

Timeline of Rhode Island History

1636 - Roger Williams founds **Providence** to establish a colony based on religious freedom and a separation of Church and State. The land was bought from Narragansett sachem (chief) Canonicus.



1637 - Anne Hutchinson leads another group of people from Massachusetts to Aquidneck (Rhode) Island and helps found Portsmouth, which is then bought from the Narragansett tribe.



Touro Synagogue

1763 - **Touro Synagogue**, the first synagogue in America, built in Newport due to the colony's religious freedom.

1762 - **Old State House** built in Providence. Rhode Island's government rotated between Providence, Newport, Bristol, East Greenwich, and Kingston from 1681 to 1854, when Newport and Providence became the only capitals. Providence became the only capital in 1901.



Where is this state house located?

1772 - **Gaspée Affair** - First act of armed rebellion against the British government. Rhode Island colonists board and burn the British tax ship HMS Gaspée in Narragansett Bay.



1764 - **Brown University** founded by people such as John Brown (a slave trader involved in the Triangle Trade) and his brother Moses Brown (a Quaker and important early abolitionist).

1776-1783 - **American Revolution** – Stephen Hopkins from Providence signed the Declaration of Independence and was governor of R.I. 10 times.

Nathanael Greene from Warwick became second-in-command of the Continental Army after George Washington.

Gilbert Stuart from North Kingstown was a famous colonial painter and painted the portrait of George Washington that appears on the \$1 bill.



1776 - **Rhode Island Declares Independence** from Great Britain on May 4th here in the Old State House. It is the first colony to declare independence.



1790 - **Rhode Island Signs the Constitution**. It was the last state to do so because Rhode Islanders disliked the lack of a Bill of Rights. Newport and Providence are the 8th and 9th largest cities in the country in 1790.

1792 - **Slater Mill** is founded in Pawtucket by Samuel Slater. It is the first successful water-powered cotton mill in America and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the US.



Slater Mill - Pawtucket

1841 - **Dorr Rebellion**, led by Thomas Dorr, happens in Rhode Island because many people are not allowed to vote.



19th Century – **Many New Factories Open** and R.I. becomes one of the most important industrial centers in the country. Rhode Islanders move from the countryside to the city. Mill villages are formed across the state.



The Elms Mansion

1870s-1890s - **Gilded Age** - Newport becomes the most important summer destination for America's richest families, many grand mansions are built there. Current State Capitol is built out of white marble between 1891 and 1904 because of R.I.'s growing population.

1929 - **Great Depression** hurts Rhode Island's textile industry and many factories close.



1960s - **Preservation Movement** begins, the R.I. Preservation Commission is created, and Rhode Islanders work to protect the state's historic places for future generations.

1938 - **Hurricane of 1938** destroys many homes across Rhode Island.



Jamestown after the Hurricane