

"Save your Magazines."—See Inside Page Rear Cover.

2765-

1916

# PROVIDENCE MAGAZINE

*Published by the*  
**Providence Chamber of Commerce**

*Devoted to the Interests of the Metropolitan District of Providence*

Volume XXVIII, No. 1

**JANUARY 1916**

Single Copies 10 Cents



OLD "KIT HEALEY HOUSE" AT CROSS'S MILLS  
See Story of "Old South County."—Page 19

**HISTORY OF PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS. Part IV.** Rhode Island, always Busy with Leadership. "Lively Experiments" in Government followed by Commercial Supremacy, and this in turn by Industrial Pre-eminence. Pawtucket's Proud Distinction. Old South County and the Ninigret Dynasty. Chamber of Commerce Building Throbs with Multifarious Activities.



the sea is lost.  
catch the glint  
e, and you are  
ut before you  
ry, disappears  
ases, no boats,

iliar with the  
acial moraine,  
by the passing  
il. Follow it,  
e old Narra-  
tion, the old

enjoy the use  
hat they are  
steal up to  
inking at the

isible trails,  
rings, where  
of the dim,  
outh County  
ng morning  
e afternoon

a the shore  
a negroid  
habitations,  
a curious  
uddenly to  
nd sea and  
pines, and  
honk, honk

the road  
ay village.  
hospitable  
e door of  
of water  
and. The  
flaky, for  
the pier,  
ers.

he day is  
nd. You  
tent for  
out your  
nd. You  
ng sand-  
ribs, to  
e steeple  
en, level  
sky.  
or car a  
he past,  
r, more  
ty, and



BY THE QUIET ROADSIDE.

## Along The Queen Anne Highway.

One of the Most Interesting and Oldest Roads in the United States.—Old-time Aristocracy Dwelt in Stately Mansions Along Its Winding Ways.—Section Through Charlestown Rich in Historical Lore and Indian Legendry.—Coronation Rock and Royal Residence of King Tom Ninigret.—Old Council House and Mission on the Shore of Quacom Paug.—Last Days of the Niantic Tribe.

One of the most interesting and oldest roads in the United States, a part of the main thoroughfare which has existed since the earliest days of New England, and which was built over two and a half centuries ago to connect Newport, Providence, Boston and New York—New England and the South, in fact—is that through southern Rhode Island formerly known as Queen Anne's Highway. Along this highway were built many of the most beautiful houses in the colonies, which were kept up in a style of magnificence surpassed only in Virginia. All the way from Westerly to Warwick, every foot of this country is rich in historic memories and interesting legends. At first the route skirts the foot of the hills which overlook the great salt ponds and lagoons that lie back of the beaches all the way to Point Judith. Along the ocean-front, across these protected waters, are numerous summer settlements, like "Ocean View," Weekapaug, and Quonochontaug. Opposite the road which leads to the latter resort there stands on the right a monument to Gen. Stanton, the first Senator from Rhode Island.

From here the fine highway twists and turns around the base of the little hills, with charming glimpses of little inlets here and there.

Four or five miles beyond the Stanton monument we curve around the interesting country estate known as the King Tom farm, with its

### Charming Vistas of the Sea,

historic mansion and tiny lake, between which is the large flat-topped boulder called Coronation Rock. About half a mile more brings us to the hamlet locally known as Cross's Mills. To the south lies Pawauget, or "Charlestown Pond," as the modern race of pale-faces calls it, the largest of the many salt-water lagoons along this south shore. Charlestown Beach, which is seen in the distance, separates it from the ocean.

The remains of an old fort, said to have been successively held by the Indians, the Dutch and the English, occupy an enclosure upon a commanding knoll above the water, not far from the village cross-roads.

A large boulder erected near the middle of the old fort bears this inscription: "Fort Ninigret, Memorial of the Narragansett and Niantic Indians, the Unwavering Friends and Allies of Our Fathers, Erected by the State of Rhode Island."





ON THE HILLSIDE NEAR NINIGRET LODGE.

The town of Charlestown is rich in Indian lore, and every foot of its ground is of historic interest. Between the years 1620-1790 the country was in the hands of the Niantics, which tribe was ruled over during this period by nine members of the Ninigret dynasty.

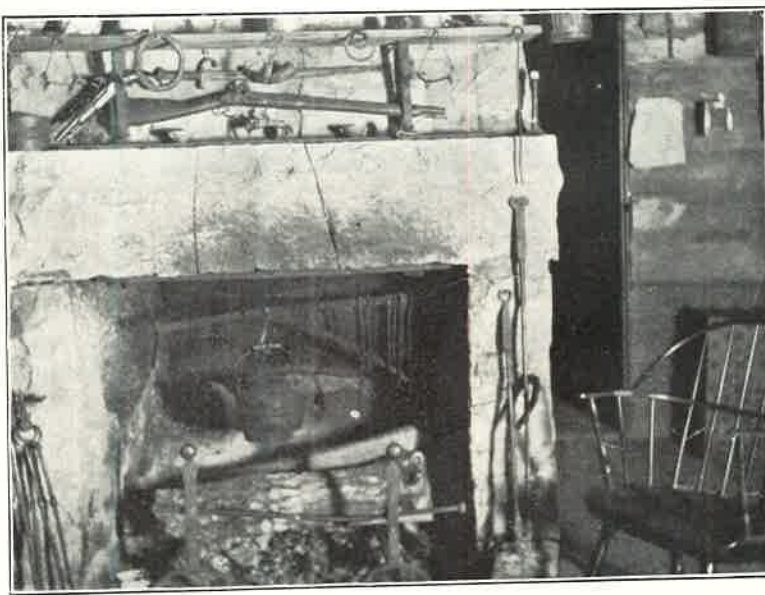
#### Thomas Ninigret, King of the Niantics.

The most famous and widely known of those dusky chiefs was Thomas Ninigret, otherwise King Tom, who was crowned in 1746. After him came Queen Esther. It was on "Coronation Rock" that this queen was crowned. She was the eighth of the Ninigret dynasty, her successor, George Ninigret, being killed soon after the Revolutionary War by the falling of a tree.

When George died, the tribe voted to do away with royalty and to adopt a more democratic form of government. Accordingly, a council was chosen, which consisted of a president and four members elected annually.

King Tom, it is said, was a very popular man, possibly too much so for his own well-being. He was sent by his tribe to England to imbibe some advanced notions of civilized rulership from his English Majesty, King George. This education in the king business, or profession, evidently involved several kinds of imbibing, and the altogether too literal following of the royal example of the English sovereign resulted in the creation of a royal establishment in Charlestown on a scale considerably too luxurious for the revenues of the Ninigret family. At any rate, the fine mansion still known as the King Tom house, which was built by the young king soon after his return, from plans which he had brought back from England, was

finally seized by the colony to pay the debts which are supposed to have been due for the royal firewater. The house was therefore sold in 1773 to Nathan Kenyon, great-grandfather of the late James N. Kenyon of Providence, who made extensive improvements a few years ago in the estate, which is one of the most beautiful summer homes in South County.

FIREPLACE AT NINIGRET LODGE.  
Former council house, mission church and school.

The Niantics were invariably friendly to the whites. They never lifted their tomahawks against the pale-faces, and consequently they survived in a measure the shock which crushed the Narragansetts. The Nipmucks and Wampanoags, the subjects of the Ninigret dynasty, were confederated with their tribal superiors up to the time of King Philip's War, in 1775 and 1776.

#### Last Refuge of the Narragansetts.

When the New England natives rose against the white settlers, the Ninigrets refused to join forces with their red-skinned neighbors. Then followed the bloody conflict between the white and red men, and in December, 1675, the Narragansetts were crushed and overpowered in the Great Swamp fight, and the remnants of the tribe over whose destinies the grand old Sachem Canonicus had once presided so successfully were humbled to the extent of seeking refuge with the unharmed Niantics.

By mistake of various historians the consolidated and blended tribes have been spoken of as the Narragansetts, and the reservation of Indian lands which was maintained until 1880 in the town of



Charlestown but, in fact, Niantics, and ragansetts m abolished by account of t admitted to

It was a quit-claim to

tribal or vac of \$5000. T ancient Coun of the Great all persons in





POINT JUDITH GUARDS THE WESTERN ENTRANCE OF NARRAGANSETT BAY.

Charlestown was in some instances called the Narragansett country, but, in fact, the reservation from time immemorial belonged to the Niantics, and the royal house of this tribe survived that of the Narragansetts more than 100 years. This tribal authority was finally abolished by act of the General Assembly, March 30, 1880, largely on account of the desire on the part of the Indians themselves to be admitted to the rights of citizenship.

It was agreed by the Indian council on behalf of the tribe to quit-claim to the state all of the interests held by the tribe in the



QUACOMPAUG LODGE.

tribal or vacant lands, and all other rights and claims, for the sum of \$5000. The commissioners held various public meetings in the ancient Council-House on an island overlooking Quacompaug ("Lake of the Great White Gull") in the midst of the reservation, at which all persons interested in the proceeds of the land sold were notified

to appear and prove heirship thereto. There were nearly 500 applicants for heirship in the tribe, but the number which was finally officially recognized was reduced to 324, and these received shares of the \$5000, the individual dividends being \$15.43.

#### Mission in the Wilderness.

The Council-House itself, which is located some two and a half miles north of Cross's Mills, appears to have been built in 1727 as a mission by the English "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," and in the intervening century and a half had been used as a school on week-days and a church on Sundays. Rev. Samuel Niles was one of the first missionaries, and, after his long career among the natives, was buried on the hillside back of the ancient building, together with his dusky converts and "parishioners."

After the transfer of the tribal property to the state, the house was acquired and has since been maintained for the purposes of a country club, now named in honor of the Ninigrets.

Two miles farther to the east, and about a mile back from the "Post Road," the state maintains another old burial-ground, the last resting place of many of the Narragansett sachems, on the summit of Burial Hill.

During the last century the remnants of the tribe have intermarried with the ex-slaves who were liberated by the abolition of human bondage in Rhode Island, but the several hundred negroid descendants still retain many of the characteristics of their Indian ancestors. Their annual festival, known as "August Meetin'," is a sort of Old Home Week, and is attended by many interesting ceremonies.

