


11-1-1935

Calendar of Events November 1935

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Recommended Citation

Brown/RISD Community Art Project, "Calendar of Events November 1935" (1935). *Calendar of Events*. 11.
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44 Benevolent Street
Providence, Rhode Island

(Sec. 435 1/2 PL & R)
U. S. POSTAGE
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Providence, R. I.
PERMIT No. 101

COMMUNITY ART PROJECT



CALENDAR
of
ART EVENTS

November
1935

Volume Three

Number Two

SHAKESPEARE'S HEAD

A PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RELIC

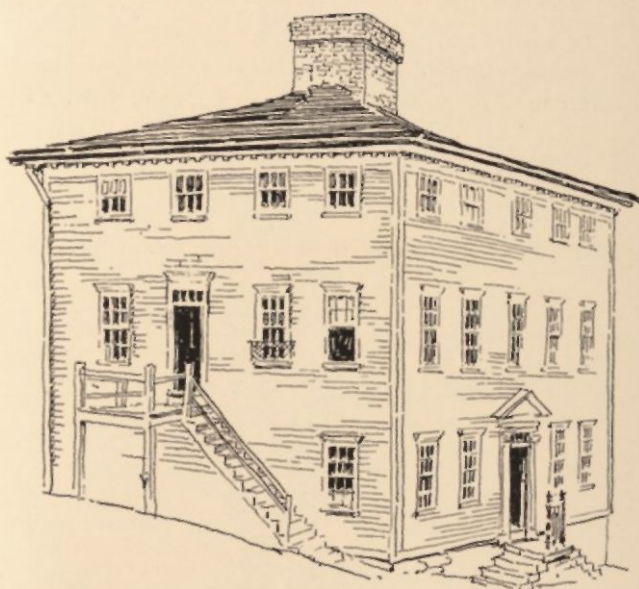
Though the terms "Colonial" and "Georgian," when applied to an architectural period, are generally considered to be synonymous, they would seem to have a chronological distinction. The war of the Revolution marked an epoch, both historically and architecturally; it terminated America's period as a British colony, and it commenced an era when houses and public buildings were designed and constructed with a tasteful richness and elaboration of detail hitherto unknown. For that reason the term "Colonial" may properly be applied to the simpler types of structures erected before the Revolution, whereas "Georgian"—named for the succession of English Kings whose reign extended over a period of more than one hundred years—may characterize the more elaborate structures of the succeeding period. So far as Providence architecture is concerned, "Georgian" architecture would thus commence with Joseph Brown and terminate with John Holden Green, the two outstanding architects of that era, or chronologically from 1775 to 1820. However distasteful English politics may have been to Americans, they found Georgian English architectural prototypes very much to their liking.

Gazette was published; in another room he maintained a book store. It is said that the sign of Shakespeare's head "topped a post some six to eight feet in height which stood before the house, and symbolized the treasures of literature to be found within." That would indicate that the house did not receive its name until Mr. Carter occupied it and opened his book shop.

In addition to its use as a printing office and book store, Shakespeare's Head housed the Colonial post office for a short period. Postal service was first established in Providence in 1758 with Samuel Chace as postmaster, and with the post office located opposite St. John's Church, the predecessor of the church now bearing that name. It was moved to Shakespeare's Head in 1766, following the business trend southward, and a year or two later was again shifted to the Abbott Still House, where College Street now intersects South Main.

Like most houses of the pre-revolutionary period in Providence, Shakespeare's Head is well proportioned but severely simple in design, architectural adornment being confined to the main entrance, the cornice, and the window caps. It is nearly square, three stories high above the basement, with a hip roof and a large brick center chimney. The cornice has a wide projection, supported by carved and closely spaced consoles. Heavy moulded caps surmount the first and second story windows. The main entrance on the hillside is of the

Among the Colonial houses which have withstood the ravages of time, there remains on Meeting Street hill, between North Main and Benefit Streets, in sordid dignity, rapidly deteriorating, a structure known as Shakespeare's Head. When erected in or about the year 1763 the highway on which it stood was known as Gaol (or Goal) Lane; North Main was then Towne Street, and Benefit, only recently "stated," was Back Street. To the



SHAKESPEARE'S HEAD

Drawing by Helen Mason Grose from the forthcoming "Handbook of Rhode Island Architecture" by Antoinette F. Downing, to be published by the Community Art Project.

pilastered and pedimented type characteristic of the Colonial period. The pilasters are fluted and of unusual width, and rest upon high plinths; the frieze is curved, and the cornice above is set back over the transom. A double row of stone steps leads to the entrance, at the edge of which formerly stood a well designed wrought iron balustrade. Within the front hall a winding staircase leads to the upper stories. On each floor are two square front corner rooms, and a larger room at the rear, all of which have fireplaces set in the large central chimney, and some of which have paneled walls. Though the interior wood finish is in good taste, it is less impressive than in some of the contemporary houses.

Shakespeare's Head dwarfed Captain Updike's residence, a two and a half story gambrel roof house of humbler, though perhaps more charming appearance.

The Calendar of Art Events is published regularly by the Community Art Project. Copies will be mailed monthly without charge upon request to Miss Louise Bauer, Stenographic Bureau, Brown University, Providence, R. I.

The Community Art Project announces the following lectures, prepared in the form of a written text accompanied by lantern slides: (1) **The Life and Work of Gilbert Stuart;** (2) **Legends of Christmas in Art.** The lectures are available without charge to interested groups in Rhode Island. Applications for bookings may be made to Professor George E. Downing, Secretary, 44 Benevolent Street, Providence, R. I.

west of Shakespeare's Head stood Captain John Updike's house, erected before 1759, and removed about fifteen years ago; across the street was erected in 1769 the brick school house which is still standing.

The earliest historical reference to Shakespeare's Head appears to be in connection with the printing of the Providence Gazette, a weekly newspaper and the first to be published in Providence. The first issue bore the date of October 20, 1762, the publisher and editor was William Goddard, and the printing office was located on Towne Street opposite the Court House. On August 6, 1763, the Gazette was removed to Shakespeare's Head, where publication was continued until May 11, 1765 when it was interrupted for four months on account of difficulties brought about by the Stamp Act. Shortly after its resumption Mr. Goddard removed from Providence, whereupon the newspaper was continued by his mother Sarah Goddard. She took into the business John Carter, late of Benjamin Franklin's shop in Philadelphia, who secured sole possession of the "Gazette" in 1768 and continued its publication until 1814, during a part of which period William Wilkinson was associated with him as partner.

Mr. Carter, who was a brother-in-law of John Updike, took up his residence in the upper stories of Shakespeare's Head, thereby becoming Captain Updike's next door neighbor. In one of the first floor rooms the

This latter house at one period contained a rival printing establishment.

There still exist in Providence numerous pre-revolutionary structures, though the number is diminishing. Conspicuous examples are the old State House (1762), the Brick School House on Meeting Street (1769), University Hall (1770), the Market Building (1773), and the First Baptist Meeting House (1775). And among the thirty or more pre-revolutionary dwellings are the Richard Brown house (circa 1731) on Butler Hospital grounds, the Stephen Hopkins house (circa 1743) on Hopkins Street, the Esek Hopkins house (1756) on Admiral Street, the Joseph Russell house (1773) at 114 North Main Street, the Betsey Williams cottage (1773) at Roger Williams Park, and the Joseph Brown house (1774) at 50 South Main Street. All of these buildings are in an excellent state of preservation, and none of those others that have been neglected are, for historic and architectural reasons, more worthy of restoration and preservation than Shakespeare's Head. May a patron of the fine arts of architecture and printing rescue this historic relic before it is too late, and set up within its ancient walls a permanent museum where historic examples of both arts may be perpetuated.

John Hutchins Cady

EXHIBITIONS IN RHODE ISLAND

Faunce House Art Gallery, Brown University

Oct. 31-Nov. 15—Contemporary American Mural Paintings.

John Hay Library, Brown University

Oct. 1-Nov. 15—Lincoln as Portrayed in Metal.

Oct. 21-Nov. 15—Development of Church Architecture in America.

Oct. 18-Nov. 30—Selection from the Endicott Collection of Sheet Music.

Oct. 18-Nov. 30—Andrew Carnegie Memorial Exhibit.

Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design

To Nov. 3—Annual Exhibition of American Painting.

Nov. 7-Nov. 30—Exhibition of Polish and Russian Handicraft.

Providence Art Club

Nov. 5-Nov. 17—Loan Exhibition of Modern Drawings and Prints.

Nov. 19-Dec. 1—Paintings by Edith Jackson Green.

Armour Gallery

Nov. 1-Nov. 30—Etchings and Drypoints by Briscoe, Blampied and Rosenberg.

Mauk-Murray Studios

Oct. 28-Nov. 16—Sculpture and Watercolors by Gino Conti.

Nov. 16-Nov. 30—Exhibition of Block Prints and Etchings by the Gearhearts.

Nathaniel M. Vose Gallery

Oct. 25-Nov. 9—Recent paintings by Gino Conti.

Nov. 13-Nov. 30—Temperas, recently done in New York, by John Rawdon. Costume Sketches.

Tilden-Thurber Galleries

Nov. 4-Nov. 16—Camera Portraits by Albert Peterson.

Nov. 18-Nov. 30—Etchings by Arthur W. Heintzelman.

Nov. 25-Dec. 7—Paintings by H. Anthony Dyer.

School Gallery of the Rhode Island School of Design

Oct. 30-Nov. 11—Block Prints by J. F. Wallace.

Nov. 11-Nov. 28—Exhibition of papers by Crane Paper Co.

Art Week Exhibitions

Nov. 2-Nov. 9—

Exhibition in Providence Public Library.

Exhibition of students' work at the Central High School.

Two paintings by Rhode Island artists, in each of the Junior High Schools.

Newport

Nov. 4 only—The following studios will be open: Christine C. Andrews, 397 Gibbs Avenue; Howard Benson, 29 Thames Street; William H. Drury, Paradise Avenue; Durr Freedly, Oakwood Terrace; Percy Hartley, 99 Touro Street; Francis L. V. Hoppin, Auton House, Harrison Avenue; Ruth Thomas, Ayrault Street; Carl Tollefson, 34 Mt. Vernon; Edith Ballinger Price, 7 Arnold Avenue; Helena Sturtevant, Second Beach Road.

CALENDAR

(All events listed are open to the public)

Thursday, October 31

INSTITUTE OF ART, under the auspices of the Community Art Project. Speaker: Dr. H. A. Overstreet. Address: "Art, Economics, and Our American Future." Faunce House Auditorium, Brown University, 8:15 P. M.

Friday, November 1

INSTITUTE OF ART, under the auspices of the Community Art Project. Speaker: Mr. M. D. C. Crawford. Address: "The Machine and Good Taste." Memorial Hall, Rhode Island School of Design, 8:15 P. M.

Saturday, November 2

INSTITUTE OF ART, under the auspices of the Community Art Project. Speaker: Mr. George Biddle. Address: "Mural Art in America." Faunce House Auditorium, Brown University, 2:30 P. M.

Speaker: Dr. Howard Hanson. Address: "American Music Today." Alumnae Hall, Pembroke College in Brown University, 8:15 P. M.

ART WEEK. Exhibition of pictures of historic buildings opened by Governor Theodore Francis Green. Speakers: Miss Helena Sturtevant and Col. H. A. Dyer. Art Association of Newport, Bellevue Avenue, 4:00 P. M.

Sunday, November 3

INSTITUTE OF ART, under the auspices of the Community Art Project. Recital of American Chamber Music by Mr. Nicolas Slonimsky, and Members of the Boston Chamber Orchestra. Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, 3:00 P. M.

Monday, November 4

ART WEEK. Studios of Newport opened from 10 A. M. to 1 P. M. Aquidneck Cottage Industries, 10 A. M. to 5 P. M. Concert by Swanhurst Choral Society and Newport Composers. Newport Art Association, 8:15 P. M.

The Basement Studio Group presents a dramatic reading of Shakespeare's "Richard III." Tea. 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Wednesday, November 6

ART WEEK. Display of work of art classes in Public Schools of Newport.

Redwood Library display of Art Books, Newport.

Reading of one-act play; exhibition of local artists' work. The Basement Studio, 80 Benefit Street, 8:00 P. M.

Authors readings. Mr. Harford W. H. Powel, Miss Edith B. Price, Mr. Richard Barrett, Miss Louise Guyol. Newport Art Association, 8:15 P. M.

Thursday, November 7

ART WEEK. Lecture on "Colonial Buildings of Newport and Their European Prototypes," by Mrs. W. W. Covell (Illustrated with slides). Newport Art Association, 4:00 P. M.

Play by the Unity Club. Channing Memorial Parish House, Newport, 8:15 P. M.

Musical at the Federal Hill House School of Music, 9 Thomas Street, 8:00 P. M.

Friday, November 8

ART WEEK. School of Newport Art Association open. Tea at Providence Art Club. 3:00 P. M.

Saturday, November 9

ART WEEK. Lecture by Mrs. Maude Howe Elliott on "Some Newport Artists." Newport Art Association, 4:00 P. M.

Monday, November 11

The Basement Studio Group presents a dramatic reading of Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer." Tea. 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Monday, November 18

The Basement Studio Group presents Miss Annie B. Thompson in a song recital, Miss Alice W. Darling, accompanist. Tea. 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Sunday, November 24

Lecture by Dr. W. Louis Chapman, on the program of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Providence Public Library, 4:00 P. M. (auspices of the Monday Morning Musical Club).

Monday, November 25

*Sack and Buskin presents "Sailors of Catarro." Faunce House Theater, Brown University, 8:30 P. M.

Basement Studio Group presents Miss Alice M. Howe in a playreading of "Paolo and Francesca," by Stephen Phillips. Tea. 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Tuesday, November 26

*Sack and Buskin presents "Sailors of Catarro." Faunce House Theater, Brown University, 8:30 P. M.

*Concert by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Dr. Sergei Koussevitsky, conductor. Metropolitan Theater, 8:15 P. M.

Wednesday, November 27

*Sack and Buskin presents "Sailors of Catarro." Faunce House Theater, Brown University, 8:30 P. M.

*Admission charged.