

**PPS RECORDS FOR
326 WAYLAND AVENUE
(formerly 320 Wayland Avenue)
PLAT 39, LOT 495**

**ADELE R. WOODS HOUSE
BUILT 1913**

DESCRIPTION:

A 2-1/2 story, Colonial Revival style single family house with a dormered cross-gable roof and wood shingle siding. The enclosed side-hall entryway (likely a later alteration) has a brick stoop and stained glass sidelights. A bay with three 6-light windows projects slightly from the first floor level at the front. Elsewhere, windows are wood double hung multipane sash. The house has a large side yard, enclosed with a wooden fence, and a garage at the rear ca. 1937 (both along University Avenue).

The house stands on an 8,000 square foot lot on the west side of Wayland Avenue and the south side of University Avenue (the southwest corner of that intersection). The lot measures 80 feet wide on Wayland, and 100 feet deep on University.

HISTORY:

Adele R. Wood, widow of William H. Wood, moved to Providence from Newton, Mass. and purchased this house in September 1913 from Harry Rayner of Cumberland. (The house is named after its first resident owner, Mrs. Wood, even though it had already been constructed by the time she bought it. Mr. Rayner bought the property in May 1913 and had the house built that same year, but never lived here.) Mrs. Wood lived here for more than 20 years. In 1936 the house was sold to Dorothy W. Sears. Since then the house has changed hands three more times; the current owners, William and Constance Bryan, bought it in 1976.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT¹:

In the 18th century, Moses Brown's Elm Grove Farm covered more than 300 acres on Providence's East Side: bounded by today's East Manning and Pitman Streets on the south; Laurel Avenue on the north; Arlington Avenue, Lloyd Avenue and Hope Street on the west, and the Seekonk River on the east. (Brown's country home once stood near the intersection of today's Humboldt and Wayland Avenues.) One of four brothers in a very wealthy and prominent family, Moses Brown was a Quaker and abolitionist. Among his many accomplishments, he helped to found a boarding school for Quaker youth (now the Moses Brown School), and he was a primary sponsor of Samuel Slater's cotton mill in Pawtucket, which brought the Industrial Revolution to America.

Moses Brown died in 1836, leaving the farmstead to his granddaughter Anna Almy Jenkins; in 1856 her two surviving children split the estate in half, divided at Angell and South Angell

¹ From "Historic and Architectural Resources of the East Side, Providence," by Robert Owen Jones, published by the R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 1989; and previous PPS Marker Reports.

Streets. Anna's son Moses Brown Jenkins took the northern portion of the estate and in 1865 subdivided it for residential development as the Elm Grove Farm Plat. In 1868, the entire Elm Grove Farm Plat (over 6 million square feet of land) was sold to Charles C. and Henry M. Taber of New York City (Deed Book 184, Page 74). The Tabers replatted their land as the Moses Brown Farm Plat in 1870, and again in 1872 and in 1891. The family remained one of the East Side's major landowners for more than three decades, gradually selling off hundreds of vacant lots to individual owners and to real estate speculators. Taber Avenue is named for them.

The lot on which 326 Wayland Avenue now stands remained vacant between 1870 and 1913, despite being owned by a real estate speculator for at least 20 years. It was not until public transportation and residential utilities (water, sewer, electricity, telephone lines) became available on the East Side in the late 19th and early 20th century that this previously undeveloped area became more desirable for housing construction. By 1908, water and sewer services were available to this property, and the Elm Grove Avenue streetcar line ran just a block away. The house was built five years later.

DESIGNATIONS

Not listed on the National Register of Historic Places; not located in a local historic district zone.

RECORDS

(All records are found in Providence City Hall unless otherwise noted.)

Maps and Atlases

1798: "A Map of Owners of Lots in Providence," compiled by Henry B. Chace in 1912: Plate V shows Moses Brown's farm occupying over 300 acres north of today's Angell Street (then called "Moses Brown's Road to the Central Bridge"), between what is now Hope Street and the Seekonk River. *(Archives)*

1865: "The Elm Grove Farm Plat Belonging to Moses B. Jenkins," surveyed and drawn by Charles E. Paine, recorded in Plat Book 8, Page 15, and copied on Plat Card 215. This plat contained over 6.3 million square feet of land, and was divided into three tracts numbered 1, 2 and 3. Tract #1 (over 3.26 million sq. ft.) was bounded by Wayland Avenue on the east, Angell Street on the south, Asylum Street (now Arlington Avenue) on the west, and by land of various other property owners on the north. No buildings are shown on this map. *(Registry of Deeds)*

1870: "The Moses Brown Farm Plat," surveyed and drawn by Charles E. Paine, recorded in Plat Book 11, Page 2, copied on plat card 281. Shows the block bounded by Wayland (E), Irving (S), Elm Grove (W), and Lloyd (N) Avenues. (University Avenue does not appear on this map.) The block has eight lots, numbered #108-115, all 19,000 sq.ft. and all vacant. Lot #111 is shown on the west side of Wayland Avenue 100 feet north of Irving Avenue; the University Avenue right-of-way would later be cut through part of Lot #111, and the remainder would be subdivided into four smaller lots, on one of which 326 Wayland would later be constructed. The map notes that "purchasers of lots are prohibited from placing any buildings on this plat with 20 feet of any street or avenue, and all their deeds are subject to this agreement." *(Registry of Deeds)*

1872: "The Moses Brown Farm Plat," surveyed and drawn by Cushing & Co., recorded in Plat Book 11, Page 10, copied on plat card 286. Shows the same configuration as on the Paine plat map of 1870, with Lot #111 on Wayland Avenue measuring 19,000 sq. ft.; no buildings are shown. (*Registry of Deeds*)

1875: "Atlas of the City of Providence," by G.M. Hopkins Co., Vol. 1 (Wards 1, 2 and 3), Plate J shows the block bounded by Wayland, Irving, Elmgrove and Lloyd Avenues, with the same lot layout as on the 1870 and 1872 Moses Brown Farm Plat maps. University Avenue has not yet been laid out. The map indicates that the Weybosset Land Co. owned Lot #111 (19,000 sq. ft.), which was vacant at this time. The map refers to the Moses Brown Farm Plat. (*Archives*)

1882: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 4, shows the same block configuration and lot layout as on previous maps. Lot #111 is still vacant; neither its size nor its owner is indicated. The map refers to the Moses Brown Farm Plat. (*Archives*)

1891: "The Moses Brown Farm Re-Plat" by Charles E. Paine, recorded in Plat Book 19, Page 17, copied on Plat Card 640. University Avenue appears for the first time, running east-west between Elmgrove and Wayland Avenues. The former lot #111 on Wayland Avenue has been subdivided into four smaller lots. Two of these front on Wayland Avenue, each measuring 40 by 100 feet (4,000 square feet). Lot #361 is at the southwest corner of Wayland and University; lot 360 is directly to the south of Lot 361. Both lots are vacant. (*Registry of Deeds*)

1895: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by Everts & Richards, Pages 32-33, shows the block bounded by Wayland, Irving, Elmgrove and University Avenues. The former Lot #111 has been subdivided into four 4,000 sq. ft. lots, two fronting on Wayland and two on University. Neither lot numbers nor the owner's name is indicated. The entire block remains undeveloped. Sewer lines have been laid on Elmgrove Avenue as far north as Elton Street (one block south of Irving); the Angell Street streetcar line is five blocks to the south. (*Archives*)

1902: Assessors Plat Maps, Plat 39 shows the block bounded by Wayland, Irving, Elmgrove and University Avenues. Assessor's Lot #495 measures 40 feet along Wayland Avenue and 100 feet deep (4,000 sq. ft.); it lies 40 feet south of University Avenue. Lot #207, at the corner of Wayland and University, also measures 40 by 100 feet (4,000 sq.ft). No buildings or owners' names appear on this map. (*Archives*)

1908: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by L.J. Richards Co., plate 9: shows two vacant 4,000 sq.ft. lots at the southwest corner of Wayland and University Avenues, both owned by the Weybosset Land Co. (*Archives*)

1918: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 21: A house with a street address of 320 Wayland Avenue stands on the southernmost of two 4,000 sq.ft. lots (the other lot is vacant) at the southwest corner of Wayland and University Avenues, both owned by A.R. Wood. (*Archives*)

1926: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 21: The house previously numbered 320 is now 326 Wayland Avenue, standing on the southernmost of two 4,000 square foot lots (the other lot is vacant) at the southwest corner of Wayland and University Avenues, both owned by A.R. Wood. (*Archives*)

1937: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 21: The house at 326 Wayland stands on an 8,000 sq. ft. lot at the southwest corner of Wayland and University

Avenues (the two previous 4,000 sq.ft. lots having been merged into one). A garage has been built at the rear of the lot, accessed from University Avenue. The owner is D.W. Sears.
(Archives)

Intent to Build Records (Archives)

No records were found listed in the index under either Wayland or University Avenue for the construction of this house. However, in 1940 a permit was issued to Dorothy Sears to erect a wall at 326 Wayland Avenue (Permit #40272, October 16, 1940).

Deeds (Registry of Deeds)

Deed Book 533/Page 180: On October 18, 1912 the Weybosset Land Company of Providence sold to John McNulty of Providence, a 4,000 sq.ft. lot on the west side of Wayland Avenue, 40 feet south of University Avenue, designated as #360 on the Moses Brown Farm Replat of 1891. The deed does not mention any buildings on the property.

DB 537/293: On May 28, 1913 John McNulty of Cranston sold to Harry Rayner of Cumberland, the same lot #360 (4,000 sq.ft.) that he had acquired in 1912. The deed does not mention any buildings on the property. (McNulty also sold Rayner another lot, #470, on the east side of Wayland.)

DB 539/271: On September 2, 1913, Harry Rayner of Cumberland sold lot #360 (4,000 sq.ft), with all buildings and improvements thereon, to Adele R. Wood of Providence for \$100.

[Note: Mrs. Wood acquired the vacant 4,000 sq.ft. lot to the north (#361 on the Moses Brown Farm Replat of 1891, also AP 39 Lot 207), at the southwest corner of Wayland and University Avenues, sometime between 1913 and 1918, when her name appears on the city atlas as the owner of both lots. The lots were combined into a single 8,000 sq.ft. lot by the next owner, Dorothy Sears, sometime between 1926 and 1937.]

Directories (Archives)

City Directories (organized by resident name):

Adele R. Wood, widow of William H. Wood, is first listed as a resident of Providence in 1914, at which time her address is given as 326 Wayland Avenue.

House Directories (organized by street address);

326 Wayland Avenue is listed for the first time in the 1915-1916 directory. Mrs. William Wood is indicated as the resident.

Tax Records (Archives)

1912: Weybosset Land Co. owned Plat 39, Lot 495. The land was valued at \$960; no assessment was made for buildings.

1913: Harry Rayner of Cumberland owned Plat 39, Lot 495. The land was valued at \$1,400 and buildings at \$3,500. Clearly the house had been constructed since the previous assessment was recorded.

1914: Adele R. Wood, widow of William H. Wood, of Newton, Mass., owned Plat 39, Lot 495. The land was valued at \$1,400 and buildings at \$3,500.

Assessor's Field Cards (Assessor's Office)

Field Card for AP 39, Lot 495 on Wayland Avenue

Weybosset Land Company owned the property as of April 15, 1891.

John McNulty owned the property as of January 2, 1913.

Harry Rayner of Cumberland owned the property as of June 14, 1912.

Adele R. Wood owned the property as of November 1, 1913.

Dorothy W. Sears owned the property as of June 15, 1936.

Grace G. Harris and Townes M. Harris owned the property as joint tenants as of November 1951.

Robert A. Lusardi and wife Paula A. Lusardi owned the property as joint tenants as of June 1, 1973 (DB 1175, p. 31).

William R. Bryan and wife Constance H. Bryan owned the property as joint tenants as of July 6, 1976 (DB 1192, p. 705).

William R. Bryan and Constance H. Bryan owned the property as tenants in entirety as of October 18, 1990 (DB 2313, P. 304).

*Research compiled by Kathryn J. Cavanaugh
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