Brilliance of black artist transcended a difficult life

During Black History Month, The Journal-Bulletin will chronicle the accomplishments and contributions of Rhode Island's historic black community, in a series of profiles running on this page Monday through Friday. The clergy, educators, artists, business people and others described in this series have largely been ignored in accounts of the state's history. Many of the individuals profiled have been suggested by Ray Richman, president of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society.

EDWARD MITCHELL BANNISTER
The year was 1876 — the nation's hundredth anniversary — and in Philadelphia, the most ambitious art exhibit ever in America was organized to celebrate.

Among first-place winners was a huge oil painting showing cows and sheep taking shelter from a storm under broad oak trees, painted on a Rhode Island farm.

What stunned the United States Centennial Exposition was not the painting itself — the excellence of Under the Oaks never was disputed — but the artist's color: Edward Mitchell Bannister was black.

There are varying accounts of what took place next.

One story is that the jury had second thoughts but was dissuaded from changing the outcome by other artists who threatened to withdraw if the award was taken away from Bannister.

Another is Bannister's first-person account, recalled by fellow Providence painter George W. Whiting:

Surprised by reports of his prize, Bannister, who was then 48 years old, pushed through a crowd to verify the honor with a judge.

"Without raising his eyes, [the judge] demanded in the most

exaggerated tone of voice: 'Well, what do you want here anyway? Speak lively. I want to inquire concerning No. 4. Is it a prize winner? What's that to you? In an instant, my blood was up; the looks that passed between him and others in the room were unmistakable. I was not an artist to them, simply an inquisitive colored man. Controlling myself, I said deliberately: 'I am interested in the report that Under the Oaks has received a prize. I painted the picture.' An expression could not have made a more marked impression. Without hesitation, he apologized to me, and soon everyone in the room was bowing and scraping to me."

Among the nation's most accomplished landscape artists during and after the Civil War, Bannister created an estimated 1,000 works: Narragansett Bay seascapes, portraits, rural scenes; compelling, moody works inspired by French artists whose Barbizon style is named for a village near Paris.

He sailed the Bay from Newport to Providence in his large sailboat, Fanchon, sketching. He was among the founders of the Providence Art Club. He lectured and taught. His wife, Christiane Carreux Bannister, helped found the present-day Bannis-

ter Nursing Care Center.

But biographer Juanita Marie Holland says he never escaped the issue he had confronted in the City of Brotherly Love.

African Americans were subjected to restrictions on seating on public transportation; in church and other institutions, mocked in the press and ridiculed in minstrel shows. Even the Providence Art Club featured paintings by white artists with titles like Barnyard Dance of the Negro and Wat Dat.

The Canadian-born Bannister was largely self-taught, denied the schooling of contemporary white painters; much of his life was spent as a shipboard cook, barber, hairdresser and photographer.

Still, he was honored in his own difficult time and continues to be. Albert Klubberg, of the Rhode Island Historical Society, says that about every two years for the past quarter-century there has been an exhibit of his paintings somewhere in the

Ann Woolsey, a curator at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, says "his best work is quite remarkable," and that the Providence museum normally exhibits two of its seven Bannisters.

"We are very lucky to have Bannister; we are very proud of him," says Ray Richman, president of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society.

Despite the recognition, much about Bannister remains a mystery. His centennial prize-winner is one example. Under the Oaks has been missing for years.

(A profile of Christiane Carreux Bannister will be published tomorrow.)

— BRIAN C. JONES

RHODE ISLAND LANDSCAPE: This 1898 oil painting by black artist Edward Mitchell Bannister is from Kenkeleba House, New York. Bannister, influenced by the Barbizon style, created over 1,000 works during his lifetime.
You Made It,
Edward Bannister

Edward Bannister loved to read. He loved poetry and music. But most of all he loved art. As a young man, he worked on ships that sailed from his town in New Brunswick, Canada, to ports along the East Coast. He explored the seaport cities, curious to know what each one was like. He especially liked Boston, with its museums and art shows and people who cared about books and painting as much as he did. "That's the place for me," Edward thought. So, when he was 24, he headed for Boston.

That was in 1852, when black people like Edward were still being bought and sold as slaves in the southern states. In Boston, Edward was glad to find that people spoke out against slavery and even helped runaway slaves.

For a while, Edward worked as a photographer; but what he really wanted to do was paint. Would people buy his paintings? he wondered. Making a living as an artist wouldn't be easy. Could he ever make paintings as wonderful as those in art shows? He wasn't sure, but he decided to try.

It was a good decision. When he was 26, he sold his painting "The Ship Outward Bound." He also took art classes and he talked with other artists about painting. All of this made him more sure of his talent.

Around that time, Edward married Christina Cartreux, a Narragansett Indian from North Kingston, Rhode Island. Edward and Christina moved to Providence in 1871. Edward was inspired to paint many lovely scenes he saw around Rhode Island: woodlands, country cottages, cattle in fields. He especially liked to capture the strange and interesting light at dawn or sunset or after a rainstorm. People in Providence liked Edward's paintings and bought them to hang in their houses.

In 1876 something happened that made Providence the important place for art that it is today, and Edward was right in the middle of things. Ameri-
cans were celebrating the one hundredth birthday of the United States. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, there was to be a grand art show - the Centennial Exhibition. Edward sent one of his paintings to the judges, hoping they would think it was good enough to be in the show.

When the Exhibition opened, Edward went to Philadelphia to see it. He discovered his painting, "Under the Oaks," displayed with the work of artists from all over the world. Edward's dream had come true. When he read that "Under the Oaks" had won a prize, he could hardly believe it. He hurried to the information room to find out if it could be true. There was a great crowd there ahead of him. As he made his way through, he heard people muttering, and someone said in a haughty tone, "Why is that colored person here?"

The official at the desk barely looked at him, only demanded in a rude way, "Well, what do you want here anyway? Speak lively!"

"I want to inquire concerning 'Under the Oaks.' Is it a prize winner?" Edward asked.

"What's it to you?" said the official.

Edward controlled his temper. "I am interested in the report that 'Under the Oaks' has received a prize," he said. "I painted that picture."

Edward later told a friend, "The explosion of a bomb could not have created more of a sensation in that room." The official apologized, and Edward was treated with more respect.

A group of women from Providence, who were also visiting the Exhibition, recognized the scene in Edward's prize-winning painting: William Goddard's farm, which is now Goddard Park. The Exhibition gave them an idea. Why not start an art school and museum in Rhode Island? When they returned to Providence, they started the Rhode Island School of Design. Since a lot of Rhode Islanders were getting excited about art, Edward and some other artists decided they needed a place to show their work. They started the Providence Art Club. Artists still have shows at the art club that Edward and his friends started.

When Edward died in 1901, the Providence Art Club held an exhibition in his memory. The many people who had encouraged Edward by buying his work lent 101 of his pictures to the show. Edward M. Bannister, one of America's first successful black artists, helped open the world of art to the people of Rhode Island.
William Ellery Channing

b. Newport, RI, April 7, 1780
d. Bennington, VT, October 2, 1842

Author, philanthropist, philosopher, theologian, opponent of slavery, considered one of the leading ministers of his day in Boston. Called the “Conscience of Boston” due to his stands on moral issues.


Brother of Edward Tyrrell Channing of the North American Review and Walter Channing, the first professor of Obstetrics and Medical Jurisprudence at Harvard.

Married his first cousin Ruth Gibbs in 1814, their son is inventor William Francis Channing.

Dedicated in his honor, Channing Memorial Church stands on Pelham Street in Newport. The cornerstone is laid on the 100th anniversary of his birth; consecrated in October of 1881.

Adjacent to the Old Stone Mill in Touro Park, Newport, stands a statue of Channing which faces the church.

His birthplace and family home still stand at 24 School Street on the southeast corner of Mary Street. The former Children’s Home is now occupied by Child and Family Services of Newport County.
The family country estate was known as "Oakland Farm". A frequent visitor, Channing uses this estate as a summer retreat - a place to relax, heal, write and enjoy the natural surroundings. The latter days of his life were spent here.

Oakland Farm was located on the southwest side of East Main Road and Union Street, Portsmouth, RI. The main house no longer exists; the property has been subdivided into condominium homes.

Harvard class 1798; first pastoralship in Boston (1803); his most famous sermon "Unitarian Christianity" delivered in Baltimore (1819). This leads to recognition as a founder of Unitarianism. He forms a conference of liberal ministers (1820), out of which grew the American Unitarian Association, established 1825.

Influential in American literature. The term "Channing Unitarians" was applied to a group of New England writers, which included Emerson, Longfellow and Thoreau.

Bibliography

Redwood Library and Athenæum
50 Bellevue Avenue Newport, Rhode Island 02840 USA Tel (401) 847-9292
Redwood Library Homepage Newport Notables Contents

http://www.redwoodlibrary.org/notables/channing.htm 7/14/2004
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NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
It was a warm, calm September day in 1850, when four Newport schoolboys decided to go for a leisurely sail. They made it to the Dumplings and back safely, but once inside Newport harbor, the high jinks began.

One of the boys climbed the mast of the small sailboat and began to rock away. The boat capsized, sending the boys splashing into the harbor. They surely would have drowned but for the intercession of Ida Lewis.

Lewis saw the boat overturn from Lime Rock lighthouse, where her father was the keeper. She was only 17, but that didn’t stop her from launching a rowboat and pulling the boys aboard.

Back at Lime Rock, Ida served the soaked and shivering boys “a stiff dose of hot molasses” and otherwise cared for them until their families arrived.

Thus began an extraordinary career.

Lewis saved at least 18 people — some say more — from the waters off Newport. Many times she ventured out in her rowboat alone, in the freezing cold, risking her life to pull others to safety. All the while, she distinguished herself as one of the nation’s first female lighthouse keepers.

“She has worked out the problem of a woman’s rights in a different manner,” Col. Thomas Higginson said in 1869 when the citizens of Newport presented her with a rowboat called Rescue.

“She has been accustomed to assuming the right of helping her fellow-man without asking any questions,” Higgins said.

Ida’s older sister Zorada Lewis was born in Newport on Feb. 25, 1842, in a small wooden house at Spring and Brewer Streets. She was the second of four children of Captain Hosea Lewis, who was originally from Hingham, Mass., and Idavalley Zorada (Willey) Lewis, the daughter of a Block Island doctor.

Captain Lewis was appointed keeper of the Lime Rock light in the early 1850s. At that time, Lime Rock was merely a collection of boulders with a small shed on it. It is where the Ida Lewis Yacht Club now stands.) Captain Lewis rowed out to Lime Rock twice a day to light and extinguish the kerosene beacon.

In the mid-1850s, a house was built on Lime Rock for Captain Lewis and his family, but shortly thereafter he suffered a stroke that left him unable to work. The duties of light keeper fell to his wife, and eventually to Ida, who was officially appointed keeper of the light in 1887.

In 1870 or thereabouts, Lewis married William H. Wilson of Connecticut. But she left Connecticut — and her marriage — after a few months to return to Lime Rock, where she lived, by all accounts, a fastidious life.

By the time she died in 1911, at the age of 69, her daring rescues were reported around the globe and the somewhat taciturn Lewis had become a reluctant cause célèbre.

Gen. Ulysses S. Grant asked to meet Lewis on a visit to Newport. Other notable personalities, who made the trip out to Lime Rock by rowboat to pay homage to her, included Mrs. William Astor, financier Jim Fisk and robber baron Jay Gould, who presented Ida with a pair of gold oarlocks.

“It is estimated that over ten thousand people called on Miss Lewis last summer,” the June 20, 1870, edition of the Boston Journal reported.

“People would land at the rock, prowl over the house, quiz the family, pry into the household affairs, patronizingly ask the age of each person and what they lived on, and how they felt when Ida was saving souls,” the newspaper reported.

ELIZABETH ABBOTT

Source: The Newport Historical Society. Note: Ida Lewis’ rowboat “Rescue” is on display at Newport’s Museum of Yachting at Fort Adams. The beacon from her lighthouse can be seen at the new Museum of Newport History at the Brick Market.
Idawally
Zorada Lewis

b. Newport, RI, February 25, 1842
d. Newport, RI, October 24, 1911

The heroine of "Lime Rock" and "the Grace Darling of America."

Second child and oldest daughter of four. Parents were Captain Hosea Lewis and Idawally Dordia Willey, formerly of Hingham, MA, and Block Island, respectively.

Rowed her siblings to and from school and brought supplies to lighthouse. Accomplished swimmer, master handler of the oars.

Credited with saving 18 lives - the most notable rescues occurred in 1858, 1866, 1867, and 1869.

National publications pick up her story. Receives letters of praise, congratulations, offers of marriage.

July 4, 1869, duly honored in Newport. Boat (named Rescue) is presented by citizens as a token of appreciation. Presentation held at Washington Square. Upwards of 4,000 people attend.

Met then President Ulysses Grant in Newport, who said in part, "I am happy to meet you, Miss Lewis, as one of the heroic, noble women of the age."

October 23, 1870, weds William H. Wilson of Black Rock, Bridgeport. Marriage doesn't last long, never divorced. Legend has it that her true marriage and love is Lime Rock.

January 21, 1879, officially appointed Lightkeeper. In all, kept 50 year vigil at lighthouse.
Recipient of numerous medals, e.g.: Gold Lifesaving Medal of U.S. Lifesaving Service.

Fallacies: meets President Grant at lighthouse; special act passed by Congress in her appointment; referred to as the first female lighthouse keeper and first woman to receive a congressional medal.

Controversy surrounds her death.
Buried in the Common Burial Ground, marked by an unusual gravestone of anchor and oars.

Birthplace still stands at 283 Spring street.

The family home and lighthouse is now the *Ida Lewis Yacht Club*.
Memorabilia on exhibit at the Newport Historical Society.

*Ida Lewis* book excerpt.

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**Bibliography**

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http://www.redwoodlibrary.org/notables/idalewis.htm

7/14/2004
Ida Lewis answered many calls of distress on Newport Harbor

Ida Lewis, the heroine of the Lime Rock Light at the southern end of our harbor, was born in 1842. What has been written about her could fill the famous "5-foot bookshelf"—or more.

Sometime in the mid-1850s, the teenager began saving lives. There were many times when the water off the light could be rough. As a result of her work, Lewis was recognized in the 1870s in national publications and newspapers. She kept the light until she died in 1911.

On Aug. 12, 1909, at the age 67, she saved the lives of five girls whose boats had swamped off the light.

The south end of Goat Island was a busy corner of the harbor. Countless power and sail yachts passed in and out of the port. A variety of Navy craft entered the inner harbor at that place and proceeded to docks at the Torpedo Station. Vessels of the Fall River Line used that area as they headed for New York. We assume that those luxury steam-boats could not negotiate passing into the bay using the water north of Goat Island. The big boats came down from Fall River, Mass., to their Long Wharf landing. That positioned them to use the inner harbor in order to proceed to the big city.

The 355-foot long, 1-year-old Fall River Line's Commonwealth made the tight turn at the end of Goat Island. Here, huge side paddlewheels, which could propel her through the water at 23 miles an hour, churned up some huge waves in her wake. The five girls were enjoying that August evening in the water, which was considered calm. The swash from the big steamer swamped the boat. The cries for help from the girls were heard by Ida Lewis. She wasted no time getting into her boat and "had the girls safely inside it in such a short time ... she must have flown over the water to reach them."

In reporting the rescue, The Daily News noted, "The Commonwealth is not the Fort Adams launch, and her swell is a real danger and should be avoided."

Coincidentally, according to the brief account of the rescue, there were a few words that indicated that the Commonwealth's wake evidently swamped a launch as she was leaving her Fall River pier about an hour before her arrival in Newport.
IDA LEWIS

Idawalley (Ida) Lewis was a Newport heroine. She lived at the Lime Rock lighthouse with her family. Her father was the lighthouse keeper until he became very ill. As a young girl Ida became the new lighthouse keeper, the first female to officially have that job in the US. Ida was very strong and was thought to be the best swimmer in Newport. She became famous for her daring rescues (over 18). Every day she rowed the mile from the lighthouse to town to take her family members to and from school and to get supplies. She received many medals and was a true hero for saving lives. Ida's lighthouse home is now the Ida Lewis Yacht Club on Wellington Avenue.

Did you notice the other lighthouses in Newport? One is on Rose Island. Another is on Goat Island. A third is at Castle Hill on Ocean Drive.

Do you have any heroes? What made them heroes?

Have you ever been someone's hero? Why? Draw or write about it here.
Ida Lewis to the Rescue

In 1857, when Ida Lewis was fifteen years old, she moved with her family to a lighthouse on a rock that just poked its ragged head above the waters of Newport Harbor. Ida’s father was the keeper of the light on the tiny island named Lime Rock. It was his job to keep the light burning to warn boats away from the rocks in the harbor.

When the family had lived on the island for about six months, Ida’s father became very ill and could no longer tend the light. Her mother took over the job of cleaning the lamp and keeping it filled with oil. Ida left school to help with the housework and the light.

Though she had grown up in Newport, with the sea all around, Ida didn’t know anything about boats. She had to learn quickly. Each weekday she rowed to the mainland to take her sister and two brothers to school and to buy groceries. In even the coldest and stormiest weather, she rowed the skiff through the waves. Though the trip was not a long one, it was often dangerous. When the seas were rough, the small boat was tossed about like a cork.

All that rowing made Ida strong. People were amazed that such a small girl could handle a boat so well.

Ida soon put her skill to a new use. One day four boys were sailing near the lighthouse when they accidentally overturned their boat. The strong tide was carrying them out to sea. Seeing what had happened, Ida quickly rowed out, pulled the boys aboard, and took them safely back to the lighthouse. It was Ida’s first rescue. She was just sixteen. Neither Ida nor the boys told anyone what had happened.

Over the next ten years, Ida tended the light. Sometimes she had to pull people from the unpredictable sea. She didn’t like to talk about herself or her rescues. Anyone would do the same, she felt. “If there were some people out there who needed help,” she once said, “I would go out to them even if I knew I couldn’t get back. Wouldn’t you?” But word of Ida’s bravery got out.
It was a cold March day in 1869. The wind howled and whipped the waves into huge breakers. Rain fell in sheets. Suddenly Ida heard her mother yelling, “Ida! Ida, run quick! A boat capsized and men are drowning. Run quick, Ida!” Barefoot, without coat or hat, her long skirts wrapping around her ankles in the wind, Ida ran into the gale, calling for her brother Hosea to help her. Together they launched the skiff into waves that looked like rolling mountains. Ida pulled on the oars with all her might. Time and again the great crashing waves threatened to sink the little boat, but Ida finally reached the half-drowned men. She and Hosea hauled the men from the icy waters. Then Ida fought her way back to the warmth and safety of the lighthouse.

The men, soldiers stationed at nearby Fort Adams, were so grateful to Ida that they told their story to everyone. Suddenly Ida was famous. Newspapers and magazines told of her rescues. People all over the world were talking about her. That summer over 9,000 curious people made their way to Newport to see the “heroine of Lime Rock.” Some of her visitors were famous themselves. One was President Ulysses S. Grant.

Everyone admired Ida’s courage. They gave her medals and awards. They wrote her letters by the thousands. They made speeches about her. The governor of Rhode Island declared July 4, 1869, Ida Lewis Day, and a grand ceremony was held in her honor. People sported Ida Lewis hats and Ida Lewis scarves. They even danced to the tune of the Ida Lewis waltz!

In time her fame died down, as fame always does. Ida didn’t mind. In fact, she was relieved to have peace and quiet once again.

She lived the rest of her life on Lime Rock, with her cocker spaniel, Dewey, six cats, and assorted rabbits. Always she kept an eye and an ear out for people in trouble in the water. At the age of 63 she made her last rescue. During her lifetime, she saved at least 18 people, some say as many as 40. We’ll
Clement Clarke Moore

b. New York City, NY, July 15, 1779
d. Newport, RI, July 10, 1863

After retiring from teaching, the author of The Night Before Christmas arrived in Newport in the 1850s. Moore purchases home and becomes a summer resident.

One of 26 men and women who donate monies for the purchase of land to be known as Touro Park (1865).

Died at Newport home. The house, #25 Catherine Street, still stands at the southwest corner of Catherine and Greenough Place. Broken into apartments, the house dates c. 1856 and after.

The house is known by the names: Cedars, Clement C. Moore House, and The Night Before Christmas House, often incorrectly claimed as site of the composition of Moore’s famous poem. No truth to the matter - as Moore had not yet begun his Newport days and house was not built when the poem was supposedly written by him in 1822.

Author, educator, poet and noted Hebrew scholar. Attended Columbia College, Valedictorian received B.A. (1798).

Father, Benjamin Moore, was the third president of Columbia College and second Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York - wanted son to become a priest.

Devoted to the study of Hebrew, Moore produced A Compendious Lexicon of the Hebrew Language: In Two Volumes which appeared in 1809.

Married Catharine Elizabeth Taylor on November 20, 1813. Upon father’s death (1816) inherited large amount of New York property originally owned by Moore’s grandfather Maj. Thomas Clarke - estate known as Chelsea.

Moore’s donation of 60 lots of land in 1819, together with a New York layman’s gift two years.
later, made possible the establishment and erection of the General Theological Seminary.

Became professor of Biblical learning and interpretation of Scripture at the diocesan seminary at New York in 1821. In 1823 became a professor in the General Theological Seminary, into which the diocesan seminary was merged. He was professor of Oriental and Greek literature until his resignation in 1850.

Moore wanted to be known for his writing contributions - mainly his Hebrew work. However, he is associated forever with his poem - *A Visit from St. Nicholas, The Night Before Christmas*.

Various stories have been told concerning the origin. Supposedly Moore wrote the verse as a present for his six children in 1822. Somehow a friend, or friend of a friend - transcribed, sent the verse to the *Troy (NY) Sentinel*. It appeared in the December 23, 1823 issue. Appearing many times thereafter in various publications, Moore did not include it in one of his published works until 20 years later (Poems 1844).

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**Bibliography**

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Redwood Library and Athenæum

50 Bellevue Avenue Newport, Rhode Island 02840 USA Tel (401) 847-0292

*Redwood Library Homepage*  *Newport Notables Contents*
The Complete Christmas Eve Story

'Twas The Night Before . . .

... dedicated to the memory of two Newporters, Dr. Clement Clarke Moore and James H. Van Alen, both of whom have given us the image of Santa Claus. Dr. Moore, a clergyman, wrote The Night Before Christmas in 1822 and James H. Van Alen, Founder of the International Tennis Hall of Fame, wrote in 1953 the verses that completed the beloved and magical story —

Newport Casino
International Tennis Hall of Fame
Christmas 1994
41st Annual Reading
Program
1:00 p.m.

Dr. and Mrs. Clement Clarke Moore
Portrayed by Mrs. James Van Alen
and Mr. John G. Winslow

The Moore Children portrayed by
Paul Marshall    Caitlin Nicholson
Kristiana Reed Moore    Clare Rok

Mistress of Ceremonies
Mrs. Van Alen
Reads James Van Alen's Introduction

John Winslow Reads the Night Before Christmas
with James Van Alen's additional verses.

Thompson Junior High School Concert Chorus
Christmas Carols conducted by John Duphiney

Thompson Junior High School Band Concert
with Leland Brown as Band Master

Sing-A-Long

Arrival of Santa Claus with goodies in his bag
for all the children!
Introduction

Dear children far and children near
The story you're about to hear
Was writ in eighteen twenty-two
For little children just like you
By Doctor Moore a kindly man
In whom the flow of poetry ran
So strong and true his verse and rhyme
Have stood the taxing test of time.
Yes, you tonight are going to hear
The age-old tale which year by year
's been read in homes across the land
On Christmas Eve when hand in hand
Fond parents with their children sit
And read the pages only lit
By logs and candles burning bright
How Santa Claus will come tonight
And fill your stocking as he's done
For Father, Mother, everyone
Since once upon a time they too
Were little children just like you
And then the story'll take a turn
And through another's lines you'll learn
What happy thankful thoughts went on
In Father's head when Santa'd gone
So if you'll all sit very still
Your eyes and heads this tale will fill
With visions which on Christmas Eve
Are dreamt by all who do believe.

See! now the picture comes to life,
The Doctor, children and his wife
Are gathered that the tale be read
Before the children go to bed.

James Van Alen
A Visit From St. Nicholas

By CLEMENT C. MOORE

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the luster of mid-day to objects below.
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles their coursers they came,
And he whISTLED, and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
His eyes — how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk.
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like a down of thistledown.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"
Afterward

SEQUEL TO “THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS”

By JAMES VAN ALEN

I leant far out listening, my hands on the sill
No sound broke the silence, the night was so still,
T’was hard to believe just one moment before
Saint Nick and his reindeer had raced past my door.

The air clear as crystal was frosty and crisp,
It turned the warm breath from my lips to a whisp
Of cottony cloud just as white and as thick
As the smoke from the short stumpy pipe of Saint Nick.

From the window I turned and to my surprise
Found Mamma and the children not opened their eyes.
But through the commotion’d continued to sleep
The slumber of innocents gentle and deep.

I eased down the sash with the greatest of care,
Refastened the shutters to foil the night air,
Then softly as wildly I’d sprung from my bed
Crept back, pulled the covers right up to my head.

To think that Saint Nick and I’d stood side by side
That of all on this Eve only I’d seen him ride!
Not the smallest detail must I let slip my mind,
For what’er I forgot would be gone with the wind.

So I lay snug and warm with the covers pulled high
While like troops on review each fresh mem’ry marched by
His swift flying team and his toy laden sleigh
The moon on the snow turning night into day.

His lightness of foot, his quickness of motion,
The prancing and pawing and sounds of commotion.
The names of his coursers, the ash on his suit,
His whistle shrill high and as clear as a flute.

His twinkle, his dimple, his nose like a cherry,
His wink and his laugh none was ever more merry.
My last fleeting view ere he drove out of sight,
His fading farewell, “And to all a good night.”

Then I thought, of the chimney I must take a view,
To make doubly sure what I’d witnessed was true,
And the fire’s final flicker disclosed to my eyes
The stockings toy-filled stretched to three times their size.

Yes, Saint Nick had been here, it had not been a dream.
He had come and he’d gone like a phantom moonbeam.
But where moonbeams that vanish leave never a trace,
Clear proof of his visit hung by the fireplace.

As my eyes closed, I smiled at the wonder there’d be
In the morn when I told what had happened to me.
What questions and answers, what jumping and dancing
The picture I conjured was truly entrancing.

With my heart warm and happy my nightcap on tight
I resettled myself for the rest of the night
And I whispered so only the Good Lord would hear
“Bless my children, Saint Nick and his tiny reindeer.”
Newporter
Dr. Clement Clarke Moore
1779 - 1863

Newporter
James A. Van Alen
1902-1990

41st Annual Reading
of The Complete Night Before Christmas

The Purpose

TO BRING at Christmas Time the image of our beloved Santa Claus as envisioned by Doctor Clement Clarke Moore and the spirit of family love, understanding and solidarity which Santa Claus symbolizes to every heart and home in America.

TO ENCOURAGE a community presentation of the "Christmas Eve Reading" in every city, town, village and hamlet, in the costumes of 1822. It was on Christmas Eve of this year that Doctor Moore wrote and first read his immortal poem "A Visit From Saint Nicholas" known to all as "The Night Before Christmas," to his family assembled: Mrs. Moore, his three daughters and his son.

The Committee is most grateful for the assistance, cooperation and participation of the many who have contributed their efforts to make this annual event possible.
Matthew Calbraith Perry

b. Newport or South Kingstown, RI, April 10, 1794.
d. New York City, NY, March 4, 1858.

Birthplace in question, boyhood home still stands at #31 Walnut Street.

Confusion concerning final burial location. Some place body in the Slidell family vault (married Jane Slidell) in churchyard of St. Mark’s-in-the-Bowerie (NYC), others in the Belmont Circle at island Cemetery. On south wall of Trinity Church is a memorial to Matthew. Baptized there in 1795.

His daughter Caroline married August Belmont, the senior. A statue to Perry’s memory was erected in 1868 in Touro Park by Mr. and Mrs. Belmont.

In commemoration of Perry’s accomplishment with relations between Japan and United States, the Black Ships Festival is held every summer in Newport.

Younger brother of Oliver Hazard Perry, he began naval career in his mid-teens, before it was over, he had been on an incredible number of missions spanning the globe for our government.

One of the most important missions of his career was the "opening up" of Japan. Japan, at the time, was under self-imposed isolation from the rest of the world. Our Navy, citing a need in that part of the world for a safe haven for whaling vessels and the need for coal for use in steamships, made a valid case to "open up" Japan.

In March of 1852, received command for Japanese expedition. After preparing at Okinawa, the Perry squadron arrived at what is now known as Tokyo Bay on July 8, 1853. The Japanese were quite taken back as this was the first time they had ever seen these so called "Black Ships." The American ships had no sails and were dispersing thick black smoke into the air.
Perry promised sufficient time for the Japanese to consider the proposal and would return the next spring for their answer. In November, Perry learned the Russians and French were planning their own treaties with Japan. Feeling this might jeopardize the Americans' chances he planned to sail for Japan early.

In February of 1854, Perry returned to Tokyo Bay and anchored of Yokohama. On March 8, the commissioners from the Emperor arrived to meet with Perry. After 23 days of intense negotiations, a treaty was signed. It contained provisions for the harbors of Shimoda and Hakodate to be opened for supplies and coal; shipwrecked sailors to be assisted and returned; and the free movement of American citizens within treaty ports.

The treaty of Kanagawa was ratified by the Senate on July 15, and signed by President Franklin Pierce on August 7, 1854. This was the first treaty of peace, amity, and commerce between the United States and Japan.

During his career, Perry successfully advocated for steam warships in the Navy, developed a naval apprentice system, organized the first Naval Engineer Corps, and established the first course of instruction at the Naval Academy.

Bibliography

Redwood Library and Athenæum
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http://www.redwoodlibrary.org/notables/e_perry.htm  7/14/2004