

John Tripp, 1611 - 1678

A Glimpse into Our Founder's Life

by Janet Tripp Andrews

edited by Jan E. Tripp

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This paper is my way of getting to know our ancestor, John Tripp, who lived from 1611 to 1678 and immigrated from England to the New World. To do this I have combined some of the major events of the founding of Rhode Island and colonial life with the known activity of John, and through this synthesis he has begun to reveal himself. This exploration could not have been done without *The Early Records of the Town of Portsmouth, Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, and the multitude of genealogical research about the first colonists that provide what we know about John.

Early Life and History, 1611-1638

We are very lucky to have the 1670 "relation" of John Tripp that identifies his origin and places of abode (see attached transcription). According to the "relation" and Paul Tripp's research he was born about 1610 and christened September 8, 1611 at Horkstow Parish, in northern Lincolnshire, England just south of the Humber River. His parents were John Tripp, 1587 - 1636, and Isabel Moyses, 1584 - 1654, who had 12 children, John being the oldest, and probably the only one who came to the New World. In approximately 1625, at about age 14, John was apprenticed to a ship carpenter named John Baats of South Thoresby in southeast Lincolnshire about 25 miles from Boston, where he served for over 7 years. After that in about 1634, at age 23, he bound himself to Frances East, carpenter, for 4 pounds a year for 4 years. East immigrated to Boston in the New World and later sold John to Robert Jafra (Jefferies) then living in Boston or Charlestown in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. (PTripp), (AH, pgs 325 & 334)

During John's early years, the Protestant religious reformation, that favored preaching and prayer versus ceremony and sacraments, was in full swing and people were experimenting with a life free of forced worship. However, God's laws and a church were still at the center of everyone's life. At this time James I was on the throne (1603 - 1625) following Elizabeth I's death. His reign was defined by the unity of Scotland and England, the continued growth of the Puritan movement, and a stronger Parliament seeking to play a larger role in church and state affairs. Despite being raised a Calvinist, James favored arbitrary power of the Crown, and was followed in the same vein by his son, Charles I, who ruled from 1625 to 1649. (Arnold, pgs 1 - 7)

Meanwhile in the New World, for over a century Europeans had been exploring its eastern shores and trading with the American Indians who had no immunity to European diseases. In 1616 - 1618 the Wampanoag Indians, who inhabited southeastern Massachusetts, were hit especially hard by the first epidemic. Mortality rates were an astounding 80 - 90 percent, so frequently whole villages were wiped out leaving the area around Plymouth, Massachusetts open to settlement by the Pilgrims who arrived on the Mayflower in 1620. Many of the Pilgrims had been living in the Netherlands in order to have religious freedom, but, wanting to band closer together, decided to relocate to the New World. The first winter in Plymouth was brutal and food was very scarce causing many to perish. Recognizing the

problem Massasoit, Chief Sachem of the Wampanoag, befriended the Pilgrims starting our Thanksgiving tradition. (Hatcher, pgs 1 - 10)

The Puritan migration, called the Great Migration, started in 1630 and lasted through 1640. This religious group was from the East Anglican counties of Essex, Suffex, Norfolk, and Lincoln to the north. After founding the Massachusetts Bay Colony the Puritans settled in and around Boston, named after Boston in Lincolnshire. Their religious goals were to establish a New Jerusalem, a city on a hill. In order to have a commonwealth of the Godly they believed the government got its authority from the church, and that conformity was required from all. (RW, ch. 9) So, when intellectual freethinkers such as Roger Williams and Ann Hutchinson argued for ideas of separation of church and state, or for each person's freedom to have their own personal awareness of God, they were immediately embroiled in controversy with the Massachusetts Bay Colony political and religious leaders. Fortunately for the freethinkers, Roger Williams had the interest and foresight to make friends with Massasoit, the Wampanoag sachem who had earlier befriended the Pilgrims, and through him, chief sachems of the Narragansett tribe, Canonicus and his nephew Miantonomi, who lived to the west in what is now Rhode Island.

In 1636 Roger Williams' views on religious liberty, namely separation of church and state and fair treatment of the American Indians, resulted in his being banished from Massachusetts by the General



Roger Williams after being banished from Boston for his views of separation of church and state, fled into the wilderness around Narragansett Bay and found shelter with Massasoit and the Wampanoag.

Court. When Massachusetts authorities were about to send him back to England, he fled west to the Narragansett Bay area where he was sheltered by Massasoit and the Wampanoags who, along with Canonicus and Miantonomi, helped him establish a settlement at what is now Providence, Rhode Island. Providence was the first settlement in New England based on complete religious liberty and separation of church and state. (Arnold, pgs 1 - 50)

Two years later in 1638, Ann Hutchinson and others were also banished from the Massachusetts

Bay Colony for their belief that emphasized the direct connection between mankind and God, known as soul liberty. So again the struggle for freedom of thought, one of the main principles of the Reformation, was squelched in Massachusetts by the General Court with help from the clergy. Ann Hutchinson and her group also found refuge in the Narragansett Bay region. On March 7, 1638 the first Portsmouth Compact (agreement to band together in body politic for common good and defense), was signed by 23 men, probably at the Boston brick home of William Coddington, a wealthy merchant and politician. Two weeks after signing the charter, with the help of Roger Williams, William Coddington and others from the Hutchinson party purchased all of the Aquidneck Island from the Narragansett sachems, Canonicus

and Miantonomi, and began a settlement that would later be called Portsmouth, Rhode Island. (RecPM, pgs 55 - 56), (Arnold, pgs 51 - 71)

Amazingly, the next few sentences from our John Tripp's "relation" reveal that, because Boston church



Ann Hutchinson was also banished from Boston for her religious beliefs of mans direct relations with God, and she and her followers also sought shelter in the Narragansett Bay area.

members persecuted his master and others, they moved to Rhode Island with the persecuted people. He also states that his master sold him to Randall Holden of Portsmouth whom he served for only a short while because John bought out the rest of his contract. (PTripp) So, our John Tripp was associating and traveling with the Ann Hutchinson group who avidly believed in religious freedom and soul liberty.

Others have searched for, and been unable to find a ship's manifest showing John Tripp as a passenger, so we are left to estimate his arrival in Boston as around 1635/6. Valentine states that John came in the same ship with William Hall in 1635, no doubt owing to the fact that she found wills showing both Halls and Tripps in Barton, Lincolnshire, England, but she doesn't name a ship. Thompson (*The Genealogist*, Fall 1989, pgs. 195-199) says John likely came on the "Elizabeth and Ann" in 1635 with his master Robert Jeffery. This ship's manifest lists the Jeffery family and their two maidservants as passengers, but not John. The third and most likely theory is that John came in about 1636 with his then master Francis East. According to a *Great*

Migration Newsletter, no 1636 ship passenger lists survive, so we will probably never know which ship and exactly when he came. The more we learn, however, the more it seems probable that John indentured himself to East in order to gain passage to Boston, and East sold him to Robert Jeffery after arriving in Boston. (Benson) But no matter which ship, we know John was among the first 30,000 Englishmen who came to New England before 1640 in little wooden boats each holding about 100 people, their luggage, and some livestock. About one-third of those immigrating to northern colonies were indentured servants who qualified as having good character. Three-quarters of them were male, single, and young (16 - 27 years), and the bulk of them were unskilled agriculture workers (Hawke, pgs 120 - 125) As already discussed many colonists came for religious reasons, but others who tolerated Puritanism, joined the migration in hopes of finding a better life. With only the small amount of information we have about John's early years, it appears that either one or both of these reasons might have been his motivation to immigrate. I don't know whether John had a previous connection with the Hutchinson religious group or whether it was just happenstance, but it is interesting to note that Ann Hutchinson was from Alford and William Coddington was from Boston, both in Lincolnshire, 24 miles apart and close to the area where John was probably living and working.

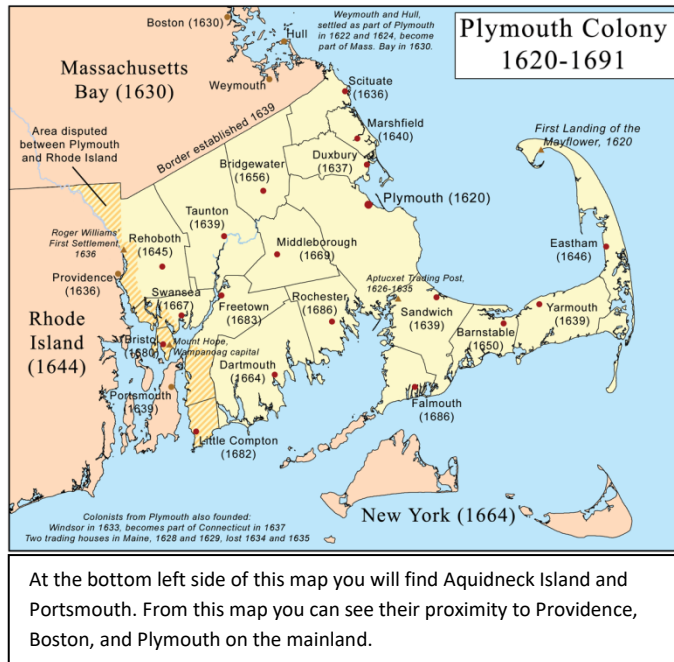
Before we dive into the settlement of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, it may be helpful to review just a little more New England history concerning the colonists and Native Americans. New England was a colony of Great Britain, and therefore was ruled by the English crown. As such, the Crown granted proprietary

land rights and political appointments to some gentry in expectation of future financial gain. As you might expect the colonial settlers followed English models of law, governance, social, and agrarian activities. And their small wooden ships were constantly making the two plus month voyage between England and Boston carrying immigrants, trade goods, political messengers, and news. And guess what, everyone spoke with an English accent. In fact, New England in the seventeenth century, had the purest English stock that America has ever had. (Hatcher, pgs 19 - 47)

But many centuries earlier, New England had been the home of several American Indian tribes. The Wampanoag, previously mentioned, were a peaceful agrarian tribe, whose headquarters were in eastern Rhode Island around Mount Hope Bay, later called Bristol. We will soon learn that Bristol is directly connected with our John. Their chief sachem, Massasoit, made an agreement of peace in 1621 with Plymouth's Governor, Edward Winslow, that he kept for 40 plus years while he was alive. Massasoit's successors were his two sons, Wamsutta and Metacomet known by the English as Alexander and King Phillip, whom we will visit again later in the story. But, the larger and more powerful American Indian tribe was the Narragansett, who inhabited nearly all of the present state of Rhode Island. Chief Sachems Canonicus and his nephew Miantonomi were allied with many other smaller tribes, controlled most of the trade, and were held with great respect by the smaller tribes for their peaceful leadership. The Narragansett were the ones who gave land to Roger Williams to found Providence, sold Aquidneck Island to William Coddington, and later on sold other Narragansett mainland to Samuel Gorton. And, in addition to the Wampanoag and Narragansett, the much more hostile Pequot and Mohegan Indian tribes occupied the whole of Connecticut. (Arnold, pgs 72 - 96)

Portsmouth Settlement to Charter, 1638 - 1647

The founders and signers of the first Portsmouth Compact were some of Boston's most successful business men. They were men with a high level of education, social, and political standing, and they were Puritans of the highest form. They were also experienced leaders capable of quickly establishing a government and a legal system. In fact they had carefully planned their relocation before they were actually banned by sending someone to scout for the most fertile land available with good access for trade. Their choice of location, Aquidneck Island, is about 38 square miles in size and is situated in the Narraganset Bay about 20 miles southeast of Providence. It is surrounded by several smaller islands,



namely Prudence, Hog, Patience, and Dyer that soon became useful resources to our settlers. Aquidneck Island had already largely been cleared of trees, afforded rich soil fit for crops and animals, and provided a safe refuge from predatory animals and the Massachusetts Bay Colony government. The settlers choose the town meeting form of government and elected William Coddington as Judge, William Aspinwell as Secretary, and William Dyer as Clerk. On May 13, 1638, at the first recorded meeting of the new colony, they decided to locate the town at the northern end of Aquidneck Island near Town Pond and a spring, to fully equip every inhabitant with arms, and to make temporary apportionments of land to

inhabitants. They also decided to require the approval of all current freemen before admitting others as freemen or inhabitants, and for every new settler to agree to follow the laws of the government. However, new settlers were not required to become a member of a church as did the Massachusetts law. (Arnold, pgs 124 - 127)

Our John Tripp was admitted to Portsmouth as an inhabitant in 1638 at the time of founding. (GenDict, pg 208) Being an inhabitant allowed you to own land, but it did not allow you to vote or hold office as did the status of freeman. In 1638/9, John may have paid off his indenture to Randall Holden and may have been in a probationary period, usually one to two years, before being admitted as a freeman.

The week after the first meeting, the town was laid out in lots and provisions were made for recording land titles. The price of land was set at two shillings per acre to be paid into the treasury. The first twenty or so pages of *The Early Records of the Town of Portsmouth*, where the first lots were assigned, are badly frayed, so unfortunately we don't know whether they provide information about John's early residence. However, we do know that an inn, brewery and general grocery (for strong liquor) was established with William Baulston in charge. Next, a militia was organized. All men between the ages of

sixteen and fifty years were required to attend training on the following Monday, so we can be fairly sure what our John Tripp was doing on that particular day.

A few days later an act was passed to order a pair of stocks with a whipping post. Then a prison was ordered to be built (but never accomplished) and Randall Holden was appointed Marshal for one year. In November Nicholas Esson proposed building a water-mill for the use of the colony, and a grant of land



This John Tripp historic stone ender was built in the 1700s in Providence, RI. It was studied extensively in the Historic American Buildings Survey and later moved to Newport where it is featured in the *AIA Guide to Newport*. This house is currently a vacation rental. You can see detail pictures and drawings at www.loc.gov/item/ri0331/

and timber was made to him for this purpose. During the first months of 1638 the settlers lived in caves or hovels or anything that could be quickly thrown together. However, the settlers soon set about building more permanent shelters usually consisting of a one room wood frame structure and loft mostly with thatched roofs, so we can understand why having sawn lumber available was extremely important. As time passed these crude structures were replaced or added onto. Unfortunately for us all the original structures disappeared long ago. Most of the oldest remaining colonial homes were built in the early 1700s, and once again we are lucky because our John Tripp's grandson's stone-ender, now located in Newport, is one of them. My guess is the

house belonged to John Tripp Jr.'s son, Lott Tripp and his wife Ann Manton, because it was located on Manton Avenue in Providence.

Farming became the main occupation of the Portsmouth settlers even though few had prior experience in England. Some of the wealthier Portsmouth settlers brought swine, goats, neat cattle, sheep, and horses with them from Boston. For the less wealthy small farmer, hogs were the valuable transition beast because they could run at large and forge for themselves. Goats were the next best transition beast. For the first few years only the most wealthy settlers had neat cattle and sheep, still a cattle pound was needed to guard them against invasions from the Indians. The firing of three muskets, with the cry of "Alarum," was established as the emergency signal to gather at the house of the Judge for group defense. (Arnold, pgs 127 - 132) Meanwhile every settler was busy making the land fit for crops, building a house and barns, digging wells, fencing their property, planting orchards, as well as working their trade, if they had one. For over a generation only crude mostly wooden hand tools such as hoes, shovels, and axes were available to these novice farmers. Plows were not in general use until 1670. And as trades go, ship carpenters seldom lacked commissions to make many kinds of small craft such as open shallops, pinnacles, and barques. (Hawke, pg 36), (Bridenbough, pgs 36 - 39 & 80) We know that John



Small utility crafts were built for fishing and transporting people and goods between colonies. Shipbuilding was hard and complicated work. To be a shipbuilder you needed to know math and angles. Shipbuilders were architects, carpenters, joiners, caulkers, sailmakers, and designers.

was a ship carpenter, so no doubt he was very busy building boats for others and, as he had time, for himself as well.

With nothing but hard work from dawn till dusk, it is hard to imagine that in only one year's time, these few strong willed Aquidneck founders would develop major disagreements. But, that is what they did. So, at a town meeting held in early 1639 a 2nd compact was written

(but never signed) agreeing for some to start a new settlement on Aquidneck Island to the south of Portsmouth, and William Coddington and nine others, including all of the Portsmouth government officers, removed to the south end of the Island and founded Newport. They chose an area with a good harbor suitable for a shipping/trading port. So trade and commerce became the main occupation in Newport which proved to be very profitable for the Newport settlers. In the move they took the minutes of the first year's meetings, and unfortunately they have never been found.

The largest number of original settlers stayed in Portsmouth, but they were deprived of their government, and records. So two days later, on April 30, 1639, a third Compact was written. This time our John Tripp was among the 30 who signed the new Compact of Loyalty. (RecPM, pgs 1-2) From this document we can see John had at least enough education to sign his own name, and did not have to use an "X" as did over half of the signers. William Hutchinson was elected Judge, and seven men, William Balston, John Porter, John ____, William Freeborne, John Wall, Philip Shearman, and William Aspinwall, were chosen as Assistants. So, although not the ideal situation, two distinct governments existed on Aquidneck Island for the remainder of 1639.

Fortunately, at the first General Court of Election held by the town of Newport, the two governments united as one. The newly elected officers were William Coddington, Governor from Newport, William Brenton, Deputy Governor from Portsmouth, William Dyer, Clerk, two Assistants, one Treasurer, one Constable, and one Sergeant from each town, and eight land layout persons, five from Portsmouth and three from Newport. Separate Portsmouth and Newport Town Courts were to meet twelve times a year. Combined Quarter Courts were to meet four times a year alternating between Portsmouth and Newport, and the General Courts two times a year also alternating between towns. Any disputes could be appealed to a higher level court if parties were not satisfied with the lower level decisions.

At the next General Court on August 6, 1640, a formal treaty was made with the Narragansett Indians specifying that the Indians could not set fires on the Island, or set traps for deer or cattle, and if any

crime was committed by an Indian, they would be punished by a magistrate, according to law. However, if a sachem was accused or the crime was major, then Miantinomi was to be sent for to be present at the trial. Thus, from the need for this treaty, we can see that the settlers had frequent contact with the Indians, who lived all around the Island, and the settlers had concern for the safety of their property and possibly for themselves. (Arnold, pgs 132 - 146)

In 1639/40 John, about 28/30 years old, married Mary Paine, daughter of Anthony Paine, born 1586/90 in Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, England. (GenDict, pg 208) Very little has been recorded about Anthony Paine, except that he was also admitted as an inhabitant to Portsmouth in 1638, and signed the April 30, 1639, Compact with his mark. Anthony and his first wife, Elizabeth Potter, had several children including two daughters, Mary and Alice, who evidently came with Anthony to New England. I don't know the year, but Mary's sister, Alice, married Lott Strange, also an inhabitant of Portsmouth. So John now has a family of his own consisting of a wife, father-in-law, and sister and brother-in law. A few years later, in 1643, Anthony married Rose French Grinnell who also had several children from a previous marriage. (GenDict, pg 142) And, in 1645 Anthony purchased, from Randall Holden, 100 acres of land on the east side of the Island where he farmed and raised a few cattle. (LandEvid, pg 38) History has shown that the family in early America replaced the English village as a business, vocational institute, house of correction, a church and a welfare institution. (Hawke, pg 60)

The following year, 1640, John and Mary Tripp had their first son, John Tripp, Jr. (GenDict, pg 208) On September 7, 1640 Portsmouth established its first ferry on the north east side of the Island being the narrowest part of the passage to the mainland. It was known as Howland's ferry, and Thomas Gorton was appointed ferryman. Cattle were ferried across to the mainland each day for grazing. (Arnold, pg 146)

On September 14, 1640, because of their concern about the increasing potential danger from the Indians, Governor Coddington, and two Connecticut Governors, wrote to the Governor of Massachusetts suggesting that they work together for mutual protection. However, the Massachusetts Courts had not mellowed towards Rhode Island and its ideas of religious freedom, so they replied by refusing to help the towns on Aquidneck Island, referring to the people as heretics, and not worthy of help due to their seditious ideas.

The next year, 1641, one of the first homes built in Newport was burned to the ground by a fire started by some Indians. The settlers responded by arming a boat and scouting all around the island to keep Indians from landing. Fortunately the matter was settled peacefully.

Being ostracized by the Massachusetts Courts, not only meant Massachusetts would not help Rhode Island with defense, it also meant they would not trade with the people of Rhode Island. So, Rhode Island made arrangements to trade with the Dutch in Manhattan for gun powder and other critical supplies needed for their defense and survival. (Arnold, pgs147 - 156)

In 1641 John was likely admitted to Portsmouth as a freeman (Fields), however the event is not in the Portsmouth Town records and John did not hold public office until 1648, so this is another of the several gray areas about John's life. But in 1642 John and Mary were blessed with their second son, Peleg. (GenDict, pg 208)

In March, 1643 at a general town meeting it was ordered that John Tripp was to have three acres of land joining Thomas Gorton. (RecPM, pg 26) At the same meeting each male resident was ordered to have



Section B of the Original Land Grants of Portsmouth compiled by Edward West, 1932. At the north end of Aquidneck Island, is Town Pond where the first lots were assigned. On the west side of the island are the lots of John Tripp and Abiel Tripp, and on the east side is the lot of Anthony Paine and the route to the Howland Ferry (called Pocasset). All the land grant maps are available on Portsmouth Historical Society's web site at portsmouthhistorycenterarchive.org then search for land grants.

powder and bullets, and to attend the upcoming militia meeting. You can't help wondering what John and Mary thought and felt about the Rhode Island towns being ostracized by Massachusetts, and whether they had frequent contact and fear or simply good will with the Indians. Possibly they were just too busy to spend much time worrying about the situation, but we know they were aware of the danger from Indians and from the 1670 "relation", we know John was aware of the persecution by Boston church members.

Also in 1643 another religious dissenter, Samuel Gorton, and several others, purchased land from the Narragansett sachems, and founded a settlement located on the west side of the Narragansett Bay. Gorton's choice of location infuriated William Arnold (father of Benedict Arnold who later became Governor of Rhode Island) and others so much that they deviously sought help from the Massachusetts General Court.

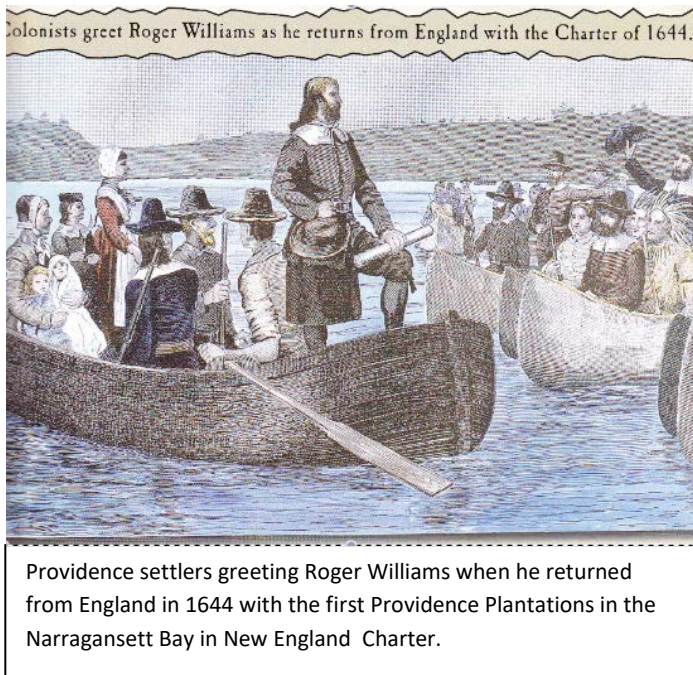
Finally in 1643 the three Rhode Island towns, Providence, Portsmouth, and Newport, agreed they needed to join together for protection from an Indian war and from the surrounding Puritan colonies. So, they sent Roger Williams to London to obtain a charter from the crown. To get there Williams had to travel through New York, a Dutch colony, for passage, because the Puritan authorities would not allow him access through Massachusetts territory or passage to England from Boston.

While Williams was at sea, Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Connecticut formally joined together as "The United Colonies of New England", a league for mutual defense, leaving tiny Rhode Island exposed and alone to defend for itself.

When Roger Williams arrived in London, the English Civil War between the Royalty and Parliament was in full swing. The King had already fled to Oxford, and the Long Parliament ruled. Luckily, Williams had several friends in Parliament with whom he discussed how to get the charter and in addition he wrote several books and pamphlets that influenced current thought on religion and government. Also during this time Massachusetts responded to Arnold's request and imprisoned Gorton and his friends and confiscated their land, and they also ordered Rhode Island's Indian friend, Miantonomi, to be put to death by his enemies, the Mohegans. It appears that Miantonomi's fate was sealed simply because he was one of Rhode Island's best friends. Back in England Parliament established The Commission on

Foreign Plantations, to be in charge of the colonies, and appointed The Earl of Warwick, Chairman.

On March 4, 1644, Roger Williams obtained a charter uniting the three Rhode Island towns, as "The Incorporation of Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay in New England." This charter was the first legal recognition of the Rhode Island towns as an independent state, and gave them the freedom to enact their own civil laws without interference from a church. Because of the new charter, the Massachusetts authorities were forced to allow Roger Williams to return home through Boston and the Massachusetts territory. Fourteen canoes filled with



joyous Rhode Island colonists met and escorted him home to Providence as a celebration.

After Gorton was freed from the Massachusetts prison, he convinced Canonicus and Pessacus, brother of Miantonomi, to submit themselves and their land to the King of England. They agreed thinking they would get better treatment from the King than from the Massachusetts and Plymouth Colony authorities who had no respect for Indian rights. (RW, pgs 290 - 320), (Arnold, pgs 113 - 118)

Then Gorton made a trip to England to get another charter from the Earl of Warwick. After Gorton returned home he named the settlement Warwick for the Earl who had helped Roger Williams and then himself obtain their charters. So, a fourth town was added to Rhode Island's Providence Plantations. Two of Gorton's supporters and co-purchasers of Warwick are of interest to us. They are Randall Holden, the former master of John, and Robert Potter, whom John visited in his home at Warwick and may have become related through marriage. So, once again we can be certain John was aware of these Warwick controversies, but can only guess about his feelings and thoughts. (Arnold, pgs 163 - 199)

And in 1644, John and Mary were once again blessed with a son, their third, whom they named Joseph. (GenDict, pg 208) The population of Portsmouth was increasing to the point that at a town meeting of freemen held on December 23, 1644, it was ordered that no more lands be laid out in an area bounded by John's and other's property. And, any unclaimed land within that area was to remain with the town. (RecPM, pg 32) Two years later, 1646, John and Mary had their first daughter, whom they named Mary. (GenDict, pg 208) During the early colonial years women were elevated to the status of "partner" to their husbands because their responsibilities not only included running a home and raising children, but also hoeing in the field and raising crops. Children frequently had chores by age three. (Hawke, pgs 62 - 67)

On June 21, 1647, John Stanford took over running the Howland ferry on the east side of the Island from Thomas Gorton. It is interesting to note that he was to provide a boat sufficient to carry cattle to the mainland. Rates were also set. (RecPM, pg 34)

Knowing how significant the Providence Plantation Charter from England was to the Rhode Island towns, one has to ponder why it took over two and one-half years of negotiation between the towns before they could agree to unite. However, you also have to remember that these settlers were dissidents -- fiercely independent, tough, and willing to take huge risks in order to maintain their hard won freedom of religion, thought, and civil justice, that actually no other Englishmen had ever had! But finally, at a three day meeting on May 19-21, 1647, the first General Assembly of the people was held at Portsmouth to adopt the Charter and organize a government under it. The event was so significant that the majority of people in the colony were present. Because a majority was present, the meeting was held in Portsmouth, and an event that happened soon after, we can safely predict that John Tripp was present at this first General Assembly of Providence Plantations that created the freest society in the world. Officers were elected and scores of pages of laws were agreed on for the incorporation of all four towns under one united democratic government. They chose John Coggeshall as President, one Assistant from each town, as well as a Clerk, and a Treasurer. And, each town was to be represented by a committee of men at each General Assembly meeting. (Arnold, pgs 201 - 217), (RecRI Vol I, pgs 147 - 208), (RW, pg 352)

John in his Prime, 1648-1675

The next General Court of Elections was held one year later on May 16, 1648, at Providence. John Tripp, age 38, attended the Court as one of the six committee men from Portsmouth. William Coddington was elected President although several charges were made against him, and he was not even present at the meeting. (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 208 - 210) (Arnold, pgs 217 - 221) This was John's first recorded public service office and a sign that he had become a trusted and valued member of Portsmouth and for sure a freeman if not as indicated earlier in 1641.

Then in 1648 John and Mary's second daughter, Elizabeth, was born. (GenDict, pg 208) This means that John and Mary now have five children, John eight, Peleg six, Joseph four, Mary two, and Elizabeth, just a babe in arms. I know we can safely assume that John Jr. and Peleg had regular chores like milking and feeding, their cattle, and helping their father in the fields, and that Joseph was tagging along not far behind. Schools were not established in Portsmouth until 1725, so probably the children had no formal education. However, these colonists were very smart and capable people. For example, they knew how to make everything they needed from wool thread, cloth, butter and cheese to shoes, buckets, hinges, tallow, soap, candles, plates, and combs. (Bridenbough, pg 47) In these times learning was utilitarian, for example, one needed to know how to add in order to exchange money, and learning how to read was more prevalent than how to write. (Hawke, pgs 70 - 71)

And, let us not forget that England was still embroiled in the Civil War, fighting for many of the same liberties as were the colonists. In fact many colonists returned to England to work on reforms at home.



Parliament in England where Roger Williams, William Coddington, John Clark and others went to appeal Rhode Island's cases.

Meanwhile in Rhode Island the same old problems persisted -- persecution by the Massachusetts Bay Colony Courts, threat of an Indian war, and disputes between the towns about how to govern. But now, in addition, there was a new threat from their own President, William Coddington. Coddington had gone to England to request the separation of Aquidneck Island from the Providence Plantations Colony in order that it be under his governance--in effect to allow him to be the autocrat of the fairest and wealthiest parts of Rhode Island. But, by the time Coddington arrived in England, Charles I, King of England, had already been beheaded outside Whitehall

Palace on January 30, 1649. With the abolishment of the Monarchy, Privy Council, and the House of Lords, power was in the hands of Parliament and the newly formed English Council of State. So have no doubt, everything in England was in chaos. Coddington was two years in England working on his request before he got his answer in 1651. Meanwhile the General Court of Providence Plantations met at regular

intervals. However, there was little desire by the colonists for public service, so heavy fines were imposed on any who refused office. (Arnold, pgs 221 - 229)

Meanwhile at a Portsmouth town meeting on October 16, 1649, John Tripp was again elected as one of six Grand Jurymen for the next General Court of the Providence Plantations. (RecPM, pg 43) The General Court was held in Newport on May 22, 1650. At that court, election of officers was held and Nicholas Easton was chosen President in place of William Coddington. The other court business was to apportion the colony's supply of gun powder and lead between each of the four towns. (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 220 - 228) And, although not recorded, you know there was much discussion about the beheading of the King, reform in England, and Coddington's intent to split up the Rhode Island Colony. (Arnold, pgs 229 - 230)

Sometime around 1649/50 Anthony Paine, Mary's father, passed away at about age 65. His wife, Rose Grinnell Paine, was the executor of his will and Mr. Porter and William Baulston were administrators. Anthony left his daughter, Alice, who had married Lot Strange, one cow, and to his daughter, Mary Tripp, one young heifer, but the difference in value between the cow and young heifer should be given to Mary. Also in Anthony and his wife's 1643 agreement before their marriage, upon death of either, the property of the one deceased would go to that person's children. (GenDict, pg 142) So Alice and Mary received land, but the number of acres was not revealed in John and Mary Tripp's March 18, 1650 land



A 1650 painting of Providence, Rhode Island showing typical houses, fences, cattle lots, planting fields, and orchards. This painting shows how much progress had been made in the ten plus years of settlement.

evidence record. The entry only states they received what was due. (LandEvid, pgs 144-145) However, a year later on April 27, 1651, another land evidence record shows that John and Mary sold 27 acres to Mathew Grenell. The deed states that the land they sold was bounded by land owned by Rose Paine, and was that land given to Mary, so they must have received around 27 acres from Anthony. (LandEvid, pg 145)

1650 turned out to be a very busy year for John and Mary. Their third daughter was born, and they named her, Alice, no doubt after Mary's sister. (GenDict, pg 208) Fair trade was just as important in 1650 as it is now. Portsmouth wanted to make sure that when a person purchased a loaf of bread and a quart of beer, they got the same amount as the next person making the same purchase. John Albrow was Portsmouth's Clerk of Weights and Measures and on April 29, 1650, at the town meeting he was ordered to have the townsmen bring their weights and measures to be certified at the next meeting. So at the next town meeting on June 2, 1650, the weights that John Tripp presented were approved to be the standard for the town. (RecPM, pgs 44 - 46) John is the only one recorded as presenting weights at the meeting, and we learn later from John's will that he owned a great scale and weights.

I'm diverting from the story just a little because I want to start identifying names of John's fellow settlers when I know they eventually become significant to his family. The settlers whose sons or daughters married John's children are John Anthony, Richard Sisson, Thomas Fish, William Wodell, William Hall (3 marriages), Philip Sherman (2 marriages), and George Lawton. Following is a brief background for each of these men. Philip Sherman and William Hall signed the very first Portsmouth Compact in 1638. William Hall and George Lawton signed the second Portsmouth Compact in 1639 along with John after the split when nine of the settlers left to found Newport. Philip Sherman was elected Portsmouth's Secretary in 1639. John Anthony, Thomas Fish, and William Wodell began appearing in the Portsmouth records about 1643/4, and William Wodell was one of the original Warwick purchasers along with Samuel Gorton, Randall Holden, and Robert Potter. Richard Sisson does not arrive in Portsmouth until 1651.

Now, back to the story, on July 8, 1650, John was appointed juryman with John Anthony and ten others for the town court that was to be held July 16, 1650. At the court Captain Richard Morris, defendant, asked the plaintiff, John Sanford, to ignore the words of slander he might have uttered in passion. John Sanford declared he was satisfied, and the court adjourned. (RecPM, pg 46 - 47) So, we can see many sides of human nature at work even in this very religious community.

Then the bad news came that on April 3, 1651, William Coddington obtained from Parliament a commission to govern Aquidneck Island during his life. Coddington returned to Aquidneck in August, 1651 with the document in hand and both Portsmouth and Newport quietly submitted to his rule. However, the mainland towns, Providence and Warwick, threatened with extinction with a split colony, prepared to send Roger Williams back to England to obtain recognition of his previous Providence Plantations charter. Interestingly, a large percentage of the people of Portsmouth and Newport agreed to send John Clark along with Williams to help procure a repeal of Coddington's commission. So Williams and Clark presented their case to the English Council on April 8, 1652, and waited in England for a reply. (Arnold, pgs 233 - 240)

As before we have no clue what John and Mary thought about Coddington's usurpation of power and separation of the Island from the Providence Plantation Colony, but we do know they were busy, as usual, at home. It appears that the town of Portsmouth was pleased with John's presentation of weights at the last meeting, because at a town meeting on June 3, 1651, John Tripp was chosen Clerk of the Weights of Measures. His instructions were that the two penny loaf shall weigh 6 ounces and that those that sell beer shall not sell less than a quart for two pence, and he was ordered to visit the places that sell bread and beer once a month and check whether they are in compliance. A fine was set in the event that offences were found, and if found the Sergeant was to enforce the law. In 1650 John Anthony was licensed to sell bread and beer. (RecPM, pg 49) So, we know John had to inspect his friend's place of business and any other taverns in the town. In addition, John was chosen to view the cattle that were being transported off the west side of the island near his home. William Freeborn was to do the same on the east side. (RecPM, pgs 50 - 51)

More than a decade had passed since the founding of Portsmouth and herds of cattle and sheep were increasing. Therefore, the need for fences to keep cattle from foraging and tramping the corn fields

became the most necessary improvement on a farm. The most familiar and pleasing Rhode Island type of fence was the stone wall, and at a Portsmouth meeting August 25, 1651, Ralph Earl and John Tripp respectively agreed in writing to make a 40 and 20 rod stone wall between their lots to fence off their cattle. The agreement required the remaining 60 rods of fence to be as good as the 20 rods that John had already built. (RecPM, pgs 53 - 55) So, here we have another instance where John's work was being used as the standard for the town. Because building a fence called for a large expenditure of precious



This picture of a stone fence was taken in 2014 in Westport, Massachusetts in the area where John Sr. bought land that was part of the Dartmouth Purchase.

labor, they were given until March 15 of the following year to finish. The agreement was signed and sealed in the presence of Thomas Newton and Benedict Arnold. I can picture John Jr., now 11 years, and Peleg, nine years, helping their father finish this project, can't you? And also in 1651, John and Mary's fourth daughter, Isabel, was born. (GenDict, pg 208)

Thankfully, on October 2, 1652, the English Council of State ordered the repeal of Coddington's commission and directed all four towns to reunite under their charter. The colony did not know until William Dyer, who had gone to England with Williams and Clark, returned home in February, 1653 with the news.

Williams and Clark remained in England as agents for

the colony. But, can you believe it, rivalry between the towns, still threatened the cohesiveness of the Providence Plantation? So, during the next three turbulent years, still under Coddington's dictatorship, courts for the Island and the mainland met separately. Finally Roger Williams returned home to help settle the disputes. (Arnold, pgs 240 - 251)

Meanwhile in New England, more and more colonial settlements were expanding west from Plymouth, Massachusetts. Accordingly in 1652, Plymouth elders purchased a large track of land that included the



Massasoit, Chief Sachem of the Wampanoag, meeting with Plymouth Elders. The Dartmouth Purchase meeting probably looked very similar to this.

present townships of Dartmouth, Westport, New Bedford, and Fairhaven from Massasoit, Chief Sachem of the Wampanoag and his son Alexander. This tract of land is located adjacent to Rhode Island's eastern mainland. The original deed with Massasoit was signed by John Winslow and John Cooke of Plymouth. This purchase became known as the Dartmouth Purchase, and the Record of Deeds, Plymouth Colony, Book 2d, page 107, shows the purchase belonged to thirty-six persons, including the well known names of William Bradford, Miles Standish, and John Alden. (Ricketson, pgs 13 - 29) Shortly, we will learn what this purchase of land in Massachusetts means to the rapidly expanding Tripp

family, who in 1653 added their fourth son, Abiel. (GenDict, pg 208)

At the June 2, 1653 Portsmouth town meeting John Tripp, John Anthony, and four others were chosen Jurymen for the next Quarter Court. (RecPM, pgs 59 - 60) Aquidneck Island and the mainland towns were still meeting separately, so this Quarter Court was probably just for the towns of Portsmouth and Newport. At about this time the English and the Dutch were in a trade war so England had sent authorization to license privateers against the Dutch in New Amsterdam for profit, and Aquidneck Island agreed to the scheme. This act greatly displeased the mainland colonists from Providence and Warwick, and made reuniting the towns even more difficult. (Arnold, pgs 246 - 247), (RW, pgs 362 - 363)

Finally the General Court was to be reunited and, at the September 11, 1654 town meeting, John Tripp was chosen as one of the committeeman to represent Portsmouth. (RecPM, pgs 64 - 65) The next day the General Court of Elections of the Providence Plantations, after three years of separation, was held at Warwick. (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 281 - 290) So, it appears that John traveled across the Narraganset Bay to Warwick and took part in the first meeting of the reunited colonies that elected Roger Williams President. The second day of the Court fixed the next elections to be in May of 1655. Instructions from England to the colonists were to address legal issues to Oliver Cromwell, His Highness, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland. At the meeting Roger Williams received permission to send thank you letters to His Highness and others for helping the Providence Plantations reunite. Therefore, harmony was, for the most part, restored to the Rhode Island colony. (Arnold, pgs 251 - 252)

On May 5, 1655, John was again chosen by the town as a Commissioner to meet with the rest of the colony at the General Court to be held in Providence. The Commissioners were given full power to transact business as if the town were present. (RecPM, pgs 66 - 67) The Court met May 22 and most of the same officers were re-elected, and John was appointed to several subcommittees. Drunkenness of both Indians and English seems to have been a problem, so one committee took up the matter of suppressing the sale of liquor. The second committee was to exercise penalties for those commissioners who are chosen for a subcommittee and refuse to serve, and the third was to make a rate to accomplish the tasks the Assembly had taken on. And the fourth was to implement an order that two copies of the Assembly's records should be made. One copy should be filed at Newport and the other at Portsmouth. (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 303 - 315)

The Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island shows John, all his in-laws (except Richard Sisson), and many other colonists being admitted as freemen in 1655. It seems likely this means they were admitted as freemen to the Providence Plantation Colony because many had already been admitted as freemen to their own town. (GenDict, pgs 5, 78, 91, 121, 178, 208, and 434) In 1655, the total roll of freemen in the colony was 247: Newport had 96, Portsmouth 71, Providence 42, and Warwick 38. So we can see that two-thirds of Rhode Island's strength was with the colonists of the Island and that in fifteen years Newport had outgrown Portsmouth and would continue to do so because of their far superior port and skills in trade. (Arnold, pgs 255 - 256)

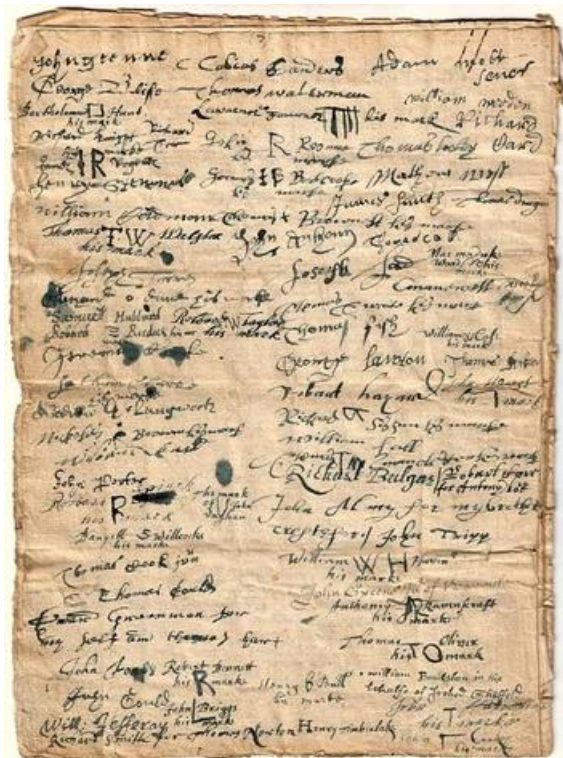
On June 28 - 29, 1655, a special session of the Assembly was held at Portsmouth to discuss a letter from Cromwell no doubt to confirm their loyalty to the Commonwealth. (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 316 - 321) At this meeting we get a glimpse of the decorum at meetings, because the Assembly passed a law that in case any man strike another, he shall be fined or whipped as deemed appropriate by the court. (Arnold, pgs 257 - 258) The Portsmouth town minutes have no records of John breaking any laws, so he seems not to have been one of these hot tempered men.

Then at the March, 1656 Court of Trials held at Warwick, Coddington, only a few months after being ousted as dictator, attended as an elected Commissioner from Newport. Many of the colonists were outraged at his attendance, so he was required to pledge allegiance to the Providence Plantation, and made to answer for other questionable behavior. As a result, healing between the colonists and Coddington finally began. (Arnold, pg 259) Also in 1656, John and Mary's fifth and final son, James, was born. (GenDict, pg 208)

The increase of cattle rustlers on the Island required Portsmouth to take more stringent methods for prevention from theft. In 1648 only two men were required to inspect all cattle being removed from the Island, but in only three years, more cattle were ferried off the Island than people. So, two more men were appointed to inspect besides those stationed at Howland's Ferry on the east side of the island. At the August 11, 1656 town meeting, John Tripp, William Hall, Thomas Cornell, and Richard Bulger were appointed to take on this inspection. The surveyors were required to record the names of persons

removing the cattle, day of the month, number of cattle, and earmark. This requirement is the second indication we have seen that John must have had at least some ability to read and write to do the job. The surveyors were authorized to deny passage if earmarks were suspicious, and they were required to be especially diligent if the ferries were running at night. (RecPM, pgs 72 - 73) And by the way, the earmark of John Tripp was a crop on the left ear and a hollow in at the crop and a hapeny on the e side of the same ear. (RecPM, pg 273) Earmarks were clipping to the ears, not brands. (Hawke, ps 52)

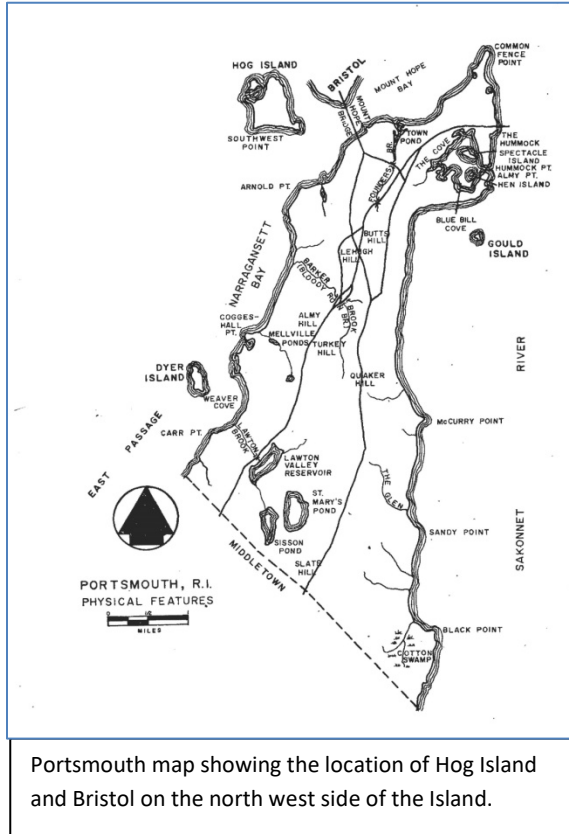
By now Aquidneck Island was fairly heavily populated with people and planting fields, leaving the colonists in need of a place to graze their cattle. Therefore, on March 10, 1656, over 100 settlers from Newport and Portsmouth joined together to purchase Conanicut and Dutch Islands in the Narragansett Bay just west of Newport. The agreement was signed on February 12, 1657. The amount of land purchased varied significantly, from 1/40th part to 1/900th part. John purchased 1/250th part of the land. Most of his in-



The signature page of the 1657 Conanicut and Dutch Island purchase by 100 Newport and Portsmouth settlers from the Indians. John Tripp's signature is on the lower right side.

laws also participated in the purchase namely Richard Sisson, John Anthony, Thomas Fish, George Lawton, and William Hall. Dutch Island was to be held in common for the use of all purchasers. (JT)

In 1657 John served for his first and only time with two others as town Constable. (RecPM, pgs 75 - 76) And then on November 30, John Tripp, John Anthony, Richard Sisson, and seven others including Ralph



Earl were granted planting land on Hog Island for seven years. (RecPM, pg 80) Hog Island is located in the Narragansett Bay on the northwest side of Aquidneck Island just west of Bristol. One needed a substantial boat to get there, and an adequate place to dock. The Portsmouth shore land at this time was owned by the town, but John Tripp, Ralph Earl and Richard Borden owned land near where it would be natural to build a pier. So, it is likely that all of them owned a boat and carried travelers across when requested until a regular ferry was established. (RIFerries, pgs160 - 178)

August 3, 1657 the ship *Woodhouse* landed in Newport carrying a band of Quaker missionaries. The previous year Quakers had set foot in Boston greatly alarming the Puritans who called them pests and contagions and set about persecuting them first with fines, imprisonment, whipping, then banishment, mutilation and even death. When the Bostonians learned of the Quakers presence in Rhode Island they

demanded that Rhode Island leaders remove them. But, after deliberation the Rhode Island General Assembly replied that freedom of conscience was the ground of their charter, therefore they had no legal reason for banishing the Quakers as long as they abided by civil laws. As you know Rhode Islanders were already labeled heretics, but now the rhetoric ramped up with names like "Island of Error" and "the cesspool of New England". Severe measures in Massachusetts against the Quakers continued for more than five years, including the hanging of Mary Dyer, wife of the Aquidneck Island's first Clerk. Mary Dyer had simply traveled to Massachusetts to visit some Quaker friends. (Arnold, pgs 264 - 266)

On March 2, 1658, Portsmouth's town treasurer was ordered to pay twelve shillings to Goodman Tripp for going into the Bay. (RecPM, pg 83) The minutes give no explanation about what "going into the Bay" means, but I've seen other references where someone "went into the Bay" to deliver a letter or message for the General Court, so we can guess that the Town Council needed someone to travel by water probably near John's lot to deliver something. Whatever it was, either John Sr., now about 48 years, or John Jr., now 18 years, did a service for the town and the town chose to reward him. "Goodman" is an old English title to denote a farmer. If he progressed to a higher office he became "Mister" and even higher he would add "Esquire" to his name. (Hawke, ps 110) Also in 1658 John and Mary had their final child, a daughter they named Martha. (GenDict, pg 208)

Then seven months later at the October 6, 1658 town meeting, it was ordered that Goodman Tripp shall be paid from the Treasury for carrying Commissioners to Court in Warwick last May. (RecPM, pgs 86 - 87) This town record is the first concrete proof that John owned a boat that was large enough to hold at least six passengers. So, it seems even more possible that he had a small pier for docking and easy access to the Bay and Warwick. This may have been the precursor of the Ferry to Bristol or Tripp's ferry run later on by Abiel. Remember though in 1658, Bristol was still the headquarters of Massasoit, sachem of the Wampanoag, so it was not possible to have a formal ferry. It was not until 1682 that William Earl, John Borden, Abiel Tripp, and Joseph Anthony were given permission to complete their wharfs. For many years this ferry was known by the names of their owners, Tripp's Ferry and Borden's Ferry, and it was not until just before the Revolutionary War that the ferry name was changed to Bristol Ferry. (RecPM, pgs 217 - 218). (RIFerries, pgs 160 - 178)

On October 27, 1658 John Sr., now 48, was chosen with five others as Commissioner, and it was ordered that Goodman Tripp would carry the Commissioners since the court was to meet across the Bay at Warwick. For this service he was to be paid out of the Treasury. (PM pgs 87-88) Since the 1658 minutes are the only occurrences of the term "Goodman Tripp," the reference could possibly be to John Jr., being 18, and may indicate that "Goodman" was being used to refer to the younger generation, but that is just a guess, or a question really. At the November 2 meeting in Warwick, the main business was to pass a law stating that one could not submit his lands to another jurisdiction as men from Pawtuxet had done previously that had created such difficulty with the Massachusetts Courts. And a new law was passed ordering that any new laws would not go into effect until 20 days after the end of the assembly in order to allow enough time to make copies of the laws, to distribute them to each town, and for the people to consider them. (Arnold, pgs 270 - 271) (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 394 - 404)

In March of 1659, the Council met to publish the proclamation that Oliver Cromwell had died in September, 1658, and that his son Richard Cromwell had seceded him as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. (Arnold, pg 271)

On February 6, 1660 John, calling himself about 49 years old, gave testimony that he had heard his uncle, Robert Potter, say he had sold a certain house and land located slightly north and east of John's property to John Anthony. (GenDict, pg 157) In 1662 it was confirmed that twenty years earlier John Anthony had purchased the property from his brother-in-law, Robert Potter. (Olney) As you already know, John Anthony is one of John Tripp's in-laws who had previously been licensed to sell bread and beer in Portsmouth. And, Robert Potter was one of the original signers of the April 30, 1639, Portsmouth compact, but he left Portsmouth in 1643 with ten others to purchase and settle at Warwick. He was also an inn keeper at Warwick. (GenDict, pgs 156 - 157) Whether Robert Potter was related to our John through John Anthony or through Mary's mother whose maiden name was Potter is not clear.

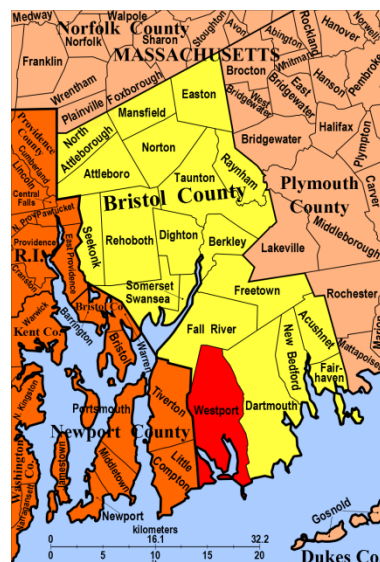
A letter received from John Clark informed the Colony that Richard Cromwell had resigned and that Parliament was now the sole authority. All legal correspondence was to be addresses to the Commonwealth of England. (Arnold, pg 271) This meant the continued existence of the English Commonwealth was in grave danger from loyalists wanting to restore the crown. Meanwhile life goes on in Portsmouth and on June 4, 1660, John is one of three chosen as Town Council. (RecPM, pg 93)

Later that year the Town Council completed the important project of establishing an Evidence of Lands book showing land granted by the town or land purchased from others. (RecPM, pgs 94 - 95) No doubt getting the Land Evidence Book up-to-date was the reason for John's February testimony about John Anthony's purchase from Robert Potter.

A special meeting of the Assembly was held at Warwick on October 21, 1660 to announce that Charles II, son of the beheaded Charles I, had accepted the crown of King of England on April 4, 1660. So, the struggle for self government in England failed, ending the short life of the English Commonwealth, and returning power to the aristocracy. Charles II was later crowned at Westminster Abbey on April 23, 1661. The Rhode Island Assembly sent a letter to John Clark confirming to the Crown that Clark was their agent and asked him to obtain a confirmation from the Crown of the Providence Plantation Charter that had been granted earlier by parliament. (Arnold, pgs 274 - 275), (RecPM, pgs 96 - 97)

In 1661 Massassoit, chief sachem of the Wampanoag, died at about age eighty. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Alexander. However, only a year later, Alexander died suddenly after being forcibly taken by Plymouth authorities and charged with sedition. He was succeeded by his brother, King Philip, who was angered by the death of his brother and suspected foul play by the colonists at Plymouth. (Arnold, pgs 387 - 393)

On February 24, 1661, John Sr. is chosen with two others as Petty Jurymen for the town. (RecPM, pg 108) A few months later John attended the General Assembly at Newport on May 21, 1661. (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 437 - 446) And, on June 3, 1661, John is again chosen to be on the Town Council for that year. (RecPM, pgs 105 - 106) Then on August 24, 1661, he was chosen with five others as Commissioners to the General Assembly to be held at Portsmouth on August 27. (RecPM, pg 107) (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 447 - 452) At the meeting a letter from John Clark was read and money was approved to be sent to Clark for his continued work as agent for the Providence Plantations. (Arnold, pgs 276)



Today Westport is about a 20 minute drive from Portsmouth.

Crapo reports that in 1662, about ten years after the previously mentioned Dartmouth Purchase by 36 Plymouth elders, John Sr. purchased about a one-quarter share of the Dartmouth Purchase, from John Alden. (Crapo, pgs 285) However, a different source says John was deeded 114 acres in 1672 by Daniel Wilcox (GTripp), and another mentions a deed to John from Samuel Wilber in 1663. (GenDict, pg 155) I don't know the exact transaction, but it is well known that Daniel Wilcox purchased large tracts of Dartmouth land then resold them to Portsmouth settlers as well as to Quakers from Cape Cod. And, it is clear that by 1665 John Sr. was one of the Portsmouth settlers who acquired Dartmouth land that was located in what is now Westport Town. Westport records show that most of the early settlers were from Portsmouth. (WPHS) (GTripp) The land was not actually surveyed and the irregular sales accepted as valid until 1710, when Benjamin Crane was employed by the Proprietors of Dartmouth as their surveyor. The survey records can be found in *The*

Field Notes of Benjamin Carne, Benjamin Hammond, and Samuel Smith. We now know that Tripp's homestead land in Westport was located on Drift Road near Central Village.

Then on June 2, 1662 John Sr. was again added to the Town Council for the year along with his brother-in-law, Lott Strange. (RecPM, pg 111) And on June 17, 1662, John attended a reassembled General Court where he was appointed with four others from Portsmouth to collect what was past due from the town for the payment to John Clark. (RecRI, Vol I, pg 480 - 491) And later that year on September 29, he was elected as one of six Commissioners to serve at the next General Court to be held in Warwick. He was also elected as one of three Grand Jurymen to serve at the trials at Warwick after the General Court meeting. (RecPM, pg 113) (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 492 - 500) December 22, found John once again in Warwick at the house of Robert Potter as witness to the testimony of John Briggs about hearing Robert Potter say he sold land and a house to his brother. (GenDict, pgs 156 - 157)

On May 12, 1663, John was one of six Commissioners from Portsmouth to the General Court held at Providence. (RecRI, Vol I, 501 - 503)

In 1663 John Clark's work as the Providence Plantation's agent in England paid off with a Royal Charter from the King. So, for the last time under the Providence Plantations charter granted by Parliament, the General Court of Commissioners convened November 24, 1663 at Newport to receive the Royal Charter granted by Charles II. The Royal Charter confirmed everything the previous charter had given, and it strengthened their views on religious liberty and separation of church and state, and it defined Rhode Island's boundary lines dealing a blow to the surrounding colonies aggressive attempts to absorb Rhode Island land into the Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies. The new General Assembly was to be composed of a Governor, Deputy Governor, and ten Assistants, and a House of Deputies to be elected by each town, six from Newport, four each from Portsmouth, Providence, and Warwick, and two each from newer towns. Benedict Arnold was elected the first Governor. At the meeting many adjustments were made to current laws, and of course border disputes with Massachusetts and Connecticut continued, but Rhode Island was in a much stronger bargaining position than before the Royal Charter. (Arnold, pgs 283 - 301) (RecRI, Vol I, pgs 508 - 511)



The 1663 Royal Charter from Charles II, King of England. The charter is famous for phrases like "full liberty in religious concernments."

On February 17, 1664 John Sr. was chosen Commissioner with Lott Strange and two others for the General Court to be held in Newport. (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 22 - 95) (RecPM, pgs 123 - 124) So for the March 1, 1664 meeting, the brothers-in-law traveled to Newport which by now was the largest and most prosperous town in Rhode Island. When they approached Newport, the harbor was likely filled with ships because Newport was a successful port town. The garb of a gentleman was gold or silver lace, buttons or points at their knees, and great boots, but only a few Rhode Island gentry purchased elegant clothes and finery. The vast majority worked in leather breeches and aprons or dressed in cloth spun and woven

from wool or flax. Moccasins were the choice for daily foot ware. (Hawke, pg 111), (Bridenbough, pgs 104 - 105) Possibly each of the brothers-in-law had a special pair of cloth breeches, a linen shirt, and close fitting jacket for the trip to the city. And, from John's will we know he owned a pair of silver buttons for britches, which he no doubt proudly wore to government meetings.

At this time John Jr. was 25 years old, Peleg was 23 years, and Joseph 21--all grown men. And now we begin to see how John and Mary had planned for their future. The *Rhode Island Land Evidences* show that on September 8, 1665, John Tripp Sr. granted Peleg, his second son, a fourth of his share of the Dartmouth Purchase. Peleg's land was at the south end of Sawdy Pond and included all uplands, meadows, woods, timbers, and waters. The only condition of the deed was that if Peleg would sell, it should only be to John Sr. or one of his heirs. (LandEvid, pg 19) Based on Peleg's frequent appointment to public office in Portsmouth, it appears he didn't actually move to Westport until around 1690. On September 7, 1665, the day before the deed to Peleg, John Tripp, Jr. married Susanna Anthony, daughter of John Anthony (brother-in-law of Robert Potter of Warwick). It may have been at this time that John Jr. was given the old house or north end of John Sr.'s building as described in his will. (GenDict, pg 208 and 5) I have not found a marriage record for Peleg, but his marriage to Ann Sisson, daughter of Richard Sisson, was probably soon after, in 1666.

At a Portsmouth town meeting on October 13, 1665, John was elected with two others as Grand Jurymen. (RecPM, pg 130) The main business at the General Court was the debt owed to John Clarke as most towns were still in arrears on their share of the debt. So, the order to collect the tax was renewed. (Arnold, pg 323)

On December 8, 1665, the Commissioners confirmed that some twenty-five years ago (about 1640) Mary Paine Tripp, before she married John, bought three acres of land from Richard Searle for a pint of wine. (GenDict, pg 208) Richard Searle was living in Portsmouth in 1640, but he removed long ago and left no deed. (GenDict, pg 174) Perhaps this three acres is where John and Mary lived when first married before their 1643 grant of three acres.

Then on February 22, 1666, John Sr. and ten other Portsmouth men including Lott Strange, William Wodell, and William Hall were chosen to make a rate (tax) of 100 pounds to pay John Clarke for his work in England to obtain the Royal Charter. The committee was ordered to meet the last Wednesday of the month to make the rate and all townsmen were invited to give input. (RecPM, pg 131)

In the same year John Sr. was also chosen to do several other jobs for the town. On April 25, 1666, he was chosen with two others as Grand Jurymen. June 4th he was elected along with Capt John Sanford, who operated the ferry on the east side of the Island, to be Surveyor of Cattle for the year, and on August 27th he was chosen as one of four Deputies with John Anthony. (RecPM, pgs 133 - 135) (RIFerries, pgs 188 - 195). The four deputies attended the Sept 4, 1666 meeting in Newport. (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 150 - 157) Past non-attendance of Deputies, caused the Assembly to pass an act to pay members of the Assembly and Courts three shillings a day while on duty. Also the delay in paying John Clarke was threatening him with foreclosure on his home, so a special committee headed by William Harris was

appointed to collect the money. They were not able to collect all the money by the October meeting so the Committee was continued. (Arnold, pgs 327 - 330)

The next year, 1667, John Sr. continued to be busy with similar public service. On April 27th he was chosen to serve on a committee with William Wodell and William Hall to make a plan for preserving the wood and timber in the town's Common areas, and to present their idea at the next town meeting. (RecPM, pg 137) There is no record of their report in the minutes, so we don't know what kind of solution they proposed. And, on June 3 he was elected to serve another year as Surveyor of Cattle with John Sanford. Then on June 26, he was again chosen with three others to serve as Deputy at the next General Court to be held at Newport on July 2, 1667. (RecPM, pg 138) (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 199 - 208) And this year Joseph, age 23, married Mehitabel Fish, daughter of Thomas Fish, so now the 3 oldest boys are married and starting families of their own. (GenDict, pg 208)

Few changes were made at the General Election, but England was at war with France and Holland and threat of an Indian war surfaced again. A council of War was organized in each town consisting of the Town Council and officers of the trainband (militia). On the island all Indians were disarmed and all male Indians over 16 were sent off the Island. A series of beacons were established in case of attack. One was northward on Windmill Hill, the highest point on the Island. Cannons were mounted at Newport and cavalry troops were formed in each town. And, it is no surprise that border and leadership disputes continued in the colony. Thankfully the preparation for the Indian war turned out to be premature. (Arnold, pgs 330 - 334)

At the June 1, 1668 election for Portsmouth officers, John Sr. and three others were chosen for the Town Council and John Sr. and John Sanford were again elected as Surveyors of Cattle. (RecPM, pg 142) In addition John Sr. was one of five including Philip Sherman, William Wodell, and William Hall to make a rate of 40 pounds for care of the poor. (RecPM, pg 143) Later that year, on October 16, John Sr. was chosen as one of four Deputies for the next General Assembly that met October 29, 1668 at Newport and again May 4, 1669. And Joseph Tripp, age 24, was admitted as a freeman to the town. (RecPM, pgs 143 - 144) (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 236 - 245) The business conducted at the General Assembly was settling disputes and warding off Plymouth's aggressive action towards an old time Rhode Island settler, as well as admitting a large number of freemen to the colony. (Arnold, pg 336) And about this time, Mary Tripp, John and Mary's first daughter, married Gershom Wodell, son of William Wodell.

Trouble arose about the Howland Ferry, run by John Sanford, so on March 29, 1669 the town voted to form a committee of seven men to meet on Thursday, April 1 to draw up propositions about the ferry to present at the next meeting. John Sr., Philip Sherman, William Woodell, William Hall as well as three others were chosen for the committee. At the next meeting on April 28, 1669 John Sanford lead a discussion about the ferry, but the discussion was continued to the next meeting. (RIFerries, pg 190) And John Sr. was one of four to be chosen as Deputy for the upcoming General Assembly. (RecPM, pg 146 - 147) The General Assembly met on Tuesday, May 5, 1669 and elected Benedict Arnold as governor and John Clarke as deputy governor. A fifth town, located on the southernmost border with Connecticut, was added to the colony and named Westerly. Land and people disputes, as usual, were part of the agenda. (Arnold, pgs 337 - 341)

Then at the town of Portsmouth meeting on June 7, 1669, John Sr. was one of four, including William Hall and William Wodall, chosen to serve on the Town Council and again as Surveyor of Cattle with John Sanford. (RecPM, pg 148)

Almost a year later on April 27, 1670, John Sr. and three others were chosen as Deputies for the next General Assembly to be held at Newport. (RecPM, pg 151) At the Assembly meeting on May 4, 1670, the legislatures chose John Sr. as an Assistant, one of the public officers of the Rhode Island Colony. So, at



Newport harbor in 1730. A few decades earlier John and his colleagues from Portsmouth would dock at this harbor when attending meetings of the General Assembly. Then they would walk to the end of Washington Square to the modestly sized wooden house for their meetings.

age 60, John Sr. served for the ensuing year on the Governor's Council with notable colonists Roger Williams, William Baulston, John Coggeshall, and others (RecRI, Vol II, pg 301 - 305) This seems like quite an accomplishment for one who started as an indentured servant in order to gain passage to the New World, don't you agree?

Although about one-third of the immigrants to New England were indentured servants, historians agree that only a few of them later became prominent leaders in the seventeenth century, so we can be very proud of John's accomplishments. I can't help wondering whether the 1670 "relation", the document so important to our knowledge of John's early years, was

required before being sworn in as an Assistant? Further research could probably answer this question. The business of the Assembly was mostly of a financial nature. (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 301 - 305), (Hawke, pgs 120 - 125)

A special meeting of the Governor and his Council was held May 23, 1670 in Newport to respond to a letter received from Connecticut requesting a meeting about boundary issues. A second General Assembly was called on June 7, 1670 at Newport to continue dealing with the trouble with Connecticut. The legislature voted to send a delegation to New London to meet with Connecticut commissioners. To pay for the trip, some of the legislators contributed money ranging from 1 to 10 shillings. Our John is shown to have contributed 2 shillings. (RecRI, Vol II, 306 - 309)

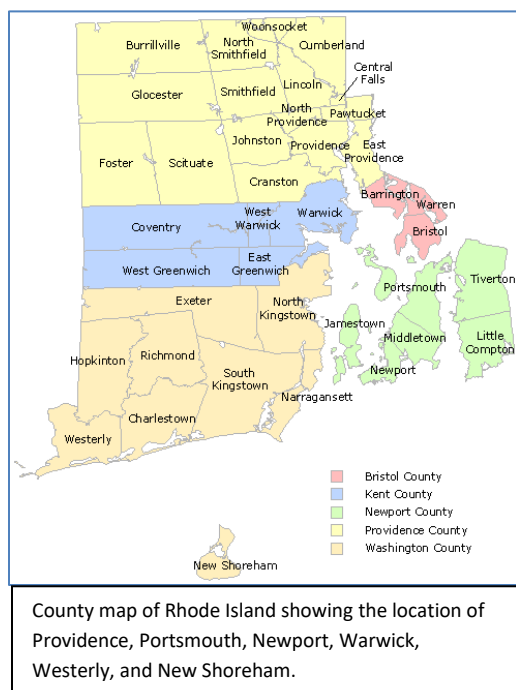
The Rhode Island and Connecticut committees met in New London, but did not reach an agreement. A little later the Connecticut men took over the government of the disputed town of Westerly.

On June 19, 1670 when news of the Westerly usurpation reached Newport, a message was sent to William Baulston and John Tripp to join the others at Newport by 9 am the following day for a meeting at the home of Captain Morris. At the meeting, the legislature wrote a letter to Connecticut's Governor and Commissioners again informing them they were acting against the King's orders and requesting them to withdraw to the legal boundaries of the Royal Charter. Further, if they choose not to withdraw,

Rhode Island would appeal to the King. They sent another delegation to Connecticut to deliver the letter and message. The letter was signed by Benedict Arnold, Governor, Nicholas Easton, Deputy Governor, Wm Baulston, Assistant, John Trip, Assistant, John Green, Assistant, and John Easton, Assistant. (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 323 - 324)

Meanwhile life goes on in Portsmouth and at a town meeting on June 6, 1670 John Sr. was again chosen with John Sanford as Surveyor of Cattle and put on a committee with Phillip Sherman, William Hall, and William Wodall to make a rate of 30 pounds to pay the towns debts and pay for the poor. (RecPM, pgs 152 - 153) And around 1670 Elizabeth Tripp, John and Mary's second daughter, married Zuriel Hall, son of William Hall.

A special session of the General Assembly was held on June 29, 1670 in Warwick to deal further with



Connecticut's usurpation of Westerly. Governor Arnold was appointed as their agent to go to England, and a tax was levied to meet the expenses. Also several private individuals, including our John Tripp, lent money to the colony to pay an outstanding debt to Richard Dean from England for past service in obtaining the charter. The loan was to be repaid out of the next rate. (RecRI, Vol II, pg 337)

Correspondence continued between Governors Arnold and Winthrop, but so did the disputes and violence. More General Assembly meetings were required in October and April. (Arnold, pgs 341 - 350)

Then at a Portsmouth town meeting November 23, 1670, John was put on a committee with Phillip Sherman, William Hall, William Wodell and John Sanford to make a rate of 50 pounds as ordered by the June 29th General Assembly. (RecPM, pg 156)

At the May 2, 1671 regular General Assembly meeting, John attended but was not re-elected as an Assistant. He was however appointed to a committee to consider giving help to Westerly along with Captain John Cranston, John Coggeshall, Roger Williams, John Easton, John Albro, Cableb Carr, and Richard Carder. (RecRI, Vol II, pg 376 - 385) The next time his name appears in the records of Rhode Island is on June 7, 1671 when the bills from Captain John Cranston, John Tripp, and John Easton are delayed until the next General Assembly. (RecRI, Vol II, pg 401) No doubt the bills were for expenses relating to the Westerly problems, but the General Assembly, as usual, was short of cash.

And at home on May 3, 1671, John now granted Joseph, his third son, 1/4th share of the land lying within Dartmouth, Massachusetts. (LandEvid, pgs 16 - 17) So now, both Peleg and Joseph own land on the mainland in Massachusetts east of Rhode Island in the present town of Westport. According to the Westport Historical Society, 1671 was the year that Richard Sisson, father-in-law to Peleg, became the

first family to settle there. (WPHS) In 1681 Joseph Tripp was still in Portsmouth, but we know he moved to Westport by 1685 when he was their representative to the Plymouth Court. (GTripp)

On June 5, 1671, John Sr. was once again chosen as Surveyor of Cattle along with John Sanford. (RecPM, pgs 161 - 162) And on October 14, 1671 John was on a committee to make a rate assessed by the General Assembly. (RecPM, pgs 166 - 167) Also in about 1671, Alice Tripp, John and Mary's third daughter, married William Hall, Jr., son of William Hall Sr. This is the second Tripp-Hall union with both Elizabeth and Alice marrying brothers.

Then on March 14, 1672, John Sr. was chosen as Deputy with George Lawton for the next General Assembly to be held at Newport in April. (RecPM, pg 167) The General Assembly was having trouble collecting taxes needed to protect Rhode Island from Connecticut threats, Indian war, and treachery from within. So at the April 2, 1672 meeting, the legislature passed an act that anyone opposing any rate laid should be tried, and if found guilty, they would be imprisoned or fined. This was by far the boldest act of the General Assembly for central power. (Arnold, pgs 354 - 356) But, the next General Assembly proceeded to undo all of the acts of the previous legislators, showing the continued bitterness between the colonists. Other business of the Assembly included allowing a paid dinner for the Magistrates and Deputies so they could continue deliberating into the evening. (Arnold, pgs 358 - 359) (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 434 - 448)

At the Portsmouth town meeting on April 25, 1672, John Sr. was chosen as one of six on the Town Council, and one of four Surveyors of Cattle. He also spoke out against the town's decision to grant eight acres to John Sanford to make a highway 20 rods wide between land of Joseph Anthony and down to the sea. (RecPM, pgs 168 - 171) This may have been the issue about Howland's Ferry, operated by the Sanfords, that was delayed in 1669. At any rate this is the first time we have a record of John taking a stand on an issue, even though he was in the minority.

Rhode Island suffered greatly for taking in the Quakers, but, this did not mean that everyone agreed with the tenets of Quakerism. Roger Williams was one who disagreed with them, however he also



Quaker leader, George Fox, preaching at a tavern. His preaching was grounded in scripture, but was mainly effective because he was able to project his own personal experience.

believed in religious liberty for all. So on August 8, 1672, at age 73, Roger Williams rowed himself from Providence to Newport, a full day's journey, to have a public debate with Quaker disciples of Fox. The debate lasted three days, and is a good example of the type of public discussions on theology that were commonplace in Europe and America during these times. (Arnold, pgs 359 - 362)

Then at the October 14, 1672 Portsmouth town meeting, John Sr. was chosen Moderator for the first time. For years William Baulston, one of Portsmouth's original 1638 Boston

leaders, had been elected Moderator. To replace such an educated man to lead their public meetings shows that by now, John Sr. had earned a great deal of respect from his community. He was also chosen again as a Deputy to the General Assembly to be held at Newport the last Wednesday in October. (RecPM, pg 171) Not enough Deputies from Providence and Warwick attended the October 30 meeting so the meeting was adjourned and messengers were sent for the Deputies to attend the reconvened meeting on November 6, 1672. (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 465 - 466)

On November 6, 1672 the General Assembly incorporated Block Island into the colony and renamed it New Shoreham. So New Shoreham became the colony's 6th town, namely Providence, Portsmouth, Newport, Warwick, Westerly, and now New Shoreham. But as we know, conflicts with Connecticut had virtually prevented Westerly from participating in any colonial affairs. (Arnold, pgs 363-365) Also at this meeting, John Tripp, Sr. was voted onto two committees. The first one was to audit the accounts of John Coggeshall, the late General Treasurer, and report their findings in May. Their first meeting was to be held December 2 at Captain Morrice's house in Newport. (RecRI, Vol II, pg 471) And, the second committee was to audit on any men's accounts who charged the colony. (RecRI, Vol II, pg 480)

At the May 7, 1673 General Assembly, Nicholas Easton was reelected Governor and William Coddington was elected Deputy Governor, the first public office he had held since his 1651 usurpation of the Island.



In 1739 the house-sized wooden structure at the end of Washington Square where General Assembly meetings were held was replaced by this Colony House that still stands today.

And our John Sr. was again chosen as an Assistant. Auditing of the Treasurer continued, and the Assembly authorized a committee to meet with all the Indian sachems about preventing Indian drunkenness and solving any other differences that arose during the meetings. (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 483 - 488)

At the June 2, 1673 Portsmouth town meeting John Sr. is again chosen Moderator. In addition he is chosen as one of three overseers of the poor and one of four Surveyors of Cattle. (RecPM, pgs 175 - 176)

On August 13, 1673 in Newport, the General Assembly voted John and four others to be on the committee to prepare matters for the Assembly concerning Indian drunkenness, readiness of the militia, and a new threat

from the Dutch who had taken control of New York. Much of the meeting was devoted to preparations for war if the colony were to be invaded. (RecRI, Vol II, pg 488) At the next session of the Assembly on October 29, 1673, after the meeting with the Sachems, the Assembly confirmed a statute against selling liquor to the Indians and imposed heavy penalties upon Indians found drunk. And John Clark demanded the colony pay him the amount yet due for his work in obtaining the Royal Charter.

At the next General Election in 1674, William Coddington was elected Governor, and our John Sr. continued as an Assistant. For a few precious months, quiet prevailed. (Arnold pgs, 367 - 370), (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 516-526)

On November 28, 1673, June 1, 1674, and October 10, 1674 John was again chosen Moderator of the town meeting as well as Surveyor of Cattle. (RecPM, pgs 180 - 182)

One of the duties of an Assistant was to be a witness for town court proceedings, such as the stone fence agreement between John Sr. and Ralph Earl in 1651. In 1674 at the dwelling house of John Tripp, a charge was brought that Mary Hoomeyhoo had accused William Brownell of bugging John Tripp, Jr.'s mare to death. Upon being questioned by the Portsmouth magistrates, Mary confessed she had said this falsely and done him wrong, and asked that the matter be passed without further trouble. This was done and confessed December 28, 1674, and witnessed by Assistants Joshua Coggershall and John Tripp. (RecPM, pgs 427 - 428) This record shows that by now some of the town meetings were held at John's house, and also that superstitions existed in Portsmouth as well as in Salem. In fact most early Americans shared the belief that natural disasters and heavenly displays were signs from God to alert them to their sinfulness. Even farming was dictated by moon watching. (Hawke, pgs 157 - 167)

If you are wondering about John's religion, in 1675 William Harris wrote a letter to English officials saying "The Governor of Rhode Island, Coddington, their Deputy, Easton, Assistants, Bull, Gould, Clark, Coggeshall, Trip . . . some of them called Quakers, some Called Generalles." (Bridenbough, pg 65, footnote) Being a Quaker in Rhode Island would not be a surprise, because in 1690 close to half of the population belonged to the Society of Friends. (Bridenbough, pgs 69 - 72) But, Quaker or not, John was a religious man who in his will left money to all his grandchildren for Bibles. Also around 1675 Isabel Tripp, John and Mary's fourth daughter, married Sampson Sherman, son of Philip Sherman, the first of two Tripp-Sherman unions.

At the May 4, 1675 General Assembly, William Coddington was reelected Governor and John Sr. as Assistant. Joseph Tripp was one of several admitted as freemen to the colony. Standards for weights and measures was the main topic of business. This was the last year John Tripp, now age 65, served on the Governor's Council as an Assistant. (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 526 - 530)

King Phillips War, 1675 - 1676

The dreaded war with the Indians arrived in 1675. Many wrongs had been done to the Indians, mostly



The Great Swamp Fight during King Philip's War where the New England Confederacy's army burned the Narragansett's fort to the ground along with all their winter provisions.

by Massachusetts authorities, and much of their land had been taken over by the English. King Philip, Chief Sachem of the Wampanoags, whose headquarters were in Mount Hope (Bristol) was thought to be slowly gathering support from all the surrounding tribes for war against the English. But, in June, 1675, before Philip's plans for war were complete, three Indians were murdered at Plymouth. Phillip was enraged and mustered his warriors to conduct a massacre at the town of Swansea, Massachusetts. The New England Confederacy, of which Rhode Island was not a member, responded with troops from Plymouth, Boston and Connecticut. During late 1675 Indian offensives were

successful, but the tide began to turn when the New England Confederacy attacked the fort of the Narragansett. After a long and deadly battle, known as the Great Swamp fight, the Indian's fort was burned to the ground along with all their winter provisions.

This action brought the Narragansett, who were friends of Roger Williams and Rhode Island, into the



All settlements on the mainland of Rhode Island were destroyed by the Indians. Thankfully, Aquidneck Island and our Tripp forefathers were spared.

war and everywhere burning towns and mangled bodies of the English, including at Providence, Warwick, and Dartmouth, were evidence of the severity of the war. Richard Sisson's home in Westport was one of the ones destroyed by the Indians. (WPHS)

Defense in Rhode Island was turned over to the Council on Wars in each town. The General Assembly sent a letter to the inhabitants of Providence and Warwick advising them to flee to Aquidneck Island for security and informing them that relief would be supplied to those in need. So, Rhode Island mainland residents fled to Aquidneck Island for safety. Four boats with five or six men, well furnished with ammunition, constantly sailed around the island to prevent invasion from the Indians.

Two canons were moved to Portsmouth where one was placed at Howland's ferry on the east, and the other was placed at John Borden's close to John Sr.'s on the west side of the Island. (RecRI, Vol II, pgs 532 - 540) Captain John Albro, three of John

Tripp's in-laws, Philip Shearman, William Wodell, and George Lawton, along with several other men were in charge of assigning watches for Portsmouth and were active leaders during King Phillips War.

Finally, after about one and one half years of destruction and carnage, Canonchet, the leader of the Narragansets was captured and killed. Soon after King Philip himself was captured and killed on August 12, 1676 at Mount Hope by Captain Church. The first written reference we have to Tripp's Ferry is by



King Philip was killed at his headquarters in Mount Hope (Bristol) by an Indian deserter under the direction of Captain Church. Captain Church mentions "a sand point against Tripps", in his book written later about the incident.

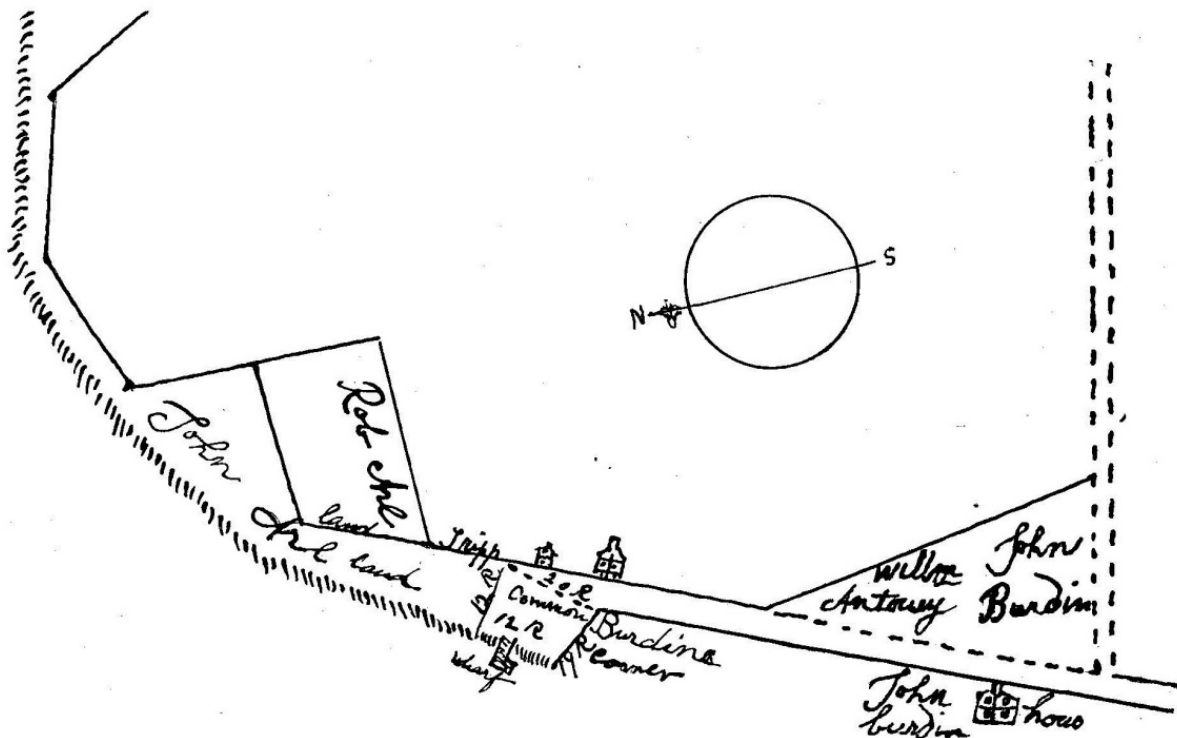
Captain Church who described the above incident in a book he wrote years after the war. Church related that on August, 1676 he received word that an Indian deserter was on a "sandpoint over against Tripps, about where the Bristol Ferry lighthouse was to be." Church and his party responded and "they were soon at Tripp's Ferry where the deserter was." A few days later Church wanted to use the ferry, but the boat was in use elsewhere. (RIFerries, pgs 162 - 163)

The war was ended, but the price on both sides was high. Many of the towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut were destroyed and the rural districts were laid waste. However, Rhode Island, excluded from the league and always opposed to the war, suffered more severely than the Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies. Her mainland had become a desert, but thankfully, Aquidneck Island was untouched and had been a fortress for defense and city of refuge for her mainland residents. The colonist's losses were insignificant, however, compared to that of the Wampanoag and Narragansett -- essentially total annihilation of their tribes. Most of the surviving Indians

were either executed or sold into hopeless slavery in Barbados or other distant lands. (Arnold, pgs 387 - 420)

John Tripp's Last Years, 1676 - 1678

And so, the end of the war was the opening for a formal ferry between Portsmouth and Bristol, and was also the start of rapidly increasing settlement in all areas of the Dartmouth Purchase. The Bristol land, that had been the Wampanoag headquarters, was granted to Massachusetts proprietors provided they set up a ferry. On the Portsmouth side, Abiel Tripp, along with William Earl, John Borden, and Joseph Anthony were given permission to build or finish wharfs on public land in 1682. (RecPM, pgs 217 - 218) The Bristol ferry became one of the most important ferries in Rhode Island because it provided a direct route from Newport to Providence. As evidence, even George Washington is known to have traveled the



Plat of Bristol Ferry Common, Portsmouth in 1714. Shows Tripp and Borden (Burdine) houses and location of the wharf.

Bristol Ferry. (RIFerry, pgs 156 - 159)

Before 1700, the Head of Westport at Dartmouth was settled by the following Portsmouth families, Sisson, Mott, Lawton, Waite, Tripp, Earl, Sherman, Briggs, and Ricketson. The area was enticing to settlers because of its abundance of rich farmland, navigable waterways, and protected harbors. You can find lots of early Westport information at the Westport Historical Society website (WPHS) and in *Early Tripps in New England* by George Tripp about the Tripps at Westport from whom he descended (as well as many of us, I suspect).

But, we have moved ahead of John Sr.'s story. After the war John Sr. appears to be slowing down, but he is still active in local affairs. At a town meeting on June 7, 1675, John Sr. was once again chosen

Moderator and one of four Surveyors of Cattle along with John Anthony. He was also appointed to prove all weights and measures. (RecPM, pgs 183 - 184) And again on July 16, 1675, he is chosen Moderator and put on a committee to make a rate. (RecPM, pg 185) Then June 5, 1676, he was, as usual, chosen one of three Surveyors of Cattle with John Anthony. (RecPM, pgs 190 - 191)

Around this time John's sons are also becoming active in Portsmouth affairs. On June 4, 1677, Peleg was chosen to be on the Town Council while John Sr. again served as Surveyor of Cattle. (RecPM, pgs 192 - 193) In 1677 Joseph was on the Court of Trials and Peleg on a committee to preserve land. (RecPM, pg 194) On April 3, 1678 Peleg was chosen to be on the Town Council. (RecPM, pg 196)

Then on April 7, 1677, Peleg traded his 75 acres (3/8 share) in Dartmouth to his brother-in-law, George Sisson, for 32 acres in Portsmouth with house, orchard, and fencing. (LandEvid, pgs 105 - 106) (GenDict, pg 181) Recalling the sale restriction on Peleg's Dartmouth land grant, he must have received permission from John Sr. for the trade, and Peleg must have preferred to remain in Portsmouth while George Sisson wanted to relocate to Dartmouth where his father was rebuilding after the war.

By the end of 1677 we can be certain that John Sr.'s health was fading because on October 6, 1677, he made his Last Will and Testament. *The Genealogy Dictionary of Rhode Island* says he passed away on December 6, 1677, however, according to the Portsmouth town records on April 23, 1678, John Sr. was chosen for his last public service as Surveyor of Cattle along with John Anthony and Robert Hodgson. (RecPM, pgs 196 - 197) So, I don't know the exact date of his death, but we can assume he passed away before finishing his term as Surveyor of Cattle, because his will was proven October 28, 1678 with Mary serving as Executor.

John left all estate, land, goods, and chattels to Mary during her life. According to the will he had already deeded his old house, or north end of his building, to John Jr., and as we already know, he had previously deeded land in Dartmouth to Joseph and Peleg. Now, in his will, he also leaves 10 acres in the Clay Pitt field and meadows at Hog Island to John Jr., the new house or south end of his building with adjoining lot and other land to Abiel, and 1/8th share of land at Dartmouth and rights to his land at Narragansett and Westerly to James. In addition he leaves Peleg 5 pounds, Joseph 10 pounds, Martha 20 pounds, and his granddaughter, Elizabeth Wodell, 10 pounds. (Will)

Just to refresh your memory, at the time of John Sr.'s death, John Jr. was 38 years and married to Susanna Anthony, Peleg was 36 and married to Ann Sisson, and Joseph was 34 and married to Mehitabel Fish. Mary was 32 and married to Gershom Wodell, Elizabeth was 30 and married to Zuriel Hall, Alice was 28 and married to William Hall, Isabel was 27 and married to Sampson Sherman. Abiel was 25, James 22, and Martha 20 years, all three unmarried. (GenDic, pg 208) It appears that John Sr. and Mary were living in the new house at the south end of his building, and John Jr. and Susanna Anthony were living in the old house at the north end. Abiel, James, and Martha, being unmarried, may still have been living with John Sr. and Mary.

And from the will and on the more personal side, John Sr. gave John Jr. his dripping pan and spit. This was one of the most valuable tools in a colonial home and was used for roasting meat and catching the tallow used for crude candles. Peleg received his flagon, a container for liquids with handle, spout, and

lid, and his great scales and weights that John Sr. must have used to prove weights for the town. In colonial times not everyone had their own cup. Instead a flagon was passed around the table for everyone to take a sip of ale or beer. Joseph received a Dutch pewter pot also of great value for preparing porridges and puddings, the mainstay of the colonial diet. Abiel received the great chest and a pair of silver buttons. A chest was an essential piece of furniture, because closets did not exist until decades later. The custom was to fold and store clothes in a chest, because pegs and hooks were only used for cloaks and hats. James, the youngest, received the great Bible. To each of his grandchildren he gave five shillings to buy Bibles. Also in the will, John reserved a burying place in the West Field for himself, Mary, and John Strange. See the attached will for all the details. (Will)

Unfortunately John's probated inventory was not found, so we only have visibility to his above listed most valuable possessions. We can expect, however, that he owned the typical essential pieces of colonial furniture, usually one or more beds, possibly some bed rolls, and a crude table with a few stools, probably handmade. As luck has it, however, we do learn from the *History of Rhode Island Ferries*, that his inventory does list a great boat with appointments and a smaller boat. (RIFerries, pg 163) It seems strange that John did not feel a need to grant the boats to one of his sons, but they are not in the will. So, at his death it seems that the boats were left to Mary.

The last activities we have for Mary are at a town meeting on April 23, 1679, about one year after John's death. Widow, Mary Tripp, was granted a license for one year to sell victuals and drink to travelers. (RecPM, pgs 200 - 201) So, did Mary turn the house into a tavern? It appears she did. Then on April 17, 1680, Mary presented a bill, probably for past service by John Sr., for twenty-four shillings to the town that was ordered to be paid. (RecPM, pg 205) And, on April 4, 1682, 4 years after John's death, Mary married Benjamin Engell of Portsmouth. (RecPM, pg 303) I couldn't locate any information about Benjamin Engell. Mary died five years later on February 12, 1687. (GenDict, pg 208)

Author's Ending Statement

Reveal himself, he did. From fearlessly trekking into the wilderness, successfully building boats and houses with hand tools, sailing expertly in the Narragansett Bay, setting and maintaining fair standards for the community, immersing himself into community affairs when so many others did not, to caucusing with Indian Sachems, and holding his own with revered men such as Roger Williams. Not to mention being a good husband and providing equally for his family.

My guess is that John Tripp considered himself successful beyond his wildest dreams and he left this world with a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.

So John, this story is a tribute to you and all that you have done for us, your descendents. We thank you! You are not found in history books, but in my opinion, you are the poster boy for realizing the "American Dream".

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(LandEvid) - *Rhode Island Land Evidences, Volume I, 1648-1696*, Abstracts, Rhode Island Historical Society.

(Fields) - *Biography of John Tripp*, Mark L. Fields, relativelyconnected.com/tripp/tripp-john-gallery/bio-j-tripp.htm

(RecRI) - *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, transcribed by John Russell Bartlett, Vol. I, 1636-1663, Vol. II, 1664-1677. (Available free on the Internet)

(Ricketson) - *The History of New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts including a History of the Old Township of Dartmouth and the Present Townships of Westport, Dartmouth, and Fairhaven from their Settlement to the Present Time*, by Daniel Ricketson, Published by the Author, 1858.

(JT) - *Jamestown Historical Society: Land Document Transcription*

(RIFerries) - *A History of Rhode Island Ferries, 1640-1923*, Anna Augusta and Charles V. Chapin, The Oxford Press.

(Olney) - *The Olney Connection*, rootsweb.ancestry.com - Robert Potter

(Crapo) - *Certain Comeovers*, Henry Howland Crapo

(GTripp) - *Early Tripps in New England*, George H Tripp, Old Dartmouth Historical Sketch, Number 26, New Bedford Whaling Museum, whalingmuseum.org/explore/library/publications/old-dartmouth-historical-sketches/odhs no 26

(WPHS) - Westport Historical Society, Head of Westport, wpthhistory.org

The Field Notes of Benjamin Crane, Benjamin Hammond, and Samuel Smith: reproduced in facsimile from the original notes of survey of lands of the proprietors of Dartmouth, including what is now the city of New Bedford, and the towns of Dartmouth, Westport, Fairhaven, and Acushnet, New Bedford, Massachusetts: New Bedford Free Public Library, 1910

"Descendants of John Tripp of Portsmouth, R. I.", Margaret Buckridge Bock, *The Genealogist* 4:59-128 (1983)

"Some Observations on the Ancestry of John Tripp, Emigrant to Portsmouth, Rhode Island", Neil D. Thompson, Ph. D, F.A.S.G., *The Genealogist* 10:195-199, (1989)

On March 28, 1991, I found the following document (a photocopy of the original: the original was not present) in the New Bedford Library, in Massachusetts:

THE RESOLUTION OF JOHN TRIPP (1611-1677)

(February 17, 1670)

"The Rolation (*Resolution*) of John ye said John Tripp concerning (*concerning*) the plases (*places*) of his aboad (*abode*.) First I was born (*per the Horkstow Parish Register, he was christened 8 September 1611*) in Horstow (*Horkstow: in the extreme north of Lincolnshire, east of the north-flowing river Ancholme, about 2 miles south of the Cliff Channel, which leads eastward into ...the English Channel?*) in Lincolne Sheire (*Lincolnshire*) 3 miles from Bartern Hambar (*Barton Upon Humber*) and my father name was John Tripp and my mother name was Isabel Moses (*her name from the Horkstow Parish Register at her marriage, 30 July 1609, is "Elizabeth Moyses"*) before she was marryed (*married*) my father when she was a maid and they had about 12 children (*from the Horkstow Parish Register I found 8 children, John, Robert, 1612, Grace, 1612 [twins], Francis, 1614, Elizabeth, 1616, Dorothee, 1618, Anne, 1621, and Bridgett, 1629. The remaining four may be in the 1630 and onward portion of the Register, which I have not searched*) and much kindred (*Parish Register in Horkstow, in randomly selected years between 1578 and 1616, shows 16% of christenings, marriages and burials were named TRIPP*) we had and when I grew in yeares (*years*) I was put (*c. 1625, age 14*) an apprentice to a sheipt earpendist carpondor (*ship carpenter*) whose name was John Baats (*Bates?*) of Thorsbee (*Thoresby, now named South Thoresby, in southeast Lincolnshire: about 34 miles from Horkstow. 34 miles! John early on learned to live away from home, likely making his immigration at age 25 a natural.*) 3 miles of from Alford in Lincone Shire afore said where I served 7 yiare and sometime after (*estimate 2 years*) wrought with him and after that (*c. 1634, age 23*) I bound myself to one Frances East for 4 pounds a year for 4 years who sould me after I had served him and his asign for about a year and a half hee sould me to Robert Jafra then liveng in Boston (*assume immigration here, at age 25 years, c. 1636*) and Boston Church members persacuting som to the ofending of others my master came to Rhod Island with the said parsacuted people and I with him (*c. 1637, age 26,, because John became a founder of Portsmouth 23 June 1638, per Leonard*) and his wife being sickly and they could not git their maid to com to Rhod Island with them because Boston members cried out against Rhod Island people whom the said members had expeled from them therefore my master was forsed to sel me to Randal Houlding of porth mouth one Rhod Island (*of Portsmouth on Rhode Island*) and I served a ~~xxx~~ while and after bought out the rest of time of him and after a while I married a wife whose madon name was Mary Paine I being about thirty or twenty eight years old or thereabouts (*c.*

John Tripp, Sr, Will, from Land Evidence Book, Vol 1, page 160

I in the name of God chosen Know all men by those present that I John Tripp of Portsmouth on Road Island in this colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations shaft [ship] carpenter being of God sixty seven years or there abouts have and doe upon due and serious consideration itt being the present sixth day of the tenth month Anno dom 1677. I this said John Tripp being through the mercy of God in my perfect sencies [senses] and memory have thought fitt to set my house in order and to that end have thought good to make this my Last Will and Testament declaring it to bee irrevocable. In the first place I make ordaine and appoint my well beloved wife Mary Tripp to bee my sole and absolute Executrix of all my Estate consisting of lands goods and chattells moveable and immovable durring her life naturall. Only my old house Excepted or north end of my building which I have given to my soann John Tripp formerly and now I give my house lott and tenn acres of land in the clay pitt feild with my meddowes at Hog Island and all the fencing[,] orchards[,] and housing and privileges here unto belonging unto my sonn John Tripp excepting my new house or south End of my building and privileg[e] to pass and repass unto it which I give to my sonn Abiell Tripp with the lot on the [word scratched out] south side here of which I bought of my sonn Peleg Tripp and a certain parcell of land also lying betwixt the land of Samuell Wilbore [Wilbur] and John Bording [Bareing] his land in the Town aforesaid called by this name of West Field with all privileges belonging or any ways appertaining all with aforesaid tracts or parcells of lands and housing as aforesaid. I doe intayle upon my sonns John and Abiell and the heirs male of there bodys lawfully begotton butt in case they have not male heirs then to the female only[.] I reserve [request?] a burying place in West Field for mee and Mary and for John Straing [Strange?] according to my former promise to him which shall bee two rods round a rod on every side further[.] I doe declare that if my said wife should marry then my sonn John his heirs or heirs shall pay or cause to be paid to my said wife yearly fifty shillings a year in currant silver of Ken/Knd England or of equevolent during her life[.] Also my sonn Abiell shall pay fifty shillings unto my said wife yearly during her life in currant silver money as aforesaid. I doe also order my sonn Abiell to pay or cause to be paid unto his brother Peleg his heirs or assignss the full and just sum of five pounds sterling in current pay of Road Island also to pay his brother Joseph his heirs or assignss tenn pounds sterling in current pay as aforesaid[.] All which aforesaid payments are to bee payd [paid] to said sonns Peleg and Joseph within the space of two years after the decease of my said wife[.] Also I doe give and bequeath to my sonn James Tripp the eight part of a share of Land at Coxsit lying in Dartmouth in the colony of Kjn Plimouth to him and his heirss for ever with all privileges there to belonging and also all my right in the Kamligansit company [Conanicut colony?] with my right in land lying within the township of Westerly or Nisganamecutt [Narragansett?] in the colony of Road Island without Bortaylgring ?????? it but in case Abiell or James die without heirss male or female then to the survivour of either of them and their heirs forever and after[.] I give and bequeath to my daughter Martha twenty pounds sterling in currant pay of Road Island to bee paid by my Executix at her marriage day or at twenty years of age[.] Also I give and bequeath unto my grandchild Elizabeth Wodell tenn pounds to be paid as aforesaid and all this to bee paid with the movables[.] Also I give to my sonn John my great driping [dripping?] pann and spitt after his mother deceases[-] Also I give to my sonn Peleg the biggest fagon ?? ????? in my house and my great scales and waights belonging to them [him?] after his mothers deceas[.] Also I give to my sonn Joseph A Ourh pewter pott after his mothers deceas[.] Also I give to my sonn Abiell a great chest and a paire of silver buttons for britches after his

mothers deceas. Also I give a great Bible to my son James after his mother's deceas and I doe give and bequeath to all my grand children that shall bee borne and living at my decease five shillings in silver to each of them for to buy Bibles for them and this to be paid by my sons John and Abiell equally but to them at or before two years after the deceas of my wife but in case my wife marry[,] my sonns John and Abiell shall take there shares into there possession at the day of her marrying and further my will is that my two sonns John and Abiell shall be my Executors after there mothers deceas to Execute and performe this my Last Will and Testament and James shall alsoe take his part into his possession at the day of his mothers marriage and if my wife see cause shee may choose an Executor or two to perform this my will after her decease and further my will and ??? is that my Loving friends Robert Hodgson and John Anthony shall bee overseers to see this my last will performed.

Ordered that part of this twentieth line should bee cancelled on the other ??? at the signing ?????? This above writing is ????????

John Tripp SEAL

The above written will was (proved) the twenty eight day of October in this year 1678, according to law. Before us this town council of the Town of Portsmouth.

John Albro, Assistant

Wm Cadman

William Wodell

Latham Clark

Peleg Tripp

Jacob Mott

In the name of God Amen know all men by these presents that I John Tripp of Portsmouth on Road Island in the colony of New England and Providence Plantations shalbe
carpenter being aged sixty seven years or thereabouts have and do upon just and serious con-
sideration it being this present sixt day of the tenth moneth elenth born 1677 of the said John Tripp
being through the mercy of God in my perfect senious and memory have thought fit to set
my house in order and to that end have thought good to make this my last will and testament
declaring it to be irrevocable In the first place I make ordaine and appoint my well
belov'd wife Mary Tripp to be my sole and absolute executrix of all my estate consisting
of lands goods and chattels movable and immovable during her life naturall only my eld^{er}
excepted on north end of my building which I have given to my son John Tripp formerly
and now I give my house lot and ten acres of land in the claypit field with my middens
at hog Island and all the fenceing orchards and housings and priviledges thereto belonging
unto my son John Tripp excepting my new house on south end of my building and pro-
viding to pass and repass unto it which I give to my son Abiell Tripp with the lot on the
south side thereof which I bought of my son Peter Tripp and a certain parcel
of land also lying betwixt the land of Samuell Willard and John Boring his land in
the town aforesaid called by the name of west field with all priviledges belonging
or any ways appertaining all which aforesaid tracts or parcels of lands and houses my
aforesaid I do intayle upon my sons John and Abiell and the heirs male of their
bodies lawfully begotten but in case they have not male heirs then to the female
only I reserve a burying place in west field for me and myne and for John staining ac-
cording to my former promise to him which shall be two Rods Round a Rod on Every
side further I do declare that if my said wife should marry then my son John his
heirs or heirs shall pay or cause to be paid to my said wife yearly fifty shillings a year
in current silver of New England or Equivallant during her life also my son Abiell
shall pay fifty shillings unto my said wife yearly during her life in current silver money as
aforesaid I do also order my son Abiell to pay or cause to be paid unto his brother Peter his heirs or
assignes the full and just sum of five pounds sterling in current pay of Road Island also to pay
his brother Joseph his heirs or assignes seven pounds sterling in current pay as aforesaid
all which aforesaid payments are to be paid to my said sons Peter and Joseph within the space of
two years after the decease of my said wife also I do give and bequeath to my son James Tripp
the right part of a share of land at coxet lying in Sautmouth in the colony of New Plimoth to
him and his heirs for ever with all priviledges thereto belonging: and also all my right in the
Rhingansit contrary with my right in land lying within the towne ship of orstedly or misqu
amocutt in the colony of Road Island without intayling it but in case Abiell or James die
without heirs male or female then to the survivor of either of them and their heirs for
ever and also I give and bequeath to my daughter Martha twenty pounds sterling in current
pay of Road Island to be paid by my executrix at her marriage day or at twenty years of her age
also I give and bequeath unto my gran child Elizabeth Wedell seven pounds to be paid as aforesaid
and all this to be paid with the movables also I give to my son John my great cuping
pann and spitt after his mothers decease also I give to my son Peter his biggest baggon in my
house and my great scalls and waights belonging to him after his mothers decease also I
give to my son Joseph eld^{er} puter proff after his mothers decease also I give to my son Abiell
a great chest and a paire of silver buttons for buttons after his mothers decease also I give a
great bible to my son James after his mothers decease and I do give and bequeath to all
my grand children that shall be borne and living at my decease five shillings in silver to each
of them for to buy bibles for them and this to be paid by my sons John and Abiell Equally betwixt
at them at or before two years after the decease of my wife but in case my wife marry my
sons John and Abiell shall take their shares into their possession at the day of her marriage and
further my will is that my two sons John and Abiell shall be my Executors after their mo-
thers decease to execute and perform this my last will and testament and if one
shall also take his part into his possession at the day of his mothers marriage and if my
wife see cause shod may choose an executor or two to perform this my will after her decease and
further my will and desire is that my loving friends Robert Higdon and John Anthony shall
be overseers to see this my last will performed
and that part of the twentieth line shall be cancelled on the other side at the signing here
by me John Tripp
this aforesaid is a true copy of the original of the last will and testament of the said John Tripp
signed in the presence of us
John Anthony Robert Higdon
John Anthony Robert Higdon

ସିଗନାଲ

by me John [unclear] in the presence of us

[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page]

This a book nothing is a true copy of John - [unclear]
The original English and accounts the
history of the month long as at

1. The following items were received from the donor:

