

FEB. 10, '42

Story of a Bygone Era

Wind Grist Mills of Rhode Island

By Benjamin F. C. Boyd

matões, 100 quarts of tomato juice, 50 quarts of wax beans, 28 quarts of green beans, 35 quarts of beets, 60 pints of corn, and 30 quarts of carrots. In addition three bushels of potatoes have been dug. The remainder of this crop is estimated at nine bushels. Two bushels of onions are also growing.

E. E. E.

Several commuters from Providence would like to know when and why the reservoir by the beach was made, why there is a main pond and the smaller one, what is the separating wall for, how is the reservoir filled—how it came to be laid out in that manner, what the wall separating the smaller pond from the roads is for, etc., etc.?

Also what data do you have on the new reservoir to be constructed in Portsmouth.

Could you please have this information in your column next Wednesday to settle a dispute?

E. E. B., T. C., J. F., H. E., D. C. W. McD.

Providence.

Sheriff Robert H. Chappell wanted to know how things were going with his son, Bob, Jr., who is now serving in the army at one of the big camps in this country. He kept pressing his son for some information and finally got it. The answer came in a letter that was written in rhyme, and some of the comments in it were very emphatic.

"Well, I asked for it," said the sheriff.

This history of a disappearing industry of our forefathers is the work of a man whose family has operated wind grist mills since early in the 19th century. The Herald News is pleased to offer this story by Benjamin F. C. Boyd of Portsmouth in a series of five articles of which this is the first.

At the time when the first settlers came to this country there were only three ways of obtaining power outside of manual labor and animals. These were tide mills,

Portsmouth by the late Robert Sherman. When I was about 14 years of age it was bought by the late Benjamin and William Hall, and moved to Lehigh Hill on the West Road, and now belongs to the Newport Historical Society.

I can remember when there were 10 of these mills standing in Portsmouth, Middletown and Newport, two in Little Compton, and before my time there was one in East Greenwich, and another in Bristol or Warren; but old Father Time came out ahead in the race and only a few are now left.

I have heard my father say that in the Revolution there was one of these wind mills stood on Prudence Island, and the British soldiers used it as a target to try their cannon on.

To the people here on the Island these old mills are so common-place that they excite very little interest, but to the thoughtful person, or stranger, they are always a source of wonder and curiosity, possessing for him an air of mystery and historical interest, as their moss covered

was known that ground grain produced better results than if fed whole, but the streams on Rhode Island were small and produced little power and dried up in the Summer, so the old fashioned windmills of Europe were reproduced to help out.

I have heard my father say that notwithstanding there were a number of these mills, they were always jammed with grain to be ground for the fattening of beef and pork; also some selected grists to be ground into fine meal for family use, or to be carried to the village or city store to be traded for groceries.

As money was scarce in those days the miller got his pay by taking toll. This came to be regulated by law so that a water mill should take two quarts of grain for grinding a bushel and a windmill should take one-tenth of a bushel, or about three quarts, it being considered more work to run a wind grist mill; this old custom of taking toll came to an end about 1910.

A Century and a Third Years Old Mill Still Being Run Commercially

I do not know which is the oldest mill now standing, but as the one I own and run, and which is known as Boyd's Mill, is quite old and as my family has probably had a longer experience in running wind grist mills than any other family outside of Europe, it may be of interest to describe our mill and our connection with it.

It was built in the year 1810 by John Peterson, a retired sea captain; the timber being cut back of Wickford Village on the west side of Narragansett Bay.

The mill building is eight square and 18 feet across through the squares, and about 20 feet from corner to corner, tapering to the plate, which is put on in a circle 15 feet in diameter and 30 feet high. The top, or roof, is round similar to a half sphere and is about eight feet high, making the total height of the mill 38 feet.

On top of the plate is bolted in

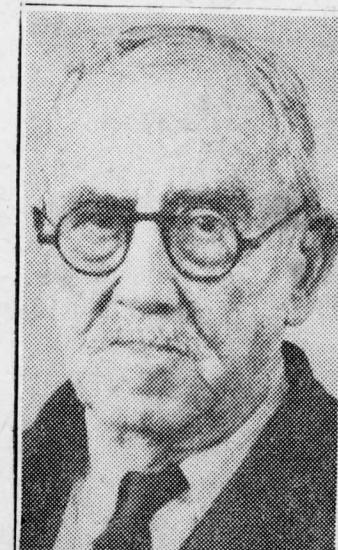
of shaft, and when running describe a circle of 63 feet in diameter; each arm carries a sail 28 feet long by seven feet four inches wide.

On the main shaft is the main driving wheel made of wood with iron cogs bolted on this wheel is about nine feet in diameter and drives a perpendicular wooden shaft by a pinion wheel which turns the upper mill stone by a peculiar clutch which does not interfere with the free balancing and running of the stone. The perpendicular shaft and stone make six turns to the main shaft's one.

When running, the vanes or arms must be kept facing the wind by turning the top as the wind may change. The running stone which is the top one is 22 inches thick and five feet in diameter and weighs two and one-half tons. The lower stone is the same size but not so thick and remains stationary. The corn is fed between the surfaces of the stones by a hole 11 inches in diameter in the top stone. The surfaces of the stones have furrows radiating from the center to allow the corn and cooling air to flow over them. The speed of the arms sometimes go as high as 25 revolutions per minute but is then at the danger point.

The mill when running at 20 revolutions per minute is estimated to develop 30 horse power in a 30 mile wind. There is no way of regulating the speed of the mill in a gusty wind, except to stop the mill and reef in part of the sail, or put it out as the case may be. The sails can be spread from the ground, taking one arm at a time as it points down to the ground. A fair speed is 18 or 20 revolutions per minute. There is a powerful brake on the main wheel by which to stop the mill.

There have been some improvements made in the mill since it was built. Originally it was fitted with clumsy wood wheels with wood cogs. The top was turned by a large wood screw a foot in diameter and on the top meshing into



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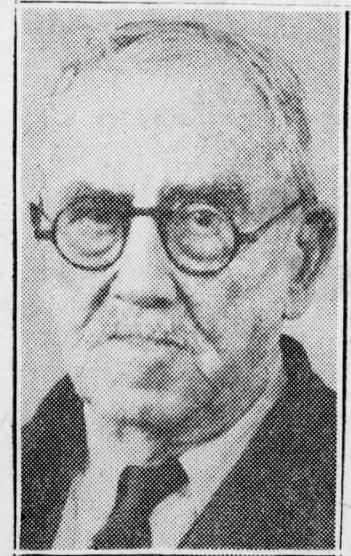
At the time when the first settlers came to this country there were only three ways of obtaining power outside of manual labor and animals. These were tide mills, water mills and wind mills, the same as had been in use in Europe for ages.

For some reason Rhode Island seems to have been the only place where these wind mills were used to any extent. In fact, I have never heard of any outside the State, with the exception of one or two on Long Island and one on Nantucket Island, two on Block Island, three or four on Cape Cod, one of which was bought by Henry Ford and moved to Dearborn, Mich., and there is at least one on Cape Cod now, which is run in the summer for the benefit of summer visitors.

There are four still in existence in Rhode Island, one of these is in Jamestown and belongs to the Jamestown Historical Society, and the other three are in Portsmouth. One of these was moved here from Little Compton about 1880 by the late Daniel Almy, it stands on the East Main Road and is owned by Lawrence Thurston.

Another one was built in Warren, where it was used in grinding in connection with a whiskey distillery. It was moved to Fall River, and later was moved to

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shingles tell him that these old mills form a connecting link between him and his ancestors when they were fighting the wilderness and the Indians to obtain a living in this land of the free and the brave.

At the time these mills were built the Armours and Swifts, and their great slaughter and packing houses had not been thought of; Chicago was a wilderness; the great plains of the West produced no grain; the whole broad expanse was given over to prairie grass and sage brush through which large herds of buffalo and wild horses roamed at will, only molested by the Indians; the steam engine had not got started and a thousand and one other things which we of today think we could not do without had not then been thought of. These things point out the reason for the building of these old wind grist mills. People could not eat their grain whole, the villages and cities depended on the surrounding country for their beef, pork, mutton, hides and wool. It

take one-tenth of a about three quarts, it being considered more work to run a wind grist mill; this old custom of taking toll came to an end about 1910.

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I do not know which is the oldest mill now standing, but as the one I own and run, and which is known as Boyd's Mill, is quite old and as my family has probably had a longer experience in running wind grist mills than any other family outside of Europe, it may be of interest to describe our mill and our connection with it.

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The mill building is eight square and 18 feet across through the squares, and about 20 feet from corner to corner, tapering to the plate, which is put on in a circle 15 feet in diameter and 30 feet high. The top, or roof, is round similar to a half sphere and is about eight feet high, making the total height of the mill 38 feet.

On top of the plate is bolted iron segments forming a continuous circular rack gear. The heavy framework of the roof on top of the mill is locked over this circular gear by a groove cut in the frame. This prevents the top from sliding off, but leaves it free to be turned in any direction by a chain wheel and system of gears meshing into the circular rack gear.

This chain wheel is on the top and the chain extends to the ground and by pulling on the chain the top can be turned so that the sails will face the wind at all times.

In the framework of the top is placed the bearings for the main shaft, this shaft is wood 22 inches in diameter and 19 feet long. It is made of Georgia hard pine. The neck, or main bearing, is protected by steel skeins placed around the shaft one inch apart, this space being filled in with wood and then hooped. The rear end of the shaft has a cast-iron gudgeon set into it. About four feet of this shaft is outside the mill to which is attached the vanes, or mill arms, on which the canvas sails are spread.

There are eight of these arms each one 31 1/2 feet long from center

lower stone is the same size but not so thick and remains stationary. The corn is fed between the surfaces of the stones by a hole 11 inches in diameter in the top stone. The surfaces of the stones have furrows radiating from the center to allow the corn and cooling air to flow over them. The speed of the arms sometimes go as high as 25 revolutions per minute but is then at the danger point.

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There have been some improvements made in the mill since it was built. Originally it was fitted with clumsy wood wheels with wood cogs. The top was turned by a large wood screw a foot in diameter and on the top meshing into wooden cogs projecting through the plate on the body of the mill, forming a crude wooden worm gear. The screw had a wheel over which a chain was placed extending to the ground. By pulling the

chain the top could be screwed around either direction.

Some of the first mills were even more crude than this, a long heavy pole was framed into the top and extended at an angle of 45 degrees, on which a wheel was placed resting on the ground. By hitching a horse onto this pole the top and arms could be hauled around to face the wind.

Few of those now living know what a tough job it is to run one of these old wind grist mills especially in the winter. There were no stoves in them because owing to the revolving top there could be no chimney, and owing to the shape of the mill and its windy position a stove pipe run out the side of the mill would meet 57 varieties of draft, under which no fire could burn; also one door had to be kept open so that the miller could keep his weather eye peeled on the weather lest he be caught

and wrecked in a squall. In fact, the running of a wind grist mill required about the same ability and judgment as a sea captain, other than he did not have the water to contend with.

It was his business to make a fine quality of meal, but as his power and speed constantly varied in a gusty wind he had to constantly vary the amount of grain flowing between the stones and the weight of the running stone on the grain, and in the midst of it all some farmer's horse would become frightened at the mill and start to run away. Then the miller would have to leave off what he was doing and find the farmer's grist for him and put it in his wagon, while the farmer held his horse and tried to take a reef in his broken harness and wagon.

Many are the days that I have run this mill when the thermometer was down to zero, in a howling gale and snow storm, when one could not see 200 feet; but the grinding had to be done, and these millers under such conditions had to use all their experience and nerve to turn the power of the wind into ground feed for man and beast.

When the miller was running his mill on his nerve in one of these storms, he, like the sea captain, could not tell whether in five minutes a heavier squall would wreck him, or whether he might be in the midst of a calm. Another hazard of running these mills was in trying to do so in a near freezing rain storm. In 10 minutes the sails might freeze as stiff as a board, then he would be at the mercy of the wind as he could not furl his sails. Generally when the mill was not running the sails were rolled up and twisted around the arm and tied.

When we thought it was going to rain in the Winter we took sails off, but we sometimes them on and they got wet and froze up. I have spent many hours up on those mill arms with the temperature down to zero picking out frozen mill sails, or trying to thaw them out with teakettles of boiling water from the kitchen stove.

The Great Gale of 1815

The date at which our family

meal, and for years feed grinding was the principal business. But with the development of the West, and its cheap grain and meat products and the increase of manufacturing in the East, it became unprofitable for Rhode Island farmers to continue the old methods of farming, and they went more and more into truck farming instead of raising grain. This change marked the beginning of the end for many of these old mills and they gradually were abandoned and allowed to decay. But there were many people who appreciated the fact that Rhode Island corn, which is of a different shape and color from any other, possessed merits for making meal for family use superior to any other corn known. It is sweeter and richer, is more delicate in flavor with none of the strong bitter taste found in other strains of corn, and when ground into fine soft meal it can be made into one of the finest human foods, the famous Rhode Island Johnny Cake.

Appreciating these facts and realizing that the grinding of feed was a vanishing industry the Boyd family pushed the Rhode Island Johnny Cake meal business until now Boyd's Johnny Cake meal has become famous, and has been shipped as far away as South America.

The mill was built only 27 years after the Revolution ended, and 34 years after the great Bill of Human Rights was signed.

At times when I am in the mill alone and think of the changes that have taken place since my grandfather ran this same mill, and to which it has been a mute witness, it seems as if the Great Power which causes these ceaseless changes in the universe should endow it with the power of speech, that it might speak in counsel to the grandchildren of those it served so faithfully long years ago.

During the 131 years that this mill has stood here it has seen humanity come to understand and take advantage of the natural forces and resources of the earth

This old mill has seen the little babe in its mother's arms, with its big eyes staring in wonder at the mill arms with their white sails



BOYD'S GRIST MILL, which the author of these articles has operated for many years and which has been conducted by his family for 131 years or more, as it appeared many years ago.

many hogs. November was the time of slaughter, thousands of pounds of pork was marketed in Newport, Fall River, and New Bedford. I have heard my father tell of taking 6,000 pounds of pork to New Bedford in two loads. These hogs had been grown and fattened on the toll he had taken for grinding the farmers' grain. It was an era of salting pork, the making of country sausage, and the curing and smoking of hams for Winter use. The farm cellars were filled with all kinds of vegetables, apples, cider barrels and pork barrels.

man, every man was a free man, and a dictator of his fellow man by argument until the polls closed, when the majority ruled until the next annual Town Meeting. The school districts conformed with the road districts.

There were cattle drivers and traders, also horse traders with whom the farmers traded or bought and sold their livestock. This was an eye tooth cutting, buyers beware process, in which one learned a lot about human nature, and it helped to develop the Yankee shrewdness for which New Eng-

wind into ground feed for man and beast.

When the miller was running his mill on his nerve in one of these storms, he, like the sea captain, could not tell whether in five minutes a heavier squall would wreck him, or whether he might be in the midst of a calm. Another hazard of running these mills was in trying to do so in a near freezing rain storm. In 10 minutes the sails might freeze as stiff as a board, then he would be at the mercy of the wind as he could not furl his sails. Generally when the mill was not running the sails were rolled up and twisted around the arm and tied.

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The Great Gale of 1815

The date at which our family commenced running wind grist mills is uncertain, but I have heard my father say his father, the late William Boyd, was running a mill which stood near Bristol Ferry on the day of the so-called Great September Gale of 1815. This gale blew ships from the Providence harbor up into what is now the lower end of Westminster Street, and did great damage through New England, New York and Pennsylvania.

The wind was light in the morning from the Southeast, but gradually increased until Mr. Boyd was running the mill with bare arms, the sails having been all furlled. The wind continued to increase until the mill became unmanageable. Mr. Boyd applied the brake and left it, and about half an hour after the mill was blown to pieces. It will thus be seen that our experience with wind grist mills must date back to about the time when our present mill was built, or 1810. That Fall, after the Bristol Ferry mill was blown to pieces, William Boyd leased, and finally bought, the Peterson mill.

As I have stated, our mill was originally built for grinding food products, and incidentally family

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During the 131 years that this mill has stood here it has seen humanity come to understand and take advantage of the natural forces and resources of the earth

This old mill has seen the little babe in its mother's arms, with its big eyes staring in wonder at the mill arms with their white sails swinging slowly through the air. It has seen this same tot grow into youth and manhood, has seen him become the head of a family and bring his grist of corn to mill, to be ground into sweet Johnny Cake meal to feed his little ones. It has seen his hair whiten, and his step falter, and finally seen him gathered to his fathers. It has seen his sons bring their grist to grind and pass on, and still its big white sails swung slowly through the air

as if defying time. It can almost say with the running brook that "men may come and men may go on forever."

But so-called human progress has changed all this, electric power has been substituted for wind power, and the wondering eye of the babe will be diverted with fear to the deadly bomber and the murderous automobile.

Contemporary Side Lights

All meal up to 1895 whether sold in the cities or farmers' grists was unsifted and the house wife had to do it. At this time I invented a power sifter run by the mill. At this time there was an average of 6,000 sheep kept on the island and



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It was the old New England conception of plenty, with peace on earth and good will toward men; old time fiddlers, and country house dances, (right hand to partner, grand right and left, round the other way, doe se doe). Plowing and carting was mostly done with oxen, nearly every farm had one pair of oxen, and large farms had three or four pairs.

Money was scarce, so the town was divided into seven road districts with a supervisor for each district, and on a certain day after planting, when there was a slack time before cultivating and hoeing, the supervisor warned each tax-payer that he could come out and work out his tax if he so desired, bring oxen and carts, crowbars, shovels, forks, hoes, chains, plows, and as many of his hired help as he desired.

There were fixed rates to pay per hour for men, oxen, carts and tools, and even boys. All this was part of the business done at the annual Town Meeting, the finest type of government ever set up by

man, every man was a free man, and a dicator of his fellow man by argument until the polls closed, when the majority ruled until the next annual Town Meeting. The school districts conformed with the road districts.

There were cattle drivers and traders, also horse traders with whom the farmers traded or bought and sold their livestock. This was an eye tooth cutting, buyers beware process, in which one learned a lot about human nature, and it helped to develop the Yankee shrewdness for which New England became famous. I knew some of these cattle drivers, one of them a man by the name of Dean, who was a regular cattle driver, going through the towns with droves of from half a dozen to 50 head, good, bad and indifferent. Sometimes one could hear him coming before you could see him, or his cattle, hollering, "Git along thar, whate the matter on ye?" He was about as shrewd as they come.

One day he was driving a large herd along the road when he stopped to talk or barter with a farmer, with the result that his cattle got a mile or so ahead of him with no one to look out for them. They spied a large field of cabbage, and as the road wall was poor the whole herd was soon in the field eating sauerkraut to beat the Germans. The farmer who owned the cabbage soon saw them, and by the use of his most choice cuss words managed to get them back into the road again, and with wrath in his bosom, and blood in his eye, waited for Dean.

Dean soon hove in sight and taking in the situation at a glance he knew that the farmer might have a case at law against him for damage. So he decided that

the best defense was to attack first, and before the farmer could get started Dean started hollering at him and damning him up hill and down, and telling him that he expected half his herd of stock would die as a result of stuffing themselves with cabbage, and that if they did, he would bring suit against him for damage, as he was to blame for not keeping his wall up. While the farmer did have a claim against him, Dean frightened him out of it, and he begged Dean to drop the matter and he would stand the loss of his cabbage. It is needless to say that Dean did not lose any of his stock.

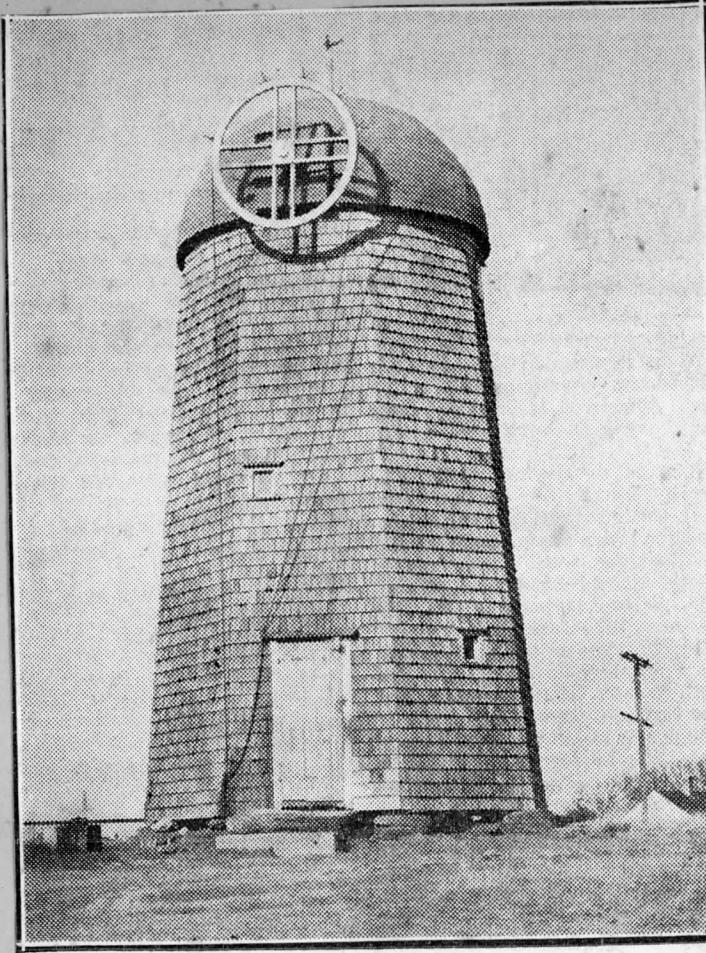
By a curious flow of human events it turns out that I, through my mother, am a descendant of Nicholas Easton, one of the founders of Portsmouth, and that his son, Peter Easton, built the first wind grist mill in Rhode Island, and the last of these old mills to run by wind was that of the late Edward W. Thurston about 1924. It was the end of an industry and trade. I have farmed it all my life and have turned the black dirt of Old Mother Earth into wheat, rye, oats and barley to be ground into feed for livestock, and as I have baked many Johnny Cakes, I have literally turned the black dirt of Old Mother Earth into one of the finest food products known to man, the Famous Rhode Island Johnny Cake; ground by the power of the free air, which is the only thing that is free today.

Man,—Dust thou art.

Johnny Cake,—Dust thou art,
and to dust thou both shall return.

I have made all the rapids on this mill since I was 18 years of age. I know how to build one of these mills, and in 1901 remodeled our mill from a four armed mill to an eight armed mill. It was the wonder of all who saw it, and there never was one like it stood on the earth since Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden. It was an experiment like Noah's Ark, and only one of these was ever built.

It is doubtful if there will ever be another of these wind grist mills built in this country. The timbers and boarding in the lower stories of these old mills are full of rusty tack nails, where notices of town meetings, auctions, and other notices have been tacked up, and the old blacksmith shops were used



—Herald News Photo
BOYD'S GRIST MILL in Portsmouth as it appears today.

The old time fishing business of Portsmouth and Tiverton has nearly disappeared, and the common sense country mind which once governed our country has now changed into the jazz and mob of our cities.

What I have written here is history. I know wind grist mills from the ground up. When I was four years old I was struck on the head by one of the mill arms and picked up for dead; and when I was 28 years of age I went up on an arm to fix a sail, I did not put the brake on but braced the arm against the ground with a stick, the stick jarred out and the mill started, and I went sailing through the air, around and around. I barely managed to twist my arms and legs around the mill arm to stop it.

FUNNY FACTS about our Rhode Island FOREFATHERS



Shovel-leaning in Rhode Island is nothing new!

Our forefathers had a system of roads-upkeep that no doubt fostered its share of leaners!

In 1664 the Providence council passed a law requiring every adult male to set aside two days of the year for work on the public roads. If the citizen owned a horse only one day's work was required.

Present-day methods have dispensed with the horse, but the shovel still remains. And perhaps a moral is attached—somewhere!

If you ever had a trick cigar explode under your nose, you've probably said, with feeling, "there oughta be a law!"

Well, in 1825 our Providence forefathers DID have a law against all smoking—plain or fancy—on the public highways.

Fire hazard was the reason, and later, when a permanent fire

Edward W. Thurston about 1924. It was the end of an industry and trade. I have farmed it all my life and have turned the black dirt of Old Mother Earth into wheat, rye, oats and barley to be ground into feed for livestock, and as I have baked many Johnny Cakes, I have literally turned the black dirt of Old Mother Earth into one of the finest food products known to man, the Famous Rhode Island Johnny Cake; ground by the power of the free air, which is the only thing that is free today.

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It is doubtful if there will ever be another of these wind grist mills built in this country. The timbers and boarding in the lower stories of these old mills are full of rusty tack nails, where notices of town meetings, auctions, and other notices have been tacked up, and the old blacksmith shops were used the same way. They were the public forums where news, politics and scandal were debated. There used

to be four or five of these shops in Portsmouth, now there is not one.

It was the old fashioned horse and buggy day
The day of a lad and a lass in a jingle bell sleigh,
With a blush on her face from the tingling breeze
As his arm slipped around her for a little squeeze.

One of these blacksmiths, the late William Earl Cook, shod my horse on his 90th birthday. He passed away at the age of 105 and never heard of a vitamin, but there were five generations living in his family before he passed away.

The blacksmith shops have disappeared and there has not been a notice, or circular, tacked up in my mill in years.



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It was estimated I went around 30 times. My brain has been in a whirl ever since, cause and effect.

But why go on?

Mankind today stands on the brink of the greatest disaster and tragedy in all recorded, or unrecorded, human history.

The mills of the gods grind slowly
But they grind exceedingly small.
While man's wind mills and ambitions vanish

And Death takes the miller as toll.
All is vanity and vexation of spirit.



Shovel-leaning in Rhode Island is nothing new!

Our forefathers had a system of roads-upkeep that no doubt fostered its share of leaners!

In 1664 the Providence council passed a law requiring every adult male to set aside two days of the year for work on the public roads. If the citizen owned a horse only one day's work was required.

Present-day methods have dispensed with the horse, but the shovel still remains. And perhaps a moral is attached—somewhere!

If you ever had a trick cigar explode under your nose, you've probably said, with feeling, "there oughta be a law!"

Well, in 1825 our Providence forefathers DID have a law against all smoking—plain or fancy—on the public highways.

Fire hazard was the reason, and later, when a permanent fire-fighting force was organized, the no-smoking ban was removed.

K. L. H.

Today, good highways are taken for granted. But our Rhode Island forefathers considered smooth roads a rarity.

In days of the old turnpikes, each citizen whose property fronted the road was required to keep a section of it clear of obstacles.

One tavern keeper took such pride in his road-clearing abilities that he offered to pay a dollar for every stone, larger than a hen's egg, found on his particular stretch of road.

And he occasionally had to make good, too!

It must have been the Cinderella influence. At any rate, our Rhode Island forefathers, in 1800, decided that the stroke of midnight must see all good citizens fast asleep—or, at least, off the streets.

In 1806, the custom of calling out the hour of midnight was begun, and special watchmen were delegated to the task. Probably just to remind insomniacs that the night was still young!

K. L. H.

Governor's Wife Sponsors S. S. John Clarke



MRS. J. HOWARD McGRATH, as she was about to christen the S. S. John Clarke yesterday at the Rheem shipyard. She swung the beribboned bottle of champagne twice at the nose of second Rheem-built Liberty ship but did not break the bottle. Assistant General Manager R. J. Seltzer however saved the ship from going into the water unchristened by breaking a spare bottle on the bow of the ship. Miss Leslie Crook, left, of Pawtucket, was Mrs. McGrath's maid of honor. —Rheem Shipyard Photo

Records in Town of Portsmouth Bare Trials Faced by John Clarke

Man for Whom New Rheem Liberty Ship Was
Named Served as Agent to Win Charter for
Rhode Island from England

How John Clarke, for whom the ship launched at the Rheem yard yesterday was named, sustained himself in London during the ten months while he and Roger one of 1643

Hence the interest on the island in the effort to obtain for Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, a better and more explicit charter than the

The charter is said to have been the most liberal of any granted to the original 13 Colonies. It virtually told the people here to govern themselves. But principally, from the point of view of many, and most of all Williams, it guaranteed them freedom of conscience. It contained, among other things, the words that are graven in marble on the facade of the State House:

"Lively Experiment"

"To hold forth a lively experiment that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained with full liberty in religious concerns."

It is said that John Clarke actually wrote much of the charter, but that is still a moot question. More significant is that the charter remained in force longer—from 1663 to 1842—than any other written charter of liberty granted in the history of the world.

The charter is still with us. It is behind the glass on the back of the door of a safe in the office of the Secretary of State.

Providence's world-famous safety campaign is another example of history repeating itself—and in the same place!

During the 1600's, a law was passed in Providence forbidding citizens to ride through town at a gallop.

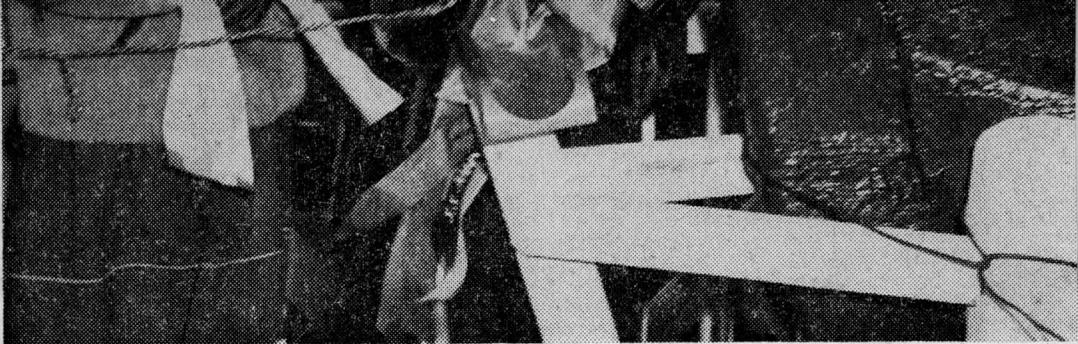
Instead of today's "five and costs," penalty for galloping was five shillings. One-half this amount could be claimed by the informer.

K. L. H.

are mr Phillip Sherman, mr John Sanford, Robert Hazard, Edward Fisher and Phillip Tabar, and that these five men or the mayor part of them shall take in to there Custodie the towne stock, Either Catill or sheep and make saile of them, and deduct so much as they amount unto out of the Rate and make the Rate so much the less"

Literally Paid for Freedom

There was hardly a good speller in the town, but they knew what they were doing, and since the contribution that the General Court, the law making body of Rhode Island, had required them to make for the support of John Clarke on his mission



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Man for Whom New Rheem Liberty Ship Was Named Served as Agent to Win Charter for Rhode Island from England

How John Clarke, for whom the ship launched at the Rheem yard yesterday was named, sustained himself in London during the long years while he and Roger Williams, then he alone, sought a better charter for Rhode Island was recalled yesterday after a little digging in the early records of the Town of Portsmouth.

"The Great Island of Aquidneck," together with nearly all the other islands of Narragansett Bay, had been bought by the little company of English settlers on that island from Cononicus and Miantonomi, the Chief Sachems of the Narragansetts, for 40 fathoms of white beads, and for a further payment of 10 coats and 20 hoes the Indians were to remove themselves from the island before winter. The deed passed March 24, 1637.

Years of Labor Followed

There followed years of living and labor and much painstaking self-government, in order to hack out of the wilderness a community, and carve out of old customs and new ways a society. But all the while, and more and more as the years passed, it was uncertain what the status of the little democratic colony was in the larger scheme of things.

Hence the interest on the island in the effort to obtain for Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, a better, more explicit charter than the one of 1643.

They were for the most part poor, and it seemed that they were always taxing themselves—"making a Rate," they called it—for one thing and another, and thus it came about that:

Agent's Money Raised

"At a meeting of the free inhabitants of the Towne of portsmoth July the 7th 1662

"It was Ordered by votte of the free inhabitants of the Towne of portsmoth that 55 pound ten shillings, shall be gathered by the way of a Rate, Accordinge to the last Genrall Court order, for the supply of mr John Clarke our Agent in England, more ovaer it was ordered and votted by the free inhabitants of ye towne of portsmoth, that five men should be Chosen to make the aforesaid Rate, and that they or the mayger part of them, shall make the said Rate Accordinge to the best of there Judgments, upon lands and Estates, and the said Rate is to be made with in one month after the date of this present meetinge, the men that are Chosen to make the afore said Rate

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they planned to soften the blow by
selling livestock. Their payment for
freedom was literal.

Then on Dec. 3, 1662, it was ordered
that the town contribute 76 pounds
two shillings, more "for mr John

Clarke's suply in England," and an-
other rate had to be made.

Again, Nov. 17, 1663, a rate of 17
pounds, 10 shillings "in Currant
monies" was made for the same pur-
pose, and Feb. 22, 1665, a rate of 100
pounds. Presumably it was all hard
money, and certainly it was hard to
get. But the rate makers kept after
it, and the citizens paid. Community
life revolved about the validity of
that system of taxing themselves for
things they chose to or so were re-
quired by the General Court to do.

Gets Charter in 1663

It was in 1663 that John Clarke at
last got the charter. Roger Williams,
who had long been with him in Eng-
land on the same errand, had had to
come home because of the growing
poverty and distress of his family.

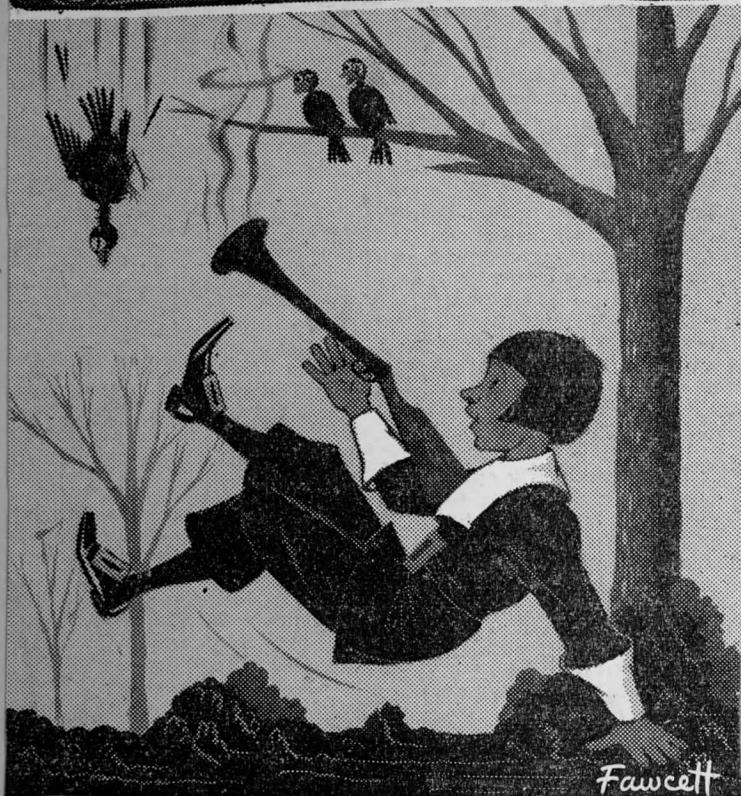
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K. L. H.

FUNNY FACTS about our Rhode Island FOREFATHERS



You've heard of daily dozens. Perhaps you've even done them. But did you ever hear about the YEARLY dozen our Rhode Island forefathers were required to do?

Around the 1700's every householder in the town of Portsmouth had to bring down twelve blackbirds each year—or suffer a twelve shilling fine! For every bird above the required dozen a bounty of a penny was paid.

It didn't take the blackbirds long to get the idea, and the Portsmouth town fathers were later able to revoke the law.

The Town Fathers of Providence said no when a number of people asked for grants of land along the river at the foot of Weybosset street on one side and running along North Main street on the other. There had been a continual demand on the town for use of the land as warehouse sites.

The proposals were rejected at a meeting on July 27, 1704, and the reason was this: The foot of Weybosset street was a popular crossing place for canoes, boats and cattle. And since the stream ran so fast and strong at times, persons starting from one bank had no idea at what point they might land on the other.

A favorite Indian pastime, back in the early days of our Rhode Island forefathers, was the dice game and John Indian was no piker gambler! He'd stake everything—even himself—on the luck of the roll.

The dice, incidentally, were fashioned from plum stones. It was probably an Indian who first discovered that a rolling stone gathers no wampum!

K. L. H.

In the early days of the town, constant fear of attack by hostile Indians led to the organizing of its first army—18 men under the capable direction of Major Dexter. They were "to scout the woods in search of the enemy."

He had to be a first-rate enemy, too, before our fearless forefathers would waste any shot on him. The reason was that each soldier had, according to law, to furnish his own ammunition and provisions, and every shot fired cut into his daily stipend of two shillings sixpence.

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said:
"Can't SOMETHING be done about
Point street's 5 o'clock traffic!"

A century ago, our Rhode Island forefathers had no bridge traffic problem because there wasn't any bridge. For a long while, a solitary rowboat sufficed to accommodate shore-to-shore travelers. The fare was two pennies a trip. Afterwards, larger boats were placed in service. In 1870 the bridge was built.

K. L. H.

Did you ever hear of a creditor trying to avoid a man who owed him money?

Believe it or not, many such cases existed for a time in Rhode Island. In 1786 a bank was established here with authority to print paper bills. The colonists, however, had little confidence in this money, and creditors would often evade debtors who tried to "pay off in paper."

When the lottery system was introduced into the colony in the latter part of the 18th century, it became the most popular way of raising money for a number of years. The first lottery was for 15,000 pounds to permit the construction of a bridge at the foot of Weybosset street.

In order to instill confidence in the venture and encourage public participation in it, the town purchased 400 tickets itself!

The town fathers stopped at nothing around the year 1776 when they tried to check the spread of smallpox, then prevalent throughout New England.



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Jitterbugs—or their 1757 counterparts — were regarded with stern disapproval, as this excerpt from the South Kingstown Monthly Meeting Records clearly shows:

"It having been reported to this meeting that Jonathan Perry hath of late so far Disregarded the Rules of our Society as to attend a gathering where there was Music and vain Mirth, and further that the said Jonathan did there dance in a Light and Airy Manner, our friends Joseph Collins and Thomas Hazard are appointed to visit said Jonathan and inquire into his conduct." That's what happened to Jonathan for dancing in a "Light and Airy Manner" in 1757!

K. L. H.

In 1750, some of our Rhode Island forefathers felt pressing need of extra cash. So they decided to make it themselves! Since counterfeiting at that time was punishable by death, it was risky business to trifl with the King's currency. One ring of counterfeiters swore each member to secrecy with the "solemn oath" reprinted here in part:

"God save ye King, prosper our progress herein and keep us from all traitors. . . then each and every one of us taking ye Bible in our hand, do swear by ye contents thereof to observe these articles of agreement."

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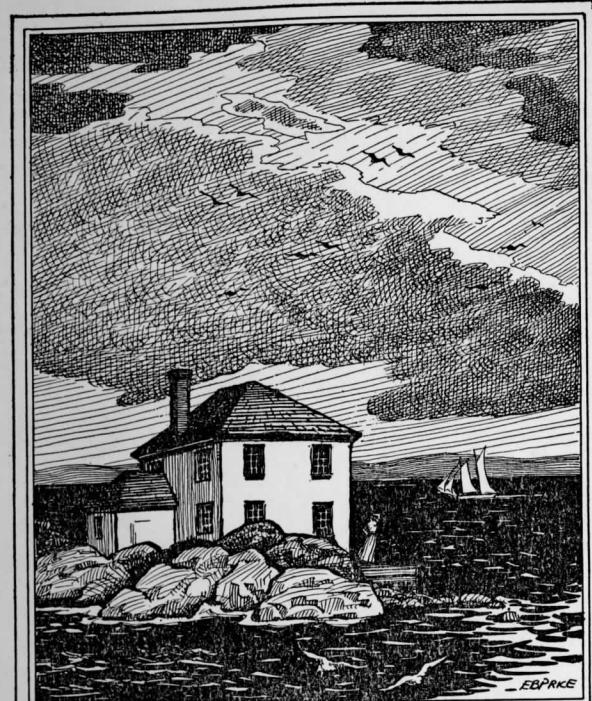
It was voted that a place be provided at the Upper Ferry near Tockwotton street where travelers coming from Boston and other affected places were to be smoked, cleaned and inoculated. This procedure put a crimp in Mr. Fuller's ferry business, and he subsequently put in a bill of damages, receiving eight pounds 17 shillings for his inconvenience.

We're hearing a lot about 'self-determination' these days. So did our forefathers.

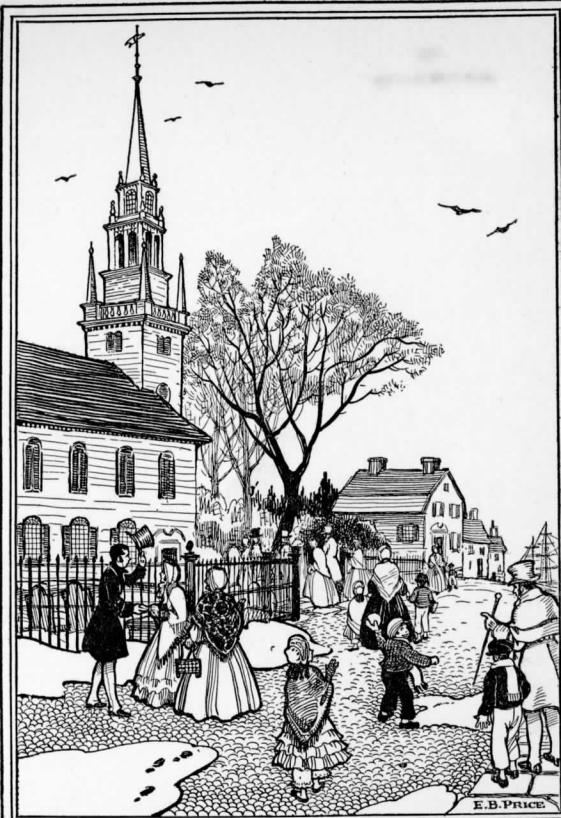
Who could be expected to lead a happier existence than the lucky colonists living under the lenient laws of Roger Williams?

Yet, strangely, in 1750 group of malcontents attempted to break away from what they termed "despotic old Providence!"

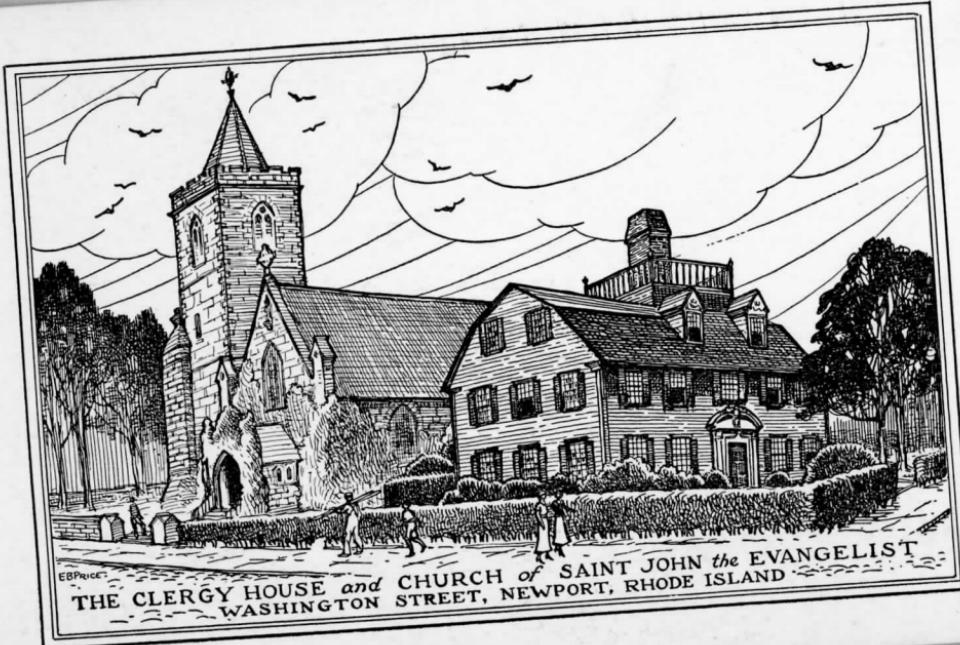
The plan was to establish a new village to be called Westminister. The venture didn't work out, however, and today Westminister street, Providence's principal thoroughfare, is reminder of a scheme that failed.



LIME ROCK LIGHT
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
IN 1878, IDA LEWIS BECAME ITS KEEPER,
AND, DURING HER LIFE THERE, MADE TWENTY-
TWO RESCUES. NOW HEADQUARTERS
OF THE IDA LEWIS YACHT CLUB.



TRINITY CHURCH, NEWPORT, R. I.
BUILT 1725. HERE BISHOP BERKELEY PREACHED, AND,
IT IS SAID, GEORGE WASHINGTON WORSHIPPED.



EB PRICE
THE CLERGY HOUSE and CHURCH of SAINT JOHN the EVANGELIST
WASHINGTON STREET, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

118

SALE OF OLD ORGAN TO FORD OPPOSED

Instrument in Portsmouth
Christian Church May Be
Bishop Berkeley Gift.

NEWPORT STUDIES HISTORY

Aid of Bishop Darlington of Pennsylvania Enlisted in Determining Identity of Antique

For the first time since he became one of the world's richest men, Henry Ford is perhaps going to find his desires thwarted. Rhode Island millionaires and a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church are prepared to give him battle, with a little antiquated pipe organ now in the Christian Church at Portsmouth as the *casus belli*.

If the organ in question proves to be the organ which George Berkeley, Lord Bishop of Cloyne, presented Trinity Church, Newport, in 1733, and which was removed from the church many years later to make way for a large and better one, Mr. Ford, who has entered into negotiations for its purchase, cannot have it, say Bishop Darlington of Pennsylvania, John Nicholas Brown, former Governor R. Livingston Beeckman and others.

If it proves not to be the Bishop Berkeley organ, he will be allowed to take it away and thus add what undoubtedly is a treasure of its kind, even, without definite historical connections, to his collection of antique musical instruments, now housed in Dearborn, Mich.

It is known that members of Trinity Church were greatly interested in the Christian Church, Portsmouth, at the time of its formation and for many years thereafter and it is believed that the little, old organ now in the church was sent there from Trinity. Mrs. Alonzo Borden, member of the church board for many years, says that when the organ now in use there was installed, the builders of the instrument stated that the old organ, removed to the church gallery, was evidently one of the oldest they had seen.

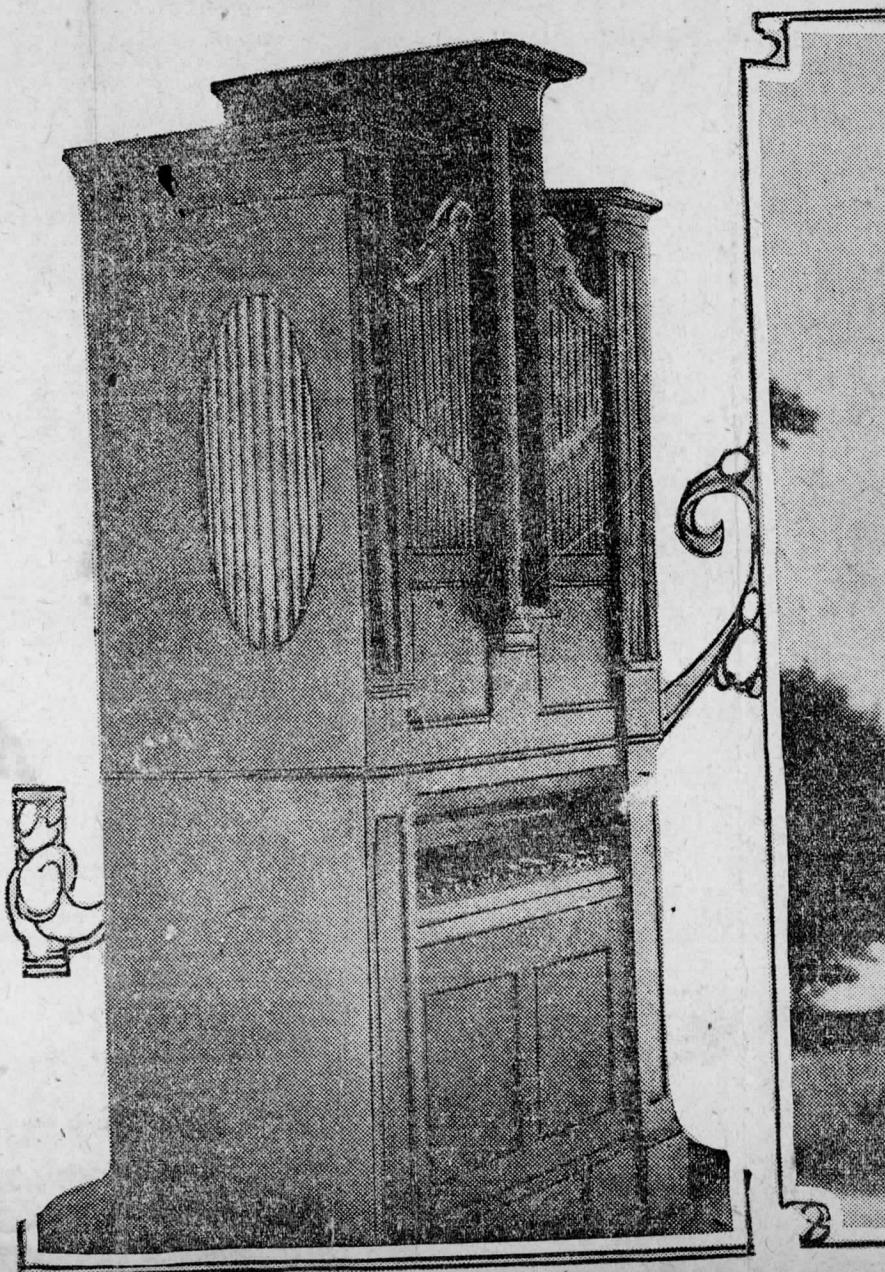
Organ Re-cased

There are indications that the old Portsmouth organ has been re-cased and it is known that the case of the original Berkeley organ was kept in Trinity church and new "works" and pipes placed inside and upon it.

Neither Mrs. Borden nor her husband,

PIPE ORGAN WHICH HENRY FORD SEEKS TO AN

Agents of Detroit Manufacturer Have Been Negotiating for the Purchase of the Organ by George Berkeley, Lord Bishop of Cloyne. If it So Develops Bishop Darling of Rhode Island, and That Mr. Ford Cannot Have It.



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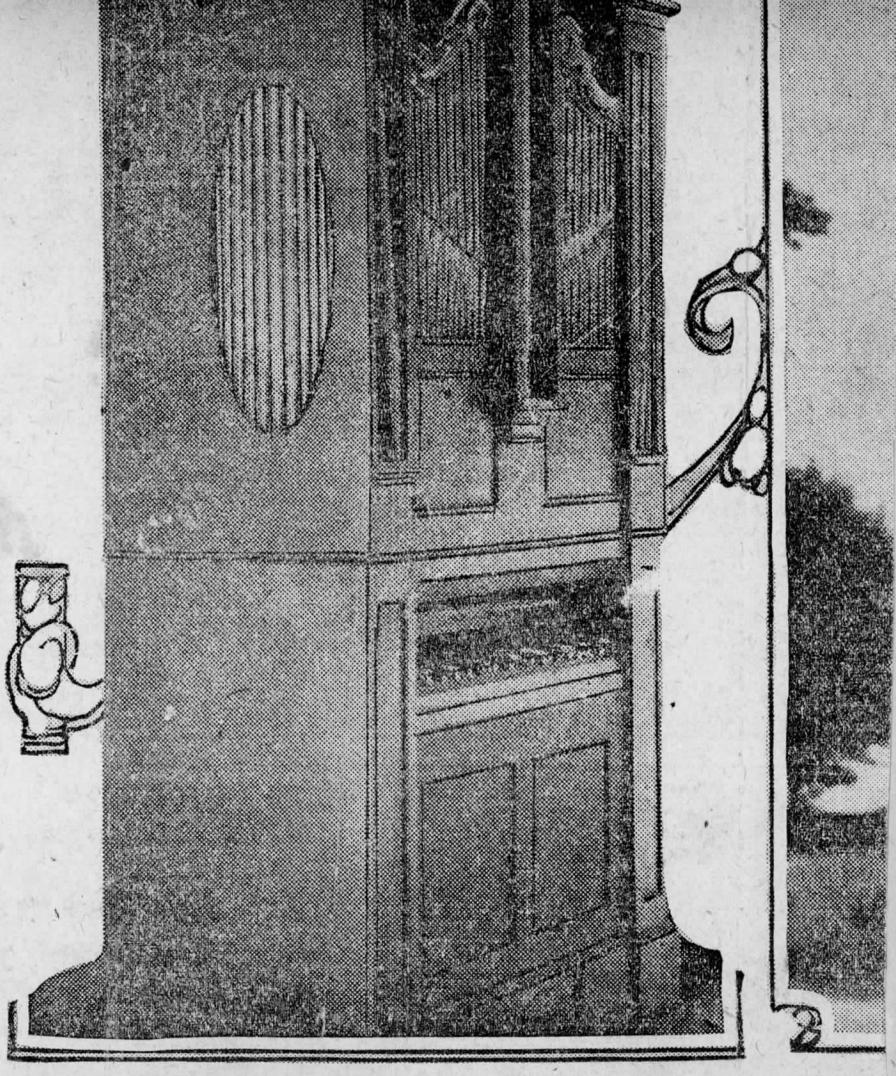
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Neither Mrs. Borden nor her husband, members of the church for many years, knows anything definite of the early history of the organ. In them and other members of the church board, however, is vested full authority to dispose of it as they see fit. It was Rev. Russel Clem, pastor of the church, who first told Mr. Ford of its existence and suggested to the Detroit man that he buy it. Agents of Mr. Ford later examined the instrument and began negotiations for its purchase.



Hearing that Mr. Ford was after the organ, old Newport residents who knew more of Rhode Island church history than the automobile magnate, began to inquire into the history of the instrument and connect it in their minds with the noted Berkeley organ.

Bishop's Aid Sought

Inasmuch as the original Berkeley organ was placed in Trinity Church, they sought co-operation of the Episcopal Church and Bishop Darlington of Pennsylvania, because of the fact that Rt. Rev. James DeWolf Perry, Bishop of Rhode Island, is in Europe. They

also enlisted aid of wealthy Rhode Island laymen in furthering the inquiry.

Among those who have inspected the old organ is J. Herbert Howard of Newport, considered an expert in antiques, who says he is not prepared to say whether the old organ is the Bishop Berkeley organ. "To settle the question, one would have to spend considerable time in searching old records and examining the organ thoroughly," said he. "There is one thing certain, however. The old organ is a treasure, from the antiquarian's point of view, and Mr. Ford is not to be blamed for trying to possess it."