

obsolete

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NEWPORT SILVERSMITHS

early 7th century and later

During the years between 1700 and 1800, there worked in Newport a group of ^{gold} silversmiths who produced tankards, canns, creamers, spoons, porringers, and other items comparable to the work being done in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia at that time. It is thought that much of this fine ^{gold} silver was taken to England by the departing Loyalists. In support thereof, several important pieces have in recent years been acquired abroad. Two cups by John Coddington were auctioned in London several years ago and an Arnold Collins porringer was purchased in France. Perhaps other pieces will gradually return home.

ARNOLD COLLINS -- -1735

Married (1) prior to 1687 to Sarah; son Sylvester born in 1688, daughter Sarah born 1690. Commissioned March 3, 1690, to design and engrave the Seal of the Colony. Married (2) on March 16, 1692, to Amy Tew Ward, widow of Thomas Ward; a son Henry born March 25, 1699, died 1766, unmarried. In 1702 he was a proprietor of Common Lands. In 1711 a beaker made by him was bequeathed to United Congregational Church of Little Compton, R.I., by Joseph Church. Contributed the land for the first Sabbatarian Meetinghouse. Will recorded August 1735.

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SAMUEL VERNON 1683-1737

Born December 6, 1683, in Narragansett, son of Daniel and Ann (Dyer) Vernon; second cousin of Edward Winslow, silversmith of Boston. Married (1) April 10, 1707, to Elizabeth Fleet of Long Island, who died in 1722. Freeman, 1716. Married (2) Elizabeth Paine of Bristol January 12, 1725, sister of Nathaniel Paine; she died March 15, 1759. Advertised working 1705-1725-1726. His fifth child of first marriage, Daniel, born August 20, 1716 (Freeman, 1738), worked as a silversmith. Appointed by Assembly to settle land dispute 1726. Assisted the Governor in investigating health conditions. Justice of the Peace, 1728. Member of Boundary Commission, Massachusetts-New Hampshire 1737. On base of cup lent by Captain V. A. Watson of London, England, 1936, Rhode Island Tercentenary at Rhode Island School of Design, a different touch mark appears, initials above fleur-de-lys but in a rectangle, possibly a piece of early origin prior to the adoption of usual mark. His third child and first son of second marriage, Samuel, Jr. (born September 6, 1711, died July 6, 1792), married Amy Ward Freeman 1733, had twelve children. Samuel Vernon died December 5, 1737.

ISAAC ANTHONY 1690-1773

Born, April 10, 1690, in Newport, son of Abraham and Alice Wodell Anthony. Advertised as a goldsmith in the Boston GAZETTE March 21, 1737. Died in Newport, 1773.

BENJAMIN BRENTON 1686-1740

Born, December 23, 1686, eldest son of William and Hannah (Davis) Brenton, grandson of Governor William Brenton (first charter, 1660-1662; second charter, 1666-1669). Married Sarah Collins in 1708; son Benjamin, Jr., born October 16, 1710. Freeman 1717. Sold land to Samuel Fowler. Made a flagon for Trinity Church in 1733 as a Nathaniel Kay legacy, as well as a flagon for St. Michaels of Bristol, R. I. Died, 1740.

JOHN CODDINGTON 1690-1743

Son of Nathaniel and Suzanna Coddington. His father Nathaniel (born May 23, 1653, died January, 1724) was the son of Governor William Coddington, born 1601. His mother was Suzanna Hutchinson, the daughter of Captain Edward (born May 28, 1613) and Catherine Hutchinson and the granddaughter of William and Anne Hutchinson who were forced to leave Boston during the Antinomian controversy and went in March,

1637/8 with a group, which included William Coddington, first to Providence where they were joined by Roger Williams, who accompanied them to Plymouth where it was decided that the settlers from Boston would buy Aquidneck. They went across the bay and with the assistance of Roger Williams bought the Island of Aquidneck (now called Rhode Island) on March 24, 1637/8 from the Narragansetts for "forty fathom of white beads". The deed read: "we, Caunonicus and Nuantunnesu, the chiefe Sachins of the Narragansetts by vertue of our generall Command of this Bay----- have sold unto Mr. Coddington and his friends united unto him, the great Island of Aquednecke." The group that made the purchase numbered eighteen including William Coddington. This group settled on the Northward end of the Island (then called Pocasset, now called Portsmouth). In a matter of weeks discord between the adherents to Anne Hutchinson and those of William Coddington caused a rupture, referred to in Governor Winthrop's (Massachusetts Bay Colony) Journal of 11 May 1639 "at Aquidy the people grew very tumultuous and put out Mr. Coddington and the other three magistrates and chose Mr. William Hutchinson only, a man of very mild temper and weak parts and wholly guided by his wife who had been the beginner of all the former troubles in the country, and still continued to breed disturbance."

The meeting which is referred to in Winthrop's Journal occurred on April 28, 1639 and was continued on April 30. As a result, the Eastons left Pocasset on April 30 and went by boat along the west shore and began the settlement of Newport on May 1, 1639. Coddington and his followers either accompanied them or followed very soon, holding a town meeting May 16, 1639 with the following in attendance:

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------|---------------|
| Wm. Coddington, Judge | | John Clarke |
| Nicholas Easton | } Elders | Jeremy Clerke |
| John Coggeshall | | Thomas Hazard |
| William Brenton | | Henry Bull |

W Dyre Secr:

16th 3d 1639

William Coddington, having the original deed to the Island in his own name, was successful in his arguments for Portsmouth to submit to the Newport government and the following year on March 12, 1639/40 "William Hutchinson was elected one of the assistants" doubtless in recognition of his renouncing his office.

Married (1) May 23, 1715; married (2) August 25, 1720 to Elizabeth Rogers. Member of the House of Deputies 1721-1729. Sheriff 1733-1735. Colonel of the Militia in 1729. Alluded to himself as a goldsmith in his will.

DANIEL RUSSELL 1698-1771

Working 1718-1719. Made baptismal bowl for Trinity Church as a William Bright-John Mulder memorial. Working 1721-1724. Married (1) Mary Rurrell August 30, 1722, in First Trinity Church. Made baptismal basin for Trinity Church as a Nathaniel Key legacy. Advertisement 1735, "working Goldsmith." Made in 1742 gold locket in Garvan Collection. Married (2) to Mary Mumford January 10, 1754, by the Rev. James Searing, Jr., of Second Congregational Church. July 1, 1755, Mr. Daniel Russell is mentioned in a letter to William Vernon, Jr., of Newport as a subscriber to a volume of Dr. Mayhew's Sermons published in Boston. Extract from Edward Thurston's interlined almanac May 12, 1772, "peach tree bloomed in Mr. Daniel Russell's Garden which bloomed last year (1771) May 6."

JONATHAN CLARKE 1705-1770

Very little is known of this silversmith at this time. Possibly he was a descendant of one of the founders, John Clarke. Working in Newport in 1734 and 1755. Later worked in Providence. Made in 1734 a flagon for the Church of England in Providence, now the Cathedral of St. John. In 1735 joined with Edward Winslow, Samuel Greenwood and others in refusing to accept tax notes as currency. Made the Jabez Bowen punch strainer dated January 1766.

JOHN TANNER 1713-1785

Taught trade to Daniel and Joseph Rogers. Joseph Rogers became a partner of Tanner & Rogers. Gave to the Sabbatarian Meetinghouse the scroll with the Ten Commandments in 1773.

JONATHAN OTIS 1723-1791

Born in Sandwich, Massachusetts, nephew of Moody Russell (1694-1761) of Barnstable, Massachusetts (silversmith). Married Katharine Coggeshall in 1745. Working in Newport 1750 and 1753. Lived at 87 Spring Street. Removed to Middletown, Connecticut, during the British occupancy of Newport. Major of Militia, 1778.

THOMAS ARNOLD 1739-1828

Prominent citizen and member of Trinity Church. Had a shop fourteen feet wide on Thames Street on site of the MERCURY. William Stoddard Nichols was one of his apprentices. April 12, 1784, proprietor of a pew in Trinity Church. Signed a document "do manifest our approbation of the plan for settling a minister." Other signers were Deborah Hunter, John Barnister, Francis Malbone and others. March, 1805, he subscribed \$5.00 for a new bell, the same amount as William Crooke. December 1, 1806, "It was voted that Mr. Littlefield

be requested to employ Mr. Thomas Arnold to take charge of the clock, put her in order, and agree with him for a compensation to keep it so." (Annals of Trinity Church) Continued in trade until 1796. A beaker made by him is owned by the United Congregational Church, Newport.

DANIEL ROGERS -- -1792

Brother of Joseph Rogers. Both were apprentices to John Tanner, working 1752/3. Advertisement, 1774. Chosen Deputy to Assembly, 1792.

WILLIAM HOOKER -1812

Listed 1736 and 1745 as "Gold and Silversmith." Working 1750 on "Long Wharf." He worked at 6 Coddington Street which was built by his grandfather, the Reverend Daniel Whiteman. Died in 1812.

NICHOLAS GEOFFROY 1761-1839

Born Grenville, France c. 1761. Came to Newport c. 1795. Described as "an industrious and useful citizen of the town." In 1799 he bought land which had belonged to Benjamin Brenton. Advertised as working 1798. Married Sally Shaw in 1803. Worked with John A. Shaw and later joined him in John A. Shaw & Co. Sometime around 1800, he reworked the silver beaker of the Sabbatarian Church, now at Newport Historical Society.

Made a ladle of some spoons and the silver lace from Mrs. John Bannister's wedding gown. He had a shop where he sold imported goods and "silvered" mirrors as well as dealing in retail food-stuffs. His entries in J. A. Shaw's Day Book (later his) are in a fine French hand. (Archives of Newport Historical Society.) He became known beyond Rhode Island by the part he played in politics during the election of John Adams. Died in February, 1839.

WALTER CORNELL 1780-1800

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Walter Cornell carried on a business in both silver and clocks. Whether he bought the clocks and put his name on or whether they were made in his shop is yet to be determined. He is supposed to have worked both in Providence and in Newport.

WILLIAM STODDARD NICHOLS 1785-1871

Son of Walter Nichols, cabinetmaker, and Rachel Stoddard Nichols, who was a direct descendant of John and Priscilla Alden, being the daughter of Rachel Paybodie Stoddard whose father William Paybodie was a great-grandson of John Alden. Apprenticed to Thomas Arnold. Worked in Newport in 1808; lived on Division Street. Had a shop at 155 Thames Street where he made strings of gold beads from five-dollar gold pieces. Moved

late in life to the Nichols family house on Marlborough Street,
the White Horse Tavern, where he died, leaving it to his wife
and children.