



After Roger Williams was banished from Salem (then part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony), he spent fourteen weeks enduring the bitterly cold New-England winter of 1635/36 on his own.

Receiving help from a Native-American hunting party, he safely reached the home of Massasoit (the chief sachem of the Wampanoag) which was located near the present-day town of Bristol (Rhode Island).

Some of Williams' followers, from Salem, joined him to settle the land. This image, from the National Park Service, depicts how those settlers may have appeared as they searched for suitable land and, in the process, encountered Narragansett.

The [National Park Service](#) tells us more:

In a canoe with several others, Roger scouted the area across the Seekonk River. They spotted a group of Narragansett on a large rock, known afterwards as Slate Rock, along the western shore of the Seekonk River.

As they approached, the Narragansett greeted them by calling out: "What Cheer Netop!" This greeting is a combination of English and Narragansett languages.

"What cheer" was an informal common English greeting of the day, short for "what cheery news do you bring" and today's equivalent of "what's up?"

"Netop" is the Narragansett word for friend.

When it came time for Williams to settle what would become "Providence," today the capitol of Rhode Island, he paid for the land. The U.S. National Park Service tells us about [those negotiations](#):

Roger negotiated a deal for the land that was to become Providence with the Narragansett Sachems Cononicus and Miantonomo. In return for the land, Roger would allow the Sachems to come and take whatever English trade goods they wanted from him.

The Narragansetts made this deal with Roger so they could add one more resource to the area around the Cove [a place abounding in natural resources, such as salmon]: English trade goods. By giving the land to Roger the Narragansett now had close access to these trade goods without having to deal with Boston or Plymouth, English that they trusted far less than Roger.

Click on the image for a better view.

Credits:

Image of Roger Williams and his followers online, courtesy National Park Service (NPS). PD

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