

# THE ROGER WILLIAMS FAMILY ASSOCIATION

1999-2000 No. 86

Incorporated January 30, 1906  
Providence, Rhode Island



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Cousins and Friends,

Greetings to all our members and, on behalf of the Association, a warm welcome to all our new members.

We note with regret the passing of Miss Dorothy Budlong of Providence, for many years our Sunshine Chairman until poor health required her to relinquish her duties. We also extend our sympathies to those families recently bereaved.

The Program Committee, led by 1st Vice-President Walter Covell, has planned a very interesting series of meetings and events for our members for the coming year. I hope that many of our cousins, from near and far, will be able to attend. I guarantee that you will enjoy the gracious company and camaraderie of your fellow Williams descendants. Also, members are invited to send in any suggestions they may have for future programs ... fresh thoughts are always welcome.

I encourage everyone to visit our web site regularly ([www.rogerwilliams.org](http://www.rogerwilliams.org)). For those of you without access to the internet, seek out a friend or relative who wouldn't mind allowing you to browse the web on their computer. Between online shopping, information about Roger Williams, links to other organizations, and (soon) archived copies of our Association's bulletins, I'm certain you'll find the web site most interesting.

Past President Dorothy H. White, with the help of several devoted volunteers, continues to organize our records and treasures at the Roger Williams University Library. Members are encouraged to visit our Association's archives at the library at 1 Old Ferry Road in Bristol, RI (401-253-1040).

As a member of the Association, I applaud the fine efforts continually put forth by all our officers and volunteers. Robert Allen Greene has done an admirable job as our President for the last three years, and it will be difficult taking over the helm from such capable hands. A. John Prokopowicz, after many years of faithful and expert service as our Treasurer, will soon be relinquishing the ledgers and, at last, enjoying his retirement. And Elsie Bushnell Williams, an active member since 1949, continues to serve the Association as Registrar, entering her twenty-fourth year in that role. We are indeed fortunate to have so many able and willing volunteers to further the Association's goals.

Keeping the above company in mind, I am honored to have been elected President of this Association. With the help of our dedicated officers, directors, and industrious committees, I am confident that we will have a very interesting and productive year.

My best wishes to all our members and their families.

Frank Budlong Stevenson

August 1999

# ROGER WILLIAMS' TRADING POST

*Janis M. Stevenson*

The June 1999 meeting of the Roger Williams Family Association was held at Smith's Castle at Cocumscussoc in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. It was a delightful afternoon, made special by a tour of the house and grounds led by knowledgeable guides in era costume and, later, a lovely picnic overlooking Mill Cove off Narragansett Bay. Also contributing to the afternoon's appeal was the knowledge that, somewhere nearby, Roger Williams conducted business from his trading post with the natives of the region.

As we sat in the shade and enjoyed the slight breeze off the water, some wondered where Roger Williams' trading post was actually located. Was it where Smith's Castle now stands? Was it the Vaughan House, as suggested by Elisha Potter? Or was it just across the road from Smith's Castle, either on the site of or still standing as the Hall-Northup House?

To figure out the mystery, it's probably best to consult the extensive research done by Col. Elmer Hall Palmer, current owner of the Hall-Northup House. Col. Palmer states that, after laying out the town of Providence in 1636, Roger Williams "decided to establish a house on Narragansett Bay to trade with the Indians and to escape worldly life. This was accomplished some time after 28 October 1637, when the Chief Narragansett sachem, Canonicus, gave Williams a tract of land for a trading post. It seems likely, although not conclusive, that this trading post was located at Cocumscussoc by 1638, since a letter by Williams is dated 7 Sept. 1638 at Narragansett. However, the first direct mention of the trading post at the site comes from a letter from Williams to John Winthrop Jr. dated 28 May 1647 at 'Cawcawmsquissick.' At Cocumscussoc, Williams and his Indian servants raised goats and crops, hunted wild game, and engaged in the lucrative trade with the Narragansett Indians."

Roger Williams conducted business with the natives at his trading post in Cocumscussoc until 1651. It was in that year that, needing cash to finance a journey to England to deal with the Colony's charter, he sold his trading post to Richard Smith. For fifty pounds, Williams sold "my trading house at Narragansett, together with two Iron Guns or murderers, there Lyeing as alsoe my fields & fenceing about the s'd House, is alsoe the use of the litle Island for goates which the old Sachem, deceased, Lent mee for that use ..."

Once the property left Williams' hands, did it survive as the Vaughan House? As Col. Palmer states: "The Vaughan house location for Williams' trading post was proposed by Elisha Potter in 'The Early History of Narragansett' in which he reports that 'Wilkins Updike [1784-1867] says Williams' trading house was where Royal Vaughan last lived next north of Spink's Tavern. John C. Reynolds lives there now.'

"This seems to be the least likely of the three possible locations. The reasons for this assessment are (1) the Vaughan house is too far from a harbor to be a logical choice for a trading post; (2) it is much closer to Maskechugg Brook than Cocumscussoc Brook, thereby making it illogical to call the settlement Cocumscussoc; and (3) the Vaughan house is located on property that was never owned by Richard Smith, Sr. who bought Williams' trading house in 1651."

If not the Vaughan House, is the Hall-Northup House or grounds the site of Roger Williams' trading post? At one time, some must have thought so, for around 1936 the North Kingstown Committee of the Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Tricentenary Committee, Inc. placed a plaque on a rock near the driveway to the Hall-Northup House. The plaque was engraved: "In 1637 near this spot ROGER WILLIAMS set up a trading post where he dwelt for several years trading and treating with the Narragansett Indians. His dealings so completely won and held the friendliness of the powerful Narragansett Sachems that for more than a generation the white settlements of Rhode Island were spared to become a flourishing state."

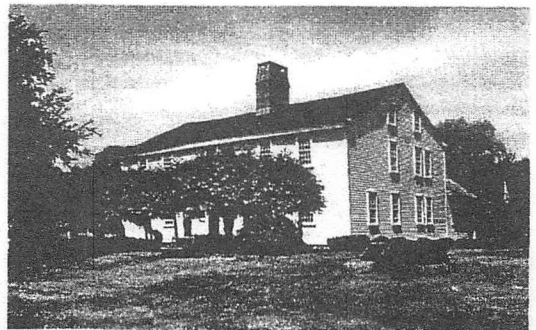
The architecture of the Hall-Northup House lends itself to the belief that this was the actual trading post building. As Col. Palmer relates: "The core of the Hall-Northup House is a one-room, one-and-a-half-story stone ender, which is characteristic of mid-seventeenth century Rhode Island homes. On the basis of its architecture and general location in the vicinity of Cocumscussoc, both Norman Isham and Antoinette Downing (1979) have suggested that 'if it were not that the chronicles of King Philip's War of 1675/76 record the destruction of every building south of Warwick, one would have to conclude that this is Roger Williams' trading post of ca. 1638.' It is possible that after King Philip's War the house was rebuilt on the foundation of the earlier structure, encompassing remains of the stone ender which may have been Williams' trading house."

Granting that the Hall-Northup House was destroyed during King Philip's War, was it at least the site of Roger Williams' trading post? Col. Palmer, borrowing from the work of Patricia E. Ruberstone (1990), Principal Investigator in her report with Robert K. Fitts, states that it was not. "... this house could not have been sold to Smith by Williams in 1651. Extensive deed and genealogical research showed that the house remained within the Hall family for the entire 18th C., and that the first Hall owner, William Hall, left his sons in his 1673 will 'all my land in the Narragansett which I purchased of Thomas Lawton.' Thomas Lawton purchased this tract from the Narragansett sachem Cadganaquant in 1660, but the exact location of this tract has not been identified. The tract is described as being 'bounded on the north and west with a river called Signebetuck together with all the mowable land bordering on its north and west sides of the said river, on the south bounded by an Indian path called Mascopoumsicke, on the east with the English path from Warwick to Pequot.' Assuming that the land purchased from Lawton is the same on which the house now stands, this land was never owned by Richard Smith and thus could not have been sold to him by Williams in 1651. Thus the Hall-Northup house does not seem to be the site of Williams' trading post."

The only remaining and most likely candidate for the site of Roger Williams' trading post is, therefore, the area surrounding Smith's Castle. Col. Palmer states: "According to the 'Petition From The Inhabitants Of The Narragansett Country To The King' in 1679 Smith may have moved into Williams' house after 1651 and built around it. This suggests that Williams' trading post would be in close proximity to the block house in which the Colonial troops were garrisoned in 1675, although it may not be on land presently owned by the Cocumscussoc Assoc. since the Updike lands were subdivided in the early 20th century." As stated in Roger Williams Family Association Bulletin No. 52, when Richard Smith took possession of Williams' trading post and property in 1651, he decided that it was there he would "put up his 'English Home.' In 1676 Indians burned the trading post and garrison house, but Richard Smith, Jr. erected in 1680, partly from material of the old building, the house which stands today at Cocumscussoc Farm."

The June 2000 meeting of the Roger Williams Family Association will be hosted by Col. and Mrs. Elmer Hall Palmer at the Hall-Northup House at Cocumscussoc. Perhaps one should take this opportunity to peruse the Hall-Northup House and grounds, then peer across the road to Smith's Castle ... and wonder.

Works Cited: First Families of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations *Lively Experiment*, Vol. II, No. 4, pp. 9-18; Roger Williams Family Association *Bulletin*, No. 52, p. 4.



Smith's Castle

# CALENDAR

September 1999 - June 2000

## **Saturday - September 18, 1999 at 1:30 pm**

Members and guests are invited to meet at the Boat House, Roger Williams Park for a business meeting and presentation by Robert Billington, President of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. A social hour with refreshments will follow.

## **Saturday - October 16, 1999 at 10:00 am**

We will meet at the Point Street Landing of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council's ferry and embark on a cruise of the historic Providence Harbor. The ferry will leave the landing at 10:30 am sharp. Following the cruise we will gather at a local restaurant for a self-ordered lunch and brief business meeting. The cost of the cruise and tour is \$10.00 per adult or \$5.00 per child. Please call Walter Covell, Program Chairperson, at 401-245-6279 by October 11 if you plan to attend.

*Directions: Route 95 North or South; exit 20 to Route 195 East towards Cape Cod/East Providence; exit 2 to Wickenden St./Point St.; right on Point Street and cross bridge to landing.*

## **Saturday - November 13, 1999 at 1:00 pm**

Members and guests will meet at the 1786 John Brown House at 52 Power Street in Providence, RI. A tour of the building (\$4.00 charge per person) will be followed by a brief business meeting and refreshments. Please call Ann Prokopowicz at 401-785-2512 by November 7 if you plan to attend.

## **Saturday - December 4, 1999 at 1:30 pm**

Members and guests are invited to enjoy a social hour and a program of Christmas music at the home of Alice Cashill at 24 Meadowbrook Drive, Barrington, RI. Please bring a non-perishable item for a food basket to go to Tap-In, Barrington's center for the needy.

*Directions from Providence: Route 195 East to Route 114 South toward Barrington; left at light at "White Church" onto Massasoit Avenue and follow through to New Meadow Road; right onto New Meadow Road; first right onto Meadowbrook Drive; Cashill home is on the left.*

## **Saturday - March 18, 2000 at 12 Noon**

We will meet for lunch at Chelo's, 2225 Post Road, Warwick, RI. Following a business meeting, Charlie Jefferds will speak to us about his career in radio. Please call Walter Covell, Program Chairperson, at 401-245-6279 before March 11 to select your choice of the following menu: meat pie "French Style" with vegetable, garden salad, dessert, and coffee (\$11.25); grilled chicken in herb sauce with potato, garden salad, dessert, and coffee (\$11.25); baked scrod with potato, garden salad, dessert, and coffee (\$13.50). Prices include gratuity.

*Directions from Providence: Route 95 South, State Airport exit, follow signs to Post Road south, Chelo's on right.*

## **Saturday - April 22, 2000 at 2:00 pm**

Members and guests will meet in the Auditorium at Roger Williams Park Museum for a business meeting and light refreshments. We will then attend the 3:00 show at the Museum's Planetarium (\$3.00 charge per person). Please note that there is now an elevator to the Auditorium. See the following page for an interesting note regarding the Association's role in the building of the planetarium.

## **Sunday - May 21, 2000 at 11:00 am**

First Baptist Church In America Founders' Sunday

75 North Main Street, Providence, RI

We will gather for a special service at the church founded by Roger Williams in 1638. Following coffee at the church, we will proceed to the home of Ev and Dot White at 15 Frederick Drive,

Barrington, RI for a 1:00 PM pot-luck lunch followed by a business meeting. If you plan to attend, please call the Whites at 401-246-0246 by May 14 to tell them what you would like to bring to the lunch.

*Directions from Providence: Route 195 East to Route 114 South toward Barrington; right onto Primrose Hill Road at "Zion Bible College" sign; second left onto Frederick Drive; White home is fourth house on the right.*

### **Saturday - June 17, 2000 at 11:00 am**

Members and guests will meet on the grounds at the home of Ann and Elmer Palmer in Wickford. Following the Annual Meeting and regular business meeting, we will enjoy a picnic lunch on the beautifully landscaped grounds of this Roger Williams historic site. A large canopy will be provided; members are required to bring their own picnic lunch, beverages, and lawn chairs. Please call Walter Covell, Program Chairperson, at 401-245-6279 before June 11 if you plan to attend.

*Directions from Providence: Route 95 South; Route 4 South; Route 403 South; right onto Route 1 South; the house is just south of and on the same side of Route 1 as the Rhode State Police Barracks, and is across the street from Smith's Castle.*

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### **Heavenly Real Estate**

The following excerpt from our October 1952 Bulletin should make our April trip to the Roger Williams Park Planetarium even more interesting: "Mrs. Winthrop H. Saunders, 255 Alabama Avenue, Providence 5, has recorded the quit-claim deed granted us for the Constellation of the 'Little Dipper' and 'Coma Berenices.' Roger Williams Park Museum, where we hold our Annual Meetings, will have an addition this spring in the form of a planetarium to be open to the public free of charge. In order to finance this project, Heavenly Real Estate has been offered for sale. The Roger Williams Family Association is proud to have acquired the 'Little Dipper' and the Star Cluster 'Coma Berenices' for \$50.00 ... The name of our Association will go on the permanent plaque in the Roger Williams Park Museum as a donor, and the names of the individual donors will be listed on our books in a permanent record."

### **Where Is Roger Williams' Watch?**

In 1936, in celebration of the Tercentenary of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, an exhibition was planned as part of the opening ceremonies. Mr. H. Russell Drown Jr. of New York, proud owner of the silver watch owned and used by Roger Williams, kindly allowed the Tercentennial Committee to display the artifact. It was described as "an inch and a quarter thick, two and one-eighths inches in diameter, fully 10 ounces in weight with a swinging pendulum and a device that changes every 24 hours to mark the day of the month ... Even the works are of gilt, elaborately decorated. The pendulum is a curiosity, seldom seen even in the oldest time pieces. The spring originally was wound with a catgut cord, but about a century or so ago was replaced by a fine chain. It is wound by a separate key about an inch long, inserted in a slot in the back. Hands of carved gold point to hours in letters and to minutes in numerals. Behind a thick rock crystal glass is the face of the watch in silver, ornamented in the center with a Cupid blowing a bugle and following a stag pursued by a hound. The name of the maker is engraved on the face. Below this is the small opening through which may be seen a rotating disc telling the day of the month" (Roger Williams Family Association *Bulletin*, No. 52, p. 4).

It is unknown when or where Roger Williams acquired the watch. He may have purchased it for himself, or it may have been a gift from his father, his wife, or perhaps even his benefactor, Sir Edward Coke. It apparently was a handsome and unusual piece and still kept good time in 1936. It can only be hoped that this precious relic of the past still exists, being kept proudly and safely in a secure location. If anyone knows the whereabouts of Roger Williams' watch, we ask that you contact us so that we may all learn more about this most interesting item.

*Visit the Roger Williams Family Association Home Page on the Internet  
[www.rogerwilliams.org](http://www.rogerwilliams.org)*

# NEW MEMBERS

1998-1999

* Benjamin, Stephen Lloyd	Hampden, ME	Mary
* Cassell, Margaret Lawton	Napa, CA	Mary
* Chamberland, Joanne F. (Mrs.)	Cranston, RI	Mercy Winsor
* Chase, Virginia Snider	Venice, FL	Mercy Winsor
* Currah, Bonnie Horne (Mrs. Warren)	Tulahoma, TN	Mercy Waterman
* Duryea, John Underhill	Chocowinity, NC	Daniel
Garland, William James	Lancaster, NY	Freeborn
* Harmon, Heather Nicole	Warwick, RI	Mercy Waterman
* Harmon, Sarah Elizabeth	Warwick, RI	Mercy Waterman
Hart, Steven J.	Coventry, RI	Daniel
Jones, Albert C.	Fairhaven, MA	Mercy Winsor
* Kasanovich, Sarah Bailey	Truro, MA	Mary
* Kasanovich, Daniel Essex	North Smithfield, RI	Mary
* Leach, Ryan Joseph	North Arlington, NJ	Joseph
* MacDonald, Byron Keith	Greensboro, NC	Mercy Waterman
* MacDonald, John Malcolm	Newport, RI	Mercy Waterman
* MacDonald, Lauren Candace	Newport, RI	Mercy Waterman
* Messinger, Dwight Ferrand	Salisbury, NC	Daniel
* Partridge, Geoffrey H.	Villanova, PA	Mercy Winsor
* Partridge, Glenn R.	Villanova, PA	Mercy Winsor
* Partridge, Graham M.	Villanova, PA	Mercy Winsor
Perrin, Stephen R.	Ann Arbor, MI	Mercy Winsor
* Pols, Wendell	Warren, RI	Honorary
Radican, Constance Davis	Cranston, RI	Mercy Winsor
* Radican, David Ernest	Highland Village, TX	Mercy Winsor
* Signor, Peter L.	San Jose, CA	Daniel
Smith, Michael W.	Bayville, NY	Joseph
* Stearns, Christopher R.	Schenectady, NY	Freeborn
* Thompson, Logan Parker	Edmond, OK	Joseph
* Thompson, Nathaniel Hunter	Edmond, OK	Joseph
* Tizol, Nancy A. Radican	Glen Dale, MD	Mercy Winsor
* Williams, Phyllis King (Mrs. Lyle M.)	Omro, WI	Daniel
* Williams, Harvey Sarkis	Dobbs Ferry, NY	Daniel
* Woodard, Kenneth George	Norwood, MA	Mercy Waterman
* Woodard, Matthew Reilly	Norwood, MA	Mercy Waterman
* Woodard, Robert Alan	Abington, PA	Mercy Waterman
* Woodard, Robert Joseph	Abington, PA	Mercy Waterman
* Woodard, Robert Lewis	West Kingston, RI	Associate
* Life Member		

## IN MEMORIUM

Howard E. Baker	31 September 1990	Joseph
John R. Blackinton	20 March 1990	Daniel
Dorothy W. Budlong	1 April 1999	Mercy Waterman
Leta A. Clark	1989	Mercy Winsor
Fannie Young Dudley (Mrs. Raymond)	1 July 1995	Daniel
Havena Hopkins Kenney (Mrs. Gordon B.)	8 January 1999	Mercy Waterman
Grace S. Messinger (Mrs. Melvin E.)	10 March 1999	Associate
Myron C. McIntyre	10 January 1999	Mercy Winsor
James E. Pennell	31 January 1998	Associate
Donald Osgood Seamans	12 October 1998	Mary
Linda Marie Trim	22 June 1998	Mercy Winsor
William Walton	-----	Joseph
Donald E. Wennberg	6 February 1991	Associate

# BEGINNING OUR 108TH YEAR 1999-2000

## OFFICERS

<i>President</i> .....	Mr. Frank B. Stevenson
142 George Allen Road, Glocester, RI 02814 .....	401-568-4016, frankbs@jci.net
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<i>2nd Vice President</i> .....	Mrs. Ann (Rowley) Prokopowicz
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<i>Recording Secretary</i> .....	Mrs. Meredith (Rowley) Smith
Wilbur Hollow Road, North Scituate, RI 02857 .....	401-647-7204
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i> .....	Miss Gladys I. Bailey
2153 South County Trail, East Greenwich, RI 02818 .....	401-884-4988
<i>Treasurer</i> .....	Mr. A. John Prokopowicz
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<i>Registrar</i> .....	Mrs. Elsie (Bushnell) Williams
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<i>Historian</i> .....	Mrs. Birdella (Wightman) Corbitt
15 Ivy Lane, Seekonk, MA 02771 .....	508-336-9418

## DIRECTORS

<i>Director, Past President</i> .....	Col. Robert Allen Greene
PO Box 137, E. Greenwich, RI 02818 .....	401-884-5929, 401-884-7530, fax 401-885-9370
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1017 Great Road, Lincoln, RI 02865 .....	401-334-2674
<i>Director</i> .....	Mrs. Janis (Frigault) Stevenson
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15 Frederick Drive, Barrington, RI 02806 .....	401-246-0246, edwhite@excelonline.com
<i>Director, Past President</i> .....	Mr. George W. Williams
8 Moses Brown Street, Providence, RI 02906 .....	401-351-2351

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

<i>Auditors</i> .....	Mr. Raymond L. Hilton Jr., Mr. Everett O. White
<i>Chaplain</i> .....	Mrs. Birdella (Wightman) Corbitt
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