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Editor's Note

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Editor’s Note

From Fort Adams to Crème Brûlée to a printing press, this issue of Newport History is an example of the diversity of topics available to researchers of Newport County’s past. The feature article, written by Theodore L. Gatchel, examines the defenses and fortifications of Narragansett Bay. Many of these forts are mere ruins and shadows of their past role of defending Newport and the bay; others, like Fort Adams, are once again being recognized as marvels of architecture, science, and weaponry. Theodore Gatchel helps us to understand the importance of these works of fortification to Newport, and reflected in this story is Newport’s importance within the colonies and the United States. In the companion article in this issue, Eileen G. Slocum provides a wonderful and vivid recollection of growing up on Bellevue Avenue. With a wry sense of humor, Mrs. Slocum dwells fondly on her home, grandparents, parties, and the “festive” meals she enjoyed as a child.

Colonel Theodore L. Gatchel retired from the United States Marine Corps in 1991 after a thirty-year career of command and staff assignments afloat and ashore, including two combat tours in Vietnam, service as a special advisor to the supreme allied commander, Europe, and the chairmanship of the Operations Department of the Naval War College. Colonel Gatchel has a B.S. in geological engineering from the University of Oklahoma and an M.S. in management from the Naval Postgraduate School. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Newport Historical Society and the Continental Sloop Providence, and on the Committee of Management of the Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection at Brown University. He has written on a wide range of military topics for professional journals, military magazines, and newspapers, and his articles have received awards from the Marine Corps Gazette and the Naval Institute Proceedings. He is currently writing a book on amphibious warfare.

Eileen G. Slocum is a descendant of John Carter Brown and Roger Williams, as well as William Watts Sherman. She is active in several philanthropic and non-profit organizations, including the Redwood Library, the Newport Art Museum, the Preservation Society of Newport County, and the Newport Historical Society. Mrs. Slocum also takes an active interest in local and national politics, having supported the candidacies of several prominent Republicans. Her husband, John J. Slocum, is a distinguished former diplomat who served at posts in Cairo, Bonn, and Brussels. The Slocums have three children: John J. Slocum, Jr., Beryl, and Marguerite.

Finally, in “From the Collection,” we examine the James Franklin printing press. The arrival of this press in the eighteenth century signaled and facilitated Newport’s transformation from a provincial town to a cosmopolitan colonial city.