

Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction
Hauts Grades Academy

The Involvement and Influence of
Saint Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence Free and Accepted Masons
in the Burning of H.M.S. Gaspee

Submitted to Hauts Grades Academy Advisory Board
in Candidacy for Completion of HGA Level 3

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Figure 1: The Burning of the Gaspee by Charles deWolf Brownell, c1892. A wall sized painting similar to this piece is proudly displayed in the foyer of the Scottish Rite Cathedral for the Valley of Providence in Pawtuxet (pronounced puh-tux-et), in the City of Cranston, RI, just under 2 miles NNW from where H.M.S. Gaspee was burned. This is also the current meeting location of Saint Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, F. & A. M.. The Gaspee Chapter of RI DeMolay meets there as well.

The original oil on canvas painting is on display at the John Brown House Museum in Providence, RI.

The sun had just set on the warm late spring evening of June 9, 1772, when a young Daniel Pearce walked down Main Street in the Town of Providence in the Colony of Rhode Island beating a drum and raising an alarm.¹ The news that he delivered was that H.M.S. Gaspee had run aground on Namquid Point in Narragansett Bay in the mid afternoon as the tide ebbed while chasing the packet sloop Hannah². It was expected to remain stuck until the tide flowed enough to free the grounded ship, at around three o'clock in the morning. Any party interested in engaging the vessel should meet at the house of James Sabin.

Sixty to eighty men assembled at Sabin's Tavern and proceeded to the docks on the Providence waterfront. They boarded seven or eight longboats at Fenner's Wharf, and with blackened faces and muffled oars, started south down the Providence river toward Pawtuxet Village, three and one-half miles north of the head of Narragansett Bay. From Providence, H.M.S. Gaspee lay motionless about five miles away, patiently waiting for the early morning tide to free her. The men from Providence were met in Pawtuxet Village by another longboat or two coming just under six miles from Bristol, Rhode Island to the southeast. Just after midnight on the morning of June 10, 1772, the boats departed from their assembly point in Pawtuxet Village to row the remaining distance to their target about a mile and a half away.

The moon had set around midnight ensuring total darkness. The men rowed silently toward the Gaspee against the incoming tide, surprise providing their best tactical advantage. The Gaspee was operating with a diminished crew³, had only one sailor on watch that night, and had no reason to expect trouble. The longboats approached from the bow to help avoid detection

¹ "Daniel Pearce (c1755 - 1800)", accessed March 14, 2020, <http://gaspee.org/DanielPearce.html>

² The prevalent theory is that the Hannah lured the Gaspee to purposely run her aground in an attempt to detain the Gaspee's commander. Namquid is sometimes spelled Namaquit or Namaquid among other spellings.

³ Steven Park, *The Burning of His Majesty's Schooner Gaspee* (Yardley: Westholme Publishing, 2016), 16.

and to stay out of the sweep of Gaspee's guns. As the longboats were almost upon the stranded Gaspee, the watchman on deck, Bartholomew Cheever⁴, saw the longboats and alerted Lieutenant William Dudingston, the ship's commander. Lieutenant Dudingston verbally challenged the encroaching raiders as their longboats came nearer, issuing a threat to fire upon them, but the approach of the longboats was fine on the bow of the Gaspee and prevented any of Gaspee's guns from coming to bear.

As the raiders came close to the Gaspee, one of them, Joseph Bucklin, asked for his gun, and fired toward the deck of the Gaspee, "what many historians consider the first shot of the revolution, and Dudingston fell wounded to the deck."⁵ However, some accounts of the incident indicate that the crew of the Gaspee had been able to fire off a single haphazard volley before being boarded, and that it was possible that a stray shot from that volley may have struck Dudingston. Regardless of the source of the shot, Dudingston incorrectly assumed the wound to be mortal, and lay wounded at the mercy of the raiders who had boarded the ship and were in the process of fighting and subduing the crew of the Gaspee. Greatly outnumbered and at a severe tactical disadvantage, Dudingston ordered the crew of the Gaspee to surrender. Dudingston was brought to his cabin where medical aid was administered by one of the raiders, Dr. John Mawney, who stayed the flow of blood, removed the pieces of musket ball, and probably saved the Lieutenant's life.⁶

By this time, about 3:30 in the morning, the first vestiges of the morning light had started to show on the eastern horizon over Bullock's point just under a mile to the east. The leaders of the raid issued the order for the raiders to place the captured Gaspee crew into the longboats and

⁴ Park, *Schooner Gaspee*, 17.

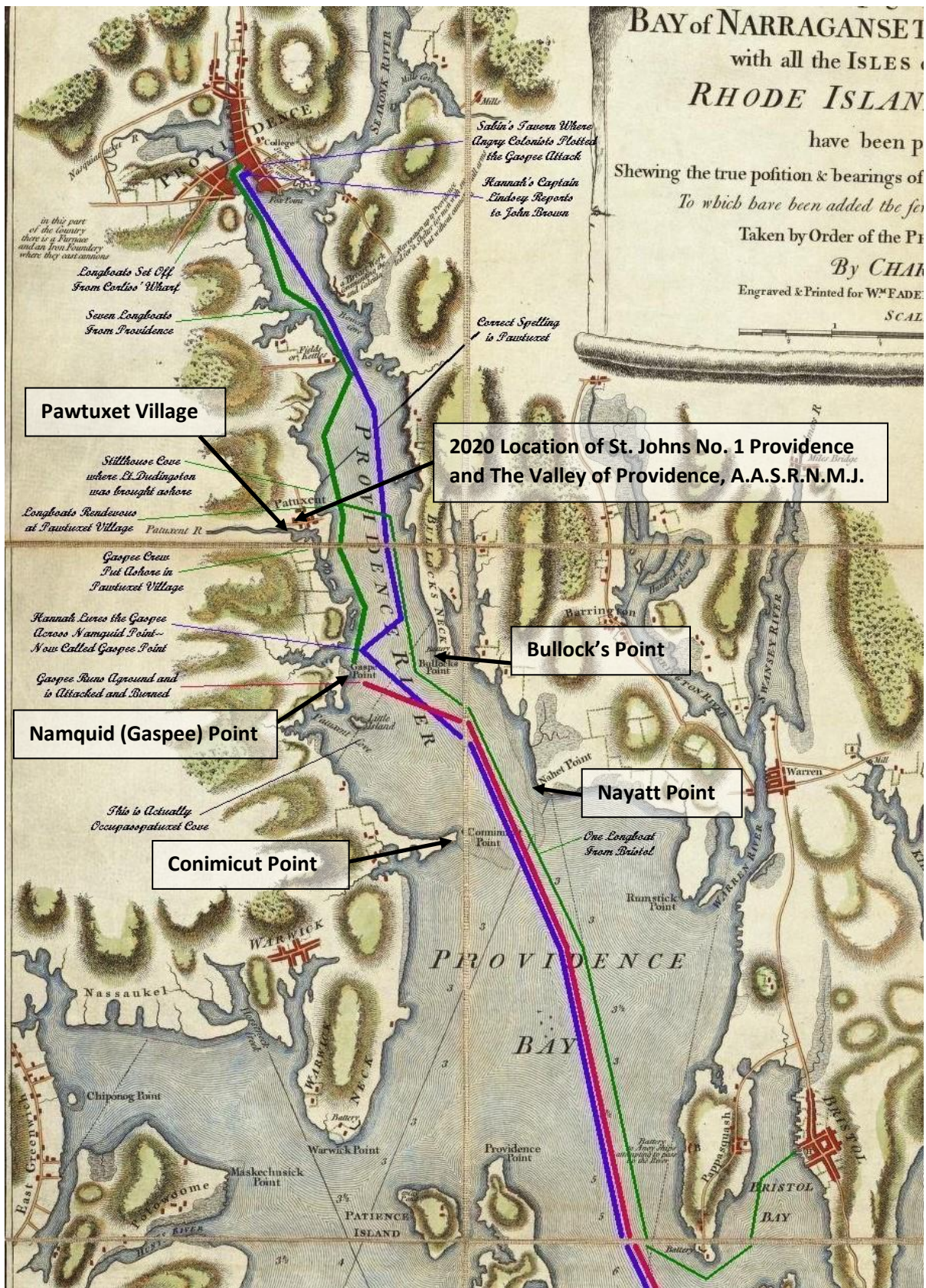
⁵ Rory Raven, *Burning the Gaspee: Revolution in Rhode Island* (Charleston: The History Press, 2012), 57.

⁶ Raven, *Burning the Gaspee*, 59-60.

row them ashore. In an effort to prevent any evidence from implicating any of the raiders, an order was issued that nothing was to be taken from the vessel. The ship was set ablaze, although nobody knows who started the fire or if it was part of the original plan. The powder magazine exploded illuminating the night sky and the schooner H.M.S. Gaspee burned to the waterline. And so, ended the actions of one of the first acts of uprising against British colonial authority.

But who were these men from Providence town who undertook such a dangerous course of action? Why did they undertake what was considered a treasonous and seditious action? What were their familial, business, and social relationships with one another? What role did Saint Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, the first Masonic Lodge in Providence, have in the affair? To answer these questions, it is important to look at the early history of the Colony of Rhode Island and its geography, culture, commerce, and overall personality.

Providence, Rhode Island was founded in 1636 by Roger Williams who established the settlement where the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers merge to form the Providence River, which in turn merges with the Seekonk River. These waters retain the name Providence River as far south as Conimicut Point on the west shore and Nayatt Point on the east shore where it flows into the north end of Narragansett Bay. The Pawtuxet River flows into the Providence River on the west bank about 3.5 miles north of Conimicut Point, about 1.5 miles north of Namquid Point, where H.M.S. Gaspee ran aground, and 4 miles south of Providence. Namquid Point is about 2 miles north of Conimicut Point on the west shore of the Providence River.



The other early settlements near Providence were Wickford, settled in 1637 by Richard Smith and Roger Williams, and Pawtuxet founded in 1638 by William Harris and the Arnold family. The settlements surrounding the original Town of Providence formed Providence Plantations. The island of Aquidneck, or Rhode Island, was settled in 1638 with the foundation of Pocasset, now known as Portsmouth on the north end of the island by Anne Hutchinson and company, and Newport in 1639 on the south end of the island by William Coddington and company. Shawomet, now called Warwick, was established in 1642 by Samuel Gorton. By 1663, through a process of royal decrees and charters, these settlements formed the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations as an English Colony until 1707, then a Colony of Great Britain until independence was declared on May 4, 1776, being the first colony to renounce its allegiance to King George III.⁷

What differentiates this colony from the others is how it was established and by whom, and the very different attitudes and beliefs that contributed to Rhode Island's culture. Roger Williams fled the Massachusetts Bay colony in the Winter of 1636 before he could be arrested and deported for his heretical and independent views on religion. He founded Providence, "...setting up shop to practice the religion he chose, where nobody could tell him what to do. It is an attitude that still resonates amongst Rhode Islanders."⁸ After founding Providence, he lived with the native people there and learned their ways and customs, treating them with dignity, with fairness and honest dealings. Roger Williams planted the seeds of religious tolerance and individual liberties and equality among men.

⁷ Patrick T. Conley, *An Album of Rhode Island History, 1636-1986* (Norfolk: The Donning Company/Publishers, 1986), 19.

⁸ Tim Lehnert, *Rhode Island 101* (Lunenburg, N.S.: MacIntyre Purcell Publishing, Inc., 2009), 22.

Anne Hutchinson established Portsmouth after being placed on trial in the Massachusetts Bay Colony for heresy and convicted of “false revelations”.⁹ One of her company, William Coddington, helped establish Newport after a falling out with the Portsmouth settlement. The same held true for the Shawomet settlement when Samuel Gorton parted ways with Portsmouth. Each of these founding settlements were setting the framework for individual independence, religious freedom, and local self-governance.

These founding ideals were ensured by the Royal Charter of 1663 which, in a lively experiment, “guaranteed complete religious liberty, established a self-governing colony with local autonomy, and strengthened Rhode Island’s territorial claims. It was the most liberal charter to be issued by the mother country during the entire colonial era”.¹⁰ These principles were integral to the fledgling colony and matured into the principles and ideas by which Rhode Islanders identify themselves.

As historian Edgar Mahew Bacon phrases it:

"As for little Rhode Island, her manifest destiny was to do things, not to talk or write about them. She had acquired a taste for independence that by the time the struggle with Britain was imminent had become a controlling habit. Rhode Island did not cast off the British yoke--she simply refused to put it on; she denied ever having worn it."¹¹

The cupola of the Statehouse in Providence exemplifies those ideals by proudly serving as the pedestal for the Independent Man statue, representing those ideals by which Rhode Islanders have self-defined and identified for almost 400 years.

⁹ Kenneth C. Davis, *America’s Hidden History: Untold Tales of the First Pilgrims, Fighting Women, and Forgotten Founders Who Shaped a Nation*, (New York: Smithsonian Books/Harper Collins, 2008), 59.

¹⁰ Conley, *An Album*, 19

¹¹ “Commodore Abraham Whipple (1733-1819)”, accessed March 14, 2020, <http://gaspee.org/AbrahamWhipple.html>

By the time that the French and Indian War started, Rhode Island had become a very successful little colony. Its natural resources of timber, fish and whales, its agricultural commodities such as flax, maize, livestock and dairy, and the protective natural harbors provided by Narraganset Bay served to make Rhode Island a very prosperous colony. Additionally, the port city of Newport had become one of the largest and busiest ports in Colonial America, and the Town of Providence also had its fair share of wharfs, warehouses, ships, merchants, and sea captains. There were also the maritime industries of ship building and shipping that played a big role in the prosperity of Rhode Island, both in Newport, Providence, and the surrounding communities. Providence and Newport were also busy turning a profit in the slave trade by which many merchants and businessmen earned sizable profits including reinvestment of those profits in vast amounts of molasses used to make rum and to trade with other colonies.

Rhode Island had also drawn the attention of the crown. After the conclusion of the French and Indian War, Parliament passed several Acts including the Sugar Act and the Navigation Acts meant to protect British interests and raise revenues, but these Acts were ill-received in the colonies, and gave rise to a dramatic increase in smuggling. For instance, the Molasses Act of 1763 placed a tariff on any molasses imported into the colonies from non-British sources. “Molasses was the cornerstone of the colony’s economy; it found its way into most branches of business.”¹² Rhode Island alone was importing almost five times the amount of molasses that the British Islands could supply. The Colony was exporting massive quantities of rum, far more than could be accounted for based on imports registered through the customs house. The extra molasses had to come from somewhere, and the crown knew that illegal

¹² David S. Lovejoy, *Rhode Island Politics and the American Revolution, 1760-1776*, (Providence: Brown University Press, 1958), 19.

imports and smuggling were the reason.¹³ The crown cracked down by deploying revenue schooners to check cargos, catch smugglers and seize their cargos. One such schooner was H.M.S. Gaspee.

The H.M.S. Gaspee was purchased in Halifax in 1763. At the time of purchase, it was a one masted sloop and measuring 49 feet in length. It was armed with 8 small guns and crewed by 30 men. It served the British between Halifax and Philadelphia and its primary role was to prevent illicit trade. In 1767 or 1768 it was re-fitted as a two masted schooner. In the fall of 1768, the Gaspee came under the command of Lieutenant William Dudingston, who continued Gaspee's mission to intercept smugglers in the waters near Philadelphia.¹⁴

Lieutenant Dudingston was an ambitious and motivated commander. It was in his own best interests to enforce Britain's laws against smuggling and illegal trade because the commander of the revenue vessels shared in the profits made from seized cargos. He quickly acquired a reputation for harshness and cruelty toward the colonials, seizing legal cargos under dubious accusations and circumstances. He pursued his duties with fanaticism to the point of questionable operations and seizures beyond his mandate. There had been several complaints and lawsuits against him while the Gaspee was operating in the waters around Philadelphia, and so the Gaspee was ordered to patrol in Rhode Island waters where Dudingston's reputation might not follow. However, the Rhode Island merchants and seafarers were already aware of Dudingston and his iron handed policies and tactics. Even if his reputation had not preceded him, Dudingston wasted no time in making himself and the Gaspee despised in the waters of Rhode Island. "The Newport Mercury gleefully reported the depredations of 'this piratical

¹³ Lovejoy, *Politics*, 33.

¹⁴ Park, *Schooner Gaspee*, 8-9.

schooner”¹⁵ Dudingston’s actions were so egregious that the “...Deputy Governor Darius Sessions in Providence wrote to Governor Joseph Wanton in Newport indicating that the ‘gentlemen of this town’ complained that a schooner had ‘much disturbed our navigation.’”¹⁶

When Dudingston was investigated by Governor Wanton, and demands were made for Dudingston to present his ship’s orders to the Governor, Dudingston refused and sought further support from his superior officer in Boston, Admiral Montagu. The Admiral communicated to Wanton that it was the duty of the Governor of the Colony to support the Gaspee’s mission because the Gaspee was one of His Majesty’s vessels. In a display of Sinatra Syndrome that exemplified the “I’ll do it my way” worldview of the Colony, “Wanton, who would later show himself to be a staunch loyalist, nonetheless shot back ‘Please be informed that I do not receive instructions for the administration of my government from the King’s admiral stationed in America.’”¹⁷

All the pieces were now in place for the drama that was about to unfold. British law had made smuggling and illegal trade very profitable in the colonies. This was especially true in Rhode Island whose busy seaports and maritime prosperity combined with its independent spirit and contemptuous attitudes toward British Acts and Regulations. Add to the mix an overenthusiastic and motivated revenue ship’s commander and a colony full of merchants, seafarers, distillers, and others who had a vested interest in the success of smuggling operations,

¹⁵ Charles Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade and the American Revolution*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 104.

¹⁶ Park, *Schooner Gaspee*, 11.

¹⁷ Rockwell Stensrud, *Newport: A Lively Experiment – 1639-1969*, (Newport: Redwood Library and Athenæum, 2006), 188.

either directly or indirectly. “The colony was absolutely dependent upon maritime trade for its survival.”¹⁸

Enter the players.

On February 17, 1772, the revenue schooner H.M.S. Gaspee under the command of Lieutenant William Dudingston made her first seizure of goods and vessel in Rhode Island waters. To the west of Conanicut Island, where the town of Jamestown is located, and to the east of North Kingston, in the west passage to Narragansett Bay, the Gaspee came upon the sloop Fortune at anchor.¹⁹ The Fortune was captained by Rufus Greene and its contraband cargo of “twelve hogsheads of West India rum, forty gallons of Jamaica spirits, and a barrel of brown sugar ...belonged to the sloop’s owners, Nathanael Greene & Co., his cousin’s business on nearby Potowomut Peninsula.”²⁰ Rufus Greene, Nathanael Greene, and Jacob Greene who was the owner of the seized rum,²¹ as well as the extended Greene family and business partners were now on the playing field, as this seizure was the lynchpin event for the entire affair.

In Providence, the activities of the Gaspee did not go unnoticed. The most prominent merchant in Providence was John Brown. He had made his fortunes in commerce and shipping, specifically in the slave trade and by outfitting and supporting privateers during the French and Indian War. John Brown and his brothers Joseph, Moses, and Nicholas had formed the Nicholas Brown Company which encompassed many of their joint ventures and interests. Undoubtedly, the increased pressure from the Gaspee and the recent seizure of a vessel belonging to the

¹⁸ William R. Staples, *The Documentary History of the Destruction of the Gaspee*, (Providence: The Rhode Island Publications Society, 1990), xvi.

¹⁹ Rappleye, *Sons of Providence*, 105

²⁰ Gerald M. Carbone, *Nathanael Greene: A Biography of the American Revolution*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 3.

²¹ Park, *Schooner Gaspee*, 10.

Nathanael Greene & Company made them uncomfortable. “John Brown, in particular, was determined not to accept Dudingston’s incursion without a challenge. After huddling with the other primary merchants in town, Brown composed a formal complaint against the Gaspee and presented it to Darius Sessions”²² who served as Deputy Governor of the Colony. This complaint went through the appropriate channels for the time, eventually ending up with Governor Wanton who then “wrote to notify Dudingston of complaints by ‘a considerable number of inhabitants of this colony... of your having, in a most illegal and unwarrantable manner, interrupted their trade.’”²³

The Browns and the Greenes were not the only ones feeling discomfort resulting from the Gaspee’s activities. Local settlers complained of having their livestock, wood and other commodities illegally appropriated by the Gaspee without proper compensation. Also, there were those whose enterprises may have been directly or indirectly affected by the Gaspee’s operations and interference with both legal shipping, and smuggling and illegal trade. For instance, Ephraim Bowen²⁴ ran a rum distillery in Pawtuxet as did Silas Cooke²⁵ in Middletown. “In 1764 there were more than thirty distilleries in Rhode Island alone; several hundred people were directly dependent upon the manufacture of rum for their livelihood.”²⁶

The seafaring colony whose economy was dependent upon trade and shipping had an estimated population of 58,196 in 1770.²⁷ In 1764, it had an estimated population of 48,000,

²² Rappleye, *Sons of Providence*, 105

²³ Rappleye, *Sons of Providence*, 105

²⁴ “Colonel Ephraim Bowen (1753-1841)”, August 2016, accessed March 14, 2020, <http://gaspee.org/EphraimBowen.htm>

²⁵ Don N. Hagist, “Silas Cooke’s War: the Sufferings of a Civilian on the Front Lines”, accessed November 23, 2020, <http://smallstatebighistory.com/silas-cookes-war-the-sufferings-of-a-civilian-on-the-front-lines/>

²⁶ Lovejoy, *Politics*, 19.

²⁷ “Estimated Population of American Colonies: 1610 TO 1780”, accessed November 27, 2020, <https://web.viu.ca/davies/H320/population.colonies.htm>

“...more than a quarter of whom lived in either Newport or Providence.”²⁸ Newport had a population of almost 11,000 in 1776²⁹, and Providence was under half the size. In 1790, the population of Providence was only 6,380³⁰, but in 1769 it only had a population of about 3,000³¹. Many of the inhabitants of Providence and the surrounding communities knew each other through business interactions and the economic ventures, and it can be assumed that even then, just as it seems now in Rhode Island, everybody knew somebody, and that there were very few degrees of separation.

The closeness of community ties was also built upon family ties. Many of the major families were related to many of the other major families through a common progenitor or marriage. Family enterprises were strengthened and expanded through extended family connections. Essentially, most of the prominent families had some sort of connection to each other.

There was also another connection between a group of men in the Town of Providence. They belonged to a Lodge of Freemasons. Saint Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence was granted their charter on January 18, 1757 by the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons in North America making it the thirteenth oldest masonic lodge in the United States. Their first stated communication was held on February 18, 1757 at the Sign of the White Horse in Providence where they met regularly until moving next door to

²⁸ Lovejoy, *Politics*, 18.

²⁹ Lawrence Yun, “Largest Cities In The United States In 1776, And In 2076”, July 3, 2012, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.nar.realtor/blogs/economists-outlook/largest-cities-in-the-united-states-in-1776-and-in-2076>

³⁰ Rhode Island Statewide Planning, “Rhode Island Population by City, Town, and County: 1790 – 2010”, accessed November 27, 2020.

http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/census/popcounts_est/pop_cities_towns_historic_1790-2010.pdf

³¹ Henry Greene Jackson, *200-Year History of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, F. & A. M.*, (Providence: n.p., 1958), 9.

the house of the Widow Dinah Kelton. They met at Widow Kelton's from November 16, 1757 until March 15, 1758 when they started meeting at the Two Crowns, run by Noah Mason who became a member of the lodge on February 10, 1758. There are no surviving meeting minutes after June 27, 1758 but we know that they were still meeting at the Two Crowns until the lodge went dark in 1769³², also likely meeting at Sabin's Tavern up to that point.

The men who joined St. Johns in Providence were some of the movers and the shakers of their time including Joseph, Moses, and John Brown, Jabez Bowen, and Abraham Whipple. Most had a direct connection to shipping and trading, and many had functioned as privateers in the French and Indian War and later during the American Revolution. Some ran businesses as tavern keepers, chandlers, and distillers. All came well recommended, and all must have had a degree of wealth. The founding members of the lodge were made masons by St. John's Lodge Newport on November 11, 1755 at a special communication of the lodge held in Providence. The cost to become a mason was £30³³ which equates to just over \$9000 in today's dollars. In 1758, the lodge charged a \$24 refundable nomination fee and a \$24 degree fee, each equating to \$932 in 2020. Clearly, it was not cheap to become a Mason, although the records do indicate that some members were made masons gratis.

However, "Toward the end of 1769, the members of St. Johns found themselves 'discouraged, without funds, without accommodation. They closed the Lodge, shut up the books and sealed the jewels.'"³⁴ Joseph Brown was the Worshipful Master and his brother Moses was Secretary from 1762 and remained so until the lodge emerged from darkness on July 15, 1778

³² St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records & By Laws of St. Johns Lodge No2 Providence*, (Rhode Island: n.p., n.d.), 3-33.

³³ Jackson, *200-Year History*, 4.

³⁴ Jackson, *200-Year History*, 7.

when Jabez Bowen became the Worshipful Master. Previous to 1778, “In the first twenty years of its existence St. Johns Lodge, of Providence, had admitted but forty-six to membership, the last one in 1769.”³⁵ However, many of those forty-six brothers would play a part in changing history forever when they planned, led, and participated in the raid on H.M.S. Gaspee, and still more raiders or their sons would join the lodge after 1778.

When young Daniel Pearce walked down Main Street in the Town of Providence in the Colony of Rhode Island beating a drum and raising an alarm, encouraging any party interested in engaging the vessel to meet at the house of James Sabin, known as Sabin’s Tavern, it is widely accepted that “it was the regular meeting place of the St. John’s [sic] Lodge – the Providence Lodge of Freemasons – and also the Sons of Liberty.... There was considerable overlap in membership between the Freemasons and the Sons of Liberty, and anyone belonging to one group was probably a member of the other as well.”³⁶ However, at the time of the Gaspee Affair, St. Johns No. 1 Providence had been officially dark for over two years. “In view of the steadily mounting tension, later to break out into open hostility against the British Crown, it seems highly probable that the Lodge was active ‘underground,’ if not openly and officially.”³⁷

On the site, <http://www.gaspee.org>, the Gaspee Virtual Archives, a list of known conspirators is provided.^{38,39} On that list of thirty-eight known conspirators out of the approximate sixty-four men suspected, six are known members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, and another 34 lodge members are included on the list of potential suspects and

³⁵ Jackson, *200-Year History*, 11.

³⁶ Raven, *Burning the Gaspee*, 50-51.

³⁷ Jackson, *200-Year History*, 9.

³⁸ “Those That Burned the Gaspee: The ‘Official’ List of Gaspee Raiders”, March, 2016, accessed February 28, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.org/GaspeeRaiders.htm>

³⁹ “Potential Suspects”, August 2016, accessed February 28, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.org/Suspects.htm>

relatives of known Gaspee raiders. The six known conspirators are Ephraim Bowen, John Brown, Joseph Brown, John Mawney, Captain Joseph Tillinghast and Abraham Whipple.



Figure 4: 1826 parade banner depicting the burning of the Gaspee. Surrounding the picture are the names of the four then 'surviving captors' who participated in the raid who were being celebrated: B. Page, E. Bowen, T. Smith, and J. Mawney. RI Historical Society

Ephraim Bowen was the last surviving Gaspee raider, and the source of much of the firsthand information about the raid. He was the raider who handed the gun to Joseph Bucklin who shot and wounded Dudingston, the commander of the Gaspee. He lived in Pawtuxet and ran

a distillery.⁴⁰ He was the half-brother of Jabez Bowen who was the Master of the Lodge starting in 1778 and the future first Grand Master of Rhode Island. His father was first cousins with Benjamin Bowen, a founding member of the Lodge and its first Junior Warden. He was cousins with Dr. John Mawney, the conspirator who treated the wounded Dudingston. Through his mother's family, he was also second cousins once removed with the Brown brothers and first cousins with Captain Joseph Tillinghast.⁴¹ It is unknown when he was initiated, but it was either prior to 1778, which would mean that he was initiated before the lodge went dark in 1769, or in 1778 after July. He was passed on December 16, 1778 and raised on December 14, 1779.⁴² Ephraim Bowen went on to become the Grand Master in Rhode Island in 1809.

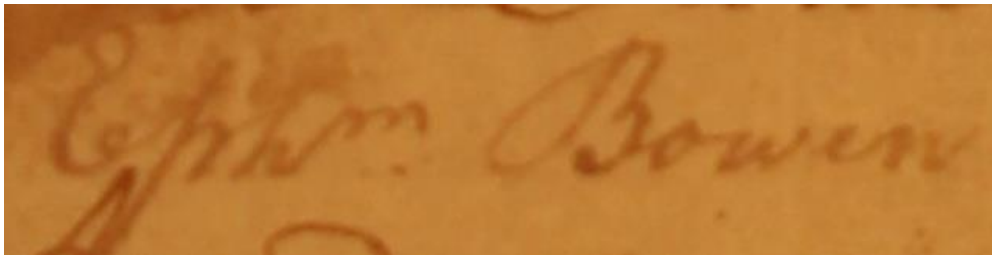


Figure 5: Ephraim Bowen's signature from *First Records & By Laws of St. Johns Lodge No2 Providence*, p. 42.

“John Brown was the acknowledged planner and leader of the attack on the Gaspee in 1772.”⁴³ It was John Brown to whom the news of the grounded Gaspee was first reported, and who appointed Abraham Whipple to lead the raid on the Gaspee. He was “taken prisoner in irons to Boston for participation in the ‘Gaspee Affair’, 1775.”⁴⁴ He was released unharmed.

⁴⁰ “Colonel Ephraim Bowen (1753-1841)”

⁴¹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, multiple pages, n.d., accessed February 21, 2020 through January 3, 2021, <https://www.familysearch.org>. The genealogical research provided in this paper required cross-referencing between multiple pages on this site. Therefore, individual page references would be meaningless and are not provided. Information about individuals and familial relationships began with a basic search on this site for the individual(s) in question, utilizing people pages as well as pedigree pages.

⁴² St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 101.

⁴³ “John Brown (1736-1803)” accessed March 14, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.org/JohnBrown.htm>

⁴⁴ The Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, *Manual of the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution*, 1899, Edited by Edward Field (Central Falls, RI: E.L. Freeman, 1900), 53.

John Brown was the wealthiest merchant in colonial Providence having made his fortune in shipping, primarily the triangle trade, and was pro-slavery. He also made money in privateering, outfitting ships and other merchant marine ventures. He was co-owner of a chandlery and an iron works located in Hope, Rhode Island producing pig iron. He was instrumental in forming Rhode Island College, renamed Brown University in 1804, and moving it to Providence in 1770.⁴⁵ His brothers were Joseph, Moses, and Nicholas Brown. John Brown was proposed to be made a Mason on March 29, 1758 by Edward Scott who was acting Master. John's brother, Joseph, was in the Junior Warden's chair that night.⁴⁶



Figure 6: Portrait of John Brown by Edward Malbone, 1794, Watercolor on ivory, New York Historical Society Library and Museum.

Joseph Brown was named by multiple sources as being one of the Gaspee Raiders. Joseph Brown was the second oldest surviving Brown brother, younger than Nicholas by four years, and older than John and Moses by three and five years, respectively.

"Of the Brown brothers, Joseph was the most active politically... and was actively involved in the manufacturing [of] saltpeter for use in gunpowder, planning fortifications at Fox Point, and procuring fire-ships for the defense of the Colony....

Although he did engage in the merchant business of Nicholas Brown and Company for income, his political and social activities overshadowed his business activities. His scientific skills were put to good use, though, and he was left by his brothers to be largely in charge of the mechanics of the Hope furnace and the spermececi candle factory his family owned. He was an architect, leaving as part of his legacy the

⁴⁵ "John Brown (1736-1803)"

⁴⁶ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 29.

design of the Joseph Brown House (1774), the John Brown house, University Hall at Brown University, the Market Building, and the First Baptist Church of America (1774)....

Florence Parker Simister, in her book *Streets of the City: An Anecdotal History of Providence*, p57 relates that it was Joseph Brown who was at the forefront of citywide excitement about the transit of Venus across the sun in 1769. He purchased the observatory equipment such as a reflecting telescope... and measuring devices for the observatory set up in Providence at the site of what is now known as "Transit Street".⁴⁷

Joseph was truly a student of Architecture and most of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences as is demonstrated by his interest in politics (Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic), architecture and mechanics (Arithmetic and Geometry), and Astronomy itself. Only Music seems to have escaped Joseph's interests and talents. A perfect fit for Freemasonry, Joseph Brown was sponsored on March 28, 1757 by Captain Woodbury Morris who had just been initiated the previous week. Joseph received the first two degrees of Freemasonry on April 5, 1757. By the November 16, 1757 regular communication, Joseph Brown was sitting in the Junior Warden's chair, and the Senior Warden's chair by December 6, 1757. On June 7, 1758, Joseph sat in the Master's chair in the absence of John Burgess who was not in attendance.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ "Joseph Brown (1733-1785)", accessed March 14, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.org/JosephBrown.htm>

⁴⁸ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 15, 16, 32.

Interestingly, Woodbury Morris was a seafarer and merchant who bought land from Joseph Whipple, a relative of Abraham Whipple, upon which he built his home. Captain Morris died at sea in the mid-1760s, at which point James Sabin established Sabin's Tavern in that building still owned by the widow of Woodbury Morris.⁴⁹

The third and youngest of the Brown brothers who were members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence was Moses Brown. There is no evidence that Moses Brown participated in the Gaspee Affair, but he was heavily involved in the Brown's businesses, community, and St. Johns No. 1 Providence. However, Moses was an abolitionist and a Quaker, and separated his business interests from those of his Brother, John. He was initiated into the Lodge on October 12, 1758.⁵⁰



Figure 7: Portrait of Moses Brown

The Brown brothers were related to many of the other prominent families in Providence at the time. Through their common progenitor, the Reverend Pardon Elisha Tillinghast (1625-1718), the Browns were second cousins with Captain Joseph Tillinghast and second cousins once removed with Dr. John Mawney and Ephraim Bowen⁵¹, all being Gaspee Raiders⁵² and all brothers of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence.⁵³

⁴⁹ John Concannon, "The History of the Sabin Tavern", accessed December 14, 2020, <http://www.pawtuxet.com/Gaspee/SabinTavern.htm>

⁵⁰ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 100.

⁵¹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

⁵² "The Men Who Burned the Gaspee", accessed March 6, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.info/raiders/index.htm>

⁵³ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 100, 105.

Dr. John Mawney was certainly an active participant in the Gaspee Affair. When the ships commander, Lt. Dudingston, was wounded by the shot fired by Joseph Bucklin, it was Dr. John Mawney who attended to his wounds and saw him safely to the home of Joseph Rhodes in Pawtuxet Village. He was a well-educated, albeit young at the time of the burning of the Gaspee, being about 21 years old.⁵⁴ John Mawney was cousins with Ephraim Bowen on his mother's side. He is Joseph Tillinghast's first cousin once removed, and second cousin once removed with the Brown brothers.⁵⁵ Although not a member of St. Johns No. 1 Providence at the time of the Gaspee Affair, he joined the lodge on November 8, 1780 and was passed on June 6, 1781.⁵⁶

In an 1826 interview, Captain Joseph Tillinghast was identified by John Mawney as a Gaspee Raider, stating "...that he was living with Tillinghast at the time, and that it was Tillinghast who commanded the particular longboat that carried Mawney on the raid."⁵⁷

Captain Joseph Tillinghast worked in partnership with Josiah (or Joshua) Hacker in operating the Providence to Newport ferry packet in 1762. This is of intense interest to us because in 1763, Joseph Tillinghast was replaced in this partnership by none other than Benjamin Lindsay, the captain of the Hannah that lured the Gaspee aground in June of 1772.

Joseph Tillinghast was a sea captain and merchant based in Providence, and primarily shipped goods between Rhode Island and St. Croix in the present US Virgin Islands. He often carried molasses and rum on his return voyages, and frequently sailed for the Nicholas Brown & Company and later for Brown, Benson, & Ives, both of which one partner was Gaspee raid commander John Brown.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ John Concannon, "Dr. (Col.) John Mawney (1751-1830)", accessed March 14, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.org/MawneyBio.html>

⁵⁵ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

⁵⁶ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., First Records, 105.

⁵⁷ "John Mawney's Account of the Attack on the Gaspee", accessed April 11, 2020, http://www.gaspee.info/history/Mawney_statement.htm

⁵⁸ "Captain Joseph Tillinghast (1734-1816)", accessed April 11, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.org/JosephTillinghast.htm>

Captain Tillinghast was not a brother in St. Johns No. 1 Providence at the time of the Gaspee raid. However, he was initiated on May 5, 1784, passed on July 7, 1784, and raised on August 18, 1784.⁵⁹ However, his father's first cousin, Daniel Tillinghast, was initiated into the Lodge on February 1, 1758⁶⁰, and Henry H Tillinghast, his second cousin and Daniel's son, joined in 1779.⁶¹ His father-in-law, William Earle, was initiated into the Lodge on February 20, 1758.⁶² His son, William Earle Tillinghast, married John Mawney's niece⁶³ and joined the Lodge in 1798.⁶⁴



Figure 8: Captain Joseph Tillinghast.
Artist Unknown

One of the most accomplished Gaspee raiders was Abraham Whipple. As John Brown was the Strategic mind behind the raid on the Gaspee, Abe Whipple was the tactical mind, and was chosen by John Brown to lead the raid. His name does not resonate with most Americans, let alone Rhode Islanders, and has become the Revolutionary War hero that time forgot. "No Rhode Islander could claim as many Revolutionary War 'firsts' as Abraham Whipple, but in the last accounting his name is seldom recorded among those colonists of outstanding deeds. Truly he might be called the "forgotten man" of the Continental Navy."⁶⁵ He was an accomplished privateer, mariner and tactician as is evidenced by the fact that "In one cruise in the years 1759-60, as commander of the privateer Gamecock, he is said to have captured thirty-three French

⁵⁹ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 103.

⁶⁰ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 101.

⁶¹ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 102.

⁶² St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 27.

⁶³ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

⁶⁴ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 111.

⁶⁵ Rhode Island Short Story Club, "Who Was Whipple?" *Revolutionary Portraits: People, Places and Events from Rhode Island's Historic Past* (Providence, R.I.: Rhode Island Bicentennial Foundation, 1976), pp. 6-15. Quoted in "Commodore Abraham Whipple (1733-1819)", accessed March 6, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.org/AbrahamWhipple.html>

prizes, and the value of British vessels that succumbed to his superior skill and energy during the Revolution has been calculated at nearly one million dollars.”⁶⁶

This successful cruise happened in the midst of a turbulent beginning for Abraham Whipple with Freemasonry. On the 19th of October in 1757, Brother Silas Cook, another privateer captain, “proposed Mr. Abraham Whipple to be made a Mason and paid cash to the Treasurer £25... was balloted for in due Form and was negatived..... and the above £25 was Immediately Returned”.⁶⁷ Abe Whipple had been blackballed. For what reason, we know not. Imagine if Paul Revere or Dr. Joseph Warren had been “negatived” upon their application to their Lodge. However, eventually Abraham Whipple was “Initiated, passed and member [on] June 11, 1761”.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, the minutes for that meeting have been lost.

Abraham Whipple was also the first captain in the Revolutionary Navy. “On June 12, 1775, the Rhode Island General Assembly, meeting at East Greenwich, passed a resolution creating a navy for the colony of Rhode Island. The same day, Governor Nicholas Cooke signed orders addressed to Captain Abraham Whipple, commander of the sloop Katy and commodore of the armed vessels employed by the government.”⁶⁹ Abraham Whipple immediately engaged the British ships in Narragansett Bay under the command of Commodore James Wallace, resulting in the



Figure 9: Portrait of Abraham Whipple by Edward Savage, 1786. On loan to National Portrait Gallery from U.S. Naval Academy

⁶⁶ Rhode Island Short Story Club, "Who Was Whipple?"

⁶⁷ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 23.

⁶⁸ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 100.

⁶⁹ Nathan Miller, *The U.S. Navy: A History* (3rd ed.) (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 15. Quoted in "Continental Navy", accessed November 23, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_Navy.

first naval battle won by the embryonic Rhode Island Navy that would eventually grow into the United States Navy. “When Abraham Whipple, captain of the *Katy*, was threatened by Wallace with hanging, he replied with the following terse dispatch: ‘Sir – Always catch a man before you hang him.’”⁷⁰

Abe Whipple’s familial associations were mostly through his wife, Sarah Hopkins, sister of Ephraim Bowen’s mother. She was also the niece of Stephen Hopkins, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Admiral Esek Hopkins⁷¹, who was the commander of the infamous slave ship *Sally* that was owned by Nicholas Brown and Company.

In addition to being brutal and inhumane, slave trading was also a complex, competitive business, which put a premium on experience and knowledge of local conditions on the African coast. Having decided to send the *Sally*, the Brown brothers first offered the ship to William Earle [suspected Gaspee raider and a member of St. Johns No. 1 Providence], who had commanded their previous African venture, the *Wheel of Fortune*, in 1759. But Earle declined, having already accepted the command of another Africa-bound ship. ...the Browns instead offered command to their friend Esek Hopkins. Hopkins had commanded privateers during the recent war with France, but he had no experience in the slave trade. This lack of experience would prove a substantial liability...⁷²

In 1775 Esek Hopkins was appointed the first Commander in Chief of the United States Navy. Neither Steven Hopkins nor Esek Hopkins were Freemasons, but it does imply the extensive network of decision makers outside the Craft that were associated with those inside. Sarah Hopkins was also the cousin of privateer Christopher Hopkins, who was a member of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, and was “agreeably voted in” on March 19, 1757.⁷³ Abraham

⁷⁰ Conley, *An Album*, 52.

⁷¹ The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints.

⁷² James Campbell, Brown University Scholarly Technology Group, the Center for Digital Initiatives, John Carter Brown Library, “The Voyage of the Slave Ship *Sally*:1764-1765. Assembling the Crew”, accessed December 19, 2020, https://cds.library.brown.edu/projects/sally/narr_crew.html

⁷³ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 14.

Whipple was a second cousin once removed to Joseph Whipple⁷⁴ who sold the property to Woodbury Morris where Sabin's Tavern was eventually located.

The Gaspee Virtual Archives further lists names of those were probable or possible raiders of the Gaspee as well as those who were co-conspirators. From the list of those who were probable or possible raiders, Ezek Hopkins, Stephen Hopkins, and James Sabin have established business and/or family connections to the brothers of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence. Also listed is Dr. Henry Sterling who "...apparently looked in on the wounded Lieutenant over several days while Dudingston recuperated in the Pawtuxet home of Joseph Rhodes." Sterling was a member of Lodge, having joined on Jan 18, 1758.⁷⁵ The uncle of his wife, Patience Tew, was Paul Tew, who was also a founding member of the Lodge⁷⁶, and her great uncle was Thomas Tew, the Newport privateer turned notorious pirate.⁷⁷

Paul Tew was also included in the Gaspee Virtual Archives in a list of "Potential Suspects". The archives give a caveat about the names on this list:

This list is frivolous at best, and represents an attempt to gather names of prominent merchants and ship captains in the 1772 Providence area, and relatives of known Gaspee Raiders. The purpose of this list is to launch further investigations into the lives of these people to see if they were in any way connected to the Burning of the Gaspee in 1772. These people are potential suspects only and would not presently be connected with this event by any hard evidence. Their inclusion into this list is both arbitrary and whimsical⁷⁸

⁷⁴ The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints

⁷⁵ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 26, 100.

⁷⁶ Jackson, *200-Year History*, 4.

⁷⁷ The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints

⁷⁸ "Potential Suspects"

There are many people whose names are on the list of those that have connections with the members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, and many of those individuals have compelling, but circumstantial links to the Gaspee Affair. Paul Tew was the sheriff of Providence County during the time of and preceding the Gaspee Affair. He was made a Mason on November 11, 1755 at the special meeting in Providence of St. John's Lodge No. 1 Newport and was one of the Charter members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence.⁷⁹ As aforementioned, he was the uncle of Dr. Henry Sterling's wife, and the nephew of the pirate, Thomas Tew.

There were many members of St. Johns No. 1 Providence on this list who were involved in privateering during the American Revolution. They are listed in alphabetical order and separated into two lists, those who belonged to the Lodge before the lodge went dark in 1769, therefore before the burning of the Gaspee, and those who joined when the Lodge came back to light, after July 15, 1778. Listed with each person's name is the name of the vessel with their date of service, the role of the individual such as ship's master, captain or owner, and the date in which they were initiated, passed, raised, or became members of the lodge as well as any other notes.



Figure 10: Portrait of Jabez Bowen by John Singleton Copley, c.1771-1774, National Portrait Gallery



Figure 11: Joseph and William Russell House, 118 North Main Street, Providence, Rhode Island, Built 1772, the year that the Gaspee was burned.

⁷⁹ Jackson, *200-Year History*, 4.

Privateer Members Prior to the End of 1769 ⁸⁰			
Name	Ship/Date ⁸¹	Role	Masonic Information
Bowen, Jabez	<i>Sally</i> , 1778	Owner	Initiated Oct 4, 1758 ⁸² Worshipful Master July 15, 1778-1790 First signer of 1779 bylaws Most Worshipful Grand Master 1794–1798 ⁸³
<p>“On the 15th of July 5778 There was a Deputation from the R Worshipful John Rowe Eigth Grand Master of the Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons in North America Appointing our Brother Jabez Bowen, Esq. Master of the First Lodge in the Town of Providence in Consequence whereof Masonry was Revived here.”⁸⁴</p> <p>“Jabez Bowen, of Providence, R. I. ; occupied many civil offices, and, when war was declared , resigned his position on the Bench of the Supreme Court to accept the command of the 1st Regiment of the County of Providence; in 1778, 1779, and 1780 was elected Deputy Governor, and through the whole conflict was an active member of the Council of War, and constantly consulted as to the Rhode Island movements by Generals Spencer, Sullivan , and Gates ; he was placed on many important committees, Jabez Bowen ' s Cartridge- Box, in the pos e V session of the Rhode Island Historical Society . quarters for the military officers; the Declaration of Independence was read from the front balcony of his house; in Market square, on the present site of the What Cheer building, Washington and Lafayette were entertained when they came to Rhode Island, by Governor Bowen, and General Rochambeau was always his guest when in Providence; he was a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1778.”⁸⁵</p>			
Bowen, Oliver	<i>St. John</i> , 1782	Master	Initiated before December 21, 1768 ⁸⁶
Clarke, Peleg	<i>Mary</i>	Co-owner	Joined prior to 1778. Signed 1779 by-laws stating that he was made in Newport

⁸⁰ “Potential Suspects”

⁸¹ Field, Edward, " List of Privateersmen from Providence", in *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History, Vol II.* (Boston: Mason Publishing Co. 1902), 424-430. Quoted in “Potential Suspects” Unless otherwise specified, Ship names, dates and Roles are from Field.

⁸² St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 100.

⁸³ Jackson, *200-Year History*, 33,34.

⁸⁴ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 33. As handwritten on this page.

⁸⁵ The Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, *Manual*, 50.

⁸⁶ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 100.

Privateer Members Prior to the End of 1769 ⁸⁰			
Name	Ship/Date ⁸¹	Role	Masonic Information
Cooke, Silas	<i>General Warren</i> , 1777	Master	Proposed by Samuel Angell on March 4, 1757 “Cap ⁿ Silas Cook... was Balloted In and with Ambrose Page was made Masons and past to the Fellowcraft Degree”, March 19, 1757. ⁸⁷
Earle, William	<i>Yankee Ranger</i> , 1776	Owner	“R.W. John Burges propos ^d Cap ^t . William Earle to be made a Mason and paid his Nomination money and he was accordingly Balloted for and unanimously Balloted In.”, February 1, 1758 ⁸⁸
William Earle was Appointed in 1773 to the Providence Committee of Inspection (for war preparedness). ⁸⁹ His son, William Earle, also joined the Lodge on June 13, 1785. ⁹⁰ There is a long history of members of the Earle family joining St. Johns No. 1 Providence well into the 20 th Century.			
Hopkins, Christopher	<i>General Washington</i> , 1783	Owner	Initiated March 11, 1757 Passed March 11, 1757 Member March 19, 1757 ⁹¹
Russell, Joseph	See note below	See note below	Made a Mason on November 11, 1755 at special communication of St. John’s Lodge No. 1 Newport. Founding member of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence ⁹²
Ship-owner, merchant of the firm William and Joseph Russell. State Senator in 1785. Appointed in 1773 to the Providence Committee of Inspection (for war preparedness). ⁹³ Co-owner of privateer <i>General Gates</i> , and others during Revolution			

⁸⁷ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 13,14. As handwritten on this page.

⁸⁸ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 27. As handwritten on this page.

⁸⁹ Richard M. Bayles, *History of Providence County, Rhode Island* (New York: n.p., 1891), 181. Quoted in “Potential Suspects”

⁹⁰ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 106.

⁹¹ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 14, 100.

⁹² Jackson, *200-Year History*, 4.

⁹³ Bayles, *History of Providence County*, 181.

Privateer Members Prior to the End of 1769 ⁸⁰			
Name	Ship/Date ⁸¹	Role	Masonic Information
Urdike, John	<i>Crawford</i> , 1780	Master	Nominated October 4, 1758 Passed October 4, 1758 Signed 1779 by-laws ⁹⁴
Webb, Joseph	<i>Generous Friend</i> , 1777	Owner	Made June 1, 1757 ⁹⁵
Joseph Webb the Mason was from Boston and was proposed by Joseph Russell. He does not appear in any of the lodge records after this date, so he may have become a Mason at St. Johns No. 1 Providence but returned to Boston. There is no evidence for or against this, and no definitive evidence that the Mason, Joseph Webb, is the same mas as the Owner of the <i>Generous Friend</i> . However, having been proposed by Joseph Russell, a known merchant and privateer owner, it is plausible that they are one and the same.			

Privateer Members After July 15, 1778 ⁹⁶			
Name	Ship/Date ⁹⁷	Role	Masonic Information
Barton, William	<i>Vermont</i> 1783	Owner	No dates listed. Signed 1779 by-laws
Bucklin, Daniel	Sloop <i>Montgomery</i> 1776 Captured the HMS Rover August 17, 1776	Master	No dates listed. Signed 1779 by-laws
Chase, Captain Samuel	<i>Oliver Cromwell</i> , 1776-77 <i>St. Peter</i> , 1777 Sloop name unknown	Master Captain Captain	Initiated December 16, 1778 Passed December 16, 1778 Raised December 14, 1779

⁹⁴ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 42, 101.

⁹⁵ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 18.

⁹⁶ "Potential Suspects"

⁹⁷ Field, Edward, *State of Rhode Island*, 424-430. Quoted in "Potential Suspects". Unless otherwise specified, Ship names, dates and Roles are from Field.

Privateer Members After July 15, 1778 ⁹⁶			
Name	Ship/Date ⁹⁷	Role	Masonic Information
<p>Captain Samuel Chase, Jr. The <i>Oliver Cromwell</i>, 1776-1777, was owned by Nicholas Brown and William & Joseph Russell, was forced aground in Narragansett Bay, and burnt by the British sloop-of-war, Kingfisher in August 1777.</p> <p>The <i>St. Peter</i> was captured off Antigua by the <i>HMS Aurora</i></p> <p>Sloop (name unknown) was owned by Welcome Arnold and was captured by the <i>Earl of Dunmore</i>. He was kept prisoner in New York, per Bartlett in Records of RI, 1780-1783.</p> <p>“He was certainly of the right contacts and ilk to have been involved somehow with the burning of the Gaspee.”⁹⁸</p>			
Clarke, John Innes	<i>Joseph</i>	Owner	No dates listed. Signed 1779 by-laws
Handy, Charles Jr.	<i>Yorick</i> , 1782	Master	Signed 1779 by-laws
Lawrence, David	<i>Montgomery</i> , 1776. ⁹⁹	Co-sponsor	Initiated December 23, 1778 Passed December 23, 1778 Raised December 29, 1779 Signed 1779 by-laws ¹⁰⁰
Malone, William	<i>Harbinger</i> , 1780	Master	Initiated February 2, 1780 Passed February 2, 1780 Raised April 1780 Signed 1779 by-laws ¹⁰¹
Miller, Nathan	<i>United States</i> , and others during Revolution	Co-owner	No dates listed. Signed 1779 by-laws ¹⁰²
Olney, Joseph	<i>Rover</i> , 1781 and others	Master	Signed 1779 by-laws Made in Philadelphia ¹⁰³
Tillinghast, Henry H	<i>Clemence</i> , 1782	Owner	Initiated December 23, 1778 Passed December 23, 1778 Raised April 1780 Signed 1779 by-laws ¹⁰⁴
Tillinghast, John	<i>Retaliation</i> , 1777	Master	Signed 1779 by-laws ¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ “Potential Suspects”

⁹⁹ Glenn B. Short, personal e-mail correspondence of Dec 2015 re RI State Archives as quoted in “Potential Suspects”.

¹⁰⁰ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 42,101.

¹⁰¹ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 45,105.

¹⁰² St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 59.

¹⁰³ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 45.

¹⁰⁴ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 45,104.

¹⁰⁵ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 45.

Privateer Members After July 15, 1778 ⁹⁶			
Name	Ship/Date ⁹⁷	Role	Masonic Information
Wall, William	Co-sponsored a privateer in 1776 along with known Gaspee raiders John B. Hopkins, Joseph Tillinghast, and others. Co-owner of <i>Montgomery</i> , and others		Signed 1779 by-laws ¹⁰⁶
Waterman, William	<i>Diamond</i> , 1776	Master	Raised December 15, 1783 Signed 1779 by-laws ¹⁰⁷
Wescott, Jacob	<i>Sally</i> , 1782	Master	Initiated September 5, 1781 Passed September 19, 1781 Raised September 19, 1781 Signed 1779 by-laws ¹⁰⁸

There were also quite a few members of the Lodge who were politicians, merchants, tradesmen, or other professionals who may have had reason enough to participate in the burning of the Gaspee.

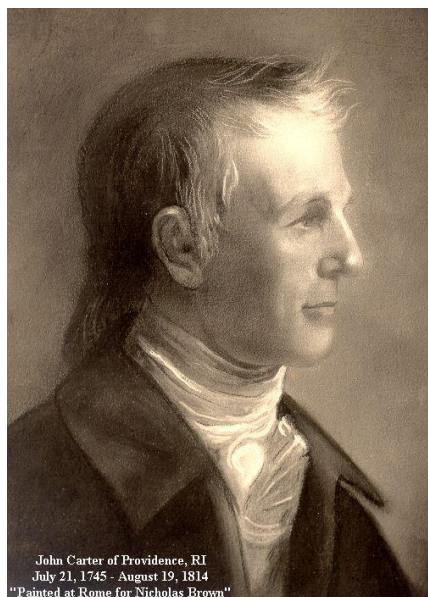


Figure 13: John Carter (left)

Figure 12: Samuel Chace (right)



¹⁰⁶ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 45.

¹⁰⁷ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 43, 102.

¹⁰⁸ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 46, 106.

Members Who Were Merchants or May Have Had Peripheral Involvement ¹⁰⁹		
Name	Occupation/Involvement and/or Role	Masonic Information
Atwell, Amos	Member of General Assembly from Providence c1776. Owned two properties off Weybosset Street near the docks.	Initiated Jan 25, 1792 Passed August 27, 1792 Raised December 10, 1781 Signed 1779 by-laws ¹¹⁰ There is a discrepancy with these dates that could not be reconciled.
Bowler, Metcalf	Prominent politician, named by Hackett in fictionalized 1940s play. Dep. delegate to Stamp Act Congress, NY 1765. ¹¹¹ See Simister p23. Member of the Sons of Liberty and the RI Committee of Correspondence. Was a Judge in Newport in 1772, and a Deputy (legislator) and Speaker of the House from Portsmouth. He may have been a spy for the British 1776-1779, however. Turns out, he was... ¹¹²	Made in Virginia, no date Passed October 8, 1883 Raised October 14, 1789 Signed 1779 by-laws ¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ "Potential Suspects". Unless otherwise specified, occupation and involvement information in this table is sourced from this resource.

¹¹⁰ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., First Records, 46, 106.

¹¹¹ Florence Parker Simister, *Streets of the City: An Anecdotal History of Providence*. (Newport: Mowbray Company, 1969), 23. Cited in "Potential Suspects"

¹¹² "Metcalf Bowler: Farmer, Merchant and British Spy", accessed December 26, 2020, <https://portsmouthhistorynotes.com/2018/12/30/metcalf-bowler-farmer-merchant-and-british-spy/>

¹¹³ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 43, 102.

Members Who Were Merchants or May Have Had Peripheral Involvement ¹⁰⁹		
Name	Occupation/Involvement and/or Role	Masonic Information
Carter, John	<p>Publisher of the Providence Gazette. As someone most to be affected by the levies of the Stamp Act, we can assume that Mr. Carter was an active member of the Sons of Liberty.</p> <p>His house, still extant, on 21 Meeting Street (called Shakespear's Head) was also the local post office, and which was known to deliver mail to individuals identified only as 'Sons of Liberty in Providence'. He undoubtedly knew more than he published.</p> <p>Until August 1757, he was Benjamin Franklin's apprentice.¹¹⁴ That begs the question, did he learn about Freemasonry from Poor Richard?</p>	<p>Initiated December 21, 1778</p> <p>Passed December 21, 1778</p> <p>Raised December 14, 1779</p> <p>Signed 1779 by-laws¹¹⁵</p>
Hall, Levi	Appointed officer in the United Train of Artillery from Providence, c1775	<p>Initiated August 4, 1779</p> <p>Passed August 4, 1779</p> <p>Raised December 29, 1779¹¹⁶</p>
Lawrence, David	Appointed in 1773 to the Providence Committee of Inspection (for war preparedness). ¹¹⁷	<p>Initiated December 23, 1778</p> <p>Passed December 23, 1778</p> <p>Raised December 29, 1779</p> <p>Signed 1779 by-laws¹¹⁸</p>
Olney, Joseph	<p>Tavern owner where the Sons of Liberty regularly met.¹¹⁹</p> <p>Later sailed with Gaspee raider Benjamin Page.</p>	<p>Signed 1779 by-laws</p> <p>Made in Philadelphia¹²⁰</p>
Wall, William	Prominent Providence merchant ¹²¹	No dates listed. Signed 1779 by-laws ¹²²

¹¹⁴ "John Carter: Printer and Postmaster, Providence, RI", accessed December 26, 2020, <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~rigenweb/carter.html>

¹¹⁵ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 42, 101.

¹¹⁶ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 42, 101.

¹¹⁷ Bayles, *History of Providence County*, 181.

¹¹⁸ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 42,101.

¹¹⁹ Simister, *Streets of the City*, 23. as cited in "Potential Suspects"

¹²⁰ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 45,104.

¹²¹ Field, Edward, *State of Rhode Island*, 424-430. Quoted in "Potential Suspects".

¹²² St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 45,104.

The following is a table of people who were related to known raiders of the Gaspee.

Members Who are Related to Known Gaspee Raiders			
Name	Significance ¹²³	Relationship ¹²⁴	Masonic Information
Arnold, Jonathan	Appointed in 1773 to the Providence Committee of Inspection (for war preparedness). ¹²⁵	Brother of Gaspee raider suspect Welcome Arnold.	Initiated May 29, 1779 Passed May 29, 1779 Raised December 29, 1779 Signed 1779 by-laws ¹²⁶
Bowen, Jabez	See Jabez Bowen in pre-1769 privateers list	Older stepbrother of Ephraim Bowen. Cousins with Brown brothers	See Jabez Bowen in pre-1769 privateers list
Bowen, Oliver	Master of Providence-based privateer, St. John, 1782	Older Stepbrother of Gaspee raider Ephraim Bowen. Cousins with Brown brothers	Initiated before December 21, 1768 ¹²⁷
Bucklin, Daniel	Master of Providence-based privateer, sloop Montgomery, 1776, Field.	Married Martha Comstock, brother of Captain Benjamin Comstock and widow of Brother Richard Eddy (signed bylaws of 1779) ¹²⁸	No dates listed. Signed 1779 by-laws ¹²⁹
Clarke, John Innes	Merchant of Clark & Nightengale. Member of General Assembly from Providence c1776.	Brother-in-law of Gaspee raider Ephraim Bowen.	No dates listed. Signed 1779 by-laws ¹³⁰

¹²³ Field, Edward, *State of Rhode Island*, 424-430. Quoted in "Potential Suspects". All listed significances are from Field unless otherwise specified.

¹²⁴ The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-day Saints. All relationship data was determined using person and pedigree information for subject individuals, cross referenced with each other and cross referenced with the known raiders list and the members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M. from *First Records*.

¹²⁵ Bayles, *History of Providence County*, 181.

¹²⁶ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 42, 101.

¹²⁷ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 100.

¹²⁸ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 46.

¹²⁹ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 104.

¹³⁰ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 46, 106.

Members Who are Related to Known Gaspee Raiders			
Name	Significance ¹²³	Relationship ¹²⁴	Masonic Information
Comstock, Capt. Benjamin	Commanded vessel of Nicholas Brown & Co. to procure arms shipments for the Revolution and was also involved in importing slaves for John Brown.	Brother of Martha Comstock who was married to (1) Brother Richard Eddy and then (2) Brother Daniel Bucklin (see Daniel Bucklin)	Not a Mason, but with familial connections
Sheldon, Israel	Would have been almost 17 years old at the time of the Gaspee raid	Son of known Gaspee raider Christopher Sheldon.	Raised December 14, 1780 Signed 1779 by-laws. ¹³¹

The Town of Providence was the second largest community in the Colony in 1772 with a population of around 3,000 people. It was a seaport town rich in merchants, warehouses, seafaring men, ships captains, and some of the most influential movers and shakers in New England. It was also the home of the “First Lodge in Providence New England”¹³².

The Lodge, founded by Masons made in St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Newport, attracted men of wealth and influence, and many men whose livelihood was connected to the shipping and trading business that was the lifeblood of the town. It was also a lodge whose members were merchants, privateers, and smugglers. The British Crown sought to eliminate illegal trade. The Gaspee incident was the response of these men who ran Providence to the perceived threat of the Gaspee, and some of the conspirators were members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence. Out of a lodge numbering 46 members before it went dark between 1769 and 1778, six members are known conspirators including four of the most famous conspirators.

¹³¹ St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, 46, 105.

¹³² St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence F. & A. M., *First Records*, title page.

John Brown was the mastermind behind the attack and selected Abraham Whipple to lead it. Ephraim Bowen was the last surviving Gaspee raider and provided much of what we know about the attack¹³³, as well as providing the gun to Joseph Bucklin who spilt the first blood of the American Revolution three years before Lexington and Concord. Dr. John Mawney provided medical aid to the wounded British Commander, Lt. Dudingston, and probably saved his life.

But who were the rest of the raiders, and were they members of St. Johns No. 1 Providence? There is no hard evidence demonstrating that any further members were involved, but there is strong evidence that proves the close familial, business, and fraternal relationships. There is a documented connection between the Brothers of the Lodge and the known and suspected Gaspee raiders based on their family connections. Many of the brothers of the lodge were actual brothers, cousins, uncles, and nephews, second cousins, etc. Many were related through marriage. In addition to family connections, these men had common interests and goals through their professions and businesses which also connected them socially. Finally, through their Masonic connections they shared a common philosophy, morality, and an unbreakable bond of brotherhood. None of the men from Providence admitted to being a raider or identified another as a raider until after the American Revolution. They could trust each other with their lives and livelihoods, which the Gaspee Affair proves they did. They could trust each other with their secrets. All of this suggests that many more Brothers of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence may have been participants in the burning of the Gaspee, “The first overt action by an armed force against the Government of Great Britain.”¹³⁴

¹³³ “Ephraim Bowen's Account of the Burning of the Gaspee (Corrected)”, accessed March 6, 2020, <http://www.gaspee.org/Bowen.html>

¹³⁴ Jackson, *200-Year History*, 10

Notes on 1770 Maps of Providence, Figures 11, 12 and 13:

1. Sabin's Tavern was located on the NE corner of the current intersection of Planet Street and South Main Street. There is a parking lot there now.
2. Fenner's Wharf was located at the current 155 South Main Street currently occupied by The Packet Building

3. Widow Kelton's was located at the current SE corner of Roger William's National Park just south of where the connecting path (between "Cady Street" and "Church Street") intersects "Cady Street". The location is on the west side of North Main Street, opposite the Old State House.

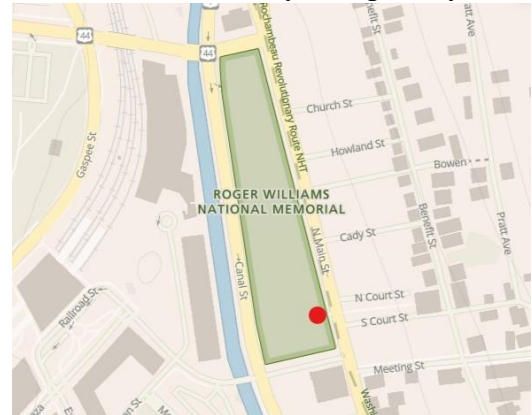


Figure 14: Location of Widow Kelton's. Map courtesy of The National Park Service.
<https://www.nps.gov/rowi/planyourvisit/maps.htm>

4. The Sign of the White Horse was located at the current location on South Main Street of the RISD Administration Building addressed at 20 Washington Square (182 North Main Street) in the block between Steeple Street and Washington Place, directly across from the First Baptist Church in America.
5. According to the Jackson in the *200-Year History...*, the Two Crowns was located where the What Cheer building was located at approximately 101 North Main Street. The What Cheer building was torn down to make room for the western entrance of a railroad tunnel which is now sealed off and located at the rear of an elevated parking lot on that site.
6. Streets Names and Place Names, Old and New
 - a. Old Goal Lane is now Meeting Street,
 - b. Broad Street is now Weybosett Street,

- c. Water Street and Main Street are now South Main Street. The current South Water Street would have been part of the harbor in 1790,
- d. Back Street is now Benefit Street,
- e. Old Lane is now Smith Street,
- f. Old Road to Killingly is now Orms Street,
- g. The road labeled To Ferry is now Transit Street,
- h. The road in the southeast corner of the map, heading east from the south end of Water Street is now Wickenden Street,
- i. Cowpens Point got filled in and expanded, and is now the Jewelry District,
- j. The Bridge on the east end of Wickenden Street connecting to the Town Parade ground is now the College Street bridge.

Key to Figures 13, 14 and 15¹³⁵

<i>Blue – Residences and businesses of Members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, F.& A. M., e.g., Moses Brown</i>	<i>Blue with Red Border – Residences and businesses of Members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, F.& A. M. who were known Gaspee raiders, e.g., Ephraim Bowen</i>	A	Sabin’s Tavern
<i>Pink – Residences and businesses of non-Masons who were known to be Gaspee raiders, e.g., Benjamin Cushing</i>		B	Fenner’s Wharf
<i>Purple – Residences and businesses of non-Masons who were not Gaspee raiders but played a role in the event, e.g., Daniel Pierce</i>	<i><u>Blue with Red Underline</u> – Residences and businesses of Members of St. Johns Lodge No. 1 Providence, F.& A. M. who were suspected Gaspee raiders or had other involvement, e.g., Joseph Russell</i>	C	Widow Kelton’s
		D	Sign of the White Horse

¹³⁵ “Gaspee Graphics Index 4—Places”, accessed April 4, 2020, <http://gaspee.org/GaspeeGraphics4.html>. Figures 13, 14 and 15 were individual 1170 Providence Taxpayer Maps that were merged. Data was added as indicated by the map key. Figure 13 shows the entire pertinent map of Providence. Figures 14 and 15 show the north and south halves of the same map, blown up for readability.



Figure 15: Map of Providence, RI 1770
with Locations of Interest

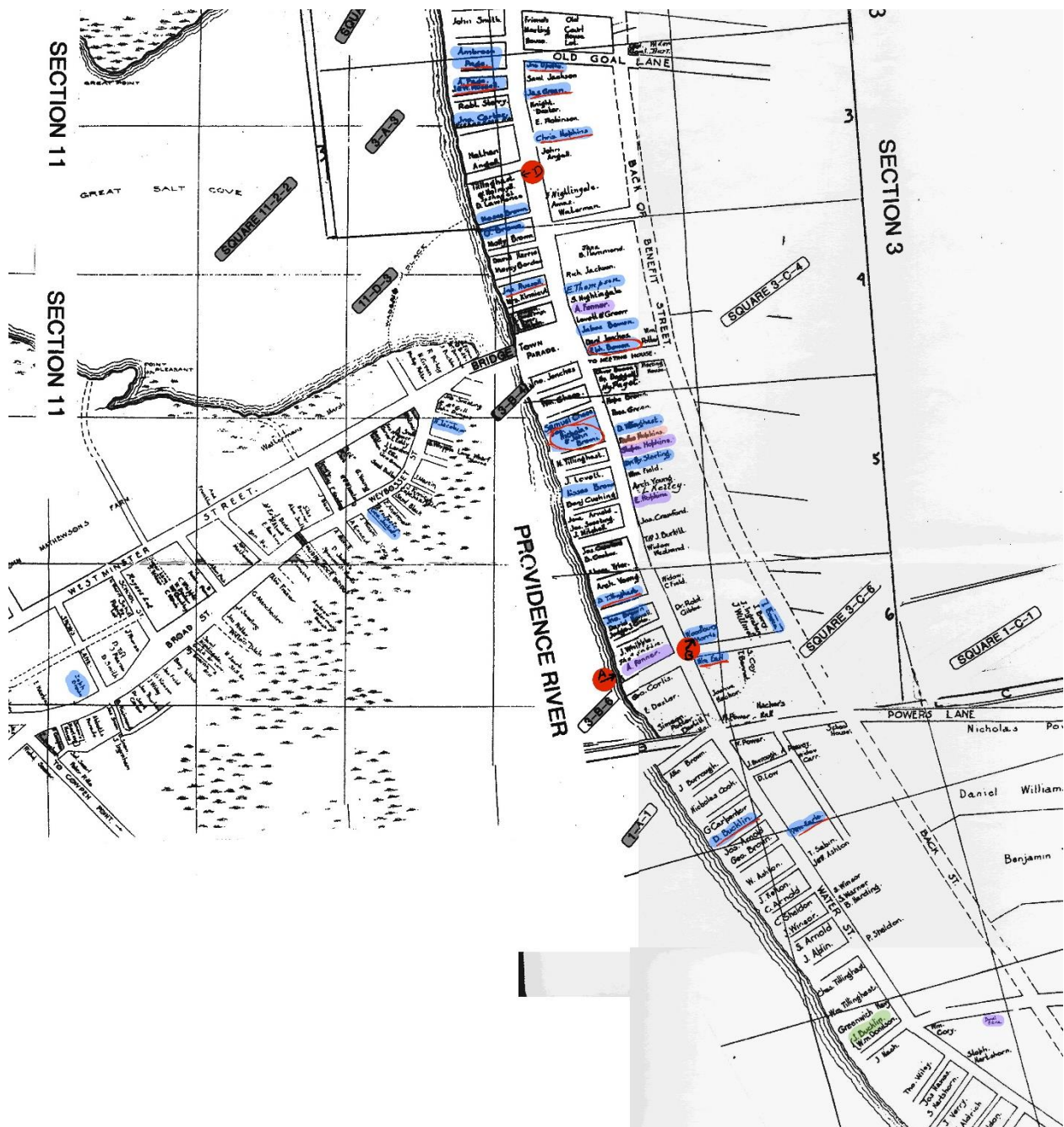


Figure 17: Map of Providence, RI 1770 with Locations of Interest, South of current South Court Street and Park Row

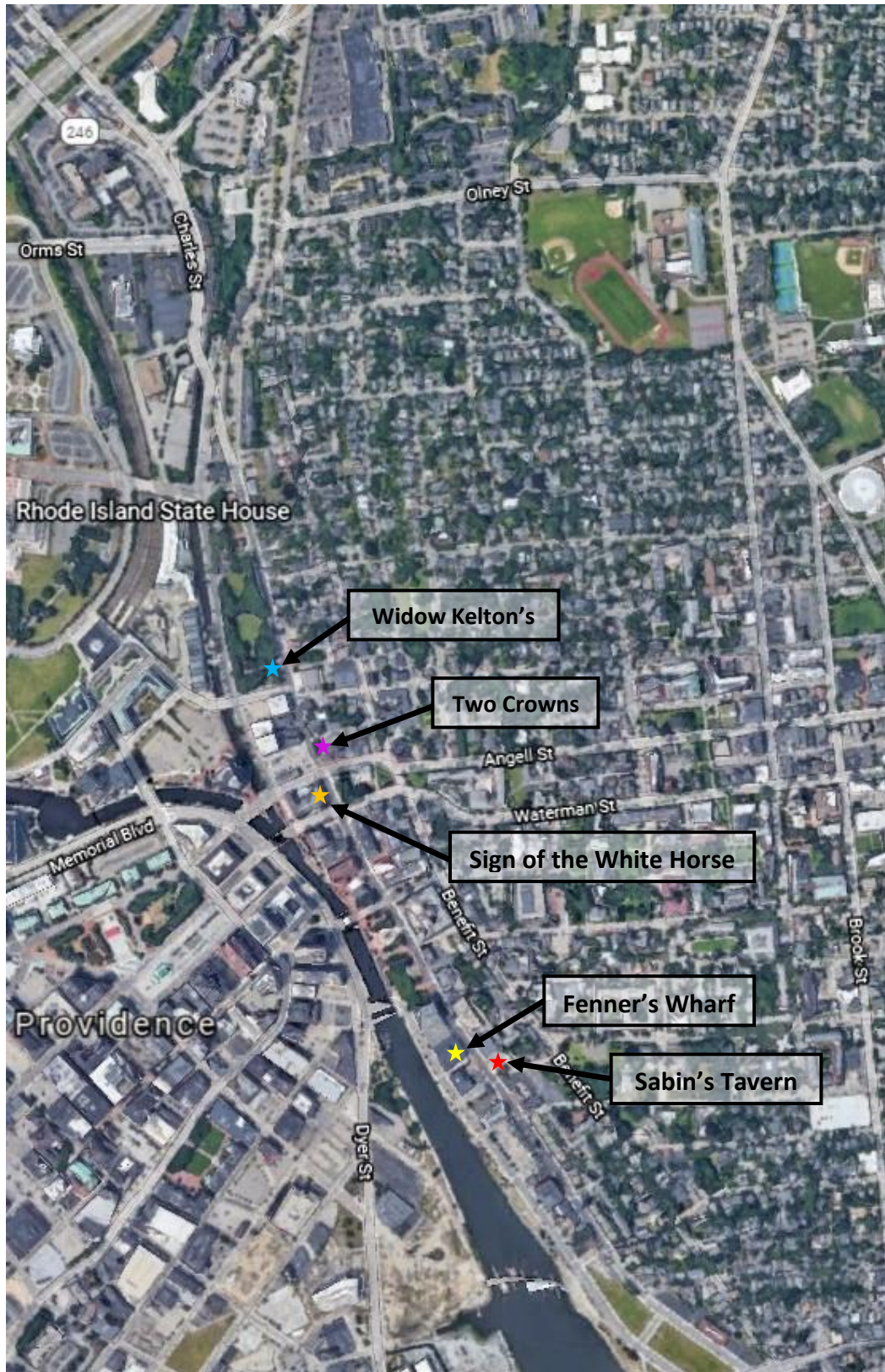


Figure 18: Providence in 2020 from Google Earth with the locations of Sabin's Tavern (red), Fenner's Wharf (yellow), Widow Kelton's (blue), Two Crowns (magenta), and Sign of the White Horse (orange) indicated with colored stars.

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