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## Dorrite Prisoners of War

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# Dorr's Prisoners of War

by

Russell J. DeSimone

The minor part now take the alarm,  
But how can they prevent the harm?  
Suppose by legalized inflatus,  
They call the Posse Comitatus;  
Few of the Posse come – if any;  
Theirs is the party of the many;  
And how the few can many quell,  
Is more than you or I can tell.  
Will many all their strength devote  
To aid in seizing by the throat  
Themselves? And will they never fail  
To drag themselves by force to jail?<sup>1</sup>

George Santayana wrote “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” so it is when governments fail to heed the grievances of its people and often learn anew the consequences of such inaction. As the English Parliament discovered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when it discounted the American colonist’s grievances, so too did the Rhode Island legislature learn, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when that ultra-conservative body resisted repeated calls for suffrage extension. This lack of action on the part of the Rhode Island legislature ultimately led to the establishment of an extra-legal People’s government in 1842. Faced with dual governments, the people would be called to elect officers on April 18<sup>th</sup> for the People’s government and on April 20<sup>th</sup> for the existing Charter government. The Charter government, anticipating such a development, took measures to negate the People’s government by establishing on April 2<sup>nd</sup> an “Act in Relation to Offenses against the Sovereign Power of the State”. This act, derisively referred to by the pro-suffrage supporters as the Algerine law, provided for penalties for anyone participating in the People’s government election and declared anyone who assumed office under this government guilty of treason against the State. The People’s government convened in Providence on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and shortly thereafter many officials of that government were arrested under the Algerine law. While these arrests were made under civil law it was soon after that other arrests were made under martial law, resulting in those detained becoming prisoners of war.

The Dorr rebellion witnessed two quasi-military encounters. The first occurred on the evening of May 17, 1842 and carried over into the early morning hours of the 18<sup>th</sup>. Following several days of excitement and planning, Dorr and a band of between 200 and 300 citizens and militia friendly to the People’s Constitution made an ill advised attack on the state arsenal located on Cranston Street in Providence. The attack failed or better stated, ‘fizzled’. The air on that spring evening was heavy with mist and the cannons Dorr’s men pulled from his headquarters, the Burrington Anthony house on Federal Hill, to the field in front of the arsenal failed to fire. Some said the powder was wet, others that

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from “A New Year’s Address to the Non-Freeholders of Rhode-Island”, *New Age and Constitutional Advocate*, Friday January 14, 1842.

the cannons were spiked. Regardless, the attack failed and Dorr fled the State. The resort of armed means to force the Charter government to give way to the People's government caused Dorr to lose much of his politically moderate support. It also helped the coalescence of the pro Charter government such that any future repeat of armed action by the Dorrites would be met by swift and harsh means.

The second encounter, or near encounter, occurred in late June at the village of Chepachet and nearby Acote's Hill in the town of Gloucester. Dorr in preparation for his return to Rhode Island had called for the convening of the People's legislature, appropriately enough, on July 4<sup>th</sup>. When word spread that Gov. Dorr was returning and the People's government was to meet, some Dorr supporters began to converge on Chepachet with militia companies encamping on the high ground of Acote's Hill. Between Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup> Dorr supporters came; however, the turnout was less than Dorr expected. He had not yet fully grasped what the impact of the attack at the arsenal had to his support; nor the effect the Charter government's enactment of martial law<sup>2</sup>. Dorr's government never convened. Poor turnout, the advice to quit the cause by his more moderate advisors and the advancing Charter government's army caused the disillusioned Dorr to issue a proclamation disbanding his government and dismissing his troops. Soon after Dorr's troops quit Chepachet, the Charter troops moved in. The second military encounter resulted in no exchange of fire; however, the state was about to convulse under the events that were to follow.

Under martial law, (Figure 1), armed troops throughout the state were able to arrest with little evidence suspected Dorr sympathizers as prisoners of war. While most of the arrests occurred in the strongholds of Dorr support, Chepachet, Woonsocket, Pawtucket and other northern Rhode Island towns and villages, arrests were not limited to these areas as evidenced by the Martin Luther home invasion in Warren. Arrests were made even in the ultra-conservative pro-Charter stronghold of Middletown on Aquidneck Island. The following rather amusing article appeared in the July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1842 issue of the *Daily Evening Chronicle*:

Yesterday the Rev. Mr. Barrows, of Middletown, was arrested by the guard, and brought to head quarters, where he passed a most rigid examination. – He has been a most violent parson, and has caused much trouble, by sowing the seeds of dissemination in the church of which he is pastor. He had not been bold enough in his acts for us to find enough to warrant a committal, though some of the most respectable citizens of Middletown appeared at the trial against him. After a very severe reprimand and some most excellent advice from the Captain Commanding, he was allowed to return home.

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<sup>2</sup> Martial law was enacted by Charter governor Samuel Ward King on June 25<sup>th</sup> and wasn't suspended until August 8<sup>th</sup>. Martial law was declared effective for all of the state not just the county in supposed rebellion. Interestingly the suspension of martial law still stands as the law was never abolished.

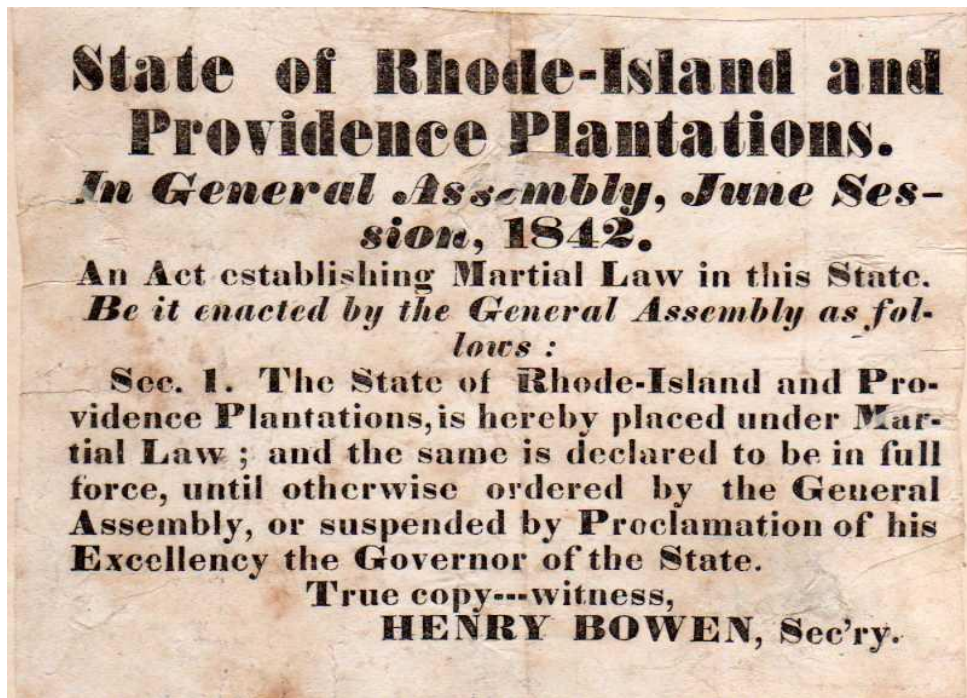


Figure 1. Broadside declaring Martial Law

In the days following Dorr's retreat from Chepachet and Rhode Island, a number of those arrested were subjected to harsh treatment and inadequate prison accommodations. A *Boston Post* article, entitled "Brutal Outrages", was reprinted in the *Providence Daily Journal*. The article detailed some of the horrors perpetrated by the arresting officers. In keeping with the *Journal's* pro-Charter stance, it emphatically denied all of the *Post's* claims.

#### BRUTAL OUTRAGES<sup>3</sup>

The Charter party in Rhode Island are practicing the most disgraceful and inhuman acts of oppression and cruelty upon the friends of free suffrage there. The injustice, baseness, and tyranny of that conduct would disgrace the Algerines of Africa. Innocent citizens are arrested under the despotic sway of martial law, thrust into prison, and treated like beast. On the First Page of the Daily Post will be found a letter from our Bellingham correspondent, to which we would direct the particular attention of our readers – Mr. Olney, so far from participating in any acts of violence, went to Chepachet, we understand, and persuaded some fifteen or twenty men, his acquaintances, to quit Dorr's fort and return to their homes, before Dorr left. We also learn that some of the Charter troops, entered a milliner's shop in Providence, ransacked her goods, took such articles as pleased their fancy, and twenty dollars in money from this unprotected female. When they entered Sprague's house at Chepachet, a Charter soldier commanded a woman at work there, Mrs. Paine, to stand, and told her if she spoke or moved he would kill her; the woman through terror, either moved or screamed, and she was immediately struck with a dirk, and her life only saved by a thick pocket book under her clothes through which the dastard steel penetrated! On Saturday a body of prisoners were marched from Woonsocket to Providence, pinioned in a cruel manner, and subjected to the worst species of abuse and degradation on the way. – They were kicked, and dirt was thrown upon them, while, in some instances, even the women upon the road who saw their intense suffering from heat, fatigue, and cruelty, were denied the liberty of giving the

<sup>3</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Thursday July 7, 1842.

poor fellows a cup of water. It is said the Charter troops in Providence intend to desecrate this Glorious Day by marching their prisoners through the streets of that city to receive the insults and execrations of a maddened soldiery and populace! GOD FORBID IT.

But what is most infamous in all this abominable business, is the fact that a large majority of the individuals seized upon to glut the vengeance of the Charterists, have never raised a hand in violent opposition to King's government. The height of their offence in most instances has been an expression of opinion in favor of equal political rights or of having cast a vote in favor of the Suffrage party!

The present occasion is used for the gratification of private malice – a suffrage man has only to intimate to the corporal of a guard that his neighbor is friendly to the Constitution, and the friend of Liberty is thrown into prison without a moment's warning. Again, the present government of Rhode Island is composed of bitter whigs, and hence this opportunity is improved by it, and the baser sort of its adherents, to gratify their old political malice. Democrats are imprisoned upon the most shallow pretext, while those who have been prominent in the suffrage movement, but previously active whigs, are permitted to go unmolested. So headlong have some of the King whigs been in seeking vengeance upon old political opponents, that Charter men, who have heretofore acted with the democrats, have been arrested.

The people of other States cannot know a tittle of the injustice practiced by King's party. There is no press in Rhode Island that dare publish a true and full account of the occurrences there, particularly in Providence. The tyrants who have sway in that city shrink at the voice of a Free Press, and have forcibly suppressed the publication of the only journal there that appeared as the organ of the Suffrage party. There is but one journal in Providence that *feels* any sympathy for the oppressed, and that dare not give utterance to what its eyes witness.

We were informed yesterday, that a father visiting his son, who is in prison in Providence upon the accusation of being a Suffrage man, and, moved by parental love and human sympathy, he immediately went before the Charter Legislature and described to a committee of that body the suffering condition of the prisoners and the disgusting state of the prison; *his complaints were met by a commitment of himself.*

The question is fast losing its mere local political aspect. The deeds perpetrated by the Charterists are violations of the laws of God and Man. Their conduct concerns the whole human race – it is an outrage upon humanity, and you may as well try to confine the tides of the ocean as to prescribe the limits of human sympathy by geographical demarcation.

Any further attempt to gain possession of the government of Rhode Island by force, on the part of Dorr or his adherents, no impartial and candid man would commend. Dorr has proved unable to enforce the government instituted by the people, and the people have proved unwilling to take such measures as were necessary for its consummation; therefore, if the citizens of that State desire a change at this time, they should begin anew, and seek a peaceable manner until a clear majority of them have established another form of government, and then maintain it at all hazards. The late Constitution has been abandoned by its originators, and hence become void. And now, if the Charter people will but manifest an ordinary degree of magnanimity - if they will avoid unnecessary persecution, and open a way for those who are disposed to submit to the present authorities to return to their peaceful avocations unmolested, they will do the State good service, and shun a mountain of infamy which hangs over them.

By early July, the daily newspapers began to list the names of prisoners and their hometowns<sup>4</sup>. These lists were provided by a commission consisting of Elisha Harris, Stephen Branch, Alfred Bosworth, Henry L. Bowen and Joseph M. Blake, all appointed by the General Assembly to examine persons charged with rebellion against the state<sup>5</sup>. Each notice specified the date, time and place of examination (usually the Providence county jail) so that all persons interested could attend. Virtually hundreds of people were arrested in what must have seemed to many a period of fear, intolerance and oppression. Of those taken prisoner not all were Dorrites. Some were haplessly at the wrong place at the wrong time; however, most were Dorr sympathizers and while not intent on rebellion they were interested in having their political voice heard. The day following the interrogations another newspaper article would appear entitled “Examination of Prisoners” in which some details on each prisoner was provided and the disposition of each. The following is a complete listing of all “Examination of Prisoners” articles as they appeared in the *Providence Daily Journal* for the first two weeks in July. After which time, all prisoners having been examined, no other articles appeared. While the list of prisoners is extensive it is not complete as other people not listed here are known to have been arrested.

#### EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>6</sup>

The following is the result of the examination of the prisoners taken since the proclamation of martial law. The description of the prisoners is generally taken from their own accounts.

Tourtellot Millard, Gloucester, laborer, not in the camp. Discharged.  
 Alonzo F. Hodges, North Providence, laborer, pressed into the camp. Discharged.  
 Samuel Henney, South Providence, laborer, pressed into the camp. Discharged.  
 Charles H. Thayer, Arkwright Mills, mule spinner, not in camp. Discharged.  
 John Paine, Providence, calico printer, forced into the camp. Discharged.  
 Silas Whelden, Lonsdale, mule spinner, not in the camp. Discharged.  
 Freeman Studley, Valley Falls, laborer, not in the camp before Monday night.  
 Discharged.  
 Michael Smith, Valley Falls, pedlar, went into the camp from curiosity and was not permitted to leave. Discharged.  
 William Spink, Valley Falls, machinist, pressed into camp. Discharged.  
 Lorenzo Crandall, Pawtucket, housewright, pressed into camp. Discharged.  
 Charles Wickes, Woonsocket, works in mill, was coming from Abingdon, Vermont, taken prisoner while on his way to Woonsocket. Discharged.  
 Nelson Billington, (18 years old,) Centreville, works in mill, pressed in. Discharged.  
 George King, Centreville, works in mill, bound to Connecticut, pressed. Discharged.  
 Frederick S. Macomber, Centreville, went to Chepachet, pressed. Discharged.  
 Allen Brown, Smithfield, wheelwright, pressed. Discharged.  
 Joseph Billington, Johnston, works in mill, pressed. Discharged.  
 Samuel Sweet, North Providence, miller, pressed. Discharged.  
 Nelson Barnes, Johnston, housewright, pressed. Discharged.

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<sup>4</sup> Here it should be understood that these were pro-Charter newspapers as the Dorrites newspapers were temporarily suppressed.

<sup>5</sup> Elisha Harris of Coventry was a state senator, Alfred Bosworth of Warren was a state representative, Henry L. Bowen was Secretary of State and Joseph M. Blake of Bristol was Attorney General. Stephen Branch of Providence would become a state representative in the June 1843 elections.

<sup>6</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Monday July 4, 1842.

Lewis K. Dey, Bristol, mule spinner, no charge against him. Discharged.  
 Samuel Moffatt, Newport, housewright, bound to Connecticut. Committed.  
 George Frissel, Chepachet, shoe maker, one of the men who marched Charles Harris and others, to Woonsocket. Committed.  
 Caleb Bradly, Chepachet, hostler, another of the Woonsocket escort. Committed.  
 John Paine, Chepachet, coal-dealer, the man who put the musket at Charles Harris's breast and said he would blow him through. Jeremiah Sheldon got him into the mess. Committed.  
 Samuel Bowen, North Providence, housewright, went after his son. Committed.  
 George Eddy, Chepachet, baker, son of Amasa Eddy, Jr. (Dorr's Lt. Governor.) Committed.  
 Frederick A. P. Batchelder, Tripptown, comb-maker. Committed.  
 Larned Dey, Johnston, laborer, pressed. Discharged.  
 Allen Taylor, Johnston, stone-cutter. Discharged.  
 Henry Lord, Providence, carriage-trimmer. Committed.  
 John Vickery, Arnold's bridge, carder. Committed.  
 James Capwell, Arnold's bridge, works in bleach house. Committed.  
 Christopher N. Knight, Arnold's bridge, works in bleach house. Committed.  
 Gorton Smith, Johnston, laborer. Discharged.  
 Otis Hawkins, Glocester, tavern-keeper. Committed.  
 Henry Smith, Johnston, blacksmith. Discharged.  
 William Smith, Providence, oysterman, one of Dorr's guard, made his will before he went. Committed.  
 Sterry Johnson, Glocester, laborer, no charge against him. Discharged.  
 Benjamin C. Olney, Johnston, farmer, went in pursuit of his gun. Discharged.  
 Augustus Greene, Lonsdale, machinist, no charge. Discharged.  
 Geo. W. Field, Lonsdale, machinist, no charge. Discharged.  
 Silas Thurber, Johnston, teamster, no charge. Discharged.  
 Geo. K. Davis, Providence, jeweler, pressed into the camp. Discharged.  
 Joel C. Fernel, Providence, laborer. Committed.  
 James Phillips, Greenville, teamster, no charge. Discharged.  
 Thomas Dyer, Providence, works in factory, no charge. Discharged.  
 Nicholas Peters, Providence, laborer, went to Chepachet, threatened to shoot him if he came away. Discharged.  
 Abraham Tilotson, Warwick, laborer, caught in Chepachet, and threatened to shoot him if he went off. Discharged.  
 Ths. Williams, Providence, mariner, no charge. Discharged.  
 Samuel Stanton, Coventry, carriage-maker, no charge. Discharged.  
 Horace Hopkins, Coventry, carriage-maker, no charge. Discharged.  
 William Patterson, Smithfield, mule-spinner. Discharged.  
 George Dispeau, Pawtucket, (17 years old.). Committed.  
 John Bennett, North Providence, laborer. Discharged.  
 Nehemiah Smith, Chepachet, works in factory. Committed.  
 Henry Bowen, Chepachet, learning baker's trade, (19 years old). Discharged.  
 William H. Northup, Pawtucket, laborer. Committed.  
 Thomas Condry, Chepachet, baker. Committed.  
 Christopher Robinson, Coventry, tailor. Committed.  
 William Ayesdon, Providence, laborer. Committed.  
 Joel B. Harvey, Johnston, stone-cutter. Committed.  
 John Welch, Smithfield, bleacher. Committed.  
 Richard Lacock, Smithfield, bleacher. Committed.  
 John Bowden, Olneyville, laborer. Discharged.  
 Joseph Wright, Providence, laborer; William B. Dean threatened him if he did not take arms, would shoot him. Committed.  
 Thomas Stevenson, Pawtucket, laborer, (14 years old). Discharged.  
 Edwin Pomeroy, Providence, (18 years old). Discharged.

Albert T. Gidney, Providence, hatter. Committed.  
Joseph Pidge, Providence, butcher. Discharged.  
Allen E. Aylesworth, Lonsdale, laborer. Discharged.  
Bowen Westcott, Lonsdale, dress-tender. Discharged.  
Thomas Collins Jr., Smithfield, housewright. Discharged.  
Benjamin Gavitt, Smithfield, overseer weaveshop. Discharged.  
Adin Lawrence, Smithfield, carder. Discharged.  
Nicholas Hayes, Smithfield, mule-spinner. Discharged.  
George E. Brown, Foster, at present a resident of Woonsocket; has a regular diploma to practice medicine, not on the steam principle, no connection of the celebrated Doct. J.A. Brown. Practice very extensive. Was on his way to Chepachet in the way of his profession, and was captured there. Never advised taking up arms, after the push at Providence, with guns and bayonets. Committed.  
George Hale, North Providence, laborer. Committed.  
Benoni Mathewson, North Providence, mule-spinner. Committed.

In all 77 prisoners were examined on July 2nd and as reported in the above newspaper article 49 were dismissed. The commissioners charged with the interrogation of prisoners appear to have decided to dispense with the easier cases first since such a large number of prisoners were dismissed. In subsequent examinations, the interviews reported in the newspapers were more extensive. It is noteworthy that future published accounts did not list which prisoners were dismissed and which were committed. This first round of interrogation consisted almost exclusively of men from the northern communities of the state and other than Dr. Brown, all prisoners consisted of men from the working class. It is not surprising that so many of the prisoners were working class men; after all, they had the most to gain. Most middle class support for Dorr began to wane with the enactment of the Algerine law in early April, and what support remained from this social class was further diminished when Dorr attacked the Providence arsenal in mid-May. Possibly owing to the fact that they had more to lose than those of the working class, or that they were less receptive to armed action, middle class numbers among the prisoners were disproportionately less. As such, men from the working class were the last holdouts of Dorr's support. Most, while steadfastly allegiant to the suffrage cause, were also dedicated to the man, Thomas Dorr. It was a strange combination of the wealthy aristocrat and the common man working together for the same great cause.

The most ardent Dorrite of those committed to jail on July 2nd, was Henry Lord. Lord was by trade a carriage trimmer and, as it turned out, also a capable draftsman. It was Lord that posterity has to thank for a rendering of the Charter troops and their prisoners at Chepachet, (Figure 2). The rebellion occurred too early in time for a photographic record, but Lord's drawing provides the modern reader with the only recorded image of this event. The drawing, "The Capture of Acote Hill and the Sacking of the Village of Chepachet" produced by the Boston lithographer Thayer & Co. was available for sale as a print shortly after the rebellion died down. Lord's credit-line on the print reads 'Drawn by H. Lord – prisoner of war.'



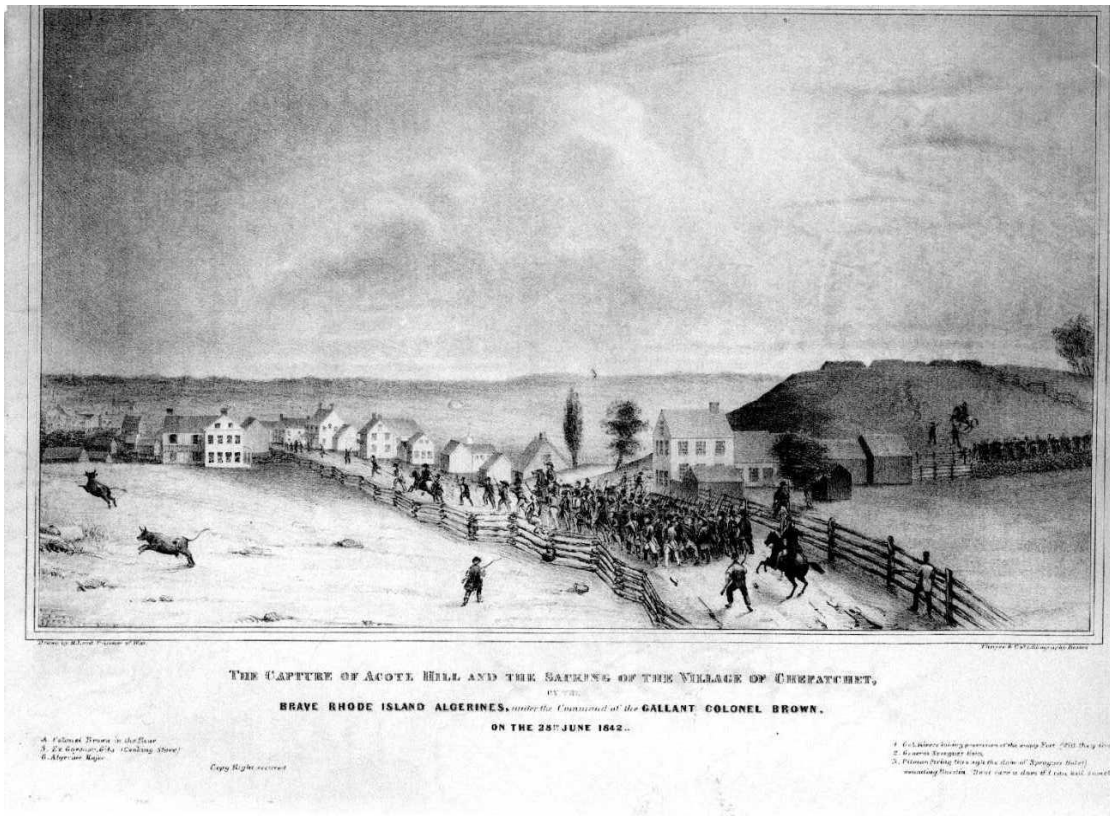


Figure 2. Capture of Prisoners at Chepachet

During the interrogations of George Frissel, Caleb Bradley and John Paine, reference was made to an interesting event that took place on Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. That evening Dorr's troops then patrolling the outskirts of Chepachet village intercepted a chaise occupied by Charles F. Harris and Samuel W. Peckham. Harris and Peckham, perceived as 'damned landholders' and spies were arrested and taken to Sprague's tavern where they joined Charles J. Shelley and John C. Keep who had already been arrested at the tavern by Dorr's men. The four prisoners were then bound at their hands and marched on foot to Woonsocket by an armed escort of about thirty men. Accounts of the incident state that the prisoners were ill treated during their march. After being detained in a barn in Woonsocket for a while they were ultimately released.<sup>7</sup> As this episode was retold in the Law and Order press it caused 'intense indignation' among the citizenry. It is no wonder that participation by any of Dorr's men in this event was a certain guarantee for incarceration.

Not surprisingly, there was no examination of prisoners on Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> or on Monday, Independence Day. Questioning of prisoners resumed on Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> when 33 prisoners appeared before the commissioners They included Otis Hawkins, Christopher Knight, Joseph Pidge, Christopher Robinson and Nehemiah Smith, all of whom had been previously interrogated. The newspaper account of the July 5<sup>th</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Friday June 24, 1842; Almon D. Hodges, *Almon Danforth Hodges and His Neighbors*, Boston 1909, p. 197.

proceedings was more comprehensive compared to the account of the July 2<sup>nd</sup> interrogations; so much so, that it was reported over two consecutive days – July 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Worthy of note during these examinations is that some prisoners refer to Charter government press gangs operating during martial law. Press gangs did exist but may have been conveniently overstated by the prisoners in their defense; however, it is not an overstatement that anyone not willing to join the Law and Order cause was looked upon with suspicion. On the same account some prisoners claimed that while they went to Chepachet out of curiosity, once there they were forced into Dorr's camp and made to take arms and stand guard duty.

#### EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>8</sup>

Tuesday, July 5

*Otis Hawkins* – arrested Tuesday at his house in Glocester – keeps tavern and toll gate 4 miles this side Chepachet. Several were arrested at the same time who came from Chepachet. Never was in Dorr's camp and never has borne arms. – Some of these men were such as, James Mathewson and Nelson Barnes, Silas Thurber and Granville Williams, two musicians, Greene and Westcott. Mr. Dorr's father passed his house towards Chepachet, and when he returned told him that he believed the matter was to be settled, and prisoners told others; nothing alleged against him.

*George S. Carpenter*, age 52 – occupation housewright – born in Providence, removed from here 15 years ago, and now lives 2 miles from Chepachet – arrested just above Olneyville last Wednesday. Has had no connection either directly or indirectly with Dorr and his company. No witness appeared against Carpenter.

*Joel B. Haney, Jr.*, age 27 years – laborer, born in Rehoboth, lives in Johnston; came to this State 17 years ago, was taken at Hawkins' tavern with several others – was in Providence on the 17<sup>th</sup> May at Anthony's house with a gun, not loaded, staid there but a little while. Was not present when Dorr attacked the Arsenal. Left home on Saturday, and after being in Dorr's camp half an hour, returned to Johnston. Did not take his gun. The story being told that a press gang was out, left Johnston for Dorr's camp again on Tuesday but did not go into it.

*James Mathewson*, stone cutter, 26 years old, Johnston, arrested Tuesday between Connecticut and Glocester; brother Olney Mathewson taken at the same time. Not been in Dorr's camp, passed through Monday night. Left Johnston Sunday about sunset, bound towards Chepachet, for Connecticut. Understood a press gang was after men and having a brother in Connecticut, thought he would go there for a week or two. Never has taken arms at any time, and was taken on his way home from Connecticut. His brother Olney went to Chepachet with him and had a gun, but accompanied him to Connecticut.

*Olney P. Mathewson*, Johnston, 22 years old – stone cutter, arrested in Glocester with my brother returning from Connecticut. Left home because there was a story that the law and order men were pressing all into their ranks, staid on Dorr's ground Sunday night. Monday morning tried to get off the ground and went off; gun loaded with ball which was given to him by somebody; don't recollect who. Was in Providence two or three hours with his gun in May; came in with Amasa Sweet in a wagon; Sweet went with him to Chepachet, and he also had a gun. Edward Mowry of Smithfield was acting as a guard at Dorr's camp, when he was there. Amasa Sweet, James Mathewson, Benjamin Mathewson, Nelson Barnes, Granville Williams, Silas Thuber, were among those who went with him. Was first told three weeks ago that Dorr was to fortify in Chepachet, and never spoke to any landholder about it. – Heard Dorr expected help from New York.

*Charles Hall*, - 21 years old, North Providence; went to Chepachet Saturday in a four horse wagon with Mr. Blanchard and others; had no gun, one given when we got there; attached to the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward company. Henry Hillman at Fruit Hill, a blacksmith, advised him

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<sup>8</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Wednesday July 6, 1842.

to go. Was in Providence on the 18<sup>th</sup>, came with Nicholas White of North Providence. Hillman advise me to go, because he said every poor man would benefited by it; was in Dorr's camp until Monday night. The Woonsocket company was principally on guard when I was there; they said we must fight for Dorr.

*George Hall*, - 22 years old, North Providence; laborer, went to Chepachet Friday night and was taken Tuesday morning. Was in company with Edward W. Olney and others in Mr. Wales's wagon; a butcher from Fruit Hill; Dorr's guard prevented me from coming off; was advised to go by Henry Hillman; was in Providence in May; had no gun there, was a spectator, staid two nights at the Columbian House; Hillman was also in on that day; when he went to Chepachet had 25 or 30 balls. The provisions for the camp were brought by a man in a wagon who is now in prison; his name is Angell Darling.

*Edward W. Olney*, 19 years old; North Providence, laborer, was at Chepachet; advised by Hillman to go to fight; his father, Cyrus Olney, knew that he was going; some of the men came there from New York; when there belonged to the Woonsocket volunteers.

*Ezra Olney*, 18 years old; North Providence, farmer, was in Chepachet Friday with George Hall, and in Wales's wagon, took a gun, was formed into a company at Woonsocket, was taken Tuesday morning, came off just after dinner Monday. Ware the butcher wanted him to go.

*Otis W. Arnold*, Coventry, 29 years old, a farmer, not in Chepachet, taken in Providence on suspicion.

*Christopher N. Knight*, 29 years old, Arnold's mills; arrested 2 miles from Pond factory with eight others; had been to Chepachet, went Sunday with four others, none had guns, took none in the camp, was stopped by no guard, was there but half an hour; went to see what was going on.

*Joseph Pidge*, butcher, 26 years. Left Providence Friday morning, and arrived in Chepachet Monday, passing through Woonsocket, was looking after stock.

*Parsons Brainard*, 41 years – Providence, works in furnace, native of Connecticut, lived in R.I. 8 months – went to Chepachet, carried no arms – got on the hill – saw a man from N.Y., by name Charles Done, who was acting as guard; took his gun to relieve Done a few minutes – first time he ever took arms.

*Christopher Robinson*, Coventry, tailor, 46 years old – never was in Dorr's camp, and has not borne arms against the State.

*Lee Steere*, Gloucester, 45 years old, laborer – taken in Gloucester, 4 ½ miles from Chepachet Village. Never was in Dorr's camp, and has not borne arms.

*Stephen Davis*, Gloucester, laborer, been to shoemaker's about a mile from his home – never was in the camp, has had nothing to do with Dorr or his party.

*Dexter S. Remington*, East Greenwich, housewright, arrested 5 miles this side of Chepachet, on Tuesday, bound to Killingly, in company with Messrs. Bartlett and Clarke; horse and wagon taken – had a gun, Bartlett had one – went to get rid of the excitement – loaded his gun before he started from home.

*Stephen Smith*, Gloucester, in Chepachet Saturday – lives 4 ½ miles from the village – not in the camp – had no arms on that day. Monday went into the camp and carried a loaded gun, one bullet and no powder – stood as guard two hours. David Coomer advised me to take a gun. Jere Lawrence, Zephaniah Bishop, and Sabin Durfee had guns. Coomer is a mason by trade.

*Burrill Hutchinson*, Lime Rock, laborer – was in Providence in May on Federal Hill – went to Chepachet in a wagon with some half dozen guns – was out the night before to Woonsocket and Slatersville.

[ Want of room compels us to omit a notice of the examination of quite a number of others]

The Commissioners recommended the discharge of the following persons and the Governor accordingly discharged them yesterday: Otis Hawkins, George L. Carpenter, Joel Haney, Jr., James Mathewson, Granville S. Williams, Sterry Fry, Thomas Fuller, Otis W. Arnold, Christopher N. Knight, Joseph Pidge, Christopher Robinson, Lee Steere, Richard S. Laycock, Samuel Fenner, Mason Boss.

## EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>9</sup>

Tuesday, July 5

*Granville S. Williams*, Johnston 26 years old, stonecutter. Was at Chepachet, in Dorr's camp. Left home Sunday night; the neighbors said they were after men from the city, and that was the reason why he left home. About 3 miles this side of Chepachet, between 20 and 30 of Dorr's guard took him and carried him into the camp. Started with a gun, but gave it to some boys while on the road. I was taken at the same time as Amasa Sweet, James and Olney Mathewson, Nelson Barnes and Henry Smith.

*Roswell Saltonstall*, native of Massachusetts; lived here 5 years; stonecutter in Johnston; 27 years old. Left home Sunday night, in company with three Harrisons and some others; had a gun not loaded, and no ammunition until reaching the camp. Marched on by the guard in company with the others above named, Monday morning about four o'clock, and remained until night, when the camp broke up. Was drilled in the Scituate company; was in Providence in May with a gun; did not arrive until the afternoon of that day; left the gun at James Phillips house. Ethan Thurber was one of Dorr's guard.

*Sterry Fry*, Foster, 21 years old; had been to Chepachet Sunday, came to Providence and thence to Foster, and was taken at the hemlock. Knew no person there under arms.

*Thomas Fuller*, Foster, 27 years old; went in company with Fry; went from curiosity to see what was going on.

*Samuel Fenner*, mule spinner, 36 years old, Simmons Factory; went to Chepachet after his brother, had no arms and would not take any.

*Mason Boss*, Johnston, 24 years of age, in Chepachet Monday afternoon, on the ground 10 or 11 minutes; bound to Connecticut to get rid of trouble, have nothing to do with guns or Dorr.

*Elisha Wilbour*, Scituate, 34 years, laborer; at Chepachet Saturday; carried no gun, was forced to stand guard, and then ran. Major Allen commanded; several of my neighbors went; none had arms, our object being merely to look and immediately to return; liquor was handed about among the men; not a plenty of eatables. Stephen Rounds was sergeant of the guard Increase Getchell was captain of the Woonsocket Company, and John Getchell was another officer.

*James Bartlett*, Warren, farmer, 50 years old; went to Chepachet to see Amos Clarke, who lives eight miles from the village. Had a loaded gun; was in company with Dexter S. Remington.

*Thomas Hunt*, Warwick, 20 years old, farmer. Never been to Chepachet; had no arms; taken at Stephen Smith's, bound to Amos Clarke's, in company with Remington and Bartlett.

*Nehemiah Smith*, Gloucester, 18 years old; was in Providence in May; brought in by Angell Darling of Chepachet, at 3 o'clock on the morning Dorr attacked the arsenal. Was in the camp in Chepachet, and drilled in the village by Bradley, Sprague's hostler. Seth Luther was a clerk in the camp; George Eddy brought prisoners on the ground; Joseph Sheldon and myself were among those who escorted Messrs. Shelly and other to Woonsocket Falls.

*Jeremy Bancroft*, Scituate, 57 years old, native of Mass., came from there one year ago; went to Chepachet Monday; took a fowling piece and hid it in the woods; went with one Brown, a blacksmith, and he had a gun.

*Welcome Alexander*, 18 years old, Cumberland, laborer, went to Chepachet on Thursday, was there three days – Nathan Whipple, of Diamond Hill Plain, was captain of our company; drilled three hours, taken prisoner at Woonsocket – Whipple asked him to go, and promised to pay the men, Dorr came on to the hill and made a speech, and talked about fighting the landholders, and that he would lay his bones there. They killed a cow, and had liquor. Don't know how to read or write, works for Stephen Joslin.

*Peter McCusker*, Irish, 12 months in this country, nothing to do with Dorr.

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<sup>9</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Thursday July 7, 1842.

*Welcome White*, Smithfield, 34 years. In Providence in May, with gun and ball, furnished by Capt. Saunders of Woonsocket; was on guard at Anthony's house. At Chepachet on Thursday; musket carried there in the Woonsocket baggage wagon. Isaac Allen was in command. Don't understand what was to be gained by going to Chepachet. Capt. Saunders told us that Mr. Dorr would pay us one of these days for our services. Heard the officers, D'Wolf among others, talk about going to Providence. They said if the landholders did not come from Providence to attack them, they should march to Providence. Major Allen said this. D'Wolf came from Dorr with a message for the forces to separate. As soon as the word circulated, some of us tried to clear.

*Leonard Wakefield*, grocer and preacher, of Connecticut; lived here 21 years, has lived principally in Cumberland and Smithfield. Was in Chepachet a week last Saturday, by the earnest request of Fenner Brown and Dr. Ballou. Being engaged under Alexander Ballou, as assistant postmaster, I advised him that I was going to Chepachet to induce the Cumberland people, who were there in arms, to return to their homes. Was in Dorr's camp an hour on Saturday, then went to the tavern and stayed two or three hours, and came home. Has not aided or abetted, in any way, in the suffrage cause; had admonished against taking up arms; had seen powder scattered along the road in his neighborhood, after the powder-house was entered; saw Major Allen and Gen. D'Wolf at the camp. It was generally thought that the camp would not be attacked – The order was not so strict as it might be. Saw Dorr on the hill, and conversed with him. I told him what the general Assembly had done, and that the people of Cumberland were satisfied, and he replied, that he had mistaken them if they would submit. He also wished to know, if the people would allow him and his men to submit to the penalties of the Algerine law. He said that he expected to maintain his position at Chepachet. Rendered no service on the hill. Sent the act of the General Assembly to Dorr – heard several men say they had seen it, and they seemed to be satisfied. Heard some one say, that two hundred men from New York were expected the next day, or the day after. About eighty men from Cumberland in the camp. Done nothing to induce men from the Albion village or any other place, to take up the suffrage movement. Has never attended private suffrage meeting.

Wednesday, July 6

*William H. Northup*, laborer, Pawtucket, 22 years old; was in Providence at Anthony's house with a loaded gun; not a member of Despeau's company until that day. Amos Ide was Lieut. Of the company. The gun obtained at Despeau's shop; was one of the company that marched to the Arsenal; knew nothing of the proceedings until he reached the road to the Arsenal; marched off with the other men of said company before Dorr flashed the guns; left Pawtucket Saturday for Chepachet, and stayed until Monday; took no arms; captured three miles this side Chepachet; Havens, a cigar maker, was another of Despeau's regiment. Edwin Mason was another who was at Anthony's house.

*William W. Streight*, Warwick, 20 years old, farmer, not in Providence when Dorr was here; at Chepachet Sunday night with George Havens, John Vickery, Thomas Covil, Christopher Knight, Jeremiah Hawkins; none of us had arms; no difficulty in going into Dorr's camp; took no guns while there; stayed until Monday noon; none of the men I went with did duty; went up because he was alarmed by the story of the press gang.

*John Vickery*, Warwick, 18 years old, carder; not in Providence; at Chepachet in company with the men named above.

*Thomas Collins, Jr.*, Cumberland, 27 years old, laborer; wife and two children work for Eliab Whipple; was at Chepachet, left Friday morning; Whipple armed him with a musket; introduced to the officers of the Diamond Hill company; left Monday when they said Dorr had fled, and was taken near Smithfield Union Bank, with half dozen others. Nathan Whipple was Capt. Of the Diamond Hill company. Eliab Whipple advised him to go and told him that he would take care of his family. Whipple is a butcher and drilled in Dorr's camp, Whipple carried up Calvin Richards and Milton Ballou, besides himself.

*James Capwell*, 27 years old, Warwick, bleacher; not in Providence in May; at Chepachet, went on account of the press gang, with William Streight, Vickery, Hawkins

&c; none of us armed; did no duty while at Chepachet, and went off as soon as he could get off.

*George Hawkins*, Warwick, mule spinner, 27 years old; went in company with Capwell, &c, for the same reason that he went; no arms; did no duty.

*John Webb*, Johnston, 18 years old, works in factory; not in Providence in May; left for Chepachet Monday forenoon; no arms; reached within a mile of the village, when we were seized by Dorr's men who carried us into the camp and made us stay there until we slipped off.

*Joseph R. Harrison*, Johnston, farmer; went to Chepachet; was in pursuit of his three boys and a couple of guns taken from a neighbor's hay mew; found the guns in the camp, and the boys on guard. Tried to get them away, and the Dorr men would not let them come off; when the camp was broken up he got them.

*James M. Harrison*, son of the above, 19 years old; went to Chepachet with a gun, in company with two brothers and two Thurbers. Had no ammunition; when arrived in the village carried into the camp and stayed one day; had but one meal while there; provisions smelt bad, dreadful sick of the place.

*Alexander Harrison*, brother of the above, 24 years old, had no gun, and when in the camp, a man with a sword came and made him stand guard. Hiram Buffington was an officer in the camp.

*Patrick McCusker*, came from Boston to Woonsocket last Thursday, where he was taken, knows nothing about Chepachet; had nothing to do with the matter.

*Isaac Carr*, Warwick, 23 years old, store keeper in Centreville; went to Chepachet Saturday, with George Ross from curiosity to see what was going on; invited to take a gun but declined; found it difficult to get out. Wm B. Dean, of Providence was captain of the guard.

*Daniel L. Cooke*, Warwick, works in factory, 23 years; went to Chepachet; carried no arms; arrived there Monday noon; stayed awhile; tried to get off and finally in the afternoon got off; refused to join any company.

*George Cooke*, Warwick, father of the above, 45 years, blacksmith; in Chepachet Sunday, went with Sherman of Providence; got home a few minutes past seven o'clock in the evening, carried no arms.

*James Bennett*, native of Massachusetts, been in the State five or six years; in Chepachet Sunday, and stayed until Tuesday morning; carried no gun.

*John Franklin*, Warwick, 19 years old; went to Chepachet Sunday in a wagon with three others, carrying five guns. Nathan Locke was in Chepachet and tried to get his men to form a company in Dorr's camp and took the guns from the wagon. James Langley put the guns in the wagon. Prisoner did nothing; stayed an hour and a half, did not go in the camp.

*Edward Jepson*, 26 years, tinman, Providence. On the hill at Anthony's house with a gun; drilled at Col Eddy's ship-yard; Isaac B. Allen and Harris J. Mowry were officers of the company – Allen had the powder and ball, which he sold – a man by the name of Wood gave him ammunition. Twenty guns, furnished by the Fifth Ward company, were sent from Boston, directed to John S. Eddy. Went from Providence to Chepachet Saturday; sold his gun for one dollar and twenty-five cents to pay his expenses there; arrived about noon; went half the distance on foot; stayed until Monday noon in the camp, Sunday wanted him to take a gun, he refused. Dean asked how many troops were assembled in Providence, he asked me to take a musket and drill, he was corporal of the guard.

*Joseph Wright*, Providence, mariner, 18 years old; in Chepachet and on guard duty around the marquee – after Sunday, they said they had put Chepachet under martial law. Never trained or attended a meeting. Hamilton was on guard duty at Chepachet, after they had examined him and found he was true.

*Edward Ward*, been in the State two months, 19 years old; bread cook at the Tockwotten house; Irish boy; never in Chepachet.

*John Welch*, Scott's Pond, Englishman, in the State ten or twelve months, 21 years old, had no part in Dorr's rebellion.

*Lawrence Wilbour*, 27 years old, in the State ten or twelve years, native of Mendon; went to Chepachet Monday, in company with three others; all had guns, not loaded, no ammunition; in the place two hours. Drilled in the Lime Rock company; *George Cuirrine*, captain; a review Sunday afternoon; *Daniel G. Harris* drilled with the company. *Barton Whipple* was there with a gun; *Bill Dean* and *Charles Newell* had swords; *D'Wolf* was drilling the men when I was there.

*George W. Parker*, Smithfield, 31 years, work at the Lime Rock; at Chepachet in company with *Lawrence Wilbour*, with a gun. *Michael Fuller* was acting as guard at Chepachet.

*Gideon Jenckes*, Lime Rock, 21 years old; went in company with *Parker* and others; carried a gun loaded with ball; member of Lime Rock company. *Russell Harrington* had most to say about directing us on the road. The object of the company was to defend *Dorr*.

*Enos Mowry*, Lime Rock, 37 years old; not in Chepachet. Major *Mowry's* youngest son, *John*, had the list of the Lime Rock company, and with one or two others said they would not go unless he did. They were to start from the Lime Rock gate; 30 names on the list of the company.

*Thomas Rankins*, Smithfield, 20 years old; went to Chepachet Tuesday, and taken before he arrived there; went from curiosity; never drilled; before we started heard that *Dorr's* folks had gone; lives about six miles from Chepachet.

*James Booth*, *Scott's Pond*, 30 years old, bleacher, Englishman, been here four months; left for Chepachet Monday noon, in company with *John Welch* and others; not in the camp, taken on the way home.

*George Howlds*, same place, Englishman, 35 years old; in the country 16 years, bleacher; nothing to do with *Dorr's* party.

*Albert T. Gedney*, native of New York, 24 years old, been here two years, hatter; went to Chepachet from *Thompson, Conn*; arrived there Monday afternoon. Had no arms; came from there Tuesday morning, and on his way home was taken at *Triptown*.

*William M. Williams*, *Crompton Mills*, 28 years old, clerk in store; left Saturday morning for Chepachet; no guns; went from curiosity.

The following persons were discharged yesterday – *Stephen Davis*, *Stephen Smith*, *John Franklin*, *Joseph Wright*, *Edward Ward*, *John Welch*, *Thomas Rankins*, *James Booth*, *George Howlds*, *Albert T. Gedney*, *William M. Williams*, *Leonard Wakefield*, *William M. Streight*, *John Vickery*, *Thomas Collins jun.*, *James Capwell*, *George Hawkins*, *John Webb*, *Alanson Vose*, *Joseph R. Harrison*, *James M. Harrison*, *Alexander Harrison*, *Patrick McCusker*, *Daniel Cooke*, *George Cooke*, *James Bennett*.

It should be noted that not all prisoners were arrested while at Chepachet. Arrests were made throughout the State and included people who had never been to Chepachet. While arrests occurred throughout the period of martial law, most occurred in the days immediately following the collapse of the People's government. In the case of *Leonard Wakefield*, the last prisoner interrogated on July 5<sup>th</sup>, the reasons for his arrest are interesting. *Wakefield*, not a staunch *Dorr*ite but conceivably pro-suffrage in sentiments, was a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was arrested at his *Cumberland* home on Thursday June 30<sup>th</sup> by Charter troops returning to *Providence* from *Woonsocket*. Initially taken to a local tavern where prisoners were collected, he was then brought by wagon, in the company of twenty other prisoners, to *Providence*. First assembled at a *Providence* armory, he along with others, under the watchful eye of the City Guard, was marched through the streets of *Providence* to the State Prison. From Thursday until Sunday, he was held in a 12' x 9' cell along with 15 other prisoners. On Sunday he was

moved to another cell holding only eight prisoners. During his time in prison no charges were filed against him. When brought before the commissioners for interrogation on Tuesday July 5<sup>th</sup>, he was asked the standard questions as to name, age and residence. He was also asked if he had run ammunition for Dorr's men. What seems to be the cause of Wakefield's arrest followed next in a series of questions about a discourse he preached at Albion village and whether or not he exhorted the people of Albion to fight in the suffrage cause.<sup>10</sup> Present at the interrogation was Christopher Rhodes, a resident of Albion who while not present at Wakefield's discourse was told about it by his agent. During this period people were often arrested merely on hear say. The day following this examination, Wakefield along with 15 other prisoners was once again brought before the commissioners, this time to receive an address (most likely a word of warning) before finally being released.<sup>11</sup>

#### EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>12</sup>

Thursday, July 7

*Andrew Knox*, Coventry, native of Conn.; in this State past 8 years; age 35; not in Providence in May; never in Dorr's camp; went to the village; carried no arms and took none; was there one hour and a half; Monday at Sprague's tavern; saw George Fairbanks with one of the spears; went to Chestnut Hill Monday night; was taken at home, in company with Fairbanks, Leonard Love, Archibald Moore, Benoni Cahoone; all neighbors.

*James W. Mathewson*, Coventry, laborer, 35 years old; in Chepachet village in company with the above; left home Monday; reached Chepachet 2 o'clock in the afternoon; had no arms and took none.

*George Fairbanks*, Coventry, native of Mass., in the State 27 years, aged 45; not in Providence in May; in Chepachet Monday; went in company with the above; was one of the Representatives from Coventry in the Foundry Legislature; went into camp; marched up with a company and spear. Takes the New Age; resigned his office as representative, 29<sup>th</sup> of June; don't know that it has been published; have not spoken to Dorr these ten years; saw Flavel Patterson in the village.

*John Malbone*, Coventry, 37 years old, farmer; went in company with the above. Leonard Love, overseer of the poor in Coventry said he would pay his expenses, and if he fought on any side it would be for Dorr; Love also paid the expenses of another; Benoni Cahoone paid part of the expenses; Fairbanks treated Mathewson several times.

*John Leach*, Johnston, 20 years old, farmer; went to Chepachet Sunday; carried no arms; some officers forced him into the camp; did nothing there; got nothing to eat while there; left when the camp was broken up; has never belonged to any company.

*William Davis*, Glocester, 47 years old, works in factory for Henry B. Lyman; never in Dorr's camp or borne arms.

*Paris O. Davis*, son of the above, shoemaker, 22 years old, works for Alex Eddy and George Owens in Chepachet; has drilled in a company, Bradley, captain. Saw a load of powder carried to Layton Owens' building; understood it came from Providence.

*Ruel Place*, Glocester, laborer, 37 years old; never in Dorr's camp, lives 4 miles west of it; had no connections with the rebellion.

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<sup>10</sup> Compare Wakefield's situation with that of the Rev. Mr. Barrows of Middletown – even Sunday sermons of the clergy came under the scrutiny of the Law and Order forces. In 1843 Wakefield sued for libel the publishers of the *Providence Daily Journal* for printing the claim that he was Dorr's chaplain at Chepachet.

<sup>11</sup> Edmund Burke, *Interference of the Executive in the Affairs of Rhode Island*, House of Representatives Report No. 546, 1844, pp. 313-315.

<sup>12</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Friday July 8, 1842.



*Henry Griffith*, Johnston, stonemason, 26 years old; went to Chepachet Sunday night, in company with James Mathewson; carried no arms; was in the camp; left Monday afternoon.

*Joseph Holbrook*, Johnston, native of Mass., been in the State four years, farmer; 21 years old; was in Chepachet Monday noon; in company with Mr. Randall; no arms; marched into the camp by Dorr's men; left for home same night, and was taken about three miles this side of Chepachet.

*William Randall*, Johnston, 25 years old, housewright; went to Chepachet in company with Holbrook; never has had arms.

*Samuel Foster*, Pawtucket, 21 years old, mule spinner; born in Connecticut; lived in this State four years. Went to Chepachet Saturday in a wagon, with two others; had a gun, no powder and ball; Augustus Hicks loaned him the gun for training at Valley Falls. Marched on the ground in a company headed by D'Wolf. Left the gun at Sprague's tavern; saw provisions, arms and balls on Saturday night in Owen's red building; stayed until Monday night in the camp, when they were dismissed; took his gun at Sprague's tavern and left for home. On Monday forenoon D'Wolf called the men together to drill them, and told them that they were there to fight for suffrage; drilled them nearly two hours; when the troops were dismissed D'Wolf wanted the men to take the guns &c. to Connecticut, and they refused. Drilled one night in Despeau's company; held a meeting in Pawtucket Thursday night; officers of the company chosen; Despeau captain; Stephen Rice an officer; not determined at that meeting when the company should start for Chepachet. Despeau's son was there with a gun; asked him if his father was coming, and he said he didn't know or care. Thought they were to go there to fight for liberty. Some said up there that if the people did not come up there, they would come down to Providence. Despeau accepted the appointment of captain; 150 men formed that night and marched about the streets of Pawtucket until 11 o'clock. Despeau wanted the company to meet Thursday night to march up to Valley Falls, and join other companies there on Friday or Saturday.

*Thomas Atkinson*, Englishman, been in the country four months, 26 years old; went in company with Laycock and others from Scott's Pond. Previously discharged.

*James Manchester*, Manville, 26 years old, dresser-tender. Went to Chepachet Thursday afternoon by way of Woonsocket; carried a musket, but no powder and ball; arrived at two o'clock that afternoon; did not join the camp; remained at the tavern; left Monday night; went to get rid of fighting for the landowners; took his gun because he was afraid of losing it. Saw Dorr.

*Benjamin F. Crandell*, Woonsocket, 45 years, farmer, and shoe-maker; went to Chepachet, on the ground and pressed into the ranks by the Woonsocket company; took Hiram Buffington's sword from him, and Boyden's gun to carry home, and gave them up to the guard at the Union Bank; never took arms with the company at Woonsocket.

*Cyrus N. Knight*, Cranston, 18 years old, spinner; in Chepachet Sunday, in company with his brother; neither had guns; not in the camp; couldn't get on unless he joined the ranks; Nathan Lock tried to get him to join a company.

*William Esden*, Providence, Scotsman, seven months in the country, 62 years old; never fired a gun in his life; left Providence 2 o'clock Monday for Smithfield; after employment for his son, a mule spinner; then thought they would go from curiosity to see Dorr's camp; didn't reach there, and was taken on return to Providence.

*William R. Havens*, North Kingstown, lives in Warwick, age 40, farmer; started from home Monday alone, and was taken four miles this side the village by Gen. Stedman's brigade; not in the village and never in the camp.

*Thomas B. Smith*, Providence, 60 years, oysterman; was on Federal hill, with a gun; having attended the town house meetings, and there instructed that he was bound to sustain the People's Constitution. Some one of the oystermen at the fishmarket gave him a gun; was a part of the time before Anthony's house on guard, and did not leave until Thursday morning. Left Providence Saturday morning for Chepachet, with two young fellows from the fishmarket, and went into the camp. Took a gun and was on guard; stayed that night; Gen. D'Wolf was commander-in-chief; Allen an officer; Dorr was on

the field Sunday. The general convention was, to stand their ground; no malice in it; about two hundred in arms; didn't think they were able to stand a hand; talk about men from New York and Connecticut. Monday about sunset, D'Wolf harangued them and told that Dorr has resigned, and off he came into town; no malice about it, glad it ended as it did; hardest trial he ever had to go to war; a clear conscience, no ill will; as much affection for one man as another; stood on guard in Dorr's camp.

*Charles Jorden*, Slatersville, twenty years old, laborer, went to Chepachet Saturday afternoon, and went home that night.

*John F. Clarke*, stone-cutter, Cumberland, 27 years, went to Chepachet, no arms, on the ground with Allen Haskell; had a fife, played for the company Monday – was detained by Ben. West, was not employed as a musician; started for home that night, and was arrested about a mile west of the Smithfield Bank.

*Caleb Mathewson*, Johnson, 36 years old, farmer; left for Connecticut Monday morning, with Fenner White; reached beyond Chepachet; left the next morning for home and was taken; never had a gun, and the only part he has taken, was to vote.

*Henry R. Taylor*, Cranston, works for Amasa Sprague, 26 years old; went off Sunday morning for Killingly, to get rid of fighting, as they said a press gang was after men. Tuesday morning, started for home, through Chepachet, and taken on the way home near the Pond Factory.

*John Knowlton*, Cumberland, 30 years, farmer; left for Chepachet with Nathan Whipple and Welcome Alexander, with a gun, powder and shot; on Thursday saw Dorr twice on the ground; stayed until they broke up; heard D'Wolf's speech; left his gun and started for Woonsocket falls. The story told me was, that if they got force enough, it would lead to the People's Constitution. Drilled with the Cumberland company; saw Amasa Whipple in the camp.

*Isaac Lawton*, N. Providence, 55 years; works in a factory; was in Chepachet Saturday, with his son, and returned that night; was taken at his house the next day.

*Wm. H. Lawton*, mariner, son of the above, 25 years old; was at Chepachet with his father, and taken at the same time.

*Ebenezer Smith*, N. Providence, 21 years, born in Massachusetts; in the State six years; left for Chepachet Sunday night, to see the sight, was forced into the camp; left Monday afternoon; taken on his way home; works on Philip Allen's farm.

*John A. Cory*, N. Providence, 25 years old, farmer; at Chepachet Sunday night; no arms; at Sprague's tavern; in the camp ten o'clock; forced on by four men; refused to take a gun; left Tuesday morning for home, and taken the other side of Greenville; belonged to no company, and had nothing to do with the rebellion.

*Andrew Thompson*, Providence, 23 years old, housewright; went to Warren for the guns; left for Chepachet, and stayed until Monday; took a sword, and was taken in Angell Darling's house.

*Arnold Thomas*, Johnston, 30 years of age, farmer; Chepachet Sunday; got a gun before he arrived at Chepachet; could not get off until Monday afternoon.

*Jeremiah King*, Johnston, 29 years old, carder; in company with John A. Cory; had no arms; frightened from home.

*Joseph Higgins*, North Providence 47 years old, laborer; left for Chepachet Sunday; has had no arms; and no connection with the rebellion.

Andrew Knox, James W. Mathewson, John Malbone, John Leech, William Davis, Ruel Place, Henry Griffith, Joseph Holbrook, William Randall, Thomas Atkinson, Benjamin F. Crandell, Cyril R. Knight, William Esden, William R. Havens, Charles Jordan, Caleb Mathewson, Henry R. Taylor, Ebenezer Smith, John A. Cory, Arnold Thomas, Jeremiah King, Joseph Higgins, were discharged yesterday.

The plight of 22 prisoners examined on July 8<sup>th</sup> was typical of all other prisoners arrested. They ranged in age; from the very young, Daniel Weatherhead was only 15, to middle aged Clarke Smith who was 50. Often prisoners were either from the same village

(Clarke Smith and William Mason were both from Albion) or from the same place of employment (Thomas Easton and his son James were both mill workers in Philip Allen's factory). The elder Easton's testimony notes Allen's factory was closed, most likely due to the general excitement of the rebellion in which many businesses closed due to an insufficient workforce. Oddly, Philip Allen was Thomas Dorr's uncle, and a Law and Order Democrat. He would go on to serve as Rhode Island's governor from 1851 to 1853. During his governorship the Democratic led General Assembly passed a resolution restoring Thomas Dorr to his political rights. These rights had been lost when Dorr was convicted of treason in 1844 and not restored when he was liberated from prison in 1845.

### EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>13</sup>

Friday, July 8

*George Cotton*, Pawtucket (Mass.), 20 years old; never had a gun in his life; never in Chepachet; arrested in Providence Monday; supposed to be concerned in the Pawtucket mills.

*Esek Kelley*, Scituate, 41 years, not in Chepachet; arrested in Johnston, on the road to Warwick Monday; works in factory.

*Thomas Esten*, native of Scotland, 20 years old; in the State six weeks from a whaling voyage, in the ship *Rosalie*; since his return worked at Philip Allen's factory; mill stopped, and went to Chepachet Monday afternoon to see the place; stayed in a barn that night, and left Tuesday morning; arrested by the army on his way to Mr. Allen's.

*James Esten*, mule-spinner, Scotchman, work at Philip Allen's; went to Chepachet Tuesday morning, from curiosity, and taken with his father, before examined.

*Samuel Greene*. Manville, 40 years old; went to Chepachet Friday, on business with his brother; forced into the camp by D'Wolf; had no arms; rode up in a wagon with David Vallett.

*Nelson Bowen*, Gloucester, 24 years old; laborer; very sulky; didn't seem to know any thing.

*Wm. E. Mason*, Albion village, 18 years old; went to Chepachet Thursday and returned Saturday, again Sunday, frightened off by the story of a press gang; saw Hiram Buffington and Getchel from Woonsocket, both with swords; came home Monday; saw six iron cannon on the field, no brass pieces. Benoni Stone, Sanford Harris, Sanford Simmons, Daniel Young persuaded him to go, the latter paid his fare.

*Daniel D. Weatherhead*, Albion, 15 years old; Chepachet Monday, went with Daniel Harris and Sanford Harris who carried guns; Dean, a one armed fellow, was an officer on the hill.

*James Holmes*, Providence, 26 years old; not in Chepachet; native Connecticut; came to the State last March; works in George Reed's shoemaker's shop; has seen forty-eight ball cartridges in Read's shop, Read went to Chepachet to carry clothing to Charles H. Blanchard; heard Read say, that he and his oldest son and Blanchard, were at Anthony's house, and came to the Artillery alarm post for the guns; Reed persuaded him to go to Chepachet, but refused.

*Clarke Smith*, Albion village, shoemaker, 50 years old; went to Chepachet with his son; both with guns; there Thursday and Friday.

*Almon Smith*, son of the above, 19 years old; works in cotton mill; rode from Woonsocket in a two horse wagon; father advised him to stay at home.

*Joseph Chappwell*, Providence, wheelwright; left for Chepachet Saturday, the works where he was employed being stopped; thought he would go to see what was to be seen;

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<sup>13</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Saturday July 9, 1842.

stopped at Sprague's tavern that night; started for home early Sunday morning, and taken near Olneyville; carried no arms.

*Henry Bragg*, Providence, laborer, very violent in his conversation; approved of Dorr's second return, and that he was ready and wanted others to defend him; was at the arsenal with his gun; not more than three weeks ago declared that he would wade up to his knees in landholders' blood.

*William B. Gould*, Providence, housewright, 39 years, at Anthony's house with a gun; remained there an hour, and went home with it; drilled in George McCall's shop, in the third ward; not been to Chepachet.

*Charles H. Kimball*, Barrington, 26 years old, shoemaker; was at Anthony's house on Tuesday; took no gun, stayed about an hour; left Providence for Chepachet Saturday, and stopped at his uncle John Campbell's, in Pawtucket, did not go up to the village; was seen with pistols.

*Charles B. Dewey*, Johnston, painter, 20 years old; native of Connecticut; in this State 2 months; forced into the camp when bound to Connecticut.

*John Gorton*, Simmons's Factory, 21 years old; Dorr's soldiers took him about a mile this side of the village, ran away, and was taken near Greenville; went to see what was going on; no arms, and no part in the rebellion.

*Arnold Harrington*, Fruit Hill, 22 years old, laborer; went to Chepachet on Friday with Geo. Hall and others; stopped at Sprague's tavern and Dorr's men got him into the camp twice; remained until Monday morning, with Hall; taken at Hawkins's tavern; advised to go by Hillman, the blacksmith.

*Stephen A. Colwell*, Gloucester, 21 years, farmer; lives four miles west of the village; was there Saturday morning and returned home in the evening; had no arms; asked permission from the guard (one armed Dean,) to enter the camp; was requested to take a sword; declined; drilled once in Chepachet village, in the company called the West company; Anthony Tucker was the captain.

*Mathewson Andrews*, Gloucester, in the village, 42 years old, laborer; was never in the camp; has not held a gun in ten years; took no part in the rebellion.

*George Comstock*, native Massachusetts; came from there a year and a half ago, live in Pawtuxet, housewright; been drilling in the Pawtuxet volunteers company; George Hoffman, capt., Joseph Norton, Lt.; sometimes more than thirty men drilled; bought his gun, which came from Boston; the design of the company was to come out 4<sup>th</sup> July for a clam-bake; calculated to get a charter; left Pawtuxet for Chepachet on Sunday; carried his gun in company with two others; remained until 6 o'clock Monday evening; applied to Gen. D'Wolf for a pass, and he replied, that he should not have the men going off and on, and meant to establish Gen. Jackson's rule, strict order; left in the evening and started to quit the State; stopped at a tavern three miles west; came again to the village and gave himself up. Previous to the attack on the arsenal, Comstock was very violent in his threats about the Pawtuxet guns; he applied to Dorr about them, and he directed Comstock to come to Pawtuxet and demand the guns of Mr. William Rhodes; a week before the encampment at Chepachet, Comstock tried to have a vote passed by the volunteer company at Pawtuxet that they should march to Chepachet.

*Frederick A.P. Batchelder*, North Providence, 30 years of age, native of Maine; in the State more than a year; comb-maker; left Sunday morning for Chepachet; carried a gun; stood guard two hours; left the camp and stayed at Sprague's tavern that night; was bound home the next day and taken at Greenville; attended one meeting at Holmes' brewery, where Parmenter made a speech.

The following persons were discharged yesterday: Esek Kelly, Thomas Esden, James Esden, Samuel Greene, William E. Mason, Daniel H. Weatherhead, James Holmes, Almon Smith, Joseph Chappell, Charles B. Dewey, Wm White, Enos Mowry, John Gorton, Stephen A. Colwell, Mathewson Andrews.

The July 9<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Providence Daily Journal* also provided an account of prisoner examinations at the Bristol jail. What makes this report interesting is neither the Bristol or Warren newspapers, *The Phenix* or *The Northern Star and Farmer's and Mechanic's Advocate*, carried any detailed accounts of prisoner examinations at Bristol. Oddly while not reporting on events in town, *The Phenix* did carry some abbreviated accounts of prisoner examinations in Providence. The following report is also interesting in that it notes some prisoners having already been released from the Bristol jail. The named released prisoners do not appear in any other newspaper accounts, substantiating that not all of those arrested during this period are accounted for by newspaper reporting. An accurate total number of prisoners detained at Bristol or Providence during the period of martial law may never be fully known as no official record of prisoner interrogations has been located.<sup>14</sup> The Bristol examinations were conducted by Joseph Blake, the Rhode Island Attorney General and a resident of Bristol.

Correspondence of the Journal<sup>15</sup>

Bristol, July 8, 1842

The examination of the prisoners in Bristol jail, arrested under martial law, took place to-day.

*Peleg W. Slocum*, 26 years of age, born in Bristol, has resided in Pawtuxet 3 years; fisherman and tailor by profession; was warned to do duty at Pawtuxet on the 27<sup>th</sup>; left next day in boat with several others, crossed over to Sabine's Point and from thence started for Swansey, to get clear of being taken; went up as far as Slade's Ferry and thence into Little's Narrows, where we were arrested; was in the procession which escorted Dorr into Providence on the 18<sup>th</sup> May; never was at Chepachet; never took up arms for Dorr, was present when a volunteer company was formed at Pawtuxet, and joined them as fifer; company consisted of about 30 members; was asked by Wm. M. Williams to go to Chepachet; declined; at one of our meetings, Williams introduced a resolution to go in a body to Dorr's camp; I objected; Williams expressed himself strongly in favor of Dorr, said he should go if no one else, as he thought he should be as safe there as any where; and he had a horse as swift as any one, and they might catch him if they could; Williams has a gun and drilled with the company.

*Loring Hoyle*, 33 years of age, mule spinner; born in Thompson, Conn.; resides in Pawtuxet; left home on the 28<sup>th</sup> to get clear of fighting on either side; was arrested with Slocum at Little's Narrows, was not in Dorr's procession on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, has not been in Chepachet for 10 years.

*Stafford Healy*, cooper, born in Tiverton, resided in Warren 3 years, 48 years of age, was warned on the 25<sup>th</sup> to train; went fishing to get clear; returned the same day, concluded to clear to get rid of difficulty, never took up arms against the State.

*Loranus A. Brayton*, laborer; born in Seekonk, lived in Warren one year; was not at Providence with Dorr on the 18<sup>th</sup> May; never was at Chepachet; never took up arms against the State.

Elmer Waldron of Fall River, George Munro of Providence, and Stephen R. Sheldon of Pawtuxet, were previously released, no charges being brought against them.

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<sup>14</sup> No detailed official records of prisoner interrogations at Bristol were found at either the Rhode Island State Archives or the Rhode Island Supreme Judicial Court Records Center, the two most likely repositories.

<sup>15</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Saturday July 9, 1842.

Only five prisoners were scheduled for interrogation on Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup>. Comparatively few when compared to the daily number of prisoners interviewed during the previous week. Perhaps the commissioners were looking for a light schedule or a short day, especially after the long week of interrogations in the poorly ventilated jailhouse at the height of the summer's heat. However three of those scheduled for Saturday examination were no ordinary prisoners. Seth Luther was a known proponent of free suffrage, an able public speaker, somewhat of a rabble rouser and a prime mover in the Rhode Island Suffrage Association during the 1830s. John Dispeau was the highest ranking Dorrite military leader to be captured. Lyman Cooley was seen as a major link between Dorr in Chepachet and his Providence base of supporters. On July 20<sup>th</sup>, only eleven days after his interrogation, Luther a prolific writer, wrote a ballad from his prison cell which he later caused to be published as a small twelve page pamphlet.<sup>16</sup> The notes of this pamphlet provide some useful insight into Luther's humiliating march through the streets of Providence with 20 other prisoners as they made their way to the state prison or as he phrased it, 'that Bastile (sic) of American Despotism.' The pamphlet's other notes refer to a Mr. L\_\_\_ C\_\_\_ losing his reasoning in consequence of the treatment he received from the Algerines while in prison. Only two prisoners had the initials 'LC' and one, Lorenzo Crandell was released on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. By the process of elimination it stands to reason that the 'LC' Luther referred to was Lyman Cooley. That 'LC' was Lyman Cooley is further substantiated by a deposition of Jedediah Sprague given in May, 1844.<sup>17</sup> As odd as it may appear, Luther's own sanity was also called into question. While Luther was imprisoned in Newport awaiting trial, two Newport physicians, at the direction of the Court, examined him and found "no unequivocal evidence of mental derangement ..."<sup>18</sup> Luther goes on to say that 'LC' was finally transferred to an asylum. Whether Cooley or Luther were sane or not is irrelevant, the fact remains that they were considered important and of far more interest to the Law and Order commissioners than those prisoners examined to date. The following examinations were also significantly more detailed than any conducted during the preceding week.

#### EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>19</sup>

Saturday, July 9

*Seth Luther*, Providence, 47 years old educated by Governor Earle. Word came out last May, when he was in Chepachet, that Gov. Dorr wanted assistance in Providence. Seth found out that Dorr's forces were there assembled at Anthony's house, and in he came with his gun in the evening; was present at the attack on the arsenal; advanced with the cannon; don't know whether Dorr touched off the guns or not; left the field and repaired to Hoyle tavern for breakfast, having had no supper the night previous. Seth doubt's whether Dorr touched the cannon; stayed in town until the next Sunday morning. After the breastwork was thrown up, went up to see it; gun he left at Hoyle tavern. The following Sunday after the attack on the arsenal, retired to Chepachet to obtain work, knowing that as he had personal enemies in Providence, it would be difficult to procure employment there. On the morning that operations were commenced at Chepachet, he

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<sup>16</sup> Seth Luther, *The Garland of Gratitude*, Providence, 1842, pp. 9-12.

<sup>17</sup> Burke, p. 342.

<sup>18</sup> Manuscript document in the Luther file at the Supreme Court Judicial Records Center.

<sup>19</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Monday July 11, 1842.

was told that some mails were wanted on the hill; Seth replied that he didn't know where the hill was; soon found out, however; has never attended any secret meetings or acted on any committees. When in the encampment, and while the rebels were there, Seth acted as clerk for the encampment; kept a record; from when he received his appointment declines telling; was at work for Colonel Atwell previous to the commencement of the war; was about to remodel a parlor of his; continued to act as clerk until a dispatch was put into his hands from Gov. Dorr, written on the first page of a sheet of letter paper; read it, handed it to the person who gave it to him, and continued his labors as clerk. Soon after this, left the encampment, and the troops moved off, which was about dusk. The purport of Dorr's letter was that he had consulted with the friends of suffrage, and the result was that he wished the troops to disperse. Will lose his life first before he would disclose secrets; refuses to answer the question whether he has attended private meetings in Chepachet; left Chepachet for Woonsocket on Monday between 8 and 9, in company with a number of others; very rainy; went into a barn on the road, and was arrested about four miles from Woonsocket by a gentleman who he didn't know, but who said he had captured the illustrious Seth Luther. Mr. Cooke found him with a sword at his side; had pistols in his belt one day; when captured was delivered into the hands of the guard; something given him to eat, and was required to sign a paper, and thought before he signed it, would be kept until all eternity. – The guard treated him in a very jocose manner; declines answering when first heard of Dorr's return; his intention was to defend Dorr; declines to tell whether Dorr meant to remove his forces, and declines general answering all questions implicating others, or developing the plans of the suffrage party.

*John S. Dispeau*, Pawtucket, native Mass., resided 14 years here, age 42, keep store in Pawtucket, first commenced warlike preparations when Dorr was marched through Providence, as capt. Of the Pawtucket Company, numbering 110 men, most of them armed, the guns some of them borrowed, the next turn out was the Federal Hill expedition; arrived about sun-down with the company; about 2 o'clock in the morning, moved with his company towards the arsenal; thinks the whole force was about 300, including 40 or 50 of his men; objected to the attack on the arsenal and at 10 o'clock that evening advised against it; told Dorr it was an imprudent step, and wouldn't risk himself and his men in the attempt; however, didn't wish to be the first one to back out and marched up; very dark and foggy, went as far as the buttonwood tree and then retreated at daylight to the Hoyle Tavern; again to Anthony's house, took breakfast, and when Anthony proclaimed the compromise, withdrew, and this was the last active part which he has taken in the business; week before last, got his company together and all the officers resigned, when it was proposed to get up a new company, being none in Pawtucket to do escort duty on 4<sup>th</sup> July, &c.; the design being not to help the People's Constitution, but merely for the usual training purpose; urged men not to go to Chepachet, refusing himself to go; didn't know that his son was going, and if he had dared would have gone after him; read the notice from Isaac Allen, major, though a man from Burrillville, for his company to assemble at Chepachet, laughed at it; didn't know that any of his men had gone; guns were frequently left at his shop and taken again; no ammunition with them; never told his son to fight; took no notice of the Chepachet order; has had nothing to do directly or indirectly with any force against the existing government since Dorr's attack on the arsenal; Dorr said that night, that when he had taken the arsenal, he meant to march for the colleges and get possession there.

*Lyman Cooley*, 43 years, merchant, New York; left Providence for Chepachet Wednesday having been advised by his nephew Henry, to leave the city, as there was a good deal of excitement against him; was conveyed there by Major Power; had no arms; stayed at Sprague's tavern; came to Providence on Friday with letters, one was directed to Otis Holmes, and three others were left at James Thurber's store in Canal street; was brought in and carried back by Nick Power, as far as the Greek Tavern; stayed at Gen. Sprague's house while in Chepachet; object in going to Chepachet was to drill and to assist the suffrage people; the Captain and Secretary of the Spartan Band were in Chepachet, and 200 more had left New York, but did not reach, as the order was sent back that the camp had broken up; it was talked in the camp that they intended to come to

Providence; understood that a tax was to be laid on the inhabitants to reimburse the suffrage party; brass pieces were expected from New York; a much larger force was to have been obtained from New York, money was raised in New York; the headquarters were at Major Hopkins'; he was the cashier; to some of the men who left, he paid 8 or 10 dollars a piece. A man from New York, who is a lawyer there, Daniel E. Sickels, has been in the prison and advised him to deny all facts and communicate nothing. Sickels came as a committee from Tammany Hall to aid the prisoners. He has been concerned in the Rhode Island matters.

*Charles W. Carter*, blacksmith, born in Massachusetts, 33 years old, in the State 14 years; was lieutenant of the Fourth Ward volunteers; at the arsenal, with the two brass pieces; the cannon was touched and flashed, one of them twice; Dorr present, with more than 200 men, all armed; examined a large part of the boxes, had no balls in them; at daylight hardly men enough to drag the cannon away; they brought again to Anthony's house, Carter bored out the touchholes with a gimlet, drew the charges and fired them off; went once to Stonington to escort Dorr.

*Dr. Benjamin Nichols*, Centreville, 38 years; in Chepachet Sunday, left with Dutee J. Pearce; saw Dorr at Sprague's house and tried to persuade him to withdraw his forces; took a letter from Walter S. Burges to the same purport; told Dorr that the act of the Assembly was such, that men had withdrawn from him, and he seemed to consider that if it was so he must submit, returned to Providence that evening; was elected one of Dorr's foundry Senators and sworn into office; has never resigned; does not approve of force measures; never has contributed money or corresponded with any person on the subject of suffrage; went to Chepachet by request of Mesers. Burges, Pearce, Wales, &c.

Twelve prisoners were scheduled for interrogation on July 11<sup>th</sup>, four of whom had been questioned previously. At the end of the day's examinations five prisoners were discharged; four from the current proceedings and one, Isaac Lawton, from the July 7 proceedings. The most noteworthy prisoner scheduled for examination on Monday July 11 was Jediah Sprague. He was the Chepachet innkeeper and owner of the tavern (Figure 3) that served as Dorr's headquarters from June 24 – 27.



Figure 3. Thomas Dorr's Chepachet Headquarters



By mid-July, out-of-state Democratic newspapers published accounts of Sprague's untimely death while in the custody of the Algerines. The Law and Order papers strenuously denied the claim. The account proved false as Sprague was subsequently transferred to the Bristol jailhouse on July 30<sup>th</sup> to await trial for treason against the State. Another prisoner to be examined this day was David Hamilton, an Irishman who gave some of the best accounts of events at Burrington Anthony's house on May 18<sup>th</sup> as well as insight into developments on Acote's Hill in June.

#### EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>20</sup>

Monday, July 11

*David M.G. Hamilton*, 42 years, Providence, mason, Irishman by birth, has been naturalized; has drilled in the Fourth Ward volunteers; commenced before Dorr's encampment at Anthony's house; one of the escort; in arms on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, as one of the guard comprising twenty; was present Tuesday evening among those who attacked the arsenal; forty men were detached to guard Anthony's house, while the remainder were at the arsenal; had a good deal of trouble and fright to get the brass pieces to the arsenal; when there, Hamilton was detached with six others to take a position at the right, which they did; soon a young man came up on horseback, (Pitman was his name,) and hailed us, thinking we were their men; some of those with Hamilton said "pop him," and Hamilton replied, "no, it would be cowardly for seven men to shoot one," and then Pitman retired; never has been at a secret meeting since the 18<sup>th</sup> May; first learned of Dorr's second return through various sources; left Providence for Chepachet Friday evening, and arrived there Saturday morning about 7 o'clock; carried neither guns nor ammunition; went directly on the field; was passed in by some one who knew him, with a number of others, refused to take a musket and was marched off by Capt. Olney of Woonsocket, and put under guard, kept until afternoon, on condition that he would again go to the field; complied; Dorr came up at 3 o'clock; four companies were formed into a hallow square, and he addressed them. The people had begun to be dissatisfied, some had left, and his address seemed to re-animate them. He vowed his purpose to be at that time, to fortify himself in Chepachet and await assistance from abroad. On Saturday, there were more men than muskets; at night it was reversed, owing to the management of Major Allen. D'Wolf took command on Monday; they wanted me to be third lieut. of the Fourth Ward volunteers, which I refused; the officers met at Dorr's quarters, to consult as to placing D'Wolf in command; they were suspicious of D'Wolf, on account of his letter addressed to Gov. King. Hamilton was on guard from 9 to 12 o'clock, Saturday night, raining hard, and from 4 to 7 o'clock, Sunday morning; that night he was requested to go on a scout among the neighboring farms; refused; the previous night, three cows had been taken; on Monday they said the landholders had laid the south part of the State under martial law, and they should put the north part of the State under the same, and the order was given to shoot every man who left the camp. The provisions which the prisoners are allowed in prison, Hamilton says, are good enough and plenty of them, more than the prisoners can consume; no complaint on that account. Monday, I was detached as one of a guard to go after men down the turnpike, and obtained some thirty; went twice to see Col. Atwell; he told prisoners that he didn't think they could hold out, that is was injurious to the trade of the place, and they had put a guard around him, saying he was a traitor; left the camp at 2 o'clock Monday afternoon; twenty men were detached from the Fourth Ward volunteers under command of Dawley, who went down the road to press men; saw Dawley get into a wagon with a man and woman and carry them up to the camp; before he left, some twenty or thirty of the Spartan band were selected to go on a scouting expedition; this Spartan band had a place selected by themselves on the field;

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<sup>20</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Tuesday July 12, 1842.

they selected the best guns; never attended a meeting at Holmes' brewery, prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> May; Sunday night, about one hundred and fifty recruits entered the camp; was captured at Greenville, on his return to Providence.

*Nelson Barnes*, Johnston, housewright, 31 years old; went to Chepachet with a sword on Sunday night because he was afraid he should lose it; was pressed into the camp, and had his sword with him; has not seen it since; he ran away from the camp; has never borne arms against the State, or been at all concerned in the rebellion; was three miles this side of Chepachet when pressed by Dorr's men; was not present at the attack on the arsenal; nothing to do with it.

*Lewis P. Parlin*, physician, aged 32 years; lived in Providence three years; born in Maine; was on Federal Hill on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May; no arms; on the 17<sup>th</sup>, undertook to pass a man, who stood as guard to the cannon, by the name of Pearce, and his orders were to let no one pass, friend or foe. Pearce asked him to take his musket, while he went to get a drink of water, which he accordingly did; stopped several citizens as they attempted to pass; took his orders from Pearce; left towards sunset and returned home, and again returned after sunset. Was there until the alarm bells were rung, in a house with Dr. Allen and others. Dr. Capron and another gentleman came in, they seemed to be riding about from curiosity. Dr. Allen was there acting, or ready to act, as surgeon; he had prepared the room, and had his surgical instruments, as he said. Dr. Parlin remained at the request of Dr. Allen; at this time Dr. P. had a small fowling piece with him; went to Anthony's house, and was at home about three o'clock; returned at half past eight o'clock, and was told before he went that Dorr had fled; remained until the troops marched up and possession was taken of Anthony's house; went merely as a spectator. Not in Chepachet; knows nothing about it; except from street rumor. Left the city on Sunday, for Pawtucket, Mass., and stayed until Thursday following. Was not present at the mob on Monday night, near the bridge; did not go to Woonsocket. Allen requested him on Tuesday afternoon to meet him, saying, perhaps some one may be injured, who may require assistance. Disapproved of the movement against the arsenal; did not know of it, until half an hour preceding. Being told that, under martial law, every person who did not fight for the government, was liable to be committed to prison, rather than be pressed, he chose to retire to Massachusetts, as he was against all forcible measures. – Never has attended any meetings at Holmes's brewery.

*Jedediah Sprague*, Gloucester, 38 years, keeps tavern, was in Providence on the 18<sup>th</sup>, arrived about 7 o'clock; was at Anthony's house; saw Dorr, conversed with him, did not understand his objects and movements; saw Benj. Cowell there and Levi Aldrich of Smithfield, who had command; was there when Dorr fled, and immediately left the house; was in Woonsocket in company with a number of Dorr's officers; was not appointed a military officer except by Dorr's Legislature; brigadier general; understood he was appointed a committee to purchase or select ground for the military or civil purposes of Dorr; never acted or advised with any person except that Major Allen once spoke to him about it; refused to have his premises used for a military depot; Shelly and Keep were under guard in his house, also Edward D. Pearce and William Slater were there as prisoners. When he was at Woonsocket he understood that he was selected a committee to procure the ground; this meeting was held at the Woonsocket hotel, D'Wolf chairman; the meeting held about 10 days after Dorr's departure in May; Sprague was invited to attend, can't tell who invited him or whether the object stated; can't tell whether officers were or were not appointed; an encampment was at that time marked out in Woonsocket; William Aldrich went from Chepachet in company with Sprague; can't recollect whether any arms or ammunition were spoken of, has seen letters from Dorr before he arrived in Chepachet; can't recollect what was in them; can't recollect about dates; directed to D'Wolf and others; was shown two letters; first he knew of his returning was through the papers mostly; D'Wolf has been to his house in June in company with Comstock more than once, perhaps he might have conversed with him on the subject of Dorr's return; this was after the Woonsocket meeting; thinks he didn't say any thing about arms and ammunition; no previous notice to provide for so many travelers; concluded Major Allen selected the ground; don't know that any person pointed

out the hill; first he knew of it, heard that the men were on the hill; didn't know they were there until some one told him. – Allen was in the village before the encampment was commenced; Sprague the only man appointed to choose a site for the encampment.

*George E. Brown*, physician, 25 years old, as he says, probably nearer 50; at Chepachet on Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup>; left Woonsocket for Forster; passing through the village of Chepachet to see some patients in Forster; perceived there was a gun in the wagon belonging to the man with whom he went; this is the direct road the Doctor usually travels once or twice a week towards the Musqueto Factory. The Doctor, as he was passing along with his saddle-bags, was met by some of Dorr's soldiers, who told him that a man was in the camp in a dying condition, and that he must go up and administer relief; and he concluded to go. Passing Colonel Atwell's house, he saw him and accosted the Colonel thus: "you see what you have brought the people to; for and against them; talking one thing to day and another to-morrow; so much for a traitor." The Colonel replied to Brown not to call him a traitor; he had helped Dorr, finding him poor; had helped him to a barrel of pork, and was ready to give more. The man in company with the Doctor rebuked him for taunting Colonel Atwell, and corroborated the statement made by the Colonel. The Doctor was captured near Sprague's; has never had pistol or gun, or in any way been concerned against the Government.

*George Eddy*, Gloucester, son of Amasa Eddy, jr., baker, 34 years old; was in Providence on the 17<sup>th</sup> May, in company with William Aldrich, at 11 o'clock in the evening; had a gun on the hill, in front of John Barton's house; was not on duty with a musket more than half an hour. First knew Dorr was coming to Chepachet a week or ten days before he arrived. Major Allen was about the first officer who selected the ground; first saw D'Wolf Friday; heard Jedediah Sprague was appointed to select the ground; knows nothing about powder; cartridges were made in Frissell's shop, and also in Owen's shop; provisions from Connecticut were stored in the same building; five or six men, strangers, were busy making cartridges in the same building, some four or five days before the encampment; Benjamin West among them, Eddy furnished a portion of the bread, the flour being brought from Owen's building; Major Allen promised to pay him; saw a letter from Dorr, in possession of Major Allen at Sprague's tavern, about a fortnight before he came. Colonel Atwell asked Eddy if they had provisions enough, if not, they could have some out of his cellar. The letter referred to, was presented at a meeting of officers at Sprague's, Bill Potter Chairman and Silas Comstock, Secretary; Sprague was present; the letter related to the encampment; said he was to have a force from New York; about 30 were present; talked with Mr. Atwell one evening, (Wednesday) a dozen or twenty present, concerning the encampment; by his talk, he seemed to be on both sides. The men talked of coming in to Providence on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Brought cartridge boxes from Woonsocket to Chepachet on the 25<sup>th</sup> June.

*John Paine*, Chepachet, 22 years old, works for Jeremiah Shelton; was in Providence on the evening the arsenal was attacked; some one handed him a gun the day after, did not go to the arsenal; started for home in the afternoon of the 18<sup>th</sup>; lived opposite the encampment at Chepachet, and was on the ground Thursday or Friday; was pressed by Major Allen to march Charles Harris and others to Woonsocket Falls.

*Ethan T. Place*, Gloucester, 29 years; in the camp Saturday; took his gun from home and was on guard until 12 o'clock that night; left about sunrise next morning for home; went down Monday afternoon for his gun and couldn't find it, the reason he went was, that the people there said that if every body turned out in Gloucester, Dorr would have force enough from other States to carry the People's Constitution without much bloodshed. Amasa Eddy wanted him to go, and sent word by William Aldrich.

*Charles Colvin*, Arkwright, 39 years, laborer; not in Chepachet; had no arms; attended no meetings.

*Thomas Brown*, Englishman, 23 years old, farmer; Gloucester present residence; in the camp Friday; compelled to stay and to take a gun; couldn't get off until the next day; left the gun.

*Edwin Aldrich*, Gloucester, 40 years old; farmer; in the camp Thursday, returned home that night; had no gun; merely looked about; no connection with Dorr's party.

*Samuel Bowen*, Pawtucket, native Mass.; been in the State 32 years; laborer; came to Providence with a gun in May; went to Chepachet with others with a gun, stayed in the village half an hour and left for home.

The following persons were discharged yesterday by the Governor, viz. Isaac Lawton, George E. Brown, Ethan F. Place, Charles Colvin, and Thomas Brown.

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, 44 prisoners were scheduled for interrogation, seven of whom had been examined previously. This group was the second largest number of prisoners to be examined since interrogations began on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. One of the prisoners examined was Eliab Whipple, a farmer from Cumberland. Arrested on July 6<sup>th</sup> on a warrant of Governor King and Council, he was brought to Providence and after eight days in prison was examined by the commissioners. After spending 24 days in prison he was discharged, but before he could leave the jail house he was re-arrested by the civil authorities. The day following his second arrest, he was sent to Newport to await trial, but after six more days in jail he was released on bail of \$10,000 with sureties. At the next term of the court, the grand jury found no bill against him. Whipple's recognizance of \$10,000 was not returned to him until the March 1843 term of the court. By Whipple's own calculation he was imprisoned a total of 31 days.<sup>21</sup> Also noteworthy in this grouping were Otis Holmes and Nicholas Power. Holmes was the owner of Holmes Brewery where some of the Dorr militia trained and stored their recently commandeered cannons used in the attack on the Providence arsenal. His responses to the commissioner's questions were remarkable both for his lack of memory and lack of cooperation. Power was an elderly Dorr supporter; his responses to the commissioner's questions were humorous yet insightful. Unquestionably these two prisoners provided some of the more memorable dialog during the proceedings.

#### EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>22</sup>

Tuesday, July 12

*Peter Norton*, Pawtucket, native of Martha's Vinyard, in the State three years, 48 years old; drilled in the Pawtucket company; not in Chepachet.

*Allen Legg*, Smithfield, housewright, 47 years; came Tuesday evening to Providence; when the arsenal was attacked, had a gun, and remained until the next morning; marched to the attack on the arsenal; left for Chepachet on Saturday afternoon, used no gun; remained until Monday night; stood as guard Sunday afternoon.

*Samuel Moffet*, Newport, housewright, 43 years; not in Providence in May; passed through Chepachet on his way to Connecticut.

*Austin Downs*, River Head, Long Island, horse trader; came to Providence from New Bedford on Sunday, when the troops were collecting, in his own carriage; was bound to Connecticut, and from there home, and passing through Chepachet was taken prisoner; had in his wagon three others, Charlton, Wormwell and Foy. A lawyer by the name of Daniel E. Sickels, of New York, has been to see him since he has been in prison, and wanted Downs to pay him ten dollars to obtain his discharge, which he refused to advance.

*John Wormwell*, Boston, native of New Hampshire, was passing through Providence on Sunday, and started in company with Downs, in his wagon, with the others above named, for Connecticut, and was taken there.

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<sup>21</sup> Burke, p. 316.

<sup>22</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Wednesday July 13, 1842.

*James Foy*, 22 years, a sportsman, like his three companions, residence in Boston, told the same story with the others.

*Robert Charlton*, New York, confirms the accounts of the preceding.

*Robert C. Sisson*, New York, 42 years old; has not been to Chepachet for 19 years; he left New York June 25, for Griswold, Jewett City, and Stonington, thence to Newport for Portsmouth, R.I., where he was arrested.

*Caleb Bradley*, Chepachet, hostler, 46 years old, born in Massachusetts; in this State three years; captain of the Chepachet volunteers; no particular object in drilling; the company under his command marched into the camp; knows nothing about powder, cartridges, provisions, or any kind of preparations for the camp; marched to the Falls to escort Messrs. Peckham and others as prisoners. Bradley was opposed to going there; helped place a nine-pounder on a carriage, in front of Sprague's house, which was taken from Chas. A. Slocum's barn; drilled the Chepachet company in Sprague's barn, and sometimes between the barn and house.

*George Hoffman*, 27 years old, Pawtuxet, harness maker, teamer, lets horses, &c., captain of the Pawtuxet volunteers, which was raised for 4<sup>th</sup> July clam-bakes, &c.; one of those who refused to obey the orders of Governor King; he is a native of New York; has been in the State 6 years; purchased a gun of Joseph F. Norton.

*Joseph F. Norton*, native of Maine, in the State three years, butcher, 24 years old; a member of the Pawtuxet company; 2<sup>d</sup> lieutenant; went to Boston and procured 17 muskets; the men paid the money for them; brought them to Seekonk depot; thence in a wagon to the Seekonk shore, and across to Pawtuxet in a boat; the whole object in forming the company was to march to clam-bakes.

*Joel R. Fernal*, Providence, 32 years old, laborer, born in Frankfort, Maine, in the State three years; went to Chepachet on a Sunday from curiosity; in the afternoon, D'Wolf marched down to Sprague's tavern, and ordered all spectators to fall into the ranks, D'Wolf then carried us to the blacksmith's shop, made us take some of the pikes, and forced us into the camp; has had no connection with Dorr or his gang.

*George Dispeau*, 17 years old, went to Chepachet.

*Layard H. Brown*, Stonington, 28 years old, blacksmith, lived in Providence since last October; not in Chepachet; was at work in Scituate Four Corners; left there on account of the press gang, for the woods, and was on the way back when captured near Hawkins' tavern.

*Hiram Chappell*, Providence, 38 years old, native of Connecticut; in the State three years; escorted Dorr; drilled in John S. Eddy's yard; on Federal Hill; at the attack on the arsenal, being Lieutenant of the Fifth Ward company; plugged up the brass cannon; objected to the attack on the arsenal; Israel A. Tripp came to him about the guns; John S. Eddy's son also told him about it; when alarm-guns were fired the company were to assemble at the alarm post; left Providence for Chepachet Friday night; carried no arms; Bill Potter had his sword; was in the camp half an hour; then went above the village, slept in a barn, and was bound to Killingly; turned about for the Pond Factory, and was taken. – Plugged the guns about one o'clock in the morning, standing as guard over them; did it slyly, while the others were in Anthony's house; has had no connection with Dorr's party since the 18<sup>th</sup> May; resigned his office as lieutenant since May; has never told any person that he plugged the guns, until committed to prison.

*Elisha Greene*, mule operator, 27 years old, Coventry; not in Providence in May; went to Chepachet in company with Franklin Bennett and others, who have been previously discharged.

*George Prince*, Thompson (Conn.) 38 years, housewright; in Chepachet, Friday; had no gun; expected to see some friends on that day and cause to join them; had a brother who owes him a note of \$40, and agreed with him to come to Chepachet to arrange it. Had been at work for Silas Comstock, in Burrillville with D'Wolf; saw several men in Chepachet from Thompson; has had no arms; no connection with the suffrage cause.

*Otis Holmes*, Providence, 46 years old, brewer; companies began to drill at his brewery some time last spring; Capt. Everett first applied to him for the use of the brewery; was paid from time to time; never attended himself; never attended the secret meetings; don't

know who went; don't know that any secret meetings were held there; ten or a dozen spoke to him about use of the brewery and can't name a man; has seen powder in the building and balls, and don't know where they came from; don't know who owned the cannon or who had charge of it; heard it said that cannons were buried there; don't know certain about it; was up on Federal Hill two or three times on the night of the attack on the arsenal; was not in consultation with the leaders in that expedition; never has subscribed money, and don't know where it came from; can't tell who paid him at any time; was present when the ten signal guns were fired at his brewery, on Friday afternoon, and don't know a man who loaded or touched them; heard that the guns were to be fired for the suffrage men to assemble to go to Chepachet, don't know where the powder came from; never knew anything about the encampment; never received a letter from Chepachet, through the hands of Lyman Cooley, or any other person; the guns were buried somewhere in his yard, one in the pig pen, a long gun which came, as he was told, from Mr. Davis; the other, a short gun, was buried in the back part of the yard; after the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, these guns were brought to his brewery; who brought them, don't know; the Mayor requested them to be delivered and he refused, because they were [not] his property; can't name a man who was at the brewery meetings; great many there, but can't recollect one; has seen Burrington Anthony there.

*Nicholas Power*, Providence, 72 years old, gentleman at large, has not carried messages to and from Dorr's camp, the only person he has carried to Chepachet is Lyman Cooley; don't know that Cooley ever brought dispatches to any person in Providence; has been an intimate friend of Burrington Anthony, and was frequently at his house to see how his friend endured the press and throng about him; Mr. Dorr he has not been intimate with, although he should feel proud of the intimacy of such a man; the night of the attack on the arsenal he was aroused from his slumbers by the infernal noise of the bells, and got up to see what the hubbub was; repaired to the arsenal or its vicinity with no arms save what nature had given him, and remained there until the broad light of day; was at Anthony's house just previous to the appearance of the State troops. The commissioners ought to have a diagram, that Major Power might put his finger upon the very spot where he then stood. Upon his honor, he could not tell when he received information of Dorr's return to Rhode Island, first left Providence for Chepachet on Wednesday preceding Dorr's arrival, and carried Lyman Cooley; found him opposite James Thurber's shop; was often in the habit of going there to refresh himself; a lad approached him, who he did not know from Adam's grandmother, and said, Mr. Power, a gentleman is anxious to procure passage to Chepachet; he had a man in his mind's eye whom he thought could accommodate him; finally Mr. Power befriended him and the gentleman started; Mr. Power arrived at Sprague's tavern just before nightfall and remained until Friday; as it rained, and he had neither coat or umbrella, returned with Lyman Cooley, having courteously offered him a passage; Mr. Cooley made a boastful matter of his dispatches; never acted as secretary to Dorr, or ever held any appointment under him; when the Major arrived in Providence, or before his arrival, having previously heard that his friend Cooley was to be hunted down or shot down in the streets of Providence, he deemed it most prudent to ride into the city and learn the truth of the report, having satisfied himself that there was no foundation for the report, he again embarked, and it was necessary first he should pass Holmes' Brewery; as he passed, he looked for Holmes and he was not there, he then rode up to a shop opposite, inquired if Mr. Holmes was there, saw a person whom he took to be his brother, transacted his business and then inquired for some beer; Holmes took a horn glass and filled it; and the Major quaffed a most delicious horn of beer, by which his system was refreshed; during the time that he was in Chepachet, Mr. Power espied Capt. Atwell, and as small bodies are sometimes attracted towards the greater, he leaned in that direction and conversed with Mr. Atwell; it would puzzle a conjurer to say upon which side of the fence Mr. Atwell was; he was positively of the neuter gender. Mr. Power was not captured, he surrendered himself like a man, into the hands of the guard while traveling on his horse near Greenville; among that guard, was an Englishman, whose treatment was an outrage upon humanity; another, Mr. Alfred Wright, acted the part of a courageous and noble gentleman; some of them thought that

his horse was made by him to kick, but he wished it to be distinctly understood that his horse was sometimes disposed to kick an enemy, but never a friend.

*Sheldon Potter*, Arkwright, 24 years old; laborer; not in Chepachet; has not taken arms.

*Alfred Fisk*, Arkwright, 35 years; worked last for Samuel Dexter; went for his uncle's beyond Chepachet on Friday; his reason for going was that, having heard that martial law was to prevail he would flee to Connecticut, which he did, rather than fight.

*James Langby*, Arkwright, 31 years old; left Monday morning with the intention of going to Seekonk, and thought for safety he would go to Chepachet; arrived Monday and was captured the next day.

*Eliab Whipple*, 34 years; farmer and butcher; was in Chepachet, Friday, in a horse and wagon, with three others, with arms; has been a kind of military character, and started, the latter part of May, a company, and happening to be there, assisted a little about drilling them, very ignorant about all the movements.

*Silas G. Tripp*, 32 years, jeweler, Providence; never in Chepachet

*William J. Paisley*, 25 years; shoemaker; native New Hampshire; never has been in Chepachet, and has not borne arms.

*John Bartlett, Jr.*, 22 years, overseer weaveshop, native Massachusetts, in the State since a child, now lives in Woonsocket; was in Providence in May, on Tuesday, had no gun; lieut. in the Woonsocket Light Infantry; returned Sunday.

*Robert A. Blanchard*, Woonsocket Falls, 21 years; overseer; taken no part in military movements; at Chepachet three different times, Thursday, Saturday, and Monday; went to carry passengers; some of them had arms.

*Joseph Wells*, Woonsocket, laborer; one of Dorr's artillery men.

*Thomas Conley*, Irishman, Gloucester, in the State six years; baker; works for George Eddy; drilled in Bradley's company, but took no arms while Dorr was there; the diversion of drilling he likes; but no particular diversion in fighting.

*Stanford Ross*, Providence, keeps store, 27 years old; drilled men in the Third Ward; on the hill at Anthony's, and when he learned that Dorr was to attack the arsenal, left the hill; has not been in Chepachet.

*Timothy S. Walker*, 30 years old, calendar, not in Providence in May; went to Chepachet Thursday, with a sword; a man handed it to him; wanted him to carry it; not drilled, or trained with the Woonsocket company; never acted with any company.

*Nathaniel N. Carpenter*, aged 54, mariner, was on Federal Hill with a gun; nothing to do with Dorr since his expedition on Federal Hill; had a match in his hand near the cannon; ordered to take it by the man in command.

*Benoni Mathewson*, North Providence, 19 years old, mule spinner; went to Chepachet on Sunday, and remained there until Tuesday, had no arms while there.

*Randall N. Knight*, 20 years old, Arkwright, works in factory; had no arms.

*Henry Lord*, Providence, native of Connecticut, lived here 24 years; 56 years old; on Federal Hill with a gun; stood guard about two hours; refused to go to the arsenal; remained until the next morning; went to Chepachet Saturday; did not leave home intending to go there; went in a carryall with three others; don't choose to tell who went with him; one person had a gun; acted as one of Dorr's guard in the road this side of the village; stopped carriages as they were passing.

*Rufus Hally*, 28 years old, Smithfield, laborer; went to Chepachet Friday; no arms; took a gun there; drilled an hour or two, and stood guarding the officers marquee; remaining until Sunday morning.

*George Frissell*, Chepachet, native of Woodstock, shoe maker, 46 years old; was in Providence on Federal Hill; arrived at 3 o'clock in the morning; came in company with Angell Darling and others; drilled in Bradley's company; was in the squad that escorted Peckham and others to Woonsocket; cartridges were made in his shop; Mr. Atwell owns it; Ben. West and one-armed Dean were about there; saw boxes with muskets in them at Woonsocket; for several days was engaged as bar keeper for Mr. Sprague.

*Angell Darling*, Chepachet, baker, 45 years old; came to Providence in company with Frissell and others; merely as a spectator; furnished no bread for the camp; but upon second thought, did bake from flour furnished by Wm. Aldrich, one of Dorr's officers.

Darling drove Dorr from Chepachet the first time he fled to Thompson after his attack on the arsenal; left him at the Thompson depot; don't know that Dorr was armed; don't know who paid for the carriage; left him with a man there. Eddy asked him one day to help bake a barrel of flour while Dorr was there; Dorr's principal topic of conversation while passing to Thompson, was about the appearance of the country.

*Samuel Hutchinson*, Woonsocket, 28 years; boating on the canal; in Chepachet Sunday; drilled in the Woonsocket company; took a gun while there; went merely from curiosity.

*Samuel N. French*, native Massachusetts, in the State 11 months; shoemaker; drilled in the Woonsocket company; went to Chepachet twice, Friday and Sunday; was near the Massachusetts line, and hearing that men were to be pressed, instead of going into Massachusetts, fled to Chepachet for protection; had arms in Chepachet.

*William H. Wood*, Massachusetts, here 5 or 6 years; now lives in Providence; housewright; 24 years old; at Anthony's house with a musket during the night of the attack on the arsenal; went to Chepachet with a gun; started when the alarm guns were fired on Federal Hill.

*Caleb Mathews*, Warwick, 41 years; shoemaker; on Federal Hill with a gun; was at the Hoyle tavern when Dorr marched from the arsenal; went to Chepachet, Friday; carried water round for the men to drink; told Daniel Brown in joke, as he said, that he had some blue pills for him; presented a pistol to Dr. Brown, and some one near by took it from him; had two guns at Chepachet.

*Edward McCulloch*, Irishman, in the country twenty years, 42 years old, shoe-maker; in Providence on Federal Hill, with a gun; started for Chepachet with a gun, because he was frightened off by the press gang from Pawtucket; went about twenty miles on foot, instead of stepping over Pawtucket bridge.

*George Himes*, Providence, 54 years old; not in Chepachet; has had no arms.

The following persons were yesterday discharged: Peter Norton, Samuel Moffatt, Austin Downs, John Wormwell, James Foy, Robert Charlton, Robert C. Sisson, Joel R. Fernal, Geo. Dispeau, (son of John,) Ledyard H. Brown, Elisha Greene, Geo. Prince, Sheldon Potter, Alfred Fisk, James Langley, Silas G. Tripp, Wm. J. Paisley, Benoni Mathewson, Randall N. Knight, Geo. Himes.

Wednesday July 13<sup>th</sup> was the last day of prisoner examinations in Providence. Only five prisoners were examined although the previous day's newspapers announced six prisoners were to be examined. Pleg W. Gardner of Providence was scheduled but for unknown reasons not examined. Of the five prisoners examined, William T. Olney<sup>23</sup> would be jailed the longest. He was ultimately released from the Bristol jail in January 1843 but it was not until the following September that all charges against him were dismissed. The record shows that "on the second day of the present term of the court the Attorney General endorsed the indictment as follows 'I will prosecute this indictment no further. – Jos. M. Blake.'"<sup>24</sup> Olney's recognizance was discharged in September 1843, nearly 15 months after his arrest; his tribulations as a Dorrite were finally over.

#### EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Olney was arrested in Bellingham, Massachusetts by an overzealous Law and Order militia that knowingly disregarded state boundaries thereby setting off an investigation by the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

<sup>24</sup> Bristol Supreme Court 1800-1850 record book, p. 542, Supreme Court Judicial Records Center.

<sup>25</sup> *Providence Daily Journal*, Thursday July 14, 1842.



Wednesday, July 13

*John Fisk*, Cumberland, 37 years old, laborer; marched to Chepachet, Monday, with the Woonsocket volunteers, and stayed until the camp was broken up. When returning, his musket was taken from him; Aaron White told him that he must go to Chepachet; Seth Arnold and Israel Greene contributed money for the purchase of arms; was in Providence with his musket, at Anthony's house. The object of the encampment was, to take Rhode Island, and have Dorr Governor; meant to take the public property first; they calculated to have 5000 men from New York and 2000 from Connecticut. Aaron White told them, that if they could not get possession peaceably, they should forcibly.

*Wm. T. Olney*, Woonsocket 39 years old, painter and glazier; in Providence at the attack on the arsenal, with the Woonsocket company; arrived about 9 o'clock in the evening; first lieutenant of the Woonsocket volunteers; Increase Getchell was captain of the company; Laban C. Wade second lieutenant; \_\_\_ Nichols third lieutenant; saw Ben West of Providence, acting as a field officer; also Bill Dean and Major Allen; heard Mr. Slade say, that he expected to receive commissions, before Wm. H. Smith came to Woonsocket; heard him say, he was appointed a lieutenant colonel, and acted in that capacity; the commissions were to be sent to Aaron White, Jr.; there was a signal at Woonsocket to prevent arrest; Horace Pierce was to fire it, and the men were to rally with small arms; made one cask of powder into cartridges; it was understood in Woonsocket, that a military organization was going on through the State; Aaron White was advised and consulted with, about it; communications were received through him; some of these communications came from Dorr to White, and from White to us; has frequently consulted with White; had planned an encampment; Squire White was the man they all went to for counsel and advice; never heard that Aaron White subscribed money; Aaron White received letters from Dorr, when he was in Connecticut and New York; White approved of the military preparations, and urged them to organize; was present at the secret meeting at the Woonsocket hotel, when the plan was made to select a site for an encampment.

*Oliver F. Ballou*, Cumberland, has taken an active part in the rebellion; went to Chepachet and carried a gun. James Manchester acted as guard at Dorr's camp.

*Bradford Allen*, Providence, jeweler, refuses to answer any questions.

*William Eddy*, Providence, native of Massachusetts, in the State a year, 26 years old, painter, at Anthony's house on Tuesday night; no gun; went to Chepachet on Saturday; took a gun and equipments, and stood on guard.

The following persons were yesterday discharged, viz.: Charles Hall, George Hall, Edward W. Olney, Ezra Olney, Parsons Brainard, Elisha Wilbur, Thomas Hunt, Jeremy Bancroft, Welcome Alexander, Thomas Collins Jr., Lawrence Wilbur, George W. Parker, Gideon Jenckes, Paris O. Davis, John P. Clarke, George Cotton, William B. Gould, Arnold Harrington.

The table below is a compilation and summary of information gleaned from *Providence Daily Journal* articles during the first two weeks of July 1842. Other newspapers provided similar information differing only in style of the reporter and political perspective of the newspaper. The table clearly demonstrates that nearly 250 individuals were arrested during this time period and over two-thirds of them were discharged in the same period. Nearly 10% of all prisoners were interrogated more than once. Accounts of other individuals being arrested and interrogated are known but unaccounted for in newspaper reports. Such accounts certainly add to the total number of people detained, possibly by as much as 20%. The vast majority of these prisoners were young males from the working class, many of whom were members of militia companies friendly to Dorr and the People's Constitution. The occupation most often identified during interrogation

was that of mill or factory worker and allied trades; accounting for nearly 20% of all prisoners. Other frequently identified occupations were laborer (17%) and farmer (9%). Whether or not the prisoners were represented by legal council during their interrogations is not clear; most likely prisoners did not have any legal representation. Actually, these interrogations seem to have been conducted somewhat informally as “neither the officers, or any of the witnesses were sworn.”<sup>26</sup> As evidenced in the testimony of Lyman Cooley on July 9<sup>th</sup> and Austin Downs on July 12<sup>th</sup>, Daniel Sickels, a Tammany Hall lawyer from New York and future Civil War Union general, was present at the Providence county jail, supposedly to offer legal council to the New York prisoners. However Law and Order accounts<sup>27</sup> implied Sickels’ purpose was to protect the identity and role of certain prominent New Yorkers. This account rings true with Cooley’s testimony where Sickles “advised him to deny all facts and communicate nothing.” Exactly what services Sickles may have provided or what promises he made to any of the prisoners for their cooperation is not known. If his mission was truly to protect unnamed prominent New Yorkers, he was successful as none were ever implicated. It does however bring into question the significance of Tammany Hall’s role in Rhode Island’s affairs.

Table of Prisoner Examinations

Date	Examined	Previously examined	Discharged
Saturday, July 2	77	--	49
Tuesday, July 5	34	5	15
Wednesday, July 6	29	7	26
Thursday, July 7	32	--	22
Friday, July 8	22 4(Bristol)	1 --	15 3
Saturday, July 9	5	--	--
Monday, July 11	12	4	5
Tuesday, July 12	44	7	20
Wednesday, July 13	5	--	18
Total	264 <sup>28</sup>	24	173 <sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> A Rhode Islander [Frances H. Whipple], *Might and Right*, Providence, 1844 p. 285.

<sup>27</sup> *The Northern Star and Farmers’ and Mechanics’ Advocate*, Saturday July 16, 1842.

<sup>28</sup> Of the 264 interrogations conducted, 18 were follow-up interrogations; in total 246 individuals were interrogated.

During the period of martial law many occurrences of poor judgment were exhibited in the name of law and order. As Charles Congdon wrote in his reminiscences about the arrest of noted lawyer and Democrat, Thomas F. Carpenter, “It was, perhaps an unnecessary piece of severity; but men in authority in those days were not always wise.”<sup>30</sup> In another instance Law and Order officer Almon Hodges, Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment of Police Companies, related how Capt. Pond, a known wag, as a prank convened a mock court martial for one of the Dorrite prisoners who had played a role in the capture of Harris and Peckham at Chepachet. After being found guilty the prisoner was placed before a firing squad which used blanks in order to give the hapless prisoner a fright.<sup>31</sup> The civil laws of Rhode Island were suspended during this time and what may seem like numerous violations of civil rights were acceptable means under martial law. In fact there were some Law and Order proponents who felt the only citizens of the State were the landholders and all others were second class citizens. Unfortunately, events of the Dorr Rebellion were not without some casualties. Not surprisingly with so many ill-trained citizen soldiers under arms there were bound to be casualties. While there were several accounts of citizens and militia men sustaining non-life threatening gun shot wounds, there were also two fatalities. The first occurred at Pawtucket bridge on the evening of June 27<sup>th</sup> when a militiaman fired his weapon over a menacing crowd. The shot struck and instantly killed an innocent bystander, Alexander Kelby, a Scotsman, leaving behind Kelby’s pregnant wife and seven children. The second fatality took place less than twenty-four hours later in Chepachet. Robert Gould, a 24 year old member of the Middletown Volunteers, was shot in the face by a fellow Middletown Volunteer, his brother-in-law, Job Barker. Given the number of militiamen under arms, (well over 4,000), and the pitch of emotions at the time it seems remarkable that so few people were hurt or killed.

By mid-July the Commissioners announced that examination of prisoners had concluded. The cessation of examinations did not mean arrests had stopped. In some instances citizens were arrested after the period of this study, as in the case of George Nichols<sup>32</sup> the North Kingston town moderator under the People’s government and Timothy Hoskins<sup>33</sup> of Westmoreland, New Hampshire. In fact arrests occurred into the following year as in the case of Martin Luther who was arrested in April 1843 and Thomas W. Dorr who was arrested in October 1843. Those prisoners not already released by mid-July were at month’s end conveyed to Newport to await trial for treason before the Supreme Judicial Court. Among these individuals were John Paine, George Frissill, Seth Luther, Eliab Whipple, Nathaniel Carpenter and Burrill Hutchinson. A month later on August 24<sup>th</sup>, Otis Holmes was also sent to Newport for trial<sup>34</sup>. Due to delays and

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<sup>29</sup> Of the 173 prisoners listed as discharged, Thomas Collins Jr. was listed on three separate occasions; the correct total of individuals discharged is 171.

<sup>30</sup> Charles T. Congdon, *Reminiscences of a Journalist*, Boston, 1880, p. 113. Congdon was the young editor of the *New Age* a pro-suffrage newspaper during the period of the Dorr Rebellion.

<sup>31</sup> Hodges, pp. 197-8.

<sup>32</sup> *Newport Mercury*, August 27, 1842.

<sup>33</sup> Rhode Island State Archives record book titled “Criminals C – County Jail Providence 1841-42” p. 197.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 190-191.

continuances these unfortunate individuals languished in jail through the winter of 1842/3. By January 1843, the General Assembly passed a resolution authorizing the Governor and Council to discharge from prison on recognizance any persons indicted for treason and other offences against the Sovereign Power of the State whom they may think proper subjects for lenity upon their taking an oath to bear true faith and allegiance to the State and the Government thereof and upon their giving bond to the State in such sums as the Governor and Council may require and that they will keep the peace and be of good behavior for a period of twelve months, and any other terms the Governor and Council may see fit to impose. This resolution specifically cited the petitions of Caleb Bradley, William T. Olney, Joseph Gavit, George T. Nichols and Sylvester Himes praying for discharge from prison and for stay of proceedings against them.<sup>35</sup> All prisoners cited here appear to have been incarcerated in the Bristol County jail. Two months later in March a similar partition by Newport prisoners, Seth Luther, Nathaniel Carpenter and others was made and they too were released upon their oath of allegiance. Still, some prisoners were held and finally tried as were Benjamin Bosworth, a machine maker from Warren and Wilmarth Heath of Barrington. Both were found guilty and sentenced to a \$500 fine and six months imprisonment beginning May 5, 1845.

Accounts of prisoner arrest, imprisonment and ultimate release do not do justice to the hardships these Dorrites endured. Imprisoned during the hottest months of the year, in poorly ventilated and overcrowded prison cells had to have been unbearable. Facing the uncertainties of trial and if convicted, imprisonment for many years for the crime of treason must have added to their worries. For the many who were only imprisoned from late June to mid-July the hardships were still great. The majority were working men who earned their daily bread by the sweat of their brow and could ill afford the loss of income as their families went wanting during this period. For some prisoners their problems were far from over when released from jail. There were instances when released mill workers were denied employment<sup>36</sup> and Dorrite shop keepers who lost some of their trade. In response to the prisoners' difficult situation there were also many acts of kindness, usually on the part of the various woman suffrage associations. When possible these women brought food to prisoners in their cells. In one instance, the Ladies of the Fifth Ward Suffrage Association in Providence raised \$100 to be presented to Gov. Dorr for his sacrifices in the cause of Equal Rights. Dorr returned the funds and requested the money be distributed among the prisoners. The ladies used this money to purchase cloth in order to make clothing for the prisoners' families.<sup>37</sup> In a striking instance of worker solidarity the Benevolent Female Suffrage Association, recognizing that a number of persons had been turned out of employment on account of their suffrage principles, "recommended the Ladies of the different manufacturing establishments, to associate and form societies in defense of human rights, and to enter in a mutual contract and agreement, never to work for any manufactory where any man is dismissed on account of his political opinions, be those opinions what they may. And likewise never to purchase a single yard of cloth for themselves or families, of the manufacture of such

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<sup>35</sup> Acts and resolves of the General assembly, January 1843, p. 65.

<sup>36</sup> Peter J. Coleman, *The Transformation of Rhode Island 1790-1860*, Providence, 1963, p. 288.

<sup>37</sup> *Providence Express*, Thursday January 19, 1843.

establishments.”<sup>38</sup> These Dorrite women demonstrated some very modern thinking with regard to human rights as well as a keen understanding of the power of union and economic boycott. The Dorrite prisoners of war and their many sacrifices have long been overlooked by history. In the end their sacrifices were somewhat rewarded as Rhode Islanders would go to the polls in November 1842 and approve a written constitution with suffrage provisions for native born non-landholders.

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<sup>38</sup> *Providence Express*, Thursday, January 5, 1843.