

**IN OLD NARRAGANSETT;
ROMANCES
AND REALITIES**

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In old Narragansett; romances and realities by Alice Morse Earle

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IN OLD NARRAGANSETT

ROMANCES AND REALITIES

BY

ALICE MORSE EARLE

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FOREWORD

Some of these stories of old Narragansett are familiar fireside tales to those who have lived in that picturesque land; some are but vague traditions, others summer dreams; a few are family chronicles; still others are outlined in that interesting memoir, Thomas R. Hazard's "Recollections of the Olden Times," or in Updike's "Narragansett Church." Old Narragansett was, properly, all the lands occupied by the Narragansett Indians at the coming of the English. Narragansett is now, popularly, the coast sweep of the western shore of Narragansett Bay from Wickford to Point Judith. In 1685 Narragansett was made a separate government apart from Rhode Island, and was called the King's Province. When reunited with Rhode Island this was changed to King's County. For many years, and by some old people to-day, it is called the South

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County, but its legal name is Washington County, which was given it in 1781; Washington being a more agreeable and tolerable name at that date to loyal Americans than King's. Narragansett was owned by a comparatively small number of persons, and estates were large, one family owned a tract nine miles long and three wide. Thomas Stanton had a "lordship" four and a half miles long and two wide. Colonel Champlin owned two thousand acres, Thomas Hazard twelve thousand acres. Farms of five, six, even ten miles square existed.

Thus the conditions of life in colonial Narragansett were widely different from those of other New England colonies. The establishment of and adherence to the Church of England, and the universal prevalence of African slavery, evolved a social life resembling that of the Virginian plantation rather than of the Puritan farm. It was a community of many superstitions, to which the folk-customs of the feast-days of the English Church, the evil communications of witch-seeking Puritan neighbors, the voodooism of the negro slaves, the pow wows of the native red men, all added