



# RHODE ISLAND

## THE OCEAN STATE

### An Illustrated History

#### ABOUT THE BOOK

In a book as intriguing as its subject, authors George H. Kellner and J. Stanley Lemons have successfully blended an innovative, forceful text with extraordinary images to produce a lively historical canvas of the state of Rhode Island.

Rhode Island began when free-thinkers like Roger Williams, Ann Hutchinson, William Coddington, and Samuel Gorton established the four original towns on Narragansett Bay in the 1630s and 1640s. As a haven for religious freedom, the colony was harshly criticized by its neighbors and denounced as the “Isle of Errors.” And when resentment against Britain turned to war, Rhode Island was the first colony to renounce its allegiance to George III—but the last of the original 13 states to ratify the Constitution, stubbornly holding out for the inclusion of a Bill of Rights that guaranteed individual liberties. The same self-reliant stance has characterized each era of its dramatic history and has even influenced some national and world events. Boldly deserting the limitations of the more traditional history book, the authors have included topical themes selected for their intrinsic interest, such as recreation and the spirit of patriotism, plus a fascinating segment about Newport’s “High Society.” And they take a penetrating look at Rhode Island’s institutions and controversial figures of the last three centuries.

A generous display of rare photographs, paintings, advertisements, and maps, many in full color, illuminate the events, personalities and trends of the times, giving added insight to the rich history of this beautiful state on the ocean. A special chapter, presents the histories of many individual business firms and other organizations that have made vital contributions to Rhode Island’s growth and success. Finally, an illustrated timeline of significant events in Rhode Island history enhances and supplements the text.

The authors’ profound knowledge of Rhode Island’s history, combined with excellent narrative ability, potent illustrations and a hard-hitting commentary, has resulted in a landmark volume that will be discussed and treasured for generations.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**George H. Kellner**, has been an educator at Rhode Island College for 35 years and a full professor of history for more than 20. He received his Ph.D. in 1973 from the University of Missouri. His specialties are American urban and immigrant history—interests which have led him to study German immigration, ethnicity and the process of urbanization in the 19th century. He has contributed articles to several ethnic-immigrant publications, including *Aspects of the Black Experience*, and he has edited portions of a 19th-century immigration promotional account, *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America*. As director of Rhode Island College’s Ethnic Heritage Studies Project, he collaborated with the staff to produce and publish *From Immigrant to Ethnic: The Rhode Island Experience*.

Born in Germany, raised in the Midwest, and acculturated to the East, Dr. Kellner has cultivated a commitment to local history. He has frequently addressed many ethnic, civic and educational organizations in the state, and has appeared on several local media programs.

**J. Stanley Lemons** is a professor of history at Rhode Island College. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri in 1967. Before coming to Rhode Island, Dr. Lemons taught at Ohio State University. His interest in American social and cultural history has led him to studies and publications in such subjects as women’s history, black history, popular culture and reform movements. He has contributed scholarly articles to various national and state historical journals, as well as authored *The Woman Citizen: Social Feminism in the 1920s* and edited *Aspects of the Black Experience*.

Though a native of the Midwest, Dr. Lemons has developed a deep and growing interest in Rhode Island and its history. He has worked on several historical projects in cooperation with The Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence Preservation Society and Providence Public Library. In addition to numerous appearances on local radio and television programs, he has spoken to many civic, social, educational and fraternal groups.

In 2003 the American Association for State and Local History recognized Dr. Lemons with an Award of Merit for “Lifelong Commitment to Rhode Island History.”