

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 496

Approved November 22, 2017

WHEREAS, On or around November 12, 1805, the Providence Town Council voted to name a one-block street between George and Benevolent Streets as Megee Street after William Fairchild Megee, who owned property on the street, and

WHEREAS, According to Jacques M. Downs, “The Merchant as Gambler, Major William Fairchild Megee, 1765-1820,” published in *Rhode Island History*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, (November 1969) (Exhibit A), Mr. Megee was, at that time, a merchant involved in the China trade, and

WHEREAS, In the fall of 1805, Mr. Megee ran into difficulties with creditors, and attempted to recoup his losses by transporting slaves from Senegal to South America, and

WHEREAS, The United States had enacted a ban on the slave trade effective January 1, 1808, causing an historian to describe Mr. Megee’s venture as “a desperate attempt to cash in on the final moments of that brutal and increasingly disreputable commerce,” (*see* Exhibit A, p. 107), and

WHEREAS, This venture failed, and Mr. Megee declared bankruptcy in 1807, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Megee subsequently moved to China in 1810, where he spent the rest of his days, and

WHEREAS, Megee Street later became known as Magee Street, and

WHEREAS, At 93 Benevolent Street, three blocks east from the intersection with Magee Street, stands the former home of the artist Edward Mitchell Bannister and Christiana Carteaux Bannister, who resided there from 1884 to 1899, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bannister was an accomplished painter of landscapes and seascapes, including one work that won first prize at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, and

WHEREAS, In 1890, Mr. Bannister co-founded the Providence Art Club which continues to thrive in its location on Thomas Street, and

WHEREAS, In addition to his artistic career, Mr. Bannister worked with his wife Christiana Carteaux Bannister in the abolitionist movement, supporting the formation of the all-black 54th Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bannister's art work was not sufficiently appreciated in his day, perhaps in part due to his African-American heritage, and

WHEREAS, In 1978, Rhode Island College dedicated its art gallery in Mr. Bannister's name, as part of a general revival of interest in and appreciation of his art, and

WHEREAS, Christiana Carteaux Bannister was a successful businesswoman, establishing a chain of hair salons in Boston and Providence, and

WHEREAS, After moving to Providence with her husband in 1869, Mrs. Bannister provided aid to the families of deceased African-American Civil War veterans, and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bannister also helped establish a retirement home for African-American women in Providence, now known as Bannister House, and

WHEREAS, Both Mr. and Mrs. Bannister have been inducted as members of the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council hereby renames Magee Street as Bannister Street.

IN CITY COUNCIL

NOV 16 2017

READ AND PASSED

Sabrina Mats

ACTING PRES.

Loi L. Hays

CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

[Signature]

Mayor
Date: 11/22/17

EXHIBIT A

R H O D E
I S L A N D
H I S T O R Y

FALL 1969

It is quite possible that here—in his relative poverty and the possibility of being supported by his wife and children—was the origin of Megee's very strong motivation.⁶

Whatever the case, we know very little about Megee's early life, education, religious convictions, friendships and other ties—parental which would help greatly in filling out a picture of his character. Very scanty evidence indicates that he probably went to work in John Brown's countinghouse in Providence in the early 1780s. Brown was one of the foremost merchants in the state, and was particularly noted for his energy and his creative commercial imagination. He was one of the prime movers of the Rhode Island economy of the period, being a founder of the first bank and the first insurance company in Providence and owner of the first local ship to sail to China. An apprenticeship under Brown, therefore, offered a young man an unusually good commercial education. One can only guess at the power of such a stimulus upon the talented and ambitious Newport youngster.

The next step in a young merchant's career was naturally a sea voyage for the firm, often as clerk or supercargo. Although it is not clear what his job was, Megee sailed aboard Brown's *General Washington* with Captain Jonathan Donnellson, on Providence's first voyage to China. The supercargo, Major Samuel Ward, liked a sail which Megee and several others aboard the vessel were to follow for the better part of their lives.⁷ The ship sailed on Christmas Eve 1787, only 40 days after Megee's marriage to Mary "Polly" Sweeting of Providence.⁸

Megee must have been groomed to take over Samuel Ward's place. On the ship's next two China voyages (1790-91 and 1792-93), Megee was supercargo.⁹ It was during the second of these, only two months after the ship had left Providence that Mrs. Megee

died, possibly in childbirth, after William Falschold Megee Jr. was born the same year.

Megee first came to the notice of the city as a father and a widower on May 14, 1793. With 2 small babies in his hands, Megee was in a rather awkward position for a seagoing man. However, in the practical atmosphere of the city, which was particularly mercantile, he was not hindered. On December 21 of the same year, he married Deborah Nightingale and sailed for Providence. Megee's new wife was well connected. The Nightingales were among the leading merchants of Providence. Apparently, with his successes in trade and marriage, Megee started well along the road to becoming a major commercial figure in the young nation.

One of his new in-laws, Joseph Nightingale, became part-owner in Megee's next ship, the *Halcyon*, while a former in-law, Captain Benjamin Page, was hired to command the vessel. Page had only recently returned from a pioneering voyage to Australia and China, which were to be her destinations on the current expedition.¹⁰ Of course, since nobody then knew just what the weather and the seas in that part of the world were at best very imperfectly known, the voyage was something of a gamble. Apparently Megee counted on the salubility of much of the Botany Bay prison colony, for spirits constituted a major part of the cargo. In implementing this calculation, Megee probably guaranteed the success of the voyage.¹¹

The *Halcyon* arrived at Port Jackson (Sydney) on June 14, 1793, almost exactly four months after weighing anchor in Providence. Similar four other vessels already anchored in the harbor. Page and Megee, fearing that the market would be glutted, but Megee's luck held, the ships in the harbor were short of the very provisions the *Halcyon* was carrying. Megee promptly sold out. In addition, he disposed of some

⁶ Certainly a number of New England's most active merchants were similarly circumstanced in their youth in the China trade alone. One thinks of Thomas Handasyd and James Perkins, John Murray and Robert Benner Foster, John Pringle Cochran, and Samuel Russell. Relative poverty and the loss of at least one parent seem to have been powerful stimuli. Indeed, the Puritan view of poverty still had a strong hold on Yanket consciousness, for as William Sturgis was to write John B. Channing some thirty years later, "to be poor is with us to be criminal in the highest degree." March 23, 1812. Bryant & Sturges Letterbook, 53. Baker Library, Harvard University Library.

⁷ Megee's name appears on documents for the *Halcyon* during the period. Anyways he was principal of the return which contained detailed apprentices. See the original protest (witnessed by Megee) dated June 10, 1793, on a loose page in Samuel Chace's Book of Megee Papers, both at The Rhode Island Historical Society. Megee himself named in his handwritten protest that he had been "previously brought up as a merchant in . . . Falmes, Jersey," but he failed to mention the name of the firm. Petitions to the General Assembly, vol. 27, 123, Rhode Island State Archives, State House, Providence.

⁸ Ward's journal of this voyage is in the Ward Papers at The Rhode Island Historical Society. Megee's log of the same cruise is in the Brown & Sweet Papers.

negotiated the sale of spirits at an "advanced price" to the colony's officers, who monopolized the local liquor trade.



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During his stay at Botany Bay, Megee seems to have taken the opportunity, afforded by the quick sale of his rum, to do some sight-seeing, and reportedly was greatly impressed with the colony's prospects.¹² The colonists were quite another matter, for Megee was beaten and abused by convicts during one of his strolls near Sydney.¹³ Thus, when the *Hulwen's* officers discovered a stowaway en route to Canton, they could not have been overly sympathetic. The commander of another vessel reported that they intended landing

him at another British colony. Megee arrived home with a China cargo on April 29, 1795, fourteen months after he had left.



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The voyage of the *Hulwen* apparently strengthened Megee's confidence in his business ability and encouraged him to use his imagination in future mercantile schemes. Thus, within a year of his return, he again embarked for China with a complex plan for another annual voyage. He sailed in February 1796, as supercargo and part owner of the tanned-ship *Grand Turk*.¹⁴ Captain Bernard Megee (no relation) in all, the vessel had seven owners living both in Providence and Boston.¹⁵ The Providence venturers

12. John Collins, "Megee was the master of *Alma*, which Captain Benjamin Capen, upon Megee's business departure, reported to the Board of the Western and Tree Company."

13. Megee's stay at the colony, a voyage to Canton, Boston, and Tree Company.

14. Page had built the vessel, but seems to have relinquished title before she sailed. At that time the owners were Megee, John Harris Clark, and Joseph Nighingale. The information on the voyage of the *Hulwen* is taken largely from Thomas Donahoe, "Rhode Island and Early Australia," a typed M.A. in The Rhode Island Historical Society, dated November 20, 1948.

15. David Collins, Judge Advocate General at Sydney, in explaining a large purchase of spirits from Captain Megee's voyage to Australia noted the tenderness expressed by the people (the convicts) toward this particular American spirit was remarkable; they hesitated not to go

to get him (Megee) from the ship, and to the following, several of the people from the other, and so on, and so on, as showing that they were very much interested in the voyage, and

16. Ibid., 7.

17. Ibid., 7-8.

18. The *Grand Turk* was sold by her banker, Elias Hasket Derby of Salem, by March 1795. Robert E. Corbally, "Notes on the Life of Elias Hasket Derby," Boston, 1911, pp. 151-152, states that the ship had been built at New Bedford, which she chartered from the New Bedford government to run the mail line sailing from New Bedford to London. This was apparently the same ship as the one.

19. The large number of owners may be due to the nature of the risk and the expense involved.

As for me that upon his arrival home in 1792,¹⁸ George would look back upon his private gambling and business, indeed, he may have a series of ventures braver than a single enterprise, including one rather peculiar China voyage and other gambler's ventures, two of which probably involved evading British blockades. The third ended in litigation. Obviously, these were not the actions of a cautious man. The latter's cruises were the only part of his temerous activities which clearly paid handsomely. In 1799, his luck faded. Megec would struggle to cover his losses and still owe a sizable loan to one of Providence's new entrepreneurs. But the law of averages was against him.

Megec soon developed a new scheme for fishing in waters troubled by war. During the summer of 1798, he outfitted the new ship *Argonaute* at Providence. Ship was the joint property of Megec and John Clark. Clark, Joseph Nightingale's partner and a financial brother of Megec's, was also dead. After a midlife voyage to Hamburg, during which he suffered major setbacks in a bad storm, the ship was to be used, Megec said, as a vessel designed for that market. Her captain was the same William Trotter who had done so badly for Megec and Clark in the past.

In Buenos Aires the ship was sold to Pedro Duval, a wealthy merchant of that city, and dispatched to "friendly foreign parts."¹⁹ This sale seems to have been an artifice to secure the vessel a favorable reception upon her return to Buenos Aires, where rival officials were not only bent on accepting bribes and not selling foreign vessels, indeed, at least one cargo of Trotter's was seized, apparently. The sale amounted to approximately \$80,000 to which he added or \$26,666.66 was Megec's.²⁰ Trotter was still petitioning the government for redress in 1807, when Megec needed the money badly.

Of course, illegal smuggling and paper deals for procuring a vessel's armament and ship did not make a

business venture safe, much less were, especially given a falling market for shipping and a fall. Thus, the ship's owners of the *Argonaute* in the next two years did not always prosper. She appeared at Rio de Janeiro in 1800 under her new name, *Proserpine*, and in 1801, in Lapland and February of 1801, she was again in the Rhode Island. Shortly thereafter she returned to Providence but was not profitable for a while. By the following November she appeared in the Chesapeake, and in February 1802 she was back at Rio de Janeiro. This time, however, she had the property of Clark alone.²¹ Presumably, she had been damaged and was that she had made Megec a profit is a mystery. It seems evident, however, that she had been engaging in dangerous business.

Megec himself ventured into perilous water once again in 1799, when he set off as supercargo and partner of the ship *Argonaute* with Captain Nathaniel Pearson. Again, the number of owners may be some indication of the dangers as well as of the expense of the voyage. Judging from the heavy equipment, Megec expected profits. The ship returned to Providence, carried 50 men and was reported to be in remarkably good shape. At this time the United States was engaged in the undeclared maritime war with France, and the Revenue was granted a letter of marque. However, if she met any French ships on the trip out, she made short work of them. Her first shipwrecked at Sydney, September 6, only four months after leaving Providence. She was in Whampoa, South China, about 19 miles off shore in the last week of July 1800.²² Captain Megec had reported that war-torn ships, this time a constitutional one of the belligerent powers, and were again in bad shape, home with a profit.

No sooner had he set foot on shore than Megec began to plan another risky voyage, but his luck was beginning to ebb. In February 1801 he dispatched the *Argonaute* under Captain James Rowan, an experienced

18. Title, *Charles George Papers* (Newport Historical Society).

19. Megec Papers.

20. This ship's track was discovered near Portland, Maine, in January 1799.

21. Charles George Nightingale, "The Rhode Island Voyages, 1798-1802," *American Antiquarian Society* 21 (1911): 101-102.

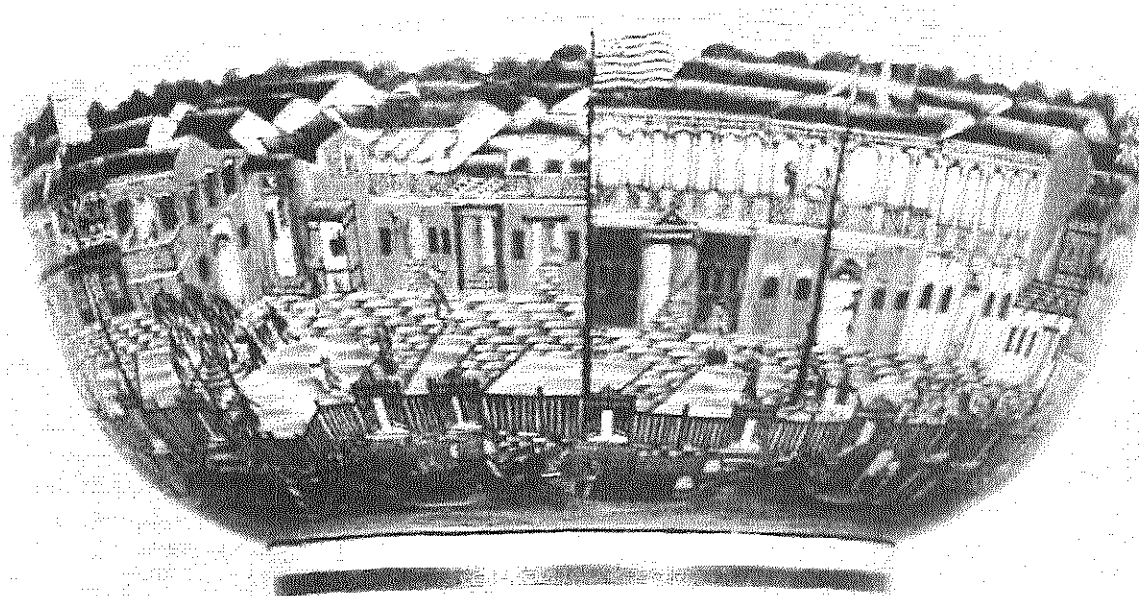
22. See Megec's Account Book and the Documents in Spanish on the subject in the *Charles George Papers*. For a useful example of the bookkeeping a ship's captain kept, see T. L. Hallock, Jr., *George Augustus Rogers, 1765 and*

John Smith (Providence: October 15, 1911), pp. 100-1, 103-104.

23. For information on the *Argonaute*, Log of the ship *Argonaute* from Providence toward Hamburg, Oct. 11, 1799. "Log of the ship *Argonaute* bound from Madeira to Oct. 1800." Log of the ship *Argonaute* at Providence in the Rhode Island Harbors and February 1801, all in the Rhode Island Historical Society, T. L. Hallock, Jr., *George Augustus Rogers, 1765 and John Smith*, pp. 100-1, 103-104. *Stowman's Log*, Rogers, and Charles Brown Chandler, "Log of United States Vessel of Trade 1802-1803," *Harvard American Museum of Natural History*, 20 November 1802, 1803.

Byron and the Thompsons, who were hiding by the side of the river and the house, were there when they could see the ship. The house was the first that showed signs of life, and the ship was the first to be seen.

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trading cruise to the Northwest Coast, the west coast of South America and the Islands of the Pacific. By this venture, Megee was joined by two other Providence merchants, his former brother-in-law Benjamin Page and John Corlies.

Over the next several years, the *Hazard* lived up to her name. In the cargo was a large quantity of muskets, an item which was bound to arouse suspicion in Latin America. In February 1802, while the *Hazard* was anchored in the harbor of Valparaiso, Don Antonio Francisco, Ochoa Carrasco, Acting Governor, heard of the muskets and demanded they be surrendered. Rowan refused, whereupon Don Antonio seized every American who happened to be ashore, a spiteful action which gained him nothing. He ultimately

won his point when he managed to sneak a considerable number of men aboard the *Hazard* by a subterfuge. There, they reportedly behaved in a most raffish fashion, not only confiscating the weapons but also plundering the ship, killing one of the crew, and mauling the others. Rowan was thrown into prison. Although he later extricated himself somehow, the owners' loss was substantial.²⁴ From Canton, where the ship appeared later in the year, Sullivan Dorr reported to his brothers in Boston that Rowan had lost \$20,000 in the incident.²⁵

The *Hazard* sailed again for the Northwest Coast and California on February 5, 1803, in company with the *Alert*. Capt. John Elliott, of Boston, Rowan made two trips between Canton and the Pacific Northwest

24 The source of this version of Megee is James S. F. H. Perkins, May 3, 1803, Megee's Account Book, Megee to John Upcott, May 25, 1803, Megee Papers, Sullivan Dorr to Joseph to John Dorr, November 21, 1799, in Howard Coaling ed., "Howard's Sullivan Dorr," *Algonquian Historical Society, Proceedings*, vol. 57, 1941-42, 48, and the Providence *Journal*, August 1, 1803. Interestingly, the French *Librairie Megee* brought home with him proved enough of a contrast to warrant that a column of text in the newspaper.

25 Probably the best available description of this affair is in Richard J. Channing, *A Narrative of Voyages and Discoveries in the Pacific Ocean*, 1800, 163-174.

26 Dorr to Joseph, John S. Andrews & Son, November 17, 1801, Coaling 57.

27 Megee, *Journal*, part 1, 1803, with John Corlies, in this issue.

28 The *Ship*, *Journal*, . . . in Providence, . . . 1803, 174, having stated in the same paper upon the 10th, 1803, and

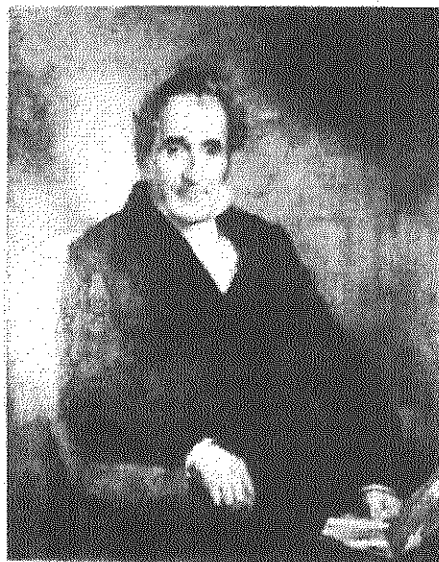
regard he was no different from many other New England merchants of his era, but Mages seems to have taken more chances than most. One person who took a particularly favorable view of Mages was Sullivan East, then resident of Canton. Although East was a competitor on the very dangerous trading and could not be expected to appear wholeheartedly of Mages, he knew him well. East had noted earlier in a letter to his brother that he was obliged to be strict to Mages, as "he can't be helped, [and] gives a hand when needed and isn't to be pushed out of [one's] way." While he criticized Mages's ability, East viewed him with disapproval, an opinion others would soon discover had not without reason.

Mages landed his first in Providence on July 18, 1837. Although it seems doubtful that this voyage was very profitable, Mages was still a wealthy man. Before departing his arrival home, he purchased a ship or two. In addition, he still remained owner or part owner of at least three others³⁶ and possessed real estate both in America and China.

For the next two years, Mages remained at home continuing his pursuit of imaginative if risky commerce. He risked more on a larger scale than ever before, and his career increasingly complicated. The *Reverence* seems to have imported the bulk of the Oriental goods which were the basis of his trade in the Western world. She plied between Providence and the East, especially to Canton and Shanghai. In the Atlantic, working the ports of Europe, the West Indies and the islands of the eastern Atlantic, were the *Abbyville*, the *Indy*, the *London*, and occasionally a captured vessel or two. Finally Mages had an interest in the *Edmund*, which was still cruising in the Pacific. Although he placed heavy reliance on his captains and supercargoes, Mages dealt through agents in other cities whenever possible. Three of the most important of these agents were Wils & Company, Amsterdam, J. & J. H. Perkins in Boston and Edward Carrington at Canton. It was an expansive system, well conceived

Mages's first visit to the Port of Providence on the Providence State Post on March 4, 1838. He distinguished himself by his large business capacity and high integrity. It should be noted that the transactions of Mages were marked by good, healthy, earnest and honest.

Source: written by Charles Jones & Son, Providence, Rhode Island, in *Providence Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island).



and probably as diversified as the times and trade allowed. However, foreign commerce was as dangerous as it was profitable, especially when a merchant took chances like Mages.

Also, the China trade probably took more capital than any other commerce of the times. Like many other China merchants in the young, capital-shy United States, Mages was compelled to borrow large sums of money often at high rates of interest to finance his voyages to the Far East. He was frequently unable to pay these debts until his China cargoes arrived and were sold. Thus, Mages was gambling for very large stakes. It is not surprising that he even-

³⁶ When Mages returned to Providence, it is not surprising that Mages took advantage of the opportunity to dominate the market in China.

³⁷ See the *Providence Journal*, November 1, 1839. Captain Lee wrote that Mages had been in the city for some time and that he intended to make the Chinese merchants. Although Mages had been in the city for some time, this was not the case. Mages had been in the city for some time, but he had not yet established a permanent residence. Mages had been in the city for some time, but he had not yet established a permanent residence. Mages had been in the city for some time, but he had not yet established a permanent residence.

³⁸ The *Providence Journal*, November 1, 1839. Mages had been in the city for some time, but he had not yet established a permanent residence. Mages had been in the city for some time, but he had not yet established a permanent residence. Mages had been in the city for some time, but he had not yet established a permanent residence.

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ually failed; indeed it is remarkable that he was so successful for so long.

Within a few months after returning from China, Megee undertook the largest speculation of his entire career. Possibly the Western world's largest speculation of construction of China goods lay in Europe, and the principal center for this huge market was Amsterdam. Megee's agents there, Wils & Company, had encouraged him to speculate for sale at the Dutch East India Company's auctions and for reexportation to various North Sea ports, especially Emden. Between August 1803 and January 1804, Megee sent five ships to Amsterdam or Emden wholly or partially laden with goods consigned to Wils & Company. Had this speculation been successful, Megee would probably have become one of America's leading merchants. But fortune was now against him.

The first two vessels to arrive were the chartered brig *Superior* and the *Abbey of Sally*, whose combined cargo was valued at \$147,134.96. The *Superior* was lost on the return trip and the *Abbey of Sally* ran aground heavily in Galois, damaging her cargo. More importantly, all five of Megee's ships arrived as a bad market. The prices were low and little was available for a return cargo. Possibly one of the developments which hurt Megee was the temporary peace between the warring powers of Europe. The Peace of Amiens lasted from March 27, 1802, to May 10, 1802, a period during which normal trade was partially resumed, thus placing more goods on the European market than Megee had anticipated back in China, when he had left instructions with Carrington.

A confusing factor is the charge of a Megee captain, one Thomas Holden of the *Abbey of Sally*, who was convinced that his employer had been badly defrauded by Wils & Company. "Amsterdam," said Holden, "has produced a more completely finished set of villains than Wils & Co." According to his bankruptcy petition, Megee never really knew exactly how he had lost his once imposing fortune.⁴⁷

Whatever the occasion for his loss, Megee seems to have run out of luck. Faced by a bank default, he climbed once more. In the fall of 1805 he put to sea in the *Thetis* with Anne Thetis (labeled "super-cargo" bound for Baltimore, Lisbon and Canton). On the voyage, Megee's final faith again was impugned, this time by powerful merchants and ex-friends. His creditors, who included J. & T. H. Perkins, Brown & Lee and Samuel Nightingale Jr., were led to believe that he would sail from Portugal to China and return with a full cargo to pay his mounting debts. Instead, Megee altered his course for Senegal, where he took on a cargo of slaves for South America. It should be remembered that the international slave trade would become illegal for Americans on January 1, 1808. Thus, Megee's voyage appears to have been a desperate attempt to cash in on the final moments of that brutal and increasingly disreputable commerce. Megee also probably hoped to get some action on the long-delayed claim against the Portuguese government for the goods lost by Captain Thomas's sailors.

Megee defended himself in his bankruptcy petition, in which he stated that "although, as the price of goods he carried to Europe, he was unable to recover to the original price or destination and sailed with a cargo for the River de Platte." It is interesting that the ship's *Articles* and the description of the cargo went unmentioned.⁴⁸ Another remarkable circumstance indicating that this was no ordinary voyage is the timing of a series of real estate sales and their register. Megee sailed for this fatal journey sometime around the end of October, 1805. Before leaving, he sold to his hypothetical creditors all of his remaining real property, mostly to good friends or relatives. However, none of these conveyances was recorded before November 18 by which time Megee was safely out of reach of the sheriff.⁴⁹ Had they learned of the transfer in time, his other creditors might have become suspicious and attacked his ship and cargo. By mid-November, however, they had no

⁴⁷ The ship's expenses would never return the profit, and the interest on borrowed money would take a big bite out of the principal. The *Abbey of Sally* cargo was valued at \$120,244.96 and was dated August 28, 1803. With all expenses that Megee was himself very close to the edge. Again by January, 1804, charges amounted to \$47,775.61 and accumulated against the shipments in the *Superior*, the *Abbey of Sally* and the *Thetis*. Wils & Co. in Megee's January 1, 1804, Megee's bankruptcy petition, the bankruptcy petition was filed in the court of the London High Court in a shipment of property to Amsterdam, which institution was the consignor of

a shipment in the market, to the warehouse of the London High Court and the consignor.

⁴⁸ The *Articles* of the ship, which were made a part of the cargo, were made a part of the cargo. The *Articles* of the ship were made a part of the cargo.

⁴⁹ For a brief account of the voyage see Earl C. Farnham, "A description of the voyage of the ship 'Thetis' from New York to Senegal, 1805-1806," *Journal of the American Historical Association*, vol. 14, no. 1 (May 1905), 100-101.

⁵⁰ See *Records of the Court of the City of New York*, vol. 14, no. 1 (May 1905), 100-101. See also *Records of the Court of the City of New York*, vol. 14, no. 1 (May 1905), 100-101.

alternative might hope for a successful voyage.

Thus, the enterprise was conducted on borrowed money, for which Alphonse had pledged his home and those of his other properties. Moreover, he had done so without consulting his creditors. Possibly they might have accepted the decision, but again a legal problem arose, for the success of the voyage depended upon two major variables. Nothing was to happen while the Republic appeared in South America. Indeed, Aires, his destination, was a province of the British under Sir Hugh Duguid, and Megec was not permitted to land his merchandise—soil some of which he had acquired in Montevidéu during the summer of 1806, but he suffered the loss of a large part of his cargo in one or two very unfortunate collisions in the harbor of the province. The appearance of Montevideo in March 1807, again caused many other difficulties, including a long stay in the harbor of the ship's crew. He finally left on 15 February with a shattered cargo, arriving in Charleston, South Carolina, some time in May and in Providence shortly thereafter.

The voyage was disastrous, and the creditors expecting a valuable cargo of raw wool returned. A presumably dishonest list of his creditors, merchants, Benjamin Franklin, commenced:

First Megec's creditors arrived here a few days since on board a long ship to South America with the use of an old ship that lay in the harbor. A more extensive process and return of the goods Megec's debt required to be returned.⁴¹

Megec announced that he planned to return to Canada to recover his fortunes, but his situation was hopeless. His creditors were undoubtedly less inclined to be lenient than they might have been, since 1807 was a difficult year, and they believed Megec had abused their confidence. Seeing that bankruptcy was inevitable, shortly after his return, Megec decided to his mother a life interest in land and buildings on the south side of High Street in Providence,⁴² apparently to secure her a home and to protect himself.

With such bleak prospects for the future, why did Megec wait another seven months before filing his

petition for bankruptcy? Since no direct evidence suggests the answer to this question, one can only offer an hypothesis. The war in Europe was being waged with ever-increasing intensity. The British victory at Trafalgar had taken place late in October 1805, and the French now had no navy. On the other hand, a series of French triumphs on land, Austria in December 1805, and Austria in October 1806, and Friedland in June 1806 had removed all Britain's continental allies from the contest. Each of the two great antagonists was spreading his victor's net throughout her enemies. Hence, Britain and France reacted to a program of maritime restrictions in an attempt to destroy each other's economy. Unfortunately the Megec's neutral vessels were probably hurt more than either belligerent, and the most important neutral with a commercial relation was the United States. Since Britain was mistress of the sea and had so recently won the national enemy, America was more sensitive to her degradations than to those of Napoleon.

In June of 1807, the British ship *Argentine* fired upon the American naval vessel, the *Revenge*, and took off several alleged deserters from the Majesty's Navy. The American public was furious over this wanton outrage, and by the end of December, President Jefferson had persuaded Congress to pass the Embargo Act, which banned all foreign ships from American ports and kept American craft at home. All foreign trade ceased.

Thereafter, what could Megec hope for? His creditors were keeping close watch over his property so that any ship he owned would be attached immediately upon its arrival in an American port. Moreover, the Embargo would keep him idle thereafter. Earlier there might have been a chance that some property could be slipped into the country, but even this remote possibility was now gone. In the meantime the interest on his borrowed capital was killing him. He did not even have a gambler's chance.

Despite his misfortunes, Megec seems to have maintained a faint hope, which must have been

had survived. His creditors must have become uneasy, and it is not a wonder they were so quick to file a petition for bankruptcy in the spring of 1808, the second year.

⁴¹ Bankruptcy petition, submitted to the General Assembly, 1791-92, in the Rhode Island State Archives.

⁴² *Register and Evening Post*, May 11, 1807, Providence Papers.

⁴³ *Providence Journal*, March 28, 1808.

⁴⁴ *Providence Journal*, May 11, 1807, Providence Papers. *Register and Evening Post*, May 11, 1807, Providence Papers. *Register and Evening Post*, May 11, 1807, Providence Papers. *Register and Evening Post*, May 11, 1807, Providence Papers. *Register and Evening Post*, May 11, 1807, Providence Papers.

considering a bad creditor. Benjamin Hutton wrote Carrington on July 5, 1846:

*Megoe has obtained the benefit of the insolvency act of this state by paying all his debts except \$37,500 which he owes to the creditors of his firm in the world. For details see what I told you before in your letter of the 27th.*⁴⁴

After his bankruptcy, Megoe became involved in a bitter quarrel with his wife's family, particularly his brother-in-law and creditor, Samuel Nightingale Jr. Megoe's whereabouts for the next 18 months are something of a mystery, but it is certain that when he left Providence, he left alone. He does not seem to have abandoned his family altogether, however. He sent his wife gifts and funds through both Edward Carrington and William F. Megoe Jr., who soon became a China captain in his own right.⁴⁵

Early in 1848 Megoe arrived in Canton by the last date. His friend Carrington, having made a handsome

fortune, was preparing to leave for Canton city. He had taken Hutton's advice and seized Megoe's factories⁴⁶ but he may have aided Megoe by doing so. Moreover, he seems to have helped his former partner to begin business in Canton as an independent. Megoe managed to supplement the income from his home by acting occasionally as an auctioneer and a building contractor. His biggest customers in all these endeavors appear to have been the British, even during the War of 1842. He caused particularly to captain and other ships either flying the flag between Canton and India.

During the remaining four years of his life, Megoe was an institution at Canton. He was the first inn established in the foreign community there, and his table and whist parties were renowned all over the Orient. He maintained several "loose-shipper boats" and a crew of Malays to row his tenants and friends in Whampoa and back to Canton for illegal services.





Christiana Carteaux Bannister
Bust in the Rhode Island State House



Edward Mitchell Bannister
Co-Founder, Providence Art Club



Edward Mitchell Bannister: Artist

First African American to win a national art prize: the bronze medal for his painting "Under the Oaks" at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial

Co-Founder of the Providence Art Club, 1880, the nation 2nd such organization

Resided at 93 Benevolent Street, Providence, between 1884 and 1899. The house has recently been restored and plaqued by Brown University

His paintings are held in 17 major museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Detroit Institute of Arts, RISD Museum, and collected by Oprah Winfrey and other high-profile collectors

Christiana Carteaux Bannister: Entrepreneur

Famous Abolitionist

Funded the all-Black 54th Regiment during the Civil War

Founded Bannister House, the first nursing home for elderly women of color in the Northeast

Inventor of Hair products for white women

The Providence Journal

October 11, 2017 - This summer it seemed like you couldn't turn on a television or open a newspaper without reading about the debate over Confederate monuments and the larger issue of historical memory. Too often, the arguments focused on the false narrative that taking down a monument or renaming a building is about erasing history. It isn't. We can no more erase the history of slavery than we can erase the history of winning World War Two.

Our past — our collective pride and shame alike — will always be with us. Renaming public spaces is not about erasing history but about deciding who we honor as a society. We must decide what a sin against humanity should do to a person's reputation, and whether our time is not better spent celebrating those who have been unfairly overlooked by history.

Providence now has the opportunity to recognize two people long overdue for celebration. City Councilor Sam Zurier has introduced a resolution to rename Magee Street — currently named for William Fairchild Magee, who was a slave trader and opium merchant — in honor of two of Providence's most famous African-American residents, Christiana and Edward Bannister. This is an idea whose time has come. There are few people less deserving of honor than Magee and few people more deserving of recognition than the Bannisters.

Christiana Bannister, a businesswoman and philanthropist at a time when few women, and even fewer African-American women, could be either, owned salons in Boston and Providence. For elites in both cities, frequenting her establishments was all but required. She raised money for Civil War veterans and widows, and established the Bannister Nursing Home for elderly, indigent African-American women. It was Christiana's financial success that enabled her husband Edward to pursue his career as an artist.

Edward Bannister remains one of America's best landscape painters. There was no artistic training available for African Americans in the 1800s, but Edward taught himself to be an exceptional painter. As a young artist in Boston, he was a sought-after portrait painter. In Providence, he did his most famous work at his studio at the bottom of College Hill, painting such local landscapes as Narragansett Bay.

At the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, which drew 10 million visitors (a huge number, considering the country had fewer than 37 million citizens at this time), Bannister's painting "Under the Oaks" won a first-prize medal. When the judges learned his race, they tried to rescind the award until the other artists threatened to withdraw their works unless Bannister received what was rightfully his.

Christiana and Edward are the kind of trailblazers who deserve celebration. By honoring their accomplishments, Providence can make a clear statement about who deserves praise from our city.

The debate about the sins of slavery is too often only focused on states below the Mason-Dixon Line. While it is convenient for the rest of the nation to believe slavery and racism were a uniquely Southern problem, it's simply untrue. Here in Rhode Island, our ports and our civic leaders were an integral part of slavery in America.

Almost 60 percent of all American slave ships left from Rhode Island ports, carrying rum and other trade goods to Africa to be exchanged for slaves, who were then sold in the Caribbean and South America. That brutality is as much a part of Rhode Island history as the burning of the Gaspee.

We can never change our ancestors' actions, but we can choose how we recognize them. One of the ways to atone for the failings of our past is to celebrate the people who, despite the obstacles put in their way, achieved incredible success. Christiana and Edward Bannister embody that ideal. They are exactly the kind of people who deserve to be recognized and celebrated, and renaming Magee Street in their honor should be a small part of that celebration.

Ray Rickman, of Providence, is executive director of Stages of Freedom and a local historian.

Brown Faculty Club

BFC Monthly



A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE BROWN FACULTY CLUB

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2017



From the President

To all faculty, students and alumni:

In this season of thankfulness, I'm thankful that the Faculty Club is a very diverse place.

I have long valued the diversity of the members and staff at the Faculty Club. In fact, I belong to the club because I believe our club is indeed a place where individuals of all colors and walks of life are welcome and celebrated. This is in contrast with most membership clubs that are refuges for the elite in our society. During this period of thankfulness, I'm grateful that I belong to a club that continues to demonstrate what the University's emphasis on diversity could look like.

I was recently surprised and pleased to learn that Providence City Councilor, Samuel Zurier, introduced a resolution to rename Magee Street, named for a slave trader, to Bannister Street in honor of Christiana and Edward Bannister. The Bannisters were African-American luminaries prominent in Providence Society in the 19th Century.

Edward was an artist whose pastoral landscapes were of much acclaim resulting in his being named "Best Artist in America" at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. His works have been featured in museum exhibitions in both Providence and New York City. Christiana, Edward's wife, was a prominent businesswoman and philanthropist who raised funds for the care of civil war veterans. She also founded Bannister Nursing Home to serve indigent elderly African-American women.

The Faculty Club is the only building that fronts Magee Street, so this change would be important to us. It will allow our commitment to diversity to be reflected in our address. I hope you will join me in supporting this change.

I am thankful that I belong to this Club. I'm pleased that our members will have the opportunity to connect and share in great food and spirits and several events that lighten the season. As in past years, I will bring family and friends to *Breakfast with Santa* on December 9th. It is a wonderful and joyous gathering during the holiday season that brings us all together. I hope to see you there.

Jael Martz

Welcome New Members

Francis and Heni Anesi, Dr. Steven and Maxine Awner, Sallee Boyce Benjamin and Thomas Benjamin, Dr. Joseph and Barbara Dooley, Elizabeth and Jim Eickmann, Christopher and Sheila Faber, Andrew and Chris Foster, Brand and Ann Fowler, Susan and Kent Friday, Elise and Tully Friedman, Aaron and Stephanie Furlong, Ashley Gordon Jacobs and Bruce Jacobs, David Glaser, Thomas J. and Sally Healy Jr., Laura and Greg Horn, Courtney Jane, Jeanne and Michael Johngren, Brad and Gayle Johnson, Ward Kallstrom and Rosemary Morgan, Grace Lo and Y. Paul Lee, Laura Lopez-Sanders and William Sanders, Sudesh and Zoe Maniar, Dr. Michael J. and Sharon Monsour, Melissa Murphy and Sam Wilkins, Gabrielle Nohmberg and Fabio Savoldelli, Sanford Pensler, Richard M. Reice, Melanie and Barnaby Rockwell, Tiffany and Nick Talbott, William and Kelley Tomlinson, Christine M. Warner, Peter Wertheimer and Janet Fosdick, Leslie Yunhsuan Lai



GO PAPERLESS!

Good for the environment
and your Club.

Email: Faculty_Club@brown.edu
with your email address today!

HOURS:



LUNCHEON

Monday-Friday 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

DINNER

Wednesday-Friday 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Saturdays-November 11th and
December 2nd 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Reservations: Call (401) 863-3023

Special Event or Private Room Reservations:

(401) 863-3403 Cheryl Carberry

Fax Number: (401) 863-9110

Visit www.facultyclub.brown.edu

Browse www.acuclubs.org for the most up-to-date
listing of all reciprocal clubs in the United States
and around the world.

Visit our website for the most up-to-date event listings and details!

Chef Demonstration

Thursday, November 2,
5:00 p.m.

Chef Dave Chabot will demonstrate the art of pie creation. Master the lattice pie crust technique and enjoy samplings of Apple, Pumpkin & Chocolate Cream Pies.

\$8.00 Per Person



Fall Wine Dinner

Friday, November 3,
6:00 p.m. (one seating)

Eight courses perfectly paired; a truly unforgettable tasting experience. Reserve your seat today; limited availability.

\$75.00 Per Person



Thanksgiving Cornucopia

Wednesday, November 15,
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Butternut Squash Bisque with Rhode Island Apples | Gherkins, House Made Pickles, Crackers, Bread Sticks, Bell Pepper Tapenade, Sundried Tomato and Goat Cheese Dip | Mixed Baby Greens, Shaved Fennel, Julienne Beets, Dried Cranberries, Sliced Pears, Citrus Herb Vinaigrette, Blue Cheese Crumbles and Walnuts | Mashed Russet Potatoes | Roasted Acorn Squash with a hint of Cinnamon and Brown Sugar | Balsamic Roasted Brussels Sprouts | Cider Brined Turkey Breast and Herbed Stuffing | Sage Scented Turkey Gravy | House Made Whole Berry Cranberry Sauce | Pan Roasted Salmon, Caramelized Onions, Whole Grain Mustard, Parsley | Traditional Thanksgiving Desserts | Whole & Sliced Fruits.

\$16.95 Per Person



Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, December 9,
9:00-11:00 a.m.

Don't miss this annual tradition!



Holiday Prix Fixe Dinner

Thursday, December 7,
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Starter: Cranberry & Orange Zest White Wine Spritzer

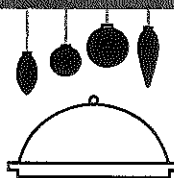
Soup: Carrot Ginger Soup with Cilantro Cream

Salad: Crisp Romaine, Honey Crisp Apple, Dried Cranberries, Toasted Almonds, Pomegranate Seeds, Pomegranate Vinaigrette

Choice of Entrée: Roasted Long Island Duck Breast, Dried Cherry Demi-glace, Wild Rice and Farro Pilaf, Braised Baby Leeks | Roasted Filet Mignon with a Port Wine Bordelaise, Cipollini Onions, Cast Iron Au Gratin Garlic, Cauliflower & Potato | Winter Vegetable Napoleon, Cauliflower Pancake, Roasted Squashes and Root Vegetables, Red Beet Puree, Goat Cheese | Fettuccini with Roasted Rhode Island Clams, White Clam Sauce, Parsley, Garlic Baguette

Choice of Dessert: Chocolate Ganache Covered Flourless Chocolate Holiday Trees with Raspberry Sauce or Berry Sorbet with Fresh Berries

\$36.00 Per Person



'Tis The Season Luncheon Buffet

Thursday, December 14,
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Select Cheeses, Fruits and Nuts | Cranberry Chicken Stew | House Made Pumpkin Spice Bread | Smoked Seafood Crostini's with Salmon, Mackerel, Mussels, Pickled Red Onions, Sliced Radish, Grain Mustard, Lemon Aioli and Grilled Baguette | Baby Spinach Salad with Red, Yellow & Green Bell Peppers, Red & Yellow Cherry Tomatoes, English Cucumber and a Tomato-Lemon-Ginger Vinaigrette | Chef Carved Garlic and Rosemary Bistro Steak with a Forest Mushroom Gravy | Roasted Corn Pudding with Crispy Bacon Bits on the side | Grilled Swordfish with Sweet and Sour Mango Pineapple Sauce | Mashed Yukon Gold Potatoes | Roasted Green Beans with Almonds and Buttered Bread Crumbs | Cheese Tortellini Puttanesca | Assorted Holiday Cookies and Traditional Holiday Desserts

\$16.95 Per Person



Board of Managers

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Associate Dean of Medicine
Secretary

Jon Land '79
Novelist

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Executive Director and Chief of Public Safety
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Attorney Advisor

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Assistant Professor of History and Religion,
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

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Professor Terry Tullis
Geological Sciences

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Executive Chef/Kitchen Manager

Cheryl Carberry
Function Manager

Alex Reyes
Dining and Functions Supervisor

Kristen DePetro
Office Coordinator

Carol Knowles
Lead Hostess

Beverage service, taxes and our services are additional for all events.

PLEASE NOTE: reservations for all events are recommended.

Call (401) 863-3023. Starbucks Coffee and Tazo Tea service is included with meals.

November

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 A la Carte Dinner 5:00-8:00 p.m.
3	4	5	6 Emeriti Faculty Social Hour 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	7 Holiday Prix Fixe Dinner 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.	8	9 Breakfast with Santa 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
10	11	12	13	14 'Tis the Season Luncheon Buffet 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	15	16
17	18	19	20 No A la Carte Dinner Service	21 Club closes after lunch service	22 Friday, 12/22 - Sunday, 1/14/18	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

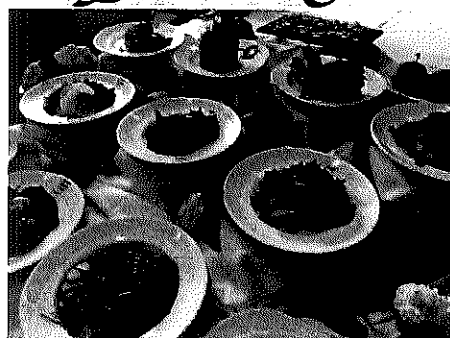
The Club is closed for winter recess beginning December 22nd. We reopen on Tuesday, January 16, 2018.



The Brown Faculty Club
Brown University Box 1870
1 Magee Street
Providence, RI 02912-1870

Non-Profit Org.
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New Menu Offerings



Jorge O. Elorza
Mayor

Steven M. Paré
Commissioner



Colonel Hugh T. Clements
Chief of Police

Department of Public Safety, Police Department
"Building Pride in Providence"

October 2, 2017

Lori L. Hagen
City Clerk
Providence City Hall
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Ms. Hagen:

This letter is to confirm that I am in support of the resolution renaming Magee Street to Bannister Street. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call me at (401) 243-6401.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hugh T. Clements Jr.", is positioned above the printed name.

HUGH T. CLEMENTS, JR.
Colonel
Chief of Police

STEVEN M. PARÉ
Commissioner of Public Safety
Acting Chief of Department



JORGE O. ELORZA
Mayor

Department of Public Safety, Fire Department
"Building Pride in Providence"

October 13, 2017

The Honorable Sabina Matos
Acting Council President/Chairwoman
Committee on Urban Redevelopment, Renewal & Planning
Providence City Hall
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Resolution Renaming Magee Street to Bannister Street

Dear President Matos:

I am in receipt of your memorandum regarding the above-referenced resolution. Please be advised that renaming Magee Street to Bannister Street would not have an impact on public safety and I do not have any public safety concerns at this time.

If you have any questions or require any further information, please feel free to contact me.

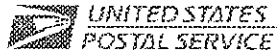
Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven M. Paré".

Steven M. Paré
Commissioner of Public Safety
Acting Chief of Department

cc: Lori Hagen, City Clerk

Connecticut Valley District
Providence Post Office



October 13, 2017

Lori L. Hagen
City Clerk
City of Providence
25 Dorrance St – Rm 311
Providence RI 02903

Dear Ms. Hagen:

I received your letter dated September 28, 2017, concerning a street name change.

The Postal Service has no issue with the name of this street being changed to Bannister Street. Please let me know when that will become effective so we may input this street name in our data base.

If there is anything else we can do in support of your efforts, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald A. Pauline", written over a horizontal line.

Ronald A. Pauline
Postmaster

Attachment

24 Corliss Street
Providence RI 02904-9998
(401) 276-6950
FAX (401) 276-6967