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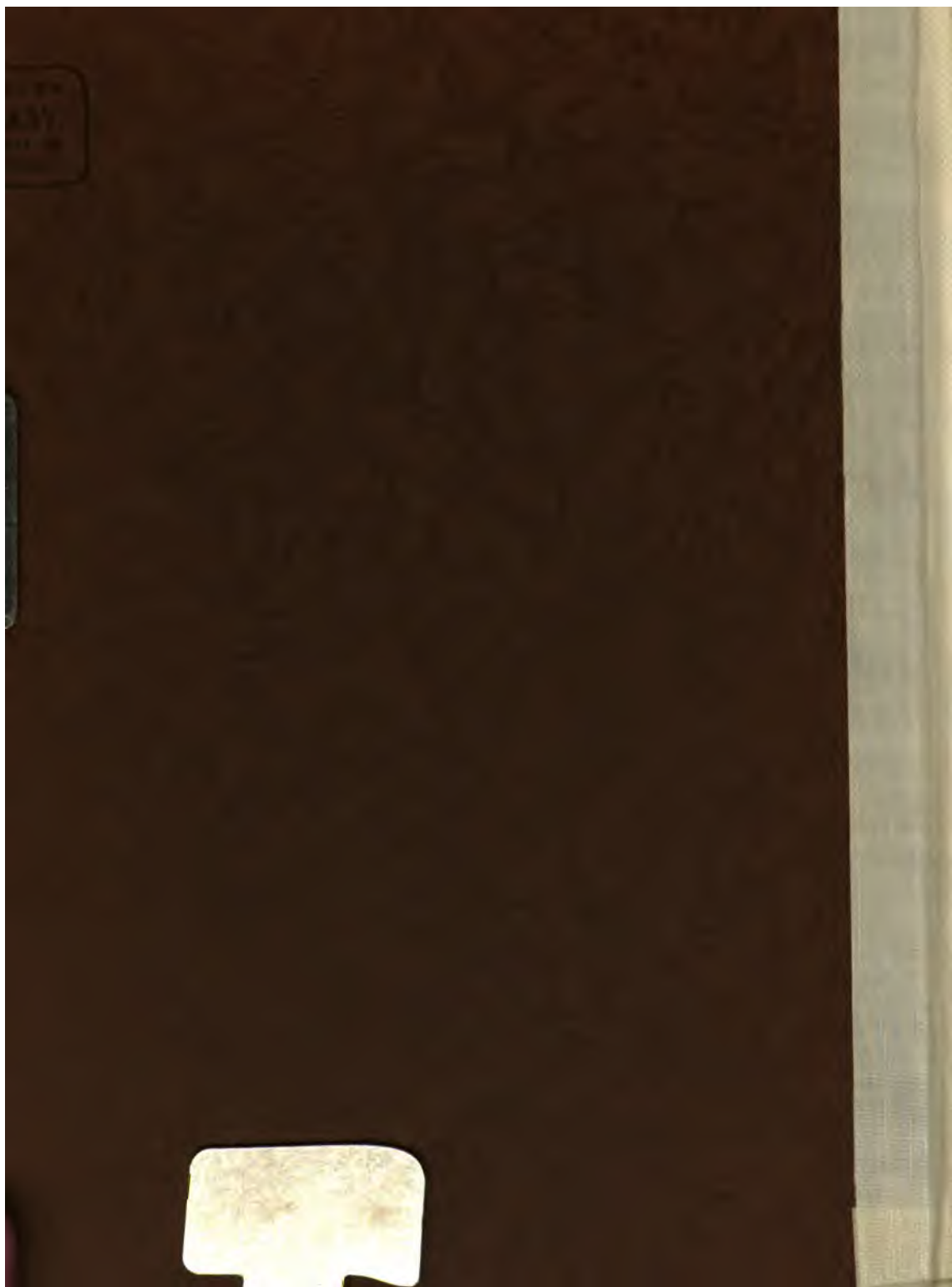
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**RHODE ISLAND  
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**Second Series.**

No. 2.

**AN INQUIRY**

**CONCERNING THE**

**AUTHENTICITY OF AN ALLEGED PORTRAIT OF  
ROGER WILLIAMS.**

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RHODE ISLAND  
HISTORICAL TRACTS.

*Second Series.*

No. 2.



PROVIDENCE  
SIDNEY S. RIDER.

1891.

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PRELIMINARY NOTE.

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This *Tract* was, like the one which immediately preceded it, on the alleged Defranchisement of Roman Catholics by the Founders of the Colony of Rhode Island, undertaken upon the suggestion of Horatio Gates Jones, Esq., of Philadelphia. A discussion had arisen among certain Baptist newspapers on the question of the authenticity of the portrait. Mr. Jones had taken part in the discussion. The present writer would have much preferred to have been able to have reached a different conclusion; but historical facts must control his inclination. The two portraits on pages 22 and 23 were so placed for the obvious purpose of being able to examine them without turning a leaf. Such criticisms or suggestions as have been made on the first publication of the essay, have received the attention which they merited in this *Tract*.



An interesting discussion has arisen concerning the authenticity of the portrait of Roger Williams, an engraving of which appeared in Mr. Benedict's History of the Baptists, 1848. The discussion has been chiefly confined to the *Standard* and the *Journal and Messenger*, published respectively in Chicago and Cincinnati. BOOK NOTES\* has been solicited to take a hand. It will do so. Down to the year 1844 there was supposed to exist no portrait of Williams. During that year Mr. Daniel L. Jones, a Welshman living in New York, and, as Mr. S. G. Drake informs us, "whose occupation was apparently that of a plumber," and who published a small periodical in the Welsh language, gave in that periodical an engraved head of Williams. This was the first ever heard of a portrait. The year following (1845) the head appeared in Mr. Gammell's *Life of Williams*, which was included in Sparks' *American Biography*. Mr. Gammell's *Life* was also issued in 1846 in a separate volume of which there were several editions, always with the engraving. From a paper written by Mr. S.

\* This paper appeared originally in BOOK NOTES December 6, 1890. It has been corrected in some particulars, and somewhat enlarged.

G. Drake and published in the *Historical Magazine*, December 1868, p. 269, it appears that he visited Mr. Jones on the 22d Oct. 1844, in order to see the portrait from which these engravings were alleged to have been made, and to obtain some particulars concerning so interesting a discovery. He says that a time was set by Mr. Jones for him to see the portrait, but that notwithstanding he, Mr. Drake, was on time, neither the portrait nor Mr. Jones ever "showed up." Mr. Drake states that Mr. Jones informed him that this portrait together with a companion was sold at an auction\* in New York of the books and pictures of the Duke of York; that on the back of one was written the name *Roger Williams*, and on the back of the other the name *Oliver Cromwell*. This statement differs from that made in Benedict's *History*, which will be given later in this Tract. On the 29th October, 1846, there appeared in the *Manufacturers and Farmers Journal*, a newspaper published in Providence, R. I., a communication signed J., (possibly Jones,) from which it appears that people in Providence were somewhat incredulous concerning the authenticity of the head in Gammell's *Life*. The story of the purchase is told, and certain things which appeared in the portrait, but which were omitted in the engraving in Gammell's *Life*, are

\* The date when this auction took place has not been mentioned by any one.

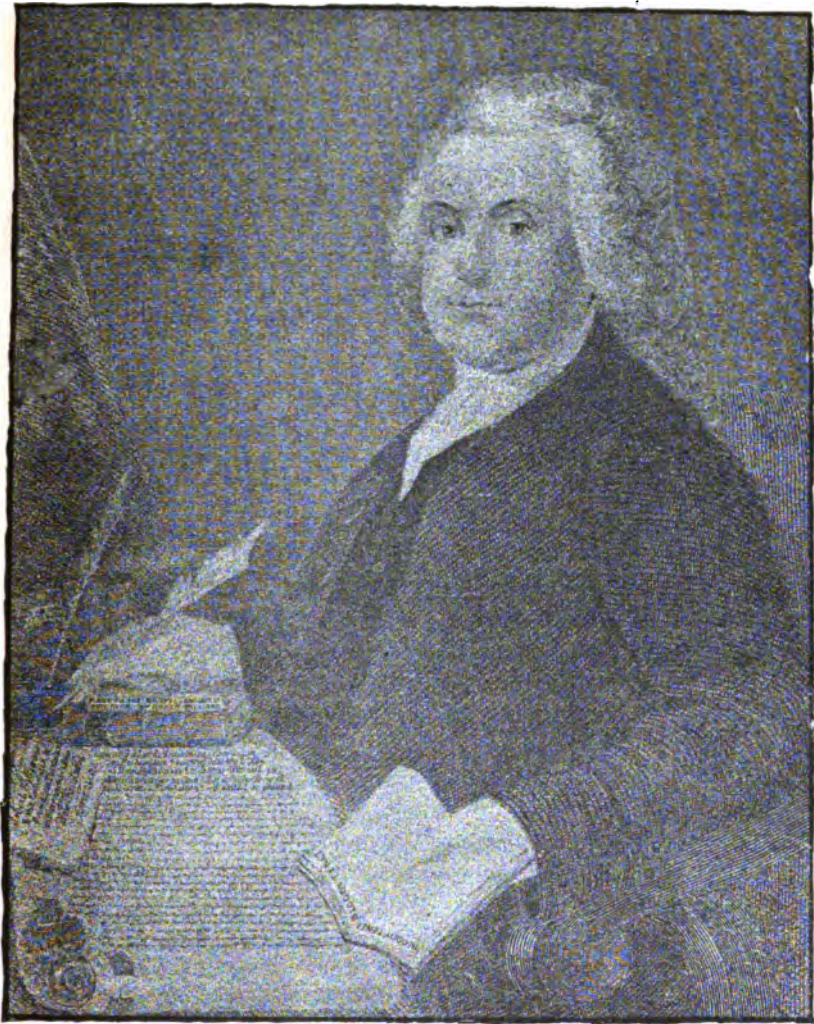
described, thus: "Williams is seated at a table on which are papers and books, among which is the *Charter of Rhode Island* distinctly traced in manuscript, and volumes marked *Key to the Indian Languages*, *Bloudy Tenet*, &c., books written by Williams." A proposition was made to the people here by the writer of the communication, that if they would raise the sum of five hundred dollars to be used in the erection of a monument to Williams, a sum of money raised by Mr. Jones among those interested in New York would also be contributed, and the portrait would be "*given*" to some person or institution in this State," (Rhode Island.) It is further stated by the writer, J., that "the late Col. Stone who saw it, expressed his conviction of its authenticity." Two years later appeared the engraving in Mr. Benedict's *History of the Baptists*, 1848. This engraving differs from the heads which preceded it, in that it presents the paraphernalia which go to identify the portrait as that of Roger Williams. A printed leaf, on thin paper, was inserted in the book with the engraving and descriptive of it. This description is here presented in full.

"This engraving is an accurate copy of a painting recently discovered, which came to this country, and was sold at auction in New York, with other paintings and books from the library of the Duke of York, about the time that great collection was dispersed. At the sale Mr. Daniel L. Jones, of New York, a native of Wales, and a zealous antiquary, bought two very dusty old paintings which were sold together. Upon being cleaned

one of them proved to be a fine portrait of Oliver Cromwell, to whom Roger Williams was related. The other bears its own evidence in the lettering, etc., distinctly legible as in the engraving. Upon the back of the canvass (sic) of both is the inscription, "Voit Van Saltzburg, Dembrost zu Waltzburg." It was without doubt made when Roger Williams went to England in 1644, and his age 44. His right arm rests upon his "*Key to the Indian Languages*," underneath which is a Bible. Underneath this Bible and rolling off from the table is the Charter, of which several lines can be distinctly read. In his left hand he holds the "Bloody Tenet." In the background is seen a work inscribed "Coke upon Littleton," which goes to decide the controverted question of his having been educated by Sir Edward Coke. Also lying before him are letters addressed to Robert Williams and the Committee of Providence Plantations, and Mary Williams, which are in the painting in *his own handwriting*. The force of all these circumstances will be appreciated by those who are familiar with his life." The engraving referred to appears on the page opposite.

In these sentences rests all the claims for the authenticity of the portrait, unless the words, "Engraved by F. Halpin, from an original painting," may by some be regarded as proof. It is apparent that Mr. Drake did not believe in the existence of the painting, although he did not in so many words say so; but in this he was mistaken. It exists, and is now owned in Boston, where the present writer has recently inspected it. It is in oil, on canvas 29 by 36 inches, in excellent condition.\*

\* The picture is now owned by two brothers, Woodward, both apothecaries, one at No. 40 the other at 52 Bromfield street, Boston, Mass.



**ROGER WILLIAMS.**  
FROM  
**Benedict's History of the Baptists, 1843.**



The question then is, whether this is an original portrait painted in London in 1644 as claimed, with all the memorials of Williams painted in it at that time, or whether it is a portrait of some other person into which these memorials have been introduced at some recent period, with intent to deceive? If the first part of this question can be satisfactorily answered, a very large sum of money awaits the fortunate owners from men in Rhode Island.

From the first putting forth of the claims of authenticity for this portrait, its genuineness has been questioned. Mr. Drake, although claiming to have questioned it in 1844, is not on record until 1868. In 1852 the Rev. Dr. Elton published his *Life of Williams*. In his preface he says: "No portrait of Williams is known to exist; one indeed has been published purporting to be such, but it is spurious, being with slight alterations the likeness of Benjamin Franklin." A communication written by the Rev. Dr. Henry Jackson appeared in the *Providence Journal*, June 20, 1856. Affirming the authenticity of the portrait, he says, "Dr. Benedict placed the likeness in his *History of the Baptists*, and upon a separate paper assigns the reason for the opinion he credits, that it is as it claims to be, a *painting* of Roger Williams. Dr. Benedict says it is more than three feet square." As to its being Franklin, Mr. Jackson says, "at any rate the picture in the *History* as above is not the picture of Franklin." Notwithstanding the am-

biguity\* of meaning in the use of the word "painting" in the place of "portrait," Dr. Jackson was a firm believer in the genuineness of the portrait. He was a brother-in-law of Dr. Benedict and in the closest of relationship with him, and a prominent Baptist clergyman at Newport, R. I. His communication was reproduced in the *Southern Baptist*, and with it an article by the Rev. J. P. Tustin,† the editor of that periodical, also affirming the authenticity of the portrait and denouncing the Franklin theory advanced by Dr. Elton, which the editor declares was an opinion which could be "entertained by none but very incompetent or uncandid critics." But Dr. Tustin gives us one bit of information, not found elsewhere, as to where the picture came from. He says, "It was known to have been in the possession of the *old* Duke of York, whose extensive portrait gallery was sold we think in 1812."‡ This communication appeared in

\* An anonymous critic here asks why ambiguity here in the use of the words "painting" and "portrait"? My unknown friend must have heard of a painting by Raphael known as the *Madonna di San Sisto*. Did it never occur to him that the head of the Madonna was not a portrait of the Mother of Jesus?

† The Rev. Dr. Tustin was for some years a Baptist clergyman at Warren, R. I. He was the author of the *Historical Discourse* delivered at the dedication of the new Baptist church edifice, in Warren, May 8, 1845.

‡ A correspondent suggests that the war of 1812 and the embargo which preceded it would have interfered with this hypothesis.

the *Providence Journal*, July 18, 1856, and is accompanied by an editorial leaning towards authenticity, but which really straddles the question. There is nothing in these papers which merits attention; the writers knew really nothing about the question; their wish for genuineness was father to the thought. In the light of such a history it seems singular that no severe critical examination of the claims for authenticity has heretofore been made. Let me attempt something of the kind: First, I note the difference between the statement of J. in the communication of 1846 and the statement in Mr. Benedict's *History* of 1848, as to the things in the picture identifying it as a portrait of Williams. In the first no mention is made of Mary Williams, or of Robert Williams, whose names are in the latter, said to be in the picture; no mention of a *Bible* appears in the former, but is mentioned in the latter; *Coke upon Littleton* is not in the former, but is in the latter; in the former, the *Charter of Rhode Island* is mentioned, but in the latter the *Charter* only is mentioned. These things being omitted in the first, but mentioned in the last statement, are of suspicious import as denoting the development of an imposition. But there is a paragraph in J.'s communication which is of still more suspicious character. It is this: "The late Col. Stone, who saw it, expressed his conviction of its authenticity." This communication, it must be kept in mind, was published in a *Providence, R. I.*, newspaper.

Col. Stone was William L. Stone; he died in August, 1844; he was the editor of the *Commercial Advertiser, N. Y.*, and he was a brother-in-law of the late Francis Wayland, then President of Brown University, and a leading Baptist divine. It is written in the *Memoir of Wayland* that this brother-in-law was Wayland's "most valued and trusted friend," (v. 1. p. 72,) and it is therein further written, that in the death of this brother-in-law, Wayland "experienced one of the severest bereavements of his life," (v. 2, p. 48.) Was it the intention of the writer J. to make an impression upon Wayland, and through him upon the Baptists, favorable to the portrait? and was it not safe enough to quote Col. Stone, he being unable to deny the statement, as to his opinion? But look at the proposition: J. offers to *give this authentic, original* portrait, and with it a sum of money, to anybody here who will erect a monument to Williams costing five hundred dollars. Such a proposition is contrary to our human natures. How was Jones to make any money in such an operation? But can there be a doubt, that had President Wayland the slightest opinion of the genuineness of the portrait, the money would have been instantly forthcoming? Let us now examine in their order the things described on the leaf in Benedict's History. The *Charter of Rhode Island*, which is said to lie upon the table, is not the Charter of Rhode Island, but is the Patent for Providence Plantations; the name

Rhode Island does not appear in the document.\* It was this Patent which Williams obtained in 1643-4; but the wording in the picture is not the wording of the document. The following words, to wit, "bearing date the second day of November, *Anno Domini* 1643," are abridged thus, "bearing date the 2d Nov—no Dom, 1643." (Hazard's Hist. Coll. v. 1, p. 538.) With the patent then just granted and then before him would the artist have abridged it in this modern style? 2d. An open book is held in the hand of the person represented, on each page of which appear the words Bloody Tenet, Bloody Tenet. It is well known that Roger Williams was the author of such a book. It was published in 1644, anonymously, and with no place of publication. Williams' name does not appear upon it in any connection. It was published probably in June,

\*By this Patent the three towns, Providence, Portsmouth and Newport, were incorporated by the name of *Incorporation of Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay in New England*. The union of these towns under this Patent was prevented by the threats of the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts for nearly four years, until May 19, 1647. The town of Warwick was then incorporated and admitted, its first act as a town being dated August 8, 1647. The name Rhode Island was first legally given to the Island in March 1643-4, but it had been so-called for some years before. The union of the two names in the Charter of Charles the Second made the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. A paper on the origin of the name "Rhode Island" can be found in *BOOK NOTES*, vol. 6, pp. 29 and 37.

1644. The reason for this opinion is as follows: Williams arrived at Boston on his way home, September 17, 1644. In order to do this by the slow sailing ships of the time, he must have sailed from London, for he sailed from that port, by the 1st July. On the 9th of August the House of Commons ordered this "book by one Mr. Williams" burned publicly by the common hangman, (Masson's Life of Milton, v. 3, p. 162), and two days later this had been done.

Williams was careful not to publish the *Bloody Tenent* until the Patent was secured. At the same time he is claimed to have had this portrait painted with the book in it; Thus putting in the picture that which he dared not print on the title page of his book, to wit, the means of the identification of the author. We disbelieve it.

But how came the artist to change the spelling of the title? The title is: The BLOVDY TENENT. We think no artist of that day would have so changed it, nor would Williams have permitted it.\* 3d. There is in the picture, a book labelled, "A Key to the Native Language of America." How came the artist to again change Williams' title? The original edi-

\*Mr. Cotton's reply was entitled The BLOVDY TENENT. His second heading was spelled the Bloody Tenet. This was in 1647 three years after the alleged date of the painting. In 1652 Mr. Williams issued his reply to Cotton entitled the *The Bloody Tenent yet more Bloody*.

tion of this book (1643) was the only one which the artist could have seen. The title of it was, "A Key Into the Language of America." Would the artist have so changed it? We think not. 4th. A book labelled *Coke upon Littleton* is introduced into the picture, which as the printed leaf in Benedict's History informs us, "goes to decide the controverted question of his having been educated by Sir Edward Coke." All of which is a pure absurdity. It decides nothing of the kind. This treatise by Coke is in four parts; the first part was published in 1628, the second in 1642 and the third and fourth parts in 1644. Williams left England for New England, December 1st, 1630 and again probably July 1st, 1644. There is not the slightest probability that Williams at the time this portrait is alleged to have been painted, to wit, after March 14, and before July, 1644, had ever seen a complete copy of this book. This book as represented in the picture is a ponderous folio, standing in height far above the other books among which it is placed. That is the form in which it would have appeared when completed, but this was not the case when this picture is alleged to have been painted. The book had not at that time assumed that form. 5th. It is claimed by the writer of the printed leaf in Benedict's History that the name *Mary Williams*, the wife, and of *Robert Williams*, the brother of Roger Williams, appear in this picture in Roger Williams' "own handwriting," which is another positive absurdity, they are in nothing

of the kind; they are in the style of the copper plate engraving of 1848, in New York city, and not earlier. There is not the slightest difference in style between these superscriptions and the manuscript of the first five lines of the Patent as given in the picture; but there are considerations concerning the Robert Williams superscriptions and the words which follow it, which weigh heavily with me. The letter is addressed "to Robert Williams and the Committee\* of Providence Plantations in Narragansett Bay, New England, America." No letter so addressed is now known; if it ever existed it must have borne the date 1644; we have no letters by Williams between 1641 and 1645. This does not prove that such a letter might not have once existed; but I shall undertake to show that such a letter could never have existed.

The phrase "Providence Plantations," was the *crea-*

\*The earliest organization of colonial government under this Patent, consisted of a body similar in its constitution to the present House of Representatives, called the Court of Commissioners. It consisted of twenty-four members, six from each of the four towns. The fact that Robert Williams was in 1650-51 one of these commissioners, appears in Knowles' *Memoirs of Williams* (p 403). He is there styled "deputy," but the real title to the office was "commissioner." See *Knowles' Memoirs* (p. 208). It was doubtless from this fact that whoever concocted the alleged portrait of Williams, obtained his idea. He mistook the term commissioner for committee, or supposed it to be synonymous.

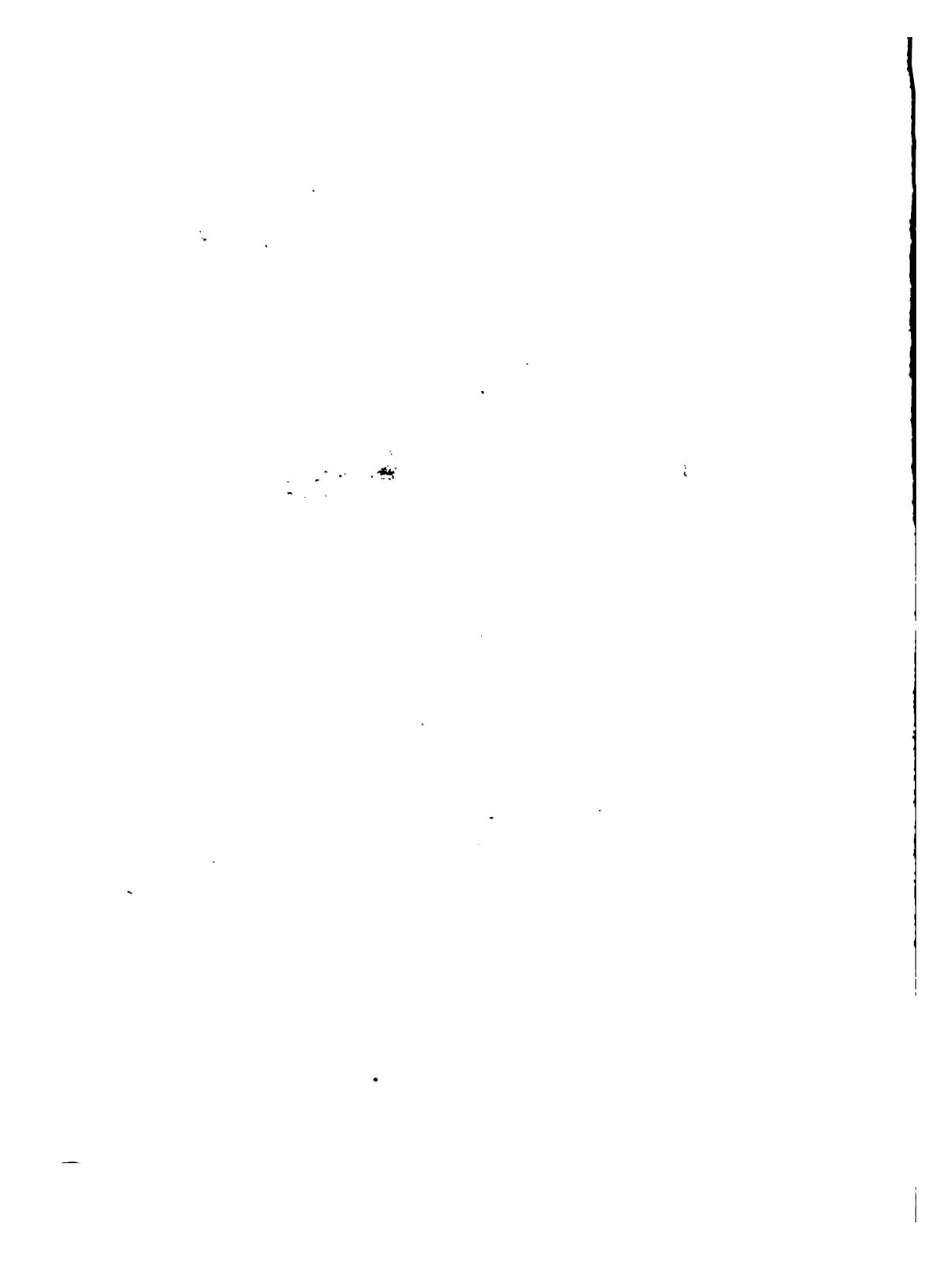




**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.**  
FROM  
**Watson's Annals, 1830.**



ROGER WILLIAMS.  
FROM  
Gammell's Life, 1846.



tion of the Patent, which Williams obtained March 14, 1644. The fact of the existence of the Patent was first known in the colony when Williams reached the shores of New England with it during the latter part of the following September. The people at home here in Providence could have known nothing of it until so apprised by Williams, and hence they could not have appointed a committee of the "Providence Plantations" with Robert Williams at the head of it. As a matter of fact no such committee was ever appointed. The deputies from the towns to the General Court were first styled "Committee" by an act of the General Court, May 16, 1648. (R. I. Col. v. 1., p. 209) Robert Williams was at that time one of the "Committee," subsequently in 1651 the name was changed to "Commissioners." All this was unknown in 1644, the date of the alleged painting. But supposing they had done so, they would then have to apprise Williams in London of the fact in order for him to have so addressed his brother, and also to have the artist introduce this address into his picture, all of which would have to have been done before July 1st, 1644. The time was 108 days; two voyages were necessary with the usual waiting for ships to sail, and the repugnance of Massachusetts in allowing men or things to pass to or from England through that colony to be encountered. Williams, on this very business, had been obliged to sail in a Dutch ship from Manhattan. The thing was impossible to be true. Had

Williams actually written such a letter to his brother and sent it, he would have reached his brother before the letter could possibly have done so, hence why should he have written. Moreover, I affirm that since Williams never wrote an address in the form above given, he would not have done so on this occasion.\* There *is* a letter written by Roger Williams to his brother Robert (*Knowles' Mem. Williams, p. 402*). It is addressed, "For my beloved and much respected, the inhabitants of the town of Providence. To Mr. Robert Williams and Mr. Thomas Harris deputies, or either of them." This letter is dated Nar. 22, 11.50, which being interpreted means, Narragansett, February 22, 1650. Robert Williams *was* at that time a deputy (R. I. Col. Rec. v. 1, p. 217). But how could an artist in 1644 introduce a superscription written in 1650.† 6th. Mr. S. G. Drake says that Mr. Jones, the owner of the alleged portrait in 1844, informed him that the name of Roger Williams was written on the back of the canvas. In the account given by Benedict, it is stated that on the back of the canvass (sic.) is the inscription, "Voit Van Saltzburg, Dombrost Zu Waltzburg." What that means, or

\*The form as given in the picture is "Providence Plantations, in Narragansett Bay, New England, America."

†In *Book Notes* Mr. John R. Bartlett was charged with error in affixing the date 1651 to this letter. A further investigation of matters contained in this letter convinces the writer that Mr. Bartlett was correct.

in what language it is, I do not know, nor have I been able to find anyone who does know. A pretty thorough search reveals no such artist, if it means an artist, but after much searching the writer saw the painting and discovered that neither the name of Roger Williams nor any other inscription is now, or appears ever to have been, on the back of the portrait.

It is stated by Benedict that the portrait was purchased by Mr. Daniel L. Jones in New York, at an auction sale of the "books and pictures of the Duke of York," One naturally inquires which of the Dukes of York preserved portraits of Oliver Cromwell and Roger Williams, and the effects of which Duke were sold in a New York auction room. Mr. Tustin informs us, as I have before stated, that it was the *old* Duke, he thinks, whose effects were sold in 1812\*—a statement which is a trifle too indefinite for my present purpose. The Dukes of York who have died since 1644, the alleged date of the portrait, are, 1st, Charles the First, who died in 1649, under such peculiar circumstances that one would hardly think that portraits of Cromwell and Williams would have been found among his effects and sent to New York to be sold by auction; 2d. James the Second, a son of Charles the First and a brother of Charles the Second, whom he succeeded as King in 1685. He abdicated in 1689—too much Roman Catholicism was his trouble.

\*See note page 13.

Under the circumstances, would portraits of these gentlemen have been among his cherished mementos, and sent after his death in 1707 to a New York auction room to be sold. 3d. Edward Augustus, son of George the Second, died at Monaco, 1767. It is safe to say that his effects were not of the class usually sent to New York auction rooms to be sold in 1844. 4th. Frederick, son of George the Third, died in England, 1827, a scandalous, worn out debauchee. He left neither widow nor child, and his effects descended to his brother, William the Fourth, King of England, whom we are asked to believe sent his brother's books and pictures to a New York auction room. We beg to be excused. Mr. Drake called the portrait, "Mr. Jones' shallow hoax, or rather fraud." He reached this conclusion apparently by intuition, and not by process of reasoning as is herein attempted. If this reasoning is sound the portrait must be a fraud; but I am not prepared to say that Mr. Jones perpetrated the fraud; he may have been imposed upon. He is still living and can explain his connection with it.

That the whole scheme could have been concocted out of the Memoir of Williams by Mr. Knowles is quite capable of demonstration.\* This book was published in 1834. It was comparatively new when this alleged portrait was discovered. Cromwell's portrait was dis-

\*Mr. Knowles in the preface to the Memoir, page x v. says, "No Portrait of Roger Williams it is believed is in existence." This was written in December 1833.

covered with it because Knowles speaks of a supposed relationship to Williams, (p. 23.) The book, Coke upon Littleton, was introduced because Knowles speaks of the interest Coke took in the education of Williams, (p. 24.) The name of Mary as the wife of Roger Williams was not generally known until the publication of Knowles's Memoir. Mr. Backus (Hist. Baptists, v. 1. p. 516, 1777,) has her name as Mary, but Backus was but little known. Mr. Benedict, a much later writer, gave (Hist. Baptists, v. 1, p. 476, 1813,) her name as Elizabeth, in which he was sustained by the Records of the First Baptist church. This confusion was corrected by Mr. Knowles, (p. 32.) In passing, It may be remarked that Elizabeth Williams was the wife of Robert Williams, the brother of Roger, and that Mary, the wife of Roger, may not have been a member of that church. The spelling "Bloody Tenet," came from Knowles, (p. 359). The idea of a letter to Robert Williams came from Knowles, (p. 402). The relatives of Williams named in the picture are such only as were known to Mr. Knowles. In fact, there is nothing in the picture which is not mentioned by Knowles. How Roger Williams in giving directions to the artist should have so closely followed Mr. Knowles's Memoir, which was to be published two hundred years later, is one of those mysteries which seem difficult of understanding. It was suggested by Mr. Drake in the magazine before referred to, that this alleged portrait of Williams was in reality an old

portrait of Franklin, with recent additions, and Dr. Elton did the same. Upon this phase of the question I have not entered, confining myself rather to showing whom the portrait is not, than to showing of whom it is. No sooner has anybody hitherto ventured such an opinion than somebody denounces him as "incompetent" or "uncandid," hence I venture no opinion, but simply reproduce the two pictures side by side, and everybody can form his own opinion and nobody will contradict him.

There has been no attempt herein to discuss the question of dress. In the *Providence Journal* of July 18, 1856, to which reference has been made, a correspondent raises the question as to the wearing of wigs. The editor of the *Journal* discussed the question in a loose way but reached no conclusion. The manner of wearing the beard as given in the picture is also open to question. The structure of the canvas, which has blue stripes on it; whether it is new or old, or whether the picture has been re-backed, also deserves attention. There is an inherent improbability in the character of the whole composition of the picture. From the known characteristics of Roger Williams, would he have been likely to have caused himself to be painted with all these things introduced into the picture? would he have introduced the superscription of a letter addressed to one of his brothers, when he knew well enough that he had another brother?

a fact, however, so far as the name of that brother is concerned, which was not known in 1844 when the picture first appeared, and which was discovered in 1889. He had a brother who, he said, was a merchant in Turkey. We have just learned his name,—Sidrac,—but he must have known it in 1644. Why did the artist omit this brother?

Nothing connected with Rhode Island History would give the people of that state so much pleasure as the obtaining of a genuine portrait of Roger Williams, the one man who laid the foundations of the state and whose principle, *Soul Liberty*, lies at the foundation of every other American State. The writer of this *Tract* will not wince at its demolition, if by that destruction, the genuineness of this alleged portrait could be established.

