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THE DETRIBALIZATION OF THE NARRAGANSETT INDIANS:
A CASE STUDY

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At the present time there is wide discussion about the detribalization of Indian groups throughout the United States. The controversy regarding detribalization indicates that there is much difference of opinion on the advisability of removing Indians from their tribal status. Opinions vary within groups of Indians themselves, among their non-Indian neighbors and among anthropologists and other students of Indian affairs.

The magnitude of the problem as a whole can be only barely appreciated when the fact is realized that there are many small and highly integrated tribes throughout the United States as well as large and well known groups such as the Navaho. Of course each case deserves independent consideration, but for grounds on which to base judgment one tends to look for comparable situations and to examine their outcome.

For this purpose as well as for the pure social history involved, we propose to look into the details of the detribalization of the Narragansett Indians of Rhode Island in 1880. Fortunately much of the process was recorded step by step and has been preserved in the form of detailed written reports by the investigating committee, and hearings recorded verbatim by a stenographer.¹ Thus we can read the expression of opinion and feelings in the words of the Indians who were facing detribalization. Besides the problems involved of giving up tribal status and land, the hearings brought out information on practices and attitudes of the Indians that have not been reported elsewhere.

Although the case of the Narragansetts does not parallel that of any other tribe of American Indians, elements within the history of their detribalization may be comparable to situations confronting numerous small tribes. For example, at the moment two tiny

reservations of Pequot Indians are being considered for liquidation by the Connecticut legislature.²

To appreciate their situation at the time of Narragansett detribalization, a brief history of the Narragansetts after the advent of Europeans is in order. From descriptions found in Verrazano's,³ Roger Williams' and others' accounts we know that this tribe's culture was quite typical of northeastern seaboard Algonquin culture in the 15th and 16th centuries. Their homeland covered approximately the southern half of present day Rhode Island, and by the early 17th century the Narragansetts were in a dominant political and military position in relation to neighboring tribes, such as the Niantics to the southwest.⁵

Their first lasting contact with colonists was with Roger Williams and his followers. This set a precedent of confidence. Roger Williams made a great point of the fact that he and his associates actually purchased land from the Indians. This practice was not continued for long, but the positive relationship established by Williams through his intimate contact, and through his willingness to try to speak and preach to the Narragansetts in their own language probably preserved a measure of amity between the Whites and Indians for some years. By 1675, however, the animosity of Indians and Whites in eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island reached a climax in the conflict known as "King Philip's War."⁶⁶ The outcome of this was that the Narragansetts were reduced in number, weakened in material strength, and scattered. Within a year they were written off in colonial history as any menace to expansion. Many found refuge with the eastern Niantics who had not been involved in the War and from then on the Narragansetts and Niantics were usually considered as one tribe.

As far as their legal position was concerned, the Narragansett tribe had subjected itself to the English crown in 1644, but had remained a separate power center from the point of view of the colonists. After the war of 1675-1676 the Narragansetts were weakened to such an extent that they became, in effect, a subject people and the colonial legislature assumed more and more control over their

civil affairs.

The last quarter of the 17th century was a devastating period for the Narragansetts. As the number of colonists increased the Indians retreated. Land-and servant-greedy Whites used dishonest means to obtain Indian land and labor by getting the Indians to become indebted to them. By the beginning of the 18th century the situation was so alarming that the colonial legislature began enacting measures to protect the Indians from greed and exploitation.

The most important step in this respect occurred in 1709. Ninigret, the Indian chief at the time, deeded all the vacant land in Rhode Island to the Rhode Island Colony, with the exception of a certain tract of 64 square miles which was to serve as the Indians' own land and which in the course of time came to be known as the Indian Reservation.⁷ From 1663 on it had been illegal to buy land from an Indian without consent of the General Assembly, but since colonists had been encroaching, the General Assembly also legislated prosecutions for trespass.⁸ In 1718 the Indians were exempted from suits for debt as a further measure to protect them from losing their land and personal freedom.⁹

However, Reservation land was sold to non-Indians, church groups and the like throughout the next hundred years, and the Indian Council also granted tracts within the Reservation to various individual Indians to hold and pass on as private property. So, by 1880, when the Reservation was surveyed only about 1,000 acres remained as commonly owned Indian land.¹⁰

In regard to changes taking place in their culture, throughout the post-contact period two opposing forces were influencing the Narragansetts. There was a tendency among them to integrate into European culture and affairs, as opposed to a tendency toward withdrawal into the Reservation and independent management of Indian affairs within the tribal group. From the earliest contact times the Indians had desired to obtain the White man's goods and comforts. The land area being small and the colonists and traders being relatively numerous, the Indians were soon acquainted with

European mores and goods. By the time the Reservation was set aside the Indians were already familiar with European culture. Before the mid-17th century Roger Williams was learning the Narragansett language and trying to preach the gospel to the Indians in it. By the mid-18th century a church and school had been built on the Reservation and instruction and way to salvation were presented in English only. In fact, the deed to the school house as drawn up in 1768 specifies that Indian children who desired it were to be taught Latin and Greek as well as arithmetic and reading.¹¹ By the early 18th century the Narragansett language is believed to have gone out of use.¹² More and more English names were given throughout the 18th century, as may be seen from records and deeds. A somewhat conscious effort to speed up adoption of European customs came about during the reign of a chief known as "King Tom" from 1746-1770. King Tom spent some years in England and tried to live as a White colonist, thereby unfortunately incurring great debts. Much of the Reservation land was sold to pay these debts.¹³ By the mid-18th century in about every important aspect of culture the Narragansett Indians had become Europeanized. This applies to methods of livelihood, and to material traits as well as to language, religion and most social institutions. Thus the force of integration had been so strong from the time of first contact that, despite the existence of the Reservation as a real refuge from Europeans. by 1880 the Narragansett Indians had practically abandoned their pre-contact Indian way of life.

What then, we may wonder, was the effect of the Reservation and of any other influences in retaining tribal consciousness and remnants of Indian culture? In the first place the very fact of living together as a community held the Indian families in close daily contact with each other and isolated them somewhat from the White peoples' world. Furthermore, two very important community institutions, although of European origin, were located in the heart of the Reservation. These were the Indian church and the Indian school house. The church was started by 1741 and has continued

without a known break to the present day.¹⁴ The school was started some time around 1765¹⁵ and continued to be used until the break-up of the Reservation. Its unsatisfactory condition by 1880 was, as a matter of fact, one of the issues that precipitated the final step of detribalization. Although strictly non-Indian in subject and approach and although conducted in English, the presence of these community institutions on the Reservation and the fact that they were attended by Indians only served to make them cohesive forces. The management of the church was, and still is, in Indian hands and the upkeep of the school building was the responsibility of the Indian tribe.

Besides living close together on or near the Reservation the Indians had retained another important institution which served to retain their consciousness of tribal identity. This was an organized tribal government. At the time of contact the Narragansetts are described as having hereditary chiefs with wide and nearly absolute authority.¹⁶ The chieftainship did not descend through a direct line but was partly determined by the age and seeming ability of men in the "royal" family.

Much intermarriage between chieftain families took place, as geneologies reveal.¹⁷ With continued greater assumption of government of the tribe by the colonial legislature and with continued greater acceptance of the White man's culture the power of the Indian chief diminished.¹⁸ At some time the institution of a council of five Indians became solidified and this body assumed more and more power in the handling of tribal affairs. The council may have been a development of the early custom of the chief sachem being advised by and conferring with minor sachems. (Three counsellors "signed" the deed to the colony in 1709). On the other hand the Indians may have adopted the custom after observing the White man's elections. In any case, the council was in existence in the 1760's when the hereditary chief, "King Tom," became a trial and burden to the tribe because of his personal extravagance. The tribe did not depose him, but the council assumed

most of the duties that had formerly been invested in their chief. The last hereditary chief was the grandson of King Tom who died as a young man without an heir during the period of the American Revolution.¹⁹ From that time on tribal affairs were conducted by the council alone.

In 1792 important legislation was passed to regularize the relationship between Rhode Island as a state and the Indian tribe.²⁰ Issues such as composition of the council, definition of membership, eligibility to vote and annual election day were clarified. As part of the Act the office of appointive treasurer (non-Indian) was set up; the duty of the person holding this office was to prosecute suits for trespass in behalf of the tribe. The office was abolished in 1818 upon the tribe's petition but in 1839 an office known as the Indian Commissioner took the place of the non-Indian appointive treasurer.²¹ For nearly 50 years tribal spokesmen seemed unready to give up their relationship expressed in such an office with the state. However, by 1880 the attitude had changed and the majority of the Narragansetts were willing, and some were eager to change their status.

Before examining the events of the years 1880-1882 during which the detribalization took place there is one more element of Indian culture that had been retained by this tribe which should be examined. This was the practice of conducting an annual gathering in August. From scanty references to this practice in colonial literature it is apparent that it was a continuation of a pre-contact institution. Early documentation is too meager for generalizing, but we can say that the annual gathering was a pre- or early harvest group gathering that included ceremonies and dancing.²² Now known as the Pow Wow, the summer gathering is referred to in 18th and 19th century legislature and reports,²³ sometimes in respect to regulation of sale of liquor at such affairs.²⁴

By 1880 the Pow Wow was an annual institution regularly held on the Reservation in August. Accounts for this period are very meager, except that dancing is mentioned. For the purpose of the

present discussion it is sufficient to know that at the time of detribalization an annual reunion of Indians to observe a purely Indian institution was an accepted practice. The annual Pow Wow was, therefore, as strong a force as any in holding the group together and causing its members to retain Indian practices and attitudes.

To summarize what tribe and reservation actually meant to the Indians as a way of life different from life in the community at large in 1880 we list the following points:

1. Many of the Indians—but far from all—lived in a village group in a central location relative to the Indian church and school, affording them daily close contact with each other.

2. Maintenance of both church and school was a group responsibility that put the Indians into an even closer communal relationship.

3. The annual Pow Wow afforded an opportunity for non-White customs to be practiced, and for reunion and communication with fellow tribesmen, some from other communities.

4. A tribal member had certain prerogatives in regard to the Reservation. A pauper, as then called, could expect to be supported by funds from the tribal treasury at the discretion of the Council. Members of the tribe had the right to cut and sell logs from the cedar swamp in the Reservation.²⁵ (Members also had the right to camp by the salt water on another part of the Reservation for extended fishing.)

5. Again at the discretion of the Council, some parcels of land were granted to individual members to hold as their own for home and farming.²⁶

6. Male members of the tribe who were over 21 years of age had the right to vote annually for Council members. Being a small group, this gave them close and direct participation in the management of their local affairs.²⁷

7. Individually held property on the Reservation was tax exempt and Indians who lived on the Reservation were protected from suits for debt.²⁸

This being the legal and cultural situation of the Narragansetts when detribalization started, we can now follow the steps of this procedure with greater understanding. Positive action toward the abandonment of tribal relations began in 1879. The Indian Council through its president petitioned the State House of Representatives to form a committee to investigate the affairs of the tribe. The House promptly resolved

that a select committee of 3 be appointed to inquire into the justice, expediency, and practicability of abolishing the tribal relations of the Narragansett Indians; of conferring the rights of citizenship upon the members thereof; of the most equitable manner of disposing of the land belonging to the said tribe, etc., and report at the next January Session of the General Assembly, or sooner if possible.²⁹

During the course of the year 1879 a committee held three public hearings on or near the Reservation, had a private meeting with the Council, and prepared a report of their findings. The Council in the meantime had voted to relinquish the tribal status and the commonly owned Reservation lands and so the committee was able to draft "An Act to Abolish the Tribal Authority and Tribal Relations of the Narragansett Tribe of Indians," which was passed in January, 1880.³⁰

In their report to the legislature the committee pointed out some information pertinent to the tribe's then present situation: the population on the Reservation was 119 but there were more tribal members living elsewhere; there were no more "pure Indians" and color ranged from "Caucasian to the Black race"; the commonly owned Reservation land was of little value and yielded a very small revenue to the Indians; the Indian School was presently a failure. The committee believed that the tribal relation "encouraged pauperism and vagabondism."³¹

Throughout the hearings the tribal members expressed dissatisfaction on some matters and misgivings over the prospect of "coming out as citizens." There were also differences of opinion among the White neighbors of the Indians about the proposal. Some were concerned about the prospect of having Indian "paupers" to support by town taxes, and adding to the taxpayer's burden by having Indian children attend the district schools.

The Indians seem to have been chiefly concerned about the possibility of their becoming colored or second class citizens in a White man's world. Many of them had observed the limited privileges of "colored" people, and were aware of their own large amount of Negro admixture. More material worries were that White people might encroach upon their land and get them involved in boundary disputes which would be difficult to deal with since much of their land had never been properly surveyed and recorded. Some of the Indians did not relish the prospect of paying taxes and being liable for debts.³²

However, dissatisfaction with the existent situation, especially in regard to the school, and the solutions proposed outweighed the reluctance to abandon the Reservation way of life. The White people for their part were satisfied when they learned that: 1) The Indian "paupers" would become charges of the State, not of the town, and 2) The additional tax revenue from the Indian lands would more than make up for the added expense of having Indian children in the district schools. So the Council voted to abandon the Reservation and tribal status upon payment of \$5000, which sum was to be shared by all tribal members.

To a large extent this was not much more than a legalization of the situation that many families had already reached by 1880. Payment of taxes was the only new burden to many of the families whose homes were on Reservation land. The right to cut and sell cedar logs from the common land would be forfeited, but it was a negligible source of income by then. "Paupers" or indigent vagrants were the individuals who would lose the most, since previously they could expect shelter and support on their Reservation at tribal expense.³³ Throughout the Public Hearings attitudes on the part of the Indians and Whites toward each other became apparent. Some White people expressed something less than admiration for the Indians who lived on the Reservation. They made remarks like "come out like men and women," "burrowing" and "holing up" for the winter. Such remarks were largely directed at the vagrants who wandered about during the summer and who were supported by the tribal funds on

the Reservation during the winter. Some White persons expressed the belief that the custom of supporting these vagrants was a bad influence on the "morals" of the group as a whole.

To return to the Indian school. We may well conclude that deep dissatisfaction over its condition precipitated the petition for the inquiry. The school had been conducted for over a hundred years and at one time, in the 1830's, there had been an enrollment of 50 to 60 students. However, by 1879 the situation was sorry indeed. The average attendance was around 12 and very irregular. The State contributed \$200 for the teacher's salary and supplies; the Indians were supposed to maintain the building. One reason for disuse of the school was that many Indian families were no longer living in proximity to the Reservation and were sending their children to district schools. The Indians' complaint about the school was that the teacher appointed by the Indian School Commissioner was in poor health, and was unable to do much teaching when he got to the school. The teacher in turn complained about poor and irregular attendance and the difficulty of instructing under such conditions.³⁴ No matter where the fault may have lain, it was by 1879 certain that many Indian families no longer lived close enough to the school for convenient attendance and that the tribe as a group had about outgrown the total arrangement. The very fact that the Indian parents considered schooling as a "must" is testimony of their deep integration with White culture by this time.

With passage of the Act the committee (known as the Indian Commission) faced two tasks. The first one was to survey and sell those Reservation lands at their disposal and the second was to determine which individuals should be considered tribal members, in order to pay each his share of the \$5000 purchase money. The first step was to acquire from the Indian Council a deed to the commonly owned tribal lands made out to the State. This was done promptly, and the lands later surveyed, broken into parcels and sold at auction. Title to one important piece of land was excepted in the deed: this was for the two-acre lot upon which was located the Indian church or meeting house and cemetery.³⁵ Thus the church and its surrounding plot

remained in the ownership and under the control of the Indian congregation and has remained so to the present time.

Upon receipt of the deed, the Commission was free to survey the total Reservation area. The surveyors found that of the total area as bounded in 1709 and consisting of 64 square miles, only about 1000 acres remained as "common land" by 1880. Besides the common land the original Reservation area had included land which, during the 18th century, tribal chiefs had deeded to individuals or to institutions, such as churches. Much of the original Reservation was by 1880 designated as "individual lands" which had been granted by the Indian Council to tribal members to hold as private property and pass down to their heirs. However, such land could not be sold to non-Indians without the consent of the General Assembly.³⁶ How a tribesman gained possession of his plot is interesting from the point of view of ethnology. If the Council deemed an applicant worthy, its members would go with the applicant to the area and mark trees or set up some boundary marks around the tract. Then a member of the Council would place a piece of turf and a twig upon the head of the would-be owner. This ceremony was sometimes called "crowning," sometimes "turf and twigging" and served the purpose of legal deeding.³⁷ During the hearings an Indian woman testified:— "He said I wasn't legal heir because I hadn't been turfed and twigged." This custom bears close analogy to the common law "livery of seizin" of England, and the Indians probably adopted it from the colonists.

As the Indian Commission had gathered from the public hearings, the land at their disposal to sell, the so-called common land, was of little economic value. Most of the arable land in the original reservation had been granted to individuals and so was beyond the Commission's control. The 1000 acres of common land for which the tribe was to receive \$5000 according to the Act of 1880 was finally auctioned off for a little over \$1200.³⁸ The cost of surveying amounted to over \$1200.³⁸ Thus, while \$5000 seems poor return for 1000 acres of land today, there is no reason to think that the State dealt ungenerously with the tribe. The surveyor's report also measured and platted the individual holdings, which protected the Indian owners against non-tribal

encroachments.³⁹

Probably the knottiest problem that the Commission faced was the determination of tribal membership. This had to be done since the law required that every member receive an equal share of the purchase money. Not only was this an intellectual problem per se, but it became quite a subject of dispute among the Indians, all of whom were eager to receive a maximum share of the purchase money.

There were no longer any physical means for distinguishing membership. Racial mixture had gone so far that candidates "from glossy black to shiny white," as the Commission reported it, applied for a share of the purchase money. Residence on the Reservation had decreased to such an extent that it, too, was no longer a criterion of membership.

Therefore, the Commission arranged for public hearings to be held in the vicinity of the Reservation, at which candidates should present names. At these hearings anyone had the right to challenge a candidate, and to be heard. Both parties had the right to be represented by a lawyer and the Commission reserved the right to be the final judges. During the year 1880 six such public hearings were conducted, affording opportunity for claims, objections and counter-claims to be aired.⁴⁰

The Commission finally adopted a double criterion for determining tribal membership: lineal descent plus participation or at least a display of interest in tribal affairs. The only legal guide the Commissioners had was the old law of 1792 which defined eligibility to vote. This specified that a voter should be a male over 21, son of an Indian woman member or of an Indian member and "any other than a Negro Woman."⁴¹ During the hearings it was brought out that this restriction was made during slave days in order to keep a slave woman's children with her as slaves.

The first qualification, that of descent, was not especially difficult to deal with. It was the second, that of interest and participation in tribal affairs, that became the focal point for dispute.

When it became known that quit-claim money was to be distributed

several families of Indian descent who had not been on the Reservation for a long time appeared and applied for a share of the payment. This brought before the Commission two types of problem cases:

1. People of not well established legal descent who had been living on the reservation and had been granted rights to proceeds from the lumber swamp and other privileges of Indians. In other words these were people who had been living and were regarded as Indians in spite of unproven or legally irregular descent.

2. People whose descent was well established but who no longer or seldom took part in tribal affairs, or visited the Reservation or showed interest in their Indian connections.

With the help of the Attorney General the Commission ruled as follows:⁴² The old law of 1792 that excluded male offspring of Negro women from becoming voting members was focused on voting rights and should not be used to exclude an individual from membership for the present purpose since both sexes and all ages were to receive an equal share of the money. The Attorney General went further in his reasoning along this line by pointing out that since Indians had traditionally adopted many people, sometimes whole communities at a time, the granting of privileges restricted to tribal members to an individual was tantamount to adoption and should serve as evidence of membership.

To help solve the second type of problem, the Attorney General ruled that abandonment of tribal relations could be recognized by sale of local land and purchase of a home elsewhere at the same time accepting rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the new home. If an Indian had done this and had, over a period of time, showed no interest in tribal affairs, his action could be construed as abandonment of tribal status and he would not be entitled to a share of the purchase money.

Based on this reasoning and after hearing claims, objections and counter-claims throughout several public hearings, the Commission finally decided upon a list of rightful claimants. The list contained the names of 324 persons, each of whom received \$15.43.⁴³ This amount was paid to every member of the tribe regardless of

age, and was held for under-age members. The count of members gave questionable cases the benefit of the doubt since in 1832 a count of 315 members⁴⁴ had been made and in 1858 it was 138 not including "about 50" off the Reservation.⁴⁵

Within a span of 3 years the job of legal detribalization was completed. As we have seen, this caused but little change in the Indians' daily lives, so far had integration gone by 1880. The tangible effects may be summarized as:

1. Abolishment of the Indian school which was recognized as beneficial by most of the families concerned.
2. There would be no more tax-free land nor could Indians expect to receive grants of Reservation land from their Council.
3. Indians who had been living on the Reservation were no longer exempt from suits for debt.
4. The common lands in the Reservation no longer existed as a source of income (small as it was) derived from logging the cedar swamp.
5. Indigents no longer could expect shelter and support on the Reservation at Indian Council expense.

Although most of these tangible results of detribalization were of small concern to most of the people, except for the schooling changes, it was still possible that the intangible effects might have had a far greater impact on the lives of many of the Reservation Indians. Again, the public hearings brought out expressions that reflected the current attitudes of Whites and Indians toward each other. The overall advantages of being citizens, of voting in town meetings to say nothing of voting in general elections, of eligibility to public office and jury duty were remote benefits indeed. Freedom from the obligation to get State permission to sell land to non-Indians was also not too important a consideration since the State had been granting this permission quite freely.

When the Commission closed its series of reports the final remarks were in the nature of a sentimental farewell to the tribe: "—the name of the Narrangansett tribe now passes from the statute

books."⁴⁶ At that time it was an open question to what extent the continuation of tribal feeling or attitude of Indian-ness would remain. The Commissioners' closing remarks might be taken to infer that the tribe as an entity would no longer exist. However, looking at the present situation we find that the descendants of the Narragansetts have maintained a consciousness of being Indian and have continued to practice some of their group and tribal activities.

It would have been possible for the tribe to have disintegrated completely when legal detribalization took place, but as it is three main phases of communal life have remained as institutions pertaining only to the Indians. These are: the organization of the tribe itself, the Indian church and all the responsibility of its management, and the holding of the annual Pow Wow.

The church has continued to be attended and kept up and is presently under the direction of a Board of six persons. Until his death recently the minister was a Narragansett and local resident. Although there have not been many recent burials in the Church graveyard, it is still available and occasionally is used. The group responsibility of maintaining the church after formal detribalization took place may well be an important factor in the cohesion of the tribal members.

Besides the church and its management, the tribal organization is still in existence, incorporated as of 1934.⁴⁷ The corporate body holds an annual election of officers and functions very much as a volunteer society working for a worthy, partly recreational and partly social cause. Within the last five years it has raised funds and built a Long House as a meeting place and community building for social affairs. This incorporation was the result of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and formalized an already existent group relationship.

Perhaps most important in the forces that have kept the Indians together regardless of whether they live near the former Reservation or not is the continuation of the August Pow Wow. The actual events of the Pow Wow have gone through many changes in conformity with the degree of Europeanization of the Indians. At present,

influenced by and influencing the many Pow Wows that take place in New England every summer, it is a mosaic of European, Narragansett and, largely, other Indian dances and practices. Not only have the Narragansett Indians themselves adopted elements from other culture areas, such as the Plains feather bonnet, they now invite Indians of other tribes and localities to attend and perform dances at a Pow Wow.

The Algonquin Council of Indian Tribes formed in 1926,⁴⁸ as well as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 have sparked and revived Pow Wows in many Indian communities. Whereas the Narragansetts seem to have held exclusively tribal dance gatherings in or around August throughout their history, the present-day Pow Wow openly invites the attendance of the whole community. Its emphasis has shifted from an intra-group reunion to an intertribal spectacle. Without doubt the Pow Wows conducted by other Indian groups in New England act as a stimulus to the Narragansetts. They amount to a summer circuit for an Indian family of any tribe. A number of good dancers add greatly to the "success" of a Pow Wow, and there is rivalry between groups to hold well attended Pow Wows. The Narragansetts are in a very advantageous position as far as Pow Wow gatherings are concerned. They have a backlog of continuity from the past, besides the fact that their gatherings take place in a field in front of their church which has been central in tribal life and affairs for over 200 years. Thus pride in the unbroken continuity of their Pow Wow gatherings is another factor making for cohesion in the tribe.

To return to the question of detribalization and how it has affected the Narragansetts we may draw the following conclusions and summarize the points already made:

1. The change in legal status and loss of the commonly owned tribal lands had little effect on the lives of the Narragansetts in 1880 when it took place. By then the Indian population was deeply integrated into European culture and the commonly owned lands yielded very small economic return.
2. The Indians who lived on or near the Reservation gained an

immediate tangible advantage, that of better schooling for their children.

3. The intangible changes due to formal detribalization seem also to have been small. Communal Indian activities continued. When a new Indian organization, the Algonquin Council, formed, Narragansetts took leading parts. Within six months after the Indian Reorganization Act passed the Narragansetts had their new charter and were reorganized accordingly.
4. The misgivings voiced by some of the Indians concerning entering the community at large as dark-skinned citizens were offset in part by the fact that the continuation of the Indian Church and the Pow Wows kept the community aware of their Indian descent and interested in it.

If this case may be considered a "successful" detribalization and if, therefore, any generalization can be drawn from it, we may say that detribalization brings about little disturbance or discomfort to those directly affected and to those in the immediate community when:

1. The tribe itself takes the initiative in asking for a systematic study of their situation with a view toward detribalization and is under no outside pressure. (The 1880 investigation of the Narragansetts was the third for that tribe in the 19th century; others had received negative responses from the Indians.)

2. From the point of view of the Indians and the community at large, the tribe is so thoroughly integrated in livelihood that the new citizens will be able to make a satisfactory living and thus will not become an economic burden to their White neighbors.

3. The legislative body pays the Indian tribe the total amount agreed upon for the land before the land is put on the market.

4. There is continuity of some communal tribal activities and responsibilities that have the respect of the outside community.

Notes

1. Reports of the Committee (later Commission) of Investigation on the Affairs of the Narragansett Indians to the General Assembly of

Rhode Island, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883. The reports include appendices that give historical sketches, legal documents, resolutions, surveyors' reports, lists of purchase money recipients, deeds, etc., as well as verbatim stenographic records of "Evidence Taken" at the many hearings that the Commission held.

2. Hartford Courant Magazine, January 22, 1956, pp. 3 and 12.
3. Verrazano, Voyage, pp. 11-13.
4. Williams, A Key, passim.
5. Potter, Early History, p. 1 and Ch. 1, passim.
6. Ellis and Morris, King Philip's War, passim; Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip's War, passim.
7. Deed from Thomas Ninigret to the Colony of Rhode Island, executed March 28, 1709, (in Potter, Early History, p. 111).
8. An Act for the Preventing of Illegal and Clandestine Purchases of the Native Indians in this Colony, 1663 (in Laws of the Colonial and State Governments, p. 19).
9. An Act to Prevent Indians from Being Sued for Debt, 1718 (in Laws of the Colonial and State Governments, p. 21).
10. Surveyor's Report, Appendix G, (in Report of the Commission of Investigation on the Affairs of the Narragansett Indians, 1881, p. 152).
11. Appendix D, Report of the Commission, 1881, p. 143.
12. Parsons, Indian Names, p. iii of Preface.
13. Tucker, Historical Sketch, pp. 50-51.
14. Ibid., p. 65.
15. Ibid., p. 68.
16. Williams, A Key, pp. 140-142.
17. Chapin, Sachems of the Narragansetts, pp. 5-10 and passim.
18. Report of the Commission, 1883, pp. 8-10.
19. Ibid., 1883, p. 11.
20. An Act for Regulating the Affairs of the Narragansett Tribe of Indians, in this State (in Acts and Resolves of the State of Rhode Island, 1792, pp. 26-30).
21. Report of the Commission, 1883, p. 12.

22. Williams, *A Key*, pp. 126-127.
23. Tucker, *Historical Sketch*, p. 65.
24. *Acts and Resolves of the State of Rhode Island*, May, 1850.
25. *Report of the Commission*, 1883, pp. 20-21.
26. *Ibid.*, 1881, p. 151.
27. *Acts and Resolves*, 1792, p. 26.
28. *Report of the Commission*, 1883, pp. 10, 13.
29. *Ibid.*, 1880, p. 3.
30. *Ibid.*, 1880, pp. 5-8.
31. *Ibid.*, 1880, pp. 6-7.
32. *Ibid.*, 1880, pp. 23-92, passim. (This is the verbatim record of the Public Hearings.)
33. *Ibid.*, 1883, p. 21; also *Acts and Resolves of the State of Rhode Island*, October, 1849.
34. *Ibid.*, 1880, pp. 57-76, passim.
35. *Ibid.*, 1881, pp. 19-20, Deed from the Indian Council to the State of Rhode Island, executed May 15, 1880.
36. *Surveyor's Report*, Appendix G, *Report of the Commission*, 1881, pp. 150-154.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
38. *Ibid.*, 1883, pp. 15-16.
39. *Ibid.*, 1881, p. 154.
40. *Ibid.*, 1881, pp. 21-132 and passim, "Record of Proceedings of the Indian Commission at the Six Hearings for the Registration of Names of Claimants for the Purchase Money, Correction of the List and Other Matters Connected Therewith."
41. *Acts and Resolves of the State of Rhode Island*, February, 1792, p. 26.
42. *Report of the Commission*, 1881, p. 6.
43. *Ibid.*, 1882, p. 3.
44. Potter, *Early History*, p. 361.
45. *Report of the Committee*, 1880, p. 3.

46. Report of the Commission, 1883, p. 13.

47. *The Narragansett Dawn. We Face East.* May, 1935, p. 24. This was a monthly pamphlet written and published by the Narragansett tribe for about two years. This reference is taken from an account of a party in celebration of the tribe's incorporation in December, 1934.

48. *Boston Sunday Globe*, June 26, 1927, p. 2.

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