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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note:

This issue of our journal commemorates the many roles of women in Newport history. It coincides with the Newport Historical Society's 13th annual Winter Lecture Series, "'Her True Profession': The Changing Roles of Newport Women, 1700 to the Present." The first lecture in this series, "Skirting the Law: Women and the Legal System in Early Rhode Island," by Elaine F. Crane of Fordham University, is presented here as the lead article. The article examines gender inequities in 17th century Rhode Island and how women sometimes circumvented—or "skirted"—the legal system to enhance their roles in society.

The second section of this issue of Newport History is a photograph essay compiled by the Society's Curator and Deputy Director for Collections, Joan Youngken, featuring images of women at work from the colonial period to the 1960s. This essay echoes the major theme of the Winter Series: how women worked within and without the constraints of their particular time period to find their own "True Professions," a phrase often used by Catherine Beecher and her sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, in their mid-nineteenth century manuals for women. All of the images used in this photograph essay are from the collections of the Newport Historical Society.

Also in this issue is the latest chapter on the life of William Claggett, clockmaker, engraver, scientist, and now, conclusively, printer. This short article examines a newly-discovered document that confirms a long-held belief that Claggett printed money for the colony of Rhode Island on plates that he engraved. The author, Richard L. Champlin, is the former librarian at the Redwood Library and has studied the lives and work of Newport's clockmakers for more than twenty years.

Finally, in "From the Collection," a meteorological log and lighthouse record book kept by David Melville, storekeeper, inventor, meteorologist, is examined.