

(This letter is written to...)

Feb 25, 1869

Hon. Stephen Salisbury
President of American Antiquarian Society

Dear Sirs, A record has been carefully preserved in my family, which throws some light upon the first conflict between the American States and Great Britain. I send it to you, hoping it may serve as a nucleus, around which other information may be gathered from the descendants of the parties concerned in the transaction.

In Cooper's Naval History of the U. States p.p.31.32.33. Vol. I occurs the following statement relating to the first conflict between this country & Gr. Britain. "One of the first overt acts of resistance that took place in this celebrated struggle, occurred in 1772, in the waters of Rhode Island. A vessel of war had been stationed on the coast to enforce the laws and a small schooner called the Gaspe, with a light armament and twenty-seven men, was employed as a tender, to run into the shallow waters of that coast. On the 17th of June, 1772, a Providence packet that plied between New York & Rhode Island, named the Hannah, and commanded by Capt. Linzee hove in sight of the man-of-war, on her passage up the bay. The Hannah was ordered to bring to, in order to be examined, but her master refused to comply; and being fanned by a fresh southerly breeze, that was fast sweeping him out of gun shot. The Gaspe was signaled to follow. The chase continued for five & twenty miles, (end of page one) under a force of sail, when the Hannah coming up near with a bar, with which her master was familiar and drawing less water than the schooner. Capt. Linzee led the latter on a shoal, where she stuck. The tide following, the Gaspe served as was not in a condition to be removed for several hours. The news of the chase was circulated on the arrival of the Hannah at Providence. A strong feeling was excited among the population, and towards evening the town drummer appeared in the streets, assembling the people. A crowd being collected, the drummer led his followers in front of a shed, when a man disguised as an Indian suddenly appeared on the roof, and proclaimed a secret expedition for that night inviting all of "stout hearts" to assemble on the wharf, precisely at nine, disguised like himself. At the appointed hour, most of the men in the place collected at the spot designated. When sixty-four were selected for the undertaking that was in view. This party embarked in eight of the launches of the different vessels lying at the wharves, and taking with them a quantity of round paving stones, they pulled down the river in a body. The Commander is supposed to have been a Capt. Whipple, who afterwards held a commission in the service of Congress, but none of the names were publicly mentioned at the time. On nearing the Gaspe, about two in the morning, the boats were hailed (end of page 2) by a sentinel on deck. This man was driven below by a volley of stones. The commander of the Gaspe now appeared and ordering the boats off, he fired a pistol at them. This discharge was returned from a musket, and the officer was shot through on the deck. By this time, the crew of the Gaspe had assembled and the party from Providence boarded. The conflict was short, the Schooners people being knocked down and secured. All on board were put on the boats, and the Gaspe was set on fire. Towards morning, she blew up.

This bold step naturally excited great indignation in the British officers, and all possible means were taken to discover the offenders. The Government at home offered a reward of (Sterling symbol) 1000 for the leader, and (Sterling symbol) 500 to any person who would discover the other parties, with the promise of a pardon should the informer be an accomplice. But the feeling of the times was too high for the ordinary means of detection, no evidence having ever been obtained sufficient even to arraign a solitary individual, not-with-standing a Commission of Inquiry, under the Great Seal of England, sat with that object- from January to June, during the year 1773.

My Grandfather-Nathan Salisbury was one of the officers commanding the company that attacked the Gaspe from Warwick Neck, and Wm Rhoads, an Uncle of mine was an eye witness. (end of page three) The following is the statement of my Grandfather. "Two years before the battle of Lexington (1774)? The English had blockaded the harbor of Newport and Providence, at which act the people of Rhode Island were greatly enraged. During the year 1772, Capt Linzee was running the packet Hannah between Providence and New York. On the 17th of June as he was about rounding into the harbor, he was hailed by the blockading squadron, and ordered to heave too, and submit to examination. He replied that he would do so as soon as he could round in. There being a stiff southern breeze, and he under full headway & sail, instead of stopping as he had led them to suppose he would, he proceeded full sail in his way to Providence. Then having no vessel ready for pursuit except the frigate Gaspe, which had just arrived from England, with supplies and money for the fleet, she without waiting to unload, started in pursuit. She had pursued the Hannah for 25 miles under full sail, when Capt. Linzee in rounding Warwick Neck, instead of passing round the bar, cut across it, and not drawing as much water as the frigate Gaspe, passed over safely. The Gaspe following in her track, and not knowing of the bar, ran so high upon it, that she careened over on one side and stuck fast. The tide soon retired and left her high out of the water. The Hannah (end of page 4) proceeded with all dispatch to Providence, and informed certain parties of what had happened. The town drummer soon appeared in the streets assembling the people. A crowd being collected, the drummer led his followers to a shed on the roof of which appeared a man disguised as an Indian and proclaimed a secret expedition for that night, inviting all "stout hearts" to assemble on the wharf precisely at nine o'clock disguised as he was. At the appointed hour, most of the men in the place collected at the spot designated, when sixty-four were selected for the undertaking that was in view. This party embarked in eight of the launches of the vessels lying at the wharves and taking with them a quantity of round paving stones. They rowed down the river in a body.

In the meantime the people of Cranston & Warwick were posted in the matter and before the expedition from Providence had started, the military had collected under the Command of Capt. Burgess and Lieutenant Nathan Salisbury (my Grandfather) armed with the notorious "Long Red Nose" 18 Pounder. They disguised, proceeded at once to the Eastern Extremity of Warwick Neck, which was within a short distance of the frigate Gaspe. The frigate lay careened on her side, so that her guns pointing landwards, were elevated at an angle of nearly 45 degrees and of course they were quite harmless to an attacking party. Capt. Burgess and Lieut. Salisbury at once opened (end of page 5) fire and the second shot tore a hole in her side below water mark several feet square. They were at the fire till dark doing great damage to the frigate. The fire from the frigate passed over their heads.

The families from Providence were commanded by John Brown - a wealthy merchant who laid the corner stone in 1770 of Rhode Island College; now Brown's University. They moved down the bay in boats with muffled oars, and about 10 o'clock in the evening arrived along side the frigate Gaspe. They approached so stealthily that they were not discovered till they commenced boarding. The sentinel hailed them when he was driven below with a shower of stones. The Captain then came up, ordered the boats off, and fired at them a pistol shot. This was returned from the boats by musket shot, which wounded the commander in the thigh and scrotum. By this time the crew had assembled, and the parties from Providence had boarded. The conflict was short, the crew and officers being knocked down and secured. The provisions and valuables were secured and placed on the boats with the prisoners, and the frigate set on fire, after which the boats proceeded to Warwick. They took the

prisoners to the house of Mr. Wm. Rhoads of Warwick Neck. Wm. Rhoads was the father of an Uncle of mine. My Uncle (end page 6) Wm. Rhodes Jr. was then old enough to recollect all the circumstances of the affair. He died Sept, 6 1860. The crew were soon discharged. The captain was seriously injured in the thigh and scrotum by the musket shot he received during the boarding of his vessel. The wound in the testicles scrotum proved so serious, that the testicles had to be removed. His injuries were carefully dressed, and arrangements were made with Mr Rhoads to have him remain at his house till fully recovered, which he did.

This bold step excited great indignation among the British officers, and all possible means were taken to discover the offenders. The balance of the account is substantially as given in Cooper's Naval History.p.p.31.32.33.Vol I.

Cleveland O.
Feb 25th 1869
Respectfully
JH. Salisbury

(I recognize his signature)

Hon Stephen Salisbury
President of American Antiquarian Society

Dear Jim,

I send with this a record, which has been carefully preserved in my family that throws some light upon the parties connected with the first conflict between Great Britain and this country. I have for some years intended to work this matter up, by corresponding with the descendants of John Brown, and Captain Burgess, - but a multiplicity of duties have thus far prevented this undertaking. I herewith send you what information I have thinking perhaps that you might have greater facilities for collecting the records of the families named than I could possibly have at this distance.

My Grandmother, on my father's side, was 25 years of age at the date of this occurrence. She lived in Providence and remembered distinctly the transaction in all its details. She related this affair to me frequently when I was just a boy. She was a woman of remarkable intelligence and memory. She died at the age of 88. My Grandmother's maiden name was Stone. Her mother's maiden name was Brown. She was a relative of John Brown, whether a sister or cousin, I have now forgotten. I mention these facts as it may aid in collecting the records of this first conflict.

If you should not have leisure to undertake this inquiry, perhaps you may aid me in this matter.

Since writing you last, I have come across evidence of Bird track writing - in Amhurst Lorain Co. O. At this point there is also figures of the human foot cut in the rocks. I hope to make considerable additions, to my paper before the month of May.

Sincerely,

Cleveland O J. H. Salisbury

Feby 27th 1869

Feb. 25 - 1869

Hon. Stephen Salisbury,
President of American Antiquarian Society.

Dear Sir:- A record has been carefully preserved in my family, which throws some light upon the first conflict between the American States and Great Britain. I send it to you, hoping it may serve as a nucleus, - around which other information may be gathered from the descendants of other parties concerned in the transaction.

In Cooper's *Naval History of the U. States*, P. P. 31, 32, 33, vol. I occurs the following statement relating to the first conflict between this Country & Gr. Britain,

"One of the first overt acts of resistance that took place in this celebrated struggle, occurred in 1742, in the waters of Rhode Island. A vessel of war had been stationed on the coast to enforce the laws, and a small schooner, called the *Gaspe*, with a light armament and twenty-seven men, was employed as a tender, to run into the shallow waters of that coast. On the 17th of June, 1742, a Providence Packet that plies between New York & Rhode Island, named the *Naumak*, and commanded by Capt. Linzer, here in sight of the main of war, on her passage up the bay. The *Naumak* was ordered to bring to, in order to be examined; but her master refused to comply; and being furged by a fresh northerly breeze, that was fast sweeping her out of gunshot, the *Gaspe* was signalled to follow.

The chase continued for five or twenty miles,

under a mass of ice, when the Nauvab coming up with a bar, with which her master was familiar, and drawing less water than the schooner, Capt. Livogz led the latter on a shoal, when she struck. The tide falling, the Gaspe saved, & was not in a condition to be removed for several hours. The news of the chase was circulated on the arrival of the Nauvab at Providence. A strong feeling was excited among the population, and towards evening the town drummer appeared in the streets, assembling the people. A crowd being soon collected, the drummer led his followers in front of a shed, when a man disguised as an Indian suddenly appeared on the roof, and proclaimed a secret expedition for that night, inviting all of "stout hearts" to assemble on the wharf, precisely at nine, disguised like himself. At the appointed hour, most of the men in the place collected at the spot designated, when six lay-fans were selected for the undertaking that was in view. This party embarked in eight of the launches of the different vessels lying at the wharves, and taking with them a quantity of round flung stones, they pulled down the river in a body. The Commander is supposed to have been a Capt. Whipple, who after wards held a commission in the service of Congress, but none of the names were publicly mentioned at the time. On leaving the Gaspe, about two in the morning, the boats were hailed

proceeded with all despatch to Providence, and informed certain parties of what had happened. The town drummer soon appeared in the streets, assembling the people. A crowd being collected, the drummer led his followers to a shed, on the roof of which appeared a man disguised as an Indian, and proclaimed a secret Expedition for that night, inviting all of "stout hearts" to assemble on the wharf, precisely at nine o'clock, disguised as he was. At the appointed hour, most of the men in the place collected at the spot designated, when sixty-four were selected for the undertaking, that was in view. His party embarked in eight of the launches of the vessels lying at the wharves, and taking with them a quantity of rounds, paving stones, they moved down the river in a body.

In the mean time the people of Cranston & Warwick were posted in the matter, and before the Expedition from Providence had started, the military had collected under the command of Capt. Burgess and Lieutenant Nathaniel Salisbury (my Grandfather) armed with the notorious "Long Red Nose" 18 Pounder.

They, disguised, proceeded at once to the Eastern extremity of Warwick Neck, which was within a short distance of the frigate Gaspe. The frigate lay cannon on her side, so that her guns pointing landwards, were elevated at an angle of nearly 45° , and of course, they were quite harmless to an attacking party. Capt. Burgess & Lieut. Salisbury at once

fire, and the second shot tore a hole in her side below water mark several feet square. They kept up the fire till dark, doing great damage to the frigate. The fire from the frigate passed over their heads.

The parties from Providence were commanded by John Brown - a wealthy merchant, who laid the corner stone, in 1770, of Rhode Island College, now Brown's University. - They moved down the bay in boats with muffled oars, and about 10 o'clock in the evening arrived alongside the frigate *Essex*. They approached so stealthily, that they were not discovered till they commenced boarding her. The sentinel hailed them, when he was driven below with a shower of stones. The Captain then came up, ordered the boats off, and fired at them a pistol shot. This was returned from the boats by a musket shot, which wounded the commander in the thigh and scrotum. By this time the crew had assembled, and the parties from Providence had boarded. The conflict was short; the crew and officers being knocked down and secured. The provisions and valuables were secured, and placed on the boats with the prisoners, & the frigate set on fire, after which the boats proceeded to Warwick. They took the prisoners to the house of Mr. M^r Rhoads, of Warwick Neck. Mr. Rhoads was the father of our Uncle of mine. My Uncle,

be a sentinel on deck. This man was driven below by a volley of stones. The commander of the Gospe now appeared, and ordering the boats off, he fired a pistol at them. His discharge was returned from a musket, and the officer was shot through the thigh. By this time, the crew of the Gospe had assembled, and the party from Providence boarded. The conflict was short, the schooner's people being knocked down and secured. All on board were put on the boats, and the Gospe was set on fire, towards morning, & blew up.

This bold step naturally excited great indignation in the British officers, and ^{all} possible means were taken to discover the offenders. The Government at home offered a reward of £1000 sterling for the leader, and £500 to any person who would discover the other parties, with ^{the} promise of a pardon should the informer be an accomplice. But the feeling of the times was too high for the ordinary means of detection, no evidence having been obtained sufficient ^{to} arraign a solitary individual, not with standing a Commission of Inquiry, under the Great Seal of England, set into that object, from January to June, during the year 1773!!

My Grandfather - Nathaniel Salisbury was one of the officers commanding the Company that attacked the Gospe from Warwick Neck, and Mr. Rhoads, an Uncle of mine - was an eye witness.

The following is the statement of my grandfather,
 "Two years before the battle of Lexington (1774) I
 The English had "blockaded" the harbor of Newport
 and Providence, at which act the people of Rhode
 Island were greatly enraged. During the year
 1774, Capt. Dyer was commanding the privateers
 Providence and Chryseis. On the 17th June
 he was about running into the harbor, he was
 hindered by the blockading squadron, he ordered
 to leave the and submit to examinations. He
 replied that he would do so as soon as he
 could return in. When being a party
 brought, and he under full military rank, made
 of stopping as he had but time to disengage
 himself, he proceeded full sail on his way to
 Providence. When being no words ready for
 Yarnall except the privateers, which had
 just arrived from England, with articles and
 money, for the first, he orders writing to me -
 -land, articles in private. She had furnished
 the account for 25 miles under full sail -
 when Capt. Dyer in commanding privateer, and
 instead of following round the bar, cut across
 it, and not drawing as much water as the
 privateer boats, showed over easily. The depth
 was so high when it, that she came over on
 one side, and went past. She had even ordered,
 and left her high out of water. She returned

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Mr. Rhodes Jr. was then old enough to recollect all the circumstances of the affair. He died Dec 6 1860. The crew were soon discharged. The Captain was seriously injured in the ~~thigh~~ and Scrotum, by the musket shot, he received during the Boarding of his vessel. The wound in the Scrotum proved so serious, that the testicles had to be removed. His injuries were carefully dressed, and arrangements were made with Mr. Rhodes to have him remain at his house till fully recovered, which he did.

This bold step excited great indignation among the British Officers, and all possible means were taken to discover the offenders. The balance of the account is substantially as given in Cooper's Naval History, P.P. 31.32.33. vol 1

Cleveland O.

July 25th 1869

Respectfully

J. H. Salisbury