Archeological Resource Study

Roger Williams National Memorial
RHODE ISLAND

Cultural Resources Management Study No.1
Division of Cultural Resources
North Atlantic Region
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Archeological Resource Study

Roger Williams
National Memorial

RHODE ISLAND

Susan G. Gibson, Principal Investigator
Stephen Cole
Peter Thorbahn
Cynthia Wood
Myron Stachiw

Prepared by Public Archaeology Laboratory,
Department of Anthropology, Brown University
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Cultural Resources Management Division
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U.S. Department of the Interior

Washington, D.C. 1979
Cover: Providence in 1790 by John Fitch (R.I.H.S.)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCE STUDY
AT
ROGER WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEMORIAL

INTRODUCTION

This study of archeological resources at Roger Williams National Memorial was conducted under Contract No. CX1600-8-0012, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The purpose of the study was fourfold:

1) to provide information regarding the characteristics and locations of known and potential archeological resources in Roger Williams National Memorial.

2) to provide estimates of and rationale for the eligibility of the identified, known and potential archeological resources in ROWI for the National Register of Historic Places.

3) to provide recommendations for specific kinds of intensive archeological investigations to be undertaken prior to the development of various portions of ROWI.

4) to provide information for management and interpretation of archeological resources.

Both prehistoric and historic archeological resources were addressed.
RESEARCH METHODS

Prehistoric

The goals of the prehistoric research were to:

a) Describe the present environment and land use of the Roger Williams National Memorial.
b) Reconstruct the prehistoric, proto-historic and early historic environment and land use within the general area of the Memorial.
c) Estimate the potential for the Memorial property to contain significant prehistoric, proto and early historic resources.

The methods used began with a review of literature and maps of the topography, bedrock geology, surficial geology, hydrology, climate, flora and fauna relating to the ROWI. The next step was to search published and unpublished literature and local collections for prehistoric site locations near ROWI in order to estimate the chronology of land use in the area. Given the present environmental setting and an estimate of prehistoric land use, the next task was to consult general sources on environmental processes in drowned river valleys and relate this to known prehistoric sites in southern New England. The comparison and contrast of the situation in and around ROWI with similar environmental and cultural settings in the region permitted the formulation of a model of past environments and land use. The proto and early historic environment and land use was estimated from historical sources and maps of the area.

The last stage of the research was to derive likelihoods of site occurrence on the ROWI property from the land use models and to estimate their condition given historical modifications of the landscape as it existed prior to Anglo-American settlement.

Historic

The historic sites investigation was divided into three principal components:

a) Reconstruction of the land use history of ROWI.
b) Identification of potential archeological resources.
c) Evaluation of the potential archeological significance of possible resources.

We began our study by consulting secondary sources relating to the history and development of Providence from its initial settlement by Europeans in 1636 until the present. We then focused on the development of the area which is now ROWI and its immediate vicinity, relating developments in this area to the growth of Providence as a whole. Because of the extremely complex, fragmented nature of the data (cf. Schuyler 1977), research was aimed at revealing the overall pattern of development in ROWI, rather than at providing detailed information on individual "sites."
The kinds of sources which proved most useful in reconstructing the land use history of this section of Providence included histories of Providence, maps and atlases and city directories. Public records, such as town meeting and city council records, also yielded some information, although it was widely scattered. Pictorial representatives (paintings, photographs, drawings, etc.) provided valuable supplementary and illustrative material.

In order to identify the locations of potential archeological resources in relation to the present ROWI boundaries, and to estimate their degree of integrity, a series of three maps was drafted, all to the same scale, showing the ROWI area at different points in time. By comparing these maps with each other, as well as with various historical maps of the area, it was possible to determine the approximate locations of many sites, and to estimate the number of building episodes which had taken place on them. Also very useful in this stage of the research were city directories, the College Hill Architecture Merit and Building Age Map prepared in 1958, which identifies the approximate ages of the buildings standing at that time, and the 1966 Providence Redevelopment Authority map, which indicates which buildings had cellars. We also studied the results of previous archeological investigations in ROWI, which, although very limited in scope, provided some information on the location and condition of archeological resources.

In evaluating the significance of possible archeological resources in ROWI, we attempted to determine how these resources, if they do exist, might contribute to the theoretical and methodological aims of historical archeology, particularly urban historical archeology. We considered the historical and anthropological importance of the area, as well as the estimated degree of physical integrity of below-ground remains. We compared ROWI with other urban historical archeological sites in the Northeast, in terms of the kinds of research problems which might be addressed and the nature of the data believed to be present.
PRESENT ENVIRONMENT AND LAND USE

Location

Roger Williams National Memorial is located in Providence, Rhode Island (USGS Quad Sheet 1957, see Figure 1). Physiographically, the project area and Providence lie in the Eastern Seaboard Lowland as part of the Narragansett Basin Lowland. Providence is located at the western edge of the Narragansett Basin at the head of the Providence River, a tidal arm of the Narragansett Bay. The Memorial consists of 4.56 acres of urban land located at the base of the western slope of College Hill in Providence. It is bordered on the north by Smith Street, on the south by Lonsdale Street and a commercial area, and on the east by North Main Street and the residential area of College Hill. The western edge of the park is flanked by Canal Street and the now-channeled waters of the Moshassuck River.

Topography

The relief of the area consists of gently sloping hills and rounded ridges. The average height of the lowland hills is fifty feet, and the ridges range in elevation from 100-200 feet with uniform steep slopes in all directions. Elevation at Roger Williams National Memorial ranges from 7-20+ feet above sea level. The change in elevation from North Main to Canal Street is the most significant land form at the site. This varies from a three-foot change in elevation at the north end to an eleven-foot change in elevation at the south end. The change in elevation between Smith and Lonsdale Streets varies from .6 feet along the eastern boundary to 10 feet along the western boundary (National Park Service 1977).

Bedrock Geology

The bedrock underlying Providence and the Narragansett Basin is sedimentary strata of the Carboniferous Age. Emerson (1917) types local bedrock as part of the Rhode Island formation which consists of deformed shales and slates in which layers of sandstone and conglomerates are irregularly bedded. Outcrops of bedrock occur at several scattered places below the cliffs on the north side of the Woonasquatucket Valley, on the south and east of Windmill Hill in the northern part of the city, and in places in East Providence. Several old valleys underlying Providence were carved out of bedrock by glacial activity, but are now filled with unconsolidated pleistocene deposits. The trend of the old valleys is from northeast to southwest. One lies beneath the Seekonk River near its confluence with the Providence
River and tends southward. The second buried valley passes beneath the center of Providence and has several tributaries. One narrow gorge passes beneath the present bed of the Moshassuck River and into the valley of the Woonasquatucket River. The buried valley here is as deep as that below the Seekonk River, but narrower. Rock is at or near the surface in a number of places.

**Surficial Geology**

The bedrock in Providence is mantled by deposits of Pleistocene and Recent Age. These deposits consist of till, stratified drift and layers of clay and silt of both glacial and recent origin. A relatively thin layer of glacial moraine in the form of till covers rock at higher altitudes on ridges. "Blue Marl," locally formed of sedimentary rocks, shale and graphite such as occurs on College Hill east of the site, is dark olive grey in color and bouldery (Smith 1956). Stratified drift occurs in the low areas and the valley floors in the form of kame terraces, out-wash plains, or as post-glacial alluvium. The Roger Williams National Memorial is underlain by a low kame terrace of recent glacial deposition; and at least on its western side, by artificial fill. Because of landform modification that has occurred at the site and the obscuring of the 1636 water line, it is difficult to ascertain the extent and depth of fill.

The original soil type present at the site is unknown. However, the low kame terrace bordering much of the Moshassuck River consists of medium to coarse sand with a small amount of gravel (Smith 1956). The soil survey report for Providence also indicates that soil of the Paxton series, consisting of very stony fine sandy loam, occurring on 8-15% slope is present on the hillside east of the Roger Williams Memorial (USDA 1975). Further information on the soil and extent of fill present at the site is available from logs of wells and test holes. The results of those done in the area of the study are listed below:

**Providence #1053, Smith Street Bridge at junction of Canal and Smith Streets. Land surface altitude - 17' above sea level.**

- sand, brown and gravel depth 2'
- sand, brown and gravel depth 6'
- sand, brown and gravel depth 12'
- sand, brown and gravel depth 21'
- sand, fine grey, some gravel depth 29'
- sand, fine grey, some gravel depth 36'
- clay, graphitic, stratified depth 37'
- stone, hard, grey depth 39'
Providence #22, 293 Canal and Cady Streets. Land surface 10' above sea level.

- fill and muck depth 10'
- hardpan depth 14'
- sand, coarse depth 30'
- rock depth 30'

Providence #102, 265 Canal Street near Otis Street. Land surface 10' above sea level.

- muck depth 10'
- sand, fine, hardpan depth 15'
- sand, coarse depth 21'

Providence #152, 276 Canal Street opposite Otis Street. Land surface 10' above sea level.

- muck and sand depth 52'
- rock depth 21'
- casing 8''

(see Figure 2)

Hydrology

The northern part of Providence is drained by the Moshassuck River which flows along the western edge of the site as part of the Blackstone Canal. The western and central part of the city is drained by the Woonasquatucket River, a larger stream which enters Providence from the northwest through a narrow gorge at Dyerville. The Woonasquatucket River flows through a flat valley until it joins with the Moshassuck River to form the Providence River, now at a point south of Roger Williams National Memorial. The Providence River, a short tidal river, connects the two land rivers with Narragansett Bay. Ground water is found in all of the rocks that underlie Providence, occurring in sand and gravel deposits and in bedrock. Along the valley of the Woonasquatucket River, large quantities of ground water are available in the glacial sands and gravel and in the deeply buried bedrock which lies as much as 200 feet below the valley bottom (Roberts and Drashears 1955). Ground water at the site is found at 12 feet below the surface. The original fresh water sources in the area were a spring, now buried or dry, located on the site, and a freshwater stream located where Brook Street is now.
ROGER WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEMORIAL
LOCATION OF WELLS AND TEST HOLES

SOURCE: ROBERTS AND BRASHEARS
1945

Figure 2
Climate

The climate of Providence is influenced by its proximity to Narragansett Bay; the Atlantic winters are generally mild and the summers are warm and long. The mean annual temperature is 50.2°F. The lowest monthly mean temperature of 28.6°F occurs in February, while the highest monthly mean, occurring in July, is 72.4°F. The annual mean precipitation (for a forty-year period between 1905 and 1944) is 38.25 inches. Precipitation is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year.

Flora and Fauna

Because of the urban nature of Roger Williams National Memorial, no woody vegetation remains, except for a few trees and shrubs which have been planted. Most of the Memorial is presently a grassy field, which means that there are probably thriving populations of insects and small mammals throughout the area. Neither the botany nor zoology of the Memorial has been systematically studied, although it would be an ideal site for studying ecology in an urban setting.

Present Land Use

At present the only standing structure at the Roger Williams National Memorial is the Antrim-Gray shop, but indications are that cultural disturbance at the site has been extensive. Commercial buildings that occupied the site from the early nineteenth century on have been recently razed. It is probable that part of the site consists of artificial fill. Until the construction of Canal Street during the early part of the nineteenth century, the extreme western portion of the site may have been under the waters of the Moshassuck River and the salt cove into which it flowed. Filling since that time has obliterated the 1636 water line (National Park Service 1977:21).

In August 1975, further disturbance occurred when the Providence Redevelopment Authority rough-graded the area filling in cellar holes with debris and removing the topsoil. The filling in of the salt cove, construction of Canal Street and commercial buildings, and the chanelling of the Moshassuck River have all contributed to the remodeling of the contours of the Memorial area, resulting in a landform different from that at the time of settlement.
Paleoenvironmental Change

The most important natural characteristic of Roger Williams National Memorial, in terms of the prehistoric environment, is that it lies at or near the headwaters of a drowned river valley. Drowned valleys are the result of the estuatic rise of sea level which began approximately 12,000 years ago when the last continental glaciers (Wisconsin) started to recede (Thornbury 1969:117). Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the changes in the sea level elevation at the Memorial for the past 3700 years correlated to prehistoric cultural periods. The table and graph are based on the rates of sea level rise estimated by Redfield (1965) in his study of salt marsh development at Sandy Neck, Barnstable, Massachusetts. The cultural sequences are taken from Ritchie (1978)(see Figure 5).

Figure 6 is an approximation of the topography of the Memorial area at about 3500 B.P. (1550 B.C.). It is immediately apparent that the environment of the area was significantly different. Instead of being a low lying bank of a brackish river, the Memorial was nearly two kilometers (1.2 miles) north of the shoreline. The site was probably on a second or higher terrace on the east side of the confluence of two wide river valleys. The passage of 3500 years is not a vast span on an archeological scale, but it has undoubtedly seen fundamental changes in the environment around the Memorial. In the transition from an inland river valley to the border of an estuary, soils, vegetation and fauna would have changed dramatically.

In the more distant past, the rate of sea level rise is conjectural but it has been estimated that the shoreline was within twelve miles of Block Island, 130 kilometers (80 miles) southwest of Providence, at 10,000 B.P. This was probably the earliest period of prehistoric occupation in New England, and the area around the Memorial would have been low uplands at about 100 feet elevation in an essentially park-tundra environment (Braun 1974).

Although sea level change has been the most important factor in determining the local post-glacial environment, several other geomorphological processes have probably affected the Memorial surroundings: alluvial erosion and deposition, isostatic rebound, and aeolian deposition, to name a few. These processes are more difficult to identify because of recent urban land use. However, the four borings mentioned above indicate that the east side of Roger Williams National Memorial is underlain by unconsolidated river terrace deposits, while the Canal Street side is underlain with muck and peat from a salt marsh surrounding the Great Salt Cove.
Roger Williams National Memorial Park

Elevation Above Mean Sea Level Through Time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years B.P.</th>
<th>Feet Above Mean Sea Level</th>
<th>Cultural Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (1950 A.D.)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 (1550 A.D.)</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>Early Historic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 (1150 A.D.)</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>Late Woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1400 (550 A.D.)</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>Middle Woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2600 (650 B.C.)</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>Early Woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3700 (1750 B.C.)</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>Late Archaic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Susquehanna)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: At earlier dates sea level is conjectural.

*Based on Redfield 1965

Figure 3
ROGER WILLIAMS R.O.W.I.
HEIGHT ABOVE M.S.L. VS YEARS B.P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B.P.</th>
<th>H.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3700</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ H = 10 + 3.33 \times 10^{-3} \times Y_{BP} \]

\[ H = 16.6 + 10 \times 10^{-3} \times (Y_{BP} - 2000) \]

PRESENT WATER TABLE
(500 B.C.)

Figure 4
### Figure 5
Southern New England Cultural Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Culture or Tradition</th>
<th>Phase or Complex</th>
<th>Approximate Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paleo Indian</td>
<td>Eastern Clovis</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,000-9,000 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Paleo Indian</td>
<td>Plano Tradition</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,000-8,000 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Archaic</td>
<td>A. Bifurcate-base Point Tradition</td>
<td></td>
<td>ca. 8,000 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Other traditions based in</td>
<td>Leroy, Kirk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southeast Piedmont area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Archaic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Neville Complex</td>
<td>ca. 7,700 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stark Complex</td>
<td>ca. 7,000 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Middle Archaic</td>
<td>Laurentian Tradition</td>
<td>Merrimack Complex</td>
<td>ca. 6,000 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vergennes Phase</td>
<td>ca. 5,000 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Archaic</td>
<td>A. Laurentian Tradition</td>
<td>Brewerton Phase</td>
<td>ca. 4,500 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Small Stemmed Point Tradition</td>
<td>Squibnocket Complex</td>
<td>ca. 4,500 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bear Swamp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Susquehanna Tradition</td>
<td>Atlantic Phase</td>
<td>ca. 3,600 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Watertown Phase</td>
<td>ca. 3,400 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coburn Phase</td>
<td>ca. 3,200 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hawes Group (?)</td>
<td>ca. 2,750 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Orient Complex</td>
<td>ca. 3,000 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Woodland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lagoon Complex</td>
<td>ca. 2,600 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Woodland</td>
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<td>Several Unidentified</td>
<td>1,650-1,150 B.P.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complexes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Woodland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,100-400 B.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>400-350 B.P.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROVIDENCE AND VICINITY
CIRCA 3500 B.P.

Figure 6
Historic accounts provide a more detailed picture of this area of Providence prior to the extensive land modifications of the nineteenth century. When Roger Williams first came to Rhode Island, the channel of the Providence River widened into a shallow salt cove that bordered the western edge of the present Roger Williams National Memorial. Cady (1957) suggests that South Water and Canal Streets follow the original shoreline. Along the northeastern shore of the cove the mouth of the Moshassuck formed a small estuary where it emptied into the cove at Smith Street. Falls were reported to have been situated three to four miles upriver at Pawtucket. The Woonasquatucket River emptied into the cove along the western shore. Early descriptions indicate that the Woonasquatucket Valley cut through a level plateau which was inundated at times by the tide and covered with a coarse growth of thatch. The cove was bordered by broad, sandy beaches on its eastern and northern shores and by salt marshes along its western southern edge. A freshwater spring was located near the estuary of the Moshassuck River "by the edge of a strip of comparatively level land that lay between the river and the steep hillside" - College Hill (Prospect Hill) (Dorr in Bayles 1891:135).

Because of the urban nature of Roger Williams National Memorial, a few planted trees and shrubs remain on the site. Prior to settlement, however, a variety of floral and faunal species characteristic of a tidal estuarine environment were probably available. Vegetation may have consisted of hardwoods such as red or white oak, cedar, red maple and birch in low areas. The specific soil type for the Memorial area has not been determined; however, the Soil Survey Report for Providence indicates soil of the Paxton series, consisting of very stony, fine, sandy loam, 8-15% slope on the hillside east of the site (USDA 1975). Soil of this type is favorable for coniferous-hardwood forest cover as well as wild herbaceous plants, providing suitable habitat for woodland wildlife such as wild turkey, grouse, woodcock and other game birds, grey fox, raccoon, white-tailed deer, elk and black bear. The lower areas may have supported a variety of wetland floral and faunal species. Marshes bordering the cove may have contained various reeds, grasses and ferns, and have provided a suitable habitat for species of migratory waterfowl such as ducks and geese.

The most important resources available may have been shellfish and anadromous fish species abundant in a tidal estuarine environment such as existed at Roger Williams National Memorial. Dorr (in Bayles 1891:134) reported clam beds and oysters along the eastern shore of the cove and river, and noted in 1830 that the cove included a natural oyster bed and was an excellent fishing spot. Anadromous species of fish such as sturgeon, alewife, salmon and shad should have provided an abundant seasonally available food resource.
Known Prehistoric Sites

Within the vicinity of Providence, there have been a number of prehistoric sites investigated in drowned valleys (see Figures 7 and 8). Dr. Ruth Carol Barnes directed excavations at the Reed Farm Site, less than five miles due east of Roger Williams National Memorial on the Barrington River. She also worked at Bear Swamp II on the Taunton River (Ruth Carol Barnes personal communication). Just north of the Bear Swamp, an important site was excavated on Grassy Island by Johnson (1947). To the south and west of Providence, the Fields Point Site (Chapin 1924) and two sites on the Pettaquamscutt River in Narragansett have been partially studied, namely, the Green Site (Fowler 1954) and the YWCA Site (Stachiw 1978). In terms of cultural periods represented, the five sites contain major components from the Late Archaic Small Stemmed Point (ca. 4,500 B.P.) and Susquehanna traditions (ca. 3,600 B.P.) and from the Early and Middle Woodland periods.

Since comparable environmental settings were occupied by prehistoric populations, it is highly likely that the immediate area of Roger Williams National Memorial was also occupied during one or more of these periods. In fact, two quartz small stemmed points were recovered during excavations on the Old State House grounds just across North Main Street from the Memorial (Susan Gibson personal communication).

The Woodland Period saw an apparent shift from inland to coastal settlement in New England (Dincauze 1974). In the Providence River Valley the shoreline and estuarine resources were becoming established in the immediate vicinity of Roger Williams National Memorial. Woodland materials were recovered from the Squantum Woods Site in East Providence. In addition, artifacts in the Roger Williams Park Museum from unprovenienced sites on the east side of Providence show a similar chronological pattern from the latter part of the Late Archaic to Middle Woodland times.

Thus, the chances that the area now comprising Roger Williams National Memorial was occupied at one or more times in the past four millennia are very high, and the probability is increased when the location of a fresh water spring is added to the assessment. Springs were apparently very attractive locations for prehistoric settlement as evidenced by the Flat River Site in Washington, Rhode Island (Fowler 1966), and the Faulkner Spring Site in Taunton, Massachusetts (Robbins 1944). At the Smith Brook Site in Western Connecticut, 499 ceremonial Meadowood blades were recovered from the bottom of a spring, indicating that such locations may have had special non-utilitarian significance to prehistoric peoples (Bourn 1968).
RHODE ISLAND
PREHISTORIC SITES DISCUSSED IN TEXT

PROJECT AREA

1 Twin Rivers
2 Flat River
3 Field's Point
4 Squantum Woods
5 Read's Farm (Seekonk, Mass.)

Figure 7
1 Grassy Island
2 Bear Swamp II
3 Boylston Street Fish Weir
4 Bull Brook
5 Read Farm (also on RI map)
Proto and Early Historic Land Use

At the time of contact, the estuarine ecotone present at Roger Williams National Memorial would have provided an abundant resource base for either habitation or seasonal occupation. Historic descriptions report an abundance of shellfish and anadromous fish species in the salt cove and Providence-Moshassuck estuaries. The existence of an active freshwater spring would have further enhanced the site's potential.

Although early accounts of the settlement do not report Indian occupation of the site, this does not eliminate the possibility of the site having been used, at least seasonally. One important factor to consider is the plague of 1616-17 which nearly depopulated the coastal regions of southern New England. Populations from the Saco River to Narragansett Bay were reduced to one tenth or less of their former numbers (Dincauze 1974). By the time of the settlement of Providence in 1636, many of the surviving Indians had retreated to villages farther inland.

Maps of seventeenth and eighteenth century Providence indicate that several Indian trails converged in the area of Roger Williams National Memorial (Figure 9). The Pawtucket and Louquassuck trails came in from the north, joining at a point just above the spring. The Pequot Trail reportedly ran across Weybosset Hill, crossing the river to Towne Street where it joined with the Wampanoag Trail which came in from the east. The Watchemochet Trail entered the area from the southeast, and Route 44, which now includes Canal Street, was supposedly an Indian trail extending from Providence to the western part of Rhode Island and beyond to Hartford. Towne Street, or North Main Street, also was said to have been a trail running along the river to Narragansett Bay. The presence of an active fresh water spring, as well as estuarine resources, may have increased the attractiveness of the site as a stopping point between the Bay and inland sites. Both the Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers, with a portage around the falls at Pawtucket, could have served as waterways into the interior.

At contact, the Narragansett Indians occupied a large portion of the territory of Rhode Island, including the Providence area. Their major residences were reported to have been located in the eastern part of South County around Narragansett Bay with principal villages at Meshopaugue and on the island of Canonicut (Chapin 1930). Of particular interest in terms of the present study area is the relationship between Roger Williams and the Indians of both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The writings of Roger Williams and other contemporary documents, as well as biographies and Providence histories, discuss this topic in great detail. Briefly, it is generally agreed that Williams was well-liked and respected among local Indian groups. Although he was concerned with the religious instruction of the native inhabitants, his attitude towards their beliefs and dealings with them was of a more
Figure 9
tolerant nature than that of the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay. Williams
developed a close friendship with both Cononicus, Sachem of the Narra-
gansett, and his nephew Miantonomo, resulting in the purchase—or
gift—of the lands adjoining the Providence-Moshassuck and Woonasqua-
tucket Rivers. As early as the summer of 1636, he had also established
a trading post in the area of Wickford Harbor in Narragansett territory.
The product of several years of living among the Indians of Massachusetts
and Rhode Island, his Key to the Language of America, 1643, was the first
extensive vocabulary of the Indian language published in English and
contains numerous passages on the customs and lifeways of the local
groups. He wrote, "My soul's desire was to do the natives good and to
have their language, which I afterwards printed," and "God was pleased
to give me a painful patient spirit to lodge with them in their filthy
smoke holes (even while I lived at Plymouth and Salem) to gain their
tongue" (Williams 1827). Because of his knowledge of the language,
Williams often acted as mediator between the colonists and Indians.
After the burning of Providence in March 1676, Williams held conference
with the Indians at the north end of the town in a place now included in
the present study area. According to Swan, the site of the meeting was
probably a small bridge on the east bank of the Moshassuck River near
John Throckmorton's home lot, near the foot of present-day Smith Street
(Swan 1971).
HISTORIC LAND USE

Early Development of Towne Street

The land that early Providence was first settled on bordered at its western side the Great Salt Cove, a tidal marsh and inlet of the Providence River. East of the tract rose a steep hill. The beginning community spread itself out on what was a margin of fairly level land wedged between salt water and the hillside.

Providence's first roadway was Towne Street, which probably came into being in a gradual and informal way soon after settlement (Cady 1957:4). Below the hill it extended northerly beyond the Salt Cove, while to the south the path of the road was along the Providence River. Home lots of six acres were laid out along Towne Street's eastern side as well as east of the street on Prospect Hill. This land was distributed to an initial group of colonists in 1638, and the center of Providence became an area at the falls of the Moshassuck River where the town's first grist mill was located. Roger Williams received lot number fourteen in the allotment of lands, a piece of property bounded west on Towne Street, east on Hope Street, north between Howland and Church Streets and south on a line between Bowen and Howland Streets. This location put Williams a short distance east of today's National Park Service lands.

Although there was considerable activity by 1650 along the eastern side of Towne Street, lands at the west of the street remained vacant for more than half a century (Figure 10). As Henry Dorr, a nineteenth century historian of Providence, noted, "During the first sixty years, the original conception of the Towne Street remained unexecuted. As we have thus far viewed it, it had but one side. In modern phrase it was a shore road" (Dorr 1882:93).

It would be impossible to correlate the bounds of the Memorial with the layout of seventeenth century Providence since too few landmarks were present to define it accurately; but by 1738 the tract was bounded on the east by Towne Street, on the west by the Cove waters, on the north by Smith Street and on the south by the corner of Meeting Street which did not extend across Towne Street to the Cove.

The first available plat map of the northern section of Towne Street is dated 1713 and shows that by that time the ROWI land been divided into lots and included a town common beyond the northern boundary of which was Scott's Spring (Figure 11). A parcel north of lot eighty-four had been left for the laying of timber, and two lots already had individual owners: number eighty-five belonged to "Whitman" and number eighty-six was owned by Major Dexter. In an article titled "The Cove Lands and Proprietors Rights," a Providence Journal writer stated that much of the shore lands were left to public use in the early eighteenth century as they were not desirable to those purchasing
Figure 10

A Map of the Providence Home Lots showing Owners and Houses erected 1636-1650.
lands. The presence of a common and public lands for timber each located on the shore west of Towne Street suggests that this may have been the case.

The major feature on the property in 1713 was Scott's Spring, a fresh water source thought to have been named for and associated with Richard Scott, who lived on the east side of Towne Street almost directly across from the spring site. The name of Roger Williams, as the founder of Providence, is also associated with the spring.

Land records indicate that the first actual settlement within the ROWI boundaries was in 1717 when Gabriel Bernon, a Huguenot emigré, built a house on the spring lot (Providence Preservation Society 1960:8). Bernon did not buy the property on which he had built his house until 1721. However, before that time no individual had owned the spring lot; it remained town property until Bernon's purchase. Bernon was sold the spring lands "... with all privileges excepting only to the inhabitants of said town free liberty to pass and repass to and from the spring at the bottom of the hill within said land which liberty is reserved for the inhabitants to fetch water at said spring forever" (Providence Preservation Society 1960:12-13). The spring on the site of the ROWI may well have been an important social center in eighteenth century Providence, for if residents did not have private water sources, it was inevitable that they would utilize the town spring and there come into frequent contact with neighbors.

There is a gap of thirty-three years between the 1713 plat map and the next known map of the area, dated 1746 (Figure 12). By this date eight houses stood on the lands bounded southerly by Haymarket Street and northerly by Smith Street. Also included is the first indication of commercial activity on the site - Bowen's warehouse on lot eighty. There is at least one indication that the map may not be entirely accurate, however, for it shows Gabriel Bernon's house located one lot south of the spring site, whereas according to land deeds Bernon's house stood directly on the spring lot (Providence Preservation Society 1960:12-13). The Cady map of 1750 shows no additional houses within the Memorial area and only one change in ownership (Figure 13). In 1746 the lot just south of Smith Street had been the location of John Whipple's house but four years later was evidently occupied by Antrim's distill house instead. The presence of the rum distillery is indicative of continued commercial growth on the west side of Towne Street. However, finding nearly ten houses on the west side of Providence's most important roadway allows us to dispel a long standing notion concerning early

Bernon was instrumental in the coming of the Episcopal Church to Providence. He encouraged the visits of Newport clergy and helped to raise the funds for the building of King's Church in 1722 on the northeast corner of Church and Towne Streets.
Figure 12: Plat of Towne Street, 1746
Location of ROWI (P.P.L.)
PROVIDENCE
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Scale

Drawn by John Hutchins Cady

Figure 13
development on the Towne Street, namely that residences along Towne Street had been confined entirely to the eastern side and that the commercial concerns of Towne Street merchants, such as wharves and warehouses, were found on the west side waterfront (Cady 1957:19). The evidence we have collected indicates that those owning property on the west side frequently built residences there.

Gangways

With the settlement of Towne Street's western side came the need for passage by landowners and, perhaps, the public to the waterfront as well as to areas between Towne Street and the water. In setting out lots on the west side, the proprietors established gangways (generally described as a passage or way into, through or out of an enclosed place) approximately twelve feet in width. Gangways usually appeared between every two properties and were publicly owned. It is difficult to determine precisely when gangways were laid out or came into use in Providence. They may have been provided for in the first allotment of lands in 1638 but are first clearly shown on the 1713 plat map dividing every two lots. Haymarket and Smith Streets had definitely been surveyed and laid out by 1738 (City of Providence 1895:79), and by 1803, when the first map of Providence drawn from survey was produced, Lonsdale, North Court, Crockett, Otis, Cady and Bowen Streets were also in existence. Above Bowen Street a large tract of land remained uncult by roadways as far north as Smith Street. Describing the gangways in general, the nineteenth century historian Henry Dorr wrote, "The narrow lanes or alleys on the west side of Towne Street were, in their earliest days, inadequate and inconvenient. Such as they were the adjoining owners were only too well inclined to claim their exclusive use." (Dorr 1882: 158-159). By 1749 the private use of these public ways had become unbearable to the proprietors who also noted that the lanes had become common depositories for rubbish (Reed 1965:7). In September of that year, a committee from the proprietors approached the town council to ask that the gangways be cleared of trash and made open for future public use (City of Providence 1895:79).

The Schoolhouse Lot

Early in the development of Providence, the proprietors became aware of important civic responsibilities which required some action. Thus, in the spring of 1663, six acres of meadow lands as well as one hundred acres of upland within the town bounds were set aside to support the activities of a school. There is no indication of where these lands for the school's maintenance were located or where the schoolhouse they maintained may have been. It is on the 1746 plat map that property referred to as "schoolhouse land" is first seen. The parcel seems to have been double the size of the average house lot and bounded on the south by the lane which would become Haymarket Street and at the north by lot seventy-four, above which was the lane later known as Canal Avenue. A nineteenth century source describes the
schoolhouse lot specifically as having been on the west side of Towne Street at the northeast corner of Haymarket Street, but admits to having found no record of when this land was set off for educational purposes. In September of 1764 a warrant was passed at a meeting of the proprietors requesting Nicholas Brown and Jabez Brown, Jr. to sell the schoolhouse lot, "together with the old schoolhouse thereon" (Providence Journal 1877). Money from the sale would be used "towards purchasing a more convenient lot and building a public schoolhouse in the town of Providence" (Providence Journal 1877). At some unknown date, then, land was set apart for the use of a school and a schoolhouse built on it, no longer serving that purpose after 1764.

The Gaol Lot

The schoolhouse had as a neighbor for a number of years the county jail. In 1752 Stephen Hopkins suggested to the proprietors "... that the flats in the Salt River, being the west end of the lot that was formerly granted for the use of a school, whereon the town schoolhouse in said Providence standeth, to be a proper place, and might be improved for that so necessary a use" (Providence Journal 1877). Hopkins' plan was acceptable and it was voted that, "The western end of said lot be allowed for the use of said gaol, always keeping and reserving the whole front of said lot and eighty feet back from the main street, for the use of the town school" (Providence Journal 1877). The land donated by the proprietors to the state was accepted, and before the jail was constructed, fill was added to the land. The jail was put up in 1753 and utilized until 1828, standing in the general area where Haymarket Street and the later Canal Street met.

Beginnings of Urban Growth, 1750-1775

Judging from Chace's 1770 map, the section of Towne Street we are studying had undergone considerable growth since the middle of the century (Figure 14). Approximately eighteen buildings are present on the western side between Meeting and Smith Streets at this later date, an increase of ten structures since 1750. The source providing importantly detailed information about the area's development is a map drawn from memory in 1834 by T.M. Sumner (Figure 15). Sumner sketched the northern parts of Benefit and Towne Streets as he remembered them appearing in 1775-1777, the years he resided in Providence. Sumner's recollections are consistent with the information found on reconstructed maps of the area.

The important aspect of the Sumner map is the inclusion of buildings within a parcel of land and an explanation of how lands were utilized. The lots from Towne Street to the river are long and narrow with a house fronting the street and, not uncommonly, a garden behind it. Typical components of a more heavily developed parcel are exemplified by the property marked Allen's Wharf (between Cady and Bowen Streets) which included besides a house, a distillery, cooper's shop and wharf.
PLATE III
OWNERS OR OCCUPANTS
OF BUILDINGS
IN THE CENTRAL PART
OF THE
TOWN OF PROVIDENCE R.I.
1770
Henry R. Chase.

Figure 14
Figure 15: ROWI in 1775-1777 as sketched by T.M. Sumner, 1834

(P.R.A.)
All of these structures probably did not belong to one individual, yet the complex as a whole remains indicative of the combined residential and commercial pursuits carried out on mid-eighteenth century properties. In total, Sumner includes one tavern, a jail, one barn and one shed, three stores, eighteen houses, four gardens, four wharves and four shops on this section of the west side of Towne Street.

These years between 1742 and 1776 have been spoken of as ones of constant population growth for Providence and a time when increased commercial development brought the town center to the area of the Weybosset Bridge from the northern section of town where our interests lie. The community of Providence was no longer the agricultural settlement that had first clustered around the grist mill. Providence's primary industry was now water-bourne commerce and the active heart of the town followed the location of greatest industry. Near what later became Market Square, the deep water of the Providence River accommodated ships transporting goods to and from the establishments of the major merchants. Even as late at 1760, however, Providence lacked some of the qualities essential to a successful port of commerce. Unlike the region around Boston, areas inland of Providence were only sparsely settled and never could match the demands of the port for commodities such as livestock, timber and lime. Conversely, a small country population also meant that Providence did not become a major center for the importation of goods until the last half of the eighteenth century.

One of the earliest businesses active on the west side of Towne Street was William Antrim's distillery which Cady's mid-eighteenth century map locates on Towne Street where it is crossed by Smith Street. Antrim distilled rum was one of the commodities used in the maintenance of New England's Triangular Trade. From Providence to the West Indies would be sent locally available goods - timber, farm produce, hoops and staves. West Indian molasses and sugar were gotten in return and in Providence made by distillers like Antrim into rum. Of poor quality, the rum would then be taken to the African Gold Coast where it was traded for black slaves. Antrim remained in the distillery business until 1764 when he declared bankruptcy due to losses at sea. At least one other distillery house operated in the eighteenth century in the area of the ROWI. T.M. Sumner's map includes a still house on Allen's Wharf, and Zachariah Allen is known to have had a sugar house on the property in 1798 (sugar house may have been another phrase meaning distillery or perhaps connoted a place for storing materials used in the distilling process).

A twentieth century source notes, "There were six distilleries located in the compact part of town in 1770 along the river front with droves of hogs kept in the cellars to dispose of the refuse grains" (Reed 1965:38). Zachariah Allen's wharf and distill house were probably busy with industry in this period, for fully loaded vessels returning from the Indies (presumably with sugar and molasses) could sail up into the Cove as far as the base of Bowen Street, the site of Allen's business (Cady 1957:39).
The waterfront properties became increasingly valued and utilized as the eighteenth century progressed, so that by 1760 tradesmen new to Providence settled across the Providence River on the city's Weybosset side. Mercantile houses, shopkeepers and early settling residents monopolized much of the water frontage on the East Side, and those lands remaining were expensive to purchase. It is estimated that by 1775 nearly fifty wharves reached out into the Cove and the Providence River. In the short span beginning just below Haymarket Street and ending at Smith Street, four wharves were noted by Sumner as present during the years 1775-1777. Since Summer drew his map from memory, more wharves may have been located on the parcel. Outbuildings stood on three of the wharves and crafts were performed out of them. Hall's Wharf contained sheds and a workshop, Pachard's Wharf a store, and on Allen's Wharf were both a cooper's shop and distill house. Just such a pattern of waterfront development was also observed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where maintaining craft shops on wharves allowed "... for the craftsman's direct control in obtaining raw materials and marketing finished goods by water transport" (Pendery 1977:30). As the cooper's shop and distill house on the Providence waterfront both produced goods used in the Triangle Trade, such an observation seems to apply here.

The Revolutionary and Post-War Era

During the entire Revolutionary Era from 1770 to 1785, the business of merchants in Providence survived and in some cases thrived. It was the operations of tradesmen, the majority of whom conducted business on Providence's Weybosset side, which were interrupted by revolution. Almost exclusively, the names of tradesmen appear on the enlistment rolls of The Regimental List of Rhode Island. We know something about several businessmen who carried on commerce at the west side of Towne Street. Darius Session's shop near Smith Street was in operation during the war and sold "... milk, cheese, choice French brandy, Holland geneva and many other articles" (Coyle 1960:50). One block north and west of the old State House stood the American Coffee House of Richard Olney. In business both before and after the Revolution, Olney also dealt in seeds and grain. The stage for Boston is known to have departed from Olney's Inn, at least during 1767, leaving every Tuesday and returning two days later. In the years 1775-1777 an unidentified store across from the State House, a shop on the south corner of Allen's Lane and North Main, and Sanders Pitman's blacksmith shop, just previous to Church Street at North Main, also did business according to Sumner's map.

A final glimpse of Providence in the war years can be gotten from the 1783 account of buildings in town. Four structures described in the booklet were within the ROWI lands. Mary Tripe owned a "... long, old house" (Rider 1783), the location of which is found on the 1798 map. This structure, built by Gabriel Bernon in 1717, was one of the first buildings constructed on the west side of northern Towne Street. Sanders Pitman had "... an old, small house and stable" (Rider 1783) at the same time of the account. In 1798 he is found at the same
Figure 16: Providence in 1790 by John Fitch

(R.I.H.S.)
location with an unfinished house. This building probably replaced the older home. Richard Olney, proprietor of the American Coffee House and a grain dealer, was the owner of a "... good house, two stables and wharf" (Rider 1783), properties useful to an innkeeper. At the very south end of the ROWI land, John Smith, who headed a wholesale-retail staples and liquor concern, was in possession of a "... house, wharf and buildings, all good" (Rider 1783).

Chace's 1798 map shows dramatically the great growth in the area of the ROWI. At the middle of the eighteenth century there had been nine structures on these properties; in 1798 approximately forty-two were standing (Figure 17). When broken down into building types, eight barns, five shops, four wharves, one distillery and twenty-four houses are noted. An interesting aspect of this development is the fact that ten of the twenty-four houses were inhabited by tenants. Three of the five shops and two of the six barns were also rented. These statistics are important reminders of the amount of speculation in land and buildings which occurred during the Colonial Period. Although the west side of Towne Street had traditionally been thought of as the near-exclusive domain of the maritime trade, the area we have viewed retained a primarily residential character through the eighteenth century. Wharves, craft shops and distill houses were present in back of the housing and along the water, but commercial activity did not dominate the northern sector of Towne Street.

The Period 1800-1825

By the year 1800 the kind of maritime commerce carried out along the waterfront from below Haymarket Street to Smith Street was defined. In that time, wrote a nineteenth century historian, "The West India trade had its shipping headquarters in the Providence River, to the north of Transit Street, while still further to the north, even to Smith Street, the coastwise traffic mainly found wharfrage" (Greene 1882: 69). The work of coastal vessels was important during Providence's maritime era, for these boats gathered cargoes to be exported and delivered them to the upper Towne Street wharves where they were held. As well, the vessels made short trips during which imported goods as well as those produced locally were distributed to coastal American markets. Wharves on the ROWI lands probably participated in this trade until the 1860's when Providence ceased to operate as an international port, and coastal transport moved to cities with active foreign fleets, such as Boston and New York.

In the early nineteenth century most of the events which affected the western side of North Main Street would occur along the Cove Front, but in 1805 action taken by the city government assured Towne Street a place in Providence's history for that year. The name of the Towne Street was changed at that time, and later in the century an indignant local historian would comment upon the act, "It may well be regretted that an old name of a century and a half's duration should
have been superseded by those of 'North' and 'South' 'Main' Streets -
two as tasteless and prosaic titles as municipal perversity could devise"  
(Dorr 1882:242). Five years later the other major event in the vicinity  
of North Main Street during the early nineteenth century occurred. Just  
opposite ROWI, at the corner of Church and North Main Streets, St. John's  
Episcopal Church was erected on the location of the original Episcopal  
Church previously demolished. Some sources have suggested that much of  
the building material for the new church, including stone and timber,  
were transported to the site via the waters of the Cove and left off on  
the waterfront lands west of North Main Street. It is likely that  
construction goods were delivered in this way, for wharf facilities were  
already available and using the overland method would have made the  
task much more difficult. Finally, the spring lot which had been first  
purchased and built upon by Gabriel Bernon was sold by his heirs to  
Nehemiah Dodge in 1816. Dodge razed the original Bernon home and con-  
structed a sizable brick home on the lot. The water from the spring  
(known variously as Scott's, Roger Williams' and Tripe's Spring) was  
piped to a pump on the north side of Allen's Lane and remained public  
domain.

During the rebuilding of Weybosset Bridge, which occurred in 1792,  
the town decided to build a street north of the bridge along the  
eastern shore of the Salt Cove. By the turn of the century land had  
been filled and a roadway made as far as Steeple Street. The project  
started up again in 1814 when owners of waterfront property above  
Steeple Street were allowed to build out the western edge of their  
lands so that North Water Street could be extended to the bridge at  
Smith Street. The project had been devised with some forethought, for  
steps from the street to the Cove were installed at intervals to provide  
access to water in case of fire. After the granting of several exten-  
sions, the roadway was completed in 1825 at a width of forty feet with  
a retaining wall on its western side. It was officially known as North  
Water Street.

The Blackstone Canal and Related Developments

In 1825 Providence merchants began an effort to solve a problem  
which had plagued them since the preceding century. In the mid-1800's  
commercial concerns were never supplied with sufficient goods for  
export, such as lumber and livestock, because the inland towns were  
not heavily settled and hence could not meet such a need. Since that  
time the hinterland had grown, but no inexpensive system existed to  
transport raw goods to the coast. The Blackstone Canal, begun in 1825  
and completed three years later, was conceived to eliminate that  
problem (Figure 20). Traveling forty-four miles from tidewater at  
Market Square, Providence, to Worcester, the canal opened up the  
Blackstone Valley to trade and carried inland cotton (for the consider-  
able Blackstone Valley textile industry), salt, flour and molasses in  
exchange for goods such as cordwood and even coal. The Blackstone was  
not entirely a dug canal, and in some locations mill ponds and portions
Figure 18: Daniel Anthony's map of Providence, 1803

(R.I.H.S.)
Figure 19: A detail from Alvan Fisher's painting of Providence from across the cove. The ROWI district runs along the shore at far left.

(R.I.H.S.)
of the Moshassuck River were used as links in the waterway's path. This method of construction more than any other factor led to the eventual demise of the canal.

The building of the canal brought many changes to the waterfront area from Lonsdale Street north to Smith Street beginning with the completion of North Water Street in the year canal construction began. Although the precise date is not known, at some time during the canal's construction a causeway was built across the Cove beginning at the western edge of North Water Street between Haymarket and Canal Streets and ending near the Gaspee Street Bridge. A tidal lock was incorporated into the eastern end of the causeway, and waters above the span were used by the Blackstone Canal Company as a boat basin. Maps and city directories give us little information on how the canal's presence affected the lands now included in ROWI, and only detailed deed research would allow us to reconstruct the property in that time with accuracy. The consensus of historical sources has been that the waterway stimulated the further development of wharves and warehouses already operating in the area. At the western side of North Water Street new wharves were built, and east of the roadway warehouses stored goods and materials ready for passage into the Blackstone Valley or having just come from that region.

Forty years after the operation of the waterway, the Cove and boat basin as they had existed were described by an unidentified newspaper:

When the canal first started, the stream where the upper portion of Canal Street now is was some 300 feet wide. The water spread from Canal Street quite a distance beyond the present railroad tracks. Where the park now is, the old State Prison and the Worcester Freight Depot, all was water. Where the canal reached what is now Smith Street it narrowed somewhat, and from that point on there was not much difference in the width of the canal, strictly speaking. (Anonymous 1860) (Figure 21).

Anecdotally, the same article tells about the transport of more than trade goods from North Water Street wharves to the Blackstone Valley. Wharf rats traveled on canal boats up into the country and soon infested stables, barns and pig pens becoming a health problem for farmers.

By 1828 the name of the roadway which hugged the eastern shore of the Cove had been changed from North Water Street to Canal Street and improvements were being made along its length. Apparently those owning lands bounded by Canal and North Main Streets in the area between Market Square and Allen's Lane were troubled by water settling on their lands. Perhaps the water accumulated there after heavy rains or when the Cove flooded nearby streets due to severe storms. In any event, property owners were requested to fill their lots to a height which would allow water to run over Canal Street and into the Cove. Towards this same end, a committee recommended that public streets and gangways
Figure 20: The Blackstone Canal at Market Square, Providence, ca. 1830, just south of ROWI.

(R.I.H.S.)
Map
OF THE CENTRAL PART
OF THE
CITY OF PROVIDENCE
IN THE YEAR
1832

Figure 21
between North Main Street and Canal Street be treated in the same manner. We do not know whether either of these actions took place.

The Blackstone Canal, relying on mill ponds and the Moshassuck River for part of its course, was never a financial success. In summer months drought made these sections of the canal unusable and during winter, ice kept the boats from operating. The canal system was maintained for over ten years and fell into disuse when the Providence and Worcester Railroad began operations in 1847 efficiently serving the same region as had the canal. The presence of a large rail system necessitated lands for railroad facilities, and in 1846 the Providence City Council granted the Providence and Worcester Railroad permission to construct an elliptical stone retaining wall in which to contain Cove Waters (Figure 22). Areas formerly under water were filled in and built upon by the railway, which erected buildings and laid down tracks. The waters of the Cove were taken from the Canal Street waterfront by the railroad work, and all that remained to border the street was the constrained path of the Moshassuck River, now bordered on its western side by filled land. The wharves of the Cove's northeastern shore which had served the maritime trade would no longer be of use.

The Period 1850-1900

With the closing of the Blackstone Canal and Providence's demise as an international port, the character of the city's oldest part - the East side - was set. From the mid-nineteenth century to this day it has served as a residential, cultural and educational center, home to Providence's earliest churches, as well as colleges, museums and libraries. The steepness of College Hill rising above the waterfront served as a barrier to serious industry in this area, for the hillside made large scale transportation a difficult task. Only along the level slip of land by the Providence and Moshassuck Rivers did any important East Side commerce remain.

The seat of business had shifted across the Providence River to the west side, known as Weybosset - a process begun by tradesmen in the late eighteenth century. Retail and industrial enterprises were numerous there and on filled lands stood the station house and buildings of the Providence and Worcester Railroad. Not unexpectedly, Weybosset had become the seat of Providence government as well.

An 1857 map depicts the west side of North Main Street as fairly built up by the mid-nineteenth century (Figure 23). The lands fronting both Canal Street and North Main Street were in almost all cases built upon, while the property further back from both streets was largely vacant. All in all, probably two thirds of the land within the ROWI parcel was developed. Judging from city directory listings for the period, the North Main Street area was a residential working and middle-class neighborhood. A number of widowed women maintained homes there interspersed with grocery merchants and craftsmen involved
Figure 22: The Providence Cove in 1846, watercolor by E.L. Peckham. Lower Canal Street is at right. (R.I.H.S.)
Figure 23: The Cove converted Providence in 1857.
in trades such as shoemaking and smithing. It is important to remember that European immigration was changing the character of Providence's population in the 1850's, so that among the older Yankee families could now be found people newly arrived from northern and central Europe. In the North Main Street and Canal Street locality individuals born in Ireland, Germany, Scotland and England were taking up residence.

Perhaps because of the residential nature of North Main Street, many civic improvements took place in the district between the middle and the end of the nineteenth century. The changes began when, in 1855, North Main was made sixty feet wide from Market Square to Smith Street, indicating that the street was an important roadway under constant use. The First District police station came to the area in 1861 and was located at the corner of Canal and Haymarket Streets on the site of the former jail. This three-story brick building served for some time as Providence police headquarters as well as a district station. When a mounted police squad was created to operate out of the First District in 1879, stables were constructed near the station. In the late 1890's the building was abandoned by the city police and was put to other uses until it was razed in 1950.

Other improvements occurred during the latter half of the nineteenth century in this part of the city. A fire station built in 1863 joined the First District police station on Haymarket Street. By 1867 the engines used by the station were steam powered and Providence fire fighters no longer were forced to work with the ancient hand machines. Providence streets continued to be maintained and enlarged toward the late nineteenth century, and in 1875 North Main Street was again widened (perhaps in preparation for the horse drawn cars which traveled on North Main Street in the early 1880's). At that time, Nehemiah Dodge's large brick house was moved back to the new street line placing it directly over the spring. Water from the spring, which had previously been piped to the north side of Allen's Lane, was now sent to a Canal Street pump where a watering trough was found.

The growth of milling and manufacturing houses along the Moshassuck River in the nineteenth century inevitably affected the quality of the river water which flowed through the Blackstone Valley. Initially used to power mill machinery, the Moshassuck later became a dumping place for industrial wastes. This inevitably affected the environment of Canal Street along which the river flowed upon reaching Providence. Examining the Moshassuck River in Providence in 1880, the City Superintendent of Health wrote:

The water of the river is polluted and rendered exceedingly foul and offensive before it reaches the limits of the city, and gives off an offensive odor of sulphureted hydrogen gas, like very foul sewers. It is certain that much filth is turned into the river in the city (Snow 1868).
Figure 24: Looking north over the ROWI property, before 1873.

(R.I.H.S.)

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Figure 25a (above): Looking north from Canal Street before 1873. (R.I.H.S.)
Figure 25b (below): View up North Main Street before 1873. (R.I.H.S.)
Figure 26: ROWI lands in 1875 from the Hopkins Atlas of Providence.

(R.I.H.S.)

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Although the area of the Cove which bordered upper Canal Street had been filled in the 1840's, the existing Cove Basin to the south was still of considerable importance to those who resided or did business in that locale (Figure 27). The basin was said to be a repository for all kinds of domestic trash as well as sewage from nearby buildings and a breeding ground for black flies which were "... often so numerous as to cover the sides of buildings and blacken the walls of rooms at some distance from the Cove" (Snow 1868). The problems of sewage and trash were somewhat alleviated by the tidal flow into the basin which twice a day washed out the detritus. However, in another important respect, the Cove was extremely beneficial to Canal Street merchants and residents. Hurricanes and gales blowing into Providence from the south and south-west had always pushed high water up into the increasingly narrow Providence harbor causing flooding on both the East and Weybosset sides of the city. The Cove, and later the Cove Basin, consistently saved Providence from enormous losses of life and property by providing a broad expanse in which flood waters could be held. Storms in 1784, 1807, 1869 and 1886 were damaging to the Providence waterfront and to property on upper Canal and North Main Streets, but the effects of these storms would have been much greater without the Cove.

The City of Providence had considered filling the Cove Basin for the purposes of sanitation in 1868, but Health Superintendent Edwin Snow's defense of the Cove as an aid in storm control effectively stopped such action. Almost two decades later the Cove's usefulness again became an issue in Providence. A pamphlet published in 1887 reiterated the Cove Basin's effectiveness as a reservoir for storm water but also championed the Cove as a possible park location. Although a Cove park or promenade had existed at the rim of the Basin since at least 1857, the present plan was to create an island park on the Cove Basin connected by bridges to the Basin's perimeter. The proposed park was never constructed, but the reasoning used to defend the importance of park land in urban areas was sound and today is applicable to the creation of the Roger Williams National Memorial on lands just north and east of the former Cove Basin.

The slight good effected by fine parks placed in or towards the outskirts of a city is as nothing compared with what may be carried out by retaining and opening up interior open spaces, squares or avenues and improving them. Their value greatly depends on the convenience with which they are used, those being most valuable, other things being equal, through which the greatest number of people may be induced to pass without severe hindrance or inconvenience. A single acre of trees or grass in the heart of a city which may be reached by a few minutes walk when the labors of the day are over, is of more value than an area of 100 acres at such a distance as it can only be visited on an occasional holiday (City of Providence 1887).
Figure 27: View of the Cove Basin from Prospect Terrace before 1870.

(R.I.H.S.)
By the end of the nineteenth century the ROWI property was quite heavily developed. Whereas in 1857 one third of this land had been open, by 1895 there was very little vacant space. Canal Street had made a logical transition from the days when it served as center for the warehousing of goods traded on the Blackstone Canal. Much of the area retained a commercial quality, and warehouses along Canal Street now housed wholesale businesses primarily dealing in meat, produce, hay, grain and liquors. Companies of this kind would remain on Canal Street until urban redevelopment brought about land use changes in the late 1960's. North Main Street in the last decade of the nineteenth century remained the sort of neighborhood it had been during mid-century, home to a varied mix of working and middle-class families. Laborers, engineers, dentists and carpenters all lived along what had been Providence's first street. Perhaps the greatest change in fifty years' time was the number of individuals living in the area. The population had grown dramatically, accommodated in part by an increased number of boarding houses operating along North Main Street, some of which housed as many as ten persons.

The Twentieth Century

The year 1900 was marked by the loss of the last visible remains of the public's right to the water of the North Main Street spring. The pump which had been set up on Canal Street in 1875 for the use of townspeople was taken down and the water piped to a Canal Street sewer. Six years later, however, a plaque commemorating the history of the spring and identifying its location was attached to the brick house which had been built by Nehemiah Dodge and which now belonged to the Seagrave family.

Two new groups of immigrants, Armenians and a substantial number of Russian Jews, moved into the North Main Street area during the first twenty years of this century. The district, already thickly settled, began to show signs of congestion and was described as a Russian Jewish colony with strong ethnic cohesiveness. There were fewer middle-class professionals than in the previous century, and instead, the area was occupied primarily by laborers and merchants. These groups made no incursions into the wholesale provisions and produce houses on Canal Street, however, for businesses there remained in the hands of proprietors who had owned them in the previous century.

In 1921 the property on which the North Main Street spring was located came under new ownership and the Nehemiah Dodge house was razed. Another building was constructed over the spring and this structure, along with the spring lot, was purchased by Judge Jerome Hahn in 1930. After demolition of the building, Hahn deeded the spring lot to the City of Providence in his father's memory hoping that a park would be built there. The Hahn Memorial, designed by Norman Isham and opened in 1933, stands on the site today and includes a granite well thought to contain the spring associated with Richard Scott and Roger Williams. In 1946 the Episcopal Diocese of Providence
donated a fifth of an acre of land just north of the Hahn Memorial (formerly Gabriel Bernon's home lot). Given in memory of Gabriel Bernon, who had helped to gather Providence's first Anglican Church, the wooded property became known as the Bernon Grove.

Few changes came to North Main Street and Canal Street as the twentieth century progressed. The dense settlement of Russian Jews on North Main Street dispersed to some extent, and a number of businesses opened, giving the street a greater residential-commercial mix than it had had previously.

In 1958 when the house survey of the College Hill Demonstration Grant Project was carried out and buildings within the future ROWI were reviewed as to age, architectural merit and physical condition, approximately three post-Colonial, four Greek Revival, eleven Victorian and fourteen twentieth century structures were identified on the Memorial lands. The high percentage of Victorian and twentieth century buildings on the property indicates that urban renewal and development had occurred there frequently from the late nineteenth century onward.

The Providence Redevelopment Authority began to acquire properties within the bounds of Roger Williams National Memorial in February of 1969 and by October of that year had purchased and condemned most properties in the parcel. Many buildings were demolished soon after coming under PRA ownership. The foundations of buildings having basements were destroyed to two feet below grade, and holes were made in the basement floors for drainage purposes. Building rubble was then dumped into the foundations. The Providence Redevelopment Authority completed work on the property in August 1975 when building debris was removed and fill trucked onto the site and rough graded. The United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, assumed ownership of the land for Roger Williams National Memorial in December of 1974.

The history of the Roger Williams National Memorial property has been one of continuity in the character of the landform and in the activities which took place there. Just east of Towne Street, the steep slope of Prospect (later College) Hill was cut down over a period of two centuries in order to make the East Side more accessible. To the southwest the broad Providence Cove was filled in during the late nineteenth century to provide growing space for the city's center as well as new transportation systems. At the western edge of ROWI, both the upper Cove and Moshassuck River were contained during the middle of the last century to form the boat basin for a new canal system. The ROWI land has grown slightly at the west side where shore lands were filled out to accommodate the extension of Canal Street, but as in the eighteenth century, there is still the possibility of flooding in the area when a heavy storm blows into Providence harbor from the south.
Figure 28: The lower ROWI lands taken from the Sanborn Atlas of Providence, 1921.

(R.I.H.S.)
Figure 29: The upper ROWI lands taken from the Sanborn Atlas of Providence, 1921.
If the upper North Main and Canal Street district has lost any quality over the last two centuries, it is that of political and economic importance. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the focus of town politics was here at the north end of town, where residences were interspersed with the businesses at an early date and Rhode Island's State House was erected in 1762. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, Providence's commercial core had shifted farther south on North Main Street to the area of Market Square. As politics seemed to follow commerce, the concerns of government moved to the Square also and later crossed the Providence River when Weybosset became the city's main business district.

Despite a loss of political and economic importance, the essential character of the Canal and North Main Street neighborhood has changed relatively little through time. In the eighteenth century long narrow lots ran from Towne Street to the waterfront, occupied by a string of buildings usually beginning with a house or store with garden, along Towne Street, followed by sheds or craft shops, and finally a wharf, and possibly a warehouse on the waterfront. From that time to the middle of the present century, houses and shops were intermingled along North Main Street, while Canal Street served as a warehousing row for many different kinds of goods. By the early nineteenth century, the long narrow lots had been subdivided so that North Main Street and Canal Street properties often had different owners.

The warehouses on Canal Street have been serviced by four different modes of transport. Sailing vessels, canal boats, horse-drawn carts and trucks have all taken part in the movement of articles such as rum, hay and beef to and from Providence. At the very edge of the residential East Side of Providence, the upper North Main Street area has always been an oddity, for as nowhere else in this part of the city, commercial and residential life have always coexisted there.

PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC LAND USE SUMMARY

Roger Williams National Memorial (ROWI) is located in Providence, Rhode Island, near the mouth of the Providence River at the head of Narragansett Bay. The Memorial consists of 4.56 acres of low-lying, level land at the base of the western slope of College Hill on Providence's East Side. ROWI is bordered on the north by Smith Street, south by Lonsdale Street, east by North Main Street, and west by Canal Street.

In the seventeenth century when Europeans first settled in Providence, numerous Indian trails converged in the vicinity of ROWI. One of these trails followed the course of present day North Main Street along the eastern edge of the Memorial. At that time most of Rhode Island was occupied by the Narragansett Indians, a branch of the Algonquin language family whose main village was located near present-day Charlestown, Rhode Island. Roger Williams himself was much
respected by the Narragansetts and their neighbors. His *Key to the Language of America* remains a major source of information concerning Narragansett language and customs.

The prehistory of the Providence area around Roger Williams National Memorial is very poorly known. This is probably because so much building has occurred that most of the sites have been destroyed. However, prehistoric artifacts dating to about 4,000 years ago have been found as near as the Old State House grounds just across North Main Street from ROWI. The most important characteristic of the Memorial property in terms of its attraction to ancient occupants would have been the major environmental changes that have taken place in the Providence River valley.

Sea levels have been rising ever since the last glaciers that covered southern New England started to recede some ten to twelve thousand years ago. The present day site of ROWI has changed from an inland river valley to a low lying estuary over this time period, so there has been a succession of environments and natural resources which would have attracted people to the area. Freshwater fish, aquatic vegetation and upland game would have been important in early times. Later saltwater fish, shellfish and migratory waterfowl would have replaced the earlier inland flora and fauna, and the contact zones of fresh and salt water in estuaries are one of the most productive environments in southern New England. Many prehistoric sites have been found throughout the region in just such settings.

Perhaps the most interesting resource at ROWI was the freshwater spring. Apparently springs were very important to prehistoric people in New England. At a site in Connecticut, 499 finely chipped stone blades were found at the bottom of a spring as if some sort of offering had been made there.

Providence was first settled by Europeans in 1636 when Roger Williams and a small band of followers seeking freedom from the strict religious orthodoxy of the Massachusetts Bay Colony established a settlement at the head of Narragansett Bay. The home lots of the first settlers, six acres each, were laid out in long narrow strips extending back from the eastern side of the "Towne Street" (present-day North Main Street), opposite what is now Roger Williams National Memorial. The inhabitants drew water from a freshwater spring located on ROWI land. This spring was variously known as Roger Williams' Spring and Scott's Spring (after Richard Scott, who owned the lot directly opposite).

The ROWI area itself was not occupied at first because the land was low lying and wet. The western edge of the Memorial was actually submerged beneath the waters of the Great Salt Cove, the uppermost arm of Narragansett Bay. Because the land was located so close to the original center of town, however, it was gradually filled in and a variety of shops, houses, wharves and public buildings were erected
upon it during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The first house to be built within the bounds of ROWI was that of Gabriel Bernon, a prominent French Protestant emigré, in 1717. Bernon's house was located on the spring lot, and when he purchased the land from the town, the latter reserved the right for the citizens of Providence "to pass and repass to and from the spring at the bottom of the hill within said land which liberty is reserved for the inhabitants to fetch water at said spring forever."

By the middle of the eighteenth century, another half dozen houses had been built along the western side of Towne Street on ROWI land. The beginnings of commercial activity could also be seen in the presence of Bowen's Warehouse and Antrim's Distill House.

With the settlement of Towne Street's western side came the need for passage by landowners and the public to the waterfront area. In laying out lots between Towne Street and the Cove, the town proprietors provided for a number of "gangways" usually between every two properties. The gangways were publicly owned and later became streets such as Haymarket, Smith, Lonsdale, North Court, Crockett, Otis, Cady and Bowen. In the eighteenth century the gangways were narrow and crowded. Abutting landowners tended to appropriate them for their own private use, and they became common depositories for all manner of rubbish.

Sometime before 1746 a schoolhouse was built on ROWI lands near the intersection of what later became Haymarket Street and North Main Street. In 1764 the schoolhouse and land were sold and the money put towards purchasing a more convenient lot and building a public schoolhouse in the town of Providence. In 1753 a "gaol" was built on filled land just west of the schoolhouse, approximately where Haymarket and Canal Street later met. The gaol was utilized until 1828.

Between 1750 and 1775 Providence as a whole and the ROWI area in particular underwent considerable growth. By this time the ROWI parcel included approximately eighteen houses, a tavern, a jail, a barn and shed, three stores, four wharves, four shops and at least four gardens. Various tradesmen set up shop here within easy access to the wharves where raw materials could be received and finished goods could be shipped to markets. Among the commodities produced here were rum and barrels, both principal items in the New England Triangle Trade, involving the West Indies and Africa.

During the Revolutionary War businesses along the western side of Towne Street continued to thrive. The American Coffee House operated by Richard Olney was a popular meeting place before, during and after the Revolution and served as a departure for the Boston stagecoach as well. Also in business during the Revolution were Sanders Pitman's blacksmith shop and Darius Session's store near Smith Street which sold a variety of goods ranging from milk and cheese to choice French brandy.
The ROWI area continued to develop as a residential and commercial center after the Revolutionary War, and by 1798 there was a total of twenty-four houses, eight barns, five shops, four wharves and a distillery. In general, the houses fronted North Main Street with the outbuildings and commercial establishments located behind. Ten of the twenty-four houses, as well as some of the shops and barns, were leased to tenants.

In 1805 the name of Towne Street was changed to Main Street with the northerly part, near the Memorial, coming to be known as North Main Street while the southerly section was, and still is, known as South Main Street.

In 1810 St. John’s Episcopal Church was erected at the corner of North Main and Church Streets, opposite ROWI. The new church was built on the site of the original Episcopal Church, which had been founded by Gabriel Bernon. It is likely that building materials for St. John’s were transported by water to the wharves in ROWI.

In 1816 the spring lot which had originally been owned by Gabriel Bernon was sold by his heirs to Nehemiah Dodge. Dodge razed the original Bernon house and constructed a sizable brick home on the lot. The water from the spring was piped to a pump on the north side of Allen's Lane where it continued to serve as a public facility.

In 1825 the Blackstone Canal was completed along the western edge of ROWI. The Canal extended forty-four miles from Market Square in Providence to Worcester, Massachusetts. It opened up the interior region of the Blackstone Valley to trade, carrying inland cotton, salt, flour and molasses in exchange for cordwood and coal.

Initially the building of the canal stimulated the development of wharves and warehouses in the ROWI area. It was never a financial success, however, and fell into disuse when the Providence and Worcester Railroad began operations in 1847. The Railroad constructed an elliptical stone retaining wall just south and west of the present-day Memorial in which to contain the Cove waters and filled in the surrounding area in order to lay tracks and erect buildings.

With the building of the Railroad came the final demise of the ROWI area as a center of maritime trade. By this time, too, the seat of business and government in Providence had shifted from the Memorial area to the western side of the Providence River, known as Weybosset. The west side of North Main Street was largely a residential area where the homes of the working and middle classes were interspersed with small businesses such as groceries, shoemakers and smithies.

A number of civic improvements took place in the ROWI area during the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1855 North Main Street was widened to sixty feet from Market Square to Smith Street. In 1861 the First District police station was built at the corner of Canal and
Haymarket Streets, on the site of the former jail. The station served as a police station until the late 1890's and was finally razed in 1950. In 1863 a fire station joined the First District police station on Haymarket Street. North Main Street was widened once again in 1875, causing Nehemiah Dodge's large brick house to be moved back, placing it directly over Roger Williams' Spring. Water from the spring was now piped to a Canal Street pump where it emptied into a watering trough.

By the end of the nineteenth century the area which is now ROWI was almost totally developed. The warehouses along Canal Street, which once had served the waterborne trade, now housed wholesale businesses primarily dealing in meat, produce, hay, grain and liquors. The residential population had also grown dramatically and continued to increase during the early part of the twentieth century, due largely to an influx of European immigrants, chiefly Armenians and Russian Jews. During the first twenty years of this century the area was known as a Russian Jewish colony with strong ethnic cohesiveness. Later on the dense settlement of Russian Jews on North Main Street dispersed somewhat and a number of businesses opened, giving the street a greater residential-commercial mix than it had had previously.

The pump which had been set up on Canal Street was taken down in 1900 and the water was piped to a Canal Street sewer. Six years later a plaque commemorating the history of the spring and identifying its location was attached to the brick house built by Nehemiah Dodge. The Dodge house was razed in 1921 and another building was constructed over the spring. The spring lot was purchased by Judge Jerome Hahn in 1930. After demolishing the 1921 building, Hahn deeded the spring lot to the City of Providence in order that a park would be built there in his father's memory. The Hahn Memorial, which occupies the area today, was designed by the well-known Providence architect, Norman Isham, and was opened in 1933. In 1946 the Episcopal Diocese of Providence donated one-fifth acre of land just north of the Hahn Memorial, formerly Gabriel Bernon's home lot. This area is now known as the Bernon Grove.

The Providence Redevelopment Authority began to acquire properties within the bounds of the present ROWI in 1969. All of the remaining buildings in the area were demolished between that time and 1975 with the exception of the Antrim-Gray House at the corner of North Main and Smith Streets. In 1974 the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, assumed ownership of the tract and opened a visitor interpretation center in the relocated Antrim-Gray House.
LAND-USE HISTORY OF PROPOSED PARK DEVELOPMENT AREA

In consultation with Park Superintendent Roy Weaver, those areas of ROWI which may be impacted by proposed development of the park have been identified. The construction of an amphitheater requiring excavation to the depth of the water table is planned to occur on the land between Haymarket Street and Otis Street and constitutes the major area of impact. In addition a small amount of filling is planned for the rest of the site, especially within the area of Bowen and Try Streets. Following is a chronology of buildings and, where possible, activities within the impacted zone of the proposed amphitheater from the eighteenth century to the present. Structures are discussed in relation to the four streets, Haymarket, North Court, Canal and Otis, which once crossed this section of the site.

Buildings and Activities: Haymarket to Crockett Street 1738-1966 (Figures 30-32).

Haymarket Street was laid out in 1738, and by 1746 an undetermined amount of land (either one or two lots in size) extending from Towne Street to the waterfront was known as the schoolhouse lot. There is no available date for the construction of the school, but the property and a school building were sold in 1764 and the institution moved elsewhere. At the southwest corner of the schoolhouse lot, the county jail was constructed in 1753 and remained in use until 1838. The jail was described as fifty feet in length and located eighty feet west of the schoolhouse extending to the channel of the river.

By 1746 Crockett Street (which later became Canal Avenue) had been laid out. The land between the schoolhouse lot and Crockett Street was lot #74 and at the middle of the century had not yet been purchased. In 1759 Dinah Kilton owned this lot fronting Towne Street, and by 1770 J. Kilton was the owner or occupant of a building on the property. There was a lot of land either unaccounted for in reconstructed maps or consisting of the northern half of the large school lot which was between the Kilton's property and the schoolhouse lot's southern section. Here Oliver Arnold owned a house and barn, the house having been constructed some time between 1749 and 1771. From 1775 at least through 1777, a store was present just north of Haymarket Street along North Main, probably on the east half of the former schoolhouse lot. North of this building was a house owned or occupied by the Throop family which may have been Oliver Arnold's first home. The new Arnold family house was a brick structure above the Throop home and sat on the southwestern corner of Crockett and Towne Streets.

In 1783 the land between Haymarket Street and Canal Avenue was described as under the ownership of Oliver Arnold's widow. The land included, from Haymarket: a large shop, a wood house "improved by Doctor Throop" and a large brick house with garden and stable. This description matches exactly the information about buildings on this
Figure 30: ROWI district, 1775-77
MOSHASSUCK RIVER

Information from T. Sunner map, 1834

Figure 31: ROWI district, 1882

Information from C.M. Hopkins, Providence Atlas, 1882

Figure 32: ROWI district, 1958

Information From Downing, College Hill Architectural Merit and Building Map, Providence, 1958.

AGE
Post Colonial 1775-1800
Federal 1800-1820
Greek Revival 1825-1850
Victorian 1835-1900
20th Century 1900 to date

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property from the years 1775-1777. Near the end of the eighteenth century, in 1798, Amos Horton owned the lot of land which thirty years earlier had been Oliver Arnold's property and the property of his wife in 1783. On a narrow strip in the area where North Court Street would run in the future, Horton owned three houses and two shops, perhaps set in back of each other. Two of the homes and both shops were leased to black tenants. In the same year the plot above Horton's between North Court and Crockett Streets included a house and a barn which were rented out by the owner, Widow Arnold. It is not known whether the structures on Horton's property included the original Arnold home, later called the Throop house, nor if the house Widow Arnold leased out was the large brick house she had owned in 1783.

Information on Providence building from the year 1824 may indicate a period of stasis in the development of North Main Street from Haymarket to Court Streets which began in 1798. At the later date a grocery and home, two more residences and a millinery shop occupied the land between these cross streets. The total adds up to three residences and two shops (one possibly having been combined with a house), the same number of houses and shops found on this parcel when Amos Horton owned it in 1798. It is possible, therefore, that the buildings of the earlier period had survived to the 1820's. Above North Court Street and up to Crockett Street, there was a shoemaker's shop at No. 121 and an umbrella maker's business at No. 123 North Main Street. There is no information on the nature of the building or buildings these shops occupied.

The face of the block between Haymarket and North Court Streets had changed by 1850. There were now three standing structures in an area that had included four or five buildings twenty years earlier. There was a butcher shop, a residence and a confectionery shop. From North Court to Crockett Street one structure was listed for this period – an inn.

Many changes in block development were evident in this parcel by 1857. From Haymarket to North Court one building fronted North Main Street while another building was found to the rear of it. The uses of both structures are unknown. Further along on the land between North Court and formerly Canal Avenue, now Crockett Street, one building stood on North Main Street. At the rear of this structure were three more buildings which stretched to Canal Street, leaving very little open space on the block. The last building in the line from North Main Street faced Canal Street and included a store on this end. The building was Greek Revival in style, having been erected between 1825 and 1850, and was standing in 1958 when an architectural survey of the district was made (Downing 1957-58).

On the former jail site at the corner of Haymarket and Canal Streets (between Haymarket and North Court Streets) the First District police station was constructed in 1861. Eighteen years later stables were built near the station to service a mounted police unit. In 1875
there was a frame building along North Main Street in the block bounded by Haymarket and North Court Streets. The north end of this building was used for business purposes, and to the rear of it was a brick building, possibly the same building noted there in 1857. Between this structure and Canal Street were two buildings owned by the City of Providence - an outbuilding and, fronting Canal Street, the First District police station. The presence of six buildings and one outbuilding at this time left no part of the block between North Court Street and Canal Avenue undeveloped.

The years 1875 to 1882 were ones of slackened redevelopment at the lower end of North Main Street. Only one new structure - an outbuilding - was added to the block. The district police station was enlarged after the early 1880's, and by 1895 the outbuilding had been removed from the police station property. Two brick buildings remained in the central portion of the lot. The district police changed headquarters in 1895, and from that time until 1950, the state Department of Public Aid utilized the structure. On the North Main Street side of the block between Haymarket and North Court Streets, the frame building present in 1882 was razed, and a three story yellow brick building was constructed. It was used as office space for several physicians and engineers. From North Court to Canal Streets, the number of buildings in 1895 had changed on the eastern half of the lot. Two structures and one outbuilding replaced the four buildings which had occupied the area. They housed a butcher's shop and a bakery. On the west half of this block one building contained the businesses of both a provisions and a butter dealer, very typical Canal Street enterprises. Between these street-side buildings on North Main and Canal, two outbuildings fronted Canal Avenue, housing a blacksmith shop and stable.

Between 1895 and 1924 the block between Haymarket and North Court Streets did not change. The block was congested and each building was made of brick. They included the three-story brick building, a one-story brick storeroom, a two-story auto garage and, along Canal Street, the city offices within the former police station. Similarly, between North Court Street and Canal Avenue, there were no building changes from 1895 to 1924. Along North Main Street was a two-story brick building which included a store and bakery. Behind this structure stood a single-story frame bake house with brick ovens at the rear. The last building in the line from North Main Street was a one-and-one-half story wooden outbuilding. Fronting Canal Street there was room for a two-story wood building. A store was maintained on the first floor and the second floor contained storage area.

By 1958 only one building remained in the block between Haymarket and North Court Streets. The three story brick structure facing North Main, built between 1882 and 1895, was described at that time as being in good condition. Two buildings remained in the block between North Court Street and Canal Avenue: a large twentieth century structure facing North Main Street and an almost equally large frame Greek Revival (1825-1850) building. The wooden structures shown in the central
portion of the block in 1895 and 1924 were gone. As of 1966 the Victorian brick structure in the block between Haymarket and North Court Streets was still standing, and a single story masonry building on the eastern portion of the block between North Court and Crockett Streets was the only building on that block. Neither of these buildings had a basement.

Two areas between Haymarket Street and Canal Avenue stand out in terms of their historical interest and archeological potential. The first is the site of the jail which was constructed in 1753 at the western edge of Haymarket Street along the waterfront. The location of the building is thought to have been the northeast corner of Haymarket and Canal Streets, an area which underwent relatively little disturbance compared with the rest of the ROWI property. The jail stood on the lot for eighty-five years until 1828, and after its removal, the First District police station building occupied the property for eighty-nine years, beginning in 1861. The police station was enlarged once, with stables and an outbuilding added nearby, but no other major construction is known to have occurred there. The duration of time both buildings remained on the property and the comparatively minimal construction and destruction at the site may have helped to preserve evidence of the jail in the archeological record.

The string of shops and residences along North Main Street from Haymarket to Crockett Street represents the other area of research potential. Businesses and houses intermixed characterized this neighborhood from 1775 to at least 1824 and perhaps for a number of years thereafter. The large brick Arnold house was located there in 1783, three shops were present by 1798, and in 1824 a grocer, umbrella maker and shoemaker did business on this stretch of North Main Street. However, from 1857 to 1895 extensive building renewal was carried out on these properties, and both the number and configuration of structures changed significantly. Substantial development of the land between Haymarket and Crockett Streets during the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century may have caused considerable disturbance of earlier cultural remains.

Buildings and Activities: Otis Street to Cady Street, 1746-1966 (Figures 30-32).

As in the case of Crockett Street, no date has been ascertained for the opening of Otis and Cady Streets, but in 1746 the land bounded by today's streets was divided into two lots and was partially utilized. Peleg Dexter owned the house on lot 77, just north of Otis Street, while the next parcel, below Cady Street, remained unoccupied. Sanders Pitman came to own Dexter's house sometime between 1750 and 1771, and in this same period Esek Brown built a new house on the northern lot, number 78. Brown and Pitman still maintained these properties in 1775 and had gardens on the land as well. By 1798 Sanders Pitman owned an unfinished house at this location, having removed the original Dexter house from the property and being in the process of building a new home.
to replace it. At the end of the eighteenth century, Esek Brown's house was still standing, but it was then in the possession of his heirs.

In 1824 two single-family dwellings fronted North Main Street, and no additional buildings were listed for the entire block as late as 1850. At that date both residences housed families, but the house north of Otis Street also contained the shop of a carriage maker and painter. It is possible that these buildings were the Pitman and Brown houses which had been built in the previous century. An 1857 map provides visual access to the western part of the block showing two buildings along Canal Street, two frame structures along North Main and two structures on the center of the lot, one facing Cady Street, the other facing Otis Street. In 1875 the block was only slightly different from what it had been in 1857. Buildings along North Main and Canal Streets remained the same, but there were three outbuildings along Cady Street. A frame building which had been present in 1857 faced Otis Street. Amid the developmental changes in the block between Otis and Cady Streets, the yards behind the frame buildings on North Main Street had remained open from the eighteenth century at least until 1882.

By 1895, however, each of these open areas had been built upon. Where the frame building closest to Otis Street had been, the lot was now empty, but in the backyard a large building had been erected. The frame structure bounded northerly by Cady Street had either been altered or demolished by this date, for it appears as a different shape than previously on atlas maps. The yard behind this structure now contained an outbuilding which abutted the building in front of it. The outbuildings on Cady Street had been replaced and enlarged by a different arrangement of sheds, and the single structure at Otis Street had either been enlarged or replaced. Two buildings remained on Canal Street. The buildings on the block at the turn of the nineteenth century had many different uses. Dressmaking, liquor and confectionery shops were housed in the two North Main Street structures as well as rooms for rent and a bowling alley. A wheelwright's shop was found on Otis Street, and on Canal Street one building held the shops of a carpenter and blacksmith while the other contained the New York Biscuit Company.

The face of the block between Otis and Cady Streets had changed again by the year 1924. A large two-story brick building covered the entire eastern end of the block and housed a furniture store. At the corner of Canal and Cady Streets stood a three-story building constructed of brick, used as a wholesale meat warehouse. Immediately to the east of this building was a two-story wooden frame structure. A four-story brick building used to store roofing materials sat on the southwestern portion of the block. In 1958 all of the buildings from the 1920's remained except for the wooden frame building on Otis Street. By 1966 a four-story masonry structure had been erected in its place. No other changes in building development had occurred on the block.
In the case of this block, it seems possible that the two eighteenth-century structures which stood along North Main Street - Esek Brown's house and the Sanders Pitman house - may have remained there until sometime between 1882 and 1895. More research would be needed to confirm the survival of each house into the late nineteenth century, but we can be certain that the yards behind the buildings were free of building until a point in the same time period - 1882-1895. At the later date, the lot of the former Pitman house was empty, but a large structure was located at the rear yard. There is a slight chance that if the Esek Brown house was maintained until the late nineteenth century, it might also have stood into the twentieth century. It is not clear from the 1895 atlas whether the frame building at the site had been razed and a new structure built in its place, or whether the building had simply been enlarged. By 1924 a large brick structure covered the land both buildings had been located on and the rear yards as well. The building was constructed without a basement and was present at the time when the Providence Redevelopment Authority took ownership of the property. If the eighteenth-century houses remained standing until the end of the last century, then they have been built over only once between that time and the present. The cement slab foundation of the twentieth century buildings may have helped to seal and preserve building remains below it. Perhaps, then, the level of disturbance would be reduced on this site. The yards behind the frame buildings had remained until the end of the nineteenth century but thereafter were built on twice. However, the twentieth century construction did not include a basement, although there may have been one as part of the earlier building.

Buildings and Activities: Crockett Street to Otis Street, 1746-1966
(Figures 30-32)

(Note: The name of the street originally known as Canal Avenue was changed to Crockett Street at some time between 1895 and 1908.)

There is no information concerning the years in which both Canal Avenue and Otis Street were laid out, although space for building of these streets was indicated on Providence plat maps as early as 1713. In 1746 two lots, numbers 75 and 76, were located between the streets. Thomas Kilton owned and had a house on lot number 75. Between 1749 and 1771 Stephen Kilton took possession of the property Thomas had owned. A house and barn are known to have been on the lot at that time. Also in this period, Richard Olney came to own lot 76 just above the Kilton land and bounded on the north by Otis Street. Olney had a house and barn at this location.

Information available from the year 1775 shows Stephen Kilton's home as a double house, one half of which was occupied by James Foster. Also at this time, Richard Olney operated a combined tavern and inn, known as the American Coffee House, in his house just below Otis street. Olney's improvements on his property included, by 1783, two stables and a wharf. Wait Kilton had taken possession of her late husband's land by 1798, and
at this time the large double house may still have been in use. Wait is
listed as owning two houses on the property, one of which was occupied by
Joshua Rathbone, a tenant. Perhaps the two houses were not separate but
attached and actually a double house. The property north of Kilton's was
now that of S.H. Olney, and new building had taken place there. At the
back of the lot, probably near the waterfront, were a house and barn, and
along Towne Street were a house, considered old (Rider 1783) probably
Richard Olney's former inn), and a shop.

By 1824 four structures stood between Crockett and Otis Streets:
two houses, a tailor's shop and another residence. The first two houses
could have been formerly Wait Kilton's property, and the shop and house
further along North Main Street might have been those listed as occupying
S.H. Olney's front lot in 1798. The buildings toward the rear of Olney's
property are not mentioned. For the year 1850, too, there is information
only on those buildings bounded by Crockett and Otis Streets which fronted
North Main Street. There were, again, four structures: a residence, a
boardinghouse and two more homes. The third house in the line seems to
have replaced the tailor shop of a quarter century earlier.

Map resources for the year 1857 finally allow a look at developments
toward the rear of this block. Along Canal Street three buildings stood
between Crockett and Otis Streets with five buildings present behind
them in the middle of the parcel. Two of these buildings faced Otis
Street and the other three faced Canal Avenue; all were of wood frame
construction. At the front of the block were three structures, making
this eastern portion look as it had in the late eighteenth century. We
do not know what the uses of these buildings were or how long each one
had been standing. By 1875 several changes had come to this block,
especially to the eastern section along North Main Street. Two large
brick buildings had replaced the three smaller earlier structures and
both were used as places of business. Four buildings lined Canal Street
at the western end of the property and appear to be the same ones found
in 1857, with one addition. Two of these buildings were frame and the
others were brick. Five structures remained at the center of the block,
those facing Canal Street being the same as had been present in 1857.
Along Canal Street one of the two buildings was new.

The block between Canal Avenue and Otis Street changed little until
sometime prior to 1895. At that time one large brick building filled
the entire eastern part of the block. It housed two liquor stores, a
tea shop, the shop of a harness maker and many boarding rooms. One brick
building faced Canal Street and housed a family, a restaurant and a
liquor store. Two houses on the middle of the lot fronted Otis Street,
and although there was at least one building along Canal Avenue, its use
and occupants remain unidentified. Judging from the configuration of
buildings on the block in 1895, it appears that except for the two
homes on Otis Street, all of the structures had been built after 1875.
In 1924 the block looked somewhat the same as it had at the end of the previous century. The four-story brick building remained along North Main Street and contained four stores in its ground story. At Canal Street a three-story brick building housed three stores. The changes in the block occurred on those lots facing Otis and Crockett Streets. Facing Crockett Street was a single-story brick wagon house attached to a three-story brick building. Also on Crockett Street was a two-story wood frame building which was apparently vacant. Fronting Otis Street was a three-story frame building.

By 1958 only the central portion of the block had changed. The three-story wooden building on Otis Street had been replaced by two twentieth century masonry structures, and while the three-story brick building on Crockett Street remained, the wagon house and two-story wood frame building were gone. No changes occurred on the block from this time until its purchase by the Providence Redevelopment Authority in the late 1960's. A PRA map of the block drawn in 1966 indicated that none of the structures contained cellars.

Of the many buildings present on the block during more than two hundred years of occupation, those of the eighteenth century would probably be the most significant archeologically. The house within which Richard Olney operated an inn and tavern was built sometime between 1749 and 1771 and remained on the site at least until 1798. At this time one other house as well as a shop and barn were also standing on the property. Olney's American Coffee House is known to have been in operation throughout the entire period of the American Revolution (Coyle 1960). The lot and buildings just south of the Olney land belonged to the Kilton family in the eighteenth century, and remains of their activities might also be archeologically significant. A house was present on this site as early as 1746, and the building shown there in 1770 and 1783 was referred to as a double house.

It is difficult to determine the extent of building changes on the block between Crockett Street and Otis Street during the first half of the nineteenth century. The number of structures along North Main Street remained constant from 1798 to 1850, although some of these buildings might have been constructed after the end of the eighteenth century.

Some changes had occurred on the block by 1857 with substantial building on the middle and rear of the lot. Atlases from both 1875 and 1897 indicate major new construction at the eastern portion of the land. Large multi-storied brick buildings were constructed in both instances. After 1895 new development took place only on the middle section of the property. A sizable amount of construction, razing and reconstruction within the block during the latter half of the nineteenth century occurred precisely in the area where the eighteenth century buildings were located along North Main Street. The only factor which might mitigate the expected high level of subsurface disturbance at the eastern end of this block is the fact that the structures built there just prior to the twentieth century did not include cellars.
PREVIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Brown University, 1971

Limited archeological excavations were carried out in the fall of 1971 by Brown University students in the area immediately to the west of Bernon Grove, between Church and Lamb Streets (Espinosa et.al. 1971). Two trenches were excavated, one to a depth of twelve feet, exposing the foundation of a mid-nineteenth century tenement house overlying a late eighteenth century privy or refuse pit.

The excavations were located just to the north (opposite Church Street) of the site of the first house in the ROW tract, built by Gabriel Bernon in 1717. By 1746 two houses had been built between Lamb and Church Streets, and by 1749 a third house had been erected on the block. No outbuildings are recorded, but sheds, privies, dairies, et cetera must have occupied the area behind, or west of, the houses which fronted on Towne Street. By 1777 there were five houses in the block between Church and Lamb Streets.

The area excavated was probably a part of the Levi Hall lot - a narrow lot that stretched from Towne Street to the river and was bounded by Church Street on the south. In the late eighteenth century this lot included a house, sheds, workshop and wharf. The excavations were situated somewhere in the area between the house and the wharf and between the sheds and Church Street.

The filling of the waterfront lands and laying out of Canal Street in the early nineteenth century brought a new wave of building to the area, although no new structures were built on this lot at that time. Sometime between 1850 and 1875, two frame buildings were erected between North Main Street and Canal Street just north of and fronting on Church Street. One excavation unit was placed between these two buildings, and the other fell within the foundation of the westernmost structure. These buildings functioned as tenement houses until 1928 when they may have burned, as suggested by a thick layer of charcoal encountered during the excavations. There are no entries for the addresses of these buildings in the city directories after 1928. Their occupancy had ranged from five to sixteen persons who followed a variety of trades including those of shoemaker, laborer, grocer, driver and butcher.

Excavations indicated that as much as eight feet of fill, comprising at least nine different layers, had been deposited over this part of the site. The walls of the westernmost tenement building had been built through the fill to a depth of 7.5 feet below the present ground surface. Beneath the fill the remains of a square wood-lined pit were found, extending to at least twelve feet below the present surface, where excavations were stopped because the water table was encountered. This pit, which may have been constructed originally as a privy, was filled with a variety of domestic refuse such as bones, ceramics, glass
and metal objects. Based on the ceramics and other datable artifacts, it can be ascribed to the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century, and was probably associated with Levi Hall's occupation of the lot.

National Park Service, 1974

In July 1974 Albert F. Bartovics of Brown University conducted limited test excavations for the National Park Service in the vicinity of the Antrim-Gray House prior to its removal. Bartovics excavated three test pits, two a short distance to the west of the Antrim-Gray House beneath an asphalt paved parking area and one to the south of the Gray House where a building had stood until demolished by the Providence Redevelopment Authority. Bartovics concluded that in the asphalt-paved area, the original ground surface had been stripped away prior to paving sometime in the twentieth century, leaving no seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth century living surfaces intact.

In the area to the west of the Gray House, Bartovics found a number of nineteenth-century artifacts scattered across the surface, but after excavating to a depth of about three feet and encountering massive concrete fragments, he concluded that the building had had a cellar (although none was indicated on the demolition map) or at least a very deep foundation which had been filled in at the time of demolition. On the basis of his surface survey and three test pits, Bartovics concluded that the land surface of the block bounded by Canal, North Main, Lamb and Smith Streets had been "substantially altered since the mid-nineteenth century" (Bartovics 1974). He pointed out, however, that "there still remains the possibility of subsurface features such as privies, wells and trash pits" being found in the asphalt paved area and did not rule out the possibility "that older foundations might underlie [the] foundation" of the building south of the Gray House (Bartovics 1974).

In 1978 a cursory inspection of utility trenches being excavated on the former site of the Antrim-Gray House revealed a number of nineteenth century ceramic and glass fragments, as well as a wine bottle neck and fragment of Delft fireplace tile, probably of eighteenth century manufacture. While none of these artifacts were found in situ, their presence suggests that this area may, in fact, contain eighteenth and nineteenth century archeological components meriting further investigation.
Prehistoric Site Potential

Based on known sites in similar environmental settings within the immediate vicinity, there is a high likelihood that Roger Williams National Memorial was occupied during the Terminal Archaic and Woodland cultural periods. If such sites do exist on the property, they could make significant contributions to our understanding of Southern New England prehistory and paleoecology. Investigation of sites at the Memorial could be used to test three key hypotheses on prehistoric settlement patterns:

1. It has been proposed that site location and subsistence strategies in the Late Archaic period were based on seasonal rounds with a strong inland orientation, and that in the Woodland period, there was a shift to coastal settlements which were more permanent (Dincauze 1975).

2. By the Late Archaic period sea levels had stabilized and ecological communities were established that persisted with little change into modern times (Braun 1974).

3. Sites from prehistoric periods earlier than the Late Archaic are rare along the present-day coastline because the older sites were covered by rising sea levels (Dincauze and Mulholland 1977).

Roger Williams National Memorial is situated at the headwaters of a drowned valley which contained an extensive salt marsh and cove. During the terminal Archaic, however, the area was an inland river valley. The Memorial property changed from an interior to an estuarine environment during the critical Archaic to Woodland transition and this presents a unique opportunity to view changes in the regional settlement pattern at a single locus. The organic deposits documented in boring logs along Canal Street could very well contain a botanical record preserved in anaerobic conditions below the present water line, and if the biological changes can be dated and correlated with cultural materials, it would be a fundamental contribution to the archeological record.

The potential for such an approach has already been demonstrated at Sandy Neck, Barnstable, Massachusetts. Redfield's (1965) work on the development of the salt marsh there has already been discussed. It so happens that a brief archeological reconnaissance was also conducted independently at about the same time (Powell 1967). Nine sites, tentatively assigned to the Woodland period, were discovered; and the lack of Archaic components was attributed to the recent development of the marsh and barrier beach that Redfield demonstrated. The archeological results were very preliminary and Sandy Neck is not a drowned valley, but the same research framework could be applied at the
Memorial if sites were encountered. Additionally, Archaic components have been identified as nearby as the Old State House grounds, which indicates that there might be a complete complementary cultural sequence on ROWI property that could be used to test the three key hypotheses outlined above, as well as alternate hypotheses such as Braun's (1974) contention that shellfish resources may not have existed along the New England coast until well into the Archaic.

Proto- and Early Historic Site Potential

Roger Williams may have obtained the land along the Great Salt Cove for the very reason that it was uninhabited at the time of contact. There is no mention of Native American settlements in the immediate vicinity in his writings, and the fact that he established a trading post far to the south indicates that there were few if any Native American settlements nearby. This does not necessarily mean that the spring, cove, rivers and environs were not utilized. On the contrary, they were probably important resources which may have been exploited from short term, specialized-function sites. In fact this might have been an area of open-access, common resources. The conference held near the foot of Smith Street after the burning of Providence in 1676 may indicate that the locale was some sort of neutral ground. There are correlates in the archeological record for the concept of open-access resource areas without habitation sites such as the enormous shell middens on the Maine coast. The most famous, Whaleback, did not have an associated habitation site within several miles (Snow 1972).

The vicinity of the present Roger Williams National Memorial may have been a special location for the exchange of information and goods. Four major trails converged at this point, so it was probably an important node in the regional communication and transport network. There is an impressive body of evidence indicating that in traditional, non-market economies, incipient markets develop between population concentrations at ecological or cultural boundaries (Bohannon and Dalton 1962; Hodder 1965; Berry 1967). The confluence of the rivers and estuarine cove near the Memorial would have provided the boundary conditions as well as east of transport. The spring could have been an important provisioning point in a regional network. The importance of the location may have also extended into prehistoric times because Rhode Island was apparently an important source area for steatite, or soapstone, which was used to make storage and cooking containers prior to the development of ceramic technologies and was traded widely throughout the Northeast (Fowler 1967).

Summary of Prehistoric and Early Historic Site Potential

In summary, the Roger Williams National Memorial has very high potential for significant archeological resources which could contribute important information to regional prehistory and provide an interpretable framework for the site of Roger Williams' original land holding in Rhode
Island. However, serious questions still remain as to the condition and integrity of any archeological resources that might be on the property.

The National Park Service Environmental Assessment states that "No further archeological investigation of the site is anticipated" because previous excavations indicate that "Extensive disturbance has occurred on the site as a result of urban renewal" (1977:20). However, it should be pointed out that the cited excavation was very limited in extent (Espinosa et al. 1972), and that, in fact, the researchers encountered undisturbed features in natural soil horizons extending from about three feet below grade to the present water table at twelve feet (Myron Stachiw, personal communication). In addition, Bartovics, excavating at the Antrim-Gray shop in 1974, encountered undisturbed subsoil at only eighteen inches (Bartovics 1974). Although neither excavation produced prehistoric or early historic materials, this cannot be taken to mean that there are none on the property. The work was limited to historic, site-specific operations with no intention of providing an estimate of the entire property's archeological potential. Finally, the documented filling of the western side of the property may have provided excellent protection for subsurface resources.

**Historic Site Potential**

The Roger Williams National Memorial occupies a significant position in the developmental history of Providence. It was peripheral to the earliest settlement itself which was strung out along the eastern side of present-day North Main Street but was undoubtedly utilized by the settlers in a variety of ways. Scott's Spring, also known as Roger Williams' Spring, served the community as a source of fresh water from the time of settlement until the end of the nineteenth century. Even before there were any buildings or streets, the land must have been crossed and recrossed many times by residents passing to and from the shore of the Great Salt Cove with its abundant supply of oysters and fish. Although not documented, it is likely that because of its accessibility, the area was also used by the early settlers for other purposes, such as animal grazing and refuse disposal.

Beginning with the construction of Gabriel Bernon's house in 1717, the ROWI developed slowly into a residential and commercial area of considerable importance. Eight houses were built prior to 1750, and by 1800, there were more houses, as well as wharves, gangways, shops, taverns, distilleries, a gaol and other buildings. The area developed at an accelerated rate during the nineteenth century. The building of the Blackstone Canal along the western edge of ROWI made the area an ideal location for warehouses, craft shops and various other commercial enterprises. It also boasted a sizable residential population distinctive for its ethnic make-up.

Without the systematic subsurface testing, it is difficult to estimate the integrity of possible archeological resources in the
ROWI area. Although the area was undoubtedly utilized in the seventeenth century, it is possible that little or no evidence of this use exists in the archeological record. Deeply-buried portions of the spring may survive, but since the area was not actually occupied during this period, it is likely that other forms of utilization of the area left few traces in the ground. The seventeenth century was comparatively poor in the kinds of materials that survive best archeologically - ceramics and glass - so that most seventeenth-century sites, even those which were intensively occupied, tend to have very low archeological "visibility" (Deetz 1977). In addition, seventeenth-century sites do not usually contain many deeply buried features, such as trash pits and privies, and are thus particularly vulnerable to destruction during subsequent occupations.

The probability of archeological resources surviving from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is much higher. By this time the ROWI area contained a number of permanent structures, and associated with these were undoubtedly many subsurface features, such as cellars, wells, privies and trash pits. Thus, even with massive reshaping of the ground surface in the present century, it is possible that a great deal of evidence of eighteenth and nineteenth century occupations of the area still exist in the form of subterranean features. The fact that even very limited test excavations have uncovered eighteenth and nineteenth century material in situ indicates that ROWI does, indeed, contain archeological resources from this important period in Providence's development. The nature and distribution of these resources can only be established by a program of subsurface testing which takes into account the possibility that archeological features may be buried at considerable depths beneath filled or "disturbed" areas.

There are a number of potential sites in ROWI which might, if substantially undisturbed, qualify for National Register status. Among the more noteworthy of these would be the spring itself (primarily for its association value), Olney's Tavern, Antrim's distill house, the gaol and Gabriel Bernon's house lot, although there could be many others as well, particularly among the earlier house lots and wharf areas. In actual fact, however, it is likely that most or all of these sites have been altered to the point where they would not, individually, be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

This does not mean that ROWI is without archeological potential; rather, it calls for a broader perspective. As the city of Providence grew over the course of three and a half centuries, the ROWI area evolved from a haphazardly utilized fringe area to a major residential and commercial center and then entered a period of decay. Because the area was occupied continuously from the early eighteenth century into the twentieth century, the archeological record can be expected to be exceedingly complex. This complexity is inherent in the very nature of urban archeology, however, and does not, in and of itself, diminish the value of the area for archeological study (Schuyler 1977). Indeed, it presents unique opportunities. An accumulating body of literature
demonstrates that by utilizing appropriate conceptual frameworks and excavation methods, much significant information about urban lifeways, as well as about processes of urban growth and change, can be extracted from highly "disturbed" areas analogous to ROWI (Schuyler 1977; Cotter and Orr 1975; Stachiw 1974; Dyson 1978; Ingersoll 1971).

The topography of ROWI has been altered considerably since the seventeenth century. At the time of settlement, the Great Salt Cove extended perhaps halfway into the tract, and the area along Towne Street was probably low-lying and wet. Gradually the area was filled in and made habitable, but little is known about when this process began or how it was accomplished. Archeology might be able to provide some answers to questions about the filling in of this and other parts of the Providence shoreline and about the topography and environment of the area at the time of settlement. Far from being an impediment to archeological study, the fills which overlie much of ROWI could, on the contrary, become the subject of such investigations (Horvath 1976; Ingersoll 1971; Barber 1978).

Information gained from a comprehensive archeological program at ROWI could be of value in reconstructing many aspects of eighteenth and nineteenth century urban lifeways, as well as in shedding new light on the evolution of Providence as a city. The broader significance of ROWI lies in the possibility that archeological data from the park could be used to test hypotheses generated at comparable sites such as Portsmouth, New Hampshire (Pendery 1978), and Newburyport, Massachusetts (Faulkner et.al. 1977), as well as to generate new hypotheses in order to contribute to a theoretical framework for explaining processes of urban growth and decay. It is essential for the realization of such a research objective that ROWI not be viewed simply as a collection of small independent sites but that emphasis be placed on the pattern of development revealed by the area as a whole.
RECOMMENDATIONS

ROWI is not, by any means, the only area in Providence with archeological potential, nor even necessarily the most significant area. However, the fact that it is the only large public-owned tract in the vicinity of the original settlement places a special burden of responsibility on the trustees of the property to ensure preservation of the park's archeological resources.

Landscaping and new construction for ROWI should be designed, wherever possible, to minimize subsurface disturbance. During the planning stage of any project involving subsurface alteration of the park, intensive subsurface testing should be carried out in order to determine whether significant prehistoric or historic archeological resources will be affected and, if so, to develop an appropriate plan for avoidance or mitigation of adverse effects.

The entire ROWI area should be considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as an archeological district. Historic research indicates that the park area played an important role in the history of Providence and that it could contain significant information regarding not only the development of Providence but processes of urban growth and development generally (Pendery 1977; Faulkner 1977). Final determination regarding the area's archeological significance according to National Register criteria would be contingent upon a program of systematic subsurface testing designed to provide an accurate estimate of the kinds and state of preservation of resources actually present. The testing program should address both prehistoric and historic archeological resources and should be aimed at gaining an understanding of the history and development of the area as a whole, rather than individual sites only.

It is difficult to predict which areas of ROWI would have the greatest likelihood of containing well-preserved archeological remains. Therefore, any testing program which is undertaken should incorporate a statistically valid sampling scheme designed to provide a reasonable estimate of the range of resources present over the entire site.

However, in addition, certain sites might be singled out for special attention. Among the sites which should be intensively examined in any general testing program are those where evidence of archeological remains has already been found, i.e., the former site of the Antrim-Gray house and the Bernon Grove area. Another site which may have been less disturbed than most and might therefore merit special attention is the gaol/schoolhouse lot. It might also be noted that, in general, the areas between the buildings fronting North Main and Canal Street, i.e., in the approximate center of the block, appear to have been somewhat less disturbed than the areas along the streets themselves where the larger buildings stood. In these "backyard" areas one would expect to find refuse pits, privies, et cetera, features which are particularly likely
to have survived because of being deeply excavated and because this part of ROWI may have been partially protected by landfills. It might also be expected that streets and gangways would be less disturbed than the areas which faced them, although their research potential is probably not as great. It must be stressed that these observations are based almost entirely on documentary evidence, however, and should be tested archeologically.

If subsurface testing is contemplated at ROWI, it ought to be carried out in several stages. Initially, a large truck-mounted auger might be used to delineate fill contours and determine the natural stratigraphy of the site. This could be followed by a statistically selected set of test pits or trenches which might, depending on conditions, be excavated partially with heavy machinery. Care should be taken, however, to consider even recent and filled areas of the site as potentially significant. Finally, individual resource loci could be more intensively investigated in order to evaluate their nature and extent. Additional historical research is not recommended at this time, but in the future, detailed deed and probate investigations might be undertaken in order to document developments on specific sites.

In the long run, probably the most significant research potential of ROWI involves changing settlement patterns in an urban maritime environment. Historical and archeological data from ROWI could be used, for example, to test Pendery's hypothesis developed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, that settlement patterns can be divided into three major phases, the first characterized by dispersed coastal farmsteads, the second by combined residential, commercial manufacturing houselots and the third by highly subdivided parcels and houses owned by absentee landlords occupied by impoverished tenants. Preliminary indications are that the ROWI area underwent a similar process of expansion and decline, though with important differences. Other problems which might profitably be addressed through historical and archeological investigations at ROWI include changing patterns of trade, consumption and refuse disposal, and immigration.

An additional problem which should be pursued, more for interpretive purposes than for its relevance to archeological resources at ROWI, is the relationship between Roger Williams and the Native American inhabitants of Rhode Island. Roger Williams' achievements in this area are surely as noteworthy as his role in the history of religious liberty.
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In reviewing the reliability of maps used in this study, we need only to concern ourselves with those produced prior to the nineteenth century or reconstructed at a later date to represent the area of ROWI during the colonial period. By 1803 Daniel Anthony had drafted the first map of Providence taken from an actual survey. Thereafter and throughout the nineteenth century, the frequency of maps and atlases drawn from survey increased.

Greene's map (1886) of Providence in 1650 includes five Indian trails which converge at the western shore of the Great Salt Cove. Greene did not substantiate the location of these trails in his text nor did he reference the 1650 map, so the validity of this information is open to speculation. The 1708-13 plat map of Towne Street, Providence, was as far as is known, drawn at that time and accurate. The 1746 plat map of Towne Street has been found to be inaccurate in one instance. We know nothing about the origins of this map, but it appears to be a reconstruction of Towne Street which appeared in a newspaper during the late nineteenth century. Within it, Gabriel Bernon's house is located one lot south of the spring lot, although land records (Providence Preservation Society 1960:12-13) clearly indicate the presence of the Bernon home on the spring lot. The 1746 map also numbers the spring lot as lot 84, whereas it remains unnumbered on the 1708-13 map, and a plot north of the spring lot is identified as lot 84.

Reconstructing maps of Providence for the years 1770 and 1798 by Chace, as well as those by Cady for the years 1650 and 1750, should be considered accurate as the information they contain was drawn from city tax lists, land deeds and the 1798 federal valuation of properties and collection of taxes. The work of both men is based upon extensive scholarly research in this century. A section of T.M. Sumner's map of Providence for the years 1775-77 has been included in this report in a redrafted form. Sumner drew his map in 1834 from memory. In comparison with Chace's maps of Providence in 1770 and 1798, Sumner's map seems accurate as to the location of buildings and in identifying the owners of buildings.

Finally, Fitch's 1790 sketch map of Providence should be considered, at the least, incomplete. While Fitch drew structures on the west side of upper Towne Street, he did not include any buildings in the yards behind them or along the waterfront. Documentary and cartographic evidence indicates that buildings were present along the upper Towne Street waterfront as early as 1750.
MAPS

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under the United States Administration.