ITEMS OF INTEREST CONCERNING OLIVER HAZARD PERRY IN NEWPORT, AND NEWPORT IN THE WAR OF 1812

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NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Trieste

COM. OLIVER HAZARD PERRY

From portrait in possession of Newport Historical Society

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FOREWORD

This year being the centennial anniversary of the Victory on Lake Erie, by our revered townsman, Oliver Hazard Perry, the Newport Historical Society felt that it would be eminently appropriate to issue in a condensed form a reminder of the event.

The committee to whom was intrusted this matter present these brief items, not only as an acknowledgment of the service rendered his country by Oliver Hazard Perry, but with a desire that the youth of today may be imbued with his spirit of patriotism and duty.

ROBERT S. FRANKLIN, Secretary,
EDITH MAY TILLEY, Librarian,
Committee.

Some Items of Interest Concerning Oliver Hazard Perry in Newport

Newport has a glorious and precious heritage in the memory of Oliver Hazard Perry, and although born in South Kingstown, R. I., August 23d, 1785, he seems peculiarly our own, for in Newport he was baptized, educated and married; with Newport men he sailed to victory upon Lake Erie; and in the Island cemetery at Newport he lies buried.

During the early days of his boyhood, he resided in the house on the corner of Second and Walnut Streets. This house is still standing, and has been marked by the Newport Historical Society as the birthplace of his brother, Commodore Matthew C. Perry.

January 13, 1795, Oliver Hazard, Raymond Henry Jones, Sarah Wallace and Matthew James Calbraith, children of Christopher Raymond Perry and Sarah his wife, were baptized at Trinity Church, Newport, by Rev. William Smith.

Captain Christopher Raymond Perry had removed to Newport largely to take advantage of the educational facilities for his children, and Oliver became a pupil in the academy of Mr. John Frazer in Church Street, which for many years took high rank as a classical school. A notice which appeared in the Mercury of October 6, 1821, well describes the man and the esteem in which he was held.

"Died. In this town, on Wednesday last, Mr. John Frazer, in the 56th year of his age. He was for nearly thirty years, an eminent teacher in the Latin and Greek languages, and the mathematics. His qualifications were

highly respectable, founded on a finished education at the High School and University of Edinburgh. Many of his scholars have been celebrated for the extent and accuracy of their classical and mathematical attainments. Mr. Frazer was an honest man, never ashamed of, and reflecting honor upon that highly literary nation, Scotland, which gave him birth. His loss will be deeply felt, and his memory, as a man of science and integrity, will be held in high respect by his fellow citizens."

This stern Scotchman and severe disciplinarian became devotedly attached to Oliver and took pleasure in teaching him mathematics and their application to navigation and nautical astronomy, and it is said in the intervals between school hours, and on holidays, would frequently walk to the beach with him, where a horizon could be obtained, to take astronomic observations, and otherwise render his lessons more practical. Before Oliver left Mr. Frazer's school, the latter was wont to boast that he was the best navigator in Rhode Island.

Influenced by his father's example and his own love for the sea, Oliver early determined to become an officer, and in April, 1799, he entered the Navy of the United States, receiving his warrant as a Midshipman. A portrait of him in this uniform, which was painted on the floor of his house on the Point, is now in the possession of the Newport Historical Society.

Midshipman Perry was immediately ordered to the "General Greene," which had been built at Warren under the superintendence of his father, and under his command, sailed from Newport on her first cruise, June 2, 1799.

In 1802, he sailed on the frigate "John Adams," and later on the "Constellation" as a Lieutenant, to