

**STORY OF DR. JOHN CLARKE: THE  
FOUNDER OF THE FIRST FREE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE WORLD  
ON THE BASIS OF "FULL LIBERTY IN  
RELIGIOUS CONCERNMENTS"**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649008179

Story of Dr. John Clarke: the founder of the first free commonwealth of the world on the basis of "full liberty in religious concerns" by Thomas W. Bicknell

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**THOMAS W. BICKNELL**

**STORY OF DR. JOHN CLARKE: THE  
FOUNDER OF THE FIRST FREE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE WORLD  
ON THE BASIS OF "FULL LIBERTY IN  
RELIGIOUS CONCERNMENTS"**



"A FLOURISHING CIVIL STATE—WITH FULL LIBERTY IN RELIGIOUS CONCERNMENTS."



*Si monumentum requiris, Circumspice*

39225



"HIS GRAND MOTIVE  
A JUST LIBERTY TO ALL MEN'S SPIRITS  
IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS"

Roger Williams on Dr. John Clarke

STORY OF DR. JOHN CLARKE

THE FOUNDER OF  
THE FIRST FREE COMMONWEALTH  
OF THE WORLD  
ON THE BASIS OF

*"Full Liberty in Religious Concernments"*

BY

Thomas W. Bicknell, A.M., LL.D.

Author of "Historical Sketches"; "History of Barrington, R. I.";  
"History of the Rhode Island Normal School"; "History and  
Genealogy of the Bicknell Family in England and America";  
"Sowams"; etc., etc.

FIRST EDITION

Published by the Author  
PROVIDENCE, R. I.

1915





F  
82  
G

**COPYRIGHT**  
**THOMAS W. BICKNELL**  
1915

**DR. JOHN CLARKE**

Scholar            Author

Physician

Minister of the Gospel

Leader in Banishment

Co-Founder of Towns on Aquidneck

Co-Founder of Rhode Island Colony

Diplomat at home and in England

Stateman

Author of Royal Charter of 1663

1609—1676



## PREFACE.

---

The Honorable Le Baron Bradford Colt, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island in the Senate of the United States declared, "The Rhode Island doctrine of religious freedom stands as the first amendment to the Federal Constitution, and is incorporated into the organic law of every American state. This is the immortal principle which Rhode Island has added to the structure of our government,—to the making of America." It is my purpose to show, when, where and by whom "*the Lively Experiment*" of a Free Commonwealth, on the basis of soul-liberty, was first successfully and permanently made. I shall attempt to prove by the most conclusive evidence, that, at Portsmouth (Pocasset) in 1638, and at Newport in 1639, William Coddington, John Clarke and their associates established a well organized "Bodie Politicke" on the broad foundations of "*DEMOCRACIE*" and that in 1640, by the political union of the two towns, a colony was set up, styled the Colony of Rhode Island, on the island of Aquidneck, which in its declared principles and in its vital character, illustrated and enforced, in due magisterial form and procedure, for the first time in the world's history, the full, clear, comprehensive Doctrine of Civil and Religious Liberty in the conduct of a Free Commonwealth.

Yet more clearly will the great concerns of these English planters be made manifest to the world, when it will appear that Dr. John Clarke, the leader of the Aquidneck Plantation, procured, by wise diplomacy, from King Charles the Second, in July, 1663, the most liberal charter ever given to men, securing to Rhode Island and Providence Plantations full liberty in civil and religious concernments.

Yet more, the highest honor belongs to Dr. John Clarke, the author and inspirer of the Royal Charter, whose mind dictated and whose pen wrote the imperishable sentiment, "THAT IT IS MUCH ON THEIR HEARTS (IF THEY MAY BE PERMITTED) TO HOLD FORTH A LIVELY EXPERIMENT, THAT A MOST FLOURISHING CIVIL STATE MAY STAND AND BEST BE MAINTAINED, AND THAT AMONG OUR ENGLISH SUBJECTS, WITH A FULL LIBERTY IN RELIGIOUS CONCERNMENTS."

These words, cut in enduring marble on the west facade of our beautiful Capitol at Providence, constitute it a living monument to perpetuate the spotless name and the matchless fame of DR. JOHN CLARKE OF AQUIDNECK.

To the Grand Jury of the World, I submit the evidence of historic facts.

THOMAS W. BICKNELL.

Providence, R. I.

Sept. 6, 1915.

## The Story of Dr. John Clarke of Aquidneck

---

### CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Chapter I. Rhode Island, The Birth- place of Soul Liberty . . . .	9-14
Chapter II. The Puritan in the Making	14-26
Chapter III. Religious Liberty — Con- science Liberty . . . . .	26-33
Chapter IV. Boston, The Preparatory School of a Free Common- wealth in Rhode Island . .	33-54
Chapter V. Anne Hutchinson's School of Civil and Religious Lib- erty . . . . .	54-73
Chapter VI. Dr. John Clarke from 1609- 1651 . . . . .	73-87
Chapter VII. The Founding of Ports- mouth . . . . .	87-101
Chapter VIII. A Democratic State in the Making . . . . .	101-122
Chapter IX. The Founding of Newport .	122-133