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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note:

Mark Twain once commented, "There is a sumptuous variety about the New England weather that compels the stranger's admiration and regret. The weather is always doing something there....Yes, one of the brightest gems in the New England weather is the dazzling uncertainty of it. There is only one thing certain about it: you are certain there is going to be plenty of it." Weather has always been a daily focal point in the lives of Newporters and New Englanders. We have prospered in the benevolence of its calm and suffered in its rage.

This issue of *Newport History* examines the impact of severe weather in Newport and New England by examining four events: The "Hessian Storm" of 1778; the Great Gale of 1815; the "Year Without a Summer in 1816"; and the hail storm of 1894. Each of these storms left a mark on the area, figuratively and literally, that grows or shrinks in severity according to the teller of the tale. Such is the nature of our memories when it comes to weather. In the telling of these stories, the authors of "Weathering Changes: Notable Storms in 18th and 19th Century New England" draw heavily from historical and literary sources, letting local residents and survivors describe the weather in their own words.

The material for this article was first presented in spring 2000 by staff members of the Society during its 17th Annual Lecture Series: "Weathering Changes: The History of Climate and Storms in Newport and New England."

Also in this issue, Frank Snyder recounts the circumstances that led to "The Court-Martial of Lieutenant J. B. Carey" in 1879 during the Anglo-Zulu War. Carey, a descendent of the Brenton family of Newport, was convicted of "Misbehaviour before the Enemy" for his actions during a fatal attack on Louis, the Prince Imperial of France.

Frank Snyder is a retired naval officer, who is currently a research fellow at the United States Naval War College in Newport, and a former member of the Board of Directors of the Newport Historical Society.