

**CEREMONIES AT THE UNVEILING
OF THE MONUMENT TO
ROGER WILLIAMS, ERECTED
BY THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE**

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Ceremonies at the Unveiling of the Monument to Roger Williams, Erected by the City of Providence by J. Lewis Diman

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J. LEWIS DIMAN

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CEREMONIES

AT THE

UNVEILING OF THE MONUMENT

TO

ROGER WILLIAMS,

ERECTED BY THE

CITY OF PROVIDENCE,

WITH THE

ADDRESS BY J. LEWIS DIMAN,

OCTOBER 16, 1877.



PROVIDENCE:
ANGELL, HAMMETT & CO., CITY PRINTERS.
1877.

THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY COUNCIL,

APPROVED OCTOBER 22, 1877.

RESOLVED, That the city council of the city of Providence, hereby tender their thanks to Professor J. Lewis Diman, of Brown University, for the learned, scholarly and eloquent oration delivered October 16, 1877, upon the occasion of the dedication of the monument in commemoration of the life and services of the venerated founder of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in Roger Williams Park; and the joint committee on parks be requested to wait upon Professor Diman and ask for a copy of said oration for publication, and to cause the same to be printed for the use of the city council.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of the council be also tendered to the Grand Lodge of the State of Rhode Island, for their services in the masonic ceremonies at the dedication of said monument.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PROVIDENCE, October 20, 1877.

DEAR SIR:—

In accordance with a resolution of the city council, I request you to furnish for publication, a copy of the address delivered by you at the dedication of the monument to Roger Williams. I am, sir,

Very respectfully yours,

ARTHUR F. DEXTER,

Chairman Committee on Parks.

Professor J. L. Diman.

PROVIDENCE, October 25, 1877.

SIR:—

In compliance with the request conveyed in your note, it gives me great pleasure to furnish a copy of the address at the recent exercises in Roger Williams Park. I remain, sir,

Very respectfully,

J. L. DIMAN.

Arthur F. Dexter, Esq., Chairman, &c.

CEREMONIES.

The city of Providence, founded by Roger Williams in 1636, had seen more than two centuries of prosperous life, had increased till it numbered more than 100,000 inhabitants, had become the second city in New England in wealth and importance, and yet had secured no large public park, and had erected no statue in memory of its founder. Happily, a portion of the farm given to Mr. Williams by his friend, the sachem Miantunnomi, was still in the possession of one of his descendants, and she, his great-great-great-grand-daughter, Miss Betsy Williams, in whose character an affectionate veneration for the memory of her ancestor had always been a prominent trait, determined to honor his memory and benefit the city founded by him, by bequeathing to it this tract for a public use.

The farm comprises about 100 acres of plain and woodland, and has many natural advantages for a public pleasure ground. It is the place where the family of Roger Williams lived for many years, where the old homestead still stands, and where many of his descendants lie buried in the ancient Williams burial ground.

Miss Williams died November 27, 1871, leaving a will in terms as follows :—

In the name of God, Amen. I, Betsy Williams, of the City and county of Providence, State of Rhode Island, being of sound disposing mind and memory, do publish, pronounce and declare this to be my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking and annulling all former wills by me at any time made,

First.—I direct my executor, hereinafter named, to pay all my just debts and funeral expenses, and to place, to mark my grave, which I desire shall be in the "Williams Burying Ground," upon my farm, head and foot stones corresponding in size and quality with those which have been erected to mark the resting places in the same ground of my parents and sister.

Second.—I give and bequeath to the city of Providence my farm, situate partly in the said city and partly in the town of Cranston, lying southerly of and adjoining the Stonington railroad, and also adjoining the westerly side of the Old Pawtuxet Road, (now called Broad street,) containing about one hundred acres, more or less being the same which is now occupied by my tenant, John Read, Jr., to have and to hold the same to said city, on the following express conditions, viz. : That said Farm shall never be sold, excepting, however, such small portions thereof as it may be desirable to sell or to exchange for the purpose of straightening any dividing line or lines, or of leaving the main body of the Farm in a better shape than it now is; that it never shall be used for any special punitive or reformatory purpose, or for a hospital for any contagious or infectious disease; that no slaughter house, piggery, bone or fat boiling establishment, or any repulsive trade or occupation shall be allowed thereon; that any public purpose for which the said Farm shall be used shall be named in honor of Roger Williams, as "Roger Williams Park" "Roger Williams Cemetery," &c.; that the said city shall erect a monument to the memory of Roger Williams, in the aforesaid Williams Burying ground, at a cost of not less than five hundred dollars; that the said city shall maintain a good and becoming fence around the said Burying Ground, and keep the grounds within the enclosure in proper order; that all sums for which any portion of said Farm shall be sold, as heretofore provided, and all sums which may be received for rents, or in any other way derived from the property hereby devised, shall, after defraying the expense of improvements, constitute a fund to be entitled the "Roger Williams Fund," the interest of which shall be applied towards the support of the poor of the city of Providence,—I hereby reserving the aforesaid Williams Burying Ground from the above devise as a place of sepulture of the descendants of my ancestor, Roger Williams, forever. Nothing, however, above contained, is intended to debar the city from laying out such streets and avenues through and over said Farm as the interest of the property and the public convenience may require.

Third.—I give and bequeath to Mary Alice Rein, wife of Elmerich Rein, and Fanny Carpenter Pitman, wife of Henry Pitman, both being daughters of my much esteemed friend, the late Thomas F. Carpenter, one undivided half part of a piece of land, containing in the whole about four acres, lying westerly of and adjoining the new Stonington Railroad, to have and to hold to them, their heirs and assigns forever.

Fourth.—I give and bequeath to Freclove B. Carpenter, widow of Cyril Carpenter, and Elizabeth Tower, wife of Emerson Tower, of Providence, the other undivided one-half part of the aforesaid piece of land, to have and to hold to them, their heirs and assigns forever.

Fifth.—I give and bequeath to my relative and friend, Zuriel Waterman, for the term of his natural life, and to Polly Boon Waterman, his wife, after him, should she survive him, for the term of her natural life, the house in which I now live, with all the land belonging to me which adjoins the same, they to keep the premises in a proper state of repair, and to pay the taxes thereon.

Sixth.—I give and bequeath to my nephew, Charles Williams, of the city and State of New York, son of my deceased brother, Charles Williams, all of my household goods, my clothing, carriage and sleigh.

Seventh.—All the rest and residue of property, real, personal and mixed, of every name and nature and wheresoever the same may be, of which I may die possessed or to which I may be entitled, I give, devise and bequeath, the one undivided half part thereof, to my said nephew, Charles Williams, and the other undivided half part thereof to the heirs of my deceased nephew, Albert Pabodie Williams.

Eighth.—I nominate, constitute and appoint my said nephew, Charles Williams, sole executor of this, my last Will and Testament.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal on this twenty-first day of August, in the year eighteen hundred and sixty eight.

Signed, sealed, published, pronounced and declared by the said Betsy Williams, to be as and for her last Will and Testament, in the presence of us, who, in her presence and in the presence of each other, have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses to the same.

BETSY WILLIAMS, L. S.

The word "to" on the last line of the second page having first been expunged, and the word "brother" on the last line of the third page expunged, and the word "nephew" interlined.

JOSEPH J. COOKE,
CHARLES W. PATT,
PHILIP S. PAINE.

CODICIL.

I, Betsy Williams, of the city and county of Providence, State of Rhode Island, do, this ninth day of October, eighteen hundred and sixty-eight, make and publish this Codicil to my last will and testament, in manner following, that is to say, whereas, in my said will I give and bequeath to my relative and friend, Zuriel

Waterman, for the term of his natural life, and to Polly Boon Waterman, his wife after him, should she survive him, for the term of her natural life, the house in which I now live, with all the land belonging to me, which adjoins the same, I do hereby order and declare, and my will is, that, after the death of the aforesaid Zuriel Waterman, one-half part of the said house and adjoining land shall revert directly to and be the property of my nephew, Charles Williams, and the other undivided half part thereof shall revert directly to and be the property of the heirs of my deceased nephew, Albert Fabelle Williams, instead of being the property for life of the aforesaid Polly Boon Waterman. And I hereby order this, my codicil, to be annexed to and make a part of my last will and testament, to all intents and purposes.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal on this ninth day of October, in the year eighteen hundred and sixty-eight.

Signed, sealed, published, pronounced and declared by the said Betsy Williams, to be as and for a codicil to her last will and testament, in the presence of us, who, in the presence of each other, have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses to the same.

BETSY WILLIAMS, { L. s. }

JOSEPH J. COOKE,
CHARLES W. PATT,
PHILIP S. PAINE.

The city council, by resolution of date February 12, 1872, accepted this bequest, and forthwith began to plan the erection of a statue to Roger Williams that should far exceed the modest requirements of the testatrix, and which should be worthy the subject and the place. Various committees were appointed to carry out this design, and many plans were examined, resulting in the acceptance of those presented by Mr. Franklin Simmons, of Rome.

After many unavoidable delays, the monument was dedicated on Tuesday, October 16, 1877. The interest in this event extended far beyond the limits of the city; and from all parts of the state came many people to attend the ceremonies. There was great rejoicing that at last a monument was