



## Roger Williams

Given by Rhode Island to the National Statuary Hall Collection

---

ROGER WILLIAMS WAS BORN IN England between 1603 and 1606. He grew up a member of the privileged class and received a thorough liberal arts education from Sir Edward Coke, the great English jurist. Under Sir Edward's tutelage, Williams attended Cambridge, receiving his B.A. in 1627. He abandoned the study of law to become a priest in the Church of England.

Williams was interested in the Puritan movement and the newly established Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was warmly welcomed to the New World by Massachusetts governor John Winthrop when he arrived in Boston. Williams was an adamant separatist and accepted a post as an assistant pastor in Salem, reputedly a friendly place. However, his teachings were deemed radical and he was banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635. Williams founded the colony of Rhode Island in 1636 and secured a charter for Providence Plantation in 1664. His greatest gift to the colonies was his authorship of the declaration of the principle of religious liberty. Roger Williams died in 1683, around the age of 80.

Three hundred years after his banishment from Massachusetts, a monument in his honor was erected in Providence, Rhode Island. Set in a public park once part of Williams's property, it reminds Rhode Islanders of their illustrious founder and champion of religious freedom.

January 2014



Marble by Franklin Simmons  
Given in 1872; located in Hall of Columns