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Roger Williams, The Founder of Providence – The Pioneer of Religious Liberty

Amasa M. Eaton

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ROGER WILLIAMS

THE FOUNDER OF PROVIDENCE—THE PIONEER OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

BY

AMASA M. EATON, A. M., LL. B.

WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY IN SCHOOLS

BY

CLARA E. CRAIG

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
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PREFATORY NOTE.

In providing for the issue of a series of historical studies relating to Rhode Island, adapted to use in school, the Department of Education is fortunate in being able to present, as an initial number, Mr. Eaton's study of "Roger Williams, the Founder of Providence." It was first delivered as an address before the Rhode Island Historical Society on the second of October, 1906, upon the unveiling of the tablets placed by the State to mark the site of the spring where the settlers first landed and the site of the Roger Williams Home Lot.

As the founder of Providence, as a leading actor in the beginnings of Rhode Island, and as one of the few famous Americans of Colonial times whose names will endure, Roger Williams is certainly a great historical personage, of whose life and times every pupil in our schools should have knowledge. Teachers are reminded of the opportunity here presented to acquaint their pupils with facts of the early history of their State, and thereby awaken in them an abiding interest in its past story and future weal. The value of the pamphlet for use in school is enhanced by the suggestions, prepared by Miss Craig on request, for study in both primary and grammar grades.

Teachers and pupils will surely share in our thankful appreciation of the generous service of Mr. Eaton and Miss Craig.

ROGER WILLIAMS,

THE

FOUNDER OF RHODE ISLAND.

Roger Williams, the pioneer of religious liberty and of complete separation of church and state, was born in 1603, according to his own statements made in late life. He was the son of James Williams, of London, who is described as a merchant tailor, and Alice (Pemberton) Williams. In his youth Roger took down speeches, in the Court of Star Chamber, in short-hand. He presented his notes to Lord Coke, and this great lawyer and chief justice, taking a liking to the youth, became his friend and patron. In 1621 he sent him to Sutton's Hospital, now better known as Charter House. Many distinguished men went to this school, among them Addison, Steele, John Wesley, Blackstone, Thirlwall, Havelock, John Leech, Thackeray, and Grote. When Thackeray lectured in Providence he told of carving his initials on a beam in this old school, when himself a scholar there, and of finding there the initials R. W., cut by Roger Williams when a scholar at the same school.

In 1623, after gaining a prize at this school, Roger was admitted to Pembroke College, Cambridge, whence he was graduated with honors in 1626. Admitted to the ministry, in the English Church, he became chaplain in the household of Sir William Masham, whose wife was a cousin of Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell's name was Williams, he having assumed the name of Cromwell in recognition of his kinship to Thomas Cromwell, the famous minister of Henry VIII. Inevitably this suggests the inquiry whether Roger Williams was not related to Lady Masham, for this might account for his appoint-

ment as domestic chaplain in her family. Straus, in his life of Roger Williams, mentions the tradition, but he does not mention the important fact that Cromwell's name was Williams. The facts yet remain to be unearthed, through research in England. In view of Roger Williams's acquaintance with Oliver Cromwell it would seem that if there were any relationship some mention of the fact would be preserved.

Church preferment was offered Williams, but his growing dislike to the Anglican liturgy led him to decline it and to become a Puritan. It was a period of bitter persecution by Laud at the head of the English Church. Williams prepared himself, by the study of Dutch, to join the Pilgrims left in Holland. Marrying Mary Barnard and changing his plans, the couple sailed for Boston on the ship "Lyon," reaching Nantasket, February 5, 1631, after a perilous voyage of 65 days, bringing relief to the famished Pilgrim colony at Plymouth. Favorable reports about Williams having reached Boston, he was soon invited to occupy the pulpit of John Wilson, then on a visit to England. He declined, because, as he said, they were an unseparated people. The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, although non-conformists, had not yet formally withdrawn from the Church of England; but the Pilgrims of Plymouth were "Separatists," they having become a separate church before they left Holland, and this step had led them logically to the conclusion that the state has no right to punish spiritual sins. Williams disapproved, therefore, of the control over the individual conscience that the Boston church arrogated to itself. Finding also that the Boston church was supported by the civil magistrates, Williams protested against it, claiming that any church that used the arm of the civil power to enforce its claims, is not a church of Jesus Christ, thus adopting a distinguishing feature of the Baptists, although he was not yet numbered with them. This gave great offense to the Boston ministers, and after a short pastorate in 1631 in Salem, he went to Plymouth and was settled there, as assistant to the pastor the Rev. Ralph Smith, against the remonstrances of the ministers in Boston. At Plymouth, as elsewhere,

he improved every opportunity to cultivate the friendship of the Indians and to learn their language. He was obliged to support himself partly by manual labor.

Returning to Salem in 1633, upon the death of Samuel Skelton, in 1634, Williams became his successor as pastor of the First Church. Here he began teaching "that no person should be restrained from, nor constrained to, any worship or ministry," except in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience. Winthrop tells us in his Journal that Williams was so jealous of personal freedom, he doubted the propriety of meetings of ministers for social and literary improvement "lest it might grow in time to a presbytery or superintendency, to the prejudice of the church's liberty."

The main contention of Williams was that the civil power should have no authority over the consciences of men. He denied, further, the validity of title to land under the Bay's charter of 1629 from Charles I, holding that valid title could be acquired only from the Indians. He objected also to the cross in the English flag, as papistical. It will readily be seen, that if the assertion of these doctrines were allowed to go unrebuked, enemies of the Puritans in England and of this Puritan colony might easily represent to the king that the colony was seditious, if not traitorous, in sentiment.

In July, 1635, Williams was summoned to appear before the General Court of Massachusetts to answer the charge of maintaining dangerous opinions; and in October, 1635, still persisting in his contumacy, he was adjudged guilty of having "broached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates." Sentence of banishment was passed against him, and he was ordered to depart the jurisdiction. It would seem that, foreseeing the result, some time earlier in this year, 1635, he had visited his old friend, the Indian Chief Massasoit, in his wigwam at Mount Hope, near Bristol, and had obtained from him a grant of land on the east shore of the Blackstone river. Williams was ordered to depart within six weeks, but was afterwards granted leave to remain until spring, provided he should not "go about to draw others to his

opinions;" but as many still resorted to his house to hear him, and to make arrangements for removal with him in the spring, he was held to have violated the condition upon which he had been allowed to remain, and he was ordered to go to Boston, which he declined to do. Captain John Underhill was thereupon despatched with a sloop to Salem, to arrest him and to put him on a ship for deportation to England. But warned, Williams left Salem during the night, with two companions, and fled through the wilderness. He passed the rest of the winter on the bank of the Blackstone river, at or near the spot in East Providence now marked by a tablet, and he and his companions began planting corn in the spring of 1636, when, to quote his own words: "I received a letter from my ancient friend Mr. Winslow, the Governor of Plymouth, professing his own and others' love and respect to me, yet lovingly advising me, since I was fallen into the edge of their bounds, and they were loath to displease the Bay, to remove to the other side of the water, and there, he said, I had the country free before me, and might be as free as themselves, and we should be loving neighbors together."

According to tradition, with five companions (William Harris, John Smith the miller, Joshua Verin, Thomas Angell, and Francis Wickes), he embarked in a canoe, probably in June (1636), and paddling down the Seekonk river, the party stopped to answer the greeting of the friendly Indians, "What Cheer, Netop," at Slate Rock. This is now the appropriate device on the seal of the city of Providence. Rounding Fox Point and proceeding up the river, they went up the smaller stream, the Moshassuck, to a point near St. John's Church, and landed at the spring now in the cellar of the house owned by Mrs. Sylvanus Lewis, on Alamo Lane, where was erected in 1906, by the State, through a committee of the Rhode Island Historical Society, a tablet with the inscription: "Under this house still flows the Roger Williams spring." Here, at Moshassuck, was founded the new settlement called Providence by Williams, "in grateful remembrance of God's merciful providence to me in my distress." Here he was joined, later the same year, by his wife and

their two children. What is now North Main street, then called the Town Street, was the main street. The "home lots" ran from it over the hill to what is now Hope street. The tide flowed almost up to the spring, and the street passed along on the edge of the shore. Williams's home lot was at the corner of North Main and Howland streets, and here was erected, in 1906 by the State, through the same committee, a tablet marked: "A few rods east of this spot stood the house of Roger Williams."

We know from Gov. Winthrop that : "At their first coming Mr. Williams and the rest did make an order that no man should be molested for his conscience." As Staples says, in his Annals of Providence: "Here, then, was established a Christian community based upon the great principles of perfect religious liberty, as contended for by Mr. Williams, both at Salem and at Plymouth."

Fortunately the famous compact of 1638 has come down to us. It is as follows: "We whose names are hereunder, desirous to inhabit in the town of Providence, do promise to subject ourselves in active or passive obedience to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for public good of the body, in an orderly way, by the major assent of the present inhabitants, masters of families, incorporated together into a town-fellowship, and such others whom they shall admit unto them, only in civil things."

In this rude wilderness these men did what law-book writers and jurists tell us can not be done. Without any external source of authority or power, they incorporated themselves as the town of Providence, and the corporation thus created still lives and is acknowledged to be a corporation. This document is certainly one of the most precious in existence, for it founded a state on a new principle by the four words "only in civil things," the principle set forth in the words over the portico of our State House: "To set forth a lively experiment that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained with full liberty in religious concernments."

In 1639 Williams adopted the principles of the Baptists, to which he had previously shown a leaning. He was publicly immersed, and

planted the first Baptist church or society, for they had no meeting house. This is said by Benedict, in his History of the Baptists, published in 1813, to be "the mother of eighteen thousand churches of a like faith and order on the continent of America." Richard Scott said: . . . "I walked with him in the Baptist way about three or four months, in which time he broke off from his society and declared at large the ground and reason of it: that their baptism could not be right, because it was not administered by an apostle."

But only a few months later, doubting the validity of his immersion, Williams severed his connection with the Baptists and became a Seeker; that is, one dissatisfied with all existing sects, seeking something better. In 1646 Cromwell wrote to his daughter, Mrs. Ireton: "and thus, to be a Seeker is to be of the best sect, next after a Finder; and such an one shall every humble Seeker be, in the end. Happy Seeker, happy Finder."

In 1644 Robert Baillie, a member of the Westminster Assembly, wrote: "The Independents are divided among themselves. One Mr. Williams has drawn a great number after him to a singular independency denying any true church in the world, and will have every man serve God by himself alone." Later Baillie wrote:

"Sundry of the Independents are stepped out of the Church and follow my good acquaintance Mr. Roger Williams, who says there is no church, no sacraments, no pastors, nor has been since a few years after the apostles."

If these things were said of any one now, with all our independence of thought in matters theological, what would be thought of him? Can we wonder that in a less tolerant age there were those who, hearing these things said of Williams, deemed him an outcast, a renegade firebrand, whose views should be denied a hearing?

The colony at Providence then included the lands now known as Providence, as we know it now, and Pawtucket, North Providence, Cranston, Johnston, Scituate, Foster, Smithfield, Glocester, Burrillville, North Smithfield, and Lincoln. This colony, as well as the col-

onies settled within the next three years at Portsmouth and Newport, had a common fear of encroachments by the Massachusetts Bay settlement, and this fear was enhanced by the consciousness that they had no title to their lands except that from the Indians. This sense of common danger caused them to unite in sending Williams to England, as their agent, to procure a charter, or patent, from Parliament, then the source of power. His application for leave to sail from Boston was denied by the Massachusetts Bay authorities, and he was obliged to sail from New York. He employed his leisure on this voyage compiling "A Key into the Language of America, or an Help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America called New England." It was printed in London in 1643, at the press of Gregory Dexter, who had previously joined the settlement in Providence. During this and a subsequent visit to England, Williams was hospitably received and entertained by Sir Henry Vane, the younger. While Governor of the Massachusetts Bay, Vane had become Williams's warm friend. He helped him materially in obtaining the desired Parliamentary Patent, in 1644, entitled "The Incorporation of the Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay, in New England, " with full power to govern themselves. Before returning to Providence Williams spent several months in London, seeing through the press those controversial works of his, now so dear to the heart of the bibliophile, but so dreary to the understanding of the average man of this day. Will the controversial theological literature of to-day be equally difficult of apprehension two and three centuries hence? It will at least be safe from the fate that attended Williams's work, "The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience," for this work was ordered by Parliament to be burned by the common hangman.

Armed with an English safe conduct, or letter of protection, Williams returned to Providence, via Boston, in December, 1644, bringing with him the Parliamentary Patent. It was not formally adopted until 1647, the fourth town, Warwick, then also joining the colony. The towns or separate colonies were long fearful of the result of giving up their powers to a united colony.

In 1651 William Coddington, of Newport, went to England, and by some means, not yet fully understood, obtained a commission appointing him the Governor of the Island of Aquidneck, (the island of Rhode Island) thus disrupting the union effected under the Parliamentary Patent. Again Williams was sent to England, this time, with that able man John Clarke, of Newport, to secure the abrogation of Coddington's authority as well as to obtain protection against the encroachments of Massachusetts and Connecticut, which, between them, would leave but little territory for Rhode Island. Williams remained two years and a half in England at this time, in the mission he was sent out on, in renewing old and in forming new friendships, and in seeing new controversial tracts printed. He visited his old friend Vane, now at the height of power, but subsequently to lose his head on the scaffold. He was also on intimate terms with Hugh Peters. It is probable he knew John Owen and Richard Baxter. He associated with Thomas Harrison, the regicide, the President of Cromwell's Council of State, whom he described as "a heavenly man, but most high flown for the Kingdom of the Saints." He knew Henry Lawrence, another member of Cromwell's Council, also that eccentric genius, Sir Thomas Urquhart, and he took part in securing a mitigation of the terms of his imprisonment.

But he had also greater men than these among his friends, including Coke, Cromwell, and Milton. He wrote to Lord Coke's daughter, Mrs. Sadler: "My much honored friend, that man of honor and wisdom, and piety, your dear father, was often pleased to call me his son." Williams wrote of Cromwell as "pleased to send for me and to entertain many discourses with me at several times."

Cromwell was an Independent, or a Congregationalist, as distinguished from the Presbyterians. He was a believer in liberty of conscience. Major-General Crawford had cashiered a captain because he was thought to be an Anabaptist; whereupon Cromwell wrote to him: "Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinion: if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies."

The intimacy between Williams and Milton continued during all Williams's residence in England. Williams wrote: "It pleased the Lord to call me for some time and with some persons to practise the Hebrew, the Greek, Latin, French, and Dutch. The Secretary of the Council, Mr. Milton, for my Dutch I read him, read me many more languages." Milton too believed in liberty of conscience, but not to the same extent that Williams did, since he would restrict the application of the principle to those of the Protestant faith. What high discourse on this subject must have taken place between these two men.

It is indicative of Williams's kindness of heart and his desire to do good to others that while in London he worked to secure a supply of coals from Newcastle for the poor, during the winter. His unselfishness is attested by his "wisely putting the crown from him," as Richman says, when he received a letter from Providence Plantations, dated October 28, 1652, thanking him for his "care and diligence to watch all opportunityes to promote our peace," and intimating that it would be to the public advantage were "the Honorable State of England . . . to invest, appoint and empower yourself to come over as Governor of this Colony for the space of one year."

Returning to Providence in 1654, after this memorable stay in London, during which he enjoyed the opportunities afforded for communion with kindred spirits, Williams found the colony disorganized and divided. He brought with him a notable letter from his friend and the colony's friend, Vane, deprecating the disorder in the colony and inviting the planters to unite in putting an end to it. The distinction between disorderly license and ordered liberty in matters of conscience is well brought out in Williams's letter to the town of Providence, written in 1665, in which he likens the commonwealth to a ship:

"There goes many a ship to sea with many hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common: and is a true picture of a commonwealth or an human combination or society. It hath fallen out

sometimes that both Papists and Protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked into one ship. Upon which supposal, I affirm that all the liberty of conscience that ever I pleaded for, turns upon these two hinges, That none of the Papists, Protestants, Jews, or Turks, be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship, nor compelled from their own particular prayers or worship, if they practice any, I further add that I never denied that notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command the ship's course: yea, and also command that justice, peace, and sobriety be kept and practiced both among the seamen and all the passengers. If any of the seamen refuse to perform their services, or passengers to pay their freight: if any refuse to help in person or purse towards the common charge or defence: if any refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship, concerning their common peace or preservation: if any shall mutiny and rise against their commanders and officers: if any should preach or write that there ought to be no commander or officers, because all are equal in Christ, therefore no masters, no laws, nor orders, nor corrections, nor punishments:— I say I never denied, but in such cases, whatever is pretended, the commander or commanders may judge, resist, compel and punish such transgressors according to their deserts and merits. This is seriously and honestly minded, may, if it so please the Father of lights, let in some light to such as willingly shut not their eyes."

From 1654 to 1657 Williams was President, or, as we now say, Governor, of the four united towns or colonies, then called Providence Plantations. He continued to render important service to the adjacent colonies, as heretofore, by using his influence with the Indians to preserve peace and by giving warning of impending hostilities to the authorities of Massachusetts and Connecticut. He himself wrote: "Upon letters received from the Governor and Council at Boston, requesting me to use my utmost and speediest endeavors to break and hinder the league labored for by the Pequots and Mohegans against the English (excusing the not sending of company and supplies by the haste of the business) the Lord helped me

immediately to put my life into my hand, and scarce acquainting my wife, to ship in a poor canoe, and to cut through a strong wind with great seas, every minute in hazard of life, to the Sachem's house. Three days and three nights my business forced me to lodge and mix with the bloody Pequot ambassadors, whose arms methought, reeked with the blood of my countrymen, murdered and massacred by them on the Connecticut river, and from whom I could not but nightly look for their bloody knives at my own throat also. God wondrously preserved me and helped me to break to pieces the Pequot's negotiation and design: and to make and finish, by many travels and charges, the English league with the Narragansetts and Mohegans against the Pequots."

William Harris, one of the first settlers of Providence in 1636, had given an absurd application to Williams's principles, by promulgating anarchical doctrines, such as the unlawfulness of "all earthly powers" and the "bloodguiltiness" of all discipline. Williams, while President, made one of the few great mistakes of his life by issuing a warrant for Harris's arrest on a charge of high treason. The charge could not be sustained. There was strong feeling between the two men, arising out of a dispute over Providence lands and their boundary lines, which made the action of Williams all the more unfortunate. The dispute and the lawsuit arising therefrom survived them both and were not finally disposed of until well into the eighteenth century. To this day there are descendants of William Harris in this community who, through the influence of family tradition, but with but little knowledge of the facts, entertain but a poor, mean opinion of Roger Williams.

Williams's sincere belief in the principles he professed is attested by his treatment of Quakers, or Friends. He abhorred their views, yet he steadily refused to expel them or to persecute them when they were driven out of Massachusetts and sought refuge in Rhode Island. When an old man, Williams rowed himself to Newport and back again to hold there a public debate with three of the followers of George Fox. As usual, both sides claimed the victory and published

diverse accounts of the arguments, and each side manifested great talent in heaping abuse on its adversary, a fault in argument from which Williams was generally free. With a grim sense of punning humor, Williams published a quarto treatise of 335 pages, in 1676, on this subject, entitled "George Foxe digged out of his Burrowes."

The royal charter of 1663 was obtained by John Clarke, the colony's agent in England, and the government of the colony was reorganized under it. Williams was elected an Assistant, and was re-elected in 1667 and 1670. In 1677 he was again elected Assistant, but declined to serve. The Assistants, one from each town, now constitute our Senate.

King Philip's War occurred in 1675–76. In the memorable "Pierce's Fight," near Pawtucket, a band of perhaps six hundred Indians ambushed a force of about fifty white men and thirty friendly Indians. But three men escaped. Three days later the band of wild savages marched on Providence and burned it, leaving but eight houses standing. The well-attested tradition is that Roger Williams, now an old man, alone and unarmed, save with his staff, went out to meet the band of approaching Indians. His efforts to stay their course were unavailing, but they allowed him to return unmolested, such was the love and veneration entertained for him by these savages. At the end of this war Williams served on the committee appointed to allot the captured Indians as slaves among the heads of families residing in Providence. The contrast between the two situations is striking.

For some years Williams kept a post for trading with the Indians at Cocumscussuc, near Wickford. This business, of considerable pecuniary profit, brought him into friendly relations with the Indians. He was obliged to sell it to obtain the means to go to London the second time as the agent of the colony, relinquishing profits, he says, of one hundred pounds a year. Williams, never rich in worldly goods, died poor. So far as is known he left no will, and no inventory of his estate was ever filed. His house, in the rear of North Main street and the corner of Howland's alley, on his home lot, was

burned by the Indians at the outbreak of King Philip's war. Williams went to live with his son Daniel, and his house was not rebuilt. It appears from a study of the town records and the traditions connected with the subject, that no building has since then been erected on this part of these premises. It has remained for a committee of the Rhode Island Historical Society, while preparing to place the tablet to mark the site of Roger Williams's house, in 1906, to find buried under the soil the fireplace and hearthstones of the founder of the State. The site should become the property of the State, and suitable protection should be provided for the preservation of these historic remains.

The date of the death of Roger Williams is unknown. His last known letter was to Governor Bradstreet, in Boston, and was dated Providence, May 6, 1682. He died in Providence, probably in April, 1683. All we know of his death is the mention, made in a letter of May 10, following: "The Lord hath arrested by death our ancient and approved friend, Mr. Roger Williams, with divers others here."

Two opposite views are maintained as to Williams's character, although none deny his learning and his ability. One view is that he was an impracticable fanatic, arrogant, dogmatic, pragmatic, a man hard to get along with, visionary and contentious. This is the view taken of him by his enemies. Bradford, in his History of Plymouth, calls him a man godly and zealous, having many precious parts, but very unsettled in judgment. Cotton Mather, in his Magnalia, spoke of his having a windmill in his head, but it must be remembered that Mather was the theological autocrat of Boston, and of course did not believe in liberty of conscience unless that liberty led one to follow him and his church. But many of his contemporaries, who were personally acquainted with Williams, speak very differently of him. Milton calls him an extraordinary man, a noble confessor of religious liberty, who sought and found a safe refuge for the sacred ark of conscience. Edward Winslow said he was "a man lovely in his carriage."

Sir Thomas Urquhart, in expressing his "thankfulness to that reverend preacher Mr. Roger Williams, of Providence, in New England," said: "he did approve himself a man of such discretion and inimitably sanctified parts, that an archangel from heaven could not have shown more goodness with less ostentation."

Bancroft claims for Roger Williams a place by the side of Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, and other great benefactors of mankind. It is true he was looked upon by many as "a disturber of the peace," "a disseminator of pestilential opinions," "conscientiously contentious." "But it should not be forgotten that his nature was kind, gentle, sympathetic, forgiving, making him alike the earliest and life long apostle to the natives, and the truest and most influential friend the Puritans had."

In his "History of American Literature," Moses Coit Tyler says: "From his early manhood, even down to his late old age, Roger Williams stands in New England a mighty and benignant form, always pleading for some magnanimous idea, some tender charity, the rectification of some wrong, the exercise of some sort of forbearance towards men's bodies or souls."

Perhaps Lowell is just to him in "Among My Books," saying: "He does not show himself a strong or a very wise man," though "charity and tolerance flow so noticeably from his pen that it is plain they were in his heart."

Richman says that "highly affectionate in his own nature he" (Williams) "was ever ready to discover answering sentiments of regard in others. In his view Governor Winthrop tenderly loved him. John Cotton looked on him with affection; even acerbic old Mrs. Sadlier, the daughter of Sir Edward Coke, whose recorded wish was that some day Tyburn might give him welcome, was his much honored friend."

Williams's life is his best monument. His kindness towards the Indians, the services he rendered them and the services he rendered his enemies who had exiled him and driven him into the wilderness, services often rendered by restraining the Indians from warfare and

giving his enemies notice of impending danger and helping to avoid it, mark the essential nobleness of his character. He shared freely with his fellow settlers the gifts of land made to him personally by the Indians. He served the colony gratuitously throughout his life, with difficulty securing repayment of his expenses, leaving his family for years while in this service. It is true that the views he held and promulgated as to liberty of conscience were not original with him. They were in the air as the logical result of the development of thought at that time, and doubtless in the further course of development of civilization they would have made themselves heard and felt, even if Rogers Williams had never lived. But his is the honor of founding a state upon the distinctive principle of the complete separation of church and state, a principle accepted and embodied in the constitution of the United States, a principle that with the march of time, in the further development of a progressive civilization, will conquer in Europe, as it has already in the United States, and will free all churches from the control of the state, as well as all states from the control of any church.

Perhaps the best proof we have of the high character, great learning and ability, as well as of the real nobleness, of Roger Williams is to be found in considering the character of his friends. They were the best men of the age, wherever he went. They included Bradford, Winslow, the Winthrops, Bradstreet, Vane, and others like them, the leaders in New England, even though they did not always believe in the principles he taught. They included Coke, Milton, Cromwell, Vane, Peters, Harrison, and many others, the leaders of thought and of action in England during a remarkable period in its history. He moved among them their equal, the friend of all. We may be sure from this fact that we may with justice and truth place a high estimate upon his character as a man.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF ROGER WILLIAMS.

A.—Suggestions for Study in Primary Grades.

No formal study of history should be required before the fifth grade. Primary pupils should properly learn their country's story in the story hour.

In their observance of Thanksgiving Day, the children have become familiar with the story of the Puritans and Pilgrims. Recall this narrative to give setting to the recital of the tales of Roger Williams.

A student of local history says, "We go far afield for our heroes, but here is one to hand." Let the primary teacher, protecting the child from religious controversy and impossible explanation of cause and effect, tell the simple, personal story of the founder of Rhode Island. Let her describe his early life in England, his persecution as a Puritan, his departure to join his brethren in Massachusetts, his disagreement in belief with them, and his consequent banishment. Let her picture his wandering through the wilderness, his ejection from his temporary home on the banks of the Blackstone river, his journey down the Seekonk river to Slate rock, and up the Moshassuck river, to a spot which he selected for a home, purchasing it from the Indians and naming it Providence. Emphasize his justice towards the Indians and their resultant friendship for him.

Interpret the seal of Providence. Locate and if possible visit the localities associated with the life of Roger Williams and the early history of the city which he founded.

B.—Suggestions for Study in Grammar Grades.

Pupils of grammar grades should be informed upon the appended topics which have been prepared with a view to shield them from the fierce fire of religious contention with which the name of Roger Williams is associated. Controversy is not history.

Roger Williams.

I.

Birth; parentage.
Youth; schooling.

Admission to ministry of English Church.
Union with Puritan party.
Departure from England.

II.

Arrival in Boston.
Protest against assumed authority and civil connection of Boston church.
Removal to Plymouth.
Friendliness towards Indians.
Pastorate in Salem (1634).
Promulgation of doctrine of "personal freedom."
Denial of titles to lands under royal grant.
Trial before General Court of Massachusetts.
Sentence.
Flight through wilderness.

III.

Settlement of Providence.
Compact of 1638.
Lands included within Providence colony.
Granting of Parliamentary Patent of 1643.
Confederation of Providence, Newport, Portsmouth, and Warwick (1647).
Williams' services as Governor of Providence Plantations.
Granting of charter of 1663.
Williams' election as Assistant.
Williams' effort to save Providence from destruction by Indians.
Williams' death.

IV.

Views of character of Roger Williams.

Places identified with the life of the founder of Rhode Island and with the early history of the colony should be located and if possible visited. Many of these places are mentioned in the pamphlet.

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