

Please join Roger Williams National Memorial and our community partners for

Inspired Providence

A bold look at our city's rich cultural history from Roger Williams' "lively experiment" in 1636 to the rise of a Creative Capital.

Thursdays

September 29th – November 10th

6:00 pm

Free and Open to the Public

9/29: *Roger Williams National Memorial: Interpretation of an Idea*

John McNiff —*Roger Williams National Memorial*

282 North Main Street, Providence RI, 02903

Just 375 years ago, Roger Williams established Providence as a place with unprecedented personal freedom. Here, government and religion were to be kept separate, not because religion was unimportant, but because religion, in Williams' opinion, was too important to be tied to and dictated by government. Separation of church and state, freedom to believe what you choose are at the core of a civil society. Williams' teaching of these ideas and the establishment of a settlement based on these beliefs, a lively experiment in personal freedom, while looked down upon in the 17th century, set a precedent for the freedoms we, as Americans, enjoy in the 21st century. National Park Service Ranger John McNiff will examine these foundational concepts and show how they were echoed in a truly revolutionary document more than 100 years after Williams' death, the United States Constitution.



John McNiff, a Rhode Island native, has been studying the works of Roger Williams for more than 25 years, ten of them as an archaeologist here in New England and the last 15 as a Park Ranger at Roger Williams National Memorial.

10/6: *Monumental: A Fitting Memorial for the Founding Father*

James Brayton Hall—*Providence Athenaeum*

251 Benefit Street, Providence, RI 02903

Seventy-five years ago, Providence celebrated the 300th anniversary of the founding of Providence but the 1933 approach to commemoration differed significantly from today's efforts. James Hall, Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society, will discuss and examine the architectural competition that led to the creation of the Roger Williams statue in Prospect Park on Congdon Street.



James Brayton Hall is the Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society and the former Assistant Director of the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design.

10/13: Stories of a Cape Verdean Raconteur

Len Cabral—Providence Children’s Museum
100 South Street, Providence, RI 02903

Cape Verdean immigrants began arriving in Rhode Island in the early 19th century—many aboard whaleships on which they had worked as crew. During an evening of folktales, fables, and personal family stories Len Cabral explores their incredible journey from the high seas to the streets of Providence. Explore Cape Verdean music, food, and culture and celebrate the wonder that stories hold for us all at this special family program!

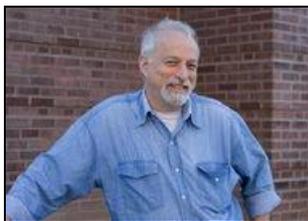


Len Cabral is an internationally-acclaimed storyteller who has been enchanting audiences with his storytelling performances at schools, libraries, museums and festivals since 1976. He is the recipient of the National Storytelling Network 2001 Circle of Excellence Oracle Award and multiple NAPPA and Parents' Choice awards.

10/20: “This I Believe” Community Dialogue: What Do the Beliefs of Roger Williams Mean to Us Today?

Marc Levitt—Providence Public Library
150 Empire Street, Providence, RI 02903

Are the ideas of Roger Williams still relevant today? Are Williams' beliefs threatened by the contemporary political climate? Is there practical basis for his ideals or are they simply philosophical expression without a firm foundation? Join radio host Marc Levitt for a night of discussion and debate on the ways that Roger Williams’ ideas and beliefs have shaped Providence as well as how they inform and influence our lives today!



Marc Levitt is a writer/storyteller and the Host and Co-Executive Producer of Action Speaks a multi-formatted radio show/panel discussion heard on over 250 stations nationwide and hosted by WGBH Boston. Mr. Levitt, the author of the Corwin Press Book, Putting Everyday Life on the Page, has been the recipient of RISCA's New Genre Award and RICH's Tom Roberts Award. He has been invited to speak and perform in over 50 countries and is currently working on Audio Winds #2, an audio installation project for Narragansett Beach www.marclevitt.org

10/27: How Providence Became a City: The Impact of the Hardscrabble & Snowtown Race Riots of 1824 and 1831

Ray Rickman—Old State House
150 Benefit Street, Providence RI

Early 19th century Americans viewed their world through the prism of the newspaper. Newspapers with a point of view. Newspapers written with “respectable” townspeople in mind. It was the newspapers that spoke about the townspeople in mind. It was the newspapers that spoke about the tensions in the rapidly growing town of Providence between those with wealth and those without; the tensions between those who had steady employment and those that struggled to get steady employment; the tensions between the African- American neighborhoods and the rest of the town. All too often, these tensions played out in violent ways, as was the case with the race riots in HardScrabble and Snowtown of 1824 and 1831. What was the impact of these uprisings on Providence and its ability to protect its citizens? Join us as Ray Rickman paints a picture of growing Providence, a burgeoning African-American population, and the role of local newspapers in creating divisions around race and class.



Ray Rickman is President of the Rickman Group, a consulting firm that raises funds and conducts management and diversity training for non-profits and small businesses. He is the former Rhode Island Deputy Secretary of State and has served as both Equal Opportunity Officer and Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission for the City of Providence. He is the former President of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society. Ray regularly conducts architectural and African-American history tours of the Brown University area in Providence.

11/3: *Latin Roots: The History of Latin Americans in Rhode Island*

Marta Martinez—Olneyville Community Library
One Olneyville Square, Providence, RI 02909

Rhode Island Latinos are very diverse. They not only come from many Latin American countries, but they fill diverse roles in the community as a whole. Rhode Island Latinos are often referred to as a “young” community, but that does not refer to their age but rather to the year in which they arrived and planted their feet firmly on Rhode Island soil, saying: “We are here to live, work, go to school and grow as a united community!”

Using narratives from the Rhode Island Latino Oral History Project Marta Martinez explores the history of the Latino community through the eyes of individuals. Learn about the Rhode Island Latino Oral History Project and how you can be part of it! Organizers are looking for volunteers to conduct interviews, as well as for any pioneers who would be willing to contribute their story.



Marta V. Martínez was the first Executive Director of the Hispanic Social Services Association of Rhode Island and the founding Director of the Center for Hispanic Policy & Advocacy. She was named by the Providence Journal as one of “Ten People to Watch in 2010” and received the 2008 Community Engagement Award by the Center for Hispanic Policy & Advocacy. She is the co-founder of the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Hispanic Affairs & the Hispanic Heritage Committee of Rhode Island and founded the Hispanic Heritage Committee-RI in an effort to encourage Latino artists to share their art and traditions.

11/10: *Providence 1872: The Birth of the Diner Business that Became an American Institution*

Richard J. S. Gutman—Culinary Arts Museum at Johnson and Wales
315 Harborside Boulevard, Providence, Rhode Island 02905

Where did people go out to eat in Providence in the late 19th century? They might try the Roger Williams Hotel in Market Square, a "German Hotel of the first class" with "Milwaukee Beer constantly on draft." There were plenty of oyster houses, like the one operated by John W. Pettis, who was also a wholesale dealer in the bivalves. But after 8 p.m., when most restaurants closed, the eating house choices were slim...that is until Walter Scott, a compositor and pressman in the newspaper trade, began to hawk sandwiches, pies and coffee from a horse-drawn wagon in 1872. This ancient predecessor of today's phenomenally popular food truck was the spark that set in motion the manufacture of portable restaurants, a business that continues to this day. This presentation will put the story in perspective.



Richard J.S. Gutman is the director and curator of the Culinary Arts Museum at Johnson & Wales University. He graduated from Cornell University in 1972 with a Bachelor of Architecture, doing his thesis on diners. He has since written four books on the subject and has worked on more than 80 diner restoration projects. Along with many TV, radio and print stories on diners, Mr. Gutman was the subject of a front page profile in The Wall Street Journal and was written up in “The Talk of the Town” in The New Yorker.