

SCITUATE, RHODE ISLAND (SATUIT)¹



"I know histhry isn't thrue, Hinnissy, because it ain't like what I see ivry day in Halsted Street. If any wan comes along with a histhry iv Greece or Rome that'll show me th' people fightin', gettin' dhrunk, makin' love, gettin' married, owin' th' grocery man an' bein' without hard coal, I'll believe they was a Greece or Rome, but not befur."

— Dunne, Finley Peter,
OBSERVATIONS BY MR. DOOLEY,
New York, 1902



1710

Scituate in Rhode Island was settled by a group from Scituate of the Bay Colony (this name "Scituate" had originated as Satuit meaning "cold brook").

1724

4th mo.: The Quaker Yearly Meeting held in June 1724 determined that:

The quarterly meeting of Rhode-Island having represented to this meeting, that it is most likely for the advancement of truth, to build a meeting-house in the town of Providence, which proposal is approved of, and for the present that the work may be going forward, do agree to raise the sum of one hundred pounds, of which it is desired that the quarterly meeting of Rhode-Island do collect the sum of eighty pounds; and also desires the quarterly meetings of Sandwich and Scituate to collect the sum of twenty pounds, and to send the same up to Samuel Aldrich, Thomas Arnold, and Benjamin Smith, of Providence.

1. Note, please, that Scituate in Massachusetts and Scituate in Rhode Island are two different towns in two different states.



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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.

1731

When the town of Scituate in Rhode Island was incorporated, its first town meeting was held at the Angell Tavern in South Scituate, with Stephen Hopkins being elected as the first moderator and Joseph Brown as the first clerk. Initially, Scituate boundaries also encompassed the land which is now Foster, so it was bounded by Gloucester to the north, Providence to the east, Warwick to the south, and Connecticut to the west. During the Revolutionary War, 76 cannons would be forged at the Hope Furnace in the town.

1781

The present town boundaries of Scituate, Rhode Island were created when a western portion of largely unsettled woodlands was subtracted in order to create the town of Foster. This new entity derived its name from US Senator Theodore Foster, a resident who donated to it his library (some of his books remain, including one in which were set down the earliest factoids of the government of the town).

1829

The Reverend Charles A. Goodrich's hagiographic and chauvinist LIVES OF THE SIGNERS TO THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, part of a developing American genre. All hail our DWM "Founding Fathers" who could do no ill.²

The events leading to the declaration of independence ... have
2. Notice that according to Francis Jennings's THE CREATION OF AMERICA: THROUGH REVOLUTION TO EMPIRE (NY: Cambridge UP, 2000), this John Hancock fellow had decidedly mixed motives in fleeing from the army in Lexington and opting to become one of the rebels: had the British import taxes been collectable, his business as the most active smuggler in Boston would have been destroyed.



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brought us to the more particular notice of those distinguished men, who signed their names to that instrument, and thus identified themselves with the glory of this American republic. If the world has seldom witnessed a train of events of a more novel and interesting character, than those which led to the declaration of American independence, it has, perhaps, never seen a body of men, placed in a more difficult and responsible situation, than were the signers of that instrument. And certainly, the world has never witnessed a more brilliant exhibition of political wisdom, or a brighter example of firmness and courage. The first instant the American colonies gave promise of future importance and respectability, the jealousy of Great Britain was excited, and the counsels of her statesmen were employed to keep them in humble subjection. This was the object, when royalty grasped at their charters; when restrictions were laid upon their commerce and manufactures; when, by taxation, their resources were attempted to be withdrawn, and the doctrine inculcated, that it was rebellion for them to think and act for themselves. It was fortunate for the Americans, that they understood their own rights, and had the courage to assert them. But even at the time of the declaration of independence, just ash was the cause of the colonies, it was doubtful how the contests would terminate. The chance of eventual success was against them. Less than three millions of people constituted their population, and these were scattered over a widely extended territory. They were divided into colonies, which had no political character, and no other bond of union than common sufferings, common danger, and common necessities. They had no veteran army, no navy, no arsenals filled with the munitions of war, and no fortifications on their extended coast. They had no overflowing treasures; but in the outset, were to depend upon loans, taxation, and voluntary contributions. Thus circumstanced, could success in such a contest be reasonably anticipated? Could they hope to compete with the parent country, whose strength was consolidated by the lapse of centuries, and to whose wealth and power so many millions contributed? That country directed, in a great measure, the destinies of Europe: her influence extended to every quarter of the world. Her armies were trained to the art of war; her navy rode in triumph on every sea; her statesmen were subtle and sagacious; her generals skilful and practised. And more than all, her pride was aroused by the fact, that all Europe was an interested spectator of the scene, and was urging her forward to vindicate the policy she had adopted, and the principles which she had advanced. But what will not union and firmness, valour and patriotism, accomplish? What will not faith accomplish? The colonies were, indeed, aware of the crisis at which they had arrived. They saw the precipice upon which they stood. National existence was at stake. Life, and liberty, and peace, were at hazard; not only of this generation which then existed, but of the unnumbered millions which were yet to be born. To heaven they could, with pious confidence, make their solemn appeal. They trusted in the arm of HIM, who had planted their fathers in this distant land, and besought HIM to guide the men, who in his providence were called to



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preside over their public councils. It was fortunate for them, and equally fortunate for the cause of rational liberty, that the delegates to the congress of 1776, were adequate to the great work which devolved upon them. They were not popular favourites, brought into notice during a season of tumult and violence; nor men chosen in times of tranquillity, when nothing is to be apprehended from a mistaken selection. "But they were men to whom others might cling in times of peril, and look up to in the revolution of empires; men whose countenances in marble, as on canvass, may be dwelt upon by after ages, as the history of the times. "They were legislators and senators by birth, raised up by heaven for the accomplishment of a special and important object; to rescue a people groaning under oppression; and with the aid of their illustrious compeers, destined to establish rational liberty on a new basis, in an American republic. They, too, well knew the responsibility of their station, and the fate which awaited themselves, if not their country, should their experiment fail. They came, therefore, to the question of a declaration of independence, like men who had counted the cost; prepared to rejoice, without any unholy triumph, should God smile upon the transaction; prepared also, if defeat should follow, to lead in the way to martyrdom. A signature to the declaration of independence, without reference to general views, was, to each individual, a personal consideration of the most momentous import. It would be regarded in England as treason, and expose any man to the halter or the block. The only signature, which exhibits indications of a trembling hand, is that of [Stephen Hopkins](#), who had been afflicted with the palsy. In this work of treason, John Hancock led the way, as president of the congress, and by the force with which he wrote, he seems to have determined that his name should never be erased. This gentleman, who, from his conspicuous station in the continental congress of 1776, claims our first notice, was born in the town of Quincy, in the state of Massachusetts, in the year 1737. Both his father and grandfather were clergy-men, distinguished for great devotion to the duties of their profession, and for the happy influence which they exercised over those to whom they ministered. Of his father it is recorded, that he evinced no common devotion to learning, to which cause he rendered essential service, by the patronage that he gave to the literary institutions of his native state. Of so judicious a counsellor, young Hancock was deprived, while yet a child, but happily he was adopted by a paternal uncle, Thomas Hancock, the most opulent merchant in Boston, and the most enterprising in New-England. Mr. Thomas Hancock was a man of enlarged views; and was distinguished by his liberality to several institutions, especially to [Harvard College](#), in which he founded a professorship, and in whose library his name is still conspicuous as a principal benefactor.

Under the patronage of the uncle, the he received a liberal education in the above university, where he was graduated in 1754. During his collegiate course, though respectable as a scholar, he was in no wise distinguished, and at that time, gave little promise of the eminence to which he afterwards arrived. On leaving college, he was entered as a clerk in the counting house of his uncle, where



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he continued till 1760; at which time he visited England, both for the purposes of acquiring information, and of becoming personally acquainted with the distinguished correspondents of his patron. In 1764, he returned to America; shortly after which his uncle died, leaving to his nephew his extensive mercantile concerns, and his princely fortune, then the largest estate in the province. To a young man, only twenty-seven, this sudden possession of wealth was full of danger; and to not a few would have proved their ruin. But Hancock became neither giddy, arrogant, nor profligate; and he continued his former course of regularity, industry, and moderation. Many depended upon him, as they had done upon his uncle, for employment. To these he was kind and liberal; while in his more extended and complicated commercial transactions, he maintained a high reputation for honour and integrity. The possession of wealth, added to the upright and honourable character which he sustained, naturally gave him influence in the community, and rendered him even popular. In the legislature of Massachusetts, and this event seems to have given a direction to his future career. He thus became associated with such individuals as Otis, Cushing, and Sam Adams, men of great political distinction, acute discrimination, and patriotic feeling. In such an atmosphere, the genius of John Hancock brightened rapidly, and he soon became conspicuous among his distinguished colleagues. It has, indeed, been asserted, that in force of genius, he was inferior to many of his contemporaries; but honourable testimony was given, both to the purity of his principles, and the excellence of his abilities, by his frequent nomination to committees, whose deliberations deeply involved the welfare of the community. The arrival of a vessel belonging to Mr. Hancock, in the year 1768, which was said to be loaded contrary to the revenue laws, has already been noticed in our introduction. This vessel was seized by the custom-house officers, and placed under the guns of the *Romney*, at that time in the harbour, for security. The seizure of this vessel greatly exasperated the people, and in their excitement, they assaulted the revenue officers with violence, and compelled them to seek their safety on board the armed vessel, or in a neighboring castle. The boat of the collector was destroyed, and several houses belonging to his partisans were razed to their foundation. In these proceedings, Mr. Hancock himself was in no wise engaged; and he probably condemned them as rash and unwarrantable. But the transaction contributed greatly to bring him into notice, and to increase his popularity. This, and several similar occurrences, served as a pretext to the governor to introduce into Boston, not long after, several regiments of British troops; a measure which was fitted more than all others to irritate the inhabitants. Frequent collisions, as might be expected, soon happened between the soldiers and the citizens, the former of whom were insolent, and the latter independent. These contentions not long after broke out into acts of violence. An unhappy instance of this violence occurred on the evening of the 5th of March, 1770, at which time, a small party of British soldiers was assailed by several of the citizens, with balls of snow, and other weapons. The citizens were fired upon by order of the commanding officer: a few



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were killed, and several others were wounded. Although the provocation was given by the citizens, the whole town was simultaneously aroused to seek redress. At the instigation of Samuel Adams, and Mr. Hancock, an assembly of the citizens was convened the following day, and these two gentlemen, with some others, were appointed a committee to demand of the governor the removal of the troops. Of this committee Mr. Hancock was the chairman.

A few days after the above affray, which is usually termed "the Boston massacre," the bodies of the slain were buried with suitable demonstrations of public grief. In commemoration of the event, Mr. John Hancock was appointed to deliver an address. After speaking of his attachment to a righteous government, and of his enmity to tyranny, he proceeded in the following animated strain: "The town of Boston, ever faithful to the British crown, has been invested by a British fleet; the troops of George the third have crossed the Atlantic, not to engage an enemy, but to assist a band of traitors in trampling on the rights and liberties of his most loyal subjects; those rights and liberties, which, as a father, he ought ever to regard, and as a king, he is bound in honour to defend from violation, even at the risk of his own life. These troops, upon their first arrival, took possession of our senate house, pointed their cannon against the judgment hall, and even continued them there, whilst the supreme court of the province was actually sitting to decide upon the lives and fortunes of the king's subjects. Our streets nightly resounded with the noise of their riot and debauchery; our peaceful citizens were hourly exposed to shameful insults, and often felt the effects of their violence and outrage. But this was not all; as though they thought it not enough to violate our civil rights, they endeavoured to deprive us of the enjoyment of our religious privileges; to vitiate our morals, and thereby render us deserving of destruction. Hence the rude din of arms, which broke in upon your solemn devotions in your temples, on that day hallowed by heaven, and set apart by God himself for his peculiar worship. Hence, impious oaths and blasphemies, so often tortured your unaccustomed ear. Hence, all the arts which idleness and luxury could invent, were used to betray our youth of one sex into extravagance and effeminacy, and of the other to infamy and ruin; and have they not succeeded but too well? Has not a reverence for religion sensibly decayed? Have not our infants almost learned to lisp curses, before they knew their horrid import? Have not our youth forgotten they were Americans, and regardless of the admonitions of the wise and aged, copied, with a servile imitation, the frivolity and vices of their tyrants? And must I be compelled to acknowledge, that even the noblest, fairest part of all creation, have not entirely escaped their cruel snares? – or why have I seen an honest father clothed with shame; why a virtuous mother drowned in tears? "But I forbear, and come reluctantly to the transactions of that dismal night, when in such quick succession we felt the extremes of grief, astonishment, and rage; when heaven in anger, for a dreadful moment suffered hell to take the reins when Satan, with his chosen band, opened the sluices of New-England's blood, and sacrilegiously polluted our land with the dead bodies of her



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guiltless sons. "Let this sad tale of death never be told, without a tear; let not the heaving bosom cease to burn with a manly indignation at the relation of it, through the long tracks of future time; let every parent tell the shameful story to his listening children, till tears of pity glisten in their eyes, or boiling passion shakes their tender frames. "Dark and designing knaves, murderers, parricides! How dare you tread upon the earth, which has drunk the blood or slaughtered innocence shed by your hands? How dare you breathe that air, which wafted to the ear of heaven the groans of those who fell a sacrifice to your accursed ambition? – But if the labouring earth doth not expand her jaws; if the air you breathe is not commissioned to be the minister of death; yet, hear it, and tremble! The eye of heaven penetrates the darkest chambers of the soul; and you, though screened from human observation, must be arraigned, must lift your hands, red with the blood of those whose death you have procured, at the tremendous bar of God. "But I gladly quit this theme of death – I would not dwell too long upon the horrid effects, which have already followed, from quartering regular troops in this town; let our misfortunes instruct posterity to guard against these evils. Standing armies are sometimes, (I would by no means say generally, much less universally,) composed of persons who have rendered themselves unfit to live in civil society; who are equally indifferent to the glory of a George, or a Louis; who for the addition of one penny a day to their wages, would desert from the Christian cross, and fight under the crescent of the Turkish sultan; from such men as these what has not a state to fear? With such as these, usurping Caesar passed the Rubicon; with such as these he humbled mighty Rome, and forced the mistress of the world to own a master in a traitor. These are the men whom sceptred robbers now employ to frustrate the designs of God, and render vain the bounties which his gracious hand pours indiscriminately upon his creatures." Previously to this address, doubts had been entertained by some, as to the perfect patriotism of Mr. John Hancock. It was said that the governor of the province had, either by studied civilities, or by direct overtures, endeavoured to attach him to the royal cause. For a time insinuations of this derogatory character were circulated abroad, highly detrimental to his name. The manners and habits of Mr. Hancock had, not a little, contributed to countenance the malicious imputations. His fortune was princely. His mansion displayed the magnificence of a courtier, rather than the simplicity of a republican. Gold and silver embroidery adorned his garments and on public occasions, his carriage and horses, and servants. Livery, emulated the splendour of the English nobility. The eye of envy saw not this magnificence with indifference; nor was it strange that reports unfriendly to his patriotic integrity should have been circulated abroad; especially as from his wealth and fashionable intercourse, he had more connection with the governor and his party than many others. The sentiments, however, expressed by Hancock in the above address, were so explicit and so patriotic, as to convince the most incredulous; and a renovation of his popularity was the consequence. Hancock, from this time, became as odious to the royal governor as his adherents, as he was dear to the



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republican party. It now became an object of some importance to the royal governor, to get possession of the persons of Mr. Hancock and Samuel Adams; and this is said to have been intended in the expedition to Concord, which led to the memorable battle of Lexington, the opening scene of the revolutionary war. Notwithstanding the secrecy with which that expedition was planned, these patriots, who were at the time members of the provincial congress at Concord, fortunately made their escape; but it was only at the moment the British troops entered the house where they lodged. Following this battle, Governor Gage issued his proclamation, offering a general pardon to all who should manifest a proper penitence for their opposition to the royal authority, excepting the above two gentlemen, whose guilt placed them beyond the reach of the royal clemency. In October, 1774, Hancock was unanimously elected to the presidential chair of the provincial congress of Massachusetts. The following year, the still higher honour of the presidency of the continental congress was conferred upon him. In this body, were men of superior genius, and of still greater experience than Hancock. There were Franklin, and Jefferson, and Dickinson, and many others, men of pre-eminent abilities and superior political sagacity; but the recent proclamation of Governor Gage, proscribing Hancock and Adams, had given those gentlemen great popularity, and presented a sufficient reason to the continental congress, to express their respect for them, by the election of the former to the presidential chair. In this distinguished station John Hancock continued till October 1777; at which time, in consequence of infirm health, induced by an unremitting application to business, he resigned his office, and, with a popularity seldom enjoyed by any individual, retired to his native province. Of the convention, which, about this time, was appointed to frame a constitution for the state of Massachusetts, Hancock was a member. Under this constitution, in 1780, he was the first governor of the commonwealth, to which office he was annually elected, until the year 1785, when he resigned. After an interval of two years, he was re-elected to the same office, in which he was continued to the time of his death, which took place on the 8th of October, 1793, and in the 55th year of his age. Of the character of Mr. Hancock, the limits which we have prescribed to ourselves, will permit us to say but little more. It was an honourable trait in that character, that while possessed a superfluity of wealth, to the unrestrained enjoyment of which he came at an unguarded period of life, he avoided excessive indulgence and dissipation. His habits, through life, were uniformly on the side of virtue. In his disposition and manners, he was kind and courteous. He claimed no superiority from his advantages, and manifested no arrogance on account of his wealth. His enemies accused him of an excessive fondness for popularity; to which fondness, envy and malice were not backward in ascribing his liberality on various occasions. Whatever may have been the justice of such an imputations many examples of the generosity of his character are recorded. Hundreds of families, it is said, in times of distress, were daily fed from his munificence. In promoting the liberties of his country, no one, perhaps, actually expended more



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wealth, or was willing to make greater sacrifices. An instance of his public spirit, in 1775, is recorded, much to his praise. At that time, the American army was besieging Boston, to expel the British, who held possession of the town. To accomplish this object, the entire destruction of the city was proposed by the American officers. By the execution of such a plan, the whole fortune of Mr. Hancock would have been sacrificed. Yet he immediately acceded to the measure, declaring his readiness to surrender his all, whenever the liberties of his country should require it.

It is not less honourable to the character of Mr. Hancock, that while wealth and independence powerfully tempted him to a life of indolence, he devoted himself for many years, almost without intermission, to the most laborious service of his country. Malevolence, during some periods of his public life, aspersed his character, and imputed to him motives of conduct to which he was a stranger. Full justice was done to his memory at his death, in the expressions of grief and affection which were offered over his remains, by the multitudes who thronged his house while his body lay in state, and who followed his remains to the grave.

* * *

Among those who signed the Declaration of Independence, and were conspicuous in the revolution, there existed, of course, a great diversity of intellectual endowments; nor did all render to their country, in those perilous days, the same important services. Like the luminaries of heavens each contributed his portion of influence; but, like them, they differed, as star differeth from star in glory. But in the constellation of great men, which adorned that era, few shone with more brilliancy, or exercised a more powerful influence than Sam Adams. This gentleman was born at Quincy, in Massachusetts, September 22d, 1722, in the neighbourhood afterwards rendered memorable as the birth place of John Hancock, and as the residence of the distinguished family which has given two presidents to the United States. His descent was from a respectable family, which emigrated to America with the first settlers of the land. In the year 1736, he became a member of Harvard College, where he was distinguished for an uncommon attention to all his collegiate exercises, and for his classical and scientific attainments. On taking the degree of master, in 1743, he proposed the following question, "Whether it be lawful to resist the supreme magistrate, if the commonwealth cannot be otherwise preserved?" He maintained the affirmative; and in this collegiate exercise furnished no dubious evidence of his attachment to the liberties of the people. On leaving the university, he began the study of law, for which profession his father designed him; but at the solicitation of his mother, this pursuit was relinquished, and he became a clerk in the counting house of Thomas Cushing, at that time a distinguished merchant. But his genius was not adapted to mercantile pursuits; and in a short time after commencing business for himself, partly owing to the failure in business of a friend, and partly to injudicious management, he lost the entire capital which had been given him by his father. The genius of Adams was naturally bent on politics. It



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was with him an all engrossing subject. From his earliest youth, he had felt its inspiration. It occupied his thoughts, enlivened his conversation, and employed his pen. In respect to his private business, this was an unfortunate trait of character; but most fortunate for his country, since he thus acquired an extensive knowledge of those principles of national liberty, which he afterwards asserted with so much energy, in opposition to the arbitrary conduct of the British government. In 1763 it was announced, that the British ministry had it in view to "tax the colonies, for the purpose of raising a revenue, which was to be placed at the disposal of the crown." This news filled the colonies with alarm. In Massachusetts, a committee was appointed by the people of Boston to express the public sentiment in relation to this contemplated measure, for the guidance of the representatives to the general court. The instructions of this committee were drawn by Mr. Adams. They formed, in truth, a powerful remonstrance against the injustice of the contemplated system of taxation; and they merit the more particular notice, as they were the first recorded public document, which denied the right of taxation to the British parliament. They also contained the first suggestion of the propriety of that mutual understanding and correspondence among the colonies, which laid the foundation of their future confederacy. In these instructions, after alluding to the evils which had resulted from the acts of the British parliament, relating to trade, Mr. Adams observes: - "If our trade may be taxed, why not our lands? Why not the produce of our lands, and every thing we possess, or use? This we conceive annihilates our charter rights to govern and tax ourselves. It strikes at our British privileges, which, as we have never forfeited, we hold in common with our fellow subjects, who are natives of Britain. If taxes are laid upon us in any shape, without our having a legal representation, where they are laid, we are reduced from the character of free subjects, to the state of tributary slaves. We, therefore, earnestly recommend it to you, to use your utmost endeavours to obtain from the general court, all necessary advice and instruction to our agent, at this most critical Juncture." "We also desire you to use your endeavours, that the other colonies, having the same interests and rights with us, may add their weight to that of this province; that by united application of all who are agreed, all may obtain redress!" The deep interest which Mr. Adams felt and manifested for the rights of the colonies, soon brought him into favour with the patriotic party. He became a leader in their popular assemblies, and was bold in denouncing the unjust acts of the British ministry. In 1765 he was elected a representative to the general court of Massachusetts, from the town of Boston. From this period, during the whole revolutionary struggle, he was the bold, persevering, and efficient supporter of the rights of his oppressed country. As a member of the court, he soon became conspicuous, and was honoured with the office of clerk to that body. In the legislature, he was characterized for the same activity and boldness which he had manifested in the town. He was appointed upon almost every committee, assisted in drawing nearly every report, and exercised a large share of influence, in almost



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every meeting, which had for its object the counteraction of the unjust plans of the administration. But it was not in his legislative capacity alone, that Mr. Adams exhibited his hostility to the British government, and his regard for rational freedom. Several able essays on these subjects were published by him; and he was the author of several plans for opposing, more successfully, the unjust de-signs of the mother country. He has the honour of having suggested the first congress at New-York, which prepared the way for a Continental Congress, ten years after; and at length for the union and confederacy of the colonies. The injudicious management of his private affairs, already alluded to, rendered Mr. Adams poor. When this was known in England, the partisans of the ministry proposed to bribe him, by the gift of some lucrative office. A suggestion of this kind was accordingly made to Governor Hutchinson, to which he replied in a manner highly complimentary to the integrity of Mr. Adams." Such is the obstinacy and inflexible disposition of the man, that he never can be conciliated by any office or gift whatever." The offer, however, it is reported, was actually made to Mr. Adams, but neither the allurements of fortune or power could for a moment tempt Him to abandon the cause of truth, or to hazard the liberties of the people. He was indeed poor; but he could be tempted neither by British gold, nor by the honours or profits of any office within the gift of the royal governor. Such patriotism has not been common in the world; but in America it was to be found in many a bosom, during the revolutionary struggle. The knowledge of facts like this, greatly diminishes the wonder, which has sometimes been expressed, that America should have successfully contended with Great Britain. Her physical strength was comparatively weak; but the moral courage of her statesmen, and her soldiers, was to her instead of numbers, of wealth, and fortifications.

Allusion has been made, both in our introduction, and in our notice of John Hancock, to the Boston massacre, in 1770, an event which will long remain memorable in the annals of the revolution, not only as it was the first instance of bloodshed between the British and the Americans, but as it conduced to increase the irritation, and to widen the breach between the two countries. Our limits forbid a more particular account of this tragical affair; and it is again alluded to only for the purpose of bringing more distinctly into view, the intrepid and decisive conduct of Samuel Adams on that occasion. On the morning following this night of bloodshed, a meeting of the citizens of Boston was called. Mingled emotions of horror and indignation pervaded the assembly. Samuel Adams first arose to address the listening multitude. Few men could harangue a popular assembly with greater energy or exercise a more absolute control over their passions and affections. On that occasion, a Demosthenes, or a Chatham, could scarcely have addressed the assembled multitude with a more impressive eloquence, or have represented in a more just and emphatic manner, the fearful crisis to which the affairs of the colonies were fast tending. A committee was unanimously chosen to wait upon Governor Hutchinson, with a request that the troops might be immediately removed from the town. To the request of this committee the governor, with his usual



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prevarication, replied, that the troops were not subject to his order. Mr. Adams, who was one of this committee, strongly represented to the governor the danger of retaining the troops longer in the capital. His indignation was aroused, and in a tone of lofty independence, he declared, that the removal of the troops would alone satisfy his insulted and indignant townsmen; it was, therefore, at the governor's peril, that they were continued in the town, and that he alone must be answerable for the fatal consequences, which it required no gift of prophecy to predict must ensue. It was now dark. The meeting of the citizens was still undissolved. The greatest anxiety pervaded the assembly find scarcely were they restrained from going in a body to the governor, to learn his determination. Aware of the critical posture of affairs, aware of the personal hazard which he encountered by refusing a compliance, the governor at length gave his consent to the removal of the troops, and stipulated that the necessary preparations should commence on the following morning. Thus, through the decisive and spirited conduct of Samuel Adams, and a few other kindred spirits, the obstinacy of a royal governor was subdued, and further hostilities were for a still longer time suspended. The popularity and influence of Mr. Adams were rapidly increasing, and the importance of his being detached from the popular party became every day more manifest. We have already noticed the suggestion to Governor Hutchinson to effect this, by the gift of some lucrative office. Other offers of a similar kind, it is reported, were made to him, at different times, by the royal authorities, but with the same ill success. About the year 1773, Governor Gage renewed the experiment. At that time Colonel Fenton was requested to wait upon Mr. Adams, with the assurance of Governor Gage, that any benefits would be conferred upon him which he should demand, on the condition of his ceasing to oppose the measures of the royal government. At the same time, it was not obscurely hinted, that such a measure was necessary, on personal considerations. He had incurred the royal displeasure, and already, such had been his conduct, that it was in the power of the governor to send him to England for trial, on a charge of treason. It was suggested that a change in his political conduct, might save him from this disgrace, and even from a severer fate; and might elevate him, moreover, from his circumstances of indigence, to the enjoyment of affluence. To this proposal, Mr. Adams listened with attention; but as Col. Fenton concluded his communication, with all the spirit of a man of honour, with all the integrity of the most incorrupt and incorruptible patriotism, he replied; "Go tell Governor Gage, that my peace has long since been made with the King of kings, and that it is the advice of Samuel Adams to him, no longer to insult the feelings of an already exasperated people." The independence and sterling integrity of Mr. Adams might well have secured to him the respect, and even confidence of Governor Gage; but with far different feelings did he regard the noble conduct of this high minded patriot. Under the irritation excited by the failure of a favourite plan, Governor Gage issued a proclamation, which comprehended the following language: "I do hereby," he said, "in his majesty's name, offer and promise



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his most gracious pardon to all persons, who shall forthwith lay down their arms, and return to the duties of peaceable subjects: excepting only from the benefits of such pardon, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock, whose offenses are of too flagitious a nature to admit of any other consideration but that of condign punishment." Thus these independent men were singled out as the objects of peculiar vengeance, and even their lives endangered, for honourably resisting a temptation, to which, had they yielded, they would have merited the reproach of their countrymen, and the scorn of the world. Mr. Adams was a member of the first Continental Congress which assembled in Philadelphia on the 5th of September, 1774; and continued a member of that body until the year 1781. During this period, no delegate acted a more conspicuous or manly part. No one exhibited a more indefatigable zeal, or a firmer tone of character. He early saw that the contest would probably not be decided without bloodshed. He was himself prepared for every extremity, and was willing that such measures should be adopted, as should lead to an early issue of the controversy. He was accordingly among the warmest advocates for the declaration of American independence. In his view, the die was cast, and a further friendly connection with the parent country was impossible. "I am perfectly satisfied," said he, in a letter written from Philadelphia, to a friend in Massachusetts, in April, 1776, "of the necessity of a public and explicit declaration of independence. I cannot conceive what good reason can be assigned against it. Will it widen the breach? This would be a strange question, after we have raised armies, and fought battles with the British troops; set up an American navy; permitted the inhabitants of these colonies to fit out armed vessels, to capture the ships, &c. belonging to any of the inhabitants of Great Britain; declaring them the enemies of the United Colonies; and torn into shivers their acts of trade, by allowing commerce, subject to regulations to be made by ourselves, with the people of all countries, except such as are subject to the British king. It cannot surely, after all this, be imagined that we consider ourselves, or mean to be considered by others, in any other state, than that of independence." The independence of America was at length declared, and gave a new political character, and an immediate dignity to the cause of the colonies. But notwithstanding this measure might itself bear the aspect of victory, a formidable contest yet awaited the Americans. The year following the declaration of independence, the situation of the colonies was extremely gloomy. The stoutest hearts trembled within them, and even doubts were expressed, whether the measures which had been adopted, particularly the declaration of independence, were not precipitate. The neighbourhood of Philadelphia became the seat of war; congress, now reduced to only twenty-eight members, had resolved to remove their session to Lancaster. At this critical period, Mr. Adams accidentally fell in company with several other members, by whom the subject of the state of the country was freely and confidentially discussed. Gloomy forebodings seemed to pervade their minds, and the greatest anxiety was expressed as to the issue of the contest. To this conversation, Mr. Adams listened with silent attention. At length he expressed his



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surprise, that such desponding feelings should have settled upon their hearts, and such desponding language should be even confidentially uttered by their lips. To this it was answered, "The chance is desperate." "Indeed, indeed, it is desperate," said Mr. Adams, "if this be our language. If we wear long faces, others will do so too; if we despair, let us not expect that others will hope; or that they will persevere in a contest, from which their leaders shrink. But let not such feelings, let not such language, be ours." Thus, while the hearts of others were ready to faint, Samuel Adams maintained his usual firmness. His unshaken courage, and his calm reliance upon the aid and protection of heaven, contributed in an eminent degree to inspire his countrymen with a confidence of their final success. A higher encomium could not have been bestowed on any member of the Continental Congress, than is expressed in relation to Mr. Adams by Mr. Galloway, in his historical and political reflections on the rise and progress of the American rebellion, published in Great Britain, 1780. "He eats little," says the author, "drinks little, sleeps little, thinks much, and is most indefatigable in the pursuit of his object. It was this man, who by his superior application, managed at once the factions in congress at Philadelphia, and the factions of New-England." In 1781, Mr. Adams retired from congress; but it was to receive from his native state, additional proofs of her high estimation of his services, and of the confidence which she reposed in his talents and integrity. He had already been an active member of the convention that formed her constitution; and after it went into effect, he was placed in the senate of the state, and for several years presided over that body. In 1789, he was elected lieutenant governor, and held that office till 1794; when, upon the death of John Hancock, he was chosen governor, and was annually re-elected till 1797, when he retired from public life. This retirement, however, he did not long enjoy, as his death occurred on October 2d, 1803, at the advanced age of 82. From the foregoing sketches of Mr. Adams, it will not be difficult for the reader to form a tolerably correct opinion of his character and disposition. In his person, he is said to have been only of the middle size, but his countenance indicated a noble genius within, and a more than ordinary inflexibility of character and purpose. Great sincerity and simplicity marked his manners and deportment. In his conversation, he was at once interesting and instructive; and those who shared his friendship had seldom any reason to doubt his affection and constancy. His writings were voluminous, but unfortunately, as they generally related to the temporary politics of the day, most of them are lost. Those which remain furnish abundant proof of his superiority as a writer, of the soundness of his political creed, and of the piety and sincerity of his character. As an orator, he was eminently fitted for the stormy times in which he lived. His elocution was concise and impressive, partaking more of the logical than the figurative, and rather calculated to enlighten the understanding, than to excite the feelings. Yet no man could address himself more powerfully to the passions, than he did, on certain occasions. As a statesman, his views were broad and enlightened; what his judgment had once



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matured, he pursued with inflexible firmness, and patriotic ardour. While others desponded, he was full of hope; where others hesitated, he was resolute; where others were supine, he was eager for action. His circumstances of indigence led him to habits of simplicity and frugality; but beyond this, he was naturally averse to parade and ostentation. "Mr. Adams was a Christian. His mind was early imbued with piety, as well as cultivated by science. He early approached the table of the Lord Jesus, and the purity of his life witnessed the sincerity of his profession. On the Christian Sabbath, he constantly went to the temple, and the morning and evening devotions in his family proved, that his seasons of retirement from the world. The last production of his pen was in favour of Christian truth. He died in the faith of the gospel." In his opposition to British tyranny, no man was more conscientious; he detested royalty, and despised the ostentation and contemptible servility of the royal agents; his patriotism was of a pure and lofty character. For his country he laboured both by night and by day, with a zeal which was scarcely interrupted, and with an energy that knew no fatigue. Although enthusiastic, he was still prudent. He would persuade, petition, and remonstrate, where these would accomplish his object; but when these failed, he was ready to resist even unto blood, and would sooner have sacrificed his life than yielded with dishonour. "Had he lived in any country or epoch," says his biographer, "when abuses of power were to be resisted, he would have been one of the reformers. He would have suffered excommunication, rather than have bowed to papal infallibility, or paid tribute to St. Peter; he would have gone to the stake, rather than submit to the prelatic ordinances of Laud; he would have mounted the scaffold, sooner than pay a shilling of illegal shipmoney; he would have fled to a desert, rather than endure the profligate tyranny of a Stuart; he was proscribed, and could sooner have been condemned as a traitor, than assent to an illegal tax, if it had been only a sixpenny stamp or an insignificant duty on tea; and there appeared to be no species of corruption by which this inflexibility could have been destroyed." In the delegation of political power, he may be said to have been too cautious, since our constitutions, as he would have modeled them, would not have had sufficient inherent force for their own preservation. One of his colleagues thus honourably described him: "Samuel Adams would have the state of Massachusetts govern the union; the town of Boston govern Massachusetts; and that he should govern the town of Boston, and then the whole would not be intentionally ill governed." With some apparent austerity there was nothing of the spirit of gloom or arrogance about him. In his demeanour, he combined mildness with firmness, and dignity with condescension. If sometimes an advocate for measures which might be thought too strong, it was, perhaps, because his comprehension extended beyond ordinary minds, and he had more energy to effect his purposes, than attaches to common men. In addition to these qualities, he manifested an uncommon indifference to pecuniary considerations; he was poor while he lived, and had not the death of an only son relieved his latter day poverty, Samuel Adams, notwithstanding his virtues, his patriotism, his unwearied zeal, and



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his acknowledged usefulness, while he lived, would have had to claim a burial at the hand of charity, or at the public expense.

* * *

Robert Treat Paine was a native of [Boston](#), where he was born, in the year 1731. His parents were pious and respectable. His father was for some years the settled pastor of a church in Weymouth MA, in the vicinity of Boston. His health failing him, however, he removed with his family to the latter place; where he entered into mercantile pursuits. His mother was the grand-daughter of Governor Treat of Connecticut.

At the early age of fourteen, he became a member of [Harvard College](#); but of his collegiate course, little has been recorded. On leaving the university, he was engaged for some time in a public school. As the fortune of his father had, from various circumstances, become much reduced, the support of his parents, with some other relations, seemed to devolve upon himself. In the acquisition of more ample means for their maintenance, he made a voyage to Europe. It was an honorable trait in his character, thus in the morning of life to exhibit such filial affection; a kindness of disposition, which he continued to manifest during his father's life.

Previously to his commencing the study of laws he devoted some time to the subject of theology, which tended to enlarge his views of Christianity, and to confirm his belief of its truth. In 1755, he served as chaplain to the troops of the province at the northward, and afterwards preached a few times in other places.

At length he directed his attention to the study of law, during which period, having no pecuniary assistance, he was obliged to resort again to the keeping of a school for his support. By most persons such a course would be deemed a serious evil; but experience has shown, that those who are obliged to depend upon their own energies for the means of education, generally enter upon their profession, if not with higher attainments, with more courage to encounter the difficulties with which almost every one meets, and they are more likely to attain to a high elevation, than those whose resources are abundant.

On being qualified for the practice of law, Mr. Robert Treat Paine established himself at Taunton, in the county of Bristol, where he resided for many years. We necessarily pass over several years of his life, during which we meet no occurrences of sufficient importance to merit a notice in these pages. It may be remarked, however, that at an early period, he took a deep interest in the various disputes which arose between the colonies and the British government. He was a delegate from Taunton, to a convention called by leading men of [Boston](#), in 1768, in consequence of the abrupt dissolution of the general court by Governor Bernard. This convention the governor attempted to break up, but it continued in session several days, and adopted many spirited resolutions, designed to awaken in the people a greater attention to their rights, and to show to the ministry of England, that if those rights were violated, the provincial assembly would act independently of the governor.



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Mr. Paine was engaged in the celebrated trial of Captain Preston, and his men, for the part they acted in the well known "Boston massacre" of 1770. On this occasion, in the absence of the attorney general, he conducted the prosecution on the part of the crown. Although only a fragment of his address to the jury, at this time, has been preserved, it appears that he managed the cause with the highest reputation to himself, both in regard to his honour as a faithful advocate, and at the same time as a friend to the just rights of those against whom he acted as council.

From this time, Mr. Paine appeared still more conspicuously as a representative to the general assembly from the town of Taunton. It was now becoming a period of great alarm in the colonies. Men of principle and talent were selected to guard the ancient rights of the colonies, and to point to those measures which, in the approaching crisis, it was proper to pursue. It was a high honour, therefore, for any one to be elected a representative of the people. The rights, the liberties, and even the lives of their constituents were placed in their hands; it was of the utmost importance that they should be men of sagacity, patriotism, and principle. Such, fortunately for the colonies, were the men who represented them in their provincial assemblies, and in the Continental Congress. Of this latter body, Mr. Robert Treat Paine was elected a member in 1774. A general account of the proceedings of this assembly has already been given. At that time a separation from the parent country was not generally contemplated, although to more discerning minds, such an event appeared not improbable, and that at no distant day. The Congress of 1774, were appointed mainly to deliberate and determine upon the measures proper to be pursued, to secure the enjoyment and exercise of rights guaranteed to the colonies by their charters, and for the restitution of union find harmony between the two countries, which was still desired by all. Accordingly they proceeded no farther at that time, than to address the people of America, petition the King, state their grievances, assert their rights, and recommend the suspension of importations from Great Britain into the colonies.

The assembling of such a body, and for objects of so questionable a character, was a bold step; and bold must have been the men, who could thus openly appear on the side of the colonies, in opposition to the British ministry, and the royal power. In concluding their session, in October of the same year, they presented a solemn appeal to the world, stating that innovation was not their object, but only the preservation and maintenance of the rights which, as subjects of Great Britain, had been granted to them by their ancient charters. "Had we been permitted," say they, "to enjoy in quiet the inheritance left us by our fathers, we should, at this time, have been peaceably, cheerfully, and usefully employed in recommending ourselves, by every testimony of devotion to his majesty, and of veneration to the state from which we derive our origin. Though now exposed to unexpected and unnatural scenes of distress, by a contention with that nation whose general guidance, on all important occasions, we have hitherto with filial reverence constantly trusted, and therefore can derive no instruction, in our present



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unhappy and perplexing circumstances, from any former experience; yet we doubt not, the purity of our intentions, and the integrity of our conduct, will justify us at that great tribunal, before which all mankind must submit to judgment. We ask but for peace, liberty, and safety. We wish not a diminution of the royal prerogatives; nor do we solicit the grant of any new right in our favour."

To the Continental Congress, which met at Philadelphia in May, 1775, Mr. Robert Treat Paine was again a delegate from Massachusetts. At that time, the colonies were greatly in want of gunpowder. The manufacture of salt petre one of its constituents, was but imperfectly understood. Congress appointed a committee, of which Mr. Paine was chairman, to introduce the manufacture of it. In this particular, he rendered essential service to his country, by making extensive inquiries into the subject, and by inducing persons in various parts of the provinces to engage in the manufacture of the article. The following is among the letters which he wrote on this subject, which, while it shows his indefatigable attention to the subject, will convey to the present generation some idea of the multiform duties of the patriots of the revolution. Mr. Paine also rendered himself highly useful, as a member of a committee for the encouragement of the manufacture of cannon, and other implements of



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war.

Philadelphia, June 10th, 1775.

My very dear Sir,

I cannot express to you the surprise and uneasiness I received on hearing the congress express respecting the want of gunpowder; it was always a matter that lay heavy on any mind; but the observation I made of your attention to it, find your alertness and perseverance in everything you undertake, and your repeatedly expressing it as your opinion that we had probably enough for this summer's campaign, made me quite easy. I rely upon it that measures are taken in your parts of the continent to supply this defect. The design of your express will be zealously attended to, I think. I have seen one of the powder mills here, where they make excellent powder, but have worked up all the nitre; one of our members is concerned in a powder mill at New-York, and has a man at work making nitre. I have taken pains to inquire into the methods Dr. Franklin has seen salt-petre works at Hanover and Paris; and it strikes me to be as unnecessary, after a certain time, to send abroad for gunpowder, as for bread; provided people will make use of common understanding and industry; but for the present we must import from abroad. Major Foster told me, at Hartford, he suspected he had some land that would yield nitre; pray converse with him about it. Dr. Franklin's account is much the same as is mentioned in one of the first of the American magazines; the sweeping of the streets, and rubbish of old buildings, are made into mortar, and built into walls, exposed to the air, and once in about two months scraped and lixiviated, and evaporated; when I can describe the method more minutely I will write you; meanwhile, give me leave to condole with you the loss of Colonel Lee. Pray remember me to Colonel Orne, and all other our worthy friends. Pray take care of your important health, that you may be able to stand stiff as a pillar in our new government.

I must now subscribe, with great respect and affection,
Your humble servant,
R.T. Paine.

Of the congress of 1776, Mr. Robert Treat Paine was also a member; and to the Declaration of Independence, which that body published to the world, he gave his vote, and affixed his name. In the December following, the situation of Congress became justly alarming. The British army were, at this time, making rapid advances through New-Jersey, towards Philadelphia. The troops of Washington, amounting to scarcely one third of the British force, it was thought would not be able to resist their progress, or prevent their taking possession of Philadelphia. During the alarm excited by an approaching foe, Congress adjourned to Baltimore. Of the state of Congress, at this



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time, the following letter of Mr. Paine gives an interesting account.

"Our public affairs have been exceedingly agitated since I wrote you last. The loss of fort Washington made way for that of fort Lee; and the dissolution of our army happening at the same time, threw us into a most disagreeable situation. The interception of an express gave the enemy full assurance of what they must have had some knowledge of before, the state of our army; and they took the advantage of it. In two days after the possession of fort Lee, on the 9th of November, where we lost much baggage, and the chief of our battering cannon, then marched to the Hackensack, and thence to Newark, driving General Washington before them, with his 3000 men thence to Elizabethtown. General Washington supposed, from the best information he could get, that they were 10,000 strong; marching with a large body of horse in front, and a very large train of artillery. We began to be apprehensive they were intended for Philadelphia; and Congress sat all Sunday in determining proper measures on the occasion. I cannot describe to you the situation of this city. The prospect was really alarming. Monday, 9th; yesterday, General Washington crossed the Delaware, and the enemy arrived at Trenton on this side, thirty miles from this place; close quarters for Congress! It obliges us to move; we have resolved to go to Baltimore."

For the years 1777 and 1778, Mr. Robert Treat Paine was a member of Congress, during the intervals of whose sessions, he filled several important offices in the state of Massachusetts. In 1780, he was called to take a part in the deliberations of the convention, which met for the purpose of forming a constitution for the commonwealth. Of the committee which framed that excellent instrument, he was a conspicuous member. Under the government organized according to this constitution, he was appointed attorney general, an office which he continued to hold until 1790, when he was transferred to a seat on the bench of the supreme judicial court. In this situation he remained till the year 1804, at which time he had attained to the advanced age of 73 years. As a lawyer, Mr. Paine ranked high among his professional brethren. His legal attainments were extensive. In the discharge of his duties as attorney general, he had the reputation of unnecessary severity; but fidelity in that station generally provokes the censure of the lawless and licentious. Towards the abandoned and incorrigible he was indeed severe, and was willing that the law in all its penalties should be visited upon them. But where crime was followed by repentance, he could be moved to tenderness; and while, in the discharge of his official duty, he took care that the law should not fall into disrespect through his inefficiency, he at the same time was ever ready to recommend such as might deserve it to executive clemency.

The important duties of a judge, he discharged with honour and great impartiality for the space of fourteen years. During the latter part of this time, he was affected with a deafness, which, in a measure, impaired his usefulness on the bench. Few men have rendered more important services to the literary and religious institutions of a country, than did Judge Paine. He gave them all the support and



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influence of his office, by urging upon grand jurors the faithful execution of the laws, the support of schools, and the preservation of strict morality.

The death of Judge Robert Treat Paine occurred on the eleventh of May, 1814, having attained to the age of 84 years. Until near the close of life, the vigour of his mental faculties continued unimpaired. In quickness of apprehension, liveliness of imagination, and general intelligence, he had few superiors. His memory was of the most retentive character, and he was highly distinguished for a sprightly and agreeable turn in conversation. A witty severity sometimes excited the temporary; disquietude of a friend; but if he was sometimes inclined to indulge in pleasant raillery, he was willing to be the subject of it in his turn. As a scholar, he ranked high among literary men, and was distinguished for his patronage of all the useful institutions of the country. He was a founder of the American Academy established in Massachusetts in 1780, and active in its service until his death. The honorary degree of doctor of laws was conferred upon him by [Harvard College](#).

Judge Robert Treat Paine was a firm believer in the divine origin of the Christian religion. He gave full credence to the scriptures, as a revelation from God, designed to instruct mankind in a knowledge of their duty, and to guide them in the way to eternal happiness.

* * *

Elbridge Gerry was born at Marblehead, in the state of Massachusetts, on the seventeenth day of July, 1744. His father was a native of Newton, of respectable parentage and connections. He emigrated to America in 1730, soon after which, he established himself as a merchant in Marblehead, where he continued to reside until his death, in 1774. He was much esteemed and respected, as a man of judgment and discretion. Of the early habits or manners of young Elbridge, little is known. He became a member of [Harvard College](#) before he had completed his fourteenth year; and of course was too young at the university to acquire any decided character. Mr. Gerry was originally destined to the profession of medicine, to which his own inclination strongly attached him. But soon after leaving college, he engaged in commercial affairs under the direction of his father, and for some years followed the routine of mercantile business in his native town. Great success attended his commercial enterprise and within a few years, he found himself in the enjoyment of a competent fortune. It is natural to suppose that the superior education of Mr. Gerry, added to the respectable character he sustained, as a man of probity and judgment, gave him influence over the people among whom he resided. In May, 1772, the people of Marblehead manifested their respect and confidence by sending him a representative to the general court of the province of Massachusetts. In May of the following year, Mr. Gerry was re-elected to the same office. During the session of the general court that year, Mr. Samuel Adams introduced his celebrated motion for the appointment of a standing committee of correspondence and inquiry.



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In accordance with this motion, committees of correspondence were appointed throughout the province, by means of which intelligence was as freely circulated abroad, and a spirit of patriotism was infused through all parts of the country. Though one of the youngest members, Mr. Gerry was appointed by the House of Representatives, a member of this committee; in all the proceedings of which, he took an active and prominent part. In the month of June, the celebrated letters of Governor Hutchinson to persons in England, were laid before the house by Mr. Adams. The object of these letters, as noticed in a preceding page, was to encourage the British administration in maintaining their arbitrary measures. In the debates which ensued on the disclosure of these letters, Mr. Gerry distinguished himself, and was indefatigably engaged through the year, in forwarding the resolute measures, which combined to overthrow the royal government of the province. He was also particularly active in the scenes which marked the year 1774. He united in the opposition to the importation of tea, and to the Boston port bill; and heartily concurred in the establishment of a system of non-intercourse with the parent country. In the month of August, Governor Gage issued his precepts to the several towns, to choose representatives to meet at Salem, the first week in October. Before the arrival of that day, the governor had countermanded their meeting. Notwithstanding this prohibition, delegates assembled at Salem on the seventh of October. There having formed themselves into a provincial congress, they adjourned to Concord, and proceeded to business. Of this congress Mr. Gerry was an active and efficient member. On the organization of the assembly, a committee was appointed to consider the state of the province. Fourteen of the most distinguished members of the congress, among whom was Mr. Gerry, composed this committee. They published a bold and energetic appeal, which, in the form of an address to Governor Gage, was calculated to justify the authority they had assumed, to awaken their constituents to a sense of the dangers they feared, and the injuries they had sustained. They next appointed a committee of safety, and adopted measures to obtain a supply of arms and ammunition; of which the province was lamentably deficient. They reorganized the militia, appointed general officers, and took such other measures as the approaching crisis seemed to render necessary. In February, 1775, a new provincial congress, of which Mr. Gerry was a member, assembled in Cambridge. This congress, like the former one, published an appeal to the people designed to excite and regulate that patriotic spirit, which a the emergency required. A general apprehension prevailed, that a pacific termination of the existing troubles was not to be expected. They avowed their abhorrence of actual hostilities, but still maintained their right to arm in defence of their country, and to prepare themselves to resist with the sword. In the spring of 1775, the prospect of open war every day increased. A strong apprehension prevailed, that an attempt would be made by the royal governor to destroy such military stores as had been collected, particularly at Concord and Worcester. The committee of safety, in their solicitude on this subject, stationed a watch at each of these places, to give an alarm to the



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surrounding country should such an attempt be made. A short period only elapsed, before the apprehensions of the people proved not to be without foundation. The expedition to Concord, and the bloody scenes which occurred both there and at Lexington, ushered in the long expected contest. "Among the objects of this expedition," observes Mr. Austin, in his life of Mr. Gerry, "one was to seize the persons of some of the influential members of Congress, and to hold them as hostages for the moderation of their colleagues, or send them to England for trial as traitors, and thus strike dismay and terror into the minds of their associates and friends." A committee of Congress, among whom were Mr. Gerry, Colonel Orne, and Colonel John Hancock, had been in session on the day preceding the march of the troops, in the village of Menotomy, then part of the township of Cambridge, on the road to Lexington. The latter gentleman after the session was over, had gone to Lexington. Mr. Gerry and Mr. Orne remained at the village, the other members of the committee had dispersed. "Some officers of the royal army had been sent out in advance, who passed through the villages just before dusk, in the afternoon of the 18th of April, and although the appearance of similar detachments was not uncommon, these so far attracted the attention of Mr. Gerry, that he despatched an express to Colonel Hancock, who, with Samuel Adams, was at Lexington. The messenger passed the officers, by taking a by-path, and delivered his letter. The idea of personal danger does not seem to have made any strong impression on either of these gentlemen. Mr. Hancock's answer to Mr. Gerry bears marks of the haste with which it was written, while it discovers that habitual politeness on the part of the writer, which neither haste or danger could impair.

Lexington, April 18th, 1775.

I am much obliged for your notice. It is said the officers are gone to Concord, and I will send word thither. I am full with you, that we ought to be serious, and I hope your decision will be effectual. I intend doing myself the pleasure of being with you to-morrow. My respects to the committee.

I am your real friend,
JOHN HANCOCK.

Mr. Gerry and Colonel Orne retired to rest, without taking the least precaution against personal exposure, and they remained quietly in their beds, until the British advance were within view of the dwelling house. It was a fine moon-light night, and they quietly marked the glittering of its beams, on the polished arms of the soldiers, as the troops moved with the silence and regularity of accomplished discipline. The front passed on. When the centre were opposite to the house, occupied by the committee, an officer and file of men were detached by signal, and marched towards it. It was not until this moment they entertained any apprehension of danger. While the officer was posting his files, the gentlemen found means, by their better knowledge of the premises, to escape, half dressed as they were, into- an adjoining cornfield, where they remained concealed for more than an hour, until the troops were withdrawn. Every apartment of the house was searched 'for the members of the



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rebel congress;’ even the beds in which they had lain were examined. But their property, and among other things, a valuable watch of Mr. Gerry’s, which was under his pillows was not disturbed.” A few days after the skirmishes at Lexington and [Concord](#), the Provincial Congress re-assembled. It was now apparent that the controversy must be decided by force of arms. At this time, it was found that almost every article of a military kind was yet to be procured. The province possessed no magazines of arms, and had little ammunition. No contracts for provision or clothing had yet been made. To meet these exigencies, a committee, at the head of which was Mr. Gerry, was immediately appointed, and clothed with the proper power. The article most needed was that of gun-powder, to procure which, Mr. Gerry was specially commissioned by the committee. In the discharge of this duty, he wrote many letters to gentlemen in different party of the country, from whom he received others in reply. One of these will be found in the life of Robert Treat Paine, in a preceding page. Mr. Gerry did more: in many cases he hesitated not to advance his own funds, where immediate payment was required. In the progress of the war, the evidence of these payments was lost, or mislaid, and their final settlement was attended with heavy pecuniary loss. On the 17th day of June, was fought the celebrated battle of Bunker Hill. The Provincial Congress was at that time in session, at Watertown MA. Before the battle, Dr. Joseph Warren, president of the Congress, who was the companion and room mate of Mr. Gerry, communicated to the latter his intention of mingling in the expected contest. The night preceding the doctor’s departure for Bunker Hill, he lodged, it is said, in the same bed with Mr. Gerry. In the morning, in reply to the admonitions of his friend, as he was about to leave him, he uttered the well known words, “Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori.” [It is sweet and glorious to lay down life for one’s country] Mr. Gerry, on that day, attended the Provincial Congress. His brave friend, as is well known, followed where his duty called him, to the memorable “heights of Bunker,” where he fell fighting for the cause of liberty and his country. At an early period in 1775, Mr. Gerry submitted a proposal in the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, for a law to encourage the fitting out of armed vessels, and to provide for the adjudication of prizes. This was a step of no small importance. To grant letters of marque and of reprisal, is the prerogative of the sovereign. For a colony to authorize such an act, was rebellious, if not treasonable. The proposal was sustained, though not without opposition. Mr. Gerry was chairman of the committee appointed to prepare the act to authorize privateering, and to establish admiralty courts. Governor Sullivan was another member of it; and on these two gentlemen devolved the task of drawing the act, which they executed in a small room under the belfry of the Watertown MA meeting house, in which the Provincial Congress was holding its session. This law, John Adams pronounced one of the most important measures of the Revolution. Under the sanction of it, the Massachusetts cruisers captured many of the enemy’s vessels, the cargoes of which furnished various articles of necessity to the colonies. Of the court of admiralty, established in pursuance of the law proposed by Mr. Gerry, that



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gentleman himself was appointed a judge, for the counties of Suffolk, Middlesex, and Essex. This honour, however, he declined, from a determination to devote himself to more active duties. To such duties, he was not long after called, by the suffrages of his fellow citizens, who elected him a delegate from Massachusetts to the Continental Congress, in which body he took his seat, on the 9th of February, 1776. For this distinguished station he was eminently fitted; and of this body he continued a member with few intervals, until September, 1785. Our limits preclude a minute notice of the various duties which he there discharged on various occasions he was appointed to serve on committees, whose business required great labour, and whose results involved the highest interests of the country. He assisted in arranging the plan of a general hospital, and of introducing a better discipline into the army; and regulating the commissary's departments. In several instances, he was appointed, with others, to visit the army, to examine the state of the money and finances of the country, and to expedite the settlement of public accounts. In the exercise of his various official functions, no man exhibited more fidelity, or a more unwearyed zeal. He sustained the character of an active and resolute statesman, and retired from the councils of the confederacy, with all the honours which patriotism, integrity, and talents, could acquire in the service of the state. Before leaving New-York, he married a respectable lady, who had been educated in Europe, with whom he now returned to Massachusetts, and fixed his residence at Cambridge, a few miles from Boston. From the quiet of retirement, Mr. Gerry was again summoned in 1787, by his native state, as one of its representatives to a convention, called for the "sole and express purpose of revising the articles of confederation, and reporting to congress, and to the several legislatures, such alterations and provisions as shall render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of government, and the preservation of the union." On the meeting of this convention, little difference of opinion prevailed, as to the great principles which should form the basis of the constitution; but on reducing these principles to a system, perfect harmony did exist. To Mr. Gerry, as well as others, there appeared strong objections to the constitution, and he declined affixing his signature to the instrument. These objections he immediately set forth, in a letter addressed to his constituents, in which he observes: My principal objections to the plan are, that there is no adequate provision for a representation of the people; that they have no security for the right of election; that some of the powers of the legislature are ambiguous, and others indefinite and dangerous; that the executive is blended with, and will have an undue influence over, the legislature; that the judicial department will be oppressive; that treaties of the highest importance may be formed by the president, with the advice of two thirds of a quorum of the senate; and that the system is without the security of a bill of rights. These are objections which are not local, but apply equally to all the states. "As the convention was called for 'the sole and express purpose of revising the articles of confederation, and reporting to congress and to the several legislatures, such



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alterations and provisions as shall render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of government, and the preservation of the union,' I did not conceive that these powers extended to the formation of the plan proposed; but the convention being of a different opinion, I acquiesced in it; being fully convinced, that to preserve the union, an efficient government was indispensably necessary; and that it would be difficult to make proper amendments to the articles of confederation." "The constitution proposed has few, if any, federal features, but is rather a system of national government; nevertheless, in many respects I think it has great merit, and, by proper amendments, may be adapted to 'the exigencies of government,' and the preservation of liberty." When the constitution was submitted to the state convention of Massachusetts, of three hundred and sixty members of which that body consisted, a majority of nineteen only were in favour of its ratification. Although so many coincided with Mr. Gerry in his views of the constitution, he was highly censured by its advocates, who, under the excitement of party feelings, imputed to him motives by which he, probably, was not actuated. Under the new constitution, Mr. Gerry was chosen by the inhabitants of the district in which he resided their representative to congress. In this station he served his constituents for four years; and, although he had formerly opposed the adoption of the constitution, he now cheerfully united in carrying it into effect, since it had received the sanction of his country. Indeed, he took occasion on the floor of congress, not long after taking his seat in that body, to declare, "that the federal constitution having become the supreme law of the land, he conceived the salvation of the country depended on its being carried into effect." At the expiration of the above period, although again proposed as a delegate to Congress, he declined a re-election, and again retired to his family at Cambridge. On the fourth of March, 1797, Mr. Adams, who had previously been elected to succeed General Washington in the presidency, entered upon that office. France had already commenced her aggressions on the rights and commerce of the United States, and General Pinckney had been dispatched to that country, to adjust existing differences. Immediately upon succeeding to the presidency, Mr. Adams received intelligence that the French republic had announced to General Pinckney its determination "not to receive another minister from the United States, until after the redress of grievances." In this state of things, the president convened congress by proclamation, on the fifteenth of June. Although keenly sensible of the indignity offered to the country by the French government, Mr. Adams, in his speech to Congress, informed that body, "that as he believed neither the honour, nor the interests of the United States, absolutely forbade the repetition of advances for securing peace and friendship with France, he should institute a fresh attempt at negotiation [sic]." Upon his recommendation, therefore, three envoys extraordinary, Mr. Gerry, General Pinckney, and Mr. Marshall, were dispatched to carry into effect the pacific dispositions of the United States. On their arrival at Paris, the French directory, under various pretexts, delayed to acknowledge them in their official capacity. In the mean



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time, the tools of that government addressed them, demanding, in explicit terms, a large sum of money, as the condition of any negotiation. This being refused, an attempt was next made to excite their fears for themselves, and their country. In the spring of 1798, two of the envoys, Messrs. Pinckney and Marshall, were ordered to quit the territories of France, while Mr. Gerry was invited to remain, and resume the negotiation which had been suspended. Although Mr. Gerry accepted the invitation to remain, yet he uniformly and resolutely refused to resume the negotiation. His object in remaining in France was to prevent an immediate rupture with that country, which, it was apprehended, would result from his departure. Although he was censured, at the time, for the course he took, his continuance seems to have resulted in the good of his country. "He finally saved the peace of the nation," said the late President Adams, "for he alone discovered and furnished the evidence that X. Y. and Z. were employed by Talleyrand; and he alone brought home the direct, formal, and official assurances upon which the subsequent commission proceeded, and peace was made."

On his return to America, in October, 1798, Mr. Gerry was solicited, by the republican party in Massachusetts, to become their candidate for the office of governor. At that period much excitement prevailed on the subject of politics throughout the country. Although at first unsuccessful, his party, in 1805, for the first time, obtained the governor of their choice. In the following year, Mr. Gerry retired. But in 1810, he was again chosen chief magistrate of that commonwealth, in which office he was continued for the two following years. In 1812, he was recommended to the people of the United States, by the republican members of Congress, to fill the office of vice president. To a letter addressed to him, by a committee announcing his nomination he replied, "The question respecting the acceptance, or non-acceptance of this proposition, involved many considerations of great weight, in my mind; as they related to the nation, to this state, and to my domestic concerns. But it is neither expedient or necessary to state the points, since one was paramount to the rest, that 'in a republic, the service of each citizen is due to the state, even in profound peace, and much more so when the nation stands on the threshold of war.' I have the honour frankly to acknowledge this distinguished testimony of confidence, on the part of my congressional friends and fellow citizens, gratefully to accept their proffer, and freely to assure them of every exertion in my power, for meriting in office, the approbation of themselves and of the public." The nomination of Mr. Gerry, thus made, was followed by his election, and on the fourth of March, 1813, he was inaugurated vice president of the United States. Providence, however, had not destined him to the long enjoyment of the dignified station which he now held. While attending to his duties, at Washington, he was suddenly summoned from the scene of his earthly labours. A beautiful monument, erected at the national expense, covers his remains and records the date and circumstances of his death.

THE TOMB OF ELBRIDGE GERRY, Vice President of the United States, died suddenly, in this city, on his way to the Capitol as President



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of the Senate; November 23rd, 1814 Aged 70.

* * *

Stephen Hopkins was a native of that part of Providence which is now called Scituate, where he was born on the 7th of March, 1707. His parentage was very respectable, being a descendant of Benedict Arnold, the first governor of Rhode Island. His early education was limited, being confined to the instruction imparted in the common schools of the country. Yet it is recorded of him, that he excelled in a knowledge of penmanship, and in the practical branches of mathematics, particularly surveying. For several years he followed the profession of a farmer. At an early period, he was elected town clerk of Scituate, and some time after was chosen a representative from that town to the general assembly. He was subsequently appointed a justice of the peace, and a justice of one of the courts of common pleas. In 1733, he became chief justice of that court. In 1742, he disposed of his estate in Scituate, and removed to Providence, where he erected a house, in which he continued to reside till his death. In this latter place he entered into mercantile business, and was extensively engaged in building and fitting out vessels. When a representative from Scituate, he was elected speaker of the house of representatives. To this latter office he was again chosen after his removal to Providence, and continued to occupy the station for several successive years, being a representative from the latter town. In 1751, he was chosen chief justice of the superior court, in which office he continued till the year 1754. In this latter year he was appointed a commissioner from Rhode Island, to the celebrated convention which met at Albany; which had for its object the securing of the friendship of the five nations of Indians, in the approaching French war, and an union between the several colonies of America. In 1756, he was elected chief magistrate of the colony of Rhode Island, which office he continued to hold, with but few intervals, until the year 1767. In the discharge of the duties of this responsible station, he acted with dignity and decision. The prosperity of his country lay near his heart, nor did he hesitate to propose and support the measures, which appeared the best calculated to promote the interests of the colonies in opposition to the encroachments of British power. At an early period of the difficulties between the colonies and Great Britain, he took an active and decided part in favor of the former. In a pamphlet, entitled, "The rights of colonies examined," he exposed the injustice of the stamp act, and various other acts of the British government. This pamphlet was published by order of the general assembly, in 1765. The siege of fort William Henry, by the Marquis de Montcalm, 1767, and its surrender to the force under that general, with the subsequent cruel outrages and murders committed by the savages of the French army, are too well known to need a recital in this place. It is necessary only to state, that the greatest excitement prevailed throughout all the colonies. In this excitement, the inhabitants of Rhode Island largely participated. An agreement was entered into by a volunteer corps, couched in the following terms: "Whereas the British colonies in America are



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invaded by a large army of French and Indian enemies, who have already possessed themselves of fort William Henry, and are now on their march to penetrate further into the country, and from whom we have nothing to expect, should they succeed in their enterprise, but death and devastation; and as his majesty's principal officers in the parts invaded, have in the most pressing and moving manner, called on all his majesty's faithful subjects, for assistance to defend the country: — Therefore, we, whose names are underwritten, thinking it our duty to do every thing in our power, for the defence [sic] of our liberties, families, and property, are willing, and have agreed to enter voluntarily into the service of our country, and go in a warlike manner against the common enemy; and hereby call upon, and invite all our neighbours, who have families and property to defend, to join with us in this undertaking, promising to march as soon as we are two hundred and fifty in number, recommending ourselves and our cause to the favourable protection of Almighty God." To this agreement, Mr. Hopkins was the first to affix his name, and was chosen to command the company thus raised, which consisted of some of the most distinguished men in Providence. Preparations for a speedy departure for the field of action were made, but on the eve of their march, intelligence arrived, that their services were no longer necessary, as the progress of hostilities towards the south was not to be expected.

In 1774, Mr. Hopkins received the appointment of a delegate from Rhode Island to the celebrated congress, which met at Philadelphia that year. In this assembly he took his seat on the first day of the session, where he became one of the most zealous advocates of the measures adopted by that illustrious body of men. In the year 1775 and 1776, he again represented Rhode Island in the continental congress. In this latter year he had the honor of affixing his name to the imperishable instrument, which declared the colonies to be free, sovereign, and independent states. He recorded his name with a trembling hand, the only instance in which a tremulous band is visible among the fifty-six patriots who then wrote their names. But it was in this case only that the flesh was weak. Mr. Hopkins had for some time been afflicted with a paralytic affection, which compelled him, when he wrote, to guide his right hand with his left. The spirit of the man knew no fear, in a case where life and liberty were at hazard. In 1778, Mr. Hopkins was a delegate to congress for the last time. But in several subsequent years, he was a member of the general assembly of Rhode Island. The last year in which he thus served, was that of 1779, at which time he was seventy-two years of age. Mr. Hopkins lived to the 13th of July, 1785, when he closed his long, and honorable and useful life, at the advanced age of 78. His last illness was long, but to the period of his dissolution, he retained the full possession of his faculties. A vast assemblage of persons, consisting of judges of the courts, the president, professors and students of the college, together with the citizens of the town, and inhabitants of the state, followed the remains of this eminent man to his resting place in the grave. Although the early education of Mr. Hopkins was limited, as has already been observed, the vigor of his understanding enabled him to surmount his



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early deficiencies, and an assiduous application to the pursuit of knowledge, at length, placed him among the distinguished literary characters of the day. He delighted in literature and science. He was attentive to books, and a close observer of mankind; thus he went on improving, until the period of his death. As a public speaker, he was always clear, precise, pertinent, and powerful. As a mathematician, Mr. Hopkins greatly excelled. Till in advanced age, he was extensively employed in surveying lands. He was distinguished for great exactness in his calculations, and an unusual knowledge of his business. As a statesman and a patriot, he was not less distinguished. He was well instructed in the science of politics; had an extensive knowledge of the rights of his country, and proved himself, through a longer life than falls to the lot of most men, an unshaken friend of his country, and an enemy to civil and religious intolerance. He went to his grave honored as a skillful legislator, a righteous judge, an able representative, a ignited and upright governor. Charity was an inmate of his habitation. To the cry of suffering his ear was ever open, and in the relief of affliction he ever delighted.

* * *

John Adams

* * *

William Ellery

1915

The [Rhode Island](#) General Assembly voted to take 14,800 acres of land in [Scituate](#) (38% of the town) to create a water supply reservoir for greater [Providence](#). This would result in the condemnation of 1,195 buildings, including 375 houses, seven schools, six churches, six mills, thirty dairy farms, eleven ice houses, post offices, and the Providence and Danielson Railway, an electric railroad.



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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: December 3, 2013

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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, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of 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 algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process 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 research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
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