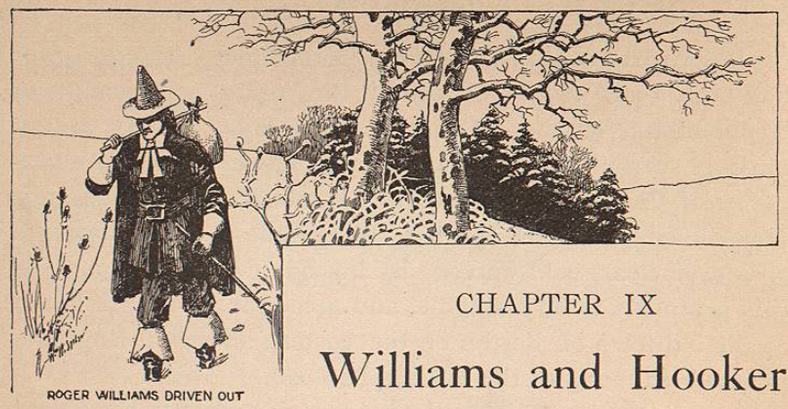


ROGER WILLIAMS DRIVEN OUT

CHAPTER IX

Williams and Hooker

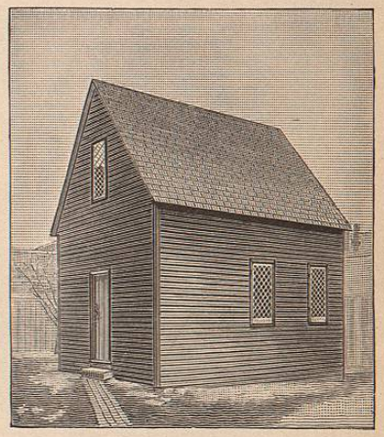
1599–1683 **1586–1647**

ROGER WILLIAMS, a young minister from England, arrived at Boston a few months after Winthrop. He was of a good family and was born in London; his father was James Williams, a merchant tailor, and his mother's name was Alice. Young Williams was a minister of the church at Salem for a little while, and then went to Plymouth, where he preached for two years and more. After this he returned to Salem, and was their minister for about two years and a half. During this time the government of Massachusetts Bay became bitterly opposed to Williams because of certain opinions which he held and preached.

Williams thought that the Massachusetts people ought to buy their lands from the Indians. He said that the king's gift was not enough, because the king did not own the land. He also taught that the government should punish for civil offences only. That is, Williams held that in religious matters every one ought to be permitted to think and decide for himself.

He was brought before the court, but he would not change. The court then passed a sentence of banishment,

ordering him to "depart out of this jurisdiction." In January, 1636, Williams left Salem, after bidding his wife and children good-by, and, with a staff in his hand and a pack upon his back, he began a long and perilous journey through the deep snows of the wilderness. Which way he went is not known, but we may suppose that on the first day, going around Boston on its western side, he reached Natick, where he found friendly Indians who gave him a resting-place in their wigwam over night.

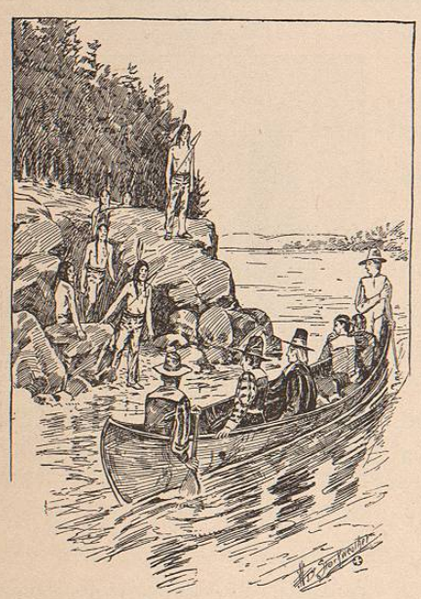


FIRST CHURCH AT SALEM WHERE WILLIAMS PREACHED (STILL STANDING).

Perhaps on the next day he made a short journey to Ponkapoag, in the present town of Canton, where some friendly Indians resided. Think of him as he pushed on through the snow to a place near Taunton, hoping there to find lodgings with other Indians whom he knew. But the snows were deep and the weather cold, the way was long, and night overtook him in the wilderness.

It may be that, finding a hollow tree, blown over by the wind, he crawled into it and during the night got such snatches of sleep as would come to him in his narrow bedroom upon so hard a bed. Finally, reaching the friendly Indians near Taunton, he may have spent a night with them, and then, on the day following, have gone on to his old friend, Massasoit, at Sowams, which is now the town of Warren, in Rhode Island.

Here Williams remained for three months or more, making his home with Massasoit, but visiting the neighboring Indians from place to place. When the springtime came on some of his friends joined him, and Williams looked about for the best place to make a settlement. In a small canoe he crossed the Seekonk River with five companions. At Slate Rock, which is on the east side of the city of Providence, he was met by friendly Indians, who greeted him with the welcome, "What cheer, Netop, what cheer!" This means, "How do you do, good friend, how do you do?"



ROGER WILLIAMS MEETING FRIENDLY INDIANS.

Williams paddled around the point of land and made a settlement near a beautiful spring of water. Here was begun a new settlement, a new town, a new colony, and one of the thirteen original United States. Others soon joined him, and a government was established by a written agreement, which read as follows: "We, whose names are here underwritten, do promise to subject ourselves to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for the public good of the body, in an orderly way, by the major consent of the present inhabitants and such others whom they shall admit unto the same—*only in civil things.*"

"Only in civil things" means that the public laws shall not interfere with a man's religious belief. Here, first in the whole world, was established a government upon the principle of full religious liberty. From that time till the present, Rhode Island has been noted for religious freedom. Roger Williams, therefore, deserves the title of "the great apostle of religious freedom."

Two years after Roger Williams came to Boston, Thomas Hooker, another minister, arrived. Within six weeks after he had landed he was chosen pastor of the church at Newtown, now Cambridge. Hooker was a man of great ability and a very attractive preacher. He at once took high rank among the learned men of Massachusetts, interesting himself in all the important political and religious movements of the colony.

Hooker did not agree with Winthrop. He believed that all the people ought to take part in the government, while Winthrop thought that a large part of them were unfit to govern. Winthrop's idea favored an aristocracy, a government by a few, the better people; Hooker thought the government should be a democracy, a government by all the people.

Hooker did not stop to quarrel with Winthrop, but, a few months after Williams had gone to Providence (1636), he, with a great company, comprising a large part of the inhabitants of the three towns, Cambridge, Dorchester, and Watertown, left the Bay Colony and set out on a long and difficult journey to the Connecticut River.

What a journey that was from Boston to Hartford! Through a trackless wilderness, across streams, they traveled, driving their cattle before them and living during the whole journey as best they could upon the milk of their cows and whatever they could find upon the way.

Three years later the Connecticut settlers adopted a "Body of Fundamental Laws," doubtless drawn up by Hooker.

The adoption of this document, and the founding of their

HOOKER'S EXPEDITION TO CONNECTICUT.

government upon it, is the first case in the history of the world where a *written constitution*, which established and put in operation a new government, was framed and adopted by the people. It gave equal rights to all citizens, and promised freedom and protection to all under the laws which the people should adopt.

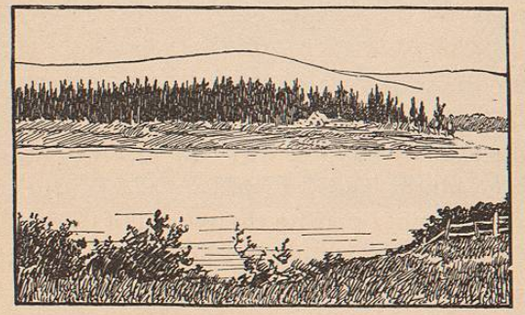
Roger Williams and Thomas Hooker must be considered among the foremost men of their age. They laid the real foundations of American liberty.

Four of the six States afterward forming New England were now settled. After a time Plymouth was united to the Bay Colony, and the two thus brought together made the colony of Massachusetts. Providence Colony united with

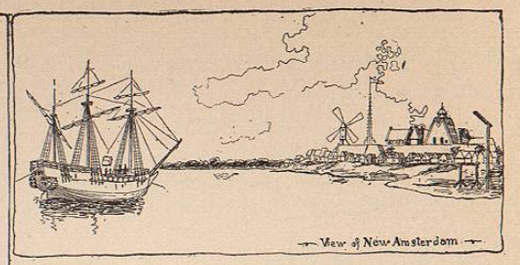
Newport Colony, and received a charter from Charles II. Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield for a time formed the Connecticut River Colony, while settlements about New Haven made the New Haven Colony. At a later date these two colonies were united and became the Colony of Connecticut.

Give an account of Williams' early life.
State the trouble between Massachusetts and Williams.
Describe his possible wanderings.
Give an account of the founding of Providence.
Explain what is meant by "religious freedom."
State why Hooker left Massachusetts Bay.
Describe the journey and its results.

Was Williams right in his ideas about the lands? Was he right in his belief in religious freedom? How did Williams know the Indians at Taunton? Williams once wrote that he was "tossed for fourteen weeks, not knowing what bed or bread did mean"; where do you suppose he spent most of that time? Why was the city which Williams founded called Providence? What do you understand by a "trackless wilderness"? What were the four New England States? How many New England colonies were there at first?



ON NARRAGANSETT BAY.



CHAPTER X

Peter Stuyvesant

1602–1682

THE same year that Pastor Robinson and the Pilgrims moved from one city in Holland to another (1609), the Dutch East India Company sent out Henry Hudson, an Englishman, in a vessel called the *Half-Moon*, to search for a nearer passage to Asia. Hudson sailed from Holland in the month of April, and reached the cold waters north of Russia so early in the season that masses of ice and broken icebergs prevented his farther advance.

He then decided to seek a western passage, as he could not go east, and he turned his vessel toward Greenland. He passed along Newfoundland, and continued southward along the coast of America, seeking for some strait or passage into the land which might lead through to the Pacific Ocean. At last he reached a point opposite the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. Not caring to visit the two-year-old colony at Jamestown, Hudson sailed north again, made the first visit to Delaware Bay, and cast anchor in New York Harbor.

For the first time Europeans viewed the spot where now stands Greater New York, one of the largest cities in the world. For the first time a vessel sailed up the river past the

Palisades and the Highlands, almost to the head of navigation where the city of Albany now is situated. For the first time the Indians on the banks of this river looked upon a vessel bearing sails, and, filled with curiosity, they flocked to the *Half-Moon* in great numbers.

To this river Hudson gave his own name. Two months earlier Samuel de Champlain had gone south from Quebec, and

HUDSON SAILING UP THE RIVER.

named for himself the great lake separating New York from Vermont. So these two men, one in the employ of the Dutch and the other sent out by France, began the exploration of the great region which is now the State of New York. Hudson entered from the south, and Champlain from

the north. They came within a hundred miles of each other.

Hudson returned to Holland and reported the results of his voyage. He had found neither the northeast nor the northwest passage to India, but he had discovered the Hudson River. He told the Dutch people about the fine harbor and the fertile country; he stated that the Indians were kindly, and that the woods were filled with fur-bearing animals; and he described the grandeur and beauty of the scenery.

Because of the voyage of Hudson in the *Half-Moon*, the Dutch claimed the entire territory between the Connecticut and the Delaware rivers. To this country they gave the name of New Netherland. Forts and trading-posts were built (1614), one on the island of Manhattan, another on the Hudson River near Albany, and a third on the Delaware River. Three years after the Pilgrims sailed for America, fifty families arrived in the Dutch colony (1623), the larger part of whom settled at New Amsterdam and the rest at Fort Orange or Albany.

A little later the governor, Peter Minuit, bought the entire island of Manhattan from the Indians for the small sum of twenty-four dollars.

The Dutch did not always use the best judgment in the choice of the governors who were sent over to take charge of the colony. Disputes arose continually between the governors and the great land-owners, or "patroons." The Indians were often harshly treated, and they in turn murdered the Dutch. Yet, little by little, the colony grew, until finally a governor arrived who succeeded in placing it on a firm footing.

Peter Stuyvesant was forty-five years of age when he was given the charge of New Netherland. While a young man he had entered the military service of Holland and had

served loyally and faithfully, losing a leg in an attack upon a Portuguese fort. He was a proud man, with an overbearing temper which could bear no opposition. He believed that a governor should have absolute power, as is shown by his answer to citizens who brought complaints against the former governor. He haughtily said: "It is treason to petition against one's magistrates, whether there be cause or not."

STUYVESANT AND THE PETITIONERS.

In spite of his temper and his belief in his own absolute power, Peter Stuyvesant proved himself well able to manage the affairs of the colony. The greatest danger to be feared was from the Indians. Stuyvesant forbade the sale of liquor or firearms to the red men, and carefully considered their welfare in all his dealings with them. He succeeded in making the Indians his friends, and perhaps thereby saved his colony from destruction.

He next turned his attention to promoting the well-being of the colonists. He established a system of schools; he built a market and began a series of annual cattle-fairs; he advised the building of better houses and taverns, and made New Amsterdam almost a model town. He enforced a careful observance of the Sabbath, but yielded religious tolerance to all persons.

As a result of his wise direction we read that: "The colony increased; children swarmed in every village; new modes of activity were devised; lumber was shipped to France; the whale pursued off the coast; the vine, the mulberry, planted; flocks of sheep as well as of cattle were multiplied.

"'This happily situated province,' said its inhabitants, 'may become the granary of our Fatherland; should our Netherlands be wasted by grievous wars, it will offer our countrymen a safe retreat; by God's blessing we shall in a few years become a mighty people.'"

In the midst of its prosperity the colony of New Netherland continually quarrelled with its neighbors. West and south of the Delaware River lay the little settlement of New Sweden. Queen Christina of Sweden had sent out a colony under the lead of the Dutchman, Peter Minuit (1638). Minuit bought land of the Indians on the west bank of the Delaware River and built Fort Christiana, where the city of Wilmington now stands.

The Dutch were angry at the coming of the Swedes, but they were too weak at the time to oppose them in any way except by words. After the arrival of Stuyvesant as governor, however, the Dutch became much stronger and grew to despise the little Swedish colony. Finally Stuyvesant built Fort Casimir, on the western bank of the Delaware, within five miles of Fort Christiana, and within the territory which the Swedes had bought from the Indians.

The quarrel now became something more than words. The Swedes made an attack upon Fort Casimir and captured it. The next year Stuyvesant sailed from New Amsterdam, with six vessels and seven hundred men, to punish the rash people of New Sweden. He not only recaptured Fort Casimir, but he also took Fort Christiana, and New Sweden ceased to exist as a separate colony.

New Netherland had now become apparently a well-established colony. It claimed all the territory of the present States of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, and also the western bank of the Delaware River, in Pennsylvania. Suddenly the power of Stuyvesant and the Dutch

THE ENGLISH FLEET APPEARING AT NEW AMSTERDAM.

came to an end. One day an English fleet quietly sailed into New Amsterdam Harbor.

England and Holland were at peace with each other, but the English commander of the fleet, Colonel Nichols, sent a letter to Fort Manhattan, requiring Stuyvesant immediately to yield the fort and turn over the government to the English. He announced that Charles II., King of England, claimed all the east coast of America because of Cabot's discovery, more than a hundred and fifty years before.

Nichols added that King Charles had given the territory

between the Connecticut and Maryland to his brother James, the Duke of York, who had sent this fleet to take possession of the country.

From the moment that the English vessels were first seen, Stuyvesant began preparations for defence. He ordered all the able-bodied men to enrol as soldiers or to work upon the fortifications. New guns were mounted and the shores patrolled. But this effort came too late. The people saw that they could not successfully resist the English, and they entered into the work half-heartedly. Besides, many English people had settled among the Dutch, and these were ready to welcome an English government.

A second letter reached Stuyvesant and his council. This offered very favorable terms. It stated that only a change in flag and governor would be required. The council advised that the letter be made public and the people permitted to decide what they would do. At this Stuyvesant became very angry, declaring that the people had nothing to do with it. He was the governor and he would not surrender. He even tore the letter into small pieces, to prevent its being read to the people.

The council put the parts together again, made a fresh copy of the letter, and published it. The people were so strongly in favor of yielding that six commissioners were sent to treat with Colonel Nichols. Terms of surrender were written and Stuyvesant was compelled to sign them.

Thus, without bloodshed and without even serious disturbance, New Netherland was lost to Holland, and New York became an English colony (1660). The Duke of York gave New Jersey to two of his friends, and afterward sold Delaware to William Penn. In 1776 these three colonies entered the Union as three States.

The Dutch people continued to live in New York and did not seem to realize the change in government. Stuyvesant himself retired to his farm, or "bowerie," of six hundred acres. His house was near the present corner of Third Avenue and Twelfth Street, and his farm gave the name to one of New York's famous streets. His garden was noted throughout the city, and a pear-tree, which he had brought over from Europe, continued to thrive for two hundred years. This pear-tree, protected by an iron railing and often visited as an historical relic, stood until it was blown down thirty years ago.

Stuyvesant spent the rest of his life on this farm, and died at the ripe age of eighty.

Describe Hudson's voyage: on the ocean; on the river; home again.

Give an account of Champlain.

Tell the story of the settlement of New Amsterdam; of its poor governors and its troubles.

Give an account of Stuyvesant: as a soldier; as a governor.

Tell the story of the capture of New Sweden; of the capture of New Netherland.

Has a northwest passage yet been found? Do you know of any modern plans for a shorter western water-passage from Europe to Asia? What was the principal reason for colonizing New Netherland? Were Stuyvesant and Hooker much alike? Had Sweden any right to make a colony? Would Roger Williams have said that she had a right? Which had the better claim to the land between Connecticut and Maryland, Holland or England? How many Colonies have we now read about? How many of the original thirteen States?