

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
SAMUEL GORTON: THE  
FOUNDERS AND THE  
FOUNDING OF THE REPUBLIC**

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The Life and Times of Samuel Gorton: The Founders and the Founding of the Republic by  
Adelos Gorton

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## ERRATA AND ADDENDA

- Page 31, For William Arnold read *William Coddington*.
- Page 33, Lines at top of page were repeated and the following lines omitted from Williams' letter: *and covetous and unchristian during late storms, Coddington, who never had a foot of land but by one man of Providence, turns Providence men off except they gratify his worldly selfish ends and conditions.*"
- Page 39, For "the signatures of Miantinomi and Williams, which were appended to the memorandum, were forgeries." read *No Sachem's names, and but Arnold's and Williams' names were affixed to the memorandum. Williams' name was forged to it.*
- Page 44, For "a few," read *so few.*
- Page 54, For Wm. D. Ely, Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc., 1887-88, read *William D. Ely, Proceedings of Rhode Island Historical Society, 1887-88.*
- Page 94, For Early Recds. of Prov. vi, 56 read *Early Recds. of Prov. xv, 56.*
- Page 113, To "was prevented by the Pawtuxet party from being recorded," add *altho this land Papaquinepaug, Gorton bought of one of them, they, as we have seen, re-claiming it after he with others had planted it and erected buildings on it.*
- Page 116, For "first Governor under the new charter; largely attributive to the limited voting privilege maintained in Newport." read *first Governor under the new charter. Largely attributive to the limited voting privilege maintained at Newport, Arnold and Brenton held the office of Governor for fifteen years between them continuously.*
- Page 134, For "Some time after the Pequot war was closed in 1639, and our charter from Parliament." read *Some time after the Pequot war (war closed in 1639) and our charter from Parliament.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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That all the principal facts belonging to the history of Samuel Gorton and his companions and the affairs with which they were associated, that are necessary to an understanding of them and a correct judgment regarding them, have never been given, alone, not with others, in one unbroken collection, and the desire expressed by many that these truths from every source should together shed their light upon these subjects, are the reasons above others that have prompted their gathering and issuing in this volume.

In this an essay is not intended, nor a discussion of subjects or opinions, but the setting in their order before the reader the various pertinent accounts and records; some of which when alone are misleading, others which explain the truth with fairness, many of which were written to defame the men and decry the measures they upheld, few of which were written to extoll them, and many of which, recording but events, have long laid unread and unpublished. We have in this followed the originals of the writings, quoting in full as many of them as were not precluded from this by their great length or the amount of their irrelevant matter; then endeavoring to as closely bide their phrase as permitted by the required abridgment of them. We have been sparing with our words of either praise or blame for those who have taken part in the transactions; giving rather the facts to show whatever is due them.

While a satisfied dominating people learn late by their experience, the student and observer so far transcends them in knowledge that his attainments often are, as such, beyond their recognition. And, too, from the general uncertainty, the reasonable suspicion, and worthy caution regarding untried things, the unselfish motives of some men have been misunderstood and the wisdom of their efforts unperceived by the people of the times in which they lived. If the members of all religious societies were not intolerant towards others who thought differently from them, they might, under then the political incitements, have become intolerant toward them upon gaining the strength to rule them. The weakness and consequent sufferings of some of them helped them earlier than others to see the wrong of punishing to correct belief and earlier to discern that the remedy was in the separation of Church and State.

The records of all the Colonies show that the Providence Colony had a larger share of troubles than any other colony; that the reason for this "larger share" was her storming by all the other colonies, that "her storming" arose from two inciting conditions. These "inciting conditions" were—the first, the prospect of the other colonies that her lands, located and inhabited without a charter, might be obtained by them. The second, the desire of the other colonies that her inhabitants, outcasts and refugees now aggrieved and unrestrained accusers, might be again brought under their jurisdiction for punishment.

The records of events in the Providence Colony show that the troubles there were principally from two sources—one operating from without, the other aided from without, but operating from within.

They show that the Providence Colony was founded and upheld and the interests of its people served principally by two loyal men, their followers and successors—one by his procuring the place and settling it, the other by his defending it, and as a consequence maintaining it.

They show that the Colony was nearly dismembered by the internal dissensions created principally by two disloyal men, subjects and agents of other colonies, their followers and successors; one by his fraudulently claiming the lands, the other by his persistently asserting, in opposition to the will of the people, his authority to rule them.

The greatest of these causes of turbulence was that regarding the lands. And for the possession of the lands, really more than for their religious opinions, the loyal people and rightful owners of the lands were assailed with the then political weapon of vile heresy and otherwise abused.

During the earlier period of this history the printing press was an institution of only the then powerful colony of Massachusetts; and not until about one hundred years after was a printing press established in the smaller and weaker colony of Providence and Rhode Island—unfortunately long after much of the best of the writings of the later colony were destroyed and the colonies' history, written by its enemies, had been in varied versions published and industriously spread throughout the land. Largely from this cause, all the men of those times who led in advancing the condition of their fellows in this colony have been the subjects of unlimited falsehood and calumny. Although men have, at every period since then, been assailed, there have been printing presses in every land, and many of them in the accused ones' hands, we therefore not left as were the early readers and later readers of this early history, dependent for information regarding men upon their enemies' accounts of them, but have the utterances of both their enemies and friends. However, we rejoice that the odium which rested upon the founders of the Providence and Rhode Island Colony as a result of the disadvantages related has been by the gradual revelations of truth removed.

The loyal sons and daughters of the State have ever honored and cherished, and their posterity will always hold in exalted remembrance, those who, by their unselfish love and labors for mankind, wrought out so much for us.

Doctor Lewis George Janes, in a valuable article on Samuel Gorton, published in the May, 1898, number of the *New England Magazine*, writes: "The nineteenth century has furnished an Easter morning for many of the worthies of our earlier period. Buried beneath the dust of centuries, with the stones of prejudice and obliquely sealing the mouths of their sepulchres, they have awaited the potent touch of the angel of the new historical method to remove the obstructions, tear from their forgotten forms the dusty cerements of misunderstanding and neglect and reveal to the world the living realities of their self-sacrificing labors and the results which are our leading inheritance.

To most readers, even the ordinary student of history, this work will be new and instructive, and, we trust, interesting. A. G.

*Philadelphia, Pa., July 1, 1907.*

# LIFE AND TIMES OF SAMUEL GORTON.

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