



## A short history of Rhode Island

*George Washington Greene*

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A short history of Rhode Island by George Washington Greene

There are two classes of history, each of which has claims upon our attention peculiarly its own. One is a sober teacher, the other a pleasant companion. One opens new paths of thought, the other throws new light upon the old, and both agree in making man the chief object of their meditations.

Nearly two thousand years ago a Roman historian likened the life of his country to the life of man. Time has confirmed the parallel. Nations, like men, have their infancy and their youth, their robust manhood and their garrulous old age. Their lives like the lives of men are full of encouragement and of warning. Interpret them aright and they become trusty guides. Misapply their lessons and you grope in the dark and stumble at every step.

And both states and men have their special duties and were created for special ends. The God that made them assigned to each its problem, and to work this out is to work out His will. Of this problem history is the record and the interpreter. It tells us what man has been, and thereby aids us to divine what he yet may be.

If with the philosopher history reveals the laws of life, with the poet she recalls the past and stirs human sympathies in their profoundest depths. Man follows man on her checkered stage; nations rise and fall; mysteries enchain us; imagination controls us; reason guides us; conscience admonishes and warns; and first and foremost of all our stimulants to action is our sympathy with our fellow-man.

I have attempted in the following pages to tell what the part of Rhode Island has been in this great drama. A talent was entrusted to her. Did she wrap it in a napkin? To those who are familiar with the accurate and exhaustive work of Governor Arnold, it will be needless to say that but for the aid of his volumes, mine would never have been written.

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