

Built 1792
By Nathan Seamans

HAB5

PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

PLAT 16
LOT 298

See... #1
H. Mason's
A-BUM

RECORDS OF

#15 ARNOLD STREET.....WOOD

BUILT..1792
BY NATHAN SEAMANS

- 1792 CHRISTOPHER ARNOLD SELLS TO NATHAN SEAMANS, DISTILLER, FOR \$150 A CERTAIN LOT OF LAND EASTERLY OF BENEFIT STREET ON THE N SIDE OF ARNOLD STREET "BEING LOT #6 IN PLAT DIVISION BELONGING TOMY LATE FATHER CHRISTOPHER ARNOLD. BOUNDED S BY ARNOLD STREET; E BY JAMES ARNOLD ESQ; W ON LAND OF SARAH GODFREY; N BY HEIRS OF JOSHUA ASHTON DECEASED."...DB 23.168 *See map at front*
- 1797 WILL OF NATHAN SEAMANS: " I GIVE AND BEQUEATH TO MY AFFECTIONATE WIFE SALLY SEAMANS ALL MY ESTATE BOTH REAL AND PERSONAL DURING HER NATURAL LIFE AND AFTER HER DECEASE TO MY 2 CHILDREN JAMES AND SALLY INDIA SEAMANS."...W 7.883
- 1798 CHACE PLACES NATHAN SEAMANS HOUSE HERE.
- 1814 PROVIDENCE DIRECT TAX OF 1814 HEIRS OF NATHAN SEAMANS; S BY ARNOLD STREET 45', CONTINUING BACK 77' WITH A 2-STORY DWELLING HOUSE BUILT IN 1792...32'x28'. (SIGNED) SARAH SIMMONS AND NATHAN
1836 Louis Leveck and family until 1866 // PD
- ⊗ 1844 1846 NATHAN TILLINGHAST SELLS THE PROPERTY TO LOUIS LEVECK "BEING THE ESTATE OF SALLY (SEAMANS) TILLINGHAST "OF WHICH SHE DIED SEIZED AND OF WHICH HER FATHER NATHAN SEAMANS JR DIED SEIZED AND POSSESSED..DB 102.47
- Δ 1851 1885 HEIRS OF LOUIS LEVECK SELL THE PROPERTY TO SARAH F DURFEE, WIFE OF CHARLES "BEING THE SAME LOT FORMERLY OWNED BY NATHAN SEAMANS AND MORE RECENTLY BY LOUIS LEVECK..DB 333.107 OWNED BY DURFEES UNTIL
- 1932 COMMISSIONER, SAMUEL TEMKIN SELLS THIS PROPERTY TO JOHN THAYER COMPANY FOR \$5,250...DB 761.408
- 1950 JOHN THAYER COMPANY SELLS TO BRADFORD SWAN "THAT CERTAIN PARCEL OF LAND WITH ALL BUILDINGS, FOR \$8000. BOUNDED: S BY ARNOLD ST 46.4' E BY W N POURNARAS 76.4'; N BY THEODORE F GREEN AND HESTER HASTINGS 44.9'; W BY ANTONIS J BAPTISTA 75.9'...897.198

OCCUPANTS OF #15 ARNOLD STREET, FROM THE PROVIDENCE DIRECTORY:

- 1824 MRS SARAH SEAMANS (SIMMONS)
- 1844 ALBERT GREENE, CLERK
LOUIS LEVECK, JEWELLER
- 1847 SAME AS 1844
- 1866 EDWARD LEVECK, CARRIAGE-MAKER
SARAH STEBBINS, WIDOW
FANNY STEBBINS, TEACHER

- ⊗ 1837 - Louis Leveck - N side - Arnold - wood - 32' front x 28' front to rear - 2 stories high front & rear - Occupied for a Dwelling House - V16-#7021
- ⊗ 1844 V.29-#11976 - same as V16-#7021
- Δ 1851 V47-#20407 - " " V16-#7021

NATHAN SEEMANS HOUSE

Address: 15 Arnold Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island.
Flat 16, lot 298

**Present Owner
and Occupant:** Mr. and Mrs. Bradford F. Swan

Present Use: Dwelling

**Brief Statement
of Significance:** This is a typical, late eighteenth century frame
house, two stories high with a center chimney.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1792 Christopher Arnold sells to Nathan Seemans, distiller, for \$150 a certain lot of land easterly of Benefit Street on the N side of Arnold Street "being lot #6 in plat division belonging to my late father Christopher Arnold. Bounded S by Arnold Street; E by James Arnold Esq; W on land of Sarah Godfrey; N by heirs of Joshua Ashton deceased." - Deed Book 23, page 168, in Providence City Hall.
- 1797 Will—of Nathan Seemans: "I give and bequeath to my affectionate wife Sally Seemans all my Estate both real and personal during her natural life and after her decease to my 2 children James and Sally India Seemans." - Wills Book 7, page 683, in Providence City Hall.
- 1798 CHACE places Nathan Seemans House here - Notes at the Rhode Island Historical Society gathered by Henry R. Chace in preparation of his book, Owners and Occupants of the Lots, Houses and Shops in the Town of Providence, Rhode Island in 1798. Located on Maps of the Highways of that Date (Providence, 1914).
- 1814 Mss. tax descriptions in the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, for the 1814 Providence direct tax to the federal government heirs of Nathan Seemans; S by Arnold Street 45', continuing back

77' with a 3-story **BRICK HOUSE** built in 1792...
32'x28'. (signed) Sarah Simmons and Nathan

1846 Nathan Tillinghast sells the property to Louis Loveck "being the lot of Sally (Seamans) Tillinghast of which she died seized and of which her father Nathan Seamans Jr died seized and possessed. - Deed Book 102, page 47, in Providence City Hall.

1885 Heirs of Louis Loveck sell the property to Sarah F Surfee, wife of Charles "being the same lot formerly owned by Nathan Seamans and more recently by Louis Loveck. - Deed Book 333, page 107, in Providence City Hall. Owned by Surfees until

1932 Commissioner, Samuel T. Smith sells this property to John Thayer Company for \$3,250. - Deed Book 761, page 408, in Providence City Hall.

1930 John Thayer Company sells to Bradford Swan "that certain parcel of land with all buildings, for \$2000. Bounded: S by Arnold St 46.4' E by W N Pomeroy 76.4'; N by Theodore F Green and Hester Hastings 4.9'; W by Arthur J Baptista 75.9'. - Deed Book 877, page 196, in Providence City Hall.

Occupants of #15 Arnold Street, from the Providence Directory:

1824 Mrs. Sarah Seamans (Simmons)
1844 Albert Seaman, clerk
Louis Loveck, jeweler
1847 Same as 1844
1866 Edward Loveck, carriage-maker
Sarah Stabbins, widow
Fanny Stabbins, teacher

2. Date of creation: Between 1792 and 1796.

3. Notes on alterations and additions: The house is largely unaltered, although the mantel in the parlor (southeast room on first floor) appears to have been changed as indicated in the description.

Prepared by Annetta F. Downing and Elvira Gowdy
for the Providence Preservation Society
December 1961.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character:** This is a typical, late eighteenth century frame house, two stories high with a center chimney plan, preserving many characteristic details including a steep winding stairway against the chimney in the small front hall.

2. **Condition of fabric:** Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. **Overall dimensions:** Rectangular main block, 32' (five bays) x 28', two stories, facing south, two-story rear wing to northwest.

2. **Foundations:** Random coursed ashlar.

3. **Wall construction:** Heavy timber frame exposed on interior, plank walls, sheathed with graduated exposure, wider toward top, corner boards with beaded edge.

4. **Stoops:** Wood entrance stoop, three steps.

5. **Chimneys:** One large brick center chimney.

6. **Openings:**

a. **Doors and doors:** Main entrance, six-panel door, Louis XV style, semicircular top light with wood muntin, fluted pilasters, pediment, medallion cornice. Panelled, top lighted rear doors, simple frame.

b. **Windows and shutters:** Six over six light double hung windows, unadorned window frames, large splined wood lintels on first floor with keystone blocks, milled lintels on second floor continuous with cornice and mold. No shutters.

7. **Roof:**

a. **Shape and covering:** Gable, shingle.

b. **Cornice, eaves:** Milled cornice, returned slightly at the eaves.

G. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Center chimney, five-room plan, with kitchen in rear wing.
 2. Stairway: Apparently original, U-shape, open well stairway in entrance hall, closed string with molded outside stringer, winders, large molded handrail, turned balusters and newel, turned pendants.
 3. Floors: Original board floors, average 5" - 8" in width. Some later strip flooring.
 4. Ceiling and wall finish: Plaster, papered.
 5. Doorways and doors: Front rooms, six-panel doors, double, molded, mitered architraves. Elsewhere four-panel doors, single molded architraves.
 6. Trim: Window frames similar to doorways. Denticulated molded ceiling cornices in southeast parlor, and second floor bedrooms. Beaded corner posts.
 7. Hardware: Miscellaneous later knobs and latches, butt hinges.
 8. Lighting: Electric.
 9. Heating: Modern central heating. Southeast and southwest bedrooms on second floor have original one-story wood mantels with crosshatched, molded fireplace surrounds, and molded mantel shelves. Mantel in parlor (southeast room on first floor) has apparently been altered: details are out of alignment, the overmantel is plaster, the fireplace opening has been cut down in height, and is surrounded by Liverpool tiles depicting Aesop's Fables which are good tiles, but it is unlikely that they would have been used originally in this house.
- D. Site: General setting; house at sidewalk line, level lot, narrow sideyards, rear yard, residential neighborhood.