

CRANSTON AND PAWTUXET, RHODE ISLAND

1638

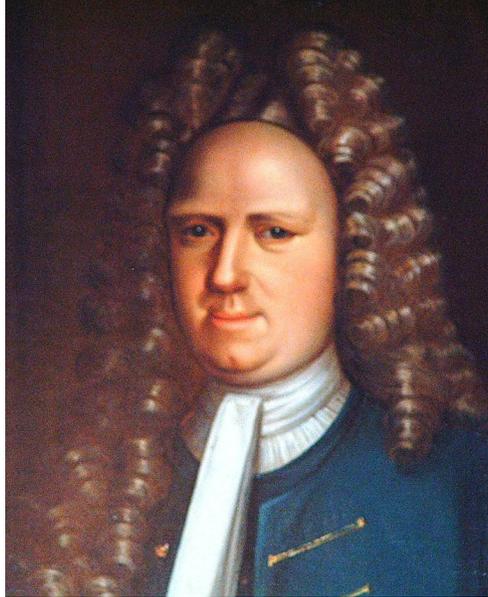
An outpost was established at [Pawtuxet](#) in what would become [Rhode Island](#), by William Harris and the Arnold family. Other nonconformists coming down into the bay region, such as William Hutchinson and [Anne Hutchinson](#) and [William Coddington](#), were founding Pocasset (now [Portsmouth](#)) and signing the “Portsmouth Compact.”



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[William Coddington](#) was chosen as governor.



According to John Farmer, the 1st (white) settlers of [Rhode Island](#) were:

- [Roger Williams](#)
- William Aspinwall
- Arther Fenner
- John Thockmorton
- Samuel Wildbore
- Henry Reddock
- William Arnold
- John Porter
- Thomas Sucklin
- William Harris
- John Sandford
- Christopher Smith
- Stuckey Westcot
- Edward Hutchinson
- Richard Pray
- Thomas Olney, Senior
- Thomas Savage
- Nicholas Power
- Thomas Olney, Junior
- William Dyre
- Stephen Northrup
- John Greene
- William Freeborn
- Edward Hart
- Richard Waterman
- Philip Sherman
- Benjamin Herendon



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- Thomas James
- John Walker
- Edward Inman
- Robert Cole
- Richard Carder
- John Jones
- William Carpenter
- William Baulston
- James Matthewson
- Francis Weston
- Henry Bull
- Henry Neale
- Ezekiel Holleman
- William Coddington
- William Man
- Robert Williams
- John Clark
- _____ Jinckes
- John Smith
- Edward Cope
- Roger Mawry
- Hugh Bewitt
- [Chad Brown](#)
- Edward Manten
- William Wickenden
- Daniel Brown
- Shadrach Manton
- John Field
- Henry Brown
- George Shepherd
- [Thomas Hopkins](#)
- [John Brown](#)
- Edward Smith
- William Hawkins
- Samuel Bennett
- Benjamin Smith
- William Hutchinson
- Hugh Bewett (the mason)
- John Smith
- Edward Hutchinson, Jun
- Adam Goodwin
- John Smith, Sr.
- John Coggeshall
- Henry Fowler
- John Smith, Jr.
- John Smith (Jamaica)
- Epenetus Olney
- Lawrence Wilkinson
- Daniel Williams



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- Christopher Onthawk
- Joshua Verin
- John Sayles
- Richard Scott (this [Baptist](#) would become a [Friend](#), very likely the 1st in [Rhode Island](#))
- Joan Tyler
- Joshua Winsor
- Valentine Whitman
- George Way
- William White
- Thomas Walling
- John Warren
- John Whipple
- Matthew Waller
- Robert Williams
- Joseph Williams
- William Wickenden
- Robert R. West
- Pardon Tillighast

1640

August 27, Monday: At [Rhode Island](#) and [Providence](#) Plantations, the 27th day of the 5th mo. in the year, so called, 1640, the settlers entered together into a Plantation Agreement.

READ THE FULL TEXT

We Robert Cole, Chad Brown, William Harris and John Warner, being freely chosen by the consent of our loving friends and neighbors, the inhabitants of this town of Providence, having many differences amongst us, they being freely willing and also bound themselves to stand to our arbitration in all differences amongst us, to rest contented in our determination, being so betruusted, we have seriously and carefully endeavored to weigh and consider all these differences, being desirous to bring them to unity and peace, although our abilities are far short in the due examination of such weighty matters, yet so far as we can conceive in laying all things together, we have gone the fairest and equallest way to produce our peace.

1. Agreed. We have with one consent agreed, that in the parting those particular proprieties which some of our friends and neighbors have in [Pawtuxet](#), from the general common of our town of [Providence](#), to run upon a straight line from a fresh spring, being in the gully at the head of the cove running by that point of land called Saxefrax, into the town of Mashapaug, to an oak tree standing near unto the cornfield, being at this time the nearest cornfield unto Pawtuxet, the oak tree having four marks with an axe, till some other land-mark be set for a certain bound. Also, we agree, that if any meadow ground lying and



joining to that meadow that borders upon the river of Pawtuxet, come within the aforesaid line, which will not come down within a straight line from long cove to the marked tree, then, for that meadow to belong to Pawtuxet, and so beyond the town of Mashapaug from the oak tree between the two fresh rivers Pawtuxet and Wanasquatucket, of an even distance.

2. Agreed. We have with one consent agreed, that for the disposing those lands that shall be disposed, belonging to this town of Providence, to be in the whole inhabitants by the choice of five men for general disposal, to be betruusted with disposal of lands and also of the town's stock and all general things, and not to receive in any in six days, as townsmen, but first to give the inhabitants notice, to consider if any have just cause to show against the receiving of him, as you can apprehend, and to receive none but such as subscribe to this our determination. Also we agree, that if any of our neighbors do



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apprehend himself wronged by these or any of these five disposers, that at the general town meeting he may have a trial. Also, we agree for the town to choose beside the other five men, one to keep record of all things belonging to the town and lying in common.

We garee, as formerly hath been the liberties of the town, so still to hold forth, liberty of conscience.

3. Agreed, that after many considerations and consultations of our own state and also of states abroad in way of government, we apprehend no way so suitable to our condition, as government by way of arbitration. But if men agree themselves by arbitration, no state, we know of, disallows of that, neither do we. But if men refuse that which is but common humanity between man and man, then to compel such unreasonable persons to a reasonable way, we agree, that, the five disposers shall have power to compel him either choose two men himself, or if he refuse for them to choose two men, to arbitrate his cause, and if these four men chosen by each party, do end the cause, then to see their determination performed and the faultive to pay the arbitrators for their time spent in it. But if these four men do not end it, then for the five disposers to choose three men to put an end to it. And for the certainty hereof, we agree the major part of the five disposers to choose the three men, and the major part of the three men to end the cause, having power from the five disposers, by a note under their hand to perform it, and the faultive not agreeing in the first, to pay the charge of the last and for the arbitrators to follow no employment until the cause be ended, without consent of the whole that have to do with the cause. Instance. In the first arbitration, the offender may offer reasonable terms of peace, and the offended may exact upon him, and refuse and trouble men beyond reasonable satisfaction, so for the last arbitrators to judge where fault was in not agreeing in the first, to pay the charge in the last. 4. Agreed, that if any person damnify any man either in goods or good name, and the person offended follow not the cause upon the offender, that if any person give notice to the five disposers, they shall call the party delinquent to answer by arbitration.

Instance. Thus, if any person abuse another in person or goods, may be for peace's sake, a man will, for the present, put it up, and it may so be, resolve to revenge; therefore, for the peace of the state, the disposers are to look to it in the first place.

5. Agreed for all the whole inhabitants to combine ourselves to assist any man in the pursuit of any party delinquent, with all our best endeavors to attach him; but if any man raise a hubbub, and there be no just cause, then for the party that raised the hubbub to satisfy men for their time lost in it.

6. Agreed, that if any man have a difference with any of the five disposers, which can not be deferred till general meeting of the town, he may have a clerk call the town together, at his occasioned time, for a trial.

Instance, it may be a man may be to depart the land, or to a far part of the land, or his estate may lie upon a speedy trial or



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the like case may fall out.

7. Agreed, that the town by five men shall give every man a deed of all his lands lying within the bounds of the plantation to hold it by for after ages.

8. Agreed, that the five disposers shall, from the date hereof, meet every month day upon general things and at the quarter day to yield to a new choice and give up their old accounts.

9. Agreed, that the clerk shall call the five disposers together at the month day and the general town together every quarter, to meet upon general occasions, from the date hereof.

10. Agreed, that the clerk is to receive for every cause that comes to the town for a trial 4d, for making each deed 12d, and to give up the book to the town at the year's end and yield to a new choice.

11. Agreed, that all acts of disposal on both sides to stand, since the difference.

12. Agreed, that every man who hath not paid in his purchase money for his plantation shall make up his 10s. to be 30s. equal with the first purchasers, and for all that are received as townsmen hereafter to pay the like sum to the town stock.

These being those things we have generally concluded on for our peace, we desiring our loving friends to receive as our absolute determination, laying ourselves down as subject to it. Witness our hands.

Chad Brown,
Robert Cole,
William Harris,
John Throckmorton,
Stukely Westcott,
Benedict Arnold,
William Carpenter,
Richard Scott,
Thomas Harris,
Francis + Wickes,
Thomas + Angell,
Adam + Goodwin,
William + Burrows,
Roger Williams,
Robert West,
Joshua Winsor,
Robert Williams,
Matthew Waller,
Gregory Dexter,
John + Lippitt

John Warner,
John Field,
William Arnold,
William Field,
Edward Cope,
Edward + Manton,
William Man,
Nicholas Power,
William + Reynolds,
Thomas Olney,
Richard Waterman,
William Wickenden,
Edward Hart,
Hugh Bewit,
Thomas + Hopkins,
Joan Tiler,
Jane + Sears,
Christopher Unthank,
William + Hawkins,



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1642

Louisquisset (Loquasuck) was purchased by the proprietors of [Providence, Rhode Island](#). The bounds of Providence were set to run from beyond [Pawtucket](#) at the [Blackstone River](#) at Sugar Loaf Hill, to Observation Rock on the bank of the Moshassuck River west of Lonsdale north of Buitt’s Bluff, to Absolute Swamp, which is the east bank of the Woonasquatucket River near Louisquisset, to Oxford of the Woonasquatucket (Centerdale), to Hipses Rock just west of Netaconkanut, to Mashapaug, to Sassafras Point on the Bay near the present Rhode Island Yacht Club near [Pawtuxet](#) village. These bounds are said to have been walked together by Miantonomi and the Reverend [Roger Williams](#).

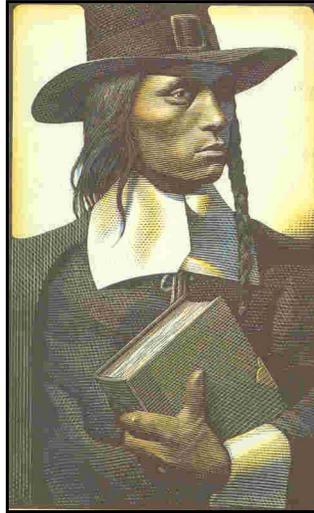


1676

January 27, Monday: [Narragansett](#) warriors raided [Pawtuxet](#) in [Rhode Island](#).

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

July 2, Thursday: At Cambridge, [James Printer](#) took part in the proclaimed amnesty, an amnesty which had been



extended to him in particular by the Massachusetts Council. These Boston Christians had charged [Major Daniel Gookin](#) to convey a special condition to him, that he should carry along with him as he came into Boston to surrender as proof of the sincerity of his repentance, “som of the enemies heads.” He forthwith came forward displaying the heads of two of his former compatriots of the forest, and was accepted back into the Christian fold.



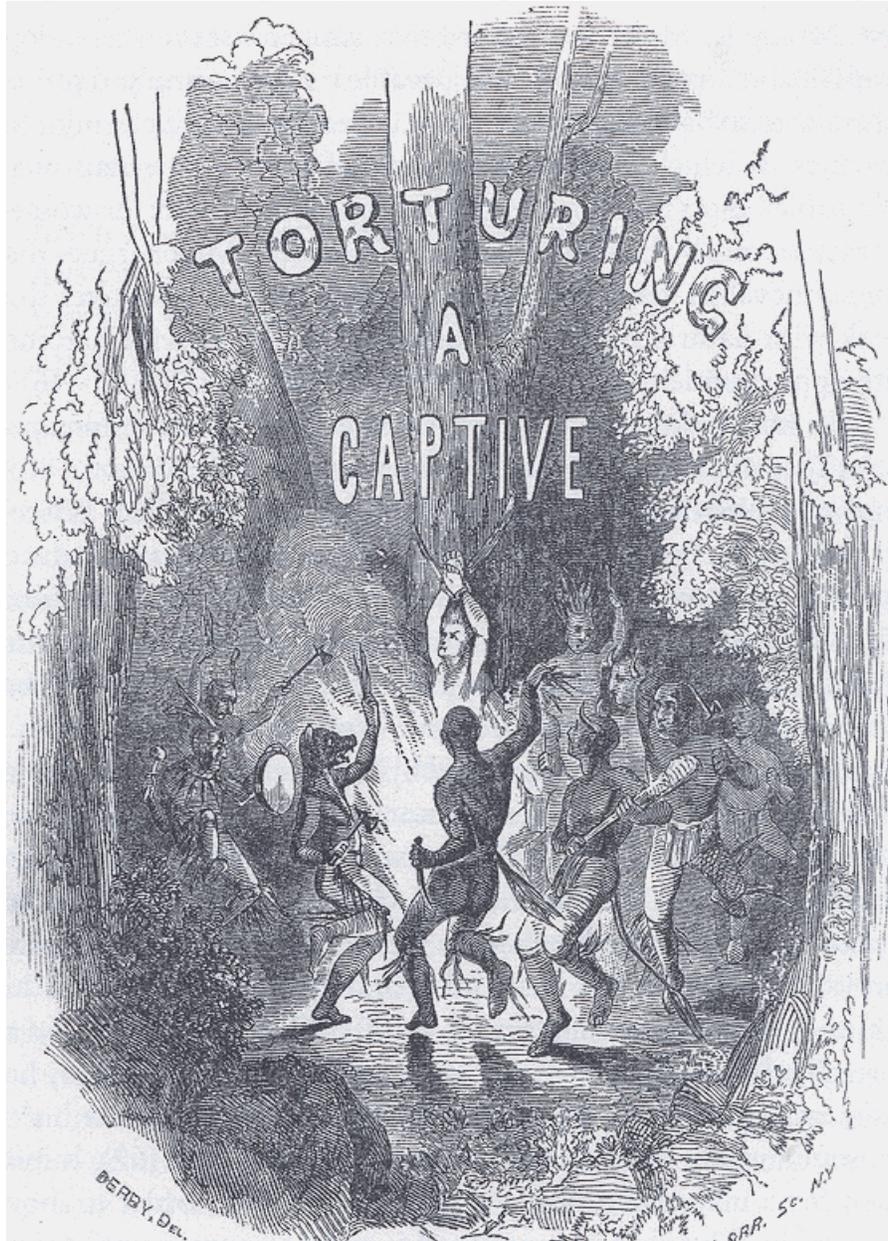
Printer realized that his future lay with her (and hers with him). In the coming weeks Printer served as scribe during negotiations for Mary Rowlandson’s redemption. Then, when amnesty was offered to Christian Indians who had joined the enemy, Printer turned himself in to colonial authorities, bringing with him, as required by special instruction, the heads of two enemy Indians – testaments to his fidelity. Eventually Printer returned to his work at the press in Cambridge and, in 1682, in one of the most sublime ironies of King Philip’s War, James Printer set the type for *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*. Mary Rowlandson and James Printer are indeed a curious pair. Their intricately linked stories are at once uncannily similar and crucially divergent. Before the war, Mary’s husband, Joseph Rowlandson, was the minister of her town, while James’s brother, Joseph Tukapewillin, was the minister of his. Both Rowlandson and Printer spent the winter of 1675-1676 with enemy Nipmuks. Both returned to Boston months later to live, again, among the English. But while Rowlandson came to terms with her time among enemy Indians by writing a book, Printer supplied body parts.

The 300 Connecticut troopers headed by Major John Talcott, with their Pequot and Mohegan auxiliaries, began a sweep of Connecticut and [Rhode Island](#), rounding up any remnant Algonquins. Quaiapen was the widow of Miantonomo’s eldest son Mexanno, and the sister of Ningret, sachem of the Niantics. She was therefore Squaw

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Sachem of one of these bands. The fugitives whom Quaiapen was leading, with her highly regarded chief counselor Potock, and with the chief native engineer, called by the English “Stone Wall John,” the man who is said to have designed the Queen’s Fort, are all presumed to have been slaughtered in one action at the south bank of the [Pawtuxet](#) River, near [Natick](#) (the body count afterward was 238 corpses). Although the English were not squeamish about offing people if it was inconvenient to hold them captive, they were exceedingly upset at the pleasure their Mohegan allies were deriving from the deliberate torture of captives.



As individuals were rounded up throughout this summer season, where convenient the English would be kindly and sell them as slaves to be transported off the continent. Potock, however, knew a whole lot, as he had been a high-level counselor, and so he was carefully interrogated. Presumably this questioning was



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accompanied by serious torture for, at the completion of the process, he was summarily executed.

[“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”](#)

1698

Required to take an oath of allegiance to the King of England in order to continue as governor, which as a Quaker he was unable to do, [Friend Walter Clarke](#) resigned in favor of his nephew Samuel Cranston,¹ whose father John Cranston had once been governor, who became the new governor of [Rhode Island](#). His long administration, until 1727, would establish internal unity and bring the colony into a working relationship with the government in London.

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

1703

Cumberlandite iron ore from Iron Mine Hill in [Cumberland](#) was used, along with iron ore from the bogs of [Cranston, Rhode Island](#), to produce iron for cannon. (Iron cannons made of this bog ore are said to have been used at the siege of Louisburg in 1745.)

1703. The Colony was divided into two counties - Providence Plantations, and Rhode-Island.

[PROVIDENCE](#)

1. Samuel Cranston had been born on August 16, 1659. He married Mary Hart during 1680 in [Newport](#). Mary was born during 1663 in Newport. She died on September 17, 1710 in Newport and was buried in Newport’s Clifton Burial Ground. Samuel would be 30 times successively chosen by the voters, holding this office until his death on April 26, 1727 in Newport — probably longer than any other American politician ever required to seek annual re-election. The town of [Cranston, Rhode Island](#) would be named for Governor Samuel Cranston. (The Quaker meetinghouse erected in 1729 there still stands.) (The blue flag of Cranston bears a shield is red with a white border, with on the shield a representation of three white cranes; under the shield there is a white ribbon with a red border, and the words DUM VIGILO CURO imposed in yellow and gold. This design was taken from the coat of arms of Governor Samuel Cranston. The motto is said to render into English as “While I watch, I care.”)



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1705

In [Cranston](#), [Rhode Island](#), [Quakers](#) began to meet in the homes of members. (In 1729 they would erect a Friends meetinghouse near Moshantatuck Brook on the present site of the Oakland Community Baptist Church of Cranston — they would also erect a small schoolhouse nearby.)

Governor Samuel Cranston of [Rhode Island](#) had some remarks to make about Negro Slavery.

GOV. SAMUEL CRANSTON

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

1707

March 7: [Stephen Hopkins](#) was born at the family's Mashapaug homestead, two miles southwest of the Weybosset Bridge on the West Side of [Providence](#) (not [Cranston](#)), [Rhode Island](#), "on Monday, the 24th of February, old stile, or in the present new stile, the seventh day of March, 1707." His mother, Ruth Wilkinson Hopkins, was a [Quaker](#), but not his father. His mother's father, Captain Samuel Wilkinson of Louisquisset, had been a Quaker, but not her mother. The biography prepared by William Eaton Foster in 1883, STEPHEN HOPKINS, A RHODE ISLAND STATESMAN, would contain a footnote on page 34 to the effect that "No record exists, however, showing any connection of Stephen Hopkins with the Society of Friends, as a member, until the year 1755," and an explanation on page 57 that "There is nothing to indicate positively the religious predilections of his father. We have only the negative probability that he was not a Friend. A Friend, however, his mother was, as has been noted; and Governor Hopkins himself, later in life, identified himself very completely with that body of Christians, even to the extent, to quote from [Moses Brown](#), his constant co-laborer, (and himself a Friend), of his having the Friends' meetings 'sometimes held in the winter at his dwelling-house.'" [Continuing in a footnote: "How late in life is not certain. His first and second wives were both Friends, but his second marriage only was solemnized in Friends' Meeting. ('Historical collections of the Essex Institute,' II. 120). It was at this time, says the same account, (p. 120), that 'he connected himself with the "Friends." Yet his first wife was of unbroken Quaker ancestry, whether herself a Friend or not. His first marriage was by a justice of the peace, and appears to have taken place 'at the house of the bride's father.' (Wilkinson Memoirs, p. 363. Governor Hopkins severed his connection with the Society of Friends in 1773. (Records of [Smithfield](#) Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1773). For the circumstances of this occurrence see Chapter VIII., of this work."'] In fact it seems that young Stephen would not connect with the Quakers until during his middle age he had lost in quick succession his dearly loved first wife and his two promising sons John Hopkins and Silvanus Hopkins (or, to put another possible face on this, until as a politician he needed to obtain support from among the Rhode Island voting Friends).

(It was also in this year that the oldest portion of the house that would become known as the "Stephen Hopkins House" in Providence, Rhode Island was erected. However, this house pertained to John Field, and Hopkins would not purchase it from him until age 36.)



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1729

The 1st [Quaker](#) meetinghouse was built in [Cranston, Rhode Island](#), near Moshantatuck Brook on the present site of the Oakland Community Baptist Church. (They would also build a small schoolhouse nearby. The Friends in Cranston would remain a worship group until 1744, would then become a preparative meeting, and then in 1859 would become a worship group again, until they would fall into decline and sell their meetinghouse in 1864 and dissolve in 1866.)

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1730

 At this point, before other towns were set off, there were at least three [Baptist](#) churches within the limits of the town of [Providence, Rhode Island](#): one established in 1706 in that district which was to become the separate community of [Smithfield](#), another established in 1725 in that district which was to become the separate community of [Scituate](#), plus of course the central one in beautiful downtown Providence. In addition there were Baptist churches in Johnston, [Cranston](#), [Pawtucket](#), [Pawtuxet](#), [East Greenwich](#), and perhaps elsewhere. It was at this point, however, that Scituate became a separated town. [Foster](#) was incorporated with Scituate, forming the western section of that township, and would remain such until 1781, when it would be set off as a distinct and separate township.

10th day 2d mo.: At the quarterly meeting of [Quakers](#) held on April 10, 1730, the [Greenwich](#) monthly meeting for business gave notice:

That they are in want of some assistance by money towards finishing a meeting-house at Shantituck, in which case this meeting desires further information as to the necessity and circumstances, &c.²

At the following quarterly meeting, the [Greenwich](#) monthly meeting for business would give notice:

That besides the subscription made for building the meeting-house at Meshantituck, they have expended the sum of £49,19, for work already done, and considerable more is wanted to finish it. It is therefore recommended to the several monthly meetings to consider the said [Friends](#) of Meshantituck, and lend them such help as in brotherly freedom they may think meet, and it is desired, that what is collected for said service may be brought up to our next quarterly meeting.

It seems that before [Providence](#) came to be divided up into separate towns, there were four [Quaker](#) meetinghouses within the town. The oldest was what is now referred to as the Lower [Smithfield](#) meetinghouse, the 2d the Upper [Smithfield](#) meetinghouse in [Woonsocket](#), the 3d meetinghouse in downtown [Providence](#), and the 4th meetinghouse in [Cranston](#).

2. Shantituck, sometimes referred to as Meshantituck, was in the district of [Providence](#) now called Cranston. It would remain part of Providence until 1754, and hence the meetinghouse there should be considered as in Providence, making the fourth erected there by the [Friends](#).



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1754

June 14, Friday: Portions of the town of [Cranston](#) were annexed to the city of [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#).

1765

During this year, on the [Pawtuxet](#) River in [Rhode Island](#), Furnace Hope was organized by [Stephen Hopkins](#), Esquire, and others such as the merchant Brown brothers. This furnace would cast cannon from local bog iron ore during the American Revolution.

[THE BROWN BROTHERS](#)

1786

September: Dr. Zuriel Waterman, 30 years of age, and his brother George Waterman, attempted to rescue two men who had passed out in a cistern in [Cranston](#), [Rhode Island](#). The result was that the doctor also was overcome by the noxious fumes, and died.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

1790

June 14, Monday: The federal Congress created the [Rhode Island](#) custom districts of [Providence](#) and [Newport](#). These two districts handled all ship traffic connecting with nine Rhode Island ports, in the Providence district, [Providence](#) and [Pawtuxet](#), and, in the Newport district, [Newport](#), [North Kingstown](#), [East Greenwich](#), [Westerly](#), [Bristol](#), [Warren](#), and Barrington.

[READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT](#)



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1798

October 1, Monday: In [Rhode Island](#), Hopkins Hudson was sentenced to be [hanged](#) for the murder of Rufus Randal of [Cranston](#).

The infant Orpah Bryant died in [Concord](#), Massachusetts without reaching her 1st birthday:

**“VIVENS,
DILECTISSIMA
ORPAH BRYANT.**

BORN DECEMBER 24, 1797.

DIED OCTOBER 1, 1798.

**SHE WAS THE JOY OF HER FATHER,
AND THE DELIGHT OF HER MOTHER**

MORTUA, LACHRYMABILLIMA.”

1805



December 25, Wednesday: Johann Philipp Karl, Count Stadion-Warthausen was named Lord Chamberlain and Chancellor to Emperor Franz I of Austria.

Dalmatia was attached to the Republic of Italy.

Brixen and Trent were removed from Austrian rule and attached to Bavaria.

In [Cranston](#), Noah Brown and Alice Prophet Greene, a widow, got married and would create a black and red mixed-race [Rhode Island](#) family. One of their sons, [William J. Brown](#), would eventually place this day on record in his autobiography, THE LIFE OF WILLIAM J. BROWN, OF PROVIDENCE, R.I.; WITH PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF INCIDENTS IN RHODE ISLAND:

PAGES 32-35: My father married Alice Greene; her maiden name was Alice Prophet. She was a widow, having lost her husband, Uriah Greene, several years previous to her second marriage. They were married in Cranston, R. I., the 25th of December, 1805, and commenced keeping house in that town, but being engaged in a seafaring life, he removed to Providence, and rented a house of Dr. Pardon Bowen, situated on Wells street. During his residence in Cranston, he had a son born, July 10th, 1810, and named him Joseph George Washington Brown. My sister, Mary Alice, was born September 1811, in this city. My brother George was born September 23d, 1817. After residing in Dr. Pardon Bowen's house five years, we were obliged to move, as Mr. Bowen wished to make a strawberry bed in the garden where the house was located. My



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father hired a house called the Red Lion, near the junction of South Main and Power streets, on the north side, the place where the Amateur Dramatic Hall now stands. My brother Henry was born there in 1820....

My mother, as I stated, was a widow when she was married to my father. I never had any knowledge respecting her first husband's relations. My mother's relations were the Prophets, who belonged to the Narragansett tribe, and resided in Cranston. My grandmother's father was a man of note and one of the chiefs, and called, Grandfather Jeffery. Whether he was a prophet by name or by title I know not. He had two daughters, but whether he had any sons I know not, but think he had none. One of grandfather Jeffery's daughters married a white man, preferring civilized to savage life. The other daughter, my grandmother, purchased a colored man and married him, by whom she had five children, one son and four daughters, John, Phebe, Mary, Alice, and Eunice. Her father being very much displeased with her management, gave his effects to the first, who married the white man, and the fourth generation are living in the city at present, and moving in upper circles. After some years his anger abated towards his daughter's husband and he rendered some aid to the family....

1825



August 4, Thursday: The name of [Walton Felch](#) was "erased" from the records of the 1st [Baptist](#) Church of [Providence, Rhode Island](#) — which is to say, he was removed from their register of members despite the fact that he had neither died nor transferred his membership to some other church.

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day Our first Meeting was large & an excellent Gospel testimony from Micajah Collins who has just returned & is on his way home from a long journey in the Western & Southern States. —Huldah Hoag had short testimony but Geo: Hatton was silent in the first meeting — In the last we had more buisness than usual —Hannah Dennis was liberated to accompany Sarah Tucker on a religious visit to some Quarteerly Meetings in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting — & South Kingston Moy [Monthly] Meeting was united with in the Appointment of Hannah Knowles to the Station of an Elder. — We dined at Aunt Thurstons & rode home —

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



August 29, Monday: Brazil agreed to a proposed treaty between itself and Portugal, recognizing the independence of Brazil.

In [Cranston, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:



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2nd day Spent this forenoon mostly in [Providence](#) attending to a little buisness & dined at Jos Anthonys - returned to the School House & spent the Afternoon in the boys school & was pleased with the progress of the learners & order that was observed among them. - it was comfortable also to find that an openness & freedom existed between the Teachers Superintendents & Schollars - to find that the inmates of the institution harmonised throughout & that all things were in a comfortable state - Towards night Wm Almy called at the School House & carried me out to his house at [Cranston](#) where I found Daniel & Thomas Howland who were a pleasant addition to our evening circle. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1828



The [Dexter Asylum](#) began to “provide care” for the poor, aged and mentally ill of [Providence](#). The building was of painted brick, five stories in the center with three stories in the wings, and with a granite basement. Thus would continue until 1957. Ebenezer Knight Dexter’s magnificent gift to the town, though much needed at the time, later would be seen as an anachronism — a walled and isolated “poor farm” in the midst of Providence’s residential east side, where nobody wanted to be reminded of the unfortunate among us. It is evident that in the minds of the people administering the institution, this town Asylum fell into the same general category as the punitive and disciplinary and custodial facilities located more fortuitously in woebegone [Cranston](#), [Rhode Island](#), to wit, the State Workhouse and House of Corrections, the State Hospital for the Insane, the State Almshouse, the State Prison and Providence County Jail, and the State Reform Schools. The general rubric under which all these facilities traveled, indiscriminately, was “Government Institutions.” Early inmates at the asylum farm with “no visible means of support” were indentured to labor,

under threat of punishment, in return merely for their room, board, and clothing. The asylum was not only a farm but also a manufacturing facility at which junk and oakum rope products were produced for the shipping industry. Records of sales of milk, vegetables, and general produce show that, despite all this virtually free labor, expenses usually exceeded earnings. The farm had constant difficulty merely in feeding itself.



From this point forward, on each 3d Saturday in December in the Council Chamber of City Hall, a “Town Meeting” would be held by “freemen” of Providence per terms of the will, to transact business relating to the Dexter donations.

A grassy enclosure of about 9 1/12 acres, on the property, located west of Dexter Street near High Street, would be put into service as a militia training field.



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1838

The 1st Rhode-Island-operated prison was built, in [Providence](#), on Gaspee Street north of the cove, a 2-story granite structure costing about \$1,300 per cell, or a total of \$51,500. This building would prove to be unsuitable, and the state would in 1869 land in the Cranston village of Howard in 1869. This land, known as the State Farm, was managed by the Board of State Charities and Corrections until about 1920. Several institutions were built there, including the State Workhouse and House of Corrections, the State Hospital for the Insane, the State Almshouse (renamed the State Infirmary in 1917), the State Prison and Providence County Jail (managed jointly), and the State Reform Schools (the Sockanosset School for Boys, and the Oaklawn School for Girls). The State Workhouse and House of Corrections building held men and women and was also the home for the women's county jail and for state prison inmates. After the male workhouse inmates were phased out, it would become in 1924 the State Reformatory for Women. It would close in about 1968. The State Prison and Providence County Jail in [Cranston](#) would be built in 1878, and this eventually would become the Adult Correctional Institution that we now hold so dear. Federal inmates have also been bunking at this facility from time to time. The governing body for the State Institutions has changed over the years, becoming variously "State Public Welfare Commission," "Department of Public Welfare," and "Department of Social Welfare." Though some of its inmates have been under federal or county jurisdiction, the institutions seem to have always been operated by the state of [Rhode Island](#). The titles "Keeper of the State Prison" and "Warden of the County Jail" are two hats worn by the same apparatchik.

DEXTER ASYLUM



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1840

The 6th national census.³ Black Americans were becoming more numerous, in Mississippi at this point, than white Americans. In Massachusetts, the average free black able-bodied workingman was receiving one dollar per day for a laboring year of 260 working days, or a total of \$260 annual income.

In the [Rhode Island](#) census, [Cato Pearce](#) was listed as an agricultural laborer living alone in [Cranston](#), with Thomas Cole as a neighbor. Cato indicates in his 1842 narrative that for many years he lived in Cranston with Deacon Thomas Cole and Mrs. Cole. Deacon Cole was a white man, a [Baptist](#), and had assisted Cato even before the 1820 incident with Potter Senior.

[Edward Jarvis](#) uncovered serious errors in the Massachusetts census of this year, and [Lemuel Shattuck](#) uncovered serious errors in the [Boston](#) census.

It having become abundantly clear that the new American Statistical Society had been poorly named, its initialism being ASS, the name was corrected to a less undignified American Statistical Association. (It's obvious that these were high-minded gentlemen — or they would have seen this one coming.)

As of 1790 the center of the human population of the USA had been a little town just about a day's travel inland

3. The rise in [manumissions](#) in the post-Revolutionary period had increased the proportion of free black Americans from about 8% to about 13.5%, where it had been holding steady. A decline in manumissions in the late antebellum period, combined with the lesser fecundity of free black Americans, would move the free-to-enslaved proportion back down to about 11% as we arrived at our [Civil War](#):

Census	% in Population
1790	8%
1810	13.5%
1840	13.5%
1861	11%

HDT

WHAT?

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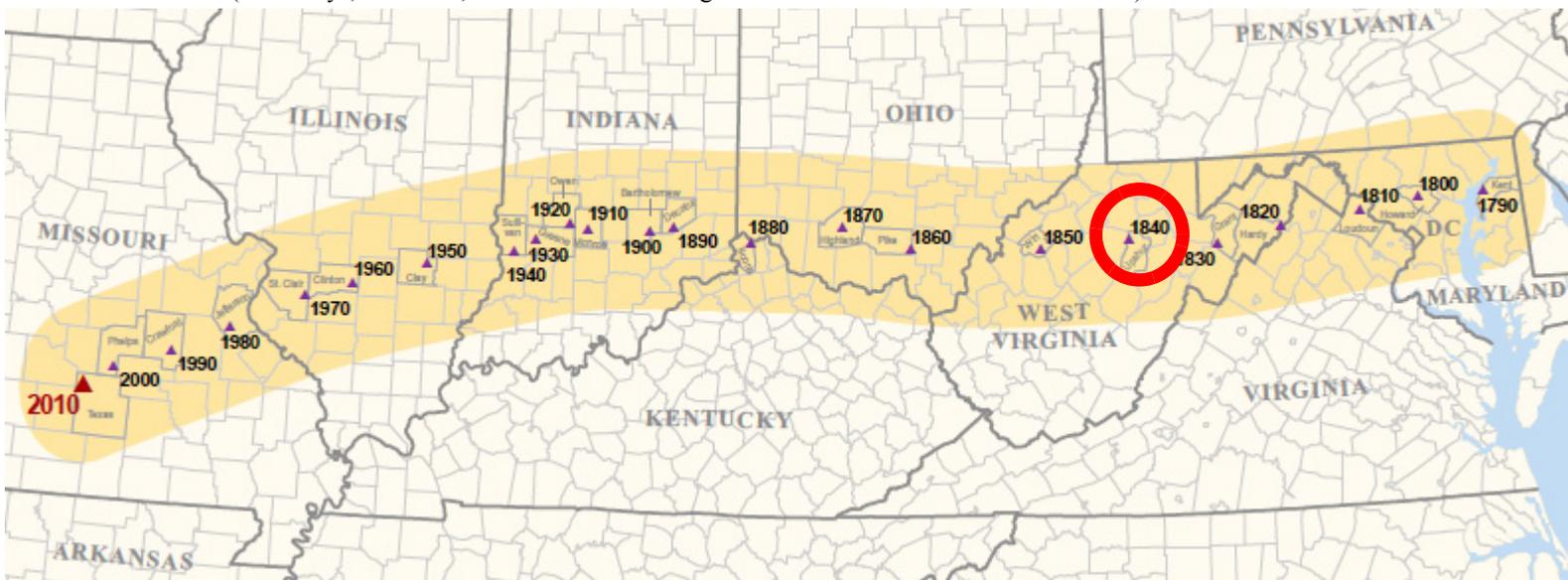
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from [Baltimore](#). By this period the center of population had relocated.



(Nowadays, of course, we've all been coming from one or another center in Missouri.)





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1841

June 26, Saturday: According to [William J. Brown](#), the last Black Election Day celebration in [Rhode Island](#) occurred in this year during the turmoil of the Dorr War.⁴

Traditional public festivals such as black Election Days continued well into the nineteenth century. According to [William J. Brown](#), the last black Election Day in the [Providence](#) region was in 1841. Interestingly, First of August celebrations occurred shortly thereafter. The [Providence Daily Journal](#) began recording West Indian Emancipation festivals in 1844. While First of August parades partly drew upon some of the traditions of Election Days, they were much more imbued with political and social context. Whereas black Election Days demonstrated much more plebeian, carnivalesque practices (albeit, as we shall see, with important social and political meanings), First of August celebrations specifically addressed salient political and social issues confronting blacks in the Atlantic world. In this way, this critical transformation in black public life did more than promote a black politics of protest, as Patrick Rael contends. British West Indian Emancipation celebrations nurtured a transnational black Atlantic consciousness. Whereas scholars such as William Pierson demonstrate the syncretic nature of black Election days, particularly how black participants drew upon African traditions (and in this regard these public festivals have their connection with other colonial black plebeian festivals such as Pinkster in New York and New Jersey, West Indian Emancipation celebrations reflected a different moral, social, and political consciousness that moved away from its African connections and addressed contemporary concerns that effected blacks in the Anglo-American black Atlantic.

If we are to follow [William J. Brown](#)'s description of the final days of black Election Days, we can see the benign as well as potentially politically and socially explosive content of these traditional New England cultural practices. Black Election Days in the Providence area annually occurred on the last Saturday of June [in 1841, June 26th], following white election days, but more critically at the end of the planting season. In this regard, black Election Days were connected to other harvest day celebrations where leisure, festivities, and fun followed an intense labor season. Some scholars have interpreted these election days as "safety-valves" where blacks in New England created their own public space to demonstrate ideas about political and social order, thereby reinforcing traditional white slave-master rule.⁵ Other scholars have focused on the

4. The holiday function soon would be assumed by the 1st of August, West Indian Emancipation Day.

5. Joseph P. Reidy, "Negro Election Day and Black Community Life in New England, 1750-1860," [Marxist Perspectives](#), Vol. 1 (Fall 1978), 102-117.



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interracial nature of these public festivals where white plebeians and blacks participated in the festivities. Indeed, these historians contend that the decline of Election Days can be attributed to rising racial and class tensions produced by immigration and industrialization. They maintain that the decline of black Election days corresponded with the emergence of a white working class with vested racial interests (and who would later find their leisure activities absorbed by racially charged minstrel shows), and a black bourgeoisie that promoted a politics of racial uplift and moral rectitude invested in asserting its authority and legitimacy over black plebeians who largely participated in these festival.⁶

Other scholars such as William Pierson draw connections to the ways elected Election Day governors and kings had direct ties to Africa, revealing the ways Anglo-American style election techniques (where not only the governors or kings were elected, but also his "officers," including lieutenant-governors and treasurers) were blended with African customs regarding authority, legitimacy, and status. In reflecting upon Elleanor Eldridge's experience with black Election Days, the stature of recently arrived Africans would support Pierson's argument. Eldridge's paternal grandfather was African, and her brother George was elected a black governor for four consecutive years. Moreover, her brother's election brought a regal-like status to Elleanor. As Eldridge's biographer Frances Greene noted, "As this title [of governor] was, in imitation of the whites, invested with considerable dignity, it follows that Elleanor stood among her people, in the very highest niche of the aristocracy. She always accompanied her brothers to these festivals, dressed in such style as became the sister of 'His Excellency'."⁷

According to [William J. Brown](#), white masters would make processional arrangements with local tavern-keepers, securing rooms to hold elections and festivities following the governor's parade, and providing refreshments for election participants. Thereafter, the participants themselves would pay for food and drink during the celebration while the governor or king held "court." In the black Elections around [Providence](#), Brown recalled that the events followed a regular schedule, with officers being elected, and then marching through the streets around 11:00 in the morning. The governor and his council were "accompanied by music" and "would march up and down the road, after which they would retire to the tavern and refresh themselves, then take up a collection and dismiss until dinner; after dinner they would amuse themselves any way they choose until the time for dancing."⁸ Brown described the elections as raucous events where anyone who had "any animosity against

6. David Roediger, *THE WAGES OF WHITENESS: RACE AND THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS* (NY: Verso, 1991,1993), 102-105; Shane White, *SOMEWHAT MORE INDEPENDENT: THE END OF SLAVERY IN NEW YORK CITY, 1770-1810* (Athens GA: U of Georgia P, 1991), 95-106; Shane White, "'It was a Proud Day': African Americans, Festivals, and Parades in the North, 1741-1834," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (June, 1994), 13-50.

7. Frances Green, *MEMOIRS OF ELLEANOR ELDRIDGE* (Providence: B.T. Albro, 1838), 33.

8. William J. Brown, *THE LIFE OF WILLIAM J. BROWN, OF PROVIDENCE, R.I.; WITH PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF INCIDENTS IN RHODE ISLAND, IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND* (Providence RI: Angel & Co., Printers), 13.



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another, male or female," would "pay of their old debts by fighting." William Pierson's study of black Election Days throughout New England suggests that not all of these contentious issues were settled in this way, and the governors or kings and their councils would adjudicate these cases in a more sober manner.⁹ Moreover, the decisions resolved by the elected officials were accepted, becoming customary "law" in the local community, thereby reinforcing the importance of these black Election Days as a black public sphere that maintained social, political, and cultural power. Furthermore, that William Brown does not identify the participants as either slaves or freedmen and women (an issue further supported by our knowledge that both George and Elleanor Eldridge, free blacks living in Warwick and [Providence](#), participated in black Election Days around the time Brown recollected these events) reveals that Election Day festivities were not simply "safety valves" to release tensions between dominant and subordinate groups, nominally lubricating the hegemonic position of the white elite. Since black Election Day was celebrated into the 1830s, a period when the majority of African Americans in [Rhode Island](#) were free, their popularity suggests that these festivals were widely accepted among blacks from different statuses and social conditions as a way to carve out black public space. William Brown argued that the more "pious did not care about attending" Election Day parades, but knowing that such morally reputable women like Elleanor Eldridge frequently attended these festivities illustrates that these celebrations remained popular among the black community in the early nineteenth century.

Nonetheless, black Election Days abruptly ended in 1841 in the Providence area according to [William J. Brown](#) as a result of a riot provoked by the mistreatment of an elected officer. Election Day began innocently enough, following the traditions of elections and the parade, but when "a very dark man mounted on a horse and sword at his side, introduced himself as General Amey" and rode around town for half an hour, he "ordered the hostler to put up his horse" while he went into a local tavern. As Brown related, General Amey then "walked up to the bar and regaled himself; then walked around among the assembled crowd like some officer in authority, but finding no one willing to acknowledge him as bearing rule over them, again went out and ordered the hostler to get his horse," which he did according to orders. General Amey's perplexity over the lack of respect received demonstrates both the racial fissures of black Election Day and the ways these plebeian festivities lost the potency they traditionally held. Black Election Days were plebeian festivals where a subordinate group was for a short period "on top" in a "world-turned-upside-down," a cultural (not to say political) practice that had a long history in Anglo-America and Europe. But after years of increasing racial tensions, including two race riots (Hardscrabble in 1824 and the Olney Street Riot

9. William Pierson, *BLACK YANKEES: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AFRO-AMERICAN SUBCULTURE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NEW ENGLAND* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 129-140.



in 1831), whites were not inclined to be deferential to black authority figures, regardless of the dramaturgical quality of black Election Day. Some white Rhode Islanders might go along with the "custom" but even they had their limits. The hostler continued to take General Amey's horse as the general rode throughout the city, but now maintained that he should be paid for securing the general's horse. General Amey refused to pay the hostler, demanding to see the landlord of the facility that kept the horses, who in turn told him that it was the custom to remunerate the hostlers for their services. Again General Amey refused, and some "cross words passed between them when the landlord threw a half brick, hitting [General Amey] on the head. The General fell backward to the ground like one dead, and the cry soon went forth that General Amey was killed by the landlord."¹⁰ Pandemonium erupted. The subterranean political and social dimensions of black Election Days finally exploded. Even if white leaders thought these black public festivals were "safety-valves" to release social and labor tensions, the riot that followed General Amey's injury was not what they expected. Upon hearing the rumor that General Amey was dead, the general's brother "went like a madman after the man who killed his brother." When he reached the stable, General Amey returned to consciousness, and now "the two enraged brothers started for the landlord, who seeing them, fled into the house for refuge." The brothers charged and broke through the front door. The landlord was able to escape through a window in another room, and "was joined outside by twenty men, who armed themselves with sticks of wood." According to William Brown, "The two Ameys proceeded towards the landlord and his men who dropped their sticks and fled" towards the [Pawtuxet](#) River. Earlier, the landlord had set up a room in the tavern for Election Day festivities, and the brothers and other revelers proceeded to feast and drink, even "drinking up the landlord's liquor." After "regaling themselves" the brothers went to gather their belongings, only to be refused by the landlady, who had called upon her "help" to assist her to keep the brother's clothes. The women who had accompanied the Amey brothers then "overpowered" the landlady and her assistants, took the clothes and left for [Providence](#). The Amey brothers and other men who were participating in the festival stayed behind since they learned that the landlord "had gone after the Pawtuxet company of soldiers" and now "armed themselves with sticks of wood and formed themselves in a line, and awaited for the company." Soon they heard the fife and drum, and heard the captain of the guard order them to "surrender themselves prisoners" or he would fire upon them. The Election Day men refused and "told him cooley to fire if he pleased, but it would be the last firing he would live to do." At this point, the political potency of Election Day fully manifested itself. Not simply a racial and social drama playing to pacified black and approving white audiences, General Amey clearly saw himself as a military figure leading men to a battle because white people

10. William J. Brown, THE LIFE OF WILLIAM J. BROWN, OF PROVIDENCE, R.I.; WITH PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF INCIDENTS IN RHODE ISLAND, IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (Providence RI: Angel & Co., Printers), 14-15.



failed to recognize his legitimacy and political authority. Confronting the [Pawtuxet](#) soldiers, he was fighting for his and his men's honor, much like any other military leader leading his soldiers. The captain of the guard probably recognized this as well, for he and his company of soldiers left without confronting General Amey and his men.¹¹

Matters remained quiet for a week, when General Almey's brother told his employer Mr. Halsey (for whom he worked as a foreman) about what happened, and how he planned to return to Warwick to settle his account with the landlord of the tavern. Halsey tried to discourage him, but Almey's brother insisted on making "amends." The landlord received the brother, and said he needed a few minutes to gather the proper information. However, the "landlord immediately dispatched a messenger to [Pawtuxet](#), and a large number of men soon arrived, and locked [brother] Amey in jail." Before Almey could be released, Mr. Halsey had to pay five hundred dollars "to settle the case." As William Brown noted, "That was a death blow to the election. They tried several times to revive it, but failed in the attempt."¹²

The violence and racial unrest unleashed by this particular black Election Day celebration undoubtedly discouraged future festivals. We can also see how the conviviality and frivolity of interracial plebeian public festivals that were once connected to a colonial culture and more heterogeneous social condition now appeared remote in the context of an increasingly racially divisive and socially tense urban North.¹³ However, black Election Days also came to an end in the 1830s in part because their function as a vehicle for demonstrating a black political and cultural presence in the public sphere lost its utility. Where these Election Days traditionally offered a space for "elected" black leaders to exert political and policing control over the black community and operated outside the broader social context, by the 1830s blacks wanted to use civil and political institutions to address issues affecting the black community in [Rhode Island](#) and the United States. West Indian Emancipation festivals combined the political and social consciousness of black associational life that was maturing in the 1830s with the frivolity and pleasure of traditional black Election Days. First of August celebrations demonstrated that black Rhode Islanders could be politically assertive citizens while having fun at the same time.

The [Providence Daily Journal](#) began recording First of August celebrations in 1844, six years following the official end of [slavery](#) in the British Caribbean. The [Daily Journal](#) identified characteristics of these festivals that illustrate how they were connected to earlier black public events like Election Day and

11. William J. Brown, THE LIFE OF WILLIAM J. BROWN, OF PROVIDENCE, R.I.; WITH PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF INCIDENTS IN RHODE ISLAND, IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (Providence RI: Angel & Co., Printers), 16.

12. William J. Brown, THE LIFE OF WILLIAM J. BROWN, OF PROVIDENCE, R.I.; WITH PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF INCIDENTS IN RHODE ISLAND, IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (Providence RI: Angel & Co., Printers), 17.

13. John Wood Sweet examines the transformation of interracial contact in the North in more detail, especially focusing on Bobalition pamphlets and white humor, recognizing that race riots such as the Hardscrabble Riot of 1824 influenced this transformation, and also affected democratic politics in the North. See John Wood Sweet, BODIES POLITIC: NEGOTIATING RACE IN THE AMERICAN NORTH, 1730-1830 (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003), 378-397.



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Fourth of July celebrations. But they also reflected ties to black civic and political organizations. In the August 3, 1844 edition of the newspaper, the Daily Journal wrote that “[t]he colored people of this city assembled to the number of several hundred yesterday in the grove in the Northern suburbs, when a picnic was spread and a celebration held in commemoration of the emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indies.” However, the gravity of the occasion required more than just a social gathering and feasting. As the paper wrote, “Addresses were made by several speakers, and every thing was conducted in an orderly and creditable manner. After the picnic a long procession composed of persons of both sexes, marched through the streets with banners and music.”¹⁴

The newspaper’s description of the festival and parade is notable for a variety of reasons. While blacks traditionally claimed public space to demonstrate that they were part of the larger social fabric of the urban community since the colonial period with Election Days, they now used this space to celebrate a powerful event, the abolition of [slavery](#) in the British West Indies. As with Election Days, feasting, music, and enjoyment were integral to the event. People were encouraged to have a good time. But this solemn occasion also required sober behavior. Black behavior and morality as well as black politics were on public display, and it was critical that the celebration was “conducted in an orderly and creditable manner.” Unlike Election Day, First of August festivals were not coordinated around agricultural seasons, and were thus not tied to intense labor activities that might require an equally intense releasing of energy in leisure and festivities (the traditional “safety-valve argument). The processional march, music, and banners all speak to the ways African Americans wanted their social and political ideas to be taken seriously by the broader community. The Daily Journal commented on one occasion upon the ways festival participants “marched through the streets in process with music and banners and made a very orderly and respectable appearance.”¹⁵ At another time, the paper noted that “music, banners, and processions were all in good taste, and [the participants] were all in good taste, and they made an excellent and creditable appearance as they marched through the streets.”¹⁶ As with any public display, there was a conscious dramaturgical quality to the processions. Precisely because negative racial stereotypes of urban free blacks circulated the white press in the forms of Bobalition pamphlets and popular culture in minstrel shows, African Americans sought to redefine those counterfeit views of race with more sobering and uplifting representations of black life. The multivalent character of, not to mention the presence of white authority in black Election Day festivals, left participants and viewers unclear whether the event was nothing more than a playful game (much as the African game of paw-paw that was often seen played during Election Day

14. Providence Daily Journal, Saturday August 3, 1844.

15. Providence Daily Journal, Saturday August 2, 1845.

16. Providence Daily Journal, Monday August 3, 1846.



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celebrations).¹⁷ Black emancipation, however, was not a game, and the seriousness of the event required a level of engagement that was appropriate for the occasion. The procession, music, and banners may still have been a spectacle for viewers who watched the celebrants march through the city. However, they were observing a demonstration of political activity that honored black freedom, a far cry from the plebeian harvest festival of black Election Day. And as we will see momentarily, the addresses given by speakers not only directly referred to the significance of the event they were all celebrating, but also to the ways broader political movements in the British Caribbean also spoke to black life in other parts of the black Atlantic.

Significantly, First of August festivals were coordinated by the members of the black community where Election Days were financially controlled by whites and depended upon white leadership. The brief history of establishing their own churches and civic associations enabled blacks to develop an independent voice, one that became confident to assert itself in the public arena. While it is unclear to what degree [Providence's](#) black associations contributed their leadership to West Indian Celebrations, the [Providence Daily Journal](#) recorded that the First of August celebration of 1846 was coordinated by the city's Union Anti-Slavery Society. That the festival of 1845 culminated in a concert at Mechanic's Hall suggests that the black community's laboring associations might have been involved in that year's processional organization, not to mention how the celebration sought to reach a broader racial audience. At various West Indian Emancipation festivals celebrated in the American North, black and white speakers gave addresses that commemorated the triumph of black emancipation and encouraged black activism. While black and white audiences could be politically moved by lectures and (as we shall see shortly) singing hymns, black Americans were especially energized as these addresses and songs called upon them to act as citizens to change the social and political direction of the American republic.

First of August addresses spoke to a variety of issues concerning the contemporary and future condition of blacks in the Atlantic world. From local speakers such as Newport's William Channing to national luminaries such as Ralph [Waldo Emerson](#), John Quincy Adams, not to mention [Frederick Douglass](#) whose speech opened this section, black and white leaders recognized how these celebrations offered a stage to speak to the issues facing blacks in the Atlantic world. Not surprisingly these speeches move between the condition of blacks in the Caribbean to that of blacks in America, be they in the North or South. Indeed, that these speeches swivel freely between the Caribbean and the United States further illustrate how black hopes and struggles transcended national boundaries and confronted blacks throughout the black Atlantic. In this regard,

17. William Pierson, *BLACK YANKEES: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AFRO-AMERICAN SUBCULTURE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NEW ENGLAND* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 96-113, 117-128.



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it is perhaps best to initially examine the speech of Reverend Henry Bleby who served as a Baptist missionary to Barbados and witnessed the transition from [slavery](#) to freedom on the island. By 1858, when Bleby gave his August First speech at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, the issue of American emancipation was at its most volatile (indeed John Brown would lead his historic raid on Harper's Ferry, Virginia in less than a year) and undoubtedly influenced Bleby's address. Thus, Bleby's choice to initially highlight the Barbadian slave insurrection of 1832 (and the violence that ensued) and then stress the peaceful and successful transition from slavery to freedom connected with larger concerns that his abolitionist oriented audience (not to mention Americans in general) would have: what would be the future of slaves in the United States, especially once freed? Bleby directly pointed to the history of Barbadian slaves to illustrate how emancipation would not only be peaceful, but how the freedmen and women would nobly confront the challenges freedom presented. Indeed, the history of slavery in Barbados demonstrated that the brutality of slavery would only produce the violence of slave insurrections as the 1832 slave rebellion proved. In 1832, 50,000 slaves "made an effort for their liberty, and had resolved to strike a blow for freedom." According to Bleby, the uprising showed that slaves were discontented with their social condition (despite what West Indian Planters and other slaveholders argued), and that the violence endemic to [slavery](#) produced reciprocal violent responses. The British military put down the 1832 insurrection, which killed 2,000 insurgents and "most of them were either shot or hanged in cold blood."¹⁸ Bleby said that after the slave uprising, planters discouraged missionary work (even though some missionaries publicly supported planter rule), and eighteen churches were burned. Despite this low point in Bleby's missionary experience, the abolition of slavery in the British Empire energized him, as he recognized that part of his mission was to play a role in the emancipation process.

In fact, rather than producing mayhem and retribution, slaves welcomed abolition with joyful prayers and singing now that their jubilee had come. As Bleby said to his audience,

Sir, I was there when slavery was abolished. I saw the monster died.... I stood up late at night, in one of the churches under siege under my charge, a very large church, and the aisles were crowded, and the gallery stairs, and the communion place, and the pulpit stairs, were all crowded, and there were thousands of people round the building, at every open door, and window, looking in.... I was my privilege to stand up in the congregation, and "proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors that were bound."¹⁹

In Bleby's mind, God's children had finally been delivered from

18. Rev. Henry Bleby, "Speech of Rev. Henry Bleby, Missionary From Barbadoes, On the Results of Emancipation in the British W.I. Colonies, Delivered at the Celebration of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, held at Island Grove, Abington, July 31st, 1858" (Boston: R.F. Wallcut, 1858).



enslavement, describing how his black congregation knelt in prayer when “the hour of freedom had come.” And at the crucial moment of their emancipation sang hymns to celebrate their jubilee. And not just singing, according to Bleby, “they literally shouted” the hymn, “The Negro Jubilee,” which he then shared with the audience. Significantly the hymn did not simply rejoice the emancipation of slaves in the British Caribbean, although the stanza’s did celebrate British justice and philanthropy for finally bringing slave’s their freedom:

Send the glad tidings o’er the sea,
His chains are broke, the slave is free;
Britannia’s justice, wealth, and might
Have gained the negro’s long-lost right

Significantly, these freedmen and women recognized that this historical moment was connected to all those other black men and women still in chains in the black Atlantic. They also knew that the world would now turn their eyes on them to see how they would adjust to lives in freedom. As they sang:

Our prayers shall now with praise combine,
For freedom poured on every clime;
For holy freedom, gracious Lord,
To join a world in sweet accord:
Then, freed from sin, from error free,
We’ll keep a brighter jubilee.²⁰

Bleby emphasized how emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies sparked a flame, and it was now incumbent upon his audience to carry the torch. As he said, “I hope the time will soon come, Mr. Chairman, when thousands of Christian ministers, with their congregations, throughout the length and breadth of the United States will be able to sing the Jubilee Hymn (to which he was received with “Loud Applause”).”²¹ In this statement, Bleby concisely addressed the purpose of West Indian Emancipation festivals: for people to celebrate black freedom in the Atlantic world, and more importantly, become historical agents themselves to end [slavery](#) in the United States. Bleby’s address also pointed to the important ways freedmen and women made the transition from slavery to freedom. Emancipation was not a failure, as some people were arguing, rather “[t]hroughout the British West Indies, in every island, the condition of the people is comparably superior, in all respects

19. Rev. Henry Bleby, “Speech of Rev. Henry Bleby, Missionary From Barbadoes, On the Results of Emancipation in the British W.I. Colonies, Delivered at the Celebration of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, held at Island Grove, Abington, July 31st, 1858.”

20. Rev. Henry Bleby, “Speech of Rev. Henry Bleby, Missionary From Barbadoes, On the Results of Emancipation in the British W.I. Colonies, Delivered at the Celebration of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, held at Island Grove, Abington, July 31st, 1858.”

21. Rev. Henry Bleby, “Speech of Rev. Henry Bleby, Missionary From Barbadoes, On the Results of Emancipation in the British W.I. Colonies, Delivered at the Celebration of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, held at Island Grove, Abington, July 31st, 1858.”



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to what it was in slavery." It was true that the colonies were not as prosperous as before slavery, but this was the result of changes in the Caribbean economy (sugar production) in general and not tied to slavery as a labor system. Freedom did not produce a lazy and indolent black population. Instead the "moral condition of Barbadoes will compare favorably with that of any other civilized country.... The people are willing to do all they can to raise themselves, and they do raise themselves." In fact, he turned is rhetorical microscope to the condition of free blacks in the United States. Describing how he read a playbill denoting that blacks must sit in a gallery, Bleby commented how that "alone was sufficient to satisfy me that [blacks in America] are laboring under discouragements, difficulties, and prejudices which must exercise a blighting influence upon them, and must necessarily keep them down." Bleby told his audience that laws of Barbados supported racial equality, such as sitting on juries. And even the governor of one of the British Caribbean islands emphasized racial equality by inviting black people to the governor's house. When "some of the gentry gave the cold should to these colored guests, [the governor] caused it to be intimated to them, that if they expected invitations to the Government House, his guests must be treated by them with the same respect and courtesy he manifested towards them himself." To this statement, Bleby was received with loud cheers. Bleby stressed an issue that was just not influencing the lives of blacks hundreds of miles away in the American South (though that was the primary issue that brought the First of August participants together). He was now addressing an issue that directly affected his audience and was encouraging them to change the social and political condition of those black Americans who lived among them in New England. The gesture by the island governor "did more than anything else I know of to put an end to the reign of prejudice on that island. Very soon, the colored people began to mingle upon equal terms with the whites...."²² If his white audience members would follow suit (and their presence at the First of August celebration was an encouraging sign) then too the United States could be a place where racial equality could manifest. Here again Bleby was emphasizing the larger issue that these Emancipation festivals addressed: the history—and future—of blacks in America were connected to other blacks in the Atlantic world. Collectively, they shared a history of [slavery](#) and racial prejudice, and together they would triumph over these challenges to become a truly free people, a virtuous example of Western Civilization enlightenment.

Indeed, the themes of collective history and identity as well as historical agency identity repeatedly emerge in West Indian Emancipation Celebration speeches. In one of the earlier addresses, Newport's William Ellery Channing implored his audience to transcend their parochial regional interests that

22. Rev. Henry Bleby, "Speech of Rev. Henry Bleby, Missionary From Barbadoes, On the Results of Emancipation in the British W.I. Colonies, Delivered at the Celebration of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, held at Island Grove, Abington, July 31st, 1858."



had “deadened our sympathies for the oppressed,” and collectively work to abolish slavery. Again, British West Indian Emancipation was an inspiring historical example of how moral virtue triumphed over the sin of slavery. Similar to Bleby’s speech he described the brutality of the slave regime and how nature “cries aloud for Freedom as our proper good, our birthright and our end, and resents nothing so much as its loss.” Like Bleby as well, he connected the issue of emancipation to racial equality. The triumph of black freedom in the British Caribbean was not just liberty from slavery: “Still more, and what deserves special note, the colored man raised his eyes, on this day, to the white man, and saw the infinite chasm between himself and the white race growing narrower; saw and felt that he to was a Man, that he too had rights; that he belonged to the common father, not to a frail, selfish creature; that under God he was his won master.”²³ Other First of August speakers would draw upon the same theme. In his 1844 speech, Ralph [Waldo Emerson](#) noted, “I esteem the occasion of this jubilee to be the proud discovery, that the black race can contend with the white; that, in the great anthem which we call history ... [blacks in the Western world] perceive the time arrived when they can strike in with effect, and take a master’s part in the music. The civility of the world has reached that pitch, that their moral genius is becoming indispensable, and the quality of this race honored for itself.”²⁴

In his speech, William Channing informed his audience that emancipation in the British West Indies was more than a story of the end of [slavery](#) in the Caribbean. As he said, “[l]ittle did I imagine, that the emancipation of the Slaves, was to be invested with holiness and moral sublimity.” Because of its moral and spiritual power, West Indian emancipation was commanding Americans to connect with this historic event in the Atlantic world and draw upon its energy to address the salient problems within their midst, especially racial prejudice. Channing noted that blacks were received as equals in Europe, and only in the United States were they viewed as inferior (exaggerated perhaps, but nonetheless a powerful rhetorical point to inspire his audience). As he said, “It is here [the United States] only this prejudice reigns; and to this prejudice strengthened by our subjection to the southern influence....”²⁵ By celebrating West Indian Emancipation and its glory, Channing was demanding his audience not to let this historic moment recede into historical amnesia (perhaps like Haiti, the other great black emancipation movement that had been mostly shunned by the United States and, significantly, was celebrated publicly by black Americans like West Indian emancipation). In keeping the flames of history alive, his audience was sustaining the flames of human freedom alive as well. Speaking to his audience,

23. William E. Channing, “An Address Delivered at Lennox, on The First of August, 1842. The Anniversary of Emancipation, In the British West Indies” (Lenox, MA: J.G. Stanly, 1842). Rider Collection, Box 98, No. 13. John Hay Library. Brown University.

24. Ralph [Waldo Emerson](#), “An Address Delivered to the Court-House in Concord, MA, on 1st August, 1844, On the Anniversary of the Emancipation of Negroes in the British West Indies” (Boston: James Munroe and CO, 1844).

25. William E. Channing, “An Address Delivered at Lennox, on The First of August, 1842. The Anniversary of Emancipation, In the British West Indies”



Channing said, "We ought to shout for joy, not shrink like cowards, when justice and humanity triumph over established wrongs."²⁶

He thus wanted his audience to transform the moral soul of his country. In his speech he said,

We commemorate with transport the redemption of a nation from political bondage; but this is a light burden compared with personal slavery. The oppression which these United States threw off by our revolutionary struggle, was the perfection of freedom, when placed by the side of the galling, crushing, intolerable yoke which bowed the African to the dust. Thank God it is broken. Thank God, our most injured brethren have risen to the rank of men. Thank God, Eight Hundred Thousand human beings have been made free."²⁷

The connection surely was not lost on Channing's audience. The American Revolution began a new history in human freedom, and the slaves of the British West Indies picked up the torch of freedom, and it was now incumbent upon Americans "transport the redemption" of their "nation from political bondage." The festivities of the day, though, were sobered by one thought: "Our own country is in part the land of [slavery](#); and slavery becomes more hideous here than any where else, by its contrast with our free institutions. It is deformity married to beauty.... No other evil in our country, but this, should alarm us."²⁸

Hymn singing was a critical component to the First of August celebrations. They were integrated into the festivities, forming the crucial space where participants became a political and spiritual community. With the public addresses audiences listened to speeches given by notables who honored British West Indian emancipation and provoked them to become politically and socially involved in contemporary issues surrounding racial equality and [slavery](#). However, the singing of hymns fostered a deeper meaning of those issues as the act of singing together as a collective group connected them physically, emotionally, as well as spiritually to the causes for which they were going to advocate. Hymn singing became the sacred space where festival participants absorbed the political magnitude of emancipation and the condition of blacks in the Atlantic world as a spiritual exercise. As Henry Bleby's description of blacks in Barbados singing the "Negro Jubilee" on the night of their emancipation illustrates, singing hymns energized the congregation as they celebrated their freedom. However, it gave their struggle and their liberty spiritual meaning in the larger context of their collective experience, binding them to a collective memory, history, and identity. Emancipation would be the foundation of

26. William E. Channing, "An Address Delivered at Lennox, on The First of August, 1842. The Anniversary of Emancipation, In the British West Indies"

27. William E. Channing, "An Address Delivered at Lennox, on The First of August, 1842. The Anniversary of Emancipation, In the British West Indies"

28. William E. Channing, "An Address Delivered at Lennox, on The First of August, 1842. The Anniversary of Emancipation, In the British West Indies"



their new history, defining how they remembered the past, and shaping the way they would confront the future now bound together as a free people who would endure the forthcoming challenges together. Hymn singing produced a similar experience for First of August celebrants.

As the hymns and songs of the West Indian Emancipation celebrations reveal, these festivals were politicized rituals that energized and empowered participants. While we do not have records of hymns sung at [Rhode Island](#) festivals, available hymn sheets from other New England August First celebrations such as the one that occurred in 1855 in Abington, Massachusetts and sponsored by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society describe the ways the singing of Jubilee hymns politicized the audience. This hymn sheet also demonstrates how participants connected the triumph of British Caribbean emancipation with the current struggle over American slavery. Between 1848 and 1861, slavery emerged as the defining feature of American national politics. Advocates for American abolitionism watched as the acquisition of territories from the Mexican-American War created sectional tensions, especially as the California Compromise of 1850 potentially allowed slavery into the New Mexico territories and codified a national Fugitive Slave Law. The constitutionality of the latter was tested and eventually confirmed with the Dred Scott Case in 1857. The Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 provoked further sectional crisis by allowing potential states north of Missouri to locally determine whether they would practice slavery in these new states, an action that nullified the Missouri Compromise of 1820. From the perspective of abolitionists, it would seem that their cause was being undermined by proslavery forces who seemed to control the levers of national politics. As the following hymn illustrates, however, the political anxieties produced by these national events only emboldened abolitionists, creating momentum to advance black emancipation. As the speeches delivered in the 1850s by notables such as [Frederick Douglass](#) and Henry Bleby demonstrate, West Indian Emancipation festivals, now more than ever, were moments to remember the triumph of previous struggles for emancipation and to continue that struggle in America. The following hymn produced by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society reinforced this sentiment, particularly the powerful message of promoting the cause of black liberty in America. As the first and second stanzas described, the hymn began with the celebration of British emancipation, then shifted to the current crisis in the United States:

I.

'T is many years since England's arm
The mighty barriers rent,
And freely from his prison-house
The slave rejoicing went.

II.



To-day, beneath the “stars and stripes,”
The slave bows to his doom,
And a proud nation wreathed in chains,
Is rushing to its tomb!
It will not heed the boding signs,
That mark the tempest nigh;
It will not see the reddening bolts,
That flame along the sky!²⁹

Although it had been years since England had ended [slavery](#), it had followed the momentum of history, one that now celebrated human freedom. Contrastingly, the United States was moving against the tide of history, and “rushing to its tomb.” As readers, we not only see the ways the hymn defined a teleology of history that reified a progressive narrative of freedom, but we also see an apocalyptic vision for those societies that continued to practice slavery. These slave societies were not heeding “the boding signs, that mark the tempest nigh,” and were not recognizing the “reddening bolts, That flame along the sky.” Like a description from the Biblical book of Revelations, the signs of Armageddon were evident in the skies. An apocalypse had arrived and the history of American slavery had now come to a turning point. Despite its virtues, the United States was a “proud nation wreathed in chains” and was now heading towards its death.

As the following stanzas illustrate, however, this hymn connected the broader themes of history to actual historical events confronting the celebration’s participants:

III.

To-day, by sunny mount and glade,
The chapel bells do ring,
And in the palm-tree’s grateful shade,
Their free-born children sing;
And answering from our own bright land,
Peals from a thousand marts,
That piercing cry of woe which comes
From breaking human hearts.

IV.

To-day, above old Pilgrim graves,
The Slaver counts his gain;
The Merchant for the fetter raves;
The Pulpits forge the chains;
And o’er Nebraska’s glorious land,
O’er Kansas fertile plain,

29. “Hymns and Songs For The Celebration of the First of August, 1855 At the Grove in Abington By the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.”



Dark Slavery rides, and Death and Hell
Are following with their train.³⁰

Again, the hymn juxtaposes the conditions in the British Caribbean with that of the United States. In “the palm-tree’s grateful shade, Their free-born children sing” where in America, the “piercing cry of woe which comes From breaking human hearts.” The hymn then refers to how slavers profited from human bondage in a land founded by Pilgrims who fled to America seeking liberty. The hymn points to the irony that America was founded on the principles of liberty and yet keeps people enslaved, further supported by merchants and the “Pulpit.” Contemporary events in Kansas and Nebraska only seemed to have strengthened the forces of [slavery](#), as “Dark Slavery rides and Death and Hell are following in their train” in these territories. The joy with which this hymn opened in celebrating British West Indian emancipation has become much more somber by the end of the song. Yet, the festival’s participants did not leave the celebration on this solemn note. The following song from the hymn sheet followed the earlier hymn, that no doubt energized those singing, but also gave them a place in the historical saga to challenge their political situation that appeared to encourage the supporters of slavery.

As the next song on the hymn sheet reads:

I.

Yes, boldly battle for the right,
Where’er thy lot is cast –
Wage ceaseless war ’gainst lawless might,
Nor think the conflict past;
Dream not, but work—be bold and brave—
Gird on Truth’s armor strong:--
Oh! Never bow a willing slave
To sordid thrones of wrong.³¹

This hymn demands singers to be active agents in history, to “battle for right” against “lawless might.” History and truth were on their side, where “thy lot is cast,” and thus they should embrace the militancy their struggle required. The 1850s were a troubling period for African Americans in the United States, especially since the Fugitive Slave Law could ensnare free blacks, sending them South and enslaving them. It seemed even free blacks in the North were not safe. Many considered leaving the country, either to the Caribbean, Latin America, or Canada, with some black leaders leading their own colonization plans (separate from the American Colonization Society) to immigrate

30. “Hymns and Songs For The Celebration of the First of August, 1855 At the Grove in Abington By the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.”

31. “Hymns and Songs For The Celebration of the First of August, 1855 At the Grove in Abington By the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.”



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to Africa. Hymns such as this one tried to embolden blacks and their supporters not to give up on the fight for black freedom. Rather than passively accepting the current social and political climate, this hymn (and the First of August celebrations in general) asked them to change the course of history and direct their political energy towards ending slavery.

As was noted, blacks in [Rhode Island](#) (and the American North in general) did not celebrate or honor emancipation in the northern United States. Perhaps this was due to the sporadic, disconnected, and drawn-out nature of northern emancipation. There was no day or year of jubilee northern blacks could celebrate. However, celebrating British West Indian Emancipation connected them to a larger narrative of profound meaning that recognized the collective experience of enslavement in the Atlantic world, promoting a collective memory and history, and encouraging them to act collectively to change the status of blacks throughout the black Atlantic. Although the collective history of [slavery](#) in the American North might have fostered a collective history, it was not remembered as a collective traumatic event to forge a collective identity. Instead it was the energy promoted by the need for historical agency to change their marginalized condition, as well as the sense of historical destiny that bound blacks in the American North. As the hymnals from the First of August celebrations reveal, these festivals encouraged this collective identity and connected them with the larger black Atlantic. British West Indian emancipation festivals may have been an "invented tradition" in the American North in the mid-nineteenth century, and would only last a couple of decades. However, they became a tradition that profoundly ritualized and historicized recent events to attach meaning to the modern condition of black freedom in the black Atlantic.³²

Celebrating West Indian Emancipation throughout the Atlantic World thus served as profound moments of collective history and memory for blacks in the United States, Canada, and the British Caribbean. It simultaneously connected a glorious past where slaves surmounted challenges and became upstanding citizens in the process, and used this historical moment to demand similar historical change in the United States. However, West Indian Emancipation festivals would also have negative consequences. Undoubtedly, British West Indian emancipation celebrations were safe spaces to celebrate black Atlantic freedom in the Atlantic world because whites could participate without guilt, and thus allow the historical memory of [slavery](#) in [Rhode Island](#) and Nova Scotia to further recede in the past.

Historians such as Joanne Pope Melish and John Wood Sweet have described how the history of slavery in New England evaporated during the sectional crisis of the nineteenth century as New England historians and antiquarians practically extinguished local slavery from the record by describing it as "mild" or

32. Marita Sturken, *TANGLED MEMORIES: THE VIETNAM WAR, THE AIDS EPIDEMIC, AND THE POLITICS OF REMEMBERING* (Berkeley CA: U of California P, 1997), 3-9, 12-17; Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, ed., *THE INVENTION OF TRADITION* (Cambridge MA: Cambridge UP, 1983, 2004), 3-14.

ignored it altogether.³³ By the end of the century a historical amnesia set in that virtually denied the existence of slavery in these areas and created a history that had embraced abolitionism, with the American North now having emerged victorious from the Civil War. For all their virtues in promoting a black Atlantic identity and collective history, British West Indian Emancipation festivals in New England reinforced this historical amnesia as they directly ignored the history of black men and women who had struggled to fight slavery in these areas at the turn of the nineteenth century. In as much as blacks contributed to the nineteenth century language and ideology of race in the region as some scholars have argued,³⁴ one wonders if August First festivals also reinforced the historical amnesia that denied the magnitude of slavery in New England.

RACE POLITICS

1843

Late Summer: [Perry Davis](#) mixed up a batch of his patent vegetable painkiller consisting of [opiates](#) in [ethanol](#) to sell at the annual [Rhode Island](#) Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry fair in [Pawtuxet](#).



33. Joanne Pope Melish, *DISOWNING SLAVERY: GRADUAL EMANCIPATION AND “RACE” IN NEW ENGLAND, 1780-1860* (Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 1998), xiii, 208; John Wood Sweet, *BODIES POLITIC*, 2-11.
34. Joanne Pope Melish, *DISOWNING SLAVERY: GRADUAL EMANCIPATION AND “RACE” IN NEW ENGLAND, 1780-1860* (Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 1998), 4, 198.



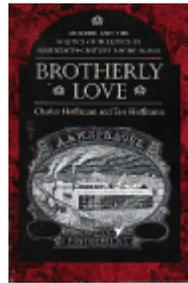
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December 31, Sunday: Many of the devotees of the Reverend [William Miller](#) expected Jesus to return at the end of 1843 (Festinger, Leon et al. WHEN PROPHECY FAILS. Minneapolis MN: U of Minnesota P, 1956, page 16).

[MILLENNIALISM](#)

The wealthiest citizen of [Cranston, Rhode Island](#), Amasa Sprague of the A&W Sprague textile empire, was murdered. Refer to Charles and Tess Hoffmann's BROTHERLY LOVE: MURDER AND THE POLITICS OF PREJUDICE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY RHODE ISLAND (Amherst MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1993).



You can read this book online at <http://www.questia.com/library/book/brotherly-love-murder-and-the-politics-of-prejudice-in-nineteenth-century-rhode-island-by-charles-tess-hoffmann.jsp>.

Three brothers who had emigrated there from [Ireland](#), Nicholas, John, and William Gordon, would be charged with this murder, although there was precious little evidence against them other than the fact that they were [Catholics](#). Of the three, Nicholas and William had the most airtight alibis, whereas John would be unable to

produce evidence as to his whereabouts on the afternoon in question. It would be John, therefore, who would hang for the crime, on February 14, 1844. The authors of this study attempt to make a case that the actual murderer was Mr. Sprague's brother and business partner, William Sprague II, who had served as the governor of the state, and was currently one of its US senators, although actually there is less evidence against Senator Sprague than there is against one "Big Peter," a mill laborer who had disappeared from the vicinity shortly after the afternoon of the crime.



At the trial the judge ruled that the testimony of recent immigrants from Ireland was inherently of less credibility than the testimony of native-born American citizens. Later there would be sufficient doubt, that this conviction and [hanging](#) had been anything more than a rush to judgment, that this would be the last hanging permitted to take place on the soil of Rhode Island.

1850

From this year into 1856, the Reverend [Frederic Henry Hedge](#) would be the [Unitarian](#) minister in [Providence, Rhode Island](#).



1860

The 8th national census. The [slave](#) states that would remain within the federal union had come to enslave only 13.5% of their population, while the slave states that would form the new confederacy were at this point enslaving 38.7% of their population. The %age of slaves in the border slave states had been gradually declining, while this had been meanwhile very slowly rising farther south:

% of Americans Enslaved

	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
Union Slave States	27.5	24.5	22.9	22.5	21.9	19.3	16.5	13.5
States of Confederacy	35.3	35.3	37.1	37.7	38.1	38.4	38.6	38.7

Another difference, and one that has been given insufficient attention, is that free blacks were a much more significant percentage of the population in Union slave states in 1860 (4.0%) than in the Confederacy (1.5%). In some states the free black percentages were substantial enough that serious resistance by free blacks could have made a difference. Delaware, for example, in 1860 while it was still a slave state, had 17.7% of its black population as free.³⁵

The US census showed 174, 620 people in [Rhode Island](#). A few years earlier, in 1845, the French Canadian population of the state had been about 400. Between 1860 and 1910 at least 32, 000 French Canadians would enter the state. [Central Falls](#) would boast 18,000 French Canadians in 1895. By 1930, of [Woonsocket](#)'s 50,000 people at least 35,000 would be of French Canadian descent.



35. Cramer, Clayton E. BLACK DEMOGRAPHIC DATA, 1790-1860: A SOURCEBOOK, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997.

By 1910 the population of Germans in the state would grow to around 13,000.



When the Rhode Island Republican Party nominated an abolitionist, Seth Padelford, for governor, the party split. Supporters of other Republican aspirants and Republican moderates of the Lincoln variety joined with soft-on-slavery Democrats to elect a fusion “Conservative” candidate. They chose the heir to a vast cotton textile empire and a colonel in the [Providence, Rhode Island](#), Marine Corps of Artillery, 29-year-old William Sprague of [Cranston](#). When Sprague outpolled Padelford 12,278 to 10,740, the city of Savannah, Georgia fired off a one-hundred-gun salute in celebration of this grand victory for human enslavement.

Young Governor Sprague, when going from his office on Benefit Street to his home on the top of College Hill, rather than dismount at the steps on Meeting Street below Congdon Street, would urge his white horse up these steps full tilt.

As of 1790 the center of the human population of the USA had been a little town just about a day’s travel inland

HDT

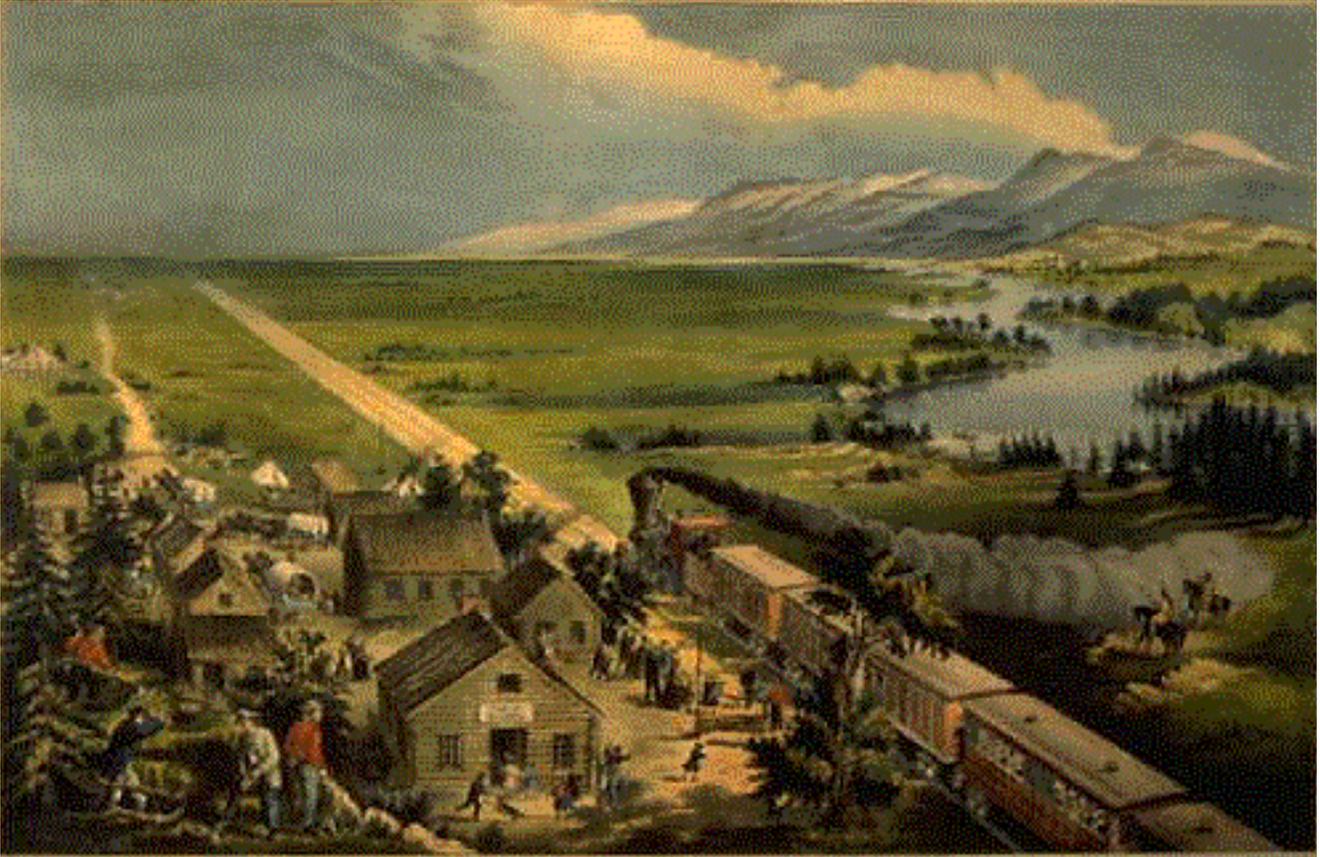
WHAT?

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from [Baltimore](#). By this period the center of population had relocated.



(Nowadays, of course, we've all been coming from one or another center in Missouri.)



1864

 The [Friends](#) meetinghouse in [Cranston, Rhode Island](#), the one that had been erected in 1729, was at this point acquired by the Oak Lawn Benevolent Society. A new [Baptist](#) church would be erected on its foundation, the building itself being shifted to behind this new church for use as the community's library. Here it is toward the center of this old photo behind the big tree, with the new Oakland Community Baptist Church building with the steeple to the left:



1868

June 10, Wednesday: Portions of the town of [Cranston](#) were annexed to the city of [Providence, Rhode Island](#).

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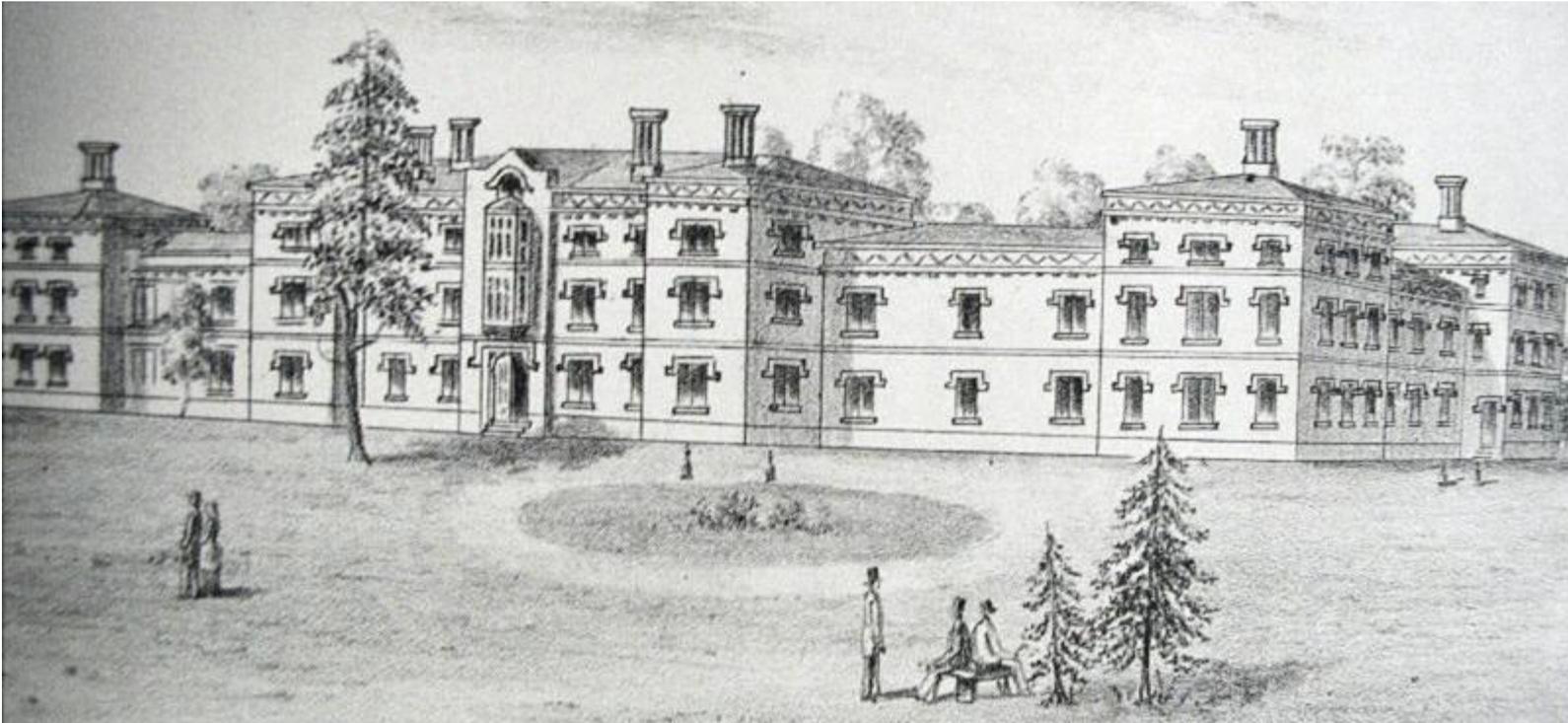
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1869

In the town of [Cranston](#), 6 miles from [Providence](#), a plot of 421 acres was purchased for the purpose of erecting bluestone with granite trim structures for a [Rhode Island](#) house of correction, a work-house, an asylum for the incurable insane, and an almshouse. These would be served by the Pawtuxet Valley branch of the New York, Providence, & Boston RR.

The [Butler Hospital](#) for the Insane would no longer need to provide care for patients unable to contribute to their room and board. In the future such indigent patients would be kept at the State Farm, at which care was cheaper.

[PSYCHOLOGY](#)**1873**

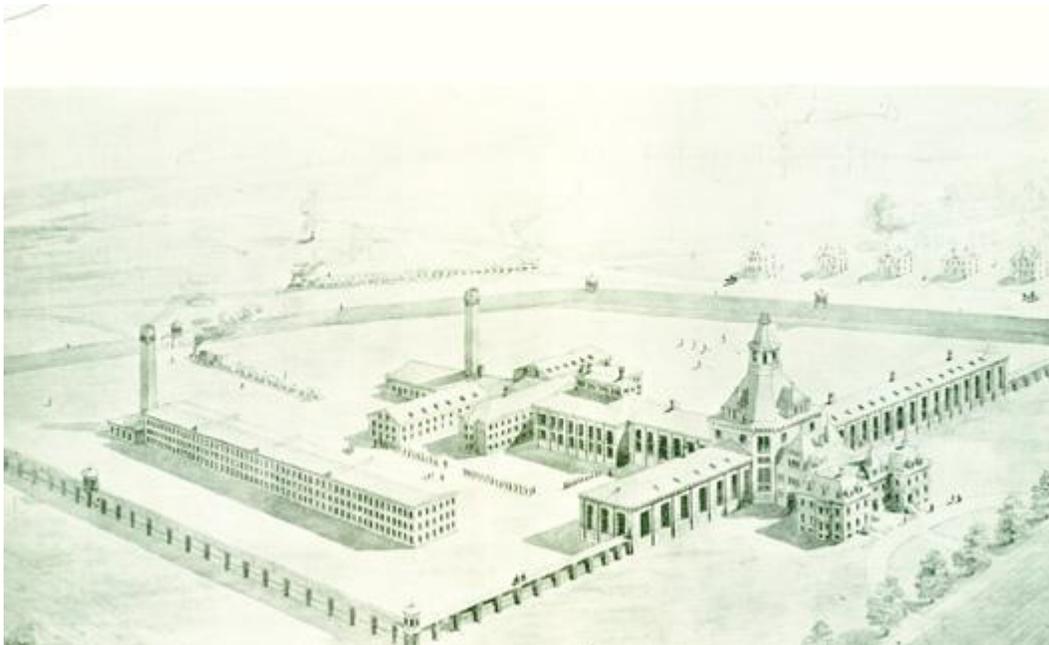
March 28, Friday: Octavius Brooks Frothingham wrote from New-York to Charles Wesley Slack discussing his intention to write a biography of the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) and asking for any material that would be beneficial in its completion.

Portions of the town of [Cranston](#) were annexed to the city of [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#).

1878

During this year and the following one, [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#) donated to the open shelves of the [Concord Free Public Library](#) a number of volumes printed between 1524 and 1878, the bulk of them printed between 1820 and 1850. (Of this gift the original extent of which cannot now be determined, some 415 volumes remain to be counted on the library's shelves. Refer to Leslie Perrin Wilson's typescript thesis [Introduction to a Bibliography of Books Presented to the Concord Free Public Library by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#) with [A Bibliography of Books Presented to the Concord Free Public Library by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#), done in 1982.)

This was the prison in [Concord](#), Massachusetts:



The old state prison of [Rhode Island](#) on Gaspee Street north of the cove, a 2-story granite structure completed in 1838 at a cost of about \$1,300 per cell, had cost a total of \$51,500. In the following year a more compact county jail had been added next the jailkeeper's home on the east side of this structure. In this year the prisoners were transferred to new \$450,000 state prison complex constructed of bluestone with granite trim, on land purchased in the village of Howard in [Cranston](#) in 1869. This edifice consists of a central building and two wings containing 252 cells, connected by iron bridges with the keeper's house in front and with the mess-room, kitchen, and hospital in the rear. The wall around the prison yard was 20 feet in height and had a granite sentry tower at each corner. These would be served by the Pawtuxet Valley Branch of the New York, Providence, & Boston RR.



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: September 25, 2013

*ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT
GENERATION HOTLINE*



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



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Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic researchlibrarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.