

**ORATION DELIVERED AT THE
DEDICATION OF THE
PROVIDENCE COUNTY COURT
HOUSE, DECEMBER 18, 1877**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649259939

Oration Delivered at the Dedication of the Providence County Court House, December 18, 1877
by Thomas Durfee

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THOMAS DURFEE

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O R A T I O N

DELIVERED AT THE

DEDICATION

OF THE

PROVIDENCE COUNTY COURT HOUSE,

DECEMBER 18, 1877,

BY THE HON. THOMAS DURFEE,

CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND.

PROVIDENCE:

E. L. FREEMAN & CO., PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1879.

US14384.20.99

1885. Feb. 3,
Bright Fund.

State of Rhode Island, etc.

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

JANUARY SESSION, 1879.

RESOLUTIONS concerning oration delivered by Hon.
Thomas Durfee, at the dedication of the Providence
County Court House.

(Passed March 22, 1879.)

RESOLVED, That His Honor Thomas Durfee, chief justice of the supreme court, is hereby requested to furnish this general assembly with a copy of the admirable oration spoken by him at the dedication of the Providence county court house, on the 18th day of December, 1877, that the same may be appropriately printed.

RESOLVED, That the secretary of state is hereby instructed, upon the receipt of the manuscript of said oration, to cause one thousand copies of the same to be printed; and the state auditor is hereby authorized to draw his order for the expense thereof, out of any money not otherwise appropriated in the treasury.

A true copy. Attest:

JOSHUA M. ADDEMAN,
Secretary of State.



PREFATORY NOTE.

The Providence County Court House is located at the south-west corner of College and Benefit streets, in the city of Providence, and occupies what was formerly known as the Old Town House lot, a site which has been used in part for public purposes for nearly a century. The land was condemned and taken for public use as a site for a Court House for the county of Providence, by act of the General Assembly passed March 9, 1875. On the following day, Messrs. Amasa S. Westcott, Edwin Darling and Thomas P. Shepard were elected, in Grand Committee, Commissioners to build a new Court House on the above designated site, with instructions to report plans and estimates during the same session. On the 30th of March, 1875, the Commissioners were empowered to build the Court House substantially according to the plans by them submitted, and an appropriation was made therefor.

Ground for the building was broken July 30, 1875. The corner stone of the edifice was laid by the Grand Lodge of Masons, May 15, 1876, the oration on the occasion being delivered by Hon. John H. Stiness.

The building was dedicated December 18th, 1877. At the dedicatory exercises a large audience was present, embracing the members of the General Assembly, of the bar, and other gentlemen prominent in public or private life.

The dedicatory exercises comprised a statement by Mr. Alfred Stone, of the firm of Stone & Carpenter, architects, of the construction of the building; an address by Hon. Amasa S. Westcott, chairman of the Commission, who at the close of his remarks delivered the keys of the Court House to His Excellency Governor Van Zandt, by whom a suitable response in behalf of the State was made.

By the Governor the keys were transferred to the custody of Christopher Holden, Esq., Sheriff of the county of Providence, who received them with appropriate remarks.

The dedicatory prayer was then offered by Right Rev. Thomas M. Clark, Bishop of the Diocese of Rhode Island.

Hon. Thomas Durfee, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the orator of the day, was then introduced and pronounced the oration, which is given entire in the following pages.

The oration was followed by an address from Hon. Abraham Payne; a collation and post-prandial remarks by Gov. Van Zandt, Hon. George A. Brayton, Ex-Chief Justice, Hon. Zachariah Allen, Bishop Clark, Senators Henry B. Anthony and A. E. Burnside, James C. Collins, Esq., Nicholas Van Slyck, Esq., and Gen. George Lewis Cooke.

The cost of the building, including furniture, was \$253,253.70, being within the appropriations therefor.

Dr. Thomas P. Shepard, one of the original Commissioners, deceased May 5, 1877, and was succeeded by Hon. John H. Stiness, who with his associates continued as Commissioners until the completion of the building.