

25 Benefit
F6

ON STREET
ABOUT THE HOUSES OF BENEFIT SQUARE
NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE BENEFIT STREET
CHAPEL OF THE MINISTRY-AT-LARGE (1843)
OWNER: Mrs. Malcolm G. Chace, Jr.
Unoccupied
Not Open
FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS BY:

The history of the early Victorian steep gable-roofed structure at 25 Benefit Street belongs to the story of mid-nineteenth century Unitarian Missionary work. Built on lot #4 of the part of the Thomas Lloyd Halsey estate set off to Sarah Halsey in 1841, the year Halsey Street was "opened and laid out", *it* was standing by 1843. A fire policy taken out in that year described it as a wooden building with a high peaked roof 30' X 70' long, 20 feet of which was finished as a two-story room. The entire building was used for a "House for Worship as a Free Chapel with offices and a schoolroom."

This Free Chapel and Schoolroom was the outgrowth of a mission called The-Ministry-At-Large, first organized in 1841 and maintained by the two Unitarian Societies, (the First Church at the corner of Benefit and Benevolent Streets and the Westminster Street Congregational Church) "for the purpose of visiting and relieving the poor of the city who are not connected with a Society, and giving them also stated religious instruction." The first Minister-At-Large, the Reverend Henry Harrington, served only briefly before meetings were ~~dis-~~
~~rupted,~~ *disrupted*, but a common school was kept regularly, two evenings a week for children who worked in factories.

In 1854, ^{when} Sarah Halsey sold the ground lot itself, the "Free Chapel of the Ministry-At-Large" and the School were under the care of the Reverend Edwin Stone, Pastor of the First Church on Benefit Street.

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A Third Unitarian Church, known as the Olney Street Congregational Church, ^{was} as an outgrowth of this Free Chapel, ~~was~~ ^{and} organized in 1878. In the meantime, in 1871, the trustees had sold the Chapel building to Simon Simmons and in 1882, when Simmons sold it to Henry J. Steere, it was serving as a dwelling house. It was acquired by Burnside Corporation in 1963 for restoration as part of Benefit Square.

The Victorian hooded and bracketed doorways, bays and dormer windows are later in character than the simple cornice and corner trim. They probably date from about 1871, when Simmons bought the Chapel and converted it into a double house.

Built 843--
altered 1871

PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Records of

Plat 9
Lot 169

#11/11/18

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#27 BENEFIT STREET....Wood

- 1841 In the partition of the Estate of Thomas L Halsey, lots #4, 21, 24, 22, 29, 32, 33 as shown in "Map of Halsey Street and adjacent lands" Platted by M B Lockwood in 1840...Plat Card...DB 81.107 (see map) ~~lots #4/21/22~~ were set off to Sarah Halsey.
- 1841 Halsey Street was opened and laid out...DB 81.90
- 1843 POLICY RECORD: Charles Tillinghast et al...a House of Worship at the corner of Benefit and Halsey Streets...wood..36' x 70'..13' posts with a high-peaked roof 20' of the length finished with 2 stories and used for a House of Worship as a Free Chapel with offices and a School Room..it stands ~~on~~ LEASED LAND...Pr 53.23114
- 1854 Sarah Halsey sells for \$3250 to Isaac Brown and Seth Padelford 1 lot of land on the E/ly side of Benefit Street, being the same and on which is the Chapel of the Ministry-at-Large under the care of Reverend Edwin M Stone and being lot #4 on the Plat of Land formerly belonging to Thomas L Halsey (Plat Book 2 page 5)..bounded W by Benefit Street 50'; N by Halsey Street 102½'; E by George S Hopkins 50'; S by formerly T L Halsey ...DB 138.375
- 1854 Isaac Brown for \$1625 sells to Stephen K Rathbone his 1 undivided ½ part of the above property...DB 138.377
- 1857 Seth Padelford, through his attorney Richard E Hamlin, and Stephen K Rathbone quit claims to the Trustees of the Benefit Street Ministry at Large in the City of Providence a certain lot of land with all buildings and improvements thereon standing at the corner of Halsey and Benefit Streets, being on the Lot on which the Free Chapel of the Ministry at Large, under the care of the Reverend Edwin M Stone, stands, being the same lot conveyed to the grantors in 1854 (138.375) 1 undivided ½ of which lot was conveyed by Isaac Brown to Stephen K Rathbone in 1854 (138.377)..DB 145.502
- 1871 Trustees of the Benefit Street Ministry at Large sell the above property to Simon Simmons bounded: W by Benefit Street 50'; N by Halsey Street 102.5 E by Allen Greene 50'; S by Allen Green 102.5'(subject to building restrictions in placing any buildings 8' from Halsey Street) and being the same conveyed to S Padelford and S Rathbone in 1857...DB 186.427
- 1882 Simon W Simmons sells to Henry J Steere 1 certain lot of land with a DWELLING HOUSE ~~BEING THE SAME CONVEYED TO THE GRANTOR FROM W~~ being the same conveyed to the grantor from William W Simmons and now conveyed subject to a mortgage (same bounds as 186.427) and subject to agreement in placing of buildings...DB 316.88

more....

*pull in
chapel*

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#27 BENEFIT STREET....continued

1889 WILL: Henry J Steere..."...I give and devise unto said Emily L Arnold my aforesaid housekeeper, my estate situated at the corner of Benefit and Halsey Streets in said Providence to be and remain unto her heirs and assigns forever....Wills 33.136

her

This property changed ownership 13 times....

1963 Hans R Hagman et ux sell to Beatrice O Chace that lot of land with all buildings and improvements thereon standing, being Lot #4 on the "Map of Halsey Street and Adjacent Land" owned by the late T L Halsey. See Map... Bounded W by Benefit Street 50'; N by Halsey Street 102.5; E by Burnside Incorporated 50'; S by Burnside Inc 102'...DB 1120.344

From Providence Directory 1844

Ministry-at-Large.

Under this name, an Association was formed in December, 1841, by members of the two *Unitarian Societies* in Providence, for the purpose of visiting and relieving the Poor of the city who are not connected with any Society, and giving them also stated religious instruction. Ample sums were at once subscribed, and in January, 1842, Rev. HENRY F. HARRINGTON was ordained, in the First Congregational church, a minister-at-large. He immediately gathered a small congregation for regular service on the Sabbath, in a room procured for a Chapel in the north part of the city. By the political agitations of the following year, this congregation was dispersed and has never been revived to the same extent. But a Sunday School has been in successful operation at the Canal Market building, from the beginning, and is open to all who wish to attend. During the last winter a common school has also been kept two evenings in the week, for those children who work in Factories, or in other ways are prevented from getting any instruction. This School has been well attended, and under the tuition of the minister-at-large, aided by several devoted friends, has apparently done good. A weekly meeting for Temperance has likewise been held in the Chapel, and its effects been visible in the whole ward. As Mr.

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Harrington is now about to leave the city, being called to a different sphere of labor, some change may be made in the mode of the ministry, but it is designed to continue it as soon as a suitable minister can be procured.

The members of the First Congregational church have also engaged a Preacher to visit other parts of Rhode-Island a portion of the year, as a State-missionary.

1971 Sold to
 Major John Nonemaker ← Bid Withdrawn
 42 Wisteria Drive
 Coventry, R. I.

M A Gowdey
May 1965