

Roger Williams University

DOCS@RWU

---

Featured News Story

The Week at Roger

---

3-18-2021

## More Than Roger's Wife: Writing Mary Williams into the Historical Record

Jill Rodrigues

*Roger Williams University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger\\_featured\\_news](https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news)



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Rodrigues, Jill, "More Than Roger's Wife: Writing Mary Williams into the Historical Record" (2021).  
*Featured News Story*. 667.

[https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger\\_featured\\_news/667](https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news/667)

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Week at Roger at DOCS@RWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Featured News Story by an authorized administrator of DOCS@RWU. For more information, please contact [mwu@rwu.edu](mailto:mwu@rwu.edu).

History books have largely overlooked Mary Williams. If she gets any nod at all, it is a mere mention that she is the wife of [Roger Williams](#), the great 17th-century political thinker and founder of Providence and the Colony of Rhode Island.

On Tuesday, March 30, as the culminating event in our celebration of Women's History Month, Roger Williams University invites the community to discover the story of Mary Williams and the lives of other 17th-century women in "More Than Roger's Wife: Writing Mary Williams into the Historical Record."

Through her presentation, Charlotte Carrington-Farmer, Associate Professor of History at RWU and resident scholar of our University namesake, strives to tell a fuller story about Mary Williams, beyond her life as a wife and mother. With meticulous research, Carrington-Farmer has pieced together a compelling narrative of Mary's early childhood in England and her religious upbringing, a tumultuous courtship with Roger Williams, and their harrowing flight from religious persecution, first from London and then from Salem, Massachusetts, settling on land that Roger would found as Providence when he was exiled for his radical views on freedom of religious conscience and separation of church and state.

"Mary Williams was more than Roger's wife – her experience matters and her place in history matters,"

says Carrington-Farmer. “It’s clear from trying to piece together Mary’s life that doing women’s history is hard. You have to be creative with the sources that you use to shed light on their lives. Historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich famously wrote that ‘well-behaved women seldom make history.’ Mary is a case in point, and by centering her experience we can learn more about women who didn’t *try* to make history, but most certainly did.”

During the event, Dawn Williams, president of the [Roger Williams Family Association](#) will discuss the association’s mission of honoring and sustaining the story of Roger Williams. As part of our commitment to preserving the history of our University namesake, RWU maintains a close relationship with the Roger Williams Family Association and dedicates space and resources to housing the association’s [family archive collection](#).

Please join us Tuesday, March 30, at 7 p.m. for an exciting evening in conversation with Carrington-Farmer and the Roger Williams Family Association. The event is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by the Office of the President, the Provost’s Office, and the Roger Williams Family Association.