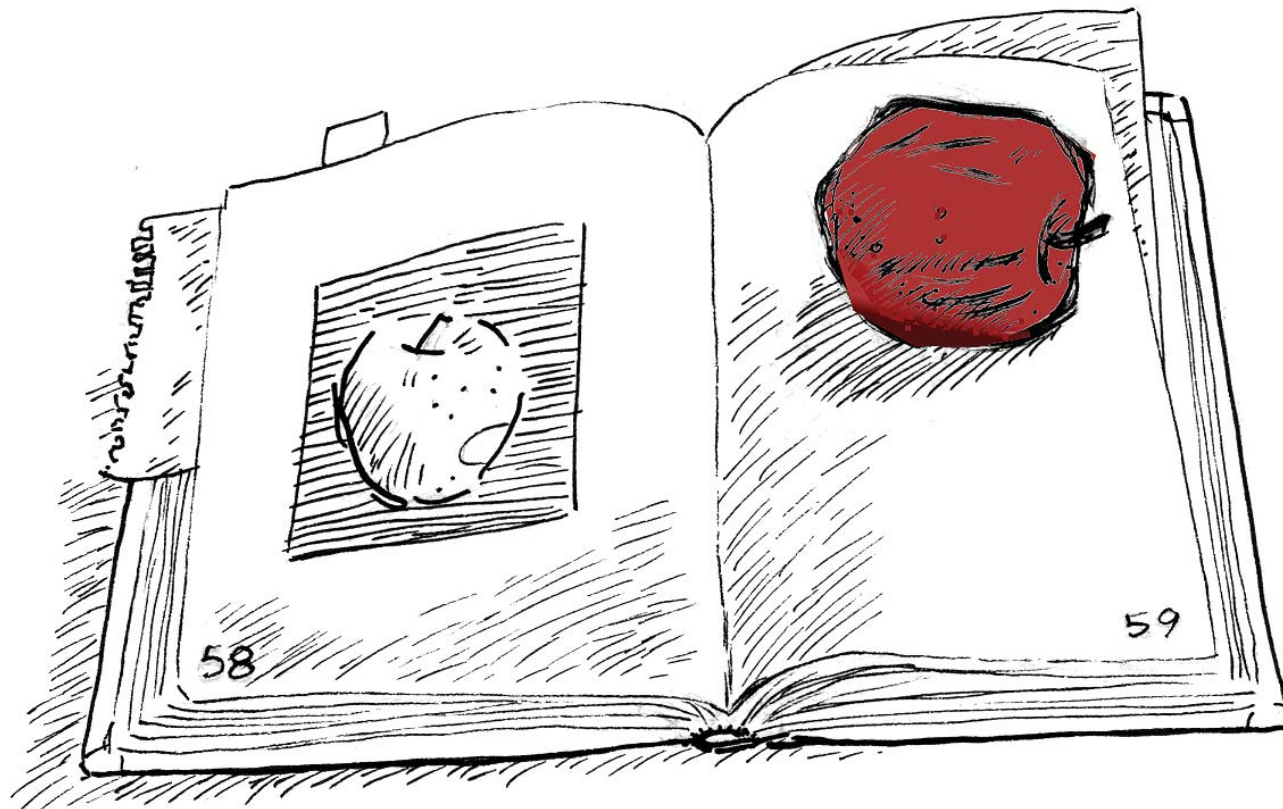


Roger Williams



Roger Williams

Roger Williams, an independent preacher, founded the colony Rhode Island.

- Williams fled religious persecution from the Massachusetts Bay Colony
- he established with his fellow settlers on a liberty of conscience
- Providence Plantation's name is based on the idea that agriculture was to be the basis of its economy
- the colony was very progressive for its time, passing laws:
 - abolishing witchcraft trials
 - imprisonment for debt
 - abolishment of most capital punishment sentences
 - abolished slavery of both blacks and whites on March 18, 1652
- Most religious groups were welcomed, with only restrictions on some forms of the Catholic faith.

Roger Williams

Some of his many radical ideas:

- asserted that the Colony magistrate should not punish any sort of breach of the Ten Commandments, such as idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, false worship, and blasphemy; the civil authority should not be the same as the ecclesiastical authority; Church and state should be separate units
- every individual should be free to follow his own convictions in religious matters
- people should have freedom of opinion on religious matters—and be able to discuss it for intellectual and meditative purposes.