

The commissioners of the Towns of Providence and Warwick met again, at Warwick the 13th of August 1653, where they answered a letter from the Massachusetts, in which they remonstrated against being drawn into the war against the Dutch—they also wrote to Mr. Williams their account of Dyre's proceedings, and of their being urged to give up their former proceedings, as null, but say they "being still in the same order you left us, and observing the great evils such a course would bring upon us."

"Firstly, the hazard of all the disorders and blood shed* which have been committed on Rhode Island, since their separation from us."

"Secondly, the evading and frustrating justice in divers weighty causes, then orderly depending in our courts, in some of which cases Mr. Smith and Mr. William Field &c. were deeply concerned."

Therefore they could not yield to such a motion.

This court was adjourned, until John Sayles General Assistant for Providence and Stukeley Waskote General Assistant for Warwick, should see cause to appoint time and place.

This appears to have been the last meeting of Providence and Warwick, by commissioners.

Mr. Williams, and Mr. Clarke, were still in England attending to the duties of their appointments, as agents, one for Providence and Warwick, and the others for the Island; but as the main object of both was the same, they united their labors. They had many enemies, and discouragements to encounter, but success finally crown'd their efforts.

Mr. Williams wrote to Providence & Warwick as follows:—

From Sir Henry Vane's at } April 1st.
Belleau in Lincolnshire. } '53 (so called.)

"My dear and loving friends and neighbors of Providence and Warwick; our noble friend Sir Henry Vane, having the navy of England mostly depending on his care, and going down to the navy at Portsmouth; I was invited by them both to accompany his lady to Lincolnshire, where I shall yet stay as I fear until the ship is gone; I must therefore pray your pardon that by the post I send this to London. I hope it may have pleased the most high Lord of sea and land to bring Capt. Chrst-n's ship and dear Mr. Dyre unto you, and with him the councils letters, which answer the petition Sir Henry Vane and myself drew up, and the council by Sir Henry's meditation granted us, for the confirmation of the charter, until the determination of the controversy. This determination you may please to understand is hindered by two main obstructions. The first is the mighty war with the Dutch, which makes England and Holland and the nations tremble: This hath made the parliament sit Sir Henry Vane and two or three more as commissioners to manage the war, which they have done with much engaging the name of God with them, who hath appeared in helping sixty of ours against almost three hundred of their men of

*The case of bloodshed above alluded to was, that of a citizen of Newport, (name unknown) who, it is said was tried for a high crime by a Town meeting in Newport, and condemned. That he was taken immediately after sentence from the Town meeting, down to the shore about where Walner's wharf now is, and there shot. There is no record, extant of such a transaction, nor we believe the naked fact as stated, viz:— that the prisoner had no trial except by the Town meeting. But as it was a time of war with the Dutch, it is altogether probable that the indictment might have been for treason. This transaction is involved in much doubt (if it ever took place) and as the Island was under a regular government, with Magistrates duly commissioned—it is hard to conceive how a capital trial should take place before a Town meeting—unless the prisoner after sentence, was indulged in an appeal to the people. As the Towns of Providence and Warwick held all the doings on the Island as illegal, and the Towns of Newport and Portsmouth held those of the former in the same light, that may account for the expression "bloodshed" by the commissioners in their letter to Mr. Williams.

ar, and perchance to the sinking and talking about one hundred of theirs, and but one of ours which was sunk by our own men. Our second obstruction is the opposition of our adversaries, Sir Arther Haselrig and Colonel Fenwicke, who hath married his daughter, Mr. Winslow and Mr. Hopkins; both in great place; and all the friends they can make in the parliament and council and all the priests both presbyterian and independant; so that we stand as two armies ready to engage, observing the motions and postures each of other, and yet shy each of other.—Under God the sheet anchor of our ship is Sir Henry, who will do as the eye of God leads him and he faithfully promised me that he would observe the motion of our New England business, while I stayed some ten weeks with his lady in Lincolnshire. Beside here is great thoughts and preparation for a new parliament; some of our friends are apt to think another parliament will more favor us and our cause than this has done. You may please to put my condition into your souls; remember, I am a father and an husband; I have longed earnestly to return with the last ship, and with these yet I have not been willing to withdraw my shoulders from the burthen least it pinch others, and may fall heavy upon all; except you are pleased to give to me a discharge. If you conceive it necessary for me still to attend this service, pray you consider if it be not convenient that my poor wife be encouraged to come over to me, and to wait together on the good pleasare of God for the end of this matter. You know my many weights hanging on me; how my own place stands, and how many reasons I have to cause me to make haste, yet I would not loose their estates, peace and liberty by leaving hastily. I write to my dear wife, my great desire of her coming while I stay; yet left it to the freedom of her spirit, because of the many dangers; truly at present the seas are dangerous, but not comparably so much nor likely to be, because of the late great defeat of the Dutch, and their present sending to us officers of peace. My dear friends although it pleased God himself, by many favors to encourage me, yet please you to remember, that no man can stay here as I do, leaving a present employment there, without much self-denial, which I beseech God for more, and for you also, that no private respects or gains, or quarrels may cause you to neglect the public and common safety, peace and liberties.— I beseech the blessed God to keep fresh in your thoughts what he hath done for Providence Plantations. My dear respects to yourselves, wives and children, I beseech the eternal God to be seen amongst you:—So prays your most faithful and affectionate friend and servant.

ROGER WILLIAMS.

P. S. My love to all my Indian friends.

Notes on the Rhode Island Memoir

1. This memoir was published 22 May 1833 in the *Rhode-Island Republican*, a Newport weekly that became *The Rhode Islander*.
2. The embedded letter by Roger Williams makes a passing yet interesting reference to Sir Arthur Hesilrige, 2nd Bt. The exact character of obstacle he reportedly presented is not clear, but presumably Sir Arthur continued to support William Coddington, Governor of the Rhode Island colony (i.e., Portsmouth and Newport). Roger Williams' mission to London (and to Sir Henry Vane) was to appeal for relief from Coddington's commission. Recall that the Rhode Island colony had been only recently founded by a small group of people who had been expelled from Massachusetts—e.g., William Dyre and his wife, Mary (Bassett) Dyre—in an act of religious intolerance and bigotry. No sooner had the new colony been established than bickering developed among these colonists, leading to a split between towns in the northern area (Providence and Warwick) and towns in the south ("the Island"). Recall, too, that more than a decade earlier Sir Arthur had been a principal in establishment of a plantation in this area (Providence and Narragansett), perhaps for which reason he retained some sense of personal interest in what later became Rhode Island colony.
3. The meaning of "Dyre's proceedings" remains obscure. Perhaps it refers only to the fact that William Dyre also went to London in 1653, seeking relief from Coddington. Instead, however, it probably refers to the fact that Dyre returned from London in May with approval for the colony to take an offensive position against the Dutch (in aid of the Home Country's conflict with the Dutch). The town of Newport issued authority for such action and commissioned three officers, one of them Dyre, as privateers. This authority added to conflict with Providence and Warwick, which feared that it would lead to trouble with other colonies (and soon it did, when one of the Newport privateers commandeered a ship belonging to a Massachusetts man).
4. Accounts of the lives of William Dyre and Mary (Bassett) Dyre offer good insight into the several aspects of life in the colonies at that time, especially the religious intolerance, squabbles over territory, and difficulties of negotiating with London during the English civil wars, Cromwellian Protectorate, and then Restoration.