

APPENDIX B

Spot Restoration Program Recommended for

HISTORIC NEWPORT

From the findings of the Survey reported in the foregoing pages, the Committee has drawn up a plan for a "spot" or "unit" method of procedure to help preserve Newport's colonial buildings. In this plan, some thirteen areas, all rich in historic houses, have been recommended for future restoration. Routes connecting them have been mapped out, and they have been arbitrarily numbered in terms of their importance, dangerous condition, or location. A single building restored in any part of the town becomes a step in the accomplishment of the whole plan. The areas and buildings so designated are:

1. Clarke Street because of the Vernon house and ten other colonial and early nineteenth-century buildings.
2. The block between the Colony House and Stone Street because of the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard house, a seventeenth-century survivor in the center of the city.
3. The Jonathan Nichols house and Washington Street as a section where merchant princes built their homes, shops, and wharves.
4. The Quaker Meeting House, as the most important seventeenth-century religious building in the state.
5. Division Street, as a street filled with characteristic little houses.
6. Coddington Street, where three almost unknown houses of seventeenth-century construction still stand. *a*
7. The Whitehorse Tavern, and Marlborough Street between Farewell and Thames, with its row of early buildings on the north side. *b*
8. Bowen's Wharf, as the wharf owned by Peter Harrison, and as an example of one of Newport's eighteenth-century shipping centers. Also the old ship chandler's shop, and Robert Stevens' double dwelling house are unique.
9. John Stevens' shop and the row of houses on upper Thames Street, as examples of small shops and homes. *c*
10. Bridge Street, where the houses of Christopher and Job Townsend, John Townsend, Caleb and William Claggett, and Captain Peter Simon stand. *d*
11. The group of little houses along Poplar at Second Street.
12. "The Court End of Town," where Francis Malbone's house of 1760 stands and where Samuel and John Whitehorne, distillers, built their fine houses.
13. The Mawdsley house at John and Spring streets, with its two seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century parts, and the row of early nineteenth-century houses on upper John Street.

Because of its central location, and the Vernon house, Clarke Street has been placed first on the foregoing list. Plans to restore its buildings and gardens have been drawn up. The history of the little street is set forth briefly here.

Clarke Street, a block-long lane laid out in the shadow of the Colony House was named for its earliest owners. The French, however, called it New Lane, and it saw a year of brilliant life in 1780-1781 when General Rochambeau established his headquarters at the Metcalf Bowler house, then in possession of William Vernon. In that same year the French commander had a ballroom built in the garden just north of the house, where the young officers could assemble for dinners, dances, and recreation. In this room, Washington was entertained at a brilliant ball on the evening of March 7, 1781, when he came to Newport to consult with General Rochambeau. He had landed on the Long Wharf the day before and had been received in a splendid military pageant by the army of the allies "drawn up in double lines all the way from Long Wharf past the State House to the Vernon house."

Long before that historical event, however, the land of Clark Street had been part of the original grant made in 1639 to Jeremy Clarke, third governor of the colony. In 1700, a lane was cut through to Peleg Sanford's orchard by Jeremy's son Walter, who was elected Governor three times, and for whom it was named. For many years kept strictly a family affair, its lots were sold off to relatives of the Clarks, the Rodmans, and the Harwoods. Many of the first buildings are still standing and several have seventeenth-century beginnings, but the street's importance in Newport history belongs to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when a colonial church and parsonage were built, an artillery building went up (in 1835), and a church school and an academy flourished.

Here lived, side by side with colonial governors, rich merchants, artists, a judge, and an eminent divine, artisans and craftsmen, a list of whose occupations gives a cross section of the ways in which colonial citizens earned their livelihoods. On this short block were once to be found a "tinn man" who made a trumpet for Fort George, a postmaster, a carman (carter), a clothier, an innkeeper, a sadler, a painter, and a brewer. Newport's early leather industry is reflected by the several tanners and cordwainers (shoe makers) whose homes were on Clarke Street, where also lived housewrights, blacksmiths, schoolmasters, manufacturers, merchants, and mariners.

A brief sketch of each of the individual buildings is included here. Elton Manuel has prepared a fuller account of the denizens of Clarke Street.

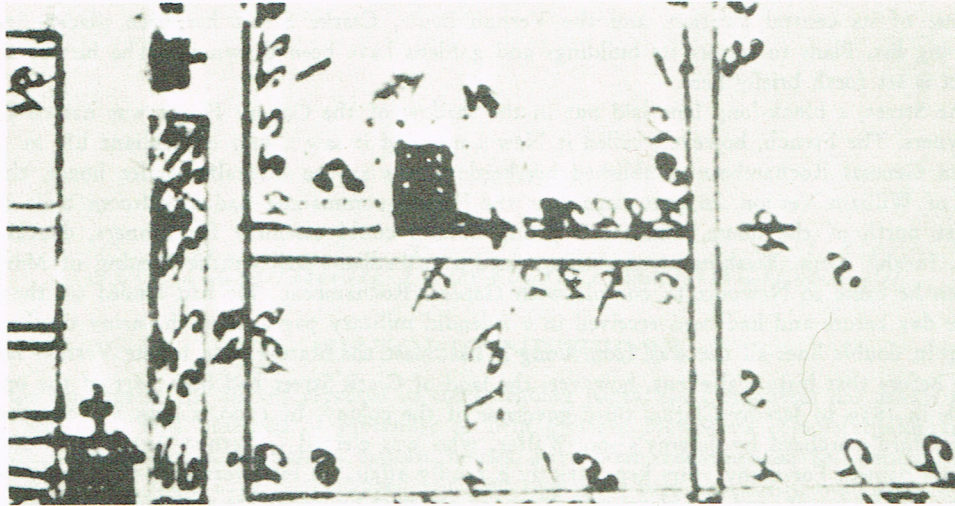
See also Plate 62.

THE BUILDINGS ON THE EAST SIDE OF CLARKE STREET

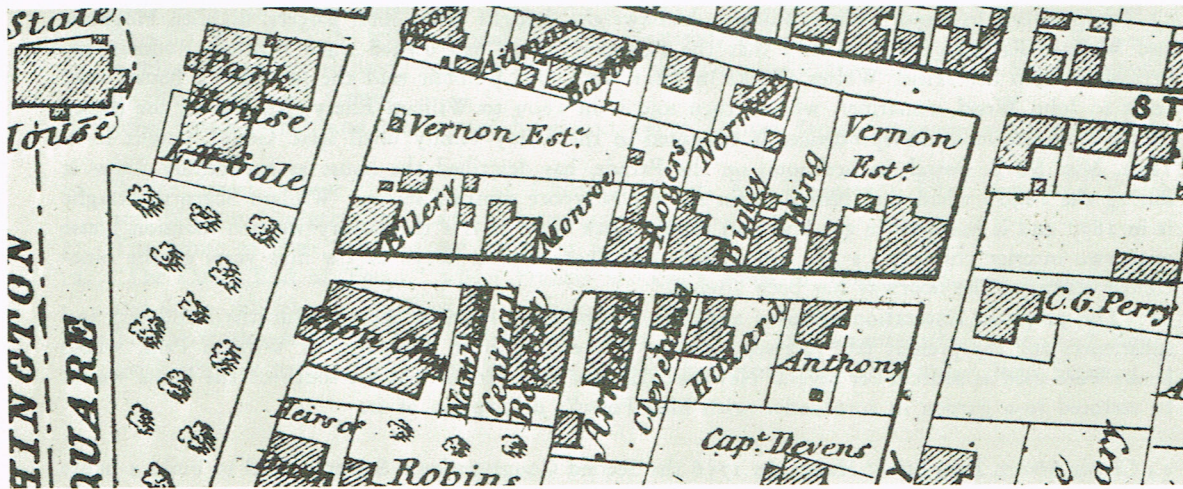
51 Touro Street. In 1800, Joshua Wilbour, housewright, bought from John Rogers, Stephen Hopkins, and William Rodman a lot of land that the Rodman family had owned since Hannah Rodman inherited it from her father Walter Clarke in 1711. In 1802, Wilbour sold the lot with a house built on it to John Wood, a mariner, who in turn sold it in 1809 to William Ellery, III, son of the signer of the Declaration of Independence. It remained in the Ellery family until Issac Gould bought it in 1852. Miss M. E. Powel, in her notes on the Parade, has described the house as her family knew it during the 1840's when they rented it for several Newport summer seasons. William Sherman bought it in 1877 and it has been in the Sherman family since then. It is a three-story wooden mansion house with two interior chimneys, a low hipped roof and characteristic detail of the first years of the nineteenth century. The doorway has been altered.

The proposed restoration removes additions in the rear, replaces the sash for the windows, and substitutes for the present late recessed doorway one drawn from the pages of William Pain, whose books were used as sources for several Newport doors of this period. The lot south of the house would be restored to a garden in accordance with Miss Powel's description of it.

14 Clarke Street, Ezra Stiles' House. In 1756 the Second Congregational Society voted to build a house for the use of the ministry on land given by William Ellery and Peter Coggeshall opposite the meeting house in Clarke Street. In 1765 it was voted that the parsonage house in Clarke Street "together with the lot and garden thereunto belonging is hereby forever appropriated to and for the use of the minister of the Second Congregational Church in Newport."



Clarke Street in 1758. Detail from Ezra Stiles' *Map of Newport*, showing Colony House at upper left, the School House in Ann Street at lower left, the Second Congregational Church in Clarke Street. Ezra Stiles own house is across from the church shown as a two story house with a bar, representing two chimneys. The Vernon House is shown as a two story house with one chimney, before enlargement. The Cheeseborough House is shown across Mary Street at the right.



Clarke Street in 1850. Detail from Dripp's *Map of Newport*, showing Zion Church, the Second Congregation Church, now Central Baptist, the Armory, and, on the Vernon estate, the ballroom built by the French. The Cheeseborough House now belongs to C. G. Perry.

Here Ezra Stiles, minister of the Second Congregational Church, lived during his Newport years. In his garden to the south of the house the learned doctor raised the white mulberry trees for his experiments in silk worm culture, and here Mrs. Stiles spun and sent to London for weaving almost enough silk to make a gown, which became a treasured family heirloom. Here Dr. Stiles made his astronomical calculations, and on the evening of June 3, 1769, watched the transit of Venus in company with Henry Marchant and William Vernon, who already lived in the Bowler house down the street.

The parsonage, a great gambrel-roofed building with central doorway and hall, was originally turned end to the streets, with the main door opening on the south into the garden. In 1834, when the Congregational Society sold it to Peter Munro, he turned the house south side to the street, "improved" the porch and entry, and added the Greek Revival detail. The building is now used as the Henderson Home.

In the partial restoration recommended, the bay windows would be removed, the early sash replaced, and the exterior detail of the house taken back to the time of its building in the 1750's. A typical doorway of that date with a pediment and double flight of steps has been chosen to replace the present Greek Revival entry.

The original garden south of the house has not been reconstructed in accordance with the old bounds, but the "pare" trees Stiles mentioned in his diary and the white mulberry trees have been allotted their space in the planting.

No. 26 Clarke Street. Not many years ago a house known as the Jonas Elias house stood on the lot south of Ezra Stiles' garden lot. This old gambrel-roofed house was torn down in 1926, but a history of the property is sketched here. Ebenezer Richardson owned the land in 1725. Years later, in 1818, Daniel Rogers, a manufacturer, sold house and lot to Robert Rogers, Jr., merchant of Bristol. In 1863 the house was sold to William Langley. In the restoration the now empty lot would be gardened. It is possible that an old building moved from elsewhere could be placed here.

No. 28 Clarke Street. Part of this stark high gambrel-roofed house may go back to the first years of the eighteenth century. In 1701, Thomas Mallet, innkeeper, sold the lot to Caleb Hollingsworth, sadler. Five years later Hollingsworth sold it with a dwelling house to Simon Ray of New Shoreham. Ray's deed was delivered in 1707 in the presence of John Carr by "turf and twig," ancient procedure for absentee land transfer. Peter Easton was in possession of the property by 1712, and it remained in his family until after 1727. In 1755, John Bennett sold the house to Joseph Burrill, who was recorded in the early deeds as a "Tinn man" and who was paid "twelve shillings lawful money" out of the General Treasury in 1774 for making a "large speaking trumpet" for use at Fort George. His son Joseph, also a "Tinn plate worker," inherited the house in 1701.

By the time Burrill had willed the house to his son, it had long since taken on its present appearance, but uneven floor levels suggest that part of the older house was built into the newer one. In the proposed restoration small-paned sash windows and an early door have been drawn in to replace the present modern ones.

No. 32 Clarke Street. The history of this property goes back at least to 1722 when Samuel Rhodes, yeoman, sold a dwelling house and lot of land to Simon Pease, mariner. Ezra Stiles' map of 1758 shows a building in this location, but it had disappeared by the time Blascowitz made his map in 1777. Probably the house was rebuilt after the Revolution by Simon Pease, in whose family it remained until Edward Peterson acquired the property in 1799 and sold it almost immediately to the stepfather of Charles Bird King, "limner," one of Newport's native artists, noted for a series of portraits of the Indian chiefs who came to see "the Great White Father" in Washington. He inherited the house from his mother in 1802. Here he lived for many years until he moved to Washington.

In the proposed restoration it has been suggested that the nineteenth-century balcony and the third story built on by Mr. King to serve as his studio both be removed. The house would be restored to a plain two-story building with a gable roof and an ell at the rear. The small paned windows would be put back and the present door replaced by one of a type common to the middle years of the eighteenth century.

Pls. 113-115

The Vernon House. This historic house, architecturally one of the most outstanding buildings in Newport, has been described in Chapter 7 and Appendix A. The proposed restoration advocates replacing the window sash with small-paned glass and replacing the present shutters with ones of early date. It also recommends complete restoration of the interior and careful furnishing with the best of Newport's eighteenth-century furniture.

Pl. 62

French Hall. In 1767 William Vernon purchased the lot just north of the Vernon house for a garden. It was on this garden lot that General Rochambeau caused the ballroom to be built for his officers. Although the Vernons had offered the French general whatever assistance possible, this elicited a complaint from William Vernon in a letter to his son Samuel, written in 1781, "I understand General Rochambeau had not your leave for building an Assembly-room in the garden. I can't think it polite of him." "French Hall," a square rusticated building resembling the main house, stood until 1894, when it was torn down to allow for the present building. Because of its historic interest, it has been recommended that the Assembly Hall built by the French be rebuilt. This could be accomplished from information based on descriptions and photographs.

Southwest Corner Lot. In 1782, Samuel Vernon bought a lot with a partially demolished house on it on the west side of Clarke at Mary Street and converted it into an additional garden, the broad central path and attractive beds of which are still remembered by old Newporters. Part of this lot would be restored as a garden.

THE BUILDINGS ON THE WEST SIDE OF CLARKE STREET

Pl. 147

The Zion Episcopal Church. In 1701, Walter Clarke sold the land (fenced), on which this church was to be built years later, to John Headley, a brewer. In 1759, Thomas Cranston sold the lot with a house on it to Peleg Barker, Esquire, a schoolmaster. The house was gone by 1832 when John Lyon sold the lot to the Building Committee of Zion Church with the "foundation stone of a cellar." In the following year, Russell Warren, who also designed the Levi Gale house was employed to build the church in the correct Greek Revival manner of an Ionic prostyle temple. It served as an Episcopal Church until it was sold to St. Joseph's Church in 1885. It now serves as a motion picture theatre.

The proposed restoration, which is based on an old photograph, would restore the Ionic portico.

No. 11 Clarke Street — The Bell or Richmond House. The gable-roofed house at 11 Clarke Street was raised some years ago to allow room for a garage underneath. Old pictures show it as a two-story house with a plain central doorway which opened into a small stair hall in front of the central chimney. Little houses like this one were the characteristic homes of Newport's early artisans and workers. In 1780 "Peleg Barker Esq." owned the house. He advertised in that year in the pages of the *Mercury*, "an evening school for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic." In 1789 he sold house and lot to Matthew Barker, blacksmith. Matthew and his wife owned it until 1796, when they sold it to Gideon Richmond, "carman." In 1829 Gideon's son, Gideon, a cordwainer, sold part of the house of Dr. Benjamin Case. Sometime thereafter the house was divided in ownership, and remained divided until 1879, when it was sold at auction to Isaac Sherman. It is now owned by Elizabeth Bell.

The restoration proposed suggests dropping the house down to its original height, removing an addition at the north side and replacing the central doorway. A plain board fence has been chosen to enclose a garden laid out at the side and rear of the house.

Pl. 61

The Second Congregational Church. This building, built by Cotton Palmer in 1735, has been described at length in Chapter 5. The Central Baptists bought the building in 1847, at which time they made extensive changes which included lengthening the house to ninety-three feet and enclosing the tower in the body of the church. They also added the Greek Revival exterior and interior detail, but Cotton Palmer's spire above the tower was allowed to keep its old appearance. A view of Clarke Street made by J. A. Williams before 1874 shows it still unchanged. In 1874-1875 wings were added and the Victorian detail was encrusted on the façade and spire, although the basic lines of the original spire remained unaltered until it was taken down in 1946.

The present restoration suggests rebuilding the spire in its original form, but keeps the Greek Revival detail and the wings in accordance with the last enlargement in size. Photographs, old views

of Newport, internal evidence, and the church records would make possible, at least on the exterior, a complete restoration of Cotton Palmer's original house.

The Newport Artillery. In 1835, the Newport Artillery, now the oldest active military organization in America, voted to build a new "armoury." The year before, Audley Clarke, Newport merchant and benefactor, had given the land on Clarke Street "in consideration of my feeling of attachment and good will towards the Artillery Company of Newport, a military company chartered by the Assembly in A.D. 1741." Enoch Hazard gave the stone.

Alexander McGregor, a stone mason who had come to Newport from Scotland and who had worked under Major Joseph Totten on the 1833 part of Fort Adams, was contractor for the building. As finished in 1836, it was one story high with a gable roof. In 1906 the house was raised a story. In 1880, Colonel John Hare Powel presented the Society with the emblems from the paddle-box of the S.S. "Metropolis," dismantled in Newport harbor in 1878, and these now decorate the front gable end of the building.

In the proposed restoration it is recommended that the building be restored to its original height of one story and that the flagpole which once stood in front of the Armoury be replaced.

No. 27 Clarke Street — Cuthbert Campbell Lot. Although the house standing on the lot south of the Artillery lot is late (the third to be built on the property), the story of the lot is an interesting one. In 1699 Walter Clarke sold it, designated then as the "fifth lot" north of Peleg Sanford's orchard, to William Rhoad, cordwainer. In 1716, John Wright, clothier, owned it. A house had been built there by that time because in that year Wright sold the lot with "dwelling house" to Cuthbert Campbell, one of Newport's first postmasters. Here the man who was responsible for the care of the eagerly awaited weekly *Boston News Letter* and other mail "by post" lived for many years. The house remained in his family until his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hargill, widow of the tanner, Barnabas Hargill, sold it in 1779 to Robert Stevens, East Greenwich merchant.

By 1837 this first old house was gone. Seth Cleveland bought the lot of land in 1842, and probably built very soon after the little one-story Greek Revival house which shows in some of the old views of Clarke Street. This house has been moved back and built into the ell of a large rooming house, the old Cleveland hotel, which now stands on the spot where lived one of Newport's first postmasters, and one after the other of her artisan tradesmen, cordwainer, clothier, tanner, and merchant.

The Newport Academy. In 1786 Robert Rogers, a graduate of Brown University and a lieutenant in the Revolutionary war, advertised in the pages of the *Mercury* that a "considerable addition had been made to the Academy lately erected in this city in order to accommodate a larger number of pupils entrusted to his care."

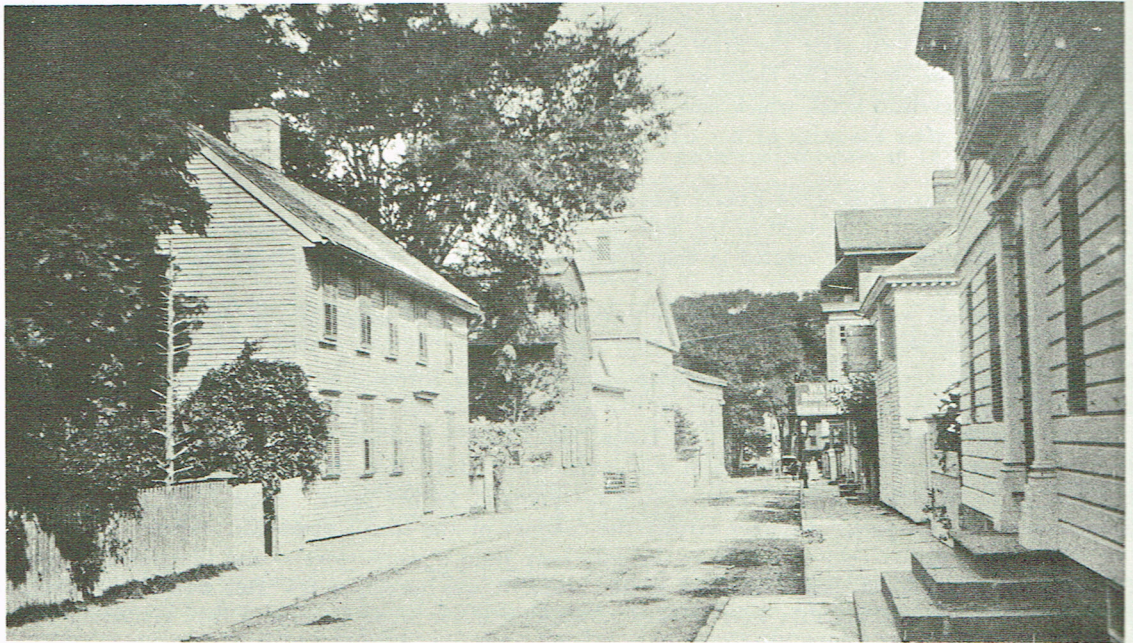
This Academy stood back of Cuthbert Campbell's house just south of the Artillery lot, and a way ten feet wide was laid out to it to be kept open "forever." It was a plain one-story building set on a high foundation. A flight of six wooden steps led to the entrance on the northeast corner, and the addition Mr. Rogers advertised, built on the east, was used for a girl's school.

In 1803 when Mr. Rogers retired, Levi Tower, also a Brown graduate and one of Rogers' assistants, took over the duties of master. The school was discontinued about 1840, and the building is now gone, but part of its history is included here. Miss Ruth Franklin, in her paper, "Some Early Schools and Schoolmasters of Newport," describes vividly the conduct of the school under Mr. Tower.

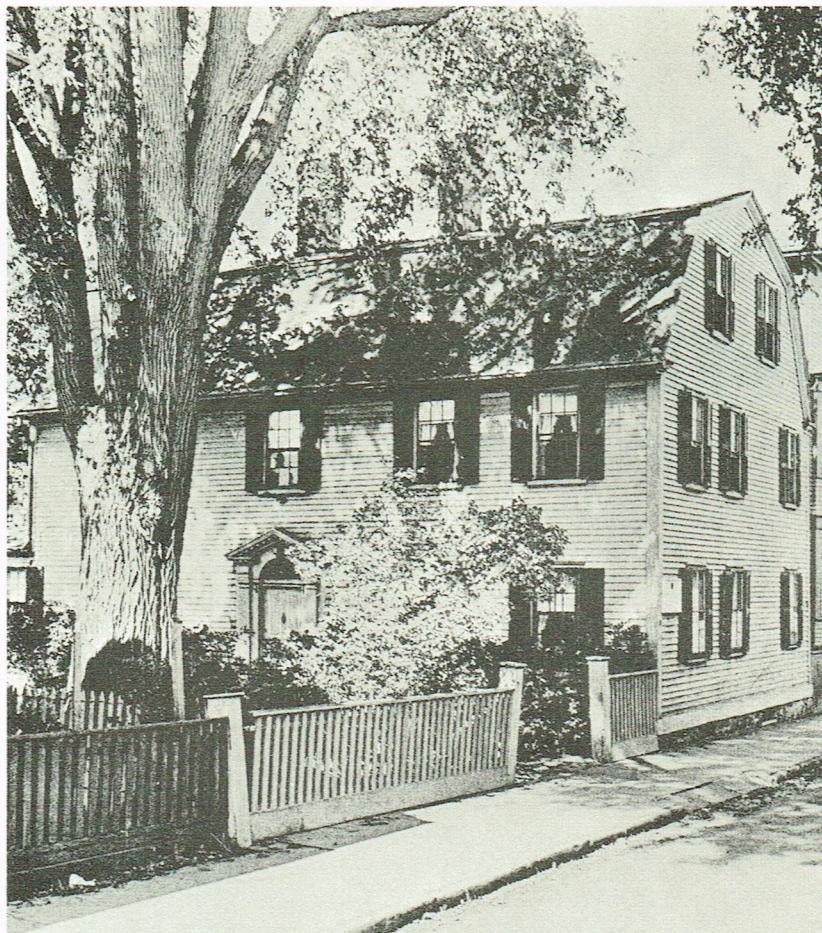
"The room was as cold as a barn — the only heat from a wood stove — and illustrated all the climates of the globe. In close proximity to the stove, it was torrid; a few feet away, temperate; around the sides, frigid. Scholars were allowed to stand near the stove as long as they could manage to stand on one foot and hold the sole of the other up to it. Mr. Tower said — 'if you are cold you can do it without wavering, if you can't, go back to your seat.' There were long wooden desks arranged on a terraced platform, the back row for older scholars, the second for those less advanced, the lowest for beginners. In the flat part of each desk a hole was bored to hold the ink horn. The ink was made by the teacher from powder, and kept in a jug which was filled on Monday and emptied back on Friday. Red ink was made from 'pigeon berries.' A terrestrial and a celestial globe completed the equipment. The teacher had a stand up desk on which were kept the ruler and the cowhide, which were



Clarke Street today. Looking north from Mary Street, showing left, the John Odlin House and right, the Vernon House.
Photo, Ralph Arnold.



Clarke Street in 1870. Looking north from Mary Street, showing left, John Odlin and Robert Stevens houses, Newport Artillery, Second Congregational Church, and part of the Zion Episcopal Church; right, the Vernon House and French Hall.
Old photograph by J. Appleby Williams. (N.H.S.)



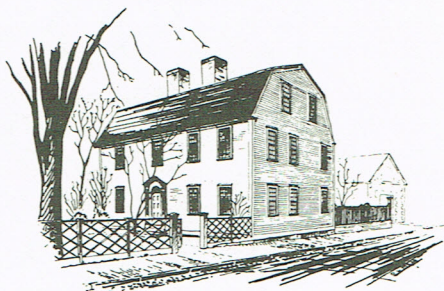
Robert Stevens House, 31 Clarke Street, about 1709.
Enlarged in the mid-eighteenth century.
Photo, Ralph Arnold.



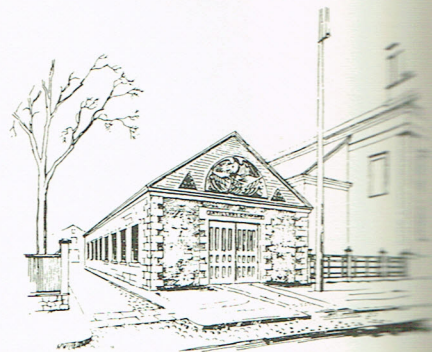
View of the east side of Clarke Street. Proposed restoration. Showing left to right,
the Joshua Wilbour, Ezra Stiles, Joseph Burrill, Simon Pease houses,
French Hall, and the Vernon House.
Rendered by Edward Doyle.



John Odlin House, 41 Clarke Street.
Restored sketch.

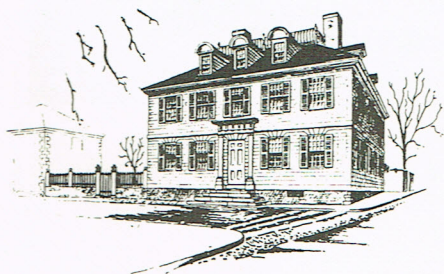
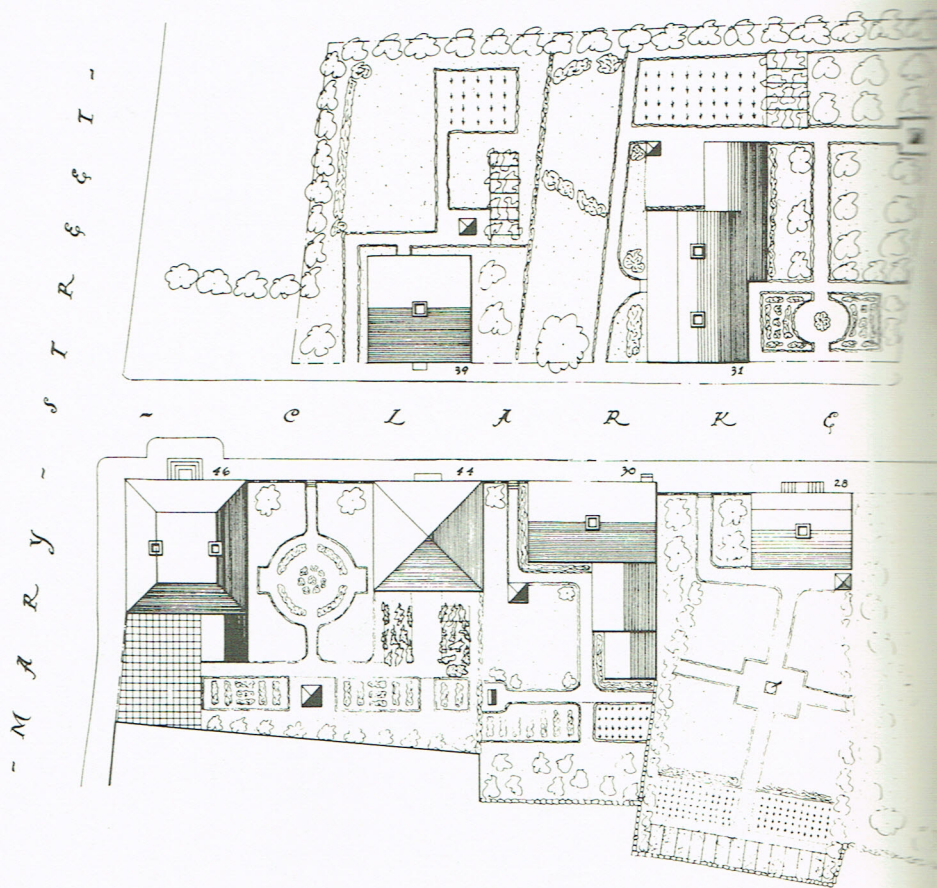


Robert Stevens House, 31 Clarke Street.
Sketch.

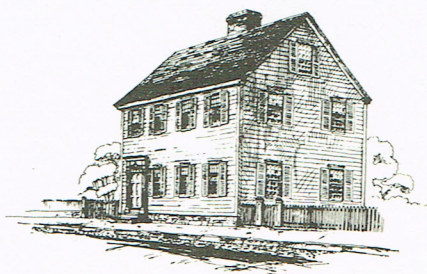


Newport Artillery. Restored sketch.

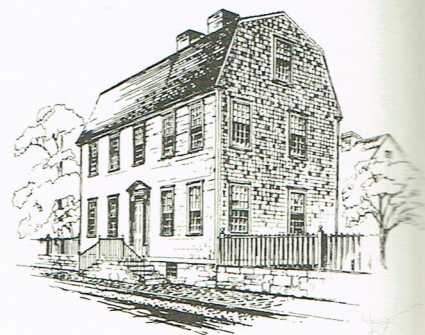
Plan for gardens in Clarke Street.
Drawn by Philip D. Creer.



Vernon House,
Rochambeau's Newport Headquarters. Restored sketch.



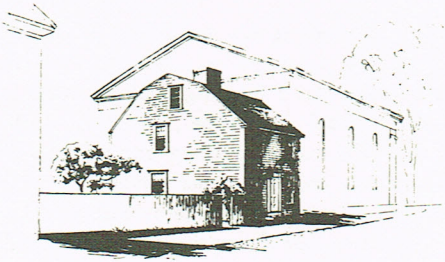
Simon Pease House, 32 Clarke Street.
Restored sketch.



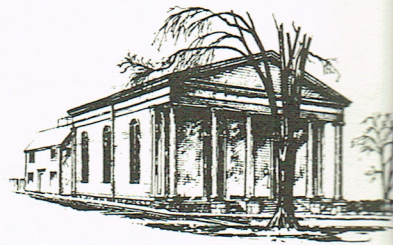
Joseph Burrill House, 28 Clarke Street.
Restored sketch.



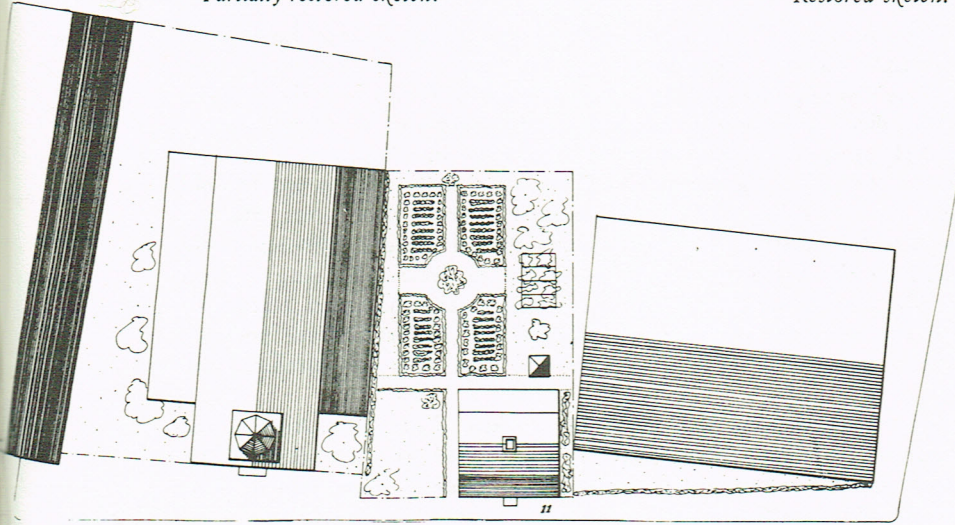
Second Congregational Church.
Partially restored sketch.



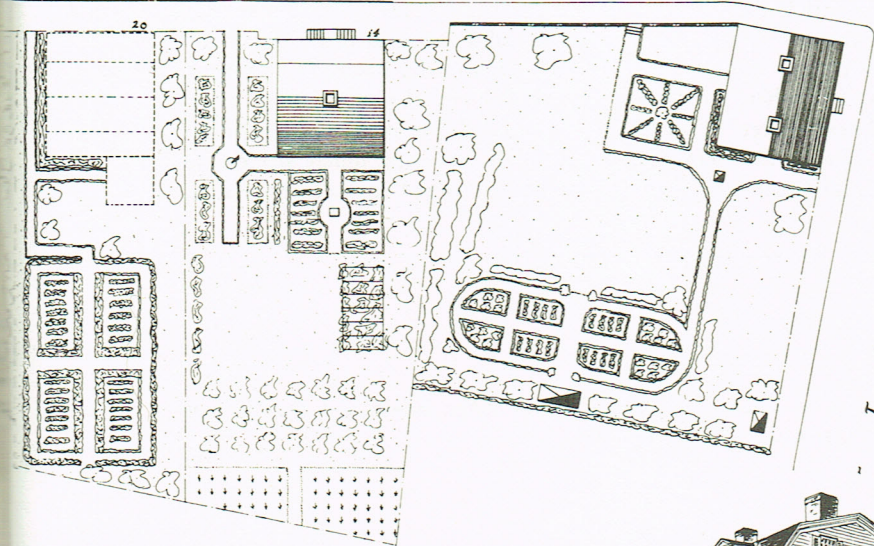
Peleg Barker House, 11 Clarke Street.
Restored sketch.



Zion Episcopal Church. Restored sketch.



S T R E E T



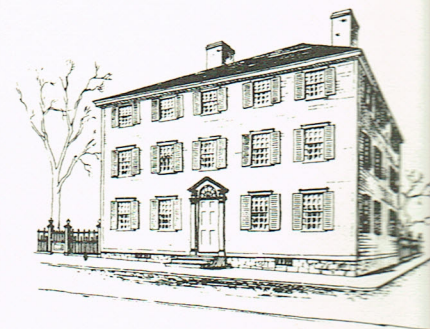
T O U R O - S T R E E T

SKETCHES FOR
THE PROPOSED CLARKE STREET
RESTORATION.

Prepared by Philip D. Creer.



Ezra Stiles House, 14 Clarke Street.
Partially restored sketch.



Joshua Wilbour House. 1802. Restored sketch.

frequently required for punishment. Discipline was harsh and penalties severe. There were no vacations. School hours were from nine to twelve and from two to five. . . Each scholar had to provide himself with an English Reader, Murray's Grammar, a Spelling book, a Geography, Daholl's Arithmetic, a slate, goosequills for pens, one-half quire of Fool's cap paper, and a piece of lead for a 'plummet' to rule his writing book. No lead pencils were allowed. Ciphering and writing books were made by the teacher from the paper furnished by the pupils and had paper covers."

In 1851, the town of Newport bought the Academy and built in its place the old Clarke Street School. This building, like the earlier one, has disappeared, and the land now forms part of the grounds of the John Clarke School. Because of practical considerations, this land has not been included in the proposed restoration, although the story of the Academy rightfully belongs to Clarke Street.

31 *Clarke Street — The Robert Stevens House.* The two-and-a-half-story gambrel-roofed house with its end set to the street and its fanlight doorway opening into a south garden must look much as it did in 1780-1781 when Rochambeau's young aides-de-camp, Conte Axel de Fersen and the Marquis de Damas were quartered there. The officers were among the most colorful figures in the French Army, and Axel de Fersen had a particularly romantic career, described more fully in Chapter 6.

Robert Stevens, upholsterer, and father of the merchant of the same name who owned the old Stevens wharf off Thames Street, was in possession of 31 Clarke Street during these years. He had bought the house in 1742 from Comfort Hatch, the widow of Nathaniel Hatch. Although early deeds show that a house was built on the property as early as 1709, the present building is mid-eighteenth-century in character. The interior is severely plain, and the chief ornamental feature of the exterior, the door, belongs to the last years of the eighteenth century. Robert Stevens probably remodeled the widow Hatch's house extensively or built a new one soon after he purchased the property in 1742.

In 1815 Robert Rogers bought the house and was living in it when Washington Allston, the painter, boarded there while he attended the Clarke Street Academy and studied art with Samuel King. The only change suggested in the proposed restoration is the substitution of small paned sash in place of the larger paned windows installed at the present time.

39 *Clarke Street — The Melville House.* As mentioned in Chapter 6 the Comte de Laberdie and the Baron de Closen were quartered with "Henri Potter" at what is now No. 39 Clarke Street. The history of the property goes back to the end of the seventeenth century, when John Odlin owned a house and lot in Clarke Street. He left both to his great-grandson, Henry Potter. Odlin's old house, according to Henry Bull, was still standing in 1841, but when the Melville family bought the property in 1869, they moved the house they owned on Frank Street to the Clarke Street lot. The narrow, high pitch-roofed house standing there today is probably the Frank Street house. It has been much altered. In style it belongs to the early part of the eighteenth century, and would be restored to that appearance.

a One has been demolished since 1952.

b Two have been demolished since 1952.

c Eight have been restored since 1952.

d Job Townsend's House has been demolished since 1952. The Captain Peter Simon and the William and Caleb Claggett Houses have been restored.