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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note:

It is not uncommon in the richly preserved environs of Newport for a house or building to overshadow the memory of the men and women who lived there. Such may be the case with Boothden, on Indian Avenue in Middletown. Boothden was designed by Calvert Vaux for Edwin Booth, perhaps America's greatest nineteenth century tragic actor, and served as Booth's summer home from 1884 until the beginning of the 1890s. Although the house remains prominent on the Middletown landscape, as with the other great dramatists of his day—Charlotte Cushman, for instance—Booth's acting career has been overshadowed by his successors, whose performances are preserved on celluloid, film, and tape. Unfortunately, Edwin Booth's memory also has been eclipsed by the infamy of his brother, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

In "Edwin Booth's Life in Paradise," the feature article in this issue of *Newport History*, James L. Yarnall examines the history of Boothden and the lives of its principal occupants, Edwin Booth and his daughter, Edwina. Also in this issue, an eighteenth century manuscript letter in the collection of the Newport Historical Society is studied and transcribed. The letter illustrates troubles Aaron Lopez experienced with one of his ship captains and reflects the difficulties involved in eighteenth century ocean trade and communication. "From the Collection" examines a common item in eighteenth century households, the candlestick tinderbox.

Readers of our journal no doubt are familiar with the writing of James L. Yarnall. This is his sixth article for *Newport History*, and he has written extensively on the life of the artist, John La Farge. Yarnall is the Director of the La Farge Catalogue Raisonné Inc., and is working with Mary A. La Farge to complete the "Catalogue Raisonné of the works of John La Farge," a project begun more than fifty years ago by Henry A. La Farge, a grandson of the artist, and due to be completed later this year. Yarnall received a Ph.D. in art history from the University of Chicago and has worked in various capacities for several museums, including the National Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. For the last three years he has been a Fellow at the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Civilization at Brown University, where he is continuing research on the Catalogue Raisonné.

Yarnall's research on Boothden would not have been possible without the benefaction of Mr. and Mrs. Avery Seaman, who generously made available their collection of photographs, land evidence information, and documentation. This collection has since been donated to the Newport Historical Society.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, the Publications Committee of the Newport Historical Society would like to thank Mrs. Larned G. Bradford for her years of devotion to *Newport History*. Pam has resigned to spend more time with her family. While a member of the committee, Pam utilized her expertise and experience to expertly critique the fine writing of our authors and the work of this editor. Her sharp eye for detail was invaluable in producing the journal that is read by our members and patrons worldwide. Thank you, Pam.