

1922

## Sight Seers Guide to Providence and Environs

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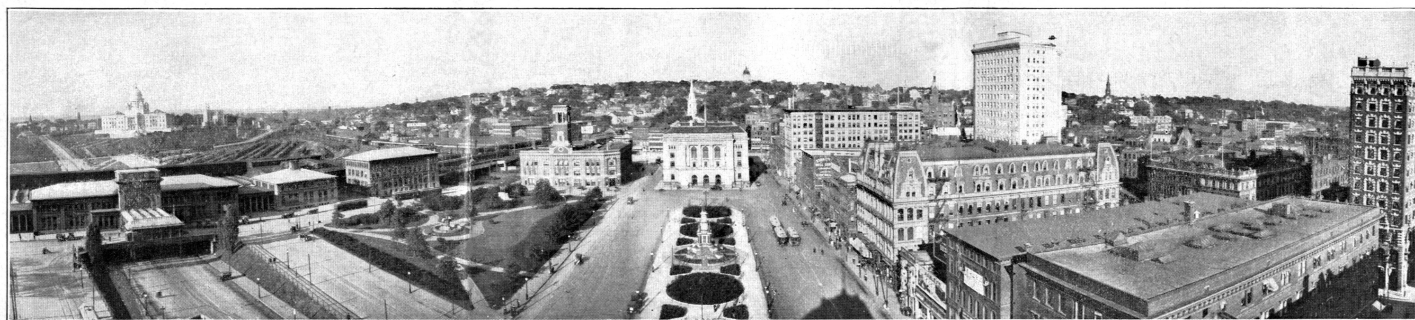
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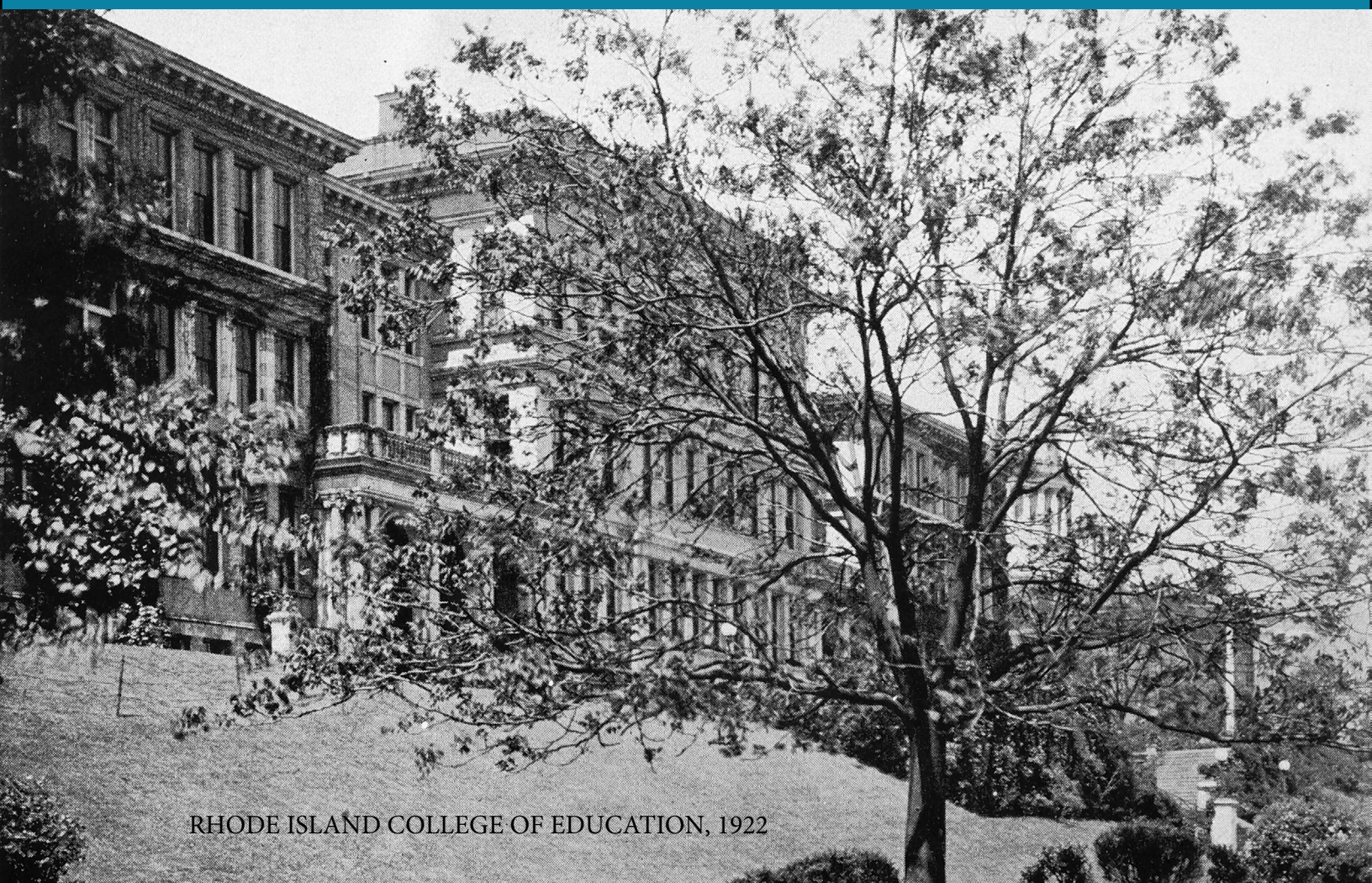
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SIGHT SEERS GUIDE TO

# PROVIDENCE AND ENVIRONS



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, 1922

A Comprehensive Compendium Compiled by  
EDITH G. ALGER







# SIGHT SEERS GUIDE TO PROVIDENCE AND ENVIRONS

A Comprehensive Compendium

Setting forth in pictures, prose, and verse, those distinctive features  
of Local Interest which delight the Eye, inform the Mind, and thrill the  
Spirit

Compiled by Edith G. Alger  
Rhode Island College of Education  
«1922»



## An Editorial Note

Early in 1893 the Trustees of the Rhode Island State Normal School appointed a special committee to consider the question of teacher training and the provision of a practice school, either through cooperation with the city of Providence or some other way. As a result, it created a Training School, and, in June of 1894, Edith Goodyear of North Haven, Connecticut, and Clara Craig, of Providence, were named its first critic teachers. In 1896, at the end of the spring term, Edith Goodyear submitted her resignation, and on June 30 she married John Lincoln Alger, superintendent of schools in Bennington, Vermont.

While living in Vermont, both Edith and John Alger were active in the educational community. In particular they shared an interest in methodology and the training of teachers. Edith Alger was described as “a lady of refinement and culture and quite widely known as an educational writer and speaker.”<sup>1</sup> In 1901 her text *A Primer of Work and Play* was published by D.C. Heath & Co. and adopted by several schools.

Called back to Providence in 1908, John Alger took on the leadership of Rhode Island College and saw it through thirty-one years of development. He was the last Principal (1908-1920) of the Normal School and the first President (1920-1939) of the newly designated Rhode Island College of Education.

This time Edith Alger’s role at the College was that of the spouse of the President, and in that capacity in 1922 she issued an invitation to faculty, an appeal for pictures, poems, and more to introduce newcomers to “the varied charms of Providence.” That compilation, a tongue in cheek *Sight Seer’s Guide to Providence and Environs*, is presented here, not worn by the donor as suggested by Mrs. Alger, but arranged as I hope she might have wanted it. Not one word has been changed.

Marlene L. Lopes  
Special Collections Librarian

Andrew Davis  
Digital Initiatives

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<sup>1</sup> William A. Davison, “Vermont Letter,” in *The Watchman*, Vol.84 (Oct. 13, 1904), p.26. <https://books.google.com/books?id=hhZQAAAAYAAJ> (accessed May 26, 2016).



### A FACULTY PROJECT

In order that new comers may be adequately introduced to the varied charms of Providence, an effort will be made on Wednesday afternoon, February eighth, to collaborate all our faculties in compiling a catalog entitled:

#### SIGHT SEER'S GUIDE TO PROVIDENCE AND ENVIRONS

A Comprehensive Compendium setting forth in pictures, prose, and verse, those distinctive features of Local Interest which delight the Eye, inform the Mind, and thrill the Spirit.

Embellished with moving pictures.

Enriched by sprightly tradition

Enlivened by reminiscence and reminonsense

Will you kindly contribute on this occasion a picture post-card, or other small mounted illustration of some object of interest in Providence, accompanied by such brief explanatory text, blithesome comment, anecdote, verse, or tradition as the subject may suggest?

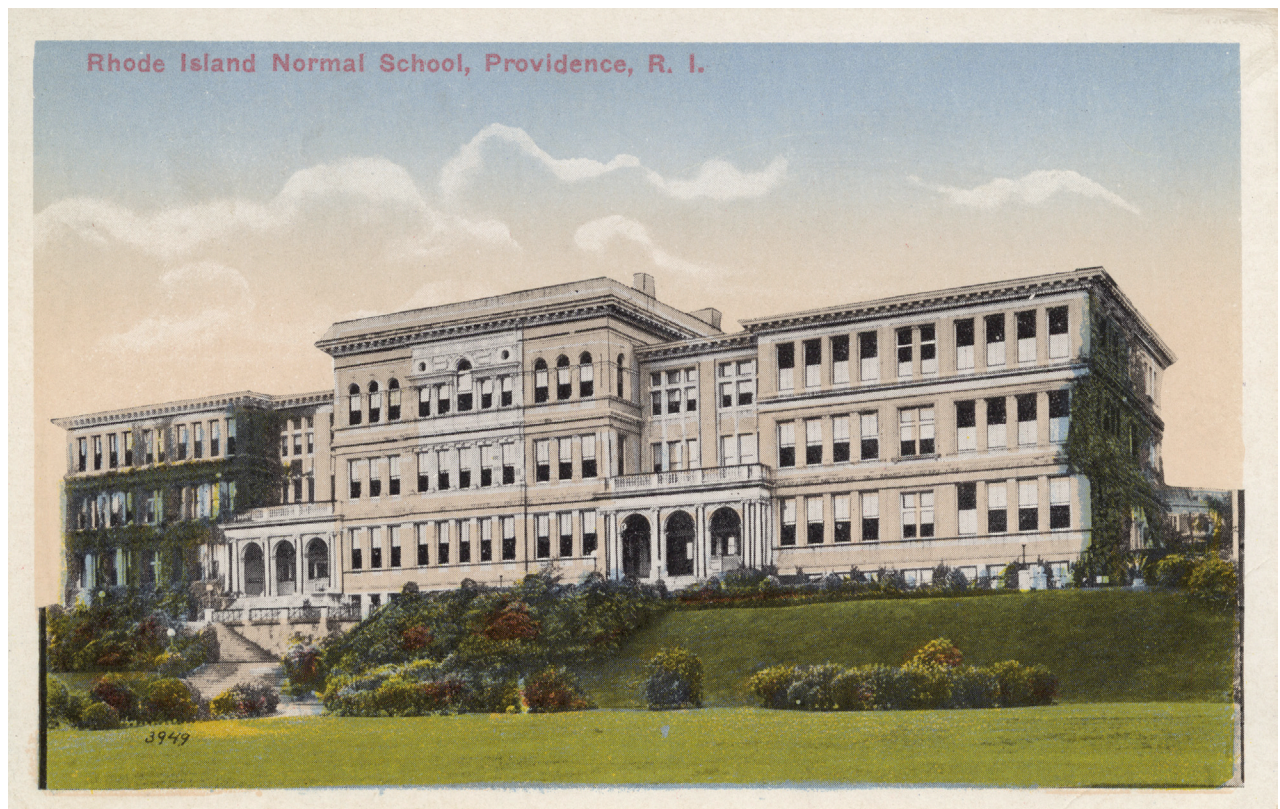
If possible please wear this contribution displayed as decoration or frontispiece.

Edith G. Alger





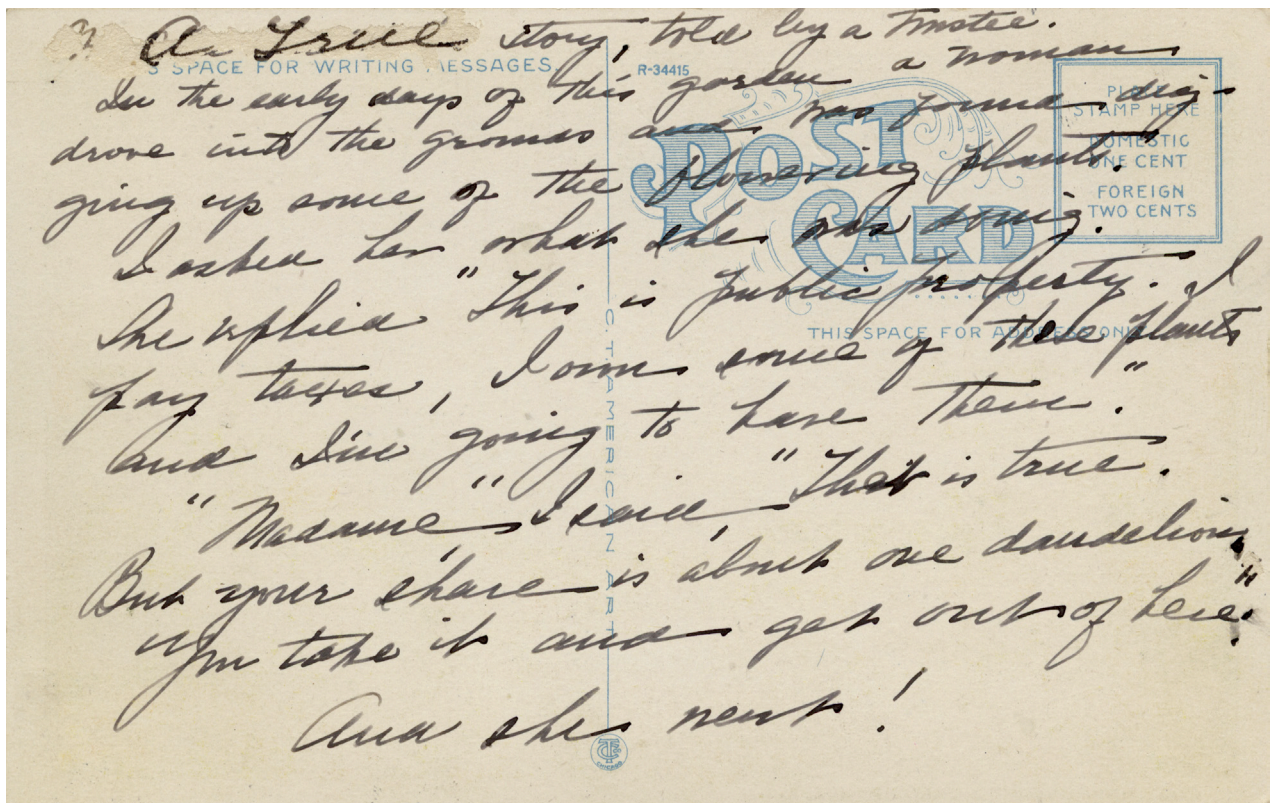
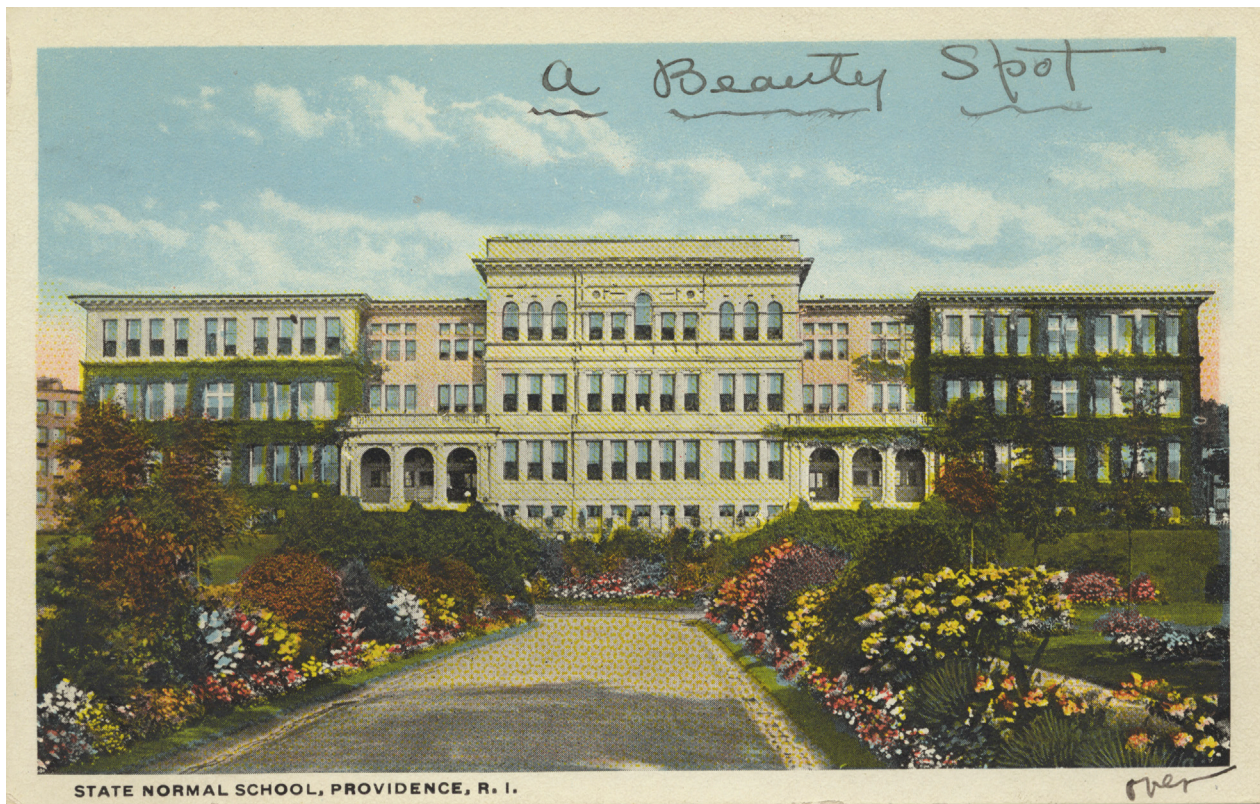
For what is fair Providence famous?  
Oh, list' to the tale I unfold.  
For industries many, for commerce a plenty,  
And hotels both new and old.  
But above all it's famous –  
Now I'm sure you'll agree –  
Because it's the home of R.I.C.E.





### A True Story, Told by a Trustee

In the early days of this garden a woman drove into the grounds and was found digging up some of the flowering plants. I asked her what she was doing. She replied, "This is public property. I pay taxes, I own some of these plants and I'm going to have them." "Madame," I said, "That is true. But your share is about one dandelion. You take it and get out of here." And she went!









## The Lost Cove

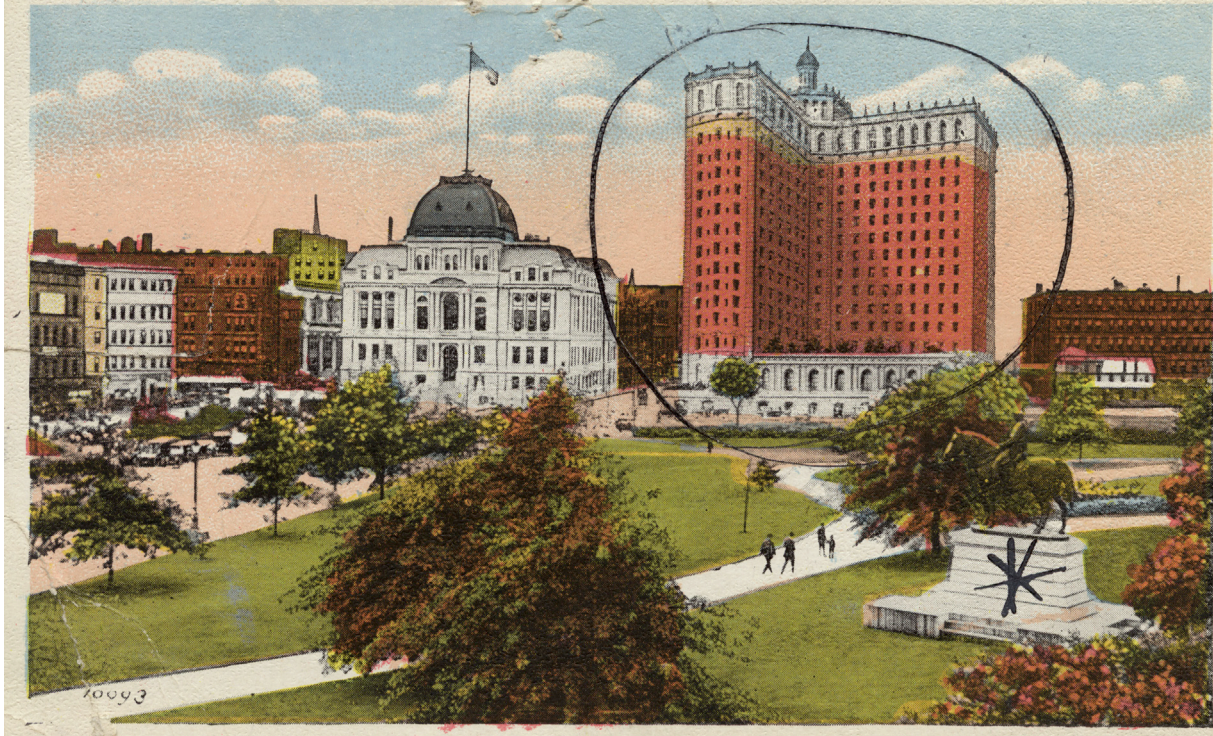
*Where autos park was once the cove.  
There long ago boys played, ducks dove;  
There luscious clams its ooze hove;  
There fishes stream, a treasure trove.*

*Alas, a scent not of the clove,  
Nor of the red and errant bovine friendly strove – by Jove –  
Against the fragrance of the grove.*

*The somber jail did lack approval. It to Cranston we did move.  
Now, where old elms still wave above,  
Stands here our school, we all do love.*



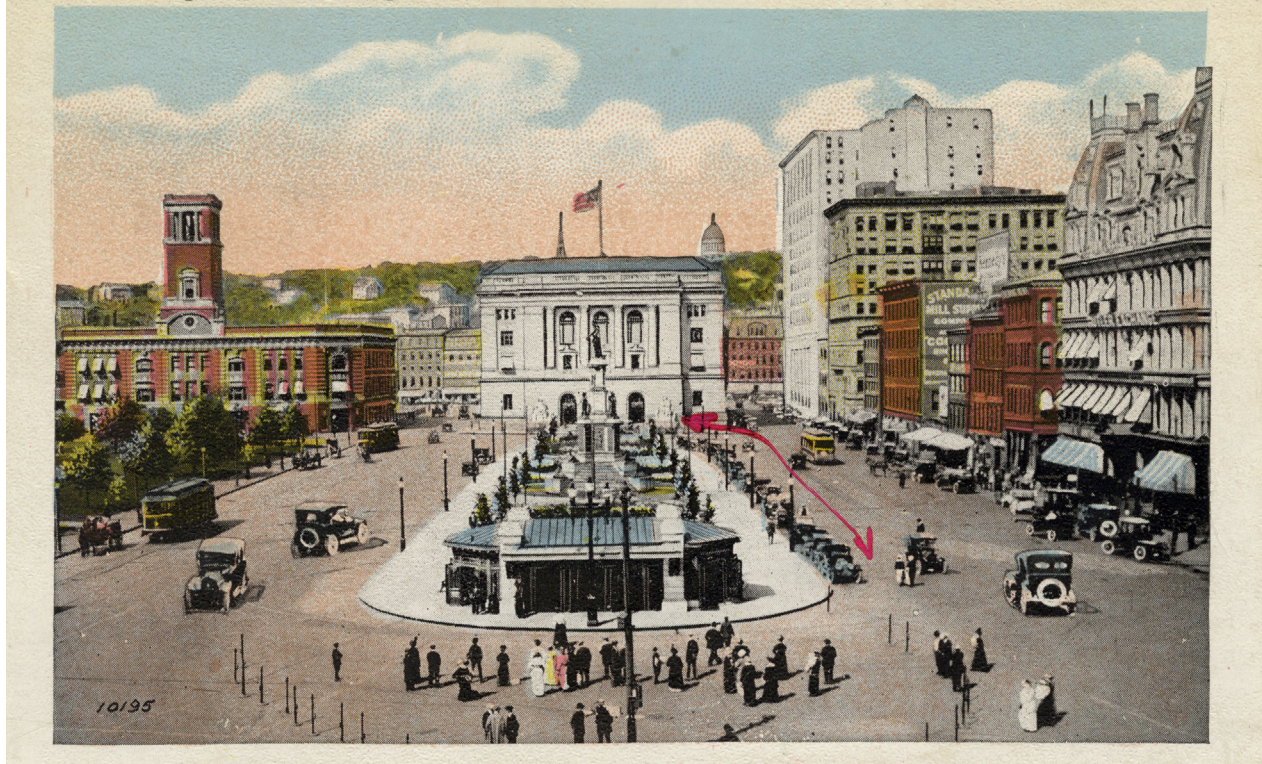
City Hall and Providence-Biltmore Hotel, Providence, R. I.



### Exchange Place

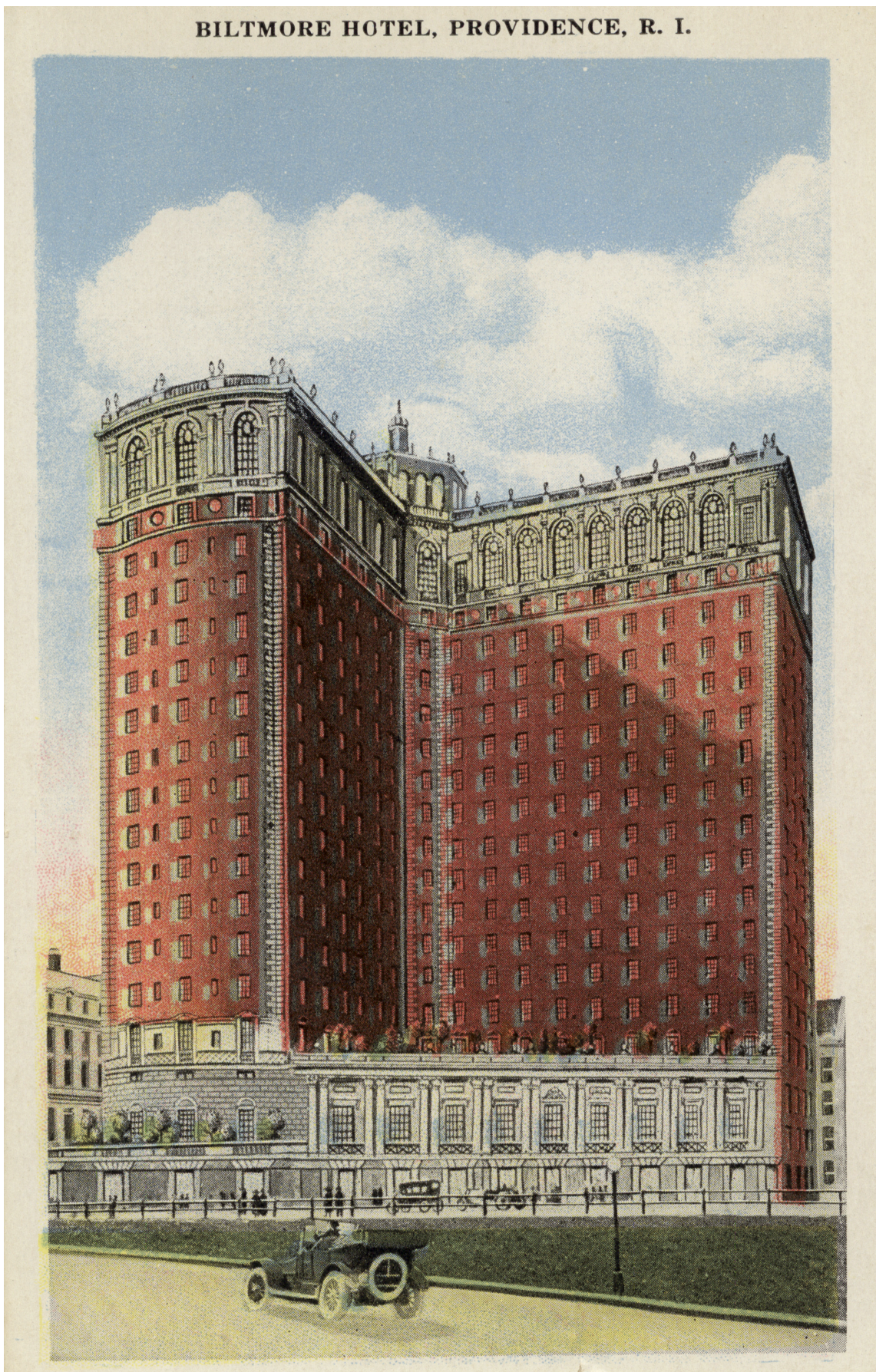
This is a picture of a wild and remote quarter of that dangerous jungle known as Exchange Place. The building enclosed in a circle is the new College of Education dormitory where teachers and students may reside at the nominal rate of \$100 per week. The gentleman in the right foreground is mildly interested in developments.

Exchange Place showing Mall, Post Office and Central Fire Station, Providence, R. I.





BILTMORE HOTEL, PROVIDENCE, R. I.



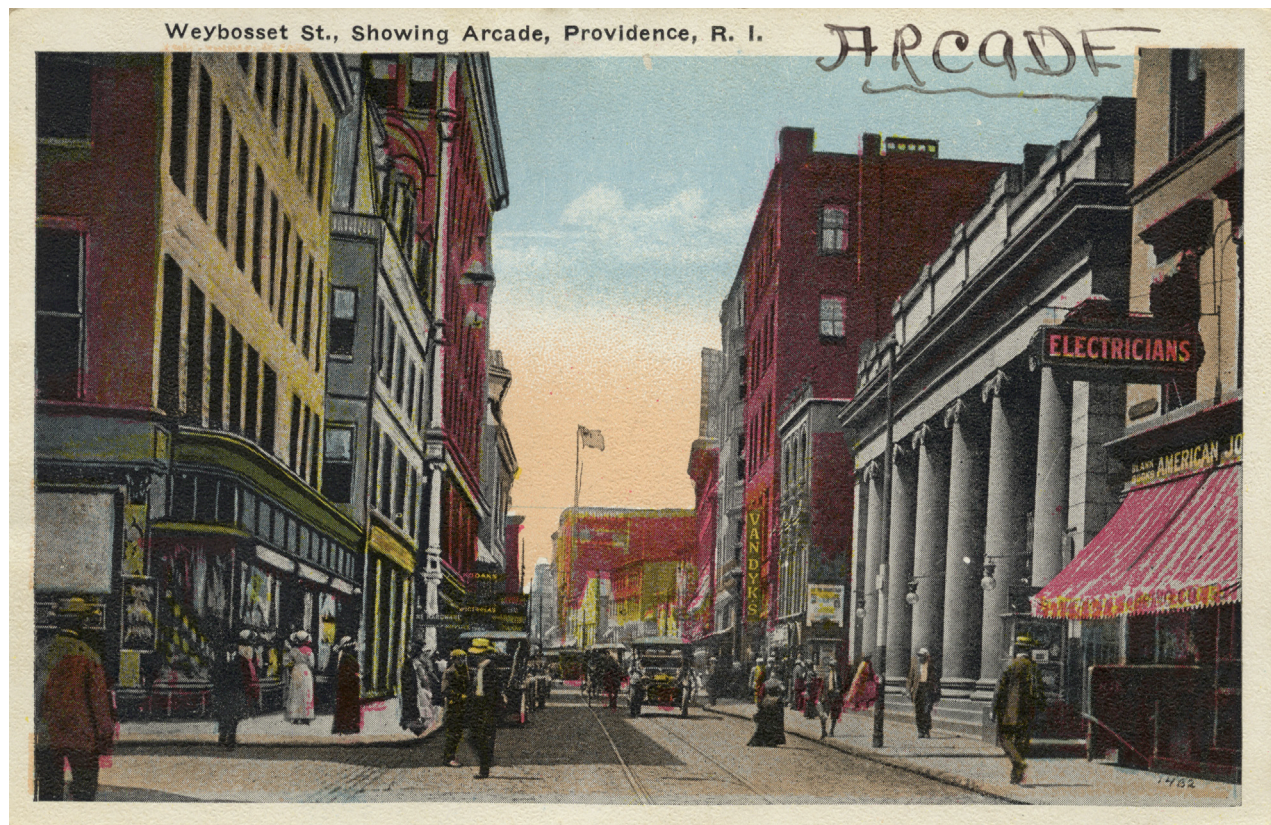


## Arcade

Only one of its kind in U.S.  
Built in 1828.

Made of granite, and is located between Westminster and Weybosset Streets. Each column weighs 12 tons, and [they] are the largest in America with one exception. They were blasted out of Bear Rock Ledge on the borders of the town of Johnston.

[The] shop particularly visited was that of the "three sisters" milliners. They were devoted members of St. John's Church, and deeply respected in Providence. The story is told of a member of that church who returned her bonnet to the milliners, asking that the bow on it be "changed to the congregation side, as its beauty was wasted on a blank wall."



Pillars cut by hand in the town of Johnston and drawn into town by yokes of oxen.

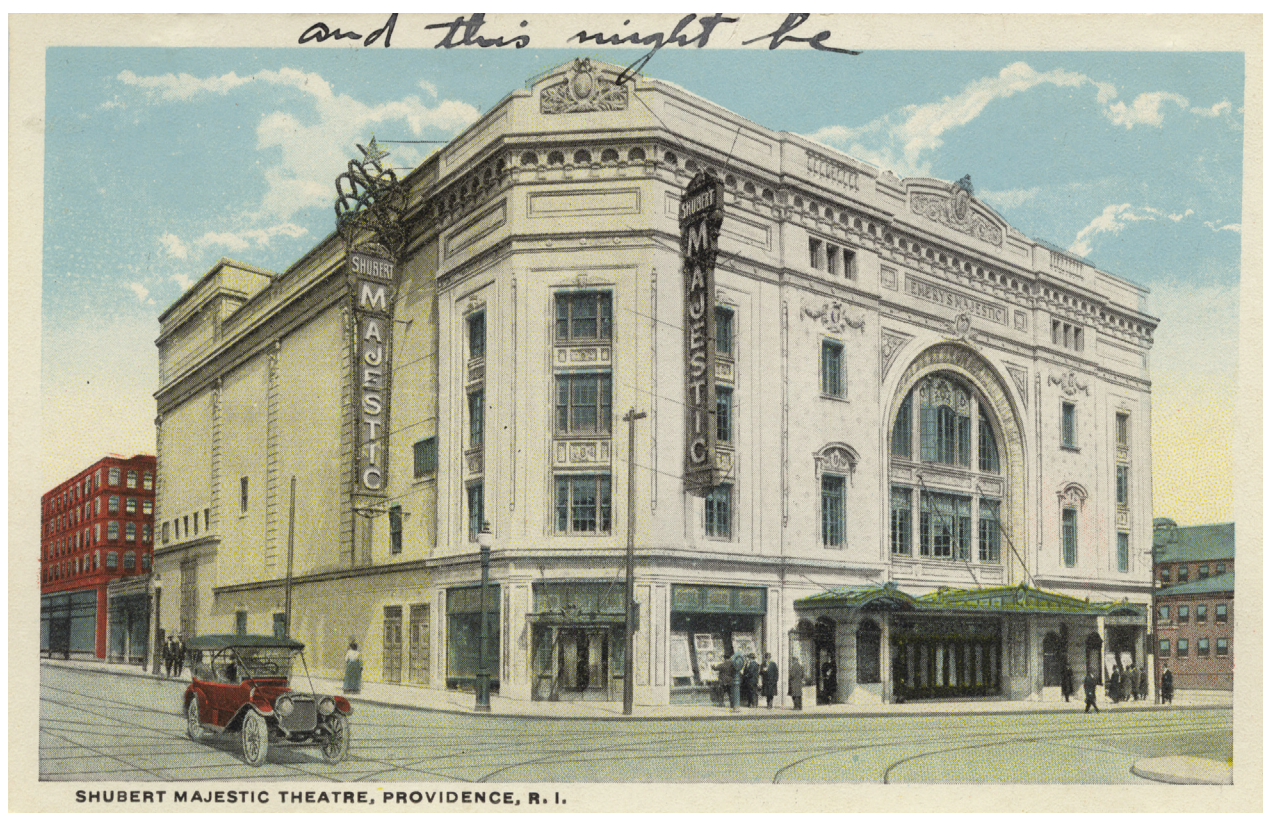
The two ends of the Arcade are not alike. On Westminster Street the pediment is triangular and on Weybosset Street it is rectangular. This is due to the difference in taste of the two architects, who compromised in the characteristic fashion of each man having his own way.

The Arcade was copied from Napoleon's building in Paris. There were six or seven in the U.S., this being the only one remaining, its loneliness adding to its fame.

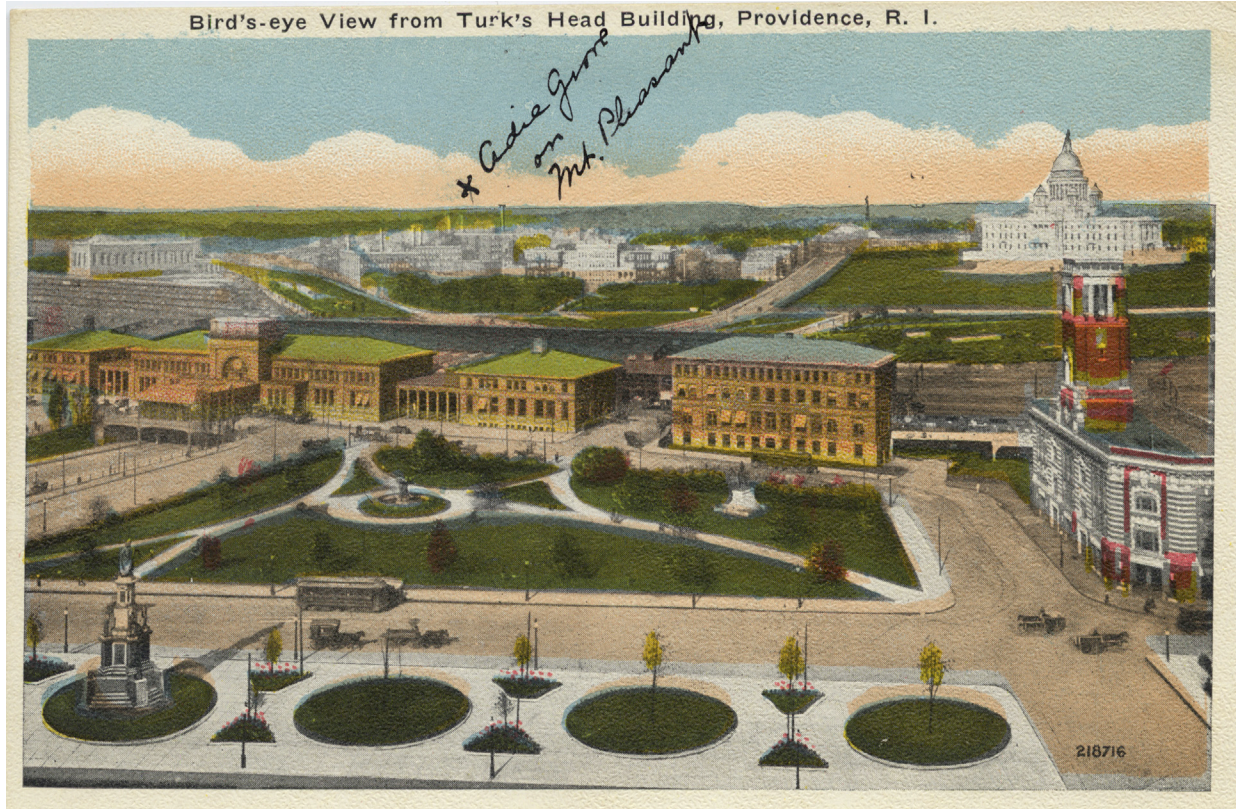




The tallest building in Providence?







## State House

The State House dome is one of the very few marble domes in the world. It is regarded as a remarkable triumph of architecture and masonry.

The figure on the top of the State House symbolizes "Independent Man." Does that explain why he stands with his back to the center of the city?

Inscription around the interior of the dome: "Rare felicity of the times when it is permitted to think as you like and say what you think".



## Turk's Head



Salt marsh bought by Jacob Whitman [sometime] between 1746 [and] 1756. He filled it in on moonlight nights with sand from Constitution Hill. Mr. Whitman built his home and lived there until his death in 1802. On a balustrade of his home was placed the renowned Turk's Head.

Head was originally the figure-head of an East Indiaman, coming from the Far East. It was enormous in size and frightful in appearance. All children and many women were afraid of it.

It was washed away in the gale of 1815 and later found. It remained for several years under the cellar stairs of Mr. Whitman, 2nd.

About 1824, Mr. Whitman shipped the head to his son, George, in Montgomery, Alabama, where it was set up over his place of business. A party of young men, having drunk a good deal, stole the Turk's Head, packed it and shipped it to the Governor of Alabama.

Eventually the head again came into the possession of George Whitman, and once more was placed over his shop. Later it was either burned in a

warehouse where it was stored or carried away by Cherokee Indians for worship.

The Turk's Head is a work of art without parallel in the country. It is conceded to have most unique features.

*In front of our station  
Where shrubbery grows  
A beautiful fountain  
Its graceful spray throws  
Over a group engaged in strife  
Expressing in bronze "The Struggle of Life."*

*One of the figures, perhaps you know,  
Possesses the charm of an extra toe.*

*Our climate is hard indeed for those  
Who must stand out on six bronze toes.*

*So when winter's blasts begin to blow  
And skies are gray with hints of snow,  
Gentle Providence its merry shows  
And shelter snug it kindly throws  
All around those six little shivering toes.*



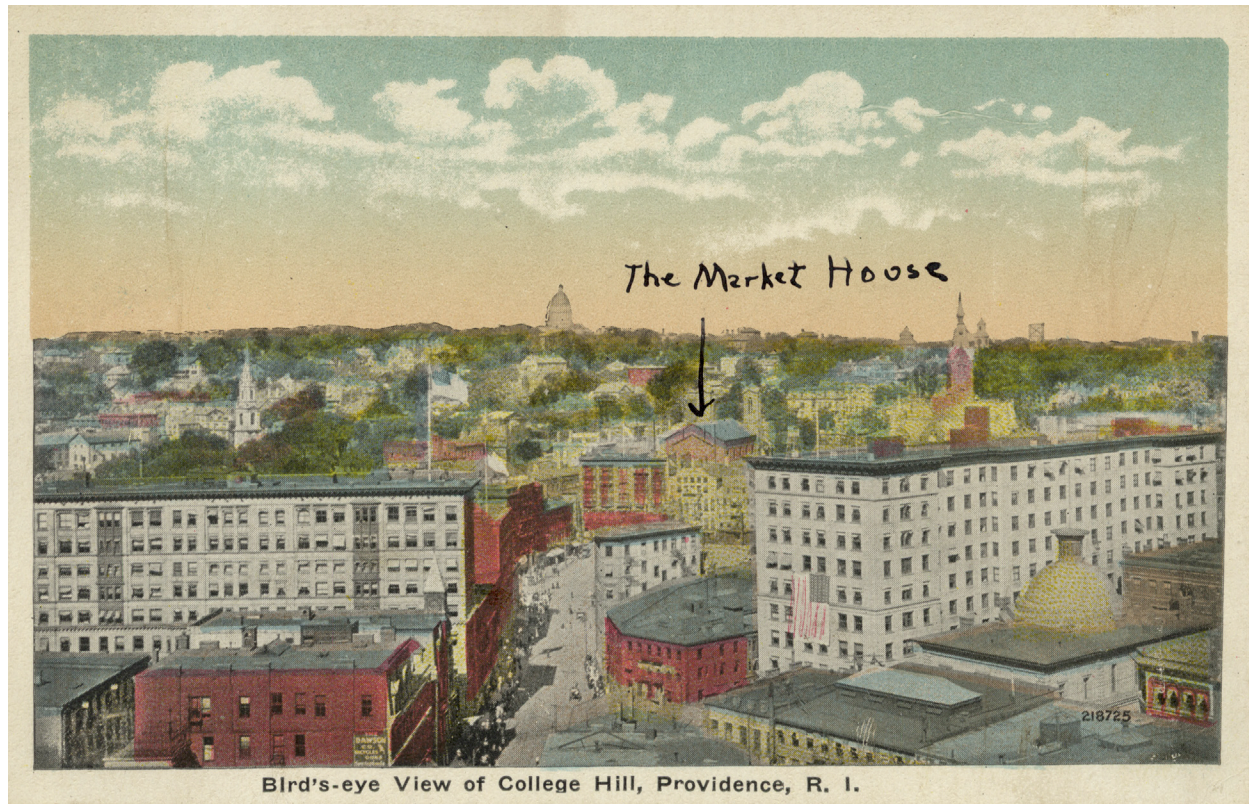
BAJNOTTI MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN—City Hall Park designed by Enid Yandell. Represents the struggle of life, the figures being in bronze. Given to the city by Paul Bajnotti of Turin, Italy, in memory of his wife, Carrie Mathilde Brown.



BAJNOTTI MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN, PROVIDENCE, R. I.



Two carved wooden figures of great interest, historical value, and rare beauty adorn the lower end of Westminster Street. They stand on the side walk, one on the right, the other on the left as one goes up the street. One is an Indian chief, the other a graceful Princess. The Princess has been in this spot over forty years. The Chief has moved up and down the street more. These figures are venerable but bear their age remarkably well.



The Market House or Board of Trade  
Oldest Municipal Building in this City  
Built in 1773

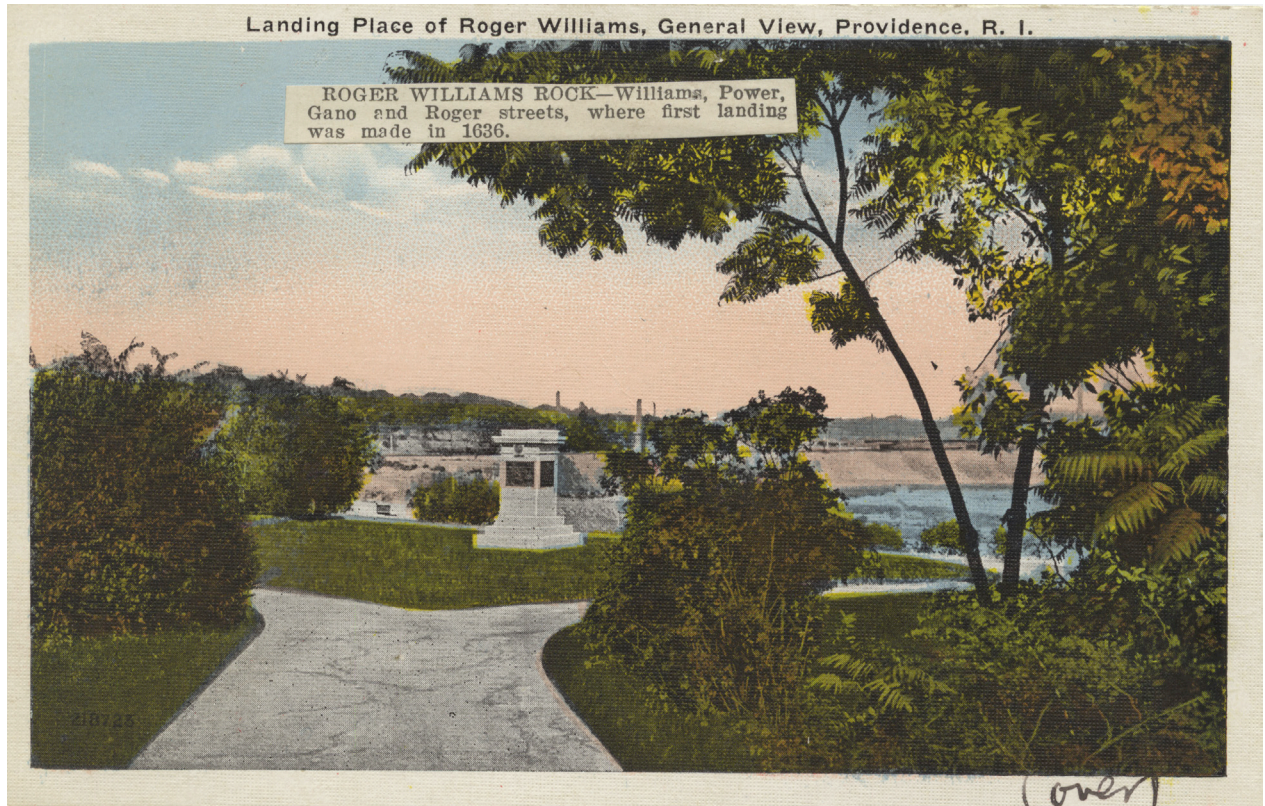
Notice placed on building March 2, 1775:

*At five of the clock this afternoon, a quantity of India tea will be burnt in the Market Place. All true friends of their country, lovers of freedom, and haters of shackles and hand cuffs, are hereby invited to testify their good disposition, by bringing and casting into the fire a needless herb, which for a long time, hath been highly detrimental to our liberty, interest and health!"*

Large bonfire at five o'clock – 300 pounds of tea burned.



## Roger Williams Rock



Description on this monument in the words of Roger Williams:

*"... and having a sense of God's merciful providence in my distress called this place Providence. I desire it may be a shelter for persons distressed for conscience."*



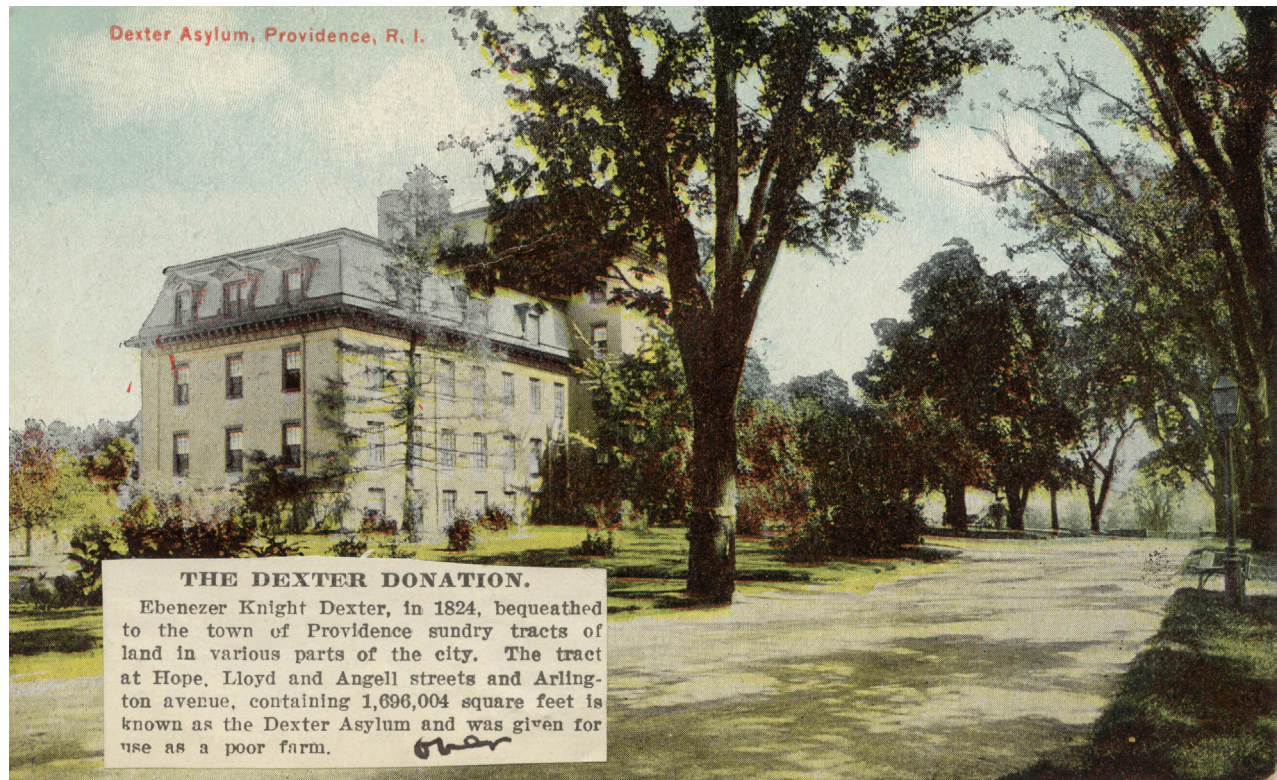
◊ BUILDING UNDER WHICH FLOWS ROGER WILLIAMS' SPRING ◊

“Our sires drank from this living stream  
Two hundred years ago,  
And, from its fountain, water clear  
Continues yet to flow.  
We have a rich and noble theme,  
Fit for a Prince or King,  
’Tis water pure, and fresh and good,  
From Roger Williams Spring.”



## Dexter Asylum

Ebenezer Knight Dexter years ago donated land for “training ground” and also a “home” for the needy citizens of Providence. This home, known as “Dexter Asylum” is in the residential part of the city and is a beautiful [and] attractive place. If the members of our Faculty would buy some real estate in Providence, they could be sure of a home near enough to the college to insure an avoidance of homesickness. This plan is recommended especially for the single members of the faculty.



This is known as the Rich Poor Farm. It is for the benefit of those former property owners of Providence who have “fallen upon evil days.”

The will requires a high stone wall to be kept up around the entire tract. In the will these words occur:

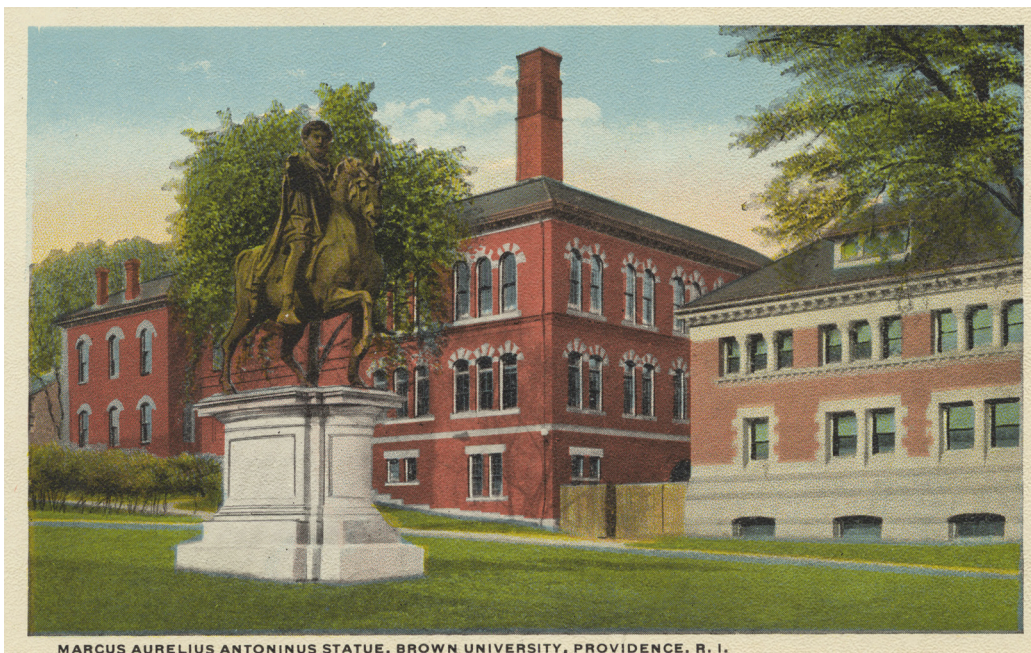
*“Leaving nothing but a headstone to mark our passage through life does not make the world better. They live best who serve humanity most.”*



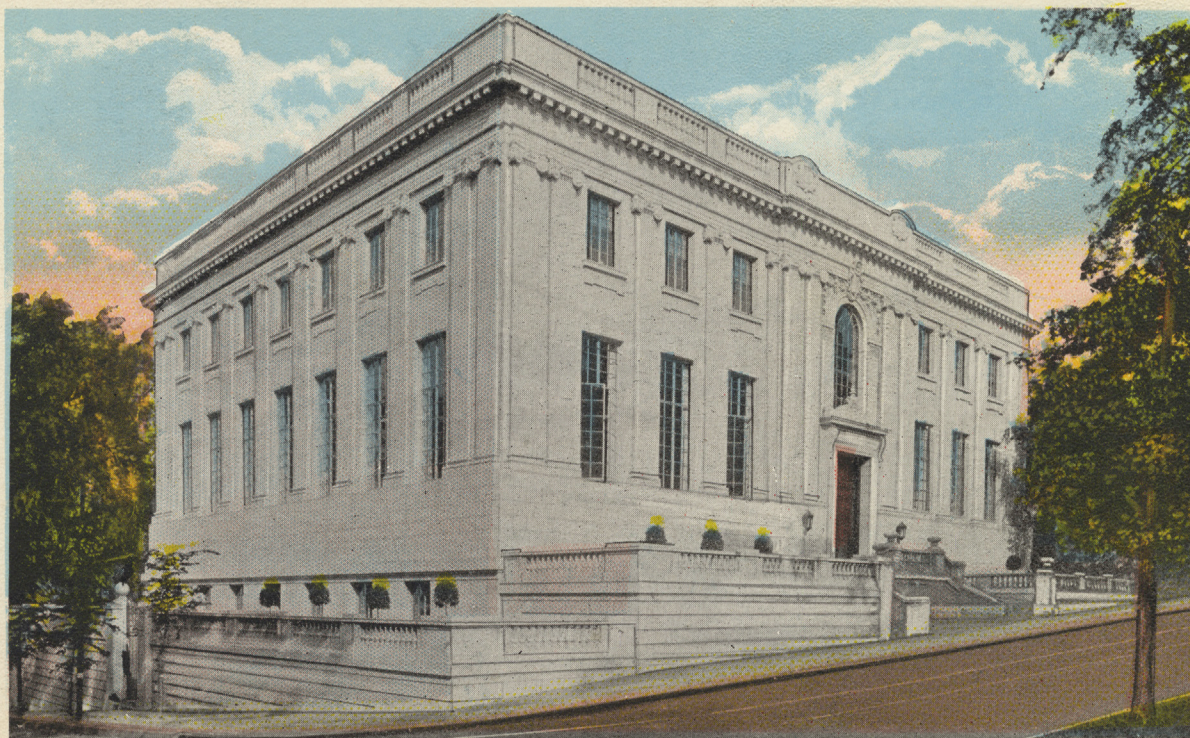
## First Baptist Meeting House

One of the oldest buildings in Rhode Island. Built during the Revolution. The money was raised by a lottery. It is a gem of colonial architecture. The fact that iron was so scarce during the Revolutionary war made it necessary to construct it with wooden pegs and braces. The beautiful spire is made almost entirely of wood.

The inscription in the hall is: "*For the worship of Almighty God, and also to hold Brown Commencement in*".





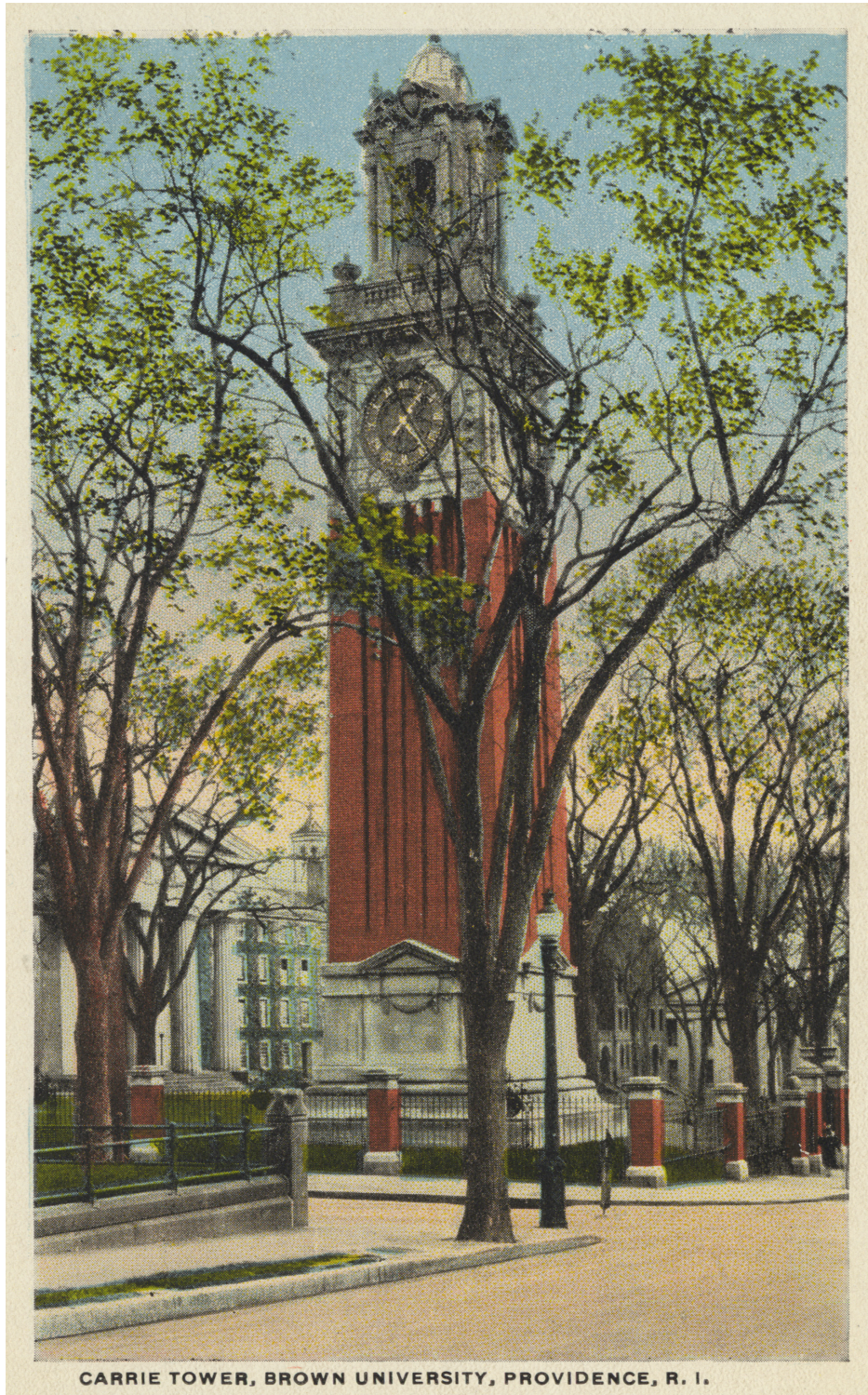


JOHN HAY LIBRARY, BROWN UNIVERSITY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.



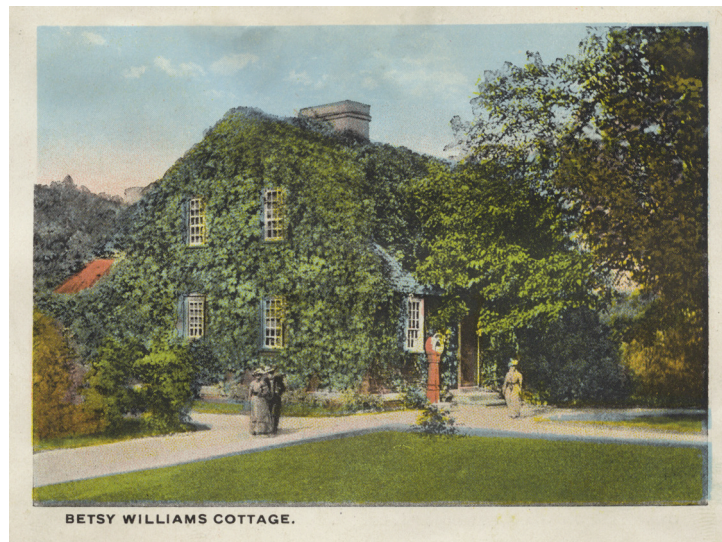
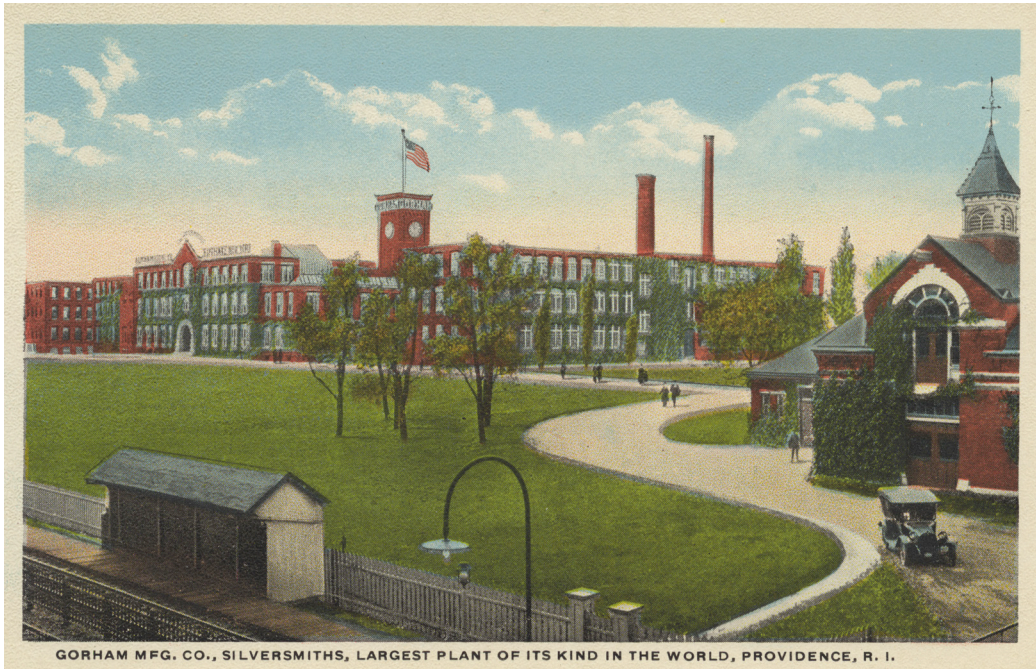
LIBRARY, BROWN UNIVERSITY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.





CARRIE TOWER, BROWN UNIVERSITY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.







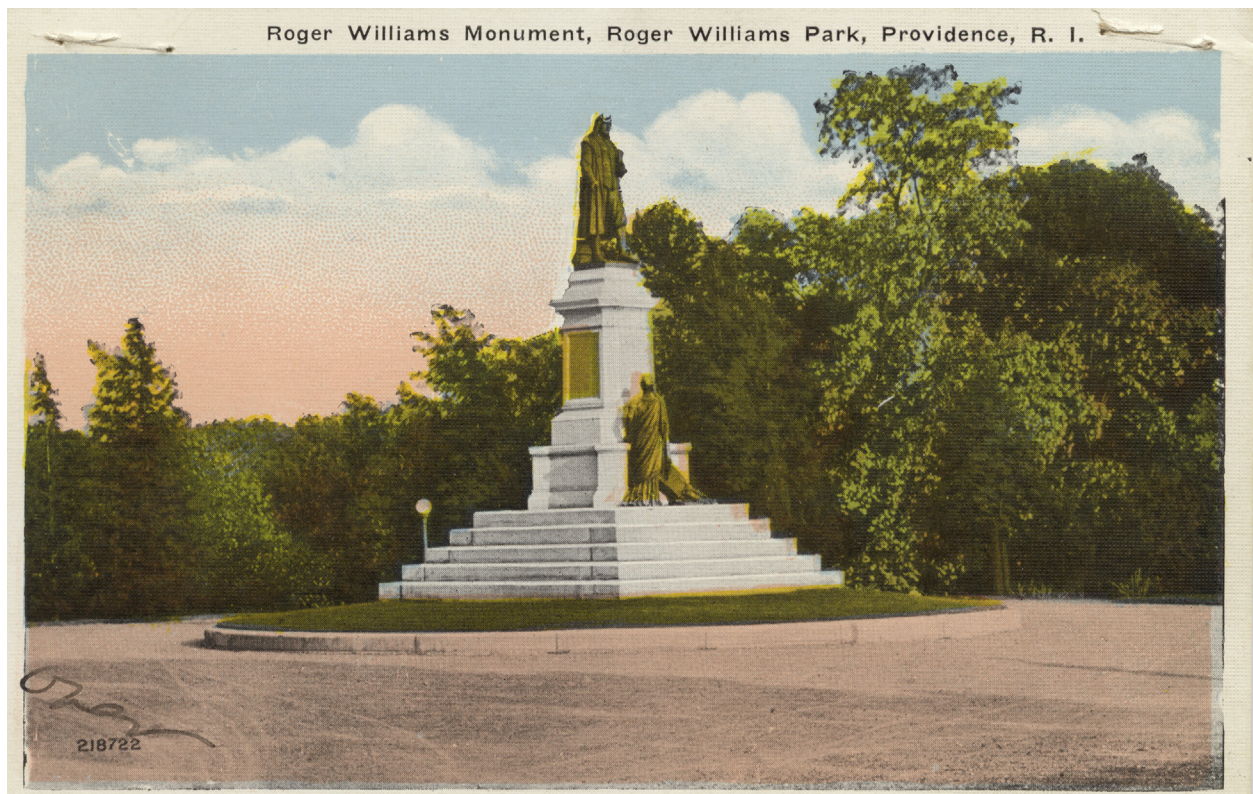
## Roger Williams Monument

Betsy Williams offered a large tract of land to Providence upon the condition that a suitable monument be erected thereon to her ancestor Roger Williams.

There was a great opposition to the acceptance of the land because it was “too far out in the wilderness” to be of any use to Providence! The vote to accept it was by a majority of two.

The city erected this bronze statue of Roger Williams. The figure of History standing on the base is usually mistaken for Betsy!

There have been several attempts to persuade Betsy to elope as she is worth her weight in bronze.



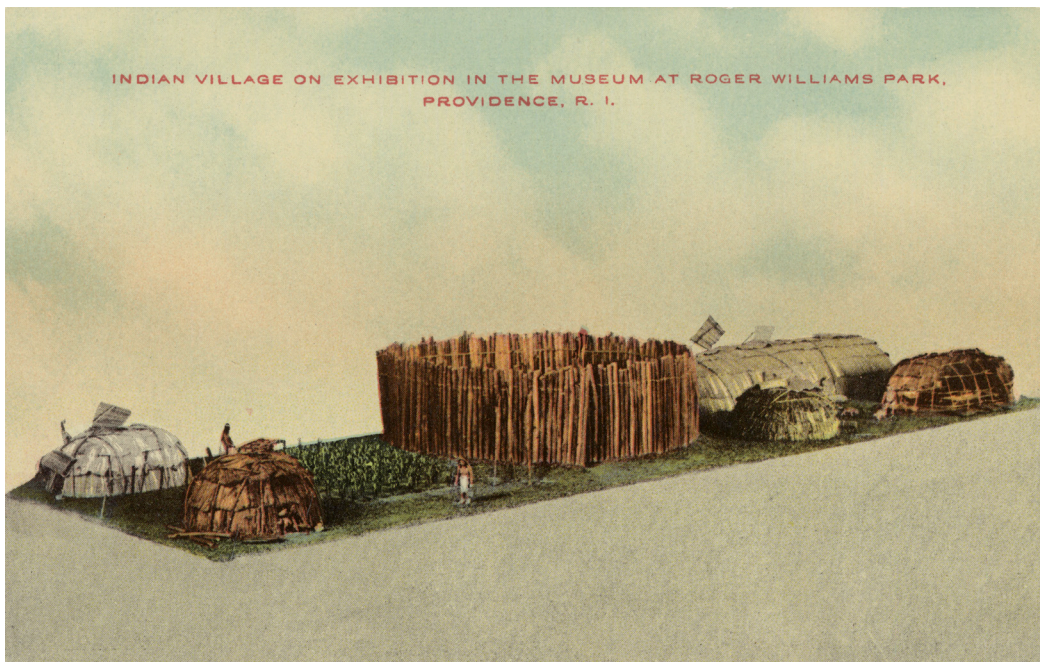




## Band Stand in the Park

*In a lake in Roger Williams Park,  
Where I have been on many a lark,  
There is built a place for the band to play,  
To amuse the people who near do stay,  
It is made of marble, pure and white,  
And looks most beautiful at night.*









ARCH BRIDGE, ROGER WILLIAMS PARK, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

The stone bridges in Roger Williams Park are named for the original Indian owners of the land: Miantunomu and Canonicus. The names are carved in tablets which can be seen to best advantage from a canoe or row boat.

It would be very foolish for any visitor to attempt to carry away these bridges, which could be immediately identified by their names.



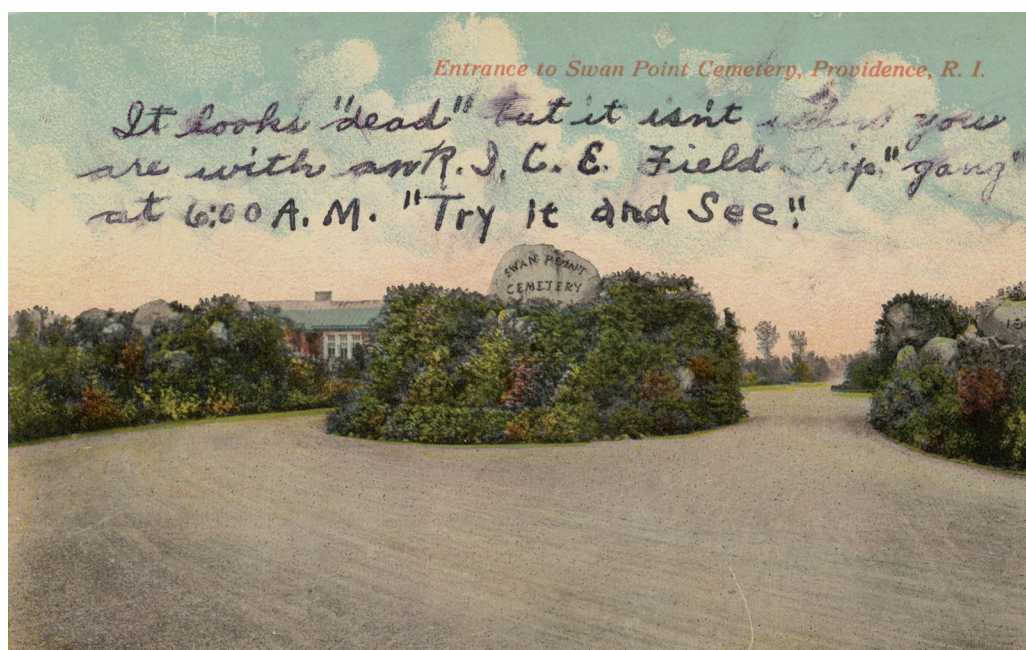


This lion thrilled the past generations of Providence children. They are now able to tell their children of the days when there were lions, tigers, and other wild beasts in Roger Williams Park.

No doubt some of the present company contributed their youthful pennies to a fund to purchase a baby camel which was a public pet. The high cost of living and other reasons forced the city to give up the menagerie.

This lion and some of his associates may now be seen in the Park Museum. They never hunger for they are well stuffed.





It looks "dead" but it isn't when you are with an R.I.C.E. Field Trip  
"gang" at 6:00 a.m. "Try it and See."



*“Owed” to a New Comer*

*I've heard it said in Providence*

*It's very hard to find*

*A place to live that's suitable*

*And just the proper kind.*

*If this experience you have had,*

*Do not despair, take heart!*

*For to a happier place you'll go*

*When you from earth depart.*

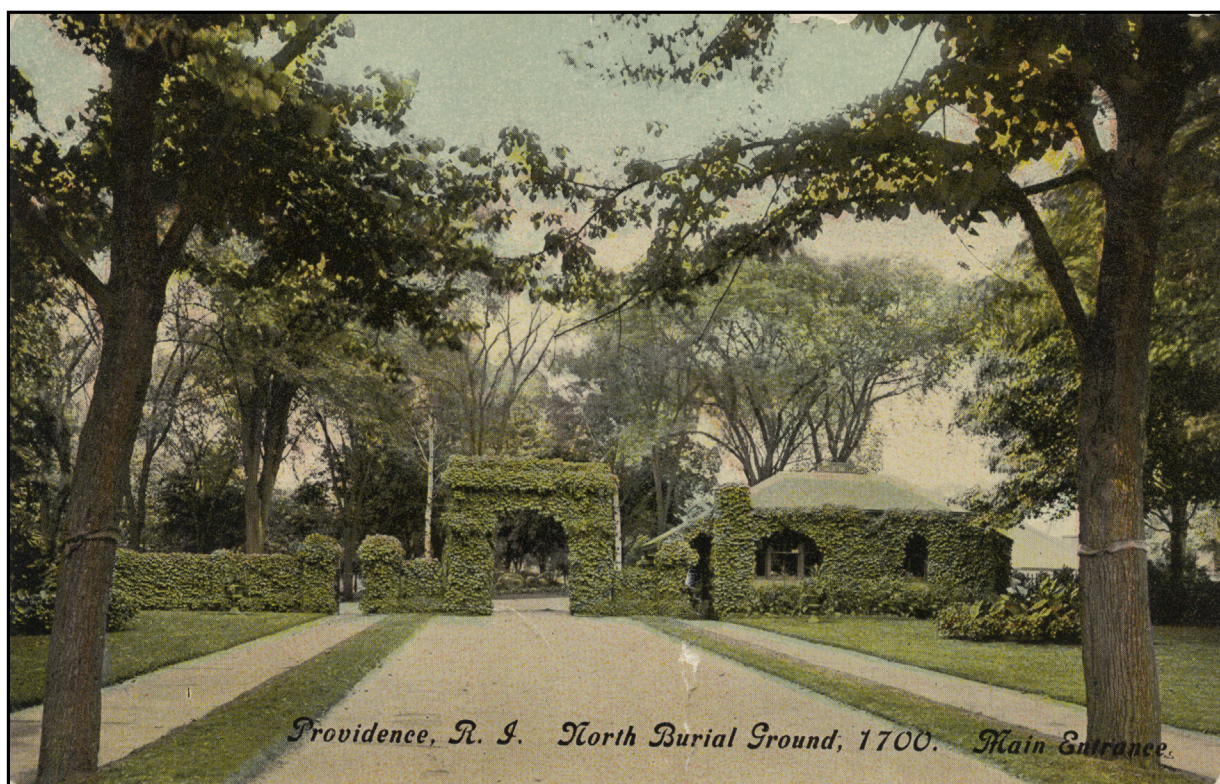
*Your choice – North Burial Ground historic,*

*Or beautiful Swan Point;*

*Your bones may rest in either place*

*And not get out of joint.*





*Providence, R. I. North Burial Ground, 1700. Main Entrance.*

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