

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS OF RHODE ISLAND



NOTE: THE 17TH-CENTURY DATA ITEMS THAT BEGIN THIS LIST, BELOW, ARE OF COURSE NOT ABOUT GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS OF RHODE ISLAND (HE WAS AN 18TH-CENTURY DUDE), BUT INSTEAD ARE ABOUT HIS ILLUSTRIOUS FOUNDING-FATHER PLYMOUTH-ROCK EPONYMOUS ANCESTOR STEPHEN HOPKINS (WHO WAS NOT HIS GREAT-GRANDFATHER, BUT SOMETHING OF A GREAT-UNCLE).

BEWARE: WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY **7** DIFFERENT MEN OF THIS FAMILY WHO IN EARLY YEARS HAVE BORNE THE NAME "STEPHEN HOPKINS."

NOTE ALSO: THE ABOVE IMAGE IS NOT A PORTRAIT OF THE GOVERNOR. WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE. WE SURMISE HE PROBABLY LOOKED SOMETHING LIKE THIS BECAUSE IT IS A PORTRAIT OF HIS SON JUDGE JHOPKINS — WHO WAS SAID TO RESEMBLE HIM.

PLEASE DRAW NO HISTORICAL INFERENCE FROM THE FACT THAT THE CLOTHING IN THE PORTRAIT APPEARS TO RESEMBLE QUAKER ATTIRE (NO MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS EVER ACCEPTED STEPHEN HOPKINS AS A MEMBER; TO THE CONTRARY, THE QUAKERS OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND EVENTUALLY WERE FORCED TO DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM HIM).



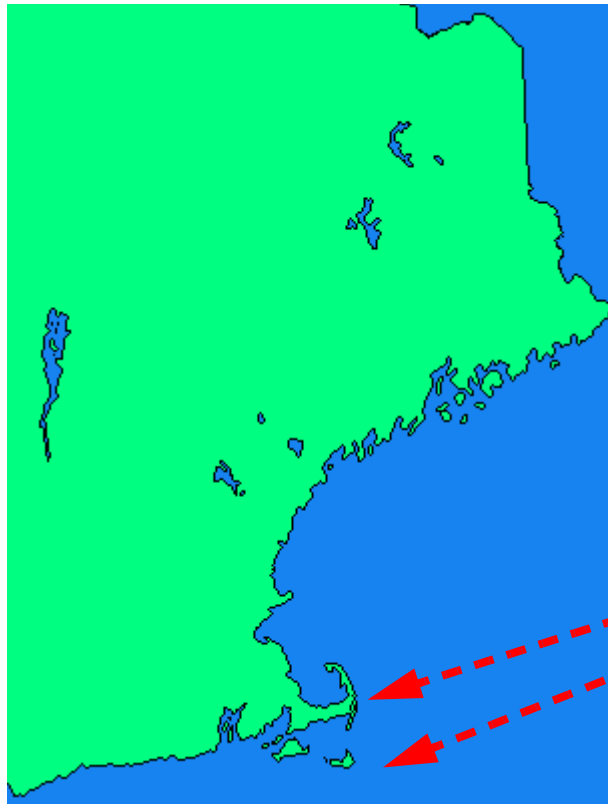
GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1620

November 19 (November 9, Old Style), Thursday: The intrusives aboard the [Mayflower](#) sighted Cape Cod, outpost of their New World. They were not appreciably off course.



While the group had been at sea for more than two months out of the sight of land, [Elizabeth Hopkins](#) had given birth to a boy they named [Oceanus Hopkins](#), “he of the ocean.” They would turn the ship a bit toward the south in order to continue on toward their planned destination on Long Island or in the Hudson River; it would be bad weather and a near shipwreck that would cause them to alter their plans and drop their anchor



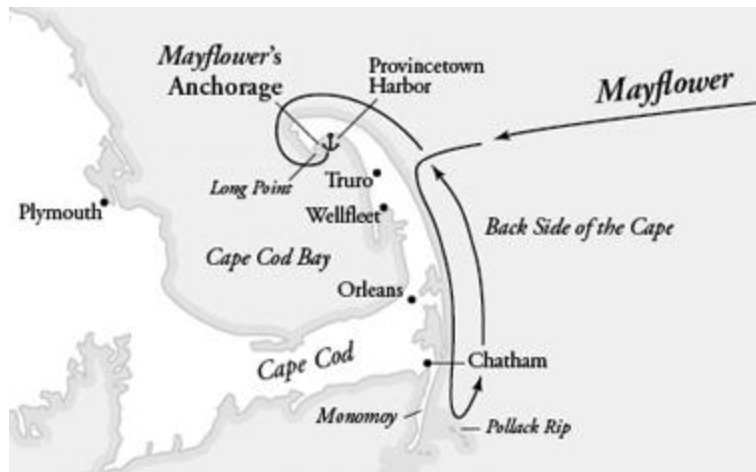
STEPHEN HOPKINS

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instead at the tip of Cape Cod.

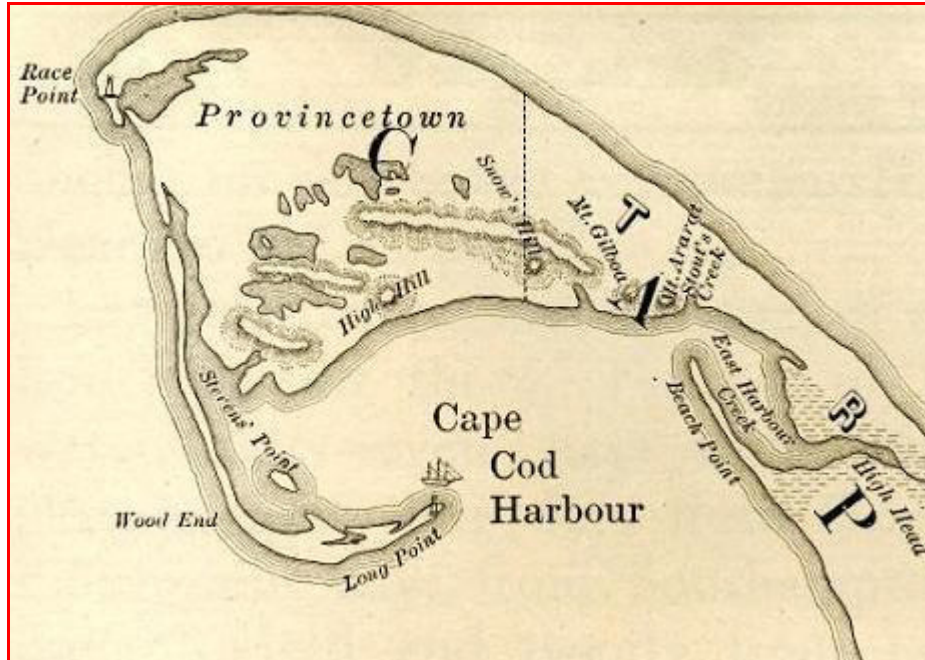
THE HOPKINS FAMILY



**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**

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November 21 (November 11, Old Style), Saturday: The *Mayflower* anchored in Provincetown harbor at the tip of Cape Cod, and the intrusives signed their compact and went ashore.

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

Bad weather and a near shipwreck had caused them to alter their plans to proceed on west toward Long Island and the Hudson River. While the *Mayflower* was in Provincetown Harbor with the Pilgrims searching out a suitable place to settle, Susanna White would give birth to a boy who they named Peregrine, the name meaning “one who journeys to foreign lands.” The English had a skirmish with the *Nauset*. The *Mayflower* would remain in American waters for that winter, its crew suffering the cold along with the Pilgrims, almost half of

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these folks dying.¹



The names of those which came over first, in y^e year 1620.
and were (by the blessing of god) the first beginners, and
(in a sort) the foundation, of all the plantations, and
colonies, in New-England (and their families)

Alden, John

Allerton, Isaac

- Mary (Norris) Allerton, wife
- Bartholomew Allerton, son
- Remember Allerton, daughter
- Mary Allerton, daughter

Allerton, John

Billington, John

- Eleanor Billington, wife
- John Billington, son
- Francis Billington, son

[William Bradford](#)

- Dorothy (May) Bradford, wife

Brewster, William

- Mary Brewster, wife
- Love Brewster, son
- Wrestling Brewster, son

Britteridge, Richard

Browne, Peter

Button, William

Carter, Robert

Carver, John

- Katherine (Leggett) (White) Carver, wife

Chilton, James

- Susanna (Furner?) Chilton, wife
- Mary Chilton, daughter

1. In addition to the live birth mentioned above, Mary Allerton would give birth to a stillborn boy just as the first houses were being built at Plymouth. Refer to [William Bradford](#), OF PLIMOTH PLANTATION, written 1630-1654, original at Massachusetts State Library, Boston.



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Clarke, Richard

Cooke, Francis

- John Cooke, son

Cooper, Humility

Crackstone, John

- John Crackstone, son

Eaton, Francis

- Sarah Eaton, wife
- Samuel Eaton, son

English, Thomas

Fletcher, Moses

Fuller, Edward

- Mrs. Edward Fuller, wife
- Samuel Fuller, son

Fuller, Samuel

Gardinar, Richard

Goodman, John

Holbeck, William

Hooke, John

[Stephen Hopkins](#)

- Elizabeth (Fisher) Hopkins, wife
- Giles Hopkins, son by first marriage
- Constance Hopkins, daughter by first marriage
- Damaris Hopkins, daughter
- Oceanus Hopkins, born en route, would soon die

Doty, Edward, servant of Stephen Hopkins

Leister, Edward, servant of Stephen Hopkins

THE HOPKINS FAMILY

Howland, John

Langmore, John

Latham, William

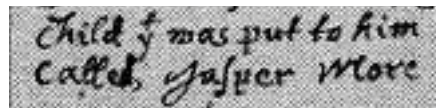
Margesson, Edmund

Martin, Christopher

- Mary (Prower) Martin, wife

Minter, Desire

- More, Ellen
- Jasper More, brother



[Captain [Richard More](#) of Salem]

- Richard More, brother

- Mary More, sister²

Mullins, William

- Alice Mullins, wife
- Priscilla Mullins, daughter
- Joseph Mullins, son

Priest, Degory

Prower, Solomon



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Rigsdale, John

- Alice Rigsdale, wife

Rogers, Thomas

- Joseph Rogers, son

Samson, Henry

Soule, George

Standish, Myles (military leader of the Plymouth colony)

- Rose Standish, wife

Story, Elias

Thompson, Edward

Tilley, Edward

- Ann (Cooper) Tilley, wife

Tilley, John

- Joan (Hurst) (Rogers) Tilley, wife
- Elizabeth Tilley, daughter

Tinker, Thomas

- Mrs. Thomas Tinker, wife
- boy Tinker, son

Trevore, William

Turner, John

- boy Turner, son
- boy Turner, son

Warren, Richard

White, William

- Susanna White, wife
- Resolved White, son

Wilder, Roger

Williams, Thomas

Winslow, Edward

- Elizabeth Barker Winslow, wife

Winslow, Gilbert

Mr. Ely

Dorothy, maidservant of John Carver

EDWARD WINSLOW

2. When, after the [Mayflower](#) had sailed in September, [Katherine More](#) had appeared before Sir James Lee, Lord Chief Justice of England, to find out what was happening to her four children, the desperate mother had been informed only that:

The said Samuell upon good and deliberate advise thought fitt to settle his estate upon a more hopeful issue and to provide for the educacon and maintenance of these children in a place remote from these partes where these great blotts and blemishes may fall upon them and therefore took the opportunity of sendinge them when such yonge ones as they went over with honest and religeous people.



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Thoreau entered these quotations in his Journal after October 15, 1849:



The 11th of Nov (all old style) they “set ashore 15 or 16 men, well armed, with some to fetch wood”; –“as also to see what the land was, and what inhabitants they could meet with” They found “the ground or earth” to be “sand hills, much like the downs in Holland, but much better; the crust of the earth a spit’s depth, excellent black earth: (We found that the crust of the earth was gone and that there was no soil except in a swamp called the shank painter, and a few other small swamps full of water –unless the inhabitants might affirm that there was some under the sand in their front yards –which we should not have thought from appearances. The land had completely lost its upper crust & instead of black earth –it was all yellow & white sand. we did not see enough to fill a flower pot unless it were the coarse swamp muck full of root & water.): all wooded with oaks, pines, sassafras, juniper, birch, holly, some ash, walnut: the wood for the most part open and without underwood, fit either to go or ride in.” (We saw no trees only a few small specimens of some of the above kinds, on the sand hills near the town, all thick shrubbery & underwood without any larger wood above it, very unfit either to go or ride in, but the greater part of the land was a perfect desert of yellow sand, rippled like waves by the wind in which only a littl beech-grass grew here and there.) At night our people returned, but found not any person, nor habitation; (As we have said we found a populous town, and the side walk was crowded with many more persons; sailors who belonged to the mackerel fleet in the harbor) and laded their boat with juniper, which smelled very sweet and strong, and of which we burnt the most part of the time we lay there. (We saw no wood to burn but a little that was brought from the eastward, but were warmed at Fullers hotel by hard coal brought from Pennsylvania)

On Wednesday the 15 of Nov. sixteen men were set ashore to see whether the land might be fit for them to seat in or no, “with every man his musket, sword, and corslet, under the conduct of Capt. Miles Standish; unto whom was adjoined, for counsel and advice, Wm Bradford, Stephen Hopkins, & Edward Tilley” – and when they had ordered themselves in order of a single file, and marched about the space of a mile by the sea, they espied five or six people, with a dog, coming towards them, who were savages; who, when they saw them, ran into the woods, and whistled the dog after them.” They soon afterwards saw many traces of these savages –their cornfields & graves & houses –&c.

(We saw no savages but we were informed by a very old white man that he could remember when there were a few in this neighborhood, and on the high bank in Truro, looking for traces of them we picked up an Indian’s arrowhead.) They say “we marched through boughs and bushes, and under hills and vallies, which tore our very armor in pieces, &c & again “About ten o’clock we came into a deep valley, full of brush, wood-gaile, and long grass, through which we found little paths or tracks: (We marched over the same region but we saw neither bush nor wood-gale nor any herb almost but a little beach and poverty grass & sorrel enough to color the surface, it was a particularly barren & desolate moorland –which seemed good for nothing but to hold the cape together –not a shrub to tear our clothes against if we would where a sheep would loose none of its fleece provided it found enough herbage to sustain it.) And all the while they could not find any fresh water “which,” say they “we greatly desired and stood in need of; for we brought neither beer nor water with us, and our victuals was only biscuit and Holland cheese, and a little bottle of aquavitae, so as we were sore athirst.” This makes me think that those pilgrims were no great travellers for (We did not think it necessary to carry either beer or water with us –but if we can drink at a pond or brook once a day we can get along very well, and our victuals were a little home-made bread & butter which we brought along with us and some doughnuts which were left from our breakfast of the day before. We had no bottle of aquavitae, nor anything whatever in a bottle.) But at the last mentioned valley they say “we saw a deer & found springs of fresh water, and sat us down and drunk our first New England water, with as much delight as ever we drunk drink in all our lives.” (We saw no wild animal but one fox in these parts, and drank at a shallow pond in the sand.) A little further on they found a heap of sand newly made “we might see,” say they, “how they paddled it with their hands; which we digged up, and in it we found a little old basket full of fair Indian Corn; And digged further and found a fine great new basket, full of very fair corn of this year, with some six and thirty goodly ears of corn, some yellow & some red, and others mixed with blue, which was a very goodly sight.” And afterward they found a bag of beans & more corn “So as we had in all about ten bushels, which will serve us sufficiently for seed.” (We saw thereabouts some fair fields of Ind. corn left out to ripen for it was not so late in the season –but all yellow –& also beans, remarkably good we thought to grow in that sand.

To the Pilgrims I think have not given the most trustworthy account of the Cape– They exaggerated the fairness & attractiveness of the land for they were glad to get to any land at all after that anxious voyage every thing appeared to them of the color of the rose and had the scent of Juniper or sassafras– They do not speak like navigators– Archer who accompanied Gosnold has given a truer account on the whole.



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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

They looked at the land of the New world with infant's eyes, in describing the country described their own feelings & hopes.— How different is the account given by Capt John Smith who speaks like an old traveller voyager & soldier as he was, who had seen too much of the world to exaggerate a part of it. He was Silenus & we the boys Chromis & Mnasilus who listened to his stories. about sunsquawl & sea-clams & wars & shipwrecks & the principles of things. until long after vesper made her appearance.?

Nec tantùm Phoebo gaudet Parnassia rupes,
Nec tantùm Rhodope miratur et Ismarus Orphea.”

— —
Quid loquar? aut Scyllam Nisi, quam fama secuta est,
Candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstis,
Dulichias vexâsse rates, et gurgite in alto
Ah! timidos nautas canibus lacerâsse marinis?

“As we wandered” say they, “we came to a tree where a young sprit was bowed down over a bow (?), and some acorns strewn underneath. Stephen Hopkins said, it had been to catch some deer. So, as we were looking at it, William Bradford being in the rear, who came looking also upon it, and as he went about it gave a sudden jerk up, and he was immediately caught by the leg. It was a very pretty device, made with a rope of their own making, and having a noose as artificially made as any roper in England can make, and as like ours as can be; which we brought away with us. In the end we got out of the wood—and were fallen about a mile too high above the creek; where we saw three bucks, but we had rather have had one of them. We also did spring three couple of partridges; and as we came along by the creek, we saw great flocks of wild geese and ducks, but they were very fearful of us.” (We saw none of these things there—but the same old man of whom we have spoken, remembered when there were a few deer in those parts as well as a great many wild fowl of all various kinds) N.E. {*MS torn*} violent {*MS torn*}



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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1621

June 18, Monday (Old Style): The first [duel](#) of New England is said to have been between [Stephen Hopkins](#)'s servants Edward Doty and Edward Leister. Fighting with sword and dagger, they wounded each other. Since there weren't any statutes as yet against such an offense, the New Comers decided to tie the two men together hand and foot, and keep them like that 24 hours without giving them anything to eat or drink. (The servants pleaded, their master interceded, and they were released before the full period had elapsed.)

July 12 (July 2, Monday, Old Style)-July 17 (July 7, Saturday, Old Style): [Edward Winslow](#), [Stephen Hopkins](#), and [Squanto](#) went from [Plymouth](#) to visit the indigenous settlement of *Pokanoket*, getting as far as *Namasket* and the weir which the natives had constructed on the Titicut River. At *Sowams* (present-day [Warren, Rhode Island](#)), they offered presents to sachem *Massasoit* (*Samoset* had gone back to Maine). Ignoring the treaty they



had only recently made, the white men took with them into the village their firearms, and, once in the village, they discharged them, terrifying everyone. (It seems already to have been implicitly recognized that the whites, being so vastly superior in power on account of their command of firearms, did not need to remember their promises.)



"As the star of the Indian descended,
that of the Puritans rose ever higher."
— Tourtellot, Arthur Bernon, *THE CHARLES*,
NY: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941, page 63





STEPHEN HOPKINS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

At the time it seems there was nothing in the village for them to eat:

WALDEN: When Winslow, afterward governor of the Plymouth Colony, went with a companion on a visit of ceremony to Massassoit on foot through the woods, and arrived tired and hungry at his lodge, they were well received by the king, but nothing was said about eating that day. When the night arrived, to quote their own words, - "He laid us on the bed with himself and his wife, they at the one end and we at the other, it being only plank, laid a foot from the ground, and a thin mat upon them. Two more of his chief men, for want of room, pressed by and upon us; so that we were worse weary of our lodging than of our journey." At one o'clock the next day Massassoit "brought two fishes that he had shot," about thrice as big as a bream; "these being boiled, there were at least forty looked for a share in them. The most ate of them. This meal only we had in two nights and a day; and had not one of us bought a partridge, we had taken our journey fasting." Fearing that they would be light-headed for want of food and also sleep, owing to "the savages' barbarous singing, (for they used to sing themselves asleep,)" and that they might get home while they had strength to travel, they departed. As for lodging, it is true they were but poorly entertained, though what they found an inconvenience was no doubt intended for an honor; but as far as eating was concerned, I do not see how the Indians could have done better. They had nothing to eat themselves, and they were wiser than to think that apologies could supply the place of food to their guests; so they drew their belts tighter and said nothing about it. Another time when Winslow visited them, it being a season of plenty with them, there was no deficiency in this respect.

**PEOPLE OF
WALDEN**

EDWARD WINSLOW

Our historians seem never to have made any linkage between this unavailability of food, and the fact that the white visitors had just been guilty of ignoring the agreement into which they had only recently entered, to wit:

- That when their men came to us, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them, as we should do our [weapons] when we came to them.

July 13, Friday (July 3, Old Style): [Stephen Hopkins](#) and [Edward Winslow](#) crossed the Titicut River at the native settlement of *Squabetty* and proceeded on to *Matepyst*, or what would become known to them as Gardner's Neck. Thence they made their way to *Sowams*, which would eventually be known as [Warren](#), [Rhode Island](#), and were welcomed there by the headman *Massasoit*.

July 15, Thursday (July 5, Old Style): [Stephen Hopkins](#) and [Edward Winslow](#) met many sachems (native leaders), witnessing some of the local sports, etc.



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

July 16, Friday (July 6, Old Style): [Stephen Hopkins](#) and [Edward Winslow](#) got up early and started out for [Plymouth](#) with totally empty bellies. They made it as far on this day as the native weir near *Matepyst*.

July 17, Saturday (July 7, Old Style): [Stephen Hopkins](#) and [Edward Winslow](#) arrived back in [Plymouth](#) wet, weary, and somewhat the worse for wear.



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

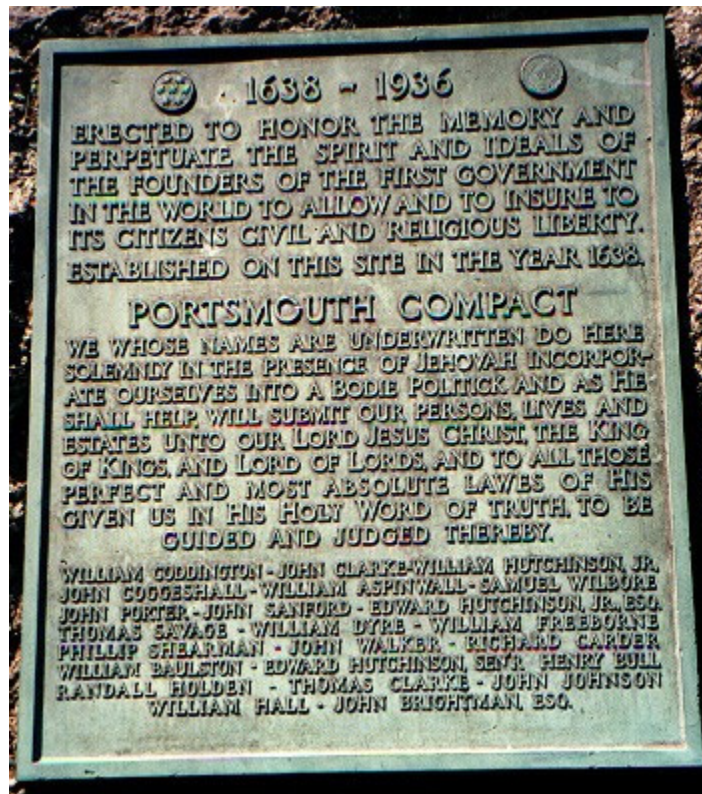
GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1636

[Stephen Hopkins](#) was fined £5 by the [Plymouth](#) court for battery against John Tisdale, and the court remarked that if anyone should have been capable of observing the King's peace, it should have been this Hopkins — who was at the time an Assistant and a magistrate.

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



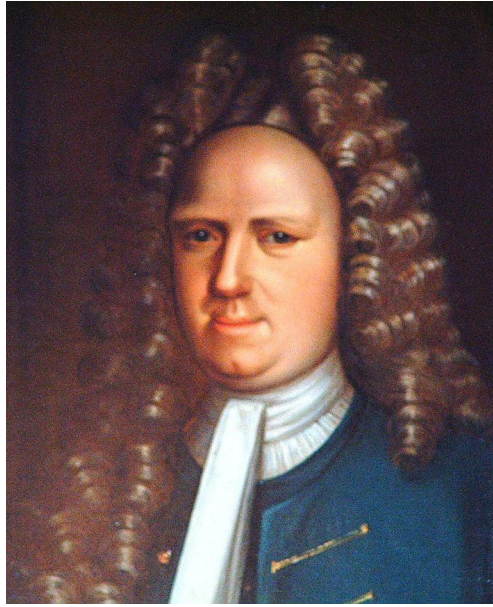


STEPHEN HOPKINS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

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



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

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



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

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



STEPHEN HOPKINS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

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



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

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STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1639

February 4, Monday (1638, Old Style): An unmarried servant of [Stephen Hopkins](#), Dorothy Temple, began to show unmistakable signs of pregnancy, and was confronted. She confessed to having had a liaison with the Arthur Peach who had recently been [hanged](#) after murdering a Nipmuc. The [Plymouth](#) court ordered that because “in regard by her covenant of indenture shee hath yet above two yeares to serve him [Mr. Steephen Hopkins], that the said Mr. Hopkins shall keepe her and her child, or provide shee may be kept with food and rayment during the said terme; and if he refuse so to doe, that then the collony provide for her, & Mr. Hopkins to pay it.” On the same day the court ordered “Mr. Steephen Hopkins is committed to ward for his contempt to the Court, and shall so remayne comitted until hee shall either receive his servant Dorothy Temple, or els provide for her elsewhere at his owne charge during the terme shee hath yet to serve him.”

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

February 8, Friday (1638, Old Style): The [Plymouth](#) court noted that [Stephen Hopkins](#) had concluded an agreement with Mr. John Holmes, an officer of the court, for £3 and other considerations to discharge Hopkins and the colony of responsibility for the support of Dorothy Temple and her bastard, and the said Dorothy was to serve the remainder of her time with Holmes.

June 4, Tuesday (Old Style): In [Concord](#), William Fuller, “who kept the mill built by Mr. Bulkeley by the Mill dam, was fined three pounds for gross abuse in over-tolling.”³

The servant woman Dorothy Temple, having had some opportunity to recover after giving birth, was sentenced by [Plymouth](#) to be whipped twice for “uncleanes and bringing forth a male bastard” (however, when after the initial whipping she fainted, her second whipping was foregone).

STEPHEN HOPKINS

In the colony being founded at New Haven, Connecticut, there was adopted a Fundamental Agreement, or Original Constitution.

READ THE FULL TEXT

3. [Lemuel Shattuck](#)’s 1835 [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;....](#). Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: [John Stacy](#)
(On or about November 11, 1837 [Henry Thoreau](#) would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study.)



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1682

May 29, Monday (Old Style): Samuel Wilkinson of [Providence, Rhode Island](#), son of Lawrence Wilkinson, who had gotten married during 1672 with Plain Wickenden Wilkinson, daughter of William Wickenden, and the couple had had Samuel Wilkinson, born on September 18, 1674, John Wilkinson, born on January 25, 1678, William Wilkinson, born on August 1, 1680, Joseph Wilkinson, born on January 22, 1683, Ruth Wilkinson, born on January 31, 1685, and Susanna Wilkinson, born on April 27, 1688. On this day Samuel Wilkinson made his pledge of allegiance to King Charles II of England. (The daughter Ruth Wilkinson would marry with William Hopkins and become the mother not only of [Esek Hopkins](#), who in 1776 would become 1st commodore of an American fleet, but also of Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#), whose name would appear on the American [Declaration of Independence](#).)

WILKINSON FAMILY

THE HOPKINS FAMILY

what we have done
a protest in such
Colony
Stephen Hopkins



STEPHEN HOPKINS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1701

The beginning of what eventually, after rework in 1743, would become the residence of [Rhode Island](#) and [Providence](#) Plantations's many-times elected governor, [Stephen Hopkins](#). This is what it looks like now:⁴



CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

Governor Stephen Hopkins

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

4. This structure has been moved a couple of times and I do not presently have the dates of those removes. Initially it stood on South Main Street, then it was moved to 9 Hopkins Street (which may at that time still have been being called Bank Street), and then it was moved to the corner of Hopkins Street and Benefit Street.



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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1707

March 7, Friday (1706, Old Style): [Stephen Hopkins](#) was born at the family's Mashapaug homestead, two miles southwest of the Weybosset Bridge on the West Side of [Providence](#) (not [Cranston](#)), [Rhode Island](#), "on Monday, the 24th of February, old stile, or in the present new stile, the seventh day of March, 1707." His mother, Ruth Wilkinson Hopkins, was a [Quaker](#), but not his father. His mother's father, Captain Samuel Wilkinson of Louisquisset, had been a Quaker, but not her mother. The biography prepared by William Eaton Foster in 1883, STEPHEN HOPKINS, A RHODE ISLAND STATESMAN, would contain a footnote on page 34 to the effect that "No record exists, however, showing any connection of Stephen Hopkins with the Society of Friends, as a member, until the year 1755," and an explanation on page 57 that "There is nothing to indicate positively the religious predilections of his father. We have only the negative probability that he was not a Friend. A Friend, however, his mother was, as has been noted; and Governor Hopkins himself, later in life, identified himself very completely with that body of Christians, even to the extent, to quote from [Moses Brown](#), his constant co-laborer, (and himself a Friend), of his having the Friends' meetings 'sometimes held in the winter at his dwelling-house.'" [Continuing in a footnote: "How late in life is not certain. His first and second wives were both Friends, but his second marriage only was solemnized in Friends' Meeting. ('Historical collections of the Essex Institute,' II. 120). It was at this time, says the same account, (p. 120), that 'he connected himself with the "Friends." Yet his first wife was of unbroken Quaker ancestry, whether herself a Friend or not. His first marriage was by a justice of the peace, and appears to have taken place 'at the house of the bride's father.' (Wilkinson Memoirs, p. 363. Governor Hopkins severed his connection with the Society of Friends in 1773. (Records of [Smithfield](#) Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1773). For the circumstances of this occurrence see Chapter VIII., of this work."] In fact it seems that young Stephen would not connect with the Quakers until during his middle age he had lost in quick succession his dearly loved first wife and his two promising sons John Hopkins and Silvanus Hopkins (or, to put another possible face on this, until as a politician he needed to obtain support from among the Rhode Island voting Friends).

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



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1726

[Stephen Hopkins](#) got married with Sarah Scott (this was not a Quaker wedding but a wedding in front of a Justice of the Peace, conducted in the home of the bride's father).

RHODE ISLAND

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

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.



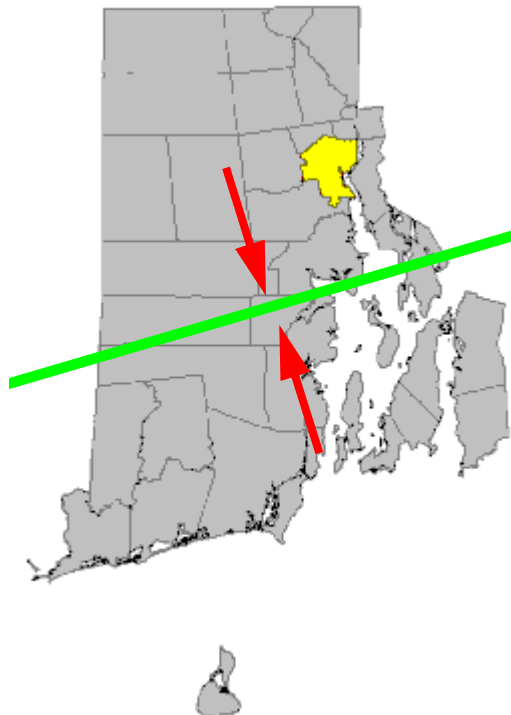
STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1740

During this decade a partisan struggle in the [Rhode Island](#) colony would pit the merchants and farmers of [Newport](#) and South County (the “Rhode Island” of “Rhode Island and Providence Plantations”), led by Samuel Ward, against the merchants and farmers of the environs of [Providence](#) (the “Providence Plantations” of “Rhode Island and Providence Plantations”), who would come to be led by [Friend Stephen Hopkins](#).



NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1742

[Stephen Hopkins](#) relocated from [Scituate](#) to [Providence, Rhode Island](#).





STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1743

In [Providence, Rhode Island](#) the [Stephen Hopkins](#) house, originating in 1701, was modified to something like its present condition.⁵ (Hopkins would be a signer of the [Declaration of Independence](#) and would repeatedly serve as governor of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.)



5. This structure has been moved a couple of times and I do not presently have the dates of those moves. Initially it stood on South Main Street, then it was moved to 9 Hopkins Street (which may at that time still have been being called Bank Street), and then it was moved to the corner of Hopkins Street and Benefit Street.



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1750

[Stephen Hopkins](#) helped to found the 1st public library in [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#).⁶

6. Please don't presume that "public" here means available for the use of free citizens of color.



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1753

Sarah Scott Hopkins died ([Stephen Hopkins](#) would during this year also lose two sons, John Hopkins and Silvanus Hopkins).

RHODE ISLAND

April 23, Monday: Silvanus Hopkins, son of [Stephen Hopkins](#), about 19 years of age, cast away on the Cape Breton shore, attempted to get to Louisburg in a small schooner but was taken by natives in canoes off the Island of St. Peter's, and tortured to death.

July 20, Friday: John Hopkins, son of [Stephen Hopkins](#), about 25 years of age, had taken his snow *Two Brothers* along the Spanish coast. On this day he died of the small pox. Since he was a Protestant, Christian burial would be out of the question.



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1755

The recently bereaved [Stephen Hopkins](#) married a 2d time, with Friend Anne Arnold Smith, widow of Benjamin Smith. This, unlike his justice-of-the-peace home wedding with his 1st wife, was a full-scale [Quaker](#) affair, and the couple's Quaker wedding certificate is preserved at the [Rhode Island](#) Historical Society. His 2d wife was a Friend as had been his 1st wife and his mother and his mother's father, and at this point he "identified himself with that religious body to which his mother and his wife belonged" (William Eaton Foster, STEPHEN HOPKINS, A RHODE ISLAND STATESMAN, 1884; also, in a footnote on page 97, Foster asserts that "It was through this act of marriage, also, that Governor Hopkins connected himself by membership with the Society."). Well, at least he seems to have begun to dress like a Quaker, that being the easy part. He would not ever, however, embrace the core of the faith, which is the Peace Testimony, nor would he concern himself with the small issues such as the longstanding Quaker refusal to take oaths, nor would he ever respond to items of Quaker discipline such as the requirement that Friends dissociate themselves from American practices of human enslavement. He made himself a Quaker more or less in the "Friend Nixon" mode, which is to say, he was pleased to carry himself as a Quaker when convenient (but not when not). There was never a "clearness committee" and no monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends ever accepted him as a member. Eventually it would become necessary to disown his sorry ass.

(Historian Kenneth Carroll has asserted that there had been no such thing as applying for membership until the 1730s and 1740s, but it would seem that by this year 1755, it should have been possible for Hopkins to apply for membership had he desired to do so. He did not, however, do this. In this timeframe monthly meetings often did not keep lists of members unless they happened to divide into two. Had Hopkins applied, there presumably would not have been any existing list of members to which to add his name because, in her analysis of early New England Yearly Meeting records, Quaker historian Elizabeth Cazden has found no comprehensive membership lists until in the 1780s meetings began to visit every family in order to tighten enforcement of the discipline.)⁷

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

Governor Stephen Hopkins

7. Pages 180-181 in Donna McDaniel's and Vanessa Julye's FIT FOR FREEDOM, NOT FOR FRIENDSHIP: QUAKERS, AFRICAN AMERICANS, AND THE MYTH OF RACIAL JUSTICE (Philadelphia: Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 2009).



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

On [Nantucket Island](#), [Friend](#) Benjamin Coffin was almost disowned by the [Quakers](#) for dragging his feet in regard to the [manumission](#) of his three slaves. He would manage to avoid disownment, but eventually the former governor of [Rhode Island](#), [Friend Stephen Hopkins](#), more recalcitrant, would indeed eventually be disowned for such continued slaveholding. (Looking up the inside of his nose: this Hopkins dude, later, would be a signer of our [Declaration of Independence](#) — which means that he apparently was willing to tolerate freedom, justice, and the pursuit of happiness at least for **some** of us at least **some** of the time.)

what we have done
a for a man in such
a colony
Stephen Hopkins



"The capacity to get free is nothing; the capacity to be free, that is the task."

— André Gide, *THE IMMORALIST*
translation Richard Howard
NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, page 7





GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1758

In [Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Hopkins](#) took the oath of office as main man in charge. In doing so he of course compromised the testimony against swearing of his monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) — but this would not cause him to be censured. (He would prove to be at least as good a Quaker as another such politician, Friend Richard Nixon.)

How had he acquired this governmental position? —The Quakers of [Newport](#) had written to the Quakers of [Smithfield](#) on April 28th to ask them to cast their votes for Hopkins for Governor “as we have reason to think his opponent [Samuel Ward] is not so moderate a man as we think is proper to sustain such a post.” In other words, the Quakers favored this politician only as the lesser of two evils. Hopkins thereupon won by a slender plurality of 66 votes.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1763

In [Rhode Island](#) politics in this year, [Stephen Hopkins](#) was in charge.



Ann Smith Franklin, sister-in-law of Benjamin Franklin, died.

The Sabin tavern, at South Main and Planet Streets in [Providence](#) very near to the governor's residence, was constructed. (On June 9, 1772 a group of local men would meet there to determine the fate of the British revenue schooner *Gaspee* that had run aground at Namquit Point.)





GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1764

In Nova Scotia, the townships of Granville, Windsor and Shelburne were formed; and the Acadians were permitted to hold lands in the province upon taking the oath of allegiance.

There were war debts that now had to be paid. Parliament modified its Molasses Act to produce revenue in concert with its Revenue Act, as the Sugar Act, the first to raise revenue not only from England but from its colonies as well. England had come out of the period known as the Seven Years' War in Europe and the French and Indian Wars in America (it lasted eight years over here) in the position of being the most far-flung empire which the world would ever see. From France, England had taken not only the amorphous hinterland known as Canada but also several islands in the West Indies. From Spain, England had taken a region centering around what would be known as Florida. But England had come out of the period of hostilities, of course, as said, with an immense debt load, and Americans of course immediately objected to sharing in this burden, on grounds that since under British law such revenue measures could be taken only upon the consent of the representatives in Parliament assembled, and with Americans having no representation in that body, we **should not be taxed with out being represented**. Everybody knew, the condition of the Parliament being what it was, that that was very much like saying that they shouldn't be raping us without kissing us first, but never mind because what we needed was a nice slogan, and ample indignation.⁸ The only real possibilities being

- either kill a whole bunch of Englishmen,
- or else do the unthinkable, stop putting sugar in our tea;

since we had just come out of a period in which we and the Englishmen had been killing a whole bunch of Frenchmen and a whole bunch of Indians, the easiest solution was a minor behavioral adjustment:

- substitute for the killing of Indians the killing of Englishmen.

This Revenue Act having brought taxation without representation to [Boston](#), obviously a Committee of Correspondence had to be formed.

8. It isn't too hard to create slogans when you really need them: witness a [slaveholder](#) standing up in public, in broad daylight like, and going "Give me liberty or give me death!" But you have to be careful to avoid afterthoughts during this process — the first inspiration is usually the best one.

HDT

WHAT?

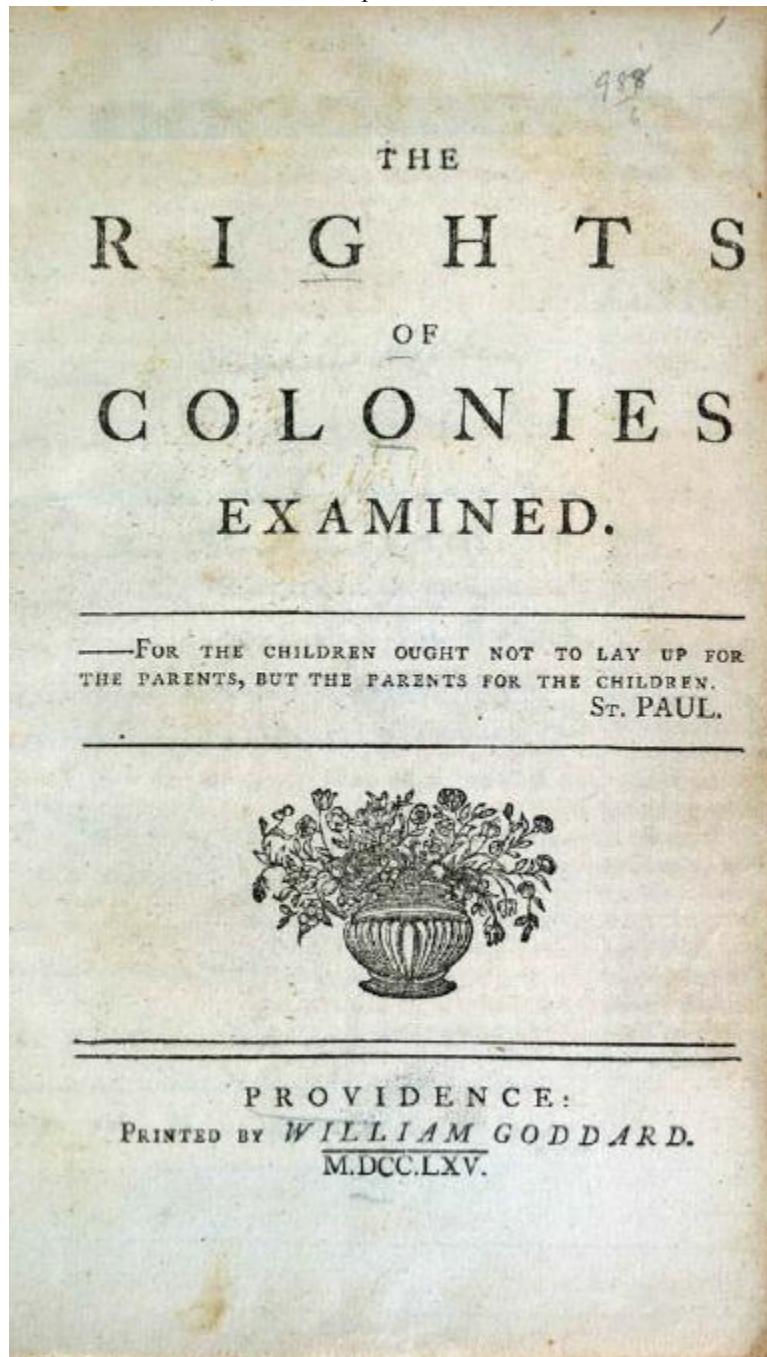
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STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

As his contribution to the resolution of this crisis, Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) of [Rhode Island](#) prepared THE RIGHTS OF COLONIES EXAMINED, and this was printed in [Providence](#):





GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

September: At [Newport](#) on [Aquidneck Island](#) occurred the first meeting of the new governing body for the proposed new [Rhode Island](#) institution of higher education. Among the 24 officials was Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#), later to become a signer of the [Declaration of Independence](#), who was named as the institution's first chancellor, his political opponent Samuel Ward, who would serve several terms as the state governor, and [Nicholas Brown](#) (grandfather of the [Nicholas Brown, Jr.](#) after whom the [College of Rhode Island](#) eventually would be renamed [Brown University](#)). The Reverend [James Manning](#), the originator of the idea, was settling in as pastor of a new [Baptist](#) church in [Warren](#), and opening a Latin school there.



Since there is a story floating around to the effect that Rhode Island College was founded “by an assorted group of Revivalist Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Anglicans,” I will mention that not only was the first college president and sole instructor a Baptist minister, but also, later on, when one of his successors as college president would come to be suspected of not believing in each and every tenet of the Baptist faith — the man would be driven out.



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1765

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

THE BROWN BROTHERS

In [Rhode Island](#), Samuel Ward would be during this year replacing [Stephen Hopkins](#) as governor.

Colonel Robert Rogers the Indian fighter passed through [Rhode Island](#) and noted a condition we have now, that was chronic even then — the colony's lack of adequate provisions for the education of its young.

COLONEL ROBERT ROGERS

“NARRATIVE HISTORY” IS FABULATION, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

The Brown Brothers of [Providence, Rhode Island](#), richie rich, were accustomed to treating persons as things. They routinely had no qualms about exchanging things for persons, and persons for things:

Providence March 11. 1765

This day Agreed with Nicholas Brown & Company to purchase for them Forty Horses that are in good Cases fitt for the Surinam Markett wher I am to purchase for them on the Best Terms I can the whole not amounting to more then One Hundred and Eighty pounds Lawfull Money and are to be all delivered to them by the Twentieth day of April next & said Persons are to pay for them at whatsoevr Prices I purchase them at (not Exceeding £180. as aforesaid for the whole) in Rum Sugar Molasses and one Negro for each of the Best prices I may procure for them in the purchase of said Horses, as also to pay me at the Rate of Six Shilling Lawfull Money of day for my time and Trouble in Selling these Articles and purchasing the Horses and they to bear my Expence in Doing the whole Business as witness my Hand

Isaac Tripp

P.S. None of the Horses to be more then fourteen Hands High



Thus we should treat it as no aberration, no fluke, no mere unfortunate happenstance, that in this year their [negrero](#) brigantine [Sally](#) experienced difficulties. (When you are accustomed to treating persons as things and vicey versa, for instance treating persons as cargo, cargo being something that is sometimes damaged in transit, you can expect that some of the persons you are dealing in will be damaged or lost in transit. It goes without saying.) For the papers of the *Sally*, Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) had used the blank back of a pass that had been issued by the British admiralty in regard to another vessel on another voyage quite completed. The front of the parchment having been used, the back was available as colonial document paper. I have inspected that parchment and its seals; it is very much the worse for wear and is now preserved at the John Carter Brown



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

Library at Brown University. It reads like this:

*By the Honorable Stephen Hopkins
Esquire, Governor, and Captain [sic] in Chief of the Colony of Rhode Island.
I certify that this Day I delivered this Pass to Ezek Hopkins Master of the Brigantine
Sally of Providence in said Colony of Rhode Island of the Burthen of one Hundred and twenty five Tons
mounted with Six Guns and navigated with fourteen Men, all Subjects of His Britannic Majesty Rhode
Island built, and bound for Africa and the West Indies. For which Pass the said Master hath given
Bond and taken the [hole in parchment] Oath to entitle him to Such Pass there being a new [??] in said Colony.
Given under my Hand and Seal at Arme [??] at Rhode Island this eighth Day of
September one Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty four, and in the fourth Year of His
Majesty's Reign George the third King of Great Britain &c.*

Step. Hopkins

((Tax Stamp with "68" and "GR" and a crown
and a quite large and ornate "GR"))

Of the 167 Africans she was transporting in chains, 109 were lost.⁹

THE BROWN BROTHERS
THE MIDDLE PASSAGE
SLAVERY

9. The other ships were the *Mary* and the *Wheel of Fortune*. To repel pirates, the *Sally* carried 7 swivel guns and a keg of powder, two pairs of ship pistols, 8 "small Arms," 2 "Blunder Busers," and 13 "Cutleshes," and to keep the male Africans under control, also, 3 long chains with a dozen "pad Locks," 40 "hand Cufs," and 40 "Shekels." We can infer that this ship was not named in honor of Sally Hemings, President [Thomas Jefferson](#)'s common-law wife/real-law slave, and mother of a number of his children — as she had not yet been born.



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1767

In [Rhode Island](#), [Stephen Hopkins](#) was in charge.

Although we have little real idea what this man looked like there is an interesting image now above the fireplace in the Corporation Room of University Hall, an image which has been created out of bold imagination by John Philip Hagen, a recent graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). The date in the lower left corner of the painting, under magnification, looks to my eye sorta like “1991.”



1767. The act of the British Parliament laying a duty on Tea and other articles went into operation, and the inhabitants in Town meeting prepared an agreement, to be signed individually, pledging themselves to each other not to import nor use those articles.



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

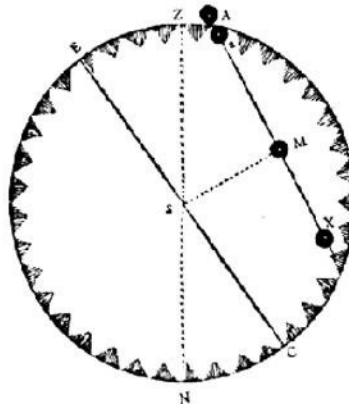
GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1769

June 3, Saturday: In [Rhode Island](#), Joseph Wanton was in charge.¹⁰ From the yard of [Friend Stephen Hopkins](#)'s home



(erected 1701, altered 1743)¹¹ a group of notables such as [Benjamin West](#) the local “philomath” and Joseph Brown observed the transit of the planet Venus across the face of the sun.¹²



[Benjamin West](#) would publish AN ACCOUNT OF THE OBSERVATION OF VENUS UPON THE SUN THE THIRD DAY OF JUNE 1769, and would soon be awarded honorary degrees by both [Harvard College](#) and the [College of Rhode Island](#).

In commemoration, Transit Street and Planet Street in [Providence](#) would receive their names. –On “Transit

10. Wanton’s wig, which had been crafted in England in imitation of the wig of the Speaker of the House of Commons, was so immense that it would have seemed preposterous to perch a hat atop it. He therefore was in the habit of carrying his hat under his left arm while holding in his right hand an umbrella (he was the 1st gentleman in Rhode Island to use an umbrella).

11. This structure has been moved a couple of times and I do not presently have the dates of those removes. Initially it stood on South Main Street, then it was moved to 9 Hopkins Street (which may at that time still have been being called Bank Street), and then it was moved to the corner of Hopkins Street and Benefit Street.

12. Would [Friend Stephen Hopkins](#)’s [slave](#) Toney, whom he was refusing to [manumit](#), have been playing “barista,” and carrying drinks out from the house and respectfully serving these notable gentlemen?



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

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Street” between Benefit Street (Back Street) and Main Street (Town Street), an observatory of sorts for the event had been constructed.

ASTRONOMY

HDT

WHAT?

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

THERE will be Five ECLIPSES this Year, 1769.

I. The first of the Sun, January 7th, 9 h. 45m. in the Evening, invisible.

II. The second of the Sun, June 4th, 3 h 43m. in the Morning invisible.

III. The third of the Moon, June 19th in the Morning visible and total as follows.

	<i>h</i>	<i>m</i>
Beginning	1	26
Beginning of total Darknes	2	40
Middle	3	12
End of total Darknes	3	42
End of Eclipse	4	58
Duration of total Darknes	0	30
Duration of Eclipse	3	46
Digits Eclipsed	13	6

IV. The fourth of the Sun, November 28th, at 3h. 5 m in the Morning, invisible.

V. The fifth of the Moon December 13th, visible as follows

	<i>oh</i>	<i>m</i>
Beginning	1	29
Middle	2	51
End	2	44
Duration	8	33

On the third Day of Junewill happen a most rare Phenomenon, which it is probable not any now living will have another opportunity of beholding, for an accurate observation of which most Civilized Nations have ordered their Astronomers to prepare at the Expence of the Public, some important Principles in Astronomy being thereby to be settled, and which will not happen again till the 8th of December, 1874. This is the passage of Venus over the Disk or Face of the Sun in the Afternoon of said third Day of June 1769, as follows.

Venus will begin to touch the Sun	2h 31m 24sec
Middle of the Transit	5 48 40
Venus leaves the Sun	9 5 56
Duration of the Transit	6 34 32
Latitude of Venus at the Middle	90 47

On the 9th of November the Planet Mercury will appear like a black Spot on the Sun's Disk.

Beginning	2 h 42 m 30 sec P.M.
Middle	5 12 30
End	7 42 30
Duration	5 0 0
Distance of cent. at Middle	7 18



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1772

September: The [Smithfield](#) monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), of which former [Rhode Island](#) Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) was at least nominally a member (as, for instance, President Richard Milhouse Nixon was at least nominally a birthright member of the Friends Church in Whittier, California –since his mother had been a member at the time of his birth– despite the fact that he had nothing whatever to do with Quakers and in fact refused to visit with committees coming to Washington DC to plead with him about such topics as the bombing of Cambodia), took [Friend](#) Stephen under dealing for his refusal to [manumit](#) his black personal manservant and [slaves](#) Toney.

QUAKER DISOWNMENT



STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1773

January 28, Thursday: A couple of Quaker men who had been delegated to visit Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#), and elder him about his not as yet having [manumitted](#) his black servant in accordance with the Quaker Query as to Noninvolvement in Slavery, reported back to the [Smithfield, Rhode Island](#) monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) that the governor “desires Friends not to act hastily.” (Does that mean “Can’t you wait until the polls close”?)

SLAVERY

QUAKER DISOWNMENT

*The matter concerning Stephen Hopkins' holding a Negro
as slave, was considered. And as he still refuses to set her at
free requested. This meeting puts him from under their care. &
Hoses Tannum & George Barnetick to draw down up a paper of this D
m & bring to next m. by meetg. And Benj. W. & Thomas Laph
pointed to Inform said Hopkins of the above conclusions. And so
next m. by meetg.*

March: [Friend Stephen Hopkins](#), a former governor of [Rhode Island](#), instead of [manumitting](#) his [slave](#) Toney, was still pleading special circumstances after six months of being dealt with. On account of this impasse, in this month the [Smithfield](#) monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) decided that they needed at this point to take action. If he continued to resist, then the clerk, Friend Moses Farnum, and an associate, were to draw up a “Paper of Denial” that would notify Rhode Islanders that the governor was no longer in unity with his Quaker associates.



QUAKER DISOWNMENT

This all seems strange to us now. What was going on back then? The Smithfield, Rhode Island Quakers had not disowned Hopkins when time after time he had compromised their testimony against swearing by taking an oath of office as Governor. The Smithfield Friends had not disowned Hopkins when he had compromised the Quaker Peace Testimony by directing the Rhode Island war effort in the Great War for the Empire, nor for seeking a defensive union of the English North American colonies. At this late date allofasudden they are acting against him but they are taking their own sweet time about it, taking him under dealing in September



GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1772 and taking half a year to reach a decision to disown him — and they wouldn't get around to making it public knowledge that he was being disowned for another five months, in October 1773! Now, Quakers are notoriously slow to be sure, but this is ridiculous — what was going on? Perhaps we may take some sort of clue from the fact that a published work of Quaker history (real trees killed to make real paper) has alleged that he was being disciplined “for refusing to free a slave woman who had small children. Hopkins insisted on retaining ownership until her children no longer needed her care.”¹³ **Can you smell whitewash? Who was this slave woman and who were her small children? —They appear exactly nowhere in our historical record. Hopkins's black manservant, whom he would not free, was named Toney Hopkins. When Stephen Hopkins died more than a decade later on July 13, 1785, this Toney was not yet in possession of his manumission document!**

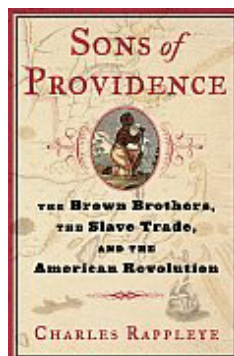
March 14, Sunday: Ruth Smith, Mrs. Anne Smith Hopkins's daughter by her 1st marriage, got married with her stepfather [Stephen Hopkins](#)'s youngest son by his 1st marriage, George Hopkins.

April 29, Thursday: The “Paper of Denial” constructed by clerk Moses Farnum and an associate (Friend George Comstock) was presented to the business meeting of the [Smithfield](#) monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), and the group put off for a month its decision on the matter of the disownment of the governor of the colony of [Rhode Island](#), [Friend Stephen Hopkins](#), until its meeting in June.

QUAKER DISOWNMENT

The matter concerning Stephen Hopkins's holding a Negro slave, was considered. And as he still refuses to set her at liberty often requested. This meeting puts him from under their care. & hopes Farnum & George Comstock to draw down up a paper of his D. & bring to next m. by meetg. And Benjamin & Thomas Lapham pointed to Inform said Hopkins of the above conclusions, and on next m. by meetg.

13. Charles Rappleye, in his recent *SONS OF PROVIDENCE: THE BROWN BROTHERS, THE SLAVE TRADE, AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006, page 142), quotes the phrase “still refuses to set her at liberty tho often requested.” I wonder if he has actually looked at these holographic minutes at the Rhode Island Historical Society on Hope Street in Providence, Rhode Island, for I am unable myself in them to make out this word he has alleged, “her.” I find there to be nothing whatever in the record to suggest that the slave in question was female.





STEPHEN HOPKINS

GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

June 24, Thursday: At the previous business meeting of the [Smithfield](#) monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), approval of the “Paper of Denial” disowning Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) for his failure to manumit his black slave¹⁴ had been deferred. At this meeting “the matter concerning the Testimony of Stephen Hopkins’ Denial was considered, and said Testimony was approved of.” Hopkins finally had been disowned.

QUAKER DISOWNMENT

However, the sole purpose of such a disownment is as a notification to the general surrounding [Rhode Island](#) community that such and such a person was no longer a [Friend](#) — and in this sensitive case the community was not notified. The community would not be informed of this action until October.

October: The [Smithfield](#) monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), that had in March decided to disown a famous former governor of [Rhode Island](#), [Friend Stephen Hopkins](#), at this point revealed that he had been disowned.¹⁵

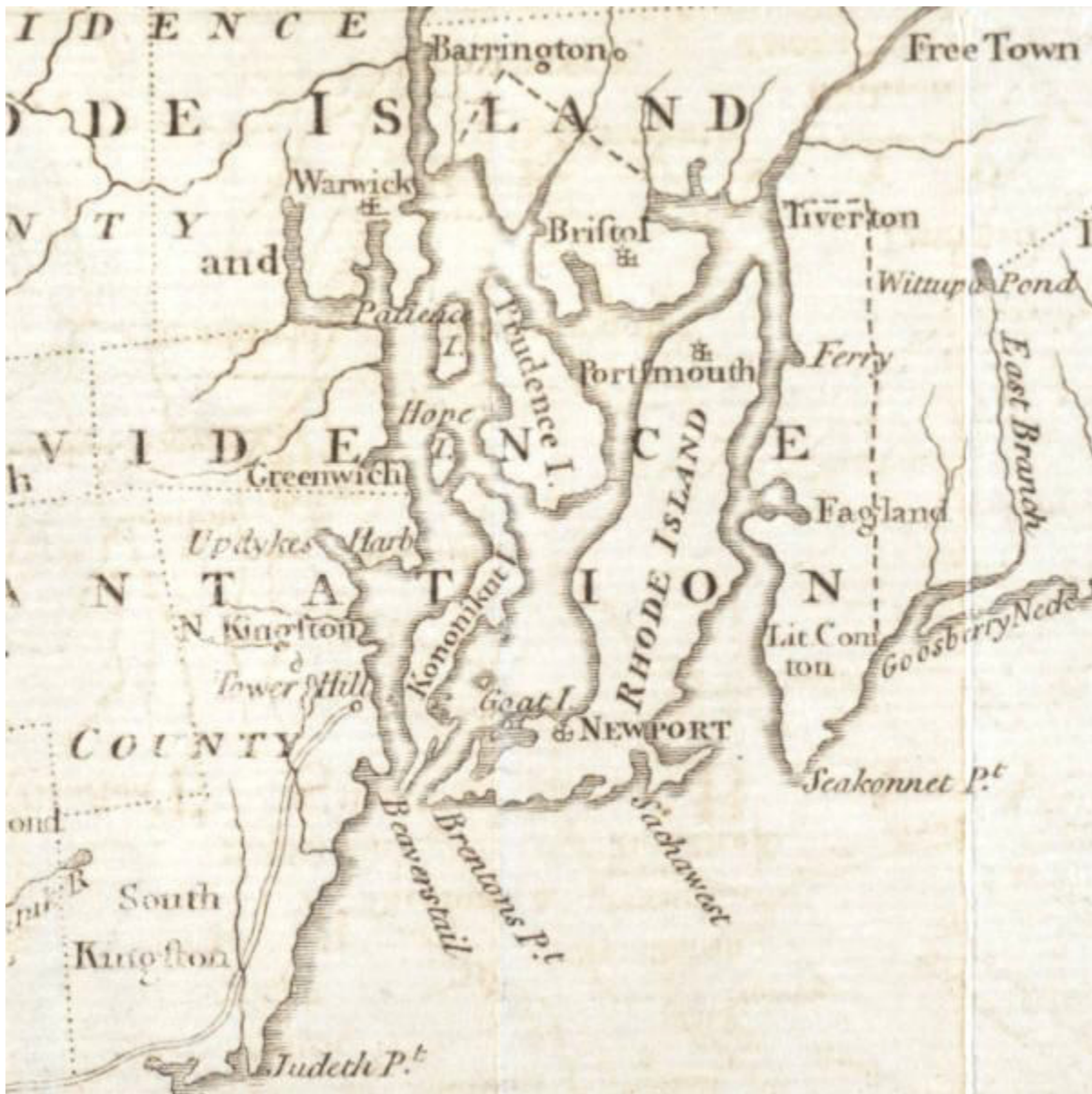
QUAKER DISOWNMENT

14. We note that this Quaker document falsely uses the singular feminine, “her,” when in fact according to the census of 1774 Hopkins owned not one but six slaves, and when in fact according to the manumission document created at the Town Hall by his step-daughter after Hopkins’s death, one of those six had been “Toney,” a male. Clearly the Quakers had not only been improperly delaying their announcement of the disownment of this public figure, but also had been putting the best possible face on this by a not overcareful attention to the truth. (Subsequent Quaker literature has made much of the “historical facts” that since Hopkins was refusing to manumit only one person, and since that one person was female, then obviously there were special considerations to which we are no longer privy — he must have been attempting, by not freeing “her,” to tenderly protect “her” from the cold cruel world!)

15. Between 1775 and 1784 we would disown 147 Quakers who would become in one way or another involved with this civil disruption — in fact we would be less tolerant of this error of patriotic violence than we had been of Quaker slaveholding.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**GOVERNOR STEPHEN HOPKINS****STEPHEN HOPKINS**[GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM](#)**1774**

The colony of [Rhode Island](#) at this point had 59,707 (57,707?) residents residing in 29 incorporated municipalities. Sixteen of the native Americans still alive were in [Bristol](#) (by 1785, this group would have dwindled to two survivors).



The census showed that, in [Providence](#), there were 4,321 persons divided into 655 families living in 421 dwellings.



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Of the Brown brothers, only [Friend Moses Brown](#) had divested himself of his slaves. [John Brown](#) owned two, [Nicholas Brown](#) owned two, and Joseph Brown owned four. In their circle of friends and associates, [Stephen Hopkins](#) owned six (the present Quaker conceit that we had been forced to disown Governor Hopkins for merely refusing to free but one slave, who was perhaps a woman in a special situation, clearly per this census data amounts to no more than that, a present Quaker conceit), [Esek Hopkins](#) owned four, Daniel Jenckes owned four, Jabez Bowen owned one (Prince, who would in 1784 cut a deal for his achieving his freedom as of 1787), and the editor of the Providence [Gazette](#), John Carter, owned one or more.

THE BROWN BROTHERS

During this year Mrs. Ann Smith Hopkins, the Quaker wife of the [Rhode Island](#) Governor Stephen Hopkins who had in the previous year been disowned by the Religious Society of Friends, herself a “birthright Friend,” applied to her Quaker fellows for a routine letter of introduction to be used during her travels in Pennsylvania—a letter stating her to be in good standing in her home worship group—and the Quaker monthly meeting in [Smithfield](#), after duly considering her request, declined to provide this First Lady of Rhode Island with any such routine endorsement.

May 17, Tuesday: Pugachev’s forces captured Fort Magnitnaia (Magnitogorsk).

Carrying a much more aggressive colonial policy, General Thomas Gage arrived in [Boston](#) to take up the post of royal governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, replacing [Thomas Hutchinson](#) (this former royal governor would depart for England, where he would act as an adviser to King George III and the British ministry on American affairs, uniformly counselling moderation).

A former resident of the Caribbean island of Antigua named Jacob Schoemaker, a [slaveholder](#) who had for a time been living in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) off the earnings of a black father named Tom whom he had rented out, had died intestate. Tom, therefore, along with his wife and their four young children, had therefore by default become the property of the town. [Moses Brown](#) had therefore petitioned the town meeting, to set free this family of six. On this day an emergency meeting of the citizens was called to consider the new Boston Port Bill, which had closed the harbor of [Boston](#) pending reimbursement to the East India Company for the cargo of tea it had lost in the Boston Tea Party. Moses Brown managed to get the two issues, of freedom for Americans and of freedom for Tom and his family, tied together in the minds of the citizens attending the town meeting, by proclaiming how very “unbecoming” it would be for American freemen to be, simultaneously, American enslavers. The resolution voted therefore contained a clause, “and they do hereby give up all claim of right or property in them.” Going even beyond that particular, “Whereas the inhabitants of America are engaged in the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as personal liberty is an essential part of the natural



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rights of mankind, the deputies of the town are directed to use their endeavors to obtain an act of the General Assembly prohibiting the importation of Negro slaves into this colony; and that all Negroes born in the colony, should be free, after obtaining to a certain age." This was the first such call by any assembly in the American colonies. The new Quaker, [Friend Moses](#), would soon be sitting down with the recently disowned Quaker, [Stephen Hopkins](#), to craft a bill banning the slave trade in Rhode Island, and this is the language which the two of them would come up with: "Whereas the inhabitants of America are generally engaged in the preservation of their own rights and liberties ... as those who are desirous of enjoying all the advantages of liberty themselves, should be willing to extend personal liberty to others; Therefore, be it enacted ... that for the future, no Negro or mulatto slave shall be brought into this colony; and in case any slave shall hereafter be brought in, he or she shall be, and are hereby, rendered immediately free."

THE TRAFFIC IN MAN-BODY

FREE PAPERS

June: [Friend Moses Brown](#) and the recently disowned Quaker governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) took the language of their proposed slave-trade bill to the assembly in [Newport, Rhode Island](#): "Whereas the inhabitants of America are generally engaged in the preservation of their own rights and liberties ... as those who are desirous of enjoying all the advantages of liberty themselves, should be willing to extend personal liberty to others; Therefore, be it enacted ... that for the future, no Negro or mulatto slave shall be brought into this colony; and in case any slave shall hereafter be brought in, he or she shall be, and are hereby, rendered immediately free."¹⁶

THE TRAFFIC IN MAN-BODY

FREE PAPERS

SLAVERY

"An Act prohibiting the importation of Negroes into this Colony."

"Whereas, the inhabitants of America are generally engaged in the preservation of their own rights and liberties, among which, that of personal freedom must be considered as the greatest; as those who are desirous of enjoying all the advantages of liberty themselves, should be willing to extend personal liberty to others; —

"Therefore, be it enacted ... that for the future, no negro or mulatto slave shall be brought into this colony; and in case any slave shall hereafter be brought in, he or she shall be, and are hereby, rendered immediately free, so far as respects personal freedom, and the enjoyment of private property, in the same manner as the native Indians."

"Provided that the slaves of settlers and travellers be excepted.

"Provided, also, that nothing in this act shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to any negro or mulatto slave brought from the coast of Africa, into the West Indies, on board any vessel belonging to this colony, and which negro or mulatto slave could not be disposed of in the West Indies, but shall be brought into this colony.

"Provided, that the owner of such negro or mulatto slave give bond to the general treasurer of the said colony, within ten

16. The bill would, of course, be gutted. Its practical import would be nil.



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days after such arrival in the sum of £100, lawful money, for each and every such negro or mulatto slave so brought in, that such negro or mulatto slave shall be exported out of the colony, within one year from the date of such bond; if such negro or mulatto be alive, and in a condition to be removed."

"Provided, also, that nothing in this act shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to any negro or mulatto slave that may be on board any vessel belonging to this colony, now at sea, in her present voyage." Heavy penalties are laid for bringing in Negroes in order to free them. COLONIAL RECORDS, VII. 251-3.

[1784, February: "It is voted and resolved, that the whole of the clause contained in an act of this Assembly, passed at June session, A.D. 1774, permitting slaves brought from the coast of Africa into the West Indies, on board any vessel belonging to this (then colony, now) state, and who could not be disposed of in the West Indies, &c., be, and the same is, hereby repealed." COLONIAL RECORDS, X. 8.]

Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#)'s biographer William Eaton Foster would in 1883 totally misconstrue this, perpetrating any number of blunders. In his "Appendix U" to STEPHEN HOPKINS, A RHODE ISLAND STATESMAN, entitled "Stephen Hopkins's Connection with the Society of Friends," on page 247, he would misrepresent Hopkins as the sole author of this legislation, misrepresent the enactment of the legislation as effective when in actuality it changed nothing, misrepresent the Religious Society of Friends as a group that had "membership" when in fact in this century there was never any such a thing as a membership list, misrepresent the Quaker process of disownment as a cancellation of membership (which it most decidedly never was), pretend there to be an equivalence between societal policymaking (freeing other white people's black slaves at these other people's expense) and personal estate planning (freeing one's own black slaves at one's own expense) when in fact there was never any such equivalence, and pretend that simply because the governor continued to call himself a Friend after his disownment, he could not have been struggling to free himself from religious influence in the sphere of political decisionmaking.

Stephen Hopkins was in 1774 the author of the humane act of legislation by which the enslaving of negroes for the future was prohibited in Rhode Island. In 1772, however, a strong pressure had been brought to bear on him to set at liberty one of his own slaves. He did not accede to this demand. Subsequent efforts, continued from month to month, appear to have been equally unavailing. Final action was taken by the Society of Friends, March 25, 1773, when his membership was cancelled. What may have been the ground for Stephen Hopkins's refusal is not easy to determine. It was apparently not a disapproval of emancipation, as is seen by his action elsewhere. Nor can it be set down to a desire to break with the Friends, for he still continued to call himself a Friend.



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This is almost, but not quite, as egregious as a lecture I went to in April 2007 at the Moses Brown School, offered by a Quaker genealogist who suggested that Hopkins's heart had been in the right place because 1.) allegedly at one time in his earlier life he had manumitted one of his slaves (providing no evidence whatever that this assertion was accurate, over and above offering no argument whatever that this actually demonstrated Hopkins's good-guy status), because 2.) allegedly Hopkins was refusing to manumit only one slave, who was a woman named Hannah (according to the census of 1774, he owned six), and refused freedom to her only because this would not have served the needs of her two small children (offering no evidence whatever that the number was singular rather than plural, or that the person was female, or that the name this genealogist assigned was accurate, or that said children actually existed), and because 3.) in Hopkins's will his slaves were to be set free upon his death (offering no evidence whatever that this will mentioning the liberation of an indefinite but plural number of slaves was effectively implemented, when we know very well that in the process known as probate no mere statement of intention could have manumitted a slave unless and until all creditors to the estate had previously been paid off, and paid off in full).



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1775

December 4, Monday: [Friend Moses Brown](#) wrote Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) of [Rhode Island](#) in an attempt to dissuade him from “present measures,” those of the hostilities against England.

On about this day, [William Bartram](#) arrived on the Tallapoosa River. He would visit Fort Toulouse, Alabama Town, Muklasa, Tuckabatchee, Kolomi, and Atasi.

BOTANIZING



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1776

GO TO MASTER INDEX OF WARFARE

January 8, Monday: People were t



In January, 1776, [Concord](#) provided 20 blankets, Bedford 12, Acton 10, and Lincoln 14. In November, 1777, and at several other times, the town [Concord] voted to provide for the families of those engaged in the continental army. 1,210 pounds was paid for this purpose before September 1779.¹⁷

In [Providence, Rhode Island](#), at a tavern on Towne (Main) Street, there was the 1st meeting of [Stephen Hopkins](#)'s committee to build frigates for the Continental navy. The committee included Governor Nicholas Cooke, [John Brown](#) and some other members of the Brown family, John Smith (this was an American John Smith, not the John Smith who in this year in London was whistling up the signature tune "To Anacreon in Heaven"), Jabez Bowen, Daniel Tillinghast, the brothers Joseph Russell and William Russell, and John Innes Clarke and Joseph Nightingale of the Clarke & Nightingale firm. The drinks that evening were on John Brown. The group would plan to build a warship of 32 guns, the *Warren*, and another warship of 28 guns, the [USS Providence](#).

17. [Lemuel Shattuck](#)'s 1835 [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#). Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: [John Stacy](#)
(On or about November 11, 1837 [Henry Thoreau](#) would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study.)



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1778

The Reverend [James Manning](#), [Friend Moses Brown](#), and [disowned](#) Quaker [Stephen Hopkins](#) (who himself owned six slaves, one of whom was his manservant Toney) began the first concerted multi-denominational effort to agitate for the abolition of [slavery](#) in [Rhode Island](#), and participation by its citizens in the [international slave trade](#).



"It is simply crazy that there should ever have come into being a world with such a sin in it, in which a man is set apart because of his color – the superficial fact about a human being. Who could **want** such a world? For an American fighting for his love of country, that the last hope of earth should from its beginning have swallowed [slavery](#), is an irony so withering, a justice so intimate in its rebuke of pride, as to measure only with God."



– Stanley Cavell, MUST WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY?
1976, page 141

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Judge William Potter had manumitted his slaves and was providing a sanctuary for “The Universal Friend” ([Jemimah Wilkinson](#)) and her band of followers at “the Old Abbey” on his estate at Little Rest (the village of [Kingston](#)) about a mile to the north of [South Kingstown, Rhode Island](#). To house his guests he made such large additions to his already large mansion (14 new rooms) that he was obliged to undertake a mortgage he would not be able to maintain. According to a record that has survived, the Judge’s daughter Susannah Potter “died in the arms of The Friend.” Dr. Joshua Babcock of [Westerly](#), a friend of Benjamin Franklin, had become one of her followers. She remained on friendly terms with [Stephen Hopkins](#), former governor of Rhode Island, a cousin. (She was also related to [Esek Hopkins](#), first commodore of the American navy.) She had influence among the [Quakers](#) of Cape Cod. Since she was not an advocate of the Quaker Peace Testimony, she was able to speak at a “Free Quaker” meeting of the disowned Friends, in Philadelphia.

[THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY](#)

Jemimah came to be known not only as “The Universal Friend” but also, inside her band of disciples, as “Beft-Friend.” Upon one occasion in New Milford, Connecticut, she would proclaim a 30-day fast on bread and water — and her disciples would obey. (What are beft-friends for? :-)



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1781

May 20, Sunday: In [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#), [Stephen Hopkins](#) made his last will and testament: “I give to all my Negroes¹⁸ their Freedom, to take Place immediately with Respect to those who shall be of Age, and of the others, the Males at Twenty One and the Females at Eighteen years of Age.”

MANUMISSION

SLAVERY

18. We note that this document is in accord with the 1774 census, which indicates that he owned six slaves, and refutes the convenient story now offered by the Quakers, that Hopkins had owned but one slave, a woman named Hannah.



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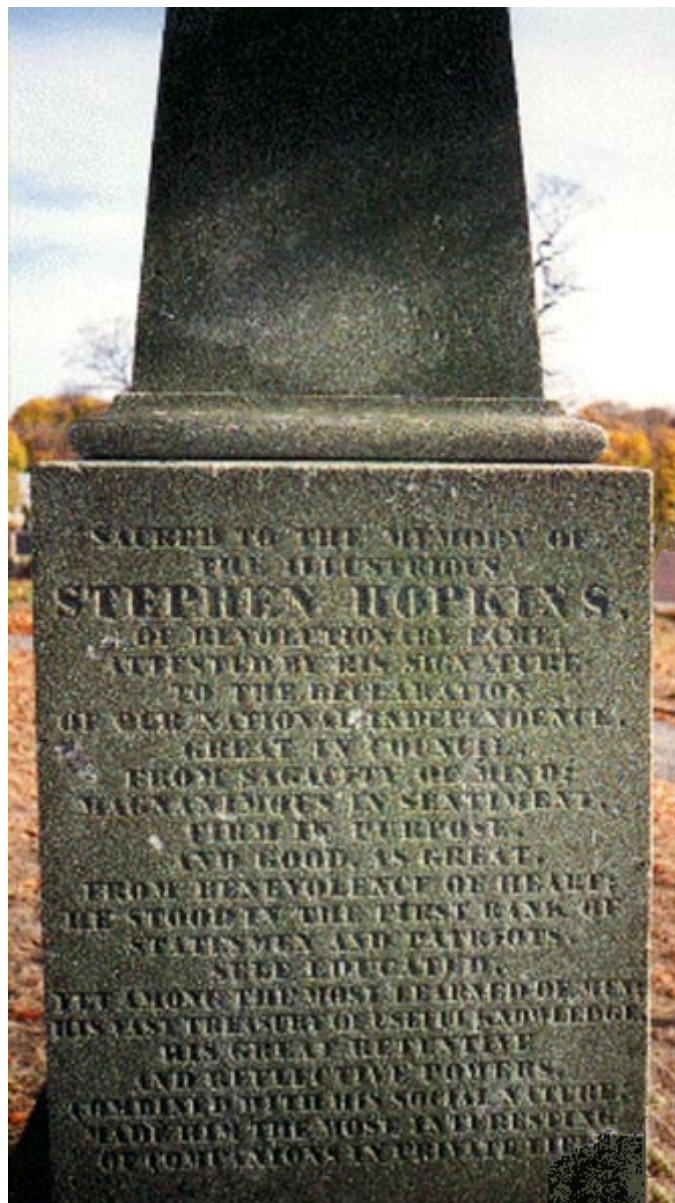
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1782

In this year [Stephen Hopkins](#)'s Quaker 2d wife, Friend Anne Arnold Smith Hopkins, died: "O my companion, thou hast left me to finish my journey alone."

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July 13, Wednesday: [Stephen Hopkins](#) died at his home in [Providence, Rhode Island](#). For some time prior to his death he had been suffering from the “shaking palsy,” in which he was attended by his step-daughter, Friend Ruth Smith Hopkins, daughter of his 2d wife by her 1st marriage and wife of his son George Hopkins. His body would be interred in a couple of days, in the North Burial Ground Cemetery:





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SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
THE ILLUSTRIOUS
STEPHEN HOPKINS,
OF REVOLUTIONARY FAME
ATTESTED BY HIS SIGNATURE
TO THE DECLARATION
OF OUR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE.
GREAT IN COUNCIL,
FROM SAGACITY OF MIND
MAGNANIMOUS IN SENTIMENT
FIRM IN PURPOSE
AND GOOD, AS GREAT.
FROM BENEVOLENCE OF HEART
HE STOOD IN THE FIRST RANK OF
STATESMAN AND PATRIOTS,
SELF EDUCATED,
YET AMONG THE MOST LEARNED OF MEN,
HIS VAST TREASURY OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE
HIS GREAT RETENTIVE
AND REFLECTIVE POWERS
COMBINED WITH HIS SOCIAL NATURE
MADE HIM THE MOST EVERLASTING
OF COMPANIONS IN PRIVATE LIFE



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1786

May 11, Thursday: [Henry Marie Brackenridge](#) was born, a son of Judge Hugh Henry Brackenridge of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He would be educated by his father and by private tutors, and then attend a French academy at St. Genevieve, Louisiana.

In [Rhode Island](#), [Friend Ruth Smith Hopkins](#), alleging that as a [Friend](#) she had “sometime past” set free her Negro Man Servant, so that he would “be entitled to the Privileges of a Freeman which he is and has an undoubted Right to be,” at this point needed to visit the town clerk to register for this [Toney Hopkins](#) a written Instrument of manumission to replace said previous such document, unrecorded, that he said he had lost.

This obviously innocent document of record in obviously honest confirmation of the previous benevolent action would appear for all time on pages 35 and 36 of Volume 22 of such [Providence](#) records:

To all People to whom These Presents shall come ~ Whereas I sometime past set free a Negro Man called Toney Hopkins heretofore a Servant [Servant??] to Me the Subscriber and gave him

—page break—

him a written Instrument evidencing the Same which writing he the said Negro- Man says is lost and being diffused that he should be entitled to the Privileges [Privileges??] of a Freeman which he is and has an undoubted Right to be I have given him the [the??] further written Evidence thereof hereby declaring him the said Toney Hopkins a Free-man agreeable to the date set for encouraging the Manumission of Slaves in this state hereby for myself my Heir's [sic??] & Rencouncing all claim to him the said Toney Hopkins his Labour or Service In Writing whereof I have hereto subscribed my Name and put my seal this Eleventh Day [Day??] of the 5th Month 1786 In Providence in Prefence of
Ruth Hopkins (L.S.)

Recorded this 11th Day of May A.D. 1786
(symbol) *Theodore Foster Town Clerk*

MANUMISSION

That's at least what this appears to be, on its surface.

But, is this all as straightforward as it seems? This would presumably be the Ruth Smith Hopkins who was the daughter of the 2d wife of [Governor Stephen Hopkins](#) (March 7, 1707-July 13, 1785), Anne Arnold Smith Hopkins, by her previous husband, who had been adopted by Governor Hopkins, and who lived in the red



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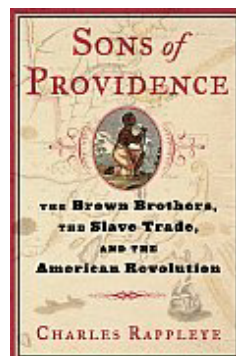
GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

house just down the street from the county house in which this record was being created:



This slave being freed would presumably be Toney, a [slave](#) in this household.¹⁹ Toney had presumably been the property not of the unmarried adopted daughter but of the stepfather who was recently deceased, and whose estate was presumably at that point still in probate. But, by his will, he had freed all his slaves! Something does not compute. But here's the rub: Governor Hopkins had been disowned by the [Smithfield](#) monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) for having refused to manumit his personal servant, pleading special circumstances. There had apparently never been any such document, as the manumission document which here she said he said was lost. **Toney, however, clearly had not been freed by Governor Hopkins or by what he had written in his will, and this adopted daughter couldn't free him because she didn't own him. This was a little white scam.** This was the [Quaker](#) daughter's one chance to set right her stepfather's neglect and clear her family of the taint of enslavement and provide to Toney his chance at freedom. The Quaker lady fibbed. Bully for her!

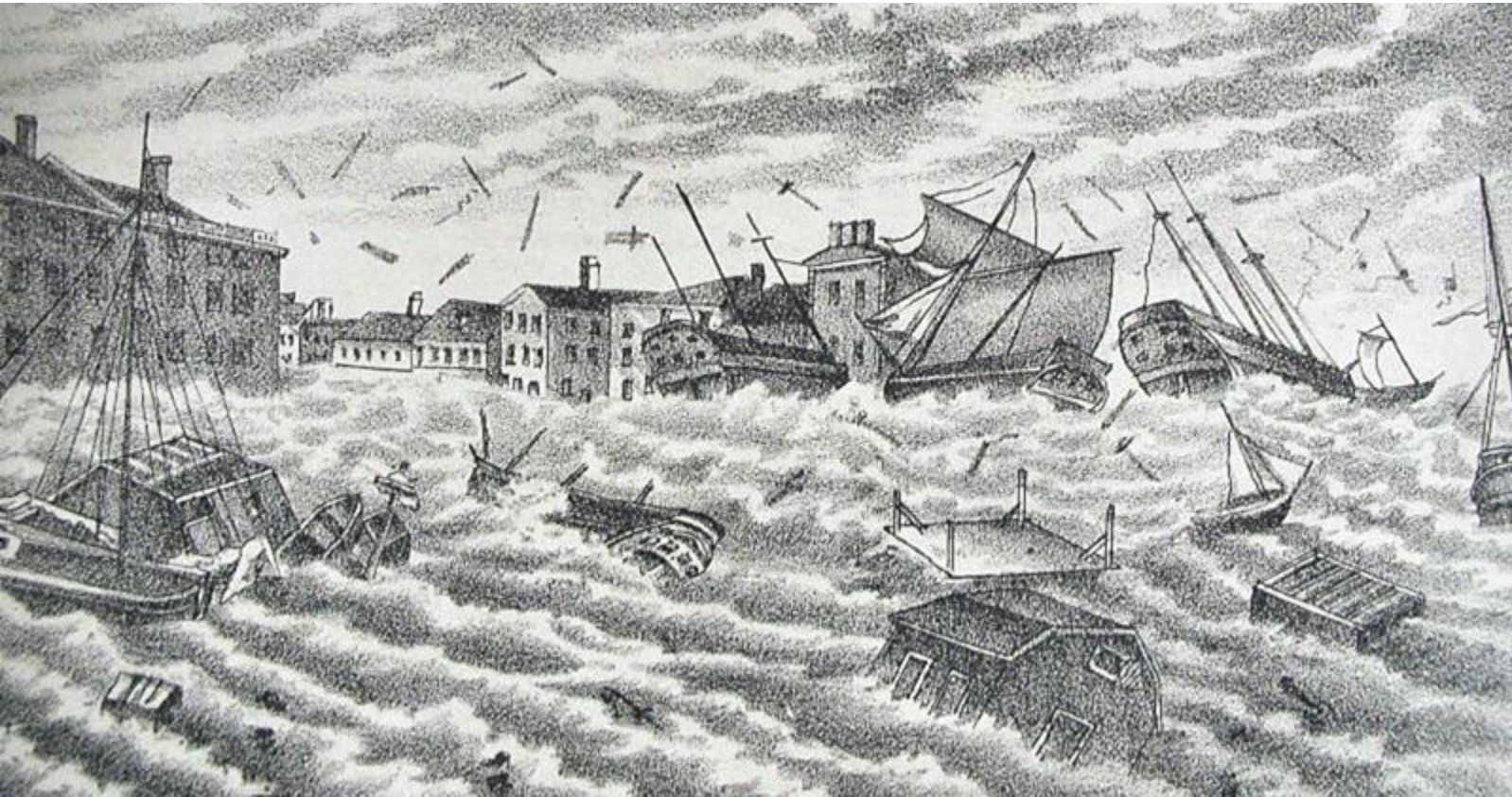
19. Charles Rappleye, in his recent *SONS OF PROVIDENCE: THE BROWN BROTHERS, THE SLAVE TRADE, AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006, page 142), instances that the 1774 census had recorded six slaves as living in the Hopkins household in Providence, Rhode Island. He also references "'a Negroe woman,'" as recorded in the minutes of the Smithfield Monthly Meeting." I wonder if he has actually looked at these holographic minutes at the Rhode Island Historical Society on Hope Street in Providence, Rhode Island, for I am unable myself in them to make out this phrase he has alleged, "a Negroe woman."



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September 23, Saturday: Unable to persuade his king Louis XVIII to appeal to the allies to rescind or modify their ultimatum, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, prince de Bénévent resigned as Prime Minister of France.

During the 18th Century there had been some 15 violent storms sweeping across New England, but none of them approached the fury of the hurricane that hit the southern New England coastline at 9AM on this day, known as the “Great September Gale of 1815.” The eye of the hurricane came ashore at Old Lyme in Connecticut and the greatest destruction was done along the path of the storm’s “eastern quarter,” such as in [Providence](#).



1815. The glad tidings of Peace were announced here February 12, and our streets were thronged with delighted men and women, and resounded with acclamations of joy. The town was brilliantly illuminated in the evening, and although it was intensely cold, the streets were thronged to a late hour by persons of both sexes and of all ages, and the sound of mirth resounded from almost every dwelling. Many, however, who had been carried along by this tide of rejoicing, had cause to mourn when the excitement



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had subsided, and the "sober second thought" of reflection had returned. They had speculated largely, when prices were high, and vast amounts were invested in merchandise, the value of which, on restoration of peace, "fell, like Lucifer, never to rise again." Many failures were the consequence; but to people at large, peace came as a blessing.

This year was signalized by the Great Storm and high tide. The storm commenced Sept. 22, and the wind was violent, and increasing through the night and the succeeding morning, many houses were unroofed, and other blown down. The tide on the 23d, rose to an extraordinary height, the gale from the South-East was of unparalleled severity, both combined, they drove the principal part of the shipping in the harbor from its moorings up the river against Weybosset bridge, which in short time gave way, and the whole was driven up and landed on the northern shore of the cove. A large sloop was left a considerable distance North of Great Point, now the site of the State Prison, and between that point and the upper part of the Canal basin, were upwards of thirty sail, of a burthen from 500 tons downwards. The water entirely filled the lower stories of the buildings in Market-street, west of the bridge, and a portion of the brick wall of the Washington Insurance building, in the third story, was broken in by the bowsprit of the ship Ganges, as she was driven rapidly by in the foaming current. A sloop of some 50 or 60 tons was driven across Weybosset-street, into Pleasant-street, where she grounded. The Baptist meeting-house, built for Rev. Mr. Cornell, near Muddy Dock, now Dorrance-street, was entirely destroyed. Many houses, stores and barns were swept from the wharves in South Water, Weybosset and some other streets, into the cove, where many of them were crushed to pieces. The water at the junction of Westminster and Orange-streets was at least six feet in depth. Two human beings only here lost their lives in this storm, which was matter of great wonder, when so many were perilled. No measures were taken to ascertain the damage done by the storm, but it was estimated at about a million of dollars.



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A large trunk of the public papers of former [Rhode Island](#) governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) were swept out of the house in which they were stored, and lost (Hopkins's house, which now stands adjacent to Benefit Street, at that time stood adjacent to what is now Main Street, within reach of the waters). By noon the storm had passed up into the wildernesses of the north and was breaking up, but the high winds had stalled the ebbing of the high tide, and then over these high waters came rushing the additional waters driven by the storm, pushing up Narragansett Bay and concentrating at the docks of Providence. First there had been the fury of the wind and then came the fury of the water:

Wind:

The vessels there were driven from their moorings in the stream and fastenings at the wharves, with terrible impetuosity, toward the great bridge that connected the two parts of the town. The gigantic structure was swept away without giving a moment's check to the vessel's progress, and they passed to the head of the basin, not halting until they were high up on the bank....

Water:

Stores, dwelling houses, were seen to reel and totter for a few moments, and then plunge into the deluge. A moment later their fragments were blended with the wrecks of vessels, some of which were on their sides, that passed with great rapidity and irresistible impetuosity on the current to the head of the cove, to join the wrecks already on the land.



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Some 500 buildings were destroyed in this city. The Indiaman *Ganges* was forced all the way up Westminster Street to Eddy Street, where its bowsprit pierced the 3rd story of the city's Market House.²⁰



In [Providence, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Moses Brown](#) would be making a detailed tabulation of the various trees that had toppled in his yard. The salt spray was carried from the ocean 40 or 50 miles inland. Apples and other fruit were blown off the trees, the corn was injured, and fences and trees were prostrated. In particular the

20. Some 4-foot-long metal tubes jammed into the marshy soil and sediment layers at Succotash Marsh in East Matunuck, [Rhode Island](#) (at the west side of the ocean entrance of the [Narragansett Bay](#)) by Tom Webb of the Geological Sciences Department of [Brown University](#), have revealed that there has been a series of overwash fans created by storm tidal surges, indicating that seven category-three hurricanes have struck Narragansett lowlands in about the past millennium. The 1st such overwash fan that has been revealed dated to the period 1295-1407CE, the 2nd to the period of roughly the first half of the 15th Century, the 3rd to approximately 1520CE (give or take a few decades), and the 4th to the historic storm of the 14th and 15th of August, 1635. The 5th such overwash fan obviously dates specifically to this historic storm of September 23, 1815.

NEW ENGLAND



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original apple tree near Woburn MA of the Loammi Baldwin apple got knocked over:



At the time Captain [Paul Cuffe](#)'s ship was fortunately out of harm's way in New-York and Philadelphia.

In [Newport](#), [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) recorded in his journal that:

7th day 23 of 9 M / This forenoon we had the most severe Gale that Newport ever experienced - it commenced before day break to Rain Thunder & lighten, continued to increase gradually till a little before 9 OC when it suddenly increased & the tide rose with surprising velocity such as was never seen before - The wind & tide making such devastation of Vessels houses Stores & even lives as appalled all Skill to save. The destruction of houses was chiefly on the Long Wharf & on the Point - Andrew Allens wife, three children & a girl that lived with them were all in the house when it went off into the cove & they were all drowned - Over the Beach John Irish in attempting to save his boat was drowned - & two men who lived with Godfrey Hazard in trying to save their Sheep were also drowned. - Shocking was the Scene I have no powers to describe it, tho' at a more lesure



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*Moment I intend to attempt a more full description Our cellar
was full of Water, but we lost nothing of consequence. - We were
humbly thankful it was no worse*




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Many boats were destroyed at [Boston](#) wharves:



I recollect being engaged near my father's saw-mill handling lumber with my brothers [[Adin Ballou](#) was 12 years old 

The tempest, which began about 7 o'clock in the morning, reached its height at noon, when it was little else than a hurricane. Multitudes of people were filled with terror and consternation. I confess that I was, and hastening to my chamber, obtained what relief and composure I could from the unseen world by earnest supplication. I gained something of trust and calmness, but hardly enough to overcome all my fearful apprehensions, for there seemed to be no place of refuge from impending danger and my faith was not of the surest type.

When the storm subsided, the inhabitants of southern New England looked with amazement on the devastations it had caused. Inland the noblest timber lots were covered with prostrate trees and upturned earth, the finest orchards were laid waste, rail-fences, wood, and lumber were scattered far and wide, roads were rendered impassable by accumulated debris, and incalculable damage had been done to buildings on every hand, many of the lighter ones being wholly destroyed. In seaport towns and along the shore, still greater havoc, if possible had been wrought. The ocean rolled in upon the coast its mountainous waves, which, in thickly settled localities, inundated the wharves, streets, and exposed places of business, filled the cellars and lower stories of dwellings and warehouses near the water line, causing the occupants to flee for their lives, and destroying immense amounts of property that chanced to be within reach. The wind drove before it all sorts of sea-craft, even the largest vessels, sinking some, wrecking others, and landing many high on the beach, far away from tide-water. The remains of sloops and schooners, gradually dismantled and abandoned, appeared on the sand banks and along the coast for years, victims of the Storm-King's insatiate power. Such was the "great gale" of 1815, the like whereof has never been seen by New Englanders since the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock.



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Many of the trees on the Boston Common were blown down.

When, in [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), Henry David Thoreau would argue for the liberty to travel unnecessarily on the Sabbath, he was arguing against one of the pet projects of the very most prominent citizen of his town, Squire Samuel Hoar. For a story had it that when the great hurricane of 1815 had devastated the woodlands around [Concord](#), one old farmer exclaimed:

I wish the wind'd come on Sunday! -Sam Hoar would've stopped it.

[A WEEK](#): History has remembered thee; especially that meek and humble petition of thy old planters, like the wailing of the Lord's own people, "To the gentlemen, the selectmen" of Concord, praying to be erected into a separate parish. We can hardly credit that so plaintive a psalm resounded but little more than a century ago along these Babylonish waters. "In the extreme difficult seasons of heat and cold," said they, "we were ready to say of the Sabbath, Behold what a weariness is it." – "Gentlemen, if our seeking to draw off proceed from any disaffection to our present Reverend Pastor, or the Christian Society with whom we have taken such sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company, then hear us not this day, but we greatly desire, if God please, to be eased of our burden on the Sabbath, the travel and fatigue thereof, that the word of God may be nigh to us, near to our houses and in our hearts, that we and our little ones may serve the Lord. We hope that God, who stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to set forward temple work, has stirred us up to ask, and will stir you up to grant, the prayer of our petition; so shall your humble petitioners ever pray, as in duty bound –" And so the temple work went forward here to a happy conclusion. Yonder in Carlisle the building of the temple was many wearisome years delayed, not that there was wanting of Shittim wood, or the gold of Ophir, but a site therefor convenient to all the worshippers; whether on "Buttrick's Plain," or rather on "Poplar Hill."



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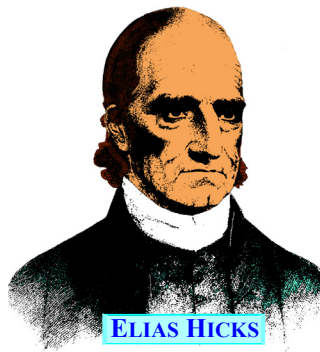
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Many of the local historians of [Concord](#), and many Thoreauvian scholars, have made this sort of connection. It is the sort of connection in which they deal, between one prominent citizen of Concord MA with prominent attitudes and another prominent citizen of Concord MA with prominent attitudes. It is, I might say, an easy association. But how many such historians and scholars know that when Thoreau would grow up in Concord in the following generation, and would take such attitudes, he was seconding the attitudes of the great Quaker preacher, [Elias Hicks](#)? For Hicks had pronounced in opposition to the so-called Blue Laws, laws which for instance entitled the Quakers of Philadelphia to stretch chains across the public street during their First Day silent worship in order to prevent the noise of the passage of carriages. For Hicks, First Day was just another day, of no greater or lesser holiness than any other weekday. He would come in from the fields, change his clothing, put on his gloves, and go off to Meeting for Worship on First Day just as he would come in from the fields, change his clothing, put on his gloves, and go off to Meeting for Worship on Fourth Day (Wednesday). But this was not merely a matter of preference for Friend Elias, any more than it was a matter of preference for Squire Hoar: it was a principle. Blue laws were laws, and laws were enacted by governments, and therefore such laws were infringements upon religion, sponsored by the state apparatus which should be allowed have no connection whatever with religion. In this direction lay a great danger, sponsored by the Squires of this world who would like nothing better than to be able to legislate the religious convictions of other people. Thus, when the Governor of New York issued a Thanksgiving Proclamation, Friend Elias was greatly alarmed, that he

*“has
by recommending a religious act
united the civil and ecclesiastical authorities,
and broken the line of partition between them,
so wisely established
by our enlightened Constitution,
which in the most positive terms
forbids
any alliance between church and state,
and is the only barrier
for the support of our liberty and independence.*

*For if that is broken down
all is lost
and we become the vassals of priestcraft,
and designing men,
who are reaching after power
by subtle contrivance
to domineer over the consciences
of their fellow citizens.”*



ELIAS HICKS

The terminology and the cadence was not Thoreauvian, but Thoreau's attitudes as proclaimed in [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) would be identical with this.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE



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Subsequent to this historic gale, and in consequence of it, [John Farrar](#), Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at [Harvard College](#), who had since 1807 been maintaining and analyzing weather records in Cambridge, would be able to elaborate upon the insights of [Benjamin Franklin](#) into the nature of the “nor’easter” weather phenomenon by conceptualizing such hurricanes as “a moving vortex and not the rushing forward of a great body of the atmosphere” (he had noted not only the lagging times of arrival of the winds at Boston versus New-York and the wind’s opposite directionality, as had Franklin, but had also been able to analyze mathematically the veering of the wind as a fluid phenomenon).



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1817



John Trumbull was commissioned by the US Congress to paint four large pictures in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, from the smaller and more artistic originals of these scenes which he had painted in the 1780s and 1790s:

- Washington Resigning His Commission
- Surrender of Cornwallis
- Surrender of Burgoyne
- [Declaration of Independence](#)

He would not have this series completed until 1824.



(The painting above, which he would paint in the 1817-1824 timeframe on a panel in the Rotunda, is 18 feet by 12 feet. The original which he had prepared during the late 18th Century from which he worked, which you can now view in Yale University's Art Gallery, you will notice to be 20 inches by 30 inches. A boyhood injury to his left eye had rendered this artist virtually monocular, with the consequence that his small-scale work is noticeably superior to his large. His portrait of Rhode Island signer [Stephen Hopkins](#) is faked on the basis of a descendant who was said to bear a resemblance.)



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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.²¹

The events leading to the declaration of independence ... have 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 as 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 treasuries; 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

21. 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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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 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



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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 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.



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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 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



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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 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



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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 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 unremitted 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



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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 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



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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 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. Ill 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 tastes 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



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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 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



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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 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.



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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 incorrupted 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 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.



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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 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



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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 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



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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 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



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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.

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 and 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



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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 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 multifarious 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 be came 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.

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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 re-organized 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 Peoples 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 unwearied 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 them 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 negociation [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 nominations 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 year, 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



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1883

December 1, Saturday: William Eaton Foster's [STEPHEN HOPKINS](#) A [RHODE ISLAND](#) STATESMAN. A STUDY IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY was printed in two volumes in [Providence](#) by S.S. Rider (dated 1884).

STUDY THE 1ST VOLUME

STUDY THE 2D VOLUME

“NARRATIVE HISTORY” IS FABULATION, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



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2006

September 5, Tuesday: The [Providence, Rhode Island](#) newspaper, the "[ProJo](#)," published a column by Dave McCarthy entitled "Westerly trust acquires cemetery" which seriously misrepresented the history of the Quaker faith. McCarthy claimed in this article that:

Quakers signed the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, pushing issues of equality, tolerance, religious freedom and separation of church and state.



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I have since corresponded with the Providence Journal, pointing out that our “[Declaration of Independence](#),” so called, was in fact a declaration of war, and that no matter how one chops one’s logic, declaring war on someone is usually considered to be counterindicated per [the Quaker Peace Testimony](#). I pointed out to this newspaper that we Quakers had, during the revolutionary period, been seriously persecuted for our total unwillingness to participate in these hostilities. I pointed out that George Clymer of Pennsylvania, John Dickinson of Delaware, and Joseph Hewes of [North Carolina](#), who signed the Declaration of Independence or



[the federal Constitution](#), although said to have been Quakers, are also being said by historians to have been Episcopalians.²² I pointed out that Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania, who signed the Constitution, was a disowned Quaker who had become a Lutheran, and that he had signed the Constitution not as a Quaker but as a Lutheran. (I did not point out to these people how little “equality” for women or blacks or redskins was to be found in our original constitutional document, and I did not point out to these people that the idea that the document contained “separation of church and state” was an idea that could at best be said to have come along years afterward, through a process of reinterpretation.) I pointed out that the supposed Rhode Island Quaker who signed the Declaration of Independence, Friend [Stephen Hopkins](#), the governor of this state, was subsequently disowned by the Providence monthly meeting of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), a group which was then meeting in [Smithfield](#). I pointed out that this man had talked the talk but hadn’t walked the walk, and that they should therefore be listing him as what he in fact was, an Episcopalian slavemaster of Baptist ancestry. I pointed out that he had been his century’s version of Friend Richard Nixon, in the sense that he wore the cloth but dishonored the testimony. I summarized:

This sort of remark, in your newspaper, is simply false, and is simply offensive.

There has been, of course, no response, either in private or in public. This newspaper apparently does not care about the truth, nor care overmuch if its lies are offensive to someone’s religion.

This information has been brought to the attention of the Meeting for Business of the Providence, Rhode Island Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. They have made no attempt to contact this newspaper to set the record straight as to the Peace Testimony of their Quaker ancestors.

22. Hewes, as a case in point, had indeed been the product of a New Jersey Quaker family of origin — but he had become a Mason (which would have been entirely impossible because as a general rule any Quaker who was caught mingling with non-Quakers in such a grouping was always immediately disowned), and he was a lifelong slavemaster (which would have been entirely impossible because meetinghouse discipline had required that all Quakers divest themselves of their slaves), and he was a warmonger, demanding war with Britain (which would have been entirely impossible because of the Quaker Peace Testimony). Eleven ways from Sunday, this guy was not a Friend.



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2007

One First Day in January: We had a couple of neatly-attired ladies attend our silent worship in [Providence, Rhode Island](#), one First Day in January. After the service they stood up and introduced themselves. They were representatives, they told us, of the local “Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) Society.” The occasion for their visit to the Quaker worship service in town was that they were planning to stage a 300th Birthday Celebration for local hero Stephen Hopkins, who had been governor of the state nine times and had signed the Declaration of Independence, and who, they asserted, had been a Quaker and a member of our Providence Monthly Meeting. Their picture of Governor Hopkins depicted him as attired in a Quaker-grey hat and clothing, and, as we all know, it is attire that makes a Quaker recognizably a Quaker. They invited us to send one of our contemporary members of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) to speak at their celebration and I volunteered to do so. They gave me an engraved invitation card to be used to gain admission into their ceremony, which was to begin, the invitation averred, at 2PM at the local cemetery.

February: One First Day in January, our monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) had been visited by a couple of neatly-attired ladies who had stood up after our silent worship and introduced themselves. They had said that they were there on behalf of the local “Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) Society.” The occasion was that their society was staging a 300th Birthday Celebration for local hero Stephen Hopkins, who had been governor of the state nine times and had signed the Declaration of Independence, and who, they asserted, had been a Quaker and a member of our Providence Monthly Meeting. Their picture of Governor Hopkins depicted him as attired in a Quaker-grey hat and clothing, and, as we all know, it is attire that makes a Quaker recognizably a Quaker. They had invited us to send a Quaker to speak at their celebration and I had volunteered to do so. They had given me an engraved invitation card to be used to gain admission into their ceremony, which was to begin, the invitation averred, at 2PM at the local cemetery.

Our February issue of our “The Provident FRIEND” meeting newsletter of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) therefore positioned all this information at the top of its page 1, complete with a description of the [Pawtuxet](#) Rangers and the color guard and flags and muskets that were to add a flavor to the occasion.

March: I had volunteered as a contemporary member of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) and as a historian to address the crowd at the North Main Street burial site in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) of Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#), on the occasion of his 300th birthday. The local Governor Stephen Hopkins Society had given me an engraved invitation card to be used to gain admission into their ceremony, which was to begin, the invitation averred, at 2PM at the local cemetery. Over the course of the days prior to their celebration, evidently they had found some reason to become suspicious of me, and they began to call me at home and discuss with me what in particular it was that I planned to tell them. I acquired a distinct sense that they had been spoken to privately by someone else.

What they were able to establish through repeated rounds of this telephone interrogation was that what I was planning to tell them was the truth, to wit, that this 18th-Century politician Stephen Hopkins had been a Quaker only in the manner in which the 20th-Century politician Richard Nixon had been a Quaker, that he had put it out that he was a Quaker in order to gain votes in a largely Quaker state but in fact had never applied for membership and had never had a Clearness Committee — and that far from ever being considered a member of the Providence Monthly Meeting, the meeting had issued a public statement declaring that he was not a



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Friend. —That the picture which they so proudly displayed, which showed Governor Stephen Hopkins in Quaker garb, was not a picture of Hopkins at all, and that in fact there were **no** authentic depictions whatever, of this man's appearance or attire. —That being a Quaker was inconsistent with signing a declaration of war, which was what this "Declaration of Independence" document actually was, a declaration of war. —That being a Quaker was also inconsistent with the owning of slaves, and that this politician had owned a number of slaves and that this had been the case after each and every actual Quaker in the state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations had cleared themselves of the ownership of slaves. —That although their "Governor Stephen Hopkins Society" was putting it out that Hopkins had kindly manumitted all his slaves, I had personally inspected all the manumission records maintained by the City of Providence, and there was in this historical record in fact **zero evidence** for any such manumissions — that their historical society had simply made this manumission stuff up out of whole cloth.

This negotiation went through a series of stages, in one of which I was warned over the phone that I would not be able to speak for longer than three minutes — due of course not to the fact that I was planning to tell the truth but to the large number of speakers who each needed to take their place at the podium. I assured them that I would rehearse my speech to fit within a three-minute timeframe, and promised not to exceed my allotted time.

(Finally, just before the event, they would call a final time and inform me that because of the extreme length of their program, they were going to be forced against their will to defer my opportunity to speak. They said, however, that they were of course extremely interested in what I had to tell them about the Governor, and promised that there would be occasions for me to address their society at other of their events at some indefinite point in the future.)



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March 8, Thursday: Several articles about Governor [Stephen Hopkins](#) appeared in the [Providence, Rhode Island](#) newspaper, the “[ProJo](#).” One illustration, an oil by John Philip Hagen, has a caption saying “Hopkins, despite his accomplishments, lived an unpretentious Quaker lifestyle and never sat for a portrait.”



Yes, this 1999 oil is not based on any record of the actual appearance of Hopkins, the artist having based the painting upon the appearance of descendants. However, the allegation that Hopkins lived according to an unpretentious Quaker lifestyle seems not to be at all an accurate record of this man’s flamboyance and zest.

This newspaper didn’t quite make Governor Hopkins out to be a Friend, but it quoted Brown curator Robert Emlen as saying, “It’s not surprising that Hopkins would not have had a painting of himself done in life ... He was by all accounts a modest person. Later in life, he became a Quaker, so his values would have been ‘to shun vanity and to speak from the heart.’” That cited remark, which the newspaper made no attempt to evaluate, does claim as definite fact that Hopkins’s membership in the [Religious Society of Friends](#) was official and documented, but this, of course, is not accurate since in fact we have no historical record whatever of any application by this man to any monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends for membership, or of any acceptance of him by the Religious Society of Friends (the only record we have is that this man did get married with a Quaker woman and then did begin to wear Quaker-type clothing, and that the Friends dealt gently with the resultant situation).



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Perhaps the reason the 18th-Century Quakers dealt gently with the situation was, that by their own standards they should have disowned the Quaker woman who married him, for “marrying out” was in that period a standard cause of such disownment. Clearly the Providence Quakers didn’t want to disown her if there was a way to stall and wait for the situation to mature. Apparently, the curator Emlen is not aware that local Friends here were sufficiently annoyed by Hopkins’ reluctance to free his slaves that they publicly disassociated themselves from him. (It would not be accurate to say that they read him out of his Meeting’s roster of members. This would be saying too much, for three reasons. The first of the three reasons is that we have no record of his ever either applying or being accepted by any monthly meeting as a member of the Friends. The second of the three reasons is that there simply never was any such thing in that period in this locality as a monthly meeting’s roster of members. I think I can safely say that the lists of names and addresses that we currently take for granted are a phenomenon of our present era, and that they do not extend back into the past. I have never seen a roster of members dating to the 19th Century or earlier, for **any** Quaker meeting. None whatever. The third of the three reasons is, the function of the disownment procedure that they followed in this case was **not** to “read someone out of his Meeting’s roster of members.” It was very different from that. It was a notification to the greater local community, that they should not consider this person to be in fellowship with the Friends, and it was a permission in the Meeting for Business to disregard this person’s objections. This is of importance because, in the case of Stephen Hopkins, uniquely, we **kept his disownment a secret** for about one year after thus disowning him. Keeping it a deep dark secret of course destroyed one of the two purposes that disownment fills!)

In this issue of the ProJo newspaper, in regard to John Greenwood’s oil-on-bed-ticking painting “Sea Captains Carousing in Surinam” painted between 1752 and 1758 and now in the Saint Louis art museum in Missouri, the caption writer speculated on whether a man seated next to Captain Esek Hopkins, Stephen’s brother, asleep with his head on his hand in the middle of the “raucous party” might be Stephen himself.



However, the article’s author, Journal Staff Writer Katherine Imbrie, points out that Stephen in 1757 spent September in Worcester suing a political enemy for slander, and then was campaigning for election in March 1758 to be governor, and thus wouldn’t have had time to sail to Surinam in South America and return. (This would be presuming that the painting was made in Surinam or that the painter visited Surinam and I do not have such evidence — I think it is quite likely to the contrary that the painting was done right here in New England.)

In the timeframe in question Hopkins was elected to his third one-year term as Governor during his total of nine years in that office and was deeply entangled in said lawsuit (the lawsuit was against his archrival, Samuel Ward, who twice unseated Hopkins before Hopkins finally succeeded Ward in 1767). Emlen says that Professor Robert Kenney decided that Stephen Hopkins was not only not a mariner, but not the sleeping drunkard in the painting, and that the drunkard must therefore have been another Hopkins brother, William. That seems to me to be likely.



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The newspaper article credits Hopkins for freeing his slaves without indicating when that was supposed to have happened. Hopkins, in his will, did express a **desire** that his slaves, plural, be set free after his death. However, the will made no provisions for the costs of this and the slaves were part of the estate. It was not an easy thing, to grant [manumission](#) to a [slave](#): for one thing, the town needed to consent (because there might be public costs for later care) and we have no record that the town did consent in this case. Since, in a probate proceeding, the settlement of debts comes **first** before the disposition of any remaining assets, the slaves **could not** have been set free unless assets were available to do so. We therefore need to verify, before we draw any conclusions from this provision in this will, that the decedent's estate was large enough, and unencumbered enough, to leave sufficient funds to set these slaves free. I myself suspect that they were **not** set free, simply because there is no record of any manumission documents for them down at the town real-estate office where such manumission documents were stored. There is only one manumission record in that office, and it is a record in which his adopted daughter after his death took **one** man to the town office, Toney, testified that Toney "had been free for a long time" but that his manumission document had been "lost or misplaced," and obtained for him a new "copy." This action, of course, would have been unnecessary, had Hopkins's slaves indeed been freed in accordance with his will, because the office to which the daughter took the man would have possessed a written record of any such previous manumission. Also, except for this one person named "Toney," we don't even know the names of these Hopkins slaves. The conclusion I have to come to is that Hopkins's slaves, plural, with the single except of this one person Toney, **did not ever** become free.

Note well that in a parallel situation, George Washington would express the same sentiment in his will, about freeing the estate's slaves after his death and the death of his wife Martha — and we know, in the case of Washington, that despite this sentiment, these slaves **did not ever** become free (the widow Martha would be dead set against any of them becoming free, and they would merely become the property of her heirs).

The newspaper article says Hopkins had acquired those slaves through marriage, perhaps indicating his first marriage rather than his second; and says that although Hopkins was a merchant he was never involved in the slave trade. It is curious that the article makes that assertion, since nobody has ever suggested that Hopkins ever himself personally went on any of the slaving voyages. Before making such a historical assertion, however, we ought to have investigated whether he might have been a silent partner in some of Captain Esek Hopkins's slaving voyages—since he and Esek were thick as thieves—and I do not have assurance that this has in fact already been investigated.

Gov. Stephen Hopkins slept here

March 8, 2007

DAVID BRUSSAT

GEORGE WASHINGTON slept in the Stephen Hopkins House. Twice. We know the neat little wine-dark house in Providence where Stephen Hopkins lived, probably even better than we know the history of Hopkins himself. Yesterday was the 300th anniversary of his birth, on March 7, 1707.

The oldest part of the house that sits on the street that now bears his name was built in the same year he was born, although he did not move into it until they both were 36 years old.

By the time he bought the house from John Field, Hopkins had held several official posts in Scituate, where he was raised. While its representative in the General Assembly, he was elected speaker in 1742. That year he moved to Providence and bought the house at the corner of the Town Street and Bank Lane, now South



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Main and Hopkins. He added four rooms to Field's two (now the rear el). The house is still becomingly modest by today's standards.

General Washington's first visit was on April 5, 1776. He was on his way to take command of the Continental Army in Boston. Hopkins himself was in Philadelphia, at the Continental Congress. His daughter-in-law served as host. Her family wanted to lend her better china for the occasion. "What's good enough for my father," she is said to have replied, "is good enough for General Washington." Modesty fit the Providence of the era, but Hopkins worked to change all that. He helped to start the Providence Library Company, a precursor to the Providence Athenaeum, and the Providence Gazetteer & Country Journal. In 1764 he was named the first chancellor of Brown University, then called Rhode Island College. He was elected governor nine times between 1755 and 1767. In the colonial politics of the era, he led Providence in the competition with Newport for civic and commercial supremacy.

Only after he left the governor's office did Hopkins begin his famous career as a founder and patriot. In 1772, as chief justice of the Superior Court, Hopkins directed the cover-up of the burning of the H.M.S. Gaspee, America's first major violent act against the crown. The tavern where the conspirators met, led by the town's richest merchant, John Brown, was a block south of the Hopkins house. Everyone knew who was involved, but Hopkins could find no one to indict. The whole town kept the secret from the enemy. (Imagine that today!)

Stephen Hopkins later served in the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. In penning his shaky signature, he had to hold his right hand steady with his left. Aged 69 and in poor health, he is said to have declared to his fellow Rhode Island delegate, William Ellery: "My hand trembles but my heart does not."

Hopkins himself hosted General Washington in 1781. Moses Brown wrote: "I sat some time viewing the simple and friendly and pleasant manner in which these two great men met and conversed with each other on various subjects." Stop the presses!

Hopkins died in 1785 and was laid to rest in the North Burial Ground in Providence. This Saturday at 2 p.m., the Rhode Island chapter of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America will hold a procession to the gravesite, led by the [Pawtuxet](#) Rangers, the Newport Artillery and the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment, and a ceremony to commemorate his life. The Hopkins House will be open 1-4 p.m. that day. The Dames run the house as a museum on behalf of its owner, the State of Rhode Island. In 1804, the house, already of obvious historical status, was relocated half a block uphill, doubtless to save it from "progress." In 1927, this time to make way for a new Providence County Court House, it was moved even farther up the hill to where it sits today, at the corner of Hopkins and Benefit.

After the move, the house was restored by Norman Isham, the famous Rhode Island architectural historian. I toured the house



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last Thursday with Kiki Anderson, of the Rhode Island Colonial Dames, who showed me some old Journal clippings about Isham's work. One was about Isham's reaction to interference from the Women's Christian Temperance Union: "Isham Waxes Wroth Over W.C.T.U. 'No Bottles' Edict - Noted Authority on Colonial Architecture Irately Says He is in Mind to Put Some 'Good Old Stuff' in Every Room of Hopkins House."

No doubt Hopkins would be amused. He was portrayed in the 1972 film 1776 as the cranky old drunkard who kept a fractious Continental Congress's nose to the grindstone. This put the local bluenoses out of joint. A column by Journal art critic Bradford F. Swann was headlined "Stephen Hopkins a drunken buffoon? We should say not." Today, the "Good Old Stuff" is not in evidence. No matter. With or without the assistance of spirits, few houses can say, "George Washington slept here twice." Because of that, however, it is one of the few houses that can also say, "I was moved to a new location twice." You could say the house lives up to the exploits of its heroic resident.

Happy 300th, Stephen Hopkins

03/08/2007

By Katherine Imbrie
Journal Staff Writer

When the Founding Fathers of the country are mentioned, few people think first of Stephen Hopkins of Providence. But Hopkins was one of two signers of the Declaration of Independence from Rhode Island, and he had already had a long career in Colonial government by the time he put his signature to the Declaration at age 69.

The Hopkins signature on the most famous American document is not as bold as that of the better-known John Hancock. Hopkins' shaky hand was due to a medical condition that is now supposed to have been either Parkinson's Disease or another type of palsy. (For this reason, Hopkins earned a bad rap in the 1969 musical and 1972 musical, 1776, in which he was portrayed as a cantankerous drunkard - a characterization not based in fact.) Hopkins' most famous quote acknowledges his disability while at the same time testifying to his strength of purpose in signing the Declaration: "My hand trembles, but my heart does not." He made the statement when his fellow Rhode Island signer, William Ellery of Newport, seemed to look askance at his shakiness while signing.

Hopkins was born in Providence 300 years ago yesterday, and on Saturday he will get his due with a birthday celebration. A free three-hour open house - complete with cider, cookies and ginger cake - will be held at his home to mark the occasion, and there will be a ceremonial procession and plaque dedication at his gravesite.

The open house is a good opportunity to see the inside of the 1707 Stephen Hopkins House, normally open four days a week in summer, or by appointment. The little red house, set in its small



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formal garden overlooking the Financial District, is a beloved landmark of the historic East Side. For Saturday's event, its tiny Colonial rooms will be enlivened by the presence of a costumed actor portraying Hopkins, David Ely.

A flawed person

Ely, who teaches theater at Lincoln School in Providence, has made a sideline of portraying famous historical characters of Rhode Island for a couple of decades, since he began by playing Roger Williams and Samuel Slater in a Rhode Island school program called "Legacy Plays." For the past five years, he's made a specialty of portraying Hopkins for 4th- and 5th-grade Rhode Island school programs about the Revolutionary War, and he also steps into the role on occasions such as Saturday's, for which he's hired by the Rhode Island Chapter of the Colonial Dames of America, the society that operates the historic Hopkins house.

Besides donning his Hopkins costume (which consists of black slip-on shoes, Colonial-style knickers and white hose, and a dark-blue coat and vest), Ely says he gets into the role of the Colonial leader by trying to integrate the good and the bad things he's learned by reading about Hopkins over the years: "He was a flawed person. He had a long-term nasty dispute with his archrival in state politics, Samuel Ward. In governor's races of the time, Ward tended to be backed by the southern landholders in the state, while Hopkins had the backing of the merchant Brown brothers. There was a certain amount of political goings-on, such as an accusation of having paid voters likely to support Ward to stay home."

But on the positive side, says Ely, "Once the two rivals became united in the bigger fight against Britain, they stopped squabbling and even became friends.

Hopkins was always a big supporter of public education – he helped establish the first library and the first college in Rhode Island," Brown.

"He freed his slaves, which he had acquired through marriage, and although he was a merchant, never was involved in the slave trade. He was a highly educated person at a time when not many people were."

For Saturday's event, Ely will not present a performance on Hopkins, but will be in period costume, along with Kim Clark portraying his wife, Sarah.

Famously modest

Besides his house, few artifacts have come down through history from Hopkins, who was famously a modest person, according to Brown University curator and senior lecturer in American Civilization Robert Emlen.

"Among the stories I like about Hopkins is that when George Washington came to stay in Providence, he chose to stay in the Hopkinses' very small and modest house, rather than at a more



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imposing house such as John Brown's. At the time of the visit, Hopkins was away at the Continental Congress, and someone is said to have urged his wife to at least get in some better china dishes in honor of Washington's arrival. But she said no, what was good enough for her husband to dine on was good enough for anyone."

Besides being a nine-times-elected governor of Rhode Island, a state chief justice and a delegate to the Colonial and Continental Congresses, Hopkins was the first chancellor of Brown University, which owns a portrait of him similar to one that hangs in the Rhode Island State House.

Emlen explains that, although the portraits are intended to represent Hopkins, they both are actually 1999 simulations made by Newport artist John Hagen. Hagen worked from a sketch made by John Trumbull in 1793 for his famous group portrait of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, the painting that hangs in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol.

"By the time Trumbull got to Rhode Island to make his sketches, Hopkins had been dead several years," says Emlen. "But everyone told him that Hopkins' nephew looked exactly like him, so Trumbull painted the nephew as a stand-in for Hopkins.

"Brown (University) had never had a portrait of its first chancellor, so we had Hagen work from the Trumbull sketch. So in fact, the so-called Hopkins portrait is not actually him, but is a 1999 rendering of a 1793 sketch of Hopkins' nephew."

"He kept the chair"

It's not surprising that Hopkins would not have had a painting of himself done in life, says Emlen. "He was by all accounts a modest person. Later in life, he became a Quaker, so his values would have been 'to shun vanity and to speak from the heart.'

"Hopkins didn't make a public spectacle of himself the way his contemporary Benjamin Franklin did. He didn't need to show off, but he had a good reputation, and from the number of times he was elected and served in public offices, he was trusted and well-respected by the people of Rhode Island."

He had a sense of humor, too.

A historic Spanish leather chair that is the official chair used for public occasions by presidents of Brown University was a gift to the university from a Hopkins descendant, says Emlen.

"The story is that Hopkins, who was a merchant, had a share in a privateer during one of the 18th-century wars with Spain. When the privateer captured a Spanish ship, some of Hopkins' friends got him this chair, telling him that it was one that he 'couldn't be unseated from' – a reference to the fact that Hopkins had been in and out of the Rhode Island governorship so often. "So he kept the chair, and his grandson gave it to Brown, which allows us to describe the presidential chair as pirate loot."

The 300th Birthday Celebration of Stephen Hopkins will be held Saturday at the Stephen Hopkins House, 15 Hopkins St. at the



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corner of Benefit Street in Providence. Admission is free. The house will be open from 1 to 4 p.m., with costumed actors portraying Stephen and Sarah Hopkins. Cider, cookies, and ginger cake will be served. At 2 p.m., a commemoration ceremony will be held at the Hopkins gravesite in North Burial Ground, 5 Branch Ave. at the corner of North Main Street. Members of the Newport Artillery Company, the [Pawtuxet](#) Rangers, the Colonial Dames, the Society of Colonial Wars, and the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment will march from the cemetery gates to the gravesite beginning at 1:30 p.m. For more information, call the Colonial Dames, (401) 421-0694.

Although at the last minute I had been disinvented as a speaker at the 300th Birthday Celebration for Governor Stephen Hopkins at his gravesite, since I still had my engraved invitation card, I did attend that ceremony at 2PM as the card stated. Quite frankly, I was expecting to be turned away at the gate in the high iron fence that surrounds this graveyard. What I found, however, when I arrived at big gate, was that the guard accepted my invitation card and allowed me to enter the grounds. However, when I reached the gravesite at the top of the hill just prior to 2PM, what I discovered was that all the speechmaking at the podium had been already completed. (Imagine that: a public event that, instead of beginning ten minutes later than announced, is already over and done with by the time that they had advertised it to begin! –You don't suppose, do you, that they were doing things this way in order to make certain that I would have no opportunity for telling them truths they did not need to hear?) The only thing remaining for me to witness in the ceremony at the gravesite was the ragged volleys of black-powder musket fire by uniformed re-enactors, and the resultant clouds of acrid gunsmoke. I stood there and endured this and then listened as a guy who clearly was not part of the ceremonies stepped forward and volunteered to inform all onlookers that he was proud to be himself personally a descendant of Stephen Hopkins. He added that his ancestor had been a Quaker "although," he added, "I'm not sure what that meant, I don't know much about the Quakers."

Back at Providence Monthly Meeting, later, there was no channel by which I could express any of this to any other Friend — since this was not an approved-by-Ministry-and-Counsel topic on which to report at the monthly meeting for business, and was not an approved-by-Ministry-and-Counsel topic "relating to the life of the community" on which I might be allowed to report during the announcements period after meeting for worship. And, since the "Media Committee" has already informed me (in writing) that no submission would be accepted for publication in the meeting newsletter –if they suspected it to be written by me– there had been no way whatever for me to respond to their war-celebratory front page center entry in the February 2007 issue of our meeting newsletter, "The Provident FRIEND."

(I think that a lot of this has to do with Friends in our meeting who have been "silently uncomfortable" with the Quaker Peace Testimony, in the same manner in which some of them are known to be "silently uncomfortable" with gay marriage. I suspect that, because this situation has been obtaining for me ever since I helped aged Friend John R. Kellam, a WWII prisoner of conscience, write his autobiography about his years in federal maximum security prison as a Conscientious Objector, <http://www.kouroo.info/RSOF/FriendJohnKellam.pdf>. We had copies printed and bound at Kinko's, and he had presented one of these bound Kinko's copies to the library of the Moses Brown School. Almost all the kiddies at this school are now non-Quaker, and I don't think they want them or their parents to have their noses rubbed in the fact that the Quakers are traitors.)



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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: January 8, 2014



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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.

Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.