II

SURVEY TECHNIQUES
PART II--SURVEY TECHNIQUES

SUMMARY

This part of the report is devoted to the development of techniques for surveying and judging historic buildings, as well as indicating the methods by which the materials derived from such survey and judgment efforts may be incorporated into the standard processes of city planning and urban renewal. College Hill is used as the testing ground for these techniques and methods, in the following major topics of Part Two:

- A brief history of Providence from the time of the first Colonial settlement, with particular emphasis on College Hill.
- An analysis of the various styles of architecture found in College Hill and their place in the development of American architecture as a whole.
- The criteria which have been set up for evaluating historic and architectural worth.
- A description of the techniques which have been developed in this study for collecting and charting information about the architecture of the area.
- How these techniques can be used to help protect the architectural heritage of a given area or city.

One objective of the College Hill Study is to perform research aimed at the development of new urban renewal and planning techniques that will enlarge the present store of ammunition to be used in the fight to renew American cities. The problem of developing a working method for incorporating a system of protecting historic buildings into an urban renewal program is a difficult one. The psychological approach required for saving old buildings frequently seems to be diametrically in opposition to the approach generally accepted as necessary for the solution of other urban renewal problems. From the point of view of the planner and the developer, historic architecture can often be very inconveniently located. In most cases, the city has continued to grow where it had its beginnings. As a result, in the course of time, the older buildings have been torn down, built over, or altered. If they have survived, the land they stand on may be at a premium or slated for clearance for any number of reasons. To find ways of safeguarding these survivals means adding another problem to an already complicated situation.

In general, many American cities approach solutions for renewal of areas of a city by considering only proposals for sweeping the decks clear and beginning over. The idea that ways to make use of the old buildings, or that they have values of their own which can enhance the potential of the city by giving it a dimension in time, has generally seemed too romantic to accept. In periods of expansion or change, the older buildings have been torn down like packing boxes or remodeled beyond recognition. Frequently relocations have had far less value than the originals. Often too, and certainly on College Hill, many worthwhile structures have been destroyed because their worth has not been recognized. Conversely, many structures are given more consideration than is their due.

In order to develop successful ways of protecting historic architecture in any setting, the first step must be a clear and generally accepted recognition that it is important for a city to keep its heritage from the past, and therefore, worth the considerable effort which doing so will frequently involve. Beyond this primary recognition, however, there is a basic need for a competent method of identifying significant structures and evaluating their relative worth in regard to preservation. To do this, it will be necessary to develop an objective system of fact finding and evaluation which can be used for describing all the buildings in the selected areas. This system should be applicable also for buildings and sections of the city which fall outside the designated areas but which may be protected in other ways if adequate data about them is readily available.

To define the areas of special architectural and historic importance
II A--HISTORY OF COLLEGE HILL
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A brief history of the College Hill area as it is related to the growth of Providence has been included at this point in order to indicate the pattern of development through the years which has produced the College Hill of today.

THE FIRST SETTLEMENT — The landing of Roger Williams and the beginning of a new Colony.

The outline of the College Hill area today had its origin in 1636 when Roger Williams, religious leader and Indian trader, and his followers, exiled for heresy from Congregationalist Salem, set up a colony at the crossroads of two Indian highways, at the head of Narraganset Bay and at the confluence of the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers. The new settlement grew around a spring of fresh water located on the west side of North Main Street near the present Alamo Lane, a short distance south of Smith Street. From the first, the colonists were dedicated to the principle of religious liberty: separation of Church and State was crystallized a year later in the compact of August 20, 1637 in the words, “We do promise to subject ourselves ... to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for the public good”, but “only in civil things.”

The separation of Church and State was partly responsible for the pattern of the town’s growth. Massachusetts and Connecticut towns were Congregationalist towns where the church, often built before the houses, was set on one side of a green and became the center around which the settlers grouped their homes. In Providence, however, where dissenters were welcomed, no church was built until 1700 and no village green was ever contemplated. Instead, the Proprietors laid out deep narrow home lots in a straggling line along an Indian pathway on the eastern shores of the Great Salt River, and extending back over the steep hill to the present Hope Street. In 1646, John Smith built the first semi-public building, a mill, at the falls of the Moshassuck River, near the junction of Charles and Mill Streets and here, in the earliest “civic center”, town life centered for fifty years or more.

MAP NUMBER 1. Providence in about 1650, showing the main Indian Trails and the first division of Home Lots. (From Greene—The Providence Plantations)
The bounds of the College Hill study area coincide with the bounds of the original lots. North and South Main Streets follow the Indian way, later the Towne Street, which meandered in front of the Proprietors' houses along the waterfront. Olney Street, first called Dexter's Lane, is near the northern bound and Wickenden was the southern. Hope Street follows a highway laid out at the head of the home lots; what is now Waterman Street follows the old way to the ferry and Red Bridge stands near where the ferry crossed the Seekonk into what was then the Massachusetts Colony. The Weybosset side was linked to the neck by a wading place and later by a bridge located in front of the site where the Market House now stands.

The tax list of 1650 shows that the only public and commercial buildings were John Smith's mill and a tannery, both of which were near the falls of the Moshassuck. Some 51 houses made up the compact part of the town, most of them strung along the Towne Street with a few more nearer Pawtucket or on Foxes' Hill. Two were on the Weybosset side and were reached by boat or by fording the river. None of these buildings has survived, but they were known to have been frame, small, steeply pitched buildings with great end chimney walls of stone into which huge fireplaces were built. John Smith Jr.'s house consisted of two rooms, a "lower room" and a "chamber" above it. Roger Mowry's tavern, built in 1653, was also small. It survived in rebuilt form until 1900.

John Smith Jr. was one of the few energetic settlers who engaged in coastwise sea trade, and there is a record that in 1654 he sent a shipment of "flour, tobacco and pease" to Newfoundland. By 1655 a few merchants had established a tenuous traffic with the Barbados, but most of the colonists who made up the population in Providence of 1650 or 1660 were planters. Unlike their Newport neighbors, their eyes did not turn seaward for some years to come.

In 1663, John Clarke of Newport, president of the Colony, came back from England with the liberal charter granted by Charles II which proclaimed the intention of the colonists "to hold forth a livelier experiment that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained... with full liberty in religious concerns." Rhode Island was thus the first colony to be assured of religious freedom; its body politic of heady individualists was set even more firmly on an independent course.

KING PHILIP'S WAR AND THE REBUILDING OF PROVIDENCE -
The beginning of an era of civic growth and commercial development.

In March of 1675 during King Philip's War, Providence, like the other towns on the mainland, was burned by the Indians. As far as is known, only two houses, Mowry's and Field's garrison house, escaped. In the next weeks the inhabitants gradually drifted back and began the arduous task of clearing away the ruins and rebuilding the town.

The reconstruction marked the beginning of an era of civic growth which saw considerable commercial and industrial development take place. The grist mill and tannery were rebuilt and in addition, a sawmill, iron works, lime kilns and a blacksmith shop were established. A schoolhouse was built near Dexter's Lane (Olney Street). Grimmer aspects of the town's life were the stocks erected on Olney Street in 1684 and the prison built south of Olney in 1700.

Civic activities also centered in the northern part of town. Mowry's tavern on Abbott Street had escaped the flames of war and Epenetus Olney rebuilt his tavern on the Towne Street near Dexter's Lane. John Whipple opened a public house on Constitution Hill and in 1685 William Turpin opened another north of Olney's.

The first church building, too, was built in this northern part of town. In 1700 Elder Pardon Tillinghast erected a meeting house "in the shape of a haycap with a fireplace in the middle, the smoke escaping from a hole in the roof", at the corner of North Main and Smith Streets.

By this time, Providence had some 1,200 inhabitants, most of whom were living on the shores of the cove and the Providence River along the east side of the Towne Street. Their houses were now often two stories high but were still built with steep pitched roofs, casement windows and great end chimneys of stone. None are left but most of them resembled the story and a half Thomas Clemence House on George Waterman Road in Manton, or the two story "Splendid Mansion" Eleazar Arnold put up in 1687 on the Great Road to Mendon.
By 1700 sea trade was beckoning seriously to men who wanted more immediate returns for their labor than “improving the wilderness” offered them. In 1680 Elder Pardon Tillinghast had petitioned for “a little spot of land—for the building himself of a storehouse with the privilege of a wharf also.” This was the first wharf. The next year a town wharf was built opposite Weybosset Point, and by 1694 warehouse lots with the privilege of building a wharf had been granted to a few of the town’s leading men. At the end of the century trade was maintained with the West Indies and other Colonies; by 1712 boat building had been commenced.

The era of sea trade was now underway. The Crawfords, the Tillihasts, the Browns, and the Powers were among the early participants and partly due to their enterprise the first decades of the eighteenth century saw a steady expansion of commerce; trade with the West Indies increased in volume; privateering was profitable; ship building, weaving, and distilling all developed into important industries.

By 1730 the increased prosperity was reflected in the numbers, size, and style of the churches and dwelling houses which were going up along Towne Street. Four new churches were built between 1722 and 1726. King’s Chapel (now St. John’s Cathedral), the first Providence building of the Church of England, was built in 1722 on the corner of North Main and Church Street. The First Congregational Church building was put up at the head of College Street and Benefit in 1723 and the Quaker Meeting House was built on the northwest corner of North Main and Meeting Streets. In 1726 a new Baptist Meeting House was built on the northwest corner of North Main and Smith Streets opposite the first “hay cap” shaped building.

By this time the seafaring merchants were beginning to settle in the southern part of town where they put up their houses on the east side of the Towne Street and built their warehouses and wharves on the water side. Colonel Nicholas Power 3rd had a large house on the northeast corner of Power’s Lane and South Main Street. Nothing is known of the house, but the property included a warehouse, cooper’s shop, cider mill, three stills, a cheese press and a sloop. Captain James Brown, who married Hope Power, and whose four sons, John, Joseph, Nicholas, and Moses, were to make Providence merchandizing history in the years
to come, also lived in the fashionable south part of town where he had a shop and a distillery built after his successful voyage to the West Indies in 1722.

Industrial, civic, and commercial activity thus began to center in the northern part of the town and the seafaring interests in the southern part. In the meantime Weybosset Street, which had taken its present curving shape to skirt the high hill which stood where Westminster runs today, was also being settled.

In contrast with the massive stone-end houses of the first settlement, the new houses were larger and were often of central chimney plan. Sash windows replaced the small casements, and classic cornices and doorways trimmed with pilasters and classic detail became common. Brick now almost universally supplanted stone for the chimneys and in about 1730 brick houses began to go up. One of these, Richard Brown's gambrel roofed half-a-house built in 1731, is still standing on the grounds of Swan Point Cemetery. However, most houses, whether of end or central chimney plan, gable, gambrel or hip roofed, were built of wood. Stephen Hopkins' house at the corner of Benefit and Hopkins Streets and Benjamin Cushing's house at 38½ North Court Street are typical.

Providence still lagged behind Newport but the stage was now set for future growth.

THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY — The emergence of Providence as a major Colonial city.

By the eve of the American Revolution, Providence had taken its place with other Colonial towns, and its destiny as the outstanding Rhode Island city could be predicted. All the enterprises undertaken in other colonial towns were now pursued successfully by Providence merchants. Privateering in the Spanish and old French Wars had proved lucrative. The trade with the West Indies was flourishing. The staple West Indian products of sugar and molasses were brought to Providence to be converted into rum by shore side distilleries. The rum was then shipped to the coast of Africa where it was used for the purchase of slaves, who in turn were shipped to the West Indies for labor in the sugar plantations.

The firm of Nicholas Brown and Company, along with other Providence merchants, had a stake in all these ventures, but the slave trade proved unreliable and most Providence firms turned to traffic in sugar and manufacture of rum, letting others try for success in the Guinea trade. Nicholas Brown and Company also set up a spermaceti works and in 1761 nine Newport, Providence, and Boston companies organized the "united firm of Spermaceti Chandlers" which regulated prices for the purchase of head matter and for selling finished candles. This combine has been called the first American Trust.

The spermaceti works, the distilleries, the shops and warehouses along the waterfront, the West Indiamen, the sloops and schooners anchored in the harbor gave a busy commercial air to this southern part of town.

In 1765, Brown established Hope Furnace in Scituate and three years later pots, kettles, and ash pans from the Hope Iron works were being sent to Nantucket, Norwich, New York and as far as Dominica and Tobago. Other merchants, Welcome Arnold, Thomas Lloyd Halsey, Philip and Zachariah Allen, John Corliss, the Russels, the Tillinghasts, the Clarks, the Nightingales, the Dexters, the Hopkins and the Jenckes were all involved in the mercantile ventures of the day.

Civic activities and new building reflected the flow of wealth into the town. The Providence Library Company was formed in 1764 with books brought from England. William Goddard arrived in Providence in 1762 and set up the first printing office where he began
the publication of the Providence Gazette, later carried on by John Carter at the "Sign of Shakespeare's Head" in the building at 21 Meeting Street. In that year, too, the first theatrical performance took place, but an ordinance forbidding such productions was immediately passed and no similar venture was undertaken until 1792.

Although a public school system was not successfully established until well into the next century, there were several private schools. A school house was built on the Weybosset side in 1754 and in 1767 a first attempt was made to establish free town schools. The attempt failed, but two school houses were built, one of which, the Brick School House on Meeting Street, is still standing.

By the outbreak of the War the appearance of Providence had been materially enhanced by a number of handsome brick and wood houses in the full tradition of the Georgian style. In 1763 the second colony house, built of brick along the lines of the Newport Colony House of 1749, was put up to replace the earlier one which had been destroyed by fire. Joseph Brown designed most of the important buildings erected after 1770. One of the four Brown brothers, he was an astronomer, a member of the faculty of the newly organized Rhode Island College (later Brown University), and an amateur architect, and his work has left a permanent stamp on Providence.

The brick market was built in 1772. Originally one story high above an open arcade, it stood on Market Square which, to make a suitable setting for the new building, had been graded and filled in and enclosed with a retaining wall. A widened, twenty-two feet, Weybosset bridge just in front of the Market had been built in 1764.

High on the hillside rose the new four story brick College building. On the Towne Street north of the Market, stood the new First Baptist Church, one of the finest architectural achievements in the Colonies of its day. All three were designed by Joseph Brown.

Fine houses were also being built. Such buildings as Joseph Russell's brick house (1772) and the house that Joseph Brown built for himself, with its ogee pediment, helped transform Providence from a town of small wooden dwellings of simple character to one whose architecture was described with respect by visitors of the day.

MAP NUMBER 3. Providence in about 1775.
View down Waterman Street, showing first Baptist Church, houses and the cove in about 1820. Watercolor by Joseph Partridge.
PROVIDENCE DURING AND AFTER THE REVOLUTION — The eclipse of Newport as Rhode Island's largest town, the rapid expansion of maritime pursuits and industrial forces at work.

The tension between England and the American Colonies had now reached the breaking point. Rhode Island, engaged in activities which brought its commercial existence into direct conflict with Great Britain's interests, was already in a state of sullen resentment. In 1772, the British Revenue schooner, the Gaspee, was scuttled and burned by a band of Providence men and on May 4, 1775, two months before the formal Declaration of Independence, Rhode Island made its own declaration separating it from British rule.

During the ensuing years of war, Providence commerce was crippled by the blockade of Narragansett Bay, but the town did not suffer occupation by the British for three years as did Newport, and its commerce recovered quickly after the war. Soon Providence had supplanted Newport as the leading port in the state.

By 1800 the population of Providence numbered over 7,500 whereas Newport's population had dropped from 9,000 to about 4,000 between 1775 and 1780. A map made by Daniel Anthony in 1803 shows that the town growth still followed the old line of Main Street along the waterfront continuing from Hearnon's Lane (Roachambou) on the north to Fox Point, Hope Street and India Point on the south. The Back Street, or Benefit Street, which had been opened in 1750 was partially lined with houses. The section around Transit and Wickenden and the newly opened streets of Williams, John, Arnold and Sheldon were also being built up. The Weybosset side was filled as far west as Stewart Street, and the town now had eight bridges to ease transportation over the many water crossings.

The years after the Revolution saw the rapid expansion of maritime pursuits. One hundred and twenty-nine sailing vessels belonging to Providence came into port in the single year of 1781, and by 1800 fifty-eight wharves had been built. These years were also the heyday of the short lived but profitable East India trade which continued until the Embargo of 1809 hastened its collapse. John Brown, who in 1787 had helped establish the Providence East India trade, was developing Tockwotton and India Point where his Indiamen and other vessels docked. There he had the shops, warehouses, an air furnace, a distill house, a glass house and the spermaceti works which made a maritime center of the Point. Rope walks were laid out east of Brook Street. The center of the West Indies trade, however, still continued farther north in the Providence River near Transit.

As the number and size of the industrial plants increased, the complexion of the town began to change, especially along the waterfront where factories and shops gradually began to replace the dwelling houses, whose owners moved out to newly converted farm lands, or up on the southern slope of the steep hillside. The most industrialized section lay along the Moshassuck where the tanyards, grist mill, slaughter houses, a distill house, a sugar house, cooper's shop, blacksmith shops, a chocolate and fulling mill, a paper mill and an iron shop all gave proof of a thriving industrial development. Seril and Nehemiah Dodge were working in silver by 1796 and by 1805 there were thirty establishments for manufacturing in precious metals.

Other important industrial forces were also at work. In 1790 the first successful American cotton manufactory was established in Pawtucket by Samuel Slater under the auspices of Moses Brown. It was an epoch-making event in the industrial history of Rhode Island.

In the meantime, among matters of civic concern, the need for public education was receiving particular attention; in 1800 the state passed legislation to establish free schools. The act was repealed in 1803 and another was not successfully passed until 1828 but Providence, under the leadership of John Howland, developed a system of its own.

Five or six of the grand mansions built in the last years of the eighteenth century and the first years of the nineteenth century by Providence's successful merchants are still standing. They were large and square, looked backward in style and were opulent in detail. John Brown's three story brick house on Power Street, designed by his brother Joseph in 1786 was reckoned by John Quincy Adams as "the most magnificent and elegant private mansion that I have ever seen on this continent." The nearby Joseph Nightingale house, 1792, the Thomas Poynton Ives House, 1806, the Carrington House, 1812, and the Samuel Arnold House, c. 1810, all characterized by their late colonial architectural style, gave ample proof of the town's burgeoning wealth.
THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY — The beginning of an industrial epoch.

The nineteenth century was to be chiefly an industrial epoch. Textile mills multiplied and it was not many years before merchants began to sell their ships. Their former captains became superintendents of prosaic cotton mills, and the inland waterways were taken over for manufacturing plants. By 1812, over thirty cotton mills were in successful operation and fortunes founded on shipping were now augmented by native industry. Providence economy was to be increasingly based on manufacturing and on wholesale and retail commerce.

In 1823, Daniel Anthony made a second map of Providence, reproduced as map 5, which showed how rapidly the town itself was growing; when the first Providence Directory was published a year later, the population stood at 15,000. Providence became a city in 1832, and commenced its life as such with a population of 17,000.

In the years between Anthony’s first map and the incorporation of the new city many changes had occurred. Elijah Ormsbee’s trial runs of his only partly successful steamboat “the Experiment” in the Providence Cove had been given up in 1792, but by 1817 the launching of Robert Fulton’s “Clermont” meant changes in sea traffic that in years to come were to sweep away the packets, sloops and schooners. The steamship “Firefly” began to operate between Newport and Providence in that same year. In 1819 regular runs to New York were instituted.

Other modes of transportation were also being explored. A canal between Worcester and Providence was opened in 1820. It served as an inland waterway for some twenty years, but a new form of transportation was soon to curtail its usefulness. In 1831, the first steam railroad made a halting run from Providence to Boston.

It was 1820 before the Town Council ordered the erection of oil lamps to light the principal streets of the town. Hitherto, pedestrians had made their way at night with the aid of hand lanterns. In the same year the town’s first order was given for flagstone sidewalks. They were to be laid on South Main Street replacing the cobblestones that had until this time extended across the street from house to house.

In the meantime, a drastic change was taking place on the waterfront. A serious fire had occurred on South Main Street in 1801 and the hurricane of 1815 resulted in the destruction of some five hundred buildings including most of the old wharves and wooden warehouses which lined the shore from India Point to Weybosset Bridge. In the ensuing reconstruction, a new harbor line was established, South Water and West Water (Dyer) Streets were constructed and Fox Hill was leveled and the material used to fill Mile End Cove (at the south end of Fox Point). The new warehouses were built of brick or stone and fire records make frequent reference to such fire proof features as iron windows and floors and roofs laid in mortar. Most of these buildings are now gone, but here and there may be seen broad gable-roofed three or four story warehouses which still give a waterfront character to this section.

Up the hill new structures were going up in rapid succession. Just as Joseph Brown had been responsible for most of the significant building immediately before and after the Revolutionary War, so the imprint of the work of the architect-builder, John Holden Greene, was stamped on early nineteenth century Providence. He designed almost every important building during these years and by the time his career closed in 1830, the aspect of the town had changed. A new St. John’s church, 1809, built in the “Gothick” manner, was his first Providence building. In 1816, he designed the First Congregational Church to replace the one which had been destroyed by fire two years earlier. In 1819 he built the Friends’ School (now Moses Brown School). Three buildings, the Franklin Hotel, Roger Williams Bank Building and the Hotel Bristol, all built between 1823 and 1824 and all now gone except for the end of the Franklin Hotel, altered the character of Market Square. In 1824 he built the Dexter Asylum for the poor. Besides these public buildings, he designed Sullivan Dorr’s new house (1809) and a series of brick and wooden square monitor-roofed houses, many of which stand today. In 1822 the College built Hope College, its second “Edifice”. This, and Greene’s buildings were among the last in Providence built in the late Georgian (or Early Republican) tradition. Most of the buildings of the next two decades were associated with the names of Russell Warren, James Bucklin and William Tallman and were Greek Revival in style.
MAP NUMBER 5. Providence in 1825 by Daniel Anthony.

Southern Benefit Street in 1830 by E. L. Peckham

Southern Benefit Street in 1845 by E. L. Peckham showing St. Stephen's Church now Barker Playhouse.
Market Square in 1823.

Franklin House, by J. H. Greene, now Part of Rhode Island School of Design.

"Cheapside"; Market and College Street, in 1843, showing Hotel Bristol by J. H. Greene.

View of Providence in 1827, by Milbert.
In about 1857, Walling and Cushing published a map of the city of Providence which showed all the buildings as well as the network of streets. Part of this map is shown on the following page. The population had now reached the 50,000 mark and the city was spreading south and west and north, although vacant lots still made up the bulk of the land in the College Hill area north of Waterman Street and east of Prospect.

By this time, the cove waters had been confined into a circular basin. Along its shores stretched the tracks of the railroads which had expanded from the limping start of 1831 to include several important lines. On the south side of the Cove, stood the new Providence and Worcester station designed in 1848 by T. A. Tefft in the Lombard Romanesque style. Tracks extended from the station down South Water Street to India Point and the docks along the shore to connect with the shipping and make a link between land and sea.

In the meantime, changes in commerce had taken place. The East India trade had passed away, with only Rufus Greene's barque to arrive in port occasionally in the 50's and 60's laden with dates, palm oil, ivory and gold dust from Mozambique. The West Indian trade was declining; whaling had risen and gone. All this was replaced by coastwise domestic commerce and the increasing fleets of merchant vessels were now loaded with coal and cotton.

The character of the Main Street also was changing, with mansion houses converted into shops or subjected to removal for business blocks. Canal Street, South Water Street and India Point were becoming centers for heavy industry such as iron foundries, a print works, a screw company, a bleachery and engine works. The Gas Works, established in 1847, was built on Pike Street.

Wealthy mill owners, industrialists and merchants were now building their houses at the southern end of Benefit Street, or along Prospect where they had a fine view of the city, or on Angell or Hope and further east in a colony on Cooke and Governor Streets.

At this time, taste in architecture was undergoing a change which was to have a profound effect on the appearance of College Hill and the city. The broad classic proportions and in some instance stuccoed walls of Greek Revival buildings were already interspersed among the red brick and the clapboarded buildings of earlier days. The romantic spirit which had induced designers and patrons alike to turn to the Greek temple now led them to look for other unusual and exotic forms for their new buildings. Tefft, who had designed the railroad station, built several houses of brownstone in the style of the Tuscan villas near Florence, and most of the other buildings were strongly influenced by the Italian Renaissance. Such houses, high and heavy in scale, with bracketed cornices and Italian classic porticoes all dating from the years before the Civil War, may be seen in numbers on the East side today.
MAP NUMBER 6. College Hill area, taken from a map of Providence, Walling and Cushing, 1857.
PROVIDENCE AFTER THE CIVIL WAR — Continued civic and industrial development encouraged by improvements in transportation and the inauguration of electricity, telephone and telegraph systems.

The years after the Civil War witnessed rapid growth. Population which had stood at 50,000 in 1860 had more than doubled by 1885. By this time, there were over a hundred iron and steel companies in the city and environs and a hundred and sixty or more shops for working precious metals. Coastwise commercial shipping continued to increase to such an extent that these years have been called “the steamboat era.”

Major improvements in transportation facilities of all types were undertaken. In 1880 the channel of the river was dredged and the harbor was extended north to Central Bridge over the Seekonk. Rail facilities were extended and the Cove was completely filled in 1892, thus making more land available for tracks and yards.

Local transportation needs were also being met. A horse-drawn street railway system was established in 1885. In 1890 cable cars to mount the steep east side hill were put in operation up College Street. With the increasing flow of traffic, improvement of the highways became a pressing concern. In the 1890’s North Main Street was widened and straightened and it was about this time that paving with cobblestones was abandoned in favor of granite paving blocks laid in concrete; in 1891 the first asphalt pavement was laid.

In the meantime, the inauguration and the installation in 1876 of telephone and telegraph systems, and in 1882 of electricity, paved the way for modern civic development. During this period also city problems of water supply and sewerage systems were being met. The water supply was extended by a reservoir in the Fruit Hill section and another, Hope Reservoir, in the College Hill area, at Hope and Olney. A sewerage plan, instituted in 1874, was improved in 1897 and again in 1900, but the problem of pollution of the river and bay waters from mill waste continued to increase rather than abate. It was at this time, too, that the first unsightly rows of cheaply constructed three-decker tenements crowded into restricted lots began to go up. The problems of the rapidly growing city had become apparent and have imposed increasing difficulties with the passing years.

Physically, part of the city began to grow upward, with tall buildings supplementing the rows of two and three story buildings characteristic of earlier Providence. The business center on the Waybossest side already had a group of high buildings, which included the Bank of North America, the Merchants Bank Building and the Custom House, all built before 1860. The Butler Exchange, 1872, and the new City Hall, both mansard roofed buildings in the French Renaissance manner, were among important additions. On College Hill Infantry Hall (1879), and the new Court House (1877) had been built and their towers changed the silhouette of South Main Street.

College Hill was now becoming a center for schools and colleges. By 1895, Brown Campus had extended east to Thayer Street and its plan included some eight buildings in Gothic Romanesque, Renaissance and Early Republican styles. The Rhode Island School of Design, established in 1878, moved into the College Hill area in 1892, and in the same year a women’s college, later to become Pembroke College, was associated with Brown. Its campus was established on Meeting Street in 1897 with the building of Pembroke Hall. The first Hope High School went up in 1898. It was the second high school building in the area, the first having been built in 1843 at Benefit and Waterman Streets. Friends’ School, later Moses Brown, had been in operation since 1819.

Two East side tracts, Prospect Terrace (1867) and Tockwotton Park (1868) had been added to the City’s Park system. Across Hope Street, the site of Dexter Asylum assured open land for years to come.

Meanwhile, mansard-roofed houses began to fill up the lots north of Waterman Street, while a few large asymmetricaly planned, towered, Italian villas went up on Prospect Street. Their high Italian scale and irregular plan broke the relationship with building of the past but their castle-like turrets, towers and domered gabled roof lines gave a picturesque air to otherwise sedate streets.
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY — The developments of modern day Providence.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of Providence was 175,000; fifty years later it had increased to 250,000. Moreover, the complex of cities adjacent to it now placed Rhode Island in the category of a city-state.

As in the late nineteenth century, heavy industry, precious metals, jewelry-making and coast-wise shipping, chiefly of coal, continued to be the basis of the city's economy. In addition, several large oil storage plants were now established on the harbor front in Providence and East Providence.

Finding ways to augment transportation facilities became mandatory. In 1910, the harbor was deepened and a quarry wall 3,000 feet long was built on the west side of the river for a municipal dock. In 1896, the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad which had absorbed the earlier companies, built a new station somewhat north of Tefft’s station of 1848, and took more land in the important central part of the city for tracks and freight yards. This was followed in 1903 by the construction of a viaduct overpassing Canal and North Main Streets and in 1908 by a railroad tunnel through the east side of Providence from North Main to Ives Street and a bridge to connect with the Warren and Bristol branch in East Providence.

In 1914, as part of a plan to improve the approach to College Hill, the United Street Railways also constructed a tunnel from North Main to Thayer Street, thus making it possible to abandon the cable car system up College Hill.

By this time, the city had become a trading center for the Metropolitan area, and, with the extension of suburban transportation, for most of Rhode Island and part of Massachusetts as well. As a result the unchanged narrow streets of the colonial town were increasingly overtaxed by the converging flow of traffic into the civic center. The coming of the automobile compounded the need to develop adequate traffic lanes. Widened streets, new thoroughfares, new bridges resulted in changed street lines but could not solve the problems created by the constant flow of automobiles over streets established more than two centuries earlier. More recently whole blocks of buildings, particularly in the downtown area, have gone down to make room for parking as well as for throughways.

The chief street changes in the College Hill section have been the further widening of North Main Street in 1903, the extension of Waterman Street to Canal Street and the new Washington Bridge (1926) and its approach (now George M. Cohan Boulevard). In 1954 the area south of Transit Street on South Water, South Main and the west side of Wickenden was cleared for the new eastern leg of the North-South Freeway which now closes the southern end of the area.

Other changes in College Hill have been effected by the development of the Market Square and South Main Street area and by the expansion of the Rhode Island School of Design, the construction of a new Hope High School on the site of the former reservoir, and the growth of Brown University which together with Pembroke College has put up some twenty new buildings since 1900.

By 1900 building style reflected the swing away from the more romantic aspects of Victorian design to academic architectural forms. The state capitol built in that year of white marble by McKim, Mead, and White is the outstanding Providence example of the trend.

About this time, too, interest in colonial building was renewed and in Providence the red brick building of the Early Republican period was revived. In 1929, the new Court House, a red brick building with Georgian detail, designed by Jackson, Robertson and Adams, was built in the block between College and Hopkins, South Main and Benefit Streets. It is one of the largest buildings in this style ever constructed and it has set the pattern for the future development of Market Square as well as a trend in style which is still in effect.

At the same time the setting for the Market Square buildings was drastically altered by the demolition of the row of warehouses which still lined the west side of South Main Street from Crawford Street to the Market Building. The open area thus created in front of the new Court House was converted into a park and that south to Crawford Street Bridge was made into a parking area. The additional space created by the demolition of buildings on the west side of the river for the 1957 Freeway has combined with the river to produce a dramatic open sweep and has effectively separated College Hill from the downtown section.

Following the example of the Court House, other South Main and Market Square buildings have been constructed in red brick, as have the new Brown and Rhode Island School of Design buildings. Most of the twentieth century domestic building has been of mixed character with Colonial revival predominating. Only one or two houses have been designed in the contemporary idiom.
II A--SUMMARY

Reference to the map of College Hill as it is today will show what recent changes have taken place in the character of College Hill. Most of the heavy industry which once fringed North Main Street, has moved away. The street, still a main traffic artery, has been in part given over to stores and parking lots. Canal Street has become a center for wholesale meat business.

Nothing but the line of the old Towne Street and a small park marking the site of Roger Williams spring is left to recall the seventeenth century community. But St. John's Cathedral and the rows of houses up the streets from North Main to Benefit and along Benefit Street form a sizable segment of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century town. In Market Square, the First Baptist Church, the Brick Market and the Joseph Brown and Benoni Cooke houses, all survive as an important architectural heritage. They are now surrounded by the massive groups of twentieth century red brick buildings and are situated facing an open park which makes a dramatic foreground setting.

The port activities, once centered in the southern part of the area, have declined, with the result that many of the buildings along South Main Street and South Water Street have fallen on evil days. In spite of this, the shells of several mansions on the east side of South Main Street and the rows of nineteenth century warehouses on the west side still manage to present a picture of the era when Providence sea trade filled the harbor with tall masted schooners and clipper ships. The new North-South Freeway has recently begun to infuse fresh life into this area and already there are signs of another development here, which while it may soon sweep away the last memory of the shipping center, could still incorporate some of the old buildings into the new growth.

On the hill, the area has been cut into two sections by the new hillside buildings and the new constructions of Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design. All of these structures are large or extended in area. As a result, they have broken with the domestic scale of the earlier neighborhoods which they have supplanted. Moreover, the Brown University and the School of Design buildings have been the first major encroachments into the hillside residential section. Brown University has acquired Dexter Asylum, thus extending its holdings to the northeast. Bryant College on the edge of the area is also causing change in the eastern part of College Hill.

Map 7 is planned to show when the structures in the area were built, to give a picture both of what remains of the early architecture and its location.

As the map indicates, the remaining eighteenth and early nineteenth century residential sections are now concentrated along northern Benefit and south of George Street where a remarkable group of merchant mansions have survived, some of them still in the possession of the families who first owned them. The northeastern part of the area, from Waterman and Prospect Streets to Hope and Olney, is also residential, and was built up for the most part shortly after the Civil War.

Signs of deterioration have been evident for some time in the northern and extreme southern sections where the smaller early houses are situated. Unfortunately, the poorly built three-decker wooden tenements built in the early part of the twentieth century when population was expanding most rapidly, have damaged the character of the colonial and early nineteenth century residential neighborhoods along northern Benefit and on Transit and Sheldon Streets. Pratt Street has been built up almost entirely of such tenements. Utility buildings, garages and stores of poorer character have also been interspersed among the old warehouses on Canal, North and South Main and South Water Streets. They are scattered along Benefit, Brook, Thayer and Wickenden Streets as well. Nevertheless, an important legacy of the past has survived in this part of the city.