

Rhode Island citizens historical association.

Rhode Island Independence Day addresses  
May 4, 1910.



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*R. I. C. H. A.*

*Rhode Island Independence Day*

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*ADDRESSES AND POEMS*

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*Nineteen Hundred and Ten*



Rhode Island  
INDEPENDENCE DAY

Addresses

May 4, 1910

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ADDRESS—By THOMAS W. BICKNELL

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ADDRESS—By Rev. EDWARD HOLYOKE

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ADDRESS—By Mrs. ELLEN RYAN JOLLY

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Historical Papers

Governor Nicholas Cooke      Edward Bosworth  
Gen. Thomas Allin

By THOMAS W. BICKNELL

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UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

The  
Rhode Island Citizens Historical  
Association

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# The Recognition of the 4th of May

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## RHODE ISLAND INDEPENDENCE DAY

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Governor Arnold in the first volume of his history of The State of Rhode Island, p. 372 says, "The last Colonial Assembly of Rhode Island met at Providence on May the Fourth.

The last important act in the colonial history of Rhode Island is now to be recorded. It was the Act abjuring allegiance to the British Crown; in effect a Declaration of Independence. It closes the colonial period of our history, for it established Rhode Island as an independent State, two months before the general Declaration of the United Colonies." Then follows the Act and the names of the general officers of the new State and the members of the General Assembly. Governor Arnold adds, "History should preserve the names of the actors in this closing scene of our colonial drama. May, 1776."

All persons well informed in the history of the State were familiar with the recorded facts, but few had recognized their importance. Mr. James S. Slater of Slatersville, R. I., states that a teacher in Illinois told him the story of our Independence Day and that he has raised a flag on Independence Day at Slatersville, since 1894. A celebration was held at Slatersville in 1906. In Bristol, R. I. appropriate services have been held in the public schools on the Fourth

of May, since 1901, under direction of Supt. John Post Reynolds. For several years the Chapters of the D. A. R. have met in honor of the day. This honor of recognizing the day, by a public celebration, belongs to *The Rhode Island Citizens Historical Association*. On the Fourth of May, 1906, the citizens of the state were invited to honor the day, and as far as possible to unite with the Society in its patriotic services. Invitations were sent to the Governor, State Officers, members of the General Assembly, the Judges of the Courts, to all patriotic and historic societies and to the churches and civic bodies to attend the services at the Mathewson Street M. E. Church, Providence, R. I. Governor George H. Utter, Ex-Governors William Sprague, Augustus O. Bourne, Charles Warren Lippitt, Charles Dean Kimball, Prof. W. H. Munro, President of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Prominent representatives of patriotic and historic societies were present and a large audience of the citizens of the state; Hon. Thomas W. Bicknell, President of the Rhode Island Citizens Historical Association presided. Prayer was offered by Rev. Henry M. King, D. D., pastor of the First Baptist Church, Providence. The introductory was made by President Bicknell, followed by an address by Mr. James N. Arnold. The principal historic address was given by Hon. Charles Warren Lippitt of Providence, who delivered an able and exhaustive discussion of the action of the General Assembly of May Fourth, 1776, proving by undoubted authorities, Rhode Island's claim to precedence in declaring Colonial Independence of Great Britain. This address was a masterly product and will become a State classic. It is published in the volume of Proceedings of the year 1909. The act of The General Assembly of May Fourth, 1776, declaring for Independence was read by John A. Anderson, a pupil of the Providence High School. Mr. Bowen R. Church played the cornet and Miss Helen Louise Ames sang. Patriotic hymns were sung by the audience. The Providence newspapers gave generous space and

praise for the celebration, and a deep impression was made by the first celebration. In 1907 the celebration was held in The Representatives Hall of the Old State House on North Main and Benefit Streets and on each Fourth of May since. In recognition of the day Governor Higgins ordered a salute to be fired at noon. At the Hall, Bishop McVickar offered prayer, Miss Mary A. Greene, Regent of the Gaspee Chapter, D. A. R., read the R. I. Declaration of Independence. Addresses followed from Prest. Bicknell, Governor Higgins, Hon. Theodore F. Greene and Hon. Roswell B. Burchard. An original poem was read by Mrs. Harriette M. Miller. On the Fourth of May, 1908, prayer was made by Rev. Thomas F. Doran, Vicar-General, Providence Diocese, R. C. C., David J. White, Esq., read the Declaration, and addresses were made by President Bicknell and Hon. Roswell B. Burchard. An original poem was read by Mrs. F. Adelia Reynolds. The Misses Ames of Providence were the vocalists.

At the January session of the General Assembly, 1908, an act was passed in recognition of the day as worthy of public recognition. To preserve the history of this legislation, the following letter is published:

HON. THOS. W. BICKNELL,

DEAR SIR: In answer to your question concerning May Fourth Legislation would say—

Tuesday May fifth, nineteen hundred and eight, January Session of the General Assembly "Mr. Reynolds introduces an Act (House 319) relating to annual observance of the Fourth Day of May. Read and referred to Committee on Education." (House Journal).

On Tuesday, May twenty-sixth, nineteen hundred and eight, the last day of the Session, Senator George H. Helm of North Smithfield presented (Senate 141)

"An Act providing for the observance of the Fourth Day of May in each year, and upon motion of said Senator, said bill was read and passed under a suspension of the rules." (Senate Journal).

On the same day the bill was communicated to the House and upon my request for immediate consideration was "read and passed in concurrence." (House Journal).

The law has become Section 8-12 inclusive, of Chap. 64 of the 1909 Revision of the General Laws of Rhode Island.

Yours very truly,

VINTON I. REYNOLDS.

The act, passed as above, was written by Mr. James S. Slater of Slatersville, R. I.

In 1909, prayer was made by Rev. Frank J. Goodwin of Pawtucket. Vocal and instrumental music by Miss Ella B. Ball, Miss Olive E. Russell and Mr. William Andros. The Declaration was read by Prof. Horatio B. Knox of the State Normal School, an original poem was read by Mrs. Sarah A. Chandler, and addresses were made by President Bicknell, Hon. William P. Sheffield, House of Representatives, U. S. A., and Governor Aram J. Pothier. This volume contains a program and exercises on May Fourth, 1910. It is distributed to the State Officers and Members of the General Assembly, to all town libraries and to leading historical societies, as previous volumes have been. These pamphlets contain a lively discussion of the events leading up to the American Revolution and a presentation of the historic facts in the part Rhode Island played in that great drama. From these pamphlets the future historian will take note of the appreciative spirit and the note-worthy action of the men of this generation.

THOMAS W. BICKNELL,

*President Rhode Island Citizens Historical Association.*

Jan. 1, 1911.

# EXERCISES

—ON—

Wednesday, May 4th, 1910,  
at 3 P. M.

AT THE OLD STATE HOUSE, NORTH MAIN STREET,  
PROVIDENCE, R. I.

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MISS HELEN LOUISE AMES, *Soloist.*

MISS FLORENCE E. AMES, *Accompanist.*

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HONORABLE THOMAS W. BICKNELL,

President of the Rhode Island Citizens Historical Association,  
will preside.

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- I. SINGING—The One Hundredth Psalm, by the Congregation.
- II. PRAYER—Rev. Henry Englander, Rabbi Congregation Sons of Israel and David.
- III. VOCAL SOLO—Miss Ames.
- IV. ADDRESS by Thomas W. Bicknell, President of Rhode Island Citizens Historical Association.

- V. SINGING—"America," by the Congregation.
- VI. READING OF THE ACT DECLARING OUR INDEPENDENCE.
- VII. VOCAL SOLO—Miss Ames.
- VIII. HISTORICAL ADDRESS, by Rev. Edward Holyoke.
- IX. ORIGINAL POEM—Mrs. Ellen Ryan Jolly, Pawtucket, R. I.
- X. VOCAL SOLO—Recessional, (Kipling), Miss Ames.
- XI. SINGING—"God Save the State."
- XII. BENEDICTION.

# Rhode Island's Declaration of Independence May 4th, 1776

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## AN ACT,

Repealing an act, entitled "An act, for the more effectually securing to His Majesty the allegiance of his subjects in this, his Colony and dominion of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations." And altering the forms of Commissions, of all writs and processes in the Courts and of the oaths preserved by Law.

WHEREAS, in all states, existing by compact, protection and allegiance are reciprocal, the latter being only due in consequence of the former ; and,

WHEREAS, George the Third, King of Great Britain, forgetting his dignity, regardless of the compact most solemnly entered into, ratified and confirmed to the inhabitants of this Colony by his illustrious ancestors, and till of late, fully recognized by him, and entirely departing from the duties and character of a good King, instead of protecting, is endeavoring to destroy the good people of this Colony, and of all the United Colonies, by sending fleets and armies to America to confiscate our property, and spread fire, sword and desolation throughout our country, in order to compel us to submit to the most debasing and detestable tyranny; whereby we are obliged by necessity, and it becomes our highest duty, to use every means

with which God and nature have furnished us, in support of our inviolable rights and privileges, to oppose that power which is exerted only for our destruction.

Be it therefore enacted by this General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is enacted, that an act, entitled "An act for the more effectually securing to His Majesty the allegiance of his subjects, in this his Colony and dominion of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations," be, and the same is hereby repealed.

AND be it further enacted by this General Assembly, and by the authority thereof, it is enacted, that in all commissions for offices, Civil and Military, and in all writs and processes in law, whether original, judicial or executory, civil or criminal, whereon the name and authority of the said King is made use of, the same shall be omitted, and in the room thereof, the name and authority of the Governor and Company of this Colony shall be substituted in the following words, to wit :

THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY OF THE ENGLISH COLONY  
OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS.

That all such commissions, writs and processes shall be otherwise of the same form and terms as they heretofore were; that the Courts of Law be no longer entitled nor considered as the King's Courts; and that no instrument in writing, of any nature or kind, whether public or private, shall, in the date thereof, mention the year of the said King's reign.

PROVIDED, nevertheless, that nothing in this act contained shall render void or vitiate any commission, writ, process or instrument heretofore made or executed, on account of the name and authority of the said King being therein inserted.



## GENERAL ASSEMBLY—MAY 1776.

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THE HON. NICHOLAS COOKE, *Governor*.

THE HON. WILLIAM BRADFORD, *Deputy Governor*.

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## ASSISTANTS.

Mr. John Collins,	Mr. James Arnold,
Maj.-Gen. Simeon Potter,	Mr. Jonathan Randall.
Mr. Ambrose Page,	Mr. Peter Phillips,
Mr. John Sayles, Jr.,	Mr. William Potter,
Mr. John Jepson,	Mr. Thomas Church.

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## DEPUTIES.

*Newport.*

Mr. John Wanton,	Mr. Gideon Wanton,
Mr. Samuel Fowler,	Mr. Thomas Freebody,
Mr. George Sears,	Col. Joseph Belcher.

*Providence.*

Col. Jonathan Arnold,	Mr. John Smith,
Mr. John Brown,	Col. Amos Atwell.

*Portsmouth.*

Mr. Metcalfe Bowler,	Mr. John Coddington,
Mr. John Thurston.	

*Warwick.*

Mr. William Greene,	Mr. Jacob Greene,
Mr. Charles Holden, Jr.,	Col. John Waterman.

*Westerly.*

Maj.-Gen. Joshua Babcock,	Col. Joseph Noyes.
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*North Kingstown.*

Mr. John Northup,	Mr. Sylvester Gardner.
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*South Kingstown.*

Capt. Samuel Seagar,                      Mr. Samuel Babcock.

*East Greenwich.*

Mr. Job Comstock,                      Mr. Thomas Shippee.

*Jamestown.*

Capt. Samuel Carr,                      Mr. Benjamin Underwood.

*Smithfield.*

Mr. Daniel Mowry, Jr.,                      Capt. Andrew Waterman.

*Scituate*

Col. William West,                      Mr. Christopher Potter.

*Glocester.*

Mr. Richard Steere,                      Col. Chad Brown.

*Charlestown.*

Capt. Joseph Stanton, Jr.,                      Mr. Jonathan Hazard.

*West Greenwich.*

Mr. Thomas Tillinghast,                      Mr. Judiah Aylsworth.

*Coventry.*

Mr. Ephraim Westcott.                      Mr. Jeremiah Fenner.

*Exeter.*

Mr. George Pierce.

*Middletown.*

Mr. Joshua Barker,                      Mr. Nicholas Easton.

*Bristol.*

Mr. Shearjashub Bourne,                      Col. Nathaniel Pearce.

*Tiverton.*

Mr. Gideon Almy,                      Col. John Cooke.

*Little Compton.*

Capt. Thomas Brownell,                      Mr. Daniel Wilbur.

*Warren.*

Mr. Cromwell Child.                      Col. Sylvester Child.

*Cumberland.*

Mr. John Dexter,                      Capt. Elisha Waterman.

*Richmond.*

Mr. Samuel Tefft, Major Richard Bailey.

*Cranston.*

Mr. Andrew Harris, Mr. Zuriel Waterman.

*Johnston.*

Mr. John Fenner, Mr. Peleg Williams.

*North Providence.*

Major Thomas Olney, Mr. Jonathan Jenckes, Jr.

*Barrington.*

Mr. Edward Bosworth, Capt. Thomas Allin.

*Hopkinton.*

Mr. John Larkin, Mr. Thomas Wells.

THE HON. METCALFE BOWLER, *Speaker.*

JOSIAH LYNDON, *Clerk.* MR. HENRY WARD, *Secretary.*

MR. HENRY MARCHANT, *Attorney-General.*

MR. JOSEPH CLARKE, *General Treasurer.*

# Rhode Island's Independence Day

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AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE FOURTH OF MAY  
IN EACH YEAR.

*It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:*

SECTION 1. The fourth day of May in each and every year hereafter is hereby established, in this state, as "Rhode Island Independence Day;"—being a just tribute to the memory of the members of our General Assembly, who, on the fourth day of May, 1776—in the State House at Providence, passed an act renouncing allegiance of the colony to the British Crown, and by the provisions of that act declaring it sovereign and independent;—the first official act of its kind by any one of the thirteen American colonies.

SEC. 2. On each and every fourth day of May hereafter, except when the said day falls on the first day of the week (commonly called Sunday), then on the day following, the governor shall cause salutes of thirteen guns to be fired, at 12 o'clock, noon, by detachments of the state artillery, at all places in the state where stationed, and shall cause a display of state and national flags on all armories and other state buildings from sunrise to sunset, in honor of "Rhode Island Independence Day."

SEC. 3. The fourth day of May in each and every year hereafter is hereby established in the annual school calendar to be known as "Rhode Island Independence Day," and shall be observed with patriotic exercises in all the public schools of the state, as hereinafter named. It is also provided that when such day shall fall on Saturday, or on Sunday, such patriotic school exercises shall be on the preceding or following days, respectively, as the case may be.

SEC. 4. The state Commissioner of Public Schools shall annually prepare a program of patriotic exercises for the proper observance of "Rhode Island Independence Day" in the schools, and shall furnish printed copies of the same to the school committees of the several cities and towns of the state, at least four weeks previous to the fourth day of May in each year.

SEC. 5. The fourth day of May as herein named shall in no-wise be construed as a holiday.

SEC. 6. This act shall take effect on its passage.

*Passed May 26, 1908.*

The Association hereby expresses its thanks to the General Assembly for an appropriation to print the present volume. Its pages contain historic truths and lessons of patriotism and civic virtue of great value for all the people of our commonwealth.

THOMAS W. BICKNELL,

*President R. I. C. H. A.*

June 15, 1909.

# The Prayer

BY

REV. DR. HENRY ENGLANDER

*Rabbi of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David.*

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Our heavenly Father, the Giver of all good, we thank Thee for the inspiration of this celebration, so rich in memories of the conscience and the courage of those who signed the document that proclaimed this, our beloved commonwealth, to be sovereign. We thank Thee for the heroism that made it possible for them successfully to maintain that claim. We thank thee for that large, liberal and high-minded spirit of religious freedom in which our State was born and bathed.

We thank Thee for the efforts of this and like organizations that seek to keep alive, from generation to generation, the inspiring records of the past, the matchless heroism, the dauntless courage that make the early history of our State stand forth in resplendent glory, an eloquent call to the present generation to exercise the highest and the best that is in it.

Grant that those who now live, and will live under the aegis of this State, will prove themselves ever more worthy of her best traditions and highest achievements. Grant, we pray Thee, that the present population, made up of the blood of well nigh every nation on this Thy great footstool, will be unified and united in its loyalty and devotion to the State, through its warmth of love for those

ideals of justice, righteousness and liberty that animated the pioneers and the fathers of our commonwealth.

May the old heroism and courage find renewed life and expression in the modern warfare against every form of evil and injustice that may attack our body politic. May we hear the voices of the past generations calling to us to remember our duty to further the great work of upbuilding our State on the highest principles of humanity.

May the words of retrospect and prospect, that will be spoken here this afternoon, deepen our faith and strengthen our hope in and for the future of our beloved State. May this historic structure, around which cluster so many fond memories, stand as a sign and witness to the covenant into which we enter by virtue of our residence here, to help to realize and to materialize as far as in our individual power the divine dreams of the founders.

We fervently invoke Thy blessing upon this our State and nation. Guard them, O God, from calamity and injury. May their adversaries not triumph over them, but the glories of a just, righteous and God-fearing people increase from age to age. Enlighten and sustain with Thy power those whom the people have set in authority, the mayor, the governor, the president, their counselors, advisers, judges, lawgivers and executives, and all those who are entrusted with our safety and with the guardianship of our rights and liberties. May peace and good will obtain amongst all the citizens of our land. May religion spread its blessing among us, and exalt our nation in righteousness. *Amen.*

# “A Lively Experiment”

AN ADDRESS

BY

THOMAS W. BICKNELL

President of the Rhode Island Citizens  
Historical Association

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One year ago, in this hall, and from this platform, I made an address on “The Royal Charter of Rhode Island of 1663, as the Constitutional Basis of Civil and Religious Freedom in America.” I aimed to show that its broad principles, its comprehensive scope, its practical statesmanship and its Catholic spirit, entitled that charter to stand first among the State papers of England or America. My convictions as to the correctness of that position have been vastly strengthened by a more careful study of early historic material relating to the evolution of Democracy, as a world movement, beginning with the Hebrew Commonwealth, founded by Moses and continuing through the Greek and Latin Republics and the great democratic movement in the days of Charlemagne and the later Charter of King John of England. I am now prepared to add and to defend the proposition, *that the Rhode Island Charter, written by Dr. John Clarke of Newport, Rhode Island and signed by King Charles of England, 1663, is, in its essence, scope and value, the greatest declaration of human rights and the most complete and masterly state-*



*ment of the philosophy, the methods and the ends of Civil government that was ever written and proclaimed among men.*

“A Lively Experiment” are three words of the Charter and are the text of my present address. In what I shall say, I am conscious of the criticism that my position may awaken, but my reverence for truth and love of justice outweigh all words of dispraise. What I now claim and shall endeavor to show is this that “The lively experiment of soul liberty” made in the early years of the seventeenth century, on American soil, and in our early colonial life, was not the labor or experiences or even the creation of the mind of one man or a few men, but was an age movement, participated in by many men and women, under diverse conditions, and with divers results,—that no one man can claim, nor can it be claimed for any one man of that period, that he was the sole or even the chief apostle of Soul liberty. Concerning “The Lively Experiment”—it can be fairly stated that Rhode Island was one of the storm centers of the conflicts of Soul Liberty with the old doctrines of political sovereignty in spiritual affairs and that within her narrow domain many choice and chosen advocates of the liberal doctrine gathered as by magnetic attraction. Each, according to his several ability, contributed his share to the general result of a free commonwealth, protecting a free church. Our discussion today aims to equalize the honors, which, by some ecclesiastical partiality or personal frailty, seem to the speaker to have been unfairly distributed and by many partial writers to have been centered on one man, Roger Williams of Providence.

His name has been lauded for a hundred years as the father of the child named “Freedom of Conscience.” The fact is “Freedom” had a much earlier parentage in Thomas Browne of 1584, in Martin Luther of 1483-1546, and in the Waldenses of 1170. Roger was only one of thousands of people who believed that man’s civil rights and rights of conscience were sacred and that the State ought to pro-

tect both. Every martyr at the stake declared that with his dying gasp. Every head severed by the axe, on the executioner's block, was a witness to the principle of man's independence in his religious as well as civic concerns. Every ship that crossed the Atlantic, with its cargo of men, women and children, bound for a new world, was loaded with a freight of ideas, surcharged with freedom in spiritual concerns. The westward gales that filled their sails, were friendly allies of their hopes. A land of freedom welcomed the Pilgrims, who sought release from civil and religious tyranny. Not all had the same ideas as to the practical working out of the problems of man's spiritual independence of the civil authority in things spiritual, but all had the fever for the possession of all that was true in man's nature and estate. John Winthrop at Boston, Thomas Cushman and Governor Bradford at Plymouth, Samuel Gorton and John Clarke at Rhode Island, William Penn in Pennsylvania, John Smith in Virginia, George Calvert in Maryland, and the Huguenots in Georgia, were all disciples of a greater master than Williams, for they followed the Lord Christ, who was the earlier founder of

"A Church without a Bishop;  
A State without a King."

Nearly a hundred years after the tri-color flag of France was first spread to the winds of Newport Harbor by Verrazano in 1524, the Mayflower, with the flag of St. George at her peak, anchored in Cape Cod Bay, Mass., November 11, 1620, with 101 Englishmen on board. This new land to which they had come in the earlier days, bore the name "New France" now that of "New England."

The golden dreams of vast continental possessions, wealth and power, of Spain and France, had been transferred to England. In Marston's play of "Eastward Ho," Seagull says, "I tell thee, gold is more plentiful there than copper is with us; and for as much red

copper as I can bring I'll have thrice the weight in gold. Why, man, all their drippin pans are pure gold and all the chains with which they chain up their streets are massive gold: and for rubies and diamonds, they go forth in Holy days and gather them by the seashore to hang on their children's coats and stick in their children's caps." And to cap all, he promises, "No more law than conscience and not too much of either."

While many English men and some women and children thought chiefly of the gold and jewels, promised in the new world, another class, a very large one, looked on the new West as a place for founding homes and for freedom in law and conscience. They dreamed of a land where men and women would be equal in each other's sight as in the sight of God. Of those Pilgrims who came to New England, Mrs. Hemans asks,

"What sought they this afar?  
 Bright jewels of the mine?  
 The wealth of seas?  
 The spoils of war?  
 They sought a faith's pure shrine."

"Aye call it holy ground  
 The place where first they trod  
 They have left unstained what there they found  
 Freedom to worship God."

If the soil of Massachusetts is called "Holy Ground," that of Rhode Island may be called "The Holy of Holies," for the men who made Rhode Island were not agreeable companions with the men of Boston, and the trinity who may be called the founders of the Colony and the state were banished from Boston and Plymouth, only to find a place for refuge among the Indian tribes on the Narragansett

Bay. These great men were Roger Williams of Providence, John Clarke of Newport, and Samuel Gorton of Warwick,—each well fitted for a special work in founding a state.

Samuel Gorton was the oldest of the three and was born in England in 1592. Roger Williams was born seven years later in 1599 and John Clarke the youngest, was born ten years after Mr. Williams, in 1609.

Before we study each of these great men, a few things may be said of all of them and of about twenty, fifty or a hundred more who settled at Newport and Warwick and Providence. All of these good people came to Massachusetts to stay and to make homes for their families. All believed that a man's conscience was not subject to the laws of the State, as his conduct was. All thought that a man ought to be free to worship God as he pleased, provided he did not interfere with the rights of his neighbors. All believed in "a church without a Bishop, a state without a King." All were banished from Boston or Plymouth "on account of their dangerous and pernicious doctrine," so that when they came to dwell on the shores of Narragansett Bay they were all exiles for liberty's sake, standing on the same platform as to civil and religious matters. This is so important a point in our story that it should be studied carefully by the light of Massachusetts and Rhode Island History. Only thus can we do equal justice to all.

This was "*The Lively Experiment*" that was made by these brave men of faith—to prove that a State could be maintained independent of the Church; and a Church could be maintained, independent of the State; that neither should control the other, and that all men were born to be free and in civil and religious concerns to be equals.

These men believed in this "lively experiment" before they left Old England for New England. They all brought the principle,

deep lodged in their hearts. They preached the doctrine in one form or another in Salem, in Boston and Plymouth. For it, most of them were exiled from Massachusetts and came to Rhode Island.

The civil governments of Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick were founded on the doctrine of civil and religious liberty. All the laws, ordinances, customs and acts of the people of the four towns that constituted the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations were fashioned on the major voice of the people to give to every man in the colony "a full liberty in religious concerns" and in proof of that mutual and fundamental purpose, Jews, Quakers, Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Catholics, Atheists, came to the colony to find homes, protection, and the fullest enjoyment of civil and religious liberty. It cost money, exile, happiness, life, to stand for that doctrine in 1636, but today millions in America and other millions in other lands believe it and live happily by it.

The first clear-cut statement of the ordering of Civil Society in all matters relating to the public good was made at Providence under date of August 20, 1636 or 1637. Its historic value may be seen by its reading:

"We whose names are hereunder, desirous to inhabit in the town of Providence, do promise to subject ourselves in active and passive obedience to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for public good of the body in an orderly way, by the major consent of the present inhabitants, masters of families,—incorporated together in a towne fellowship, and others whom they shall admit unto them only in civil things." The agreement was signed by Richard Scott, William Reynolds, Chad Browne, John Warner, John Field, George Rickard, Edward Cope, Thomas Angell, Thomas Harris, Francis Weekes, Benedict Arnold, Joshua Winsor and William Wickenden.

This important paper is in the handwriting of Richard Scott,

and he is the first signer. Roger Williams' name does not appear in the list, and of the thirteen signers, not one of the thirteen original proprietors of the town of Providence appears. One would expect to find the name of Roger Williams at the head of this great instrument of a "commonwealth absolutely divested of the theocratic principles," but it is not there. The paper declares that, *in civil things*, the present inhabitants of Providence subject themselves to the will of the majority of the people, leaving it to be clearly understood that in things spiritual, the people were absolutely free. And this great principle asserted by Richard Scott and twelve others, stands as the first declaration of the people of Providence on that subject. This was confirmed in 1640 as follows: "We agree as formerly hath ben the liberties of the town: to hold forth Libertye of Conscience."

This "Combination" as it was called, was drawn up by Robert Coles, Chad Brown, William Harris and John Warner, and signed by thirty-eight persons, Mr. Williams being one. It is well known that serious troubles had arisen between Mr. Williams and the first comers, which threatened to break up the infant settlement, growing out of the division of the lands. This subject so engrossed the minds of the planters of Providence, that freedom of conscience in spiritual matters was almost lost sight of in the struggle for house lots and outlands. It will be seen, however, that Richard Scott and his associates in the original compact, and that Cole, Browne, Harris and Warner did not forget to re-affirm "Libertye of Conscience" in the pact that was made as a treaty of peace. In both covenants, forty men at least declare their clear convictions on "Soul Liberty," by their signatures to the written word and thus place themselves abreast of other apostles of the doctrines. Richard Scott and Chad Browne and the Arnolds are worthy to stand in the front ranks at Providence at a time when Mr. Williams made no superior claims to leadership, in which as all know he was sadly deficient.



Turning from Providence to Portsmouth and Newport we find a company of choice spirits, who had been invited and still more urged to leave Boston "in order to avoide the censure of the Court." Among them are William Coddington, William and Anne Hutchinson, John Coggeshall, Henry Bull and others. Leaving Boston, this band of men and women was welcomed to Pocasset now Portsmouth on the 24th of March 1637, by Canonicus, Sachem of the Narragansett and by Massasoit, Sachem of the Wampanoags, the latter promising "Loveinge and just carriage" of himself toward the newcomers. It is seldom that the compact of the Portsmouth colony is seen in print, and we give it publicity for the sake of illustrating the quality and principle of that distinguished body of people.

"THE 7TH DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH 1638, WE WHOSE NAMES ARE UNDERWRITTEN DO HERE SOLEMNLY IN THE PRESENCE OF JEHOVAH, INCORPORATE OURSELVES INTO A BODIE POLITICK AND AS HE SHALL HELP, WILL SUBMIT OUR PERSONS, LIVES AND ESTATES UNTO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS AND TO ALL THOSE PERFECT AND MOST ABSOLUTE LAWES OF HIS GIVEN US IN HIS HOLY WORD OF TRUTH, TO BE GUIDED AND JUDGED THEREBY." EXOD. 24c. 3, 4v. : 2 CHRON. 11c. 3v. : 2 KINGS 11c. 17v.

This compact was signed by William Coddington, John Clarke, William Hutchinson Jr., John Coggeshall, William Aspinwall, Samuel Wilbour, John Porter, John Sanford, Edward Hutchinson, Jr., Esq., Thomas Savage, William Dyer, William Freeborn, Phillip Sherman, John Walker, Richard Carder, William Baulston, Edward Hutchinson Sen., Henry Bull, and Randall Holden. On the same day the record declares "We that are Freemen incorporate of this Bodie Politick do elect and constitute William Coddington, Esquire, a Judge amongst us, and so covenant to yield all due honor unto him according to the laws of God, and so far as in us lyes to maintaine the honour and privileges of his place which shall hereafter be satisfied according unto God, the Lord helping us so to do."

And on the same day, "William Coddington, Esquire, being called and chosen by the Freemen Incorporate of this Bodie Politick, to be a judge amongst them," did covenant "to do justice and judgement according to the lawes of God, and to maintain The Fundamental Rights and Privileges of this Bodie Politick," etc., etc.

Here was the establishment of a free government after the model of the Hebrew Commonwealth. Notice first that the people declare themselves to be an incorporated body of Freemen, a Free State. This free state is a Republic, all authority proceeding from the freemen and all officers are chosen by the Freemen.

Still more the Governor, chosen by this incorporated body of freemen covenants "to maintain the Fundamental Rights and Privileges of this Bodie Politick, according to the laws of God." This new Commonwealth, founded at Portsmouth, R. I. March 7, 1638, embodies in its brief but comprehensive Declaration of Principles all the elements of Civil and Religious Liberty, as expounded by the most ardent advocates of Soul Liberty, The only Sovereignty that is recognized is the "King of Kings and the Lord of Lords." Under Him the state is organized and the citizens assume the title of "Freemen," with "*Fundamental Rights and Privileges.*"

What were these rights and privileges? Let us see. Doctor John Clarke's name stands second on the list of incorporators. He was a Baptist and a thorough student or, believer in, and advocate of Soul Liberty. He was banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony for his liberal belief and being a friend of Roger Williams, came to Providence, consulted with Mr. Williams as to the location of a new town, and by Mr. Williams' aid was led to purchase the Island of Rhode Island, joining hands with Coddington and others in the settlement at Portsmouth. John Clarke was both physician and clergyman, a born class leader and diplomat. He must have written the Portsmouth Declaration. No one of that company was so well qualified as he. No one was more thoroughly inspired with the principle of civil and



spiritual freedom of the individual. That he had the courage to stand by his convictions was made very manifest a few years later, when he was arrested in Boston for preaching, was cast into prison in that town under sentence of paying a fine of £20, or else be whipped and stay in jail, till the fine was paid. He refused to pay the fine and was kept in jail for more than a month, being freed by the payment of the cruel fine by his friends.

The Portsmouth document contains the elements of Dr. Clarke's utterances, clearness, earnestness and conviction. Into that word FREEMEN, was put all the meaning that it possessed in 1663. His own letters to King Charles, the Second, while Agent of the Colony of Rhode Island to obtain a new charter, are a perfect commentary on its significance to him and to his associates in the settlement of Portsmouth and Newport. In a letter to Charles written in 1662, he says, "Your petitioners were necessitated long since for cause of conscience, with respect to the worship and services of God to take up a resolution to quit their deare and native country, and all their near and precious relations and enjoyments therein and to expose themselves and their families to all the hazards and inconveniences which they might meet with upon the vast and swelling ocean over which they should pass, or in the barbarous and howling wilderness to which they might come." Arriving in America, Dr. Clarke describes their labors in finding a place for habitation, "among the barbarians, in places untrod," "where according to what was propounded in your petitioners first adventure, they might with freedom of conscience worship the Lord, their God, as they were persuaded."

Dr. Clarke further writes in the same letter: "Your petitioners purchased and planted those parts of the world in all desirable freedom and liberty in all respects. Therefore we humbly crave that we may not only be sheltered, but caused to flourish in our civill and religious concernment in these remote parts

of new world. So shall your servants take themselves greatly obliged while they are quietly permitted with freedom of consciences to worship the Lord their God."

In a second address the same year, 1662, to King Charles, he repeats and emphasizes the position of this his first letter, and says, "Your petitioners have it much on their hearts (if they may be permitted) to hold forth a lively experiment, that a flourishing civil state may stand, yea, and best be maintained and that among English spirits with a full liberty in religious concernments, and that true piety rightly grounded upon gospel principles will give the best and greatest security to true Sovereignty, and will lay in the hearts of men the strongest obligations of truer loyalty." More could be quoted from these two remarkable letters, found in full in the first volume of the Rhode Island Colonial records, pages 485 to 492. In these letters, Dr. Clarke declares that the principles of civil and religious liberty possessed and animated the settlers of Rhode Island soil before they left England. He refers over and over again to the trials and hardships this body of people suffered and endured for the possibility of enjoying their "fundementall rights," in a new land. He makes no reference to any one Apostle of religious freedom, but honestly claims that honor for all. "We," not "I," nor "He" is the word, Dr. Clarke constantly uses relative to the men who, for twenty-five years, have with him borne the travails of citizens of a new Christian Commonwealth. His modesty will not allow him to count himself other than one of the saints, although his utterances entitle him to rank as the Chief. While he was penning these immortal sentiments, he was receiving letters from William Brenton, Benedict Arnold, William Dyer and Joseph L. Torrey of Newport, from John Sanford, Robert Hazard and William Baulston of Portsmouth, from John Greene, Samuel Gorton, Randall Holden and John Smith of Warwick, and from William Field, Thomas Olney, Arthur Fenner, William Harris,

William Carpenter and Stephen Olney of Providence. Of all those who supported Dr. Clarke at London either in money or personal service, the name of Roger Williams does not appear, and when, on November 24, 1663, The Royal Charter of Rhode Island was opened and read "at a very great meeting and assembly of the three men of the colony of Providence Plantations," before the General Court of Commissioners held at Newport, Benedict Arnold of Newport presiding, Mr. Williams was not of the commissioners for Providence nor is there any evidence that he was present to share in the honors and rejoicings of that remarkable occasion.

Had Mr. Williams been present he would have heard for the first time those immortal words graven in marble on the facade of the State House on Capitol Hill first penned by John Clarke, M. D. of Newport.

**“ And whereas, in their humble address they have freely declared that it is much on their hearts (if they may be permitted) to hold forth a lively experiment, that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained and that among our English subjects with a full liberty in religious concernments; and that true piety rightly grounded upon Gospel principles will give the best security to sovereignty, and will lay in the hearts of men the strongest obligations to true loyalty.”**

Of the founders of the town of Warwick, it may be said that all from the least to the greatest were soul liberty lovers and seekers. John Greene, Randall Holden, John Wilkes, Samuel Gorton and others had learned the lesson from English teachers on English soil and came to America to practice the teachings there received. Of the Warwick Plantations, Samuel Gorton was the richest, the strongest, the ablest man. Gorton's religious training was received in the English Church. In an address to Charles the second, he says, "I drew my tenets from the breast of my mother, the Church of England." Gorton was an educated man, a scholar and an intellectual athlete. Born in the year 1592, he was forty-four years old when he landed with his wife, Mary Marplet and a family of children in 1637. "He yearned," he writes, "for a country where he could be free to worship God, according to what the Bible taught him, as God enabled him to understand it." Mackie in his life of Gorton says, "He was one of the noble spirits who esteemed liberty more than life, and counting no sacrifice too great for the maintenance of principle, could not dwell with ease in a land where the inalienable rights of humanity were not acknowledged or were mocked at. With all its industrial prosperity, its pleasing attractions to the eye of sense, its proud public annals, and its dear private memories, England could not detain him from venturing upon the then dread Atlantic, and seeking out a spot among the self-denying settlers of a barren coast and a savage wilderness where in thought, deed, and word and act he might be free."

"I left my native country," he says, "to enjoy liberty of conscience in respect to faith toward God and for no other end."

In this brief reference to Samuel Gorton, my sole purpose is to show that this was a soul-liberty man long before coming to New England, and long before he made the acquaintance of Clarke, Coddington and Williams. Dr. James calls Gorton, "this forgotten founder of our liberties." Mackie, his biographer, says,

"after the venerable founder of Providence, no man was more instrumental in establishing the foundation of equal civil rights and soul liberty in Rhode Island than Samuel Gorton." Chief Justice Durfee of Rhode Island, in an address before the R. I. Historical Society, says, "He was a great lover of soul-liberty and hater of shams."

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. There were many apostles of soul-liberty from the days of Jesus, the Christ, who, in the story of the denarius and the aphorism, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," became the founder of soul liberty and the separator of Church and State. All the ages from Jesus to the 17th century were made alive by the defenders of personal freedom. The English Exodus to New England sent shiploads of men who stood four-square on the foundations of civil and religious freedom. Among these were the great body of settlers of Rhode Island, individualists, separatists, liberals, men who knew and maintained their rights at great cost. Shall we name them? A volume would not contain their names and deeds. Of this small army, there were leaders, each differing from the other in some mental or soul quality. Newport had its Coddington, Hutchinson and Arnold; Warwick its Greene, Gorton and Holden; Providence its Williams, Brown, Harris and others. Who shall weigh and measure the values of each of these men and their deeds? A task too hard for men! Heaven's weights and measures alone are fitted for such a valuation. Dryden sings,

"Three poets, in three distant ages born,  
Greece, Italy and England did adorn;  
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed,  
The next in majesty, in both the last.

The force of nature could no longer go,  
To make a third she joined the former two."

Our Trinity of Rhode Island's early statesmen includes Roger Williams, Samuel Gorton, John Clarke—each greatest in his sphere of thought and influence.

Three statesmen claim a place in Rhody's Hall of Fame:

The first as Great Heart; let that be his name;  
The next as Great Thought—this his title sure;  
For Clarke both names may stand and long endure.

"The Lively Experiment" in America was wrought through them as leaders.

# Rhode Island Initiative

AN ADDRESS BY

REV. EDWARD HOLYOKE

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MR. PRESIDENT: Permit me through your courtesy to congratulate the members of the Rhode Island Citizens Historical Society upon their splendid initiative in bringing the event we celebrate into its proper setting of public appreciation. While the act we commemorate is of peculiar significance to every loyal Rhode Islander, the principle which gave it birth is of profound and universal interest. To this truth you have given natural expression in the cosmopolitan representation on the program and platform of today. Fully conscious of the world-wide significance of the day we celebrate, I accept with peculiar pleasure the opportunity of reminding the public through you that the day and its event were made possible only by the high-souled and heroic passion for liberty of two Baptist ministers and their associates, namely John Clarke of Newport and Roger Williams of Providence. Out of the springs of soul liberty flowed the stream of civil freedom, and the declaration of liberty of conscience was the natural antecedent of the proclamation of the rights of man to political independency.

The heroic men who struck that blow for civil liberty struck not for themselves alone nor for us, but for humanity, and they made the place on which we stand sacred ground to us and all the world. In vain we try to honor them with our poor tribute of words. Indeed "the world will not remember long what we say



here, but it can never forget what they did here." Every struggle for freedom is helped, every effort toward despotism or tyranny is hindered, by their heroic decision. No exile suffering in Siberia, no slave crouching on the Congo, no tyrant on the Bosphorus, no theorist of the divine right of kings, but feels the thrill their impulse gave to freedom.

"For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,  
 Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or wrong;  
 Whether conscious or unconscious, Humanity's vast frame  
 Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame;—  
 In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim."

Analysing the meaning of this day, we are interested first because it furnishes a splendid illustration of initiative. "My first," cries the school-boy, released for his game, and "the child is father to the man." In the cause of freedom and independence Little Rhody cried "first," and after her the nation and the world are following. As early as 1732-3, Rhode Island, in official protest against the sugar act, denied the right of Parliament to tax the colony, and first formally proclaimed the principle, "No taxation without representation." In the Stamp Act resolution, Rhode Island was the first and only colony to direct her officers to defy the power of Great Britain, and to insure their idemnity for doing so: first to brave royalty in arms by sinking the sloop Liberty in 1769, and by capturing and burning the schooner Gaspee in 1772: first to urge a congress of colonies and the establishment of a permanent union, and promptly elected Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward as her representatives in the Continental Congress in 1774: first to build a navy of her own, which, under Commodore Whipple, fired the first cannon on the high seas in defence of American liberty; first to recommend to Congress the establishment of a Continental navy, and gave it the first Commander-in-Chief, Esek Hopkins: first to

substitute the Governor's name and seal on all public documents and openly proclaim sovereign independence of Great Britain: first to establish a foundation of full liberty in civil and religious affairs, and thus "to hold forth a lively experiment that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained with full liberty in religious concerns." Such an example of intrepid initiative have our fathers bequeathed us as incentive to present-day progress.

The audacity of the deed compels our admiration. Rhode Island had been among the most conservative and loyal of the colonies; under the oppression of the Tax and Stamp Acts she became the most completely alienated and radical in her independence. Reversing their own former policy, our fathers went before their brethren, and though least of all, the Benjamin of the tribes became the pioneer of freedom. Alone, they gave notice of a rebellion against a monarchy which might crush them at will. Whence this courageous temper, enabling them unaided to advance their cause, as it were, against the world? From one source only could it be derived;—it was the property of men who had inherited from the founders of the colony those priceless and inalienable principles of soul liberty and the civil rights of man. The tree of Liberty political had its roots in the soil of a state builded on the foundation of full liberty in religious affairs. The "lively experiment" had already passed the experimental stage, and was reaping the advantages of practical demonstration. The noblest of all initiatives had been taken in the establishment of a state upon the foundation of principles which were still being fought out in the old world and were nowhere else fully acknowledged in the new. And these men and their successors remained absolutely true to the standard set. When in 1656, the Colonies urged sanguinary edicts against the Quakers, and threatened to withdraw all commercial intercourse unless Rhode Island joined in the persecution, this was their answer: "We shall strictly adhere to the foundation principles on

which this colony was settled, to wit; that every man who submits peaceably to civil government in this colony shall worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, without molestation." To this position the state has been loyal, in politics, education, and religion, and has made the most notable contribution yet rendered to civic and moral progress. We would not fail to honor duly every name identified with this struggle for liberty in America. Among the leaders we would place, with Straus, the successful advocate of the separation of church from state in Virginia, and the preservation of religious liberty by the constitution, Thomas Jefferson; next above Jefferson the pure, high-minded friend of liberty within limitations, William Penn; above Penn we will place Lord Baltimore, the advocate of the rights of all Christians; and high over all we will write the name of that peerless pioneer of religious and civil liberty,—the high-souled, keen-sighted, heroic champion of absolute liberty for all men, Roger Williams.

We are interested in this event as a substantial demonstration of Democracy. Under the leadership of Jonathan Arnold, the Assembly gathered here gave one more notice to the world that democracy was not to be the failure that its friends had feared, its enemies had hoped, and prophets had predicted. We are a little more than usual in need just now of the tonic of their example. It has become a fad in some quarters to decry democracy as but a partial success at best, or even to lament it as more or less of a failure. We were told within the week that democracy was dense, conservative and untrustworthy, and nothing could save it but the finest ideals, accepted and applied. Ah, but we have the ideals! France, in her revolution, shut her gates to the past, and undertook the slow task of initiating new ideals. But America, free-born, need never, can never turn her back upon the glorious heritage of ideals, civil and religious, which inspire her. Once fuse the mass of heterogeneous material of our citizenship in the "melting-pot" of a common na-

tional ideal of liberty, and you have largely determined the type of American citizenship and the destiny of our Republic.

We are interested because we have here the materials for fostering true patriotism. The adopted citizen is invited to be glad with us in the ample harbors of Narragansett Bay; in our city, beautiful for situation; our manufactures, leading the world in their class; our wealth, the greatest per capita in the union; our public buildings, crowned by a state house, successor to this of historic fame, noteworthy as a graftless model of art and public spirit; our great characters, Williams, Clarke, Hopkins, Berkeley, Channing, Arnold, Stuart, Wayland, Andrews and a host;—but more than all, to revel in the assurance that in this commonwealth the most sacred rights of man have ever been, and by God's grace are evermore to be, preserved inviolate.

Finally, we are interested in the incentives furnished to further progress. The noblest tribute we can render the fathers is to follow the splendid example of their initiative. The past is secure, its glory must abide: the future is ours, to make it what we will. They had **their** problems and solved them, on the whole, wondrously well. We have ours, none the less intricate, significant, and insistent, and they must be met with equal devotion. How shall we rise equal to the task?

First, by following the fathers wherein they were right, and next, by parting from them wherein they were wrong. No progress is possible to him who walks in dead men's shoes. No dead hand out of a past, howsoever revered, should be raised to grip and strangle the throat of progress today. With all deference to the fathers, we should not let our admiration of their virtues blind us to their faults, nor the lure of their successes lead us into irreparable error. It is possible that cherishing the ideals of the past may have involved us in a hopeless conservatism, if in our fealty to their vision we see no farther than they into the needs of our own day.

They were, for instance, pronounced Separatists, and we should not forget that if the delegates from Rhode Island had been present or active in the Congress at a critical period, their separatism would probably have secured the introduction into the constitution of the United States of a state's rights clause, with perilous prejudice to the perpetuity of the Union. The call of the hour is to collectivism and thereby is committed to us the difficult task of correcting the conditions into which we have fallen as the heirs of separatism. Instead of undertaking this task in the interest of progressive democracy, our political leaders often entrench themselves behind the barricade of the conservatism of their inheritance, and gravely assure us that the present conditions are due to time honored convictions and policies of the fathers, which are the glory of our history, and which it were sacrilege to question and treachery to change. But if the virtues of yesterday become the vices of today, shall they be immune? If the withdrawal of men and towns in the spirit of independence and the manipulation of small boroughs in the interest of corruption destroy the integrity of the state and defeat the will of the people, must they be left undisturbed? If the present inequality in the distribution of power results in rank injustice to certain urban communities, shall suburban and rural legislators set themselves to perpetuate the inequality until it develop from iniquity to iniquity? A part of this difficult but necessary task of redistribution is assigned to the August session of the legislature, and we must be patient as to results. But we and our representatives need to be conscious that

“New occasions teach new duties;  
 Time makes ancient good uncouth;  
 They must upward still and onward,  
 Who would keep abreast of truth;  
 Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires!

We ourselves must pilgrims be,  
 Launch our Mayflower and steer boldly  
 Through the desperate winter sea,  
 Nor attempt the Future's portal  
 With the Past's blood-rusted key."

If we are true to the spirit of our fathers, the present social problem will find us ready to progress so far as we may toward an industrial democracy. Is it too much to expect that in this land of liberty, church and state, labor and capital, socialist and individualist, shall walk together in fraternal endeavor to secure a more equitable distribution of earnings? "If we can go ten steps with the socialist," says Mr. Roosevelt, "let us take those ten steps and then fight, rather than fight him all the way."

We are a cosmopolitan people, of diverse convictions and varying habits. The most enthusiastic reformer must concede that here the will of the majority is the ultimate law. Within these limits it may be said that no thinking man believes for a moment that the open saloon in American politics and American home-life is the final solution of our drink problem.

For the determination of the evils of drunkenness, for the equalization of political rights, for the equitable distribution of the products of labor, for the settlement of a hundred problems of our complex modern life, we have need of men no less far-sighted than Williams, no less tactful than Clarke, no less patriotic than Arnold. Great achievements have not all passed into history. A still more glorious future summons to its tasks the finest talents and the noblest souls. Confident that the spirit of the fathers, memorialized this day, will find yet fuller and finer expression in the better humanity of tomorrow,

“We turn from memory today  
To the fresh tasks, splendid heroic toil,  
Triumphs of knowledge and beneficence,  
And victories unblemished by regret;  
With the untroubled confidence of strength  
We go to build the commonwealth of peace.”



# The Women of the Revolution

AN ADDRESS BY

MRS. ELLEN RYAN JOLLY

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God said unto Moses, "Draw not nigh hither; put thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is hoily ground."—Well may we receive this injunction today as Moses received it, of old on Mount Horeb—"put off thy shoes from off thy feet for *this* is holy ground"—Holy, indeed, by the memories which hover around these hallowed walls—memories of that glorious day when Rhode Island severed forever the cruel shackles which bound her a slave to British despotism, and bidding defiance to the inhuman George III., declared herself free and independent—free to prosper and advance and absolutely independent of the tyranny of Kings. This, *Rhode Island's* Independence Hall, is doubly dear, from the fact, that, beneath this very roof—beside the same fireside, and with God's blessed sunlight shining in through these same windows, two months before the National Declaration of Independence was signed and proclaimed in Philadelphia, on May 4th, the patriots of Rhode Island declared their independence; and in the words of Walter E. Ranger, State Commissioner of Public Schools, "Made this little State the oldest sovereign government of the people in our great republic."

The poet has truly said:—

"A nation's greatness lies in men, not acres: One master mind is worth a million hands."



With faithful hearts we offer revered tribute to Nicholas Cooke, and his associates, who assembled in this hall 134 years ago today and bearding the British lion in his den, voted to have "liberty or death." And here let us express the hope, that, the State of Rhode Island may soon do tardy justice to the memory of these patriots, "who dared to do"—and that a magnificent monument shall be erected to their honor, on which shall be carved in letters of the purest gold, the names of these true heroes, whose example shall be a beacon light, to generations yet unborn. Commemorating their deeds, we can almost feel their sacred presence near us, believing that the God of Nations would sanction their visit to the scenes of their struggles and triumphs and allow them to witness with the eyes of the soul, this gathering of men and women assembled, to do honor to the principles they declared beneath these same rafters, and to bear witness to our pledges of allegiance, to the Star Spangled Banner—God bless its every star and broad stripe:—and may it continue to wave in freedom, over the hallowed graves of our beloved, patriotic dead—scattered, as they are, over the hillsides, glens, and plains of this fair land they loved so passionately.

The Rhode Island Declaration kindled a fire in the hearts of men, which was not quenched, until Great Britain, herself, acknowledged her defeat on the day when the proud Cornwallis surrendered his sword, to our beloved Washington at Yorktown.

Yes! Rhode Island's Sons led the van and gave the daring example, which ended in total separation from England, the land which more than 150 years before, had sent the Pilgrim Fathers across the trackless ocean, in search of religious liberty. Daring, indeed, was the act of Rhode Island's liberty-loving Sons—as defeat meant death for treason, the sentence for which under George III. was that the victim should be hanged, drawn and quartered and the members of the body scattered to the four winds; the blood of the traitor, to the English Crown, to be food for the dogs of the street, and his

head to be placed on a pike, by the roadside, as a warning to others, who dared to dream of freedom.

Rhode Island's Sons were manly men, and in paying our homage to them on this day of days, let us not forget the *mothers* who bore them. One of the world's greatest philosophers has said: "Show me a great man and I will show you a great mother." The martyred President Lincoln said repeatedly: "All that I am now, or hope to be, I owe to the influence of my Angel Mother." A knowledge of the heroism of the Revolutionary women seems to have unfortunately for us, passed, with the generation which witnessed it. This is unfair. This is not gratitude—it is also Un-American. The ancient writers have preserved for all time in classic verse, the story of the brave women of Sparta and Rome. Shall we Americans do less? We must not forget the patriotism of our great women, and today, in this historic hall, let us entwine a halo of laurel, rosemary, and immortelle, and with reverence and love, place it upon the altar of our affections, to the memory of the sisters, wives, and mothers of America's valiant Sons. God alone knew the sacrifice the Mother made in "those days which tried men's souls in giving her first-born son to almost certain death."

There is no love like the Mother love and even this wondrous affection is increased a thousand fold, in her love for her first-born son.—"Bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh." How tenderly the mother folds her first born son to her heart of hearts; how carefully and fondly she trains his first steps, and how proudly she sees him develop into splendid manhood. And all this time the mother is building castles for her brave boy, her handsome lad. How earnestly she prays, that the Great God may keep her son in His holy care, free from sin or shame. In the midst of this happiness, in the midst of this day dream, she hears the echo of the shot fired at Lexington and realizes that the hour has arrived, when mother and son must part never to meet again, never, perhaps, until reunited, before the

great white throne, where partings are no more. Did the mother hesitate? Read the history of their lives for the reply. No! a thousand times no! Their motto was "malo mori quam foedari:—Death before dishonor." The daughter was not outdone in generosity and many a proud and fond sister gave up an only brother, the playmate of her childhood, her pride and her hope—only, perhaps, to learn later, that this idolized brother had filled an unknown grave in a distant colony.

The patriot's wife, fully worthy of that holy name, gave the parting hand to a husband, who was dearer to her than life, and saw him go forth to the battlefield, where death was almost certain to be his portion. Later, the sad intelligence came to many a thousand homes, that, the husband so dearly loved was dead. What wonder is it, that, in many cases the burden was too heavy for the weary spirit, and that the widow's broken heart, found rest and reunion, with the loved and lost, in an early grave.

The following graceful eulogy to the women of 1776, with a heart throb in every line may be found in the History of Barrington, written by the Honored President of our Association, The Hon. Thomas Williams Bicknell. "There was not a day when the women were not in service in one form or another. In several instances it is related, that the wool which was on the sheeps' backs in the morning, was finished garments on the backs of Revolutionary Soldiers before bedtime. The patriotic women worked the farms and many a heart-sore mother, carried her baby to the field, cradled it in the boughs of a tree, while she tilled the soil which was to produce food for the fatherless flock. Such were the noble mothers of the Revolution and worthier women never drew breath than these great souls, who not only stood the brunt of the home struggle, but they made it possible for their husbands and sons, to fight the battle and cheered their return to duty, that a glorious and noble America might be freed from the tyrants' yoke of oppression, and that they, and their

children, and their children's children, might enjoy the priceless treasure, freedom. Women of this royal stamp were not made to sit at the feet of tyrants, and they, like the Roman mothers, gave the command to their best beloved: "Bring back your shield, or be brought back upon it." These are the women whose sacred memory we venerate today. Women who have left to the world a priceless lesson in self sacrifice, devotion to God and Country. Women who dared all, suffered all and offered all, upon the Altar of their country, that this fair land "Might take its place among the nations of the earth—great, glorious and free." In the struggle for Nationhood, in the battle against unjust taxation, the women showed a practical patriotism, in their observance of the non-importation Acts and would not wear apparel of British make. The first ladies in the land, who objected to taxation without representation, (women who had been accustomed to wear the finest silks, velvets, laces and jewels), discarded these luxuries cheerfully, and putting aside harps and harpsichords, took the spinning wheel, the lace bobbin, and mat, and knitting needle. They pledged themselves to wear only home-made fabrics and were, if possible more charming than ever, in their plain gowns of linsey-woolsey, the threads for which were carded, spun and woven by their own fair hands, at their colonial firesides. The question of the English exactions was the burning topic in every household, it was served at breakfast, smoking hot for dinner and there was no ice upon it when the time came for supper. It was the women who refused to wear the clothing that would be taxed, it was the women who made the Spartan sacrifice of their tea and if the men had not made that memorable party in Boston Harbor, on the 16th of December, 1773, assuredly the women would have been to the fore. Yes, the women obeyed the letter and spirit of the law and to aid the patriots, many a chest was relieved of its prized linens, which they converted into garments for the suffering soldiers. Their pewter dishes, treasured family heirlooms, were

melted and made into bullets and they carried them into the camps to the "Men along the thin blue line, in the thickest of the fight." Blessed be the memory of these grand women of those sad days, women like Martha Washington, wife of the immortal Commander-in-Chief, George Washington, and our own Kate Littlefield, wife of Rhode Island's pride, General Nathaniel Greene, and many other brave women who spent that fearful winter among the suffering soldiers at Valley Forge, in that darkest hour of the Revolution, each bravely taking her share of the hardships of the camp, at a time, when the soldiers were half starved, half clad, sick and dying, and almost totally discouraged. These ministering angels of mercy, carried consolation into the soldiers' rude huts and many a sinking heart found renewed courage, in the burning words of patriotism, uttered by tenderly nurtured women, who forgot self, in their devotion to the cause, and to the patriots, who were ready to die, that those near and dear to them might breathe God's free air, under a flag of their own. It is interesting to note, that, while the Sons of Liberty were doing heroic deeds, in the colonies, that Rhode Island's fair daughters organized the first Sister Society known as "Daughters of Liberty" and many of their descendants belong to the "Daughters of the American Revolution." A roll call of the old Rhode Island families, would be a roll call of the Revolutionary dames, who sustained a loyal part in the conflict. They resolved, not to purchase British manufactures, unless the Stamp Act should be repealed. In fancy, we can see these good and great women, flinging their canisters and caddies of tea, upon the great bonfire of tea, in Market Square,—a burning commemorated by a bronze tablet in in the Board of Trade Building, Market Square, this city, by a tablet which was unveiled with elaborate ceremony, in 1894, by Mary A. Greene, a representative of the family which gave to the cause, General Greene.

My dear friends, in the history of Revolutionary, or Pre-Revo-

lutionary days, we almost look in vain for any reference, to the Non-importation resolutions, adopted by the Merchants of Philadelphia, on Oct. 25th, 1765—ten years before the battle of Lexington was fought: a resolution to which I now refer with justifiable, racial pride and which is commemorated by a mural tablet of bronze, occupying a particular position of honor in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, with an inscription, in part as follows:—

“In hopes their example will stimulate the good people of this Province to be frugal in their use and consumption of all manufactures, excepting those of America and lawful goods coming directly from Ireland and manufactured there. Signed this day, Oct. 25, 1765.” This act was a public, a grateful, and immortal acknowledgement of Ireland’s generous and practical support, to the cause of America’s independence.

God bless dear old Ireland for that loyalty! Ireland, the land of my exiled people, which true to the traditions of a royal, a wronged, and persecuted race, did not forget America in its hour of distress. Yes, thank God, Ireland’s Sons responded nobly; and history proves, that every battlefield, from Lexington to Yorktown, is saturated with Irish blood and billowed with the graves of Irish Soldiers.

Long, as Homer’s catalogue of the ships, is the list one might give—of America’s patriot women—if time permitted.

We might dwell upon the literary ability of Mercy Warren, the courage of Abigail Adams, wife of one President and mother of another. We would tell in detail of the martial bravery of Moll Pitcher, who saved the day at the battle of Monmouth by manning the gun, as her husband, the gunner, fell dead at her feet, by the shot from a British cannon.

A really noble letter sent by an unmarried woman, to a British officer in Philadelphia, reads as follows: “I will tell you what I have done, my only brother, I have sent to the Camp with my pray-



ers and blessings, and had I twenty brothers and sons they should go—I have retracted every superfluous expense in my table and family. Tea I have not tasted since last Xmas, not bought a new Cap or Gown since your defeat at Lexington, and, what I never did before, have learned to knit, and am now making stockings of American wool for American soldiers—I know this—that as free, I can die but once; but as a slave, I shall not be worthy of life.”

These are sentiments of all my American Sisters.

“You may destroy all the men in America,” an officer in Charleston told Lord Cornwallis, “and we will still have enough to do to defeat the American Women.”

The annals of the day tell us of a Connecticut widow, who sent her five sons and eleven grandsons to the war, and asking God to bless her sixteen children—made the sacrifice. “I had rather,” she said, “that they had all been killed, than that one of my blood came back a Coward.” These are only a few of the deeds, written by the recording angel, upon the books of fame.

We call upon you, young mothers, by that which never fails in women—the love of your children: teach them, as they climb your knees, or lean upon your hearts, the blessings of liberty. Teach them at the Altar, with their baptismal vows, to be true to their God, and their country and our American future will be secure in their hands.

I call upon you, old men, for your counsels and your prayers whose inheritance you possess, and to be true to that heritage.

I call upon you, old men, for your counsels and your prayers and your benedictions.

The time of our departure is not far distant, and our children must continue our work—May God speed them and theirs! May he, who, at the distance of many years, shall stand here to celebrate this day, still look round upon a free, happy and virtuous people! May he have reason to exult as we do! May he, with all the en-

thusiasm of truth, as well as of poetry, exclaim, that *here* is still his Country! Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free.

Let us be true to the best traditions of this glorious Country—where we enjoy in the broadest sense civil and religious liberty: a “Government of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

Let the purity of our women’s lives show to the world, that, in America the honor of the home is sacred, that the home is the nucleus of the Nation; and that She who makes the home, a temple of beauty and love, patriotism and piety, is worthy of high honor and is indeed the true Mother of America. God bless its National emblem—our glorious,

“Star Spangled Banner, and long may it wave,

O’er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.”



## NICHOLAS COOKE.

Nov. 1775—1778.

*Leading Events of His Administration.*

- Nov. 5, 1775.—Esek Hopkins, Commodore of American Navy.  
 Nov. 7, 1775.—Gov. Joseph Wanton formally deposed.  
 Apr. 5, 1776.—Gen. Washington visits Providence.  
 May 4, 1776.—Rhode Island declares her independence.  
 July 18, 1776.—The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies endorsed by the General Assembly.  
 Dec. 8, 1776.—The British Army takes possession of Newport.  
 Jan. 9, 1777.—Colonel W. Barton captures Gen. Prescott.  
 Feb. 9, 1778.—A regiment of negro slaves ordered to be raised.  
 Feb. 9, 1778.—Articles of Confederation between the thirteen original States adopted.

## NICHOLAS COOKE.

Nicholas Cooke, son of Daniel and Mary Power Cooke, was born in Providence, Feb. 3, 1717. In early life he followed the sea and became a successful master of ships. Later he entered mercantile life and sold the goods his ships brought to the Providence market. He acquired a handsome fortune for that day and invested his gains in land in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut. He also carried on rope-walking and distilling, winning in all his varied affairs money and a good name. He married, Sept. 23, 1740, Hannah, daughter of Hezekiah Sabin, and was the father of twelve children. His 9th child, Jesse, was the father of Joseph S. who was the father of nine children, from whom Hon. Geo. L. Cooke of Providence, is descended.

The home of Governor Cooke was the center of the independence elements of the Colony. Governor Wanton had reached

years of cautious conservatism, and while jealous for the rights of the Colony, he trusted that Great Britain would withdraw her obnoxious laws and would cease to harass the colonies, while the influence of the wealth and culture around him undoubtedly encouraged him in this position. Although he had been Governor for six years he does not seem to have kept step with the advancing cause of liberty.

He was the Edward Everett of his day, who could not understand the deep meaning of the events of his time, nor the portents of evil that hung over his horizon. If he understood, then his conduct can only be attributed to weakness or conservatism, qualities never before credited to the Wanton family.

Whatever the facts on the side of Governor Wanton, the people of the Colony were now under the leadership of Samuel Ward and Stephen Hopkins, and were not to be trifled with. The nineteenth of April at Lexington and Concord had shattered all hopes of peace, and the war for American independence had actually begun. The prediction of Patrick Henry had been fulfilled, "the next gale that sweeps from the North may bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms." Following the events of April, 1775, liberty or death were the only alternatives. Lieutenant-Governor Darius Sessions, the double-minded, half-hearted patriot, was defeated at the April election, and a successful merchant, Nicholas Cooke, of Providence, had been elected to succeed him. Mr. Cooke had been in public life as an assistant in the Assembly from Providence for the years 1752-53-55-56-57-59 and Lieutenant Governor for the years 1768-69.

He was acquainted with the leading men of the Colony, was familiar with the details of the government, and in earnest sympathy with the advanced patriotic sentiment of the people. As a native of Providence, he had been associated with the Browns, Bowens and Hopkins, in the business concerns of the town and had taken part in the public meetings on Colonial protection and policies. A man

of his sea-faring life and bold spirit might have been, as were the Browns and other bewigged citizens of Providence, a participant in the Gaspee affair. It is unfortunate that we of this day have no catalogue of all the men who made up that expedition. Stephen Hopkins must have been near the head of the procession, in advice and plan, if not in person.

Governor Cooke at first strenuously declined the duties and responsibilities of the chief seat in the Colony, but the influence of his friends, Governor Hopkins, Dr. Bowen and the Browns, led him to accept the office for which he was so well fitted and which he filled with great acceptance to the people. As evidence of his determined spirit one needs only to read the report of the Committee of Inspection of the Town of Providence, of which Governor Cooke was chairman. This Committee was appointed to see that the town "faithfully and inviolably adhered to" the declarations of the Continental Congress, relative to trade with Great Britain. Among the rules which the merchants and people of Providence were ordered to observe were: No direct or indirect importation of goods from Great Britain; no India tea from any part of the world; no molasses nor coffee from the British plantations; no import or purchase of any slave and the discontinuance of the slave trade; no purchase or use of any East India tea whatever; no exports to Great Britain; merchants and owners of vessels to stop all orders and imports from Great Britain; encourage the raising of sheep for meat and wool; discourage horse-racing, gaming, cock-fighting, expensive shows, plays and diversions; discontinue expensive funerals and giving gloves and scarfs; sell all manufactures at reasonable prices so that no advantage be taken of a scarcity of goods; all these and other rules to be observed "as a great means of extricating this country from impending ruin and slavery."

During the interval between the election of Governor Wanton in May, 1775, and the succession of Governor Cooke, the principal

duty of commissioning officers for the army had been devolved on the Secretary of State Hon. Henry Ward, son of Governor Richard Ward. Among the Acts of the General Assembly were the removal from Newport to Providence of the Colony treasures, records and offices, for greater safety; the passage of acts for raising and equipping troops, fixing pay of officers and men; securing arms, tents and provisions necessary for an Army; choosing a Committee of Safety; choosing the officers of the Army of Observation, of which Nathaniel Greene, Esq., was made Brigadier General and James Mitchell Varnum one of the Colonels. Lieutenant Governor Cooke was instructed to write James Wallace, Esq., Commander of the Ship *Rose* for unlawful interference with coasting vessels of the Colony, in which he said to Wallace that while he demeaned himself he might depend on protection; otherwise, "you may be assured that the whole power of this Colony will be exerted to secure the persons and property of the inhabitants against every lawless invader." To this Wallace replied: "I am unacquainted with you or what station you act in: Suppose you write in behalf of some body of people,— I desire to know whether or not you or the people in whose behalf you write are not in open rebellion to your lawful sovereign and the acts of the British legislature." Important rules and orders were adopted for the government of the army, and the Committee of Safety was directed to employ two vessels to be manned and armed to protect the trade of the Colony. Abraham Whipple was placed in command of the vessels, with the rank of Commodore. Post officers and post riders were established, "in order to preserve an intercourse between the Colonies." Post offices were established at Providence, Newport, Bristol, Warren, Tower Hill and Westerly, postmasters were appointed, and rates and duties for postage were fixed; the lowest rate for any distance not exceeding sixty miles was  $5\frac{1}{4}$ d. or 10 cents, and not exceeding one thousand miles 2s. 8p. or about 50 cents. Thursday, the 20th day of June, 1775, was observed

as a day of fasting and prayer. Six additional companies, of sixty men each, were ordered raised and equipped. A committee was chosen to make an inventory of all the ammunition in all the towns. Job Watson of South Kingston was appointed to a post on Tower Hill to watch for any squadron of ships on the coast and to alarm the Colony and in case of an alarm the northern counties be ordered to march to Providence. A proclamation was issued, commanding every man in the colony who was able to bear arms to equip himself completely with arms and ammunition. The town of Providence was ordered to fix a beacon on Prospect Hill to alarm the country in case of an invasion. Two row-gallies were ordered built and equipped for protection and defence.

On September 15th, 1775, the General Assembly was persuaded, that the building and equipping an American fleet as soon as possible would greatly and essentially conduce to the preservation of the laws, liberties and property of the good people of these colonies; and they therefore instructed their delegates, to use their whole influence, at the ensuing Congress for building, at the Continental expense, a fleet of sufficient forces for the protection of these colonies." In this resolution we find the initiative of our American Navy, when ready for service was placed in command of Esek Hopkins, brother of Stephen, as Admiral.

In November, 1775, the General Assembly formally deposed Joseph Wanton from the governorship. Since "The whole course of his behaviors . . . hath continued to demonstrate that he is inimical to the rights and liberties of America, and is thereby rendered totally unfit to sustain said office."

The balance of the legislative year, under Governor Nicholas Cooke, was devoted to the preparation of troops and the business of making ready for war. An Address to the Continental Congress by the Assembly set forth the exposed condition of the Colony by reason of easy access to its navigable waters, stating that "this Col-

ony is scarcely any thing but a line of sea-coast." And for that reason has been made the harbor of the ships of the enemy, on account of which the town of Newport has been depopulated and threatened with total destruction. After setting forth the efforts of the Colony in raising troops for home defence and the aid of sister Colonies, it asks Congress for assistance in Colonial defence. An Act was passed to encourage the manufacture of saltpetre and gunpowder. The town of Newport, in view of its disastrous condition and threatened destruction, was allowed to furnish beef and beer to the war-ships of the enemy stationed in the Bay. There followed a very interesting and important correspondence between Governor Cooke and General Washington, then in command of the American troops at Cambridge.

The one act, which above all others, distinguishes Governor Cooke's administration and reflects the highest honor on the Colony of Rhode Island, was the Declaration of Independence of Great Britain, which passed the General Assembly at its session in the old State House, Providence, on the Fourth of May, 1776, just two months prior to the Declaration of the Thirteen Colonies at Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. This Act repealed a previous Act of Allegiance to the Crown, and declared that hereafter the King's name and authority in this Colony was void and of no effect; that the name of the Colony should be "The Governor and Company of the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations," that the courts of law be no longer considered the King's Courts; that no instrument in writing of any nature or kind whether public or private, shall, in the sale thereof mention the year of the King's reign and that all commissions, all writs and processes shall be issued, no longer in the name of the King, but in the name of the Governor and Company of this Colony. The Act was drawn by Col. Jonathan Arnold, a lineal descendant from Governor Benedict Arnold.



Unfortunately no record has been preserved of the debate that followed its introduction in the General Assembly. Governor Cooke wrote to Hon. Thomas Cushing of Massachusetts under date of May 6th. "The enclosed act passed the upper house unanimously and the lower house by a vast majority; There being upwards of sixty members present, and only six votes against it."

The first act of the new government was "Instructions from the General Assembly of Rhode Island, to Stephen Hopkins and William Ellery, Delegates from the Colony to the Continental Congress," in which they are urged to provide and confirm "the strictest union and confederation" between the Colonies; "to secure to the said Colonies their rights and liberties, both civil and religious;" "taking greatest care to secure to this Colony, in the strongest and most perfect manner, its present established form, and all the powers of government, so far as relates to its internal policies and conduct of our own affairs, civil and religious."

In Staples "Rhode Island in the Continental Congress" may be found valuable letters of Governor Cooke, one in particular in which he alludes to his successful manufacture of saltpetre. All his public life and records give a high conception of the excellent good sense and wise judgment of the Governor. Both Governor Cooke and Deputy Governor William Bradford declined a re-election in 1778. Both were publicly thanked by the General Assembly "for their patriotic zeal, firmness and intrepidity."

Governor Cooke died Nov. 14, 1782, and was buried in the North Burial Ground, Providence, where a plain shaft and a Revolutionary marker stand above his grave.

Governor Cooke's biographers speak of him "as an honest man of affairs," of excellent common sense and good judgment, patriotic, zealous, firm, intrepid. The venerable John Howland said of him, "Rhode Island history, if faithfully written, will hand his name down to posterity in connection with most eminent public characters

of which our country can boast." He was a Trustee of Brown University from 1766 until his death, representing the Congregational Church of which he was a member



## EDWARD BOSWORTH.

Edward Bosworth was born in Barrington in the year 1716, of good Pilgrim stock. His parents lived on the west bank of the Sowams or Barrington River, where he spent his long life on the ancestral farm. He was a lineal decendant of Nathaniel Bosworth of Bristol, one of the founders of that town, in 1683, and was an active man in Barrington town and church matters and held several offices in both, prior to the Revolution.

Mr. Bosworth was one of a Committee of Correspondence, appointed by the town, March 21, 1774, "to attend to all that relates to the liberties of America,"—a heavy responsibility for a private citizen of the smallest town in the smallest Colony to shoulder. He undoubtedly bore his share of patriotic labors in behalf of America's liberties.

Clippings from the Resolutions of the town of Barrington, passed at that March town meeting, will show what the patriots were talking about.

"We will neither buy, sell, nor receive as a gift, any dutied tea nor have any dealings with any person or persons, that shall buy, sell, give receive or trade in said tea, directly or indirectly, knowing or suspecting it to be such."

"It is the duty of every man in America to oppose, by all proper measures, to the utmost of his power and abilities, every attempt upon the liberties of his country."

"We heartily unite with the town of Newport, and the other towns in this, and all the other sister colonies, and exert our whole force in support of the just rights and privileges of the American Colonies."

"If any of the obnoxious tea should be brought into this town, or any other attempt made on the liberties of the inhabitants thereof, the Committee is directed and empowered to call a town meeting,

forthwith, that such measures may be taken as the public safety may require."

"We heartily unite in and resolve to support the foregoing resolves with our lives and fortunes."

These were a part of the series of Resolutions passed unanimously by the town of Barrington, and ordered to be published in *THE PROVIDENCE GAZETTE*, thirteen months before the first gun was fired at Concord Bridge and Lexington Common, and Edward Bosworth and Thomas Allin were chosen as a part of the committee to see that the resolutions were executed. The other members of that important committee were James Brown, Josiah Humphrey, Samuel Allen, Nathaniel Martin and Moses Tyler.

In May, 1776, the town of Barrington elected Edward Bosworth, Esq., then sixty years of age, and Thomas Allin, Esq., afterwards a Brigadier General, as Deputies to the General Assembly, which passed the act of May 4, 1776, declaring our Colonial Independence of Great Britain. At that session of the **General Assembly**, Nathaniel Martin, Esq., of Barrington, was chosen colonel of the regiment of militia, in the county of Bristol. The Barrington company of militia had as officers, Thomas Allin, Captain; Viall Allen, Lieutenant; Daniel Kinnicutt, Ensign.

#### GENERAL THOMAS ALLIN.

Thomas Allin was one of the Deputies in the session of the General Assembly of Rhode Island at Providence, that adopted the Declaration of Independence May 4th, 1776. He was a lineal descendant of William Allin, who removed from Prudence Island in Narragansett Bay, to what was then Swansea in Plymouth Colony, but is now West Barrington, in the town of Barrington, R. I. His house stood about twenty rods east of the West Barrington station

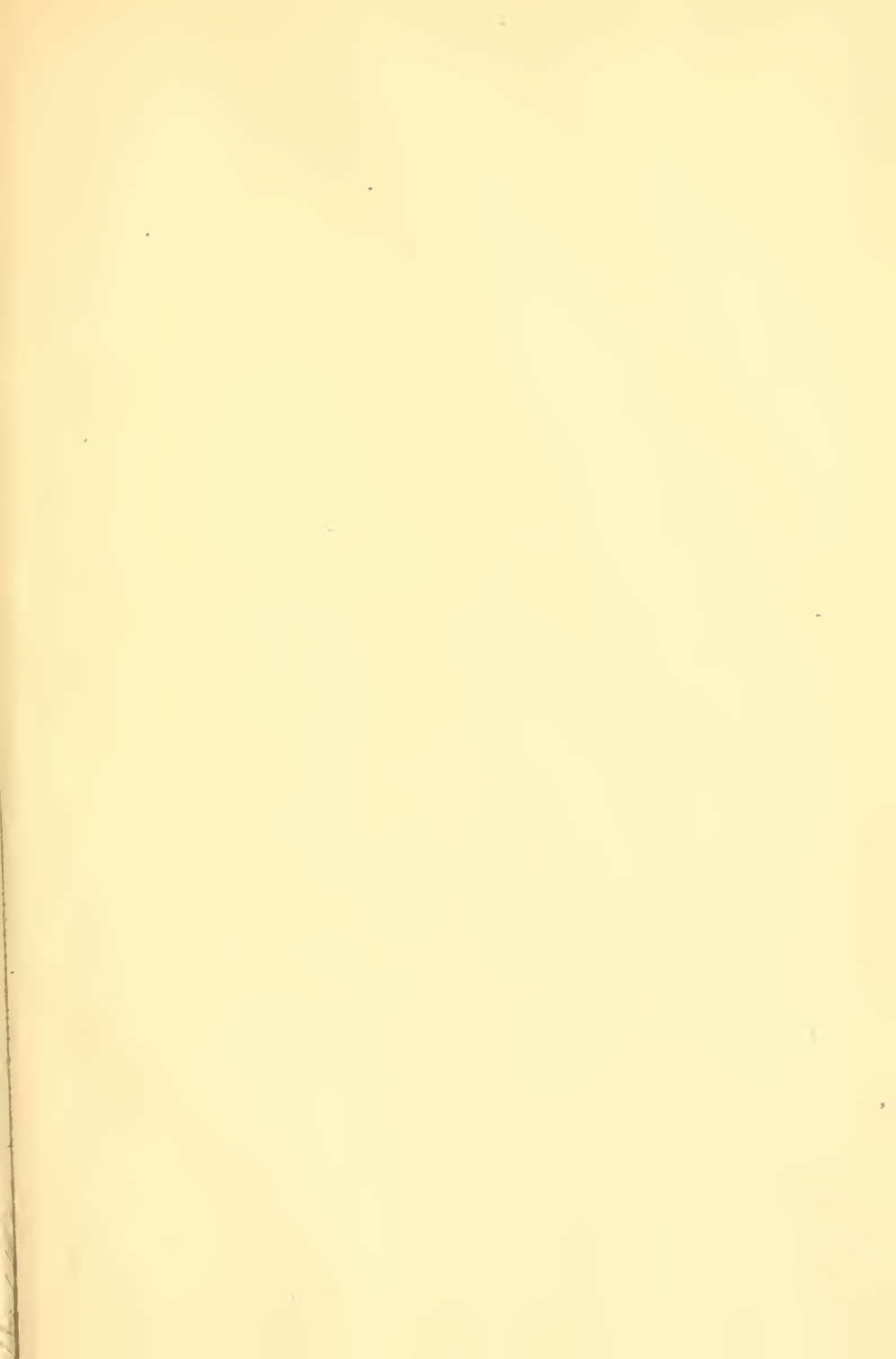
of the Providence, Warren and Bristol R. R., on land now owned and occupied by Mr. Howard L. Smith.

Thomas Allin, the son of Matthew and Ruth (Stockbridge) Allin, was born in Barrington, April 15, 1742; the grandson of Thomas and Anna (Barnes) Allin and the great grandson of William of Prudence Island, and West Barrington. Mr. Allin was brought up on his father's farm with the limited district school education of the day. He married May 29, 1768, Amy Bicknell of Barrington, learned the art of surveying and devoted his time for the rest of his life to the work of the farm and that of a public surveyor. Mr. Allin was a true patriot during the years and events that led to the American Revolution, and in 1774 was chosen one of the Committee of Correspondence. He served as Deputy in the General Assembly in 1772-3-4-5-6, 1781, 1791, 1794-5-6-7-8.

In 1775, Mr. Allin was the representative for Barrington on the Colonial Committee of Safety. In June, 1775, Mr. Allin was chosen by the General Assembly Captain of the Barrington Co. of Militia and proceeded to drill his company half a day, once a fortnight, in Pickering's "Easy Plan of Discipline for Militia," bought by Capt. Allin on a visit to his brother, Capt. Matthew Allin, at Watertown, Mass. On April 1, 1776, Capt. Thomas Allin appeared with forty-one members of his company on the alarm at Bristol. A month later Capt. Allin, then thirty-four years of age, and Edward Bosworth, Esq., then between fifty and sixty, sat in the House of Deputies and voted for the Revolutionary Act that made Rhode Island an independent state—the first absolutely free commonwealth on the American continent. From this time until the end of the Revolutionary struggle, Capt. Allin, afterwards elected Brigadier General of Militia, served his country in the field or in council. His record as it appears in the History of Barrington, and in the military and civil records of the state is an honorable one, for which the people of Rhode Island may be proud. Gen. Allin was a mem-

ber of the Convention of Rhode Island, in 1790, to adopt the Federal Constitution and the votes of Samuel Allen, Esq., and Gen. Allin made the two majority which placed Rhode Island in the ranks of the old thirteen in the Federal union, the final vote standing thirty-four in favor to thirty-two against. Had the two Barrington Deputies voted on opposite sides of the statehood question, the vote would have been a tie, and Rhode Island would have been an independent State, outside the bounds of the Great Republic.

Gen. Allin died in Barrington May 30, 1800, at the age of 58, and was buried in the Allin family burial lot, on the ancestral farm in West Barrington. His grave is flagged and marked as a Revolutionary patriot and soldier, and flowers annually decorate his grave in memory of his distinguished services.









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