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The Newport Historical Society has maintained a library and museum of Newport and Rhode Island history since its incorporations in 1854. Three centuries of political, business and family manuscripts, including the early records of the Town Council housed for the City of Newport, together with important holdings of maps, prints, photographs, newspapers and maritime memorabilia, are preserved by the Society as are furniture, silver, paintings and ceramics which give it a representative regional collection of the American decorative arts.

Incorporated into the Society’s fireproof building is the 1729 Newport Seventh Day Baptist Church. In addition the Society owns the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House (1675), the Friends Meeting House (1669), and Green End Fort.

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The Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House and the Friends Meeting House are open June to Labor Day. Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Newport History solicits original articles on any aspect of Newport County history. All submissions will be considered by the editorial committee for publication. Obtain information from the editor, Eileen Warburton, at Society headquarters.
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FRONTISPICE: A Map of the American continents at the end of the 18th century. From The American Universal Geography, or A View of the Present State of All the Empires, States, and Republics in the Known WORLD and of The United States of America in Particular, in Two Parts. (Boston, 1796), Page 37.
FROM THE EDITOR

In the commercial history of Newport the connection between this city and South America has been a constant feature. Connoisseurs of Newport furniture will recall, for example, that mahogany began to be imported from Honduras after Jamaican supplies of the fine wood were exhausted. Furthermore, throughout the 18th century, trade with the Spanish Main was the principal source of hard currency for Newport merchants.

The contents of this issue of *Newport History* shed some light on the diplomatic connections between Newport and the South American continent during the early decades of the Republic. Oliver Hazard Perry's brief embassy to Venezuela, described and evaluated here by Dr. Evelyn Cherpak of the Naval War College, is but one example of a prominent citizen of Newport called to represent the United States in this other America. Similarly, the correspondence between Catharine Dennis and Mary Hunter, the first excerpts of which appear in this issue, was occasioned by a diplomatic mission to Brazil. In reading the eleven-year cycle of letters in its entirety, it is interesting to note how frequently the four sea-going sons of the two families are able to call in at their friends' houses, whether in Newport or in Rio de Janeiro.

— E.H.W.