

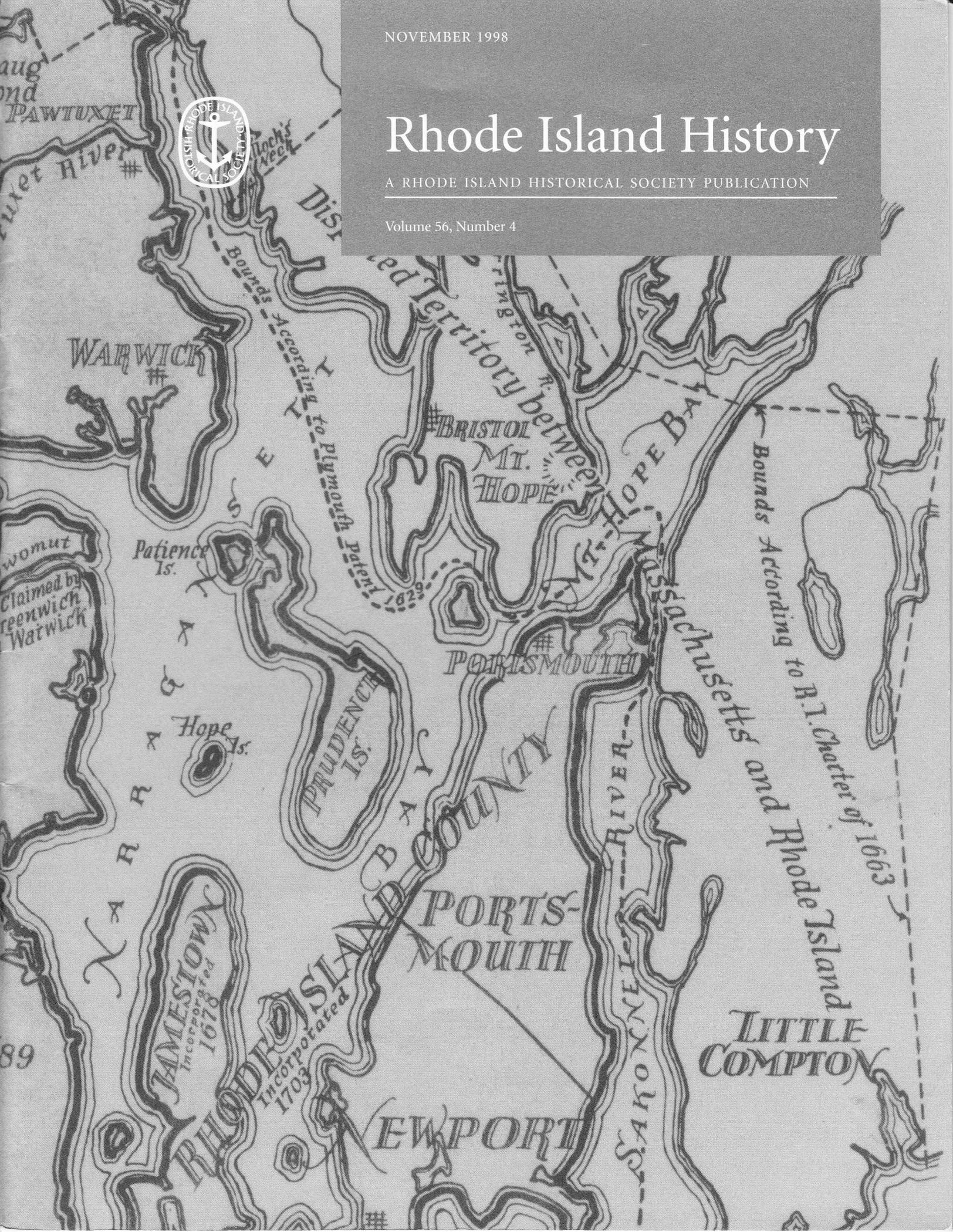
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Introduction

WILLIAM MCKENZIE WOODWARD

Originally published in 1936 as a contribution to the three hundredth anniversary of the state's settlement by English colonists, *Rhode Island Boundaries, 1636-1936*, is herewith reprinted to bring it to the wider audience the work deserves. In it, Providence architect and self-styled historian John Hutchins Cady provides a detailed description of the evolution of Rhode Island's state, county, and municipal borders.

Cady was born in Providence on 17 January 1881, the son of John Hamlin and Mary T. (Eddy) Cady. Although not wealthy, the Cadys and the Eddys were old-Yankee Providence families and thought of themselves as such. Cady's family made its home at 127 Power Street, and Cady would continue to live there until his death on 27 September 1967 at the Jane Brown Unit of Rhode Island Hospital.

After attending the University Grammar School and Hope High School, Cady entered Brown University, from which he received a Ph.B. with the class of 1903. He then enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study architecture.¹ Before, during, and after his studies there, he worked for a number of architectural firms: Clarke & Howe, of Providence, between February and September 1904; Stone, Carpenter & Willson, of Providence, for four months in 1905; Peabody & Stearns, of Boston, in 1906 and 1907; and Howells & Stokes, of New York, for three months in 1907. He then briefly joined the Atelier Duquesne in Paris, one of that city's most prominent and active architectural studios, where two Rhode Island natives—Raymond Hood and F. Ellis Jackson—were already employed. Like most American architectural students in turn-of-the-century Paris, Hood and Jackson were enrolled at the prestigious Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but Cady did not follow their lead.² Instead, he returned to Providence in 1908 and began his own architectural practice, concentrating at first on private residences and later expanding into restoration work.

Professionally, Cady was a disciple of architect and architectural historian Norman Morrison Isham (1864-1943).³ Isham was a pivotal figure in the history of American architecture and the historic preservation movement. With Albert F. Brown, he coauthored *Early Rhode Island Houses* (1895), the first published scholarly study of American architecture, and *Early Connecticut Houses* (1905). Between 1912 and 1933 he taught architecture and architectural history at the Rhode Island School of Design and guided the restoration of a number of significant Rhode Island colonial buildings. In 1923 the Metropolitan Museum of Art appointed Isham a consultant to design and equip its newly created American Wing.⁴ Cady admired Isham's work in historic architecture, and his own work—especially in the 1930s, as Isham's began to wane—increasingly emulated it: restoration of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century buildings, lectures, and publication of articles and books on historical topics.

John Hutchins Cady (1881-1967). Courtesy of the Providence Journal.

William McKenzie Woodward is an architectural historian with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.

Rhode Island Boundaries was the first of Cady's historical writings. Cady later published *Walks around Providence* (1942); *Swan Point Cemetery* (1947), a centennial history of the cemetery he served as president for thirty-three years; and his crowning achievement, *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence* (1957). He also published articles

and book reviews in *Rhode Island History*, *Old-Time New England*, and the *Providence Journal*. Like Isham and Fiske Kimball, other early writers of American architectural and developmental history, Cady was trained as an architect, not a historian, and he approached his task from an orientation more visual than verbal and analytical. These writers, like contemporary historians such as Samuel Eliot Morison and Charles M. Andrews, brought to organizing and explaining history a particularly old-guard Yankee determination to “get the facts down and get them straight.” All of Cady’s writing is marked by his striving for fastidious accuracy.

Cady took a great interest in civic improvements and planning issues from the early days of his career. Having joined the City Plan Commission two years after its creation in 1913, he served as its secretary from 1915 until 1930 and as its chairman from 1930 until its reorganization in 1944. He also served on the Improved Housing Committee in the 1910s, the Providence Housing Association in the 1940s, and the Federal Hill House Board of Managers. His 1934 appointment to the National Planning Board, the organization that guided the distribution of government funding to states and municipalities during the Great Depression, was eminently appropriate for his highly organized, process-oriented mind.

In his capacity as a member of the National Planning Board, Cady served as consultant to Rhode Island’s State Planning Board, an agency first appointed by Governor Theodore Francis Green in December 1934 and established in state legislation by the General Assembly in April 1935. The State Planning Board was the instrument through which the federal Public Works Administration and Works Progress Administration projects were planned and funded. The PWA cooperated with the state in planning projects and allocated federal funding. The WPA provided work for the unemployed.

One of the first tasks undertaken by the State Planning Board was a survey of current conditions in the state’s housing, recreation, transportation, historic properties, and nine other areas, among which boundary definition was not specifically mentioned.⁵ But the issue of boundaries had already captured Cady’s attention. In reporting to the State Planning Board in June 1936, Cady noted that “Culminating research work undertaken by the consultant *for several years* [emphasis added], a report entitled ‘Territorial Bounds of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations,’ illustrated by six maps, was completed in May.”⁶ For whatever reason, never explained by Cady, he had begun a boundary survey long before the creation of the National or State Planning Boards. No doubt because in part it documented existing conditions, Cady and members of the State Planning Board viewed his boundary survey as contributing to the board’s designated work.

Publication of *Rhode Island Boundaries* was jointly sponsored by the State Planning Board and the Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission. Chairing the board, and serving as a member of the Tercentenary Commission, was John Nicholas Brown (1900-1979), a civic-minded Providence businessman and scion of the old mercantile and manufacturing family.⁷ It was Brown who was responsible for the decision to transform Cady’s survey into a commemorative book for the tercentenary. A letter to Brown from Horace G. Belcher, executive secretary of the Tercentenary Commission, notes the commission’s decision to publish “this most valuable monograph and to hold the size of the edition to a figure large enough to provide for the State and other leading libraries, historical authorities and others to whom such a book would be of real value. As I recall our telephone conversation, this was your own idea.”⁸

The monograph that the Tercentenary Commission published in the fall of 1936 may now seem puzzling for what it does not reveal. The colonial and state boundaries of Rhode Island, drawn and redrawn from 1636 to 1862, have probably been subject to greater and more protracted dispute and readjustment than the boundaries of any other

state in the country. Municipal boundaries continued to change until 1919, nearly three hundred years after English settlement began. Cady describes all these external and internal boundary changes, but he does not relate them to the religious, political, economic, and social forces that occasioned them.

Offering the reader a wealth of factual detail, together with maps drawn by State Planning Board staff artist William A. Perry in “ye olde manner” with elaborately cartouched legends and swaggering italic lettering,⁹ Cady provides no context for the bare facts he lays out. He gives no sense of the seventeenth-century climate that shaped the external boundary disputes and allowed them to continue for two centuries, nor does he explain how internal boundary changes reflected the tremendous transformations of the state’s economic base and the ethnic background of the population. He does not consider the effects of the boundary changes on those who lived in the areas where the changes occurred, nor does he examine the role, if any, that local residents played in bringing about those changes. Through frequent use of the passive voice he avoids revealing who it was who decided that boundaries should be changed. The absence of such information may be a reflection of both Cady’s lack of training as a historian and the state of scholarship in the mid-1930s.¹⁰

But these deficiencies do not negate the utility, or the considerable interest, of Cady’s monograph. The complexity of Rhode Island boundary changes makes this work a particularly valuable guide for state and local historians and genealogists, for Cady’s accuracy and comprehensiveness allow those researchers exactly to pinpoint in which jurisdiction a given event occurred at any time in the state’s recorded history. The only seeming inaccuracy in the document is in the figures given for areas in the state: because geographical features and methods for measuring them change over time, Cady’s figures no longer coincide with those current today.

Further consideration of Rhode Island boundaries has been scant since publication of Cady’s book. Brief discussion may be found in Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island* (New York, 1975), and William G. McLoughlin, *Rhode Island: A History* (New York, 1978). Full-scale treatment of the subject, however, would provide a fascinating framework for understanding the many forces that shaped the state, its counties, and its municipalities.

Notes

1. At the time, MIT had the country’s oldest and most prestigious school of architecture. Cady was listed as a graduate student in 1904-5 and a special student in 1905-6; such designations were then typical for students with bachelor’s degrees.
2. Richard Chafee, architectural historian, telephone conversation with author, 29 June 1999.
3. According to W. Chesley Worthington, who knew both men, Cady and Isham were good friends. Telephone conversation with author, 30 June 1999. Cady’s great admiration for Isham is further revealed in a biographical sketch of Isham (“A Connecticut Yankee in Rhode Island,” American Institute of Architects Papers, RIHS) that Cady wrote in 1957. Isham bequeathed many of his papers to Cady, who donated them to the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1962. Among the papers are extensive field notes on historic buildings and architectural history manuscripts.
4. For his scholarship, his restoration work, and his leadership in the preservation movement, Isham deserves much fuller treatment than can be given here. Among his students was Antoinette F. Downing (1904-), who wrote *Early Homes of Rhode Island* (1937) and developed the methodology for the landmark preservation plan *College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal* (1959). Mrs. Downing’s contributions to the historic preservation movement are national in their influence.
5. John Hutchins Cady to John Nicholas Brown, 8 Apr. 1935, Correspondence Received, State Planning Board, John Nicholas Brown Papers, John Nicholas Brown Center, Providence.
6. John Hutchins Cady, *Six Months’ Progress Report, December 15, 1935, to June 15, 1936* (Providence: State Planning Board, 1936), 6.
7. Brown was a personal friend, neighbor, and political supporter of Democratic governor Theodore Francis Green. The political affiliation of the two men was conspicuously different from that of most of their fellow old-Yankee East Siders, who were traditionally Republican.
8. Horace G. Belcher to John Nicholas Brown, 15 Sept. 1936, Correspondence Received, Tercentenary Commission, John Nicholas Brown Papers.
9. The same sort of graphic approach is seen in architectural drawings of the period, including a perspective drawing made in 1932 by Wallis E. Howe to illustrate a proposed addition to John Nicholas Brown’s house on Benefit Street.
10. Publication of Charles M. Andrews’s landmark *The Colonial Period of American History*, for example, only began in 1934, and the volume addressing Rhode Island did not appear until 1936, the year Cady’s book was published. Historical interpretation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was virtually nonexistent.

RHODE ISLAND
BOUNDARIES
1636-1936

by
JOHN HUTCHINS CADY
Consultant
to the State Planning Board

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Published by the
Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission

1936

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RHODE ISLAND
STATE PLANNING BOARD

RHODE ISLAND BOUNDARIES was first issued on June 15, 1936, as a special report of the Rhode Island State Planning Board. The maps were designed by the author and drawn by William A. Perry, a staff artist of the planning board, whose services were made available through the courtesy of the Works Progress Administration.

The text and maps are descriptive of the boundaries of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, and of her counties and towns, as they have been developed from the first settlement by the English up to her tercentenary year, nineteen thirty-six. The information was gathered from numerous sources, among which are mentioned the following:

Rhode Island Colonial Records
Early Records of Providence
Rhode Island Historical Society Collections
G. W. Greene: Short History of Rhode Island
S. S. Rider: The Lands of Rhode Island
E. R. Potter: Early History of Narragansett
Report of Boundary Commissioners of Massachusetts and
Rhode Island
C. W. Bowen: The Boundary Disputes of Connecticut
Rhode Island Manual
Map of the Colony of Rhode Island, 1720, by John Mumford
Map of the State of Rhode Island, 1795, by Caleb Harris
Map of the State of Rhode Island, 1819, by M. M. Peabody
United States Geological Maps

Acknowledgment is made to Messrs. William Davis Miller and Howard M. Chapin of the Rhode Island Historical Society for reviewing the brochure, and to the Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission for sponsoring its publication.

John Hutchins Cady

October 31, 1936

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RHODE ISLAND BOUNDARIES

• *Introduction* •

BEFORE Rhode Island was settled by the English in 1636, there dwelt upon her territories five tribes of Indians, as follows:

The Narragansetts, who occupied all but the southern part of Washington County, parts of Kent and Providence Counties, all of the islands in Narragansett Bay, and Block Island, and who dominated over the remainder of the state's territory.

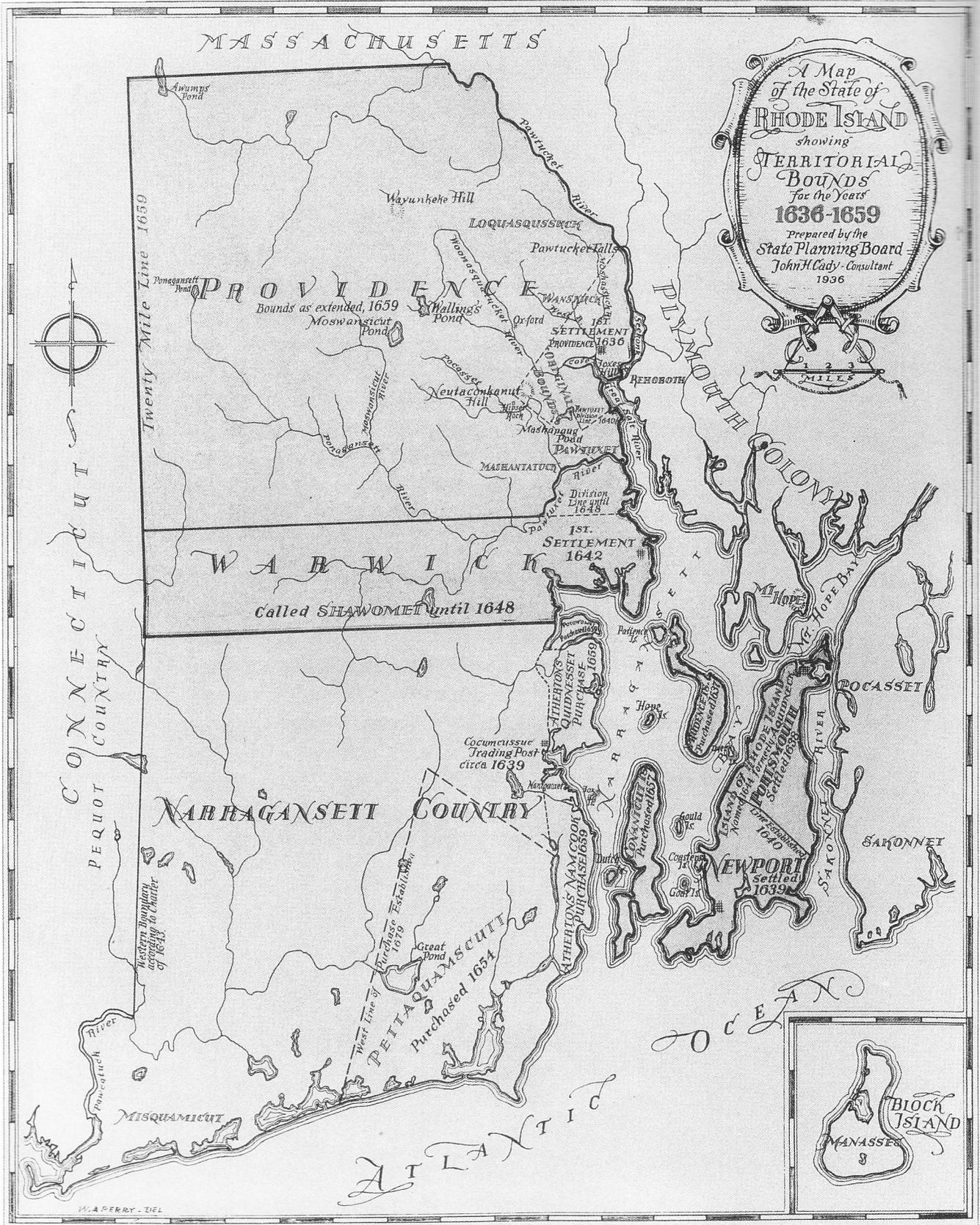
The Nipmuks, who dwelt in the north-western portion.

The Wampanoags, whose stronghold was in Massachusetts but who also occupied the north-eastern part of Rhode Island.

The Niantics, who lived along the south shore.

The Pequots, a Connecticut tribe who dwelt also in the south-west corner of Rhode Island.

In the reign of Charles I of England there was enacted February 3, 1635, an "Eightfold Partition of Territory under the Great Council for New England," by which the lands of southern New England east of the Connecticut River were allotted to Edward Lord Gorges and the Marquis of Hamilton respectively, the dividing line between the former's territory on the west and the latter's lands on the east established as the Blackstone, Pawtucket and Seekonk Rivers and Narragansett Bay, the line running west of Prudence Island and between the islands of Conanicut and Rhode Island to the ocean.



¶ 1636-1659 ¶

Providence was settled in 1636 by Roger Williams on land which he secured by verbal transfer from Canonicus and Miantonomi, chief sachems of the Narragansetts, and which was described as "the lands and meadows upon the two fresh rivers called Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket." In 1637 he obtained a formal deed for this territory by which the bounds were established "from the rivers and fields of Pawtucket, the great hill of Neutaconkanut on the north-west and the town of Mashapaug on the west, reaching to Pawtuxet River, as also the grass and meadows upon Pawtuxet River." This conveyance was confirmed by Miantonomi in 1639, further extending the bounds to include the territory "up the streams of Pawtucket and Pawtuxet without limits."

Miantonomi, about the year 1642, established more specific bounds for the 1637 deed, as follows: Sugar Loaf Hill, Bewit's Brow, Observation Rock, Absolute Swamp, Ox-ford, and Hipses Rock. Those bounds cannot now be accurately determined. Sugar Loaf Hill was doubtless north-west of Pawtucket, and possibly at Lonsdale; Bewit's Brow was somewhere on the west side of Moshassuck River; Observation Rock was probably in the town of Lincoln; Absolute Swamp may have been in Wanskuck; Ox-ford was probably on the Woonasquatucket River; and Hipses Rock was undoubtedly a high rock west of Neutaconkanut Hill. By a further conveyance on the part of Cojonoquant, successor to Miantonomi, in 1659, and by deeds to the town from certain other Indians, the territory of Providence was extended to include all of the present Providence County west of the Blackstone River, with the west bound "twenty miles west of Foxes Hill."

Portsmouth (as it was later named) was settled in 1638 by Anne Hutchinson and William Coddington, who purchased the island of Aquidneck (the name of which was changed in 1644 to Rhode Island) and laid the foundation of the new town at Pocasset, near the north end of the island. In 1639 another settlement was made at Newport, at the south end of the island, by seceders from Pocasset, the division line of which was established in 1640.

In 1642 Warwick was settled by Samuel Gorton who, with eleven companions, purchased Shawomet, the territory bounded on the east by the waters from Sowhomes Bay (Occupasspawtuxet Cove) to Shawhomett Neck (Warwick Neck), and extending westward twenty miles. In the same year John Greene purchased a tract at Occupasspawtuxet, north of the cove.

Roger Williams in 1643 obtained from the Earl of Warwick a charter to form the "Colony of Providence Plantations in Narragansett Bay in New England," which united the settlements of Providence, Portsmouth, Newport, and Shawomet (now Warwick). By the terms of this charter the lands were bounded "northward and north-east by the patent of the Massachusetts, east and south-east on Plymouth patent, south on the ocean, and on the west and north-west by the Indians called Narragansetts; the whole tract extending about twenty-five English miles into the Pequot River and country." The territory of the Plymouth patent, granted in 1629, included "one half of the river called Narragansetts"; in 1645 Rehoboth was incorporated as a part of that colony, including

within its bounds the lands of the present Massachusetts towns of Rehoboth and Seekonk as well as East Providence and the eastern part of Pawtucket.

The General Assembly of Rhode Island was instituted in 1647, admitting Providence, Portsmouth, Newport, and Warwick under equal terms. In 1651 the colony was disrupted, Newport being governed by Coddington, and Providence and Warwick continuing as Providence Plantations. With the revoking of Coddington's Commission in 1654, however, the colony was reunited.

In addition to Aquidneck, other islands in Narragansett Bay were purchased from the Indians as follows: Prudence and Patience in 1637 by Roger Williams and John Winthrop; Hope, probably shortly after by Roger Williams; Gould in 1657 by Thomas Gould; Conanicut in 1657 by William Coddington and Benedict Arnold; Dutch, Goat and Coaster's Harbor in 1658 by Benedict Arnold; and Fox in 1659 by Randall Holden and Samuel Gorton.

The territory south of Warwick to the ocean was known as the Narragansett Country, and was claimed by both Rhode Island and Connecticut. A trading post was established at Cocumcussuc, on Narragansett Bay, in 1639; a tract known as Pettaquamscutt, extending to the ocean, was purchased in 1657, and Potowomut Neck, south of Greenwich Bay, and Nanequoxet, in North Kingstown, were purchased in 1659. To sustain Connecticut's claim, Humphrey Atherton and Governor John Winthrop of that colony purchased in 1659 two large and valuable tracts of land on the western shore of Narragansett Bay, located at Quidnesset (from Potowomut River to Wickford harbor in North Kingstown) and Namkook (Boston Neck, now a part of Narragansett) respectively.

The territory of the Rhode Island colony in 1659 included the towns of Providence, Warwick, Newport and Portsmouth; eight islands in addition to Rhode Island, in Narragansett Bay; and the Narragansett Country, the latter claimed also by Connecticut.



¶ 1659-1703 ¶

In 1663 Charles II granted a new charter to "The Governor and Company of the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England in America." The overlapping of the east and west bounds of the colony defined by this charter, upon those established by the Plymouth patent of 1629 and the Connecticut charter of 1662 respectively, caused disputes which continued for many years before adjustments were finally made.

Rhode Island lands were extended by her charter "eastwardly, three English miles to the east and north-east of Narragansett Bay into the mouth of the river which runneth towards the town of Providence, and from thence along the eastwardly side . . . of the said river (higher called by the name of Seekonk River), up to . . . Pawtucket Falls . . . and so from the said falls, in a straight line due north, until it meets with the . . . line of the Massachusetts colony." The Plymouth territory, under its patent, extended westerly to include "one-half of the River called Narragansetts," interpreted to mean Narragansett Bay. Included in the overlapping bounds were the present towns of Cumberland, Barrington, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton and Little Compton.

Rhode Island's charter established her western boundary at the Pawcatuck River "and so along the said river as the greater or middle stream thereof reaches or lies, up the country northward into the head thereof, and from thence by a straight line due north" to the Massachusetts line. Under Connecticut's Royal Charter of 1662, that colony was awarded lands extending easterly to include "forty leagues on the shore of the Narragansett River," by which was meant Narragansett Bay, according to her claim. Rhode Island on the other hand interpreted the "line due north" as starting from the point where the Pawcatuck River turns to the east, about two miles west of the present state boundary. A Board of Arbitrators in London in 1663 agreed that Pawcatuck River, "alias Narragansett River," should be the boundary line between Rhode Island and Connecticut, thereby awarding to Rhode Island the territory between Pawcatuck River and Narragansett Bay. This agreement was repudiated by the colony of Connecticut, who proceeded to establish a town at Wickford and appoint town officers there. While the controversy was under way the Commissioners of the King in 1665 appointed Conservators of the Peace in the disputed territory, previously known as the Narragansett Country, and named it King's Province. After continued disputes, a Board of Commissioners of the two colonies in 1703 upheld the decision made by the Arbitrators in 1663 and established the bounds as follows: "the middle channel of Pawcatuck river, alias Narragansett, as it extendith from the salt water upwards till it come to the mouth of Ashaway river where it falls into the said Pawcatuck river, and from thence to run a straight line till it meet with the south-west bounds or corner of Warwick grand purchase, which extends twenty miles due west from . . . the outmost point of . . . Warwick Neck, to run upon a due north line till it meet with the south line of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England."

Following the agreement of the Board of Arbitrators in 1663 by which the lands of the Narragansett Country, or King's Province, were awarded to Rhode Island, three towns were established in that territory: Westerly in 1669, Kingstown in 1674, and East Greenwich in 1677. Their bounds were not at first definitely established; Westerly was the name given to the place formerly called Misquamicut adjoining the Pawcatuck River; Kingstown was established on Narragansett Bay "to obstruct the Connecticut colony from using jurisdiction there"; and East Greenwich was a ten-thousand-acre tract of land, five hundred acres of which (divided into fifty house lots) were "near the sea." The Westerly and Kingstown boundaries were established by the General Assembly in 1699, their combined areas extending from the East Greenwich line south to the sea, and from Narragansett Bay west to the Connecticut line, and the boundary between the two towns following the west line of the Pettaquamscutt Purchase "to the Great Pond (Worden) or river running out of it, thence by said river to the foot of Usquapaug River, thence northward with said river. . . ." Thus Westerly included the present towns of Charlestown, Hopkinton and Richmond, and Kingstown included the present towns of North and South Kingstown, Exeter and Narragansett.

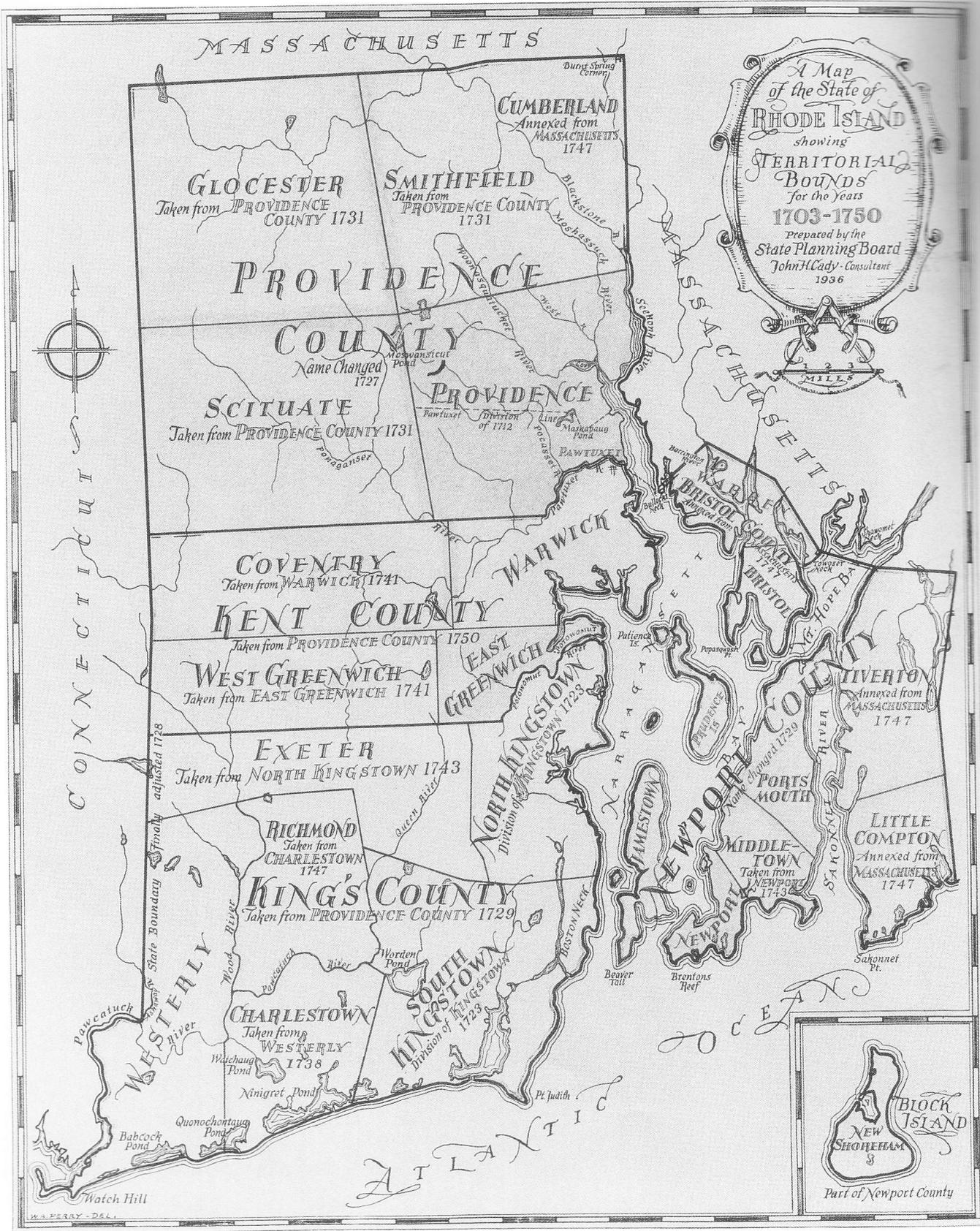
New Shoreham (Block Island), purchased in 1661 and admitted to the colony in 1664, was incorporated in 1672, as was Jamestown (Conanicut Island) in 1678.

Barrington and a part of Warren in 1667, Bristol in 1681, and Little Compton in 1682 were incorporated as towns in the Plymouth Colony; and in 1683 these and other towns became a part of Bristol County of that colony.

A "seven mile line" was established in Providence in 1660 to limit the division of the proprietors' lands westward, and was laid out from a point seven miles west of "Foxes Hill" (Fox Point) on a straight line, south to the Pawtuxet River and north to the Pawtucket (Blackstone) River. In 1697 the General Assembly fixed the south bounds of Providence at the Pawtuxet River.

In 1703 the Colony of Rhode Island was divided into two counties, named respectively "Rhode Island" and "Providence Plantations." The former included Rhode Island and the rest of the islands; Newport was the shire town and the other towns were Portsmouth, New Shoreham and Jamestown. The latter county included the mainland, with Providence the shire town and comprising also the towns of Warwick, Westerly, Kingstown and East Greenwich.





1703-1750

By an act of the General Assembly in 1723 Kingstown was divided into two towns called North Kingstown and South Kingstown respectively, the bounds extending in a westerly direction from Narragansett Bay, just south of the present Saunderstown, to the town line of Westerly north of the present village of Usquepaug.

The controversy attending the establishment of the west boundary of the state was terminated, after sixty-five years of quarreling, in 1728, when bounds were established by Commissioners as follows: a heap of stones was set at the south-west corner of the Warwick purchase (now Coventry), twenty miles due west from Warwick Neck; from that bound a line was carried north, seven degrees east, twenty-three miles and ten rods to the Massachusetts south line, and another line was carried south, eleven degrees twenty minutes west, fifteen miles and ninety rods into the mouth of Ashaway River where it falls into Pawcatuck River. Stone heaps forming boundary monuments were erected along the line.

The two original counties of the colony, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, were renamed Newport and Providence respectively in 1729. In that same year King's County was established by setting off from Providence County that part of the territory of King's Province extending south from East Greenwich, which included the towns of Westerly, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown, the latter named as the county town.

An act was passed in 1731 for erecting and incorporating the outlands of the town of Providence into three towns, including Glocester, Scituate and Smithfield, approximately equal in area. The north and south bound, separating Glocester and Scituate on the west from Smithfield and Providence on the east, was the "seven mile line," extending from Warwick northward to the Massachusetts colony, established in 1660; and the east and west bound, separating Glocester and Smithfield on the north from Scituate and Providence on the south, extended westward from the Blackstone River from a point one-half mile above the Pawtucket Falls to a monument erected on the seven mile line eight and one-half miles north of the Warwick line, and continued west six degrees thirty minutes north to the Connecticut line.

The state's eastern boundaries were fixed (for the time being) by Royal Commissioners in 1741 after disputes of seventy-eight years' duration, and were confirmed by the King and Council in 1746 as follows: "From a certain point where a meridian line passing through the Pawtucket Falls cuts the south boundary of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, south to Pawtucket Falls; then southerly along the eastward side of Seekonk river, and the river which runneth towards the town of Providence, to the south-west corner of Bullock's Neck; then north-east three miles; then along the aforesaid lines, running at three miles distance from the north-easternmost parts of the said bay, to the said bay, at or near Towoset Neck; then as the said bay runs to the southernmost part of Shawomet Neck (Brayton Point), and then in a straight line to the aforesaid point opposite to the said neck; then east three miles, and then along the aforesaid lines, running at three miles distance from the easternmost parts of the said bay, to the sea."

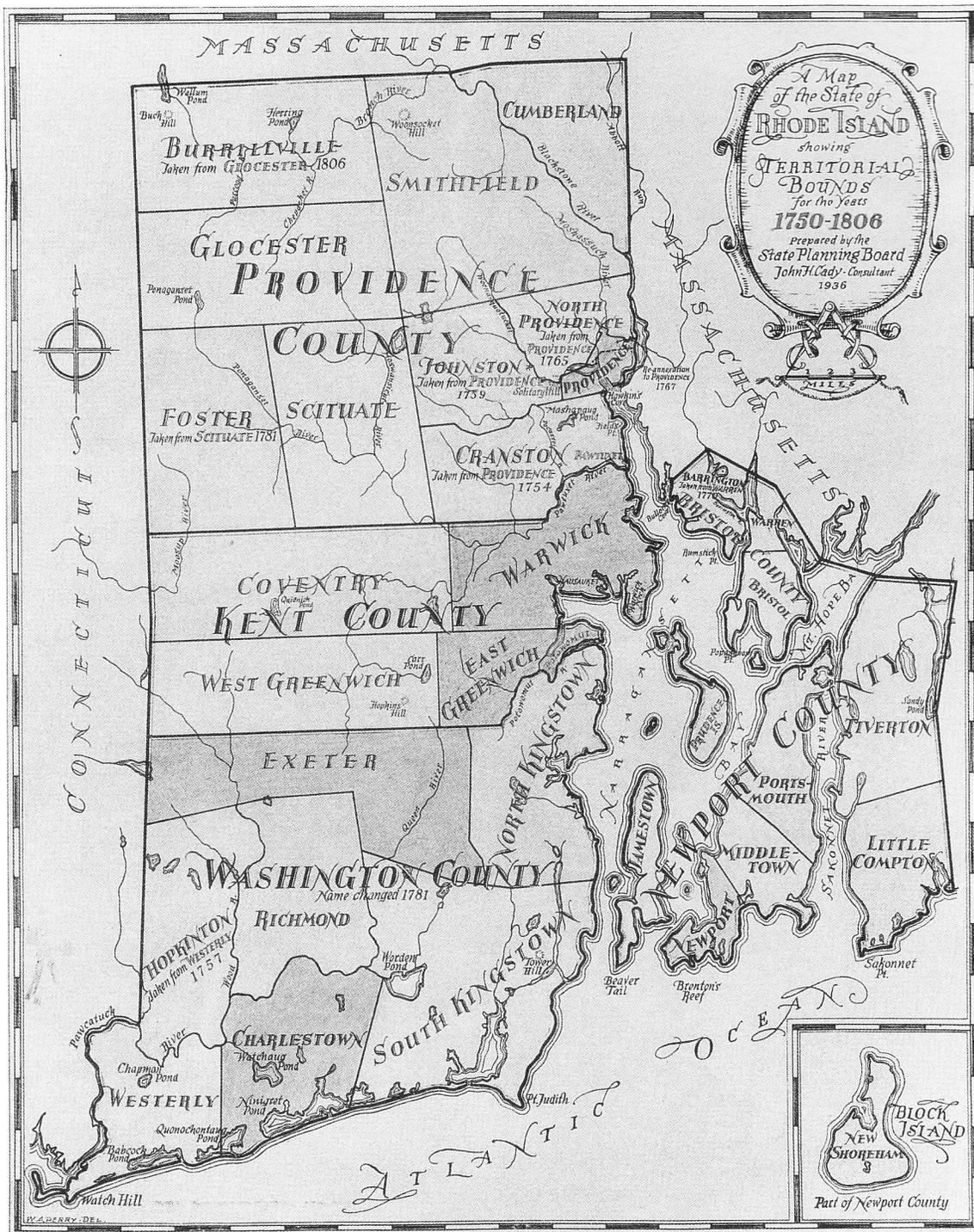
By this designation of bounds, five towns were ceded to Rhode Island by Massachusetts: Cumberland, formerly known as the Attleboro Gore, and located on the east side of the Blackstone River, became a part of Providence County; Tiverton and Little Compton, both situated on the east side of Sakonnet River, became a part of Newport County; and Warren and Bristol together formed a new Bristol County, located west of Mount Hope Bay, with Bristol named as the county town.

Charlestown was separated from the eastern part of Westerly in 1738, the dividing line being the Wood and Pawcatuck rivers and a line down to the ocean at Quonochontaug Pond; in 1743 Exeter was taken from the western part of North Kingstown; and in 1747 Richmond was separated from that part of Charlestown north of the Pawcatuck River.

Warwick and East Greenwich were reduced in area in 1741 with the setting off of the towns of Coventry and West Greenwich, respectively, from their western territories. The Warwick-Coventry dividing line was run north seven degrees east, passing through the western part of "Coweset Farms," and the line between West and East Greenwich was established as the "westerly line of the old township." Those four towns, together with Potowomut Neck, were taken from Providence County and incorporated as Kent County in 1750 with East Greenwich as the county town.



1750-1806



Between 1754 and 1767 the town of Providence was further subdivided by the General Assembly. By an act of 1754 Cranston was set off from the south-westerly part of Providence, and the dividing line established as "a straight line from Hawkins Cove on Providence Bay or River, to a bend in Pocasset River, then to follow the river up to the Plainfield road, then by that road to the seven mile line." By an act of 1759 the town of Johnston was erected out of the westerly part of Providence, the dividing line commencing "on the southern bank of Woonasquatucket river, due north from the easternmost part of Solitary Hill, and runs thence due south to the northern line of Cranston. From the place of beginning the line north is the Woonasquatucket river." By an act of 1765 the town of North Providence was set off from Providence and the dividing line established from the southernmost point where the line of Johnston meets the Woonasquatucket river, thence bounding on that river "until it comes to the northwest corner of the town's land at the east end of a place called Forestack meadow"; thence to the middle of Mill Bridge, and thence due east to Seekonk River. The bounds east and north of "the north-east corner of the town's land east of Forestack meadow" were re-established to the advantage of Providence by an act of 1767 to run "to the north-west corner of the burying land (North Burial Ground); and then, easterly and southerly, by said burying ground until it comes to Harrington's lane (Rochambeau Avenue), then easterly, by the north side of said lane, till it meets with the south-west corner of the land of Joseph Olney; then crossing said lane, due south; then extending easterly, as said lane runs, bounding northerly by said lane until it comes to the dividing line between land of William Brown and Phineas Brown; and then by said line easterly, to Seekonk River." With the setting off of Cranston, Johnston and North Providence, the town of Providence was thereby, in 1767, reduced to an area of five and one-half square miles, which area was but one and one-half per cent of the original lands as confirmed in 1659.

In 1757 that portion of Westerly extending north and west of the Pawcatuck and Wood rivers was taken from that town and incorporated as the town of Hopkinton.

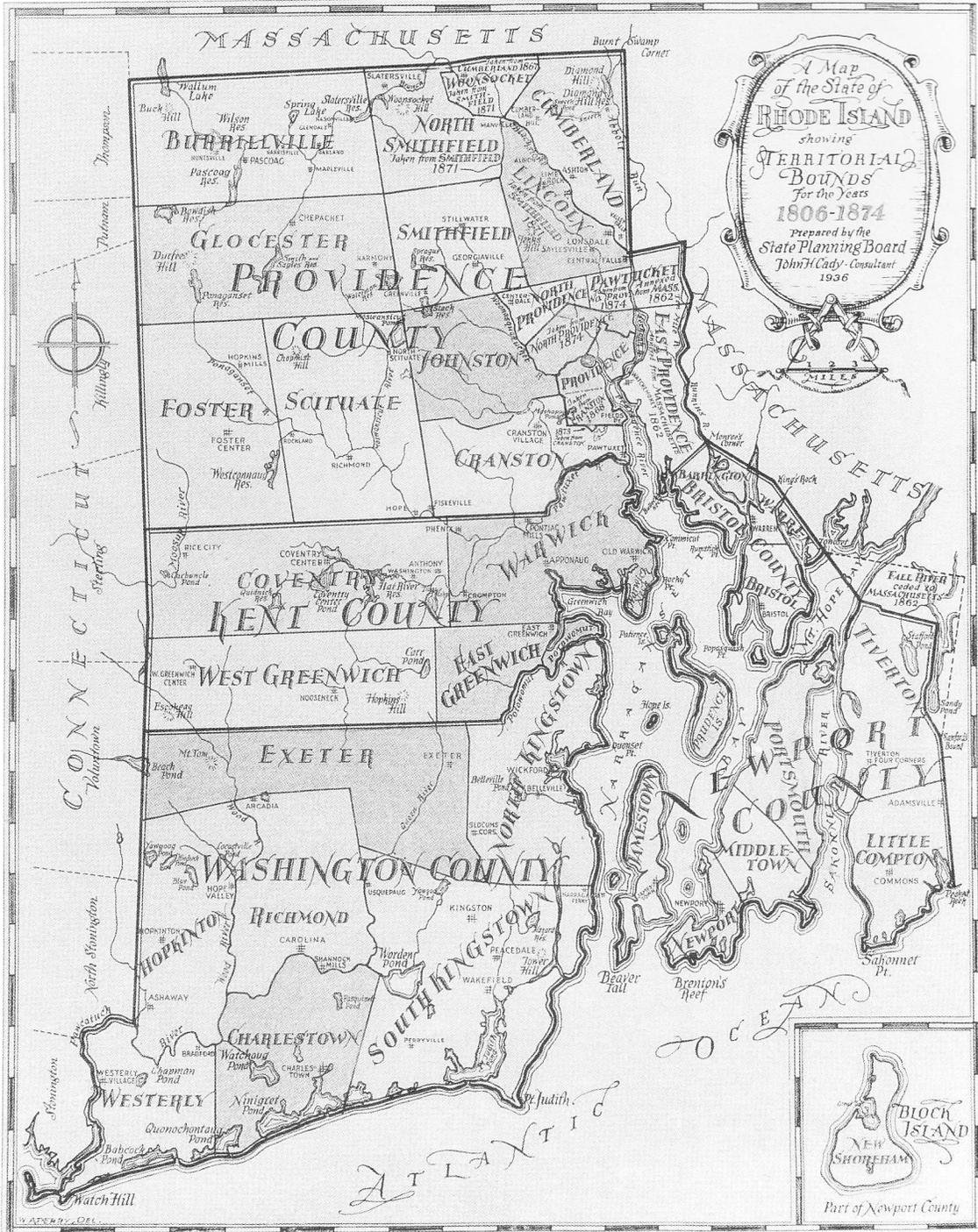
In 1770 that portion of Warren on the westerly side of the Warren River was taken from that town and incorporated as the town of Barrington.

Scituate was equally divided in 1781 and the western half incorporated as the town of Foster; and Glocester was equally divided in 1806, and its northern half incorporated as the town of Burrillville.

In 1776 the state was re-named "The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations," and in 1781 the name "King's County" was changed to "Washington County."



1806-1874



In 1840 Commissioners of Connecticut and Rhode Island, having ascertained that the stone heaps marking the boundary monuments were somewhat effaced, proceeded to run a new line from "a rock near the mouth of Ashawage (Ashaway) River where it empties into Pawcatuck River" to "a stone heap upon a hill in the present jurisdiction line between Massachusetts and Rhode Island." Monuments were erected along this line at the following locations:

- (1) At a stone heap at the south-east corner of Voluntown, Connecticut.
- (2) At a stone heap at the south-west corner of West Greenwich, Rhode Island.
- (3) At the south-west corner of Coventry, Rhode Island.
- (4) At the north-west corner of Coventry, Rhode Island.
- (5) At the north-east corner of Sterling, Connecticut.
- (6) At the south-west corner of Glocester, Rhode Island.
- (7) At the south-east corner of Thompson, Connecticut.
- (8) At the south-west corner of Burrillville, Rhode Island.

In 1847 Commissioners of Massachusetts and Rhode Island ascertained, established and marked by stone monuments the boundaries between the two states in ten portions as follows:

- (1) From the north-west corner of Rhode Island on the Connecticut line (latitude $42^{\circ} 00' 29''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 48' 18''$) easterly in a straight line 21.512 miles to Burnt Swamp Corner in Wrentham (latitude $42^{\circ} 01' 08''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 23' 13''$).
- (2) Thence due south to the center of the Blackstone River about six rods east of the bridge at Central Falls.
- (3) Thence following the rivers southerly, generally on the east banks, to Bullock's Neck (latitude $41^{\circ} 44' 42''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 21' 54''$).
- (4) Thence to Monroe's Corner (latitude $41^{\circ} 46' 34''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 19' 23''$).
- (5) Thence to near King's Rock on the Birch Swamp Farm (latitude $41^{\circ} 45' 08''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 15' 58''$).
- (6) Thence to Touisset (latitude $41^{\circ} 42' 45''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 13' 54''$).
- (7) Thence across Mount Hope Bay in a direct line to the shore at the Fall River-Tiverton line.
- (8) Thence to Ralph's Neck (latitude $41^{\circ} 41' 56''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 06' 34''$).
- (9) Thence to Sanford's Bound (latitude $41^{\circ} 35' 27''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 08' 13''$).
- (10) Thence to Peaked Rock, near the ocean (latitude $41^{\circ} 29' 58''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 07' 34''$).

By an exchange of territory in 1862, the boundary dispute between Rhode Island and Massachusetts, which had been carried on for two hundred years, was terminated. A part of what is now Fall River, which had been taken from Tiverton in 1856, was ceded to Massachusetts, and in return there were annexed to Rhode Island the westerly part of Seekonk, which was incorporated as East Providence, and the town of Pawtucket, the bounds between those towns and Massachusetts following the general line of the Runnins and Ten Mile Rivers. Pawtucket was farther extended in area in 1874 by annexing a portion of North Providence on the west side of the Blackstone River.

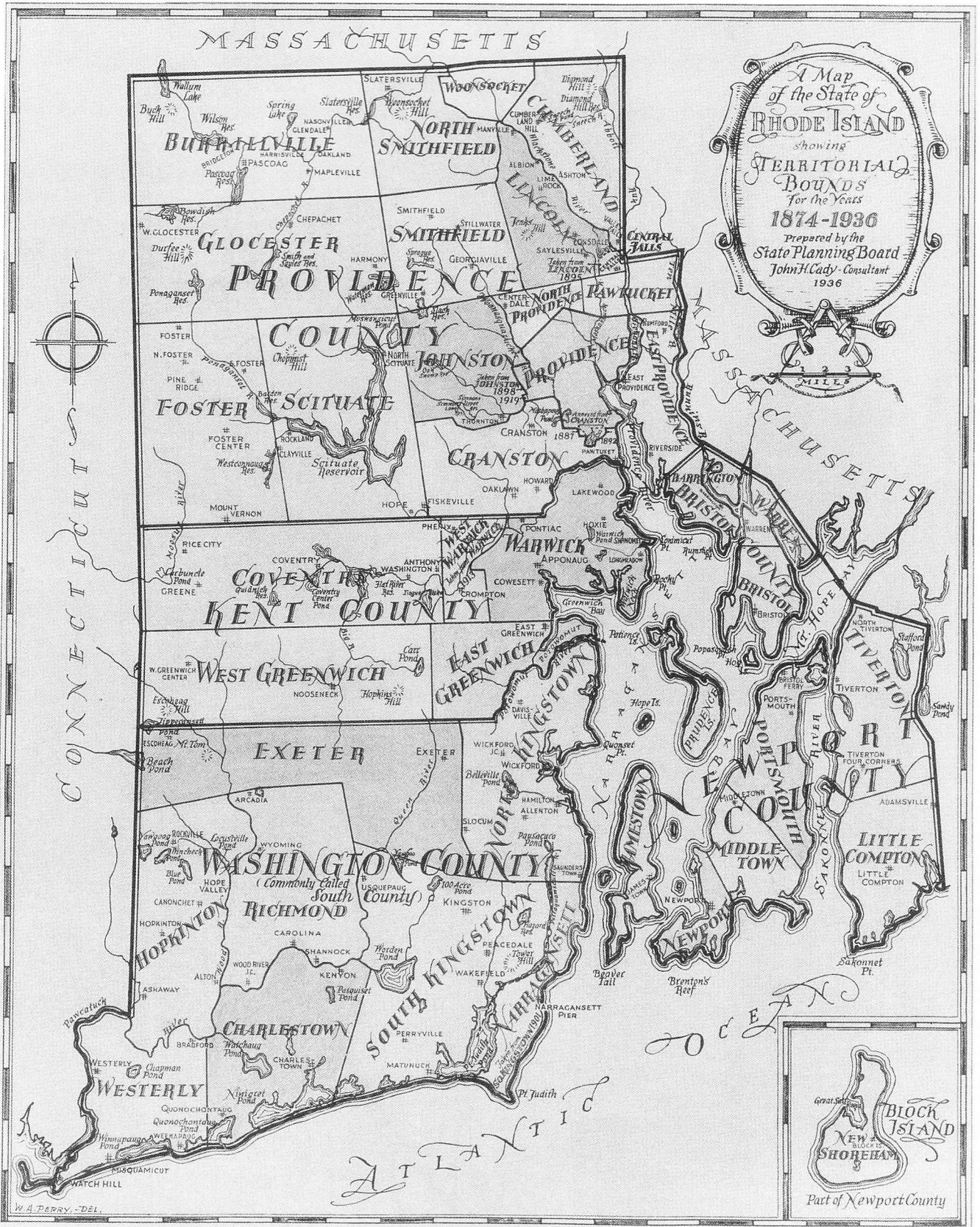
Providence, having received a city charter in 1832, re-annexed a portion of the town of Cranston in 1868, which extended its bounds southward from the old line (which ran from the north end of Benedict Pond easterly to the Rhode Island Hospital property) as follows: starting about five hundred feet west of Benedict Pond, following the curve of the railroad property to Cranston Street, thence southerly by Fenner Avenue (now Niantic Avenue) to the New London Turnpike (now Reservoir Avenue), and easterly by what are now Sinclair Avenue and Montgomery Avenue to the north end of the present Edgewood Beach reservation. A further re-annexation of about forty acres from

Cranston was effected in 1873 to provide additional land for Roger Williams Park, including Crystal Lake.

In 1873 and 1874 portions of North Providence were re-annexed to the northern part of Providence. The new bounds followed the Woonasquatucket River north-west from Olneyville to Manton Pond, then ran north-east to where is now Woodward Road at a point one-half mile north of Wanskuck Pond, then east to Smithfield Avenue at Cemetery Street where it followed Cemetery Street to the railroad, and then ran east to the Seekonk River north of Swan Point Cemetery.

Woonsocket was established in 1867 by taking land from Cumberland on the north and east banks of the Blackstone River, and was extended in 1871 by the acquisition of lands from Smithfield on the opposite side of the river. In that same year territory was taken from Smithfield to form the towns of North Smithfield on the north, and Lincoln on the east.





1874-1936

Providence re-annexed about three hundred additional acres from Cranston in 1887 and 1892 for extensions to Roger Williams Park, including Cunliff Pond and adjoining shores as far south as Park Avenue. In 1898 a portion of Johnston was re-annexed to the western part of Providence. The new bounds extended westerly from Benedict Pond to the bend in the Pocasset River north-westerly to slightly west of Killingly Street, and thence easterly to the Woonasquatucket River. In 1919 Providence re-annexed from Johnston about forty-five acres south-west of Neutaconkanut Hill. Those re-annexations brought the territory of Providence to its present size of 18.91 square miles.

Central Falls was taken from the southern part of Lincoln in 1895; Narragansett was set off from South Kingstown in 1901, the dividing line extending through Point Judith Pond and along the Pettaquamscutt River; and West Warwick was taken from the western part of Warwick in 1913.

The northern and eastern boundaries of the state were surveyed and mapped by Commissioners of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the former in 1883, and the latter in 1897. The northern boundary, extending a distance of 21.5 miles from Burnt Swamp Corner westerly to the intersection of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, was marked by sixty-seven monuments; and the eastern boundary, extending a distance of 45.8 miles from Burnt Swamp Corner to high water at the Atlantic Ocean, was marked by one hundred and thirty-eight monuments.

A perambulation of the above boundaries was made jointly by Boundary Line Commissioners of Massachusetts and Rhode Island in November, 1935. In a report made by the Secretary of the Rhode Island Boundary Commission following the completion of the perambulation a statement was made as follows: "as the line now stands, all the bounds appear to be properly set to the satisfaction of the representatives of both states."

(A survey of the Connecticut-Rhode Island boundary, sponsored by the State of Connecticut, in co-operation with the Rhode Island Boundary Commission, is under way as this book goes to press. It is the first complete survey of the line between the two states since the one carried out in the year 1840.)



STATE BOUNDARIES, 1936

WESTERN BOUNDARY. Starting at a point in Long Island Sound (latitude $41^{\circ} 18' 15''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 54' 26''$) where the bounds of New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island intersect, the line runs north approximately $19^{\circ} 45'$ east two miles to a point at the mouth of Little Narragansett Bay (latitude $41^{\circ} 19' 51''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 53' 43''$); then south approximately $61^{\circ} 30'$ east to the mouth of Pawcatuck River; then following the center of that river in a general northerly direction to the mouth of the Ashaway River; then north approximately $2^{\circ} 15'$ east to the west end of the boundary between the towns of Coventry and West Greenwich (latitude $41^{\circ} 39' 36''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 47' 14''$); then north approximately $1^{\circ} 45'$ west to the intersection of the south line of Massachusetts (latitude $42^{\circ} 00' 30''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 48' 18''$).

NORTHERN BOUNDARY. Starting from the last mentioned bound, where Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island intersect, the line runs north $86^{\circ} 02'$ east to the west shore of Wallum Lake; then north $88^{\circ} 15'$ east to a bound stone near the east bank of the Blackstone River; then north $84^{\circ} 18'$ east to a bound stone east of the Woonsocket-Bellingham road; then north $88^{\circ} 54'$ east to Burnt Swamp Corner (latitude $42^{\circ} 01' 08''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 22' 55''$), this being the north-east corner of the state.

EASTERN BOUNDARY. Starting from the last mentioned bound, the line runs south to a point on the east bank of the Blackstone River (latitude $41^{\circ} 53' 37''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 22' 55''$); then north $81^{\circ} 00'$ east to a point on the bank of Ten Mile River; then following a course east of that river in a series of straight lines, in a general southerly direction, to the Providence-Taunton Pike (latitude $41^{\circ} 49' 24''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 20' 53''$); then south $22^{\circ} 40'$ east to the center of Runnins River (latitude $41^{\circ} 48' 31''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 20' 23''$); then following the center of that river, in a general southerly direction, to a bound stone (latitude $41^{\circ} 46' 51''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 19' 44''$); then south $60^{\circ} 28'$ east to Monroe's Corner at the east end of the East Providence-Barrington line (latitude $41^{\circ} 46' 34''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 19' 06''$); continuing along that same line to a bound stone at Birch Swamp Corner between the Warren and Kickamuit Rivers (latitude $41^{\circ} 45' 08''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 15' 42''$); then south $32^{\circ} 29'$ east to the east shore of Mount Hope Bay (latitude $41^{\circ} 40' 31''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 11' 46''$); then south $76^{\circ} 19'$ east to the south shore of Cook Pond (latitude $41^{\circ} 40' 18''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 10' 35''$); then south $4^{\circ} 27'$ west about one-quarter mile, following the center of Eight Rod Road; then south $76^{\circ} 27'$ east to the shore of Watuppa Pond (latitude $41^{\circ} 39' 38''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 07' 59''$); then following the west shore of Watuppa and Sawdy ponds in a series of straight lines, in a general southerly direction to the lower end of Sawdy Pond; then south $26^{\circ} 53'$ east to Sanford's Bound (latitude $41^{\circ} 35' 38''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 07' 56''$); then south $5^{\circ} 14'$ east to Peaked Rock, near the ocean, continuing on the same line one marine league from high water mark into the ocean.

SOUTHERN BOUNDARY. Starting from the last mentioned bound, the line runs in a general westerly direction one marine league distant from the coast line to a point south of Napatree point (latitude $41^{\circ} 15' 18''$ longitude $71^{\circ} 53' 08''$); then north $19^{\circ} 45'$ west to the point of beginning.

BLOCK ISLAND (between latitudes $41^{\circ} 08' 48''$ and $41^{\circ} 13' 57''$, and longitudes $71^{\circ} 32' 40''$ and $71^{\circ} 36' 48''$), together with that part of the ocean extending one marine league from its shores, is also included within the territorial bounds of the state.



PRESENT AREA OF THE STATE

For the purpose of computing the area of the state, its territory is divided as follows: (1) land areas, and (2) tide water areas.

The land areas comprise the aggregate territorial limits of the thirty-nine municipalities; they coincide with the aggregate land areas of the five counties.

The tide water areas include all of the waters of Narragansett Bay, Mount Hope Bay (west of the Massachusetts boundary), Providence Harbor, Seekonk River, Warren River, Barrington River, Kickamuit River, Sakonnet River, the salt ponds along the south shore, one-half of the waters of Little Narragansett Bay and Pawcatuck River where they separate Connecticut from Rhode Island, and a strip of ocean one marine league (three miles) wide extending from the Connecticut to the Massachusetts boundary and encircling Block Island.

Computed on the above basis the areas of the towns, the counties, and the whole state are as follows:

| | CITIES & TOWNS | | COUNTIES | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>Year est.</i> | <i>Area in sq. mi.</i> | <i>Year inc.</i> | <i>Area in sq. mi.</i> |
| BRISTOL COUNTY | | | | |
| Barrington | 1770 | 8.46 | | |
| Bristol, including Hog Island | 1747 | 9.89 | | |
| Warren | 1747 | 6.56 | | |
| COUNTY TOTAL | | | 1747 | 24.91 |
| KENT COUNTY | | | | |
| Coventry | 1741 | 62.87 | | |
| East Greenwich | 1677 | 16.07 | | |
| Warwick, including Greene Island | 1642 | 36.26 | | |
| West Greenwich | 1741 | 51.47 | | |
| West Warwick | 1913 | 8.18 | | |
| COUNTY TOTAL | | | 1750 | 174.85 |
| NEWPORT COUNTY | | | | |
| Jamestown (Conanicut Island), including Dutch and Gould Islands | 1678 | 9.76 | | |
| Little Compton | 1747 | 21.94 | | |
| Middletown | 1743 | 13.45 | | |
| Newport, including Coaster's Harbor, Rose, and Goat Islands | 1639 | 7.94 | | |
| New Shoreham (Block Island) | 1672 | 10.95 | | |
| Portsmouth, including Prudence, Patience, Hope, and Dyer Islands | 1638 | 23.84 | | |
| Tiverton | 1747 | 31.43 | | |
| COUNTY TOTAL | | | 1703 | 119.31 |

| | CITIES & TOWNS | | COUNTIES | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>Year est.</i> | <i>Area in sq. mi.</i> | <i>Year inc.</i> | <i>Area in sq. mi.</i> |
| PROVIDENCE COUNTY | | | | |
| Burrillville | 1806 | 57.59 | | |
| Central Falls | 1895 | 1.32 | | |
| Cranston | 1754 | 28.20 | | |
| Cumberland | 1747 | 28.64 | | |
| East Providence | 1862 | 13.85 | | |
| Foster | 1781 | 52.15 | | |
| Glocester | 1731 | 56.51 | | |
| Johnston | 1759 | 25.09 | | |
| Lincoln | 1871 | 19.36 | | |
| North Providence | 1765 | 5.90 | | |
| North Smithfield | 1871 | 25.38 | | |
| Pawtucket | 1862 | 8.68 | | |
| Providence | 1636 | 18.91 | | |
| Scituate | 1731 | 55.28 | | |
| Smithfield | 1731 | 27.60 | | |
| Woonsocket | 1867 | 8.00 | | |
| COUNTY TOTAL | | | 1703 | 432.46 |
| WASHINGTON COUNTY | | | | |
| Charlestown | 1738 | 38.46 | | |
| Exeter | 1743 | 59.21 | | |
| Hopkinton | 1757 | 44.08 | | |
| Narragansett | 1901 | 14.42 | | |
| North Kingstown, including Cornelius, Fox, and Rabbit Islands | 1674 | 44.15 | | |
| Richmond | 1747 | 41.82 | | |
| South Kingstown | 1723 | 61.17 | | |
| Westerly | 1669 | 29.16 | | |
| COUNTY TOTAL | | | 1729 | <u>332.47</u> |
| TOTAL LAND AREA (72.4%) | | | | 1084.00 |
| TOTAL TIDE WATER AREA (27.6%) | | | | <u>413.39</u> |
| TOTAL STATE AREA | | | | 1497.39 |

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Pongansett
Mosw
1660
River

PLANTINGTON
WARWICK

North Boundary of King's Province

EAST GREENWICH
Original Bounds

EAST GREENWICH

Called DEDFORD 1680-89

Inc. 1677

FRENCHTOWN

Connecticut claimed all territory south of Warwick, east to "Narragansett River" under her Royal Charter 1662

WICKFORD

KINGSTOWN

Called ROCHESTER 1686

Inc. 1674

KING'S PROVINCE

Boundaries Established 1666

Color

Detail from a map drawn for John Hathings Cadys
Rhode Island Boundaries, 1636-1936, RHIS
Collection (RRI: X3 9736)

Commissioners of H. I. and Conn. 1703
adjusted 1728

COUNTY OF PROVIDENCE
Incorporated 1703

COUNTY OF PROVIDENCE
River

POSTAGE PAID AT PROVIDENCE, RI