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SHIPS AND SHIPMASTERS OF OLD PROVIDENCE

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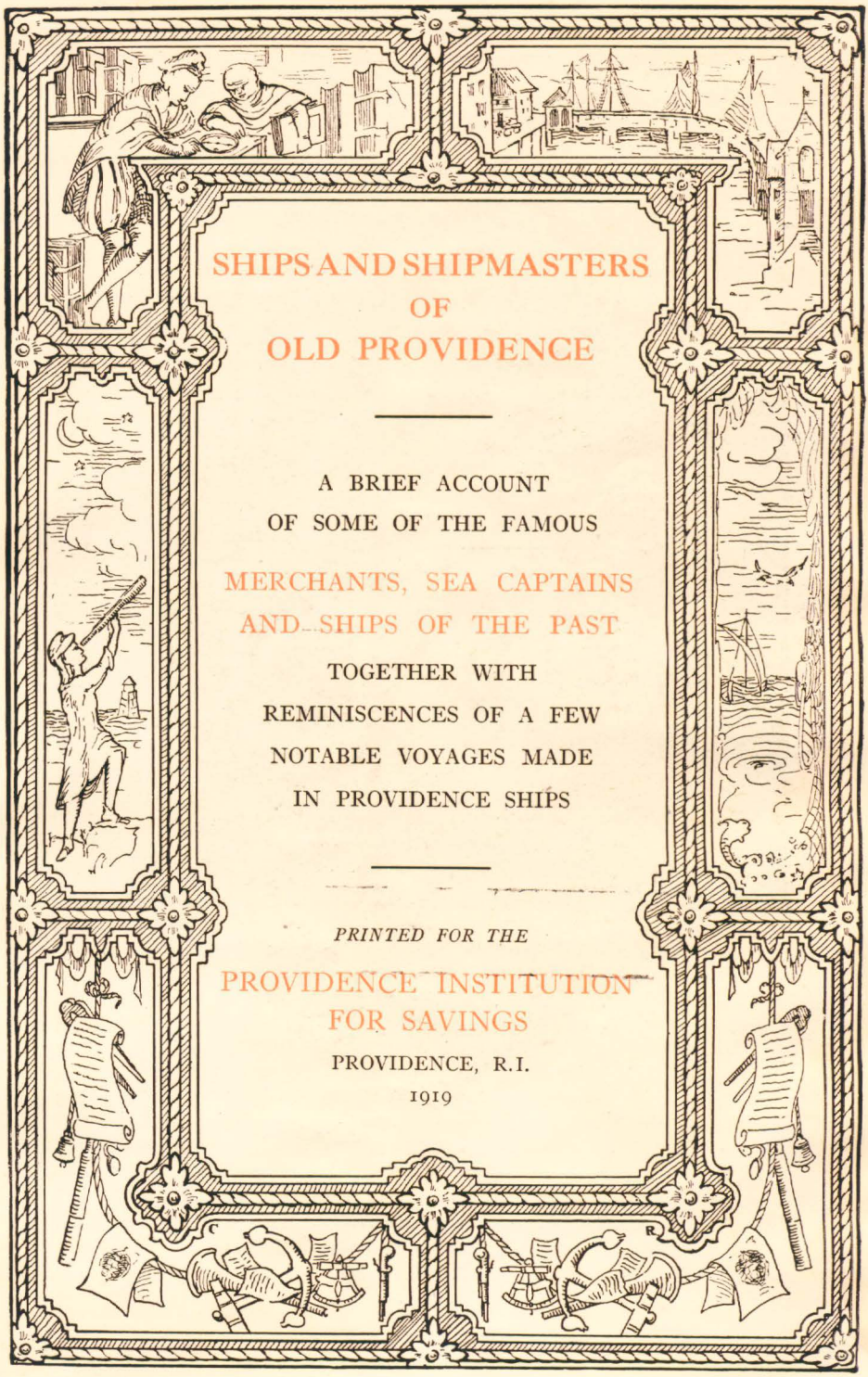
John E. Farrell, Sc.D.

From a painting *Owned by the Bank*

BENJAMIN HOPPIN
President, 1836–1865



SHIPS AND SHIPMASTERS OF OLD PROVIDENCE

A BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF SOME OF THE FAMOUS

MERCHANTS, SEA CAPTAINS AND SHIPS OF THE PAST

TOGETHER WITH
REMINISCENCES OF A FEW
NOTABLE VOYAGES MADE
IN PROVIDENCE SHIPS

PRINTED FOR THE

PROVIDENCE INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS

PROVIDENCE, R.I.

1919

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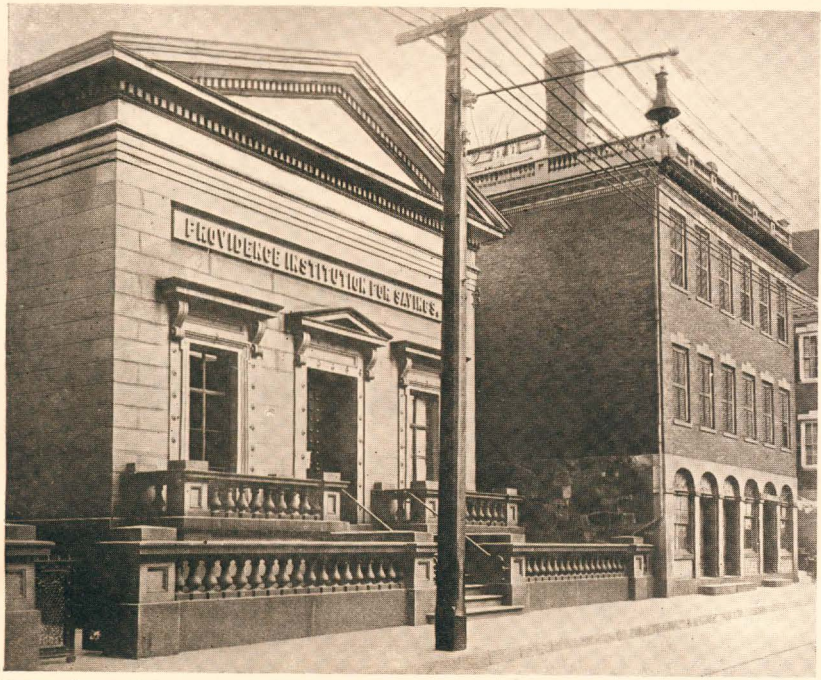

From a photograph *Owned by the Bank*

PROVIDENCE INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS
Showing the original building, erected in 1854

Compiled, arranged and printed by direction of the
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Boston, Mass.

FOREWORD

THIS little brochure is published in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Providence Institution for Savings. It is hoped that the friends and patrons of the Bank may take as keen a delight in recalling the old shipping days of the town as the writer has had in gathering together the facts and traditions relating to the same. The subject—"*Ships and Shipmasters of Old Providence*"—from the viewpoint of the Institution for Savings is a singularly appropriate one. The founders and early officers of this Institution were men who had vast interests in shipping, and who not alone built and owned ships that sailed to every quarter of the navigable globe, but who imported commodities from the West Indies, the Far East and Russia. There is scarcely a name associated with Providence shipping that does not appear on the list of officers and incorporators of the Bank, where Moses and Nicholas Brown head the list, followed closely by Samuel Nightingale and Obadiah Brown, and Thomas Poynton Ives, who served the Bank as President from its incorporation in 1819 to 1835. On this list of incorporators are also the names of Arnold, Green, Richmond, Hoppin, Tillinghast, Wilkinson, Goddard, Russell, Mauran and Peckham—all names familiar in the annals of Providence shipping.

The *Rhode Island American and General Advertiser* of October 22, 1819, has the following announcement: "At a meeting on Wednesday October 20, 1819 of Citizens friendly to the establishment of a Savings Institution in this Town, the following gentlemen were chosen officers of the Institution for the year ensuing: Thomas P. Ives, President; Thomas L. Halsey, 1st. Vice President; Obadiah Brown, 2nd. Vice President; James Burrill, Jr., 3rd. Vice President; 1. Nicholas Brown, 2. Philip Martin, 3. William Williamson, 4. John Perrin, 5. Benjamin Aborn, 6. James Petty, 7. Samuel G. Arnold, 8. William Blodget, 9. Charles Dyer, 10. Zechariah Allen, 11. Josiah Whitaker, 12. Dexter Thurber, Trustees."

The Institution was designed to promote habits of economy in those for whose benefit it was established, and to afford them a safe and productive method of increasing the amount of their little savings. "Many frugal and industrious persons," it was stated, "have laid by small sums which they intended as a relief in sickness, or in old age; but from the failure or death of those in whose hands they have placed it, have lost the whole, or if they have received it again, it has been without interest. In this Institution such persons will find a safe place of deposit, and have the satisfaction to know that it is continually increasing."

The first meeting of the Trustees was held at the offices of the Washington Insurance Company (now the Providence Washington Insurance Company), November 4, 1819. Until the 15th of December, 1837, the Treasurer occupied a room at 41 South Main Street.

On that date this building was entirely destroyed by fire, and many valuable papers and documents were consumed. The books of the Institution were saved, having been deposited as usual after business hours, in the vault of the Providence Bank. The Treasurer occupied a desk in the Providence Bank from the date of the fire until October, 1838, when the basement room in the same building was hired, at $125 per annum. In October, 1850, a committee was appointed, consisting of Benjamin Hoppin, Robert H. Ives and Isaac Brown, to purchase a suitable lot for the purpose of erecting a banking house. In January, 1852, a plan in Grecian style was adopted, and the work commenced, and on Monday morning, May 1, 1854, the banking house was opened for business, and enlarged as at present March 7, 1898. Notable officers have served:—

Presidents: Thomas Poynton Ives, 1819–1835; Sullivan Dorr, 1835–1836; Benjamin Hoppin, 1836–1865; Robert H. Ives, 1865–1875; William Goddard, 1875–1900; Gilbert A. Phillips, 1900–1908; Edward D. Pearce, 1908– .

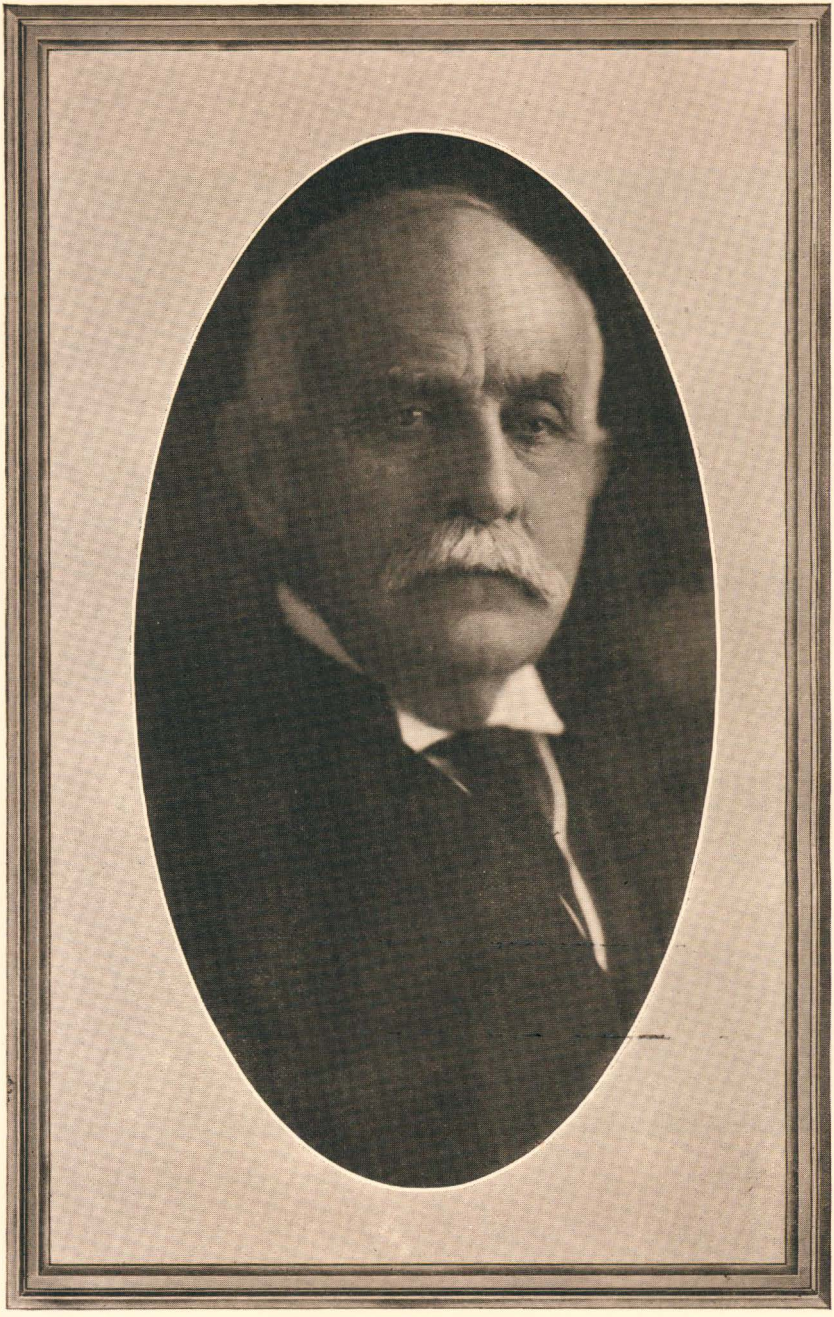
First Vice-Presidents: Thomas L. Halsey, 1819–1827; William Wilkinson, 1827–1830; Sullivan Dorr, 1830–1835; Nicholas Brown, 1835–1841; Robert H. Ives, 1841–1865; Isaac Brown, 1865–1872; William Goddard, 1872–1875; Royal C. Taft, 1875–1903; George W. R. Matteson, 1903–1908; Robert H. I. Goddard, 1908–1911; Howard O. Sturges, 1911– .

Treasurers: John Howland, 1819–1840; Henry Cushing, 1840–1860; Samuel C. Blodget, 1860–1883; William A. Hoppin, 1883–1899; LeBaron Bradford, 1900– .

The growth of the Bank has been steady. On the first day it opened for business, deposits amounting to more than a thousand dollars were recorded. To-day the resources of the Bank amount to upwards of thirty-five millions. Forty years ago, three of the original one hundred and twenty-six incorporators were living and three of the original accounts opened on the first day were active. To-day, descendants of the men who established the Institution still serve both on the Board of Trustees and as officers.

This brief glimpse of the history of the Providence Institution for Savings will serve as a fitting foreword for the story that follows—a story that the Bank presents with due pride in the old-time, romantic, busy port of Providence, with a pride in the bay that long since lost its picturesque sails, and the fragrant cargoes from Eastern lands.

The last whaler and the last clipper-ship passed a half-century ago, and the last indomitable sea-captain long since turned his compass towards the ocean of the Great Unknown. If this portrayal of their day brings back for ever so brief a moment the smack of the salt, sharp sea, and a pride in the spirit of old-time Providence, the Bank's century mark will be indeed memorable.



EDWARD D. PEARCE
President of the Providence Institution for Savings

From a photograph *Taken for the Bank*

OFFICERS AND STAFF OF THE PROVIDENCE INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS

OFFICERS

OF

PROVIDENCE INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS

1919

EDWARD D. PEARCE, *President*
HOWARD O. STURGES, *First Vice-President*
FRANK W. MATTESON, *Second Vice-President*
HENRY D. SHARPE, *Third Vice-President*

Board of Investment

EDWARD D. PEARCE
FRANK W. MATTESON
HOWARD O. STURGES
HENRY D. SHARPE
JOHN ORMSBEE AMES

Board of Trustees

EDWARD D. PEARCE
HOWARD O. STURGES
SAMUEL R. DORRANCE
HORATIO N. CAMPBELL
WILLIAM GAMMELL
ROBERT W. TAFT
HENRY D. SHARPE
ROBERT H. I. GODDARD
FRANK W. MATTESON
JOHN ORMSBEE AMES
WILLIAM L. HODGMAN
WILLIAM GAMMELL, JR.
HENRY S. CHAFEE
JOHN B. LEWIS

LEB. BRADFORD, *Treasurer*
JOHN H. ORMSBEE, *Assistant Treasurer*
WILLIAM H. CONGDON, *Clerk*

From a photograph *Taken for the Bank*

PROVIDENCE INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS

SHIPS *and* SHIPMASTERS *of* OLD PROVIDENCE

ROGER WILLIAMS' compass, deposited to-day in the city that he founded in a wilderness, might tell strange tales if it could speak. For, though the founder of Providence from necessity was unable to employ the "ships that went down to the sea," still this little indicator may have directed him in his struggle through unknown forests after his exile from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and in the frequent journeys that he made in his canoe—the only mode at that time of traversing the waters of Narragansett Bay. Mayhap this compass was on the person of the intrepid Williams when he was driven forth in January of the bitter winter of 1636, from Salem to seek, through pathless forests, the Narragansett Indians. "I was sorely tossed," he said, "for over fourteen weeks, in a bitter winter season, not knowing what bread and bed did mean, besides the yearly loss of no small matter in my trading with the English and natives, being debarred from Boston, the chief mart and port of New England." This shows that Williams was familiar with trade and undoubtedly knew the ships that plied between Boston and other ports.

After being warned by his friend, Governor Winslow of Plymouth, that it was unsafe for him to remain in that part of Massachusetts where he had established himself, Williams resolved to remove outside of the limits of the Plymouth Colony, and accordingly, he and his companions pushed forward in their little canoe and arrived at the head of the waters of Narragansett Bay where friendly Indians called, "*What cheer, Netop!*" from the rock that a century ago was described by Moses Brown as "jutting into the water,"—a rock that to-day, long since left above the high-water mark, lies somewhere beneath the square that bears the name of the founder of Providence.

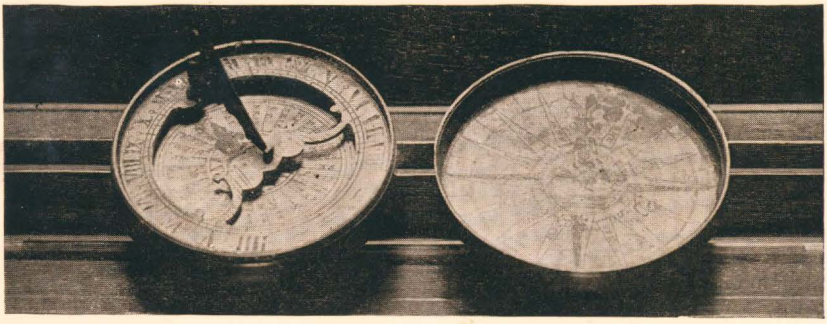
The early life of the Providence planters, even though their principal work was in tilling the soil, smacks of the sea. For perhaps a decade after the founding of the town those who settled there were planters, but eventually these planters sallied forth in their canoes and traversed the restless waters of the Bay that gleamed between

countless islands to the south. One of the first voyages recorded concerns the meeting of the first General Assembly under the Parliamentary Charter held in Portsmouth, May 18, 1647. Apparently solemn heads wagged at the prospect of what was considered a dangerous voyage, for instructions were given to the delegates, " Desiring the Lord's Providence for your safe arrival there," counsels the final blessing to those departing, " We commit you unto the protection and direction of the Almighty, wishing you a comfortable voyage, a happy success and a safe return unto us again." The gods of the Norsemen and the Dutch whose happy hunting ground the shores of the lovely Bay once had been, must have been with the august assemblymen, for there is no record that disaster overtook them in their voyage from Providence to Portsmouth, or on their return.

Privateering, in which Providence played such an important part in colonial times, dates back to the days of the founder, for in 1649 Roger Williams sent a letter to John Winthrop in which he mentioned that a prize had been captured " which the Dutch contend had been taken in violation of the treaty between England and Spain." The prize was captured by one Captain Clarke whose frigate is said to have been afterwards bought by a Frenchman who intended taking her to the West Indies, but was prevented from doing this " lest his vessel should be employed against American commerce." It was in 1652 that the Providence Colony was given the authority to fit out privateers to serve against the Low Countries. In this same year also was established the export trade of Providence when John Smith shipped to Newfoundland " forty-nine roles of tobacco, one hogshead of fleure and thirteen bushels of pease . . ." A lawsuit followed—one of the earliest, if not the first in the town—in which the amount of liquor brought in the vessel from Newfoundland was contested. Shortly after this, Captain Arthur Fenner " shipped on board of providence Williams his Sloope," a number of barrels of rum, a quantity of sugar, a panier and a horse's collar. There is also a record of a consignment of rum and molasses brought from Boston to Newport for John Whipple of Providence.

When Roger Williams was seventy-three years old, George Fox, founder of the Friends, visited Providence where he held a meeting " in a great barn, which was thronged with people." Immediately Roger Williams sent a challenge to Newport, whither Fox had gone, to debate fourteen points in the doctrine that he preached. Williams, in spite of his advanced years, on August 8, 1672, paddled himself in a canoe from Providence to Newport, but unfortunately, after paddling all day, he arrived at the latter town at midnight only to find that the preacher had already departed. Disciples, however, of Fox, debated with Williams first in Newport and afterwards in Providence.

In spite of the fact that the need of shipping facilities in Providence must have long been apparent, no definite move was made to establish the industry on a permanent basis until Pardon Tillinghast—called

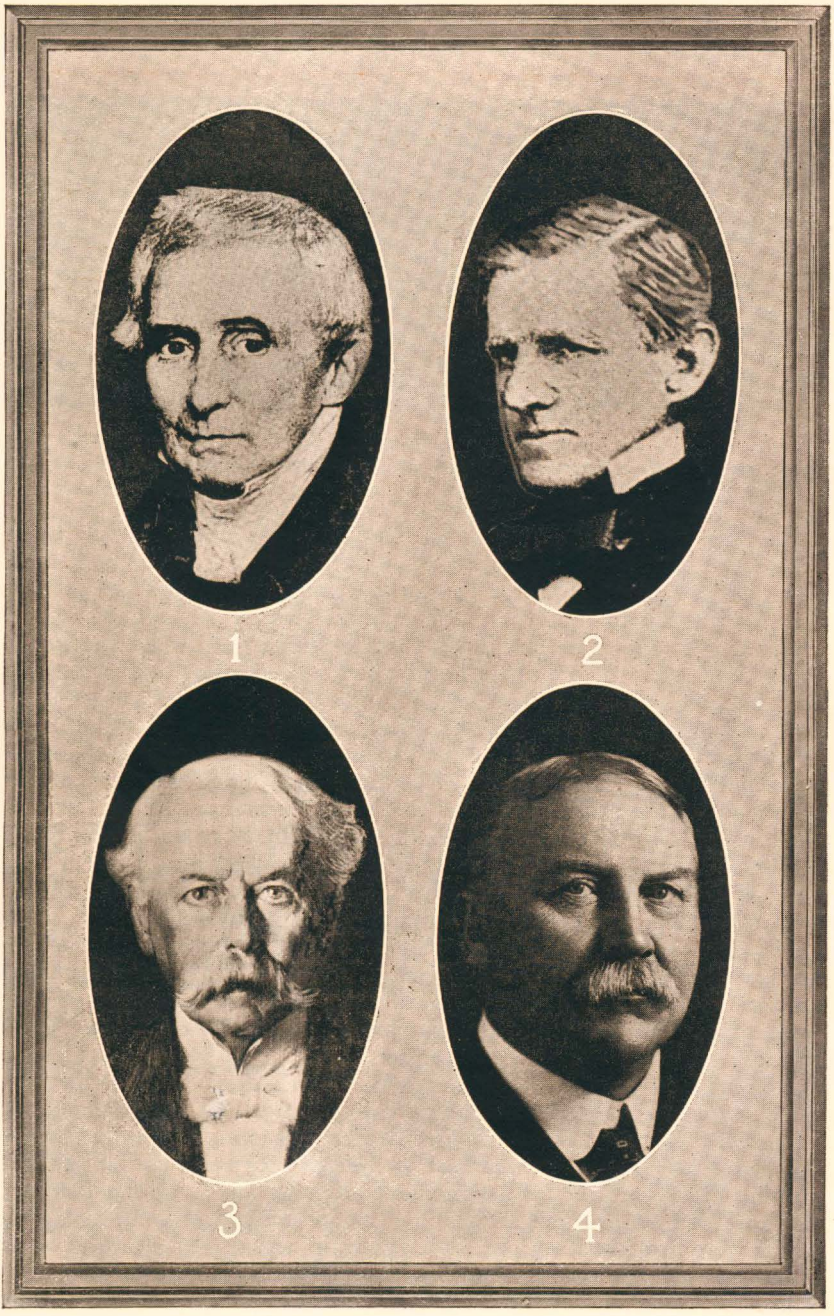


This compass, once the property of Roger Williams, and used by him on his journey from Massachusetts to Rhode Island, was presented in 1902 to the Rhode Island Historical Society by Sophia Augusta Brown.

to-day the "Father of Providence Shipping"—a one-time soldier in Cromwell's Army—built in 1679–80 a warehouse on a "spott of land twenty foot square" granted to him at a meeting of the town fathers held in January of that year. Shortly afterwards Tillinghast built a wharf at the foot of what is now Transit Street, and in a remarkably short time other men built wharves and warehouses, and the trade already established increased with not only other colonies but with that port of fortune—the West Indies. As early as 1696, a duty had been imposed on wines, liquors, and molasses, and the leading merchants—Pardon Tillinghast and Gideon Crawford—must have proved a source of revenue to the collector. Their competitive warehouse builders were Arthur Fenner, Thomas Harris, Samuel Winsor, Samuel Whipple, Thomas Hopkins, Zechariah Field, Providence Williams, Peter Place, Ephraim Pray, John Whipple, Jr., George Sheppard, Thomas Olney, Thomas Olney, Jr., James Ashton and Daniel Abbott, Jr.

Nearly twenty years after Pardon Tillinghast built his first warehouse and wharf, the General Assembly met in Providence and passed an act regulating the size of "casks and barrels in which provisions were packed and shipped, and gaugers were appointed in each port to carry out the provisions of the law."

The little canoe with which Roger Williams affirms he "cut through a stormy wind, with great seas," gave way in 1711 to Providence-built vessels, for in that year Nathaniel Brown was granted land on Weybosset Neck (now the central part of the city) for a shipyard, and there he built craft—mostly for Providence traders who were seeking fortunes in those renowned New England commodities, rum and molasses, which were brought from the West Indies in tiny craft that came home crammed with the profits of their trade. Other shipyards were established in Providence. One is spoken of on the southern end of Towne Street; another at Weybosset Bridge at the foot of where Waterman Street now ends. It is a notable fact that these craft were built in what has become the most central part of the city, and that they were



FOUR PRESIDENTS OF THE PROVIDENCE INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS

1 THOMAS POYNTON IVES
First President

2 ROBERT H. IVES
Fourth President

3 WILLIAM GODDARD
Fifth President

4 GILBERT A. PHILLIPS
Sixth President

of scarcely more than sixty tons burden and largely of the schooner type. Later, shipbuilding was confined to the Mosshassuck River, near what is now Smith Street, and there were built vessels that sailed not only for the West Indies but for Africa and the Spanish Main. In good time, the Brown and the Power families engaged in shipping, and here Colonel Nicholas Power, whose grandfather had been one of the early settlers and whose father was killed in the great Swamp fight of King Philip's War, began his shipping operations. He married Mercy Tillinghast, and their daughter, Hope Power, married in 1722 a sailor-lad, James Brown, destined to become an important factor in the shipping of Providence.

JAMES AND OBADIAH BROWN—MERCHANTS

"If I should never Venter nothing, I Should Never have nothing."—Obadiah Brown

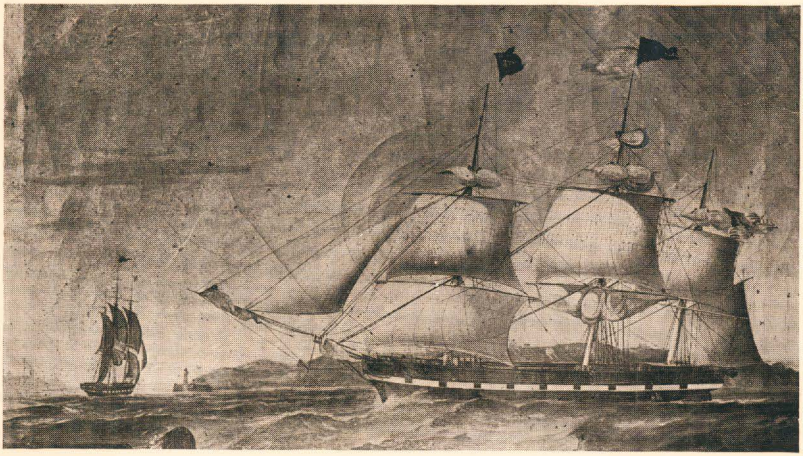
When Chad Brown, the founder of the house of Brown in Providence, left the ship *Martin*, in which he had sailed from England to Boston in 1638, he little knew that his destination was eventually to be the city founded by Roger Williams after he had been turned out of Salem in midwinter and left to the mercies of the New England forests and Indians. Chad Brown, like Williams, whose friend he became, undoubtedly expected to settle in the Massachusetts Bay Colony; in fact, he did settle there, but religious contention arose between him and the other settlers, who, tradition says, concluded that the best way to dispose of their adversary was by banishment. This act they performed without more ado and with characteristic brevity. And Chad Brown gathered together his possessions and followed Williams into the wilderness.

In the records of his descendants are set forth stories of thrift, industry, self-reliance and philanthropy. And the first rung in the ladder of fame and fortune was wrought by James and Obadiah Brown, great-grandsons of Chad Brown, when they founded the commercial house that bore their name. James married Hope Power, a great-granddaughter of Pardon Tillinghast, the "Father of Providence Shipping." In 1721—less than two years before his marriage—James, then a sailor-lad of twenty-three, appears to have been associated with five others in the building of a "Sl[illegible] by John Barns of Providence was given the commission for building the craft which has been described as "forty five foote by the Keele; seaventeene foot and halfe by the beame and seavon foot and halfe in the Whole." It was agreed that she be delivered "afloate on the north side of Waybausett Bridg," and that she be paid for "after the Rate of Two pounds & seaventeene shillings pr Tun." Later records show that the sloop was of seventy-three tons burden, that James Brown owned a quarter interest in her, and that in less than a year he had purchased another quarter.

If the whole tale of Captain James Brown might be written it would smack of the sea, of his first voyage as master of the *Four Bachelors* that flung her sails to the breeze in Newport Harbor, of her cruise to the Leeward Islands in the West Indies, of orders given by Nicholas Power for this cruise and their quaint close of "*So God send you a prosperous Voyage.*" It was after his return in the *Four Bachelors* in October that the young captain opened a shop in Towne Street; his ledger, still preserved and beginning with 1723, contains many interesting entries and names familiar in Providence history. In less than five years, during which he was brought before the court for disturbing his Majesty's Peace for some escapade or other that isn't recorded, though it is shown that he paid the fine imposed on him, the sea again claimed Captain James Brown—and he sailed away in a brave gale and fair weather in the *Truth and Delight* bound for "Martinneco" which he reached on March 14, 1727, and there disposed of her cargo of horses, Indian corn, tobacco, cheese, tar and shingles. She was reloaded with molasses and rum, and arrived home the following June. On his return from this voyage James Brown returned to his shop where he proved himself an able buyer and seller. There elapsed a little more than a decade when his death occurred prematurely—in 1739. His three sons, Nicholas, Joseph and John, were years later taken into the business by their uncle Obadiah Brown, and eventually, on the reorganization of the house, the youngest son, Moses, joined his brothers. Hope Power Brown survived her husband by half a century, dying in 1792 in her ninety-first year. On her tombstone it is recorded that she was the mother of Nicholas, Joseph, John and Moses Brown.

Obadiah Brown, fourteen years younger than James, made his first voyage in 1733 in the sloop *Dolphin*. It was while sailing in the sloop *Mary*, in which he had a part interest, that James advised his younger brother, then in the West Indies, to "by all means make dispatch in your business—if you cannot sell all your Slaves to your mind bring some home. I believe they will Sell well, gett Molasses if you can, and if you Cannot come without it, leave no debts behind you upon no Account. gett some Sugar & Cotten if you Can handily, but be Sure make dispatch for that is the life of trade." On this voyage—made in 1737—the *Mary* netted the merchants a tidy sum. She carried a cargo valued at £2601.16.10. It appears that the rum was taken to Africa, there exchanged for slaves, who in turn were taken to the West Indies, where, after being sold, the proceeds derived from the sale were invested in rum, coffee, guns, salt, etc. Obadiah brought home three slaves valued at £120.

Later, when he had attained the rank of captain, he made a voyage in the *Rainbow*, a Providence-built vessel of eighty tons. From the accounts of her voyages she was attended by misfortunes innumerable, the losses beginning with her maiden voyage under the command of Captain John Field, who took her to Surinam for James Brown in 1736. "You have all ways had Misfortin in this Vessel," wrote Oba-



From a painting *Courtesy of Brown & Ives*

HOPE

One of the several ships bearing this name, built and owned by Brown & Ives

diah Brown in 1738 to his brother James, " which Maeks me afraid, but . . . *If I should never Venter nothing, I Should Never have nothing.*" On going to " marteneck to load " Captain Brown encountered several Providence sea-captains, among them Christopher Smith, John Field and Sam Gorton.

Miss Kimball, in her account of the shipping trade in Providence during Colonial days, says: " These young sea-dogs are entered in James Brown's ledgers as ' du ' to rum, molasses, salt, and other staple commodities. Christopher Smith was not improbably at this time (1728) disposing of a cargo representing James Brown's interests as well as his own. The statement of his voyage to ' the weste indes ' in 1733 is duly entered on the ledger, and shows his proportion of responsibility for ship supplies, wear and tear, and hospital money—as also that he delivered in part payment thereof nineteen hundred and fifty-five pounds of tobacco.

" Captain John Field died at St. Eustatius, precisely one month from the date of Obadiah's letter. In 1736 he had taken the *Rainbow* to Surinam for James Brown, on her maiden voyage. When ashore he patronized the shop, buying rum, board-nails, writing-paper, sugar, garlits, and arumborges, as well as hay, oats, and a ' holter to fit his horse.' His personal possessions included 818-½ gallons of molasses, 434 gallons of rum, ' 4 Pistols of Gold,' and a quarter interest in the sloop *Merigold*—a name pleasantly suggesting the well-known flower, marigold, but in reality a colloquial corruption of *Mary Gould.*

" Sam Gorton, too, appears in James Brown's books in 1736, as master of the schooner *Ann,* the first instance noted of a vessel larger than a sloop hailing from Providence. It would be interesting to know

if Obadiah's luck at Martinique broke the charm of 'misfortin' which appeared to attend the *Rainbow*. Her maiden trip to Surinam, with John Field as master, was marred by the loss of part of her return cargo of molasses. Before sending her out again, James Brown sold one-eighth interest in her to Captain Abraham Angell. A cargo was then shipped to St. Eustatius, with Captain Angell as master of the vessel." Later the *Rainbow* was sent to the Spanish Main, but she had long been dubbed "an unlucky sloope" and was forthwith put up for sale at £1400.

It was while engaged in traffic in the "unlucky sloope" that Obadiah Brown wrote his last sea letter to his brother James—from Surinam, some two months after Captain James Brown's death. This was probably Captain Obadiah's last voyage—and the mantle that he and Captain James so long wore seems thereafter, for the few short years remaining to him, to have fallen on the shoulders of the eldest son of Captain James Brown—named for his father. A long and successful career might have ensued for this lad of fifteen who, had he lived, would have joined his uncle and four brothers in placing on a firm foundation the commercial house of his family. In 1748 he is recorded as master of his own sloop; his atlas is in the John Carter Brown Library at Providence, and his last voyage was made in the "good Sloop *Freelove*" bound for Maryland with rum and molasses for "Obadiah Brown and Company." His death occurred in Virginia in February, 1751.

Thus was founded by men of sterling worth the commercial house of Brown, later to be designated—when another partner was added to the firm—as Brown & Ives. An interesting reminder of this first century remains in the old atlas belonging to Captain James Brown, purchased by him in Boston for £10.10 and entitled "*The English Pilot. . . . Describing the West India Navigation, from Hudson's Bay to the River Amazon.*" Over how many seas the young captain carried this volume is not known, but—since it contains the note of his death—it was probably with him on his last voyage to Virginia nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

COMMODORE ABRAHAM WHIPPLE, PRIVATEERSMAN

Who captured twenty-three prizes on one cruise in 1759 and 1760, and who was the leader of the party that burned the Gaspee

In the score of years prior to the Revolution, Providence merchants and privateersmen waxed rich and great on cargoes brought from the West Indies, the Spanish Main, Newfoundland and Canada. Added to these were the spoils of the seas—prizes of the privateers. In those days privateering was a common pursuit, and though the perils encountered by the men who sailed on these voyages were great—and though their prizes were often few and far between—still so rich were the spoils that many a frigate sailed out of Providence Harbor

From a painting *Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society*

COMMODORE ABRAHAM WHIPPLE

to cast its fortunes with the birds of prey that scattered themselves over the seas.

Three names are prominent in these early privateering annals of Rhode Island: Esek Hopkins, organizer and first commander of the American Navy, who sailed as a privateer captain from 1741 until 1755; John Brown, prominent Providence merchant, who owned some of the first privateers that went out of Rhode Island, the best known of these being *The Revenge, The Triton, The Victory, The Pollux, The Prince William, The King George, The Britannia, The Queen Elizabeth* and *The Mary;* and the third colossal figure in privateering history of Providence—the intrepid Abraham Whipple, who in one cruise during the "Seven Years' War" (in 1759–60) captured twenty-three prizes, and whose prizes at one time during the Revolution amounted to $1,000,000.

To rightly estimate the service of Commodore Whipple he must be depicted amid the conditions that existed for about a decade prior to the outbreak of the Revolution. In one of his letters in 1764 Moses Brown says that Providence had fifty-four vessels afloat, "40 sail of which," he adds, "Used the West India and Other Trade, and 14 are coasters. Of the 40 sail 24 Vessels Used the foreign Trade as the Dutch, Danes, French, and Spanish ports, and the other 16 to the English." This, then, shows the revival of trade that followed the "Seven Years' War," when legitimate trade gave place to privateering so soon to be revived again as the Revolution approached; for the Continental Congress authorized privateering in an Act passed March 18, 1776.

Immediately thereafter notable services were rendered by the Rhode Island privateers in obtaining supplies that England had prevented America from obtaining or producing. "Rhode Island," says Arnold, "was a rendezvous both for national and private cruisers, and the newspapers of the day are filled with proceedings of the admiralty courts held in Providence, and with the reports of their maritime exploits." The story of this Revolutionary privateering properly belongs to the story of the infant American Navy, that had its birth in Providence,—a navy that was hampered to no small degree because the pecuniary end of affairs favored the privateers.

It must be remembered that not all of the activities on Narragansett Bay—where the King's ships scudded hither and thither in search of American vessels that with much craftiness eluded the vigilance of his Majesty's officers—nor all of the activities of the colonists—whose wrath blazed up when new indignities were put upon them—were actuated by patriotism. As a matter of fact, revenge was at the bottom of many of the acts of rebellion. At the time, for instance, when the famous *Gaspee* party was planned at Sabin's Tavern in Providence, the town for three years had been a hotbed of hatred against the high hand of the British officers as it swept Narragansett Bay.

It has been said that Rhode Island did not cast off the British yoke,

because she had never put it on, and that the duties which the British Government chose to impose on American commerce "were not less earnest than the efforts of Rhode Island merchants and shipmasters to avoid paying tribute." More than a decade before the outbreak of the Revolution, armed vessels had been dispatched from Great Britain—the first, a schooner named *St. John,* and commanded by Lieutenant Hill, arrived and without any particular formality proceeded to capture a brig that Lieutenant Hill claimed had not paid the required duties when she discharged her cargo at Howland's Ferry. He took her into Newport. Not long after this the colonists, prevented from obtaining their revenge as they had planned by the arrival of a British sloop-of-war, seized and scuttled the sloop *Liberty* which they afterwards dragged through the streets of Newport. These events led up to the climax—the burning of the *Gaspee.*

In the spring of 1772 there arrived in Narragansett waters the British sloop-of-war *Gaspee,* commanded by Lieutenant Thomas Duddingston. She came to prevent commodities being landed without the payment of duty. Lieutenant Duddingston, who was utterly lacking in tact, carried things generally with so high a hand that after several encounters with the colonists he was compelled to remain on the deck of his ship-of-war.

It happened on June 10, 1772, that Captain Thomas Lindsay started from Newport in his packet for Providence. He was pursued by the *Gaspee,* but, being a man of excellent judgment and thoroughly familiar with every turn of Narragansett waters, he led the *Gaspee* until she did exactly what he intended that she should do—run aground on Namquit Point. With considerable satisfaction Captain Lindsay continued his course to Providence, where he related the incident to John Brown who conceived the idea of furnishing eight boats for transporting a party of volunteers to settle affairs with the *Gaspee.* Within a short time, the beat of a drum echoed through the streets of Providence, and a man announced that the King's schooner *Gaspee* was aground on Namquit Point, that she would not be able to float until three o'clock the following morning, and that all persons willing to join a party for the destruction of the vessel were to repair to James Sabin's house that evening. Ephraim Bowen, afterwards an officer in the Revolutionary Army, and the last survivor of the *Gaspee* party, fifty years later thus related the events of that memorable night:—

"About nine o'clock I took my father's gun and my powder horn and bullets and went to Mr. Sabin's, and found the south-west room full of people, where I loaded my gun, and all remained there until about ten o'clock, some casting bullets in the kitchen and others making preparations for departure, when orders were given to cross the street to Fenno's wharf and there embark. . . . A sea captain acted as steersman of each boat, of whom I recollect Capt. Abraham Whipple, Capt. John B. Hopkins (with whom I embarked) and Capt. Benjamin Dunn. A line from right to left was soon formed, with Capt. Whipple on the right and Capt. Hopkins on the right end of the left wing. The

party thus proceeded till within about sixty yards of the *Gaspee,* when a sentinel hailed:—

"'Who comes there?'

"No answer.

"He hailed again, and no answer.

"In about a minute Duddingston mounted on the starboard gunwale, in his shirt, and hailed. No answer. He hailed again, when Captain Whipple answered as follows:—

"'I am sheriff of the County of Kent, G—d d—n you. I have got a warrant to apprehend you, G—d d—n you, so surrender, G—d d—n you!'

"I took a seat on the main thwart, near the larboard rowlock, with my gun by my left side facing forward. As soon as Duddingston began to hail, Joseph Bucklin, who was standing on the main thwart by my right side, said to me, 'Ephie, reach me my gun, I can kill that fellow.' I reached it to him accordingly, when, during Captain Whipple's replying, Bucklin fired and Duddingston fell, and Bucklin exclaimed, 'I have killed that rascal!' In less than a minute after Capt. Whipple's answer, the boats were alongside of the *Gaspee* and boarded without opposition. The men retreated below as Duddingston entered the cabin.

"As soon as it was discovered that he was wounded, John Mawney, who had for two or three years been studying physic and surgery, was ordered to go into the cabin and dress Duddingston's wound, and I was ordered to assist him . . . orders were given to the schooner's company to collect their clothing and everything belonging to them, and put them into their boats, as all of them were to be put on shore. . . . They departed, and landed Duddingston at the old still-house wharf, at Pawtuxet, and put the chief into the house of Joseph Rhodes. Soon after, all the party were ordered to depart, leaving one boat for the leaders of the expedition, who soon set the vessel on fire and consumed her to the water's edge."

Thus, three years before the Battle of Lexington, the first blood of the War of the Revolution was shed—in Rhode Island waters, not far from the port of Providence, by one of a party commanded by Captain Abraham Whipple, whose life was declared forfeit by the British. Among his notable companions on that night were Benjamin Page, for many years a prominent shipmaster in the East India trade, and Turpin Smith, a well-known seafaring man.

Equally active days came for Abraham Whipple after the news of Lexington arrived in Providence. The vessels *Washington* and *Katie* were chartered to protect the trade of the Colony in June, 1775, and placed under the command of Captain Whipple. The *Washington* was manned with a crew of eighty men, not counting the officers, and was equipped with ten four-pounders and fourteen swivel guns, while the smaller of the vessels, the *Katie,* had a crew of thirty men. Captain Whipple in command of the larger of the vessels was appointed commodore of the little fleet, which was supplemented by two

row galleys, each having a crew of six men. With great skill Commodore Whipple went about his duties, and hardly had his galleys been completed when he encountered the frigate *Rose* of Wallace's fleet. After discharging the first gun fired in the American navy at any part of his Majesty's navy, Whipple proceeded to fight with his customary vigor. It was this battle that called forth the famous communication from James Wallace, who had got wind of Whipple's part in the *Gaspee* affair,—

"You Abraham Whipple, on the 10th of June, 1772 burned his Majesty's vessel the *Gaspee* and I will hang you at the yard arm!"

To which Whipple with characteristic brevity replied,—

"Sir James Wallace Sir Always catch a man before you hang him!"

Commodore Whipple served in the American Navy throughout the Revolution, and contributed greatly to the naval strength which Rhode Island gave to the War. Rhode Island is the smallest State in the Union—and she has the distinction of having built and manned the earliest vessels with which to fight against Great Britain; in this State were equipped more than her proportionate share of vessels during the war; it was Rhode Island that furnished more naval officers than any of the other States; and to Esek Hopkins of Providence came the honor of being the first Commander of the American Navy.

ESEK HOPKINS, FIRST COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN NAVY

Who in 1775 sailed from Providence with the nucleus of the fleet

When Esek Hopkins was twenty years of age he shipped as a raw hand in a vessel bound from Providence to Surinam. This was the beginning of an eventful career of thirty-five years during most of which he followed the sea and achieved a notable success as a privateer, captain, merchant—at one time commanding a fleet of seventeen merchantmen, many of which were owned by the Hopkins family. Three of Captain Hopkins' brothers were sea-captains, and his brother, Stephen Hopkins, was a Signer of the Declaration of Independence and a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. It is not difficult to follow the career of Captain Hopkins in the columns of the *Providence Gazette,* for not only are his shipping ventures here recorded, but an occasional mention of political affairs is made in which Hopkins took an active part during the interims between his voyages. And the fact that he was backed by such men as Nicholas, Moses and John Brown, for whom he made several voyages, lends a distinction to his early career.

An event of popular interest centres around a voyage made by Captain Hopkins to Surinam in 1769. This event is prefaced by an item that appeared in the *Providence Gazette,* March 16, 1769, to the

COMMODORE HOPKINS.

COMMANDER in CHIEF of the AMERICAN FLEET

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From an engraving *Collection of Colonel George L. Shepley*

effect that "Capt. Esek Hopkins from Surinam on the 16th ult., in Lat 30, Long 62½ spoke the Brig '*Rose,*' from Madeira for Philadelphia, out for 34 days, all well." It was early in the following November that one Captain Aulger, who arrived in Providence from Surinam, reported that he had left at that place three Providence captains—Esek, George and John Hopkins.

It is no small wonder, then, when a Continental navy was deemed necessary, that the brother of Stephen Hopkins, who then headed a committee on naval affairs, should be appointed, October, 1775, Commander-in-chief, having the same powers on sea that Washington had on land. The *Katie,* then under the command of Commodore Whipple of Providence, was dispatched to carry Commodore Hopkins and his men from Providence to Philadelphia. This little vessel was retained in the navy and her name later changed to the *Providence.* On the 17th of February, 1776, Commodore Hopkins with his little fleet, which had comprised the Rhode Island navy, consisting of the ships *Alfred,* Captain Dudley Saltonstall, and the *Columbus,* Captain Abraham Whipple, the brigs *Andrea Doria,* Captain Nicholas Biddle, and the *Cabot,* Captain John B. Hopkins, and the sloops *Providence, Fly, Hornet* and *Wasp,* sailed away from the capes of Delaware to the Bermudas and thence to Nassau where all the cannon and military stores were seized. On his return north Commodore Whipple encountered two armed vessels which he captured and found to contain large supplies of ammunition. The British frigate *Glasgow* was also met, the attack on her being begun by the *Cabot,* commanded by Captain Hopkins. The *Glasgow,* however, after eluding her pursuers and crippling the flagship *Alfred,* escaped. Though Commodore Hopkins was severely censured for this occurrence by his own officers and men, it was generally conceded that he put up a gallant fight. John Hancock congratulated him on the success of the expedition, adding, "Though it is to be regretted that the *Glasgow* made her escape, yet as it was not due to any misconduct, the praise due you and the other officers is undoubtedly the same." Trouble arose, however, and Captain Abraham Whipple, who commanded the *Columbus* and whose officers accused him of cowardice, even went so far as to demand that an investigation by court martial be made of the charges. During this investigation Captain Hazard, who commanded the *Providence,* was relieved of his command and John Paul Jones was appointed his successor.

This was but the beginning of the trouble that beset the path of Commodore Esek Hopkins. More than two hundred of his men were sick when he put into New London after the *Glasgow* engagement. This act alone proved undiplomatic—for subsequent events showed that he should have gone direct to Philadelphia and reported to the authorities there. The wages of his men were not paid. Discipline was lax. Privateers proved more alluring to the men—for there the profits were greater. Added to all of these discouragements, Commodore Hopkins was summoned to Washington to answer

charges of disobedience on his Southern trip. He was defended by John Adams.

In the mean time a committee composed of some of the most influential ship-owners and merchants of Providence had completed two ships for the Continental fleet—the *Warren* and the *Providence.* This roll of merchants was a notable one. Nicholas Cooke, the governor of the Colony of Rhode Island, served on this committee; also Nicholas Brown, Joseph Russell of the firm of William and Joseph Russell, Joseph and John Brown—brothers of Nicholas, Daniel Tillinghast, John Innes Clarke and his partner Joseph Nightingale, Jabez Bowen and Rufus Hopkins—a son of Governor Stephen Hopkins. In spite of the discontent of the times, and the fact that the privateering ventures left the new ships without crews, the *Warren* and *Providence,* built in Providence shipyards, were launched in the spring of 1776. Early in the following January when the *Warren* was lying off Field's Point at the entrance to Providence Harbor, information was brought to Commodore Hopkins of a British sloop-of-war that had run aground at Warwick Neck—halfway between Providence and Newport. The Commodore at once set about to investigate the situation. The pilot on the *Warren* said that the ships could not reach the point where the British ship was aground—the wind being far too westerly. Commodore Hopkins, therefore, leaving his fleet, set out with a pinnace belonging to the *Warren,* manned with twenty-odd men, for the sloop *Providence,* which lay against the Pawtuxet shore, and in her proceeded to the point where the British frigate *Diamond* was aground. It appeared that the British ship was out of ammunition—and bread as well. Upon learning this, Commodore Hopkins gave orders to his men to cease firing and later supplied the enemy with bread. The Commodore, however, neglected to fasten his tender securely and it drifted away, and that night the British ship escaped.

Two months later the occurrence, well-nigh forgotten by Commodore Hopkins, was reported as a "scandalous affair," and with the enlargement of the tale as it passed from one committee to another began a chain of events that resulted in Hopkins' dismissal from the service.

"I am determined," he said to William Ellery, "to continue a friend of my country, neither do I intend to remain inactive." And the subsequent years of his life prove that he meant what he said. He was immediately elected to the General Assembly, served as a member of the Council of War and in other public offices. Years also softened the harsh criticism that he suffered when in the service—and history has shown him to be a worthy patriot who gave his best to the infant navy of America.

The fate of this first American fleet may be of interest. No record of the *Columbus,* the *Hornet* and the *Fly* has been preserved. The *Andrea Doria* was burned in the Delaware in 1777 in order that she might not be taken by the enemy; the *Cabot* in 1777 was driven ashore on the coast of Nova Scotia by the *Milford,* and later used

in the British fleet; the *Alfred* was captured by two British men-of-war in 1778; the sloop *Providence* in 1779 was taken in the Penobscot; the *Wasp* is said to have been sunk in the Delaware to prevent her capture by the British; the *Warren* was burned in the Penobscot in 1779; and the *Providence* was captured at Charleston in 1780.

ELIJAH ORMSBEE

Elijah Ormsbee—a carpenter by trade and an inventor by birth—sails in 1792 from Providence to Pawtucket in his steamboat The Experiment

In the latter part of the eighteenth century—just after the close of the Revolution had given an impetus to industry and invention—Elijah Ormsbee worked in the ore beds of Cranston. There, with the observing eye of an inventor (he had already invented a fire-engine for which was granted to him the first patent issued in the State) he figured how certain difficulties encountered at the mine in the use of steam might be overcome. In one of his frequent talks with David Wilkinson—the inventor of the slide lathe—he persuaded him to build an engine at Pawtucket. Ormsbee said that he thought he could thus propel a boat by steam. Tradition says that he had already had some success in sailing around in an old log-canoe in which he had used an ordinary copper teakettle. Wilkinson built an engine, and Ormsbee installed it in a twelve-ton long-boat that he borrowed from Clark and Nightingale, prominent Providence ship-owners, who took it from their ship *Abigail* then lying in the port of Providence. It may have been this boat that Ormsbee later bought—or it may have been a boat of similar burden furnished by John Brown and once used by him in connection with an old East Indiaman, and converted into his steamboat which Ormsbee named *The Experiment.*

So sure was he of its success that he had tickets printed for the contemplated trips. With Wilkinson's aid, Ormsbee carried on his experiments in Winsor's Cove—some four miles south of Providence. Then came the eventful day in 1792 when the proud inventor steamed up to his native town and landed at what was then the lower wharf. The following day—having for spectators a goodly gathering of people—he steamed gaily over to Pawtucket and back. For days afterwards he cruised about the bay, but patrons were both few and sceptical and funds wofully lacking, so *The Experiment* was drawn up and eventually abandoned. Small wonder, then, that in 1817 when the *Firefly* puffed into Providence the people were not surprised—and they mentally compared the ugly little thing "full of machinery and awkward motions" with Elijah Ormsbee's craft that skimmed the Seekonk River fifteen years before. They even went so far as to say that if Ormsbee's steamboat had had other than goosefoot paddles, how much greater its speed would have been. They figured that even with the goosefoot paddles she could probably beat the *Firefly* that reached

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Providence from New York in thirty-one hours. And some one remembered the steamboat that Ormsbee built later with paddlewheels. They recalled that she was stolen and nobody ever knew by whom.

A half-century passed from the time when Elijah Ormsbee sailed in *The Experiment,* and David Wilkinson in the early 40's was travelling from Utica to Albany. He talked with an aged gentleman on the way, who was interested in the power of steam. Said Wilkinson:—

"I never thought Fulton an inventor but just a collector of other people's inventions."

"Well," said his companion, "I always said so, and he would never have succeeded if it had not been for Daniel French."

"What do you mean by Daniel French?" asked Wilkinson.

"Why, a Yankee [the Connecticut Yankee] that Fulton kept locked up for six months making drafts for him."

Then it was that David Wilkinson remembered—after fifty years—and in remembering later uttered this extraordinary statement:—

"The name of Daniel French burst upon my ears for the first time in nearly fifty years, and almost explained some mysteries."

One of the mysteries was this: Not long after Elijah Ormsbee had so successfully run *The Experiment,* a man appeared at the shop of David Wilkinson in Pawtucket and asked if he might examine the machinery of the steamboat. He spent several days in the task—and the only information that he left behind was that his name was French —Daniel French. He went away. In 1817 the *Clermont* puffed its way up the Hudson River. And it was nearly fifty years before David Wilkinson ever heard of him again or knew that he was the famous "Connecticut Yankee" who had worked for Fulton. So Elijah Ormsbee's name is a more or less obscure one in the history of American steam navigation, ranking a small third to the names of James Rumsey who in 1784 endeavored to run his steamboat on the Potomac, and of John Fitch who in 1790 ventured in his steamboat on the Delaware River. The fact remains that while great credit is due both of his predecessors, it was Elijah Ormsbee who successfully dashed over the Seekonk River and who from lack of money alone was compelled to abandon his invention.

THE FIRM OF BROWN & IVES

John Brown begins East India trade for Providence by sending out the General Washington*—the first ship that cleared from this port for the East*

The story of Brown & Ives is a notable one, embodying not alone the courage of the pioneers who built the foundations of the East India trade of Providence, but also unparalleled chapters of thrift, industry and benevolence. The story of James and Obadiah Brown has already been briefly told. It will be remembered that Captain James, the eldest of the Brown brothers, died in Virginia, and the

From a painting *Courtesy of Brown & Ives*

A BROWN & IVES SHIP

eldest of the "Four Brothers"—Nicholas—instead of appropriating, as was his right under the colonial laws, a double portion of his father's estate—divided the inheritance equally with his brothers and sister. Joseph, the second of the "Four Brothers," spent his early life in the counting-house and later withdrew from the firm to devote himself to philosophical study—a pursuit that eventually caused him to accept the chair of Professor of Experimental Philosophy at Brown University. John, the third of the brothers, was with the firm until 1782 when he established himself both as shipbuilder and merchant at India Point, and it was here that he began trade with the East Indies and China. Moses, the youngest of the "Four Brothers," survived his noted brothers by many years. He served an apprenticeship with his Uncle Obadiah and in 1763 became a member of the firm of Nicholas Brown & Company, where he served ten years.

John Brown, on establishing a business of his own, took as a partner John Francis, a Philadelphia merchant, who continued as a member of the firm until his death in 1796. It was this year that Mr. Benson, who had also been a member of the firm, retired, and Thomas Poynton Ives, who had been connected with the firm for some years, became a member—thus forming the commercial house of Brown & Ives.

The Duke of La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt in writing of his travels through America in 1795–97 said: "The richest merchant in Providence is John Brown, brother of Moses Brown, the Quaker. In one

part of the town he has accomplished things that, even in Europe, would appear considerable. At his own expense he has opened a passage through a hill to the river, and has there built wharfs, houses, an extensive distillery, and even a bridge by which the road from Newport to Providence is shortened by at least a mile. . . . At his wharfs are a number of vessels, which are constantly receiving or discharging cargoes. . . . The trade of Providence employs a hundred and forty-two vessels belonging to that port; and very little of it is shared with foreign ships, even by those of other states. The trade . . . consists in the exportation of oxen, live hogs, salt pork, butter and cheese, barley, timber, onions, rum, whiskey, gin, flax-seed, wrought iron, and the commodities imported from the East and West Indies. . . . The commerce of Providence is carried on with the East and West Indies, Denmark, the north of Germany, and the coasts of Africa. Some of her vessels trade in France, but the number of these is small. They usually carry thither tobacco and train-oil; during the last two years they carried rice, meal, salt beef, raw hides, and shoes for the army. Providence and Newport carry on trade with England. . . . To the value of the exports from Providence may be added about £800,000 in specie which are annually sent out for the trade with India and China."

Eight years before the Duke of La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt wrote of his travels through America, John Brown had sent the first Providence ship to the East Indies. This first ship—the *General Washington,* Captain Jonathan Donnison—was a vessel of one thousand tons. She cleared from Providence December 24, 1787, arrived at Canton, October 28, 1788, and was not only the first Rhode Island vessel in Chinese waters but one of the first American ships that reached the Far East. Her cargo consisted of anchors, cannon shot, bar iron, ginseng, tar, Jamaica spirits, New England rum, and Madeira wine, brandy and spirits. She entered the ports of Madeira, Madras, Pondicherry and Canton and on her return voyage she called at the ports of St. Helena, Ascension and St. Eustatius. Her log showed that she had covered a distance of 32,758 miles, after a voyage of a year and six months. She reached Providence July 5, 1789, laden with teas, silks, china, cotton goods, lacquered ware, flannels and gloves. Much of the news of this voyage is gleaned from the Journal of Henry Smith—afterwards acting-governor of Rhode Island—who scrupulously recorded the happenings from day to day. From her Book of Manifest it is learned that the *General Washington* brought her owners a cargo valued at £29,951, or $99,848 (reckoning 16⅔ cents to the shilling). Just two years and two days after she first cleared for the East Indies and Canton, the ship sailed for India, completing her second voyage on June 11, 1791. On January 7, 1792, she cleared for Bombay, and the *Gazette* of May 18, 1793, contained the following announcement: "Monday last arrived here the Ship *General Washington,* Captain Donnison, in 5 months from Canton, with a valuable cargo."

The last years of the career of the *General Washington* appear to have taken her not only to India but also Russia, as news of her arrival at Cronstadt was reported in Providence in October, 1803. She reached Providence the latter part of that year and the *Gazette* announced the sale of "valuable Russia goods, by order of the Executors of the Will of the Hon. John Brown, Esquire, deceased." The entire cargo of the *General Washington* was announced for sale, and it appears that on this voyage to Cronstadt William Smith was master of the vessel. The *General Washington* was also sold that day at public auction—and after her sale was used in the coasting trade.

THE STORY OF *THE PRESIDENT* AND THE *GEORGE WASHINGTON*

The latter was the first American ship-of-war to enter a Turkish harbor

John Brown was a great admirer of President Washington, and one of his means of showing this admiration was by naming for the Chief Executive three of the largest ships he had built. When President Washington visited Providence in May, 1790, it was the second ship bearing his name that he viewed on the stocks in the busy yard of John Brown, who was among the party that escorted the President to places of interest during his visit. The *Gazette* of January 8, 1791, gives further news of the ship: "On Thursday Morning a most elegant coppered Ship, called *The President,* belonging to Messrs. Brown and Francis, was launched at the Ship-yard near Fox-Point. She is intended for the India trade, is 950 Tons Burthen, and allowed to be the best Ship ever built in New England. The weather proved uncommonly fine, and she moved majestically from the Ships, amidst the Plaudits of an immense Concourse of Spectators, among whom was a brilliant assemblage of the fair Daughters of America."

She made one notable trip for the firm of Brown & Francis, for in Calcutta the following year a Dutch firm purchased her and the last news that reached Providence concerning her was to the effect that she sailed from Canton to Ostend with a cargo of sugar, gum arabic, coffee, tea and piece goods. There was considerable excitement in Providence when a wagon bearing upwards of 60,000 dollars in specie—the price of the *President Washington*—was unloaded at the Providence Bank, "this Sum," the report says, "being *more Specie* than they have shipped to the Indies."

The third Brown & Francis ship bearing the honored name of Washington was the "large and elegant ship, called *George Washington.*" She was designed for the India trade and sailed on her first voyage from Providence in January, 1794, via Madeira. Her second and last voyage under the direction of her builders was to China and Batavia two years later. It was on her return from this trip that she was purchased by the United States Government and converted into a cruiser. Miss Kimball in her "East India Trade of Providence" has a

careful history of the *George Washington.* On the purchase of the ship by the Government she says: "This event is of course commented upon by the *Gazette,* wherein, under the heading 'Wooden Walls of America,' is retailed successively the appointment of her captain, the progress of her preparations in respect both of men and ammunition,—the former coming from Worcester, the latter from 'the Foundry in Scituate' (14 nine-pound cannon), and the hope is expressed that the new frigate 'may be successful in protecting and defending the Trade of the United States against Piratical Depredators.' The *George Washington* is also described in a government report of 'Vessels purchased of the Public, now in service,' for the year 1798, as being of 624 tons, mounting 24 guns, and having a crew of 220 men. She was 'purchased of John Brown, of Providence, Rhode Island, with masts, spars, sails, etc., nearly prepared to receive her guns and military stores, for $10,400 cash.'"

In March, 1801, the *Gazette*—as it did subsequently—followed her career: "The *George Washington* frigate, Captain Bainbridge, arrived at Constantinople on the 23rd day of December, with tribute or presents from the Dey of Algiers, estimated to be worth 5 millions of piastres." A London paper the following January reports that she was the first ship-of-war belonging to the United States that ever entered a Turkish harbor, and it was reported that Captain William Bainbridge, under the protectorate of the Algerine Ambassador, was very hospitably received by Lord Elgin, the British Ambassador at Constantinople.

Samuel Patterson in the narrative of his sufferings and adventures, published more than a century ago, devotes considerable space to his "first voyage to Algiers in the frigate *George Washington.*" He says that the castle at Algiers fired a salute of twenty-one guns, and that the Dey presented Captain Bainbridge with an elegant Turkish sword. It was shortly afterwards that this Dey suddenly demanded that Captain Bainbridge carry his ambassador to the grand seignior at Constantinople. Apparently there was but one of two choices left—either to obey the Dey and take the responsibility of some two hundred Turks with gifts valued at more than half a million, or to refuse to obey him and perhaps involve the United States in difficulties. Indignantly, Captain Bainbridge acquiesced to the extraordinary demand, and was further humiliated when the Dey commanded that the American flag be replaced by the flag of Algiers, foreign vessels not being allowed to come nearer than one hundred and twenty miles of the city. When, however, he neared Constantinople the American flag was raised at the mizzen and the Algerine at the main.

Three officers were sent out to inquire what flag the *George Washington* flew. They were answered that it was the American flag. They answered that they had never heard of any such a country. "America," Captain Bainbridge said, "is in the New World." Mr. Patterson further relates an interesting story:—

"After these inquiries the frigate came into the harbour, saluted the

grand seignior's palace with twenty-one guns, and proceeded to unload the Algerine cargo. The ambassador was not permitted to have his audience before the arrival of the Capudan Pacha, or high admiral from Egypt, and it was necessary for the frigate to await the result. Captain Bainbridge endeavoured to employ the interval in giving to the Turkish government a favourable impression of a country, of which his ship and crew were the only specimens they had ever had an opportunity of seeing. At this time an embassy to Constantinople was projected, and William Smith, Esq., then minister of the United States in Portugal, was designed as our ambassador. It was therefore desirable that his arrival should be preceded by as advantageous an opinion as possible of his country. How well Captain Bainbridge succeeded in making these impressions we may learn from the unsuspicious testimony of a distinguished traveller, Mr. Clarke, who was then at Constantinople and with whom Captain Bainbridge contracted a friendly intimacy."

Mr. Clarke appears to have been much interested in the arrival of the first American frigate at Constantinople, and observed that it caused a great sensation there, and that the presents from the Dey to the Sultan and Capudan Pacha consisted of "Tygers and other animals with a view to conciliate the Turkish government whom the Dey had offended." The sovereign apparently didn't appreciate the attention given by the Dey's representatives nor his "Tygers," for he first spat on the letter presented and then stamped on it and bade the Algerines return to their master and tell him that he would treat the Dey in the same way that he did his letter. In marked contrast to this interview was the sovereign's reception of Captain Bainbridge, to whom he presented with great courtesy a shawl and fur coat, and afterwards the Capudan Pacha expressed a desire to row to the *George Washington* and hoist the American flag, and afterwards a great dinner was given in which waters from the four quarters of the globe were drunk—while natives of Europe, Asia, Africa and America feasted together.

The *George Washington* shortly afterwards sailed from Constantinople, leaving behind a high impression for the naval character of the United States. She arrived at Algiers on January 21, 1801, where the ambassadors of the Dey bore news from the Capudan Pacha at Constantinople that completely humbled him. The report of the friendliness of the powers at Constantinople also caused the Dey to exhibit a new respect towards Captain Bainbridge, to whom he had been arrogant on his first visit to Algiers. Four hundred prisoners who had been taken with British and Austrian passports were also immediately released—and war was declared against France. Realizing the peril that the French Consul and his subjects were in at Algiers and hearing that they were ordered to leave the country in forty-eight hours, Captain Bainbridge took them on board the *George Washington.*

Samuel Patterson with this final paragraph concludes his connection with the *George Washington:* "On the 31st of January we made sail

from the harbour of Algiers, touched at Alicant, landed our passengers, and sailed for America. On the 14th of April we experienced a violent gale, but received no essential injury. Much praise is due to the skill of Captain Hallowell, the then sailing-master. And, in the latter part of April we arrived at Philadelphia, in the happiest of all countries, the United States of America. At this place I was discharged, with others, from the ship; and being but a boy, with no one to control me, I roved about with the sailor boys until my money was all gone."

THE *JOHN JAY*

The John Jay *begins a notable career of thirteen years, is captured by the British in 1807, released on bail, and wrecked off Pigeon Island in the following year*

The *John Jay,* built for and owned by Brown, Benson & Ives, began her career as brilliantly as any of the other large and more famous ships of Providence. The usual designation of "elegantly built ship" was given her by the *Gazette,* which says that "the Name *John Jay* was given her, in Honour of the Abilities and Patriotism of the distinguished Statesman, whose Appointment to his present important Embassy is so cordially approved by all who wish for Peace and Prosperity of the United States."

There was, then, on the very horizon of her career a gathering of war clouds in which she early became involved. Colonel Benjamin Tallman, who had built her, may well have been proud of his handiwork as she swept down Providence Harbor in December, 1794, with Captain Daniel Olney in command, bound for Bombay with a cargo of pig iron, bar iron, rum, gin, pork, lumber, candles and tobacco—amounting to some £10,365. She brought a cargo of teas into Providence two years later valued at $250,000. It was that year that the seas and straits were reported very dangerous because of pirates. After voyages to Russia in 1798–99 she went to Batavia where she had orders "to procure a cargo of the best Java Coffee, the latest growth to be preferred, with Sugar of the first quality sufficient to ballast the Ship and no more—poor Sugar will not answer to bring to this Country." She returned in March, 1800. Her fourth voyage was to India, returning in July, 1801, with a Canton cargo valued at more than $318,000. After sailing from Newport on her fifth voyage to Amsterdam she came back to Providence in 1804 and from there cleared for Batavia where she procured a cargo of sugar and coffee.

This voyage was darkened by the loss of Daniel F. Tillinghast, supercargo. She sailed again for Amsterdam in September where she procured a cargo for Sumatra and China valued at $170,000—consisting of beef, pork, wine, burgundy, champagne, gin, pickles, smoked tongues and Bologna sausages. On her voyage home the British sloop-of-war *Driver,* in endeavoring to stop the carrying trade when England and France were at war, captured the *John Jay* and ordered

that she be carried to Bermuda. John Bowers, supercargo, sent January 13, 1806, a report of the capture from St. George's Harbor, Island of Bermuda.

For six months British authorities detained John Bowers at Bermuda. In the mean time, immediately upon the receipt of the news of the detention of the ship, Moses Brown dispatched Colonel Samuel Ward as agent for Brown & Ives to Bermuda, where he was ordered to transact any business connected with the release of the *John Jay,* Moses Brown, himself, directing matters in Providence. The High Court of Admiralty in London, after six months of delay, restored the ship on bail.

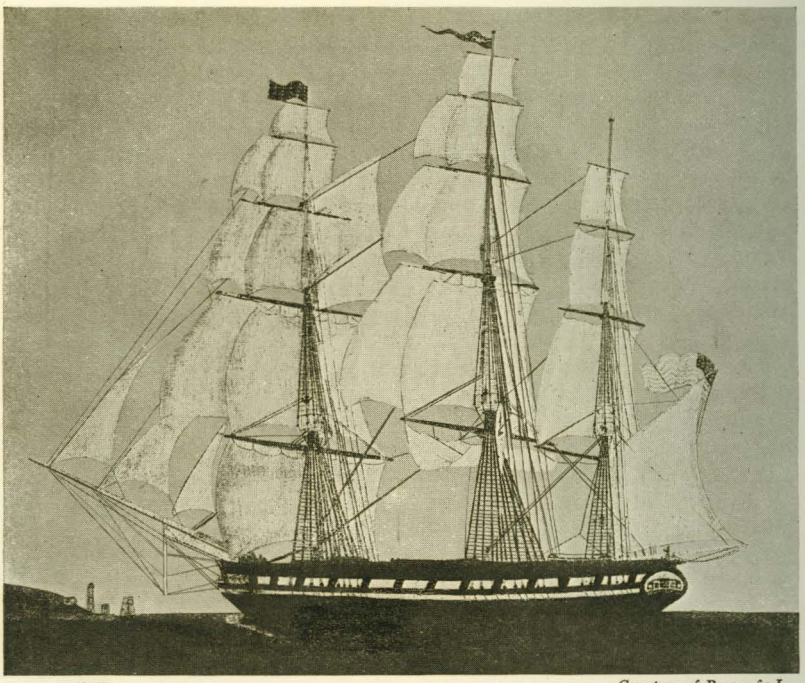
It seems a peculiar coincidence that this ship, named for the statesman who devised the treaty that bore his name, should have been thought guilty of violating his treaty which forbade American ships trading with the East Indies from carrying cargoes to Europe. In spite of this detention, the *John Jay* sailed on what proved to be her final voyage. She procured a cargo of coffee at Batavia, but unfortunately in seeking another port in search of pepper she struck a coral reef off Pigeon Island and was dashed to pieces, her crew going ashore in their boats.

THE VOYAGES AND WRECK OF THE *ANN & HOPE*

When Colonel Benjamin Tallman, master builder, completed for Brown & Ives the ship *Ann & Hope*—named for the wives of the owners—she was considered the most elegant and fleetest vessel that belonged to the port of Providence. Her span of service was destined to be brief—for between her departure on her first voyage to Canton in July, 1798, and her wreck under Mohegan Bluffs, Block Island, on the return from her sixth voyage, but seven years elapsed. Three years before Nicholas Brown and Thomas Poynton Ives launched the *Ann & Hope,* they began collecting material for her, mostly white oak timber cut in the winter of 1795, and water-seasoned. Her hold was sealed with two thicknesses of oak, each two inches thick—while between decks was two-and-one-half-inch oak. She registered 550 tons burden. She was armed with twelve nine-pound guns, was built by the day, and her cost was upwards of $50,000.

On her first voyage to Canton, the vessel carried Captain Samuel Snow as supercargo. Captain Snow had then just received his appointment as United States Consul at Canton. On that first voyage her officers and sixty seamen boasted of her sailing qualities, and after a stop of four days at New Holland (Australia) she reached her destination after a voyage of five months and one day. Captain Benjamin Page commanded her on this first voyage. The ship's surgeon sent a communication to the *Gazette* from Whampoa, China, wherein he describes an interesting experience on the way to Canton.

While anchored off the island of Tinian, it was discovered that a man



From a painting *Courtesy of Brown & Ives*

ANN & HOPE

was pacing the beach and desperately signalling to the ship. A pinnace was sent out that hailed the fellow, who inquired from what country the occupants of the boat came. It was learned that he was a Lascar who had been cast away on the island in the brig *Bramin,* formerly commanded by Captain Swain, a Providence sea-captain. On reaching the shore the Lascar knelt to his deliverers and begged that he might be saved from starvation or imprisonment that were sure to overtake him were he obliged to remain on the island. After Captain Page assured him that he would be set in some place of safety, he found that the man spoke several languages and that the brig *Bramin* from Macao was originally commanded by an Irish sea-captain named M'Clellan, who had died at Leuconia and who was succeeded by Swain of Providence. A year and a half before, the ship being anchored off the island and the crew and natives being intoxicated, she had parted her cable and been dashed to pieces on a coral reef. All of her crew were saved except one, and most of her cargo. The crew therefore lived for a long time in huts until the white members were taken off in a vessel bound for the northeast coast. The nine or ten Lascars remained until the arrival of a Spanish vessel, when they were seized—all save the man who remained to tell

the tale and who escaped into the woods—and put in irons. On his return to the huts after the Spaniards had departed with their prisoners, he found them empty and all of the stores gone. He had subsisted on the fruits that the island yielded and had spent most of his days in tears while he awaited the arrival of a ship. The surgeon adds: "Tinian abounds with fruit, such as oranges, limes, guavoes, bread fruit, cherries, plumbs, beans, cocoa-nuts, tree cabbage, &c. cotton and Indigo are also in great plenty; large white cattle are numerous and hogs and fowls abundant. We saw ruins of some pyramidal pillars mentioned by Lord Anson, but none of the pillars are standing. This beautiful island, even in its present uncultivated state, appears to be one of the finest and most desirable spots on earth. We remained there about 12 hours, got a supply of vegetables, and then took our departure."

The *Ann & Hope* sailed directly for Providence from Canton with a cargo of 3,165 chests of tea, 130 boxes of chins, 50,000 pieces of Nankins, 392 pieces of assorted silks—and her arrival is reported in Providence, June 22, 1799, being one hundred twenty-six days from Canton. On her return voyage she fell in with a privateer carrying an English flag (though it was supposed she was French), that pursued the *Ann & Hope* for some fifteen hours, firing an occasional shot that was heartily returned. Captain Page later reported that in the entire voyage the *Ann & Hope* had not met a ship that outsailed her. She was loaded with a cargo of dried skins and silver dollars for her return voyage to Canton where she arrived after a voyage of one hundred sixty-six days, January 21, 1800. Her third voyage was begun on December 24, 1800, when she sailed for Canton via London where she was coppered in the best style. She took to London tobacco, coffee, logwood and silver dollars, while to Canton she carried watches, glassware, cutlery, porter, beer, ale and broadcloths. She reached Providence again on April 7, 1802.

The fourth voyage of the *Ann & Hope* was a little out of her ordinary course. After remaining in Providence about six weeks, she sailed on May 20, 1802, for Batavia, Amsterdam and Cronstadt and returned to Providence via New York. To Batavia she took a cargo of Prussian blue, glass, candles and cloths. While in Russia she procured sable, iron, hemp, sail cloth and raven's-duck. She arrived off Sandy Hook September 11, 1803, and a little over a week later reached Providence.

After a fifth voyage to Batavia with a cargo of candles, the *Ann & Hope* reached Providence, August 12, 1804. Her sixth voyage closed her career. She cleared the following November for the East Indies via Lisbon, and was commanded by Captain Joshua Laing. In Lisbon she was quarantined for forty days—and this appears to have been the beginning of the bad luck that attended her last voyage. The date of her arrival in Batavia was May 2, 1805, and she sailed from this port with a cargo of sugar, pepper and coffee. Encountering a severe gale a few days later, she was compelled to put into the Isle of France

to repair a leak. Before she could make port she was boarded by Commodore Osborne of the English man-of-war *Tremendous,* who detained her for six hours while he persistently refused to allow Captain Laing to enter port. After noting, however, the condition of the vessel, he permitted her to undergo the necessary repairs. Her cargo was unloaded—and several weeks went by before she was ready for sea again—her repairs alone amounting to more than $20,000, a bill which Brown & Ives paid after the loss of their ship. After her repairs the *Ann & Hope* sailed from the Isle of France, September 27, 1805, and arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in a little less than a month. No sooner had she reached this port than an embargo was declared and she was prevented from leaving port for about thirty days. On account of the many delays, the supercargo decided not to go to Cowes as he had been directed, but to sail direct for Providence.

A heavy snowstorm set in when the ship neared what the pilot supposed was Hampton Heights, Long Island, January 10, 1806. Captain Laing changed the course of the vessel so that she would pass Block Island on the south side, and then he ordered that her course be directed to Newport Light. At midnight—shortly after her course had been changed—the crew was dismayed to find that she touched bottom, and on calling all hands, the captain tried to keep the ship off land, but she struck again, and was soon pounding against the rocks, where she remained for two hours, the surf breaking in great fury over her decks. After cutting away her mainmast to ease her, a signal-gun was fired, and soon Block Island men gathered on the shore—though so heavy was the sea that they were unable to get a boat to the *Ann & Hope.* The following morning the crew clung to the decks that had broken away, and with the surf breaking over them they drifted toward the shore. Three of the men were drowned, while another reached shore by swimming. The wreckage sustaining the crew finally drifted in far enough for the men on shore to reach the sailors by boat.

The cargo, valued at $300,000, was washed into the sea—and after shrewd bargaining the natives of Block Island agreed to collect pepper if they might have one-fourth of all that they saved, while on the coffee they were allowed fifty cents a bushel. They managed to secure twenty-five hundred bushels of coffee and sixty bags of pepper. The wreck was sold by Captain Laing with guns, caboose, anchors, pinnace and water-casks for $393. On the evening of January 14 a messenger reached Providence with the news of Brown & Ives' loss, while in the *Gazette* for January 18, 1806, appeared the following announcement: "With regret we announce that in the night of Friday, the 10th inst. the large and elegant ship *Ann and Hope,* Capt. Laing of this town, was lost on Block Id. and that but little of the cargo will be saved. She was from Batavia, last from the Isle of France, where she put in for repairs, and had on board a very valuable cargo."

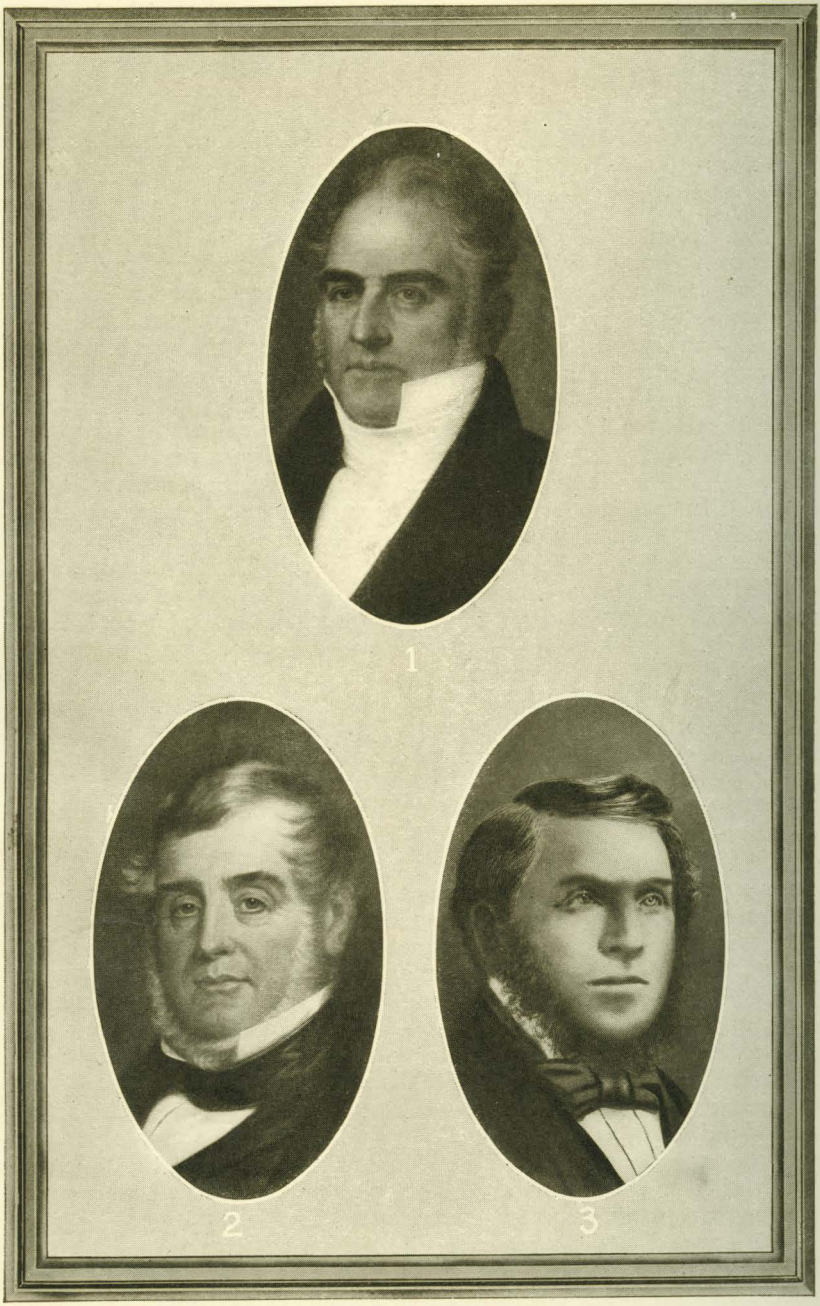
JOSEPH CARLO MAURAN

A Glimpse of the Youth of Joseph Carlo Mauran, with an Account of the Commercial Enterprises of his Sons. The Voyages of Captain Suchet Mauran

When Joseph Carlo Mauran was twelve years old, he started to sail from his home in the port of Villa, France, near Nice, for Sardinia. The little boat in which he and a comrade, Suchet, embarked belonged to Joseph's uncle, and as they were scudding along they suddenly saw approaching them an English man-of-war which finally overtook them, and impressed them into the service of the English vessel. The ship is supposed to have been the *Deptford* of fifty guns. The grief experienced by the family of the lads when it was rumored that they had been kidnapped was equalled by the captives themselves, who in spite of the efforts to be returned to their homes were unable to secure release. Eventually they were transferred to hospital-ships, and there, overcome by work and heat, Suchet died—a victim of small-pox.

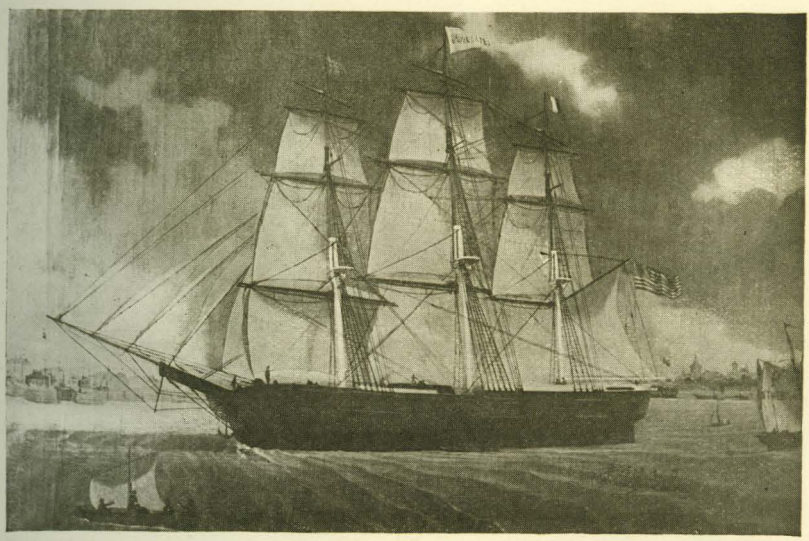
Time passed, and the ship on which Joseph Carlo Mauran served reached New London, Connecticut, where with a crew he was sent ashore for water. As soon as his feet touched the soil Joseph Carlo ran—whither he knew not—until he saw a number of farmers working in the fields. With what little English he had mastered on board ship, he told the men of his imprisonment and of the cruelties that he had suffered and when his captors, whom he had eluded, finally came for him, the farmers drove them to the shore with forks and hoes. So ended a two years' captivity!

The Sardinian lad settled in Barrington, Rhode Island, and there in 1772 he married Olive Bicknell. He served in the American Navy during the Revolution, thus carrying out the traditions that had been attributed to his Italian ancestors, all of whom had followed the sea,—his father Giuseppe, or Joseph, and his uncle, Onorato, having both served in the navy of the King of Sardinia. It is recorded that Joseph Carlo Mauran became one of the founders of the first fleet of armed vessels that formed a nucleus for the American Navy, prefacing his service—according to tradition—by going on a voyage to obtain gunpowder for the colonists. The earliest mention of his activities is in the *Providence Gazette* of May 10, 1777, when it is noted that Commodore Sir Peter Barker sends word from Chatham of the activities of various ships commanded by Esek Hopkins. Captain Mauran was then the commander of the ship *Blaze Castle,* and the following July was given the command of the armed galley *Washington,* carrying ten four-pounders, fourteen swivel guns, and eighty men. A year later the vessel was destroyed by the British at Warren, and Captain Mauran, though dismissed from the service, was "recommended as a good and faithful sea officer to all ye Friends of ye American States." He was exonerated from all blame for the ravage of Warren by the British and was placed in command of the privateer schooner-of-war,



1 CAPTAIN CARLO MAURAN

2 CAPTAIN JOSHUA MAURAN 3 CAPTAIN SUCHET MAURAN



From a painting *Kindness of George Fred Williams*

THE OROONDATES IN THE HARBOR OF ANTWERP

A Mauran ship built in Providence and commanded by Captain George W. Williams. It was on another ship—the *Maritana*—in which the Mauran brothers had an interest, that Captain Williams sailed in 1861. He died on his return from the first voyage while saving his crew in Boston Harbor.

Weazle. Later he is listed as commander of the brigantine *General Warren*, bound to South Carolina. A brig belonging to Warren, which he commanded, was captured by the British early in January, 1783, while prior to this Captain Mauran had been held for some time on a British prison ship. His death occurred in 1813, and his ten sons remained to make their mark in the world. One of them—Dr. Joseph Mauran—became a well-known physician of Providence, while Carlo and Joshua Mauran established the commercial house of C. & J. Mauran in this city. There is a humorous story told concerning Nathaniel and Carlo. A stranger called one day at their Providence store, and not finding the brothers in, asked a colored man if he should meet them on the street, how he might know them. "Deys be berry much alike, especially Carlo," explained the informant.

Of the Mauran sea-captains, the two best-known were Captain Frederic L. Mauran, who commanded the bark *T. H. Armstrong* that made the fastest trip from Galveston to Providence in 1875, and Captain Suchet Mauran, who made his last voyage to California in 1848 when the gold rush was at its height. Among the most noted ships owned by the Maurans were the *Helen Clinton* and *Joshua Mauran,* and the *Maritana,* the last deep-water vessel that went abroad from Providence during the Civil War, and that was later lost off Hull.

GENERAL EDWARD CARRINGTON

A typical merchant of the old school; for some years United States Consul to China; founder of the firm of Edward Carrington & Co.; and at one time owner of twenty-six merchantmen that sailed all over the world

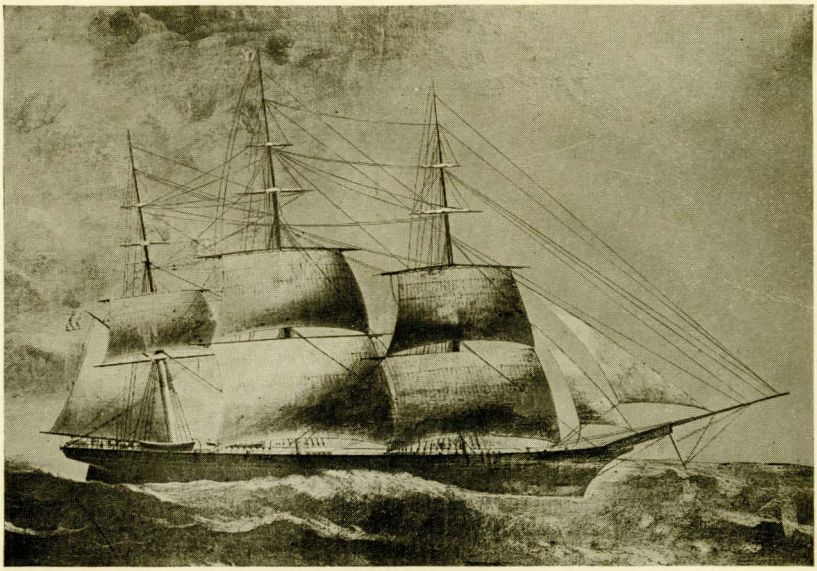
History, tradition and fiction have woven a matchless charm around the Southern colonel, who is invariably a connoisseur of wines, a lover of horses, and delightfully reminiscent of the "days befo' de war." Somehow Northerners in reading of this gentleman of courtly manners forget that in New England have lived equally charming gentlemen who have also built stately mansions, read good books, tasted good Madeira, and amassed abundant fortunes. These facts are evident as one remembers the first master of the Carrington mansion on Williams Street.

General Edward Carrington, a gentleman of the old school, was born in that eventful year 1775. When still a lad he entered the employ of Samuel Butler, who was then associated in business with Seth Wheaton and Richard Jackson. Edward Carrington gained the implicit confidence of his employers and in time he made some ventures of his own that brought him good profit. For a decade he served as United States Consul at Canton, China, receiving his appointment in 1802 and closing the period of his service in 1811 just before the outbreak of the War of 1812. A painting now owned by Edward Carrington, 3d, depicts the home of the American Consul at Canton at the time when his grandfather lived there more than a century ago, and shows a portion of the harbor where the American ships entered bearing commodities from this country to be exchanged for the cargoes of teas and silks in which so many fortunes were amassed. General Carrington had this painting made undoubtedly to remind him of the days in Canton when he greeted his countrymen at the foreign port, and not infrequently settled disputes that arose between the American captains and the British, the latter whenever an opportunity presented pressing American seamen into British service.

On General Carrington's return to Providence he established, in 1815, the firm of Edward Carrington & Co., taking as his partner Samuel Wetmore of Middletown, Connecticut. His fame as a merchant was widely known, and he was considered one of the most successful ship-owners in America. At one time he had built and owned twenty-six merchantmen—the best-known being the *Lion,* the *Superior,* the *Panther,* the *Providence,* the *Franklin,* the *Candace* and the *Carrington.* These vessels went out laden with kegs of specie, and brought back rich cargoes of tea, coffee, spices and merchandise. In these days it was said of General Carrington that he "could lay a keel of a ship, and when the vessel was completed, he could not only navigate it, but make it a source of revenue as well." The fortune that he acquired was considerable, and many of his later interests up to the time of his

From a silhouette *Kindness of Edward Carrington*

GENERAL EDWARD CARRINGTON



From a painting *Kindness of Edward Carrington*

THE CARRINGTON

death in 1843 were in manufacturing. He was one of the principal promoters of the Blackstone Canal. General Carrington served in the Rhode Island General Assembly and was a Major General of the State Militia. His son, Edward Carrington, Jr., succeeded him in business.

The Carrington mansion on Williams Street in many respects is as General Carrington left it. His books and pictures, rare china, teakwood and plate remain, and at the rear of the mansion is the fine quaint courtyard—probably the only one in New England attached to a private residence. Across the pavement of this courtyard seacaptains have passed as they came to General Carrington's private office to receive orders and make reports. Up to within a comparatively short time could be seen from the mansion Providence Harbor, so often scanned by the master when he awaited the return of his ships from foreign waters.

THE RUSSELLS AND WELCOME ARNOLD

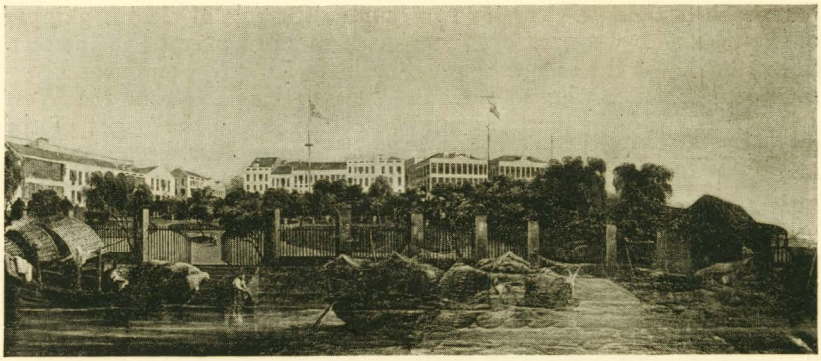
Some Reminiscences Concerning the Russells and Welcome Arnold. The Last Whaler to Leave the Port of Providence

Shortly after the Revolutionary War, the whaling industry which had in a modest way been carried on in Providence was revived, and the arrival of six whalers is recorded in 1785 in the Book of Manifest. Two years later the brigantines *Happy Return* and *Ranger* arrived in

port, each bringing a cargo of two hundred barrels of oil. A glimpse of the men who were large owners in these ships may be of interest. Foremost on the list are Joseph and William Russell, prominent Providence merchants, who sent many ships to England and the West Indies, and whose advertisements were familiar to the pages of the *Gazette* until after the close of the Revolutionary War. The brothers were not only leading New England merchants but they were prominent in the affairs of the Colony and afterwards in the State of Rhode Island. Joseph, the elder, in 1785 was State Senator and was one of the trustees of Brown University. William Russell was an officer of the Providence Cadets during the war. It is related that when General Lafayette visited Providence on the 2nd of August, 1824, several officers, who had served with him in the War of the Revolution were present at the State House to pay their respects to him; among them was Colonel Russell. From an account of the reception of the General in the *Providence Gazette,* we make the following extract: "After his introduction to the Governor and members of the committee, who received him in the Senate Chamber, he came below and shook hands with a number of gentlemen. Among the rest, the venerable William Russell, now in his eighty-fifth year, was introduced to him. The General shook both the veteran's hands in a most affectionate manner, and in enunciation that slightly marked a foreign accent, said he was extremely happy to take his old friend once more by the hand, as it recalled to his memory the delightful associations of his youth. Mr. Russell appeared scarcely at first to comprehend the scene, but in a moment, as if the whole had rushed upon his recollection, he exclaimed in a voice broken by age, and still more subdued by feeling: 'Oh my dear Marquis, how happy I am to see you once more. I remember well the time when I served under you as a volunteer in Rhode Island!' The General was evidently touched and on this, as on several other occasions, the tears started to his eye."

In the latter part of his life it was Colonel Russell's custom to dine with his nephew, Captain William Russell. Captain Russell early chose a seafaring life, beginning as a sailor-lad before the mast when only eighteen, acquiring skill in seamanship and finally had obtained command of an East Indiaman. For a quarter of a century he followed the sea, always in the India and China trade, and in all that time he had never met with a disaster, and was never obliged to call upon the underwriters for a dollar. He always acted as his own supercargo, and his returns to the owners were most satisfactory. On relinquishing a nautical life, he embarked in the dry goods business in Providence, in which he continued until a few years before his death.

A fortnight after the arrival in Providence of Joseph and William Russell's *Happy Return* and *Ranger,* the brig *Rebecca,* owned by Welcome Arnold, arrived with fourteen casks of oil and a cargo of general merchandise. Welcome Arnold began business in Providence in a limited way. After the dissolution of the partnership between him and Caleb Green, with whom he had been associated from 1773



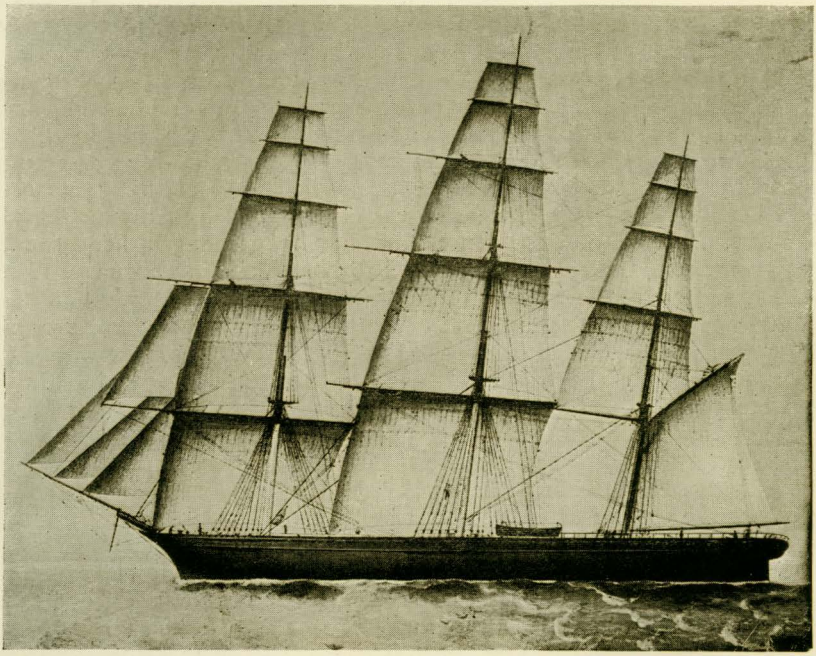
From a painting *Kindness of Edward Carrington*

AMERICAN CONSULATE, CANTON, CHINA, 1820

until 1776, he viewed conditions, found the "commercial world in confusion, the ocean commanded by British fleets, no intercourse between England and the colonies, the trade with the British West Indies cut off," but there were left a few islands with which Mr. Arnold boldly ventured to trade. Though the waters of the Narragansett swarmed with privateers, he took no note of them; he realized that during the course of the war thirty vessels were lost by capture, in each of which he was a part owner. It was part of his commercial policy never to own any whole vessel, but to divide his marine adventures so that one might in this way insure another.

He engaged exclusively in commerce from February, 1776, until August, 1778, and his ventures were successful, the greater part of his trade being confined to the French, Spanish and Dutch ports of the West Indies. Eventually he brought from Russia vast cargoes of iron, hemp and sheeting, also sailcloth. The south of Europe also yielded him great returns. It is an interesting fact that his only venture in the East India trade was in connection with the *General Washington* fitted out by his friend John Brown. It was at his house that the *Gaspee* plot was planned. Mr. Arnold was the grandfather of Samuel G. Arnold, the historian.

The whaling industry that had been successfully prosecuted by the Russells gradually diminished until in 1795 there was but one whaler—the *Ranger*—in the State of Rhode Island. She was the *Ranger* already mentioned as being owned by William Russell of Providence, and she was of one hundred and twenty-two tons burden. The industry that had so gradually declined revived again a century ago. By 1841 seven whaling-ships cleared from this port, and nine in all were licensed to engage in the industry. Most of these eventually were sold to New Bedford. The last whaler that cleared from the port of Providence was the old ship *Lion;* she cleared for the Pacific Ocean, July 17, 1854, and was lost at sea in November of 1856, being then quite forty years



From a painting *Kindness of Edward Carrington*

THE COMET
Owned by General Edward Carrington

old. She had the distinction of making the best whaling voyage recorded between the years 1843 and 1846, having cleared from Providence for this voyage November 10, 1843, for the Northwest coast, and having arrived home March 5, 1846. The total gains of this voyage were eighteen hundred barrels of whale oil, one hundred barrels of sperm and thirty-six thousand pounds of bone that were sold in Brazil. She was lost at sea just thirteen years to a day after her departure on her banner voyage.

THE STORY OF THE *HAIDEE*

She was the last ship built in Providence; she became a "slaver," was outlawed and finally scuttled off Long Island

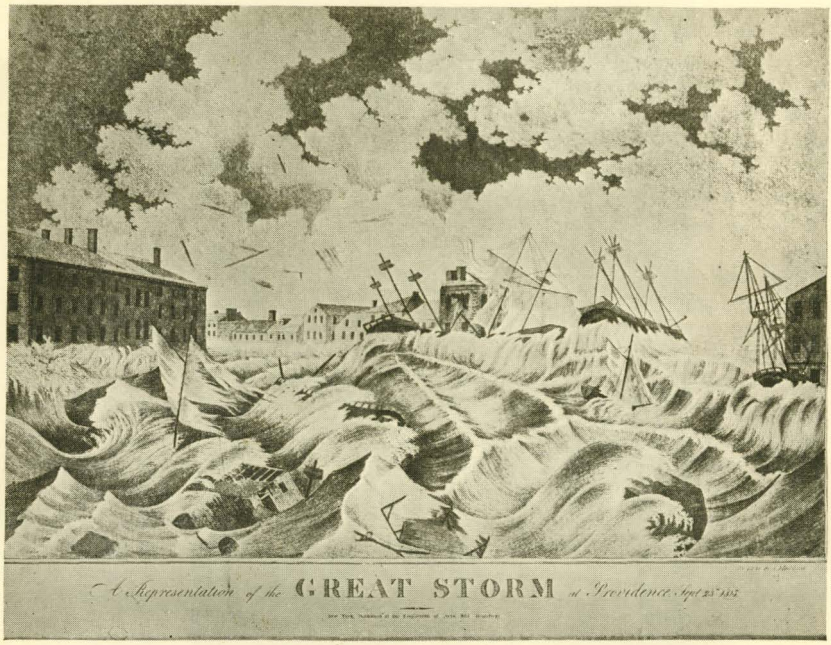
Three years before the old whaler *Lion,* after fourscore years of service, was lost at sea, Lieutenant-Governor Samuel G. Arnold and N. H. Tillinghast of Providence, and Messrs. Crane and Bucklin of New York, had constructed at Frank Allen's shipyard on India Street a little clipper ship, designed for speed, and declared by those who viewed her one of the prettiest ships then afloat. It is an interesting

fact that a descendant of the famous Pardon Tillinghast—"the father of Providence shipping"—should have been a part owner of the last ship that was launched in Providence waters. The *Haidee* began a brief and thrilling career—a career that extended over about the same length of time as that of the famous *Ann & Hope*. She was completed in 1853 and sent on her first voyage to Australia—only to return unsuccessful and the cause of thousands of dollars in loss to her owners. On her next trip—to China—she was commanded by Captain Benjamin D. Manton of Providence, and having exchanged her general cargo for teas and silks she returned to New York in February, 1857, much battered after encountering severe storms and gales off the west coast of Africa, and thereby losing one member of her crew and sails and jibboom. She brought, however, such a handsome profit to her owners that the losses sustained on her first voyage were fully covered.

In spite of this enormously successful voyage, her owners sold the *Haidee* on February 18, 1857, to Señora Georgia de Abranches, who, it is supposed, purchased the clipper ship for her husband, the record for speed that the *Haidee* had made being a desirable asset for the purpose of her new owners. Captain Manton was retained in command of the ship and she cleared inside of a month for Portugal, making on this voyage the fastest passage from America to Europe that had been recorded up to that time. It is also said that this record (seventeen days and twelve hours from New York to Oporto, Portugal) has never been beaten. It should be also remembered that on this passage the *Haidee* had three days of head winds and two days of calm. Her next voyage was to a South American port, and on December 15, 1857, the *Haidee* was purchased by Emilo Sanchez and Doly of New York, and early in 1858 she cleared for Gibraltar with a cargo of flour, cotton cloth, toys, beef, tobacco and rum, to the value of $16,631. When she left Pier 37, East River, New York, the *Haidee* sailed under the watchful eye of the government authorities, who had a suspicion that the clipper was fitted out for a slaver. Captain Manton left her, and on her final trip, when she cleared for the coast of Africa, she was in command of Captain F. G. Whitney. In Africa the *Haidee* took on nine hundred slaves that she landed in Cuba. Here at the port of Cardenas her captain left her, and the first mate brought her to New York, and having no papers he did not dare bring his ship into port.

The keeper of the lighthouse at Montauk Point observed on the morning of September 18, 1858, a square-rigged vessel lying off the southern offing. Later she disappeared. And it is further related that nine Portuguese seamen in a ship's boat came in from sea and landed at Sag Harbor, where they bought liberal supplies of clothing, paying for the same lavishly in Spanish doubloons and dollars.

A few hours elapsed, and after the disappearance of this first boatload of men another boat appeared with a similar company. They started purchasing as their predecessors had done—but becoming



From a lithograph *Collection of Colonel George L. Shepley*

During the Great Gale of September 23, 1815, ships were tossed about in Market Square; 35 sailboats were blown ashore; 500 buildings were destroyed; and the sloop-of-war *Ganges* poked her bowsprit into the offices of the Washington Insurance Company. A damage of $1,000,000 was sustained in Providence.

aware of the fact that they were arousing suspicion, they disappeared, though subsequently they were arrested with Macomber, the first mate. As no incriminating evidence could be found against them, they were released, but the unhappy *Haidee,* long before her crew had begun to lavishly spend their Spanish dollars at the Sag Harbor stores, had been scuttled off the east end of Long Island by the men who had taken her last cargo of slaves from Africa to Cuba.

THE PICTURESQUE DAYS OF THE PACKETS

When from Silver Decanters were poured Rich Draughts of Old Holland in Celebration of the Quick Passages made by these Little Boats plying between New York and Providence

The ugly little steamer *Firefly,* when she won the honor of being the second steamboat to appear in Narragansett waters, having made her first trip (in 1817) from New York to Newport in twenty-eight hours, little knew that her advent—though heralded by throngs of people who awaited her—was to meet intense dissatisfaction on the

Drawn by Newell

Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society

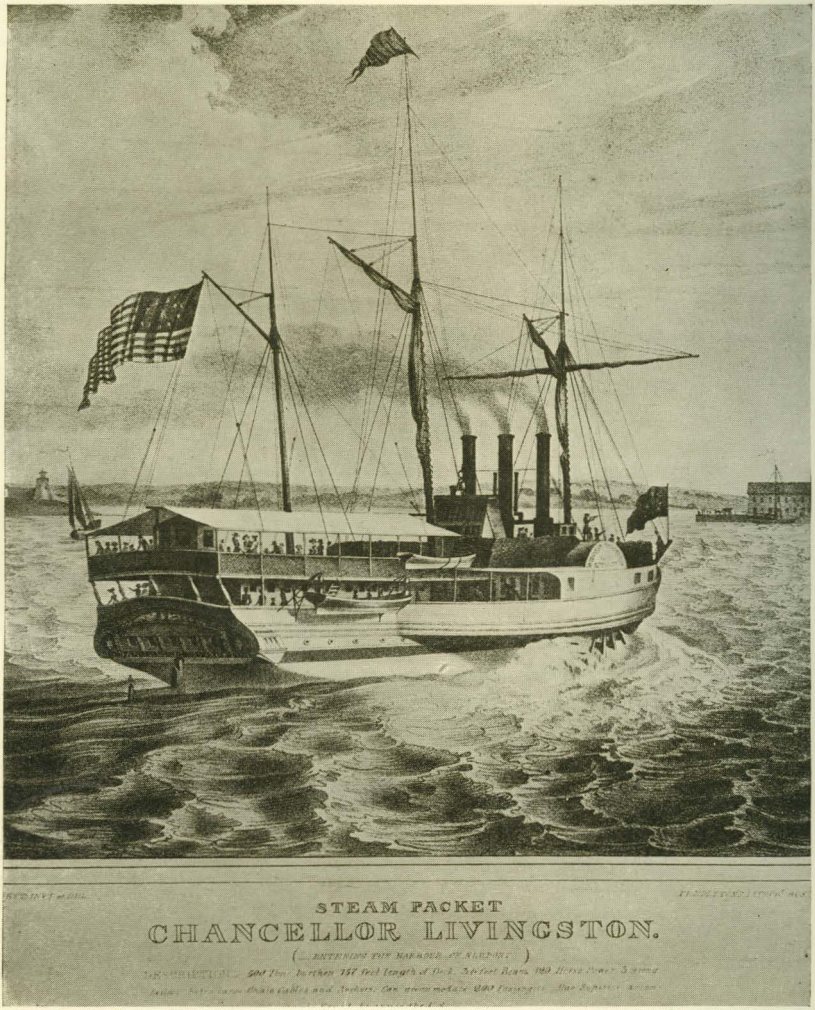
VIEW OF WATERFRONT OF PROVIDENCE ABOUT 1849

part of packet-owners who for many years had carried passengers between Providence and New York. She arrived in Newport on May 26th and on the 28th she left that port at nine o'clock in the morning for Providence, puffing and wheezing up the river until she reached this city at about noon. A month later she sailed for Newport to meet President Monroe and bring him to Providence. The President, having changed his plans and accepted the hospitality of the DeWolf family at Bristol, sailed from there in the *Firefly,* which landed him at Carrington's Wharf where he was greeted by the Presidential salute and the throngs that had gathered at the landing.

Then it was that the wrath of the packet-owners burst anew after having had a full month in which to nurse their troubles, and immediately a bitter rivalry arose between the steamboat-owners and the packet-owners, the latter having vastly the greater advantage in being able to outsail the cumbersome little *Firefly.* The packet-captains made it their business to stand upon the wharf when the *Firefly* was awaiting passengers and to openly, for a full hour before she sailed, offer to carry passengers to Newport for a quarter or for nothing if they failed to beat the steamboat to Newport. These wily captains were successful in their boycott—for they ran the *Firefly* off—and celebrated their victory by holding a mass meeting on the packet wharf, and after denouncing steamboats in an appropriate manner they adjourned to a nearby packet and there drank in Old Holland "confusion in steamboats."

In spite of the invidious manner in which these packet-men received the triumph of steam and the arrival of this first little steamer to ply between New York and Providence, there were reasons other than those of pure business that made them loath to abandon the picturesque little packets that darted hither and thither in Narragansett waters and that formed such an intimate connection between Providence and New York. Their arrival and departure from either port had ever been the signal for people to gather on the wharves, and the ceremony had been accompanied by more or less formality. Stately decanters were brought out by the captain and rows of glasses were placed on the mahogany table in the cabin where solemn healths were drunk to the master and his boat and a prosperous sail. It was in his cabin, usually furnished in mahogany, that the passengers dined, and over the stairs was the important letter-box in which letters that required a speed greater than that of the mail-coaches were placed for delivery in New York. On the distribution of these letters to those who awaited the arrival of the packet in New York, the captain again produced his decanter and glasses—and again healths all around were drunk.

These little packets have been described as graceful sloop-rigged vessels of about seventy-five or one hundred tons, built for speed, and that carried freight as well as passengers. Captain Whipple Brown, when he commanded a packet, unloaded one morning $750,000 in silver, stored in kegs of $5,000 each, which were loaded on fifteen



From an engraving made in 1815 *Collection of Colonel George L. Shepley*

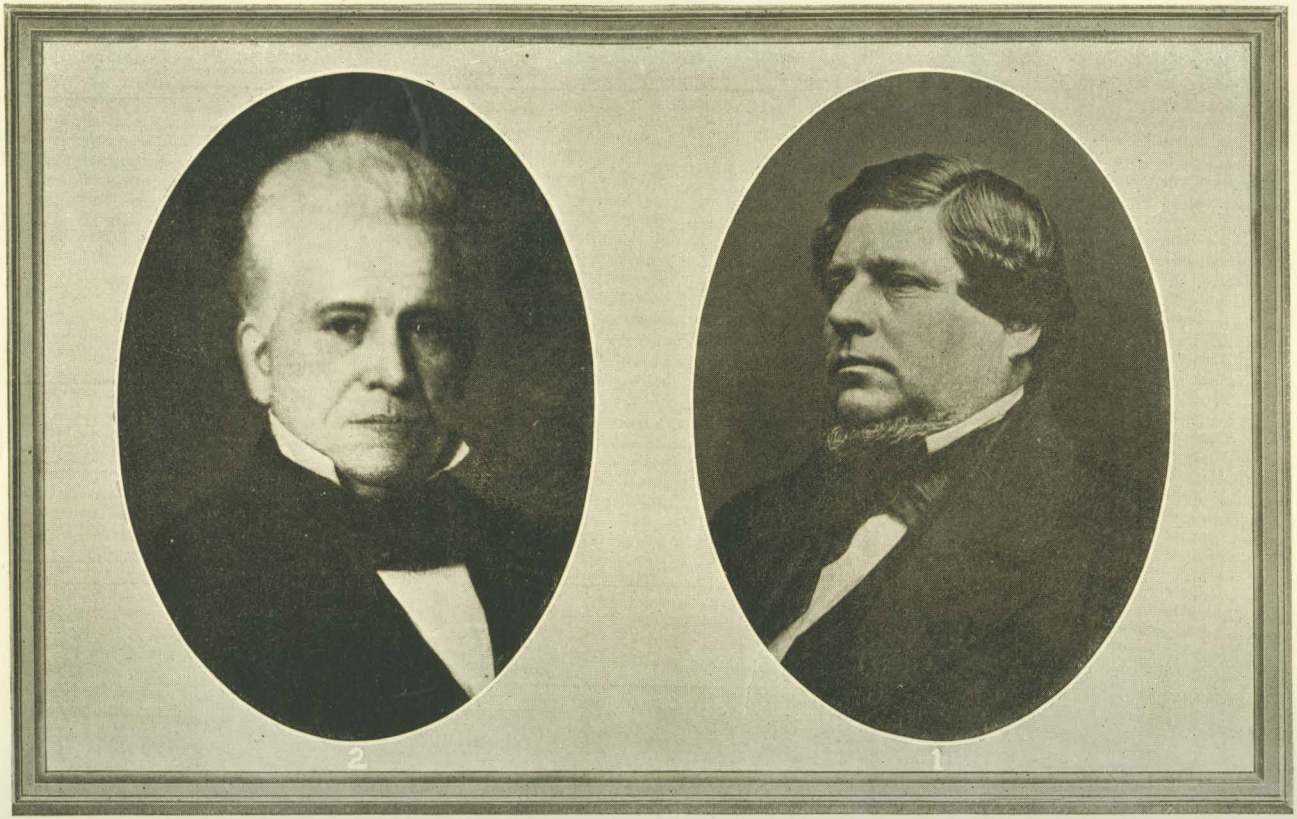
wagons in Providence and accompanied by armed guards set out before sunrise for Boston. The packets usually sailed once a week, their time in passage varying anywhere from eighteen hours to a week, the latter time being considered a record sail made by the *Huntress*. The fare between New York and Providence was $10 including meals. And the trip was considered an event to be heralded by the lucky person making it, and to be forever remembered by both the traveller and his friends. A humorous tale is told of the Providence gentleman who had made this trip himself, and who was the proud possessor of a pair of boots for which he had paid $40. He was very proud of the boots—but, as the story goes, "he was a generous soul," and when his particular friends went to New York he loaned the boots that they might be well shod. "Tradition says," continues the story-teller, "he sometimes murmured in his sleep a fear lest the beautiful boots would be lost, but their presence on any boat seemed to be powerful for good." And there is no record that they ever came to an untimely end or a watery grave!

The packets after ousting the little *Firefly* soon read the signs of the times and realized that they would soon belong to yesterday. By the time the first steamboat excursion on the *Robert Fulton* was made on the Bay in 1821, the era of steamboating had become firmly established and the packets no longer held priority as a mode of travel between Providence and New York.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM COMSTOCK AND THE EARLY SOUND STEAMERS

The Chancellor Livingston *and Prohibition a Century Ago; the Burning of the* Lexington *in 1840*

Captain William Comstock distinguished himself in the War of 1812 by successfully running the blockade between Providence and New York. For his intrepidity during this war, the underwriters of New York presented him with two silver tankards in token of their appreciation. Although he was born in Providence (in 1787) and died there (in 1873), Captain Comstock's business interests were largely in New York City where during the time he was building the boats he made his home. When the steamer *Connecticut* was running between New York and Providence early in the last century, Captain Comstock commanded her, and the decision that had distinguished him during the war was exhibited on one of the early trips of this steamboat. When near Field's Point a boiler was found to be partially ruptured. The passengers, scenting trouble and fearing fire, became unruly as they thronged the deck. The master with sharp peremptoriness ordered them all below, and having sent them there he locked the cabin, pocketed the key, and proceeded to put out the fires in the furnaces and to anchor the steamer. After remaining in this condition all night, the *Connecticut* was taken to Providence and repaired. After-



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2 CAPTAIN WILLIAM COMSTOCK

Kindness of Richard B. Comstock

1 CAPTAIN JOSEPH COMSTOCK

wards when asked how he dared face the threats of the passengers, some of whom had offered violence to him, the captain replied that he would have deserved burning if he had permitted any of them to be lost.

The *Chancellor Livingston,* another Sound steamer, was a contemporary of the *Connecticut* and was considered a beautiful boat, with an average speed of eight and a half miles an hour. When the *Benjamin Franklin,* ornamented with a bust of the sage of Philadelphia, was placed on the Providence-New York line in 1828, she was pronounced the crack boat on the Sound, although the *Chancellor* was thought to have greater speed, as would have been proved had she not had a cracked piston in a race that ensued in October of that year—a race to which the *Providence Journal* in 1828 devoted an editorial:—

"By 11 o'clock the dense columns of smoke which blackened the heavens gave note of the dreadful preparation. All was life and animation. The passengers and even the spectators partook of the feelings of the owners and commanders of the two boats, and in fact the boats themselves seemed animated for the occasion and alive for the race. Before the clock struck twelve the 'Franklin' parted her fasts, apparently impatient for the encounter. She moved slowly down the stream and came to Fox Point Wharf, waiting the departure of the 'Chancellor.' At the usual hour the 'Chancellor' left the wharf, and the 'Franklin' at the same time set her wheels in motion, but being too far to the westward she unfortunately grounded, and the 'Chancellor' passed her. In about six minutes the 'Franklin' was again in motion, proceeding rapidly on her voyage.

"It should be remembered that the 'Chancellor' was not prepared for the race. Just before the 'Franklin' started her commander received a note from the captain of the 'Chancellor' saying that the latter's piston was cracked in such a manner that it would prevent putting on the usual quantity of steam. The 'Chancellor' was also prepared for her regular trip to New York with a large number of passengers and the wood was stowed as usual upon her upper deck. Had the 'Chancellor' been prepared, the result would have been more favorable; as it was, she was beaten about three miles or from twelve to fifteen minutes. With regard to the boats, we entertain but one opinion. They are both first-rate steamships, and, . . . we think there are not . . . better boats in the country."

It was from the *Chancellor Livingston's* rival in this race—the *Benjamin Franklin*—that in the following year, on one of her trips from Providence to New York, George Washington Adams, the eldest son of President John Adams, either fell or jumped overboard. Some time after the calamity, his coat and hat were found on the deck of the steamer—but it was never ascertained whether his death was an accident or not.

Nearly a century ago the old *Chancellor Livingston* banished the decanters that had been so much a part of Sound boats from the earliest packet days. Great indignation arose at this summary action

From a painting executed in 1837
Photographed by John R. Hess

Kindness of Richard W. Comstock

THE MASSACHUSETTS

on the part of the directors of the steamship line, which the latter explained by saying they "were not influenced by petty motives of economy or gain, but hoped to do a little to aid the cause of reform." They added to this letter the following extraordinary paragraph containing a "compromise": "The tables are now supplied with red wines of good quality and pleasant flavor, as well as of good tendency in its effect upon those who may be affected by the motion of the boat. In addition to all this, whenever any person may choose to order brandy or spirits, from a belief of their necessity, it will be immediately and cheerfully supplied from the bar, and the gentleman will hear no more about it unless he pleases."

The steamboat *Massachusetts*, built under the direction of Comstock, made her maiden trip in April, 1836. She was larger than her predecessors, and made her first trip from New York to Providence in thirteen hours and a half. She became one of the first boats of the famous Transportation Company that, financed by Cornelius Vanderbilt, controlled the Sound steamers. Another that was eventually controlled by this company was the ill-fated *Lexington* for which the railroad line offered Vanderbilt $60,000—*provided* she could beat the *John W. Richmond*. The *Lexington* in the early part of her exciting career was commanded by Captain Jake Vanderbilt—a reckless abetter of races between the Sound steamers. A notable race occurred

From a lithograph *Collection of Colonel George L. Shepley*

between the *Lexington* and the *John W. Richmond,* when with machinery pounding and smoke pouring from their funnels they ran for New York, after the *Richmond* had taken aboard passengers at Stonington that were destined for the *Lexington.* On that race the *Richmond* ran through Hell Gate a half-hour before her rival, and the story goes that Vanderbilt never forgave the *John W. Richmond* that day's work. The Transportation Company was severely censured for this, and the *Richmond* continued to make record trips, at one time running from New York to Providence in eleven hours. On her last trip from New York she was out nearly seventeen hours, the pilot's log recording the fearful night: "Heavy gale; very dark and stormy; rain and hail; ugly cross sea." Off Point Judith the sea tore away the steamer's larboard gangway, tossed her chain box overboard, and sent planks from the wheelhouse into the waves. Her fate was happier than that of the *Lexington,* for she was sold to Maine parties and brought $52,000 about two months after the fearful *Lexington* disaster.

The steamer *Lexington* was burned off Huntington, Long Island, the night of January 13, 1840. Of her one hundred and fifty or more passengers but four survived. In the intensely bitter weather of that winter night, David Crowley, the second mate, burrowed into a bale of cotton, and after fearful experiences, during which the man who clung to the bale with him had died from exposure, Crowley, having drifted

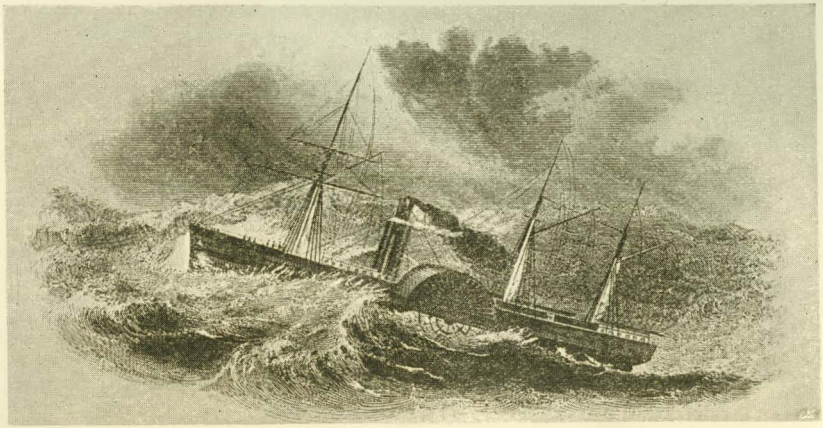
Monday night, Tuesday, Tuesday night and Wednesday, and covering in that time a distance of more than fifty miles, finally got near enough to the icebound shore of New Gully, Long Island, and then crawled ashore. After walking nearly a mile he secured shelter and food. Crowley lived for many years after this experience. He was the last survivor of the disaster, and it is an interesting fact that the owners of the bale of cotton on which he drifted gave it to him, and that he kept the bale in his home in Providence for a long time. Finally, on the outbreak of the Civil War, when cotton reached its highest mark, he sold the bale, and from it sprang the Lexington brand of cloth.

From David Crowley, Captain Chester Hilliard of Norwich, Charles Smith, fireman, and Captain Stephen Manchester of Providence—all survivors of the *Lexington* disaster—an account was obtained of the fire that destroyed the steamer. The steamer had on board a cargo of cotton, piled in bales close to the smokestacks. The fire occurred just after supper. As soon as this was discovered the steamer was headed for land, Captain George Child himself taking the wheel. When he did so something broke. Flames spread rapidly and the passengers were panic-stricken, so much so that when the boats were cast off little children were dashed into the sea. The few men who kept their heads advised that whoever could should seize bales of cotton and try to save themselves in that way. Captain Chester Hilliard and a fireman had placed themselves on a bale, seizing a piece of board for a paddle, and one of Captain Hilliard's last impressions was of a dead child floating in the water and a mother on the burning steamer crying to him to save her baby. Shortly afterwards Hilliard's companion died. The steamer, after lighting the icy waters for hours, sank at three o'clock in the morning.

CAPTAIN "JOE" COMSTOCK

One of the most famous Navigators that ever sailed from an American Port

A year before the outbreak of the War of 1812, Captain Joseph Comstock was born in Providence—and not long after the close of the Civil War, in which Captain Comstock rendered a notable service, he died in New York City. For more than forty years he had traversed Sound and ocean waters, and he has the name of being one of the boldest and most skilful captains that ever ran on the Sound or took an ocean steamship to foreign ports. Captain "Joe," as he was affectionately called by every one who spoke his name a half-century or more ago, began his seafaring life at the age of fifteen when he shipped as a sailor on a little boat then sailing on the Sound. Later he engaged for four years on a vessel in the China trade, and for a time he shipped on a Liverpool packet. His uncle, Captain William Comstock, then built the steamer *Massachusetts,* which Captain "Joe" commanded. In 1847 he superintended the building of the *Bay State* of the Fall River Line, which surpassed anything in beauty or



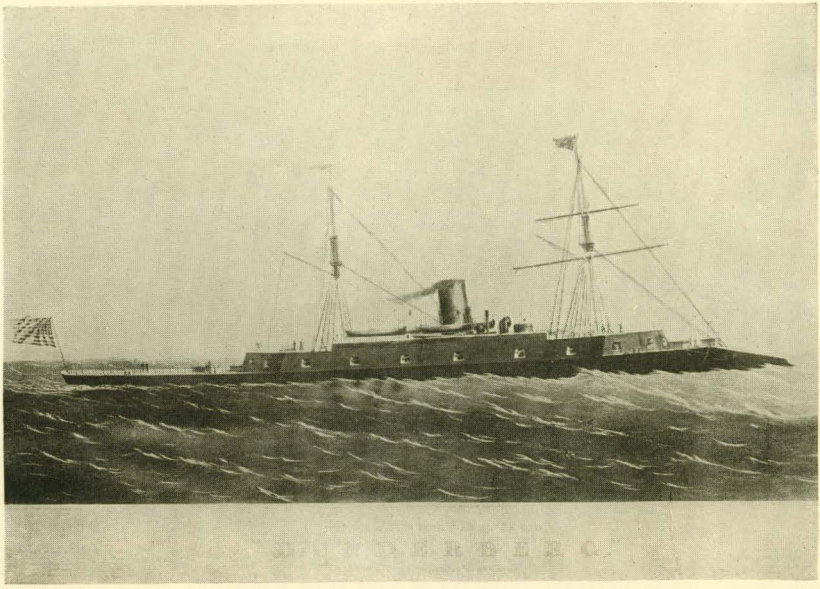
Engraved from a painting by Walters of Liverpool *Kindness of Richard B. Comstock*

THE BALTIC

in speed that had up to that time appeared on the Sound. Under Captain Comstock's command she became the most popular steamer of those sailing between New York and Fall River.

Before he sailed for the famous Collins Line of New York, Captain Comstock was offered the command of the *Panama*—a pioneer steamship in the California trade. His greatest fame came in 1850 and afterward when he sailed for the Collins Line. As commander of the *Baltic,* Captain Comstock made voyages that were never surpassed in speed by the steamships of the time. Both then and afterwards, as commander of the *Adriatic,* Captain Comstock became well known in both America and Europe. He took the *Baltic* to Havre when a steamship was a rare craft in that harbor. A pilot came off to meet him, and it was discovered that, while Captain Comstock spoke no French, the pilot spoke no English. Captain "Joe" remembered a French dictionary that was in his cabin. He sent for it and hastily scanned the pages, and as he searched he found a single word *vite.* "That's it," said Captain Comstock. "*Vite!*" he thundered to the pilot, pointing to the town as he spoke. The man apparently understood, for the *Baltic* dashed so furiously into the harbor "as to almost knock over the town," as Captain Comstock later observed. It was during the Civil War that he commanded once more the old *Baltic,* taking her to New Orleans, Charleston and other Southern ports with provisions and troops.

In 1859 when William H. Webb, the famous builder, completed the frigate *General Admiral,* that had been built for the Russian Government, he asked if Captain Comstock would deliver the vessel at Cronstadt. The Collins Line readily granted their master a leave of absence, and accompanied by Mr. Webb and his family Captain Comstock took the frigate safely into the Russian port. It was on this



Kindness of Richard B. Comstock

DUNDERBERG

voyage that the Czar of Russia, in recognition of his abilities as a navigator, presented the captain with a ring. Again, in 1863, when Mr. Webb completed the famous iron-clad *Rè d' Italia,* constructed for the Italian Government, Captain Comstock took the vessel into the Bay of Naples. Then during the Civil War times Mr. Webb built the famous *Dunderberg* designed to end the war, but she was not completed in time, and the French Government bought her. Comstock was asked to deliver the steamship at Cherbourg in the summer of 1867. A great dinner was given at New York before the departure, and after much excitement the cry went up that the *Dunderberg* was not seaworthy. Anything as large as this steamer was declared unable to float. With the flash that had distinguished Captain Comstock in war and peace, he said, as an assurance of his belief in the steamer, that he would take his young son with him on that trip. And so Richard B. Comstock of Providence sailed on that voyage with his father. When they were a little way out, it was discovered that one of the engines was crippled, and Captain Comstock ordered the steamship put back into port. Then the grave predictions concerning her seaworthiness were again noised about—and the crew, probably because they had not only had the advantage of securing half-pay before leaving New York, but also because of fear, concluded that they would leave the *Dunderberg.* They reckoned without considering the brave mate and Captain Comstock. When the latter heard

the vague growls that grew louder as the men became more menacing he thundered: "Men, this is mutiny! Back to your posts!" They returned, the engine was repaired, and in spite of the excitement and surmise that the return of the great steamer had caused, Captain Comstock again sailed, and delivered the *Dunderberg* (afterwards named the *Rochambeau*) to the French Government. In France he was received with great enthusiasm and honor—having accomplished a feat that was deemed impossible.

One brief year after this event that attracted worldwide attention, Captain Joseph J. Comstock was laid to rest in the Old North Burial Ground in Providence. One of the pleasantest remembrances of his active life is found in a page of Thackeray, wherein the famous novelist speaks of him as friend and describes one of his voyages.

"In the Atlantic steamers," he says, "on the first day out (and on high and holydays subsequently) the jellies set down on table are richly ornamented; *medioque in fonte leporum* rise the American and British flags nobly emblazoned in tin. As the passengers remark this pleasing phenomenon, the Captain no doubt improves the occasion by expressing a hope, to his right and left, that the flag of Mr. Bull and his younger Brother may always float side by side in friendly emulation. . . . 'Pray, sir, or madam, to which dish will you be helped?'

"So have I seen my friends Captain Lang and Captain Comstock press their guests to partake of the fare on that memorable 'First day out,' when there is no man, I think, who sits down but asks a blessing on his voyage, and the good ship dips over the bar, and bounds away into the blue water."

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