

# **HISTORY OF METHODISM IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649480227

History of Methodism in Providence, Rhode Island by W. McDonald

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)

**W. MCDONALD**

**HISTORY OF METHODISM  
IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE  
ISLAND**



HISTORY  
OF  
METHODISM  
IN  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND,  
FROM ITS INTRODUCTION IN

1787 TO 1867.

BY W. MCDONALD.

~~COMPOSED~~  
c-  
BOSTON:  
PHIPPS & PRIDE, PRINTERS.  
No. 11 CORNHILL,  
1868.

~~IV, 4025~~  
US 14384.20.75



Walker Fund

## INTRODUCTION.

---

THE introduction of Methodism into New England was an epoch in its religious history, the results of which we are unable, at present, fully to estimate. The facts and incidents of its early history are deeply interesting, but exceedingly fragmentary, requiring no little amount of labor to collect and arrange in chronological order.

The preparation of this work was commenced at the request of the "Providence District Preacher's Meeting," while the writer was pastor of Chestnut Street Church, and was intended, originally, to be confined to that church. But it was thought best, subsequently, to extend the work and include a brief history of the other Methodist churches in the city. We have done this as best we could, with the materials at our command.

We have encountered, in the preparation of this little volume, great difficulties in fixing the dates of events in the early history of Methodism in this

city. We may not have succeeded in every case; but if there has been any mistake, it has resulted from the impossibility of securing the desired information. Our materials have been collected from a great variety of published and unpublished documents, as well as from the lips and pens of many still living. We are under many obligations to Rev. S. Reed, Rev. J. Livesey, Rev. J. D. Butler, Rev. R. W. Allen, Rev. D. H. Ela, Rev. V. A. Cooper, Mrs. Rev. S. Heath, Rev. S. W. Coggeshall, D.D., Hon. Elisha Dyer, Daniel Field, Esq., (late deceased) and others, for valuable information. We have made the best use we were able of the materials at our disposal, and hope the result may not be entirely unsatisfactory to the reader.

W. McDONALD.

BOSTON, 1868.



HISTORY  
OF THE  
CHESTNUT STREET CHURCH.

---

REV. FREEBORN GARRETTSON.

THE first Methodist preacher to visit and preach in Providence, was Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, a native of Maryland; born August 15, 1752. He was educated in the faith of the Church of England, but under the searching preaching of Rev. Mr. Strawbridge, a Local Methodist preacher from Ireland, he was deeply awakened, and in June, 1775, was born again. "The blessed change," he says, "I shall never forget."

GARRETTSON FREES HIS SLAVES.

By the death of his father he became, without his consent, a slaveholder. For a time his mind was, from some cause to him unknown, deeply dejected. He sought relief in prayer. One evening, about eight o'clock, he called the family together for prayer. "As I stood," he says, "with a book in my hand, in

the act of giving out a hymn, this thought powerfully struck my mind: 'It is not right to keep your fellow creatures in bondage; you must let the oppressed go free.' I knew it to be that same blessed voice which had spoken to me before. Till then I had never suspected that the practice of slave keeping was wrong; I had not read a book on the subject, nor been told so by any. I paused a minute and then replied, 'Lord, the oppressed shall go free.' And I was as clear of them in my mind as if I had never owned one. I told them they did not belong to me, and that I did not desire their services without compensation. I was now at liberty to proceed in worship. After singing I kneeled to pray. Had I the tongue of an angel, I could not fully describe what I felt. All my dejection, and melancholy gloom which preyed upon me vanished in a moment, and a Divine sweetness ran through my whole frame."

COMMENCES HIS ITINERANT LABOR.

Mr. Garrettson commenced his itinerant labors the same year of his conversion, and for nine years traveled extensively through Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey. He preached with remarkable power, which drew upon him a storm of persecution. Few

men suffered more than he. In a letter addressed to Mr. Wesley, he says, "My lot has mostly been cast in new places, to form circuits, which much exposed me to persecution. Once I was imprisoned; twice beaten, left on the highway speechless and senseless; (I must have gone into a world of spirits, had not God in mercy sent a good Samaritan, that bled and took me to a friend's house); once shot at; guns and pistols presented at my breast; once delivered from an armed mob, in the dead time of night, on the highway, by a surprising flash of lightning; surrounded frequently by mobs; stoned frequently; I have had to escape for my life at dead time of night. O! shall I ever forget the divine hand which has supported me?"

GARRETTSON IN NOVA SCOTIA.

At the "Christmas Conference," 1784, Mr. Garrettson, through the influence of Dr. Coke, consented to make a missionary tour into Nova Scotia, and gather into the fold, if possible, the shepherdless sheep whom war had driven into those parts. About the middle of February, in company with James O. Cromwell, he embarked for Halifax, and after a stormy and dangerous passage of thirteen days, they