Dock Smiths' Land that Sitting. If they Did it would Give Smith and Gardner an advantage of me which they were a Seeking to take, but I found my friends so many I did not Value them.<sup>22</sup>

#### *April 1741*

1. I was at home all Day. Gardner and Willett was over to Newport but they was too Late for this trip.
2. I was at Newport to hear what they had Done but all was well. They Could Do nothing at all in the affair.
3. I was up by three o'clock in the morning and went to Updike's harbor to Get my boat off and in the evening Came home in the Same.
4. I was about home all Day, a-mend[ing] Dawley's fence to keep my creatures off father Smith's Grain. My boat Came from Bristol.
5. I was at home all Day. Ephraim Smith was to Come to our house to finish Some writings but Did not.
6. I was at Lillibridge's, Cook's, Viall's, Watson's, and Ezekiel Gardner's, where I stayed and went to Dinner, and then to William Coddington's and so home.<sup>23</sup>

7. I was at home all Day very busy a-Sending Capt. Samuel Hazard's Cattle over the ferry. Brother Allen and Benjamin Northrup went Round in my boat to town.
- 8,9,10 I was at home.
11. My boat went to Providence with fish for John Lillibridge.
12. I was at brother Allen's and there Stayed to Dinner and from thence home.
- 13,14 I was at home.
15. I as at William Gardner's and from thence home.
16. I was about home all Day.
17. I was at Newport and so home by two o'clock. My boat was a-going to town. Sweet Came for his that I borrowed and had her and I gave him Six Pound for the Lent of his boat. The wind blew fresh at South East.
18. I was at the weir when there was many fish and then part of the way to brother Gardner's with my Wife and Left Sister Filly to Look after the Children.<sup>24</sup>
19. I was at home all Day and Ebenezer Smith Jr and Benedict Remington came over to Sell the Land to Gardner or myself. The wind blew fresh at South.
20. I was at home all Day and Smith Came Down to Sell me his Land in part. He has to Come down again but Did not.
21. I was at Douglass's and so home by Uncle Watson's and brought a pair of oxen home I lent him.
22. I went for hay for Col. Updike but Could not Get it.
23. I was at father's all Day and from thence home.
24. I was about home all Day. I saw Gardner and he told me he would Go to England but he would have the Land of Smith. I perceived they had Gave him Some Conditional writing and was a mind to pick of.[?]
25. I was at Newport and Seed Thomas Ward and then home. In the evening I saw Gardner and told me I should never be in the possession of a Certain piece of Land which was then in the possession of Smith. On some angry words he parted.
26. I was at home all Day. My boat went to Carry Updike's hay. It was Calm and Foggy.
27. I went and Got Possession of the Land that Gardner told me I never Should.<sup>25</sup>
28. I was at home all Day. The wind was South.
29. I was at home all Day.
30. I was at Newport and So home the Same Day.

#### May 1741

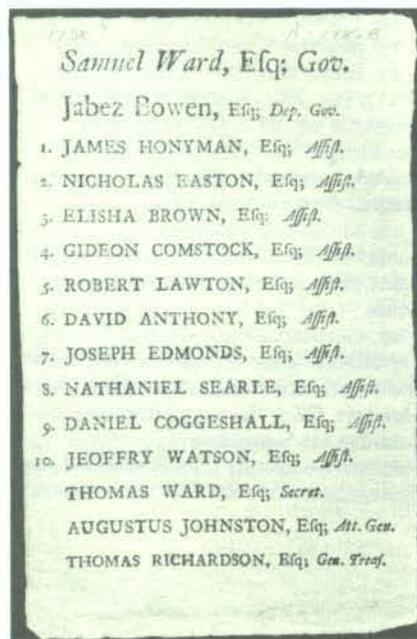
1. I was at home all Day.
2. I was at home all Day. He graved [?] No boats.
3. I was at Newport and home the Same Day. Some people think the Snow in Sundry places on Jamestown was two feet thick.
4. I was about home all Day. It thundered hard in the evening. I was lost in the fog.<sup>26</sup>
5. I was about home all Day and Ebenezer Came over to Sell me his Land and before I Could Draw the Deed he was gone.
6. I was at home all Day. It was 'Lection Day.<sup>27</sup>
7. I was obliged to Go to Newport to See what a Scheme John Gardner and the Smiths was A Carrying on to Cheat me and so at night home.
8. I went to Newport again and Cousin John Sweet went with me and there we Saw Gardner [and] Updike. They protested if I would not consent to have the Land Docked I should Lose all the money I had paid which was 3254 pounds. [I] have friends indeed!

24. The weir was on the Pettaquamscot River near the North Kingstown line.

25. South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:224/324. This deed covering this land, originally signed in Jan. 1741 and acknowledged and recorded in Apr. 1741, was apparently the object of much of the maneuvering in these entries.

26. As this entry makes clear, "at home" or "about home" meant around his home farm, rather than literally at his house.

27. Election day was the first Wednesday in May, when the ballots for governor and other colony officials were counted at Newport. Since the actual balloting occurred at town meetings in mid-Apr., the results were usually known before the official count.



An election prox (ballot), probably printed for the 1758 colony election. Jeffry Watson's name appears toward the bottom of the prox. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4897).

28. This and subsequent entries refer to the "banks" of paper money loaned to individuals by the colony government on the security of land mortgages. Most of Watson's transactions can be traced in the Paper Money Mortgage books at South Kingstown Town Hall.

29. In Mar. 1739, Watson and Smith had made an agreement dividing responsibility for maintaining fences around land Smith had sold. See South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:349/549.

9. I Came home in Company with John Gardner and he and I had Some Cross words. This is but a beginning...
10. I was about home all Day.
11. I was at home all Day and John Quit Came and Stayed all night at our House.
12. I was tower Hill to make out I had a right to the bank money.<sup>28</sup>
13. I was at Lillibridge's to Dinner and so home.
14. I was at father's and So home.
15. I was at father's and brother Gardner's and then home.
16. I was at home all Day.
17. I and brother Gardner went to cousin Will [William?] Gardner's and there went to Dinner and from thence home Round by John Sweet's but Did not Stop there. He was not at home. It Rained hard the Chief of the Day.
18. I was at home all Day.
19. I went to Newport. It rained hard the Chief of the Day. I stayed at Webb's all night.
20. I Came home to See where the Smiths was. They was to Come over to Dock their Land.
21. I went over to Newport and the Land was Docked before I got there. As I Came home the Day before they went over. This night John Sweet and Ezekiel Gardner was at our house the Chief of the night.
- 22,23,24 I was at home all Day.
25. I was at Uncle Shearman's and Sundry other places at Portsmouth and home the Same Day.
26. I was about home all Day. We took William Babcock's Cheese to Carry to Newport.
27. I was to Douglas's to Get my Mare and so home.
28. I was at Colonel Northrup's and then to brother Allen's and there was Esquire Coggeshall and from thence home.
29. I was at Newport and Came home with Doctor MacSparren and he assured to me the Decision of the Fences that was agreed Upon by Smith and others before the Land was docked and would be Good in Law-Style.<sup>29</sup>
30. I was at home the Chief of the Day.
31. I was at Pender's and Jonathan Pearce's and then went to Dinner and from thence home. It Rained the Chief of the Day. So ends the Spring.

#### June 1741

1. I was at home all Day. There was 53 men went over in one boat and many Stayed for another boat. In the afternoon there Came Willett to [my] house and told me much [he?] heard Esquire Sweet said about him and Said he would talk with him the next Day about it.
2. I went to our quarter meeting and from thence home.
3. I was at Newport and Did not Stay Long but Came home.
4. I was at tower hill where they was a-Letting bank money.
5. I was at home all Day.
6. I was at Shearman's to take [?] my Mare home and from thence home.
7. I was at North Kingstown baptist meeting where I heard two notable Sermons.
8. I was at home all Day a'mending the water fence.
9. I was at tower hill to Take of the Bank money and then home.
10. I was at Newport where there was a Likely woman whipped for Cockling her husband.
11. I was at brother Gardner's and he and John Watson Came home with me.
12. I was at Newport and they had Got Ebenezer Smith aboard the Colony Sloop to Go [on] a Cruise. It was Very hot.

13. I was at the Baptist meeting where I heard a Sermon taken from John, the 3rd Chapter and 36th Verse on three particulars: first, to show the happiness of all those that believe on the Son, secondly, to show the Doleful mercy of all those that Refuse or will not believe on the Son, and thirdly, Concludes with a Short Excitation to Stir up all to believe on the Son of God and [to] those that have some profession to behave themselves So as to be examples to the arising Generations.
14. I was at Newport and So home.
- 15,16,17 Days all. I was sick and So the 18 and 19 I was about the house.
20. I was Newport and So home.
21. I was at Congdon's at meeting. The minister's text was Matthew the 9 [Chapter] and 36th Verse. The heads of his Discourse was they went astray having no shepherd, but the sons and daughters of men Go astray although God is by his ministers a-Calling to them.<sup>30</sup>
22. I was at portsmouth in Riding in Company with Simeon Palmer. I heard Said Palmer Say he would be revenged on John Potter before he's Done it if Cost him his Life.<sup>31</sup>
23. I was at home all Day.
24. I was at Northrup's and So home.
25. I was at tower hill to pay Mumford Some money and Solomon Carpenter, Jr. and then home in Company with Daniel Coggeshall.
26. I was at Peckham's to take Some things off the records and then home.<sup>32</sup>
27. I went Down to North Kingstown to fetch my boat from Newtown [Wickford] and Jumped our horses and came home in her.
28. I was at the baptist meeting where there was two, a young man and young woman, baptized. The minister's text was Psalms the 109 [119] and 9th Verse: where with Shall a young man Cleanse his way? By taking heed to according to thy word. Don't Delay the time and put God off and think he will Accept of a [illegible] year that or Days that you are not Sure of yourselves. And from meeting to Ezekiel Gardners to Dinner and So home.
29. I was at Newport and so home.
30. I was at home all Day. Colonel Northrup was at our house to Deliver a bond that was in his hands to the Smiths, if they would Comply with the Condition of Said [bond]. But they would not so the bond was Delivered to me.

July 1741

- 1,2 I was at home all Day.
3. I was at father's and from thence to Henry Gardner's and so by Stephen Northrup's so home. John Sweet, Esq. was at our house and Stayed all night.
4. I had my Deed of Smith of all the Land I bought of them, Only a Strip on the South Side that was mortgaged So I Could not take a Deed of that yet till the mortgage is Cleared off.<sup>33</sup>
5. I was at brother Gardner's and from thence home.
6. I was at home all Day.
7. I was at John Sweet's and from thence to the Sawmill. He went with me and there we Loaded the Cart and Sent them away and we went to Job Tripp's and Drank a little wine and parted.
8. I was over the bridge and as I Came home I Saw Gardner and Ebenezer Smith and his two Sons a-Going over. I thought how Gardner was a'trying to Cheat them and Persuade them to assert how it was I, and I am Sure it is he and [it] will turn out within this three years for all they have will be Gone by that time.
9. I was at Newport and Got Ward to Search the records for me.

30. A related passage is in Ezekiel 34. The revivalistic tenor of this sermon and the one Watson heard on June 13 is obvious.

31. Colonel John Potter, one of the committee to issue paper money, conspired about this time to issue counterfeit notes, and apparently used Palmer, whom he had hired to build a house, as a means of passing them. See Kenneth Scott, *Counterfeiting in Colonial Rhode Island* (Providence, 1960), 17-19.

32. Benjamin Peckham was the town clerk from 1736 to 1742.

33. See South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:260/360 and 4:321/421.

34. Jack was Watson's slave.  
 35. Probably Dutch Island.  
 36. Benoni Hall, a prominent man in Exeter, was a well known surveyor.

10. I was at Newport and had my answer from Mr. Ward to my Content.  
 11,12 I was at home all Day.  
 13. I was at Newport and took [of] the bank money.  
 14. I was at Newport and North Kingstown and so home.  
 15. I was at home all Day.  
 16. I was at home all Day. Ebenezer Smith Gave me possession over again of all the Land I bought of his sons.  
 17. I was at Warwick and So home the Same Day.  
 18. I was at Newport and So Came home in my boat.  
 19,20 I was at home all Day.  
 21. I began to mow and Coggeshall's hands was a-mowing for Ebenezer Smith.  
 22. I was at Newport and so home before night.  
 23. I was at home all Day.  
 24. I was at home all Day. Ebenezer Came home. He had been gone for three Days but now returned again to his work.  
 25. I was at home a-Stacking hay all Day.  
 26. I was at home all Day.  
 27. I was at home all Day. Sam Dawley Came to mow for me.  
 28. I was at Newport and they finished mowing.  
 29. I was at home all Day a-Stacking hay and finished.  
 30. I took Jack with me and went to fetch a boat load of rails.<sup>34</sup>  
 31. I was at home all Day. I sent my boat [to] Newport with hay.

*August 1741*

1. I went to t'other farm where John Watson was a-Stacking hay and Colonel Coddington Came to me to know when he might have my house any longer and I told him he might for one Hundred a year and not Under and so he Concluded to Leave it.  
 2. I was at home all Day.  
 3. I went to Duck Island to fetch of a pair of oxen and Did. It is an exceeding Dry time; everything Seems to Suffer for want of Rain.<sup>35</sup>  
 4. I was at brother Gardner's and he had just finished mowing. I stayed and went to Dinner and then Came home. John was a-Stacking His the Same Day.  
 5. I was at home all Day. My wife was sick.  
 6,7 I was at home all Day.  
 8. I was at home all Day. My wife was better.  
 9,10 I was at meeting.  
 11. I was at home all Day.  
 12. I was at Newport and hurried back to Jamestown to See the body of Alice [?] buried, but was too Late. So I Came home and went where John Gardner and Ephraim Smith was with Benoni Hall a-running off the Land that formerly belonged [to] Ebenezer Smith and I told them their bounds was wrong and what they had Done was Good for Nothing.<sup>36</sup>  
 13. I was where John Watson was a-Stacking hay and from there in company with John Sweet, Esq. to John Gardner's and So home, and Sweet Stayed all night.  
 14. I went to Ezekiel Gardner's with him and there went to Dinner and then parted. I came home.  
 15. I was about home all Day. John Gardner is begun to fence the Land he had of Smith, so I shall forbear Until I hear further about them, for they Seem on a march where I know not, for they fence So far from the Line I Can't tell what they mean, but if I Live Don't fear but I Shall find out and Set them Right.

16. I was at home all Day. The wind and the tide was Very high and it Rained very plentiful all Day.
17. I was about home all Day.
18. I went down to North Kingstown in Company [with] Ephraim Smith Jr, William Smith and home at Night. It Rained hard all Day.
19. I went out in the meadow where was John Gardner and he and I fell in Some hot words and I See he was afraid to end the Controversy with me then between he and I and wherever it will be ended or not I Can't tell.
20. I was at home all Day. Hammond was a-making in Cheese.
21. I was at home all Day. Peckham was there at work.
22. I was at home all Day.
23. I was at home all Day. Peckham was there at work.
31. I was at home all Day and have been for 8 Days, part with my Child that was sick.

September 1741

- I. I was at training at Pender's and from thence home. The Captain was John Cole, Lieutenant, Benjamin Allen, Ensign, William Congdon.<sup>37</sup>
- II. I was at home all Day and have been for ten days past with my poor babe that was sick. She was born the thirteenth Day of August about twelve o'clock in Said Day in the year 1738 and ended her Short Race in this World the Eleventh Day of September in the year 1741 about twelve at night. I must just remark Some few particulars and so giut folo [sic] for a time. She was one that took Great Care what she Said that She would not Speak any bad words at all and if she heard anybody Speak any She would Chide them and tell them that they Did not Know who would have them if they spoke bad words and if anybody Did anything for her that they Seemed Loath to do in her Sickness She took so much notice of their Crossness She Seemed to resent it so She would not take anything of them. She was heard to complain and seen to Weep Dreadfully and Complained to her parents about one that Spoke Some bad words when She was sick that was in another room, and that in the Same that She was in, a thing in Deed worthy of notice for a Child of about three years of age. I will assure you friends that this babe before mentioned was one of the beautifullest flowers on earth, which I must Give God the praise and Return Humble thanks For affording me such a one though but for a Short time. But Considering God alone knows what is best for us, I desire he may give me a willing heart to Resign Contentedly to his will and also that she may be Engraved as it were in the palms of my hands or Printed in my heart that I may Remember how God favored me with Such a one as before mentioned, that I may Keep the Eye of my mind Steadily on him From whom help Comes and unto whom be all Praises thanks given, now and for Ever and ever more.<sup>38</sup>

July 1742

13. I was sent for to Ebenezer Smith's and there was John Gardner and I Perceived by some Discourse that passed between them that Gardner had bought a piece of Land of Said Smith and Smith thought there was more Land than Gardner thought there was by their Discourse, and Smith would not Sign a Deed that was Drawn before Gardner Promised to allow him, the Said Smith, for all the Land there was more than was mentioned in the Deed Thirty Pounds for every acre. And if there was not So much as was mentioned in the Deed he would allow the Said Gardner Thirty Pounds for every Acre there should want, which they promised to Each other they would do, and desired Daniel Coggeshall of North Kingstown,

37. A Pender family lived on Tower Hill Road just over the North Kingstown line. See *Old Houses in the South County of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1932). The militia officers were apparently newly chosen, because their official election was recorded by the General Assembly the next spring. Joseph J. Smith, comp., *Civil and Military List of Rhode Island, 1647-1800* (Providence, 1900), 91.

38. This moving passage refers to Jeffrey's daughter Dorcas.

39. This deed completed the dismemberment of Smith's farm. Mrs. Smith had to sign the deed to terminate her common law right of dower, under which she was entitled to a life interest in one third of her husband's land. See South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:247/447.

40. Watson sold his quarter interest in the ferry to Joshua Bill of Jamestown. See South Kingstown Land Evidences, 4:430/630. He continued to live on the farm he had bought from the Smiths for several years.

Esquire, and myself to be witness to the Same. Then I heard John Gardner tell Smith he must Deliver possession. Smith Said he would if he [Gardner] would deliver the same to him again so as he might Enjoy the same until the 25 of March next as it was then fenced, which Gardner promised he would, and Said he would not move the fence, upon which agreement He Called Mr. Coggeshall and myself again to be witness to. After this was passed Smith called in His wife out of another Room to Sign the Deed, which at first She Refused to do, but after Some Discourse She Consented to and they both Signed, Sealed, and Delivered the Deed to Gardner. And Gardner [delivered] one bond to Smith, the Condition of which bond was I think for Five Hundred and thirty-two pounds or thereabouts, after which was done I came away home and Mr. Coggeshall went homeward.<sup>39</sup>

#### *December 1742*

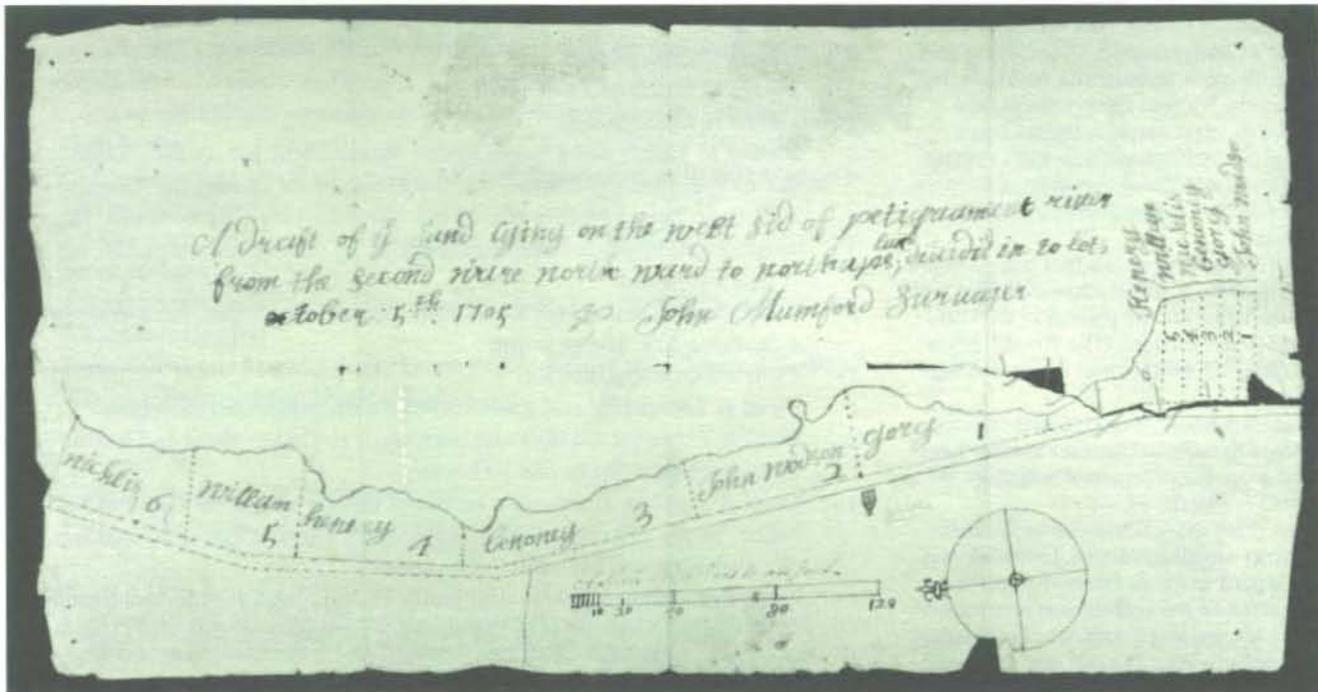
31. Mr. Hall Layed out my Land in boston Neck this 31 Day of December, In the presence of Daniel Coggeshall of North Kingstown, Esquire, and Mr. John Congdon of the Same town, Gentleman, and Ensign Benjamin Northrup and Mr. James Easton of South Kingstown, Gentlemen.

#### *March 1742/43*

9. I was at home all Day. Mr. Frank Willett came over the ferry in my boat and when he came ashore he found a Deal of fault about the boat and seemed to talk in Such a Scornful manner I took it in so much Disdain I thought I would Sell my part of Said boat and ferry.
10. I was at home all Day.
11. I was at Newport and told Jonathan Nichols I should Sell my part of the ferry and so home. The wind blew hard.
12. I was at home all Day. This Day I had news of Gardner cutting wood, trees being Cut Down or blowed. I was at home the Chief of my time till the 23 of the same month, which Day I Sold the Right I had in the ferry and moved Some of my things the 28 of the Same month and the rest the 4 Day of April.<sup>40</sup>

#### *April 1743*

8. I was home the Chief of my time from the 4 to the 8, which Day I was at the burial of the body of Uncle Nicholas Gardner, and the minister that preached the funeral Sermon was Mr. Sprague. His text was the 25 Verse of the 11 Chapter of St. John: Jesus Said unto her, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me though he were Dead, yet Shall he Live." Ever Since Mr. Hall Laid off my Land the 31 of December, I have been sensible he made a mistake and have measured it twice myself, and Can't make the Complement of what my Deed mentioned.
13. I was about home all Day. Mr. James Helme Came to Lay off my Land to see where Mr. Hall Did make a mistake or no, and he found he had, and my adversary would not Consent he Should Do any further, so we ad-journed till the 15 and Mr. Gardner went and Got Hall to Come again.
15. I was about home all Day. Father Watson and Mr. Helme Came and Mr. Hall and my adversary Gardner Came and then we went to Running Said Land. Mr. James Helme and [Benoni] Hall, Surveyors, and Mr. William Gardner, Jr. and Mr. John Congdon of North Kingstown, Gentlemen, to assist in Carrying the Chain. After which was Done it Came out in my favor 13 acres further than it was before. The main Surveyor this time was Mr. James Helme of tower hill, merchant.
16. I went to pay Mr. Douglas Some money and then home.



This map, showing lands lying to the west of the Pettaquamscutt River, was drawn by John Mumford in 1705. It illustrates the state-of-the-art in land surveying during Jeffry Watson's time and suggests, despite the surveyor's attempts to depict land divisions as accurately as possible, why Watson and others often found themselves disputing over the location of boundaries. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4894).

17. I was about home all Day.
18. I was with William Gardner Jr. and Immanuel Clarke to make my part of the fence in the Line between myself and [John] Gardner, and Just as we had done Gardner Came and had a Deal of fair Discourse [as it would] seem to be to one that Did not Know him, but the Devil in Sheep's Clothing Lay. I Look for the 8 of July [1741] and the 19 of August [1741] and there you will See I had Some Disputes and I foresaw what the Villain was about to Lay on me by the Lash of false tongues and for that Reason our Dispute will never be ended.
19. I was at tower hill and there was John Gardner and he told Ephraim Smith in the hearing of others [that] Dawley had Gave Up the Case they two had and told Eph if he would stand by him he would take him out Direct.<sup>41</sup>
20. I went to Tower Hill again and took a writing of Eph to try where I could not Stop Gardner's Lies there, and then went and Got a hatchet at Lillibridge's and then Sister filly and I came home.
21. I was about home all Day.
22. I was Sent for to Mr. Brown's. His son George was dead. He wanted Some necessaries for to bury him. I went to Newport the Same Day to bespeak a coffin and then home.
23. I went to Newport to bring a Coffin for George Brown and Carried it to Mr. Brown's and then I Came home.
24. I was to See the body of George Brown buried and so home. There was Mr. Rouse Helme and Mr. Benjamin and Robert Northrup.
25. I was about Home all the forenoon and I heard Helme had seized Ebenezer Will, and Case Came to Summon me to Give Evidence between Sam and Jere Brown but they had agreed and had no Court.
26. I was about home all Day.
27. I was at the ferry and there was John Gardner and Michael Dawley and they went to Court and I Came home.

41. The details of this dispute are obscure. The Ephraim Smith in question seems to be Ephraim, the son of Ephraim Smith farm. Ephraim the father died during his son's infancy, and the younger Ephraim (born Apr. 13, 1722) was now days over the age of twenty-one. Michael Dawley had managed Smith's farm while the boy was under-age. Ephraim sold his land piecemeal to Gardner and others between 1745 and 1755 in a series of transactions reminiscent of the Ebenezer Smith family.

42. James Helme, who was clerk of the King's County Inferior Court, did in fact lose his place to Benjamin Peckham, Jr., when the Wanton faction swept into office in 1745. Stephen Hazard was a judge of the Inferior Court from 1736 to 1758 and a political opponent of Helme's. See Smith, *Civil and Military List*, passim.

43. This entry shows that Jeffry and his family were political allies of Helme, and in the larger colony politics of the Ward and Greene faction. "The Woods" refers to the northwestern part of South Kingstown.

44. Susannah (Hazard) Smith was the wife of Bathsheba Watson's brother John. The entry illustrates how neighbors assisted at childbirth.

45. This entry illustrates eighteenth-century farming practice. Livestock was permitted to forage freely through the countryside and each farmer was responsible for building a sufficient fence around his crops to keep animals out. Pigs were required to wear a wooden yoke around their necks to prevent them from pushing through or under the fences. See Howard S. Russell, *A Long Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England* (Hanover, N.H., 1976), 152-153.

#### August 1743

- 1,2 I was at home all Day.
3. I went to Court at Tower Hill.
4. I went to Court again.
5. I went to Court and I heard Father Watson was Set up for a Deputy and James Perry for the Second and the Hazards are uneasy and Declare they will have James Helme out of his office in two Chases more. Once in three times Stephen Hazard never fails, he pretends, so we shall see how it will turn out.<sup>42</sup>
6. I was at brother Gardner's and from thence along where John Watson was a-stacking hay, and so home.
7. I was about home all Day.
8. I was at Tower Hill and there stayed a little while and then home.
9. I was at Ebenezer Smith's and then went to t'other place and helped John Draw off Some Sheep and so home.
10. I was at Stephen Northrup's and from thence to brother Gardner's and so home. In the afternoon I was at Ebenezer Smith's and it Rained hard. In the evening I and my wife Came home.
11. I was a-mending highway and James Helme, John Potter, and Immanuel Case Came to me to Go in the woods a-parliamentearing and I Did and in the Evening home.<sup>43</sup>
12. I went to brother Gardner's and from thence home, and Carried my wife to Susannah Smith. She was sick, and from thence by Ebenezer Smith's and his wife Could not Go, So I Came home and Stayed a while, and I heard Susannah was Delivered of a son, so I went and fetched my wife home. They named their son William [*interlined*]—who Died of Small-pox in Saint Kitts in the year 1760.<sup>44</sup>
13. I was at home the Chief of the Day. It Rained Exceedingly the Chief of the Day.
14. I was at the friend's meeting and there was an Old England man, I think the ablest that ever I heard in all the Course of my Days.
25. I was about home the Chief of the Day. In the afternoon I went to Northrup's for Shoes, and when I came home I heard my Son Elisha had mashed his finger, which about 8 Days after Came off.
26. I was at brother Allen's and there ate Some honey, and from thence to Tower Hill and so home, and then went to Father Smith's to Get my Son's finger Dressed and so home.
27. I was at Father Smith's to Get my Son's finger Dressed and then I Came home and Sent for Doctor Browning to Look after it, and he Came and Did for it. I was at home all the Day only in the morning I fetched my son home.
28. I was at home all Day.
29. I was at home all the forepart of the Day helping John Watson yoke his hogs, and then to the ferry with Rouse Helme. So home and then with John Watson to Ezekiel Gardner's. He had bought a new horse.<sup>45</sup>
30. I was at Tower Hill to a Town meeting. Father Watson and James Perry was chose the Deputies.
31. I was a-Straightening the Line between John Gardner and myself, and then I with my wife went to brother Allen's and Uncle Thomas Northrup's, and R. Helme's, and so home.

#### September 1743

1. I was at Brother Gardner's and went to Dinner, and so home.
2. I was at Brother Allen's and went to Dinner, and so home by Stephen Northrup's and then to father Smith's and to the ferry and home.

3. I was up early and went to fetch the Sand from the ferry with oxen, which we Did with but Little Trouble with Team [of] oxen and three men. We did it by ten o'clock.
4. I was at the Friends meeting and after meeting to Brother Gardner's and then home.
5. I went Down to the Rocks to see Allen fish and then to Robert Hazard's and so home.
6. I went with the Cart to t'other Place to carry a Cyder Press, and so by brother Gardner's house.
7. I went to the mill to Get Some Planks to make a Cyder press floor and Could not Get it.
8. I was at the ferry to buy Some Grain of Clarke and then home. Our boys fetched the oxen from Duck Island.

*October 1743*

9. I was at the burial of Ebenezer Smith.
16. I was at the burial of Colonel George Hazard.

*November 1743*

2. I was at home all Day. There was a meeting at our house and Margaret Smith was baptized this Day in the River by the bridge.

*December 1743*

6. I was at Tower Hill at a Town meeting where Isaac Sheldon, Esq. was Chosen a Town Councilman in the Room of Mr. Ichabod Potter, Deceased.

*April 1744*

17. Experience Gardner was this Day buried at Abial Shearman's. Good weather.

*May 1744*

13. I was at Robert Hazard's and at t'other farm and so home.
14. I was a-making wall all Day.
15. I was a-making wall the forepart of the Day and finished a piece next to Garden and then went to Mr. Coggeshall and from thence to brother Allen's and so home.
16. I went to t'other place and brother G[ardner] Came over there, and there we agreed that Henry Should Leave my house, and from thence home, and so to Abigail Smith's and home. Robert Brown was there.
17. Experience Gardner was this Day buried at Abial Shearman's. Good weather.
18. I was at Brother Gardner's, and by Douglas's and Got my horse Shod, and from thence to Esquire Coggeshall's for my wife. She had been to see David Green's wife buried, and from thence home.
19. I was at the ferry and So home, and then to t'other place, and there was Nectent [?] a-mending the window, and from thence home.
20. I was about home all Day. Brother Gardner and his wife was there, and they went to father's and my wife with them. I went to see there was nothing in the meadow by the sea and so home.
21. I went to t'other place to see Gardner move out of our house, and he Did, and from thence home. It began to Rain.

*May 1744*

22. I was at t'other place and from thence home.

46. This passage seems to be part of a letter of advice which Jeffry has copied into his diary. Could it be intended for his son, Jeffry Jr.?

47. This was a town meeting at which Case was the moderator and the three men named were a committee to audit accounts with those who had collected the license fee since 1746. Watson was responsible for £166-8 collected from 1749-1752. A new courthouse for King's County was built at Little Rest (modern Kingston) in 1752 and the seat of government moved from Tower Hill. South Kingstown Town Meeting Records, I (July 14, 1755); Bartlett, ed., *Recs. of R. I.*, V, 349.

48. Thomas Richardson was the general treasurer, while Colonel John Gardner had been deputy governor until Stephen Hopkins's recent election victory.

23. I was at home all Day. It Rained hard.
24. I went to t'other place. Sister Phill went there too. And then home and to father Smith's for my wife.
25. I was a-harrowing among Corn. Jeffry's mare folded there. I went to the Red house and there was brother Gardner and I went home with him.
26. I went with my wife to brother Allen's and there was brother Gardner and his wife. There we stayed all Day and then home.
27. I was at the ferry and so home the Rest of the Day.
28. I was at Esquire [Rowse] Helme's. They was a-Shearing and from thence in Company with Mr. James Helme and so home.

#### September 1746

18. And three days past. Remember and see, I pray, Take notice where you are master or not. I should be Exceedingly Glad to hear you are master of yourself. If you are not, you are not fit to master anybody Else, and this is not the first time I have Reasoned with you in this nature, but I hope it now will be to more effect than Ever it hath Been. If not, I won't Credit you any more, and think you Don't Deserve it.<sup>46</sup>

#### October 1746

26. John Watson Jr. was taken sick and lay till November ye ninth and then Grew better.

#### October 1754

13. I went in the woods to the Baptist meeting. Gardner Thurston Spoke, his Text was Job the 28th Chapter and 16th Verse, from which words he preached a Very able Sermon. It was a windy Day.

#### July 1755

14. I went to Little Rest. There was B[enjamin] P[eckham], E[benezer] B[renton], and J. N. [Jeremiah Niles] and settle the License money. John Case Talked hard, many flings and flurts, etc.<sup>47</sup>
27. It was exceedingly hot. Gardner Thurston Spoke at Little Rest.
28. I went to Newport, was at Gardner Thurston's to Dinner, and then went to Mr. Richardson's to settle Some accounts, from there to Colonel Gardner's and Stayed all night, the Next Day home and was at Home the Remainder of that week.<sup>48</sup>

#### August 1755

10. I was at the Quakers' meeting and there was Two, 1 old England and 1 Philadelphia, man Spoke.
17. I was at the Baptist meeting. Lawrence Albro Spoke from these words in Amos 4 and 12 verse: "prepare to meet thy God, O Israel," and was Exceeding able.
20. I was at the Quakers' meeting to hear Samuel Fothergill. There was abundance of people, the minister Exceeding able, and a great healer Discoursed in a very high Style.

#### December 1755

14. I was at the Baptist meeting. Gardner Thurston Spoke. His Text was Canticles the 5 Chapter and part of the 2 Verse: "open to me," and the Concluding part of the Verse, and was exceeding able. I went to Colonel Reynolds's and went to Dinner. In the evening home.
17. I went to Father Smith's to settle Some business and Could not. I shook the Dust from my feet as I came out of the house, farewell. When I Came home I heard a negro was born Dead. [*rest of entry erased*]

*January 1756*

14. I went to see Mrs. Coggeshall in Company with Dr. Sprague. She was about house, but was not well.

*April 1756*

1. Mrs. Coggeshall Departed this Life about Eleven o'Clock in the forenoon, much Lamented.
2. I went to Esquire Coggeshall's to see them, hearing his Wife was Dead, and found a Sorrowful House much Lamenting the Loss of the Deceased. Thence home and see many of the neighbors all Lamenting for the Loss of so Virtuous a person as the before mentioned. A Loving and Dutiful Wife, a Tender mother, a mild mistress, and as good a neighbor as Ever Lived on Earth, and as much Lamented as Ever was a Person Since my Remembrance.
4. I went to Esquire Coggeshall's to the burial of his Wife. There was three ministers, Aldrich, Scriven, and Carr, and as many hearers as Ever Saw at a funeral. Aldrich Very able.
12. I went to Carry my horses and Sheep in the neck and saw Esquire Coggeshall and Concluded to be at his house the next Day.
31. I was at Robert Northrup's. He buried a Child. Mr. Sprague preached a Very able Sermon; his Text was Job, 22 Chapter and 21 Verse.

*June 1756*

3. I was at Jeffry Champlin's. John Gardner and Elizabeth Champlin was married. Elder Albro Joined them. It was a Very Cloudy Day and Rained Some.
4. I was at Brother Gardner's. John Came home with his bride. A Clear Day and abundance of people.
6. I went to hear Mr. Rogers, who preached a Very able Sermon. His Text was Romans, the 5th, and 16 Verse, and in the Evening Elisha Came home much not well Taken in North Kingstown at Mr. Albro's meeting.
7. I sent for Mr. Sprague Early in the morning. Elisha Continued Very Sick and about one o'Clock I went and fetched him.
12. Elisha is growing better. The Doctor hath been with him every Day.
16. I heard Henry Gardner's Son George was sick, taken the 11 Day of the month.
20. I was at Henry Gardner's to See his Son George buried. Doctor Torrey Preached his Funeral Sermon from these words, "Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy youth;" Ecclesiastes 12 and first Verse. Mr. Coggeshall and Mr. Allen went home with me to Dine.
21. I begun to half hill my Corn in the neck.<sup>49</sup>

*July 1756*

23. I went to Settle Some accounts with Father Smith, but Could not. He talked hard, and so did Mercy and others, after which we parted and Did not settle.

*August 1756*

11. I went to settle an account with Father Smith, but Could not Settle the whole.
14. It is a thick Cloudy Day, Rained hard a Little before Day and so by Showers all Day until the Sun about half an hour high Shined bright and Set Clear. Gardner Thurston and Mr. Burris Came to our house.
15. I was at the Baptist meeting. Mr. Thurston Preached from these words: Ezekiel the 33 Chapter and 11 Verse, a Very able Sermon. And in a Particular manner Remember the Citation, Hosea the 11 Chapter and Eighth Verse.

49. Half-hilling refers to the colonial farming practice of hoeing or plowing soil against the feet of the cornstalks as the corn grew, both to keep down weeds and to strengthen the stalks against sudden storms. This and other references to "the neck" (Boston Neck) indicate that by this time Jeffry had moved to his house west of the Pettaquamscot River.



Map of James Gardner's property at Boston Neck in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, 1802. This survey of Gardner's land was requested by Walter Watson, Jeffry's nephew. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society Library (RHi x3 4896).

29. I was at the Baptist meeting. Mr. Albro Preached from these words, Revelations 3 and 21 Verse; and in the evening were Sent for, there was a meeting at Mr. Taylor's. James Scriven Spake.

*September 1756*

10. I was about home all Day. The assembly was in being and the Deputy Governor Nichols is Dead and this Day John Gardner was Chosen in his Room.

*October 1756*

15. I was at Robert Potter's at Little Rest to see the body of Daniel Weeden buried. Robert Knowles Preached the funeral Sermon to a great Auditory.  
17. I was at Little Rest, at meeting. Gardner Thurston preached, his Text was Luke 15 Chapter and 24: "For this my Son was Dead and is alive again." A Very able Sermon, indeed and a great many Hearers.

*November 1756*

1. I was at Caleb Allen's to see Benjamin Northrup who died the Next Day.  
4. I was at Caleb Allen's to see the body of Benjamin Northrup buried. Patience Green preached the funeral Sermon.

*January 1757*

28. I was at home and been for some time not well. Esquire Coggeshall was at our house all Day and Mrs. Hammond was Buried this [day?]. Mr. Torrey Preached her funeral Sermon.  
30. I was at home and heard some Discoursing about Hannah Gardner's going to Town to buy her Wedding Clothes, which made me Listen to it, and then they Told me Jeffry Watson Jr. and she was Published and had been Some time. This is the first I heard of it.

*February 1757*

6. I was at home all Day and heard the Widow Hannah was Dead, and this Day to be buried. Patience Green preached her funeral Sermon.  
14. I was at home and Marcy Came from her Uncle Watson's and told us his Daughter Hannah was Dead, Departed this Life a little before the Sun Rose.  
16. I was at my brother's. His Daughter Hannah was this Day buried. Joseph Edmand preached her Funeral.

*March 1757*

1. I was at William Gardner's to see his Son Gideon buried. Elder Sprague preached a Very able Sermon. His Text was Job 22d and 21 Verse.  
5. I was at Sanford Case's to see his sister Milleman buried. Mr. Rogers and Mr. Sprague both preached and were very able. Sprague came to our house and stayed 2 nights.  
24. I was at Father Smith's and from thence to Esquire Coggeshall's and to Mr. Helme's where Elder Sprague had a meeting, and from thence to Brother Gardner's to see Jeffry Watson Jr. and Hannah Gardner married. Elder Albro married them before I got there. Esquire Coggeshall and Dr. Sprague went to our House and stayed all night. The Next Day Esquire Coggeshall and I went to Gardner's and spent the Chief of the Day with Elder Albro, and so parted. Thursday was fair and Clear, Friday Snowed great part of the Day.

*May 1757*

14. I went to see Captain Christopher Phillips Buried and from thence home. There was no preaching at [missing] funeral.

18. I was about home all Day. Colonel Updike was this Day buried, etc; and Hannah moved [so] that this Day may be Said they went to keeping House. It is fair and Looks Likely for a Dry time.

*June 1757*

9. I was at Father Smith's. Margaret and Hammond married. It is a Dry time.  
12. I was at the Baptist meeting to hear Gardner Thurston. His text: John ye 14, part of the 6 Verse, "I am the way, and the Truth, and the Life." After meeting he Came to our House and went to prayer, and so went home that Night.

*August 1757*

14. I was about home all Day. The Sun Rose Clear and Red and soon went into thin Clouds which Grew thicker but not so as to Hide the Sun until noon. The forenoon the Sun Shined about half the time, in the afternoon Not to be seen at all, so Cloudy and Rained Some toward Night. The Sun this afternoon was Eclipsed.

*October 1757*

24. I went to hear Elder Sprague who preached at Father Smith's a Very able Sermon from these words in Joshua the 24 and 15 Verse: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, Choose you this day whom you will serve."

*December 1757*

1. It was a fair Day. I was riding in the Neck. I heard Dr. MacSparren was Dead. Died this Day at break of Day.  
6. Dr. MacSparren was buried this Sixth Day and Died the first Day just as the Day broke.

*January 1758*

12. I was at Caleb Allen's to see Esquire Hall measure said Allen's Land. When they Came to the meadow Benjamin Allen ordered Matt to forewarn Caleb from measuring round the orchard. He accordingly did, but it was not regarded. They measured all Caleb Allen had in possession which made 72 acres and—Rods.  
16. I was about home all Day. Hannah Watson has Delivered of a Son about 10 in the forenoon which is named Ezekiel Watson, and the mother according to the Course of things will have a Close Trial for her Life before she is well out of Child bed.  
27. I was to see Hannah, who is brave and well, but I fear won't hold.

*February 1758*

2. I heard Hannah Watson grew worse. I persuaded her father to fetch Dr. Sprague to her.  
21. I was at Little Rest and there heard that the Honorable William Greene, Esquire, Governor [and] Captain General in and over the Colony of Rhode Island was Dead.  
26. I was at Warwick at the Burial of the Honorable William Greene, Esquire. Three ministers spake at his funeral, Green, Cahoon, and Carr, to the biggest funeral, the greatest gathering I ever saw at a burial. This Gentleman was of an ancient family and in the earliest part of his days was much improved in Publick offices to the great Satisfaction of his Constituents; and about the 46 year of his age was Chose Governor and Continued in Said office until he Died, except a short interval, and Died in the 62 year of his age much Lamented. And at the next General Assembly held the 13

50. Dyeing sheep might serve two purposes. One was to make an identifying mark in case the flocks became mixed. The other involved smearing the rams with a substance that would mark the ewes after mating took place. The purpose here is unclear. Russell, *A Long Deep Furrow*, 154-158.

Day of March the Honorable Stephen Hopkins, Esquire was Chosen in his Room.

*July 1759*

6. Father Watson was at our House and in Riding Home his Horse Started, flung him, and hurt him much. About the 10 was much better and Soon get well.
13. I begun to mow in the Neck.
19. I begun to mow at home, ye 20 finished the far meadow.
25. I was about home all Day. Benoni Gardner and I have a controversy about our accounts. Settle now for all, etc. and ForEver and Ever, Amen.
30. A few Days ago I saw him. He Seemed Calm and wanted to settle.

*August 1759*

4. I Stacked oats in the neck. Made one larger Stack than Common, which was burnt Down the Night following. Was seen to be Kindling about two o'Clock in the morning as Some Say they see it before it blazed, and by Sun Rise was all in ashes.
14. I was about home all Day. Father was at our House. Mr. Elisha Brown's Son went Home. My son Elisha went to Kent to meeting with him. This Day the Sun Rose Something Cloudy but by the time it was half an hour high it was clear and Continued a very clear Day.
16. I went to Court at Little Rest to hear a Case Tried between John Potter and George Hazard, which went in Hazard's Favor, and in the Evening Thomas Eldredge and Martha Weeden were married.
20. I Drawed 86 Lambs off and carried in the Neck, and went to Esquire Coggeshall's and then home, and in the Night Dreamed I had a woman in my arms.
24. I went unto Kent, the General Assembly Setting, this week Thomas Potter had a daughter born, John Congdon one, and Samuel Gardner a Son born.
31. I finished mowing. It rained all the forenoon.

*September 1759*

1. I went in the Neck and Sowed my Wheat.
4. I fetched my cows home and turned into after field.
16. I was at Little Rest to Hear Elder Albro. His Text was Acts the 10 Chapter and 35 Verse, and after meeting I went with my Wife to Colonel Reynolds's to Dinner and then Home. I heard Elder Roger's Daughter was married this evening to James Allen.
25. I was at Uncle Hazard's and in the evening I heard Samuel Shearman's child was Dead and to be buried the next Day. Elisha Watson set out for New London.

*October 1759*

10. I Dyed my Sheep and Carried them in the neck. There is 120 sheep, 113 of which is ewes.<sup>50</sup>
27. I was about home all Day. Rowland and Tom had a court about a button-wood Line Rowland said Tom had took from him. Tom was caught [?] paying court, which he Refused to pay.
30. I was about Home all Day. Dorcas Came from town and told me the 28 she went to meeting to hear Gardner Thurston. His text: Hebrews the 10 and 23 Verse, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that Promised," and in the afternoon his Text was in the 1St Epistle of John, 3 Chapter and part of the 8 Verse, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might Destroy the works of the Devil.

*November 1759*

1. Clarke Gardner and Amy Lillibridge were married. There was so many People at our House I Could not go to wedding, but next day I was at William Gardner's.
8. I was about Home all Day. This Day Benjamin Morey was buried. I did not hear of it until it was too late to go.
20. This Day about Home and Heard Hannah Allen had a daughter born in the Evening about 8 o'Clock which they named Mary.

*February 1760*

2. I went to Newport to see Sister Green who was sick.
7. Matthew Allen was buried.
8. John Gifford was buried. Two Days before he Died he was well enough to file Declarations, but Said he never Should get Well again. His whole sickness was but few days.
10. Robert Wilcox was Buried—a few Days Sickness.
16. Jeffry Wilcox was buried after a few Days sickness.
18. Thomas Wilcox was buried after a few Days sickness. Three brothers in eight Days.<sup>51</sup>

*March 1760*

14. I this day begun to plow for oats.

*April 1760*

9. I was about Home. Hannah Watson had a Son born about one o'clock in the morning which they named Jeffry Watson.
18. Mrs. Brown, widow to William Brown, Departed this Life and was buried the 20th.
21. Thomas Eldredge had a Son born which they named Ezra.

*May 1760*

4. I was at Ephraim Gardner's to see Thomas Proctor buried.
9. I was at Friends meeting house to see Mr. Latham Clarke buried, who Departed this Life after three days illness, much lamented.
21. I carried my Cows in the Neck and then went to the ferry. Captain Rose Set Sail with his company about half after two in the Afternoon.<sup>52</sup>

*June 1760*

4. I was at Colonel Reynolds's. He Raised his house in corner of his Land, a Very Large Building. Abundance of people.<sup>53</sup>
20. I was at Mr. Samuel Rogers' to Write a Deed for Jeremiah Hazard to Give said Rogers of the Great Neck.
22. I went to Hear Elder Rogers who preached a very able Sermon from these words, the 1 Epistle of John, the 3rd chapter and 23 Verse, "and this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another."
26. I was at Little Rest where we met to agree upon our Deputies. 26 of us there met and set up William Potter and Hezekiah Babcock.

*August 1760*

26. I was at Town Meeting. Potter and Babcock was chose Deputies by 30 majority after a great Deal of fending and probing. Hard words and a Great Strife but ended well.

*September 1760*

2. I Received Letter from Providence That Elisha Brown's wife was Dead and to be Buried next Day.

51. This concentrated pattern of deaths points to an epidemic, but the disease is hard to identify. Smallpox was then in Newport, but Watson would have recognized its obvious symptoms. More likely were diseases such as influenza and dysentery that were regularly brought back by soldiers returning from the campaigns of the French and Indian War at this time. See John Duffy, *Epidemics in Colonial America* (Baton Rouge, 1953).

52. Samuel Rose was captain of a Rhode Island company raised in Feb. 1760 for service in the British army that conquered Canada. Bartlett, ed., *Recs. of R. I.*, VI, 241.

53. This house, at Little Rest, is #16 in *Old Houses in the South County*.

7. This Day Martha Clarke, Widow to Latham Clarke, Departed this Life about 10 at night.
18. I brought my Cows out of the neck home.

*October 1760*

8. I was at the burial of Sarah Proctor.
15. I went to Providence to see Elisha Brown, Esquire, and Tarried one Night and Next Day Home.

*November 1760*

2. I was at James Shearman's to the burial of his Wife. Carr preached her funeral Sermon.
3. I carried my Cows in the Neck.
17. I was at Home all Day. There was considerable snowfall.
19. I put my Rams amongst the Sheep. There is considerable Snow on the ground, thawed but Little. People [*illegible*] fodder.
22. Elisha Brown Came to our House and Stayed two Nights and then went to Newport.
29. Elisha Brown came from Newport and Stayed two nights. The 1st Day of December went off Early for Providence.

*December 1760*

9. Benjamin Brown and James Wells Came to our House and Stayed 1 night.
10. I heard Jacob Pender was Dead, Dyed in his passage home from Crown Point.
25. It was clear and warm with the Wind at North, North West.
26. It was warm and Cloudy with the Wind South West and thawed all Day.

*January 1761*

16. I went to Town Council to get Jacob Pender's will proved. His Widow Could not go, her Daughter was sick.
17. I was at Little Rest. Heard William Congdon was this Day buried and Thomas Rodman's wife was to be buried the 19.
19. This Day the Prince of Wales was proclaimed King of England by the Name of George the third by the grace of God King over Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc. It was a Dark Cloudy morning and the Sun Shined clear about the Middle of the Day.

*February 1761*

13. I was at Father Watson's to see Roger Morey, and by Edward Arnold's. His mother-in-law, Susannah Whaley, Died this morning.
14. I was at Home all Day and Heard father's old Negro Beck Died this morning. It was Cloudy all Day, the Sun not to be Seen at all today.

*May 1761*

19. I Carried my Cows in the Neck.

*June 1761*

1. I waked [?] and in the afternoon Thomas Brown, Esquire, was at my House and as went to get upon his Horse his saddle Turned. Broke his Right Leg off, the bones Came through the Skin. Had a bad wound. Lay Confined until the 21st and then had Something made to carry him upon, and about 40 men to assist and Carried him home Safe on our shoulders but Something faintly.

*February 1762*

21. Robert Brown, Esq., one of the members of the Town Council for this Town was taken Sick and Departed this Life the 28th a little after Sunrise, and was buried the 4th Day of March. His sorrowful widow was Taken Sick the 28th Day of February at Night and Departed this Life the 8th Day of March and was buried the 10th Day. Left two Sons in the Care of Thomas Brown, Esq., who he also appointed Executor to his Last will and Testament, etc.

*May 1762*

14. David Gardner Departed this Life and was Buried the 16th Day. Champlin and Albro preached at his funeral.
20. Robert Hassard, Esq. Departed this Life and was Buried the 22nd Day of May. Richard Hassard Departed this Life and was Buried the [blank] Day.

*October 1762*

23. Aunt Mary Gardner Departed this Life and was Buried the 27th Day. Champlin and Albro preached at Her Funeral.
28. Sister Green Received a Letter that her son Latham Clarke was Dead. Died at Havannah the [blank] Day of August Last past.

*January 1764*

29. This morning the Honorable John Gardner, Esq., Deputy Governor, Departed this life and is to be Buried the Second Day of February.
31. William Watson Set out for Providence to go to sea with Captain James Brown, and worked about 10 Days and then Came home and got Ready and the Brigantine came Down the Bay. The 18 he went aboard an Hour and a half by Sun, and before Sun Set was out of Sight of Land.

*January 1767*

9. Hannah Green Departed this Life and was buried the 13th Day of said month.

*April 1767*

19. Jesse Gardner Departed this Life about 2 o'clock in the morning and was buried the 20th of April. Jeffry Champlin Preached his funeral Sermon from these words, the 2nd of Corinthians, the 5th Chapter and Verse.

*May 1767*

29. Susannah Hassard, widow of Richard, Departed this life, and was buried the 1st Day of May.

*January 1768*

11. Bridget Babcock Departed this Life and was buried the 13th. Thomas Hassard preached.

*May 1768*

26. Benjamin and Daniel Brown Tarried all Night with me and Next Day Set off for New London and so home.
27. This Day John Franklin's wife was buried.

*October 1768*

17. John Lillibridge Departed this Life and was buried [the] 18th.

54. Beginning with 1769, the diary alters in form, and dates are incorporated into the text of the entry. The change acknowledges the predominant shift in focus to the recording of deaths and funerals.

1769

Phebe Shearman Departed this Life the 12th of September about 10 at Night and was buried the 15th. Solomon Sprague preached her funeral Sermon. His Text was Job 22 and [the] 21st Verse, "Acquaint now thyself with God," etc.<sup>54</sup>

1770

Jack went to work for Stephen Champlin Jr. the Twenty-third of April 1770 to work Eight months for twelve pounds.

John Gardner of South Kingstown Departed this Life the 6th Day of July 1770.

John Case of Tower Hill Departed this Life the 30th of July 1770.

William Taylor Departed this Life the 22 Day of September 1770.

1771

Anne Allen Departed this Life the 21 Day of February 1771, and was buried the 23rd.

Father Smith Departed this Life the 24 Day of April 1771.

Stephen Champlin Departed this Life the 21 Day of July 1771 and was buried the 23rd, much lamented.

May Champlin, wife to Jeffry Champlin of Exeter, Departed this Life the 14th Day of November, and was buried the 16th of the same month.

George Northrup Departed this Life the 17th, and was buried the 19th Day of December 1771. Nicholas Larkin Jr. was killed under the wheel of the Grist mill and buried the 19 of December 1771.

1772

Robert Potter Departed this Life January 16th about five o'clock in the morning, and was buried the 18th. Elder Whitman preached. The text was Job the 22nd [Chapter] and 21st Verse, "Acquaint now thyself with," etc.

May Peckham, widow to Benjamin Peckham, Departed this life the 29th, and was buried the 31st Day of January 1772.

John Hassard, Son of Stephen, Departed this Life the 31st of January, and was buried the 3rd Day of February 1772.

Sarah Hassard, widow to Robert Hassard, Departed this Life the 1st Day of February, and was buried the 4th of said month 1772.

Thomas Steadman Departed this Life the 27th Day of March, and was buried the [blank] Day of March 1772.

Abigail Robinson, widow to the Late Mr. Robinson, Esq., Departed this Life the 23rd Day of May 1772 at one in the morning.

Benjamin Perry, Esq., Departed this Life the 31 Day of May, and was buried the third Day of June.

Colonel John Potter Departed this Life the 1st Day of June, and buried the Third Day of June 1772.

Katharine Gardner, wife to Nathan Gardner, departed this Life the 16th Day of June 1772, and was buried the 18th Day of June 1772.

Hannah Case, widow of Immanuel Case, Departed this Life the 30 Day of June, and was buried the 2nd of July 1772.

My own Father Departed this Life the 18th Day of November about 9 at Night, and was buried the 21st Day 1772. Peter Davis, Stephen Richmond, and Robert Knowles preached at his funeral.

1773

William Browning Departed this Life the 11 Day of February and was buried the 13th Day of February 1773.

May Champlin, Widow to Stephen, Departed this Life the 6th Day of March 1773 a little before Sunrise.

Abigail Gardner, wife of Henry, Departed this Life the 6th Day of March 1773, and was buried the 7th.

Jack was Lett out to Jeffry Champlin for 9 months. He begun the 16th of March and to work until the 16th of December 1773 for 45 Spanish milled Dollars.

Jeffry Champlin, Esq., Departed this Life the 6 Day of August and was buried the 8 Day of August 1773. Elder Whitman preached his funeral Sermon, Revelations 14:13, "Blessed are the Dead that Die in the Lord." An abundance of people.

Stephen Shearman Departed this Life the 26 Instant and was buried the 28 Day of August 1773.

Thomas Allen Departed this Life the 22 of March 1773 at Port au Prince on the Island of Hispaniola, and was buried there.

1774

Col. Ephraim Gardner Departed this Life the 11th Day of April 1774 and was buried the 13th.

Mary Gardner, widow to John Gardner, Departed this Life the [blank] Day of [blank] and was buried the Day [blank] 1774.

Aunt Frances Congdon Departed this Life the [blank] Day of [blank] in the 95 year of her age and was buried ye [blank] Day 1774.

Col. Silas Niles Departed this Life the 15th at Night, and was buried the 17 Day of August 1774.

Pasco Austin Departed this Life the 22nd, and was buried the 24th Day of August 1774.

James Perry Departed this Life the 12 Day of September, and was buried the 14, 1774.

Elizabeth Rose Departed this Life the 10 of October, and was buried the 11, 1774.

1775

Daniel Coggeshall, Esq., Died the 24 and was buried the 26 of November 1775.

1776

Francis Willett, Esq., Departed this Life February 6 and was buried the 9th Day of February 1776.

Mercy Smith Died the 19 Day of February and was buried the 21. Solomon Sprague preached her funeral Sermon. His text was Amos 4 and the 12th Verse. In the Year 1776.

Joseph Hammond Departed this Life the 24 and was buried the 26 Day of June 1776. David Sprague preached his funeral. His Text was Ecclesiasties 8 and 8th Verse.

Joseph Arnold, Esq., Departed this Life the 29, and was buried the 31 Day of August, much lamented.

## 1777

Ann Richardson of Stonington Departed this Life the 16th, and was buried the 18th Day of March 1777, much lamented.

James Helme, Esq., Departed this Life the 19 Day of May about 10 at night in the year of our Lord 1777.

Mr. Samuel Rodman Departed this Life the 23 Day of May about Sunset in the year of our Lord 1777.

Elisha Gardner Departed this Life the 9th and was buried the 11 Day of June in the year of our Lord 1777.

## 1778

Elizabeth Allen Departed this Life the 10 Day of June 1778 at Stonington with the smallpox.

Stephen Champlin Departed this Life the 19th of June 1778 with the smallpox.

Moses Slocum Departed this Life the 16th, and was buried the 18 Day of October in the year of our Lord 1778.

Abial Shearman departed this Life the 8th, and was buried the 10 Day of October in the year of our Lord 1778.

Francis Slocum Departed this Life the 22d, and was buried the 24th Day of October in the year of our Lord 1778.

Thomas Rodman Departed this Life the 27 Day of October, and was buried the 29th in the year of our Lord 1778.

Else, the wife of Godfrey Hassard, Departed this Life the 27 and was buried the 29 of October 1778 with her babe in her arms.

William Congdon Departed this Life the 8 and was buried the 10 of November in the year of our Lord 1778.

Ann Case, the wife of Jonathan Case, departed this Life the 9th and was buried the 11th of November 1778.

Abigail Carpenter, Daughter of Thomas, Departed this Life the 11 and was buried the 13 of November 1778.

Sarah Hassard, the Wife of John Hassard, departed this Life the 11 and was buried the 13 Day of November in the year of our Lord 1778.

Captain James Wells of Hopkinton Departed this Life and was buried the [blank] Day of November in the year of our Lord 1778.

Sarah Franklin, widow of Abel Franklin, Departed this Life the 10th and was buried the 12th of December 1778 in 92 year of her age.

[blank], The wife of Edward, Departed this Life the 14th and was buried the 16 Day of December in the year 1778.

## 1779

Thomas Brown, Esq., Departed this Life the 5th Day of May and was buried the 8th of May in the year 1779

John Gardner Jr. was taken by the Land Pirates who assisted the Regulars at Point Judah and Carried to Newport. John Gardner Jr. was Taken at Point Judah with two of his workmen by the Land Pirates who Joined with the ministerial party to burn, plunder, and Destroy the Inhabitants of North America and Took of said Gardner's estate from him Nine oxen, Twenty-six Cows with their Calves, and about forty-five sheep with their Lambs. And Carried to Newport the 8 Day of May 1779 and Kept him prisoner until October the 15, 1779. Job Watson had about seven hundred sheep with their Lambs carried off at the Same time and some Cattle.<sup>55</sup>

June 25. The Land pirates Landed again at Point Juday and Carried away from John Gardner between two and three Hundred weight of cheese, Two calves, Two lambs, and some of his Wife's wearing clothes and some other Small Things and from Job Watson Two Negro men and four white men that was at work for him. Gorton was seen this Day in a Bean field nearby where they Landed.

Uncle Samuel Watson Departed this Life the 25 and was buried the 27 Day of November 1779 in the 94 year of his age.

## 1780

May Pender Died at our House the 25th Day of April and was Buried the 27 Day 1780. Elder Sprague preached at her funeral, Very able.

Powel Helme Died the 26 Day and was Buried the 29 Day of April 1780. Doctor Torry Preached his funeral sermon.

Susannah Potter, Daughter to William Potter, Esq., Died the 19th of May about 8 in the morning, and was buried the 22d Day of May 1780. The publick friend preached her funeral Sermon to a very large auditory.

Dorcas Mory, Widow of Benjamin Mowry, Died the 9th and was buried the 12 Day of August 1780. Elder Whitman Preached her funeral Sermon.

Ezekiel Gardner, Son of George, Died the 13th and was buried the 15th Day of August 1780. Doctor Waitt preached his funeral Sermon. It is exceeding hot and dry by the middle of the afternoon although clear, and the Sun to be seen and almost as Red as blood. It makes no shade of anything upon the ground, and Sundry Such Days there's been this Summer, in particular two Days before that Noted Dark Day. It was so the chief of the Day.

Nancy Carpenter, wife of Daniel, Departed this Life the 21st Day of October, and was buried the 23d, 1780. Doctor Waitt preached the funeral.

The Bridge over Pettaquamscot River was all new built with a new stone pillar, finished Oct. 26, 1780.

Major Battey Rode out and in the Evening Returned Home. Had some of his neighbors there. Set up Later at night than Common the Day [blank] of October, and the next Morning was found dead in his bed with his arms folded as tho he was a Sleep and was buried the [blank] Day of October 1780. Elder Pembleton preached at his funeral.

Susannah Smith Departed this Life the 28d Day of November and was buried the 30th of November 1780. Doctor Waitt preached her funeral Sermon. His text was Isaiah the 55 chapter and first verse.

Sarah Gardner, wife to George Gardner, Departed this Life the 6th Day of February 1781. Doctor Waitt Preached the Funeral Sermon. His Text was [blank].

55. The "Land Pirates" were foraging parties sent out to seize supplies for the British force that occupied Newport during much of the American Revolution. Resentment of these raids were exacerbated by the fact that many of the raiders were Tories of local origin. See Joel Cohen, "Rhode Island Loyalism and the American Revolution," *Rhode Island History*, XXVII (1968), 97-112.

56. Washington was on his way to confer with Rochambeau, and the leaders of the French forces based in Newport. See Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography*, 7 vols. (New York, 1952), V, 26-27.

1781

William Gardner Departed this Life the 6th Day of February in the Evening and was buried the Ninth Day of February 1781. Elder Sprague preached the funeral Sermon. His Text was Isaiah the 3 chapter and 10th and 11 Verses.

Capt. Henry Gardner Departed this Life 25th and was buried the 27 Day of February 1781. Doctor Waitt preached the funeral Sermon. His Text was [blank].

General Washington Rode by our House with about Twenty soldiers for a guard the sixth Day of March about 10 o'clock 1781. He was born in Virginia in the County of Westmoreland the eleventh Day of February 1732. Had a Colonel's commission at nineteen years of age, was Taken Prisoner by the French & Indians and given Liberty on a Parole, was not Exchanged when Gen. Braddock was Defeated near Duquesne in the year 1755.<sup>56</sup>

John Northup Esqr. Departed this Life the 20th and was buried 22d day of May 1781.

Mary Brown Died at Tower Hill the 30th Day of May and was Buried the first Day of June 1781.

Henry Marchant, Esq., one of the Delegates of Congress was the first that brought of the balm of Gilead to South Kingstown in the year 1779.

The Reverend Samuel Fayerweather Departed this Life the 23d and was buried the 25th Day of August 1781.

Christopher Gardner, Jr., Departed this Life the 24th and was buried the 26 Day of August 1781.

Mary Hassard, wife to Enoch Hassard, Esq., Departed this Life the 22d Day of Sept. and was buried the 24, 1781. Elder Waitt preached her funeral Sermon, Isaiah 6th and 1 and 2 Verses.

Catharine Parker, a Publick friend, Departed this Life the [blank] Day of December and was buried the Day [blank] 1781 at the meeting House.

Robert Hassard, Son of Carder, Departed this Life the 31st Day of December 1781, and was buried the 2d Day of January 1782.

1782

John Smith Departed this Life the 27 Day of March 1782, and was Buried the 29 Day of March 1782. William Northup and Caleb Allen preached at the funeral. The Text was Isaiah 38, first Verse, "Thus Saith the Lord, 'Set thine House in order for thou Shalt Die and not Live,'" etc.

Mercy Allen, wife of Caleb Allen, Esq. Departed this Life the 26th Day of June and was Buried the 28th Day of June 1782. Elder Hill preached her funeral Sermon. His Text was Isaiah 38 chapter and part of the first verse, "For Thus Saith the Lord, 'Set Thine House in order for thou Shalt die and not Live'" and was exceeding able with a full and clear sight and sense of the Text and how they must set their House in order.

Ruth Gardner, wife of Thomas Gardner, Departed this Life the 30th Day of December 1782, and Buried the 2d Day of January 1783. Elder Hill preached her funeral Sermon. His Text was Ecclesiastes the 12th chapter, part of the 5 Verse, "desire Shall fail, because man goeth to his Long Name and the Mourners go about the streets." Was very able, more Especially in prayer and Exhortation at the Close of the Sermon.

1783

Brother Caleb Allen was at our House the 13th Day February to see and then went to John Rose's where he was Taken poorly. Returned home and Continued poorly but up a-Days, and the 18th Said his feet was Cold, he must Lie down, and they must warm Something to put to his feet. He according Layed Down and Died in a few minutes and was buried the 20th Day February 1783. Elder Hill preached his funeral Sermon to a great Auditory of people. His Text was Job 3th and 23 Verse, "For I know that thou wilt bring me to Death and to the House appointed for all Living."

John Cottrell, Tailor, Departed this Life the 1st Day of March and was buried the 3d Day of March 1783. Elder Waitt preached the funeral Sermon. His Text was Hebrews 12 and 25 Verse.

Elizabeth Green, the wife of David Green, Departed this Life the Eight Day of April 1783.

James Gardner, the Son of Henry, Departed this Life the 10 Day of April 1783.

Jonathan Carpenter's wife Departed this Life the 11th Day of April 1783.

Penelope Gardner Departed this Life the 11th Day of April 1783.

John Chapman, Esqr., Sent for me to write his will the 17 of May. He Died the 21st and was buried the 24 Day of May 1783. Stephen Richmond preached at his funeral. A great many people.

Susannah Northup Departed this Life the [blank] Day of August and was buried the [blank] Day of August 1783.

Robert Northup Departed this Life the 5 Day and was buried the 7 Day of September 1783.

Hannah Campbell Departed this Life the 12 Day of September and was buried the 14 Day of September 1783.

Joseph Congdon Departed this Life 11 Day of September and was buried the 12 Day of September 1783.

My son William Watson Departed this Life the 26 Day of September and was buried the 28 of said September 1783.

The wife of James Gardiner (Son of Nicholas) Died the 28th and was buried the 30th Day of September 1780 [1783?]

William Case, son of Immanuel Case, Esqr., Departed this Life the second Day of October and was buried the fourth of October 1783.

1784

Samuel Tefft, Esqr., Departed this Life the 11th Day of April and was buried the 13th Day 1784. Doctor Waitt preached his funeral sermon. His Text was Hebrews the 11 [Chapter] and fore part of the 7 Verse.

Jeffrey Watson, Esqr., Departed this life May 10th day 1784 in the 72 year of his age and was interred the 13 day following. Elder Hill preached his funeral Sermon. His text was in Ecclesiastes 19 chap. [and] 5th verse, "all the living knew they shall die."

*Jeffry Watson's Family Memorandum*

Jeffrey Watson was born the third Day of August A.D. 1712, old style, which is the 14th Day of month now in New Style.

Bathsheba his Wife was born the 7th Day of April A.D. 1710, old style.

The above mentioned two Persons were Joined in marriage the 29th Day of November A.D. 1732.

Hannah Watson was born June the second Day and the Last Day of the Week in the year 1733.

Jeffry Watson was born October the 16th Day and the fourth Day of the Week in the year 1734.

Elisha Watson was born July the tenth Day and the last Day of the Week in the year 1736.

Dorcas Watson was born August the 13th Day and the first Day of the Week in the year 1738. Departed this Life ye 11 Day of Sept, 1741.

Mercy Watson was born July the Tenth Day and the fifth Day of the Week In the year 1740.

Dorcas Watson was born June the Fifth Day and the Last Day of the Week In the year 1742.

Sarah Watson was born January the 11th Day and the third Day of the Week, a little before Day broke, In the year 1743.

William Watson was born April the 25th Day and the Fifth Day of the Week In the year 1745. Died September 26, 1783, aged 38 years and 5 months and one Day.

Bathsheba Watson was born February the 16 Day and the Second Day of the Week In the year 1746. Departed this Life the 25 Day of January 1748.

Bathsheba Watson was born 17th Day of September and the 7th Day of the week in the year 1748.

John Watson was born the 27th Day of December and the 5th Day of the week in the year 1750.

Elizabeth Watson was born the 27th Day of May and the 6th Day of the week in the year 1757.

[N.B.] Their ages are entered in old style except the Last.

Joshua Allen and Hannah Watson was married the [blank] Day of August in the year of our Lord 1750.

Thomas Allen, Son of the above mentioned persons, was born the 24th Day of December in the year of our Lord 1750. Died at Port-au-Prince at Hispaniola.

Elizabeth Allen, Daughter of the above mentioned persons was born [blank].

Jeffry Watson, Jr. and Hannah Gardner were Joined Together in marriage the 24th Day of March 1757.

Ezekiel Watson, Son of the above mentioned persons, was born the Sixth Day of January about Eight O'Clock in the morning, [in] the Sixth Day of the week, in the year of our Lord seventeen Hundred and fifty eight.

Jeffrey Watson, Second Son of the above mentioned persons, was born the Tenth Day of April about Two O'Clock in the morning, [in] the fifth Day of the week, in the year of our Lord Seventeen Hundred and sixty.

David Watson, Third Son of the above mentioned Persons, was born the eleventh Day of April about four O'clock in the afternoon, [in] the first Day of the week, in the year of our Lord Seventeen Hundred and Sixty Two.

My own Father's marriage and Death:

John Watson, Son of John Watson and Dorcas Watson his wife, was born the 23d Day of July in the year of our Lord 1676.

John Watson, Jr., and Hannah Champlin, Daughter to Jeffry Champlin, both of Kingstown, were joined together in the Honorable State of Matrimony The eight Day of April 1703.

Hannah Watson, wife of John Watson, Jr., Departed this Life the 31st Day of October 1720.

John Watson, Jr., and Abigail Eldredge, widow to Samuel Eldredge, were Joined Together in the Honorable State of matrimony in April 1722.

Abigail Watson, wife of John Watson, Departed this Life the 22d Day of August 1737.

John Watson and Sarah Mory were Joined Together in the Honorable Estate of matrimony in September 1738.

Sarah Watson, wife of John Watson, Departed this Life the 12th Day of March in the year 1764.

John Watson Departed this Life the 18th Day of November in the year of our Lord 1772 in the 97th year of his age and in the next week's News paper his Death and character was published Thus: "November the 23, 1772. On Wednesday Last Departed this Life and on Saturday was decently Intered, John Watson, Esqr., in the 97th year of his age. He was the first child born in Narragansett after the Indian war. He was blest with more than a common share of good Sense and was Early Employed in many Important affairs—was several years a member of the General Assembly, and Sustained other offices of Trust and Importance, all [of] which he Executed with Integrity and to general Satisfaction. He Enjoyed an Uncommon Share of good Health having Never been Confined to his bed 'Til a few days before his Death. He Retained his memory and Rational faculties to the Last. He had 8 children, 57 Grandchildren, 95 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-Grandchildren, in all 163, of whom 138 are now Living, and a great part of them followed his Corpse to the grave. He was a Loving Husband, a Tender Father, a just magistrate, a good Neighbor, a mild master, and an Honest man."

John Watson (son of Jeffry) and Rachel Richardson were Joined Together in marriage the 24th Day of November 1773.

Dorcas Watson, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the Eight Day of January, and first Day of the week, about four o'clock in the morning, in ye year 1775.

May Watson, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the Twenty Ninth Day of September, and first Day of the week, about Ten in the Evening, in the year 1776.

Hannah Watson, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the Twenty first Day of December, and second Day of the week, a little after five in the Evening, 1778.

Bathsheba Watson, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the Eleventh Day of February, about a quarter past Eight o'clock in the evening, second Day of the week, 1782.

57. Record of Marriages. Watson performed these marriages in his capacity as a colony assistant and as a justice of the King's County Inferior Court.

Rachel Watson, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the twentieth of August, about two o'clock in the after noon, in the year 1786.

William Gardner and Sarah Watson, was Joined Together in marriage the [missing]

Wilkinson Gardner, son of the above mentioned persons, was born [missing]

Mary Gardner, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born [missing]

Hannah Gardner, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the [missing]

Mercy Gardner, and Bathsheba Gardner, Daughters of the above mentioned persons, was born the 22d Day of April 1777. Twins.

Elisha Gardner, Son of the above mentioned persons, was born the 9th Day of May, and first Day of the week, 1779.

Sarah Gardner, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the 6th Day of May, and second Day of week, 1782, about Sun Rise.

John Gardner, Jr. was born June the 17th Day 1745. Bathsheba Watson was born the 17 Day of September 1745.

John Gardner, Jr. and Bathsheba Watson were Joined Together in marriage the [blank] Day [of] April in the year of our Lord 1767.

John Gardner, Son of the above mentioned persons, was born the 3d Day of September in the year of our Lord 1767.

Bathsheba Gardner, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the 20th Day of September in the year of our Lord 1769.

Mercy Gardner, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the 1st Day of January in the year of our Lord 1772.

Jeffry Watson Gardner, Son of the above mentioned persons, was born the 2d Day of February in the year of our Lord 1775.

Desire Gardner, Daughter of the above mentioned persons, was born the 10th Day of February in the year of our Lord 1777.

[missing], Daughter of the above mentioned persons was born the [missing] Day of august in the year 1782.

*Jeffry Watson's Record of Marriages Performed*<sup>57</sup>

Silas Spencer and Dorcas Gardner were Joined Together in marriage the 28 Day of July 175[8?].

William Congdon and Rebeckah Taylor were Joined Together in marriage the 6 Day of August 175[unclear].

William Shearman and Amy Sweet were Joined Together in marriage the 28 Day of January 1759.

Daniel Stafford and Mary Green were joined Together in marriage the 20 Day of December 1765.

Simeon Clark and Hannah Champlin were Joined Together in marriage the 21st Day of October in the year 176[5?].

Abijah Babcock and May Watson were Joined Together in marriage the first Day of March in the year of our Lord 176[unclear].

Moses Slocum and Francis Watson were Joined Together in marriage the 21st Day of August A.D. 1746.

Edmond Littlefield and Martha Frasure were Joined together in marriage the 30th Day of November A.D. 1746.

Samuel Codner and Mary Bates were Joined Together in marriage the 28th Day of December A.D. 1746.

Samuel Curtice and Amy Case were Joined Together in marriage the 19th Day of March A.D. 1746.

Francis Parker and Rebeckah Vial were Joined Together in marriage the 22nd Day of March A.D. 1746.

Jonathan Hassard and Mary Gardner were Joined Together in marriage the 16th Day of April A.D. 1747.

James Gardner, Esq. and Wait Coggeshal were Joined Together in marriage the 15th Day of March 1749.

Nicholas Northup, Jr. and Hannah Allen were Joined Together in marriage the 29th of March A.D. 1750.

Job Babcock (Son of Samuel) and Susannah Champlin were Joined Together in marriage the 5th Day of April A.D. 1750.

John Ball and Abigail Austin were Joined Together in marriage the 22nd Day of May A.D. 1750.

Joseph Hoxsie and Amy Reynolds were Joined Together in marriage the 20th Day of February A.D. 1752.

Benjamin Sheffield and Hannah Coggeshal were Joined Together in marriage the 16th Day of April A.D. 1752.

John Potter and Mary Hassard were Joined Together in marriage the 30th Day of August A.D. 1752.

Charles Campbell and Hannah Easten were Joined Together in marriage the 26th Day of November A.D. 1752.

Wilkinson Browning and Susannah Hassard were Joined Together in marriage the 4th of February A.D. 1753.

Robert Brown and Sarah Shearman were Joined Together in marriage the 16th Day of May A.D. 1753.

Elisha Hall and Elizabeth Joslin were Joined Together in marriage the 17th Day of May A.D. 1753.

Jonathan Holloway and Deborah Everett were Joined Together in marriage the 24th Day of May A.D. 1753.

William Little and Deliverance Joslin were Joined Together in marriage the 21st Day of October A.D. 1753.

Job Durfee and Sarah Easten were Joined Together in marriage the 25th Day of October A.D. 1753.

Samuel Fry and Luceanna Coggeshal were Joined Together in marriage the 20th Day of December A.D. 1753.

James Babcock and Sarah Shelden were Joined Together in Marriage the 31st Day of January 1754.

Charles Tillinghast and Marcy Green were Joined Together in Marriage the 14th Day of February 1754.

Nicholas Gardner and Hannah Champlin were Joined Together in Marriage the 28th Day of March A.D. 1754.

Thomas Champlin and Hannah Hassard were Lawfully Joined Together [in] marriage the [blank] Day of [blank] 1754.

Jonathan Babcock and Amy Clarke were Joined Together in Marriage the 5th Day of March A.D. 1755.

Edward Arnold and Freelove Whaley were Joined Together in Marriage the 27th Day of March A.D. 1755.

The before mentioned persons were joined in marriage Before Jeffrey Watson, Assistant.

*A Record of Jeffry Watson's Slaves*

Jack was born August 1748.

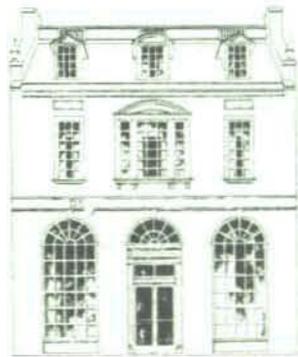
Tobe was born now Dead.

Silve was born now Dead.

Siboa was born now Dead.

Choe was born 1756, Dyed April 1780.

Trimus was born February 1758.



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