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Keepers of Rhode Island's Heritage: Ann Olyphant, Thomas Hornsby, and Stephen Gould

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"Colony Flag and Charter Chair," photograph by William James Stillman, 1874. Newport Historical Society, P842. Charles F. McKim, the architect, commissioned Stillman to photograph sixty colonial houses in Newport as study material for his designs. Stillman also took a few photographs of early furniture. This image offers uniquely valuable evidence of two priceless items together.

KEEPERS OF RHODE ISLAND'S HERITAGE:
ANN OLYPHANT, THOMAS HORNSBY, AND STEPHEN GOULD

Marian Mathison Desrosiers

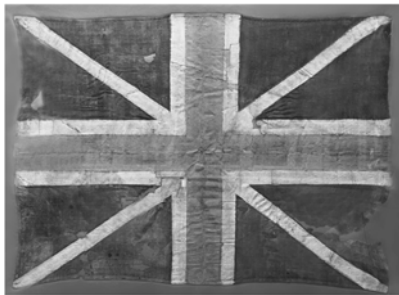
The photograph on the facing page shows what looks like trash set out for collection, but, in fact, the flag and the chair are unique seventeenth-century artifacts of Rhode Island, now held by Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport. Both relate to the period when Benedict Arnold (1615–1678) led the shaky government of Rhode Island. Benedict Arnold ably served the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations as president 1657–1663 under the restored First Patent of the Colony and then as governor 1663–1666, 1669–1672, and 1677–1678 under the Charter of 1663 granted by King Charles II.¹ A vivid painting of the flag is prominently displayed at the Charter Museum in the Rhode Island Statehouse with the caption “Flag from the ship that brought the 1663 Charter.” Smaller type underneath describes it as a replica of the flag that “supposedly flew on one of the ships that carried the 1663 Charter from England...” The chair is believed to be Governor Arnold’s “great chair” or chair of state in use at the colony meeting when the Charter of 1663 arrived in Newport. A photograph of it, now beautifully restored, and accompanying essay appear in Patricia Kane’s *Art & Industry in Early America, Rhode Island Furniture, 1650–1830*.² How is it possible that two artifacts that represent the early days of Rhode Island history survived? Who saved the flag and Governor Benedict Arnold’s great chair?

The story of the flag at Redwood Library in Newport is shorter and less well documented than that of the chair. It was made from coarse cotton threads dyed blue and woven on a hand loom into a piece 27 inches by 37 inches. On the blue cloth a red cross of St. George was painted on a white field along with the white saltire (diagonal cross) of St. Andrew. The flag is painted on both sides, a common practice in the seventeenth century. Newport historian George Champlin Mason wrote in 1859: “It was on display in the Thames Street store of Stephen Gould with a sign indicating ‘the Rhode Island Colony Flag received from England by Gov. Arnold 1663; used till the vacuation of the English.’” That would mean the flag was used in Newport from 1663 until the British occupying force left Newport

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1. H. Bullock Thompson, “Early Records of the Arnold Family,” *Newport Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 30 (Oct. 1919): 1–23.
 2. Patricia E. Kane, with Dennis Carr, Nancy Goyne Evans, Jennifer N. Johnson, and Gary R. Sullivan, *Art & Industry in Early America, Rhode Island Furniture, 1650–1830* [hereafter Kane, *Rhode Island Furniture*] (New Haven and London: Yale University, 2016), 139–140.

in 1779. Mason related that the flag was “hid by the Colony Collector John Wanton in the garret of his house; on removal of a chimney, it was found after a lapse of eighty years with other revolutionary relics.”³ Since Rev. Edward Peterson, who eulogized Governor Arnold’s chair at Isaac Gould’s store in 1853, did not mention the flag, we can estimate a window of the years 1853 through 1859 for the discovery.⁴ While one might imagine that its discovery would have generated news stories, none has been found. By 1869 the flag and the chair were said to be together.⁵ From the photograph of the flag with the chair behind a private home in 1874, it must have been donated to Redwood Library after that. Where the donation of the chair in 1877 is carefully documented, it seems odd that no record of the acquisition of the flag has been found.

Why was a tattered old maritime flag so important to Rhode Islanders? The traditional story of the flag is that it arrived with the Charter in 1663. Captain George Baxter, responsible for transport of the box with the three enormous rolls of parchment, sailed into Boston harbor from London before traveling on to Newport. From the 1660 Restoration, King Charles II held that the United Kingdom flag should fly only on military and diplomatic ships representing Britain.⁶ Therefore, it is possible that ship on which Captain Baxter sailed to



Seventeenth-century Union Jack.
Courtesy of Redwood Library and
Athenaeum, Newport.

Boston flew this flag. Perhaps it was a mark of George Baxter’s authority. Barlow Cumberland noted long ago: “A flag of the King’s colours declared its bearer to be a man of the King.”⁷ The fact remains that there is simply no contemporary evidence. The caution of historians is reflected in the word *supposedly* in the caption at the Charter Museum. It was certainly not a colony flag, as Rhode Island had no colony or state flag until 1877. Whatever the truth, Rhode Islanders saw the flag a symbol of

3. George Champlin Mason, *The Reunion of the Sons and Daughters of Newport, Rhode Island, August 23rd 1859* (Newport: Pratt & Co. 1859), 41.
4. Rev. Edward Peterson, *History of Rhode Island and Newport* [hereafter Peterson, *History of Rhode Island and Newport*] (New York: John S. Taylor, 1853), 74–75.
5. “The Graves at Newport,” *Harper’s Magazine*, Vol. 39 (1869), 380.
6. In 1663, King Charles II issued a proclamation that all “Royal Naval Ships” and “ships in service of a public official” fly the Union Flag. The union of Scotland and England was in 1654. See *Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty’s at Sea*. 2nd ed. (London: His Majesty’s Admiralty Office, 1734), 12–13.
7. Barlow Cumberland, *History of the Flags of the Union and the Empire* [3rd ed., 1900] (Frankfurt, FRG: Overlook Press, 2018), 28, 66–67.

their legitimacy as a fully chartered English colony. Cleaned up and somewhat repaired from its 1874 condition, the flag hung for decades inside Redwood Library before becoming too fragile to display.

Governor Arnold's "Great Chair" is less well known but also esteemed for its connection with the charter. The chair at Redwood is high-backed with arms of joined English oak. Standing at a height of four feet, it has an ornamented crest rail, back panel and corbels. The seat is of Norway pine, 24 inches wide by 24 inches deep. Based on the turnings of the arm supports and legs, this great chair is considered by furniture experts to have been made prior to 1663, likely by a Newport craftsman. A few Rhode Island-crafted great chairs can be found in museums, such as the Cole Family Chair from Rehoboth/Swansea and the Case/Clark Family Chair from Kingston/Westerly. From the perspective of experts on seventeenth-century New England furniture, such as Robert Trent and Patricia Kane, the Arnold chair is quite ornate.⁸

According to tradition, Benedict Arnold sat in a great chair on 24 November 1663, when he moderated the "Assembly of freeman legally called" in Newport "for the sallome reception of His Majestyes gracious letter pattent." In common usage, a great chair was any armchair of the seventeenth century that was crafted with a high back and elaborate carving. Those assembled voted that Capt. George Baxter, who brought the document from England, should open the three-foot-long Charter Box with the "King's letters and seal" and read it aloud.⁹ The Charter for the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations of 8 July 1663, granted democratic privileges and religious toleration beyond the scope of any other colony.¹⁰

Fifteen years later, in 1678, Governor Arnold died in office, still using the same chair. Although never mentioned in his lengthy will, a so-called chair of state was in the custodial care of several individuals over the century after his death. They are by no means mysterious figures, as their names were inscribed on a brass plaque on the bottom of the chair after it was donated to Redwood Library. A paper label on the bottom of the chair provides a handwritten chronology from 1843, including among others Olyphant, Hornsby, and Gould, names not often recognized in Rhode Island history. Why did these individuals hold onto the chair

8. Robert F. Trent, "New Insights on Early Rhode Island Furniture," *Chipstone* (199). Kane: *Rhode Island Furniture, 1650–1830* [note 2], 139–140.

9. Bartlett, *Recs. of R.I.* [note 3], 508–511.

10. See Cherry Fletcher Bamberg and Judith Crandall Harbold, *John Clarke's World* (Hope, R.I.: Rhode Island Genealogical Society, 2018). This book details the decade-long efforts in London of a Rhode Island founder, minister, physician, and colonial agent Clarke to write and secure the approval by the King for the Charter. They explore the importance of Clarke and his relationships with Roger Williams and Benedict Arnold. The Charter, the box in which it was rolled, and part of the seal are in the Charter Museum at the Rhode Island State House in Providence.

and where was it for much of the eighteenth century? This article will try to answer these questions.

The tools of genealogy—searches of the wills, probate inventories, deeds, obituaries, gravestones, church records, and family genealogies—help unravel the connections. The extant wills and inventories of Arnolds, Vernons, and Wards reveal numerous armchairs and mahogany or oak chairs with leather seats. This was the case for Josiah Arnold, spinster Hannah Ward, and merchant Samuel Vernon. There was no reference to a specific oak armchair with a pine seat, called the Great Chair. Yet this chair was at Redwood Library and Athenaeum in the nineteenth century and at the Newport Historical Society for part of the early twentieth century.

The Arnold Family and the Great Chair

After Governor Arnold died in June 1678, the state legislature “voted that the writings of the colony now in custody of the late Benedict Arnold be brought to the Assembly.” As was the case for decades in Rhode Island history, a committee appointed by the General Assembly came to his Thames Street home and requested from Arnold’s wife Damaris (Westcott) Arnold all official documents of Rhode Island including the Charter.¹¹ The official Rhode Island Colony House was not constructed in Newport until 1739. Since government was small, colony meetings took place in the homes of various leaders and into those leaders’ care the records of state were entrusted. The colony owned no furniture. Whether the new governor, John Cranston, requested the governor’s chair is not recorded, but it seems unlikely.

It is possible to trace the governor’s possessions through many generations. Benedict Arnold made his will in December 1677, six months prior to his death in 1678. The governor left his Newport house on the east side of Thames Street opposite his wharf and his “household stuff” to his wife Damaris (Westcott) Arnold and his two unmarried daughters Freelove and Godsgift. All three died without mentioning a chair. His wife passed away six months after the governor.¹² In 1682, the governor’s daughter Freelove Arnold married wealthy Edward Pelham and eventually moved to a large house on Frank Street near Trinity

11. Bartlett, *Recs. of R.I.* [note 3], 2: 151. The committee consisted of William Leuth, Joseph Torrey, and John Sanford.

12. H. Bullock Thompkins, “Will of Benedict Arnold,” *Rhode Island History* No. 6 (1885-1886): 20–38. Thompkins, “Benedict Arnold, First Governor of Rhode Island,” a paper read at the Newport Historical Society [hereafter NHS], 18 Aug. 1919, Newport, R.I. Benedict and Damaris are buried with huge tablestones in the Governor Benedict Arnold Graveyard, Newport Historic Cemetery 11 (John Eyler Sterling, Barbara J. Austin, Letty R. Champion, *Newport, Rhode Island Colonial Burial Grounds* [hereafter Sterling et al., *Newport Colonial Burial Grounds*], ed. Cherry Fletcher Bamberg, FASG (Hope, R.I.: Rhode Island Genealogical Society, 2009), 378.

Church. Godsgift (Arnold) Bull, wife of Jireh Bull, died in 1691, age 32y 6m, and was buried with her parents and many other relatives.¹³ Freeloove (Arnold) Pelham died in 1711.¹⁴ The probate inventory of Freeloove Arnold Pelham's son Edward and wife Arabella Williams in 1741 includes "1 dozen black back chairs" and "1 dozen Leather chairs" none noted specifically as the great chair or an armchair.¹⁵

Where was the chair if not in the home of Governor Arnold's daughters? A search of the wills of the governor's other children was the next task. The governor's son, Benedict Arnold II (1642–1727) devised to his second wife Sarah Mumford (1668–1746) his house, wharf, and two hundred acres at Point Judith with 201 sheep and 14 head of cattle. Benedict left his oldest son Sion the farm at Beavertail in Jamestown and to his son Benedict 140 acres in Newport.¹⁶ Sarah Mumford Arnold in her will left £1,000 to her daughter Ann and £2000 to be divided among the grandchildren, William, Samuel, Sarah, and Elizabeth. She gave all her household goods to her two daughters.¹⁷

It was not her daughters, but her son Sion Arnold (1674–1753) who ended up with the great chair. In his 1732 will Sion in turn devised his entire estate to his wife Mary (Ward) Arnold (1679–1754). In the probate inventory of 6 June 1754, line 18 contains a remarkable entry: "6 cane chairs with one Great chair £30."¹⁸ His wife Mary died a few months later after a marriage of 53 years, quite a feat in

13. Sterling et al., *Newport Colonial Burial Grounds* [note 12], 378.

14. Freeloove Arnold (1661–1711), who died at 50, made her will on 7 Jan. 1710. Her husband Edward Pelham (1652–1730) never filed the will; rather it was Freeloove's grandson Edward Pelham (1682–1740) who did so. His brother Thomas (1686–1724) had died, his sister Penelope was ill (1680–1732), and his sister Elizabeth Goodson (1684–ca. 1754) was married to Peter Coggeshall (1684–1748) from 1719. There was no probate of the Pelham estate in 1731 as Edward Pelham, Jr., already had possession of the Pelham House on Frank Street by deed from his father (written 12 May 1730 Edward Pelham, Gentleman to Edward Pelham Jr., Son of Gentleman, and recorded 5 July 1731 in Newport Land Evidence, NHS, 7: 71. See Marian Mathison Desrosiers, "Colonial Newport Families and the Old Stone Mill," *Newport History*, 75 (Fall 2006): 29–39. Neither Freeloove nor her husband is known to have a Rhode Island gravestone.

15. Edward Pelham Inventory, Newport Town Council Records, NHS, 8: 152–153, 21 Oct. 1741. See Meredith Colkert, "The Pelhams of England and New England," in *The American Genealogist*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Jan. 1942), 145–151. Meredith Colkert, "Herbert Pelham and His Descendants," *The New England Historical Genealogical Register*, Vol. 33 (1879), 285–295.

16. Elisha S. Arnold, *Arnold Memorial: William Arnold and Providence and Pawtucket, a Genealogy of Historical Descendants* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 1938), 71–72. See also Newport Town Council 4: 204, NHS.

17. Newport Town Council Records, 10: 107, 6 Nov. 1746, NHS.

18. Newport Town Council Records, 11: 164–165, NHS. Sion Arnold's will, made 8 Nov. 1732, was recorded on 4 Sept. 1753. His probate inventory was in Town Council, vol. 11: 164, 169, 24 Sept. 1753. On the same line was "1 wheelbarrow and 2 cords of wood £15, 1 Negro boy named Scipio £400."

those days.¹⁹ In her will Mary appointed her brother Richard Ward (1689–1763) as executor and devised “to his heirs and assigns forever all the remainder of her estate, real and personal.”²⁰

What would make Mary Ward give personal estate to her brother? Who was Richard Ward? He was, frankly, the sort of man who could use an impressive chair. The Ward family of Rhode Island was a political dynasty. Numerous Ward men became governor beginning sixty years after the death of Governor Arnold. Although he was a baby when his father Thomas Ward died, Richard Ward (1689–



Detail of portrait of Richard Ward at the Rhode Island Statehouse. Copy after original pastel portrait by John Singleton Copley, owned by Rhode Island School of Design.

1763), went on to follow his father in governance of the colony. From 1714–1733, Richard Ward was secretary of state (a position then called general recorder) and governor from 1740–1743.²¹ Of the fourteen children born of the marriage of Richard Ward to Mary Tillinghast (1689–1767), three sons took leadership roles in the colony.²² The first son, Thomas Ward (1711–1760), Harvard College class of 1733, was secretary of state for Rhode Island for fourteen years before he died. He married Content Coggeshall. Samuel Ward (1725–1776), the ninth child of Richard and Mary Ward, was the governor from 1762–1763 and again from 1765–1767. He ended his illustrious service as a congressman from Rhode Island, helping to write the Declaration of Independence before dying of smallpox. He married Anna Ray of Block Island. Another son, Henry Ward (1732–1797), husband of Esther Freebody,

served as Rhode Island secretary of state for 38 years.

Richard Ward was the protector of the great chair for less than ten years. When he died in 1763, he left his wife Mary and six daughters “the residue of all personal estate to be divided among them.”²³ His wife Mary (Tillinghast) Ward

19. They are buried in the Common Burying Ground, Newport Historic Cemetery³ (Sterling et al., *Newport Colonial Burial Grounds* [note 12], 292).

20. Will of Mary Ward Arnold, Newport Town Council Records, 11: 226, 6 Jun. 1754, NHS. In addition, Mary Ward Arnold listed fourteen specific bequests to her nieces and nephews of goods such as silver, ceramics, glassware, bedroom textiles, and furniture.

21. Cherry Fletcher Bamberg, FASG, “Notes on Thomas Ward of Newport,” *Rhode Island Roots*, Vol. 38: No. 3 (Sept. 2012), 148–166. Bartlett, *Recs. of R.I.* [note 3], 3: 148–164.

22. James N. Arnold, *Vital Record of Rhode Island 1636–1850* [hereafter Arnold, *RIVR*] (Narragansett Publishing Co., 1893), 4: 25. See John Osborne Austin, *Ancestry of Thirty-Three Rhode Islanders* (Albany: Munsell, 1887), 77.

23. Newport Town Council Records, 14: 6, made 17 July 1755, proved 7 Sept. 1763. Probate inventory 18: 137–138, NHS. Richard Ward gave £1,600 to his two single daughters and

left in turn to her daughters in her will, “all household goods of furniture to be equally divided.” These daughters were Mary (1713) who married Ebenezer Flagg, Amy (1717) who married Samuel Vernon, and Isabel (1719) who married Capt. Huxford Marchant. Mary left specific items to Hannah (1721) who was unmarried and to Elizabeth (1735), the wife of Rev. William Bliss, pastor of the Sabbatarian Church. To sons Henry and Samuel, she left silver and the pews at the Sabbatarian Church. Her son John predeceased her, as did her daughter Margaret (1729) who married Col. Samuel Freebody.²⁴

The great chair ended up at the household of a daughter of Richard and Mary Ward, namely Amy Ward (1717–1792), wife of merchant Samuel Vernon (1712–1792) and then passed to a granddaughter Ann (Vernon) Olyphant. The Vernon couple, who married 29 December 1736 at the Second Congregational Church, had ten children. Amy (Ward) Vernon predeceased her husband by six months, dying on 21 January 1792. Samuel Vernon’s probate records include a great deal of furniture—mahogany tables, leather bottom chairs, walnut and maple desks and cases with drawers—but no great chair.²⁵ It is likely that the great chair was already out of their household before the Vernon parents died.

Ann (Vernon) Olyphant (1754–1828)

Ann Vernon (1754–1828), their youngest child, is the first name listed on the handwritten label on the chair at Redwood Library as its conservator.²⁶ Precisely why and when this member of Newport’s upper crust took on the chair remain unanswered questions, but a look at her family situation during her twenties suggests possibilities. She was single, probably living at home during the Revolution. Her parents and the relatives of their generation among the Vernons and Wards were prosperous but elderly.²⁷ Her siblings had married well and

£500 to support of the minister and “the Church of Christ of Seventh Day Sabbath in Newport.” The inventory page is half destroyed and barely readable.

24. Newport Town Council Records, NHS, 15: 156. Will made 2 July 1766, proved 2 Nov. 1767. See Arthur Meredyth Burke, *Prominent Families of the United States of America*. [1908] (repr., Baltimore, Md.: Clearfield Co., 2009), 234.
25. Probate Inventory of Samuel Vernon, Newport Town Council, Newport City Hall, 2: 258, 10 Aug. 1792.
26. Harrison Ellery, “The Vernon Family and Arms,” *NEHG Register*, Vol. 33 (July 1879), 312–319. Much of the information in the next paragraph is taken from this source.
27. On her father’s side of the family, Ann Vernon’s relatives were talented silversmiths and wealthy merchants involved in trade with the West Indies and Africa. During the American Revolution, William Vernon (1719–1806) and his brother Samuel (1711–1792) were merchants in business together and chose the Patriot cause. William Vernon married Judith Harwood, great-granddaughter of Deputy Governor Clarke and Gov. John Cranston. The third brother Thomas Vernon (1718–1784), who married Mary Sanford, was a Loyalist. Brother Daniel was a silversmith like their father Daniel (1683–1737).



Detail of a portrait of Ann (Vernon) Olyphant, probably by Samuel F.B. Morse, ca. 1826. The portrait, one of a pair with that of David Olyphant, descended in the family until it was sold at auction into private hands in 2015. The website of the Doyle Auctions presents a full line of descent (<https://doyle.com/auctions>).

established their households long before Ann did. Her older brother Samuel Vernon (1745–1809) married Elizabeth Ellery (1764–1857), a daughter of William Ellery, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Her older sister Mary (1742–1776) married Christopher Ellery, merchant, brother of Elizabeth Ellery. Another sister, Amey Vernon (1747–1792) married Samuel King (1749–1819), portrait painter and son of instrument maker Benjamin King.²⁸

After the American Revolution, Ann Vernon, age 32, considered one of “the sprightliest wits of Newport society,” married a man more than twice her age, Dr. David Olyphant (1720–1805) at Trinity Church on 23 October 1785, as his third wife.²⁹ Dr. Olyphant had arrived in America in the late 1740s from Edinburgh, Scotland, supposedly seeking asylum after the defeat at Culloden where he lent support to

“Bonnie Prince Charlie” (Charles Stuart) to regain the throne.³⁰ He settled in Charleston, South Carolina, by 1749. In the American Revolution Dr. Olyphant supported the American forces, serving as a surgeon. Taken prisoner in the Siege of Charleston in 1780, he later became director-general of the Southern Hospitals

Although they were important to the Rhode Island economy, the Vernons were not among Rhode Island’s elected officials.

28. John Osborne Austin, *Genealogy Dictionary Comprising Three Generations of Settlers of Rhode Island* (Albany, NY: J. Munsall, 1867), 407. Harrison Ellery, “The Vernon Family and Arms,” *NEHG Register*, Vol. 33 (July 1879), 312–319. For King, a noted Newport painter, see William B. Saxbe, Jr., CG, FASG, and Cherry Fletcher Bamberg, FASG, “Benjamin King, Instrument Maker of Newport, Rhode Island, and His Family,” *Rhode Island Roots*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (March 2020), 2–21, esp. 12–14.
29. She was called Nancy Vernon at her marriage (“Newport, October 29,” *Newport Mercury*, 29 Oct. 1785, p. 2). A notice of the marriage, describing David Olyphant as “of this city,” appeared in Charleston (“Charleston, November 17,” *Charleston Evening Gazette*, 17 Nov. 1785, p. 2).
30. *Scots and Scots’ Descendants in America*, ed. D. MacDougall (N.Y: Caledonian Publishing Company, 1917), Part 5, online at www.electricscotland.com/history/descendants.

there and later served in the South Carolina senate. He came to Newport after the war in 1785 to recover his health.³¹

Ann (Vernon) Olyphant and her husband settled in a home on Church Street given to them by her father.³² The couple did not move up the hill into the larger Vernon family home at 91 Church Street, until the passing of her parents in 1792. The house then became known as the Olyphant House.³³ The Olyphant House was a short walk from the Vernon House of Elizabeth Almy (Ellery) Vernon (1764–1857) and Samuel Vernon (1757–1834) at the corner of Clarke Street and Mary Street.

When Ann (Vernon) Olyphant died 3 July 1828, her children had scattered. Her unmarried daughter Ann lived in North Carolina; her son Dr. David Washington Cincinnatus Olyphant lived in New Jersey. Ann Olyphant's son was a merchant in the China trade and a founder of the American missions in China. Olyphant & Co. did not trade in opium but rather in the export of American goods in exchange for tea, porcelain, and silk. Perhaps because her children were no longer living permanently in Newport, she thought it best to leave the great chair to an old friend, Thomas Hornsby, a local historian. Hornsby is the next name recorded on the paper under the seat of the chair at Redwood Library.

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31. Susan Dick Hoffius and E. Brooke Fox, *Medical University of South Carolina* (Charleston, S.C.: The Authors, 2011), online on Google Books. Address by Henry E. Turner, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, No. 5 (Aug. 1889), Vol. 13: 145–147. South Carolina newspapers show, however, that Olyphant was still closing out his partnership and fighting legal battles there for several years after his marriage.
 32. Newport Land Evidence Records, Newport City Hall, Samuel Vernon to David Olyphant et ux, 6 June 1787, 4: 239; 12 March 1794, 5: 239; 22 Oct. 1810, 12: 50. The Olyphant couple also acquired 76 acres between Almy Pond and the sea along part of the Coggeshall Farm, when Ann sold her inherited property in Jamaica. Ann owned at least three properties, Nos. 13, 15, and 17 Church Street, which she advertised for sale or lease several times in the *Newport Mercury* between May 1809 and Aug. 1812.
 33. “Died,” *Newport Mercury*, 6 Apr. 1805, p. 3. The same extended obituary appeared in Charleston papers as well, e.g., “Charleston,” *Charleston Courier*, 29 May 1805, p. 3. “Died,” *Newport Mercury*, 5 July 1828, p. 3. Her funeral was to be from her house on Church St. The Olyphant home at 91 Church Street existed until the end of the nineteenth century. On Ann's death the house went to William Vernon (1788–1867) and then to his daughter Eliza De Wolfe (Vernon) Thayer (1814–1899). Eliza and her husband Rev. Thatcher Thayer (1811–1893) lived there from 1850 until their deaths. The Sanborn Map of 1884 shows the house still standing while the Sanborn Map of 1921 shows an empty lot next to Thayer School. It was not treated in Downing and Scully's *Architectural Heritage of Newport* (1952, 1967).

Thomas Hornsby (1766–1857)

Thomas Hornsby, Jr., was born in Newport in 1766, son of Thomas Hornsby and Margaret Wade. While his father, probably a mariner, died the next year in Kingston, Jamaica, Thomas persisted in using “Jr.” after his name all his long life. He was also to lose a son, grandson, and brother-in-law who were mariners. His



Thomas Hornsby, Jr., c. 1790–1810, watercolor on ivory, 01.376. Collection of the Newport Historical Society. Hornsby is wearing a yellow jacket and white vest.

son, Capt. Thomas Hornsby (1800–1839), master of the brig *Robert* of New York, died off Rio Congo, Coast of Africa on 12 May 1839, and his grandson, Thomas Hornsby (1838–1854), a sailor on the bark *Antelope* died in Honolulu 25 January 1854.³⁴ His brother-in-law Benning Pickering (1758–1806), husband of his sister Ann, died in Africa. They, his mother Margaret, and sister Mary (“Polly”) McClish are all memorialized on a monument in the Common Burying Ground, Newport Historic Cemetery 3.³⁵

His mother Margaret married again on 17 May 1771, this time to a John McClish or McLeish or McClash when Thomas was about five-years-old.³⁶ The family of four (a couple, a boy, and a girl) was counted in Newport in 1774; Margaret only, as head of household in 1782 and 1790.³⁷ An undocumented and ambiguous biographical note on Thomas Hornsby, Jr. (Find A Grave, Memorial ID 64502788) says that Hornby testified in 1840 for William Clarke, one of John McClish’s shipmates, in a Revolutionary War pension application, but no verification has been found.

One thing is certain: Thomas Hornsby loved Newport and was in turn the warm friend of many residents. Over the decades he knew everyone in town, the

34. “Died,” *Rhode-Island Republican*, 24 July 1839, p. 3; *Newport Mercury* 20 July 1839 and “Died,” *Newport Mercury*, 8 April 1854, p. 3.

35. Sterling et al., *Newport Colonial Burial Grounds* [note 12], 125.

36. They married at the Second Congregational Church, Newport (Arnold, *RIVR* [note 22], 8: 467).

37. Linda L. Mathew, “1774 Census of Rhode Island: Newport (Part 4),” *Rhode Island Roots*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Dec. 2009), 198. In 1782 the household consisted of one woman, one boy, and three girls (Jay Mack Holbrook, *Rhode Island 1782 Census* [Oxford, Mass.: Holbrook Research Institute, 1979], 84). In 1790 Margaret headed a household of four women and a boy (1790 U.S. Census, Newport, Newport Co., R.I., p. 303).

sons and fathers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Mr. Hornsby befriended many widows of Newport including the widow of John Banister II (1744–1807), Christian Stelle Banister (1747–1830), during the last two decades of her life.³⁸ Even at the end of his life he enjoyed chatting. On 14 June 1856, Mary (Robinson) Hunter (1787–1863) recorded in her diary a visit to Thomas Hornsby, 91, and his sister Polly McLish, 84. She welcomed the opportunity to visit and listen to his stories about the spiritual teacher Sarah Osborn and the Robinson family. She commented on how Mr. Hornsby “devoted his life to nursing Newport’s sick and elderly.”³⁹

Thomas Hornsby suffered a severe illness some thirty years before his death, probably why he made his will in 1814.⁴⁰ Crippled in the last decades of his life, he still walked the local scene, but using crutches.⁴¹ He noted the changes that occurred in Newport since the American Revolution and later wrote about what he saw and heard from local citizens. Hornsby may have been the person interviewed for eight articles that appeared from the 7th to the 18th December 1849 in the *Newport Daily Advertiser*, published by George Champlin Mason. Detailed are the owners and locations of homes along Washington Street, Bridge Street, and Thames Street, as well as businesses like furniture making, spermaceti candles, and distilleries. Mason said that the information was given to him by someone in Newport over eighty years of age born before 1770.⁴² These articles are frequently cited as a valuable early source of information, especially about Newport cabinetmakers.

From 1803 to 1835, Thomas Hornsby served as one of three commissioners appointed by the probate court in Newport to interview those who had claims against the estates of deceased who were insolvent or were widows. He served a few times with Stephen Gould. City record books show that Hornsby completed the probate inventory for John Banister II in 1807, Christian Banister in 1830, and their son John III in 1831.⁴³

According to his obituary, Thomas Hornsby was a faithful member of the Church of United Brethren, the Moravian Church, which once stood on the site of Kay Chapel. The reporter added: “from early life [he] was a devout, earnest

38. In her will Christian Banister gave “her Bible with silver clasps to Mr. Hornsby” (Will Book, 8: 474, Newport City Hall).

39. Thomas R. Hazard, *Recollections of Olden Times: Rowland Robinson of Narragansett and his Unfortunate Daughter Hannah* (Newport: John P. Sanborn, 1879), 109.

40. Newport Wills, made 10 Oct. 1814, proved 12 Oct. 1857, Newport City Hall, 18: 655–657.

41. “Saturday Morning, September 19, 1857,” *Newport Mercury*, 19 Sept. 1857, p. 2.

42. The articles are copied in the Joseph W. Blaine Papers, Ms 1079, Box 8 Folder 4, RIHS.

43. Notices in the *Newport Mercury* indicate Hornsby’s role in probate proceedings for Dr. Isaac Senter, his son Dr. Horace Senter, David Nason, Benjamin Gardiner, William Crooke, Dr. Edmund Waring, Mercy Adams, and Susan Mason.

christian, expressing an abiding faith in the love of Christ.” The small congregation included Ann (Vernon) Olyphant, who lived across the street from the church.⁴⁴

When Mr. Hornsby died at the age of 92, the inventory of his estate showed over \$1,200 in china, silver, gold, shares in banks, mahogany chairs, tables, desk, and bedsteads, a clock, and books. His will and probate do not mention the great chair.”⁴⁵ Thomas Hornsby, according to records given to Redwood Library, had devised the Arnold Chair to Stephen Wanton Gould long before. Stephen Gould died in 1838, almost two decades before Thomas Hornsby. Why did the older man select Stephen Gould? They were certainly neighbors. Hornsby lived at #21 West Thames Street next door to Stephen and Hannah Gould, #19 West Thames Street. The homes were on the harborside near Arch Avenue, also known as Marsh Court.⁴⁶ More importantly, they shared the love of Newport history.

Stephen Wanton Gould (1781–1838)

Stephen Gould was the next name on the paper under the seat of the Arnold Chair at Redwood Library. He was an apprentice to clockmaker David Williams from 1796–1802 and helped to make some of Williams’s clocks. Stephen Gould kept a *Diary of an Apprenticeship*.⁴⁷ When he opened his own shop, he kept a *Memorandum of Watches Repaired from 1807-1827*. During the decade of the 1820s, Stephen Gould called himself a clockmaker, but according to his accounts he repaired and renovated clocks and watches rather than building them. Clockmaking in Newport pretty much ended in the 1820s as “industrialization and specialization made it easier for jewelers to acquire clocks made elsewhere.” He also kept a letter book and spiritual journals in which he chronicled his times, the

44. “Saturday Morning, September 19, 1857,” *Newport Mercury*, 19 Sept. 1857, p. 2. United Brethren Records, Arnold, *RIVR* [note 22], 7: 618.

45. Will of Thomas Hornsby, 18: 655, inventory 20 Oct. 1857, 19: 315–316, 338, NCH. He left many items of silver to his two sisters, Ann (McClish) (Pierce) Pickering and Sally (Hornsby) Richardson of Newport. He had so much furniture that he left \$25 for its storage.

46. “Newport Past and Present, 1700–1800–1849,” Article 3 of an 8-part series, *Newport Daily Advertiser*, published by George Champlin Mason, 12 Dec. 1849. Joseph W. Blaine Papers, Mss 1079, Box 8, Folder 4, RIHS. West Thames Street, South of Marsh’s Court (Arch Ave) was the property of “Jonathan Marsh, descendent of Walter Clarke,” and owned by the Gould family in 1770 and 1800. “Newport in 1840: Index to 1840 House Survey by Elnathan Manchester including index to people, citations from Newport newspapers etc. in 1840 compiled by Joseph W. Blaine” [hereafter *Newport 1840: House Survey*], unfinished, bound typescript, NHS. *Boyd’s Newport Street Directory 1856* (Newport: C.M. Hammett, 1856) has Hornsby at 93 West Thames and Hannah Gould Widow at 73 West Thames.

47. Richard T. Champlin, “Clockmakers of Newport,” *Newport History* No. 168 (Fall 1977), 50: 77–89.

people, and daily business events.⁴⁸ Gould wrote a history of his wife's family, the Rodmans. Two of his wife's relatives were founders of Redwood Library, namely Clarke Rodman (1699–1752) who married Anne Coggeshall and Walter Rodman (1719–1753) who married Rebecca Redwood.⁴⁹

The voting men of Newport viewed Stephen Gould as integral to the political leadership. Articles in the *Newport Mercury* from June 1828 through 1838 show that he served as clerk of town meeting, tax assessor (1828–1836), and Town Treasurer (1836–1838). During the early 1820s, distinguished men in the state discussed ways to preserve Rhode Island history, persuading the General Assembly to incorporate a Rhode Island Historical Society. Legislators appropriated an annual sum of \$500 to “procure and preserve the history of the state.” Rhode Island artifacts and documents were to be catalogued and held in two parts of the state.

The “Northern Cabinet” was for the mainland of Rhode Island and the “Southern Cabinet” primarily for the history of Newport County.⁵⁰ Rhode Island was looking for ways to capture the memories and showcase the material culture of the Revolutionary War generation. Militia lists, portraits, almanacs, newspapers,



Stephen Wanton Gould, undated drawing, presented to NHS by E.W. Gould. Object FIC.2020.122. Collections of Newport Historical Society. The jacket is shaded blue, the hair black.

48. *Letter Book of Stephen Gould 1817–1828*, No. 152, NHS. When Gould was executor for the estate of Capt. Asa Brooks, he mentioned Thomas Hornsby three times as traveling on business for him or taking care of packing Brooks's household goods. *A Quiet Life as Revealed in the Spiritual Journals of Stephen Gould 1803–1836*, 11 volumes, Transcribed from the original manuscripts by Rosalind C. Wiggins, NHS. Most of the journals relate his daily prayers, Quaker meetings in Newport and elsewhere, sermons by Father Rodman, deaths and homilies on those who died over a period of those thirty years in Newport.

49. *Genealogy of the Rodman Family from 1675 to 1822*, Ms. 559. Redwood Library and Athenaeum.

50. “Cabinets of curiosities” existed in Europe from the sixteenth century; they were furniture used to display gems and corals from explorations and skeletons and fossils from studies of natural history.

pamphlets, and sermons—in fact, any documents or artifacts of that era—would be of interest to later generations.⁵¹

Stephen Gould was one of the leaders who volunteered to serve as caretaker and librarian for the Southern Cabinet for the initial years of 1822–1829 and for the years 1835–1837.⁵² From the beginning, Redwood Library and Athenaeum offered space for both books and document storage. Although the Newport Historical Society was founded in 1854, the institution did not have a building for storing records or artifacts until 1887.⁵³ The Rhode Island Historical Society gave the bulk of their collection relating to Newport to the Newport Historical Society in 1878.⁵⁴

Stephen Gould was an exceptional choice for conservator of the great chair because of his interest in and writing about Newport history. His ancestors were of the illustrious Wanton and Gould families. His mother, Hannah Wanton (1747–1831) had married James Gould, tailor (1739–1812) on 7 December 1780 at the Quaker Meeting House. James Gould is said to have made clothes for British Generals Percy and Prescott during the British occupation (1776–1779) and after they left, Continental uniforms for Rhode Island.⁵⁵ James Gould depended on work as a tailor to support not only his own family but that of his mother and three sisters as well.⁵⁶

Hannah Wanton had numerous relatives who served in Rhode Island government and intermarried with the Goulds. The Wantons were another important family in Newport history with governors, deputy governors, and colony treasurers in Hannah's family tree. One, John Wanton, was the person whom historian George Champlin Mason believed to have hidden the "colony flag" in his attic.

51. Paul Campbell, "Rhode Island Historical Society Library," [hereafter Campbell, "R.I. Historical Society Library"], *Consortium of Rhode Island Academic and Research Libraries Newsletter*, Vol. 2 (Nov. 1983) No. 3: 1–6.

52. Benjamin Howland, Annual Reports of the Southern Cabinet 1824–1839, Box 64, NHS. Howland was town clerk for fifty years and wrote lists of donated items, such as a cartridge box and a portrait by Gilbert Stuart at age 9. He did not list names of donors. He served as caretaker of the Southern Cabinet from 1829–1835 and 1838–1877. George Champlin Mason (1820–1894), architect and historian, and George Gordon King (1807–1870) who made a fortune in the China trade, also were caretakers.

53. *Handbook of Newport Historical Society* (Newport, NHS, 1940), 1–3.

54. Campbell, "R.I. Historical Society Library," [note 50].

55. *One Hundred Years of the Savings Bank of Newport* (Boston: Walton Printing Co., 1919), 43.

56. Taylor Hastie, James Gould: A Merchant Tailor in Revolutionary Newport, MS Thesis, University of Rhode Island, 1991. Hannah Wanton's mother was Mary Clarke (1701–1750) daughter of Samuel Clarke (1672–1769) of Jamestown and Westerly. Her father was Stephen Wanton (1709–1760).

Edward Wanton, shipbuilder and very prominent Quaker leader in Massachusetts, had four sons: Joseph, William, John, and Michael. Joseph (1664–1754), the oldest, arrived in what was to become Tiverton, Bristol Co., R.I., then part of Plymouth Colony, in 1688 and married Sarah Freeborn. He built ships on the north end of Nanaquaket Pond and preached to local Quakers. Two brothers moved to Newport, Quakers still but also involved in politics and commerce. William (1670–1733), a sea captain, served in the militia. He married Ruth Bryant and became speaker of the house and Rhode Island governor from 1733–1734. John (1672–1733) married Mary Stover and became a deputy governor in the 1720s, then governor from 1734–1740. Michael (1679–1711) the eighth and last child, succeeded his father as leader of the Quakers in Scituate, Massachusetts where he married Mary Mew. Their son Stephen Wanton (1709–1760) married Mary Clarke of Jamestown 1738, and the daughter Hannah Wanton married James Gould.⁵⁷

The early Newport Wantons owned three properties on Thames Street in proximity. William Wanton's three-story home was on the harbor on Swan's Wharf, #87-89 West Thames Street. In other words, he lived just south of the home of Hannah and Stephen Wanton Gould. Living next door to his father William, Joseph Wanton was the popular governor of Rhode Island just before the Revolution from 1764-1775.⁵⁸ Governor John Wanton, William's brother, lived across the street in a house on the east side of Thames Street opposite Swan's Wharf, at #78, 80, 82 Thames Street. His immediate neighbors to the north were the Goulds and Cozzens.⁵⁹

When Stephen Wanton Gould, a man who was open, kind, and generous, died in 1838, his contributions to Newport history were many. One news article noted that this man, born during the Revolution, retained that era's dress style of breeches.⁶⁰ Stephen Gould left all his personal estate to his wife, Hannah (Rodman) Gould (1780–1860).⁶¹ Hannah was the daughter of Abigail Lawton

57. Wilkins Updike, *The History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett, Rhode Island*, three vols. (Boston: Merrymount Press, 1907), 2, Part 2, Endnotes 603, 604, 605: 274–275.

58. John R. Bartlett, *History of the Wanton Family of Newport, Rhode Island* (Providence: 1878), 34. Michael's daughter married Gideon Freeborn (see Rachel Peirce's article in this journal). The House Survey of Newport 1840 [note 46]. By mid-century, Penelope Lawton owned that property. The *City Atlas of 1876* (Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins, 1876), Plate E. Col. Robert B. Lawton owned the William Wanton House.

59. House Survey of Newport 1840 [note 46]. The *City Atlas of 1876* [note 58] shows James Horsewell as owner.

60. "Gould, Stephen," Obituary 1 Oct. 1838, Vertical file, NHS.

61. Will of Stephen Gould, 20 Apr. 1811, Newport Town Council and Probate, 12: 24, Newport City Hall.

(1753–1838) and Clarke Rodman (1750–1838).⁶² Hannah survived her husband Stephen Wanton Gould by two decades, as did Thomas Hornsby.

Isaac Gould (1783–1853)

Hannah gave all the Gould furniture to her brother-in-law Isaac Gould, her husband's younger brother. Her inventory includes an "Arm Chair with Flag bottom," valued at \$50, and "8 Arm Chairs" valued at \$16, but no specific mention of a great chair.⁶³ When Rev. Edward Peterson published his history of Newport in 1853, he included a paragraph on the "chair of state," noting: "It belongs to our respected fellow-citizen, Isaac Gould, Esq., at whose house in Thames-street, it may at any time be seen." A wistful eight-stanza poem eulogizes Governor Arnold, sadly addressing the chair as the only surviving witness to the wonderful day of the charter's arrival, ending: "Old chair, thou art alone,/That dream has fled, and gay no more, the world glides careless by,/ The Chair of State no more is great, or glitters in the eye."⁶⁴

Isaac Gould was a tailor, working at the shop on Thames Street established in 1763 in a seventeenth-century building originally owned by early generations of Clarkes. Isaac trained two sons, Nathan and David, who continued in this skilled trade. On any given day passersby "could see the men through the windows, working with their scissors or measuring customers for their garments." They advertised as Gould and Sons, Drapers and Tailors Shop at #70–72 East Thames Street, near the Town Hall (Colony House) and the mall (Washington Square).⁶⁵ Isaac Gould was far more than a modest tailor: he served as a city councilor and then state legislator. He was a close friend of Isaac Touro as well as a director of the Savings Bank of Newport from 1819–1853.⁶⁶

In 1810 Isaac Gould married Sarah Hammett, daughter of Nathaniel and Catherine (Yates) Hammett of Newport. The couple purchased a property on the east side of Thames Street in 1823 from Samuel Vernon (1757–1834).⁶⁷ Reverend

62. Rodman ran a school for nearly fifty years at the southwest corner of Mary Street and Spring Street (Ruth B. Franklin, "Some Early Schools and Schoolmasters of Newport," *Newport Historical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 96 [Jan. 1936], 26).

63. Will of Hannah Rodman Gould, 11 Nov. 1838, Town Council Probate, 20: 212. Will of Isaac Gould, 17: 276, Inventory 32: 420–421, Newport City Hall.

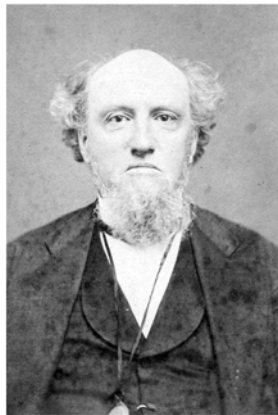
64. Peterson, *History of Rhode Island and Newport* [note 4], 74–75.

65. *Newport Mercury*, 1916 Vertical file, NHS. House Survey of 1840 compiled by Blaine in 1983, *Newport Street Directory of 1856* (Newport: Charles M. Hammett, 1856), *Newport Street Directory of 1867* (Newport: A.J. Ward, 1867), and the *City Atlas of Newport* (Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins, 1876), all at the NHS, show the same location.

66. Rebecca Gould Mitchell, *The Goulds of Rhode Island* (Providence: A. Crawford Green, 1875).

67. "Newport Then and Now," Article 7 of 8-part series, *Newport Daily Advertiser*, 17 Dec. 1849, Blaine Papers, RIHS. The house that Isaac Gould purchased from Vernon on the

Peterson said that he saw the great chair Benedict Arnold in the Gould house. Isaac Gould or perhaps his wife may have lived in or spent time at the John Wanton house on Thames Street, taking care of an ailing relative who lived there. His son Nathan H. Gould wrote to a Masonic Lodge brother in 1870: "During the last years of her life before dying in 1839, Hannah Hull, great granddaughter of Gov. John Wanton lived at the house while in declining health ... My father Isaac Gould was her guardian and had oversight of her property."⁶⁸ The property included at least one trunk of seventeenth-century documents, papers relating to Masonry and Jewish families who arrived in the 1600s, that Gould shared with Rev. Peterson. The governor is said to have arbitrated disputes with the opposing parties depositing their valuables with him.



Left: Nathan Hammett Gould, cabinet photo by D.A. Williams, Newport, ca. 1871, 2020.121. Right: David James Gould. Photographic print ca. 1870. 2020.120, Both images from the Collections of Newport Historical Society.

east side of Thames Street was next door to his shop, i.e. immediately south. That property had "descended to Samuel Vernon from his mother, who was one of the heirs of Walter Clarke, first proprietor of the land." Three houses to the south of Isaac Gould's home was the house of "Gov. John Wanton in possession of his heirs" during and after the Revolution. By 1849 James Horseywell and William L. Melville were co-owners.

68. "Nathan H. Gould to Brother Gardiner, 1870," *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Masons of Massachusetts 1869* (Boston: Solon Thornton, 1870), 359. See the extended essay on his Masonic activities in Samuel Harrison Baynard, Jr., *History of The Supreme Council*, 33°... (Boston: Privately printed, 1938), 426–428.

Nathan Hammett Gould (1817–1895)

Two of Isaac Gould's five children, sons Nathan and David, were custodians of Arnold's great chair.⁶⁹ Nathan H. Gould was the next to inherit the great chair. He married Emily J. Rogers of Boston in 1845 and served as treasurer of the Newport Historical Society in the 1850s. Nathan and his brother David took over from their father the care for the Jewish cemetery at the corner of Kay Street and Bellevue Avenue, Newport. Judah Touro left bequests to the brothers in his will of 1854.⁷⁰

Nathan Gould began his service to the Redwood Library by serving on numerous committees from 1841 until 1852 when he became a member of the Board of Directors, continuing on that body until he left Newport. Gould was a compiler of Newport history, recording each year the numerous local events and activities of residents.⁷¹

Nathan Gould and his wife left Newport to join their daughter Emily (Gould) Onderdonk and her family in San Antonio, Texas, in 1876.⁷² He left the Arnold chair behind, and his brother, David James Gould (1812–1879) made the actual presentation to Redwood Library at the Board meeting on 12 March 1877. Like his brother, David Gould, a prominent lawyer in Newport, took an active role in library activities and was friends with George G. King and Duncan C. Pell.⁷³ Since Stillman gives Thames St. as the location where he took the two 1874 photographs of the chair—the one opposite the first page of this article and the one on page 132—the chair may have already been kept at his business, D.J. & Isaac Gould, drapers and tailors, at 70 Thames Street.

Both provenance records attached to the chair state that it was used by Governor Samuel Ward King. It is interesting in that Samuel Ward King (1786–1851) of Johnston was not related to Newport families of Ward or King. As governor of the state during the turbulent years from 1839–1843, he took the

69. *Annals of Redwood Library and Athenaeum* [hereafter Mason, *Redwood Library*], ed. George Champlin Mason (Newport: Redwood Library, 1891), 357.

70. Max J. Kohler, *Judah Touro: Merchant and Philanthropist*, Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society no. 13 (1905): 93–111. Touro gave \$2,000 “to Nathaniel and David Gould, sons of his esteemed friend Isaac Gould, for continuing to oversee improvements in the Jewish cemetery in Newport.”

71. Nathan Gould Diaries 1835–1874, three vols. No. 1324, NHS. Vol. 1 1835–1841, vol. 2 1842–1855, and vol. 3 1856–1874. The pages are filled with daily historical events. In Jan 1842, “the town took down the old theater inside the Brick Market, preparing to make it over into a lecture room.” In March 1842, “Town Hall on Broadway was finished, and a bell received, weighing 227 tons from a church in Spain... Isaiah Rogers commenced the building of a granite fence around the Jews Burying Ground.”

72. Frederick Chabot, *Genealogies of Early San Antonio Families: The Makers of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Privately published, Printed by Artes Graficas, 1937), 266.

73. Mason, *Redwood Library* [note 69], 160, 176, 237, 318, 355.



Left: Charter Chair, photograph by William James Stillman, 1874, Thames St., Collections of Newport Historical Society, P841. Right: same chair today, restored. Courtesy of Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, FUR.002.

political action of calling for federal troops to oppose Thomas Wilson Dorr's attempts at expanding suffrage rights. Thousands of urban commercial and manufacturing workers who could not meet the legal property or birth requirements demonstrated in favor of Dorr's call for their right to vote. When the General Assembly dropped the Charter of 1663 and wrote the Constitution of 1843, however, Governor King supported the new governing document in January 1843. Thousands more male citizens voted in May 1843, if they could pay a one-dollar poll tax for the schools.⁷⁴

Confirmation that Governor King sat in the great chair comes from an address by Brown University Professor William Giles Goddard (1794–1846), who, like the governor, was from Johnston. Both had attended Brown University, although Samuel King left without a degree. Goddard described the 1843 election in which Samuel Ward King yielded his governorship: "Governor King ... during the ceremony was seated in the identical oaken chair, in which, one hundred and eighty years ago, Governor Arnold received the Charter..."⁷⁵ The moment was dramatic: the 1663 charter was being replaced by a new, more democratic constitution. The symbolism of the chair—the continuity between the old and the new—was brilliant. The chair, likely already fragile, was probably borrowed for

74. Erik J. Chaput, *The People's Martyr: Thomas Wilson Dorr and the Rhode Island Rebellion* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2013). Foreign-born immigrants and Native Americans were not allowed to vote.

75. William Giles Goddard, *An Address to the People of Rhode Island* (Providence: Knowles and Vose, 1843), 77.

the occasion. Ten years later, in 1853, Peterson's poem described a sad piece of furniture: "The Chair of State no more is great, or glitters in the eye." Thirty years later, in 1874, the chair appeared in its photographs as decrepit, although still protected as an important piece of Rhode Island history.

In conclusion, we now have a clearer understanding of what happened to the Arnold chair and the colony flag. Sion Arnold inherited his grandfather's great chair from his father Benedict Arnold. Sion in turn left it to his wife Mary (Ward) Arnold, who put her brother Governor Richard Ward in control of her furniture. One of Gov. Richard Ward's daughters, Amy (Ward) Vernon inherited the chair. Her daughter Ann (Vernon) Olyphant became the next owner. When Ann (Vernon) Olyphant died in 1828, the chair passed in succession to two Newport historians, Thomas Hornsby and then Stephen Wanton Gould, men who loved Newport and understood the importance of sharing the history of her people and places. When Gould passed away in 1838, he left the chair to his wife, Hannah (Rodman) Gould. The last family to have the chair in their home or shop were the Goulds.

The flag was in the attic of a home once owned by a Wanton and reunited with the chair by at least 1869. With the evidence available from wills, probate, and land ownership, the great chair and the Rhode Island flag presently at Redwood Library were saved for posterity by the Newport families of Arnold, Ward, Vernon, Wanton, and Gould.

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