

**COLLECTIONS**

**OF THE**

**Rhode-Island Historical Society.**

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**PROVIDENCE :**  
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**1843.**

**A N N A L S**  
**OF**  
**THE TOWN OF PROVIDENCE,**  
**FROM ITS**  
**FIRST SETTLEMENT,**  
**TO THE**  
**ORGANIZATION OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT,**

**IN JUNE, 1832.**

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**BY WILLIAM R. STAPLES.**

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more than £100 sterling, in making these preparations. A temporary observatory was erected in the street, since then, and from this circumstance called Transit street, about one hundred feet east of Benefit street. Here, on the morning of the third of June, were collected not only the gentlemen before named, but many others; some attracted by curiosity merely, and some by their love of science. The day proved calm and serene. Not a cloud intervened to obstruct their observation, but every circumstance contributed to facilitate it. The account published by Dr. West, bore ample testimony to his science as an astronomer. Compared with other observations, even with those made under the patronage of crowned heads in Europe, it maintains a high place for its accuracy.

Notwithstanding the political dangers and difficulties with which the colonies were surrounded in 1772, the inhabitants of Providence found leisure to form and perfect plans for their present comfort, and for the future well-being of the town. That part of the town since called Eddy's Point, was formerly an island, and was connected with the main land by an artificial embankment. It had been found a very convenient place for business, excepting only a want of fresh water for the supply of the inhabitants. In that year they formed a company for the purpose of supplying themselves with this necessary article, by an aqueduct from the main land, and obtained a charter of incorporation from the General Assembly. Capt. John Field, the owner of land adjoining, upon which there was a large and perma-

nent spring of good water, generously gave one half of it to the company for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. Operations were immediately commenced by Joseph Bucklin and Nicholas Clark, and in four months they completed the undertaking, carrying the water nearly three-fourths of a mile, in logs. The aqueduct was supposed capable of supplying one hundred gallons per minute. In a letter of thanks addressed to Captain Field on the 26th of August, after the work was completed, they say, "we are supplied with fresh water in a more convenient manner than any of the inhabitants of the colony: and, to use the language of scripture, our situation was, before, pleasant, though our waters were nought; but, now, through your bounty and beneficence, we have at command a spring shut up, or fountain, opened at pleasure." In October following the "Rawson's Fountain Society," was incorporated. The fountain of this corporation was dug in land of the heirs of the late Stephen Rawson. It was thirty feet in length, thirteen and a half feet wide, and about ten feet deep. The main pipe was four inches bore and about four hundred rods in length. The undertakers of this work, were Amos Atwell and Jonathan Ellis. The logs were bored by machinery invented by them.

Since that period, two other fountains have been built on the west side of the river. The one belonging to the Providence Aqueduct Company, is located near the junction of Stewart and Conduit streets.—The water is conveyed from it in a double range of four inch iron pipes, a part of which was laid at

great expense, the excavation for the same, varying from four to thirty-one feet in depth. The pipes from this fountain were extended at first across the river, and under its bed. They were broken while erecting the bridge, and have not since been replaced.

The other fountain is located between Fountain and Cottage streets, a little to the east of Dean street. The main pipe at the fountain is five inches in diameter. The head is sufficient to deliver water in the third story of the Union buildings, next the bridge.

These four fountains, supply a greater part of the inhabitants on the west side of the river, whose dwellings are near the salt water, with pure and wholesome water. They are owned by different companies, and the right to use the water is granted to families, at the cost of about ten dollars per year.

About the year 1803, Col. Jeremiah Olney dug a fountain in the northeasterly part of the town on his own land, for the purpose of supplying the inhabitants on the east side of the river, with water. Logs were laid to the west end of Olney street, but he met with little encouragement, the inhabitants preferring to dig and own wells, as the land in that vicinity yields a great supply of good water at no very great depth.

A larger quantity of flour was brought to market in Providence, from the surrounding country, in 1774, than in any preceding year. It was in fact so great, as to form the subject of a newspaper paragraph. Mr. Carter, the editor of the Providence Gazette, a man not given to speculation, remarked, that there appeared a probability that flour would, in