



LOVECRAFT'S PROVIDENCE & ADJACENT PARTS

by Henry L. P. Beckwith, Jr.

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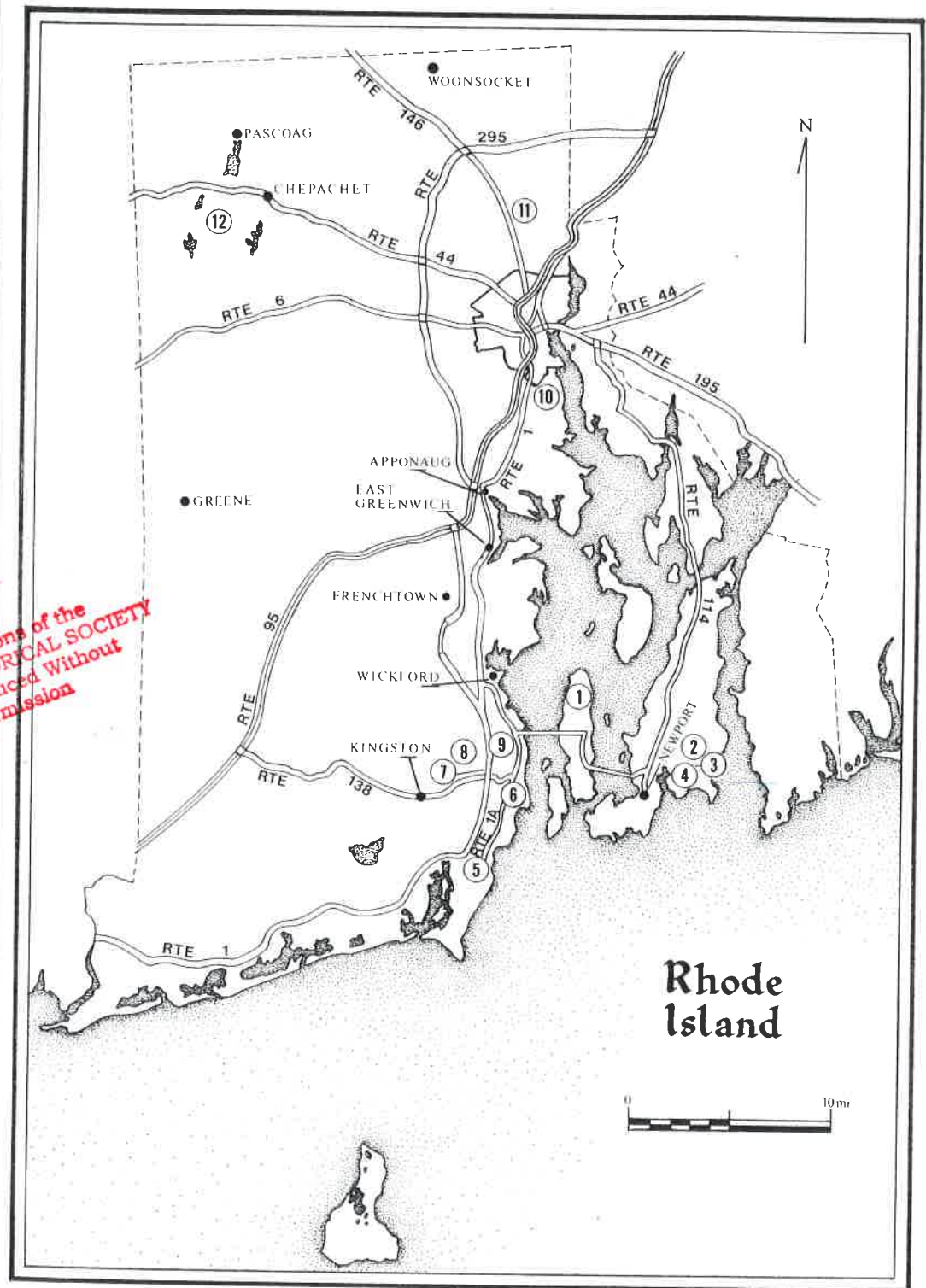
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KEY TO THE MAP OF RHODE ISLAND

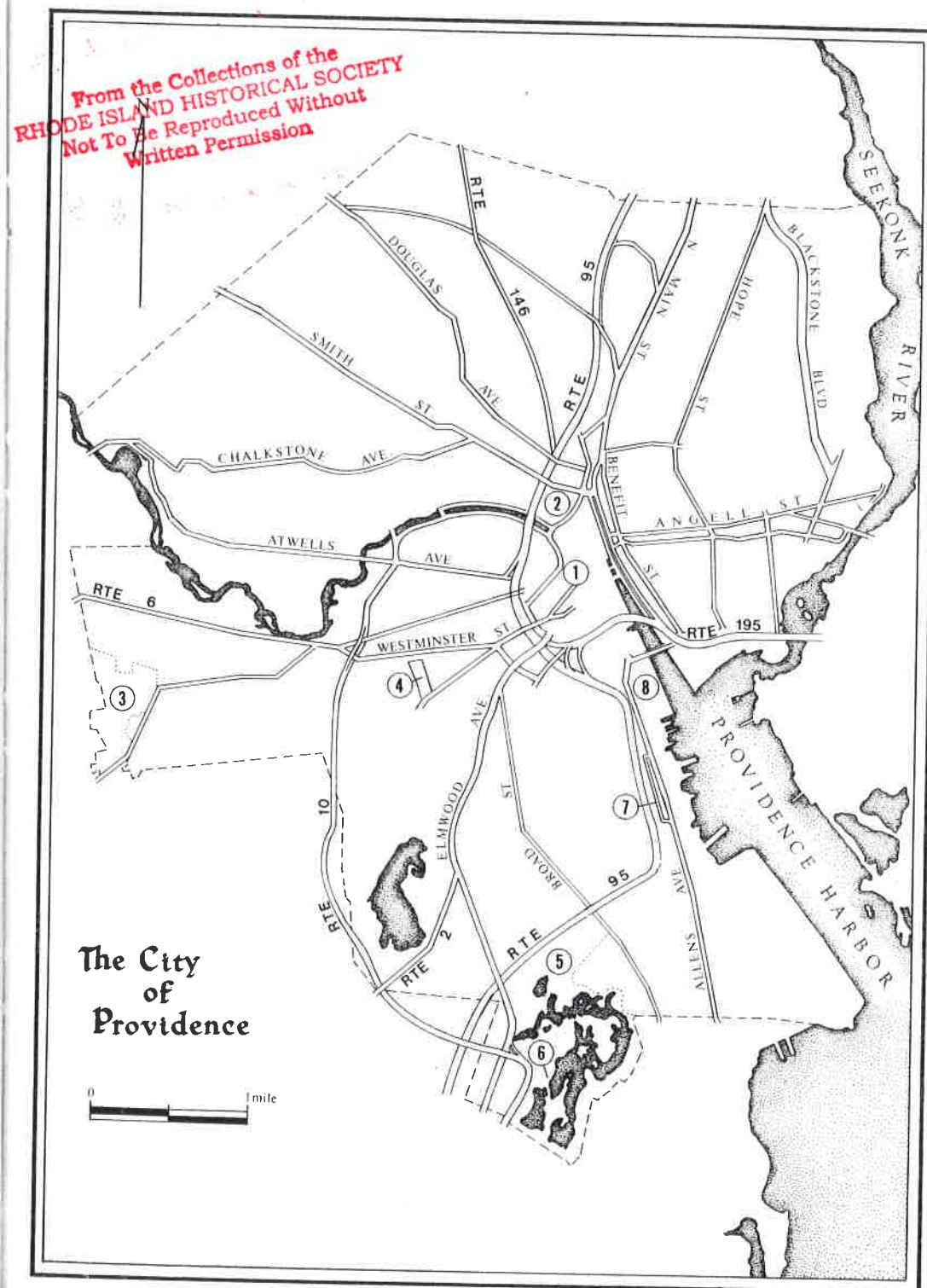
1. Conanicut Island (Jamestown)
2. Whitehall
3. St. George's School
4. Purgatory Chasm
5. Narragansett Pier
6. Rowland Robinson House
7. Hannah Robinson Rock
8. The Platform
9. Gilbert Stuart Birthplace
10. Pawtuxet
11. Quinsnicket
12. Durfee Hill

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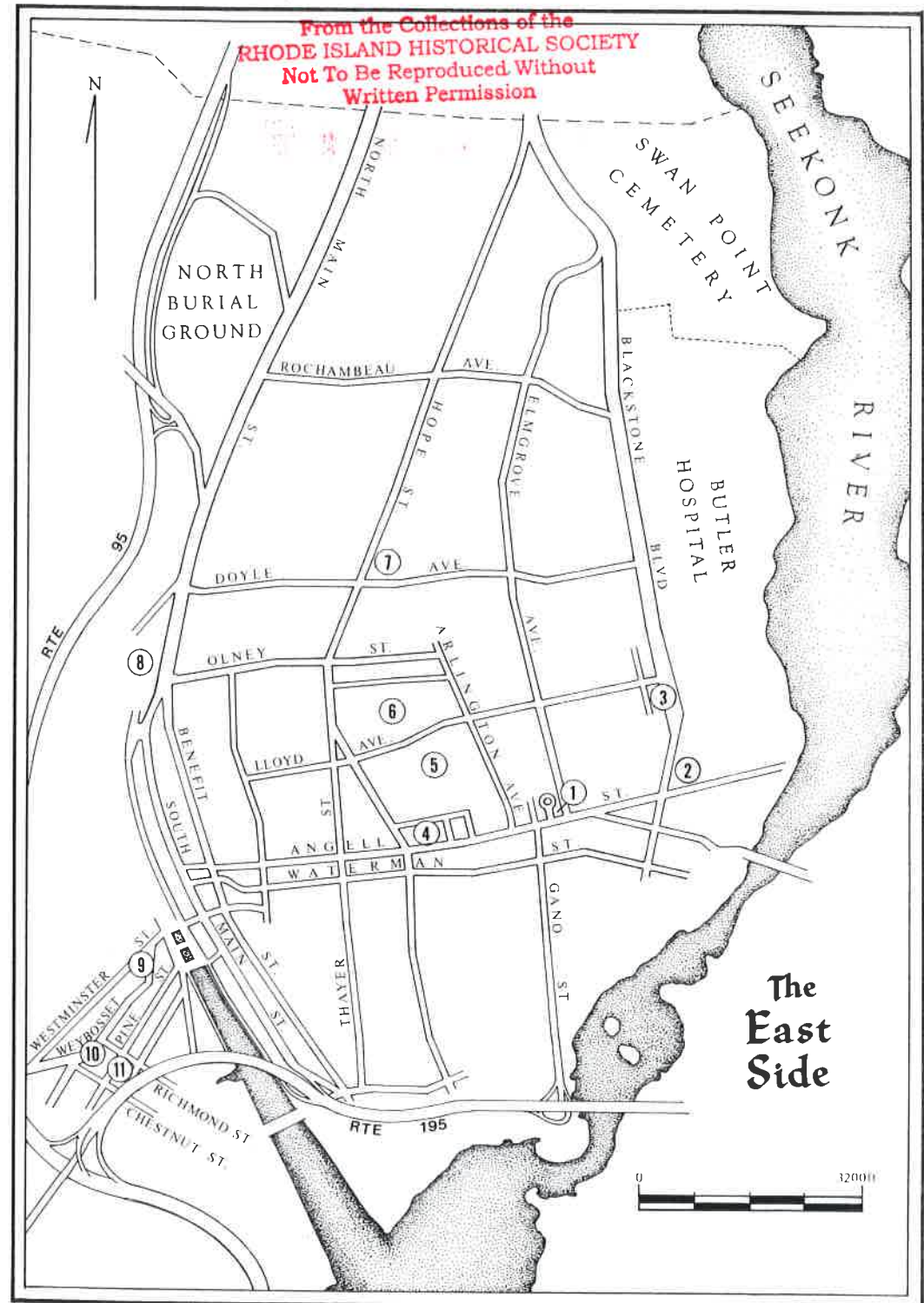
KEY TO MAP OF PROVIDENCE

1. City Hall
2. Rhode Island State House
3. Neutaconkanut Hill Park
4. Cranston Street Armory
5. Roger Williams Park
6. The Temple of Music (Benedict Monument)
7. Poe Street
8. Steamship Docks



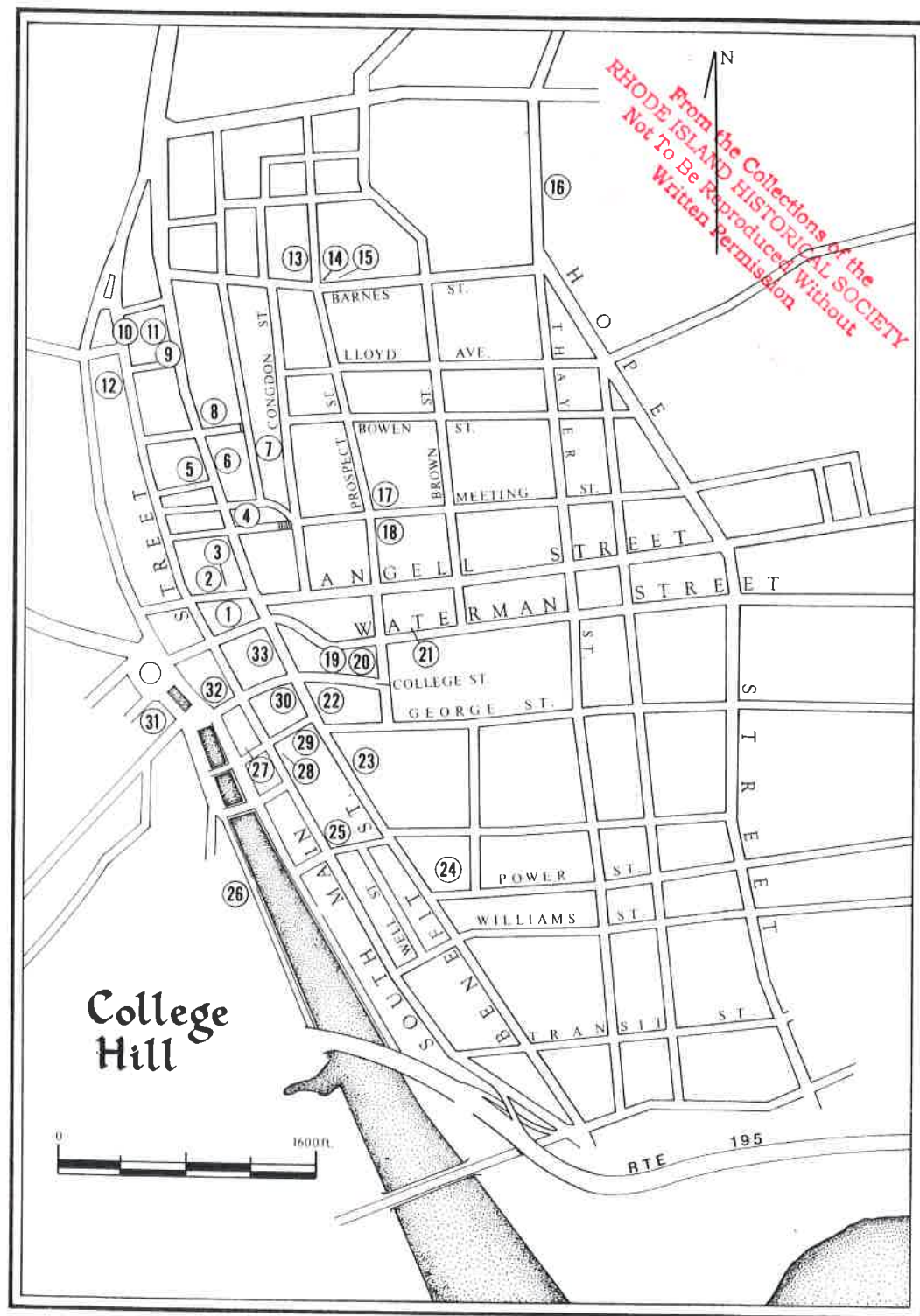
KEY TO MAP OF THE EAST SIDE

1. 454 Angell Street (Angell Court)
2. 598 Angell Street
3. Slater Avenue School
4. Archer Harris House
5. Aldrich-Dexter Field (Dexter Asylum)
6. Moses Brown School for Boys
7. Ladd Observatory
8. Stampers Hill (Olney Court)
9. The Turk's Head Building
10. Beneficent Congregational Church
11. The Met Cafe



KEY TO MAP OF COLLEGE HILL

1. The First Baptist Church
2. The Fleur-de-Leys Building
3. The Providence Art Club
4. The Mansion House/Golden Ball Inn
(Geoff's Parking Lot)
5. Elihu Whipple House (144 Benefit Street)
6. The Shunned House
7. Prospect Terrace
8. The Dorr House
9. Helen Whitman House (88 Benefit Street)
10. St. John's Cathedral
11. St. John's Churchyard
12. Roger Williams Spring Site
13. Charles Dexter Ward House
14. "The Little White Farm House"
15. 10 Barnes Street
16. Old Hope High School
17. Christian Science Church
18. 66 College Street (After Relocation)
19. 66 College Street (Before Relocation)
20. The John Hay Library
21. Former Rhode Island Historical Society Cabinet
Building
22. The Providence Athenaeum
23. First Congregational Church (Unitarian)
24. John Brown House (Rhode Island Historical
Society)
25. Sabin Tavern Site
26. Lovecraft's Favorite View of Providence
(Looking East)
27. Old Brick Row
28. 50 South Main Street
29. Stephen Hopkins House
30. Court House
31. The Great Bridge
32. Market House
33. Pendleton House (Rhode Island School of Design
Museum)



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THE FIRST TOUR

Begin in Kennedy Plaza, formerly Exchange Place. To your left is the Industrial Trust Building, Providence's first skyscraper, to your right the train station, and before you the Providence City Hall (1878), by Samuel J. F. Thayer of Boston. While Lovecraft had no love for the building, he would doubtless have approved of the careful, magnificent interior restoration now under way and well worth inspecting. He would be amazed that several years ago the Providence Commission for Cultural Affairs mounted an exhibition and held an evening celebration here in his honor.

Turning to your left as you face City Hall on Dorrance Street, walk one block to Westminster Street. In "The Shunned House" it is remarked that in the Great Gale of 1815 a sloop was driven up Westminster Street, so far as to almost tap the windows of the Dutee Harris House at the intersection with Eddy Street. And so in fact it happened that a sloop did ground there. Turning left on Westminster Street, a few buildings down on the right is the Providence Arcade (1828), to which the earlier business district of Cheapside removed. Walking down Westminster Street to its junction with Weybosset Street, you may rest for a moment by the fountain in the Hospital Trust Plaza and admire the grotesque stone visage on the point of the Turk's Head Building.

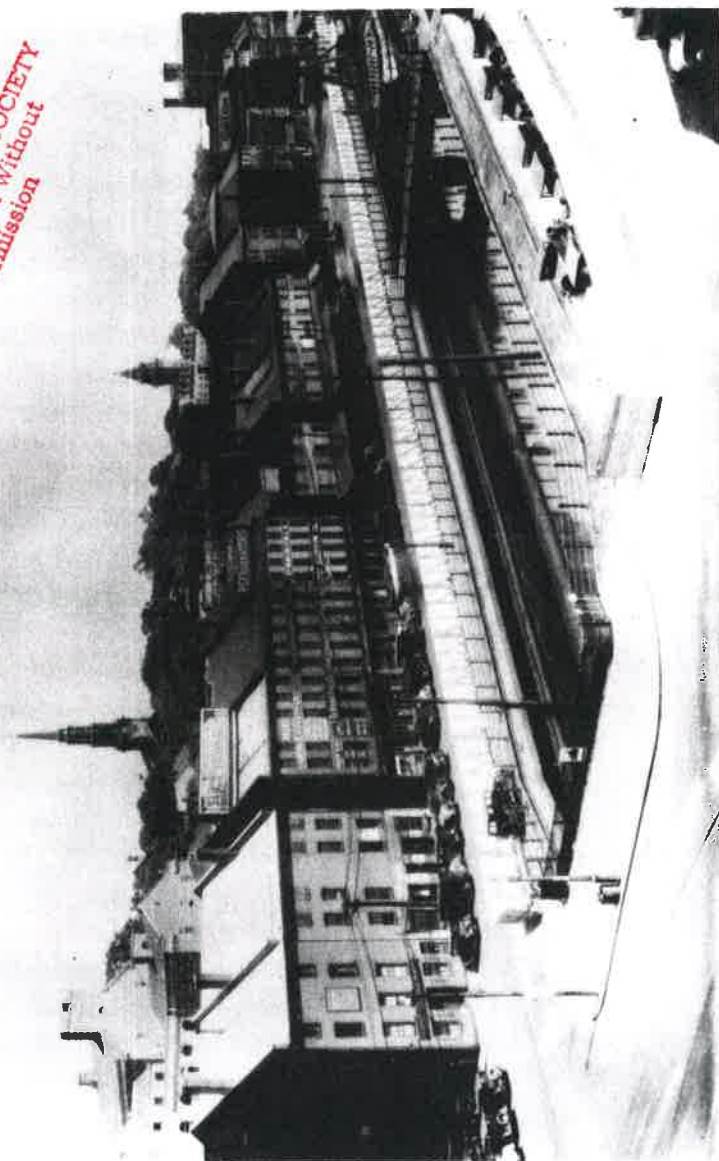
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Coming out of the end of Weybosset Street, you are now on the Great Bridge, more or less on the site of the first bridge of 1660. Walking to your right along the west side of the Providence River, you have a grand view of College Hill. Let Lovecraft tell it: "... if anyone need an incentive for active efforts in behalf of Old Providence, let him stand in Market Square some late afternoon when the slanting sunlight touches the Market House and the ancient hill roofs and belfries with gold, and throws magic around the dreaming wharves where Providence Indiamen used to ride at anchor. Then let him scale the slope in the dusk past the old white [Baptist] church and up the precipitous ways where yellow gleams begin to appear in small-paned windows and through fanlights set high over double flights of steps with curious wrought-iron railings. That is Old Providence—and any civilized spirit must agree that it is amply worth saving!"

Crossing the bridge at its down-river edge, you will notice to your left along the east bank of the river a park and parking lot. Here stood the subject of Lovecraft's poem "Brick Row"—early nineteenth-century warehouses, the destruction of which in 1929 caused him to curse bitterly those responsible. Before leaving the bridge look down the river. Here docked the great bay and coasting steamers that can be recalled by many still living, and on one of which Lovecraft's friend Maurice Moe arrived to visit Providence in 1923.

Moving north now, your attention will immediately be caught by the ogee-roofed brick house at 50 South

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"Old Brick Row," Providence, R.I.
Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society

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Main Street. Built in 1774, this was the home of Joseph Brown, one of the four Brown brothers alleged to have been of the group that put down—they thought—Joseph Curwen in 1771. Designed by its first owner, it is one of a very few colonial bricks remaining and houses the business offices of John Nicholas Brown, great-great-grandnephew of Joseph.

Crossing Hopkins Street, you pass before the Providence County Court House, greatly admired by Lovecraft. At the corner of College Street and diagonally across the intersection is the Market House (1773), also by Joseph Brown. Originally a two-story building, the third was added in 1797 to house St. John's Lodge of Masons. The clock in the west gable replaces the Masonic symbols formerly displayed there, and tablets near the southwest corner of the building record the high water levels of the Great Gale of 1815 and the 1938 hurricane.

This intersection, at South Main and College Streets, is the center of Old Providence. South Main (formerly The Towne Street), along which you have been walking, starts here. To the north of the intersection The Towne Street became North Main Street. College Street was originally Rosemary Lane, a pretty name, but was retitled Hanover Street until the time of the Revolution. The immediate portion of North Main Street was called "Cheapside," since it was the market (or, archaically, the "cheap") section, and there is still the Cheapside Building two blocks to the North.

As you climb College Street to Benefit Street, for

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lack of visual interest you may ponder two conflicting versions of a local legend, that of the “slave tunnels” under College Hill. One version would have it that there is a single tunnel, running from the waterfront to Moses Brown School, a Friends school almost a mile to the northeast. In this legend the tunnel was a part of the underground railroad—a far more literal part than the actual network of slave escape routes ever was.

The second version says that there are a number of these tunnels, leading from the waterfront to the cellars of certain homes on the Hill. In this legend, we are told that after the slave trade was banned in Rhode Island, some merchants would not give up the terrible business and used the tunnels to move their slaves in secret to their homes.

But how was the unloading of the slaves to be kept secret? Even done at the dark of the moon, the stench and noise of human beings packed together for so long would have come off any slave ship brought up the river and given the game away.

And, further, the hill is bed rock, thinly covered with soil and gravel. How could even the most avaricious merchant have cut a tunnel an eighth of a mile through solid rock *in secret*? Far easier to maintain the pattern of the triangular trade routes of those days, setting forth with a cargo of rum to Africa; thence to the West Indies with slaves, to exchange this human cargo for molasses and sugar; and so back to Rhode Island, where the legal cargo would be distilled into rum, and

the ship could venture out again. Nonetheless, there are still people who believe this tale.

There is, though, a plausible and logical explanation for the existence of underground rooms that really are sometimes found cut back into the Hill from the basements of buildings along the waterfront. They were probably cold cellars for perishable cargo, kept at a pretty steady fifty-five degrees or so by the surrounding sub-frostline earth. Spend a full seasonal year in Providence and you will understand the need for such storage areas, as well as the reason that so many of those East Siders who can afford to leave for South County and Sakonnet early in the summer.

Having reached Benefit Street, you will see on the east side of the street the Greek Revival building (1838) of the Providence Athenaeum. This institution is more closely associated with Edgar Allen Poe than with Howard Phillips Lovecraft, for here much of the former's courtship of Sarah Helen (Power) Whitman took place. A private lending library, the Athenaeum until recently maintained a locked scruple room, in which were kept books of questionable redeeming social merit, such as *Studs Lonigan* and the works of Erskine Caldwell. Newly purchased works destined eventually for the scruple room were kept temporarily in a drawer, known to the staff as “The Sewer,” at the circulation desk. I had the good fortune to be standing there the day that Professor S. Foster Damon, poet, Blake and Melville scholar, collector of books on witchcraft, and the

author of a biography of Thomas Holley Chivers (a writer admired by Lovecraft), requested from this drawer a particular title—"it's on the tip of my tongue, but I can't quite remember it." At the desk was Miss Clara Mowry, who at the time of her retirement was a veteran of more than sixty years' service at the Athenaeum. She quite definitely was a member of "the old guard on guard." "Is it," she asked quietly, "*The Carpetbaggers*?" "Yes, yes," replied Foster heartily. "It is *The Carpetbaggers* that I want to read."

The customary quiet of the building became even quieter. Miss Mowry sat still. "Well," she said. It was a statement. Miss Mowry regarded Foster. Foster regarded Miss Mowry. The clock over the desk ticked. Finally, slowly, the drawer was opened, the book produced and signed out. Exit Foster, beaming and waving goodbye to all with the book in his hand.

They are both gone now, and are both remembered with affection by many here.

You should go into the Athenaeum, and you will be made welcome. William H. P. Faunce, late president of Brown University, called it "the only library in all the world that I ever loved." It is a special place, and Lovecraft is well represented.

Leaving by the front door, you may drink (in summer) from the Athenaeum's fountain on Benefit Street and continue your climb up College Street. The John Hay Library, one of Brown's libraries, which has a great collection of Lovecraftiana, is on the northwest corner of College and Prospect Streets. Directly behind

it is the List Art Building, now occupying the former site of Lovecraft's last home, 66 College Street. He describes it as Robert Blake's home in "The Haunter of the Dark":

Young Blake returned to Providence in the winter of 1934-5, taking the upper floor of a venerable dwelling in a grassy court off College Street—on the crest of the great eastward hill near the Brown University campus and behind the marble John Hay Library. It was a cozy and fascinating place, in a little garden oasis of village-like antiquity where huge, friendly cats sunned themselves atop a convenient shed. The square Georgian house had a monitor roof, classic doorway with fan carving, small-paned windows, and all the other earmarks of early Nineteenth Century workmanship. Inside were six-paneled doors, wide floor-boards, a curving colonial staircase, white Adam-period mantels, and a rear set of rooms three steps below the general level.

Blake's study, a large southwest chamber, overlooked the front garden on one side, while its west windows—before one of which he had his desk—faced off from the brow of the hill and commanded a splendid view of the lower town's outspread roofs and of the mystical sunsets that flamed behind them. On the far horizon were the open countryside's purple slopes.

To the left of the Van Wickle Gates at the head of College Street is a stone bench. There is a photograph of Lovecraft sitting here, reproduced opposite p. 134 of *Selected Letters III* (he is not in Brooklyn, as the caption suggests). If you have time, take a walk in the Brown campus. Lovecraft hoped to become a student here in 1908, though this hope was unrealized; and his uncles,

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Dr. Clarke and Edward Gamwell were both Brown men.

Moving north on Prospect Street, you are now following the route of Charles Dexter Ward on his return from abroad, a thinly disguised account of Lovecraft's return from New York:

When the coach crossed the Pawcatuck and entered Rhode Island amidst the faery goldenness of a late spring afternoon his heart beat with quickened force, and the entry to Providence along Reservoir and Elmwood avenues was a breathless and wonderful thing despite the depths of forbidden lore to which he had delved. At the high square where Broad, Weybosset, and Empire Streets join, he saw before and below him in the fire of sunset the pleasant, remembered house and domes and steeples of the old town; and his head swam curiously as the vehicle rolled down to the terminal behind the Biltmore, bringing into view the great dome and soft, roof-pierced greenery of the ancient hill across the river, and the tall, colonial spire of the First Baptist Church limned pink in the magic evening light against the fresh springtime verdure of its precipitous background.

Old Providence! It was this place and the mysterious forces of its long, continuous history which had brought him into being, and which had drawn him back toward marvels and secrets whose boundaries no prophet might fix. Here lay the arcana, wondrous or dreadful as the case might be, for which all his years of travel and application had been preparing him. A taxicab whirled him through Post Office Square with its glimpse of the river, the old Market House, and the head of the bay, and up the steep curved slope of Waterman Street to Prospect, where the vast gleaming dome and sunset-flushed Ionic columns of the Christian Science Church

beckoned northward. Then eight squares past the fine old estates his childish eyes had known, and the quaint brick sidewalks so often trodden by his youthful feet. And at last the little white overtaken farmhouse on the right, and on the left the classic Adam porch and stately bayed façade of the great brick house where he was born. It was twilight, and Charles Dexter Ward had come home.

Ahead, on the northeast corner of Prospect and Meeting Streets is the Christian Science Church, and on the southeast corner stands Lovecraft's last home, the former 66 College Street, moved to this site some years ago.

Turn left onto Cushing Street, still much as it was in Lovecraft's time. On your way keep an eye out for a cannon, buried muzzle down and once used as a hitching post. When you reach Congdon Street, cross over into Prospect Terrace, from which you have a fine view of the city. As built in the late 1860's, the Terrace was about one-third its present size and had a fountain, unfortunately later removed.

The rectangular arch and the statue of Roger Williams, in a style which might be termed Socialist Monumental, date from 1939; and the latest grave of Roger Williams is directly behind the statue. Williams died in 1683 and was buried in a grave at the back of his home lot. In 1860 the grave was opened. There was little left: an apple tree root, a few rusted nails, and some dirt rather darker than the surrounding soil. The root, it is alleged in both prose and verse, went where the eating

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was best, working its way down the trunk of the corpse, then forking into two roots which followed the legs. The root is preserved in the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, which until recently also had the skulls remaining from "Nine Men's Misery," another tale we will get to eventually. The nails, or some of them at least, belong to a Williams descendant. He would not be pleased to have you turning up at odd hours wanting to see them, so you must simply take my word on this matter. The dirt was packed into an old soap box and placed in the tomb of Stephen Randall, another Williams descendant, in the North Burial Ground. In 1932 the dirt was repacked in a more permanent container, and in 1939 that was put in its present resting place behind the statue.

The fact that what we have here is as much a gigantic tombstone as anything else has not been appreciated by all. Back in the fifties students suspended a large, round, woman's hat box on a cord from the outstretched hand of the statue, and for a little while Roger appeared to be playing with a giant yo-yo.

Lovecraft enjoyed spending an afternoon reading on the Terrace. He may have been a Williams descendant. He is descended from one of two brothers, one of whom married a Williams descendant. In either case, the two brothers were descended from Ann Marbury Hutchinson, and so, though he did not know it, Lovecraft was a collateral descendant of his beloved John Dryden, Poet Laureate of England.

As you return to Prospect Street via Bowen Street,

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you will find 100 Prospect on the northwest corner of the intersection. This is the address of the home of Charles Dexter Ward, but not the actual house. Why Lovecraft, usually so fanatically accurate, assigned the wrong number in this case, is anybody's guess. But number 100 is a very nice house with beautiful flowerbeds bordering the sidewalk. I ask you please not to pick the flowers, for they give great pleasure to all who pass by.

Going north on Prospect Street, turn down into Barnes Street. Number 10 is where Lovecraft lived on his return from New York, and the address is assigned to Dr. Willett in "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward." Coming back to the head of Barnes Street, notice the house on the northeast corner, now owned by William A. Viall. This is "the little white farmhouse of two hundred years before that the town had long ago overtaken," past which Charles Dexter Ward was wheeled as an infant in his carriage.

Facing the head of Creighton Street is the Halsey Mansion, built in 1801, used by Lovecraft as the home of Charles Dexter Ward. Colonel Thomas Lloyd Halsey put together a considerable fortune. His son and namesake was agent for Brown and Ives, Merchants, in Buenos Aires, whence he wrote to his principals that the local officials did not stay bribed, but required two or more "donations" in the course of any transaction. In 1812 he was appointed U.S. Consul at Buenos Aires, where he gained a fortune of his own, as well as a mistress or common law wife by whom he had a daughter. The later part of his life he spent in Providence living in

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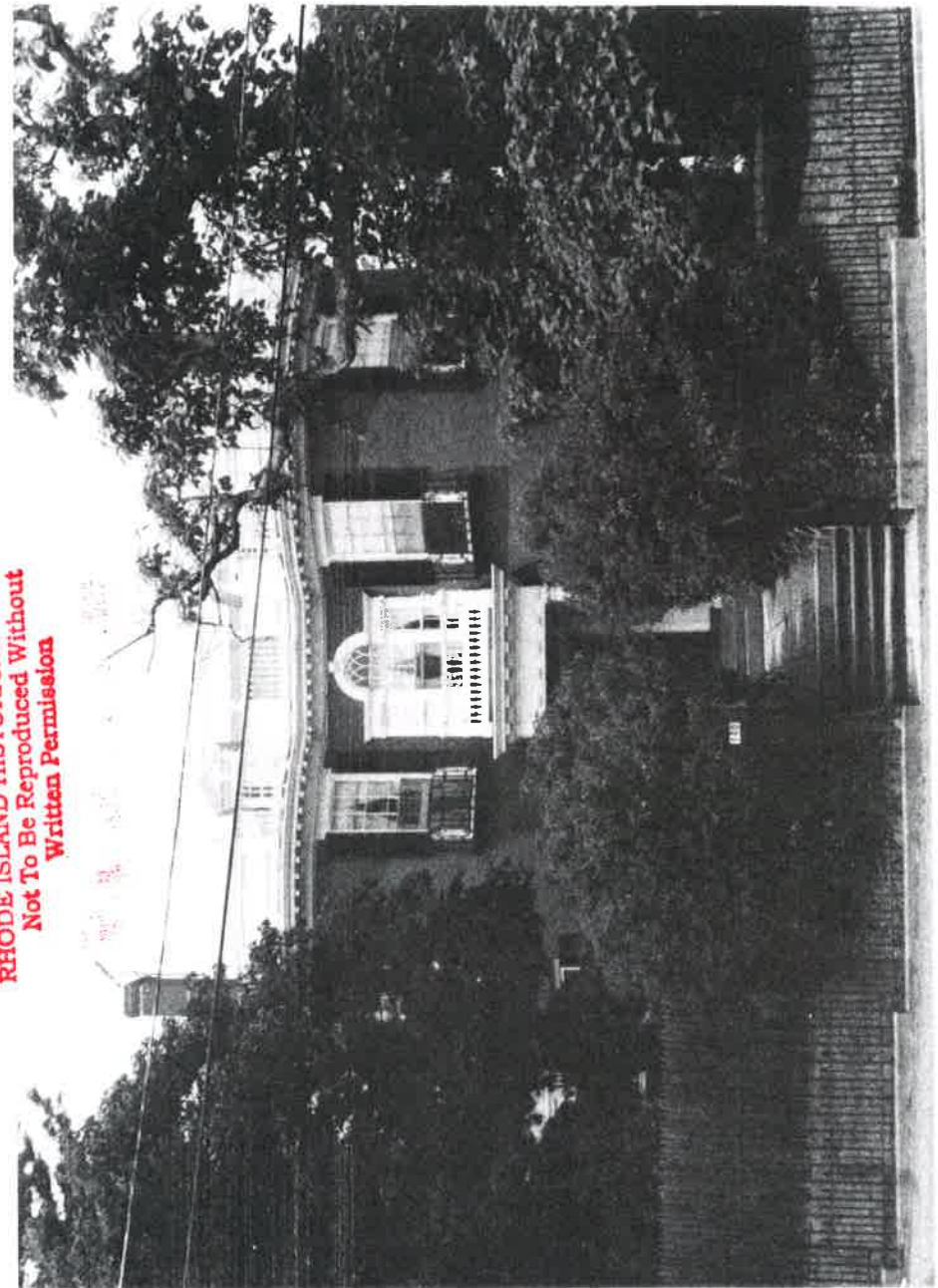
high style. His will left his sister a life interest in his property, which was then to revert to his grandson in Argentina providing he change his name to Halsey and move to Providence. This the young man did, to the dismay of the collateral heirs in Providence. The result was that all parties involved sued each other in every court available for years.

It has been suggested to me that the “stately” bays flanking the front door of the Halsey Mansion may not be part of the original construction. Persistent rumors that the building is haunted may or may not be true.

Now continue to the head of Prospect Street, turning left onto Olney Street and following that to its foot on North Main Street. Nearby is the alleged site of the Joseph Curwen House, but before getting there, consider another Providence tale.

It is said that at some point in the early history of the town, a group of the inhabitants providentially happened to be in the woods on the hill leading down to the Moshassuck River, precisely at the time a band of hostile Indians was approaching, and scared them away by stamping and jumping to create the illusion of a large party of defenders. Hence the name, Stampers Hill. What has not been taken into account before is that in 1646, John Smith, banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony ten years earlier “for divers dangerous opinions which he holdeth and hath divulged,” was granted the Stampers Hill area and the river valley, “in case he set up a mill.” He did so, part of the bargain being that he pay the cost of the wooden stampers, which milled the

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The “Charles Dexter Ward House,” Providence, R.I.

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grain, for the mill, which was built and operated there for many years. This would seem to be a more reasonable explanation of the origin of the name than the other account, which depends too heavily on the Divine Providence after which Williams named this city and his second born son, who died childless, taking his name with him.

Lovecraft did better in the naming of Joseph Curwen than he may have known. That Captain George Curwen, presumed ancestor of Joseph, lived in Salem in 1638, he doubtless knew. But he seems not to have realized that the Curwens were of the most ancient armigerous Cumbrian lineage, probably descended from the early Kings of Scots and, possibly, ultimately from Niall of the Nine Hostages, king in Ireland ca. 400 A.D.

By now you should be at the foot of Olney Street. Directly to the north, across the intersection, is the site of Epenetus Olney's tavern, mentioned by Curwen as opposite his home, and possibly the building from which Richard Chasmore, accused of being overly familiar with a neighbor's heifer, was rescued from certain Massachusetts Bay officials, who had taken him into custody, on the night of February 23, 1656/7. This area to the north and east of you was known to Lovecraft as Lippitt Hill, but it has recently been renamed University Heights, perhaps more for the sake of urban renewal than for its proximity to Brown University.

Cross North Main Street, and look over the valley before you. Until recently there were streets between here and the river below, and it was more or less here

that Joseph Curwen's house is said to have stood.

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Recrossing North Main Street, turn south into Benefit Street. The district here, run down and decaying in Lovecraft's time, has been renewed in the past twenty years, and he would have been immensely gratified to see it happen. It has been a complex and long-term effort, involving both private and public capital. In 1926 a letter from Lovecraft appeared in the *Providence Sunday Journal* pleading the case for restoration of historic Providence; but it was not until the founding, in 1956, of the Providence Preservation Society, that an organized defense was finally mounted. In 1968 the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, directed since its beginning by Antoinette Downing, was created. Both organizations have done much to preserve and restore Old Providence, and Lovecraft would have applauded them.

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Do not pass by 66 Benefit Street, otherwise Hallworth House, a nursing home operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, without entering the yard there. Go down the steps and terraces to Saint John's—formerly King's Church—graveyard. This was a spot particularly loved by Lovecraft, for Poe is supposed to have visited here. The gravestones range from colonial slates to more recent marbles and granites. The arms on the Merritt tomb are of dubious validity.

As you climb back to Benefit Street you may have visions of visiting the graveyard by night, as Lovecraft did. Please do not do so. City life is not what it was in the thirties, and in Lovecraft's day there was no convales-

cent home adjacent, whose residents might be set back by the sound of your footsteps in a silent place.

Still proceeding south on Benefit Street, pause at Number 88, at the corner of Church Street. This was the home of Sarah Helen Whitman, which explains in part why Poe spent so much time hanging about in the graveyard. Go down Church Street and cross North Main Street. Here is the beginning of a large park, and set within it the small walled Roger Williams Spring site. The spring, now a well, is that used by Williams, who lived across North Main Street and a little to the south, and the other settlers of 1636. The walled area is set below the level of the road, and so is a quiet place to pause and rest. It is an extremely well kept, pretty park, thanks to the careful attentions of Mr. Albert Rustelli, custodian of the site. If he is around, say hello; he likes to have people visit his little park. Plans for developing the larger area around the well site call for a good number of trees, which will make it a very attractive park.

Leave the well site by the north. Some few yards ahead of you is a monument to Gabriel Bernon, one of the two principal founders of St. John's (1782), opposite, and almost an ancestor of Lovecraft, his daughter Sarah having been the first wife of Benjamin Whipple (1687-1786), one of Lovecraft's maternal great-great-great-grandfathers. Benjamin's brother, Colonel Joseph Whipple, was the other person chiefly responsible for the founding of the church. In 1794 the name was changed from King's Church to St. John's—the pronominal saint is the Evangelist, rather than the Baptist—and

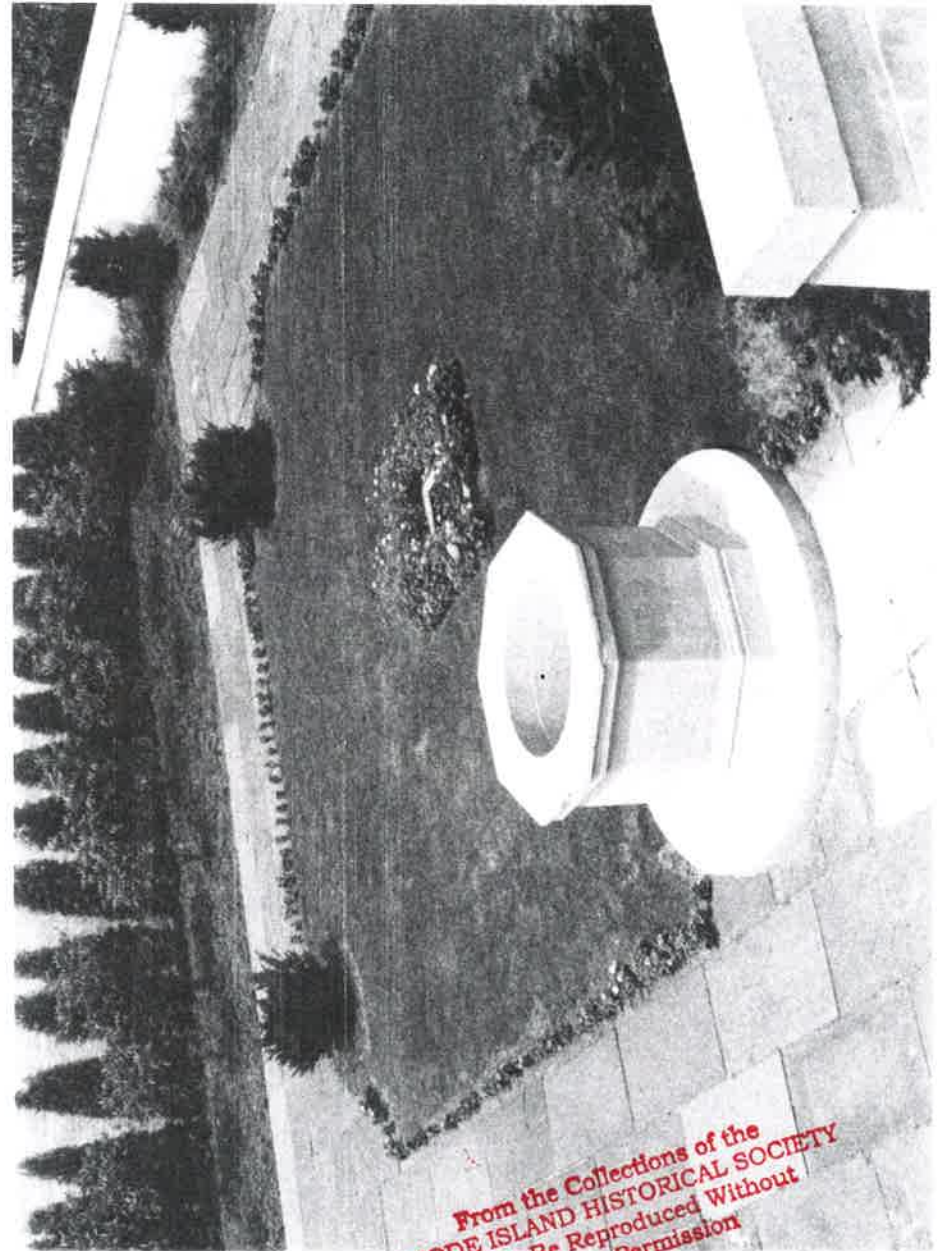
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in 1810 the original building was demolished. The present structure, designed by John Holden Greene, was dedicated in 1811, and in 1929 became the Cathedral of St. John and the official seat of the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island. Entry, during open hours, is through the Parish House attached to the north side of the church.

Re-ascend Church Street, and as you continue south on Benefit Street, notice the little dead-end courts leading off to the east. Lovecraft was fond of these for their seclusion and country-like atmosphere. At the north side of the intersection of Benefit and Bowen Streets is the Sullivan Dorr House (1809), by John Holden Greene, now owned by Frank Mauran, great-great-great grandson of the first owner and, by my calculation, seventh cousin once removed of Lovecraft; but then most of the people I mention are in some degree related to each other and to Lovecraft.

Climb Bowen Street to Pratt Street and turn north. Looking down over the fence you will see a large circular piece of granite, part of a column intended for the Arcade downtown. This marks the spot where Roger Williams was originally buried.

Go back to Benefit Street and continue south to Number 133, "The Shunned House." It is not haunted. There is nothing out of the ordinary—nor was there ever—buried under the basement. But it is a charming house, and very attractively restored in recent years. The nineteenth-century case of vampirism in Exeter, R.I., mentioned by Lovecraft in connection with Ann White, is fact, however.



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Roger Williams Spring Site, Providence, R.I.

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Moving on, note 144 Benefit Street, at the northwest corner of Benefit and North Court Streets. This is the house said to be the home of Dr. Elihu Whipple, uncle of the narrator of "The Shunned House." Across North Court Street stands the old State House (1762), at 150 Benefit Street, in use as such until 1900, when the new State House was opened. The government of the state met in Bristol, East Greenwich, Newport, Providence, and South Kingstown until 1854, then only in Newport and Providence until 1900, and since then in Providence only. After 1900, Number 150 was used as a courthouse until recently; it is now the home of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

At the southeast corner of Benefit and South Court Streets stood the Golden Ball Inn, at which Poe is said to have stayed. The site is now a parking lot for Geoff's.

I now offer you a choice. You can briskly scamper off to continue your tour, or you can stop at Geoff's and have a tremendous sandwich. While I know you will hate to pause even for a moment, the food here is really worthwhile, even though the renowned "Jake" is no longer there to serve you. I rest my case.

As you (now or shortly) cross Meeting Street, look at the stone steps a block above you, up which William Sprague, sometime Governor of and Senator from Rhode Island, is reputed to have ridden his horse. Be that as it may, people have certainly ridden down these steps, on one occasion in an out-of-control VW.

Having crossed Meeting Street, you are now in front of the Colonial Apartments, the construction of which was greatly regretted by Lovecraft. Directly

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across Benefit Street is the former State Armory (1840), originally the headquarters of the Providence Marine Corps of Artillery. When first built this stood on the parking lot to the south, but was moved in 1905 to make way for the railroad tunnel below the lot.

Continue south and turn right down Thomas Street. Number 11 is the Providence Art Club. Lovecraft went to exhibits there with his aunts; the elder of the two, Lilly Phillips Clark displayed her works there. My Great Aunt Lily's mother was married there when it was a private home, in the 1840's.

Number 7 Thomas Street is the Fleur-de-Lys Building, erected as a studio by Sydney R. Burleigh in 1885. This is the lodging of Henry Anthony Wilcox in "The Call of Cthulhu."

At the foot of Thomas Street turn left, and view the First Baptist Meeting House (1775), by Joseph Brown. The congregation was gathered in 1638/9, the oldest Baptist congregation in America. This building was regarded by Lovecraft as his "maternal ancestral church." Here, in 1923, he and his friend J. F. Morton climbed the steeple to look at the bell; and during the same visit, Lovecraft attempted to play "Yes, We Have No Bananas" on the organ but found, perhaps fortunately, that he did not know how to turn it on.

This is the end of the first tour.

*Three words a name, three dates a life,
So many children by each wife.
Drained off to various family lots,
Politely private, each one rots
Too deep to fertilize the grass,
With stones to tell who each one was.
Fathers, mothers, daughters, sons . . .*

"Family Portrait"
S. Foster Damon

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THE SECOND TOUR: PROVIDENCE (by car)

Enter the North Burial Ground (1700) at the intersection of North Main Street and Branch Avenue. The old section, doubtless where Lovecraft would have located the graves of Joseph Curwen and Ezra Weeden, is directly to the south. Here the stones are for the most part of slate, many of them well cut. We do not know where Lovecraft imagined the location of the Ward lot—possibly here, or possibly in one of the Victorian areas of the graveyard.

Prior to 1700 settlers had laid out family graveyards on or near Benefit Street, but by that date, perhaps because of the increasing value of College Hill land or as a primitive response to environmental concerns, they felt the need for a more removed and general burying place, so the Burial Ground was set aside as a public area for burying the dead and drilling the militia. In the mid-eighteenth century Benefit Street, then a winding way, was widened and straightened, and the contents of many graves were later transferred to the North Burial Ground.

Leaving the Burial Ground, go north on North Main Street (earlier, the "Common Road to Pawtucket"). Turn right onto Rochambeau Avenue (laid out ca. 1685; earlier Hearnton's Lane), and drive over the hill.

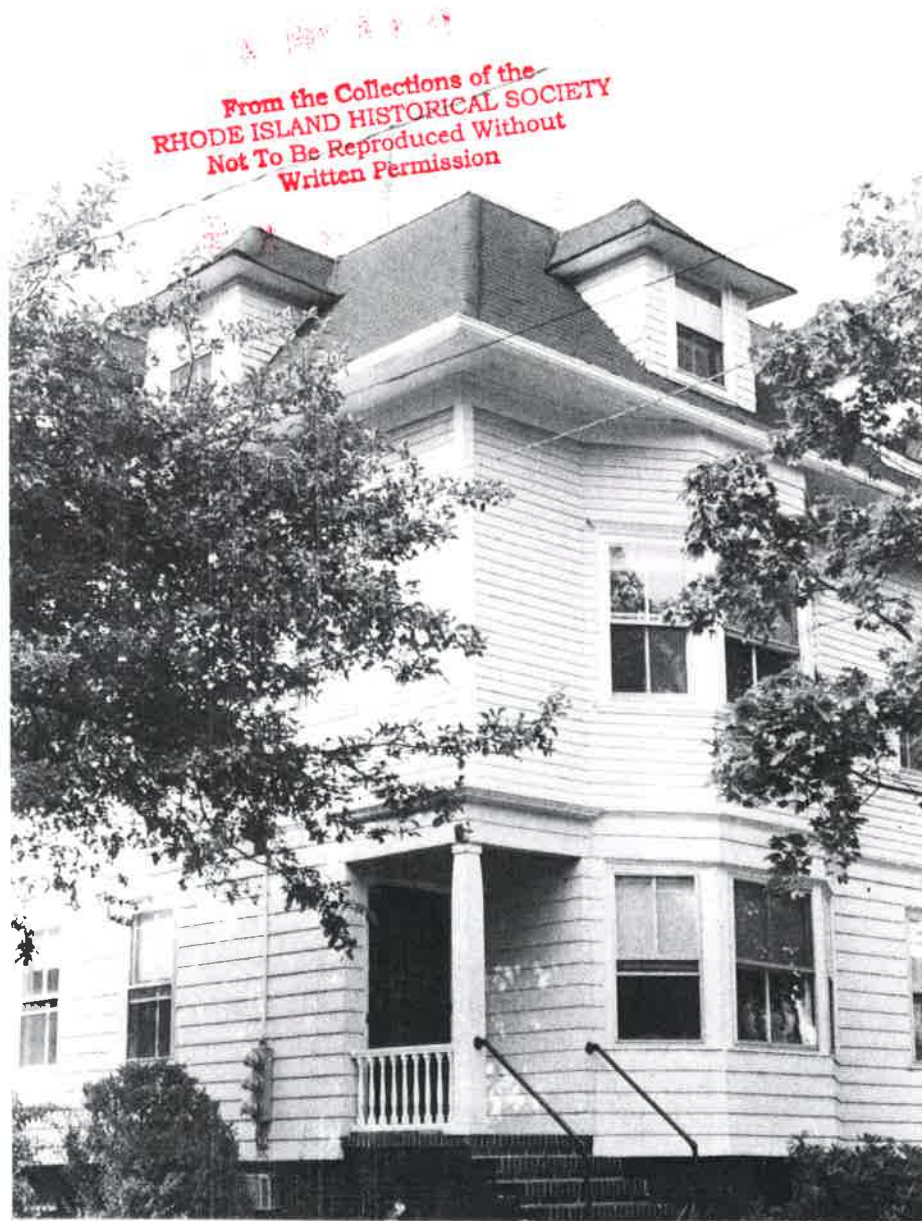
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Camp Street, which intersects Rochambeau Avenue near the crest, commemorates the site of the French troops who encamped here in 1781 and 1782 under the Count de Rochambeau. Given Lovecraft's sympathies, he would not have paused here, nor shall we. Continue on Rochambeau Avenue to its end at Blackstone Boulevard; cross to the far lane of the Boulevard and turn north. To your right is the Butler Health Center, formerly Butler Hospital, where Lovecraft's father and mother died.

Turn right into Swan Point Cemetery and stop at the office for help in locating the Whipple V. Phillips lot (in Group 281), where Lovecraft and his close relatives are buried. At the time of his death no stone was put up to mark his grave, probably for lack of money, but this has recently been remedied by a group of devotees.

The cemetery is open days. Do not go there at night. You will be caught by those who have no sympathy for night-walkers. Beyond this, consider that this area of the city along the Seekonk River is the home of a wide variety of wildlife. Many are nocturnal feeders, and your presence will only disturb and frighten them.

Leaving Swan Point Cemetery, travel south on Blackstone Boulevard until you reach Lloyd Avenue, and turn right. Take your first left onto Slater Avenue; there you will find the site of the Slater Avenue School, which Lovecraft attended, at the northeast corner of the intersection of Slater and University Avenues. Turn left onto University Avenue, then right onto Blackstone



598 Angell Street, Providence, R.I.

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Boulevard again. Stay on this street until it narrows and becomes Butler Avenue; continue until it intersects with Angell Street. Here you may turn left, if you wish to see 598 Angell Street. Lovecraft's family moved to an apartment in this building after the death of his grandfather in 1904.

Turn around and drive west on Angell Street through Wayland Square. The first intersection above the square is at Elmgrove Avenue; on the northwest corner stood 454 Angell Street, Lovecraft's birthplace. The original lot was far larger than the present corner lot, extending north two thirds of the way to Adelphi Avenue and west to Angell Court.

Continuing west you will quickly come to an area where the north side of Angell Street is bordered by a high stone wall. This surrounds a forty acre tract, now Brown playing fields, but originally set aside and walled as the Dexter Asylum, a poor farm, in the nineteenth century. The wall is three feet thick at ground level and eight feet high. Within was a marvelously Charles Addams-ish residence for the inmates, by John Holden Greene, now demolished. At the time that Brown took over the property, there was an auction of furnishings and other items in the building. One of the more interesting lots was a group of old wooden coffins, including some for infants.

Number 276 Angell Street, now Hamilton House, is the "sumptuous, but hideous French-roofed mansion," as Lovecraft would have it, that he designates "the

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Archer Harris House” in “The Shunned House.” It is a remarkable building, built in the early twentieth century rather than in 1876, as Lovecraft dates it.

Herewith a little lore on Angell Street.

The original home lots, as laid out in the seventeenth century, ran from The Towne Street (now North and South Main Streets) up and over College Hill to what is now Hope Street as long narrow strips. The piece allotted to Thomas Angell in 1636 was a bit to the north of Angell Street, which is named for him. Below Benefit Street, it continues to North Main Street as Thomas Street, also named for the settler of 1636, and extends one block further to Canal Street as Steeple Street, perhaps in reference to the spire of the First Baptist Meeting House.

At Prospect Street turn left, cross Angell Street, and descend the hill on College Street, turning left onto Benefit Street. At the southwest corner of the intersection of Benefit and Hopkins Streets is the Stephen Hopkins House, ca. 1743. At the time that Hopkins, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Lovecraft’s second cousin five times removed, lived in it, it was located at the foot of the hill on South Main Street. It was at the Stephen Hopkins House that all four of the Brown brothers, Joseph, John, Moses, and Nicholas; Captain Abraham Whipple; Dr. Benjamin West, observer of the 1769 transit of Venus (an astronomical phenomenon that you are welcome to look into further); and several others met, in December, 1770, to discuss what steps might be taken in the case of Joseph Curwen.

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The “Archer Harris House,” Providence, R.I.

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Continuing south on Benefit Street, you pass the First Congregational Church (Unitarian; 1816), by John Holden Greene, and turn left up Charlesfield Street, then right into the parking lot of the Rhode Island Historical Society about fifty yards uphill. Follow the path over to John Brown House (1786), designed by Joseph Brown for his brother, John, and given to the Rhode Island Historical Society by their collateral descendant, John Nicholas Brown, in 1941. But before you go in (admission, \$1.00), rest a bit on the lawn, and hear the tale of "Nine Men's Misery," as handed down from the tenth, who survived.

On a March Sunday in 1676, a band of eighty some men set out from East Providence with the intention of destroying a large body of Indians in Central Falls. Their commander sent a messenger across the Seekonk River to Providence, requesting additional forces to meet them at the place where the Indians were gathered. The messenger arrived in Providence shortly after the beginning of the Sunday church service. Being a good, God-fearing, seventeenth-century New Englander, he waited for four hours until meeting had ended before delivering his urgent message. By the time the troops from Providence arrived at the battle site, it was all over — piles of corpses everywhere — and the Indians had left with ten captive survivors to celebrate their victory.

The ten captives were taken up to Cumberland, where, it is said, they were tortured; they were certainly killed — except for one who escaped to tell the tale. The next day the bodies were found and buried in a common

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grave in Cumberland, under a cairn of stones. The grave site was named "Nine Men's Misery."

We now leap ahead in time. In the 1960's Mr. Joseph K. Ott was doing some volunteer work for the Rhode Island Historical Society, going through various artifacts stored in the Society's basement. Opening a carton, he was confronted by a pile of bones—and nine skulls grinning cheerfully up at him. He was considerably shaken. A card in the carton identified the contents as the remains of Nine Men's Misery, but why and how they came to be there no one knows.

But I can tell you that they have been returned to Cumberland and re-interred in a new monument on the site. And that Mr. Ott now confines his volunteer activities to the Historical Society library.

If you decide to go into John Brown House, be sure to see the Marsden Perry bathroom, tastefully decorated with nymphs. Items that may interest you in the Society's collection are the apple tree root from Roger Williams' grave, a fragment of the battleship *Maine*, and a piece of pork rind, as served on the prison-ship *Jersey* during the Revolution. Such eccentricities are normally no longer within the scope of the Society's collecting policy. If you want to get a good idea of the style in which Lovecraft would like to have lived as a Georgian gentleman, John Brown House is well worth the entrance fee.

Leave the Historical Society via Power Street and turn left onto Benefit Street. The next intersection is with Williams Street. Go west down the hill on Williams

65 — LOVECRAFT'S PROVIDENCE

Street to its intersection with Well Street. This is almost certainly the scene of the death of George Gammell Angell, Professor Emeritus of Semitic Languages at Brown University and granduncle of the narrator in "The Call of Cthulhu."

This is the end of the second tour.

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PROVIDENCE: ADDITIONAL ODD SPOTS

THE LADD OBSERVATORY

East side of Hope Street between Doyle and Observatory Avenues. In 1903 Lovecraft was given permission by Winslow Upton, Professor of Astronomy at Brown and Director of the Ladd Observatory, to use the facility. Lovecraft had a keen interest in astronomy: in 1903 he founded the (amateur) *Rhode Island Journal of Astronomy*, and he later published columns on the subject in the *Providence Tribune* and the *Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner*.

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SITE OF OLD HOPE HIGH SCHOOL

Southeast corner of the intersection of Hope Street and Alumni Avenue; now occupied by the "Alumni East Apartments." Old Hope High was built in 1898, and Lovecraft went there intermittently from 1904 to 1908. Across Hope Street is the present Hope High, built in 1938 on what in Lovecraft's time was a reservoir. Old Hope High burned down some years ago.

MOSES BROWN SCHOOL

Enter, on foot, through the gate on Hope Street across from the foot of Barnes Street or by car through the

PROVIDENCE: ADDITIONAL SPOTS — 70

main gates on the crest of Lloyd Avenue east of Hope Street. Established in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, in 1784, as the New England Yearly Meeting Boarding School; re-established in Providence in 1819 as Friends School. The original part of the main building (1819) is by John Holden Greene.

The re-establishment of the school in Providence was largely owing to the efforts of Moses Brown, a brother of Joseph the architect. It was renamed for him in 1904. Lovecraft assures us that Charles Dexter Ward graduated as a member of the class of 1920. This cannot be proven, as school records appear to be incomplete on this point, so Charles Dexter Ward must be considered in the same light as Little Willie, the main character in a cautionary lecture delivered each winter by a certain assistant headmaster. After lunch, on the day of the first snowfall, he would advise his students in pointed terms that he did not want to be the recipient of a phone call from an irate mother complaining that her "Little Willie" had been the victim of a snowball attack by his brutal classmates.

Moses Brown School possesses two stuffed specimens of the now extinct Passenger Pigeon.

OLD RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING

At 68 Waterman Street, to the east of its intersection with Prospect Street. This was the Society's first home, which it occupied until the move to John Brown House in 1941. Lovecraft visited here from time to time; in 1935 he brought Robert E. Moe to view the apple tree root from

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Ladd Observatory, Providence, R.I.

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Roger Williams' grave. Here, according to Lovecraft, one could see a sampler worked in 1753 by Eliza Tillinghast, then nine years old, later destined to marry Joseph Curwen.

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TRANSIT STREET

Runs east from Benefit Street. The transit of Venus was observed from here in 1769. Lovecraft reports that a pamphlet on this matter was published by Dr. Benjamin West, one of the party that met to discuss Joseph Curwen at Stephen Hopkins' home in late December, 1770.

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THE SABIN TAVERN SITE

The Sabin Tavern (ca. 1763) was located on the northeast corner of South Main and Planet Streets and was demolished in 1891. Here, on the evening of 9 June, 1772, John Brown, brother of Joseph and Moses, met with other influential citizens to plan the burning of the grounded British revenue schooner, *Gaspee*. The successful expedition was led by Captain, later Commodore, Abraham Whipple, not only a collateral relative of Lovecraft, but also the husband of Sarah, sister of Stephen Hopkins, who as we have seen was also related to Lovecraft.

BENEFICENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (ROUND-TOP CHURCH)

Located on the east side of Weybosset Street between Richmond and Chestnut Streets. Lovecraft came here by

PROVIDENCE: ADDITIONAL SPOTS — 74

1 night in 1903 with J. F. Morton; he described Abbot
79 Park, beside the church, as “. . . the gruesome court
which is the outer vestibule of unnamable elder laby-
rinths.”

RICHMOND/CHESTNUT STREET AREA AND SOUTH

1 Lovecraft explored this area, initially with Clifford M.
70 Eddy, who first brought him here, and later with J. F.
Morton. This is how Lovecraft saw it: “This antient and
pestilential reticulation of crumbling cottages and de-
caying doorways . . . Only the gods know who can in-
habit this morbid maze . . . narrow exotick streets and
unbelievable courts and alleys . . . emerging into un-
wholesome little squares . . . No, I had not thought that
Providence held such places as this.”

Unspoiled by urban renewal, the area remains
much as Lovecraft knew it. Gould’s Place, called
“Ghoul’s Court” by Lovecraft, is on Gould Street, just
northwest of Pine Street between Claverick and Chest-
nut Streets.

Knock back a jar or two at the Met Cafe, at the inter-
section of Friendship and Chestnut Streets, and enjoy
some very good music: blues, jazz, R & B, bluegrass, or
Rock ‘n’ Roll, depending on what is on that evening.
Tom Bates, who owns the place, is a good host.

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POE STREET

Between and parallel to Allens Avenue and Eddy
Street, it runs from Public Street to Pleasure Street.
Known to Lovecraft, and presumably named for Edgar
Allen Poe.

THE CRANSTON STREET ARMORY

On Cranston Street, between Dexter and Parade Streets.
Part of the Dexter Donation of 1824, the other portion
being the Dexter Asylum on the East Side. The stipu-
lation of the testator that no public executions be held
on the site has been faithfully complied with. It was from
this armory, in 1908, that Dr. Elihu Whipple procured
some of the apparatus taken to the basement of the
Shunned House.

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THE TEMPLE OF MUSIC

In Roger Williams Park. Designed by William T.
Aldrich of Boston, this Classical structure with
colonnade was built in 1924. Very likely the subject of
Lovecraft’s 1920 poem “On a Grecian Colonnade in a
Park.”

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NEUTACONKANUT HILL PARK

Off Plainfield Street, on the western border of Provi-
dence. Lovecraft visited here over the years, and parti-
cularly during the last Fall of his life. He much enjoyed
the prospect eastward over Providence and Upper Nar-
ragansett Bay.

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*We're going home, for we're dashing to
South County wet with autumn dew,
Ablaze with sumach, aflame with fall,
Its sky bejewelled by stars so tall.*

Going Home
Christopher LaFarge

RHODE ISLAND BEYOND PROVIDENCE

PAWTUXET

The location of Joseph Curwen's farm in "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward." Lovecraft visited here in 1936 with Maurice and Robert Moe.

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FRENCHTOWN

An area in the west part of East Greenwich, named for the French Huguenots who settled there after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It was here in 1686 that Etienne Roulet and his family first settled, only to be driven out in 1697. Moving to Providence, they lived on the lot where, in 1763, the Shunned House was built; they also buried their dead there.

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WICKFORD

Lovecraft visited here a number of times and felt that the character of the place was most to his taste of all the Rhode Island villages. Main Street, the streets off it, and West Main Street are well worth seeing. Lovecraft was especially taken with the Old Narragansett Church (1707), the first Anglican church in the colony and the oldest church in the state.

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KINGSTON

The most important village in the Narragansett Country, where Samuel Casey, Jr. (born 1724) lived, a great-great-granduncle of Lovecraft. Casey, a fine silversmith, had a sideline in counterfeiting, that nearly resulted in his being hanged in 1770.

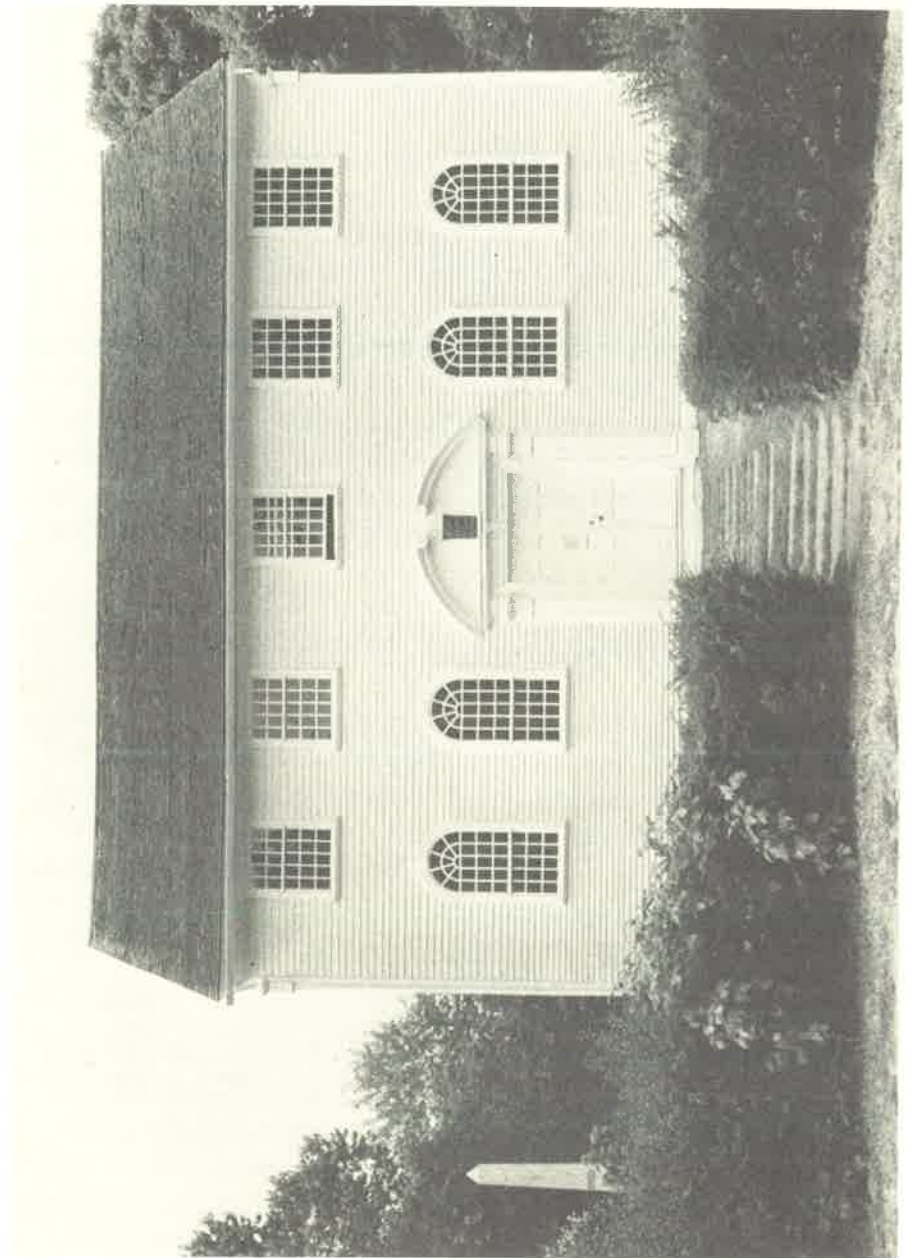
GILBERT STUART'S BIRTHPLACE

In the gambrel-roofed house (ca. 1750), with an operating snuff mill in the basement, Stuart was born in 1755. The building and mill were beautifully restored in the early 1930's and may be seen for a small entrance fee. Lovecraft visited here in the summer of 1933 and the fall of 1934.

THE PLATFORM

This country graveyard was the original site (1707-1800) of the Old Narragansett Church, now in Wickford. There are many fine old stones in this yard; it is a quiet and restful place. Lovecraft visited here with James F. Morton and E. Hoffman Price.

As you enter the graveyard note the stone of Samuel Brenton (1733-97) directly to your left, and the Sons of the American Revolution flag-holder just in front of it. Once a year some patriotic group sees to it that Sam



Old Narragansett Church at Wickford, R.I.

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gets a new flag, apparently on the assumption that he fought in the Revolution. Unfortunately their efforts are misdirected, for Brenton held his last commission (Lieutenant, Newport Artillery Company) under George III, resigning it at the outbreak of hostilities. He was not so much of a Tory as the rest of his family, all of whom emigrated to Nova Scotia at that time, but he was not for the revolutionary party, either. I am told that back in the New Deal days, one W.P.A. project was to locate the graves of veterans. The flag before you, perhaps, marks a hopeful guess.

HANNAH ROBINSON ROCK

Described by Lovecraft as "... commanding the finest rural prospect I have anywhere seen ..." It was at this site that the dying Hannah Robinson (see below) had her litter stopped for a last view of the Narragansett Country she loved so well.

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ROWLAND ROBINSON HOUSE

Built by Rowland Robinson ca. 1705 and enlarged ca. 1755 by his grandson, also Rowland Robinson, father of Hannah Robinson. Lovecraft refers to the tale of Hannah Robinson: she was disowned by her father when she eloped with and married a French dancing teacher. Her husband soon deserted her. Reduced to poverty and

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seriously ill, Hannah was finally reconciled with her father, who sent a litter to bring her home. She died shortly after her arrival.

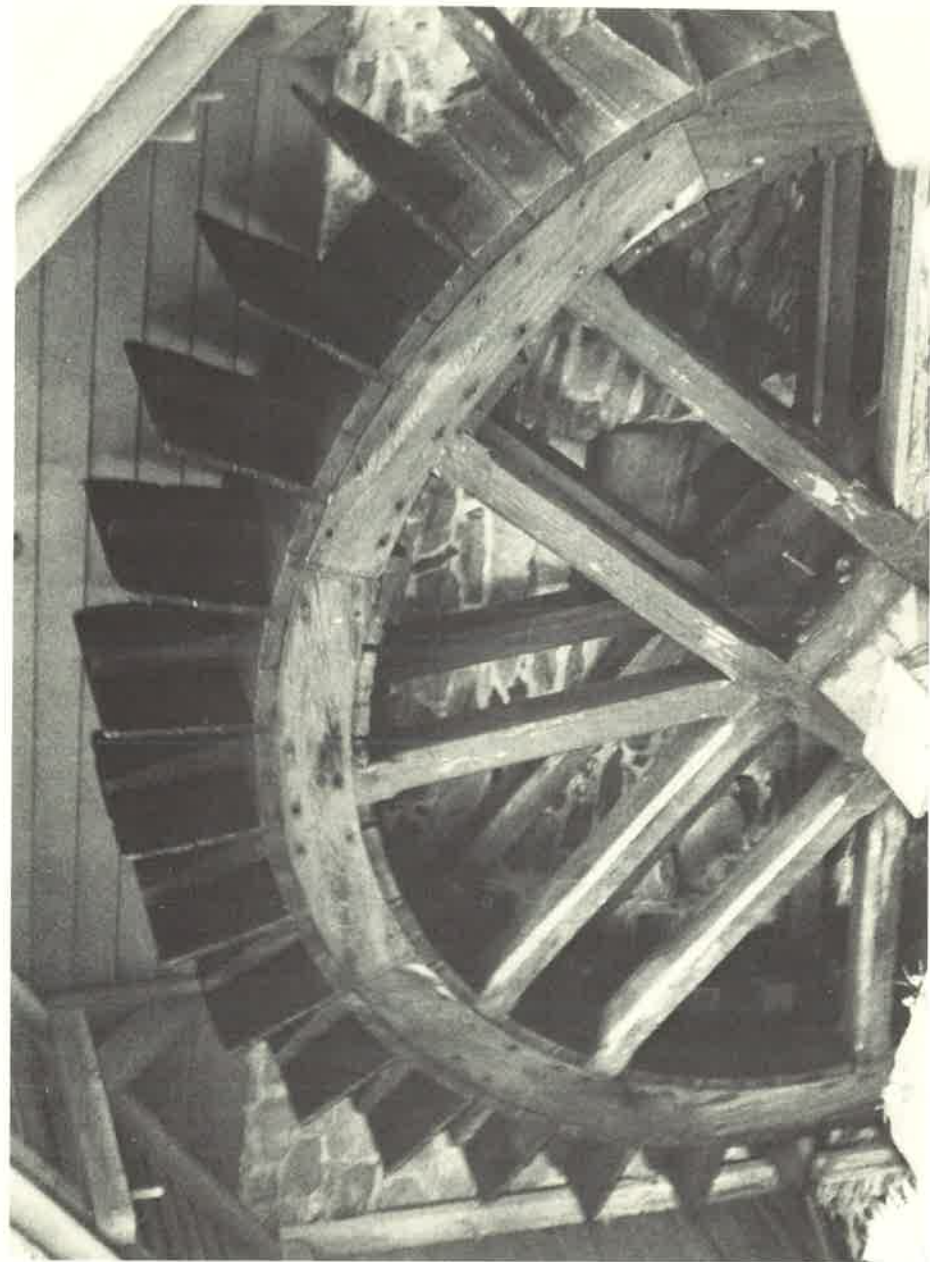
The “heraldick escallop of the Hazard arms” over the door of the house, claimed by Lovecraft through his Hazard ancestry, is of dubious validity, for the ancestry of the immigrant, Thomas Hazard, is unknown.

NARRAGANSETT PIER

Lovecraft visited here with Sonia Greene in July, 1923. He described it as “. . . an agreeable Expanse of Shoar, lin'd with a passable Esplanade. . . there are no striking Antiquities or Beauties of Scenery; so that I was not griev'd to quit it on a noon Coach.” Given his aversion to the odor of sea life, a Freudian explanation of Lovecraft's lack of interest in the place is probably more to the point.

CONANICUT ISLAND

So called by the Indians and early settlers, but now better known as Jamestown. Somewhere on this island Lovecraft locates “Dr. Waite's private hospital,” where the reconstructed Joseph Curwen was finally confined and where he disintegrated in 1928. Any “bluish-grey dust” you may see will not be the undone Curwen, but rather automobile exhaust, a result of connecting the island to Newport and the west shore of the bay by bridges. All changes are not for the best.



Snuff Mill water wheel at Gilbert Stuart's Birthplace.

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NEWPORT

This is located on Aquidneck Island, or Rhode Island. The rest of the state is the Providence Plantations in the State of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations. So you are now on Rhode Island, in Rhode Island.

In 1648 the colonists discovered what they thought was gold on Aquidneck, but it was not. Until the Revolution, Newport was a major North American station for the Royal Navy, which then moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia. During the nineteenth century it was discovered by New York society, some members of which still prefer to die here — the act ensures lower taxes here than when performed in New York State.

See the Old Stone Mill in Truro Park. No one knows who built it, but a number of ethnic groups in the state have claimed the credit on behalf of early explorers from their countries of origin. Since it first appears in recorded history in the will of Governor Benedict Arnold, who died in 1678 and was the paternal great grandfather of General Benedict Arnold, as "my stone built wind mill," it is likely to have been built by the English settlers — unless the partisans of Leif the Lucky or other claimants can produce solid evidence against this case. Lovecraft visited here in 1932 and in April, 1935, with Robert Moe.

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ST. GEORGE SCHOOL

This private preparatory school boasts a fine chapel with a Gothic Revival tower, which Lovecraft liked very much.

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PURGATORY CHASM

A rift some one hundred and twenty feet long, fifty feet deep, and ten feet wide, cut by weathering and erosion. The much-elongated pebbles in the conglomerate rock here are interesting.

Legend has it that an Indian brave, to prove his love for his sweetheart, jumped across the chasm, saying afterward that his leap had been one from Purgatory to Paradise, hence the name of the place. Lovecraft visited here in 1935.

WHITEHALL

Built by Dean Berkeley (ca. 1733), who lived in America from 1732 to 1735. The property and house are in the care of the Rhode Island Society of the National Society of Colonial Dames. Lovecraft and Robert Moe toured the house in 1935.

QUINSNICKET

Lovecraft visited here often throughout his life, taking a good deal of pleasure in the scenery. It was one of his favorite spots for rest and writing, and it was the inspiration for his poem, "A Summer Sunset and Evening."

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CHEPACHET-PASCOAG AREA

In 1923 Lovecraft came to Chepachet with Clifford M. Eddy seeking the Dark Swamp, rumored to be the lair of "IT." Whatever "IT" may have been, Lovecraft and Eddy never arrived at the swamp, though they had a nice ramble through the countryside. In the same year Lovecraft and James F. Morton set out for Durfee Hill, an elevation of some 800 feet. Unable to reach it, they went to Pascoag: "The scene is magical — it is the early, half-forgotten, beautiful simple America that Poe and Hawthorne knew — a village with narrow winding streets and Colonial facades, and a sleep square where merchants sit in their doorways."

GREENE

Whipple V. Phillips, Lovecraft's grandfather, owned a mill here. He gave the town its present name in honor of General Nathanael Greene of the American Revolution; it was earlier known as "Coffin's Corner." Lovecraft visited here in 1926 with his aunt, Mrs. Gamwell.

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