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## Reminiscences of East Greenwich

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R. J. - *Reminiscences of East Greenwich*

V.F.

# REMINISCENCES

OF EAST GREENWICH.





ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE

EAST GREENWICH

BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATION



 BY 

HENRY E. TURNER,

APRIL 11, 1892.



# Reminiscences of East Greenwich.

## ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE EAST GREENWICH BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATION.

BY HENRY E. TURNER, APRIL 11, 1892.

My earliest recollections, and of course somewhat faint ones, refer to about the year 1819. At that time my family were living in what was then known as the Searle house, in the Main street of East Greenwich, on the corner opposite the Perry Arnold house, then occupied by Captain Arnold and sister, Mrs. Lydia Greene, widow of Dr. Jeremiah Greene, son of Col. Christopher Greene of Revolutionary fame. Mrs. Greene's family consisted of her two sons—Christopher, who kept a grocery store in the basement of the same building, and William Arnold Greene, who was captain of a brig belonging to his uncle, Major Stephen Arnold, engaged in trading to Surinam, and perhaps incidentally to other ports on the Spanish main, and which went out periodically loaded with potatoes and onions, cheese and other products of Rhode Island industry, Rhode Island being then a purely agricultural state, and not as now—depending on the sale of the products of manufacturing industry for the means of supplying and paying for the cereals and other articles on which the population subsists, and without the importation of which, from other parts of the United States, it could not subsist at all. In return the cargo consisted of sugar, molasses, coffee, cocoa, rum and fruits of various kinds, such as are produced in tropical climates. The arrival of one of the vessels belonging to the Arnolds was the occasion of jubilant excitement among the boys and young men, and to all the community an agreeable interruption to the ordinary monotony of life, in a very quiet community as was that of Greenwich in general.

Up to this time the "West India trade" or, as it is often called, "Molasses trade" was, and had been time out of mind, the great and absorbing interest of East Greenwich. The father, Col. Wm. Arnold, and the brother, Capt. Perry Arnold, of Major Stephen Arnold, had, with him, constituted the great and wealthy firm of "the Arnolds," whose name, to Greenwich people, was the synonym for vast wealth and undoubted success, as much so as were those of the Browns and Champlins to the people of Providence and Newport; but shortly before the time of which I speak the father and brother having died, Major Stephen was the sole representative of the great concern, and in a few years after, probably about 1826, he died after some years of feeble health, and the West India trade, which culminated with the death of his father and brother, came to an end.

During the successful career of the Arnolds, several other parties and firms, emulous naturally of their success, attempted, on a small scale, the same business in Greenwich, but did not achieve the same degree of prosperity; so that for some years after the war of 1812 Greenwich was the theatre of very decided commercial activity, but none of the other concerns outlived Major Arnold, and the progress of events, or to use a phrase more modern, "the logic of events," precluded or defeated all future efforts in a similar direction.

In point of fact, my first recollections seem to be coincident with the beginning of the changes in the habits and modes of life and thought, which mark the progress of the nineteenth century toward



the now fast approaching point of time when its existence will be merged into the twentieth century, which, for aught we know, may be witness to even more stupendous advances in science and arts, and more rapid and substantial diffusion of intelligence and knowledge among men than the phenomenal ones which have characterized the era just passing away. God send that the progress in intellectual and material advancement, which we are justified in expecting in the next one hundred years, may be attended by an elevation in the standard of public sentiment on points of religion and morals, and of mercantile and political integrity greater than have been witnessed by the last.

There were other sources of revenue and means of trade within my recollection at East Greenwich which are now extinct.

The country back was far less densely populated than now. Indeed, some years later, in 1829 or 30, I heard some politicians discussing the probability of Rhode Island losing one of her two representatives in Congress, the new apportionment being one to 45,005, which would make the requirement 90,000 inhabitants, (and my impression is that our representation would be only saved to us by the fractional provision.) The population in 1885 was 304,484 by the census, in 1830 it was, by the same authority, 97,210; so that my friends were mistaken in their estimate. Nevertheless, the present population exceeds that of 1830 multiplied by three and some thirteen thousand and over, besides the increment since 1885, which, by analogy, (the difference between 1880 and 1885 being 27,753.) would be not less than 30,000 more. Besides the increase in population the immense consumption of the forest products, in the production of steam power and in the arts, has caused almost the entire denudation of every accessible part of New England of all its forest growth, which, when I entered on this arena, was a very considerable item in the wealth, not of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont only, but of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. When I came to Newport, about 1830, ten years later than the time I have spoken of, wood was the only fuel used. Not a ton of coal was used in Newport from years

and to year's end, except in blacksmith's shops and that only bituminous, and the immense piles of cord wood which encumbered the wharves in the beginning of winter is difficult to be conceived by those who have not witnessed them, as none of the younger generation have. Six cords of wood would be a very moderate allowance for a kitchen fire, and the better class of houses would have from two to four other fires, so that 1500 houses could not be supplied for the winter with less than an average of six cords each, making 9,000 in the aggregate. This, I think, is a very moderate estimate. Greenwich was one of the many sources from which this immense pile of wood had been recruited from immemorial time, *e. g.*, from the settlement of the State. This wood business and other supplies for Newport and Providence markets employed sloops plying constantly between these ports in the bay, and some of them to Nantucket, which was then doing a brilliant wharving business. One large sloop, commanded by Capt. Joseph Spencer, who lived at the Cove's Head, and was known as Cove's Head Joe, to distinguish him, and who was famous as the most polite man in the community, did business at Nantucket exclusively. Capt. Weeks Hill ran a large sloop regularly to Albany, bringing to Newport and Greenwich flour, butter and other products of the State of New York. These fountains of prosperity, it is probable, don't now exist. Capt. Hill will be remembered by many Newport people as a very successful brewer, in Newport, where he came after the close of his Albany trade in Greenwich. Alas! for the sloop business of Narragansett bay, in my boyhood. It was the means of taking us, as passengers, in our trips for pleasure or business, about the bay, and for supplying us with our necessities and luxuries. A sloop always ran regularly from Wickford to Newport and one from Newport to Providence, and seldom a day passed that a sloop from Greenwich did not make fast to the wharf in Newport. A sloop also made regular trips from Warren to Newport, commanded by the most genial of men, my ancient friend and kinsman, Captain William Turner of Warren, whose son, Thomas G. Turner, was afterward governor of the State.



The ancient captain, best known in Greenwich and longest associated with the Newport trade, was Captain Howland Greene of Greenwich. He lived in the Main street, at the north corner of the street coming down, opposite the Uplike House, previously known as Colonel Arnold's Tavern, and then, as now, distinguished by the sign of the bunch of grapes, which, from the revolution to this day, has been the leading hostelry in East Greenwich. In my first recollection it would have seemed an unreasonable and almost impossible effort of imagination to conceive of any other method of reaching Newport than by Captain Greene's packet, as that class of vessels were then styled, but before many years the trade had changed, so that the sloops went more frequently to Providence than to Newport, and a regular packet-sloop, between Wickford and Newport, the old Resolution, owned by the Howlands and commanded in my earliest recollection by Capt. Wm. Holloway, Jr., and built in the year of my advent, 1816, afterwards run for many years, first by Thomas Holloway and then by Capt. Baker, the father of our Superintendent of Schools, had become the more usual mode of going to Newport, and even Capt. Howland Greene had adapted himself and made his trips as often to Providence as to Newport in his advanced life.

Besides Captains Spencer and Greene, Capt. Benj. Miller was running a sloop, according to my recollection. His trade was almost exclusively confined to Providence. He was knocked overboard and drowned by the jibing of his sloop off Conanicut Point in returning from Providence, with only a young son on board, who succeeded in landing the vessel safely alone.

The tendency has been, during the last fifty years, to centralize, in the large seaport cities, all maritime enterprise.

At the time of which I am speaking a large East India trade was carried on in Providence with very brilliant results, and West India trade was a very essential element in Providence life. Bristol was doing a large and lucrative foreign trade, and Warren a very considerable business of similar character. In all these towns successful foreign trade has become a thing of the past, and only oc-

casional, feeble and futile efforts remind us in a melancholy way of what once was Newport, whose sails once whitened every sea and brought to us the wealth and luxuries of every land, and where, since the revolution, one individual is said to have owned forty sail of square-rigged vessels, and where, before the revolution, phenomenal activity and success prevailed in every branch of foreign commerce, not a square-rigged vessel is now owned.

But there are other reasons than those I have mentioned for the decadence of East Greenwich as regards its commercial possibilities.

Whereas, in earlier days, the country back of Greenwich was an agricultural country, purely though not an exceptionally fertile region. Still it was fairly productive and fairly populous, and Greenwich was its natural *entrepot*, particularly for all its forest products. It had besides its forest and agricultural capacities a development of very numerous and unfailing streams of greater or less size and of rapid descent, pervading its drainage area, affording very extensive and eligible positions for manufacturing such commodities as required the application of water power for their successful protection, steam power being then not reduced to practical use. At about the same time of which we are speaking, Mr. Samuel Slater had come to Rhode Island and persuaded the people of strong means, in and about Providence, to embark in the plan of entering into the manufacture of cotton, which his skill and industry, and their faith in him, so amply justified in the event and their energy and perseverance, aided by their capital and credit, finally resulted in such eminent and marvellous success as to completely revolutionize, in a half century, the whole industrial status of this region and to change the habits and modes of life and thought and aspirations in a marvellous degree of its population.

As a result of this process, at every point on any of those streams, and especially on the Pawtuxet river, very accessible to Greenwich, where a desirable mill privilege existed, a small village sprang into existence, and with the increasing success of the business the mills rapidly increased in size and the village in-



creased in population, affording easy markets for the farmer's produce which had therefore found its market, through Greenwich, to Newport, Nantucket, New York, the Southern coast and to the West Indies. This, I say, increasing from year to year, from, say 1815 to 1835, had reduced the prestige of Greenwich, as a market town, very materially, and then came into view the new project of a railroad from Stonington to Providence, which made the access to Providence so easy as to preclude, in a great degree, the possibility of success in the sources of profit to which Greenwich, by its natural position, was entitled. From this combination of causes another disadvantage occurred to Greenwich, viz: the manufacturing business afforded opportunities for profitable employment to young people and particularly children, so much beyond any to be found in Greenwich that each of the factory villages within a large radius was regarded as a city of refuge by people having large families of workable individuals, and while, as a result, they grew, Greenwich was depleted very materially of the more productive class of its people—artisans, especially, drifted toward the points where the most activity prevailed.

Later, it is true, after steam had established its capacity to compete with running water as a motive power, some mills were built in Greenwich, but its former position as a thriving commercial town fails to be restored.

Shortly after the Revolution some attempts were made to establish foreign trade in Greenwich by Silas Casey, who was measurably successful, and by Crary, Fry & Bently, who afterward dissolved, and Crary (Col. Archibald Crary of the Continental Army) and Mr. Fry became merchants in Newport. Capt. Christopher Bently was an old India captain, belonging in Greenwich, where he died; inferentially, though the business of Crary, Fry & Bently was not necessarily disastrous, it was not sufficiently profitable to become a permanent institution, as that of the Arnolds became afterwards.

One of the landmarks in my boyhood, gone now for very many years, was the Ropewalk, which then stood as a memorial of the Commercial Spirit which had formerly had its home in the community and which occupied the highest point on

Ropewalk Hill, a point, I should judge, not far from where the railroad depot now stands, but very much higher, the hill having been very largely removed. This hill, now constituting a large part of the southeast portion of the village, was then a barren tract, unfenced and uncultivated, with no building on it except the Ropewalk in plain view from all parts of the village, and was always the theatre, up to the time I left Greenwich, of an annual celebration of the burning of the pope's effigy, on the anniversary of the discovery of the gun powder plot, on the fifth day of November. When this practice was discontinued I do not know exactly, but after 1828. There is good reason to suppose that it lasted to a later time in Greenwich than anywhere else in Rhode Island, except possibly in Bristol. There is evidence of its having been a common practice to burn the pope all over the United Colonies up to the Revolution. Probably it had prevailed in Greenwich, from its settlement, in 1690, to 1830, one hundred and sixty years, at the expiration of which time the increasing immigration of the Catholic element from Europe made its continuance, to say the least, undesirable.

Just before, and at the commencement of the Revolution, as an expression of public sentiment, a curious combination of characters was placed in juxtaposition, viz.: Three figures were carried in a cart to execution and there burned. These were the devil, the pope and Thomas Hutchinson. T. Hutchinson was the historian and Tory Governor of Massachusetts, and became a royal refugee and was intensely hated by the American patriots of that era.

It is not to be inferred that the sentiment implied by what was popularly called "the burning of the pope" was of a religious character, wholly, or even chiefly. It grew out of the feeling of loyalty toward the royal government of Great Britain, and the persons of the royal race when in power, which always characterized the English people and which came to the Colonies with the early settlers, and which, up to the Revolution, pervaded the public mind and heart, and which induced a repulsion and indignant protest in the bosom of Americans, as well as English, against the Guy Faux



conspiracy and the atrocity of its abettors.

Another feature which at times gave interest to the Ropewalk Hill was the placing of fish to dry, on wattle frames, by the crews of certain fishing vessels then sailing from and owned by Greenwich parties on their return from the Banks or the Straits of Belle Isle, which fishing business prevailed to considerable extent at a time when the decline of larger trade required that some supplementary provision should be made for the employment of the maritime part of the community and for the capital left unemployed by the decadence of the former trade.

Another hill, a counterpart to the Ropewalk Hill, on the north, and, according to my recollection, called Meeting House Hill, was crowned by a ruin which had been the old Baptist Meeting House, through many generations, and surrounded by the cemetery in which many generations had deposited their dead. Between these two, quite symmetrical and corresponding hills, ran the street, as it now runs, from the Courthouse to the Jail, which gave the only convenient access to the water front, which was in a great degree closed to view from the town by the two hills which were both swept away in the excavations made in building the railroad, and wiping out the Baptist cemetery and several private cemeteries which were in plain view and rather an interesting object and not wanting in picturesque attraction, in the same process eliminating the obstruction to the full view of the bay and cove, show the more elevated points in the town and, no doubt, improving the facilities for communication with the landing.

The principal point of interest and attraction of that day was what was familiarly known as "The Head of the Gutter," a name so long discontinued as to be almost forgotten, and probably never known to the latter generations of what was then affectionately referred to as "The City of Perth or Peth." This also was consigned very many years ago to the limbo of the past, the latter so was far disused as to have been merely a reminiscence in my boyhood's days, but the term "Head of the Gutter" was then in constant use and referred to the Main

street crossing of the street leading to the jail, at the corners of which, were on one corner, the County Courthouse, and opposite, the Fire Engine house, and on the other corners the taverns of Ben. Brown on the west and of John Tibbetts on the east, and the "Head of the Gutter" was, emphatically, as well the centre of the County of Kent as of the village of East Greenwich.

At this point on mild evenings in warm weather the Quidnuncs of the village gathered to discuss all matters of local gossip and of public interest, and possibly to comfort the inner man with the genial decoctions of Capt. J. R. Robert's shop or Ben. Brown's bar-room.

But the great glory of this central thoroughfare only bloomed out in its consummation when the courts held their biennial sessions, and especially in August court week, when the whole population of the County took holiday, and the streets were lined with wagons, each generally drawn by a brood mare with a little colt *en suite*, or after the court had concluded its labors and begun to bear fruit in the victims of the whipping post and pillory, in which in those days it rarely failed. At these times the populace generally had an opportunity to enjoy one or more of those charming exhibitions, especially though not exclusively belonging to Donnybrook fair. All these delightful occasions belonged to the "Head of the Gutter" as much as political executions to Tower Hill or Scotch hangings to the Grass Market.

The liberty pole, as we always called it, which bore the emblem of Independence on the Glorious Fourth of July, and which was planted outside the Courthouse yard, at the corner, on these less auspicious occasions subserved the purpose of a whipping post, and the pillory was placed in close proximity to it, and at the same corner the town pump afforded, as occasion required, the means of discipline for those offenders who answered for their offences to Judge Lynch, where they were overlooked by the judicial authorities, and on some occasions afforded materials for a wholesome and efficacious ablution to those who had made use of the neighboring facilities for offering sacrifices at the shrine of Bacchus, not wisely, but too well.

On the Fourth of July the recurrence



of the anniversary of National Independence was always celebrated. At sunrise, and at noon and sunset a salute was fired always at the "Head of the Gutter" from a 2-pound swivel, mounted, for the occasion, in the centre of the street. The Kentish Guards paraded; a procession was formed in front of Wm. Updike's tavern and escorted along the Main street to the line of Warwick, up Division street to Pearce street, to the Congregational Church, on the spot now occupied by the Episcopal Church, where the Declaration of Independence was read, an oration delivered, with ascriptions of praise and supplication to the Almighty, when the procession returned by the south part of Pearce street to the point where its south end joins the Main street, and back by the Main street to Updike's, where the procession was dissolved, and a banquet was afterwards held in Updike's Hall, and the afternoon, concluded with what to the boys who had the privilege of looking on through the windows and doors, appreciated as a glorious exemplification of the "feast of reason and the flow of soul." It should be said that the notable people of the town were present in the procession and at the exercises, if not at the dinner, the fumes of Revolutionary patriotism not then, as later, having died out, and it was a reproach to a man of character to be wanting in the just appreciation of the claims to deference of our Revolutionary fathers. In point of fact, several of the men themselves were Revolutionary soldiers. Notably, Christopher Greene, Elihu Greene and William Greene, all brothers of Gen. Nathaniel Greene; also Capt. Tom Arnold, with his wooden leg, and Edward Pearce, with one arm, the witness of their Revolutionary service. Up to 1822 my grandfather, Dr. Peter Turner, was living, although confined to his house by the infirmities of age.

At the corners of Division and Main streets, north and south, were, when I first recollect, two iron canons, planted perpendicularly by Mr. Silas Casey, many years before, resembling the two, which then stood at the foot of the Parade, and now stand near the fountain in Newport. In 1824 John Quincy Adams was elected president to succeed James Munroe. On this occasion one of these old canons was dug up and cleaned and used for fir-

ing a salute immediately in front of the church on Pearce street, where she reposed for a number of years and was utilized on the Fourth of July instead of the 2 pounder swivel formerly in use. This was the first presidential election which my memory recalls, though Mr. Monroe's two elections occurred after my birth; one in my first year.

My earliest recollection of a Fourth of July celebration in Greenwich must have been at a very early period in my life, for, if I am right, the oration on that occasion was delivered by a Mr. Allen, who was then the principal of the Academy, and I was a pupil in the female department of his school in the north wing of the old Academy building with a Miss Thompson, and I became afterward a pupil in the south wing of the same building under the tuition of John Cook Brown, who had been and, I presume, then was, a student in the office of my kinsman, General Albert C. Greene, afterwards Attorney General of Rhode Island and Senator in Congress from this State. Wm. Albert Greene, the son of Gen. Albert, and myself, were, I conclude, taken into Mr. Brown's school, out of his close friendship with our fathers, rather as a favor than otherwise, we being very little boys. I could not have been more than four years old, and Wm. Albert about a year older—rather callow youths for a classical school. At any rate, I remember being at Mrs. Coggeshall's girl's school long after. Mr. Brown went, I think, with my father to Ohio shortly after, where he died very soon.

This attendance at Mrs. Brown's school was probably in 1820, and Mr. Allen had died previously, being obliged to abandon his school on account of ill health. Inferentially I was about three years old when I was at Miss Thompson's school, being carried by my aunt, Miss Isabella Greene, who was a pupil in the school, probably rather to relieve my mother from care than from any expectation of great proficiency on my part in mental culture. Within a year of the time of which I speak, strange to say in view of the wonderful change in our habits of life in every respect, and especially in our phenomenal advance in speed and facilities and economy of locomotion, I saw, and perfectly remember seeing, at different times my father, Dr. James F.



Turner, and my uncle, the late Lieut. Gov., William Greene, mount their horses to journey all the way in the saddle—my father to Columbia, Tenn., and my uncle to Ohio, where he lived for many years before he returned to end his days in his paternal mansion.

And once later my father left Greenwich on horseback to go to Florence, Ala., and returned on a horse which he bought in Alabama, and which, I remember for several years after, as the family hack.

My recollections of Miss Thompson's school are perfectly fresh. Among her pupils were the two Misses Abby and Alice Updike, Misses Caroline and Harriet King, Misses Mary and Louisa Casey, Misses Patience and Elsie Arnold, late Mrs. Thomas Rhodes, Miss Elsie Ann Tillingham, Miss Tabitha Mawney and Miss Celia Clarke, late Mrs. Judge Brayton, and others whom I cannot name. All of these, being on intimate terms with my family, naturally petted me and made a correspondingly strong impression on my mind. In Mr. Allen's room, which was the large hall in the centre of the building, were many young men my seniors, as Elihu Greene, Nathaniel Greene, Franklin and Christopher Greene, of Franklin, John Casey, Wm. Casey, Silas Casey and Charles and Vernon King, Prof. George W. Greene and Lodowick Updike, and among the rest I distinctly remember Joseph S. Jenckes, who afterward married my aunt, Miss Isabella Greene, and lived for many years, and died not many years ago, at Terre Haute, Indiana.

Whether there were any young ladies in Mr. Brown's school, I cannot remember, but I do remember the same set of boys as were in Mr. Allen's school, and I have a very vivid recollection of this circumstance: The larger boys had a frightful mask, with which one of them chased me around the Academy, frightening me almost out of my wits, it being entirely a novelty to me, and I never to this moment have forgotten or failed frequently to indulge in the grateful feeling I entertained towards Nathaniel Greene and Lodowick Updike for resenting the folly of the other big boys and protecting me against the dangerous consequences such inconsiderate treatment of a very little child might involve.

It must seem to you, most of whom only go back to a time when those men seemed to belong to the far-away past, strange to see a man talking familiarly to you who was a schoolmate with General Silas Casey, and Elihu Greene, and Franklin Greene, and Chief Justice George Brayton, etc., and yet such is the fact. At this time they were approaching manhood, while I was a very small boy. The proper companions of my boyhood were Wm. Albert Greene, Henry Ward Greene, Wm. Maxwell Greene, Christopher and Nat of Capt. Nat. Greene, Charles and James Eldredge, Christopher Handy, Samuel Whiting, James King, John Proud, and many more of about the same age.

As I have said, my first impression as connected with the Kentish Guards were derived from the Fourth of July when the oration was delivered by the principal of the Academy, Mr. Allen. The commander at that time was Col. Benjamin Brown, who was then and for many years after the landlord of Brown's Tavern, on the corner of Main and Court streets, previously kept by his father, Clark Brown, Esq. Col. Brown was a very elegant looking figure as a military man, and I remember him perfectly on this occasion, and for a long time he was my beau ideal of a soldier. He had a fine figure, admirably adapted to set off the uniform then in use by the Kentish Guards. This was a short jacket, commonly called a round-about, fitting very snugly and ornamented with red facings, especially a red-band about the waist and having plenty of small buttons on it. The pants fitted also very snugly, particularly below the knee, being encased below the knee in black gaiters, very close fitting, with an abundant supply of small buttons on the outside, I should judge twenty or more. I describe this from the recollection of a little boy less than five years old. I may be excused if I am not precisely exact in the detail. I don't remember any cap, and probably the fur hat of those days, the silk-plush hat not then being in use, was worn, as it was for a long time afterward, with a brass-plate sewn to the hat. In my first days a plume was worn of black tipped with red on the side of the hat, but later the plate and plume of red feathers were worn on the front of the hat. I am of



the impression that a black cockade was in use before the brass plate of the continental pattern within my time. This dress I have often heard spoken of in after years, when it was a thing of the past, with high encomia on its becoming effect, when worn by men of symmetrical figures, but not so much so on some other men. My grandfather, the Hon. Ray Greene, under whose command of the company this uniform was adopted, as was supposed, on account of his exceptionally graceful figure. It always seemed to me that this uniform left nothing to be desired as a perfect adaptation for an ornamental military suit of apparel.

After my grandfather Greene the company was commanded by my uncle, Henry E. Turner, and by my father, James V. Turner, and my uncle, George Turner, was its lieutenant-col., and my grandfather, Dr. Peter Turner, was its surgeon from the close of the Revolutionary war to his death in 1822, when he was succeeded by my father, who held the position until he left Greenwich in 1828, so that my sympathies and prejudices were very early and very earnestly enlisted in favor of the ancient and very respectable organization to which so many of my traditional and hereditary associations attach me. I remember in the same uniform, Billy Mowry, when he was small enough to hide behind his bass drum, which he belabored with the highest degree of unction, and I knew him, many years after, when the peculiar tone of his clarinet enlivened the streets of Newport on many a parade occasion (where he lived and died), as the tone of his bass drum had aroused the echoes of the hills around Greenwich thirty years before. His mate, who played the snare drum, was Job Whitmarsh, whom I have heard spoken of by older persons as a phenomenal performer on that instrument, they going so far as to say that he could play the snare or kettle drum, as it was then called, so nicely that the tune could be distinguished; for this, however, we depend on the fife which was the indispensable accompaniment of the bass and snare drum, a relic of continental times. Afterward, before I left Greenwich, and before the days when military bands existed in almost every village, and in the days when the company was commanded

successively, by Col. William Pinnegar and Col. Daniel Greene, on extraordinary occasions the continental music was sometimes supplemented by the bugle of Hamilton, the famous bugler of Providence, or by my old friend and dancing master, Mr. Capron, also of Providence, on the Frenah horn.

Those were halcyon days when the company paraded, as they often did, on Saturday afternoons. After marching through the streets of the village, then not very extensive, to the yard of the old Academy, not then as large as now, but unincumbered with other buildings, to exercise and drill, and we boys easily persuaded ourselves that in soldierly appearance and perfection of drill the Kentish Guards might challenge the world; just as we had no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that, as a specimen of perfect architectural art, nothing in the world was quite worthy of comparison with the Kent County Court-house. Such is, or then was, the arrogance of boys.

One of the peculiar evolutions of the Kentish Guards was this: In marching north along the Main street, when they reached the Warwick line, or what was then known as Mrs. Casey's Corner, they formed a circle, facing so that each man faced the back of another. At the word of command every man sat down, of course, finding a seat on another man's knees. I speak of this as a peculiarity, because I never saw or heard of it anywhere else.

One of the notable objects in that time, long since removed and in a fair way to be forgotten, was the old Congregational Church, usually called Presbyterian. This stood on the spot now occupied by the Episcopal Church—St. Luke's—on Elm street. This building was the old-fashioned typical New England meeting-house, of which in that day there were hundreds scattered over New England. It was in height two stories with numerous windows, in two tiers, glazed with small panes, with a barn roof, the ridge pole running north and south. On the north end was a steeple and tower, attached to the end of the main building, only on one side, and having an entrance door to the north, with a flight of wooden steps. On the east broadside, at the middle, was the main entrance with also a flight of wooden steps and a double



door larger than that at the north.

All the land in front of the church from Armory street to Court street, except the terraced garden in the rear of the Court house belonging to the Clarke estate, and half way from Elm street to Main street, was unoccupied by buildings or trees and was unenclosed, so that it was virtually common; at that time also, be it observed, there were no trees (ornamental) in the streets, and no trees at all in the village, except such fruit trees as were tolerated where the gardens were valued for their capacity for producing vegetables, so that from the whole length of Elm street the view of the cove and bay was uninterrupted, and the front steps and doorway of the church afforded an enchanting prospect, to recall which, at this distant day, fills my soul with unalloyed delight, young as I was when I received the impression. No such panorama can now be obtained at any point within the borough on the surface as was then afforded by a stroll at any point on Elm street, and I am rather given to thinking that no spot within my observation ever could compare with what I saw every day in my childhood coming to school in town from the Governor Greene farm.

I should except from my proposition, as to trees, the two elms in front of Dr. Eldredge's house, which were old trees when I was born, and those around Judge Brayton's house, and one on the Bowen estate opposite, north of Judge Brayton's, the history of the planting of which trees was given me by my very dear old friend, Daniel Updike, Esq., who has been dead for fifty years or more.

The Judge Brayton house, formerly the Clarke house, was built by General James M. Varnum near the time of the Revolution. General Varnum was a very distinguished lawyer, who went to Marietta, Ohio, as judge of the Northwest Territory before the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. A few months after his arrival in Marietta he died in January, 1789. Mr. Updike, my informant, told me that while Gen. Varnum was living in this house, and before his going to the West, he (Mr. Updike) and Mr. Ray Greene, my grandfather, were fellow students in General Varnum's law office, (both of them, by the way, were afterward attorney generals

of Rhode Island,) and one day, by request of Mr. Varnum, they took a horse and went to the woods and dug up the trees and replanted them, by Mr. Varnum's direction, where we see them now. Of course they were old trees when Mr. Updike told me the story, not less than fifty years after they were placed there, and not less than the storms of fifty winters have passed over them since.

But to return to the church. As my earliest recollections picture it on my mind, it looked like an old building, and if the exterior had ever been painted there were no evidences of it, nor had any part of the interior, except the pulpit, ever been painted. The pulpit, of the old style, of which several may still be seen in Newport, was on the west side of the audience room opposite the front door. The gallery, as in other churches of its date, occupied three sides—north, east and south. The wall pews were square and box like, and the body pews were slips, such as are now common. The finish was good panelled work in the pews and front of the gallery, and creditable in point of workmanship, showing that a nice building had been designed, but the means evidently had not met expectations, for no paint had been used in the interior except on the pulpit, and it used to be one of the dreams of my boyish ambition to look forward to the finishing of the work on what I felt was the Lord's tabernacle.

Although the plastering had been completed it was evident that it had been done at different periods from the fact that some of the parts of plaster was much darker than others, with very irregular points of junctions as if plaster had been applied as far as it would go and then another relay was waited for, and it had never been whitewashed, so that these objects of my childish observation were conspicuous always.

Still it was a very respectable establishment and the only church building in Greenwich, except the Friend's meeting house, while I lived there, the old Baptist meeting house having been abandoned before my recollection.

The interior of the church presents itself to my mind very much as I saw it sixty-five years ago. In the wall pew in the southeast corner sat Mr. Jonathan Salisbury, an old man of monstrous pro-



portions, very much heavier than any other man I have ever seen. The next wall pew toward the front door was once occupied by my family. On the other side of Mr. Salisbury's pew, on the south side, sat the family of Augustus Greene, Esq. On the west side, next the window south from the pulpit, sat Mr. Wanton Casey's family; next the window, north from the pulpit, my grandfather Turner's family sat; on the north side, west from the tower door, sat Nathaniel Ray Greene's family; on the other side, north door, Capt. Jonathan Andrew's family. Those are the wall pews I recollect. The body pews, south from the centre aisle, first from front door, was Deacon John Brown's; next Col. Spencer's pew, used by my family; next Gen. Albert C. Greene's; next Mr. Samuel King's; next Mr. Updike's; north of the aisle, first from door, Mr. Ray Clarke's; next Mr. Franklin Greene's; next Mr. Christopher Greene's, of Potowomut; the next Mr. Wm. P. Maxwell's.

The choir was entirely voluntary, unless the leader was hired. The only instrument used in the choir, except occasionally a flute, was a pitch pipe, the only one I have ever seen used, and I presume a specimen cannot now be found, the tuning fork having superseded it very long ago to give the key note. The leader sang, after using his pipe, with the most extraordinary nasal intonation I have ever known approached, which I then supposed was a necessary part of sacred worship. How it could be endured is a mystery; they seemed to have no power to escape it; he must have had phenomenal scientific superiority. It resembled in tone the old-fashioned bass, except in the Quaker preaching of those days, and that of Elder Manchester, who preached occasionally in the Court-house, and had for many years, and who was equally distinguished for his stentorial power, for the perfection of his nasal intoning and for the interminable length of his discourses. A story used to be told which illustrates the latter's peculiarity: My grandfather's house was near the Court-house, and in summer every word of the elder's came very distinctly into the open windows. One afternoon my father, a very little boy, came back about 5 o'clock, leaving the elder preaching. Said his father, "James, how came you to leave

before meeting was out?" Said the little boy, "Why, father, I staid to twenty twotwothly." In one of the violent Jeremiads, in which the elder frequently indulged, he exclaimed to his Greenwich audience, "I've hollered and bawled to ye this forty years and ye ain't no better!"

At about the same time the Methodists held their meetings in the Court-house, in the same room in which Elder Manchester preached, the Methodists being then an almost new sect without any house of worship, and just commencing, in a small way, a career which has since advanced by rapid strides to phenomenal importance and prosperity. The preacher of that persuasion, whom I first recollect, was the Rev. Mr. Risley, then a young man, but whom I saw in Newport a very few years ago, retired from service from the infirmities of extreme old age, and engaged in some missionary work in book peddling. I think he is now deceased. Next to him, as I now recollect, was Rev. Ephraim K. Avery, who was stationed here for a time, and afterwards the Rev. Mr. Otis was the resident here before I left. I recollect what a pretty scene was presented sometimes on Sunday afternoons when a baptizing occurred on the shore, south of the jail, below which the beach was broken by no wharf or landing place, and King street and the Ropewalk hill were fitted with well-dressed people to witness the ceremony. The impression on my mind was so vivid that since, when the administration of that sacred rite is called to mind by John the Baptist in the Jordan, my imagination always reverts to the shore and Greenwich cove, little as it, probably, resembles in reality the oriental scenery of the shores of the sacred river of Palestine.

I should not forget to mention the names of those worthy ministers who broke the bread of life to the Greenwich people in the old Congregational Church in my childhood. My father and mother were married in 1815 by the Rev. Mr. Rich, who was the pastor for a few years. He was succeeded by Rev. Daniel Waldo, who was very popular and whom, I recollect very well, Mr. Rich having left before my recollection. After Mr. Waldo the pulpit was occupied for several years by Rev. Charles Henry Alden,



an Episcopal minister, afterward a chaplain in the United States Navy. Mr. Alden was a nephew of Abner Alden, who was the author of the set of school books then in common use, especially in Greenwich, he (Abner Alden) having been the first principal of Greenwich Academy, being the successor in training the young ideas to Master Maxwell, and Master Boyd, and Master Franklin, near the commencement of this century. Abner Arnold had been followed in conducting the Academy by Joseph L. Tillinghast, afterward the famous Providence lawyer and many years member of the General Assembly and Representative in Congress from Rhode Island from 1837 to 1843, under the tuition of whom both my parents were pupils, and most of the generation also which preceded mine. Under the administration of Rev. Mr. Alden I was at school as long as he remained in Greenwich.

During Mr. Alden's service as principal of the Academy there were a number of boys at the school not Greenwich boys, as Frederick Herreshoff, Wm. Dorrance, Francis J. Lippitt, Henry L. Bowen, Wm. Magee, of Providence, and Wm. Munro and George Coggeshall, of Bristol, and some others; and I recollect on one occasion that Mr. Alden had a stage erected in front of the pulpit in the meeting house, and exhibited his school in public in declamation, etc. Probably very few people now living remember this, but as it was my first appearance in public it is fresh in my memory, I being then about 8 years of age. After Mr. Alden we had as preceptor Rev. Ebenezer Coleman, and later Mr. Henry Edes, Jr., for a short time, and for a longer time Christopher Robinson, afterwards member of Congress, who married Miss Elsie Ann Tillinghast, daughter of Judge Joseph J. Tillinghast, one of our most worthy citizens.

I have spoken of the extraordinary size of Mr. Jonathan Salisbury. He was a contemporary of my grandfather and outlived him for several years. He was well known in Newport, having been often a member of the General Assembly, and he could not appear anywhere without being the subject of general observation. He was reputed to weigh somewhere about 400 pounds. He generally sat in a stoop in front of his house, such

as I recollect, on several of the houses in Greenwich, with a large square top step with a railing on two sides and a flight of steps on the up-hill side; the lower side being much higher, owing to the sharp grade, was without steps, and the two railed sides were supplied with wooden seats. The platform at top being about five feet by six, accommodated a reasonably sized family party. This describes not only Mr. Salisbury's stoop, but my grandfather Turner's also. His home is now Mr. Silas Weaver's, on the corner of Elm street, just above the Court-house, which was besides shaded by the famous old grapevine, as it now is. This grapevine was brought from the woods and planted there by my father when a small boy, he having been born in 1789—probably not less than 90 years ago.

Mr. Salisbury's house was on the north west corner of Marlborough and King streets, and I have many hundreds of times seen him sitting in his stoop, which was his constant habit in suitable weather, his immense size being a disqualification for much active exercise.

Mr. Salisbury was remarkable for the power of his voice, and it used to be said that when he read the newspaper aloud the whole village could benefit by it. Mr. Salisbury had a farm in Frenchtown called the Burrow, and whenever he had occasion to visit his farm he occupied the body of an old-fashioned chaise, capacious in size, and intended for two full-grown persons, which would accommodate him alone with nothing to spare. The chaises of the class and date of Mr. Salisbury's, which were even then superseded by the calesche or bellowstop, of which there were several in use about Greenwich by the older people, had a square top and looked as if they might date back to some period not much later than the flood, and were opprobriously nicknamed by the boys and the profane roughs tobacco boxes.

The house on the corner, next below Mr. Salisbury's, was probably one of the earliest of the original buildings in the town, it having the typical stone chimney, then not entirely extinct, peculiar to the original New England residences, but I think not now represented by any chimney in the neighborhood except that of the Governor Greene farmhouse, now



by a single one on the Island of Rhode Island, where I remember in my youth several. This house was occupied by Seneca Spencer, the son of Jeremy Spencer, the miller of the Paradise mill, now gone, but which was a conspicuous and beautiful object in my boyhood, when the miller was James Arnold. I recollect, dimly, Seneca, a very old man and the house and stone chimney very definitely, but they all disappeared very early in my career.

Another specimen of the prodigious pile of stones a chimney in those days could be made to absorb was in a very large house attached, to speak correctly, to such a chimney, stood on the north side of King street. I should judge, almost precisely where the railroad intersects it. This was unoccupied, as I recall it, and disappeared at about the same time as the Seneca Spencer house and the old Baptist meeting house on the hill.

Seneca Spencer, by the way, was the grandfather of Micah and Thomas Aldrich Spencer, then boys in Greenwich, and who afterward lived in Newport, Micah having died there four or five years ago.

The house next below this was occupied by my old and valued friend, James Pierce, Esq., with whom you were all familiar, late living here, and one of your most esteemed citizens.

Next below this was the house of Capt. Thomas Arnold, commonly called Timber-toe or Old Mommouth. He was a captain and won great credit in the Continental Army as a brave and enterprising officer, deriving his familiar nicknames from the fact of losing a leg at the battle of Mommouth. In the decline of his life he was the custom-house officer of the port, and was a very familiar object on King street. He also, like Mr. Salisbury, generally occupied a seat in his stoop, which was more properly a portico, having a roof, and being on a level instead of a hillside, was not so high above the street. Like Mr. Salisbury, also, Capt. Tom was distinguished for the stentorian qualities of his voice, and the two old gentlemen conversed across the space intervening between their respective houses. Indeed, it was currently reported and generally accepted as true, that Capt. Tom could be heard to whis-

per all over town. Many of the present substantial citizens of Greenwich are descendants of these venerable worthies, but very few, if any of their progeny, remember them.

Among the time-honored institutions of this ancient burgh, and one which attracts very early notice by the children to the village, is the Kent County Jail; and in my childhood and early youth it was a more marked and conspicuous object than now, it having two specimens of scripture on its exterior front, the only ones existing at that time probably in the County of Kent. They were supposed to be very fine works of art by the boys, but they have disappeared so long ago that I am at a loss to determine whether the boys' estimate was a correct one or not, very likely having no other works of art with which to compare them, and influenced by the natural and not very reprehensible local pride belonging to youth, we exaggerated their perfections. I am not informed as to who the artist may have been, to whom we were indebted for the statues of the malefactors which adorned the front of the jail, but probably the budding village Phidias or Praxiteles never blossomed into the consummate glory of his Grecian archetype and has long ago joined the great majority, whatever footprints he may have left upon the sands of time being long since drowned in the waters of oblivion.

These figures were images of wood, one supposed to represent a murderer, the other a robber. Both were ornamented with iron wristlets, and fetters, and chains, and were painted, the one black, the other white, and the jail itself was always painted yellow, so that the characteristic statuary, being placed in each side over the front entrance, stood out in bold relief as guardian angels of this harbor of refuge, presenting an inviting and exhilarating spectacle to the young offenders who were committed for their first offence against the peace and dignity of the commonwealth. At that time the railroad bridge, not being in existence, nothing interrupted the view of the building from the centre of the village, and whether or not the moral influence was good, it was impossible to forget for long that the sword of justice was im-



pending in a positive and peremptory manner over the head of the wrong doer.

The principal method of egress from Greenwich to the outside world being by water, and the principal wharf for packets being the continuation of King street in the rear of the jail, and the jail occupying King street in almost its entire width, only a very narrow passage being left out the south side, the moral character of the denizens of the village should have been superlatively good and exemplary, for it was impossible to escape a very frequent reminder that the way of the transgressor is hard.

The dilapidated remains of one of those wooden figures, so intimately associated with the Greenwich of my childhood, is still on exhibition at the R. I. Historical Society's room in Providence, but sadly shorn of its prestine glory.

Perhaps, as I have suggested, the jail and its ornamental attachments, may have had a beneficial and warning influence, and may have contributed to the rather high tone which was accredited to the society of the town, for, as I recollect, the inhabitants of the village did not contribute very largely to the list of boarders in Squire Wall's hostelry, but they came mostly from parts more distant from the salt water. I recollect an Aaron Briggs who was pilloried and whipped at the Head of the Gutter, and was, as I understood, a sheep stealer and was generally an inmate of the jail. John Briggs, a brother of Aaron, was a most desperate rogue, and was captured by the deputy sheriff, Benjamin Holden, after a terrible fight, in which Holden was dreadfully wounded with a knife. And I perfectly recollect seeing workmen in front of the jail building a cage of iron rods and oak timbers, to be placed in a cell, for the more efficient securing of John Briggs, notwithstanding which John made his escape from his confinement and the punishment he so richly merited.

Sometime before my recollection the old Tolbooth was the scene of very great excitement. An extensive and desperate gang of counterfeiters had been broken up in the rural districts of Providence County, and so many arrests had been made that the jail in Providence would not accommodate them, and the jail in Greenwich was filled with the overflow.

There was so much apprehension on account of the dangerous character of these Providence County desperadoes, and threats of forcible rescue on the part of their confederates, that the Kentish Guards, then under the command of Henry E. Turner, my uncle, were ordered out to guard the jail for a considerable time.

In those days the County jail was the only place where convicts could serve out the terms of imprisonment to which they were sentenced by the courts until the establishment of the State prison in Providence, now removed to Cranston, so that at the present day the old-time prominence of the County jail is a thing of the past.

I have spoken of Squire Wall. He was in my early life the sheriff of the County of Kent and the keeper of the County jail, and he seemed to me the embodiment of the penal law and the impersonation of its terrors. He had been a farmer in the town, near Hunt ground, and he returned at a later period to his farm and died after many years an extremely old man. I judge him to have been a very worthy and respectable citizen.

North from the jail the next estate was that of Mr. Benjamin Davis, the ship carpenter, who succeeded Mr. Glazier, whose daughter he had married; his wife has died within a few years, of this time at the house of Capt. William Salisbury, his wife having been the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Davis and granddaughter of Mr. Glazier. The estate of Mr. Glazier was called the old Shipyards. In earlier days and in Mr. Glazier's time an active business had been done in the Shipyards; but with the decadence of the shipping interests the Shipyards had become neglected, and in my recollection it was only Mr. Davis' garden; it occupied a triangular space, enclosed by the King street on the south, by Grab street on the west, by a way on the north, (not named in the map) leading to what was then known as Brown & Turner's wharf, and on the east by the salt water, the public assuming whether or not by right or prescription the privilege of passing through it, from one wharf to another, along the line of the salt water. Fronting on the way at the north was Mr. Davis' residence, a one-storied, gambrel-roofed cottage, in which Mr. Davis reared a large family, he



being an industrious and unobtrusive man of most respectable character. I do not recollect any building of vessels or any work in the Shipyard, Mr. Davis's business probably being confined to jobbing work in repairing the few small craft which constituted the commercial marine of Greenwich in its days of decline.

Mr. Davis, at one time in my recollection, had employment in Wickford, where there was more commercial activity than in Greenwich. I used to see him in the early morning embarking in his skiff, for a row to Wickford, alone, sculls being not then in use. He probably pulled to Wickford cross-handed with long sweeps in the manner universally practised in those days, or possibly with a single oar at the stern of the boat, which would be an extremely slow process for a trip of nearly ten miles.

Opposite Mr. Davis's garden, across the diagonal street, named Grab street on the map, was the cooperage of Richard Edwards. This was a business of sufficient magnitude to be sustained during my boyhood, but, as I suppose, it was more a reminiscence of the palmiest days of the molasses trade than a necessary part of the later life of the community, and I so judge because, at that time, there were numerous cooper's shops in Newport, and the docks there were filled with bundles of hoop poles, soaking in preparation for use, principally dependent for support on the trade to the West Indies, as had undoubtedly been the case in Greenwich. Now there is not a single cooperage in Newport, and most probably, from like causes, none in Greenwich.

As I was not born at the time of the great gale of September, 1815, and not until the June following, I of course can give no reminiscences of that event from my own observations, but it was so fresh in the memory of the people, among whom my childhood was spent, that I may be indulged in some allusions to it. I spoke of the way leading to Brown & Turner's wharf. The Turner here alluded to was my father, Col. James V. Turner, later Dr. James V. Turner of Newport, probably scarcely remembered by any present resident of Greenwich. He died in Newport in 1863, aged 74 years, having left Greenwich in 1828, and up to that time, when he was 39 years

old, had always been a resident of Greenwich, but was scarcely ever here after he left, and singular to say, for the last 25 years of his life, was never off the Island of Rhode Island, although no man was better known to the citizens of the town of Greenwich and of the surrounding country or more closely identified with its population previously to his departure.

But to the point. The store on the wharf (it may be there now) was threatened by the rise of the water, and a quantity of salt, in bags, was stored on the main floor. My father, while attending to this matter, was engaged, with some hands, in carrying the salt to the upper floor. While so engaged, the length of the store being from west to east, the water rose so that the east end of the building was floated, and the extreme violence of the gale swung that end of the building from six to ten degrees, so that the building stood afterward, at that angle with its original line, as it stands at this time, if it be still in existence. My father and his men were obliged to abandon the store for their own safety.

Several vessels of considerable size engaged in the West India trade, some of them loaded, were lying at the wharves at the time. One, the largest, went onto the Casey wharf, north of the Arnold dock, across which she lay, and when the water subsided she was left high and dry and had to be launched anew.

Two others, not quite as large, were lying at the wharf with spars, sails and rigging "all ataunts," ready for sea. They broke loose, one after the other, and going north with the gale, as far as the pool, turned and went west up the ravine with the tide, where no tide had ever been before, stopped there, and when the flood subsided were left side by side, high and dry, also, in the ravine in such a manner that the sharp hills constituting the sides of the gully prevented them from falling over, and they were launched likewise, with their cargo on board, and, as was said, without breaking bulk and without serious damage.

One other circumstance worthy of note connected with the gale was this: At the outer edge of Pojack flat, where is now, I think, a beacon, was an iron spindle, which was floated up on the Nassauket shore, and was found there after the



gale. The explanation of this extraordinary freak of nature was that great quantities of wood and lumber, cases of merchandise and other "debris" of various kinds were driven up the bay from the lower points, and the spindle was picked up and carried along with a mass of that kind of buoyant material.

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