

HAB

PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Plat 16
Lot 295

Records of
#389 BENEFIT STREET.....Brick

Built by Tully Bowen c.1853

In 1823 Lydia Clarke, widow of John Innes Clarke, sold this property to William Almy, who was a son-in-law of Moses Brown. This was part of the transaction of \$16,000 which included the sale of the Mansion House, and was referred to as the South Garden Lot. 47.8'

1823 Lydia Clarke to William Almy...."also a lot called the South Garden bounded; N/ly by John Street; E/ly by Oliver Kane and Christopher Arnold; S on land of said Arnold and Arnold Street; W/ly on Benefit Street. 47.8'

1851 Samuel Tobey, physician and surgeon, sells for the heirs of Anna Almy Jenkins this property to Tully Bowen for \$8,000. (Anna Almy Jenkins was the daughter and devisee of William and Sarah Brown Almy) see ~~****~~ 123.193


1854 Tully Bowen lived here until 1865. PD

1891 Property was sold at auction to Marie L. B. Lippitt, wf of Henry F. 366.359

1911 Henry F. Lippitt is willed this property for life.

1934 Property is taxed to Henry and John B. Lippitt, Mary L. Sinnickson, and Frances L. Gage. 837.159

1941 Dora R. and Marion A. Clifford buy property. 837.160

1958 Traced to  Five Arnold Corp.

~~****~~ Bounded W/ly by Benefit Street 105 1/2'; S by Arnold Street 97'; E by Amherst Everett 80 1/2'; also E by Mary Pierce 73 3/4'; N by John Street 143.10.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-167

TULLY BOWEN HOUSE

ADDRESS: 189 Benefit Street, Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island
Flat 16, Lot 295.

Present Owner: Lee Kaplan (Five Arnold Corporation), Seaview Avenue, Bigwood, Rhode Island

Present Occupant: Various renters

Present Use: Apartment house

Brief Statement of Significance: This is a large stone mansion, built in 1853, designed by Thomas Telft.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

In 1823 Lydia Clarke, widow of John Emes Clarke, sold this property to William Almy, who was a son-in-law of Moses Brown. This was part of the transaction of \$16,000 which included the sale of the Mansion House, and was referred to as the South Garden Lot.—Deed Book 47, page 81, in Providence City Hall.

1823 Lydia Clarke to William Almy—"also a lot called the South Garden bounded; N/ly by John Street; E/ly by Oliver Kane and Christopher Arnold; S on land of said Arnold and Arnold Street; W/ly on Benefit Street—Deed Book 47, page 81, in Providence City Hall.

1851 Samuel Tobey, physician and surgeon, sells for the heirs of Anna Almy Jenkins this property to Tully Bowen for \$8,000. (Anna Almy Jenkins was the daughter of and devisee of William and Sarah Brown Almy) see—Deed Book 123, page 193, in Providence City Hall. Bounded W/ly by Benefit Street 105 1/2'; S by Arnold Street 97'; E by Anharst Everett 80 1/2'; also E by Mary Pierce 73 1/4'; N by John Street—Deed Book 143, page 10, in Providence City Hall.

1854 Tully Bowen lived here until 1865—Providence Directory.

- 1891 Property was sold at auction to Marie L. B. Lippitt, wife of Henry F.--Deed Book 366, page 359, in Providence City Hall.
- 1921 Henry F. Lippitt is willed this property for life.
- 1934 Property is taxed to Henry and John B. Lippitt, Mary L. Simickson, and Frances L. Gage.--Deed Book 837, page 199, in Providence City Hall.
- 1941 Sara R. and Marion A. Gifford buy property.-- Deed Book 837, page 160, in Providence City Hall.
- 1958 Taxed to--Five Arnold Corporation.

2. Date of Erection: 1853
3. Architect: Thomas Tefft
4. Notes on alterations and additions: The building was made over into twelve apartments plus three apartments in the original carriage house in 1941.
5. Important old views: An original elevation drawing is reproduced in the Bulletin, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Volume XVIII, Number 2 (November 1940).
6. Sources of information: Anita F. Glass, Early Victorian Domestic Architecture on College Hill (unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Art, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 1960), pp 47-49, figs. 21, 22. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr. Rhode Island Architecture (Providence: Rhode Island Museum Press, 1939), p. 50, plate 56. Bulletin, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Volume XVIII, Number 2 (November 1940).

Prepared by Antoinette F. Deening and Elvira Gowley
for the Providence Preservation Society
August 1961.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large three-story, stone mansion, built in 1853. It is one of the few large surviving works of the Providence architect Thomas Tefft, and it preserves interesting features both on the exterior and the interior and south apartment ^{on 1st floor} most unchanged. Many others changed greatly.

2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Main front block of the house, facing west, is about 90' square, divided into three bays on the front and both sides, and three stories high. Rear wing, about 45' long, two stories high.
2. Foundations: Regular coursed ashlar--brownstone.
3. Wall construction: Regular ashlar brownstone with smooth narrow joints, rusticated quoins, and belt course between first and second floors. Rear wing of brick with stone quoins.
4. Chimneys: Single stone chimneys on north and south sides in the outside walls of the main block, and two on east, rear. A similar chimney on the west front appears to be made of wood.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Rear door on north side of wing; six panel wood door with top light in segmental-headed opening trimmed with unrelieved stone. Main entrance in center of west front; wood door with top third lighted, and with one elaborate panel below; side lights and semicircular fanlight; stone frontispiece with flat Doric pilasters and full entablature with modillion cornice.
 - b. Windows: Double hung windows, six light over six light sash on first and second stories, three over three light on third story. Projecting stone window frames with pediments on first floor; cornices on second floor except with a pediment over the entrance, and molded architraves with segmental heads on third. Simpler stone frames on brick wing with either flat or segmental heads.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hip roofs covered with shingles.
 - b. Cornice: Heavy modillion cornice, apparently made of stone.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central hall plan, two rooms deep
2. Stairways: Central hall layout original; tile floor, paneled wainscot, plaster walls, plaster cornice, inside doorway repeating sides to fanlights of main door. Open wall, U-shaped, open string stair with decorated step ends; molded handrail, heavy turned balusters and newel. Basement stair paneled in dark, natural wood in small panels, similar panels used but extensively altered in some basement rooms.
3. Flooring: Modern hardwood
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster--walls divided in panels by plaster moldings, plaster ceiling cornice.
5. Doorways and doors: Tall six panel doors with segmental tops. Dog-eared doorways with double molded architraves.
6. Hardware: Original silver-plated hardware in front rooms--brass in other places--some in rear replaced; brass hardware on front door apparently not original.
7. Heating: Central with radiators; three original marble mantels with segmental or circular heads.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: House faces west on a southeast corner lot with lawn, shrubs, and trees around all sides.
2. Enclosures: Cut stone wall at west front and part of north sides, wood fence elsewhere.
3. Outbuildings: Carriage house at southeast of house extensively altered as three apartments.

Prepared by Oswald R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service - August 1961

"EARLY VICTORIAN DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE ON COLLEGE HILL"

By

Anita F. Glass

The Tully Bowen house derives from Barry's palazzo style, not only in its symmetry, but also in the correctness of the classical detail. The centrality of the doorway is chastely emphasized by a simple portico and Doric pilasters. The importance of the first floor windows is shown by their pedimented cornices, while the second story windows are capped by shelf-like elements. The entrance is further emphasized by the pediment over the middle window on the second floor. The third floor openings are unornamented square voids which reiterate the basic shape of the house. As in Barry's structures, the strong corner quoins define the shape and accentuate its cube-like unity. Of all of Tefft's houses, the Tully Bowen mansion seems closest to the Greek Revival in feeling. This is not only because of its blocky proportions, but also because its smooth brownstone surface produces an abstract quality against which the decorative elements cast broad areas of light and shadow. The windows are like voids cut into the planar surface. The abstract quality is reinforced by the setting. Tefft placed the house above and away from the street, separating it from its surroundings by a chastely designed brownstone fence. Although reminiscent of the Greek Revival and Barry's Renaissance style, the domestic scale of the Tully Bowen house shows its colonial American heritage.

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Tully Bowen House
389 Benefit St
1853