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Calendar of Events November 1938

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The old market building and one time city hall, occupied for the past fifty-eight years by the Board of Trade and its successor, the Chamber of Commerce, is being modernized as a headquarters for the Providence Department of Public Works. Erected in 1773 on the mud flats on the east shore of Providence River, near a narrow draw bridge which was the only means of crossing from the east to the west side of the town, it stands as the sole survivor of the contemporary buildings in its neighborhood after witnessing the development of Providence from a straggling village to a modern city.

The town of Providence was settled on a neck of land known as Moshassuck Peninsula, at the southern point of which sweep the waters of Seekonk River on the east and Moshassuck River, the Great Salt Cove and the Great Salt River on the west, flowed into Narragansett Bay. An irregular sandy beach lined the western shore of the neck as far north as the falls of the Moshassuck.

The town's first highway, known as the Towne street (now North Main and South Main streets), which formed the western boundary of the original home lots, ran parallel with the beach. On the opposite side of Great Salt River Weybosset Point jutted out into the waters and formed the entrance to the cove. The Indians crossed over to the point at low tide by means of a "wading place."

The first bridge across the river connecting the Towne street with the Weybosset side was built in 1660 but was washed away, or removed, fifteen years later. Another bridge was erected in 1711 and from its western end and flanked by the Koppe and Scipio Chapters of the First Baptist Meeting Church, was removed by a heavy gale in 1761 and replaced by a draw bridge, the expense of which was financed by a lottery.

On March 2, 1775 the "Providence Tea Party" was held in front of the market house, an event commemorated by a tablet, erected by the Gaspee Chapter of the D. A. R. on the outside of the building. During a part of the Revolutionary War the market house was closed to trade and was used by troops as a barracks and store house.

Damage by flood waters again necessitated rebuilding Weybosset bridge in 1792, and coincident with its construction the shore lots north of the bridge were filled in and a new highway named North Water Street (now Canal) was constructed along the shore.

In 1793 the office of the town clerk was installed in the second story of the market building and the Towne street from the First Congregational Church property for use as a town house. A few years later a fire engine was housed in the first story of the market house.

In 1797 Saint John's Lodge, No. 1, of masons added a third story to the market house for use as the first masonic hall in Rhode Island. Within the pediment of the gable roof was placed a cartouche bearing the masonic emblems. A wood cornice was carried along the sides of the building, resting on corbeled-out bricks, and surmounted by a wood balustrade. The new windows were composed of small lights of glass, and were capped by segmental brick arches.

The great gale of September 22-23, 1815, made a clean sweep of all bridges, highways and buildings along the water front and caused great damage and destruction to the town. The tide rose to a height of four feet above the ground floor of the market building, the line of which is marked by a tablet on its exterior. Reconstruction of a more permanent nature was soon undertaken, and the new Weybosset bridge, ninety-five feet wide, erected in 1816, for the first time closed the cove to navigation.

In the year that the hayward was erected the Town granted the petition of David Bucklin to build a market house in its vicinity. His project lapsed, however, for lack of funds. Another attempt made the following year was equally unsuccessful. Finally, in 1771, the Town resolved to erect a building on the south side of the highway leading from the Towne street to the bridge, to be used by the public for the purpose of trading; and as a means for paying the cost of the project, it secured the grant of a lottery from the General Assembly. Joseph Brown, who subsequently designed the First Baptist meeting house, the John Brown mansion on Power Street, and his own house on South Main Street, was placed in charge of construction, together with Stephen Hopkins. The cornerstone was laid by Nicholas Brown on June 8, 1771.

During the construction of the market house the land to the westward, formerly swept by tidal waters, was filled to the shore line, and the area surrounding the building became known as the town parade. Flanking it on the south stood the Abbott Still house, where the post office was then located; on its northern boundary was the old coffee house; across the Towne street were the homes of Dr. Ephraim Bowen, Governor Joseph Jenckes and Jabez Bowen, with Rosemary Lane leading up the hillside to the First Congregational church which stood at the corner of Benefit Street.

The market house was constructed of brick, forty by sixty feet in area and two stories in height with the first floor at the ground level. A series of arched openings provided access by teams to the interior where stalls were set up for the merchants. The second floor was used for offices. The building was completed and put to use in August, 1774.

Chamber, the exterior of the market building was partially restored to its original appearance. The project included the removal of the paint from the walls, the erection of a roof balustrade, and the installation of a clock in the pediment where the masonic emblem formerly was placed. When the lines of College Street were altered in 1936 the land adjoining the building on the south was converted into a lawn.

Due to a lack of care in maintaining the building during many years of its existence the roof timbers gradually had decayed to such an extent that the roof was condemned as unsafe by the Commissioner of Public Buildings early in 1938 and ordered rebuilt. The Chamber of Commerce vacated its offices late in the summer, and the work of demolishing the old roof was commenced. Before the roof timbers were removed, however, the old structure was able to vindicate in part at least its alleged decrepit status. For on September 21st it withstood a hurricane as well as a tidal wave in which the waters rose to a line two feet above the high water mark of the 1815 storm.

Plans for rehabilitating the building provide for its complete reconstruction above the second floor line. The roof construction will be modernized by the use of steel trusses, a safe but architecturally unorthodox substitute for the noble eighteenth century timbers. While in most respects the former exterior appearance of the building will be restored the graceful sag of the roof ridge will be sadly missed by lovers of antiquity.

JOHN HUTCHINS CADY

October 21, 1938.
### CALENDAR

- **Tuesday, November 1**
  - Lecture by Mr. Lawrence Appar, "Enjoyment of Music."
  - Frobel Hall, 3:15 P. M.
  - Open House at the Providence Art Club in cooperation with National Art Week. Governor Robert E. Quinn and Mr. William Brigham speakers of the evening. 8:00 P. M.

- **Wednesday, November 2**
  - Open House at the Handicraft Club in cooperation with National Art Week. Exhibition of members' work. Open from 10:00 A. M. until 5:00 P. M.
  - Basement Studio Group presents readings from Shakespeare. Exhibition of engravings of scenes from Shakespeare. Open House in cooperation with National Art Week. Tea, 80 Benefit Street. 8:10 P. M.

- **Thursday, November 3**
  - Open House at the Handicraft Club in cooperation with National Art Week. Exhibition of members' work. Open from 10:00 A. M. until 5:00 P. M.
  - Open House at the Rhode Island School of Design in cooperation with National Art Week. College and North Main Street entrance. 7:30 P. M.

- **Friday, November 4**
  - Dance recital by Madame Gertrude Kurath in cooperation with National Art Week. Faunce House Theatre, Brown University. 8:30 P. M.
  - Open House at the Handicraft Club in cooperation with National Art Week. Exhibition of members' work. Open from 10:00 A. M. until 5:00 P. M.

- **Saturday, November 5**
  - Open House at the Swedish House of Mrs. and Mrs. William Brigham, in cooperation with National Art Week. 460 Rochambeau Avenue. 1:00 P. M. until 4:00 P. M.
  - Open House at the Handicraft Club in cooperation with National Art Week. Exhibition of members' work. Open from 10:00 A. M. until 5:00 P. M.

- **Sunday, November 6**
  - Lecture by Mr. John B. Archer on the Boston Symphony Orchestra program, Providence Public Library. 4:00 P. M., auspices of the Monday Morning Musical Club.
  - Open House at the Handicraft Club in cooperation with National Art Week. Exhibition of members' work. Open from 10:00 A. M. until 5:00 P. M.

### EXHIBITIONS IN RHODE ISLAND

- **John Carter Brown Library, Brown University**
  - Nov. 1-20—Books and Maps relating to the Settlement of the West in connection with the Sesquicentennial of the Northwest Territory.

- **Feuance House Art Gallery, Brown University**
  - Nov. 7-21—Prints by British Wood Engravers.

- **Mu seum of the Rhode Island School of Design**
  - Oct. 15-Nov. 3—Hurricane Paintings of Rhode Island.

- **School Gallery, Rhode Island School of Design**
  - Nov. 1-30—Exhibitions related to various professional subjects of the school. Students' and professional work.

- **Providence Art Club**
  - Oct. 25-Nov. 6—Members' exhibition.
  - Nov. 8-20—Oil Paintings by Mabel M. Woodward.
  - Nov. 22-Dec. 5—Travel Sketches by Edna W. Lawrence.

- **Handicraft Club**
  - Nov. 27—Open House. Exhibition of members' work.

- **Mauk-Murray Studio**
  - Nov. 1-30—Group of Pan-American Etchers, including John Taylor Arms and Martin Lewis.

- **Tilden-Thomas Gallery**
  - Nov. 21-Dec. 2—Paintings by Colonel Anthony Dyer.

- **Leisure Time Activities Club**
  - Nov. 1-30—Mexican hand crafts. 30 Benefit Street.

- **Newport Art Association**
  - Nov. 1-26—National Art Week Exhibition.

### EXHIBITIONS OUTSIDE OF RHODE ISLAND

- **Andover, Mass. Addison Gallery, Phillips Academy**
  - Nov. 9-28—National Exhibition of Representative Buildings of the Post War Period.

- **Boston, Mass., Museum of Fine Arts**
  - Oct. 6-Nov. 9—War Prints and Drawings.
  - Nov. 15-Dec. 15—Paintings by Frank W. Benson and the late Edmund C. Tarbell.

- **Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University**
  - Nov. 1-Dec. 31—French Drawings and Paintings.
  - Nov. 13-Prints from the XVI to the XX Centuries, from the Simon Collection.

- **Cambridge, Mass., The Germanic Museum, Harvard University**
  - Nov. 1-30—German Watercolors and Drawings of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

- **Northampton, Mass., Smith College Museum of Art**
  - Oct. 11-Nov. 4—Masters of Popular Painting, Collection of Mrs. Charles S. Payson.

- **Springfield, Mass., Museum of Fine Arts**
  - Nov. 8-Dec. 4—Swedish Prints.
  - Nov. 1-21—Exhibition of Peter Hurd and Carl Sprinchorn.

- **Wellesley, Mass., Farnsworth Museum, Wellesley College**

- **New York, N. Y., The Museum of Modern Art**
  - Nov. 1-18—The Prints of Georges Rouault.

- **Providence Art Club**

- **Providence Art Club**

- **Providence Art Club**