

BENONI COOKE HOUSE

Address: 110 South Main Street, Providence, Providence
County, Rhode Island

Present Owner Providence Institution for Savings
and Occupant:

Present Use: Bank annex with offices, cafeteria, printing shop,
etc.

Brief Statement This is a large brick house, a typical late work
of Significance: of the architect John Holden Greene.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Built originally for Benoni Cooke, the present owners acquired the house in 1913.
2. Date of erection: c. 1828.
3. Architect: John Holden Greene
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Originally this was one of a pair of similar houses with a common courtyard. The other house, built for Cooke's brother-in-law Rufus Greene, was demolished in 1898.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: The ground floor of the house which opens in an elevated basement on the west has been altered for banking purposes. The west basement facade was restored in 1953, John Hutchins Cady, architect.
5. Sources of information: John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), pp. 99-100.

Antoinette Forrester Downing, Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, 1957), p. 433.

Federal Writers' Project, Rhode Island. A Guide to the Smallest State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), p. 285.

HABS Inventory prepared by John Hutchins Cady, July 22, 1956.

Norman Morrison Isham, John Holden Greene, unpublished mss. in possession of John Hutchins Cady, Providence, Rhode Island.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large brick house, a typical late work of the architect John Holden Greene. Its hillside arrangement, with a side main entrance and shops in the ground level basement, is unusual. Originally an identical, symmetrically placed house stood just north of it, with their main entrances facing each other across a common driveway leading to a common courtyard in the rear.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Rectangular main block with ground floor shops facing west on South Main Street, and main floor front facing north on driveway, about 45' (six bays) west front x 45' (five bays) north front, ground floor plus two stories above, rear wing connects with original stables.
2. Foundations: Stone, regular ashlar on west front and north side, random on other sides.
3. Wall construction: Brick, running bond on sides, Flemish bond on west front.
4. Stoops and porches: Ashlar entrance stoop with double flights of stairs, wrought iron railing. Entrance porch, one story, fluted Ionic columns at corners, Ionic entablatures with modillion cornice.
5. Chimneys: Four brick chimneys in outside walls.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doors and doorways: Large six-panel main door, flat panels, side lights and elliptical top light, doorway framed with banded colonettes.

- b. Windows: Six over six light double hung windows, marble sills, marble lintels carved to look like three pieces.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Hip, shingles.
- b. Cornice: Modillion cornice with denticulated bed mold.
- c. Dormers: Low monitor roof, low horizontal windows, bracketed cornice.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Offices on ground floor opening west to South Main Street. Central hall plan on upper floors - four rooms on main floor, large double connecting parlors on west side of upper floor. Storerooms in attic under monitor.
2. Stairways: Main stairway in central hall, straight run with 90° curve at the top, open well, open string, fan step end ornaments, two rectangular balusters per step, molded rail.
3. Flooring: Asphalt tile on ground floor. Wide boards partly covered with linoleum, on upper floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doors: Six-panel wood doors. Flat panels, small scale complex moldings.
6. Trim: Molded, wood door and window trim with undercut Gothic profiles. Some complex pilaster trim on second floor with corner blocks. Plaster ceiling cornices, some with corner blocks.
7. Hardware: Large, glass or silver plated knobs. Butt hinges.
8. Lighting: Electric:
9. Heating: Marble mantels on four fireplaces with simple Ionic pilasters. Other simple wood mantels with delicate moldings, single or double colonnettes; complex molded, projecting mantels.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Faces west on business street, driveway on north leads to rear courtyard.
2. Outbuildings: Original stables, brick, three two-story units with hip roofs, brick denticulated cornices, connected by one-story units, forming large L-shape, connected to rear wing of house, arched openings on first floor, eight over eight light double hung windows light second floor rooms.
3. Driveways: Modern asphalt.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
April 1962.

PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Isaac Brown
Benoni Cooke and ~~Rufus Greene~~ Houses

John Holden

In 1825 and 1826, Greene built three very similar houses in Providence, with adjoining stables and carriage houses. For ~~Rufus Greene~~ and Benoni ^{Cooke} Brothers-in-laws, he designed a pair of dwellings with connecting outbuildings which formed a semi-enclosed court at 112 and 114 South Main Street. ~~Only~~ Benoni Cooke's house remains. *Isaac Brown*

From "Early Homes of Rhode Island" by Antoinette F Downing
Section VI...page 433

The BENONI COOKE HOUSE 1828

#112 South Main Street

Plat #12...Lot # 124-127

In 1859 Benoni Cooke sold the above property to Rufus Greene for \$13,500, being

"A certain lot of land with brick Dwelling House, barn, and other buildings on the E/ly side of South Main Street bounded:

Beginning at a point in center of gangway laid out between the estate conveyed and the estate N/ly therefrom owned by Isaac Brown, which point is equi-distant from the S/W corner of dwelling house of the said Isaac Brown standing on the N/ly adjoining lot from the N/Wly corner of the Dwelling House on the lot hereby conveyed, then running E/ly in a straight line to center of a stone post fitted for securing gates of yard and adjoining yard. Thence E/ly through middle of well to E/ly line of said lot at a point exactly in center of shed between two brick barns which lines are bounded on N by said Isaac Brown. Bounded E/ly by William Bishop; S/ly by Ezra Howard; W/ly by South Main Street.

The whole gangway to well and pump between the yards to be enjoyed in common between the owners of the estate hereby conveyed and the estate of Isaac Brown at all times to be kept in repair at joint expense of the owners of said adjoining estates."

From "Records of Deeds"
Book #153 Page #215
City Hall, Providence, R.I.

Resident of Rufus Greene:
1857#66 Washington St. (first listing)
1858#58 George St.
1859#66 South Main St. (same place)
1870#90 South Main St. (change of numbers)
1875#90 South Main St. Mrs. Rufus Green