

Rathbun-Rathbone-Rathburn  
**FAMILY  
HISTORIAN**



U.S.S. Providence — 1778  
John Peck Rathbun, Captain

Devoted to  
the perpetuity of  
our common heritage  
an honorable  
Name.

## Letter From the Editor

This issue completes the *Historian's* second year. Our membership now exceeds 270, slightly more than the 267 we recorded in 1981. We had hoped to reach 300, and we will continue our efforts to reach this goal.

We are so confident that our membership will grow, we have decided again to reduce the price. The rate for 1983 will be \$17 — a 15 percent reduction from the present \$20 figure, and considerably less than our original \$25 subscription rate.

Last year, in the October issue, we printed our association's 1981 financial report, estimating our costs for the final three months of the year. The 1982 financial report will be published in the January 1983 issue so we can have a more exact accounting.

As the magazine's founder and editor, I am personally very satisfied with the results of our first two years. In addition to our articles on past and present family members, we have continued publication of our genealogy beginning with John and Margaret Rathbun of Block Island, and with this issue have reached the end of the fourth generation. This year, we donated \$270 — \$1 for each member — to the Block Island Historical Society for its new museum. With your

continued help, I am confident we can keep building on this record of accomplishment.

Enclosed with this issue is a renewal form for 1983. We hope and trust that you will renew your membership, and we ask that you send your checks as promptly as possible.

Also enclosed is a letter outlining a proposal to erect a marker near the graves of our immigrant ancestors, John and Margaret Rathbun on Block Island. We need your help to finance this idea. Please read the letter carefully and let us know what you think.

I would like to offer special thanks to my "staff members" whose efforts have been indispensable to the magazine's success.

My wife, Hazel, checks my writing for errors and inconsistencies, types all my copy into readable form for the typesetter, and carefully checks the galley proofs and page proofs.

My son, Frank, edits my copy for style and accuracy, reads the galleys, designs the pages and painstakingly pastes up the final layout to make "camera-ready" pages for our printer.

His wife, Janice, keeps track of our financial records, deposits and keeps track of all incoming checks and pays our bills as they come due.

All three of them help me paste on mailing labels, insert the magazines and make the mailings.

Last, but far from least, Cousin Rob Rathbun of Kentucky, who lives too far away to help prepare the magazine, devotes much of his spare time checking vital statistics, cemetery records, census data and other sources of information on our family, helping us put together an accurate and complete history of the Rathbuns, Rathbones and Rathburns in America.

Special thanks also to all our members whose financial support has made the *Historian* possible, and to those who have, and are, sending in family records, pictures, obituaries and other material on the family.

I am especially grateful to those who are making special efforts to collect fam-

ily data in their areas. John Rathbun of Lansing, Mich., has sent an extensive package of genealogical material collected by his late father. Frank E. Rathbun of Coventry, R.I., has copied dozens of Rathbun-Rathbone cemetery inscriptions, and Betty Bonawitz of Groton, N.Y., has transcribed family data in the public library at Norwich, N.Y.

Some of you have still not responded to our continued pleas for your own family records. Our genealogical section is about to begin the fifth generation, and we desperately need all your data to make the family record complete.

An important role of the *Historian* is to record the present-day activities of Rathbuns, Rathbones and Rathburns and their families. Please let us know of births, deaths, marriages, job changes and honors in your family or those you see in your local newspapers. Share your good news, and sad, with your cousins in our family association.

For example, we have received word that some 135 descendants of John K. and Laura (Howell) Rathbun gathered July 10 at Fitzgerald, Ga., for their annual family reunion. Among those present were three of our members—Reba Rathbun Reeves, Susie Carter Baston and Ann Paulk. The 1983 reunion has been scheduled for next July 2. John Rathbun was the son of Hallet<sup>7</sup> Rathbun (Thomas<sup>6-54</sup> Ebenezer<sup>3</sup> William<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>) and his third wife, Augustine Kramer.

To all of you, thanks once again for your continued support.



**MRS. JOY ROBINSON** of Brill, England has become our first "international" member. She joined our association after spending a weekend in August with Frank and Hazel in Fairfax, Va. Mrs. Robinson is a descendant of the famous Rathbones of Liverpool, and with her twin brother, Philip Rathbone, has promised to provide material for a story on these illustrious cousins.

Published quarterly by the Rathbun Family Association at 11308 Popes Head Road, Fairfax, Va. 22030. Telephone: (703) 278-8512.

Frank H. Rathbun  
Editor & Publisher  
Robert Rathbun  
Research Director  
Hazel J. Rathbun  
Assistant Editor  
Frank H. Rathbun III  
Production Manager  
Janice A. Rathbun  
Business Manager

# Several States Have Towns Named for Family Members

At least seven small towns in the United States have been named for members of our family, but only one is large enough today to appear on a road map — the city of Rathbun, Iowa.

There is also a town of Rathbun in Pennsylvania; small villages named Rathbone in New York, Colorado, Michigan and Ohio; a Rathbun Gulch in Idaho, and a Rathbun School District in New York.

Rathbun, Iowa, the largest and most famous of these communities, is in Appanoose County. It made headlines in August 1971 when President Richard Nixon dedicated nearby Rathbun Dam, a \$25.5 million structure which created Rathbun Lake. The 11,000-acre lake is the state's largest, and has been developed as a vast recreational area.

The city was laid out and platted in 1892 by the Pacific Star Coal Company, which then sold it to the Star Coal Company of Streator, Ill. Charles H. Rathbun was secretary and general manager of Star Coal, and the company named the new city after him. He was born in 1846, the son of Hubbard<sup>6</sup> Rathbun (Hubbard<sup>5</sup> Job<sup>4</sup> Benjamin<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>).

Rathbun, Pa., a small hamlet in Elk County, was founded about 1860 by George Washington<sup>6</sup> Rathbun (George<sup>5</sup> Job<sup>4</sup> Benjamin<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>). He was a first cousin of the father of the founder of Rathbun, Iowa.

George Washington Rathbun was born in 1807, and became a blacksmith. As a young man in New York, he developed one of the first iron cookstoves to burn anthracite coal, and moved to Allentown, Pa., to be near charcoal furnaces for casting his stoves. He later sold his patents to the large Rathbone and Sard Stove Company in Albany, N.Y., and moved to Elk County to engage in lumbering and oil exploration.

Rathbone, N.Y., is a small village on the Canisteo River in the mountains of Steuben County. It was formed in 1856 from parts of three other townships, and named in honor of General Ransom Rathbone, who had settled there in



*The Town Hall of Rathbone, N.Y.*

1842 and built the first store and hotel.

General Rathbone (1780-1861) was the son of Moses<sup>5</sup> Rathbone (Joshua<sup>4</sup> Jonathan<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>). He was an early settler of Oxford, in Chenango County, N.Y., where he owned a paper mill and served in the local militia. He became a brigadier general in 1807.

Rathbone, Colo., is located in the northeast corner of Summit County, at the headwaters of the Prue River and at the base of Grey's Peak. The area underwent a mining boom in the 1890s, and a post office was created there in 1893. It was named for Estes G. Rathbone, then the fourth assistant postmaster-general of the United States.

In 1893, the town had 500 inhabitants, but has since disappeared from the map and has lost its post office.

Estes G.<sup>6</sup> Rathbone (Horace<sup>7</sup> Aaron<sup>6</sup> David<sup>5</sup> John<sup>4</sup> Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>) was an important figure in turn-of-the-century America, and we will devote a story to him later. He was an Ohio state senator, candidate for Congress, and head of the Cuban post office system.

Rathbone, Ohio, is a crossroads near Ostrander, in Delaware County, and was located by one of our members, Rhoda Durkin. It may have been named for John B.<sup>7</sup> Rathbone (1850-1888), who lived there. He was a son of John<sup>6</sup> Rath-

bun (William<sup>5</sup> Thomas<sup>4-3</sup> Samuel<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>).

Rathbone, Mich., is also a tiny crossroads hamlet, with two stores and a church. It is located in Saginaw County, and may have been named for Justus H. Rathbone, founder of the Knights of Pythias. We will have a story on him in one of our 1983 issues.

Rathbun Gulch, Idaho, is located on the North Fork of the Salmon River near Lost Trail Pass, along the route taken by Lewis and Clark in 1805 on their way to the Pacific Ocean. It was brought to our attention by C.C. Cornell, one of our members, who could not determine its namesake. (This would make a good research project for any member living or traveling in that area.)

The Rathbun School District is (or was) in the town of Hanover, Chautauqua County, N.Y. Its name may have been changed over the years. It was named for Demarcus Rathbun (1788-1878), a son of Solomon<sup>5</sup> Rathbun (Job<sup>4</sup> Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>). He was one of the earliest settlers in Hanover, in April 1831, and is buried there in the old Rathbun Cemetery.

If anyone knows of other towns named for members of our family, please let us know and we will report it in a later issue.

## For Your Information

Several of our members have received mailings from Beatrice Bayley of Sterling, Pa., offering a "Rathbun Family Heritage Book" for \$27.85. Your editor bought a copy several years ago and found it to be merely a collection of general information on genealogy, with pages for compiling individual ancestries, and a list of Rathbuns (no Rathbones or Rathburns) taken from old telephone books throughout the country. The book contains *no* genealogical information on our family.

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John Peck Rathbun

# Merchant Skipper Becomes Officer in Continental Navy

*John Peck Rathbun is one of the true "forgotten heroes" of the American Revolution. His record as a lieutenant, then captain, in the Continental Navy ranks him at least the equal of John Paul Jones, his one-time commander, in terms of courage, audacity and skill. Unfortunately, he was captured by the British during the war, died in an English prison and literally disappeared from history for nearly two centuries.*

*Rathbun has been called the "mystery man" of the Continental Navy because so little was known of him. Even his name was consistently misspelled in Navy records. Two Navy vessels named in his honor in this century were called Rathburne.*

*In the past two decades, historians have started to take notice of this long-forgotten naval hero. Several books have outlined some of his accomplishments. An article by your editor on Rathbun's major feat — the capture of Nassau in 1778 — was published by the Naval Institute in 1970.*

*The following account of John Peck Rathbun's life, which will be continued in succeeding issues, is based on years of research by your editor, who hopes eventually to publish a full-length biography of Captain Rathbun.*

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John Peck Rathbun was born March 23, 1746, in Exeter, R.I., the son of Nathaniel<sup>4</sup> (Thomas<sup>3-2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>) and Ann (Peck) Rathbun.

His father was born and married on Block Island and moved to Exeter about 1744. Nathaniel became a prosperous farmer and a community leader, and was serving as captain of the local militia when he died in June or July 1750, aged 31. His widow was left with four young children — John Peck, aged four, and three daughters aged eight, six and one. Ann sold the family farm and moved to Boston, where she had two brothers, but

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**"Most of John Paul Jones' success was due to John Peck Rathbun's valour and conduct" — Commodore Esek Hopkins, 1778.**

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she died there herself only three years later, aged 30.

It is not known who reared the four children, but the three daughters, at least, apparently returned to Rhode Island, where they all married, and then died in their 20s or 30s. Early death seemed to run in this branch of our family.

John Peck Rathbun, seven at the time of his mother's death, may have stayed in Boston with his mother's oldest brother, Thomas H. Peck, a wealthy fur merchant and hatter. Ann Rathbun's will had specified that her brother use part of her estate to educate her four children. John Peck Rathbun's later career and a few surviving letters indicate that her wishes were carried out.

From Boston cousins, Rathbun heard glowing tales of his mother's family, including a great-uncle who had captured and slain the dreaded pirate, Blackbeard, and others who had held high positions in the British Army and Navy.

He probably attended school in Boston until his early teens, then was sent to sea as a ship's boy on one of his uncle's trading vessels. By 1773, when he was 27, Rathbun was commanding a small schooner in the coastal trade between New England and the maritime provinces of Canada.

Boston was his home port during the early 1770s — the turbulent years preceding the Revolution. It is quite pos-

sible that he was a witness to two historic events — the Boston Massacre of 1770 and the Boston Tea Party of 1773.

The Massacre — in which seven Bostonians were killed by British troops — took place only a few doors from his uncle's haberdashery shop. One of Rathbun's cousins years later told of visiting the spot the next morning as a young boy to see the bodies and the frozen blood in the gutters.

The massacre was stopped at the urging of a prominent Tory — Benjamin Leigh, who, ironically, would one day be Rathbun's father-in-law. Leigh was a friend of the officer commanding the British troops involved, and persuaded him to withdraw his men to their quarters to prevent further bloodshed.

Rathbun was in port at the time of the Boston Tea Party, and his uncle was likely one of the town leaders who helped plan it. Some 150 patriots, disguised as Indians, boarded three ships and dumped 342 chests of British-owned tea into Boston Harbor. The loss was estimated at 18,000 pounds sterling. The Americans were protesting the British Parliament's action in giving one company a monopoly to sell tea in the colonies.

The British reaction was explosive. King George signed what Americans called the Intolerable Acts. Among other provisions, Boston was closed to all sea commerce as of June 1, 1774.

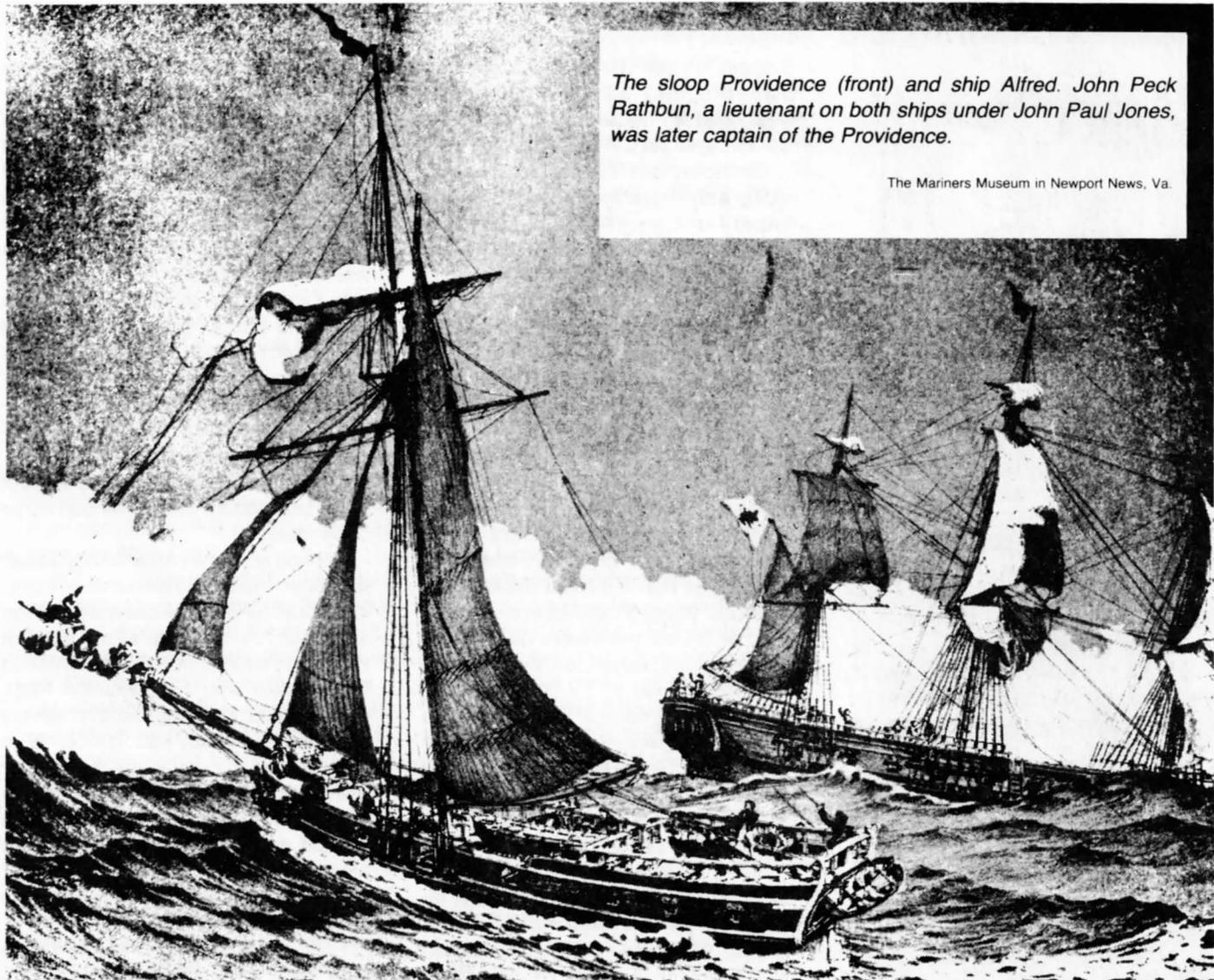
John Peck Rathbun returned in mid-June from a trip to Newfoundland, but because of the blockade he had to dock at Salem and travel to Boston overland.

During that summer and fall, Boston's economic life came to a halt. We do not know just how Rathbun spent those months, but we do know that during that time he fell in love with beautiful young Polly Leigh, 16-year-old daughter of Benjamin Leigh, the man credited with halting the Boston Massacre.

There must have been problems.

*The sloop Providence (front) and ship Alfred. John Peck Rathbun, a lieutenant on both ships under John Paul Jones, was later captain of the Providence.*

The Mariners Museum in Newport News, Va.



Leigh was a wealthy Delaware agent whose brother was a tutor to the royal family. He was an open and avowed Tory, who looked upon talk of independence and revolt as dangerous nonsense.

Rathbun's uncle was a prominent patriot, closely allied with the Boston radicals who favored independence. Rathbun no doubt shared his uncle's views, although he probably refrained from airing them in the Leigh household.

There may have been a problem, too, with the age difference. Leigh likely frowned on the romance between his teen-aged daughter and 28-year-old Rathbun.

A decision was forced by fast-moving events in the spring of 1775. Massachusetts was declared in a state of

rebellion and the British garrison at Boston was increased. On April 18, fighting broke out at Lexington and Concord, and the war was on.

Benjamin Leigh made plans to return to England with Polly and his younger children. Rathbun wanted to leave Boston, which was quickly filling up with Tory sympathizers from throughout the countryside, while patriots were leaving to join the Continental Army, gathering outside the city.

Rathbun solved the problem in a simple, direct manner—on May 4, 1775, he and Polly were married. They left Boston for Rhode Island, probably to the home of his only surviving sister, Ann, wife of Immanuel Case, a shopkeeper and tavern owner in South Kingston. The newlyweds probably spent the

summer and fall of 1775 at the Cases, as the war continued and demands for independence increased.

In Philadelphia, the Continental Congress had already created an Army, and now decided to authorize a Navy. Esek Hopkins of Rhode Island was named Commander in Chief and was ordered to begin recruiting officers and seamen.

Joining the new navy was a logical choice for an unemployed merchant captain. In November 1775, Rathbun set off for Providence to offer his services.

Hopkins had already left for Philadelphia to organize the new Navy, leaving recruiting in the hands of Abraham Whipple, like Rathbun a merchant

*(continued on page 54)*



John Paul Jones

Artist—Donna J. Neary

(continued from page 53)

skipper before the war. Assured by Whipple that he would be commissioned an officer, Rathbun "signed up" in the world's newest navy.

On November 20, he boarded the sloop *Katy*, flagship of the little Rhode Island Navy, on which Whipple was to take a group of newly enlisted seamen and officers to Philadelphia. They sailed on November 26 and arrived at Philadelphia on December 5. The sloop's name was changed to *Providence* and she joined four larger converted merchant vessels to form the U.S. Navy's first fleet.

On Feb. 10, 1776, Rathbun was commissioned a second lieutenant and assigned to the *Providence*, under the command of Captain John Hazard. The fleet set sail the next day, and three weeks later was in the Caribbean. Hopkins had heard there were large supplies of British gunpowder and ammunition at Fort Nassau on the island of New Providence.

On March 3, some 250 marines landed and took over the island with little opposition. Two weeks later, the fleet started on its return trip to New England, having found less ammunition than Hopkins had hoped.

It was an uneventful trip until April 4, off Long Island, where they became involved in the first major naval battle of the war. After capturing two small British warships, the American fleet battled briefly with the 20-gun *Glasgow*, whose captain managed to outmaneuver the five American ships and escape.

During the battle, Captain Hazard of the *Providence* proved to be cowardly, incompetent, or both. The sloop took virtually no part in the action although it was one of the fastest and most maneuverable vessels in the fleet.

Rathbun and his fellow junior officers on the *Providence* were thoroughly disgusted and once in port they brought charges against Hazard. He was court-martialed and became the first officer of the United States Navy to be dismissed from service.

Named to succeed Hazard as captain of the *Providence* was a short, cocky first lieutenant named John Paul Jones. Rathbun was promoted to first lieutenant and became Jones' second-in-

command — the equivalent of today's "executive officer."

Rathbun sailed on the *Providence* under Jones for the next six months, cruising the Atlantic from Newfoundland to Bermuda. The *Providence* captured eight British vessels and destroyed eight others. Jones was hailed as a hero, but Commodore Hopkins later commented that most of the success was due to Rathbun.

In October, Jones was promoted to command a larger ship, the *Alfred*, and persuaded Rathbun to join him again as first lieutenant. On a cruise to Nova Scotia, they captured nearly a dozen vessels and destroyed several others — another successful cruise.

On this trip, we find a graphic account of the courage for which Rathbun came to be noted.

Coming across an American privateer schooner, the *Eagle*, known to be carrying a number of Navy deserters, Jones sent Rathbun on board with a band of marines to search the ship. An officer on the privateer later complained of Rathbun's actions, charging that the marines . . . "were ordered by said Rathbun to go into the hold and prick about with their cutlasses to discover any concealed men, which they did . . . Rathbun abused the first lieutenant of the said schooner by heaving him on the deck, and many other acts of high insult were committed by Rathbun's orders."

Four deserters found hiding below deck were sent over to Jones on the *Alfred*, who sent back orders to Rathbun to seize 20 of the *Eagle*'s regular crew to fill Jones' manpower shortage.

This cruise ended the highly successful Jones-Rathbun partnership. On their return to port, they found that a promotion list had been issued, and both were disappointed. Jones was again offered command of the little *Providence*, and Rathbun remained a first lieutenant. They talked together in Boston and decided to take their cases directly to Philadelphia and the Marine Committee of the Continental Congress. It had become apparent that promotions and top assignments went to those with well-placed friends in the Congress and on the committee.

Jones left immediately, but Rathbun went first to Providence to visit Commodore Hopkins. Jones and Hopkins had

developed a bitter feud, but Rathbun got along with both men. At Rathbun's urging, Hopkins wrote a glowing letter of recommendation to his friend, William Ellery, an influential Rhode Island congressman who served on the Marine Committee.

In the letter, Hopkins called Rathbun "a man of courage" and declared that most of Jones' successes had been due to Rathbun's "valour and conduct." In concluding, Hopkins wrote that Rathbun was "of a good family in Boston. Any service you may do him will be serving the cause."

With effective foresight, Rathbun asked for a copy of the letter addressed to the chairman of the Marine Committee — John Hancock, of Boston, a friend of his uncle Thomas H. Peck. He then set off for Philadelphia carrying both letters.

William Ellery, no doubt with Hancock's backing, proved to be the "friend at court" that Rathbun needed. On Ellery's recommendation, the Congress on April 19, 1777, issued Rathbun a captain's commission and gave him command of the sloop *Providence*. Jones was to wait another six months before his next command.

On April 23, the Marine Committee gave Rathbun his orders:

"You are to lose no time in proceeding to join your vessel at Rhode Island where you must exert yourself to have her fitted and manned immediately — when ready for the sea you are to proceed on a cruise in such Latitudes as will be most likely to fall in with and intercept the enemys Transport Vessels coming to reinforce or supply their Army at New York, and you are to use your best endeavours to take, burn, sink or destroy as many of the enemies Vessels of every kind as it may be your good fortune to fall in with . . ."

Rathbun immediately left for Providence, no doubt stopping on the way to visit Polly at South Kingston. He may have been there on May 4 to celebrate the second anniversary of their wedding.

At Providence, he found bad news. The *Providence* was gone! Commodore Hopkins had sent her out on a cruise under Lieutenant Jonathan Pitcher a month earlier, and nothing had been heard of her since. If she were sunk or

captured, Rathbun's successful mission to Philadelphia would have been in vain.

He waited for weeks. Polly probably came to Providence to be with him during the anxious vigil. Finally, in mid-June, word came that the *Providence* had put into Bedford, Mass., and Rathbun immediately proceeded to Bedford to take command.

Again, he found bad news. The sloop had been badly battered in a gun fight with a British ship near Newfoundland. Lt. Pitcher had been wounded; the *Providence* needed extensive repairs, including a new mast. Her crew members had scattered.

For the next month, as carpenters and caulkers worked to repair the sloop, Rathbun rounded up a new crew and a new set of junior officers. By mid-July, the *Providence* was repaired, stocked with provisions, and had a new crew of five officers and some 66 enlisted men.

Rathbun must have been happy and confident. He knew the *Providence* well, and he was anxious to set sail for the first time as captain of his own ship.

The little sloop was about 60 feet long, 20 feet wide amidships, and carried a single mast some 80 feet high, with two yardarms. A bowsprit projected 40 feet from her bow. She had a high quarter-deck running from the stern to half the length of the ship, covering the officers' sleeping quarters and eating area, and the large "captain's cabin" at the stern. The crew slept in close quarters below the main deck.

The *Providence* carried eight carriage-mounted cannons on her main deck and four more on the quarter-deck. Each could fire four-pound cannonballs. She was a fast, maneuverable and well-built vessel, and Rathbun must have been a proud commander as he sailed her out of Bedford on his first cruise as her captain.

To be continued



Abraham Whipple  
U.S. Naval History Department

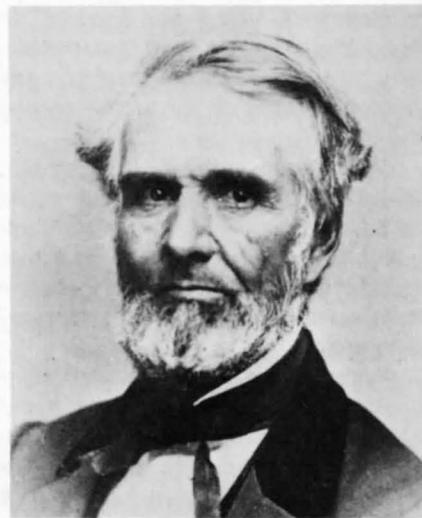
# Rathbun-Rathbone Brothers Were Grand Rapids Founders



*Charles Rathbun*  
1796-1875



*Alfred D. Rathbone*  
1806-1856



*Amos Rathbone*  
1808-1882

The early history of Grand Rapids, Michigan's second largest city, is closely entwined with the lives of three brothers — Charles Rathbun (your editor's great-grandfather), Alfred Day Rathbone, known as "A.D.," and Amos Rathbone.

Charles owned the city's leading hotel for many years. Amos was city treasurer, alderman, supervisor and a leading financier. Alfred was one of the town's first lawyers, served as its first postmaster and prosecuting attorney, and helped write the first city charter.

The three were among the 10 children of Amos<sup>2</sup> Rathbun (Amos<sup>1</sup> Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>) and Mary (Polly) Williams. Amos was a Revolutionary War veteran from Richmond, Mass., who later settled in Troy, N.Y., and finally moved about 1798 to the beautiful Finger Lakes area of New York State, at Scipio in Cayuga County, purchasing more than 1,000 acres which he cleared for growing wheat. He became a prosperous farmer and an influential member of the community, serving on the Grand Jury in

1800, as township supervisor from 1800 to 1802, and in the state legislature from 1804 to 1807.

He died on Sept. 22, 1823, leaving a sizable estate which gave his six sons and four daughters a good start in life. His wife died seven years later, on Aug. 20, 1830. Amos was described as "a large, powerful man of great courage."

**Charles Rathbun** (1796-1875), the second oldest son, was married in 1818 to Anna Kniffin, and raised a family of five sons and six daughters. As a young man, he was a farmer in Scipio, where he earned a reputation for strength and endurance.

Family tradition tells that, shortly after his marriage, he worked for a neighboring farmer during the wheat harvest season, cutting wheat by hand with a "cradle" while a companion scooped up the stalks and tied them into sheafs for stacking and drying. The workers reported at 4:30 a.m., began working at dawn and kept going until dusk, with

short breaks for lunch and supper. The pay was \$1.50 a day.

One morning, Charles' wife and newborn baby were sick, and by the time he tended to them, it was after 6 a.m. and he was two hours late for work. His employer informed Rathbun that he would not pay him for a full day's work.

"How much will you pay me by the acre?" Rathbun asked.

The farmer, estimating that a hard worker could cut about three acres of wheat in a day, said he would pay 50 cents an acre.

Rathbun agreed, and set to work with such vigor he kept two men busy tying and stacking the wheat behind him. By dark, he had mowed seven acres. The astonished farmer paid him \$3.50 and gave him a bushel of wheat as a bonus.

In 1825, two years after his father's death had left him with a modest inheritance, Charles sold his farm and moved with his wife and three young children to Huron County, Ohio, where he purchased a tract of wilderness and cleared it for farmland. Seven years



*The Rathbun House in Grand Rapids, Mich., about the time it was torn down in 1887.*

later, he sold the farm and, with four more children and a good profit for his investment and work, he returned to Cayuga County in 1832.

Meanwhile, in the Territory of Michigan, early settlers were sending back word of a fertile, pleasant area along the rapids of the Grand River, 25 miles from Lake Michigan. A Rathbun cousin, Rix Robinson, operated a fur-trading post for Indians there in 1821, and became a prime mover of the area's growth and development. He was a grandson of Edward Robinson and Susannah<sup>4</sup> Rathbun (Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>).

In 1835, 42 residents from Cayuga County, N.Y., including six of Rix Robinson's brothers, moved to the "Grand Rapids" area, then known as Kent. Word was sent back east to relatives, friends and neighbors about the great potential of the area.

Gouverneur B. Rathbun (1819-1888), the 20-year old son of Charles and Anna, moved to Grand Rapids in 1839, and went into business with his uncle, Amos Rathbone, who had also settled

there that year. They opened a general store with a total investment of \$6,000 — each partner putting up \$3,000. Gouverneur had borrowed the money from his father. The business prospered and, in 1843, Amos and Gouverneur bought land on a busy downtown street and erected the city's first stone business block.

Hearing these stories of success from Grand Rapids, Charles Rathbun, then 48, decided in 1844 to make the move himself. Taking his wife, mother-in-law and the 10 youngest children — ranging in age from 3 to 22 — he loaded up a caravan of ox-drawn carriages and wagons and set off for Michigan.

A farmer all his life, Charles now looked for a new occupation — and found it. He bought one of the village's three hotels, the Mansion House, at Monroe and Waterloo (now Market) streets.

The frame building, originally the home of wealthy French land speculator Louis Campeau, was about 10 years old and solidly built. It was two-storied and

20-by-30 feet in size, making it a "mansion" for that day and area. Two elderly sisters had bought it from Campeau and operated a boarding house there for several years. It was converted into a hotel in 1841 and called the Mansion House.

Charles purchased it for \$3,500, extended the front, added two stories and renamed it the Rathbun House.

Two years later, in 1846, as the village continued to grow and prosper, Charles spent another \$3,500 for a large addition made of cut limestone. It added some 60 rooms, a kitchen and large dining room, and a huge ballroom covering the entire upper floor. The hotel then had 117 rooms.

Charles became the most popular hotel landlord in western Michigan. Aided by his older sons and daughters, he made the Rathbun House a center of the community's life. Elections were held there, auctions were conducted from the front balcony and bonfire rallies were held on the street in front.

*(continued on page 58)*

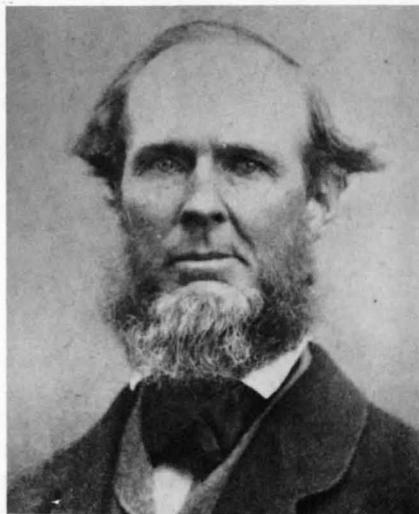
# Grand Rapids

(continued from page 57)

The huge upper ballroom was used almost nightly for dances, lectures, concerts or shows by traveling theatrical groups.

In 1851, Charles bought a farm in nearby Paris Township and moved there with his still unmarried children. Despite the hotel's success, he apparently preferred the more peaceful life of a farmer. Possibly he was influenced by the marriages that year of three of his children — costing him three valuable assistants — or by the failing health of his wife. She died in 1854, and he was married again, in 1856, to Jane Van Tuyle.

Charles leased the hotel to a series of landlords, first to his cousin/brother-in-



Gouverneur B. Rathbun  
1819-1888

law, Hiram Rathbun, who had married his sister, Pamela, and later to his daughter and son-in-law, Sarah and Benjamin Smith.

Charles' son, Gouverneur, bought out his uncle Amos' interest in the stone business block, known as "The Wedge," and finally sold it in 1853. He then entered the newspaper business and with a partner, Nathan Church, bought the *Grand Rapids Times*, but with unhappy results. An ardent Democrat, Gouverneur was a bitter foe of Michigan Republican Senator Zachariah Chandler, and when Chandler died in 1879, the *Times* carried a front-page headline, "Zach Chandler Is Dead—Thank God."

Circulation of the *Times* dropped from 1,200 to 600 within days, and in two years it folded. Gouverneur then bought a farm near Grand Rapids and lived there until his death.

Charles Rathbun stayed on the farm in Paris Township for nearly 20 years, until he turned it over to his youngest son, Hugo, in 1870. He then moved into Grand Rapids to live with a daughter. He remained physically active through his late 70s. In 1874, aged 78, he was thrown from his horse while riding and suffered injuries that led to a stroke and his death on Nov. 13, 1875.

Charles left an estate of \$13,000, in addition to the Paris Township farm which he willed to Hugo. Much of his savings had been lost some years earlier after he invested in the Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo Plank Road.

Plank roads had become almost a mania in Michigan in the Civil War era, and were built throughout the state. Thick planks were laid over parallel timbers making a smooth-surfaced road much cheaper than railroads. Railroads proved longer-lasting and cheaper to maintain, however, and plank roads were soon obsolete. Many investors lost heavily.

Charles Rathbun had sold the Rathbun House in 1872 for \$28,000, with a sizable down payment. He may have used that cash for his unfortunate plank road investment. The hotel was torn down about 1886.

A writer of the time called Charles Rathbun "a man of robust frame, strong will and temperate habits."

**Alfred Day Rathbone** (1806-1856), Charles' brother, adopted the Rathbone spelling as a young man, and became an attorney under the guidance of a brother-in-law, Thomas Yardley How, who had married his sister Mary.

Alfred practiced law for a few years in Brownville, N.Y., then moved to Silver Creek in the same state, where in 1836 he married Lucy Redfield.

That same year, he caught the "Michigan Fever" and set out for Grand Rapids with his new bride in the fall. They found a frontier village, with muddy streets and few buildings, but a spirit of bounding optimism for the future. He and his wife spent the first winter in a crude shack build by driving sharpened planks into

the ground for walls, and with bare dirt for a floor. Within a decade, he would become one of the city's wealthiest men.

He was the first regular attorney to settle in Kent County, and quickly rose to a position of prominence. He was school inspector in the middle 1830s, and in 1838, when the community was incorporated as the village of Kent, he was named the first postmaster.

From 1839 until 1843, he was Kent County's prosecuting attorney, and in 1850 he served on the commission which wrote the first Grand Rapids city charter.

Alfred became a major leader of the local Democrats, and in 1854 was drafted to become the party's candidate for the state senate. He lost by a slim margin as the Whig party converted many Democrats because of the slavery issue.

His promising career was ended by a stroke which resulted in his death on April 5, 1856, at the age of 50.

He left an estate of nearly \$60,000, mostly in real estate, and a will which set legal precedent at the time. He set aside some money to care for his wife and educate his children, but retained the bulk of his property intact for his unborn grandchildren, permitting his children to use only the annual interest. He had set a pattern later to be followed by the Morgans, Rockefellers, Fords and other wealthy families in what we know today as trusts or foundations.

Alfred left two daughters and a son, Alfred D. Rathbone II, who established a dynasty that ended with the death in 1949 of Alfred Day Rathbone IV, leaving two daughters but no sons.

**Amos Rathbone** (1808-1882), the third brother, caught "western fever" in 1834 and set off for Fountain County, Ind., where he opened a general store in Covington, the county seat. He also used the Rathbone spelling.

Amos operated his store in Indiana for several years, but visited Alfred in Grand Rapids and bought several lots there as an investment. In the spring of 1839, a letter from Alfred informed him that a shipload of groceries bound for Grand Rapids had been water-soaked and virtually ruined in a storm on Lake Michigan. The town's residents were desperately short of food.

Seeing an opportunity for profit, Amos hired some young men, loaded a wagon with groceries and hauled it to Grand Rapids with teams of oxen, driving 50 head of cattle with them. He sold the entire lot, and returned to Indiana for more. He continued in this profitable trade until fall when he decided to make Grand Rapids his home.

Amos went on to make a fortune and a successful political career in Grand Rapids. After he and his nephew, Gouverneur Rathbun, sold their general store, Amos turned to the lumbering business.

Amos bought two sawmills north of Grand Rapids, and built a ship to carry his lumber to Chicago and other Great Lakes ports. A few years later, as the area's plentiful limestone deposits began to challenge wood as a building material, Amos returned to the grocery trade for a time, but then formed a company to enter the limestone business.

In 1864, with several partners, he purchased an old "plaster mill" just south of the city, on 425 acres which covered gypsum beds some 12 feet thick, lying under 10 to 15 feet of soil.

Amos invested profits from his limestone operation in Grand Rapids real estate, which escalated sharply in value. He bought property and built nine brick stores on Monroe Street, the city's main commercial thoroughfare. He was an early promoter of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad, which was to run directly through his plaster mill property and simplify his transportation problems. He was a large and early stockholder in the railroad.

Amos was also one of the founders, and on the first board of directors, of the First National Bank, whose original capital of \$50,000 rose to \$500,000 within a few years.

In civic affairs, Amos was equally active. In 1844, he helped organize the Grand Rapids Academy, the city's first institution of higher learning, and served on the board of trustees. He was elected city treasurer in 1847 and alderman in 1857. He also represented Grand Rapids on the Kent County Board of Supervisors.

Amos died in 1882, aged 74, after spending his final years in retirement and living off the income of his many investments. He and his wife, Amanda Carver, had no children, and his

\$135,000 estate was left to nephews and nieces.

Amos Rathbone's obituary described him as "a man of quick and keen perception . . . not a perfect man, we haven't had any since Christ died, (but) . . . there is left among us but very few of better stuff than Amos Rathbone."

Unfortunately, brothers Amos Rathbone and Charles Rathbun became estranged in middle age. The two brothers did not speak to one another for the last decades of their lives. Family tradition says they quarreled over the spelling of their last name, but surviving letters indicate a more logical reason — Amos borrowed money from Charles to finance his early operations and apparently failed to repay it in full.

The three brothers who played such important parts in the early history of Grand Rapids have only a few descendants in the area today and none with the Rathbun or Rathbone name. A bronze plaque marking the site of the Rathbun House was torn down a few years ago when a new building — the fourth — was erected on the property.

**The other children** of Amos Rathbun Sr. and Polly Williams had interesting and eventful lives.

The oldest, Mary (1790-1885), married Thomas Yardley How, attorney, religious leader and secretary to Alexander Hamilton during his service as secretary of the Treasury in George Washington's cabinet. They had no children.

Nathan Williams Rathbun (1792-1852) became a lawyer and practiced for some years in Brownville, N.Y. He migrated in 1824 to Lenawee County, Mich., but returned after a few years to New York. About 1836, he went west again, settling at Maumee City, near Toledo, when he bought and improved waterfront property expecting Maumee to become the area's major port city. When that honor went to Toledo, his property became worthless and he suffered heavy losses. He was a justice of the peace at Maumee in 1837, and practiced law there until the 1840s, when he moved to Washington, D.C. He was serving as a clerk for the House Committee on Post Offices and Roads when he died in 1852. He and his wife, Mary Turner, had no children.

Electa Williams Rathbone (1797-18??) married Robert Cooley and was the mother of John Clark Cooley, author of the 1898 *Rathbone Genealogy*.

Judah Williams Rathbun (1801-1885) remained in Cayuga County as a farmer most of his life. He also complained that he loaned money to his brother Amos and was never repaid in full. He and his wife, Celia<sup>6</sup> Rathbun (John<sup>5</sup> Daniel<sup>4</sup> Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>) had several children.

Pamela Brown Rathbun (1803-1870) married her first cousin, Hiram<sup>6</sup> Rathbun (Edward<sup>5</sup> Amos<sup>4</sup> Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>), and moved to Grand Rapids. Hiram leased the Rathbun House from Charles Rathbun for some years. Hiram and Pamela have a number of living descendants, none with the Rathbun/Rathbone name.

Jacob Brown Rathbun (1810-1850)



*Jacob Brown Rathbun (1810-1850) was called the second most handsome man in New York City.*

moved to New York City as a young man and invested his money in a general store. An early writer called him "the handsomest man save one" in the entire city. He died there unmarried on Nov. 19, 1850, aged 40.

Sarah Frances Rathbone (1815-1902) married George Benedict, an attorney, and moved to Cleveland. Benedict became city attorney, council president, postmaster and eventually owner of the Cleveland Daily Herald.

# Genealogy: The Fourth Generation in America

**43. BENJAMIN<sup>4</sup> RATHBUN** (Benjamin<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born Jan. 12, 1747, in Colchester, Conn., and married there in October 1771, Huldah Williams, born Dec. 24, 1752, daughter of Philip and Hannah (Crocker) Williams. (The story of his life was told in our April 1982 issue.) He died July 21, 1819, in Springfield, N.Y. Huldah died there Nov. 23, 1824.

## CHILDREN

WILLIAMS, born Aug. 16, 1772; married Jemima Green.

DANIEL, born Nov. 6, 1774; married Dolly Stocking.

BENJAMIN, born Feb. 11, 1777; married Mary Carter.

JOEL, born Aug. 20, 1779; married Philomelia Alden.

SELDEN, born Sept. 2, 1781; married (1) Rosina Eldredge; (2) Betsey Knowlton.

ARTEMUS, born March 16, 1784; married Phoebe Carpenter.

HULDAH, born Nov. 22, 1786; married Robert Rogers.

ELECTA, born March 12, 1789; married Elezer Perry.

CLARISSA, born Jan. 16, 1796; died unmarried Feb. 11, 1862.

**44. JOB<sup>4</sup> RATHBUN** (Benjamin<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born July 24, 1748, in Colchester (now Salem), Conn., and married there about 1774 Deborah Welch, born about 1753 in Wales, possibly the daughter of Hubbard Welch. A descendant reported that she and her sister left Nova Scotia by boat, and that the sister was washed overboard during a storm on the way to New London, Conn. Job was a minuteman in the Connecticut militia in 1775 and 1776, under Captain Eliphalet Holmes. He bought 300 acres in 1808 in the northern section of Howard Township, Steuben County, N.Y.,

and moved there with his family about 1815. He built a large home in which early town meetings were held. In later life, he operated a distillery in what was known as "Old Castle," a stone house built by his son, Alfred. Job died May 1, 1838, in Howard, and Deborah died there in 1845. Both are buried in the old Allen Cemetery.

## CHILDREN

GEORGE WASHINGTON, born Oct. 16, 1775; married (1) Eunice<sup>5</sup> Rathbun (William<sup>4</sup> Job<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>); (2) Anna Matthews.

EUNICE, born Dec. 6, 1777; married Joshua<sup>5</sup> Rathbun (William<sup>4</sup> Job<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>).

RUSSELL, born June 13, 1780; married (1) \_\_\_\_\_; (2) Elizabeth Treadway.

HUBBARD WELCH, born April 24, 1781; married Abigail Saxton; three others.

LYDIA, born about 1782; married Rufus Halsey.

DYER DANA, born April 6, 1784; married Susan (Rich) Strong.

DEBORAH, born April 1786; married James Corey.

AMIZIAH RILEY, born Dec. 25, 1789; married (1) Joanna Wheeler; (2) Sarah Whiting.

ALFRED, born about 1791; married Laura Brown.

CLARISSA, born about 1793; married Cornelius<sup>5</sup> Rathbun (William<sup>4</sup> Job<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>).

SARAH ANN, born about 1795; married Cornelius Madole (McDowell?).

BETSEY, listed by Cooley; no other information.

**45. SIMEON<sup>4</sup> RATHBUN** (Benjamin<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born May 2, 1751, in Colchester, Conn., and married about 1771 Avis Hamilton, born Feb. 7, 1754, daughter of James and Priscilla (Strickland) Hamilton. He is presumably the Simeon Rathbun listed in the 1790 census in Hartford County, Conn., although Cooley says he moved to Williamstown, Oswego County, N.Y. in 1793. He does not appear in the census there of 1800 or 1810, but does in 1820. He died in Williamstown on April 29, 1829. Avis died, presumably there, in September 1828.

## CHILDREN

SIMEON, born Nov. 6, 1771; married (?) \_\_\_\_\_.

MARY, born March 1, 1775; married Admiral Birch.

SAMUEL, born Nov. 14, 1776; married Beulah Wright.

NANCY, born Sept. 25, 1778; married Hezekiah Stocking.

EPAPHRODITUS, born Aug. 12, 1780; married (1) \_\_\_\_\_; (2) Harriet Simpson.

RODNEY, born June 23, 1782; married Ruth Redfield.

MARTHA, born May 30, 1784; married Samuel Clements in 1807.

STRICKLAND, born March 13, 1786; married (1) Millie Ellis; (2) Prudence Twitchell.

DANIEL, born May 12, 1788; no further information.

ERASTUS, born July 23, 1790; no further information.

SALAH JONES, born Oct. 4, 1792; married (1) Mary Barber; (2) Sophia B. Hills.

CHARLES, born Nov. 28, 1794; married Electa Appleby.

LOUISA, born June 4, 1798; no further information.

**46. JOB<sup>4</sup> RATHBUN** (Job<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born Jan. 22, 1739, in Canterbury, Conn. His father died when he was about six, and he was reared by his uncle, William Harris, a mariner. Job went to sea as a young boy, was a mariner all his life and became a captain operating from New London, Conn. He married Patience \_\_\_\_\_, born about 1749. Job died "at sea from the effects of poison put into the drinking water by natives near the coast of South America," according to Cooley. His will was proved in 1797. Patience died March 16, 1829, in New London. They apparently had no children.

**47. WILLIAM HARRIS<sup>4</sup> RATHBUN** (Job<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born June 1, 1743, in New London, Conn., and married about 1773 Jerusha Beebe, born June 4, 1752, daughter of Jabez and Eunice (Newbury) Beebe. Like his brother, he was reared by his uncle, William Harris, for whom he was named, and went to sea as a boy. The uncle built a ship for his two nephews when they came of age, naming it the *Two Brothers*. It was burned by the English during the Revolutionary War with a cargo of indigo from the Caribbean. They were awarded a land grant as compensation for their loss, but never claimed the land. Some years after losing the ship, William Harris Rathbun left New London and moved to Warren, Herkimer County, N.Y., and then to Howard, Steuben County, N.Y., in 1808. He died there on April 16, 1822. Jerusha died later, but the date is not known.

#### CHILDREN

JOSHUA, born Sept. 20, 1775; married Eunice<sup>5</sup> Rathbun (Job<sup>4</sup> Benjamin<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>).

JERUSHA (twin), born Sept. 20, 1775; married John C. Rogers.

WILLIAM, born Jan. 28, 1778; married Hannah Page. He moved with his father to Warren, and then to Howard, and by 1830 was living at Grand Island, near Buffalo, N.Y., where he drowned while crossing the Niagara River in 1835. He had no known children.

EUNICE, born April 2, 1780; married George Washington<sup>5</sup> Rathbun (Job<sup>4</sup> Benjamin<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>).

MARY, born Nov. 1, 1782; died in 1793.

JOB BEEBE, born May 20, 1784; married Fanny Brown.

JEREMIAH, born May 5, 1786; died in infancy.

BENJAMIN, born May 10, 1788; married Margaret Walker.

REBECCA, born Aug. 9, 1789; married Ephraim Rumsey.

CORNELIUS, born Jan. 1, 1792; married Clarissa<sup>5</sup> Rathbun (Job<sup>4</sup> Benjamin<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>).

MARY, born July 20, 1794; died young.

LYDIA, born July 1, 1797; married Isaac Bennett.

**48. SAMUEL<sup>4</sup> RATHBUN** (?Thomas<sup>3</sup> Samuel<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born about 1729, probably in Exeter, R.I.; moved to Lyme, Conn., and married there about 1755, Huldah Lord, born July 16, 1735, daughter of Theophilus and Deborah (Mark) Lord. This family was overlooked by Cooley, and there is no record of their marriage or children. Samuel's parentage and the following list of children are based on study and analysis of Connecticut records. Theophilus, Sybil, Priscilla, Daniel and Samuel are most likely his children; the others are probable or possible. Samuel died Dec. 16, 1793, in Lyme, aged 63, and Huldah died June 30, 1794.

## Correction

Dorcas Wells, the wife of Joshua<sup>4</sup> Rathbun (Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>), was the daughter of Peter and Ann (Watson) Wells, not James Wells, as reported in the April 1982 issue (page 27). Her father's name was given as James in Cooley's *Rathbone Genealogy*. The corrected information was supplied by a new member, Mrs. Ellen Brown, to whom we express gratitude. Cooley's work has many such errors, and we appreciate any opportunity to correct them.

#### CHILDREN

THEOPHILUS, born about 1758; served in the Revolutionary War and was apparently dead by 1790. No known marriage or children.

JONATHAN, born about 1760; living in Colchester in 1790.

SYBIL, born about 1764; married Noah Beebe Aug. 26, 1784, in Lyme.

PRISCILLA, born about 1766; married David Ranney June 6, 1783.

DANIEL, born about 1769; died July 8, 1787, in Lyme, aged 17.

LYDIA, born July 27, 1770; married Reuben Marsh Aug. 4, 1791 in Tyringham, Mass.

ANNA, born about 1772; married Obadiah Spicer July 25, 1790.

SAMUEL, born about 1774; married Sarah \_\_\_\_\_.

WILLIAM, born about 1778; married \_\_\_\_\_.

~~ALICE, born about 1782; married Chauncey Greene Dec. 1, 1814.~~

**49. THOMAS<sup>4</sup> RATHBUN** (?Thomas<sup>3</sup> Samuel<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born about 1731 probably in Exeter, R.I. He married Nov. 15, 1755, at Canterbury, Conn., Abigail Kimball, born May 30, 1731, daughter of Nathaniel and Elizabeth (Ringdo?) Kimball. They moved about 1761 to Lisbon, Conn., where Abigail was admitted to church in April, described as "sick." She apparently died about that time, for on July 19, 1762, he married in Norwich Priscilla Baldwin, parentage unknown. He died in Lisbon Dec. 29, 1793. Priscilla later married Silas Larabee and died Jan. 29, 1826 in Lisbon.

#### CHILDREN

(By Abigail)

AMASA, born Sept. 19, 1756; died about 1761.

ASA (twin), born Sept. 19, 1756; married Ruth Kimball.

LYDIA, born Oct. 3, 1757; married Rufus Morse Sept. 13, 1778.

ZERVIAH, born Feb. 18, 1759; alive in 1782, no further information.

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(continued from page 61)

(By Priscilla)

AMASA, born April 2, 1763; died May 6, 1763.

AARON, born July 28, 1764; married Deborah Rose.

THOMAS, born Jan. 25, 1767; married Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_.

ABIGAIL, born Aug. 21, 1768; died Jan. 5, 1769.

ESTHER, born Nov. 27, 1769; died Jan. 9, 1814.

MERCY, born April 15, 1771; no further information.

HANNAH, born May 9, 1772; married Henry Eldredge Oct. 29, 1794.

CYRUS, born July 31, 1774; died Sept. 18, 1774.

ABIGAIL, born Oct. 14, 1775; no further information.

ERASTUS, born April 5, 1777; married Lydia Tubbs.

WILLIAM, born Oct. 3, 1778; married Edna Loomer.

HENRY, born Sept. 9, 1780; married Elizabeth Loomer.

ELIJAH, born June 14, 1783; married Bathsheba Rose.

BALDWIN, born Sept. 15, 1785; married Elizabeth Mowrey.

**50. WALTER<sup>1</sup> RATHBUN** (Samuel<sup>3-2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born June 16, 1734, on Block Island; married there March 4, 1756, Hannah Rose, born May 18, 1728. He was admitted freeman in 1757, elected Block Island town clerk a short time later, and held that post until his death 60 years later. He was known as "Walter the Scribe." He was the island's representative to the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1774, and served on the town's Committee of Correspondence during the Revolution. Walter died at Block Island Jan. 4, 1818, aged 84. His wife died March 10, 1807.

## CHILDREN

ABRAHAM, born Feb. 22, 1757; died March 29, 1761.

LYDIA, born Nov. 29, 1758; died April 25, 1780.

TAMAR, born Feb. 16, 1761; died Oct. 25, 1809.

HANNAH, born Dec. 27, 1764; married Archibald Millikin June 10, 1787.

EZRA, born April 29, 1767; died in June 1767.

JAMES, born May 13, 1768; married Waity Littlefield.

CATHERINE (twin), born May 13, 1768; married Daniel Mott, Jr. Dec. 24, 1795.

**51. SAMUEL<sup>1</sup> RATHBUN** (Samuel<sup>3-2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born July 10, 1736, on Block Island, and married there Nov. 18, 1758, Susannah Reynolds, born about 1739. He became a sea captain and moved to Greenwich, Conn., during the Revolutionary War. On Oct. 29, 1779, the Connecticut Governor and Council gave permission to "Captain Samuel Rathbone, late an inhabitant of Block Island, now residing at Greenwich, to go to Block Island and bring away his effects and settle his affairs." He died in 1786 in Greenwich, and his wife died there in 1792.

## CHILDREN

DELIVERANCE, born Nov. 18, 1759; no further information.

MARY, born Jan. 30, 1762; no further information.

SUSANNAH, born Dec. 8, 1766; married Jotham Merrit.

**52. ELIJAH<sup>1</sup> RATHBUN** (Samuel<sup>3-2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born May 28, 1740, on Block Island. He married June 19, 1763, in Groton, Conn., Elizabeth Ann Burroughs, born about 1747, daughter of Lemuel Burroughs, and moved to Groton. She died of smallpox on Nov. 22, 1777. He then married, about 1778, Desire (Packer) Walsworth, born about 1755, daughter of Ichabod Packer and widow of \_\_\_\_\_ Walsworth. They moved to Guilford, Vt., where he was surveyor of highways in 1782. They returned by 1790 to Groton, where she died in 1815 and Elijah on Feb. 14, 1825.

## CHILDREN

(By Elizabeth)

ELIZABETH, born Sept. 1, 1764; married Elisha Rose.

BENJAMIN, born Sept. 14, 1766; married Elizabeth Packer.

LUCRETIA, born Aug. 24, 1767; died young.

DIANA, born Dec. 8, 1771; died Jan. 19, 1794.

NANCY, born March 29, 1774; married James Sawyer.

SAMUEL, born July 15, 1776; married Abigail Burroughs.

(By Desire)

HANNAH, born about 1779; married Silas (or Elisha) Beebe Oct. 13, 1795.

DESIRE, born about 1781; married Richard Bill.

ELISHA, born Dec. 14, 1782; married Lucretia Packer.

**53. JAMES<sup>1</sup> RATHBUN** (James<sup>3</sup> Samuel<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born about 1733 on Block Island, and moved with his parents, as a child, to Greenwich, Conn. He apparently became a sea captain and is probably the Captain James Rathbun who was commander of the *Recovery* which was sailing in 1769-70 between Newport and the West Indies. He moved by 1775 to Dutchess County, N.Y., where on Aug. 15, 1775, he signed a pledge of loyalty to the revolutionary government. This family was also overlooked by Cooley, and nothing more is known about him or his wife. The following children are assumed to be his. There were probably others.

## CHILDREN

JAMES, born about 1758; married \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNA, born about 1762; married Robert Miller Jan. 17, 1782, at the Schaghticoke Dutch Reformed Church in Rensselaer Co., N.Y.

#### 54. COGGESHALL<sup>1</sup> RATHBUN

(Abraham<sup>3</sup> Samuel<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born July 16, 1738, on Block Island. He was probably a sailor in early life, and traveled to Nantucket, where he married, March 23, 1761, Mary Coffin, born Nov. 8, 1740, daughter of Robert and Susannah Coffin. He lived for a time at Hastings, on the east end of Long Island, where his son Jonathan was born in 1764. He was described as a "cordwainer" (shoemaker) in 1769 when, living on Nantucket, he sold land in Exeter, R.I. Mary died in the early 1770s, and on Sept. 22, 1774, in Yarmouth, Mass., he married Thankful (Tripp) Cash, born about 1749. He died (?) Jan. 30, 1788, in Nantucket. Thankful died Jan. 28, 1807, in Hawley, Mass.

#### CHILDREN

(By Mary)

ABRAHAM, born Sept. 1, 1762; reportedly became a seaman; was captured by the British during the Revolutionary War, and later moved to England where he died.

JONATHAN COFFIN, born Sept. 7, 1764; married (1) Mary Fosdick; (2) Sarah Clift.

JETHRO, born June 28, 1767; married Elizabeth Baxter.

JAMES, born about 1769 (baptized Sept. 10, 1770); possibly the "one of Coggeshal Rathbun's children" who died Sept. 4, 1777, in Nantucket.

NATHANIEL, born about 1770 (baptized Feb. 17, 1771); probably died young.

(By Thankful)

MARY (Polly), born about 1775; married William Tripp Nov. 6, 1792.

CATHERINE, born about 1777; married Edward Baxter, Dec. 26, 1795.

?COGGESHALL (A "Cogeshel Rathbun" died of smallpox in April, 1778, in Yarmouth, Mass. This could be Coggeshall Sr. if the 1788 death date is wrong, or it could be a son who had been given the father's name. The early records are confusing.)

This concludes the fourth generation of our family in America. The next issue will begin the fifth generation.

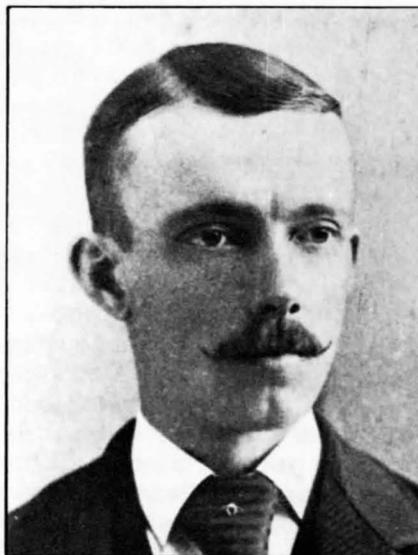
## Early Letter

Samuel<sup>4</sup> Rathbun (Samuel<sup>3,2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>), born in 1736 on Block Island, became a fishing boat captain, carrying his codfish and mackerel back to the island to be preserved in salt or vinegar and sold to merchants on the mainland. He moved from the island during the chaotic days of the Revolutionary War, when Block Island was frequently raided by the British, to Greenwich, Conn., where he died in 1786. The following letter from him to Aaron Lopez, a prominent Newport merchant, is the earliest known letter written by a Rathbun. The original is in the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit, Mich.

New Shoreham  
June the 7th, 1770

To Aaron Lopez—Sur, I have a percil of choyse pickled codfish which should be very glad if they would sute you—pray be so kind as to let me know by the bearer and if they will l'le bring them. I expect I shall have some small mackrel allso, which wont likely be ready till the first of next month. We jest begin now to catch them. I shall take it very kindly if you would take them for money is not to be had and I want to pay you as fast as possable. If it should sute you to trade further for fish, should be glad to know if you have any fishsalt, and the price by the hundred bushel, which concludes your obliged friend.

Samuel Rathbun, Junior



Victor and Ruth Streeter of Sparta, Wisc., were amazed at the photograph (above, left) in the April issue of Williams Alden Rathbun (1865-1926) of the Springfield Rathbuns. He looked remarkably like their nephew, Army Private Lawrence R. Streeter (above, right), who died in 1979, aged 20. Young Streeter was a descendant of Thomas<sup>6</sup> Rathbun (Thomas<sup>5,4</sup> Ebenezer<sup>3</sup> William<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>) and a very distant cousin of the Springfield Rathbuns.

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APRIL 1984

# Queries

**WANTED**—Information on Augustus<sup>6</sup> Rathbone (Stephen<sup>7</sup> Joshua<sup>6-5-4-3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>), who married Hannah Elizabeth Chase in San Francisco in 1855. They were living as late as 1900 in Santa Clara County, Calif. Did they have any children? When and where did they die?

**WANTED** — Parentage of Daniel Rathbun, born about 1822 in New York; moved by 1850 to St. Joseph County, Michigan, from where he served in the 11th Michigan Infantry during the Civil War. He was dead by 1900, when his widow Rebecca, and sons, Stephen, Charles and David, were living in Monroe Co., Iowa.

**WANTED** — Information on Charles Rathbun, born in 1851 in New York; married Charlotte A. \_\_\_\_\_ in the early 1870s and had at least three children — Theron, Paul and Harold. They lived in Minneapolis in 1900, but earlier lived in Nebraska.

**WANTED** — Parentage and information on Charles L. Rathbun, born in 1861 in Illinois; married Mary Margaret Evans in the 1880s and had children named Clifford, Harold and Bessie. They were living in Davenport, Iowa, as late as 1913.

# Answers

Vol. 2, No. 1 — The Jacob Rathbon living in Victor, Ontario County, N.Y., in the 1830s was actually Jacob Rathfon. This is a German name, sometimes spelled Rathvon, and is frequently confused with Rathbun in census returns and other records. Mary, wife of Jacob Rathfon, died in 1847 and is buried in Victor.

Vol. 1, No. 1 — William Rathbun of Little Falls, N.Y., in the mid-1800s was undoubtedly the son of Joseph<sup>5</sup> Rathbun (George<sup>4</sup> Joseph<sup>3-2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>). He married Aug. 17, 1842, at Mohawk, N.Y., Mary Ann (Meyer) Wilcox and had three children — Charles, Harriet and David. His stepchildren — Susannah, Wilma and Alfred Wilcox — were living with them in the 1850 census.

# Newest Subscribers

Mrs. Ellen G. Brown  
New London, N.H.

Ralph A. Cangson  
Garden Grove, Calif.

Mrs. Eloise Lewis  
Boise, Idaho

Edward and Pauline Rathbone  
Kent, Wash.

Nancy Rathbone  
Annapolis, Md.

Jack Howard Rathbone  
Wichita, Kan.

Darrell and Leyta Rathbun  
Bayport, N.Y.

G. Rex and Sheila Rathbun  
Chippewa Falls, Wisc.

Walton and Linda Rathbun  
Parris Island, S.C.

Mrs. Joy Robinson  
Brill, England

Richard Sharp  
Alexandria, Va.

James and Maxine Stites  
Lee's Summit, Mo.

Lorna C. Vogt  
DeKalb, Ill.

Mary Pearl Whitman  
Zion, Ill.

# People

**RICHARD SHARP**, one of our newest subscribers, has compiled an extensive ancestry for Jerusha Beebe, the wife of William Harris<sup>4</sup> Rathbun (Job<sup>3</sup> Joseph<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>). Interested descendants may obtain a copy by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to your editor.

**ROSMA LIMBECK** found four stanzas for the song, Rathbun (July issue), in her Lutheran Hymnal, under the title, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory." The four verses read: ● "In the Cross of Christ I glory, tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime." ● "When the woes of life o'ertake me, hopes deceive and fears annoy, Never shall the Cross forsake me; Lo, it glows with peace and joy." ● "When the sun of bliss is beaming light and love upon my way, from the Cross the radiance streaming adds more luster to the day." ● "Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure by the Cross are sanctified; Peace is there that knows no measure, Joys that through all time abide."

The father of Juanita (Rathbun) Curtis (People, July issue) is Amory<sup>10</sup> Rathbun (Charles<sup>9-8</sup> William<sup>7</sup> Alfred<sup>6</sup> Wait<sup>5-4</sup> Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>).

# Obituaries

**DIED** — July 31, 1982, Jean (Rathbun) DuBois, aged 44, in Colorado Springs, Colo. She is survived by her parents, Gathryn<sup>9</sup> Rathbun (George<sup>8</sup> Jonathan<sup>7</sup> Thomas<sup>6-5-4</sup> Ebenezer<sup>3</sup> William<sup>2</sup> John<sup>1</sup>) and Leah Coleman; her husband, Adrian; two brothers, Rex and Max Rathbun; a sister, Judy Geer; six children, and five grandchildren.

**DIED**—Feb. 15, 1982, Donald Rathbun, 30, of East Greenwich, R.I. He was one of 84 men who died when an oil rig sank during a storm off the coast of Nova Scotia. He is survived by his wife, Nancy; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Rathbun; a sister, Diane; and a brother, Robert. We do not know the ancestry of this family, and would like to make contact.

# Birth

**BORN**—March 19, 1982, in Newport Beach, Calif., Cortney Lynn Zook, daughter of Robert and Vicki (Rathbone) Zook. Mrs. Zook is the daughter of Robert C.<sup>9</sup> Rathbone (Cameron<sup>8</sup> Francis<sup>7</sup> John<sup>6</sup> William<sup>5</sup> Wait<sup>4</sup> Joshua<sup>3</sup> John<sup>2-1</sup>) and Betty Kirkeby Rathbone. The Zooks have one other daughter, Ashley Kay, aged four.