

BOORUM & PLASE "NINE"  
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PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Records of

Flat 10  
Lot 100

#118 BENEFIT STREET...Brick

#64 in 1824

#92 in 1847

#118 in 1866

Built by Thomas Holden...1814-1818

- 1782 John Carter Brown and Amey his wife et al, sell for \$193 to John Updike the 2/3 part of an undivided lot of land on Benefit Street being part of the estate of Colonel Jabez Bowen...Deed Book 20.642
- 1806 FIRE RECORD: Josiah Humphrey...W side of Benefit Street...wood... 2 stories high with 1 chimney...stands remote from other buildings.. On leased land...FR Vol 1...#197
- 1809 John Crawford Updike sells for \$400 the above land to John Miller Noyes...Deed Book 32.285
- 1809 John Miller Noyes, mariner, sells for \$500 to Josiah Humphrey, cabinet maker, a certain lot of land on the W side of Benefit Street bounded: E on Benefit Street 52'; S by Mawney's land 104'; W by Zachariah Allen 50'; N by Richard Salisbury 104'...Deed Book 34.136
- 1812 WILL: Josiah Humphrey..."to my beloved wife the dwelling house I now live in...also the lot of land adjoining my said dwelling house. Bounded E on a street or highway, S by John Mawney, W by Zachariah Allen, N by heirs of Joshua Salisbury"...Wills 11.24
- 1813 The estate of Josiah Humphrey is sold for \$675 by his widow Elizabeth to Thomas Holden (no house mentioned)...Deed Book 37.101
- 1814 PROVIDENCE DIRECT TAX (to pay for the War of 1812)...Thomas Holden ...Benefit Street...1 lot of land 50' front x 100' back.(no building)
- 1818 Thomas R Holden quit claims to Charles Holden, mariner, a certain lot of land with a DWELLING HOUSE et al improvements thereon situated..Bounded E by Benefit Street 52'; S by John Mawney 104'; W by heirs of Z Allen 52'; N by Richard Salisbury...being the same grantor bought of Elizabeth Humphrey in 1813...Deed Book 43.11

more...

#118 BENEFIT STREET...continued

1814-1865 Charles Holden and/or family lived here..Prov Dir

1823 FIRE RECORD: Charles Holden II...House on Benefit Street of brick and stone...39' front...35' front to rear...2 stories high in front and 3 in rear...self-occupied. Vol 6..#1989

1865 Levi Holden et al, heirs of Charles Holden, sell for \$10,000 to Mary Thomas that lot of land with a Dwelling House...being the same estate conveyed to Charles Holden in 1818...Deed Book 171.329

1866-1878 Hiram H and Mary Thomas listed here...Prov Directory

1867 Hiram H Thomas and wife Mary M Thomas, sell for \$14,000 to Jonah Steere that lot of land with all buildings and improvements thereon situated bounded: E by Benefit Street 52'; S by land of grantee 104'; W partly by grantee and partly by Thomas Merriweather 52'; N partly by Lydia Salisbury and partly by Marie Mason 104', being same as Deed Book 171.329...Deed Book 180.11

1871 Jonah Steere died intestate...Henry J Steere his only child appointed administrator.

1889 WILL: Henry J Steere..." to Horace W Steere my estate at #118 Benefit Street!..Wills 33.132

1892-1920 Horace Steere and wife Edith listed here..Prov Dir

1919 MORTGAGE: Property mortgaged to Ethelbert R Rusden..DB 586.323

1921 Daniel Elliot listed here..Providence Directory

1922 E A Rusden sells for \$8000 to Ronald McAdam and wife Maria a certain lot of land bounded: E by Benefit Street 51.5'; N by Max Latt 64.5'; W by R Steere 50.25'; S by R Steere 65'...DB 623.2

1923-1955 McAdams family listed here...Providence Directory

1956 Vacant...Providence Directory

1956 Katherine A McAdams and Vera M Neville sell the above property to Donald Shepard...Deed Book 1058.341

1957-1960 Donald Shepard listed here...Providence Directory

1960 Donald Shepard sells the property to Charles Davison and wife Essie...Deed Book 1104.1147

more...

## PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

#118 BENEFIT STREET...continued

1967 Charles Davison and wife Essie sell to Thomas H Rhine and Barbara H Rhine, his wife, that certain tract or parcel of land with all buildings and improvements thereon situated on the W/ly side of Benefit Street and beginning at the N/E corner of the property 40' N/ly from the N/Wly corner of Benefit Street and Cady Street. Bounded: E by Benefit Street 51.5', N partly by Roger Shattuck and partly by Audubon Society of Rhode Island 100.4'; W/ly partly by George E Wilson (on line of stone wall) and partly by Kathleene B. Coffey 50.6', to a corner, thence turning and running E/ly on a line with the stone wall 7.6', thence S/ly in line of said wall 20.0' to a point (last two courses bounding S/ly and W/ly on Coffey land) thence E/ly bounding S/ly on other land of the grantors 65.55' to point of beginning with easement to pass and re-pass to and from Cady Street over existing parking lot located on the W/ly portion of said other land of grantors...Deed Book 1142.178

1968 ----- Thomas H and Barbara H Rhine listed here..Prov Dir.

Mary A Cowdey  
researcher  
May 1969

JOSIAH HUMPHREY HOUSE

Address: 118 Benefit Street, Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island.  
Plat 10, Lot 100. In 1824 this lot was 64 Benefit Street, in 1847 it was 92 Benefit Street. Since 1866 it has been 118 Benefit Street.

Present Owner: Charles B. Davison.

Present Use: The house is presently being renovated for use as a dwelling by the present owner.

Brief Statement of Significance: Built in <sup>1817</sup>1809. This is an example of the less common brick houses on College Hill, and the earliest one standing on this part of Benefit Street. It has been remodeled at various times, and preserves both original and later detail and ornament of interest.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

1782:--John Carter, printer and Amy his wife et al for \$193 sell to John Urdike the 2/3 part of an undivided lot of land on Benefit Street Being part of the Estate of Colonel Jabez Bowen--Deed Book 20, page 642, in Providence City Hall.

1802:--John Crawford Urdike sells the property to John Miller Noyes for \$400--Deed Book 32, page 285, in Providence City Hall.

1809:--John Miller Noyes, mariner, sells for \$500 to Josiah Humphrey, cabinet maker "a certain lot of land situated on the W side of Benefit Street bounded: E on Benefit Street 52'; S by Mawney's Land, land 104'; W by Zachariah Allen 50'; N by Richard Salisbury 104'--Deed Book 34, page 136, in Providence City Hall.

1806 - Insured a wooden house  
1809:--Josiah Humphrey lived here and until 1813.

1813:--The Estate of Josiah Humphrey is sold by his widow, Elizabeth to Thomas Holden--Deed Book 37, page 101, in Providence City Hall. The Holdens lived here until 1865--Providence Directory.

1814 No house in Tax  
1823:--Fire record taken out by Charles Holden--House on Benefit Street--Brick and stone 39' front; 35' front to rear; 2 stories high in front and 3 in rear--

self occupied....has fire insurance records of the Providence Mutual Insurance Co. at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence R. I., Vol. 6, policy #1989.

1865:-Levi Holden et al sell this property to Mary Thomas wife of Hiram--Deed Book 171, page 329 in Providence City Hall.

Correction  
1887

~~1887~~:-Will of Henry J. Steere "to Horace W. Steere my Estate at 118 Benefit Street"--Wills Book 33, page 132, in Providence City Hall

1866:-Hiram H. and wife Mary Thomas lived here and until 1867--Providence Directory.

1867:-Hiram H. Thomas and wife sell this property to Jonah Steere--Deed Book 180, page 11, in Providence City Hall. The Steeres owned the property until 1919.

1892:-Horace Steere and wife Edith lived here and until 1920--Providence Directory.

1919:-Property is mortgaged by Horace Steere to Ethelbert A. Rusden--Deed Book 586, page 323, in Providence City Hall.

1923:-Daniel Eliot lived here--Providence Directory.

1922:-Ethelbert A. Rusden sell the property for \$8000 to Ronald MacAdam and wife Maria bounded: E by Benefit 51.5; N by Max Latt 64.5; W by R. Steere 50.25; S by R. Steere 65'--Deed Book 623, page 2, in Providence City Hall.

1923:-MacAdams lived here and until 1954--Providence Directory.

1956:-Katharine A. MacAdam and Vera M. Neville sell the above property to Donald Shepard for \$11,000--Deed Book 1058, page 341, in Providence City Hall.

1960:-Property is sold by Donald Shepard to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Davison--Deed Book 1104, page 1147, in Providence City Hall.

2. Date of erection: 1809.

3. Notes on alterations and additions: The main entrance, the bay window and the roof balustrade are apparently later additions, perhaps of about 1900. Various alter-

ations have apparently been done to the interior several times. The house was restored by Donald Shepard who owned it from 1936 to 1960, and it is being renovated by the present owners.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Cowdrey  
for the Providence Preservation Society  
August 1961.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character:** This an example of the less common brick houses on College Hill, and the earliest one standing on this part of Benefit Street. It has interesting detail and ornament.
2. **Condition of fabric:** Good.

### B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. **Overall dimensions:** The house has a brick main block facing east, five bays wide (about 36'), 2-1/2 stories high, on a hillside with the cellar at ground level at the west rear, and a two-story wooden rear wing.
2. **Foundations:** Cut brownstone in front, random field-stone on sides and rear.
3. **Wall construction:** Red brick, lime mortar, common bond, 2" x 7" brick, thin mortar joints.
4. **Porches:** Two-story entrance frontispiece with marble step. Second story bay window, and roof balustrade, not original, added perhaps about 1900. One-story wooden porch on south end of house leading to side entrance, lattice work supports, date unknown.
5. **Chimneys:** Brick: two on north side in end wall, one on south side in end wall, one in rear wing.
6. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** The main entrance is on the east; side entrance on south; cellar entrances on the west.
  - b. **Windows and shutters:** Front windows with cut stone lintels, side windows with gauged brick flat arches.

Movable slat shutters on front windows. Sash not original.

**7. Roof:**

- a. Shape and covering: Gable roof. Asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice: Boxed cornice with cyma recta crown mold, and bed mold with hollow cylindrical dentils.

**C. Technical Description of Interior**

1. Floor plans: Central hall plan, two rooms deep, somewhat altered with the two parlors on the north side joined by a wide archway. Secondary stair hall at the south entrance; kitchen in rear wing.
2. Stairways: Main stairway in the central-entrance hall: open well, open string, L-shaped with short leg and winders at the top; ornamental step ends; Simple-molded rail, turned newels, slender square balusters. Secondary stair in side hall: closed string, straight run with winders at the bottom.
3. Flooring: Later hardwood flooring throughout except central hall and dining room beyond the entrance hall which have black and white asphalt tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doors: Interior doors apparently not original, plain door frames with simple molded trim.
6. Trim: Wood cornices and chair rails in several rooms. Elaborate Adam style plaster ceilings in main rooms on both first and second floor, plaster cornice on first floor.
7. Hardware: No original hardware observed.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Modern system with radiators plus four fireplaces on first floor, three on second. Two Adam style mantels in north parlor, later round-headed marble mantel in the south parlor (study).

**D. Site**

1. **General setting and orientation:** Faces east on the sidewalk in a residential area with a small rear yard.
2. **Enclosures:** Wood fence around back garden.
3. **Walks:** Concrete in front, flagstones to the side door.
4. **Landscaping:** Informal back garden.

Prepared by **Osmond R. Overby, Architect**  
**National Park Service**  
and **Antoinette F. Downing**  
**for the Providence Preservation**  
**Society**  
**August 1961.**