

ROGER WILLIAMS AND COCUMSCUSSOC

The economic downturn in the late 1630's affected all trade from New England, leading settlers to turn away from sole agricultural endeavors.

John Winthrop would write that the difficult times

"...set our people on work to provide fish, clapboards, plank, etc. and to sew hemp and flax (which prospered very well) and to look out to the West Indies for trade"

Thus the settlement of Boston opened trade with Barbados and other islands. In exchange for the cattle and provisions sent from Massachusetts, the colony received goods including sugar, tobacco, cotton, and indigo. These goods were in turn sold for much needed cash, which proved to be "a good help to discharge our debts in England"

That same year of 1638, the fledgling settlement of Providence, just two years after its humble beginnings was sending hogs and corn to join the trade from Boston. The town of Portsmouth managed to make up a cargo of bolts, clapboards pipe staves, planks, and shooks for the Barbados planter's housing in 1640.

Exiled puritan minister Roger Williams had founded the colony upon the premise of "Liberty of Conscience", or the freedom to hold one's political and religious beliefs free to oneself and amongst others, with no repercussions or punishment from the state authority. This separation of church and state would become one of the hallmarks of the nation's founding, but in 1636, the radical views that Williams and his followers held were considered dangerous to the large neighboring colony of Massachusetts.

No doubt, Roger Williams, and later, John Clarke believed that such "a civill state" could exist in what the crown would name Providence Plantations. But even as he was journeying to London in 1643 for the "patent of civil incorporation", for the colony, Williams was composing *A Key into the Language of America*, a tract that was part travelogue, part foreign-language dictionary, but mostly an invitation for those men of a more adventurous sort-hunters and trappers, as well as speculators to come and trade with the indigenous people of the region.

Williams had testified, as part of his defense of the charge by William Harris of Providence that he had purchased the land from the natives for his own benefit:

"I answer, it pleased the most High to direct my steps unto the Bay by the loving private advice of that very honored soul Mr. John Winthrop...It is not true that I was employed by any, made covenant with any, was supplied by any, or desired any to come with me into these parts. My souls desire was to do the natives good & to that end to have their language which [I afterwards printed] and therefore desired not to be troubled with English company..."

As to his own benefit, Williams had insisted, when lands were first divided in Providence, that he receive “only unto myself one single share, equal unto any of the rest of that number”

Williams first venture after the founding of Providence was the purchase of Chibachuwese Island, a three thousand acre island in the Upper Bay. The Narragansett Sachem Canonicus offered the island to Williams and John Winthrop for the purpose of keeping their swine and other livestock. The pair purchased the land in 1638, and renamed it Prudence Island, purchasing also two smaller islands nearby, christening them Patience and Hope.

Cocuscussoc, an area named with the Algonquian meaning of “place of marshy meadows”, was the site allocated to Williams for his trading house. He would later testify that

“Canonicus Laid me out bounds for a trading house at Nahigansett with his own hands, but he never traded with me but has truly what he desired, goods and money....and my trading house which yielded me a hundred pound profit per annum...God knows that for the public peace-sake I left and lost it about 20 years since when I went last to England...”

It is estimated that Williams lived and actively engaged in business at his trading house for twelve years and lived there at least six of them. He was the first to bring cattle to Cocumscussoc, though his herd was limited in size. Corn was an essential commodity for this endeavor and seems at times to have been scarce in the colony. In 1648 Williams wrote to Connecticut Governor John Winthrop Jr. to ask for help in obtaining 100 bushels of corn from the Mohegans. The following year he turned to Long Island to procure his needed provisions. Williams often paddled himself with some provisions around Narragansett Bay, but he also owned a sloop and a pinnace, no doubt to transport larger goods, as herding livestock along roads as they were, had proved difficult on at least one attempt.

This occurred that same year of 1648, when Governor Winthrop dispatched a small herd of ten cattle bound from New London to Cocumscussoc under the care of one William Peacock. Driving the cattle through Niantic woods, the cattle scattered and Peacock had to enlist the aid of the sachem Ninigret for help to recover those they could. He arrived at the trading house with six of the herd after seven days. Another three were recovered within a few more days. Williams', in writing to Winthrop after the episode, suggested that he build a pen at the village of Niantic, roughly the halfway point between Winthrop's farm and Williams', where during future transports they might “keep cattle there at night”.

Williams no doubt envisioned the house he built at Cocumscussoc would be the hub of trade, commerce, and news brought into the colony and in many respects he was right, but by the 1660's Williams was also distancing himself from the constant quarrels over land and boundaries, and the resulting bitterness and mistrust that grew between the towns of the small colony.

Historian Bruce C. Daniels would write that

“Fights over land also fueled many of the internal town struggles; Providence’s, the most spectacular, lasted well beyond 1663 and centered on who owned the common land”. At a town meeting, the perplexed council, unable to quell dissensions wrote into the record that they implored the inhabitants to “heal the sores in this town... which do arise about land”.

Of the colony’s three other towns, Warwick would see part of its holdings temporarily confiscated by Massachusetts. Not formally part of the original incorporation, Warwick found itself left aligned with Providence after 1644 when William Coddington attempted to divide the colony, obtaining a brief appointment as “Governor for Life” of Newport and Conanicut Island in 1651. Portsmouth inhabitants would overcome efforts in 1644 and again in 1652 by the original purchasers, or “disposers” to claim exclusive rights to “lay out and assign the common land”. The town meeting rejected these claims, ruling that land within the town “shall be bounded common to the inhabitants of this town...and land was not to be disposed of without the consent of all the inhabitants”.

Those first purchasers had divided huge tracts of land among themselves, and little was left for new arrivals, even while much of the land owned by the “disposers” went unused and unimproved. Eventually a compromise was reached where these early settlers deeded some land back to the town for dispersal. This led only to more tensions however, as word of the available land led to a flood of new settlers. Daniels writes that

“Not only did successive waves of new arrivals fight over control of land policy, but ‘serious debates and agitations’ occurred when neighbor fought neighbor over boundaries”.

As for Newport, whose interests were largely maritime, the town would dispute the boundary on Aquidneck Island with neighboring Portsmouth for so long that it would not end until Charter of 1663, when the General Assembly finally ordered them to cease and desist.

The division of the colony forced by Coddington’s ambitions caused the freemen of Providence Plantations to prevail upon Roger Williams to return to England and get Coddington’s appointment revoked. He relented, in spite of facing much personal loss. As Rhode Islander Bertram Lippincott would write,

“Never wealthy, he sold his land at Cocumscussoc, Prudence Island, and Patience Island to help pay for the trip and his family’s expenses while gone. “

Williams was accompanied by Baptist minister John Clarke and they succeeded in securing a new charter, which reunited the colony, but did nothing to quell the turbulence within. Williams served as President of Providence Plantations once again, serving from 1654-1657 but it was three years of turmoil.

In 1662, after the revolution in England was over and the monarchy re-established; Baptist minister John Clarke was again dispatched to London as an agent for the colony. His correspondence with the crown to obtain a new charter for the Colony was promising, particularly he and Roger Williams's hopes for a "lively experiment that a most flourishing civill state may stand...and best be maintained...with a full libertie in religious concernments" that would grant the inhabitants of Providence Plantations freedom of conscience, or to worship whichever religion they chose without fear of persecution.

That spring of 1662, Governor John Winthrop Jr. of Connecticut had visited London as well, and obtained a new charter for his colony, which called into question the boundaries between the two colonies, and Winthrop's stake in the so-called Atherton purchases, in which large tracts of land claimed by Rhode Island were sold to individuals loyal to Connecticut; presented a more viable threat back home.

For as much as Clarke and Williams sought to expand the boundaries of religious freedom, the majority of their co-inhabitants sought land and an expansion of their own personal property and enterprise.

Williams had sought, in the words of his modern transcriber, to "cool the land fever" that had gripped the colony. In December 1661, Williams had affirmed the boundaries of the colony as determined by the original deed from Narragansett Sachems, and reiterating his intention in founding Providence to be "a shelter for persons distressed of conscience". By 1662 however, landholders in the town sought to solidify their control over lands allotted to them as well as gain control of sizeable portions of land both east and west of the established borders.

Clarke had gone to England to negotiate on the colony's behalf and essentially wrote the new charter which included the unprecedented "liberty of conscience" for the colony, and also gave greater corporate powers, promised protection, at least on paper to the indigenous people from attack from Massachusetts and Connecticut, largely so that treaties and land obtained by Rhode Islanders would be preserved; and established fishing rights offshore,

The new charter also gave the colony's Assembly the authority to wade through the contentious cases of land disputes, though it would take many more years to resolve, and effectively allowed landholders to greatly expand their holdings, which would give rise to the great estates that became known as the Narragansett Plantations.

Thus the pattern of British attempts of another Plantation venture continued, with the indigenous peoples of the location expelled or enslaved, and the resulting lands fought over by large investors as the once yeoman farmers fought to save their own existence.

Williams' lands at Cocumscussoc, where he retreated for his "beloved privacy" would become the site of one of the first northern plantations, as we know the term today, in North America.

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J. STANLEY LEMONS

The greatest contribution that the U.S. has made to world religion is the concept and practice of separation of church and state, and that was started in Providence with Roger Williams in 1636.

Even if nothing in the rest of the history of the state was remarkable, Providence would still have that one world-class contribution to its credit. It was the first place in modern history where citizenship and religion were separated, where freedom of conscience was the rule.

While his ideas were reviled and attacked in the 17th Century, they became embodied in the U.S. Constitution in 1789 and the Bill of Rights, appended to it in 1791.

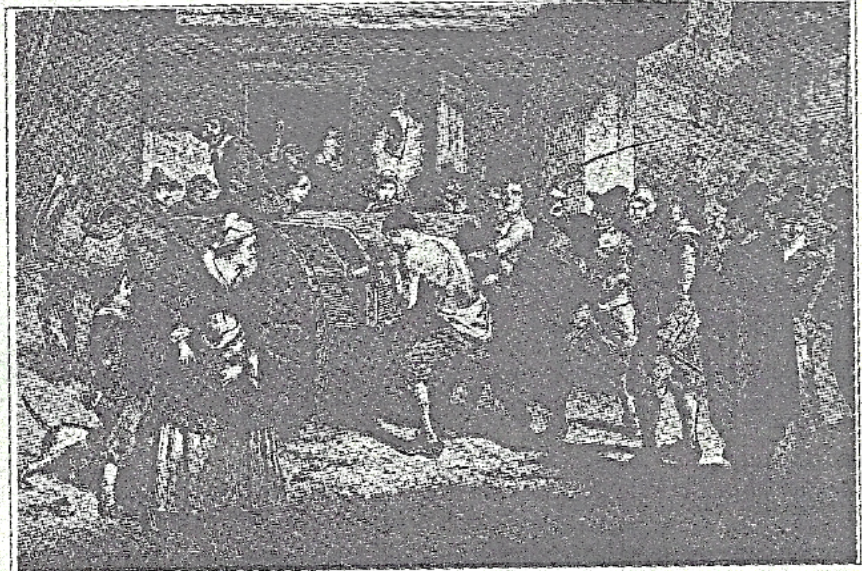
Have you wondered why there is a Roger Williams Lodge of B'nai B'rith? Why the oldest synagogue (Touro Synagogue, in Newport) in America is in Rhode Island? Have you ever wondered why Rhode Island never had a witch trial? Or blasphemy trials? Nor hanged, whipped or jailed people because of religion? All the other colonies executed witches, but not Rhode Island. Most had blasphemy trials, but not Rhode Island.

Nearly everywhere else in colonial America, people of faith were persecuted, but not in Rhode Island. Massachusetts hanged four Quakers, and Virginia imprisoned dozens of Baptists. Maryland, which was created as a haven for Roman Catholics, came to outlaw Catholic priests and prohibited Roman Catholics from inheriting property. These things did not happen here because Roger Williams founded Providence to be a "shelter for those distressed of conscience." Rhode Island's freedom of religion prevented such religious laws and abuses.

It is well to recall how this came about. Roger Williams got into serious trouble in Massachusetts when he challenged both the political and religious establishments by asserting that the government had no role in religion. Moreover, he challenged the legitimacy of the colony itself by charging that it had stolen its land from the Indians. So he was tried and convicted of sedition, heresy and the refusal to take an oath of allegiance to the colony that required him to swear in God's name. In October 1635 he was ordered banished to England, whence he had fled in 1630 because of religious persecution.

Before the banishment could be carried out, however, he fled from Salem into the snow in January 1636 and trekked to the Narragansett Bay. In June he left the shelter of the Wampanoags and crossed the Seekonk River into the domain of the Narragansetts. From Miantonomi and Canonicut he acquired Providence. His relations with the Narragansetts were so cordial that Providence and the Narragansetts remained allies for the next 40 years against the efforts of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Plymouth colonies to destroy them both.

When the householders first gathered in Providence to form their town government, they agreed that they could make rules and laws in "civil matters only." In 1644 when Williams secured his charter for the "Province of Providence Plantations in Narragansett Bay in



Whipping Quakers through the streets of Boston.

New England," that charter was for a "civil government." It did not mention religion because Williams did not believe that government had any role to play in religion. "Soul liberty" was God's gift to all humanity; it was not something granted by any government.

Soul liberty was the freedom of every person to follow the dictates of conscience. A government could only acknowledge this freedom and stand aside to allow full freedom of religion. This meant that one had to have complete separation of church and state. For Roger Williams, separation of church and state was for the protection of the church from the corrupting effects of government. Williams wrote repeatedly that true religion needs no support of the government and that government support invariably corrupts religion.

All of the neighboring colonies regarded Providence Plantations with undisguised horror and worked for the first hundred years to dismember and destroy this "hive of heretics." But they failed, and the principle that Roger Williams planted in Providence in 1636 came to be the law of all of Rhode Island and then a basic principle of the United States. And, Roger Williams, whose ideas were roundly rejected by everybody in his lifetime, would be seen by the 20th Century as the quintessential American of the 17th Century. What was the founding principle of Providence — freedom of religion (which demands separation of church and state) — now holds out a hope for the whole world where religious intolerance is the basis of so much strife.

Williams believed that it was God's command that everyone (including people that he regarded as heretics, pagans, atheists, and infidels) had a right to freedom of conscience. He believed that anyone had a right to be wrong, and that only civil debate could be used to change a heart or mind. The only tools of religion were those of the spirit, never the sword. For him, the state had no role to play in religion. He believed that whenever and wherever

the government tried to meddle with religion by trying to define it or control it or enforce it, or even to support it, religion was corrupted by such efforts.

Williams and his good friend John Clarke, of Newport, shared the view that the key to a peaceful society was complete separation of church and state. Nearly everyone else believed just the opposite: They believed that peace was possible only when everyone was united in a single church in a single state. Williams's core religious principle held that each person had freedom of conscience and freedom to practice their faith. Nearly everyone else thought that the state had to punish and coerce those who had divergent religious beliefs, wrong practices, or wayward ideas.

His position on freedom of religion was wildly radical in his day and, nearly four centuries later, this basic principle is still wildly radical in great swathes of today's world. Religious freedom does not exist in most nations on the planet.

What would Roger Williams think of the idea that our nation was founded as a Christian nation? Certainly Providence and Rhode Island were not founded as a Christian government. It is deeply troubling to know that a pastor of one of the largest churches in Texas declared on national TV that "separation of church and state is the product of some infidel's mind."

To call Roger Williams an infidel reveals profound ignorance of our nation's history. Roger Williams utterly rejected any such concept and regarded the idea of a "Christian nation" as "blasphemy." So, he established a government that was confined to "civil matters only," and this has become a model for the world.

J. Stanley Lemons is an emeritus professor of history, Rhode Island College and church historian for the First Baptist Church in America. [You will run](#)

ARTICLE: "Assessing the Global Importance of Roger Williams," 2011



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WHIPPING QUAKERS THROUGH THE STREETS OF BOSTON, W.L. SHEPPARD

this was true and forced me to try to come

SOME NOTES ABOUT EARLY RHODE ISLAND'S PLACE AMONG NEW ENGLAND COLONIES

From: Bozeman, Theodore Dwight. "Religious Liberty and the Problem of Order in Early Rhode Island." *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 45, no. 1, 1972, pp. 44–64. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/364222. Accessed 10 Apr. 2020. If you want to read the entire (very interesting) paper on-line, click the link and register (free).

"Composed largely of religious, social, and even criminal dissidents from neighboring colonies, and both hated and hounded by other colonial governments for its religious heterodoxy, Rhode Island was literally a 'banished' colony, the outcast of New England." (p.52)

"It would be false . . . to suggest that Rhode Island's 'livelie experiment' with religious disestablishment and political democracy was at first either frictionless or orderly. . . . Sufficient evidence supports the suggestion that Rhode Island faced, in its formative period, an incessant problem of civil order which deepened at times into tumultuous crises." (p.44)

"Numerous expressions of contempt for Rhode Island are contained in the colonial records of Connecticut, Plymouth, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, and even New Amsterdam. A special committee appointed by the English King in 1664 to investigate conflicting land claims in New England report that "This colony . . . was begun by such as the Massachusetts would not suffer to live among them, and is generally hated by the other colonies." (p. 52) Even the genial Governor of Plymouth, William Bradford, avowed 'concerning ye Ilanders [i.e., the Rhode Islanders] We have no conversing with them, nor desire to have, funder than necessitie or humanity may require.' (Quoted, p. 52-53)

ONE REASON OTHER COLONIES WERE AFRAID RHODE ISLAND'S IDEAS MIGHT SPREAD: The disorder and strife-torn character of Rhode Island's early political and social life was considered by many as the logical result of an attempt to overturn the axiom of nearly fifteen hundred years: that civil and political cohesion depended upon a general and coerced UNIFORMITY of religious belief (i.e., that everyone needed to belong to the same state-approved religion). Only the hated Anabaptist fanatics of the previous century had ever dared question the union of church and state in the matter of religious uniformity and they had demonstrated the anarchic bent of their ideas at Munster.

ROGER WILLIAMS' PARABLE OF HUMAN SOCIETY AS A SHIP

"It might happen that upon a given ship, persons of diverse religious convictions have taken passage. Religious freedom, in this case, would consist solely in the right of all persons aboard to attend, or decline to attend, the 'ship's prayers or worship,' or to hold 'their own particular prayers or worship.' But should any person, passenger or crew, be so misguided as to assume "freedom" to refuse his given

duties, or to withhold his fare, or to 'refuse to help . . . towards the common charges or defence; [or] if any refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship . . . or shall rise up against [his] commanders . . . [or] should preach or write that there ought to be no commanders or officers, because all are equal in Christ . . . the commander . . . may judge, resist, compel and punish such transgressors . . . ' (From Williams' letter to the Town of Providence). {This was written in response to the suggestion that Williams' concept of liberty of conscience and religious freedom gave citizens the right to disobey civil laws.)

jecting Bacon's politics but absorbing a scientific methodology—that is, the idea of testing hypotheses. Indeed, Williams cites Bacon in the dedication of his most important book, and Coke's name does not appear until page two.

When James's son Charles became king, Charles intensified the pressure on both religious and political dissenters. One clergyman—whose enmity to Puritans made him a favorite of the king—wrote, "Before God, it will never be well until we have our Inquisition." [5] In politics, Charles began usurping even more power than his father. As Charles pressed ever harder both on religious dissenters and on the historic rights and privileges of Parliament and England, one parliamentary leader said he had wanted to "postpone the business of religion" to focus on "our rights," but "never was there a more clear connection between the matter of religion and matter of state." [6]

Parliament challenged the king on both fronts. Coke led the response. In 1628, he wrote the Petition of Right, which placed explicit limits on the crown and includes several of the amendments in our Bill of Rights as well as the habeas corpus clause in the U.S. Constitution. He then ushered it through both the House of Commons and the House of Lords—both passed it unanimously—and forced Charles to accept it.

But Charles railed against the restrictions placed upon him and soon began ignoring them. Parliament protested—violently. In a chaotic scene, while soldiers stormed the doors to adjourn Parliament upon the king's order, Parliament passed resolutions declaring capital enemies—traitors—those who supported some of the king's policies. When soldiers finally broke in, leading members of Parliament fled or were arrested. Williams—then trusted messenger between members who opposed Charles—witnesses all this from the



The Landing Place of Roger Williams in Providence in 1636 (Sanford Neuschatz Collection)

gallery.

Soon after, England would explode in civil war, and Parliament would not meet again for 11 years— not until Charles was desperate. Meanwhile, to escape the boiling political tensions and ever increasing persecution, thousands of Puritans fled to America—including, of course, Winthrop and Williams.

As governor of Massachusetts, Winthrop was determined to build a New Jerusalem to advance the glory of God. God informed every aspect of life in Massachusetts, including the legal code. Although Winthrop himself had been a prominent attorney in England, this legal code was not written by lawyers but by ministers (its first draft was called "Moses His Judicials"). One of the Bay's leading ministers said the plantation would "endeavour after a Theocracy as near as might be to that which was the glory of Israel." [7] Colonists had to conform to God's will, as interpreted by the colony's ministers and magistrates. Conformity went beyond merely obeying the law. Winthrop believed in liberty but in "a liberty to do only that which is good," to be maintained by "subjection to authority." Colony leaders pressured all to conform, to join and participate in

ment to impeach Bacon, the first impeachment in 150 years. It is a sign of Williams's independence of thought that, although Coke was this great father figure, he was actually willing to learn from Bacon,

the community. Becoming a fullfledged church member was an arduous process, but church attendance was mandatory even for nonmembers. No individual was to stand alone; indeed, the colony prohibited individuals, even unmarried adult men, from living alone.

Like Winthrop, Williams also wanted a godly society, but from the very first he disagreed with basing law on scripture or using government to compel any aspect of worship. His views evolved gradually, but the essence of his position was present when he opposed a requirement that colonists take an oath of loyalty to the government of Massachusetts—and very pointedly not to the king.

For Williams, requiring an oath, an act of worship, mixed church and state. He knew that when you mix religion and politics you get politics, and politics inevitably corrupted the church. (Actually, when you mix anything with politics you get politics.) His position derived not only from Coke's views on liberty, that each man's home was his castle—views that ran in his veins—but even more from scripture itself and from a recognition of human error. A linguist, Williams read scripture in many languages and recognized differences between translations. To decide which meaning was correct, which interpretation of a passage was correct, required a human to make a judgment regarding God. And all humans made errors.

Because of the possibility of human error, because humans had to interpret God's word, it followed that no one should force his or her possibly erroneous interpretation upon another. To do so was, in Williams's words, "monstrous partiality." For the state to use its power to do so was unconscionable. He concluded that only total and complete separation of church and state stopped the corruption of the church and prevented forcing someone to accept error. So he rejected the idea that the state had power to insert itself between humans and god.

He also argued that the parable in the Gospel of Matthew on separating wheat and tares meant that the state should make no effort to force conformity to any doctrine or practice.[8] To Williams, that parable meant that error should be allowed to exist; in contrast, Augustine had interpreted the identical passage as justifying death to heretics and blasphemers.

Williams was a minister in Salem, Massachusetts, widely respected for both religiosity and scholarship, and his views began to get traction in the colony. He became a threat to order. There was no theological difference between him and either other ministers or the Puritan government, but there was a vast difference in their views of the state's role. Massachusetts magistrates ordered him not to "preach publicly on these matters" (which should remind us of why the First Amendment links freedom of religion and freedom of speech—it doesn't do you much good to think freely if you can't speak those thoughts). Williams refused to obey, so Massachusetts authorities



Two men hold an open wooden box with the purported remains of Roger Williams, found in a tomb at the North Burial Ground in 1933 (Providence Public Library Digital Collections)

banished him for his “dangerous errors,” sent soldiers from Boston to arrest him, and put him on a ship returning to England. Persecution in England was then at its height; deportation meant a certain prison sentence, probably for life, after mutilation. Another man whose criticism of the Church of England was less extreme than Williams’s was sentenced to a life term, not to begin until after he was tied to a stake to receive 36 lashes, placed in the pillory for two hours, branded in the face with “SS” for “Sower of Sedition,” then had his nose split and his ears cut off. Reportedly, upon hearing the sentence, William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury, threw his cap in the air and gave thanks to God.

Winthrop—who supported banishing Williams but opposed returning him to England to face such a sentence—sent him a warning of what was to happen. Williams immediately fled, into the teeth of a blizzard. Through the winter, Indians kept him alive. In the spring, he founded Providence. His ideas were still not fully developed, but he expressed their essence in a very simple document: the governing compact of Providence.

Every other founding document in the New World—whether Portuguese, Spanish, English, French, Dutch, Swedish, or other—said that the colony was founded to glorify God, to carry out God’s will, to spread Christianity, or something to that effect. However, a draft of the compact that would govern Providence only asked for God’s blessing—and in the final version of the compact, Williams deleted even that. The compact made no mention of divinity at all. This was extraordinary not only for the times, but also for Williams personally. In practically every paragraph of his own writing, he quotes scripture or refers to God. But the Providence government was to be only civil, and it would not compel anyone to any belief. Therefore, Williams concluded that there should be no mention of God. Williams’s colony was to be a place where the soul was free, and he began speaking about “soul liberty.” In 1652, Rhode Island actually outlawed slavery, making it probably the freest place in the world.

So how much influence did Williams have? He is a very controversial figure. Some historians— including Edmund Morgan, probably our greatest colonial historian—consider him a precursor to everyone from Thomas Paine to Thomas Jefferson and even Andrew Jackson. Others consider him de minimis. William McLoughlin called him “a magnificent failure . . . because of the inability of Rhode Islanders to shape . . . the destiny of New England or the other colonies.”[9]

But Williams’s ideas did shape other colonies. Ironically, that influence came about chiefly because Massachusetts regarded Rhode Island as a pestilence on its border, a foul corruption that might infest it with error, and so tried to crush it.

To protect Rhode Island, Williams returned twice to England, to revolutionary London, a place where a king had been beheaded, a place of such intellectual ferment it was called “the world turned upside down,” a place where they were defining the world anew. There he sought and eventually won protection for Rhode Island from the only person in the world that Massachusetts feared: Oliver Cromwell.

In fact, Williams spent several years in London and became a major figure there, counting not only Cromwell but also such men as John Milton and Henry Vane as friends, and moving in their circles. While there, his views matured. His ideas were not entirely without precedent. There had been the Anabaptists, there had been Sebastian Castellio, there was Hugo Grotius. Williams knew all the precedents, and he filtered the knowledge of them through his experiential understanding of the law and power, then combined all of it in a new way and took his conclusions further than anyone in his century.

He wrote numerous pamphlets and books; the most important was *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*, one of the most comprehensive ever written for separation of church and state, but also for individual freedom. [10] Literally hundreds of books and pamphlets in a five-year period directly addressed him or discussed his ideas, routinely quoting him—down to typographical errors in punctuation—but often without attribution. This was not plagiarism; it was a sign that his ideas had become so well known that they enjoyed their own existence separate from him.

And what did Williams say? He said, “Forced worship stinks in God’s nostrils.” He compared it to “spiritual rape.” He demanded that “the most Jewish, paganist, Turkish, or anti-Christian consciences in all nations and countries” be allowed freedom to worship. He even opposed toleration, for toleration of course can be withdrawn. He argued that not only logic and evidence of the world around him (the murder of thousands of Christians by Christians for the way they worshiped Christ, the success of both Catholic and Islamic states—which proved that God did not favor those of any particular faith) but scripture, too, supported his conviction that neither church nor state had any justification for compulsion of belief.

And he made an analogy that demonstrated that, to him, church and state were wholly, entirely distinct from each other: “The Church or company of worshippers . . . is like unto a Corporation, Society or Company . . . which Companies may . . . in matters concerning their *Societie* . . . dissent, divide, *breake* into Schism and Faction . . . yea wholly dissolve and *breake* up into pieces and yet the well-being and peace of the *Citie* not be in the least measure impaired or disturbed; because the essence or being of the *Citie* . . . is essentially distinct from those particular *Societies*[.]”

Although his views convinced only a minority, that minority had traction. Even Cromwell listened. When Indians got word to Williams that Massachusetts was pressuring them to convert to Christianity, for example, he convinced Cromwell to order Massachusetts to cease forced conversions of Indians.

But Williams’s most revolutionary statements went beyond religion to pure politics. At the time, virtually everyone believed that the authority of government came from God. Even Parliament, in its civil war with the king, in its rejection of the divine right of kings, did not dispute that God gave the king the authority to govern. And Winthrop, after being elected governor of Massachusetts, told those who had just voted for him that “being called by you, we have our authority from God.”[11]

Williams disputed this point. Since government, in his view, was entirely secular, its power could not come from God. Where, then, did it come from? “I infer that the sovereign, original, and foundation of civil power lies in the people.” Those governments “have no more power, nor for no longer time, than the civil power or people consenting and agreeing shall *betrust* them with.” Now that was revolutionary—particularly the concept that the governed could withdraw their consent after giving it.

Williams also said that, just as religion was utterly irrelevant to a person’s performance as a soldier, physician, lawyer, sea captain, merchant, or any other civil profession, a Christian magistrate was “no more” a magistrate and no better than one “of any other Conscience or Religion.”[12] Try saying that today and getting elected.

Two years alter Williams left England, the *Levellers* were quoting him verbatim. Robert Baillie, one of his leading critics, warned that Williams’s ideas would “overthrow from the very foundation the whole edifice of

our civil government; no king, no Lord, must be heard of here-after; This House of Commons must be cut down, the Imperial and absolute Sovereignty must be put in the hands of the multitude of the basest people" and that Williams was "the master of our mis-orders.[13]

The restoration of the crown did not end Williams's influence; it enshrined it. Charles II decided to grant Rhode Island a royal charter that did not establish the Church of England and allowed complete freedom of worship. He called the colony his "little experiment." Charles liked the experiment so much that he included the same language about toleration in later charters for North Carolina and New Jersey, although he did establish a Church of England in those colonies. Clearly, then, Williams influenced events in other colonies.

Yet Williams's most important impact came through John Locke. While it is unlikely that many, if any, American Revolutionary thinkers read Williams, they all were conversant with events in London a century earlier, and they all read Locke. And Locke was certainly familiar with Williams's work and even lived on the same estate where Williams had been a minister before he left England. Williams's influence on Locke was significant. Locke scholar and Harvard divinity school professor David Little concluded that, on the question of religious toleration, Locke's ideas are "simply restatements of the central arguments in favor of freedom of conscience developed by Roger Williams in the middle of the seventeenth century, when Locke's opinions on these subjects were being shaped." [14] Winthrop Hudson, a prominent historian of religion, observed: "The parallels with the thought of Roger Williams are so close that it is not entirely implausible conjecture to suggest that Locke's major contribution may have been to reduce the rambling, lengthy, incoherent exposition of the New England firebrand' to orderly, abbreviated, and coherent form. . . . It's impossible to discover a single significant difference between the arguments set forth by Williams and advanced by Locke. They scarcely differ even in the details." [15] Finally, W. K. Jordan, the president of Radcliffe and author of the classic four-volume study, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England*, concluded that not Locke's but Williams's "carefully reasoned argument for the complete dissociation of church and state was the most important contribution made during the century in this significant area of political thought." [16]

When you take this entire context into account, it becomes clear that it was no accident that our Constitution is an entirely secular document. Nowhere in it does any reference to divinity appear. It does use the word "blessing" but it seeks the blessing not of God but of liberty. In 1797, just eight years after the Constitution was adopted, the Senate explicitly separated government from religion when it unanimously approved the Treaty of Tripoli drafted under George Washington and signed by John Adams, which stated, "The government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion."

There is a huge difference between a nation and a government. One can argue that the United States was founded as a Christian nation, which I think we were, and even that we are still a Christian nation, which I think is a little more controversial. But our government was founded upon liberty and upon the complete and absolute dissociation of church and state. [

Footnotes [1] Teter J. Comes, "Best Sermon; A Pilgrim's Progress," *New York Times Magazine*, April 18, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/18/magazine/best-sermon-a-pilgrim-s-progress.html>. [2] Quoted in Baptist *Wriothesley Noel*, *Essay on the Union of Church and State*, 211. (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1848), p. 56. [3] John M. Barry, "God, Government and Roger Williams' Big Idea," *Smithsonian Magazine*, January 2012, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-/god-government-and-rogerwilliams-big-idea-6291280/>. [4] Roger

Williams to Anne Sadleir, April 1652, in *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, vol. 2, ed. Glenn W. LaFantasie (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, University Press of New England, Hanover and London, 1988).

[5] Gordon J. Schochet, ed., *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War* (Washington: Folger Institute, 1990), p. 131.

[6] Wallace Notestein and Frances Helen Reif, eds., *Commons Debates for 1629*, vol. 10-11 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1921), pp. 18-19.

[7] James E. Ernst, *Roger Williams: New England Firebrand* (London: McMillan Company, 1932), p. 90.

[8] Matt. 13:24-30.

[9] William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 7.

[10] Roger Williams, *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, Vol. 3: *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007).

[11] James Kendall Homier, ed., *Winthrop's Journal: History of New England*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), pp. 237-39.

[12] Williams, *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*, p. 398.

[13] Robert Baillie, "Anabaptism: The Fountain of Independency," in James Ernst, *Roger Williams and the English Revolution*, vol. 1 (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, 1931).

[14] David Little, "Conscience, Theology and the First Amendment," *Soundings*, 72, no. 2/3 (Summer/Fall 1989): 357-78.

[15] Winthrop Hudson, "John Locke: Heir of Puritan Political Theorists," in *Calvinism and the Political Order*, ed. George Hunt (London: The Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 117-18.

[16] W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge,

9/10

LEARNING ABOUT ROGER WILLIAMS & RICHARD SMITH SR.

<https://www.history.com/topics/reformation/roger-williams> - Short History Channel biography of Roger Williams and his impact.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwnZTHatDbo> - 24 min. Colonial Newport: An American Experiment. Gives a good overview of early RI history; Wickford had strong ties with Newport and in many respects they have parallel histories.

SOME BOOKS YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING

ABOUT ROGER WILLIAMS –

- Barry, John M. *Roger Williams and the Creation of the American Soul* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012). (youtube has some videos of Barry speaking)
- Warren, James A. *God, War and Providence* (New York: Scribner, 2018).

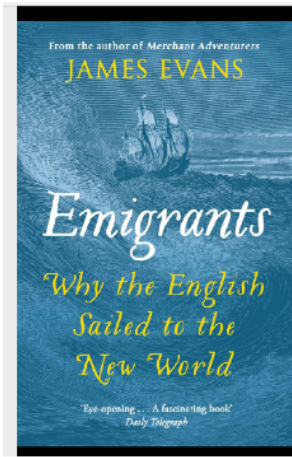
ABOUT RICHARD SMITH SR. & JR.

- Updike, Daniel Berkeley. *Richard Smith: First English Settler of the Narragansett Country, Rhode Island* (Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1937).

ABOUT COCUMSCUSSOC*/SMITH'S CASTLE/NARRAGANSETT PLANTATIONS

- Woodward, Carl R. *Plantation in Yankeeland* (Chester, CT: The Pequot Press, 1971)

*Cocumscussoc *COH – cum – skuss – uk) is the native name of the land on which Smith's Castle sits.



EMIGRANTS: WHY THE ENGLISH SAILED TO THE NEW WORLD by James Evans, Weidenfeld & Nicolson Publishers, 2017.

The English author is a writer and producer of historical documentaries for the BBC and Channel 4, and the author of *Merchant Adventurers: The Voyage of Discovery That Transformed Tudor England* and *Tudor Adventures: An Arctic Adventure: The Hunt for the Northeast Passage*. (The latter is in the RI library system). *Emigrants* is presently available through amazon.com, Hardcover: \$26.99; Kindle: usually \$15.99 but presently available for \$3.99.

The *Emigrants* book is not available in the RI library system. If you decide to purchase a hard-cover copy, please consider donating it to your library after you have read it.

Chapters 3 and 4 are particularly helpful in forming an idea of what was going on in England during the period when the Smiths and Updikes were establishing themselves in Cocumscussoc.

SUMMARY:

In the 1600s vast numbers of people left England for the Americas. In fact, it has been reported that over 40 million current U.S. citizens claim ancestry from an English immigrant, many of them from this early period. Crossing the Atlantic was a major undertaking, the voyage long and treacherous. Conditions in the New World were often as bad or worse as those they were fleeing. Contrary to what you may have read in your history texts, they did not always for freedom of religion; in fact, in most cases this was not the reason. So why did they want to leave England?



The later in the year, the stormier the Northern Atlantic tended to be. The crossing might last as little as five weeks, but could take significantly longer.

Three Ships in a Rough Sea,
Wenceslaus Hollar, c.1664.

Evans, James. *Emigrants*. Orion Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

In this book, Dr. James Evans uses contemporary sources including diaries, court hearings, and letters as well as extensive well-documented research to

create a highly readable analysis of that important question. “In the seventeenth century the decision was life-changing. Whether or not it was intended as a final move, final it was known that it could be, and final of course it very often was.” (Evans, James. *Emigrants*: Orion Publishing Group. Kindle Edition, Location 246)

The author says, “The purpose of this book is to explore some of these emigrants’ motives in going – to look at some of the major reasons for leaving England, and to explore the stories of certain individuals which illustrate these reasons.” (Evans, Location 253).

The chapter titles hint at the primary motives he identified:

1-Fish: “Some went to fish – astonished by this teeming resource in the western Atlantic, at a time when European stocks were much depleted, thinking that while many crossed and re-crossed the ocean to do so, there might be a benefit in staying to live.” (Evans, Location 259) This chapter explores the early Newfoundland settlements and specifically Richard Whitbourne.

2-Gold & Smoke (i.e., Tobacco): “From the beginning of English attempts to colonize America, the search for precious metals, and for gold and silver in particular, had been high on the list of motivating factors.” (Evans, Location 1255) This chapter explores the Virginia colonies, where many of the earliest settlers had plans to return to England as soon as they made their fortune. While they did not find the gold they sought, a longer-term source of wealth [tobacco] . . . ‘sealed the success’ of early English settlement in America.” (Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies*, p.199 quoted in Evans, Location 1773). Christopher Newport, John Smith, John Rolfe, and others figure prominently in this story.

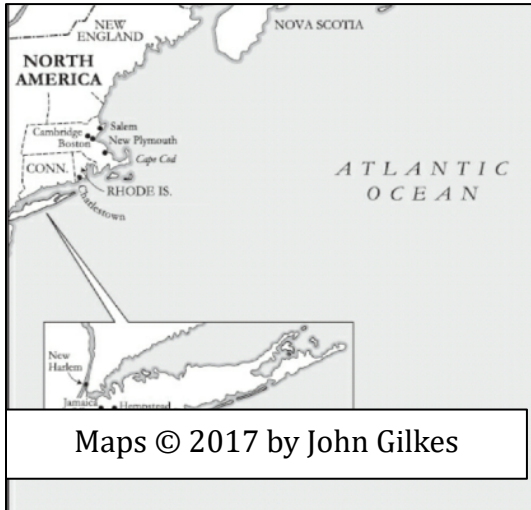


[This illustration of the tobacco plant, along with a Native American inhaling its smoke, was included in a work by Matthias de Lobel, a Flemish botanist and physician who worked in England for James I.](#)

3-Equality before God: At the end of Elizabeth I’s reign and the beginning of James I’s, Puritans who found England’s extreme laws and proscriptions intolerable, fled to Leiden, Holland. The difficulty of commercial activity among the over-crowded city, the threat of war with Catholic Spain, and the increasing loss of their English culture led them to further emigration. Throughout the 1630s, large numbers sailed to New England. *The Winthrop Fleet*, a group of 11 ships carried 700-1000 Puritans during the summer of 1630. Robert Cushman and Anne Bradstreet also appear in this chapter.

4-King: This chapter deals with the English Civil Wars (1642-1651), deposition and eventual execution of Charles I, and Oliver Cromwell. Royalist supporters fled to Virginia; some, but not all, returned to England after the Restoration. We meet Henry Norwood, Governor Berkeley, and others.

5-Fur: Richard Denton was an early English Presbyterian minister. He disapproved of government structures, bishops and hierarchy in the Church, and what is worse, he espoused democracy, which a leading Puritan had



called “the worst of all forms of government.” First, he and his congregation of about 20 families went to New Haven Colony and then to New Netherland where they established the town of Hempstead. The fur trade dominated the economic life for all Europeans in this region of America, like the Dentons, who settled here. With a mere ten pelts buying enough wheat to feed a family for a year, most emigrants soon abandoned their former professions. New Amsterdam became the hub of a thriving seasonal fur trade and a desirable prize for the English;

New Amsterdam became British New York in 1664.

6-Liberty: During and after the English Civil War (1642–1651) one of the many dissenting Christian groups which emerged, led by George Fox, was the Friends (Quakers). Although the Crown and Protestant sects of the time considered them a “blasphemous challenge to social and political order, and persecutions started as early as 1656, by 1680 their numbers in England and Wales had increased to over 60,000. West Jersey and Pennsylvania were established in 1676 and 1682 respectively, by the Quaker William Penn. “The regime, William wrote later, was ‘glad to be rid of us’. And here, in what he called his ‘American country’, he and his fellow Quaker emigrants were glad to be rid of England.” (Evans, Location 4130) “Penn was followed to his part of America by a wave of migrants (many of them not Quakers) the majority of whom came from England, though they did also leave Wales, Scotland and Ireland, as well as many parts of Continental Europe.” (Evans, Location 4303) Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer (a Quaker) were two other seekers of liberty highlighted in this chapter.

7-Despair: Finally, Evans considers those, like Edward Furnifull, who sold themselves as indentured servants for periods of 5-7 years for passage to

America to escape the hopeless poverty of England. In England, at that time severe poverty afflicted more than half the population. There had been only one good harvest in the 1630s, a terrible famine in 1632, crop failures every year from 1635-1640, and recurrent bad harvests between 1657-1661. Throughout this period there were recurrent epidemics as well, including the Black Death (Great Plague) in 1665. In the midst of all this, England's population continued to climb – from three million in THE 16th century to five million by the end of the 17th.” Everything in the country, one man lamented, was ‘in a heap of troubles and confusions.’” Evans, Location 4674)

Conditions aboard ships transporting indentured servants were deplorable: poor sanitation, overcrowding, and inadequate food. Mortality rates of half the passengers were not uncommon. Once they reached America they were auctioned off and living conditions with their new masters were not an improvement. “With no long-term interest in their welfare, masters who were inclined to cruelty could, and did, put them ‘to very hard labour’. Their lodging was ‘ill’. Their diet was ‘very slight’. (Evans, Location 4816) As many as 40% did not survive their first year, deaths hastened in part by the unfamiliar heat in tobacco-growing Virginia.



An indentured servant agreement, 1627. © Virginia Historical Society, USA / Bridgeman.

In addition to adults, some 8,500 poor children were indentured under the Poor Laws and shipped to Virginia between 1619 and 1625. Richard Frethorne was one of these, around twelve years old at the time. His letters to his parents, begging to be released from his bondage, went unanswered; unbeknownst to him his parents had both died about the time he arrived in Virginia.

CONCLUSION:

“While it may be the case that it is impossible to find a single factor which aligns perfectly with figures for emigration from certain English regions, it is broadly true that rising population in England during the first half of the seventeenth century coincides with rising emigration. With a stagnant economy failing to produce either more jobs or more supplies, pressure built and was bound to seek a release. It is broadly true too, of course, that rising emigration required the possibility of easy departure, and the fact that England was an island with many large ports, inhabited by numerous ship-

owners looking to stow paying emigrants on an outward passage in space in the hold which would be used, subsequently, to bring produce back from the New World, provided the opportunity for a large-scale movement of people that would otherwise simply not have been possible." (Evans, Location 5065-5066). Another factor was the changing social nature in England – the rise of what has been called *masterless men* – in a new wage economy without the older feudal relations of lord and master. As population growth slowed toward the end of the 17th century, emigration also dropped off. It was, in fact, then officially discouraged, although not forbidden. With a smaller population there was less pressure on food supplies.

Emigrants to America did not find the "land of milk and honey" they had hoped for. Almost half of them were dead within a few years of their arrival if they survived the trip itself. In some parts of the country the death rate was as high as 80%, particularly for poor immigrants.

"Even if it is true that northern America became, in the eighteenth century, markedly more ethnically diverse than it was in the seventeenth – that colonists were joined by many from other places. . . the numbers of the non-English were not then sufficiently large to swamp or change very significantly what was already a predominantly English region." (Evans, Location 5116)

NEW NETHERLANDS, THE SMITHS & UPDIKES

- The Dutch West India Company was a trading corporation of Dutch merchants formed in 1621.

- The 17th century was the period called the *Dutch Golden Age*, when the Dutch led the world in trade, science, the military and art.

- The West India Company had a monopoly on trade and set up trading posts and eventually settlements on the West Coast of Africa, the coast of what is now Brazil, in the Caribbean (West Indies) and in New Netherlands (now New York). They operated a large fleet; by 1633 it was numbered at over 100 ships.

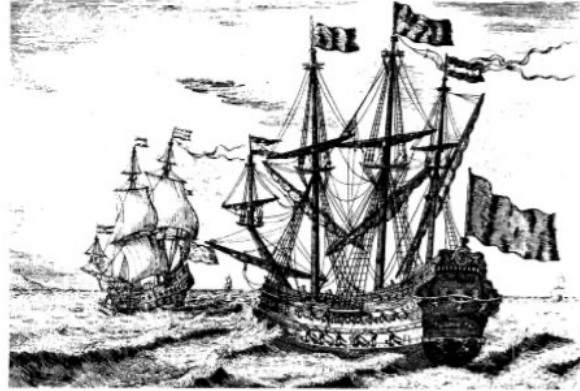


Fig. 12. Two frigates, by Monogrammist ABK, ca. 1675-99.
Courtesy of Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam.

- The Company brought in employees from Europe to operate the various trading posts, forts and company headquarters. Gysbert Opdyke (Updike) was one of these, coming in the early 1630s and serving as an officer of the Company for the rest of his life.
- The traditional Dutch reputation for tolerance of others' beliefs was a big incentive for those fleeing or banished from the rigid Puritanism of the English colonies. Among those who came to New Amsterdam (now Manhattan, NY) was Richard Smith, Sr. and his family (early 1640s).
- While living in New Amsterdam, Richard Smith held various positions of authority and worked with Gysbert Opdyke (Opdyke). He continued to maintain the trading post at Cocumscussoc and was involved in commerce.
- In 1643 Richard's daughter, Katherine, married Gysbert Updike and in 1648 daughter, Joan, married Thomas Newton.
- About 1651 Richard Smith Sr. and Jr. removed permanently to Cocumscussoc. There is some uncertainty whether the elder Smith's wife (Joan) was still alive, but his son's wife Esther returned with them. The Updikes and Newtons remained in New Amsterdam.
- Katherine died sometime before 1666 (she is listed as "deceased" in her father's will) and the Updikes (including her son Lodowick) moved to Rhode Island.
- Joan Newton died in 1664, possibly of causes related to the birth of her last child, Abigail. The Newtons moved to Barbados.
- Richard Smith Sr. died in 1666, leaving most of the property and the Castle to Richard Jr.
- In 1692 Richard Smith Jr. died childless, leaving the bulk of the property to his nephew, Lodowick Updike (son of his sister Katherine and Gysbert) who had married his cousin, Abigail Newton (daughter of his sister Joan and Thomas Newton) who had also inherited.
 - The Updikes held the Cocumscussoc property and Smith's Castle for the next 130 years.



There are more than 1500 words in the English dictionary that come from Dutch. Most of these words found their way into the language during the Dutch Golden Age (17th century), a period when Dutch trade, science and art were considered the best in the world. Here are just a few of them.

- COOKIE** From the Dutch word *koekje* (biscuit/cookie), which is pronounced kook-ye.
- COLESLAW** From the Dutch word *koopsia* (cabbage salad).
- SKATE** From the Dutch word *schaats*. The word and the custom were brought to England after the Restoration (1660s) by the exiled followers of Charles II who had taken refuge in Holland.
- BOSS** From Dutch word for ship's captain, *baas*.
- YANKEE** From **Jan Kees**, a person's name, meaning *John Cheese*. It was first used as a derogatory name for the Dutch and later the Dutch used it against New England colonists. Literal translation: *land pirates*.
- SANTA CLAUS** From the Dutch **Sinterklaas** meaning Saint Nicholas.
- ICEBERG** A direct translation of the Dutch **ijsberg**, literally "ice mountain," from *ijs*: "ice" and *berg*: "mountain".
- CRUISE** From the Dutch word **kruisen** meaning "to cross" or "to sail to and fro." Other nautical words that come from Dutch: *sloop*, *buoy*,

LEARNING ABOUT NEW NETHERLANDS

GOD, WAR, AND PROVIDENCE by James A. Warren, Scribner: New York, 2018. Available in several formats (including E-Book) through the Rhode Island Library System, also available on Amazon.

THE ISLAND AT THE CENTER OF THE WORLD by Russell Shorto, Vintage: New York, 2005. Russell Shorto tells the story of New Netherland, the Dutch colony which predated the Pilgrims and established ideals of tolerance and individual rights that shaped American history. This very readable history is based on information uncovered by Charles Gehring's translation of original 17th century Dutch records. Readily available in the Rhode Island Library System and also Amazon. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1zzjJVx0CY&t=32s> has a book talk by Mr. Shorto and Charles Gehring).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3t_eMJM2v4 - "Uncovering America's Forgotten Colony" (New Netherlands Institute). Very well done documentary on Charles Gehring's translations and what it was like in New Netherlands during the time that the Smiths and Updikes lived there.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lePvJ2Vlw2g> RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN COLONIAL NEW ENGLAND

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deKlXQjwaow> - PART II - ROGER WILLIAMS

Issues of trade with the natives in the region, rather than a missionary purpose, is what brought the Dutch to this territory. In 1624 New Netherlands achieved provincial status and had a need for settlers. By 17th century standards Netherlands had a very diverse population – from Netherlands, but also France, Belgium, German, English. This posed a problem in trying to unite the settlements. After 1626 “purchase” of Manhattan Peter Minuit was able to establish New Amsterdam as a “company town” run by the Dutch West India Company (Not purchase in our sense, natives were using the land along with the settlers until the 1680s). Population of the city were more employees interested in profit rather than citizens, also tended to be somewhat rowdy (taverns, brothels – typical port city). Growing threat from New England “Yankees” (land pirates) who had settled in Hartford, right on what the Dutch saw as their eastern boundary.

William Kiefft came in as governor in 1638 (-1647) Kiefft mismanaged things; company not doing well – he was under pressure to cut costs – period of violence and bad relations with natives. devise ways of protection against the Indians, and meeting once a week for that purpose. His son-in-law Gysbert Opdyck was one of this important Committee, and they signed together the great Treaty of Peace, Aug. 30, 1645, between the Dutch and all the River Indians in the presence of the

Mohawks. That year Richard Smith received a Patent for a lot on the East River. In 1647 the Board in Amsterdam recalled Kieft and he accompanied two of his accusers as criminals to Holland on the same vessel. The ship was wrecked and Kieft drowned. Kieft was replaced by Peter Stuyvesant in 1647 with orders to create order, develop infrastructure, improve external relations with New England (realizes real threat is Connecticut and tries to negotiate with Massachusetts; is able to establish borders). Stuyvesant does not support religious diversity; he tolerates it, in part, because investors in the company are themselves of diverse backgrounds.

Adriaen van der Donck pushed back against Stuyvesant; Stuyvesant has him jailed as a threat to order. After release van der Donck writes "Remonstrance of New Netherlands." Idea that people have certain inherent rights – pre-Enlightenment thinking. Uses Remonstrance, borrowing on ideas of natural law and human rights – and goes back to Netherlands to try to have Stuyvesant removed. Van der Donck has company convinced when Anglo-Dutch war starts (1652-54) and company reverses decision, leaving Stuyvesant in control. In 1653 New Amsterdam is granted first charter and moves from being just a company town. Everyone in town is given burgher (freeman) status – great or small. New immigrants could get small burgher status by contributing 20 pounds (in goods or money) immediately or over time. In New England the percentage of freeman never got much higher than 20%.

After 1st Anglo-Dutch War comes to an end, things continue to get worse. In 1661 Connecticut gets its own new charter and absorbs New Haven under Governor John Winthrop. CT's royal charter grants them everything to the ocean within the CT boundaries, which includes a good chunk of NY. CT now theoretically has the legal right to take over NY land. Charles then changes things and grants a good bit of that land to his brother, James, the Duke of York. James sends a fleet over to take New Amsterdam and New Netherlands from the Dutch. Stuyvesant wants to fight and his population (about 1500 residents) turns on him. Stuyvesant surrenders.

Liberty born of Pragmatism:

- Religious toleration
- Pluralism
- Primacy of Trade
- Balanced needs of the community in the face of evolving environment (It just kept on going no matter who was in charge)
- Tradition growing out of the Dutch Republic that diversity in some ways leads to liberty which allows for more diversity which allows for more liberty.

The First Women of Cocumscussoc: The Narragansett

The first women of Cocumscussoc were the mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives of the Algonquin-speaking Nahannigansett (Narraigansett) community which had inhabited the area for hundreds of generations. The Narragansett were descendants of an aboriginal people whose existence archaeological evidence and the oral history of the Narragansett People has dated to more than 30,000 years ago. The first documented Narragansett contact with Europeans took place in 1524 when a French expedition led by Giovanni de Verrazano visited Narragansett Bay and described a large Indian population, living by agriculture and hunting, and organized under powerful “kings.”

While the Italian, Dutch, and English explorers consistently likened their sachems to kings, the indigenous men’s power came from the maternal side of the family; it was a *matriarchal* society. Well after two hundred years of contact, diarists and historiographers remained seemingly unaware of this fact. Sachems staked their claims to leadership as a result of rights inherited from their **mothers**. When they married, they sought high-ranking women with whom to continue the lineage. As ethnohistorian Kathleen J. Bragdon notes:

“...sachem women were powerful in Native society, prior to, and throughout the colonial period, because they had always been crucial to the power and authority of men. These women...were also pivotal individuals in the transfer of land...”

Usually the position of sachem was passed on to the eldest son of a deceased sachem; however, there are instances of powerful women sachems as well. The sachem, with the guidance of a tribal council, was responsible for political matters (diplomacy, land transfer, war), but also for providing for the welfare of the people in his/her care (widows, orphans, elderly and infirm). A woman leader was known as a *sauncksquang*, which the English called a *squaw-sachem*. A few of the more well-known of these are: Weetamoo of the Pocassetts (sister-in-law of Metacomet/“King Philip,” Awasaunks (Awashonks) of the Sakonnets, and Quaiapen (sister of Ninigret), who is most associated with Cocumscussoc.

Quaiapen was the widow of the Narragansett sachem Mixanno, son of Canonicus. When her sons Scuttop and Quequegunet assumed sub-sachems roles within the tribe after Mixanno’s death in 1657, many of his followers remained with Quaiapen and established a village in Exeter that became known as Stony Fort. When she outlived her husband and three children, she became known as the “Old Queen” of the Narragansett. Her holdings extended over large tracts of land including the small island off the shores of Cocumscussoc.

Williams’ remembered her as “The olde sachem, now deceased” who had granted him the use of that island (now Rabbit Island), so that his herd of goats would no longer destroy Narragansett crops planted in the area. To the English, she was also known as “Magnus” or “Old Queen.”

Quaiapen's friendship with Roger Williams and the mutual respect they held for one another contributed greatly to the eventual establishment of his trading post as well as those of Richard Smith and Jacob Wilcox in the area. It is likely that her people were frequent visitors to Smith's trading post at Cocumscussoc. Young men of her encampment may also have been among those that Richard Smith Jr. later relied upon to take messages and requests for medicines to John Winthrop Jr. in Connecticut. Such established interdependency in trade and assistance allowed the English men and women who settled at Cocumscussoc nearly forty years of relative peace and productivity.

Throughout the years, Quaiapin frequently played diplomatic roles in trying to keep the peace between English settlers and her people. In 1658 she granted "six thousand acres" including Pettasquamscut to the English after Narragansett men had burned hayfields and "sundry horses" to dissuade the English from planting there. Quaiapen also attended the conference at Great Pond at the end of June 1675, where Roger Williams made a last effort to "quench the Philipian fire"³ and avert Narragansett involvement in King Philip's War.

Despite her efforts at diplomacy, Quaiapin became demonized by Massachusetts authorities for allowing Wampanoag women, children, and elderly to take shelter among her land holdings, including Nipsachuck, a swampy area inland from the sites of the Great Swamp and Cocumscussoc. Hers was among the first encampments raided by forces of the "United Colonies," which assembled on Castle land prior to the Great Swamp Fight. Although her encampment was largely abandoned, having received word of the invasion a few days before their arrival, Winslow's forces inflicted several casualties among the sick and elderly left behind and burned a large number of wigwams.

Quaiapen's people continued to move to other places of safety throughout the war. While the young braves of the community likely joined the fight against the English, the Queen continued to move the women, young, and elderly left in her encampment to places of safety. When she sent emissaries into Nipmuc territory to seek protection, the recently converted "Christian Indians" there rejected any alliance or safe haven for her people, despite a long-standing agreement. Having little choice, she brought her people to an encampment at the base of a hill at Nipsachuck Swamp.

It was at Nipsachuck that Quaiapen and her people would meet their end at the hands of Major John Talcott's battalion of four hundred Connecticut, Mohegan, and Pequot troops. Sanctioned by Connecticut's War Council to "kill and destroy (the Indians) according to the utmost power God shall give you," Talcott led his bloody expedition into the remains of Narragansett Country in early July 1676. Surprising a large encampment in the swamp on July 2nd "within 3 hours [they] slew and tooke prisoners 171, of which 45 prisoners being women and children that ye indians saved alive, and the others slayne, in which engagement were slayne 34 men, took

15 armes." Among the dead reported by Talcott was "that ould piece of venum, Saunk squaw Magnus," the woman known by her people as Quiaen.

ROGER WILLIAMS: A KEY INTO THE LANGUAGE OF AMERICA, The Tomaquag Museum Edition, 2019. Annotations by Dawn Dove, Sandra Robinson, Lorén Spears, Dorothy Herman Papp and Kathleen J. Bragdon, editors.

This edition has been updated to Modern English and has valuable annotations by Narragansett scholars [which explain terms and sometimes correct Williams' misconceptions about the Narragansett culture], as well as appropriate illustrations supplied by the Tomaquag Museum.

It is possible, however, to download a pdf of the original document at <https://ia800306.us.archive.org/14/items/keyintolanguageo02will/keyintolanguageo02will.pdf> (if you are prepared to tackle the Old English) and there are various other “translated” editions available commercially and through the library system.

BACKGROUND

In 1643 Roger Williams compiled this annotated phrase book of the English and Narragansett languages while he was traveling by sea to London to secure a legal charter for the new colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. Some scholars believe that it was helpful in his efforts to do so. There are 17 known copies of the original volume in libraries and private collections in the United States and Europe.

Prior to this compilation, Roger Williams had spent the previous years (since the late 1630s) traveling with and trading among the Narragansett and their neighbors. “. . . [T]he Key does not record a ‘first encounter’ moment [i.e., that having taken place hundreds of years earlier] but rather portrays the Narragansett as savvy participants in the Atlantic trading world and powerful allies of English settlers in the region.” (Kevin McBride, Patricia Ruberton, referenced in Kathleen Bragdon’s Introduction to the Tomaquag Museum Edition)

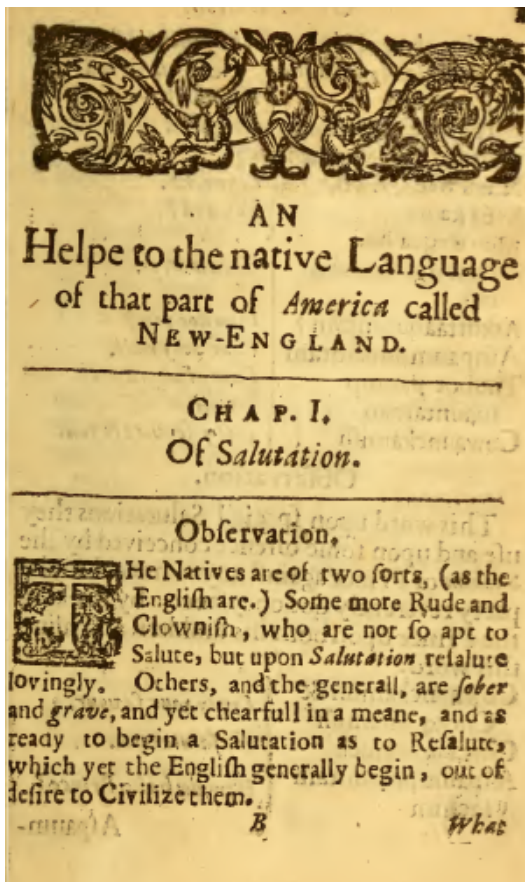
Roger Williams introduced Chapter 1 of his *Key (Of Salutation)* by saying:

*Observation: The Natives are of two sorts, (as the English are). Some are more rude and clownish who are not so apt to greet, but upon being greeted, greet lovingly. Others, and the general, are sober and grave, and yet cheerful on average, and as ready to begin a greeting as to return a greeting. **Still the English generally initiate a greeting, out of desire to civilize them.****

What cheer Netop

is the general greeting of all English toward them.

NOTE: This is also the way our docents now greet visitors to the Castle. “What cheer” is a 17th century English greeting and roughly translates to *It makes me so happy to see you – welcome. Netop* is Narragansett for *my friend*



[See comment below.] Williams also records a plural form, *Netompaúog*, but we do not generally use that.

The annotations provided by the Editors of the Tomaquag Museum edition help to clarify and expand on what Williams wrote:

- For example, they note that while Williams undoubtedly was aware of class differences in Narragansett society, his use of the word *rude* does not seem to acknowledge that some individuals might have been obeying rules of status-related custom [i.e., You do not speak first to someone who is perceived as outranking you. Thus, it would have been a mark of respect, rather than rudeness, to wait for the other person to initiate the greeting].
- Further, they note that the *desire to civilize them* comment demonstrates that Williams was a man of his times and a Puritan; this phrase reflects those attitudes.

• Finally, they clarify that the letter *N* at the beginning of the word *netop* is what signifies first person, i.e., with that letter, It becomes MY friend, rather than just A friend.

The Narragansett refer to themselves as *The People, nninnuog*. Reference to themselves as “the people” or sometimes “first people” is common usage for indigenous groups throughout the continent in general, although the word itself will obviously differ according to each language. (p.25)

The word *Narragansett* translates roughly to *The People of Small Point*. Tribal names often refer to a specific place [the people of _____].

WAMPUM

On page 18-19,

Williams says this about wampum:



Observation: Many of them begin to be furnished with English chests; others, when they go to town, bring their goods (I they live near) to the English to keep for them, and they hang their money around their necks, or lay it under their head [sic] when they sleep.

The editors of the *Key* make this comment on what Williams wrote about wampum:

Williams refers to wampum beads strung into necklaces or woven into belts *as money*. **Europeans misunderstood the meaning of these beads made from the quahog and other shells, calling it money.** Wampum was part of the Narragansett and other northeast tribal culture for thousands of years prior to European contact. Once the clam was eaten, the shell was used as ladles, scrapers, and was worked into beads, adornment, belts, and strands. These were given to people **as a sign of honor, respect, or thanksgiving. Wampum was used to call leaders from other villages to council, to record history, for trade, for tribute, and in ceremony. Wampum is sacred.** [Emphasis throughout mine], p.38-39. Also, p. 129, they write: The Europeans initiated the idea of wampum as a trade currency. They regulate the exchange rate or their own benefit. Later, the Dutch and English devalued the wampum by mass producing it, harming Narragansett traders and their families and communities.

Nuqusscarn neek – *I am moving my house*

Williams records (p.45)

They move their houses for a number of occasions. From thick warm valleys where they winter, they move a little closer to their summer fields. When it is warm in the spring, they move to their fields where they plant corn.

Sometimes they move to a hunting house at the end of the year, and don't leave it until the snow lies thick, and then will travel home, men, women and children, through the snow, thirty, fifty or sixty miles, but their greatest move is from the summer fields to warm and thick woody grounds where they winter. They are quick. In half a day or even sometimes a few hours warning, they can be gone and put their houses up elsewhere, especially, if they have poles already pitched for their mats.

One while traveling I lodged at a house, and when I returned I hoped to have lodged there again the next night, but the house was gone in the interim, and I was glad to sleep under a tree.

Chógan, Chóganeuck – Blackbird, Blackbirds

Williams, p.79 Observation from Williams

There are millions of *chóganeuck*, or blackbirds, which are great devourers of the Indian corn as soon as it appears out of the ground. This sort of bird resembles the mystical fowl of devils following the sowing of the Biblical word, as blackbirds follow the corn seed.

Editors' comments:

This *mystical fowl of devils* is offensive to us and certainly reflects Williams' own prejudice and beliefs. **The crow is respected for bringing the corn and bean to us from the southwest, Kautântouwit's home.** To this day, we tell the story of Crow and the gift of corn and beans. The imagery of the crow has also been used as a crest of logo for the Narragansett tribe.

[NOTE: Isn't it striking that this ancient legend is supported by archaeological evidence pointing to the southwest as the first known area to grow Indian corn? Kautântouwit or Kitanitowit or Cautantowwit (Great Spirit) is the creator god of Algonquian tribes. Also, see corn legends in other documents.]

Aukeeteaûmen – Planting Corn

On p. 86, the editors noted:

Corn is a vital part of our [Narragansett] diets today and in our history. We have two thanksgivings or ceremonies related to corn: Corn Planting Moon and the Green Corn Thanksgiving. The Green Corn Thanksgiving is represented today at our annual August Meeting Pow Wow. It is the oldest recorded native gathering in the United States with, as of 2018, 343 years recorded.



Deer Shoulder Hoe with Wooden Handle
(Tomaquag Museum)

Observation from Williams (p.87): The women set or plant, weed, hill, gather, and barn all the corn and fruits of the field. When a field is to be broken up, they have a very loving, sociable, and speedy way to complete the task. All the neighbors, men and women, forty, fifty, a hundred or more, join and come in to help freely.

Wussenetûock – They Make a Match (Marry)

From Williams, p.125.

For a great man's daughter a dowry of ten fathoms of wampum . . . would be appropriate.

Observation: Generally the husband gives these payments for a dowry . . . to the father or mother, or guardian of the bride.

Editors' Comments:

The Narragansett are still a matrilineal people. The husband joins the wife's family and village. During courtship he shows his respect and honor for the family through the gift of wampum. He demonstrates how he will provide for his family and community with gifts such as furs, skins, and meats. Even after marriage, the **land and home remain with the woman.**

[Compare this to the "rights" or lack thereof, of colonial European women.] Our oral tradition tells us that the woman divorced the man, and all she had to do was gather up his things and set them outside the door. They were then considered divorced. Since he was in the woman's village, he would be shamed and forced to leave.

Building of a Wampanoag Wetu - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwlbSysyy5Q>

Our Neighbors: The Narragansetts <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7HjllcPEow&t=195s>

RESOURCES ABOUT THE NARRAGANSETT PEOPLE

BOOKS:

Smith, Patricia Clark, *Weetamoo: Heart of the Pocassetts*. While technically a children's book, it gives an excellent fictional glimpse of the early life of Weetamoo.

Lisa Brooks, Our Beloved Kin, A New History of King Philip's War, Yale University Press 2018.

Johnson, Steven F. *Ninnuock (The People): The Algonkian People of New England*, Bliss Publishing Company, Inc., 1995.

Small State/Big History <http://smallstatebighistory.com/> is an Online Review of Rhode Island History (smallstatebighistory.com) which seeks to promote an interest in RI history through a variety of articles and book reviews intended for a popular audience, but with an eye for accuracy over legend. If you would like to receive a once-a-week-email alerting you to the week's articles, you can do so on the home page.

Queen's Fort – Stone Refuge for Quaiapen, 1675-1676" <http://smallstatebighistory.com/queens-fort-stone-refuge-for-quaiapen-1675-1676/>

Here are a few other articles on the smallstatebighistory site that might be of interest to you. Go to "archives" and search to locate them and then click the "Read More" button. (You don't have to put in the complete title)

African Americans in Rhode Island Who Used Food to Achieve Independence By Gloria De Paola

Top 10 Early Rhode Island History Books By Robert Grandchamp

The Narragansett Planters: Commercial Agriculture in Colonial South County By Tim Cranston

Creative Survival: Africans as Mariners in Colonial Rhode Island By Keith W. Stokes

The Narragansett Pacer: Where and How It Evolved, Flourished and Died Out by Nancy Coggeshall

3 SISTERS – LEGEND AND SCIENCE

Background Sheet: New England Corn Legends

Nipmuck Legend

Long ago our people depended on game and wild food which made it necessary for them to be constantly on the move.

During a period when food was very scarce, a young man had a vision in which a wise crow told him about a food which could prevent the people from ever facing starvation.

The youth asked the crow where this food could be found but was told that it was such a long journey that a man would never find it.

Then the crow told the man that he would bring this food to him but he explained that crows would always follow the people because this food was one of their favorite delicacies.

Several days later the man was walking in the forest when he heard someone calling him. Looking up into a tree he saw the crow that had appeared in his vision.

The crow flew to the man's shoulder and told him to hold out his hand. Opening his beak, the bird dropped three seeds on the man's palm. They were corn, beans and squash -- the three sisters. Instructions were given for preparing the soil and placing fish in the ground to feed the seeds. This would be women's work while the men did the hunting and fishing.

The crow's descendants still visit the villages at planting and harvesting time to get their share of corn.

As told by Little Turtle, medicine man of the Chaubunnagungamog band of Nipmuck, Webster, Massachusetts. It was passed down in his family, and they consider it ancient.

Narragansett Legend

In the 17th century Roger Williams heard a similar story in southeastern New England about a crow who brought the welcome seed, "an Indian grain of corne in one Eare, and an Indian or Frenche Bean in another, from the great God Kantantowit's field in the Southwest, from whence they hold come all their Corne and Beanes."

Roger Williams (1640), in Davis, 1986

Wampanoag Legend

An elderly hunter, Mon-do-min, alone and too old to hunt, was dying of hunger and cold. He prayed to the Great Spirit for help, and before long a partridge dropped near him. Before he had a chance to eat it, a woman, lost and distressed, sought shelter in his wigwam. The old hunter tended her and gave her his last food so she could live. Mon-do-min died, and in June green shoots sprung up around his grave. The Great Spirit spoke to Mon-do-min's people and told them this plant would bring food to them for his kindness to the poor and needy, and they were told to pass on the story to their children and children's children.

Adapted from Weston (1906, 3-4)

Attributed to Wampanoag, Origin Ojibwa (Simmons, 1986, 216, 297 n14)



<https://patch.com/massachusetts/sudbury/grow-your-own-wampanoag-three-sisters-garden>

AN EXCERPT FROM *PLANT YOUR OWN WAMPANOAG GARDEN*

By Mike Hunter, Apr 21, 2011 Accessed on April 17, 2020

“I studied landscape architecture in upstate New York, very near the center of the Iroquois Nation and their famed "Happy Hunting Grounds." One of my projects was to spend some time with an Iroquois by the name of Storm Cloud (he was named for his moodiness as a child) and he told me the legend of the Three Sisters. He has since joined his ancestors, but I think of his wise teachings often and in his honor I'll tell you the story as he told it to me. The Three Sisters are corn, beans and squash. **[NOTE: Different Native American nations have other versions of this legend.]**

Storm Cloud told the tale this way: ‘It was said that the earth began when one day Sky Woman, who lived in the upper world, was looking through the giant hole in the sky and she accidentally got too close to the edge and fell through it into the sea. The sea creatures loved her and could see her falling, so they quickly gathered soil from the bottom of the sea and spread it onto the back of a giant turtle "the Earth Bearer" to provide a safe place for her to land. This Earth Bearer is now what we call North America.

‘Sky woman was pregnant. With the impact of the fall she gave birth to a daughter (who has no name). The daughter lived on the Earth Bearer, grew into a young woman, and became pregnant by the West wind, giving birth to twin boys, called Sapling and Flint. The daughter died in the childbirth process and Sky Woman was very sad but she had a way to provide for the boys.



‘She buried her daughter in the late spring in the new soil. In early summer from the daughter's grave grew three sacred plants, called The Three Sisters: corn, beans, and squash. These plants were considered her daughter's special gifts and provided food for her sons while ensuring the survival of the Iroquois people and eventually all of mankind.’”



GROWING NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE: THE THREE SISTERS

<https://www.farmproject.org/blog/2016/3/31/growing-native-american-heritage-the-three-sisters>

by Anthony Walker, Education Intern

In thinking about complex sustainable agricultural techniques, it is easy to think only of modern innovations. In fact, many traditional agricultural communities have developed extremely resilient, efficient, and sustainable techniques. One such technique is companion planting, an agricultural technique where two or more crops are planted together in a single plot.

Perhaps the most famous example of companion planting is “The Three Sisters.” It involves three of the first important domesticated crops in Mesoamerican Societies: maize (corn), pole beans, and winter squash. The practice of planting these three crops together was developed over many generations among the indigenous populations of the Americans.

“The Three Sisters” companion planting technique is often attributed to Northeastern Woodland tribes, especially the Iroquois Confederacy. In fact, the name “The Three Sisters” comes from an Iroquois legend. According to the legend, corn, beans and squash are inseparable sisters that were given to the people by the “Great Spirit.”

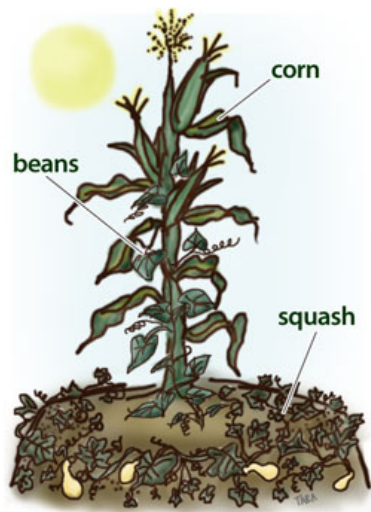


www.ecoliteracy.org

It is important to note, however, that the “Three sisters” are also found in many other areas and tribes around North America. Other known sites include: New Mexico among the Tewa with a fourth sister (Rocky Mountain bee plant); the four corners area among the Anasazi, where it was adapted specifically for an arid environment; and Mesoamerica, where the technique was applied on larger scale farms. **[MH NOTE:** The legend as told over the centuries by Northeastern nations often includes the detail that the “sisters” came from

the Southwest – interesting in that archaeologists have discovered that the oldest evidence of maize comes from exactly that part of the country.]

These crops complement each other in a number of ways. Beans are fantastic for soil health because (as with all legumes) they host microorganisms in their roots that take nitrogen (an important nutrient for healthy plants) from the air and transfer it to the soil making it available for use by plants. Corn has large upright stalks, which act as a pole-like structure that the climbing beans can wrap around. The large leaves of the winter squash shade the soil, depriving weeds from sunlight while preventing moisture from escaping due to evaporation. The squash stems and leaves are also spiny, discouraging animal pests from infiltrating. If a fourth sister was included, it was a plant that attracted pollinators (e.g. Rocky Mountain bee plant attracted bees). Furthermore, the main “three



*Direct-Sow, Easy-to-Grow:
The Ancient **Three Sisters** Method*

Image: University of Illinois Extension

sisters” each provide an important component of a healthy diet: corn provides carbohydrates; beans supply protein; and squash are rich in vitamins. Finally, since each of the “Three Sisters” is from a different crop family, they are susceptible to different diseases and pests making the polycultural planting more resilient than monocultures often seen elsewhere.

The techniques surrounding the “three sisters” developed over generations, passed on through familial and community ties. Passed down was the knowledge about placement of each plant the arrangement of the groupings, and the directional orientation. For example, beans and corn were planted in precise rows that allowing the beans to climb.

Another common procedure among the natives was that squash seeds were moistened, wrapped in grass and then in deerskin to keep seeds warm to ensure they sprouted before they were planted.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE . . . *

ABOUT 55-YEAR PERIOD: PLYMOUTH ROCK THROUGH KING PHILIP'S WAR

- Nathaniel Philbrick. *Mayflower* (New York: Viking, 2006).

ABOUT ROGER WILLIAMS –

- Barry, John M. *Roger Williams and The Creation of the American Soul* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012).
- Warren, James A. *God, War and Providence* (New York: Scribner, 2018).

ABOUT RICHARD SMITH SR. & JR.

- Updike, Daniel Berkeley. *Richard Smith: First English Settler of the Narragansett Country, Rhode Island* (Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1937).

ABOUT KING PHILIP'S WAR

- Brooks, Lisa. *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).
- <https://historyofmassachusetts.org/what-was-king-philips-war/> Rebecca Beatrice Brooks, History of King Philip's War (History of Massachusetts Blog)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= DCFIJ26Eal&t=14s> COLONIAL KING PHILIP'S WAR I
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GMV00QjGsM&t=178s> COLONIAL KING PHILIP'S WAR II



A FEW INTERESTING BOOKS ABOUT INDIVIDUALS

- Jacobs, Paul Samuel. *James Printer: A Novel of Rebellion* (New York: Scholastic Press, 1997).
- Rowlandson, Mary White. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* – Available in many formats including free Kindle.
- Chivers, David Kerr. *Metacomet's War: A Novel of King Philip's War* (Amazon Digital Services 2008). Kindle Edition.

*These are just a few of the many resources available – some that we've found most helpful. There are also numerous on-line resources, including scans of primary sources.

The Great Swamp Fight (also called Great Swamp Massacre) was a crucial battle fought during King Philip's War. The New England Confederation (Massachusetts Bay Colony, Plymouth Colony, New Have Colony, and Connecticut Colony) attacked the stockade of the then neutral Narragansett tribe in December 1675. The Great Swamp was near the villages of Kingston and West Kingston in the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. The combined New England forces numbering about 1000 and 150 Pequots inflicted a huge number of Narragansett casualties, including many hundred women and children. The battle has been described as "one of the most brutal and lopsided military encounters in all of New England's history." James D. Drake, *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England 1675-1676*

"We are told by some historians that Philip actively sought war and by others that he wept when it came; that he was a valiant warrior riding a black steed into the thick of battle and that he hung back like a coward and was always the first to fly; that he was a master diplomat with wide influence during the war and that he was a minor player pushed to the sidelines throughout most of the conflict. Like his portraits, descriptions of Philip's character often more adequately reflected the bias of the times than the life of a real, flesh and blood man struggling to adapt to his rapidly changing world." Schultz & Touglia, *King Philip's War*, pp.34-35.

A TIMELINE OF KING PHILIP'S WAR

a/k/a/ The First Indian War, Metacom's War, Metacomet's Rebellion

DECEMBER 1674

? John Sassamon tells Plymouth County officials that Metacomet is planning attacks

JANUARY 1675

29 John Sassamon dies at Assawampsett Pond

JUNE 1675

08 Sassamon's alleged murderers executed at Plymouth

11 Armed Wampanoags are reported near Swansea

14-25 Rhode Island, Plymouth & Massachusetts authorities attempt negotiation with Philip and seek guarantees of fidelity from Nipmucks and Narragansetts

24 Small band of Wampanoags attack Swansea (probably without Philip's knowledge)

26 Massachusetts troops march to Swansea to join Plymouth troops for attack on Mount Hope

26-29 Wampanoags attack Rehoboth and Taunton, elude colonial troops and leave Mount Hope for Pocasset. Mohegans travel to Boston and offer to fight on English side.

JULY 1675

08-09 Wampanoags attack Middleborough and Dartmouth

14 Nipmucks attack Mendon

15 Narragansett sign a peace treaty with Connecticut

16-24 Massachusetts envoy attempts negotiations with Nipmucks

19 Philip and his troops escape siege at Pocasset and flee toward Nipmuck territory

AUGUST 1675

02-04 Nipmucks attack Massachusetts troops and besiege Brookfield

13 Massachusetts Council orders Christian Indians confined to Praying Towns

22 Unidentified Indians attack and kill seven at Lancaster

30 Capt. Samuel Moseley arrests 15 Hassanamesit (Christian) Indians (including James Printer) near Marlborough and marches them to Boston where they are imprisoned and tried for the Lancaster attack - 2 were found guilty and hanged

SEPTEMBER 1675

01-02 Wampanoags and Nipmucks attack Deerfield. Moseley attacks town of Pennacook

12 Colonists abandon Deerfield, Squakeag and Brookfield

18 Narragansetts sign treaty in Boston.

18 The Battle of Bloody Brook.

OCTOBER 1675

05 Pocumtucks attack and destroy Springfield

13 Massachusetts Council order Christian Indians removed to Deer Island.

19 English repel Indians from Hatfield attack.

NOVEMBER 1675

- 01 Nipmucks take captive Christian Indians from 3 Praying Towns, including James Printer
- 02-12 Commissioners of the United Colonies order a united army (Mass.Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut but not Rhode Island) to attack the Narragansetts in Rhode Island

DECEMBER 1675

- 8 Massachusetts forces marched from Boston and were joined by those from Plymouth Colony.
- 17-18 **Massachusetts militias gather at Smith's Castle preparatory to Great Swamp Fight. They join Connecticut militias at**
- 19 United Colonial forces attack Narragansett Fort at the Great Swamp, massacring as many as a 1000, mostly women, children and elderly. Most warriors are away from the fort. **Richard Updike (Lodowick's brother), who fought under Major Samuel Appleton, died in the battle.**

5-29B

JANUARY 1676

- 01-14 Philip travels west to Mohawk territory (near Albany, NY), seeking but failing to secure, an alliance with them (they have already made an alliance with Gov. Andros to fight against Philip).
Mohawks attack Philip's winter camp at Schaghticoke and drive the Wampanoags back to N.E. where they continue to pursue and attack them.
- 14 **Joshua Tefft is captured by the English, tried for treason (accused of fighting with the Narragansetts at Great Swamp against English) and executed at Smith's Castle.**
- 17 Narragansetts attack Pawtuxet

FEBRUARY 1676

- 10 Nipmucks attack Lancaster. Mary Rowlandson is taken prisoner
- 14 Philip and Wampanoags attack Northampton.
- 21 Nipmucks attack Medfield
- 23 Massachusetts General Court debates the fate of Christian Indians
Indians assault sites within ten miles of Boston

MARCH 1676

- 13 Nipmucks attack Groton
- 26 Longmeadow, Marlborough and Simsbury are attacked
- 27 Nipmucks attack English forces near Sudbury
- 27 **Narragansetts burn Smith's Castle and Wickford**
- 28 Narragansetts attack Rehoboth and Warwick
- 29 **Providence is burned**

APRIL 1676

- 01 Canonchet captured by Denison's Company near Pawtuset River
- 03 Execution of Canonchet
- 21 Indians attack Sudbury

MAY 1676

- 02-03 Mary Rowlandson is released
- 18 English forces attack sleeping Indians near Deerfield

- 30 Indians attack Hatfield
- 31 Surviving Christian Indians are moved from Deer Island to Cambridge
- JUNE 1676
- 12 Force of 250 Indians defeated at Hadley by colonists and Mohegans
- 19 Massachusetts issues a declaration of amnesty for Indians who surrender
- 22 Captain Tom (Christian Indian captured by Nipmucks) is executed in Boston.
- JULY 1676
- 02 Major John Talbott and his troops begin sweeping Connecticut and Rhode Island capturing large number of Indians who are sold as slaves in the West Indies
- 04 Capt. Benjamin Church and his soldiers begin sweeping Plymouth for Wampanoags
- 11 Indians attack Taunton but are repelled
- 27 Nearly 200 Nipmucks surrender in Boston
- AUGUST
- 02 Benjamin Church's troops capture Philip's wife and son; sent to slavery in West Indies
- 12 Alderman, an Indian soldier under Church, kills Philip

The View From Swamptown: Remembering the Great Swamp Fight

- By G.T. Cranston Special to the Independent Dec 9, 2018



This marker was placed near the spot of the Great Swamp Fight of 1675. The fight was a battle between Colonial militia soldiers and the Narragansett tribe.

Photo: Michael Derr

Back in the northeast corner of the Smith's Castle property lays the mass grave of 40 men who died as a result, directly or indirectly, of the Great Swamp Fight of Dec. 19, 1675. This grave stands as a silent sentinel testifying to one of the darkest hours of Colonial history; you see the Great Swamp Fight's

impressive sounding moniker is a misnomer; it should rightly be called the Great Swamp Massacre.

The Narragansett people and the settlers of the Rhode Island Colony were unwilling participants in the greater conflagration known as King Phillip's War. The war was actually between the Wampanoag tribe, headed by their Chief Sachem Metacomet, known to the settlers by the name they gave him—Phillip, and the two Massachusetts colonies along with the colonies in Connecticut. The colony of Rhode Island, known even then for its religious freedom and tolerance, as well as the fairly peaceful relationship it had with the Narragansetts, was viewed with suspicion by the various leaders in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and was not invited to join this colonial union of war. The Narragansetts were drawn into the fray because of their refusal to turn over the women, children and elders of the Wampanoag to the English, who they were sheltering while the Wampanoag warriors fought with the colonists. Canonchet, the chief sachem of the Narragansett people, responded to this request with the following statement. "Neither a Wampanoag, nor the parings from a Wampanoag's nails shall I deliver to the English!" The English of Connecticut and Massachusetts, therefore, considered the Wampanoags and the Narragansetts as one enemy; one enemy to be exterminated.

So, in the early part of December 1675, the Colonial troops began to gather at Smith's Blockhouse. This location was chosen not only because of its central

location, but also because Richard Smith was already hedging his bets; he felt sure that an indirect result of all this would be the eventual dissolution of the Colony of Rhode Island; Connecticut coveted the western shores of the Narragansett Bay and Smith wanted to be on the winning side of this political maneuver. There were eight companies from Massachusetts and five from Connecticut, totaling more than 1,000 men, all under the command of Governor Winslow of Connecticut, who was made a general for this campaign. Captain Benjamin Church, a career military man and the only true Rhode Islander involved, accompanied Winslow as his advisor. On the morning of Dec. 19, a Sunday, the troops set out on the 15-mile march to the Narragansett stronghold located somewhere deep in the tangles of the Great Swamp. This Sunday was chosen specifically. Firstly because for decades, the colonists had preached that bearing arms on the Sabbath was sinful, so the natives would be less likely to expect an attack on a Sunday. Additionally the weather had been extremely cold and the waters, muck, and mire of the Great Swamp would be frozen solid. There was more than two feet of snow on the ground as they departed and the march was grueling, and some of the men complained of frostbite. Along the way they captured a Narragansett known as Peter. After torturing him he relented and betrayed his people by giving up the location of the encampment which was located on a few acres of dry ground deep within and encircled by the swamp. On this island of sorts were gathered about 3,500 souls: the old men, women and children of the tribe as well as a similar contingent of Wampanoags. They were protected by a small group of Narragansett warriors. The island stronghold consisted of a natural ring of large trees with the spaces between filled in with wooden logs driven into the ground. The only way to enter this fortress was across a large log which lay across the water. The warriors knew in advance of the force's arrival and were prepared to defend this "bridge" into their sanctuary. Skilled fighters, they knew what they were doing, and after the first volley of arrows, half of the captains who commanded each company of colonists were dead. During the three hours of confusion which ensued, more than 200 colonists were killed or mortally wounded and more than 1,000 Narragansett and Wampanoag lay dead. Countless others died while hiding out in the frozen swamps over the next few nights. After the killing was done, the surviving colonists whipped into a frenzy and much to the chagrin and against the orders of Captain Church, began to torch every wigwam and shelter in sight. Church, the experienced soldier, knew that the frigid cold of night was fast approaching and the food and shelter those wigwams afforded could save many lives. Without shelter the only option open to the victorious English was to gather up their dead and wounded and begin the 15-mile march back to the Blockhouse. Twenty-two wounded men, who might have lived could they have availed themselves of the shelter provided by the now destroyed wigwams, died on the way back to Smith's Castle. The survivors staggered back to Cocumscussoc at 2 a.m. on Dec. 20. The 40 bodies which they had brought back with them were buried in the mass grave over the course of the next few days. A full accounting of the occupants of the mass grave has never been possible.

Down in the Great Swamp, at a location a bit distant from the actual battle site, is another monument which stands symbolically, hand in hand with the 40 men stone.

It memorializes the event and remembers the brave warriors who died, as well as the women and children who fell in the blood-stained snow hearing as their last sound the cries of the old ones as they burned in the wigwams. All this so that the colonists of Connecticut and Massachusetts could "Restore the peace which, through the blessings of God, we have so long enjoyed."

The author is the North Kingstown town historian. The views expressed here are his own.

RHODE ISLAND – NARRAGANSETT RELATIONS AFTER THE WAR

SECTION FROM *GOD, WAR, AND PROVIDENCE* by James A. Warren, pp. 248-251

James A. Warren gives a good summary of changes in the relationships between Rhode Island settlers and the Narragansetts after King Philip's War.

And what of the Narragansetts [after King Philip's War]? In an October 25, 1676, letter to the colony of Connecticut, which laid claim to the entire Narragansett country by right of conquest, the government of Rhode Island stated explicitly that it had never made war on the Narragansetts, and that the tribe had remained at peace *till by the United Colonies they were forced to war, or such submission as it seems they could not submit to*. It was true – Rhode Island raised no troops to fight the Narragansetts or any other hostile tribe. But that didn't mean its citizens were about to turn the other cheek after Canonchet and his warriors had laid waste to Rhode Island's settlements on the mainland and killed or wounded so many fellow colonists.

One of the more significant casualties of King Philip's War was the uniquely symbiotic relationship between the Narragansetts and the leaders of the colony of Rhode Island. Williams, Gorton, Randall Holden, John Easton, and many other Rhode Islander had relied on the Narragansetts as neighbors, trading partners, and allies in their joint struggle against Puritan domination, just as the Indians had relied on them. But in the sorry aftermath of war, Rhode Island treated the Indians only marginally better than the Puritan colonies. Although slavery was formally banned by the Rhode Island General Assembly in March 1676, a number of Indians held by the Rhode Island authorities were taken to Plymouth or Massachusetts Bay and sold outright.

A committee in Providence arranged scores of indentured servant contracts for Indians with English settlers in both New England and the West Indies. Roger Williams was a member of that committee. Apparently the founder of Providence did not question the traditional seventeenth-century practice of victors retaining

custody over war captives, though according to one of the leading scholars on this subject, Williams strongly favored servitude for a finite period over outright slavery. Sadly, however, Indian slavery did become an accepted practice in Rhode Island in the early eighteenth century.

We know for certain that some displaced Narragansetts found a new home close to their old one, among Ninigret's people. Although Ninigret died sometime in the fall of 1676, he and his people had maintained strict neutrality during the war, and were rewarded for doing so. The Rhode Island government made no attempt to confiscate Niantic lands in the immediate aftermath of the war. A large swath of land in southeastern Narragansett country remained a place of sanctuary where remnant groups of Narragansetts could live in relative tranquility.

By the early eighteenth century, this Niantic-Narragansett community included some Wampanoag, Pequot, Nipmuck and probably some River Indians as well. Before long, this mixed community began to call itself *the Narragansetts*, and the contemporary Narragansett Indians of South County, Rhode Island, today trace their ancestry directly back to this group.

The basic trajectory of Narragansett history from the early eighteenth until the mid-twentieth century is similar to that of many other *vanquished* tribes. Beset by prejudice, poverty and high rates of alcoholism, a few hundred souls persevered from generation to generation under the *protection* of the Rhode Island legislature. The state proved unable, unwilling, or both, to guard the Indians' interests against the predations of outsiders, or the excesses of a number of tribal leaders who either embezzled or gambled away limited tribal assets.

As tribal lands were sold off bit by bit by speculators or to the town in South County to pay off debts, most of the people who identified as Narragansett assimilated into mainstream American culture. Many became stonemasons, fishermen and carpenters – traditions that continue to this day with Narragansett people. Yet all the while the Narragansetts retained their identity as descendants of a proud nation that had held on tenaciously to its autonomy and its traditional way of life for a long time, under great duress

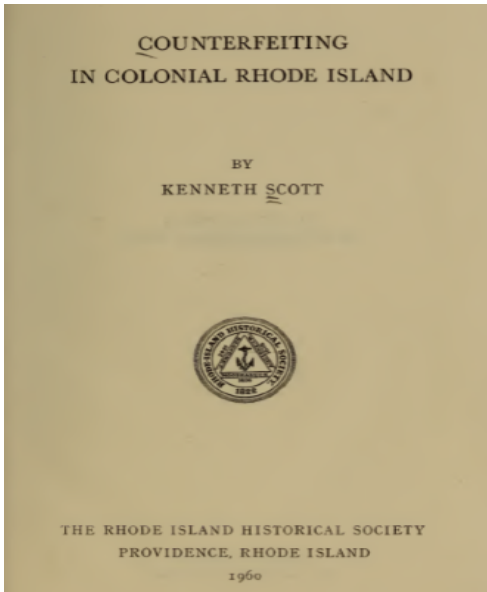
After transferring 135,000 acres of tribal land to the colony government in 1709 in exchange for protection of a sixty-four-square mile reservation against rival claims of jurisdiction, tribal fortunes spun downward. From 41,000 acres of common land in the early eighteenth century, the reservation was reduce to a mere 922 acres by 1880. In that year the Narragansetts were formally detribalized by an act of the Rhode Island legislature, ostensibly to encourage economic self-reliance and full integration of the remaining members of the tribe into American society. . .

Detribalization put an end to the tribe only in the eyes of the law. A loose form of tribal organization was maintained through the Narragansett Christian church. . . . For them, detribalization was but one more episode in a long and bitter history of dispossession.

...

Revitalization of the tribe began in the 1930s The Narragansetts retribalized as a nonprofit corporation in 1934, opening membership to all descendants of the 324 people on the tribal rolls as of 1880. . . . Today, the tribe numbers about twenty-four hundred people, and plays an active, and at times combative, role in Rhode Island politics.

<https://ia800303.us.archive.org/23/items/counterfeitingin00scot/counterfeitingin00scot.pdf>



pp. 17-21



An overmantel panel removed from the home of John Potter in South Kingston and now in the Newport Historical Society. It probably represents John Potter, his second wife (Elizabeth Hazard), his sister Martha, his daughter Mary, and a negro slave. (Courtesy of the Newport Historical Society) Copy at Smith's Castle

ment of Rhode Island in 1742 discovered that two gangs of counterfeiters had been at work and that both with Obadiah Mors (or Morse). The situation found the newspapers of the day. The *Boston Evening-Post* of 1742, reported that some persons were jailed in Newport for printing Rhode Island bills and that others had been lodged in Boston for the same offence. The same newspaper on 1742 stated that six suspected counterfeiters were in custody in Rhode Island and that in Massachusetts two countrymen had been jailed, on one of whom some £32 in false 40s. and £3 bills of 1738 had been found. The plates and signing were poorly done. The *Boston Evening-Post* of March 1, 1742 stated that because of the counterfeiting that had been done the bills of 1740 were called in by order of the General Assembly. On April 12 the newspaper informed its readers that at the Court in Newport fifteen persons had been indicted for counterfeiting, of whom thirteen had been convicted and two

gangs was headed by a person of consequence, a Quaker John Potter, born on January 3, 1715, in North Kingstown, the son of John Potter. The counterfeiter, John Potter, in 1736 married his first wife Mary Perry and upon her death a few years later married Elizabeth Hazard. See *General Treasurer's Account Book 1712-1812*, pp. 34-35, 37-38; General Treasurer's Account Book 1712-1812,

later married Elizabeth Hazard, a member of a prominent family. In 1740 Potter began the construction in South Kingstown of an imposing mansion, with Simeon Palmer as his chief carpenter. Potter was one of the grand committee for signing Rhode Island bills of the emission of 1740 and he planned to imitate the 20s. bill. He made use of Palmer for his scheme and also notably of a bricklayer named William Fairfield. Obadiah Mors, a goldsmith, was induced to come from Connecticut, ostensibly to paint the new house but really to cut a plate. Also involved in the scheme were William Potter, a minor, Ichabod Sheffield, a blacksmith, and notably Dr. Stephen Tallman (John Potter's brother-in-law). John Potter even had the effrontery to get his accomplice, William Fairfield, introduced into the press room in Newport, that he might see the real money being printed and observe the technique. Some of the false 20s. bills made by Mors and Fairfield were signed by Potter and Fairfield and put into circulation.

Toward the latter part of January, 1742, the flood of bogus currency had alerted the government, and one after another Fairfield, John Potter, Sheffield and the rest were apprehended. On January 29 Fairfield, in jail, suddenly became loquacious and accused Benjamin Peckham, Jr., of South Kingstown of being an accomplice, a charge, however, which Fairfield withdrew on October 1, when he explained that John and William Potter and Ichabod Sheffield had induced him to bring false accusation against Peckham as the only way to save them all from utter ruin. Because of the high bail set for the two Potters and Sheffield it was decided that four sureties might be accepted instead of the customary two.

Sheffield, as the court records give no information about him, probably escaped prosecution by giving evidence for the King or possibly through breaking jail. Fairfield was convicted and sentenced to stand for half an hour in the pillory and have both ears cropped or pay a fine of £800 and costs. William Potter, probably a young brother of John, was acquitted of passing. John Potter, however, was convicted on five indictments and sentenced to be pilloried and cropped or pay a fine of £10,000 and give a bond of £24,000 for the

exchanging of all his bad bills and paying double damages to persons wronged by them. Potter chose to save his ears, by paying £5,000 in gold dust and the balance in cash.

On May 10, 1742, Potter paid into the treasury 250 ounces of gold dust, which may have in part found its way to England in shipments sent to the colony's agent, Richard Partridge, in London.⁴⁹ In October, 1743, he successfully petitioned the Assembly for the restoration of his rights to vote and act as a freeman.⁵⁰ In time local resentment against him died down, for in 1754 he was elected to serve in the Assembly as a deputy from South Kingstown and the Lower House voted to receive him as a member. The Upper House, however, was less lenient and voted that he should not be received in the Assembly, for his admission, in the light of his counterfeiting, would be "a high Dishonour to the Colony."⁵¹

Mors, who did not have John Potter's money or gold dust and who had been convicted and sentenced to stand in the pillory and be cropped or pay a fine of £1,000, was confined to the Newport jail. On June 26 John Potter, out on bail, paid a visit to the prison, held a whispered conversation with the keeper, James Davis, and was overheard assuring Mors that he need not be afraid. Early in the evening Mrs. Mors came to see her husband and gave him her blue riding hood lined with white silk and made with a new-fashioned hem. Between eight and nine o'clock the prisoner, muffled in the hood, slipped out of the lockup, hugged the prison wall and turned short round a corner, disappearing into a small alley. For two nights he hid out in the garret of Dr. Norbert Wigneron, a physician of Newport, after persuading the doctor's young son Stephen to conceal him. The governor proclaimed a reward of £1000 for the capture of the fugitive, and it was decreed that a fine of £500 should be laid on every person who should conceal the goldsmith or convey

⁴⁹ Colony Agent's Account Book 1715-1748 (ms. in OSS), p. 112; General Treasurer's Account (ms. in OSS) 1712-1812, pp. 309 and 313.

⁵⁰ R.I. Petitions 5, p. 53.

⁵¹ Miscellaneous General Assembly Papers, folder 1750-59 (in OSS).

him out of the colony. Mors finally escaped, but during the summer he was retaken and presumably received his physical punishment. For breaking jail he was fined £50 and costs. Young Stephen Wigneron was lucky enough to be acquitted on a charge of aiding in the goldsmith's jailbreak.⁴²

Deeply involved in John Potter's operations was his brother-in-law, Dr. Stephen Tallman, a physician of Portsmouth. As early as January, 1742, reports reached the authorities that counterfeit 20s. bills had been traced to Tallman, so the doctor was taken into custody and subjected to a lengthy examination by Governor Ward and several assistants. It came to light that Potter and the physician had travelled together to Connecticut, where Tallman had purchased thirteen cattle, some swine, and a Negro slave. In addition, the doctor had lent out to various persons large sums which he admitted he had received from John Potter or from his mother-in-law, Sarah Potter.

It was brought out by questioning Samuel Ox, a mariner whose ship had been wrecked not far from John Potter's, that Dr. Tallman had spent considerable time at Potter's. A deputy sheriff, William Dyre, added information that the physician had declared himself destroyed through a £10,000 debt to Potter. Tallman threatened to ruin Potter "if he went to hell for it" and that he would not go alone and that he would bring out some of his lost friends. At this Dyre told him that "hell was a very bad place by the descriptions of it and that he should consider well what he said." The physician, however, answered, "Damn it; I will."

By April 5 Deputy Governor William Greene issued a warrant for the arrest of Tallman, but the doctor claimed he was too ill to go from home. The next day Greene, who was mistrustful, sent two physicians, Dr. Clarke Rodman and Dr. James Robinson, to examine their colleague. They promptly reported that they found Tallman "in a

⁴² For a much more extensive account of the activities of John Potter and his associates, see Kenneth Scott, *Counterfeiting in Colonial America*, pp. 106-120 and NCSC Files, March 1742 and NCSC, Min. Bk. C, pp. 80, 81, 125, 128; see also R.I. Journals of the Senate 1740-1768 II, pp. 1-2; R.I. Reports to the General Assembly 1748-1750, I, p. 61; R.I. Colony Records 5, p. 493.

sweat" but that he was quite able to attend the court the next day if the weather was good.

Although Dr. Tallman had been indicted, his case apparently did not come to trial. He spent some time in jail for debt and a suit he lost in an attempt to escape payment of a £10,000 bond to John Potter. In April, 1743, the doctor was being sued for £1400 by Daniel Howland and the physician's affairs were in a hopeless state. So on the night of April 23 Tallman sold his livestock to his brother Silas, gave his wife Mary a power of attorney and fled under cover of darkness. He was never seen or heard of again as far as the authorities could discover.⁶⁸

17th-18th Century Trade

Of all the New England colonies, none other had a more sustained and cordial trade relationship with the Dutch than Rhode Island. Actually, "Massachusetts Bay . . . apparently refused to allow inhabitants of Providence or Aquidneck (i.e., Newport) to purchase necessary supplies in its markets, forcing Newport, at least, to 'treat with the Governour of the Dutch to supply us with necessaries' (*Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, Bartlett, ed. (Providence, 1856), I, 126.

Since he had been banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Roger Williams left from New Amsterdam on a Dutch ship when he had to go to England to negotiate a new Royal Charter in 1651.



**DISPLAY AT SMITH'S CASTLE SHOWING
TYPICAL CARGO BOUND FOR THE WEST INDIES**

Before extensive shipbuilding in Rhode Island, cargo often had to travel on Dutch ships.

TYPICAL CARGO

[Note: This describes the cargo on Connecticut brigs in 1790s, but it would be similar to the Rhode Island trade items.]

When they had collected enough produce to fill a vessel they [merchants/traders] hired a captain and sent a ship to the West Indies where they had agents, family members, or friends who assisted in disposing of the cargo and locating enough island products to return home with a full hold.

Richard Smith Jr.'s sister Joan's family, the Newtons, lived in Barbados after her death and Thomas may have helped with sales there. There are records of other relatives making the trip to the Indies as well. Lodowick Updike's brother, Daniel (a ship's captain) was captured by pirates on a voyage and imprisoned in Algiers with the prospect of slavery at the galleys. Richard Smith Jr. ransomed him for 1500 gunlocks.

According to family tradition, he came to the colonies to thank his uncle, stayed one night, and then returned to England, which he never left for the rest of his life.

On October 25, 1795, when the brig *Polly & Betsey* sailed from the port of Middletown to Jamaica, the two-masted vessel carried a Connecticut cargo typical of the island trade. On board, according to the manifest, there were barrels of salted beef and pork, [shad](#), and pickled codfish. There was cheese, butter, beans, potatoes, corn, onions, and apples. Next listed were barrel staves, hoops, hoop poles, lumber, shingles, and oak planks. The live animals included 314 geese, 40 turkeys, 5 hogs, and 200 sheep. 5-37

The ship captain, who generally made two voyages a year, was responsible for the safety of the ship and the crew but also the profitable sale of the cargo. Working for different merchants, a captain would go once after the fall harvest and again in the spring after the harbor ice thawed. A voyage took from two to five weeks depending on the weather and port of call. Often, the ship's commander had to visit several islands to sell the entire cargo. A profitable voyage depended on unknown market conditions, speed of delivery, local contacts, safe passage through often-fierce storms, avoiding pirates, fair prices, and reputable products. All of this was accomplished without benefit of sophisticated navigational methods or even good communication beyond the news shouted between passing ships.

Map & Text from National Geographic Resource Library, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/photo/rhode-island-trade/> Accessed 04/10/2020.



Trade in Rhode Island During the 1700s

By 1750, Rhode Island had become a major trade center. Much of the colony's commercial success was due to its ability to add value to imported raw materials and turn the new products into exports. For example, cacao, sugarcane, and molasses from the Caribbean region were made into chocolate, sugar, and rum. Much wealth was also gained from exporting slaves imported from Africa.

NOTE: By the 1750s the area was called "King's County." Even at this time, most of Rhode Island's coastal trade was with the southern colonies, England and West Indies rather than the other New England colonies.

SLAVERY AND THE NARRAGANSETT COUNTRY* PLANTERS INCLUDING THE SMITHS & THE UPDIKES

(* "Narragansett Country" refers to land previously inhabited by the Narragansett people, particularly what is now known as Washington and/or "South County")

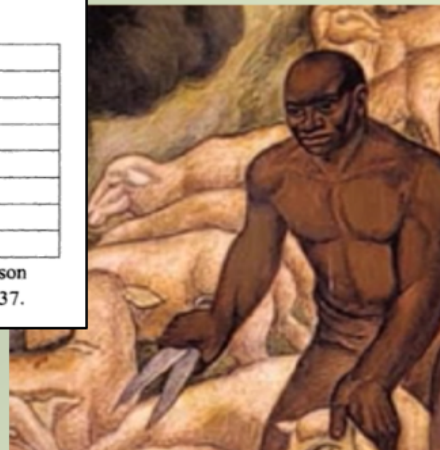
- The documentary "Colonial Slavery" (Matthew Mooney) does an excellent job of explaining the link between the Slave Trade and the Narragansett Planters (including the Updikes). You can view it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8piq-nlb3BQ>
- Briefly, the documentary makes the point that the West Indies sugar trade was so lucrative that the plantation owners did not want to "waste" land by planting crops to feed the numerous slaves needed to grow and process the cane. It was more profitable for them to import food and other items from the American colonies. As part of the Triangle Trade Rhode Island colonists supplied the West Indies with Native American slaves, livestock, horses (Narragansett pacers), dairy products, fish, candles, and lumber.
- In return they received molasses which they distilled into rum to be carried on the ships they built and manned to Africa to buy more slaves to sell in the Indies. Some of the slaves were brought back to the colonies to work on the RI plantations (raising more food for the West Indies) and as house slaves. African slaves were preferred to Native American slaves since being unfamiliar with the countryside, they were less likely to run away.
- The slave trade propelled Newport out of Boston's shadow and into the status of a major city and helped to establish Providence as a major port.



Table 2.1: Number of Slaves Owned by the Updike Family

Year	Master	Number of Slaves
1692	Richard Smith Jr. ¹	8
1736	Lodowick Updike	At least 2
1757	Daniel Updike	19
1774	Lodowick Updike	4
1782	Lodowick Updike	4
1790	Lodowick Updike	3
1800	Lodowick Updike	2

Sources: Bartlett 1858; Chamberlain 1985:57; Holbrook 1979:128; Jackson 1972:200; North 1908; Smith 1692; D. Updike 1757; L. Updike 1737.



Inventing New England's Slave Paradise: Master/Slave Relations in Eighteenth Century Narragansett, Rhode Island By Robert K. Fitts



Many of the stone walls in South County were built by enslaved people in the 18th-19th century. They were built in grids so that overseers could mark the progress of those who planted and picked in each section while also helping to keep enslaved people contained.

The Narragansett Planters were stock and dairy men and also traders and ship-owners. Vast fields of grass and corn nurtured cattle, sheep, and hogs--which yielded commercial products

in the form of butter, cheese, and wool--as well as a special breed of riding or saddle horse, the Narragansett Pacer, which was much in demand in the southern colonies and in the West Indies.

•The necessary labor for stockfarming on an extensive scale was made possible by slavery.

•Slavery, both Negro and Indian, reached a development in Narragansett country unusual in northern colonies, reaching a peak in the mid 18th century.

•The development of the plantation system bred habits

Table 3.1: Narragansett's Largest Landholdings

Planter	Dates	Town	Size (in acres)
Joseph Stanton	1739-1807	Charlestown	5760
Daniel Updike	1694-1757	North Kingstown	3000+
Thomas Hazard	1660-1746	South Kingstown	2870+
Christopher Champlin	1731-1809	Charlestown	2000+
Robert Hazard	1689-1762	South Kingstown	1600+
William Gardner	1671-1732	South Kingstown	1600
James Perry	Unknown—1774	South Kingstown	1440
William Robinson	1693-1751	South Kingstown	1317
Samuel Sewall	Unknown—1744	South Kingstown	1200
Rowland Robinson	1719-1806	South Kingstown	1000+

Sources: Charlestown n.d.; North Kingstown 1798; South Kingstown Probates n.d.; D. Updike 1737; W. Updike 1847.

of command and independence among the slave-holding class and contributed to the aristocratic exclusiveness of plantation owners.

- The Narragansett country was owned by a comparatively small number of persons (the Updikes being one of the largest landholders) and this contributed to the production of an aristocracy as it gave all political power to a few persons, since in Rhode Island only freeholders could vote.
- In many ways the plantation culture which developed was more similar to Southern plantation life than to the rest of New England. Some of the characteristics included: high degree of education, social exclusiveness (and subsequent intermarriage) within a limited number of families, lavish expenditures, elegant houses.

- Rev. Dr. James MacSparran, Rector at St. Paul's and a friend and frequent visitor of the Updike family, was a Narragansett Planter and slave owner in his own right, having married Hannah Gardiner. <https://vimeo.com/116018991> *No Simple Truth: A Minister and His Slaves in Colonial Rhode Island* recounts some of his "problems" with his slaves as recorded in his diary. "It's possible to ignore the past but harder to deny it, if we listen to the words of Reverend James MacSparran," says film-maker Elizabeth Delude-Dix.

A myth persists that Northern slavery was much "kinder" and "benevolent" than that of the South and that this somehow excused it. Here are **just a few** examples from the "slave code" found in the Acts & Laws of Rhode Island and the records of South Kingstown to give you a clearer picture of the real situation:

- **No Negroes or Indians freemen or slaves to be abroad after nine at night, on penalty of not exceeding 15 stripes; (1704, 1750)**
- **No house-keeper to suffer any servant or slave to have any dancing, gaming, or diversion of any kind, on penalty of 50 pounds or one month's imprisonment. If the host was a free negro or Indian, he, she, or they should no longer be suffered to keep house, but should be dispossessed of his, her, or their house or houses and shall be put into some private family to work for his or their living, for the space of one year, the wages accruing to be for the benefit of the town.**
- **No ferryman will transport a Negro without a certificate from an owner or justice. (1714)**
- **Later a by-law was added saying that if a slave was found at any free Negro's house or cottage, both the slave and free Negro should be whipped. In 1726 they also prohibited Negroes and Indians from holding social gatherings outdoors.**

5-6

BUT WASN'T RHODE ISLAND THE FIRST AMERICAN COLONY TO PASS AN ANTI-SLAVERY STATUTE?

Yes. On May 18, 1652, the first anti-slavery statute in the U.S. colonies was passed in what is now the state of Rhode Island. This statute only applied to white and African people, but in 1676, the enslavement of Native Americans was also prohibited in the state.

This sounds like Rhode Island was way ahead of its time. What happened? For one thing, that statute only applied to Providence and Warwick. Secondly, it only applied to **lifetime** ownership of slaves. For periods of 10 years or less, one was still permitted to essentially own another person – as an "indentured servant." At the end of ten years, ways could be found to extend the period for one reason or another to another 10 years and so on.

According to Christy Clark Pujara, author of *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island*) there is no evidence that the statute was ever enforced anyway. In

fact, by 1774, the slave population of Rhode Island was 6.3 percent, down from 10% in 1750 but still nearly twice as high as any other New England colony. Most importantly, the colony could not afford to enforce it. Rhode Island dominated the slave trade and its farms (particularly in Narragansett country) depended on revenue from the sale of their products to the West Indies and on the molasses they got from them to make rum to drive that trade. (<http://time.com/4782885/rhode-island-antislavery/>)

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SLAVERY IN
NARRAGANSETT COUNTRY?

[Traces of the Trade :A Story from the Deep North – A PBS documentary of the DeWolfe family and the Triangle Trade. Available on loan through the RI Library System.](#)


Edward Channing, *The Narragansett Planters* (1886). Limited copies available for in-library use. Also on-line.

Wilkins Updike, *History of the Narragansett Church*, 1847, particularly pp. 168-179. Available online at <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=FGrGRfuDRxoC&rdid=book-FGrGRfuDRxoC&rdot=1>

History of Kent and Washington Counties Can be read online at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo1.ark:/13960/t20c5j28d>

Robert K. Fitts, *Inventing New England's Slave Paradise: Master/Slave Relations in Eighteenth Century Narragansett, Rhode Island*, 1998.

The Narragansett Planters: Commercial Agriculture in Colonial South County

 smallstatebighistory.com/narragansett-planters-commercial-agriculture-colonial-south-county/

Tim Cranston



The Rowland Robinson house, circa 1710 and 1755, in Saunderstown. Probably the most attractive of the surviving Narragansett Planter homes. Rowland Robinson, father and son, were wealthy planters who owned up to twenty slaves. Hannah Robinson lived here. (Tim Cranston)]

The legend of Hannah Robinson is a part of South County folklore that intersects with the history of the Narragansett Planters. Beautiful Hannah fell in love with her charming French language tutor and dance instructor, Pierre Simond, and, defying her wealthy and proud father, Rowland Robinson of Narragansett, ran away with Pierre to Providence. Once in

Providence, the French cad neglected her and she fell ill. Upon hearing of her plight, Rowland Robinson swallowed his pride and headed off to Providence to retrieve his critically ill daughter. Hannah died on the trip back to the Robinson home, but not before she was able to pause along the journey at a great stone ledge overlooking the estate of her family and look down upon her childhood home. The critical detail often lost to those who first hear this tragic love story has to do with the Narragansett Planters themselves, the Robinsons among them. How was it that, in eighteenth-century in South County (then known as King's County), a group of farmers was able to collectively employ French language and dance instructors, along with numerous other tutors for their children; not to mention musicians, portrait artists, craftsmen skilled in wall and floor stenciling, English-trained cabinetmakers, and the like? Who were these Narragansett Planters? What led to this kind of success by the middle of the colonial period in South County?

These wealthy landed gentry of old South County have been described by one chronicler as having created "a bit of Virginia set down here in New England." I like to think of them as The Eleven—eleven prominent families who dominated the southern part of the West Bay in the 1700s. The monikers of the original eleven tell

another tale as well. There are just as many (probably more) Native/black individuals with roots in South County carrying the names of Updike, Gardiner, Hazard, Robinson, Potter, Niles, Watson, Perry, Brown, Babcock, and Stanton as there are white individuals. Black Hazards, Narragansett tribe members named Hazard, and white Hazards in South County, as well as other families, have a shared history that intersects during the Narragansett Planter period.

Many of the eleven families moved to South County from the East Bay after King Philip's War ended in 1676, into the void left behind, lands known then as the vacant Narragansett lands. The new immigrants borrowed money to buy this inexpensive land, cleared it for agricultural use, and started to develop farms. They got busy and utilized African slave labor obtained from slave traders in Newport who ventured to Africa and the Caribbean. Sometimes they used Native American labor, but the indigenous people could not be kept as slaves. These families began to operate on a grand scale, each plantation averaging between 700 and 1,200 acres. They raised dairy cattle, sheep, and the horses that came to be called famed Narragansett pacers; in addition, they produced cheese in abundance and raised corn and other crops. All of this business was closely intertwined with the Rhode Island colony's nasty little, albeit highly profitable, business: the Triangle Trade—a business plan in which three highly desirable commodities, good Rhode Island Rum, bulk molasses, and West African slaves, were traded and/or sold for profit on a three-legged trading route between Rhode Island, West Africa, and the Caribbean. Everything about this deal, and the interconnected Narragansett Planter businesses, spelled profit for the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. Good Rhode Island-manufactured rum, famed around the known world, was hauled upon Rhode Island-owned sailing vessels to West Africa, where slaves were acquired through purchase with rum and then hauled on those same vessels (most from Newport) to the enormously profitable sugar cane plantations on the Caribbean Islands, including Jamaica and the Barbados. Once there, the slaves were sold or traded for molasses, the primary ingredient used to manufacture rum back in Rhode Island. These sugar cane plantations were highly labor intensive with a correspondingly high death rate, thus giving rise to the need for their owners to keep up a ready supply of slaves. These plantations were so profitable that no spare land was used to grow food crops or raise livestock. Profit margins would be adversely affected if labor and land were turned over to livestock breeding.

This is where the Narragansett Planters filled the gap for the British Caribbean planters. Somebody had to grow excess food crops and livestock fodder, had to raise cattle, sheep, and hogs to produce beef, pork, and mutton, and had to supply horses and other draft animals, not only for busy crowded Newport, Providence, and Bristol, but mostly for the sugar cane plantations of the Caribbean. Again this activity led to profit and prosperity for the Narragansett Planters in the southern part of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

The type of farming that was done on the plantations of South County, most especially dairy farming, was also labor intensive, so profit margins were preserved by keeping labor costs low. The best way to do this in the 1700s was to use slaves.



George F. Morris in 1956 painted this work, imagining what a Narragansett Pacer looked like prancing on a South County beach in the eighteenth century (South County History Center)]

Like a good draft mule paid for once, the slave was paid for but never received a salary. Dairy farming in South County was dominant and the source of the Narragansett Planters' most profits. Families such as the Updikes and the Gardiners, who owned and operated plantations that are now part of North Kingstown, had hundreds of acres of grazing land supporting scores of cows cared for by teams of slaves, numbering from five to

twenty for each owner. Cow's milk is inherently unstable (it spoiled quickly in the age before refrigeration), and the only way to take that product and transform it into something that could survive a trip to Jamaica or even back to England, was to turn it into cheese, measured in the thousands of pounds. Cheese production at this scale was also labor intensive, requiring the work of slaves. The Updike plantation, centered at Smith's Castle at Cocumscossoc, was critical to this part of the story. Not only did the cheese industry, and the recipe for Rhode Island Cheshire-style cheese, originate there with Joan Smith's family recipe straight out of Gloucestershire England, but also the prevalent dairy cow in southern New England, known as the Rhode Island Cow, which was a mix of Dutch and English cows bred for traits that ensured success in the South County environment. Scientific animal husbandry was also practiced on the Robinson plantation, whose lands now straddle southernmost North Kingstown and much of what is now Narragansett (then part of South Kingstown), which is known as the place where the famed Narragansett Pacer horse breed was begun. Prized by the Caribbean plantation owners for its smaller size, easy gait, and durability, it was also the horse of choice for the "Fathers of our Nation." Paul Revere's ride was reportedly accomplished on a Narragansett Pacer, and it was said that General Washington preferred the Narragansett Pacer above all other breeds. The grandsires and grandmares that begot those horses were loaded upon barges or the ferry at South Ferry bound for Newport and a trip to the Caribbean, after being bred at the Robinson Farm in Narragansett and tended to by Robinson-owned slaves.

Indeed, large-scale livestock transportation by water was another important aspect of the overall profit plan of the Planters and their Newport-based business partners



This eighteenth century drawing shows what could be Narragansett Pacers in a French colonial island in the Caribbean, powering a sugar cane press and guided by slaves (Tim Cranston Collection)

such as the Jewish merchant Aaron Lopez. Sadly, little has survived in the historic record regarding the details of how this transportation scheme worked and who financed, set up, and ran this impressive operation; accordingly, much of what we know now is based upon oral tradition and educated conjecture. The Robinson clan most surely had a hand in what went on at South Ferry, where specialized sailing vessels were used as barges, wide of beam and shallow of draft, to haul livestock and other agricultural goods either to Newport where traders or middlemen such as Lopez

would sell them there or redirect them to other markets or transport them straightaway in the carrying trade to other North American colonies.

Even more intriguing was the complex livestock trading infrastructure that had its terminus on Updike land, just south of what was to become Wickford. It was here that the expansive Ten Rod Road ended. Ten Rod Road was one of the Rhode Island colony's most impressive infrastructure investments at that time. It consisted of a livestock drover's turnpike and its associated right-of-way that was ten rods (165 feet) wide, designed as pastureland that allowed drovers to feed their livestock during the journey from its beginnings in eastern Connecticut all the way to its end at "The Wattering Place," a fresh-water pond that was the final spot where livestock drovers could water their animals before selling them to the traders and merchants, located just about where the Wickford Elementary School playground is today. Along the way, the communities through which the Ten Rod Road passed set up town-owned livestock pounds where branded animals that had strayed could be held until their owners came back through town and paid a fine to release them. No records survive to reveal who financed and managed this impressive colonial commercial bit of genius, but most likely the Updikes were involved along with some of the other Planter families and their Newport business partners. The reality of the day was that there was no one else around but this select group with the wherewithal to pull this all together.

Perhaps no single scenario in colonial South County sparks the imagination more than the cacophony of sight, sounds, and smells at the Wattering Place. Groups of men, fathers and sons, farmers and hired hands, free men of color and slaves, along with most likely their herding dogs, clustered around their livestock, protecting their investment while one trusted member of the group headed down to the docks

(located in area where the Kayak Centre is now) to dicker with the traders there. After a deal was struck, the trusted member headed back to the Wattering Place, toward the sounds of barking, mooing, clucking, baa-ing, oinking, and braying, to the smells associated with the mass of men and animals assembled there. After that final drink of water, the livestock would be driven the last hundred yards or so onto a waiting sailing barge, where those sights, sounds, and smells were concentrated even more closely. And this scenario played out again and again, day in and day out. Presumably, the folks who lived in early nearby Wickford didn't mind the sounds and smells, as the watering place smelled like money.



Smith's Castle postcard from about 1910. In the eighteenth century, Smith's Castle and the farmland around it was owned and operated by the Updike family, who were Narragansett Planters (Sanford Neuschatz Collection)

During the colonial period in southern Rhode Island, impressive commercial farms grew crops, raised livestock, and made cheese, fanning out around dual transportation hubs centered at South Ferry and Wickford. This period, which began in the postwar recovery after King Philip's War, also saw its end started by another, the Revolutionary War. The war with Great Britain forever broke the Planters and their Newport partner's ties with the rest of Britain's colonial empire. Equally important to its demise and intriguingly ironic was the reality that the success of the Planters became a part of their downfall. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the children of the Narragansett Planters lived into adulthood. As each generation of each family expanded, the land holdings had to be divvied up among an ever increasing pool of heirs. Unlike the aristocratic Europeans, parents did not simply leave all of their estate to the eldest sons. Soon the individual farms lost the critical mass necessary to operate as true plantations. The final nail in the coffin of the Narragansett Planter's world was the new state of Rhode Island's reluctant, gradual

end of slavery. With that the era was over. The giant plantations became numerous farms of a different sort, more like the rest of New England.

Sources:

The work of Providence Journal journalist Paul Davis as well as independent researchers Darrell McIntire and Neil Dunay have been critical to my understanding of this complex topic. I am grateful to these three gentlemen, who are also my good friends, for their important work.

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McIntire, Darrell. Cocumscussoc Cheese in the 17th Century. Unpublished, in the files of Smith's Castle archives.

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Excerpts from: *DARK WORK: THE BUSINESS OF SLAVERY IN RHODE ISLAND* BY Christy Clarke-Pujara

If you prefer to listen to a podcast, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHCO8SPF3I4> Start at 6:53 to skip long introduction. The podcast is about an hour long; I found it quite interesting and it hit most of the main points that are covered in her book; even after reading the book I found it a useful summary.

Christy Clark-Pujara: “We misunderstand the institution of slavery when we only locate it on the [southern] plantation. We misunderstand the history of the United States as a whole when we do not acknowledge that the institution of slavery was national, rather than regional. Moreover, when we don’t acknowledge the role that Northern colonies and citizens played in the maintenance of the institution of slavery, we misunderstand the institution.”

RI SLAVE TRADE

“Before they committed themselves to the pursuit of commerce in multiple directions across the Atlantic Ocean, Rhode Islanders sought to restrict slaveholding; however, once they began to participate in the West Indian and Atlantic slave trades, they wrote slavery into law.” – p.11

“In RI, trade and political powers went hand in hand. During the colonial period, most governors were from the merchant class . . . and their main function was to broker trade agreements between the colonies and the mother country.”

“During the colonial period in total, Rhode Islanders sent 514 slave ships to the coast of West Africa, while the rest of the colonies combined sent just 189. As historian Jay Country has argued, the North American trade in slaves was essentially the Rhode Island slave trade.” p.17.

“By 1730, most trades and professions in Rhode Island were tied in one way or another to slaveholding and slave trading. Slave traders employed shipbuilders, sailors, caulkers, sailmakers, carpenters, rope makers, painters, coopers, stevedores, clerks, scribes, warehouse overseers, crew. The streets of Newport were paved and its bridges and country roads were mended through the duties collected on the purchase and sale of slaves. [NOTE: This is what the author terms the “business” of slavery.]

p.25 **SLAVE SOCIETY** “Historian Ira Berlin famously differentiated a *slave society* from a *society with slaves*. In a *slave society*, slave labor was essential to the economy, and slaveholders constituted the ruling class; in a *society with slaves*, slave labor was marginal to the overall economy and slaveholders were part of but did not dominate the elite class. **The Narragansett Country was a *slave society* within the North’s *society with slaves.*” (Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, Griswold, *The Manor: Three Centuries at a Slave Plantation on Long Island*)**

p. 27 “While neither their [the Narragansett Planters] landholdings nor their slaveholdings were equal to those of wealthy southern planters, they were part of the system that sustained and supported the expansion of slavery in the Americas.” (White, *It was a Proud Day*)

p.28 **DECLINE OF NARRAGANSETT PLANTATIONS** Narragansett farmers flourished until the late 1760s, when they could no longer expand. The increase in population within a finite amount of land reduced landholdings and raised land prices—a trend that was occurring throughout New England. By the beginning of the American Revolution, the economic position of Narragansett farmer was deteriorating. Ultimately, their commercial farming operations were disrupted and destroyed by the Revolutionary War. The British occupied Newport, so Narragansett farmers were unable to export their food stuffs and livestock. The region never recovered its agricultural glory.”

p.31 **NATIVE AMERICAN SLAVES.** Native Americans were the first slaves of colonial Rhode Island. The same year Rhode Island was founded, in 1636, indigenous Pequot were enslaved. The Pequot War (1636-1637) established English hegemony in southern New England and initiated the enslavement of a number of Pequots. New England armies, courts and magistrates enslaved more than 1200 men, women and children in the 17th century alone [many of these in the aftermath of King Philip’s War].

p.33 Although Native American slavery thrived in the first few decades of the founding of Rhode Island, it dwindled in the late 17th and early 18th century. An important factor in this were prohibitions by colonial governments in the early decades of the 18th century which prevented Native Americans from moving into, and colonists from bringing in as slaves, Native Americans. The colonists wanted societies where Native Americans did not live at all, even as slaves and servants.

p.34 “Starting in the first decades of the 18th century, white Rhode Islanders replaced a familiar *dangerous* (i.e., Native American) population with black *strangers*. [i.e., Africans] . . . First through common practice and then through law, white Rhode Islanders created a race-based system of slavery in which Native Americans and Africans were slaves and whites were the master class. In Rhode Island the Narragansett and the Africans intermarried for generations, and their children did not relinquish their biracial heritage and multiple identities, despite attempts from the state to insist on single-race categories In order to divest Native Americans of their land.”

p.35 **FIRST RI SLAVES DIRECTLY FROM AFRICA** May 30, 1696 – 14 enslaved Africans were purchased from the *Seaflower* in Newport – first record of Rhode Islanders buying slaves directly from Africa.

[NOTE: We know by Richard Smith Jr.’s 1692 will that he had 8 slaves. These were probably brought from Barbados (where his deceased sister’s family, the Newtons, lived) or possibly from New Amsterdam, where he had previously

lived, rather than directly from Africa. The Updikes had slaves until 1800 with the largest number being during the time of Daniel Updike who had 18]


p.35-36 **SLAVERY WRITTEN INTO RI LAW** A series of slave laws enacted by the RI General Assembly in the early 1700s officially wrote slavery and racism into law. These restricted travel, entertainment, purchase of alcohol, etc. and other rights for all people of color – free, indentured or enslaved, African, Native American or mixed.

p. 43 **WORK DONE BY RI SLAVES** In Narragansett Country, slaves labored as cow herders, shepherds and dairy farmers and produced small amounts of grain, vegetables, cheese and fish. In the colonial cities of Providence, Newport, Warwick and Bristol bound people worked as domestics, tradesmen, manufacturers and shopkeepers. The cumulative labor of all these enslaved people throughout the colony undergirded the buying and selling of people and goods on both sides of the Atlantic [i.e., the business of slavery].

p. 44ff **CONDITIONS OF SLAVERY IN RI** Most enslaved people in Northern colonies lived and labored alongside and resided in the same houses as their masters. Because of the patterns of slaveholding, families were frequently separated in the colonial North: husbands lived apart from their wives, children and siblings were separated. For-sale ads in the *Providence Gazette* regularly appeared stating that child was being sold, “only for want of employ.”

Many of the first African slaves in RI trickled in from Barbados, having learned some English from having lived there for a few years. In the 18th century Rhode Islanders began buying slaves directly brought from Africa. Merchants and tradesmen from Newport and the Narragansett Country farmers were the primary buyers. By 1755 1/5 of the population in Newport and Narragansett was enslaved.

R U N A W A Y



From the Subscriber at North Kingstown, in the Colony of Rhode-Island, a young Negro Man named

Dismas, born in this Country, a well set Fellow about 5 feet 4 inches high, has a down Look, is thin jaw'd, and has a visible Scar from the Bridge of his Nose, over his Cheek, reaching below the Corner of his Mouth. . . . He is a subtil Fellow, and has got a forged Pass, with which it is suspected he will effect his Escape to Boston, as he has some Acquaintances there. Whoever takes up said Fellow, and delivers him to me, or secures him so that I may get him again, shall be intituled to SIX DOLLARS Reward, and have all reasonable charge paid.

LODOWICK UPDIKE

p.52 “Enslaved people in the Narragansett Country, like their counterparts throughout history, experienced the common brutality of slavery. The most common physical punishment was whipping or flogging, while the threat of sale was used as a psychological control. Enslavers also commissioned and purchased devices such as pot hooks, muzzles, and balls and chains to restrain their human property. Chronic runaways were branded and maimed – fingers, toes and even feet and hands removed. The enslaved the Narragansett Country were also under near-constant surveillance. Like most enslaved northerners they lived in the homes of their masters, few farms were large enough to warrant separate slave quarters. While slaves on large southern plantations could temporarily escape white surveillance, but

enslaved people in Narragansett Country lived just on the periphery of their enslavers' lives. Moreover, physical proximity further emphasized the drastic differences between the enslaved and the enslavers. For example, slaves often had access to their masters' personal space, such as bedrooms and bathing chambers, and many enslaved people helped their masters dress and bathe; however, rituals such as meals, church and burial were segregated in order to teach slaves their place, and slaves were relegated to sleep in the kitchen, storage areas, garrets and attics.

p.54 **RUNAWAYS.** During the colonial period, slave-owners placed over 100 ads in local papers about runaways. Over 20% of the runaways were identifiable by scars. The evidence suggests that these might have been the result of work-related injuries, punishments, neglect or illness (e.g., smallpox). The majority of the runaways were male, younger than 30 and about 25% were fleeing Narragansett Country.

p.62. **BREAKDOWN OF SLAVERY IN RI.** In RI the breakdown of slavery began with Quaker manumissions in 1775 (49 of their own slaves were manumitted between 1773-1803), followed by the enlistment of enslaved men in the Revolutionary War in 1778 the passing of the Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in 1784 which ended hereditary slavery and finally the 1787 slave trade ban which forbade residents to participate in the slave trade. Slaveholding as it existed in the colonial era came to an end in RI between 1773 and 1787 although the General Assembly did not actually abolish slavery until 1842.

p.63 **INFLUENCE ON RI ENTRY INTO REVOLUTIONARY WAR.** When the British passed the American Revenue Act of 1764 (Sugar Act) and later the Townsend Revenue Acts (1767), to restrict trade with French-ruled West Indian islands, RI merchants were greatly alarmed. The West-Indian trade with non-British islands was the most important piece of RI's trade-based economy. Consequently RI joined the fight against British tyranny with their fellow colonists up and down the seaboard.

p.64 **EFFECT OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR ON RI ECONOMY** During the American Revolution (1775-83) the RI economy ground to a near halt as British blockades shut down the ports. No slave ships sailed. The rum distilleries were idle. The Narragansett farmers had no way to ship out their slave-produced goods. By the end of the war, RI was nearly bankrupt. After the war, RI was the first to resume slave trading.

QUAKERS The Quakers were the first European-descended religious group in the Americas to publicly question and eventually prohibit slaveholding among their members.

p.65 **EFFECT OF EMANCIPATION ON WHITE POPULATION** "Though the white experience of emancipation was different in nearly every aspect from that of black Americans, it was just as transformative. All white people in the North, over the space of a generation or two, depending on what state they lived in, lost their claim – or potential claim – to mastery. The vast majority of whites were laborers or

tradesmen or farmers who did not own slaves at all; **however, many of their jobs were dependent on the business of slavery.** “

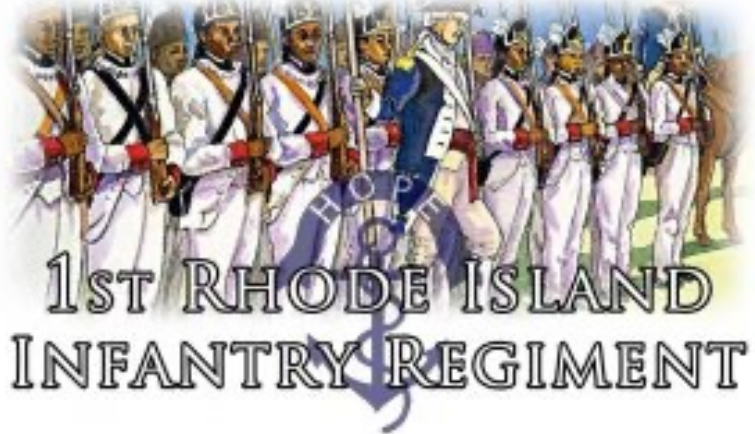
p.66-67 **PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARD SLAVERY** “Throughout the 17th century and the first half of the 18th, there was no outright public objection from any group or organization except the enslaved themselves. With very few exceptions, slavery was accepted by the colonists as a social and economic necessity.”

P.70ff **BLACKS IN REVOLUTIONARY WAR**

1775 – Recruiting officers for the Continental Army were ordered “not to enlist any stroller, negro, or vagabond” – Washington and Adams saw the war as a fight for white freedom fought by white men. Despite this ban, 1000s of African Americans served in the Continental Army and state militias.

After devastating losses and desertions in 1777, the Continental Army called for 88 new battalions and the some of the colonies started enlisting slaves to meet that need.

In 1778 the RI General Assembly authorized slave enlistments in return for freedom. An estimated 20,000 blacks fought in the Revolutionary War: 15,000 for the British – most of these from the South; it was the British who first offered freedom in return for military service to bolster their ranks and to subvert the colonists. Northern colonies then offered freedom in response.



FIRST RI REGIMENT

Rhode Island, the region’s smallest and least populous colony raised a nearly all-black regiment, the RI First.

SEE ALSO: *From Slaves to Soldiers: The 1st Rhode Island Regiment in the American Revolution* by Robert A. Geake – available at our bookstore, through Amazon and in the RI Library System

Unlike their counterparts in other regiments, black RI soldiers served as foot soldiers rather than servants, cooks, manual laborers or foragers. The RI First fought for nearly 5 years in RI, NJ and NY. They were one of the few units which enlisted for the duration of the war. At their first engagement, the Battle of RI in August 1778, the soldiers were recommended for their tenacity and courage against an experienced Hessian (German troops hired by the British) regiment that was reinforced by (British regulars. “Three times in succession they were attacked by well-disciplined and veteran troops, and three times did they successfully repel the

assault and thus preserved our Army from capture.” The regiment also fought at Red Bank, Yorktown and Fort Oswego. “. . . After the War, [A]lthough they were veterans of the American Revolution, they were not recognized as citizens of the nation.” (Greene, *Some Observations*)

p.71-2 “The mustering of slaves posed a direct challenge to mastery and racial ideology. The need for manpower superseded the authority of masters. . . . His [the slave’s] master was compensated but not consulted. Slave enlistments were the first, albeit unintentional, step in the legal dismantling of the institution of slavery.”

MOSES BROWN’S LEGISLATION

- 1775 – Bill to end slavery in RI – rejected
- 1783 – Bill had signatures of town council members throughout state; called for immediate end to slavery the fine against those involved in the trade – rejected
- 1784 – Revised version of bill won support of Providence Town Council; called for gradual end to slavery and did not mention the Atlantic trade; sponsored by black veterans and Quakers. – Children born to enslaved mothers would not be slaves (although females would be indentured to the town of their birth until 18 years old and males until 21). PASSED, even with opposition of Moses’ brother John Brown (a successful merchant involved primarily in the W.Indies trade- although he had financed some slave trade ships)
- 1785 – Assembly amended law to say that owners – not towns – were responsible for supporting and educating the children and the age of “service” was extended 3 years for females. If the child’s mother was emancipated before the child reached the age limit, the owner was not responsible for the education or support of the child. “Like other northern gradual emancipation laws, RIs law was designed not to help freed people transition into a free life, but to protect the white public from potential black dependency.” (p.74) The law also lacked enforcement procedures, other than the personal integrity of the enslavers.

In 1755 there were roughly 4697 blacks in RI, presumably almost all enslaved; in 1790 there were 4355, of whom 75% were free.

The actions of the enslaved – running away, joining the military, and lobbying for freedom – in conjunction with an emerging abolition movement – tore away at the fabric of slavery and challenged the morality and legitimacy of slaveholding in the new democracy. Moreover, in the northern states slave labor, though important, was not the center of the economy as it was in the cash crop (tobacco and rice) dependent economies of the South, so most northern states passed gradual emancipation laws during and after independence.

However, largely through their own actions, most northern slaves were free before the gradual emancipation acts would have gone into effect. In RI 97% of blacks were freed by 1810. Gradual emancipation laws reflected the breakdown of slavery in the north but did not precipitate it. They did, however, contribute to a climate in which slaves could better negotiate for their freedom.

EFFECT OF THE RI SLAVE-TRADE-BAN ACT

p. 80ff. 1787 – RI forbade its citizens to participate in the Atlantic Slave Trade altogether. “The ideals and rhetoric of the Revolution, in conjunction with the disruption of the slave trade as a result of the British occupation of Newport, had contributed to a shift in public opinion concerning the slave trade.”

However, in 1795 alone, 32 slave voyages were made – surpassing the previous record of 29, set in 1772. This blatant disregard for the 1787 law reflects the state’s unwillingness to enforce the law. Newport resumed slave-trading but never resumed its position as the center of northern slave trading. Providence emerged as the economic center of the state with Bristol (under the DeWolfes) as the new slave-trading center.

DEWOLFE FAMILY – Between 1784-1807 members of the family underwrote 88 African-slave-trading voyages. They were also the major employer in Bristol, operating a bank, insurance companies, textile mills and distilleries

1789 –founding of Providence Abolition Society – Moses Brown – tried to pursue legal remedies to enforce 1787 law, but the “desire for profit trumped the power of the law.” (p.84)

RISE OF BUSINESS OF SLAVERY. Although the number of people enslaved or owning slaves in RI decreased, the number of people involved in the business of slavery increased. From 1787-1807, RI slave traders transported over 45,000 Africans to bondage in the Americas, only about 10,000 fewer than they had brought in the previous 27 years. All of the other New England traders combined transported about 6,400 in that same time period. **Emancipation had done nothing to deter the expansion of the business of slavery in RI and slave training actually grew tremendously after the slave trade ban was passed.**

In the years after independence, RI remained complicit in slaveholding outside their own state. In the first decades of the 19th century, RI further invested in the business of slavery by becoming the leading manufacturers of “**negro cloth**,” a coarse cotton-wool material made especially to minimize the cost of clothing enslaved African-Americans in the South.

“Rhode Island embodied two seemingly contradictory historical trajectories, the victory of black emancipation, slow but successful, was accompanied by a bolstered commitment to the business of slavery.” (p.85)

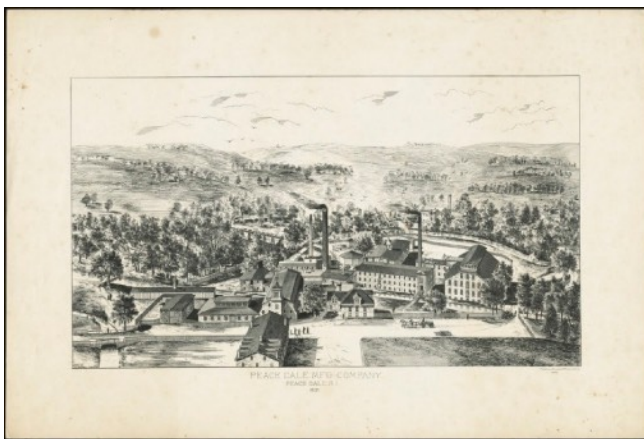
STATUTORY SLAVES. According to the provisions of the 1784 gradual emancipation law, children born of enslaved mothers were free; however, if the mother became free or ran away before they reached legal age, that freedom was virtually rescinded because they were under total control of their mother’s previous master (working for their benefit, suffering corporal punishment, and unable to direct their own lives). By 1800 only 124 out of over a thousand black people in Washington County were slaves for life yet of all intents and purposes statutory slaves lived like lifelong slaves. Further, unlike indentured servants, they did not receive land, seed, or clothing at the end of their servitude (legal age).

Jailed for Preaching: The Autobiography of Cato Pearce, a Freed Slave from Washington County, Rhode Island (with a historical introduction by Christian Burney) is available through the RI Library System (when we are able to check out books again). Mr. Pearce was a statutory slave who eventually forged a life for himself as a preacher (supporting himself as a farm worker) during the final decline of slaveholding in RI.

Although free blacks rarely made up more than 10% of the population of northern states, their challenges to the racial ideology of white supremacy created fear and panic among many white northerners, who attempted to maintain economic and social control over the sons and daughters of their former slaves. This was accomplished through discriminatory laws, the exclusion of blacks from factory work and racially motivated riots which destroyed black neighborhoods.

NEGRO CLOTH

- Also known as *kersey* – Cheap, coarse, blended cotton-wool material
- Narragansett Country transitioned from agricultural to industrial base as large farms were replaced with large mills.
- No longer dependent on slave labor, RI was now dependent on southern slave-grown cotton and the southern slave clothing market.
- 1800-1860 more than 80 negro cloth mills opened in RI, most of them located in Narragansett Country and 79% of all RI textile mills manufactured slave clothing.
- Throughout the first ½ of the 19th century, commodities traders, insurers, bankers, and manufacturers linked southern slaveholding to northern industry and northern industry thrived because of slave labor; free labor in the North relied on slave labor in the South.
- Abolitionists described the business relationship as the union of the "Lords of the Lash and the Lords of the Loom."



Peace Dale Manufacturing Company

PEACE DALE MILLS

- 1802 – Rowland Hazard, Sr. purchased ½ interest in a mill – during its first decade it produced hand-spun gingham and linen
- 1812 – Began making negro cloth
- 1819 – sons, Isaac and Rowland took over and eventually bought out other investors
- 1828 – Jonathan (youngest brother) joined company and it was renamed

- Began major operation supplying slaveholders in South with clothing, blankets and shoes until fire destroyed equipment in 1855.
- By 1860 mill employed 100 employees and manufactured shawls and cashmere. The brothers did not try to rebuild their kersey business, probably because of the abundance of kersey mills in the state and the growing regional divide over slavery.
- Over the years Rowland Hazard acted as the mill's southern agent and spent 23 winters there courting Southern business. Although the company was still selling kersey in 1850 he stood up as a member of the RI House of Representatives opposing the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and urging its repeal on moral grounds.

“In the North, industrial work was the purview of whites; it was associated with free labor and even though most blacks in the antebellum period were free, their race marked them as slavlike. Northern kersey mills thus manufactured class and race in antebellum America both figuratively and literally, *shaping* the lives of free blacks in the North and enslaved African Americans in the South. “(p.94)

“FREEDOM” FOR BLACKS WAS A RELATIVE TERM AT TURN OF 19TH CENTURY

- Practice of slavery and statutory slavery still existed
- Poverty
- Lack of rights – not recognized as citizens
 - Interracial marriages banned in 1789
 - African American men barred from voting in 1822 (probably triggered by increasing numbers of black property owners.
- Economic discrimination – most free people of color found themselves doing the same work they had done as slaves.
 - Most free women of color worked in domestic trades: cleaning, washing, weaving, sewing, childcare, paper and soap making “appropriate work for women”
 - Like all poor women, they had to work to supplement the meager, often irregular income of the males in their family. While they income was meager, it was usually steady.
 - They did have more freedom and could choose or refuse certain work.
 - A few even went into business for themselves (e.g., Mary Caesar-cakes, Elleanor Eldridge – property)
 - Free men of color often did the same work as they had done as slaves, but were increasingly shut out of the skilled trades (barred from apprenticeships and trade organizations).
 - Majority worked as unskilled day laborers: porters, grooms, handymen, ditch diggers, servants, wagon team drivers, cooks and stevedores. Often unemployed as work was seasonal and whites got first priority.
 - A few found success as small businessmen in the service sector (shoemaker, grocers, barbers, gardeners, retailers).
 - Racism kept them out of the factories.
 - With very few exceptions they were barred from professions - partly because only about 5% of RI population was black so they couldn't depend on the

patronage of other blacks and couldn't cultivate white clientele. Those who were educated moved to larger cities to find clients.

- Found niche as sailors on commercial ships. Between 1800-1820 had 20% of seafaring jobs even though they were only 5% of the population, except for whaling vessels. 90% of trading ships leaving Newport had at least one non-white crewmember
- Members of a local black self-help organization formally agreed to NOT serve aboard slave ships although some did.
- Some disadvantages of seafaring: away from family for long periods; rarely rose above rank of cook, steward or seaman; dangerous work; had to contend with southern "Negro Seamen Acts" that called for black sailors to be imprisoned during stays in southern ports and sometimes resulted in their being enslaved; disproportionately harsh discipline aboard ship.
- After a few generations of seafaring, black seamen's jobs declined as white immigrant laborers took those jobs.
- SOME PROGRESS
 - In 1822 Black Rhode Islanders collectively owned about \$10,000 in property – by 1820 - \$18,000 and by 1840 - \$46,000
 - African-American heads of household increased 121% between 1832 and 1844.
 - Number of people owning real estate increased 305% between 1829 and 1860.

POVERTY, RACE & POOR LAWS

- Emancipation process often impoverished them further
 - Runaways – began free lives with no more than the clothes on their backs
 - Black soldiers – paid in depreciated continental currency
 - Privately manumitted or received freedom as a result of gradual emancipation laws – not legally entitled to any assistance (as did indentured white servants – although only 2 out of 10 of them survived their service terms and then managed to escape poverty))

“By not allotting any resources to newly free people, the state was effectively setting up an economically dependent population, whom they would later blame for their own poverty.” (p.98)

Legal restrictions on the poor, especially those of color:

- Barred from moving out of communities in which they were born or bound
 - Public assistance required those conditions
 - People who were not legal residents could be “warned out of town.” While only 5% of the population, people of colored represented 50% of those warned out of tow.
 - Enforcing residency requirements was an effective way to weed out excess dependents.
- Free people of color who tried to flee economically depressed areas to find work (e.g., Newport workers fleeing to Providence) were challenged by authorities. Even Revolutionary War veterans were restricted from relocating.
- Removals were often made after complaints from “honorable white men” and as a punishment for “bad” behavior.

NOTE: The remainder of the book, while interesting, goes beyond the time period relative to the Castle; therefore, I have not included notes for those pages although I do encourage you to read them at some point.

THE MOLASSES TRADE

For the study of details it will be convenient to confine our attention to the simple and typical case of a small ship, owned and dispatched by a North American merchant, carrying no supercargo, and engaging for the time in no other branch of commerce. The cargo of such a vessel, taken on at one or at several ports, was usually the property of a number of persons. Besides the large share of the merchant principally concerned, various small lots of goods, representing the remittances and "ventures" of North Americans or goods purchased on the orders of West Indians, were taken as freight. On the deck were placed piles of lumber, livestock, and casks of salt provisions; below were stored more perishable goods. But deck and hold were both well filled, for lumber, which on an average voyage filled two-thirds of all the space, was used to fill all gaps. The cargo safely stowed and bonds given for its delivery at destinations legally permissible, the sailing orders were opened. In the framing of these orders careful consideration had probably been given to the nature and amounts of shipments which had recently left North America for particular West India islands and to the direction of the prevailing winds. On conclusions arrived at from these facts, and because agreements had been made for the delivery of goods at certain ports, the routes to be followed on both the outward and the home voyages were perhaps laid down. But more likely was the captain to discover that the owners expected him to search out the places where the highest prices were to be obtained in the disposal of his out-cargo and the lowest in the purchase of the return lading. Supposing that he received orders so loosely framed, his route was largely predetermined by the direction of the winds. By searching first the Windward Islands, then the Leeward, and finally Jamaica he found through most of the year winds which favored him at every stage. The voyage from the last continental to the first island port occupied, in ordinary weather, from three to four weeks.

<https://www.youtu.be.com/watch?v=F4AdxkUGBH0>

The colonial molasses trade occurred throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the British colonies of the Americas. Molasses was a major trading product.

Molasses was produced via the exploitation of enslaved persons in sugar plantations in the Caribbean (also called the West Indies), in islands controlled by England (e.g., Jamaica and Barbados), Spain (e.g., Santo Domingo), and France (e.g., Martinique). The English colonies along the Atlantic (mainly the Thirteen Colonies) purchased molasses and used it to produce rum, primarily in distilleries in New England.

To make rum, sugarcane juice or molasses is fermented with yeast and water and then distilled in copper pot stills. The liquor was given the name rum in 1672, likely after the English slang word *rumballion* which meant clamor. Sugar plantation owners in the Caribbean often sold rum on discount to the naval ships so that they would spend more time close to the islands, providing protection from pirates.

In the 18th century, New England became one of the leading rum producers in the world. It was the colonies' only commodity that could be produced in large quantities by non-English powers and sold to the English. The French West Indies had a large supply of molasses at this time, but the area was lacking in lumber, cheese, and flour. These products were the main exports of the North American colonies, which led to a very secure business relationship between the two areas.

Molasses was important in triangular trade. In the triangular trade, traders from New England would bring rum to Africa, and in return, they would acquire African slaves. These slaves then brought to the West Indies and sold to sugarcane plantations to harvest the sugar for molasses. Molasses was then brought from the West Indies to the colonies and sold to rum producers.

Massachusetts and Rhode Island together made up three-quarters of the mainland's domestic rum exports by the end of the colonial period. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Massachusetts supported sixty-three distilleries, which accounted annually for about 700,000 gallons.[9] Rhode Island supported around thirty distilleries, and after the Sugar Act was repealed, produced about 500,000 gallons of rum annually.

When the trading of molasses first began, it was unrestrained, apart from small local taxes. The colonies began to prefer French molasses to British because of the price difference. French policy provided incredibly cheap prices, and the British could no longer compete. In order to control the molasses trade with the English colonies, the Parliament of Great Britain decided to place high taxes on any molasses that was shipped from a foreign power to the colonies in North America. The Molasses Act of 1733 imposed a fee of six pence per gallon on foreign molasses. This act was meant to force the colonies into buying molasses from the British or stop producing rum in North America. Many, however, say that the Molasses Act was put in place to destroy New England's rum industry. Contrary to Parliament's plans, the colonies first protested this act. They soon realized that instead of complying with the new Molasses Act, it would be much easier for them to just ignore the new prohibitive taxes and smuggle molasses from the West Indies. Many ports collected about half of the legal duty that must have been imported to their harbors. This was clear in Massachusetts where it "...imported legally less than half as much molasses and rum as it exported..." These illicit operations would continue for several decades. Had the Molasses Act succeeded in its purpose, New England rum production would have been destroyed.

The Colonial Molasses Trade by Gilman M. Ostrander https://www.jstor.org/stable/3739927?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3Ab3a46c3a5f8557f0a4f0dfc9818d1f8e&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

The protests against the Molasses Act of 1733 and the excitement aroused by the Sugar Act of 1764 demonstrated the immense importance of molasses to the commerce of New England and the middle colonies in the 18th century. It was the Africa rum trade which gave molasses this importance for relatively little molasses imported to the mainland ever found its way to Africa. The bulk of the import was consumed within the colonies, and for the most part not in the form of rum.

Molasses was important to colonial commerce because it was the only commodity produced in vast quantity by the non-English Caribbean possessions which their governments permitted them to sell TO the English.

Molasses in the 18th century had an economic importance to the sugar industry which has since disappeared in the face of technological improvements in the sugar refining process. Modern refining methods produce 8-11 parts of sugar to one part of molasses and the molasses residue is suitable only for such uses as cattle feed and industrial alcohol. The manufacture of molasses for kitchen use or for rum distilleries is now a specialized industry. Under 18th century refining methods, on the other hand, as much as three parts molasses was produced to four parts sugar, and on an average it was estimated that the ratio of molasses to sugar was about 1 to 2. The molasses produced under those conditions was suitable for table use or for the rum distilleries. Thus the profitable disposal of the molasses was a major consideration for 18th century sugar planters.

There was practically no market in Europe for molasses; neither England nor France imported it in appreciable amounts. England did import large quantities of West Indian molasses IN THE FORM OF RUM from English Caribbean developed distilleries, but the French sugar islands were prohibited from exporting rum to France out of deference to the French brandy interests. The French were said to be throwing away a half million gallons of rum each year in the 1680s for lack of a market.

The one important market for French and Dutch surplus molasses was the English continent colonies which were importing molasses by the late colonial period at the rate of considerably more than 4 million gallons annually. The chief object of the Molasses Act seems to have been to protect the mainland market for West Indian rum by depriving the New England distilleries of their source of cheap foreign (French and Dutch) molasses – and destroying the New England rum industry.

In practice the Molasses Act was systematically violated and not enforced. In RI mobs attacked enforcement officers and in New York a man was arrested and detained for two years on a false charge, according to his statement, because he informed on a smuggler. England and France were at war for almost half of the life of the Act. The relative success of enforcement during the Seven Years' War encouraged the English government to revise and act and strengthen its enforcement through the Sugar Act of 1764 reducing the duty on foreign molasses to 3 pence but providing enforcement measures. This caused great alarm in the colonies. "Brown and Company of Rhode Island feared the worse when, after a bad

voyage a company ship returned from Surinam with a load of molasses and faced the prospect of actually paying the new molasses duty. On that occasion, the company managed to avoid paying the duty, and Nicholas Brown wrote that he hoped another of his vessels would be as fortunate, 'but how the severity of the officials may be by the time of your arrival we cannot say.'" Even though it was more successfully enforced than the earlier act the full duty was still not collected.

Rhode Island exported 170,000 gallons more molasses and New England rum annually than it imported legally during the same period; thus at least 300,000 gallons of molasses a year were being smuggled into the colony.

The large market for molasses in colonial America generally has been attributed almost entirely to the growth of the New England rum industry. Actually there was a heavy demand for molasses in the colonies before rum distilleries were built in New England and there was probably never a time when the greater part of the imported molasses was used in the distilleries. The rest was used for kitchen purposes.

Molasses had many uses in colonial cooking – in Boston baked beans and brown bread Indian pudding – to name only a few colonial dishes. It was used for medicinal purposes and in curing meat and pickling fish. It was also widely used in a soft drink called BEVERIGE – water flavored with molasses and ginger. Probably its most important use outside the distillery, however was in the home brewing of SMALL BEER.

Seven gallons molasses was used annually for a family of nine for cooking purposes. If the family brewed beer, that amount went to 9 gallons/PER PERSON per year.

At the time of the Sugar Act, RI had 30 distilleries for rum of which 22 were in Newport. The annual output would have been about 350,000. After the repeal of the Sugar Act, production rose to perhaps 500,000 gallons annually.

New England rum sold for a little more than ½ the price of West Indian rum, and its cheapness was its chief advantage. It was distilled as quickly as possible from the cheapest available molasses using less molasses per gallon than W. Indies rum, and the final product, at times watered considerable was, according to a visitor from Scotland "the most chocking liquor you can imagine."

It was produced primarily for domestic consumption, not as part of a triangle trade. The total average yearly report of rum to Africa from all of the mainland colonies from 1768-1772 was about 300,000 gallons, only about an 1/8 of the total production during the period. Half of the entire African export was by RI, but even RI exported more than half again as much rum in coastal trade as it did to Africa. "Of the molasses trade as a whole, the Rhode Island merchants declared that it was vital to the commerce of 352 RI ships in the coastwise trade and about 150 in the West Indian trade, compared with but 18 in the African trade. The African trade, compared to the coastwise and West Indian trade, was speculative and dangerous and involved competition with English and French traders. The leading RI firm of Nicholas Brown and Company send only THREE ships in the African trade during the

colonial period (one was lost, another proved a financial failure and the 3rd brought only a modest return). It was the West Indian trade based largely on molasses that the Browns pursued primarily during the 18th century. The Browns found the Caribbean safer and more profitable than the African trade.

The Role of Molasses in Colonial Brewing

The usual brewing ingredients were hard to come by in the New World. But for some wild hops, the bittering herb was scarce and the barley varieties usually relied upon did not grow well in America.

Immigrant brewers turned to using spruce tips, anise, and coriander to bring some balance to their brews. Importing barley from Britain was expensive, and only the more well-to-do brewing families could afford the cost.

So, many brewers had to find other sources of sugar. Squash, bran, maize, parsnips, persimmons, and most popular of all, molasses, were all used to feed the yeast and produce beer.

George Washington's Personal Recipe

Recipes for beer using molasses give some idea just how big a role the ingredient played. There is George Washington's famous recipe for a Small Beer, written in the journal he kept as a young colonel during the French and Indian War.

"Take a large Sifter full of Bran Hops to your Taste – Boil these 3 hours. Then strain out 30 Gall. into a Cooler put in 3 Gallons Molasses while the Beer is scalding hot or thater drain the molassses into the Cooler. Strain the Beer on it while boiling hot let this stand til it is little more than Blood warm. Then put in a quart of Yeast if the weather is very cold cover it onver with a Blanket. Let it work in the Cooler 24 hours then put it into the Cask. leave the Bung open til it is almost done working – Bottle it that day Week it was Brewed."

George Washington (Written in 1757)

Smith's Castle has been chosen as the site for a RI Slave History Medallion. It is scheduled to be installed sometime this summer, but, as with everything else right now, it's somewhat up in the air. This article reprint will give you a little idea about the goals of the Medallion Project. The blank space in the center of the marker will hold a QR (barcode) which visitors

MARKING HISTORY WITH THE RHODE ISLAND SLAVE HISTORY MEDALLIONS PROJECT

The project designates historic sites connected to the history of slavery in Rhode Island, including markers at Patriot's Park.

February 10, 2020

[Hugh Markey](#)



Photography courtesy of the Rhode Island slave history

project, used to play in the Common Burying Ground in Newport as a boy. To him, it was just open space, and the section of slave graves, known as God's Little Acre, was just part of the landscape.

Decades later, it would become the inspiration for a statewide project to resurrect the voices of the voiceless, the slaves who were a central part of Rhode Island history during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The project is producing a series of medallions tracing the history of Africans and indigenous American peoples across the state, and their stories will be linked to an informative website.

“People really want to know the truth (of slavery),” Roberts says. “This history isn’t just black history or of Native American history, it’s the history of economic development of the state of Rhode Island. Almost

everybody had a role to play in the business of slavery because that was the economic engine that helped build this state and who we are today.”

Each medallion will be placed at historically significant sites connected to slavery and will contain a QR code that will provide information about the people and events that transpired there, a process Roberts calls “place-based education.” The medallion features an angel’s head and wings at the top, inspired by the grave marker carvings Roberts noticed in the cemetery as an adult. “I looked around me and thought, ‘I’m standing in a field of angels!’ ”

The first marker at Patriot’s Park commemorates the Battle of Rhode Island, where in 1778, the Black Regiment engaged and repelled the British and Hessians troops and allowed the Continental Army to escape. “Not every household was willing to give their sons to the fight,” Roberts says, “and they replaced them with their slaves instead. Their ranks included freed and enslaved Africans, indigenous Native Americans, poor white laborers and farm boys and indentured servants.”

The medallions also acknowledge a part of Rhode Island history that is often overlooked: the colony’s role in the infamous Triangle Trade. Ships from Rhode Island carried rum made in New England to Africa to trade for slaves who were then brought to Caribbean plantations, where molasses (liquid sugar) was purchased and brought back to New England to make rum.

“We had hundreds of distilleries in New England (processing the sugar grown by slaves in the Caribbean) to produce rum for trade in Africa. Then you had to have slaves to work the Rhode Island farms to feed this massive migration of people,” Roberts says.

Still, he says the medallions are more of an attempt to present an unbiased view of history rather than placing blame. “It’s not a story about right and wrong, good guys or bad guys. It’s just the way it is,” he says. “We hope that by telling the story of the participants of the economic development of Rhode Island, we can change the social dialogue about prejudice, injustice and racism.” rishm.org

EXCERPTS FROM *THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED: FORGOTTEN HISTORIC HIGHWAYS OF NEW ENGLAND* by Robert A. Geake, America through Time, 2019

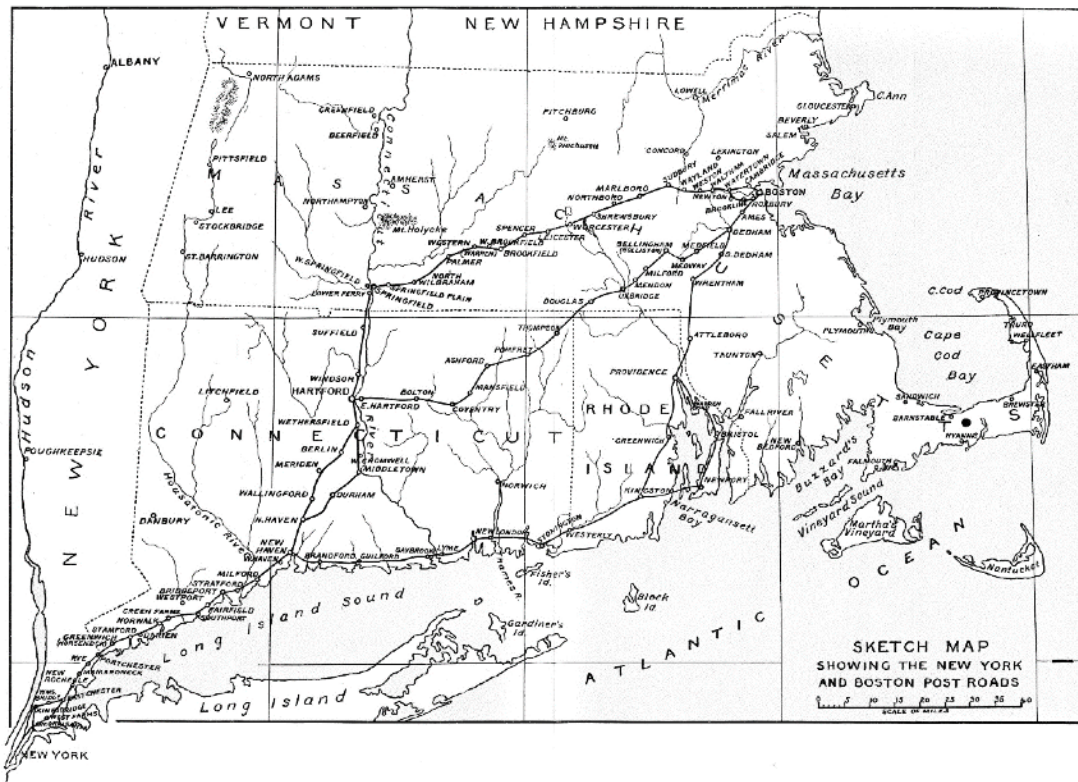
ALONG POST ROAD – CONNECTIONS TO THE CASTLE

The Boston Post Road was a system of mail-delivery routes between New York City and Boston, that evolved into one of the first major highways in the United States. There were three major sections, but the section that runs past the Castle (Route 1) is called The Lower Post Road. It started in Long Island . and hugged the Connecticut and Rhode Island shoreline, through North Kingstown, up to Providence and then on to Boston.

Miss Sarah Kemble Knight describes the scene as she approached the Post Road mail and stagecoach stop at Havern’s Tavern (site of present Pagoda Inn) on horseback in 1704:

... the way being smooth and even, the night warm, and the Tall and thick Trees at a distance, especially when the moon glar'd light through the branches, fill'd my Imagination with the pleasant delusion of a Sumptuous city, fill'd with famous Buildings and churches, with their spiring steeples, Balconies, Galleries and I know not what . . .

The post rider’s bugle, announcing the arrival of the mail along with hers, quickly robbed her of her illusions, and the noise of the gathered men in the tavern below her sleeping quarters robbed her of her night’s sleep as well. Havern’s Tavern was a



popular meeting place for locals as well as a “post office” where they could pick up or drop off mail delivered by the stagecoach.

Also along Post Road, now a large development, lies what was once one of the largest farms in the area – the Reynolds Farm. [The Reynolds family came into the Providence area about 1637; William Reynolds signed a compact in Providence in that year, promising obedience to orders supporting the public good. His son James is associated with the North Kingstown property. There was much intermarriage between the sons and daughters of the Narragansett Plantations. James Reynolds married a daughter of the Potter family (Deborah). Albert Updike (Wilkin’s brother, whose small portrait is up in the 18th century bedchamber) married a Reynolds – Dorcas Reynolds. Wilkin’s sister Elizabeth married Joseph Reynolds.

Across Post Road from the entrance to Smith’s Castle lie a bronze plaque recognizing Roger Williams and a small, shaded rest area called Richard Smith’s Grove. Just off the grove is the Palmer-Northop House, a historic house probably built around 1675 and enlarged in the early 1700s. There is some speculation that the original home may have been built by Roger Williams or has some connection to the Smiths.

The site of the current Wilson Park (near the intersection with Route 1A) was once the pasture land for the Cocumscussoc Dairy established in 1919. In the 1920s the Fox family had a profitable ice cream and milk stand at the corner of West Main and Post Road, which segued into a Howard Johnson’s when they sold out in the 30s.

Coaching Rods of Old New England by George Francis Marlowe, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1945.

“The Lower Post Road followed the route of the Middle Road as far as Dedham, from there going by way of South Dedham (now Norwood), Wrentham, Attleboro, and Providence, and on by Greenwich to Kingston. Another route followed the eastern shore of Narragansett Bay through Bristol to Newport Ferry, joining the other at Kingston. “

“By the accounts we have, the early years of that part of the road in the vicinity of Narragansett Bay were especially rich in blood-curdling tales of murder and sudden death.” Near Mowry’s Tavern in Providence, a particularly bloody murder was committed. One winter morning in 1660, a carpenter named Clauson, said to have been a thrifty and much respected young man and a friend of Roger Williams, was found with his head split open lying in a clump of barberry bushes at the meeting of two paths near the tavern. A neighbor named Hernton was accused by the dying man of having induced an Indian to do the deed in revenge for some unknown



“The Roger Mowry Tavern, also known variously as the Roger Mowry House, Olney House and Abbott House, was a historic stone ender house, built around 1653, in Providence, Rhode Island. Roger Mowry was a constable and operated the only tavern in the town. The tavern also served as a government meeting place, church, and jail.” (wikipedia.org).

offense. The children of Hernton, and his children's children, are said to have been marked with split chins 'and haunted by barberry bushes'; a curse put upon them by the murdered man for Hernton's crime." (pp.78-79)

"At certain lonely crossroads along this route suicides were buried – in accordance with another pleasant custom of the times, with a stake driven through the heart – places of keen interest, no doubt, to travelers, which the coachman would point out with a flourish of his whip as the coach went rattling by." (p.87)

"Not far from the scene of [a murderer's skeleton] hanging in chains was another crossroads of less gruesome associations. Here took place several of those extraordinary ceremonies known as 'shift' marriages. In accordance with some eccentric law or custom of the time, a widow, about to be married again, could be freed of her dead husband's debts by being married at the crossroads 'clad only in her shift.' "A Town of Warwick document of 1725 reads:

These are to signify unto all ministers of justice that Henry Strait Jun of East Greenwich in ye colony of R.I. and Prov. Plantation took Mary Webb of ye town of Warwick in ye colony aforstd, widow, in only a shift and no other Garment in ye presns of Avis Gordon May Collins and Presilar Crandall and was Lawfully Married in Warwick ye first day of August 1725 by me Recorded ye 5th of Nov 1725 Pr John Wicks T.C. (pp.87-88)

***Long ago, at the end of the route,
The stage pulled up, and the folks stepped out.
They have all passed under the tavern door—
The youth and his bride and the gray three-score.
Their eyes were weary with dust and gleam,
The day had gone like an empty dream.
Soft may they slumber, and trouble no more
For their eager journey, its jolt and roar,
In the old coach over the mountain."***

Earle, Alice Morse. Stage-coach and Tavern Days (p. 2). .
Kindle Edition.

From: *Stage Coach and Tavern Days. Customs and Fashions in Old New England* by Alice Morse Earle, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1900.

If our Narragansett coach went over the Ridge Hill, the driver surely pointed out the spot where a lover once hid his coach and horses till there rode up from a bridle-path near by the beauty of Narragansett, "Unhappy Hannah Robinson," who jumped from her horse into the coach and drove off headlong to Providence to be married. An elopement should end happily, but the adjective ever attached to her name tells the tale of disappointment, and it was not many years ere she was borne back, deserted and dying, lying on a

horse-litter, to the spacious old home of her childhood, which is still standing.
Earle, Alice Morse. Stage-coach and Tavern Days (p. 213). Kindle Edition.

NOTE: Stage-coach and Tavern Days (Alice Morris Earle) is available as a free Kindle book through amazon.com (If you do not have a Kindle device you can download the free app to read on your computer or ipod). It's also free from: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/37272>

There are many versions of the Hannah Robinson story: <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/hannah-robinson-tragic-love-affair-unfortunate/>
<https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/rhode-island/hannah-robinson-tower-ri/>

The connection with Smith's Castle is that the elopement took place when Hannah (then 21) and her sister Mary were ostensibly on their way to a ball given by their Aunt Abigail Updike (at that time 27 and pregnant with or having just had her 4th child) at Cocumscussoc.

Carl Woodward in his *Plantation in Yankeeland* (p.128) says:

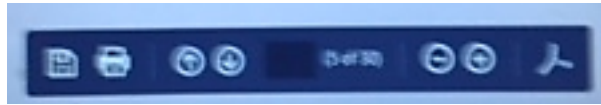
"But this version of the tale [The dying Hannah being brought home by her devastated father on a June day and stopping to look out over the countryside from Tower Hill and dying that night] is not supported in all details by recorded evidence. [Hannah's tombstone says that she died on October 30, 1773] Hence either her homecoming was not in June, or else she survived for some months thereafter. Furthermore, although the year of her elopement is not established, it appears that her marriage, instead of being of brief duration, may have lasted as much as six or eight years [and that she had children], since she had reached the age of 27 when she died. There are unverified reports also that with Hannah's return Peter Simons (her husband) was admitted to the Robinson home, that she died in his arms, and that he was present at her obsequies. Despite the reflections on his character, perhaps, it is suggested, he was not so bad a fellow after all."

The "decline" from which Hannah died was probably tuberculosis and her younger sister May, buried beside her in the family plot, also was taken by that disease a few years afterwards (not before Hannah as is told in one of the tales).

USING ON-LINE RESOURCES

Below are listed just a small sample of resources available free on-line. Many, of course, are also available in the library system, but accessing them on-line allows you unlimited use and the ability to search easily for specific topics.

NOTE: If you go to one of these sites, you can read it directly from the screen. However, if you want to use another format to view and/or to save it for later review, scroll down until you come to: "DOWNLOAD OPTIONS" – I find pdf the most useful format, because you can search easily. Click PDF (or another choice), book will download on screen. At the bottom of the page (for some files it may be in other places, but the icons are the same), you will see



Disk – save (save to whatever directory you wish on your computer)

Printer – print (usually the books are pretty long but you can use also this option to print a current page or a range of pages). NOTE: Be careful with the page numbers you request because the number shown in the pdf task bar may not coincide with the actual page number because the document also numbers cover, blank pages, table of contents, etc.

Arrow Up – go back a page

Arrow Down – go forward a page

Box with number (e.g., 5 of 300)– if you type in a specific page number, you can go to that page; it is helpful to go to end of the book to see if it is indexed; this helps to find specific topics.

Minus sign in circle – make font size smaller

Plus sign in circle – make font size larger

Triple Loop – PDF

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008376811> - *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations* – Volumes 1-10

<https://archive.org/details/entertaininghist00chur/page/n7> *The entertaining history of King Philip's war: which began in the month of June, 1675; as also of expeditions more lately made against the common enemy, and Indian rebels, in the eastern parts of New-England. . .* by Benjamin Church. A first person account of the Great Swamp Fight and other incidents in King Philip's War.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1034&context=libraryscience> *A Brief History of the Warr [sic] with the Indians in New-England (1676)* by Increase Mather.

https://archive.org/stream/cu31924028671331/cu31924028671331_djvu.txt *King Philip's war; based on the archives and records of Massachusetts, Plymouth, Rhode Island and Connecticut, and contemporary letters and accounts, with biographical and*

topographical notes by George Ellis & John E. Morris (1906) summarizes earlier accounts.

<https://archive.org/details/narragansettplan00chanrich/page/6> *The Narragansett Planters* – Edward Channing, 1886.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433008693537;view=1up;seq=9> – *Memoirs of the Rhode Island Bar* by Wilkins Updike, 1842. Has introduction and biographical sketches of early members which give quite a bit of local history, see particularly Daniel Updike.

YOUR "AT-HOME" RESEARCH LIBRARY

There are many wonderful resources available either for use on-line or for download to your computer in pdf form. Here are just a few I found interesting/useful.* These are also available in print, but may be difficult to find or for "Library Use Only."

Arnold, James N. *The Records of the Proprietors of Narragansett: Otherwise Called The Fones Record, Rhode Island Colonial Gleanings*, Providence: Narragansett Historical Publishing Company, 1894. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924028851752> (Largely records of deeds)

Channing, Edward. *The Narragansett Planters: A Study of Causes*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1886. <https://archive.org/details/narragansettplan00chanrich>

MacSparran, James. *A Letter Book and Abstract of Out Services*, (Rev. MacSparran's Diary) Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1899. <https://archive.org/details/letterbookabstra00macs>

Odyke, Charles Wilson. *Op Dyck Genealogy*, Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1889. Available at https://archive.org/stream/opdyckgenealogyc1889opdy/opdyckgenealogyc1889opdy_djvu.txt

Potter, Elisha R., Jr. *The Early History of Narragansett*, Providence: Marshall, Brown and Company, 1835. <https://archive.org/details/earlyhistoryofna00pott>

Udike, Wilkins. *A History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett*, Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1907. https://archive.org/stream/cu31924096160985/cu31924096160985_djvu.txt

Udike, Wilkins. *Memoirs of the Rhode Island Bar*, Boston: T.H. Webb & Co., 1842. https://books.google.com/books/about/Memoirs_of_the_Rhode_Island_Bar.html?id=a8sAAAAIAAJ

*Usually you will have to page down a little on the page to look for the "Other Formats" or "Download Options" link, choose pdf and read from screen after it loads and/or use floppy icon to save as ---- to the file of your choice for future use.