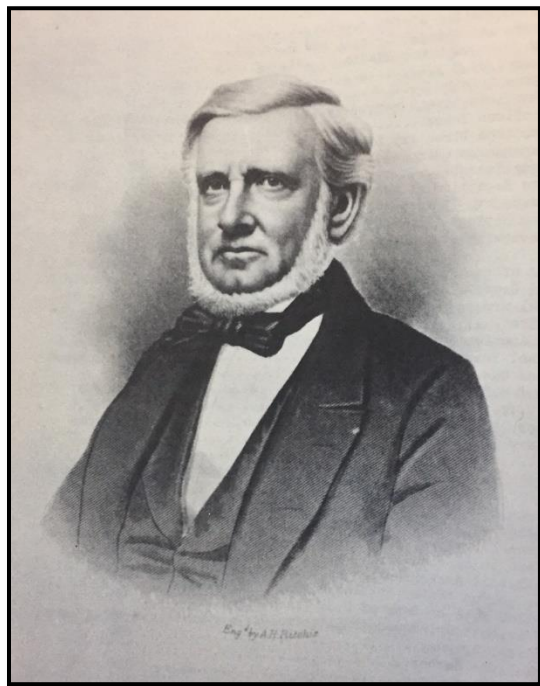


## Silas Enoch Burrows and the Search for Sir John Franklin

Douglas Wamsley

Silas Enoch Burrows (1794-1830), a Stonington-born merchant, established a successful international shipping business operating from the cities of New York, San Francisco, Hong Kong and Montevideo among others. With his financial success, he became known for his generous charitable acts and, as a man of the sea, he took a particular interest in the aid of shipwrecked mariners. After Sir John Franklin's expedition ships HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror* were lost in the Arctic, Burrows befriended Lady Jane Franklin, the missing navigator's wife, who was determined to ascertain the fate of her missing husband and his crew. Through the public and private relationships established by Burrows over the years, Burrows managed to assist Lady Franklin in a meaningful way in obtaining assistance in the search for her husband. This article examines circumstances that led to the involvement of Silas Burrows in the search for Sir John Franklin and his efforts on behalf of Lady Franklin.



**Figure 1.** Silas E. Burrows. Steers, Don. *Silas E. Burrows, His Life and Letters*.

The protracted and frustrating search for the missing Arctic expedition commanded by the British explorer Sir John Franklin in the mid-19th century captured international attention. With the recent discovery of Sir John Franklin's ships, HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, there has been a renewed interest in the expedition's fate. Franklin's ships departed England in May 1845 to much fanfare. After no word had been received from the expedition by 1849, Lady Jane Franklin, the lost explorer's wife, made an impassioned appeal directly to President Zachary Taylor seeking the assistance of the U.S. government. The appeals by the lost explorer's wife were ultimately taken up in the United States by the wealthy shipping magnate

Henry Grinnell, who outfitted two expeditions in aid of the missing mariner and his crew at his own substantial expense. Magnanimous as Grinnell's assistance was, its realization was due to the largely unrecognized efforts of another shipping merchant from Stonington, Connecticut, Mr. Silas Enoch Burrows. Many individuals held supporting roles in the search for Franklin, but the part played by Burrows in response to Lady Franklin's heartfelt plea produced perhaps the most meaningful privately funded source of support for her benefit.

Silas Enoch Burrows was born in Stonington on October 29, 1794 to a well-connected, local family. The Burrows family had strong ties to the Mystic area, their descendants having been among the first farmers in New England. At a young age, Silas was introduced to the commercial trade while working with his father's businesses in New London. He also gained a sense of public service from his father who was a respected citizen holding a number of offices at the local and state levels over the years. Perhaps Silas's most opportune achievement as a youth, however, was his assistance in the defense of Stonington when it was shelled by the British fleet (including the bombship HMS *Terror*) during the War of 1812.<sup>1</sup> It was an opportune circumstance because Silas made the acquaintance of President James Monroe when Monroe later visited Stonington to congratulate the successful defenders. Through that personal connection, in 1818, Silas managed to secure a position to carry a commercial treaty to Stockholm on behalf of the United States, and from there to visit the Legation of the United States in St. Petersburg.<sup>2</sup> The opportunity offered him a window into diplomatic circles and a marked interest in international affairs and service for the balance of his life.

After the end of the war, Silas moved to New York City in pursuit of better commercial opportunities. Possessed of an untiring will, he was actively engaged in the whaling and sealing business and also succeeded in building a profitable line of packets sailing to the port of Cartagena, Columbia, frequently carrying invalided passengers afflicted with tuberculosis. International-based commercial pursuits continued to appeal to him and Burrows, not shy of risk-taking, established businesses abroad, including in South America and China, often relocating there for extended periods. In 1835-36, he sold his share in the packet line and engaged principally in the whaling and sealing business, with many of his vessels built in Mystic shipyards.<sup>3</sup> However, Burrows fashioned himself as more than just a ship owner. He often sailed aboard his own vessels, sharing with his crew the challenges and hardships of 19<sup>th</sup>-century ocean navigation. In 1821, while in Valparaiso, Chile aboard his whaling brig *Port Captain*, Burrows

rendezvoused with the Stonington sealing fleet. Stonington whalers had established themselves as leaders in the seal trade and had plied the remote southern islands in pursuit of their quarry. It was a chance meeting with his fellow local friends Captain Nathaniel Palmer and Richard Fanning at which Burrows heard first-hand the news that “Captain Nat” had discovered unknown land to the south. Palmer’s discovery was later determined to be connected to the Antarctic continent and Palmer had the privilege of being the first American to sight Antarctica.<sup>4</sup> The search for new sealing grounds pushed daring commercial seamen to seek unknown lands, and a yearning for discovery even captured Burrows’ attention. In 1836, he wrote President Andrew Jackson that he had assembled a fleet of nine ships in the Falkland Islands for the purpose of sealing, whaling and discovery, with plans to venture as far south to the South Pole, if possible. Seeking governmental assistance, he sought Jackson’s aid in procuring a U.S. naval escort.<sup>5</sup> How the expedition ultimately fared has not been documented.

Silas Burrows was also possessed of a charitable disposition, and he could act most impulsively in offering generous assistance to others. As he gained business success and accompanying wealth, he believed that one half of his annual income should be used to help others.<sup>6</sup> His first notable act of charity was recorded in 1828, when he generously offered a \$1200 annuity to former President James Monroe to stave off foreclosure on Monroe’s homestead. Other widely diverse benevolent acts included a commitment to purchase an expensive obelisk to commemorate the grave of Mary Washington, the president’s mother (the dedication of the cornerstone of which was presided over by President Andrew Jackson);<sup>7</sup> providing a chartered ship at no cost for General Benjamin Harrison to return to Washington, D.C. from South America to accept a position in Jackson’s administration, and even \$100 to the Prince of Timbuktoo to purchase the freedom of his children, and the donation of a fine pair of horses to the military and political leader Simon Bolivar. Although his charitable acts were unrelated, they reflected a common theme in the form of assistance to high level officials with connections to the government. Burrows was not completely altruistic, and there were rewards for his acts, namely appointments to various diplomatic posts over the years and access to those in political positions of power. He obtained business advantages from his connections,<sup>8</sup> and his diary and correspondence also reflect a man who relished the role of celebrity and rubbing shoulders with the elite.

As both a ship owner and mariner, Burrows was fully aware of the hazards that faced seamen. A professional career closely linked to the sea more than likely explains his particular interest in the fate of shipwrecked seamen. That interest would become an obsession and a distinctive focus of his impulsive philanthropic acts. The so-called “Kensington Affair” was among the first of several such experiences. In June 1830, the Russian corvette *Kensington*, on its return to Russia, was badly damaged in a storm shortly after departing Philadelphia. A nearby schooner owned by Burrows rescued the passengers from among the wreckage. By happenstance, the survivors included a Russian envoy and several Russian naval officers. For his conduct, the Russian envoy offered Burrows a \$10,000 reward, which Burrows graciously declined. However, against the advice of his friends and business associates, Burrows, at the time still a young but by no means wealthy merchant, took it upon himself to guarantee the funds (more than \$55,000) to repair the corvette to enable its return to Russia. Burrows took a risky gamble by pledging his own personal assets and real estate to secure the payment without a firm commitment from the Russian government.<sup>9</sup> Burrows made good on the obligation, but the Russian government failed to honor the debt. Although the act ingratiated Burrows with the U.S. and Russian governments in the interest of foreign relations, Burrows was left nearly bankrupted by the payment and never fully recovered the loss from the Russian government.

Nonetheless, despite the disappointing circumstances of the Kensington Affair, Burrows’ interest in the fate of shipwrecked mariners increased. In 1838, he took the more active and dangerous step of leading an expedition in search of an old friend who had gone missing fourteen years previously. The close childhood friend was Captain Robert Johnson of Groton, a sealer who had become preoccupied with the discovery of the Antarctic continent. Captain Johnson had sailed south from New Zealand in a sealing vessel in an exploratory voyage in 1824. Before Johnson’s departure, Burrows had offered some guidance on Johnson’s plans and Johnson had advised Burrows of his intended course. Believing Johnson may have still been alive after almost fifteen years, in 1838, Burrows, a married man with several young children, took on the dangerous mission in the treacherous seas himself, outfitting three ships at his own expense. Burrows claimed that on a remote and desolate island, he succeeded in locating the wrecks of numerous vessels, as well as huts and graves of shipwrecked mariners, who had endured a terrible existence for some time. Although the bodies of Captain Johnson and his crew

could not be identified, the remains of the last survivor who had outlasted his companions was interred and given a proper burial.<sup>10</sup>

In an ironic twist of fate, however, Burrows and his rescuers came close to sharing the same fate as Johnson and his crew. Burrows and five of his companions were themselves shipwrecked while in a small boat and stranded on an iceberg in the ice-strewn waters of the southern Pacific coast. For three days and nights, they huddled together in the intense cold and stinging spray without shelter, sharing one overcoat. Burrows claimed they managed to kill some albatross and penguins for both eggs and skins, which were sewn together with their own sinews for warmth. As their hope began to fade with each passing hour, Burrows maintained their spirits until they were fortuitously rescued by one of his own passing ships. Burrows was possessed of a sturdy Yankee constitution, but the traumatic event left him completely unnerved; in a relieved letter to his wife he stated that “it was the most painful effort [he] ever endured,” and the event had “whitened his head.”<sup>11</sup> The dreadful event only reinforced his penchant for assisting distressed mariners.



**Figure 2.** Sir John Franklin, from *Arctic Expeditions* by D. Murray Smith, 1877.

Following the Johnson incident, another more sensational case of distressed sailors was making international news that quickly captured the attention of Burrows. In May 1845, Sir John Franklin and a crew of 129 officers and men aboard HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror* had sailed from Greenhithe, England in the largest and most complete expedition ever outfitted for the purpose of navigating the fabled Northwest Passage. The two expedition ships stopped briefly in the Whale Fish Islands (Disco) in mid-July. After a brief encounter with two whaling ships in Lancaster Sound at the end of July, Franklin’s expedition was never heard from again. By 1847, silence had become cause for concern and the first of more than thirty private and government-supported search expeditions was mounted. The missing expedition became international news, well known to the American public which followed the events in the press. The American public

was also familiar with the lost explorer's wife, Lady Jane Franklin, who had made a well-publicized tour of the United States in 1846 meeting with influential persons and visiting hospitals, schools and institutions (at which she was frequently mistaken for Alexander Hamilton's widow).<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 3.** Lady Jane Franklin from a sketch done in 1816 by Amelie Romilly. Digital file from the New York Public Library Digital Collection.

Lady Franklin left no stone unturned in her quest to find her missing husband. In April 1849, she had made a personal appeal to President Zachary Taylor seeking assistance from the U.S. government and requesting the involvement of the American whaling fleet in the search. She held out the reward of twenty thousand pounds sterling, offered by the British government to the first vessel or exploring party, from any country, to provide assistance to the lost party.<sup>13</sup> Her letter was so compelling that in the British House of Commons Sir Robert Inglis remarked that he found it “the most admirable letter ever addressed ‘by’ man or woman ‘to’ man or woman.”<sup>14</sup> The initial response from the U.S. government was extremely promising. Secretary of State John M. Clayton advised Lady Franklin on April 24<sup>th</sup> that:

“the people of the United States, who have watched with the deepest interest that hazardous enterprise, will now respond to that appeal, by the expression of their united wishes that every proper effort may be made by this government for the rescue of your husband and his companions.”<sup>15</sup>

Clayton advised Lady Franklin that American navigators, particularly whalers, would be immediately advised to aid in the search and relief of the lost expedition. Unfortunately, although President Taylor was sympathetic to her plight, and eager to provide some form of aid, to his frustration constitutional limitations prevented him from providing a material response in terms

of employing appropriate U.S. naval ships in aid. Only an appropriation from Congress could equip and furnish such vessels.

Not surprisingly, with his particular interest in mariners in distress, the enormity of the Franklin expedition, then missing for 4 years, struck a chord with Burrows, and he embraced it as he had previous causes. A determined Burrows, at 55 years of age, immediately offered President Taylor (with whom Burrows was well acquainted) one of his ships for the search. Reminiscent of the missing expedition of Captain Robert Johnson that fixated Burrows' attention several years before, Burrows even volunteered his services to lead the search in the vessel. President Taylor tactfully declined his offer, advising Silas that it was an undertaking more fit for younger men.<sup>16</sup> (By way of comparison, at the time of the departure of Franklin's expedition in 1845, Sir John Franklin was 59 years of age).

But Burrows was undeterred. In May 1849, as Burrows departed for a trip to Europe, however, he left with a letter of introduction from President Zachary Taylor to foreign dignitaries, a testament to his connections within the Taylor administration.<sup>17</sup> Over the intervening years Burrows' had continued to ingratiate himself with government officials at the highest levels. His diary of European travels records contacts and meetings with dignitaries from the continent and England.<sup>18</sup> Possessed of an introduction from President Taylor, Burrows eagerly sought out an audience with Lady Franklin and he was promptly and warmly received by the distraught widow. Believing that Burrows may have possessed some influence within President Taylor's administration, she offered Burrows "the most marked attention and kindness."<sup>19</sup> Sympathetic to her plight, Burrows advised her that he "was personally committed to the pledge" made by President Taylor and would do what he could to gain the U.S. government's support.<sup>20</sup>

While still in London, Burrows immediately followed up on his commitment to Lady Franklin. On June 22, he made an appeal directly to Secretary Clayton, writing: "realizing as I do from personal experience the sufferings Sir John Franklin has to endure, I know the goodness of your heart, will forgive my anxiety, in pressing this important expedition to your most early and favorable consideration." In his appeal, he advised Clayton that Congressional approval could be overcome by connecting the relief expedition with a survey of the coasts and seas to benefit whaling interests. For himself, if he were advising the President, Burrows would not seek constitutional approval for the rescue to fulfill his commitments to Lady Franklin, "which have

been received with much admiration,” because the people of the United States would so support the action that no one could dispute them.<sup>21</sup> In Poland some months later, Burrows was disappointed to learn that the Taylor administration could do nothing more in support of the rescue in 1849, but would take up the matter in 1850. Keeping up Lady Franklin’s spirits, Burrows wrote to her to not despond and that America would “redeem the National promise,” and deliver a rescue expedition in 1850. Burrows even suggested that if the Russian government reimbursed him for the Kensington Affair (a highly unlikely event by this time), Burrows would undertake the cost of the relief expedition himself.<sup>22</sup>

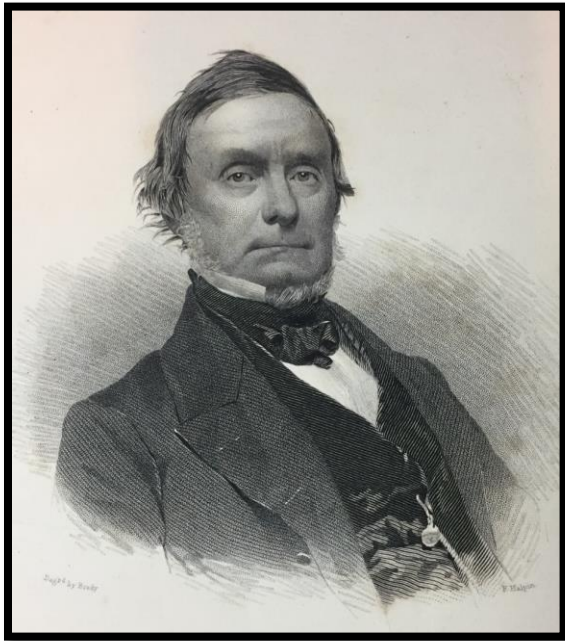
Early in November 1849, one of the earliest of the British government searching expeditions, that under the command of Sir James Clark Ross, had returned from the eastern Canadian Arctic having found no traces of the lost expedition. Their empty-handed return from a promising area of search only heightened the uncertainty as to the fate of the lost Franklin expedition. Adding to Lady Jane Franklin’s consternation was the opinion voiced by James Clark Ross that the intended search area should be shifted more than two thousand miles to the western Canadian Arctic.<sup>23</sup> Lady Franklin frowned on that approach, because, as she believed (rightly as it turned out), Franklin would have closely followed his instructions to enter Barrow Strait and Lancaster Sound from the eastern Canadian Arctic and was therefore more likely to be found by commencing the search from that side of the North American continent.

The slow process of government action was certainly a disappointment, but the persistent Burrows and advocate for Lady Franklin quickly moved to identify alternative means to fund the relief expedition through deep pocket, private means from among his wealthy business associates. By November, Burrows had written to Lady Franklin asking how he could aid her in obtaining additional assistance from the United States. In response, Lady Franklin confided to Burrows that although she had been pleased with Taylor’s initial response, she recognized that the matter was beyond his authority and despite all his “sincerity and good feelings,” U.S. government support might amount to nothing. Disappointed by the British interest in searching the western Arctic, she requested Burrows’ opinion confidentially as to the probability of being aided by ‘private contributions’ in America to pursue the area of Barrow Strait, if the U.S. government failed to move forward. She offered Burrows specific advice on what was needed from the United States:



“do you think I could procure a few thousand pounds in America to add to my own, so as to enable me to send a small vessel or two small vessels of not above 200 tons each, with boats, to those especial parts where I am persuaded the lost ships and crews are likely to be found? . . . If you rich Americans would fit out some small craft with sturdy young adventurers, who would agree to search where I wished them to go, and with some experienced whalers on board, it would answer my purpose almost as well as providing me with funds to fit them out myself, and I would gladly come over to America on purpose to lay before them my views and the grounds of them.”<sup>24</sup>

Lady Franklin’s letter provided just the direction that Burrows needed, and she was extremely fortunate to have recruited someone appropriately suited for her task. Although Burrows was not the only private source from whom Lady Franklin had sought aid from within the United States, Burrows was the only one who was realistically in a position to provide meaningful assistance. Appeals to several whaling firms and civic organizations had come to nothing. On his return to the United States, Burrows energetically took up Lady Franklin’s cause and solicited interest from among his wealthy business contacts. Over the course of some weeks, despite suffering from “a severe and dangerous illness” that he claimed should have kept him in bed, Burrows ultimately determined that he could raise individual contributions in the range of \$100 to \$500 dollars each. Although this approach might succeed in raising the necessary funds, it would have encountered what Burrows referred to as “more icebergs” than he expected to find in the latitude of New York.<sup>25</sup> Through January 1850, Burrows, now apparently Lady Franklin’s closest confidant in the United States, kept in regular contact with her, but the news was disheartening. Besides the continued inaction of the U.S. Government, she learned from Burrows the further disappointing news that the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, William P. Preston, was completely opposed to the U.S. government undertaking any efforts on her behalf.<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 4.** Henry Grinnell. Kane's Arctic Explorations, 1856.

Shortly thereafter though, the new year did bring more positive developments. For his part, believing that the small donation approach had less appeal, Burrows turned his attention to an individual who he knew could make a meaningful contribution to the cause, the shipping owner Henry Grinnell. As fate would have it, as America was first considering intervention in the Franklin search, Grinnell was retiring from his shipping firm and his interests were moving to the philanthropic rather than commercial. During the heyday of the clipper ship, his firm, Grinnell, Minturn and Company, had become one of the world's largest and most successful shipping businesses and Grinnell in turn had made his fortune.

In the small circle of New York shipping magnates, Grinnell and Burrows were well acquainted, having known each other for more than thirty years. Privately, however, Grinnell had a decidedly negative opinion of Burrows' reputation. Grinnell later confided to Lady Franklin that he thought Burrows engaged in questionable business practices such as doing business under a different name and, more importantly, not paying his bills. On a personal level, he thought that Burrows was fond of seeing his name in the press all too frequently for some noble cause; although coming from Grinnell that opinion was not at all surprising since Grinnell took quite the opposite approach.<sup>27</sup> Grinnell completely shunned publicity for his philanthropic causes, often giving anonymously, and would go so far as to not even appear at dinners in his honor.

During the winter of 1849-50, Burrows made his pitch to Grinnell, reading to him Lady Franklin's letter of November 25<sup>th</sup> and advising him that several thousand dollars in contributions were already available for the cause. Grinnell was quite moved by the plight of Lady Franklin, and as a result responded favorably to Burrows' request, immediately offering to contribute \$5,000 towards an American relief expedition. In response to the gesture, Burrows requested that Lady Franklin write Grinnell directly a "tribute of thanks" for his noble donation.

Two weeks later, Burrows shared with Grinnell another letter that Burrows had received from Lady Franklin that “was so beautifully written” (according to Burrows) that Grinnell increased his contribution from \$5,000 to \$15,000. A few days later, Grinnell received the letter from Lady Franklin that Burrows had requested from her. Her plea directly to Grinnell was convincing. Upon receiving that letter from Lady Franklin, Grinnell advised Burrows, “Mr. Burrows, draw up at my desk a subscription and I will head it with thirty thousand dollars.”<sup>28</sup> So, the first American expedition in search of Sir John Franklin (known as the First Grinnell Expedition), and Henry Grinnell’s long involvement with that quest, had begun.

From this point forward, Lady Franklin established her own relationship with Grinnell, which grew over the course of several years as the search dragged on unsuccessfully. Burrows was no longer critical to her objectives, nor did he provide any further meaningful assistance. Grinnell may have harbored some reservations about Burrows, but nonetheless, Grinnell was frank with Lady Franklin on the importance of Burrows’ involvement. Simply put, Grinnell advised her that “I am certain I should not have got it up [the First Grinnell Expedition]” had not Burrows read him her letter of appeal.<sup>29</sup> In deference to Lady Franklin, however, Grinnell advised her that she deserved the credit for the expedition due to her appeal. The funds provided by Grinnell were sufficient to purchase two ships, *Advance* and *Rescue*, as well as for the outfitting necessary to reinforce the ships for Arctic service. Evidently, Grinnell didn’t frown too much on Burrows’ business acumen, because he did request Burrows’ assistance in negotiating the best price for the two ships, which Burrows did successfully.<sup>30</sup>

Grinnell then petitioned Congress with an offer of the two vessels if Congress would furnish the men, supplies and assume military authority. The process took several months, but ultimately Congress met all Grinnell’s requests. In the end, the expedition sailed to the eastern Canadian Arctic in 1850, and with several British vessels, located the first tantalizing traces of Franklin’s expedition since its departure. The searchers found an encampment, empty food tins, clothing and three graves at Beechey Island in Lancaster Sound. It was clear that Franklin had wintered at Beechey Island, but where they were located in the maze of islands and ice of the Canadian Arctic remained a mystery. The searchers passed a long, dark and frigid winter in their ships, with temperatures dropping to -53 degrees F. After drifting in the ice in Wellington Channel for some months, the ships of the First Grinnell Expedition were finally freed in May 1851 and returned to New York in September 1851.



*Figure 5. The Graves at Beechey Island. From Kane's Arctic Explorations.*

By November 1851, even with the disappointing results of the First Grinnell Expedition, Grinnell's commitment to Lady Franklin was such that he would support a second expedition (the Second Grinnell Expedition), knowing that it could do little more than determine Franklin's fate. The Second Grinnell Expedition, commanded by Dr. Elisha Kent Kane (who had served as surgeon on the First Grinnell Expedition), left New York in 1853 to search the area north of Smith Sound between Greenland and the Ellesmere Island coasts. The expedition spent two grueling winters before being freed, but found no evidence of Franklin. However, as the Second Grinnell Expedition prepared for a second winter, Dr. John Rae had arrived in England in October 1854 with the first definitive news regarding the loss of the Franklin expedition. In 1853, Rae had been sent by the Hudson's Bay Company to survey the unmapped west coast of Boothia Peninsula on the northern North American coast. He encountered Inuit who informed him that in the year 1850 they had met about 40 white men retreating southward on the ice near King William Island and suffering from starvation. Later the Inuit found the bodies of 35 men in the vicinity of the Back River. Rae obtained numerous relics from the missing expedition that corroborated their story.

With Rae's information now at hand, Lady Franklin wasted no time in organizing a private expedition, a proposition that was somewhat easier now that the search area had been greatly narrowed. She succeeded in purchasing the *Fox*, and Sir Leopold McClintock, a veteran of three previous search expeditions, accepted command of the expedition. Lady Franklin's final expedition, under McClintock's command, furnished the conclusive evidence of Franklin's fate by locating on King William Island in 1859 the only known written record from the expedition, a note reporting Franklin's death on June 11, 1847, and the abandonment of his ships in 1848. Thus, the fate of Franklin and his expedition, the object of Lady Franklin's obsession for so many years, was brought to a close.

Burrows provided little more assistance to Lady Franklin after the departure of the First Grinnell Expedition, but his diary does record a visit with Lady Franklin on October 26, 1850, at which Lady Franklin asked if Burrows could obtain free passage for Captain William Kennedy, another of the Franklin searchers, to travel from Canada to England.<sup>31</sup> The two remained friends however, and his diary subsequently recounts that Lady Franklin offered to perform a favor by supporting his petition to the Russian government over the Kensington Affair.

Over the next few years, Burrows continued to busy himself with business endeavors, including founding establishments in San Francisco and Hong Kong and visits to dignitaries in previous haunts. There were no charitable commitments as significant as the Kensington Affair, or even the Franklin search, but his concern for distressed mariners continued unabated. In 1853, after the packet ship *Emma Packer* had rescued the lone survivor from a dismasted Japanese junk, Burrows brought the man into his home and personally returned the man to Japan (shortly after Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival in Japan), to the gratitude of the Japanese government.<sup>32</sup> The following year, after an earthquake on the coast of Japan scuttled a Russian frigate while Burrows' own vessel was in the same harbor, Burrows lodged more than thirty sailors at his home and sought their safe return to Russia through his diplomatic connections. He lived out remaining days in Mystic, Connecticut where he died on Oct. 12, 1870.

Silas Enoch Burrows evinced a particular concern for assisting distressed mariners that, on occasion, bordered on the verge of obsession. His actions may have been driven by his various motives, some of them for his own personal benefit and perhaps not all of them completely altruistic. However, in response to Lady Franklin's humanitarian plea for assistance from the United States in the search for her missing husband and his companions, Burrows

certainly met his commitment to Lady Franklin. He deserves the credit for enlisting Henry Grinnell in the search for Sir John Franklin, leading directly to his outfitting two expeditions on her behalf and certainly the most significant contribution made from the United States.

## Endnotes

1. Richard A. Wheeler, "Silas Enoch Burrows," in Duane Hamilton Hurd, ed. *History of New London County, Connecticut: with Biographical Sketches of many of its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1882), 714.
2. Silas E. Burrows, *Russia and America. The Following Correspondence is Connected with the Shipwreck of His Imperial Majesty's Corvette Kensington, in the Atlantic Ocean, A.D. 1830 and 1831* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood and Company, 1865), 9-10.
3. Wheeler, 714.
4. Don Steers, with the collaboration of R. Earl Burrows. *Silas Enoch Burrows, 1794-1870: His Life and Letters; a Compilation of Material, Gathered from Many Sources, Concerning a Rather Unusual Man* (Chester, CT: Pequot Press, 1971), x.
5. Letter to President Andrew Jackson from Silas Burrows, New York, dated May 2, 1836, in Steers, 163. At the time of Burrows' request, Congress was approving an expenditure for a national exploring and surveying expedition to the Pacific and Antarctic (i.e., the U.S. Exploring Expedition commanded by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes).
6. Steers, 369.
7. Susan Riviere Hetzel. *The Building of a Monument. A History of the Mary Washington Associations and Their Work* (Lancaster, PA: Wickersham Company, 1903), 7-8. When Burrows ran into financial difficulties, the monument was never completed.
8. James A. Morrison, "This Means (Bank) War! Corruption and Credible Commitment in the Collapse of the Second Bank of the United States," *The Journal of the History of Economic Thought* Vol. 37, No. 2 (2015), 229.
9. *Russia and America*, 24-36.
10. *Russia and America*, 229-31; Letter from Silas Burrows, Rio Janeiro, to Mary Burrows, March 20, 1839, in Steers, 166.
11. Letter from Silas Burrows, Rio Janeiro, to Mary Burrows, March 20, 1839, in Steers, 166; *Russia and America*, 230. Although Burrows' sufferings bear an element of sensationalism, the loss of Captain Johnson in the southern Pacific Ocean in 1825 is well recorded, and in fact, as late as 1832, the sea captain and explorer Benjamin Morrell held out hope that Johnson and some of his crew might have still been alive. Morrell also made an impassioned plea for their potential rescue, which may have also served as an impetus for Burrows. Benjamin Morrell. *A Narrative of four voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean* (New York: J & J Harper, 1832), 363. Coincidentally, Burrows also performed a compassionate act for Morrell's Stonington family, taking in two of Benjamin Morrell's young sisters after their mother died unexpectedly. Morrell, xix.
12. Frances J. Woodward. *Portrait of Jane: A Life of Lady Franklin* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1951), 255.
13. Letter to President Zachary Taylor, Washington, D.C, from Lady Jane Franklin, April 4, 1849, in *Great Britain. Arctic Expedition. Return to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons dated 5 February 1850*. Ordered, by the House of Commons to be printed, 5 March 1850, 143-45.

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14. H.D. Trail. *The Life of Sir John Franklin*, R.N. (London: John Murray, 1896), 422.
  15. *Great Britain, Arctic Expedition*, 148.
  16. Letter to Secretary of State John M. Clayton, Washington, D.C., from Silas E. Burrows, London, June 22, 1849. MSS, Papers relating to the Grinnell Arctic Expedition, DeHaven Papers, New York Historical Society, NY, NY.
  17. *Russia and America*, 83.
  18. Silas Enoch Burrows. Diary 1850, 1851 and 1860, VFM 383, Mystic Seaport Ms. Collection. G. W. Blunt Library, Mystic CT.
  19. Letter to Secretary of State John M. Clayton, Washington, D.C., from Silas E. Burrows, London, June 22, 1849.
  20. Letter to Commander E.J. De Haven and S.P. Griffin dated May 25, 1850 from Silas Burrows (copy), MSS, Papers relating to the Grinnell Arctic Expedition, DeHaven Papers, New York Historical Society, NY.
  21. Letter to Secretary of State John M. Clayton, Washington, D.C. dated June 22, 1849 from Silas E. Burrows. Interestingly, the copy of the original letter in the archives of the New York Historical Society differs slightly from the letter as published in Steers, 85. The published letter omits the reason for Taylor's refusal of Burrows' request to lead the rescue expedition based on Burrows' age.
  22. Letter to Commander E.J. De Haven and S.P. Griffin dated May 25, 1850 from Silas Burrows (copy).
  23. Letter to Silas Burrows, New York, from Lady Jane Franklin, London, November 28, 1849, GB15 Lady Jane Franklin Correspondence, MS 248/104, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge.
  24. Letter to Silas Burrows, New York, from Lady Jane Franklin, London, November 28, 1849.
  25. Letter to Commander E.J. De Haven and S.P. Griffin dated May 25, 1850 from Silas Burrows (copy).
  26. Letters to Silas Burrows, New York from Lady Jane Franklin, London, January 10, 1850 and January 25, 1850. GB15 Lady Jane Franklin Correspondence, MS 248/104/, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge.
  27. Letter to Lady Jane Franklin, London, from Henry Grinnell, New York, dated May 5, 1850, GB15 Henry Grinnell, Correspondence, MS/248/414/11, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. Recently, scholars have examined Burrows' role in the dispute between Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States, and President Andrew Jackson over the Bank of the United States. Morrison, 228-30; Thomas Payne Govan, *Nicolas Biddle, Nationalist and Public Banker: 1786-1844* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959). Burrows' conduct comes off badly due to his involvement in attempts to influence press reporting and a questionable loan to purchase a newspaper publisher in order to stifle its editorial coverage. Govan, 187-88.
  28. Letter to Commander E.J. De Haven and S.P. Griffin dated May 25, 1850 from Silas Burrows (copy). Grinnell's account of the back-and-forth with Burrows leading to Grinnell's ultimate decision to contribute \$30,000 was recounted by Grinnell in a letter to Lady Franklin and generally follows Burrows' account, except that according to Grinnell, Grinnell initially offered to contribute \$5,000 (and thereafter \$10,000) if Burrows "attended to the expedition," but Burrows declined; Grinnell thereafter offered



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to head the subscription list at \$30,000. Also, Grinnell noted that after committing to head the list and returning it to Burrows, Burrows offered to obtain additional contributors, including himself at \$1,000, but Burrows returned the list the next day without adding one contributor. Letter to Lady Jane Franklin, London, from Henry Grinnell, New York, dated May 5, 1850. Burrows, however, wrote that when Grinnell's subscription became known, "it was considered an individual honor, and arrested all others," evidently even Burrows' \$1,000 subscription. Letter to Commander E.J. De Haven and S.P. Griffin dated May 25, 1850 from Silas Burrows (copy).

29. Letter to Lady Jane Franklin, London, from Henry Grinnell, New York, dated May 5, 1850.

30. Letter to Commander E.J. De Haven and S.P. Griffin dated May 25, 1850 from Silas Burrows (copy).

31. Burrows Diary Oct. 26, 1850. Mystic

32. Steers, xv-xvi