**A+ Research Notes for Colony of Rhode Island**

Sources Used:

1. *The Americans* **Textbook**
2. *America: A Native History* **Textbook**
3. *A History of US* **Textbook**
4. **Primary Source:** *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (Written by Roger Williams in 1644, https://www.nps.gov/common/uploads/teachers/lessonplans/Roger%20Williams%20Bloudy%20Tenant.pdf)
5. **Webpage:** *Slavery and the Slave Trade in Rhode Island* -- John Carter Brown Library (https://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John\_Carter\_Brown\_Library/exhibitions/jcbexhibit/Pages/exhibSlavery.html)
6. **Webpage:** Rhode Island Colony -- Land of The Brave (https://www.landofthebrave.info/rhode-island-colony.htm)
7. **Online Article:** *Rhode Island --* History.com (https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/rhode-island)

1. Social Structures

* Everyone was treated equally
* Was based on democracy + secularism
  + The concept of Natural Freedom, that some basic untouchable freedoms exist for everyone, allowed everyone of Rhode Island access to qualities such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
  + Being in a religious group did not give people an upper ground in terms of social position

2. Politics

* Democracy was important
  + Governed by heads of households
  + Newcomers could apply for citizenship through a majority vote
* “God requireth not an uniformity of religion to be enacted or enforced in any civil state”

“All civil states, with their officers of justice, in their respective constitutions and administrations, are proved essentially civil, and therefore not judges, governors, or defenders of the spiritual, or Christian, state and worship.” -- *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience*

* + The idea of secularism allowed people to contribute in politics without having to be involved with religion

3. Economics

* Taxes from the commonwealth was not spent on Churches
* Rhode Island had a profitable farming community
  + They farmed apples, onions, and flax
  + They raised sheep and horses alongside the farms
  + Timber was also important to the economy
* The main source of income came from exports to other colonies and England
  + Marine life could be sold for food, oil, and fertilizer

4. Ideals and Beliefs

* Founded by Roger Williams (1603-1683), a dissenter from the Puritans living and arriving at Massachusetts who arrived in 1631
  + Was the “purest” Puritan: Separatist
    - “Forced worship stinks in God’s nostrils”
  + Expressed controversial views
  + “First, he declared that the English settlers had no rightful claim to the land unless they purchased it from Native Americans. Second, he argued that every person should be free to worship according to his or her conscience.” -- *The Americans*
  + “Championed individual liberty and criticized the way the Indians were being shoved aside” -- *America: A Native History*
  + “The king had no right to charter land that didn’t belong to him” -- *A History of US*
* Williams escaped deportation to England and went south
  + He negotiated with a Native American group called Narragansett Indians for land
    - Built town Providence: first permanent settlement in Rhode Island
  + He promised religious freedom for all and separated the church from the state

5. Religion

* People were allowed to freely practice any religion or none at all
* Welcomed those escaping religious persecution, though there were no regulations to keep their interactions in check
  + Many Jewish people came to avoid persecution
  + Various Christians could come and live without conflict
  + The religions of Native American tribes were somewhat considered “pagan” but were still respected

6. Gender Relations

* In theory, Roger would have liked equality to exist between everyone
* Women were more free in Rhode Island than they were in any other colonies or countries at that time
* “Anne Hutchinson was famous as one of the early colonists of the Massachusetts Colony who was banished from Boston in 1637 for her religious and feminist beliefs and fled to the Rhode Island Colony. Anne Hutchinson was referred by Governor John Winthrop as " an American Jezebel, who had gone a-whoring from God", and should be "tried as a heretic." -- Land of the Brave
  + A feminist, persecuted for her beliefs, came to Rhode Island and helped found the Providence

7. Most important issues in the 1700s

* Slavery increased, which contradicted the initial purpose of Rhode Island
  + In fact, Rhode Island became a leading figure in terms of the transatlantic slave trade
  + Though there were laws passed in 1652 that abolished the use of slaves, there were no real enforcement of the law and the slave trade and business grew larger
* Slavery came to the first legal end in 1784 when Moses Brown and other Quakers set forth a petition and the General Assembly of Rhode Island passed the Gradual Emancipation Act of March 1, 1784.

**1 minute speech**

* My name is William Easton, a colonist that escaped from Massachusetts to Rhode Island because (323I’ve said some things in my life and) the evidence was piling up on me that I was, indeed, an atheist.
* Here, democracy and secularism is respected and being religious does not give people an upper ground in social positions. Heads of households, not churches, make up the governing body.
* Taxes from the commonwealth are not spent on Churches, and instead are spent on services such as public education.
* Here, we believe we should be able to think freely and not govern other people’s beliefs.
* People can practice any religion or none at all, which is good for me.
* Additionally, women are treated with more equality here than any other colonies; the helping founder of the Providence, Anne Hutchinson, was a persecuted feminist herself.
* Though slavery becomes a growing issue after my death, I hear from the future that it came to a legal end in 1784 through the Gradual Emancipation Act.