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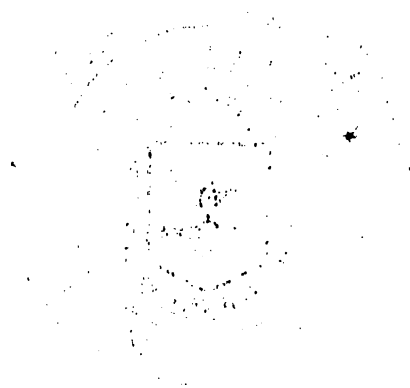
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Rhode Island - Commission on the Affairs of the Native and Indian
4th annual report







State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

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FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

ON THE

AFFAIRS OF THE NARRAGANSETT INDIANS,

MADE TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, 1884.

PROVIDENCE:

E. L. FREEMAN & CO., STATE PRINTERS.

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REPORT.

To the Honorable General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, at its January Session, A. D., 1884.

The undersigned, Commissioners of the Narragansett Tribe of Indians, directed at the last January Session of your Honorable Body, to superintend the erection of a suitable memorial at *Fort Neck*, in the town of Charlestown, respectfully present their report :

Your commissioners, in the absence of special instructions from your Honorable Body, have been obliged to determine in their best judgment, the form and character of such memorial. Considering the action of your Honorable Body herein, and the historic associations which have bound the State and the tribe together, they have decided that the memorial erected to commemorate such events, to be appropriate, should be simple, natural and enduring ; and believing no granite column, shaped by the hand of man, would be a suitable monument to the Narragansett Indians, your commissioners determined to procure a boulder, sufficiently imposing in size, and so shaped by nature, as to readily receive an inscription to denote the purpose for which it was placed. On account of the level character of the country in the immediate vicinity of the Old Fort, it was necessary to go some little distance to the neighboring hills, where, with considerable care a suitable boulder, weighing about five tons, was selected and with much difficulty was removed to the centre of the reservation at *Fort Neck*, where a proper foundation had already been prepared. About the boulder thus placed, an iron fence was erected, as more ornamental and permanent than any other suggested,

and it was deemed best in erecting this, to place it upon the outlines of the fortification to mark its form and protect it from encroachment. This extended fence being nearly eight hundred feet in length, slightly increased the expense over what had been previously estimated for an appropriation, as had also the difficulty of removing the boulder. Your commissioners, to relieve the treeless plain in which the fort is immediately situated, had some evergreen trees planted at the several corners of the fortification, and in the contract for the planting of the trees it was agreed that trees thus transplanted should be replaced in case of their failure to grow. A small sum was also expended in removing loose stones and slightly grading the reservation about the fort. These and other expenditures somewhat exceeded the sum appropriated by your Honorable Body. An account of said expenditures is hereto annexed (*Appendix A.*). The balance of said sum was paid out of an unexpended balance heretofore appropriated by your Honorable Body, to be paid on the order of your commissioners, which appropriation of said fund it is hoped will meet the approval of your Honorable Body.

While your commissioners were engaged in these labors, they were made mindful that their work was creating an interest in the community, not only in the immediate vicinity, but throughout the State. The Rhode Island Historical Society and students of our local history taking special interest therein. It was deemed proper to give an opportunity for this sentiment to express itself. The original inhabitants of this State have been really and nominally assimilated with the civilized white men who emigrated to them, and, after nearly two hundred and fifty years of friendly relations, first as host to the outcast wanderers, then of equally allied nations, and finally of a State extending its protection to its dependent wards, your Honorable Body had determined at its termination to erect some monument of that relation upon those lands which had longest remained in the possession of the Indians and their descendants. A memorial stone had been erected by your commissioners upon a spot of ground by nature picturesque, jutting prominently out into the Great pond, and which held the outline of a former fortification.

This fort too, from its distance from the Pawcatuck river, was probably the Indian Fort at which Capt. John Mason stopped on his way to the Pequot War, before it had been remodelled by the hands of the white man; an outpost, possibly, in those wars between the Niantics and Pequots, which were so constantly waged for the possession of the country between it and the Pawcatuck river, and which were afterwards revived in the boundary disputes of the colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut for the jurisdiction of the controverted territory, and it is interesting to believe that, because those Niantics held their own and followed the Pequots, pursuing them towards the Thames, the disputed territory was finally awarded to the jurisdiction of the Colony of Rhode Island, succeeding to the inheritance of its great Indian Tribe of the Narragansetts.

Considering these things your commissioners determined upon the completion of the memorial, to hold a public dedication, at which all who chose could be present. Accordingly, Thursday, August 30th, A. D., 1883, was selected. The Rev. Frederic Denison, who had always taken a great interest in and been a frequent writer about the Indians of our State, was invited to deliver an oration appropriate to the occasion, and Mr. Millen S. Greene was invited to read a poem. The Rhode Island Historical Society appointed a committee of its members, consisting of Ex-Governor Elisha Dyer, and Messrs. Isaac H. Southwick, Charles Gorton and B. B. Hammond to represent it at the exercises. The following inscription has been cut upon the sloping side of the boulder, which is set facing the south.

“FORT NINIGRET,

MEMORIAL OF THE NARRAGANSETT AND NIAN TIC INDIANS, THE UNWAVERING
FRIENDS AND ALLIES OF OUR FATHERS.

ERECTED BY THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND.

DWIGHT R. ADAMS,
WILLIAM P. SHEFFIELD, JR., } Com'rs.
GEORGE CARMICHAEL, JR., }

1883.”

The day selected proved to be auspicious for the occasion. The gathering of citizens was large, nearly all parts of the State being represented (*Appendix B.*). Commissioner Carmichael presided, making the opening address (*Appendix C.*). He was followed by His Excellency, Governor Bourn, after which, in good time, came the oration; a poem was read and addresses made by several distinguished citizens of the State. Burnside Post, G. A. R., No. 2, fifteen members, Charles Cornell, commander, tendered an escort to the Governor and other officials, and a select choir, organized by Dr. A. A. Sanders, rendered national songs, appropriate for the day. A report of the proceedings is herewith presented to your Honorable Body. With these interesting exercises the task of your commissioners was terminated. Too much importance can hardly be placed upon the influence of the Narragansett Tribe of Indians, in fostering the early inhabitants of this State, in making possible the independent existence of the Colony which preceded the State, and in extending and determining the present jurisdiction of this commonwealth. Rhode Island has never sought to ignore, but rather to pay, this debt of gratitude, in guarding the memory of the Indians who lived within her borders. It is acting in view of these feelings that your commissioners have hoped to meet the approval of your Honorable Body.

DWIGHT R. ADAMS,
 GEORGE CARMICHAEL, JR.,
 WILLIAM P. SHEFFIELD, JR., } *Commissioners.*

January, 1884.

APPENDIX B.

Among the many present may be mentioned Gov. Augustus O. Bourn, with aids-de-camp Cols. Arthur H. Watson and George H. Utter; Elisha Dyer, Jr., Adjutant General; Charles R. Dennis, Quartermaster General; Elisha H. Rhodes, Brigadier General; George M. Carpenter, a Judge of the Supreme Court; Joshua M. Addeman, Secretary of State; Samuel Clark, General Treasurer; Samuel H. Cross, State Auditor; Francello G. Jillson, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Thomas B. Stockwell, Commissioner of Public Schools; Ex-Governor Alfred H. Littlefield; Senator Nelson W. Aldrich and Representatives Jonathan Chace and Henry J. Spooner, of our Congressional delegation. State Senators—Olney Arnold of Pawtucket; Henry L. Greene, of Warwick; Thomas C. Peckham, of Coventry; Phineas O. Littlefield, of South Kingstown; Joseph C. Church, of Charlestown; Z. Herbert Gardner, of Exeter; William H. Spooner, of Bristol; Joseph H. Babcock, of Richmond; Horace L. Crandall, of Hopkinton; James M. Wright, of Foster; Henry A. Stearns, of Lincoln, and Lewis B. Smith, of Barrington. Representatives—Dwight R. Adams and Stephen T. Arnold, of Warwick; George Carmichael, Jr., of Charlestown; Melville Bull, of Middletown; Clark H. Burdick and William C. Townsend, of Newport; Royal C. Taft, of Providence; Jesse L. Moss, Jr., of Westerly; Charles J. Greene, of Richmond; James C. Collins, of North Providence; Josiah P. Palmer, of Hopkinton; Thomas W. Chace, of East Greenwich; Daniel R. Southwick, Jr., of South Kingstown; Edward L. Freeman and George P. Grant, of Lincoln; Lucius F. C. Garvin and John F. Clark, of Cumberland. Christopher Holden, Sheriff of Providence County; Elijah Baxter, Jr., Rev. B. F. Clayton, Rev. E. M. Stone, Dr. A. C. Dedrick, Dr. A. B. Whitaker, Amos Perry, Henry T. Beckwith, Wm. B. Spencer, C. A. Lee, and others.

Committee from the Rhode Island Historical Society—Ex-Governor Elisha Dyer, Isaac Southwick, Charles Gorton and B. B. Hammond.

The Town Council of Charlestown—John W. Money, Albert P. Allen, Henry S. Greene, Billings D. Macomber and George Burdick.

The late Indian Council—Benjamin Thomas, Joshua H. Noka, Daniel Seketer, Gideon L. Ammons and Brister C. Michael.

APPENDIX C.

ADDRESSES AT THE DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL BOULDER, AT FORT NINIGRET, AUG. 30, 1883.

COMMISSIONER CARMICHAEL'S ADDRESS.

May it Please Your Excellency :

The proceedings of to-day mark an epoch in the history of our State. For many centuries, tribal government, in some form has existed on this continent. Rhode Island is, I understand, the first State to absolutely abolish it. We are standing on historic ground. This is the oldest military post on the Atlantic coast. More than two centuries ago, Major John Mason, when on his expedition against the Pequots, halted under yonder bluff, just in the shades of evening. He remained without the enclosure over night. The next morning he was hospitably received by the Narragansetts, who were within this fort. Material assistance was rendered him by many Indian warriors, who coöperated in reducing the warlike Pequots to submission.

When Ninigret, in 1709, ceded to the colony of Rhode Island his vacant lands, and in return they guaranteed protection to him and his posterity, he reserved an area of sixty-four square miles, of which this was a part. Of all his possessions this region was to them the most dear, and although the princely domain of that time had become reduced to a paltry few thousand acres in our day, this spot has been retained by the Narragansetts until ceded to the State in 1880.

I leave to my associate Commissioner the duty of relating the work performed by us in settling the affairs of this people, transactions covering a period of two hundred and fifty years. I may say, how-

ever, that grave questions met us in the outset; that we were without law or precedent to guide us in their solution, that in the earliest part of our investigations it was learned that on and about the Indian reservation there were one hundred and fifty persons; that, scattered over many States, there were nearly two hundred more; that there were, perhaps, five thousand acres of land in Charlestown belonging to the Indians, four thousand acres of which, many years ago, had been set apart to the heads of families by the chiefs of the tribe; that the remaining one thousand acres, consisting mostly of swamp land, belonged to the tribe in common; that the land held in severalty, we caused to be surveyed and confirmed to the heirs of those to whom it was set off, giving them a title to such estates. The balance of the lands were sold, by order of the General Assembly, reserving this place and the Royal Indian Burying Ground. We also learned, that the Indian government of this territory, in theory, supported their own poor; that an annual election for Indian Council occurred in March of each year; that the income of the Indians from their estate from all sources, did not exceed fifty dollars per annum; that a separate school was maintained among them, supported wholly by the State. This school had practically been a failure for years. Under these circumstances, your commissioners commenced their labors. They concluded a treaty, or bargain, whereby the Indians ceded their lands to the State. Your commissioners divided the purchase money in equal parts, and paid the same to each member of the tribe. The poor of the tribe were to be cared for by the State; their children were to be allowed to attend the public schools in the districts where they resided. The tribal relation was to be abandoned, and the privileges and responsible duties of citizenship assumed.

The General Assembly, at its last session, made an appropriation for the enclosure of this spot. A boulder taken from their own lands, unhewn, in consonance with the character of the people whose memory it was designed to perpetuate, has been set up, and we are here to pay homage to the ancestors of these Narragansetts before us, for the kindness shown the founders of the Colony of Rhode Island. I will not longer detain you than to say, that in the performance of the duties entrusted to them, it was the aim of the commissioners to protect the interests of the people whose affairs they were instructed to settle, and at the same time to maintain the honor and dignity of our commonwealth.

Mr. Carmichael introduced His Excellency Governor Bourn, who said :

GOV. BOURN'S SPEECH.

In behalf of the State, it is my duty to accept the surrender of the trust committed to you by the General Assembly of the State, and I must congratulate you upon the able and impartial manner in which you have discharged the trust committed to you. The act of to-day terminates the history of a nation most hospitable, brave and generous ; the nation which gave a refuge to Roger Williams when expelled from Massachusetts for preaching the doctrine of soul liberty, and which remained a faithful friend to the infant colony until its power was broken by a merciless war, carried on by Massachusetts against the will and without the consent of Rhode Island. Looking back to the condition of this ancient seat before the advent of Roger Williams, an interesting picture rises before the mind, a picture of hills and valleys, covered with the primeval forest and abundant with game ; of villages, sheltering the Indian, yet undisturbed by white intrusion ; of lakes and streams, stocked with fish, meandering in their original purity, not yet turned to the busy uses of civilized man ; of the ocean, yet unshadowed by the sails and undimmed by the smoke of the ships and steamers sailing to distant ports. The Narragansett nation could at one time send five thousand warriors into the field, but now they have melted away like hoar frost before the summer sun, and the General Assembly of the State, which has so long been their guardian, has seen fit to dissolve the tribal relation, and place the remnant on the same footing as other citizens of Rhode Island. It is fitting that the last act of a duty well performed should take place at this ancient fort, and that a boulder from their own former lands should be a monument in memory of the relations which have existed between these Indians and the people of this State, and I trust that as enduring as this granite may be the recollection in the minds of the people of Rhode Island of the debt of gratitude which they owe to the Narragansett and Niantic Indians.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS

spoke as follows :— Perhaps it will not be amiss, at this time, to give a brief account of our stewardship :

Upon a petition numerously signed by members of the Narragansett tribe of Indians, living in the town of Charlestown, presented to the

House of Representatives at the January session of 1879, the following resolution was unanimously adopted (Feb. 18th):

Resolved, That a select committee of three be appointed to inquire into the justice, expediency and practicability of abolishing the tribal relations of the Narragansett Indians; of conferring the rights of citizenship upon the members thereof; of the most equitable manner of disposing of the land belonging to said tribe, etc., and report at the next January session of the General Assembly, or sooner, if possible."

Subsequently, Messrs. Dwight R. Adams, George Carmichael, Jr., of Richmond, and George B. Carpenter, of Hopkinton, were appointed as said committee. On the 30th day of July, 1879, a little more than four years ago, the committee held the first public meeting, in the Indian meeting-house in Charlestown, to take into consideration the various questions pertaining to the welfare of the Narragansett Indians. Another meeting was held at Cross' Mills, August 13th, and again in the Indian meeting-house October 31st, 1879. The subject and questions involved were thoroughly discussed, and considered in all their bearings, by members of the tribe, and prominent citizens of Charlestown and vicinity. The conclusion of the whole matter was, that the tribal relations ought to be abolished, and all natural and legal rights be given to the Indians. On December 26th, 1879, at a meeting of the Indian council with the committee, an agreement was made by said council in behalf of the tribe to quit-claim to the State the interest held by said tribe in the tribal or vacant lands, and all other tribal rights and claims, real and imaginary, for the sum of five thousand dollars.

The committee made a report to the General Assembly, at its January session, 1880, and an act was also submitted, which embodied in its terms and provisions a final solution of the entire question.

Subsequently, March 31st, 1880, "an act to abolish the tribal authority and tribal relations of the Narragansett Tribe of Indians," was passed, creating a board of three commissioners to carry out the provisions of said act. The board, as appointed, consisted of Messrs. Adams, Carmichael, Jr., and William P. Sheffield, Jr., of Newport, and was organized April 29th, 1880.

On Saturday, the 8th day of May following, the commission met the Indian council in conference, and had a free and full discussion on the giving of the deed, and the resulting dissolution of the tribe; and on Saturday, the 15th day of May, the commission met the members of the council in the State House in Providence, and in the

presence of Gov. Littlefield, Secretary of State Addeman, and State Auditor Spencer, executed a deed which had been prepared by Hon. William P. Sheffield, and approved by Attorney-General Sayles, quit-claiming to the State of Rhode Island all the tribal lands and rights of the tribe, reserving only the use of the Indian meeting-house and lot, while being occupied by the present religious society.

Mr. J. L. Kenyon, of Richmond, was engaged by the commission to take charge of the surveying of the newly purchased territory, preparatory to the sale thereof.

Three public meetings were held by the commission — June 26th, July 14th and 29th, 1880 — at which all persons interested in the proceeds of the lands sold were notified to appear, and prove heirship thereto. Nearly five hundred applicants for membership were considered, and the total number entitled to a share of the "wampum," (\$5,000), to be divided, as finally determined by the Supreme Court, (Aug. 19, 1881), was three hundred and twenty-four, and the individual share paid to each was fifteen dollars and forty-three cents.

As soon as the plats of the surveyor were completed and given to the commission, three public meetings were held — January 5th, 7th and 12th, 1881 — when all persons were given a hearing upon questions relating to boundary lines of the tribal lands conveyed to the State, and conflicting claims and opinions were satisfactorily harmonized, in consonance with the feelings of all. Of the land acquired by the purchase, nine hundred and twenty-two acres were sold at auction, on July 11th and 12th, 1882, in forty-six parcels. Fort Ninigret, and a drive-way around it, the three ponds, to wit: Watchaug, Cockampaug, and Deep, were reserved from the sale, and the titles to these remain in the State.

The late Indian council have rendered the Commissioners valuable and almost indispensable aid, and have been in practical harmony with us through every stage of our labors. Many questions have arisen in our new field of inquiry, such as, Could a member of the tribe abandon his tribal relations? Could the tribe adopt persons into the tribe who were not birth-right members thereof? Should the purchase money be divided among the members of the tribe according to the statute of distribution, or should every member thereof, without regard to age, receive a share? These and kindred questions were all settled without litigation, and with scarcely an appearance of friction.

The relation between State and tribe which existed nearly two

hundred and fifty years, ceased at the passage of the act of March 31st, 1880, and from and after that date the members of the tribe were subject to all the liabilities, and entitled to all the rights and privileges of citizenship. The Indians have assimilated themselves with their surroundings with no ill-effect, and the anomaly of a kingdom within a state, and yet not a vital part thereof, is happily among the things that were; and at the termination of to-day's proceedings here upon "Fort Ninigret," the word "finis" can be honorably written in the history of the Narragansett tribe of Indians.

"It can never be said, with truth, that the Narragansetts, as a tribe, have been illy treated by the whites. Both under English and American rule, as wards of the colony and of the State, they have been protected, nourished and aided, with a generous and Christian care."

Your Commissioners have ever endeavored to faithfully perform the duties assigned them in such a manner that Rhode Island may always refer, with just pride, to the honorable termination of our dealings with the now extinct tribe of Narragansett Indians.

THE ORATION OF THE DAY.

Mr. Carmichael next introduced the orator of the day, the Rev. F. Denison, who spoke as follows :

Your Excellency, Members of the Indian Commission and Fellow-Citizens : We are now called to compose the last formal chapter of a remarkable and deeply significant history. We stand on memorial, tragic and historically picturesque ground; on the one hand glancing back through Pagan shades into unmeasured centuries; on the other hand peering trustfully into the mysterious future. We are deeply conscious of having a duty to perform to the venerable past, from which we have received a precious legacy, and also of an obligation to the great future, which will inevitably receive some color and direction from our thoughts and deeds. Our historic meeting is freighted with large reflections. The services of this hour are both commemorative and dedicatory; altogether unique, unlike anything ever before observed in our country, or elsewhere; and to the thoroughly thoughtful, the occasion is too broad and suggestive in its ideas and connections to admit of being fully formulated in words. We can only touch a few points of the story.

From the imperfect and only data remaining to us, namely, the stone implements of the aborigines, their ancient shell heaps, and the indications of certain of their burial places, we venture to think that

there were people of original Mongolian origin in this region near eight hundred years before the coast was visited by Europeans and made known to the civilized world. Only into the last two hundred and fifty years of that period are we able to look with certainty as to events and characters. Beyond that we grope by the aid of faint traditions and faltering conjectures. Alas! without written language, without institutions, without a code of laws, without arts, and without real estate, except a communistic ownership of the wilderness as hunting grounds and corn patches, the natives sat in darkness, proving the weakness of nature's light, and transmitted no lessons of knowledge to the centuries following them. Here was shown the impotency of unaided Paganism ; its strength was insufficient for man's elevation.

Traditionally, we are told, that the ancient Niantics, neighbors of the equally old Narragansetts, held this coast from a line east of this fort on to the mouth of the Connecticut river, and reached back about thirty miles into the forests. Devoted chiefly to fishing, they were a mild and usually inoffensive tribe. In process of time the hardy and belligerent Pequots from the interior desiring for fish and wampum, possessions on the coast, made a descent, like hungry wolves, upon the quiet old Niantics and nearly destroyed them, taking possession of the coast from Pawcatuck to a point west of New London, including the four rivers, Pawcatuck, Mystic, Poquonoc and Pequot (Thames), with the adjacent islands, and reaching back twenty or more miles into the wilderness, leaving only two remnants of the Niantics, one in Lyme, Conn., known as the West Niantics, and one in this region known as the East Niantics, near the centre of whose territory is this old memorable fort.

These East Niantics, for security against the grasping, irascible Pequots, were obliged to form an alliance with the old Narragansetts, the powerful tribe on their east reaching to the eastern shore of Narragansett Bay, and northward more than thirty miles, and thought to have once numbered in their palmy days near thirty thousand souls. The league of these Indian monarchies, finally cemented by the intermarriage of the royal families, appears to have remained harmonious and unchanged till the dark day of King Philip's war. Frequently the Narragansetts had occasion to assist the Niantics in repelling the assaults of the Pequots. In withstanding those savage onsets this fort was of great service as a barrier against the invaders. It safely sheltered the Niantic braves, meanwhile it protected the war

canoes that took refuge in these serene waters. The foes of the Niantics, whether from Connecticut or Long Island, dreaded this stronghold and were never able to capture it. But for this fortification and the heroism displayed in it, the western boundary of Rhode Island would never have extended to the Pawcatuck. Herein we owe a debt to the patriotism and bravery of the Niantics.

The most ancient known dynasty of the Niantic Kings was that of the Ninigrets. How far into the unrecorded centuries that family of rulers extended is unknown. So far as we know, the law of blood-royal was never broken; an order which reminds us of ancient Asiatic usage. Dutch and French traders on the coast, Roger Williams, and the first white settlers of Rhode Island found here the Ninigret, whose portrait is seen in "Westerly and Its Witnesses." It was this Ninigret who gave hospitable entertainment in this fort to the heroic Major John Mason and his bold band in May, 1637, on their march through the wilderness to the famous attack upon the Pequot Fort on Pequot Hill, in Groton, Conn. He also lent Mason a detachment of his braves to aid in the fiery and bloody stroke that laid the Pequots low and virtually ended that savage monarchy.

How must this old stronghold have then appeared, manned by plumed and painted warriors, armed with their rude barbaric weapons? How looked among these the quaintly-dressed Puritan army? How wild the exterior view of the fort! Since it was then a widely-known fortification, it is probable that it had been laid out and regularly maintained for perhaps centuries. Its boundary lines more than four hundred feet on each of its four sides, with its bold bastions on three angles after the style of the forts of other tribes, particularly those of the Pequots, bristled with rough logs, stakes, branches of trees, and brush, the stakes answering as palisades, among which branches and brush were woven, after the style of basket work. Within the enclosure were certain large wigwams and stores of corn. Would that our expert artist here to-day could call up the old fort, its exterior and interior, its defences, its occupants, the war canoes in the little bay by its side, and the royal commander of its forces with his bodyguard of bowmen, and also the wild condition of the surrounding country, with the old war trail now known as Queen Anne's road. Such a picture would be a volume of history. It can be drawn, however, only by the imagination.

We stand on ground that was once royal, though the royalty was diminutive and darkly shaded. To the people who shared it, it had

a grandeur that was real, though to us it would present an air of puerility; yet human greatness after all is a comparative thing. This was the civil and military capital of a people whose story should never be lost. Here between 1620 and 1790, one hundred and seventy years, reigned nine members of the Ninigret dynasty. 1. The Ninigret of whom we have spoken. 2. His daughter, a queen. 3. Her son, who died near 1722. 4. Charles Augustus Ninigret. 5. His son, Charles. 6. George Ninigret. 7. Thomas Ninigret, crowned in 1746, and so well and favorably known as King Tom. 8. Queen Esther, who had a famous coronation on the ancient granite throne, Coronation Rock. 9. George Ninigret, who, soon after our Revolution, was killed by the falling of a tree. He was the last occupant of the Indian throne. After his death, on account of the advance of ideas and the greatly changed conditions of life, the tribe laid aside the old royal belt of peage, and in imitation of republican notions, was ruled by an annually-chosen Council, consisting of a president and four members, an order of government that, with the addition of a few laws, continued with success till the tribe, diminished and faded, was disbanded by their own action and the labors of our Commissioners.

Christianity was first brought to the Niantics, as it was to the Narragansetts, by Roger Williams, who doubtless preached as best he could, in this fort, and here illustrated the great passion of his life, that which he felt long before his exile, and which he gave us in his own words when he wrote: "My sole desire was to do the natives good." He began his ministry among the Indians while at Plymouth, and twelve years before the missionary labors of John Eliot. Indeed, Eliot caught his spirit from Williams. In all truth it may be said that the colony of Rhode Island was the providential product of William's missionary labors among the aborigines.

Until King Philip's War, 1675-6, the Niantics remained confederated with their superiors, the Narragansetts. In that great and bloody uprising of the natives of New England against the Colonists, this tribe refused to join, and continued friendly to our fathers. Consequently, as a tribe, they survived the terrible shock that virtually destroyed the Wampanogas, Nipmucks and Narragansetts. The Niantics, in all their career, never lifted the tomahawk against the whites, but always preferred and honored the calumet.

When the Narragansetts were overpowered and crushed in the great swamp fight, in South Kingstown, in December, 1675, and their last king Canonchet, was killed in 1676, the remnant of the tribe took

refuge with the unharmed Niantics, and came under the preserved sceptre of the Ninigrets.

By mistake of annalists, the consolidated and blended tribes were spoken of as the Narragansetts, and the reservation of Indian lands was in some instances called the Narragansett country. But, in fact, the reservation, like all this region, from time immemorial belonged to the Niantics, and the royal house of this tribe survived that of the Narragansetts more than a hundred years. The sceptre of the Narragansetts perished in war; that of the Niantics was finally transformed to republicanism by the power of Christian civilization. Justly do we find it inscribed on this memorial rock — and let its name henceforth and forever be **MEMORIAL ROCK** — the Niantics were “always the unwavering friends and allies of our fathers.” Not but what there were pleasing and touching instances of generosity, kindness, fidelity, brotherliness and manhood among the Narragansetts, as there certainly was to a conspicuous degree in old King Canonicus.

Ah! and when will Rhode Island raise, as she certainly ought, some memorial stone, similar to this memorial rock, to the memory of Canonicus, without whose hospitality and benevolence to the founder of our State, Rhode Island would never have existed. Here I cannot refrain from uttering my thought, a kind of lament and plea touching

THE GRAVE OF CANONICUS.

Is there no humblest stone to spell the spot

Where sleeps the monarch of his race?

Shall we, inheriting his kingdom, not

Respect his royal resting place?

Shall princely life and honors be forgot?

Is this deserved historic grace?

To exiled Williams, what a faithful friend?

As to our fathers, what a stay?

And shall their favored children not forefend

His worthy name from dark decay?

Is there no heart of gratitude to lend

Remembrance where low rests his clay?

Serene Conanicut, sea-laved and fair,

May boast the record of his throne;

Its shores and heights blessed with the healthful air

That gives to thought a broadening tone;

Yet no memorial acre bid to bear

His fame who called it all his own.

Once proudly lit he there his council-blaze,
 And mandates gave to painted braves ;
 Once listened to his people's ardent praise
 As to the anthem of the waves,
 And 'mid deep mourning, when were closed his days,
 Was laid beside his fathers' graves.

What though to us that kingly life was rude ?
 Recall we not our ancient sires ?
 Our vaunted culture has been varihued ;
 Imperfect still our altar fires ;
 Mayhap our children's children will conclude
 That we had some ill-shaped desires.

Then let us choose some massive, rugged rock,
 That near his royal home we find,
 Whereon, in lines that time may vainly mock,
 With generous, native ivy twined,
 To hold his name until earth's final shock
 Shall close the drama of mankind.

The father of Canonicus was the famed Tashtassuck, distinguished alike for his wisdom and his valor. Canonicus was the oldest of his four sons, and, judged by the moral atmosphere he necessarily breathed and all his Pagan environments, was a mild and generous prince. He died June 4, 1647, at the age of about 85 years. When shall he have his suitable memorial that may be pointed out to all the generations that shall traverse the beautiful waters of Narragansett Bay?

Greatly, too, is it to be desired that the wisdom and foresight of our Commissioners in erecting this significant and enduring boulder-monument on this old stronghold, might be imitated by the State, or by the public spirit of the citizens of our favored commonwealth, in erecting a like native monument on the never-to-be-forgotten site of the great swamp fight in South Kingstown, the most important battlefield of the State, the spot wet with the blood of so many Indians and Colonists, and where the fate of the Narragansett nation was decided by the sword. When shall such a deserved record-stone be set up? Whatever place holds the associations of remarkable deeds and characters, thereby becomes worthy of respectful and enduring remembrance.

And when shall our picturesque, opulent, fashionable "city by the sea," Newport, so rich in historical material, manifest a just historic spirit in erecting a boulder-monument — not a figure of art, but a work of nature — to King Miantonomi, at his royal seat, old Tonomy Hill, the commanding height made memorable not only by the royal

wigwam of that cruelly-murdered prince, but also by being the residence of the last sachem of the ancient Aquidnecks. Indeed, this last consideration should be enough to secure the memorial.

Still further in this line of thought. Certainly Bristol county can never be just to itself till it has set up some visible memorial — and let it be a boulder-monument, a symbol of rude grandeur — to King Massasoit in the village of Warren, the spot where he generously entertained Roger Williams and cordially welcomed the Pilgrims. Such memorials would bring a thousand-fold recompense, in reflecting intelligence, character and dignity upon the State.

The consolidated Narragansetts and Niantics, on the reserved lands, after selling some of their domain and finding themselves closely pressed by English society and customs, and thus limited in their hunting grounds, became somewhat dissatisfied with their situation, and at last, under the reign of King Tom, quite a number of them voluntarily emigrated and identified themselves with the red men in the interior of the State of New York. Indeed, the tribe underwent its greatest modification of life and manners under King Tom, who lived very much like the whites, as the house he built will testify, and strongly favored forms and means of English education. In 1750, under his reign, was formed the Indian church that still exists. In 1765, in a letter to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, petitioning for the establishment of free schools among his people, he closed by thus expressing his desire : “That when time with us shall be no more ; that when we and the children over whom you have been such benefactors shall leave the sun and stars, we shall rejoice in a far superior light.” Wonder not, then, if here, in this address, some tender thoughts crowd on the mind respecting gentle and once greatly beloved

KING TOM.

Thou best of kings of the Niantic blood,
 Erst honored here with sway ;
 Regardful where thy kingly feet once trod,
 We fain would tribute pay.

To rulers ever be the honor paid
 That rank and wealth demand,
 And whosoe'er has goodly record made,
 Shall reverence command.

Thy form rests mantled in the royal ground,
 But with us lives thy name,
 To stand in grateful history's volume bound,
 Enfolded in its fame.

The royal blood coursed proudly through thy veins,
 As back thy eyes were cast,
 Upon thy sires who ruled these hills and plains,
 In the unmeasured past.

Heir to a Pagan throne, thou didst behold
 The fading of the night ;
 But brightly rising o'er the gloomy old,
 The guiding Bethlehem light.

The while thy father's hunting grounds grew less,
 And manners new arose ;
 With all thy hopes and fears of changefulness,
 Departed to thy foes.

And when at last thy westering sun went down
 And oped the gates ajar ;
 'Twas thine we trust to leave thy earthly crown,
 To wear one brighter far.

Peace to thy ashes, as to all thy sires ;
 And to thy people's graves ;
 Long live the story of thy council fires,
 And memory of thy braves.

In their political relations to the colony and State, the natives, from the days of Williams to 1709, were regarded as under a sort of protectorate of the whites and the British crown, and from 1709 to the recent close of their government on the reservation, it was understood both by themselves and by the colony, and afterwards the State, that they were related by treaty, or alliance, wherein both parties retained certain rights, modified until the revolution by a relation to the crown of England. Roger Williams's cardinal doctrines of the brotherhood of men and the right of the aborigines to the soil of the country, were conscientiously and faithfully carried out by the authorities of the State in all their dealings with the natives. Lands were purchased always at the price named by the owners. All stipulations were carefully observed. As agreed upon by both parties in 1709, lands were definitely set off and reserved *in perpetuum* for the blended remnants of the two tribes. That compact was never violated. In the revolution the Indians joined the colony in throwing off the galling English yoke, and lent their power to the patriot cause. Some of them served in the patriot army.

Finally, with the decline of their numbers, their change of manners, their removals to various localities, and their intermarriage with other bloods, there came the great question of their tribal disband-

ment, the division of the reserved lands and their absorption into the citizenship of the State. The solution of this intricate problem is found in the admirable doings of our Indian Commissioners during the past four years. Their difficult, delicate labor is successfully closed to-day. It is more than fitting; it is an imperative duty to make honorable mention of their tasks. They had no precedents by which to be guided. Their's was an untrodden path. There existed no definite law governing the transactions to which they were called. Rhode Island and the tribe were united simply by treaty, and neither party had the expressed right to control the other. It was a case of *imperium in imperio*, a State within a State, where both parties had to be equally consulted and some new plan agreed upon whereby one party should be retired by becoming a part of the other. Only the general laws of equity were available in the case, and even here the blazed trees in the forest to be traversed were few and far between. Moreover, such was the scattered, indefinite condition of the tribe that the idea of doing justice to each member seemed almost impossible. But the whole problem was thoroughly studied, all parts of it were carefully taken in hand, patiently analyzed, and the whole complicated matter was finally settled on principles of equity to the complete satisfaction of the parties. For this labor and success, special thanks should be publicly expressed to the Commissioners. Their doings have reflected honor upon themselves and upon the State. Some niche in Rhode Island history should be given to their names—Adams, Carmichael, Sheffield. We would also preserve and honor the names of the members of the last Indian Council—Ammons, Thomas, Noka, Michel, Sekater.

And here it is but right that I should add the testimony of the Commissioner in this town, upon whom much of the details of the work of adjusting affairs devolved. In a letter to me, speaking of the Indian Council, he says: "They were as intelligent and shrewd a body of men as can be found in any town council in the State. Their patience and unwearied attention to details, and their assistance in all matters in settling the tribal affairs, deserves a cordial recognition. Give the Indian Council their meed of praise; it is well deserved."

Your Excellency: How appropriate it is that these ancient, beautiful acres should be held, for all coming time, by the State of Rhode Island, as ground consecrated to the memories of a people upon whom she was once dependent—a spot devoted to those sentiments of humanity and fraternity that ennoble mankind. It has been dedicated

by Indian empire through untold centuries. We wisely reconsecrate it for ourselves and for our children. Forever may posterity count it as hallowed to story, as it will also count Coronation Rock, the stone church and the reserved Indian burial places. How justly, as toward the Indian kings, their armies and their people, have our Commissioners enclosed this venerable fortification with this granite and iron fence, planted these clusters of evergreen trees around it for perpetual beauty and native associations, and lifted from the soil this kingly boulder — itself a type of the rude native life once reigning here — cutting upon it a brief record and tribute that may endure through all future ages. This work may properly be termed a deed of historic piety, and for it coming generations will be thankful.

Yes, this hour is historic. The statements just made by the Indian Commissioner, the felicitous address of Gov. Bourn, the works of the painter and the photographer, now sketching this scene, and the addresses to which we are still to listen, will make this occasion indeed richly memorial. And all of us who have come pilgrim-like to this old historic ground as to a shrine, have the strong advantage of varied and inspiring associations to aid us in our just service. Here the imagination summons up near eight hundred years of unwritten Pagan experience. Here rise before us the bewildering ghosts of Indian superstitions. Here are propounded anew, and with peculiar force, the deep questions of hereditary tendencies, the power of old associations, the strength of long usage, but, withal, the inevitable degenerations of false faiths and the final overthrow of unrealities before the march of truth. Evidently, true civilization follows alone the light that cometh down from Heaven.

Here, by the help of annals, we see Dutch and French traders selling metals, beads and bottles of "fire-water" to the natives for beaver skins and fur mantles. Here we seem to behold members of distinguished Indian councils, possibly Massasoit, Canonius, Miantonomi, Canonchet, Pomham, Sosoia, and the chiefs of the Nipmucks, Manisses and Metoacs, but not Sassacus, of the Pequots, or Uncas, of the Mohegans. Here, doubtless, in his prime, of strength and hope, stood Roger Williams, "the apostle of religious liberty," and preached the Gospel to proud Ninigret and to his wondering bowmen, and gathered up some of the gutteral words and phrases for his "Key to the Indian Tongue"—that remarkable and only lingual monument of the Narragansetts and Niantics. Here slept in security Mason, Underhill, Stone and the heroes of Pequot Hill. Here, armed or

unarmed, white men were invariably treated with kindness. Here compacts were always fulfilled with fidelity. Aye, what various scenes and pageants of war and peace have here passed in the by-gone centuries. Kings and queens, in their barbaric pride, here wore their royal belts of peage and were surrounded by their bodyguards of stalwart men with feathery plumes, leather regalia, painted faces and armed with clubs, bows, stone scalping knives and stone tipped spears. Here braves went out to savage battle and returned with bloody spoils. Here royal mandates were given, and scalps were displayed as the proofs of valor and of victory. This ground is freighted with memories of checkered deeds and experiences; and not least so as bringing into comparison and contrast the darkness and feebleness of paganism with the quick, animating ideas and forms of Christian civilization which gave life to our republic and have now transformed our continent. Here have been wrought out problems that may well be studied by statesmen, moralists and divines.

On this coast met two types and tides of human life. They failed to mingle, because they were so diverse. Roger Williams's hope of the natives was not realized. The weaker slowly gave way to the stronger. Except in the ill-timed and disastrous stroke of Philip's war, there was no conflict of races. There was an innate deterioration in the Indian blood, and the tribes were evidently losing both numbers and constitutional vigor when the whites first reached these shores. And gradually, despite the presentation of the Gospel, the helps of schools, the incentives of arts, and the proffered advantages of commerce, the old life faded, fainted and expired. Such as remain of the old tribes, having undergone modifications of blood and manners, are now full and regular citizens of the State. Politically speaking, there are no more Indians in Rhode Island. The alliance between the natives and our fathers, that really began in 1636, has now terminated, as it began, in peace and brotherly love.

It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that, considered in the nature, power, spread and triumph of her peculiar principles, no province of the earth, save Palestine, has contributed more to the progress of human liberty than Rhode Island. One of the cardinal ideas of her founder, the one which first provoked the opposition of Massachusetts and prepared the way for his exile, that the natives were the rightful owners of the country, deemed a heresy elsewhere, has always here been sacredly held and continuously illustrated. However the Indians may have been treated by other States and nations,

here has been shown to them the Christian law of the brotherhood of all men. Now that the natives as a separate and organized people have ceased to be, Rhode Island has nothing to regret or to conceal, as to her treatment of them or their fathers. In this respect her escutcheon is unstained, and to-day she affirms, both by her words and her deeds, she is neither forgetful nor ungrateful toward those who, under God, were the original proprietors of this soil. Happy would it have been if her Indian policy had been followed by the other colonies, and by our nation.

But time admonishes us to close these condensed and hurried thoughts. These are just and creditable services. Honor to the State of Rhode Island for reserving for all coming time this and other portions of the old Indian empire, as sacred historical memorials. Honor to our far-seeing Commissioners for the proper protections and adornments they have added to this ancient stronghold, the oldest and most impressive Indian memorial to be found on the coast of New England. Let the gifted painter now at work before us (Mr. Elijah Baxter) truthfully sketch this historical scene, including in the picture Governor Bourn, the Commissioners, the Indian Council, and the group that represents the departed tribe. Let our Rhode Island Historical Society, so well represented by ex-Governor Dyer and delegates, make full note and record of these last scenes and doings in the Indian history of our State.

Memorials like this gives sanctity to a land. They broaden and deepen the historic love of a people, teaching them due reverence for the past, quickening the spirit of enquiry into human relations, stimulating a worthy ambition to live as in the sight of all mankind; thus laying an enduring foundation for love of country and for the culture of exalting ideas. Rightly viewed, such memorials are investments that make the largest and happiest returns both of intelligence and of public virtue. Our State should have more of them, and all the relics of Indian life should be preserved.

Had we power to address those who are to come after us, we would say with emphasis: Ponder the hoary past, the darkness and the light, the story of the aborigines and of our fathers; consider what religious and political problems in two hundred and fifty years have been wrought out on these shores; cherish the traditions and memories of Canonicus, Miantonomi, Canonchet, and the Ningrets; under all changes of time and society hold sacred and inviolate this ancient fortification; guard ever yonder tombs of the Indian Kings and the

graves of all the brave Niantics; shield from all injury in all coming time, as a memento of barbaric royalty, yonder rugged yet eloquent Coronation Rock; and here let no vandal hands ever be laid on what we now sacredly dedicate Memorial Rock, tenderly set up and inscribed with the gratitude of Rhode Island to the people who once for centuries commanded this coast, and who in their noble, native generosity, gave hospitable shelter to our exiled fathers.

Rhode Island holds the Indian name
 As sacred with her own.
 And here to vindicate the claim,
 Presents her bond in stone.

EX-GOVERNOR DYER

spoke as follows :

Mr. Chairman: My colleagues, of the committee from the Rhode Island Historical Society, with that courtesy so characteristic of each, have requested me to express our grateful acknowledgements of the kind attention to us, and to the Society we represent on this most interesting and laudable historic occasion. We do not come as "messengers of mercy" to the descendants of those whose memories we are here to recall and honor and who, I trust, have long since had the fullest fruition of more perfected blessings in the "realms above" than any we could hope for them here below. Our mission is to honor those who, in the days of our State's infancy and weakness, stood firmly and bravely by the side of our Colonial Fathers in maintaining the rights and bounds of this loved land of civil and religious liberty, so that it now takes rank with all others for intelligence, industry and prosperity; to those who prevented the incursive Pequots from making our beautiful Narragansett Bay the eastern boundary of Connecticut; to do homage to the memories of nature's sovereigns and their people in whose hands the "calumet of peace" was far more dearly cherished than the bloody tomahawk. As long as this memorial, we dedicate to-day, shall continue, so long will our children's children be reminded of the Ninigrets and the Niantics; their virtues and deeds of noble daring of such an honored record. I must not forget that we are favored with the most acceptable presence of His Excellency the Governor of this State, and others of her distinguished citizens, and once more repeating the assurances of our grateful appreciation of the courtesies extended to us and to our Society, with

you, we eagerly await the literary feast of the day from the accomplished historian and poet of the occasion.

MR. MILLEN S. GREENE

then read the following poem :

I.

With humble reverence and uncovered head
I stand beside this mound;
With shoeless feet I fain would softly tread,
For this is holy ground.
Wherever kings and chieftains of the land
Have sat in regal state,
Forbid it, Heaven, that unregardful hands
The spot should desecrate.

II.

We stand and bend the eager, listening ear,
For whispers from the past—
We strain the vision, but we vainly peer,
No shadowy form is cast.
The silence of the unrecorded years
Speaks in its undertone;
And stirs the fancy, as we faintly hear
The tramp of ages gone.

III.

We may not penetrate behind the veil
And scan the scenes beyond;
We only know that human hands must fail
To lift the shadowy frond.
Enough remains that red men had in store
T' immortalize their name;
These hieroglyphics of unwritten lore
Perpetuate their fame.

IV.

This bastioned relic of a mighty race,
A living record bears;
Tho' rude, yet not untaught, an honored place
On history's scroll is theirs.
'Tis fitting, then, in honor of their dead,
Their noble deeds rehearse,
Recalling scenes, by fact or fancy led,
In prose or rustic verse.

V.

We plow, and thoughtless turn the crumbling soil,
 Which once brave warriors pressed;
 We reap the harvests of our yearly toil,
 Where kings are laid to rest.
 We plod along the sinuous woodside walks
 Where Indian maidens tripped;
 We stand upon the very moss-clad rocks
 Where once the wild deer skipped.

VI.

The young men proudly trod these conscious glades
 When from the chase returned;
 Approving glances from the bright-eyed maids
 In secret bosoms burned.
 For e're since Adam, in his prime began
 To woo his faithless dame,
 Hath women's smiles and loving glances fanned
 The heart's divinest flame.

VII.

Where now the tribes that thronged these woody hills
 And chased the tameless deer?
 Whose wigwams by the springs and mountain rills
 O'erflowed with friendly cheer?
 Where now the birch canoes that lightly skimmed
 Across this quiet bay?
 Where are the voices of the maids who hymned
 Their evening roundelay?

VIII.

Where are the braves who battled side by side
 In every hostile fray?
 The noble chiefs whose friendship true and tried
 We honor here to-day?
 The kings, who proudly wore a civic crown?
 The royal sceptre swayed?
 Whose very lips unmantled with a frown,
 Spoke only when obeyed.

IX.

Let yonder rounded, leaf-crowned hill reply,
 Whose trees, like nodding plumes,
 Bend over the graves where royalty doth lie,
 Beneath the wild flowers' bloom.

Let these mute fields, that now with harvests smile,
 This quiet, peaceful bay,
 This fading fortress, answer make meanwhile—
 What secret voice have they!

X.

Methinks I hear, born from the ocean caves,
 The beating of its surge;
 The nearer, listless lapse of quiet waves
 That kiss the pebbly verge.
 I see the azure dome above our heads,
 So measureless and vast;
 With flooded light and star-gems overspread,
 In beauty unsurpassed.

XI.

Our inmost souls are with emotion thrilled
 By thoughts that spring from thence;
 The whispers of these voiceless tones are filled
 With speaking eloquence.
 And thro' these many wondrous works of God,
 We feel the power divine;
 And kneeling on the fresh and verdant sod,
 We worship at His shrine.

XII.

The same glad sun hath swept its daily round,
 Thro' centuries untold;
 The same bright stars have flamed in depths profound
 Since when they sang of old.
 Eternal utterances have thus proclaimed
 God's wisdom, power and might;
 But darkened minds, led by a power unnamed,
 Groped in a shadowy light.

XIII.

So what may cause our longing hearts aspire
 To grand and lofty thought,
 To those less favored, no sublime desire
 May move a soul untaught.
 But equal bounties, by His kind decree,
 Who heeds the sparrow's fall,
 His love and pity, measureless and free
 Are thrown broadcast to all.

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XIV.

So, guided by one common fatherhood,
This noble race of braves,
The faithful allies of our fathers stood,
And sleep in kindred graves.
'Tis meet that we commemorate the deeds
Of those departed sires,
Who lavishly supplied our urgent needs,
Around their council fires.

XV.

Their steadfast favor ever bright and brighter grew,
As year succeeded year;
No human hearts were half so firm and true,
Or friendships half so dear.
Their faith, unswerving in the white man's cause
This granite face records;
And future wayside travellers here will pause
To read the magic words.

XVI.

Unwritten volumes of forgotten deeds
Are buried with their past;
Their wars, their pastimes and their creeds,
Are in oblivion cast.
This remnant of that proud and noble race,
With hearty cheer we greet,
Within our hearts they hold an honored place,
With gratitude replete.

XVII.

Their numbers small, their feeble footsteps turned
Towards their setting sun,
Their evening tapers to their sockets burned,
Their journey almost done.
Their fathers, who have long since passed beyond
The twilight's golden gate,
For them, upon the happy hunting ground,
With beckoning hands await.

XVIII.

An honest pride is theirs t'enjoy to-day,
Sprung from their ancient fame;
A sense of gratitude is ours alway,
In memory of their name.

May heavenly dews descend upon the mould,
 Where weeps their cypress vine,
 And bless the soil which tenderly doth hold
 Their fathers' dust and mine.

SENATOR ALDRICH,

upon being introduced, said that coming down on the cars the Secretary of the Historical Society had shown him a pamphlet which had rather unsettled his convictions as to Rhode Island history. This pamphlet was written by Dr. Parsons, and proved conclusively to his own mind that this fort was built by the Dutch. The Senator added: "I am still further satisfied that this fort was built by the Dutch because of the appearance of my friend, Mr. Chace, as a speaker on this occasion, a circumstance which compels me to believe that, if there ever has been any armament in this fort, it must have been Quaker guns. [Laughter and applause.] But, aside from all this, the occasion is most significant and memorable. The official representatives of the State are very properly here to bid Godspeed at the outset of their new career to the inheritors of a great name, and to show that the people of Rhode Island recognize the obligations they are under to the Narragansett Indians, but for whose friendly alliance and support the experiment of our ancestors in endeavoring to establish a new colony on the broad principle of freedom of conscience, would certainly have perished. Through the influence of Roger Williams with the great chieftains of the Narragansett tribe, the colony was not only saved from destruction, but recognition, denied for a long time, was wrung from the other colonies of New England. These are services which a grateful and generous people never can and never will forget, and I trust that this unpretentious stone may for centuries remain in this beautiful spot, a proper memorial to the manly qualities of the ancient possessors of the soil.

REPRESENTATIVE CHACE,

after a pleasant allusion to the Commission, said :

"I was reminded of an interesting point, while the orator of the day was speaking, and that was the claim of Connecticut to jurisdiction over this territory. The other day, in conversation with a friend upon that subject, he called my attention to 'Bowen's Boundary Disputes of the State of Connecticut.' Bowen said that when Governor

Winthrop, of Connecticut, went to London in 1662 to obtain a charter for the colony of Connecticut, the scrivener who drew up the charter made a clerical error, including in the jurisdiction of the colony all the lands as far as the 'Narragansett River,' when the intention was to have placed the boundary line west of the Pawcatuck. For eighty years the question of jurisdiction over this land was contested in the courts between Connecticut and Rhode Island, although when the Crown granted the charter of Rhode Island in 1663 special attention was called to the fact that the Connecticut boundary was to end at the Pawcatuck river. Some of my friends may doubtless be aware that Wickford, then called Narragansett, was at one time held by a Connecticut constable, and even now, if the owners of the soil on which we stand were to undertake to search their title, they would be obliged to go to Hartford to find it. Another idea. A good name is a most precious legacy to transmit to our posterity, and the State of Rhode Island may well entertain with just pride the memory of her treatment of the Indians. She may well regard with gratification the fact that no perfidy or treachery stains the record of this colony in dealing with the red men. Only two colonies, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, are entitled to the proud distinction. Your orator has said that Roger Williams paid for the soil. He not only paid for it once, but for large tracts he paid thrice, in the current coin of the realm, and paid fairly each time.

What is the lesson of the hour? We, as citizens of Rhode Island, felicitate ourselves on the fact that our hands are unstained in this matter, but it is our duty to remember that as members of this great confederation of States, we, as citizens of the Union, are liable and responsible for the treatment of the Indians in the western territories. I wish that I possessed the force and eloquence of an orator to enforce the gravity of the responsibility imposed on us by the condition of the Indian tribes, who are the wards of the nation, and for the treatment those tribes have received. When we remember, in the words of Jefferson, 'God is just, and His justice will not always slumber,' and that every drop of blood that trickled down the back of a slave was atoned for by blood shed upon the field of battle, that every dollar wrung from the unrequited toil of the slave was paid in the loss and suffering and waste of war. I ask whether it is not imperative on us, as a duty to ourselves and to our posterity, to treat the Indians as they ought to be treated, in order that if again the judgments of God shall be visited upon the land, our doorposts may be sprinkled,

that the Angel of Wrath may pass over our households and leave us unscathed."

REPRESENTATIVE SPOONER

was next introduced, and said that the work completed to-day had from its inception had his most hearty support, and as far as he was able, his hearty coöperation. The treatment of the ancient proprietors of the soil by the people of Rhode Island had been an example for the country. By act of the General Assembly the Narragansett Indians had been absorbed into the body of the State, and to-day it could be justly said there were no Indians in Rhode Island. The Indian stood to-day a fellow-citizen of the common State. Col. Spooner congratulated the Commission on the close of their well-performed labors, and the State of Rhode Island upon the consummation of those labors. Rhode Island was a little State, but she had justly vindicated her title to be called the pioneer in the assertion of freedom of conscience and of fair dealing between man and man.

SPEAKER JILLSON

alluded to the fact that but for inscriptions on monuments and tombs of stone, nations long passed away might have been utterly forgotten, and it was fitting that the State of Rhode Island should in some form place an inscription on enduring rock in memory of the early people of Rhode Island. He spoke of the bravery of the Niantics in keeping intact their boundary, and of the hospitality of the Narragansetts to Roger Williams, and traced the decay of the tribe from their prime until to-day, adding that it was fitting that the relation should now cease, and that he trusted that the Indians would prove faithful citizens of the commonwealth.

GIDEON L. AMMONS

spoke as follows:

Your Excellency, Governor Bourn, Honorable Senators, Gentlemen and Ladies:

This fort was held by my ancestors when they had prepared to meet their foes and repel attacks. They had a navy, and so they needed a fort. And they kept back their enemies from Long Island and from King Philip's trail. Finally they all met on Bonnet Point to bury

