

PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

RECORDS OF

PLAT 12
LOT 413#35 CHARLESFIELD STREET...Wood

BUILT 1827 BY SOLOMON TOWNSEND

- 1823 MARTHA HOWELL AND ISAAC BROWN, EXECUTORS U/W OF WAIT SMITH DECEASED, SELL FOR \$400 TO GIDEON HATCH A CERTAIN LOT OF LAND BOUNDED: S BY CHARLES FIELD STREET 50'; E BY WAIT SMITH 92'; N BY SOLOMON TOWNSEND 50'; W BY MOSES EDDY 92'....DB 45.350
- 1826 GIDEON HATCH SELLS FOR #475 TO JAMES RILEY A CERTAIN LOT OF LAND, "BEING THE SAME CONVEYED TO ME IN 1823 BY M HOWELL AND ISAAC BROWN..DB52.364
- 1827 JAMES RILEY SELLS FOR \$600 TO SOLOMON TOWNSEND A CERTAIN LOT OF LAND BOUNDED: S BY CHARLES FIELD STREET 50'; E BY ROBERT PURKIS 92'; N BY SOLOMON TOWNSEND 50'; W BY HEIRS OF MOSES EDDY...DB 53.187
- * 1827 1830
⊕ 1858 WILL..SOLOMON TOWNSEND: "I GIVE AND DEVISE TO TO MY WIFE 'AMELIA S TOWNSEND ...ALSO THE HOUSE AT #35 CHARLES FIELD STREET, PROVIDENCE, THE LOT ON WHICH IT STANDS AND ALL BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS THEREON. AFTER THE DECEASE OF MY WIFE, I GIVE AND DEVISE THE HOUSE AT #35 CHARLES FIELD STREET TO MY DAUGHTER AMELIA SANFORD PORTER..WILLS BOOK 18 PAGE 374
- 1866 Geo. S. Dow said makes at #35
- 1871 CHARLES AND AMELIA PORTER, HIS WIFE, ET AL SELL THE ABOVE PROPERTY TO GEORGE DOW, BEING THE SAME CONVEYED TO JAMES RILEY TO SOLOMON TOWNSEND BY DEED (53.187) AND DEVISED BY WILL OF SAID S TOWNSEND TO AMELIA S PORTER...DB 196.258
- 1878 GEORGE S DOW, SELLS AT PUBLIC AUCTION THE ABOVE PROPERTY FOR \$11,700 TO ALBERT G DURFEE, THE HIGHEST BIDDER...DB 297.349
- 1882 ALBERT G DURFEE SELLS FOR \$11,700 TO JAMES C GOFF A CERTAIN LOT OF LAND WITH ALL BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS BEING THE SAME CONVEYED TO GEORGE S DOW BY CHAS POTTER AND WIFE ET AL, AND THE SAME PURCHASED BY ME AT AUCTION IN 1878. BOUNDED: S BY CHARLES FIELD STREET 50'; E BY ROBERT PURKIS 92'; N BY S TOWNSEND 50'; W BY HEIRS OF MOSES EDDY...DB 316.215
- 1902 PROPERTY WAS TAXED TO GEORGE W HALL EST.
- 1908 PROPERTY TAXED TO HELEN S ALLEN
- 1941 PROPERTY TAXED TO CONSTANCE W READ

* 1827 Hiram Hill workman

⊕ 1830 - POLICY RECORD - Solomon Townsend - N side - wood - studding filled with brick - floors & roof in mortar - 39'x36' - All 2 stories high, Balustrade on roof - Occ. for a D.H.

1978 Bought by Doreen Mauran

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-221

SOLOMON TOWNSEND HOUSE

Address: 35 Charles Field Street, Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island. - Flat 12, Lot 413.

Present Owner and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Frederick B. Read.

Present Use: Dwelling.

Brief Statement of Significance: This is an example of a medium-sized house built in the late 1820's.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1823 Martha Howell and Isaac Brown, executors w/v of Wait Smith deceased, sell for \$400 to Gideon Hatch a certain lot of land bounded: S by Charles Field Street 50'; E by Wait Smith 92'; N by Solomon Townsend 50'; W by Moses Eddy 92'; Deed Book 45, page 350, in Providence City Hall.
- 1826 Gideon Hatch sells for \$475 to James Riley a certain lot of land, "being the same conveyed to me in 1823 by M Howell and Isaac Brown...Deed Book 52, page 364, in Providence City Hall.
- 1827 James Riley sells for \$600 to Solomon Townsend a certain lot of land bounded: S by Charles Field Street 50'; E by Robert Purkis 92'; N by Solomon Townsend 50'; W by heirs of Moses Eddy...Deed Book 53, page 187, in Providence City Hall.
- 1858 WILL..Solomon Townsend: "I give and devise to my wife Amalia S Townsend..also the house at #35 Charles Field Street, Providence, the lot on which it stands and all buildings and improvements thereon. After the decease of my wife, I give and devise the house at #35 Charles Field Street to my daughter Amalia Sanford Porter...Wills Book 18, page 374, in Providence City Hall.
- 1871 Charles and Amalia Porter, his wife, et al sell the above property to George Dow, being the same conveyed to James Riley to Solomon Townsend by

1877 (Deed Book 53, page 187) and devised by Will of said E Townsend to Amelia S Porter...Deed Book 126, page 236, in Providence City Hall.

1878 George S Dow, sells at public auction the above property for \$11,700 to Albert G. Durfee, the highest bidder...Deed Book 297, page 349, in Providence City Hall.

1882 Albert S Durfee sells for \$11,700 to James C Goff a certain lot of land with all buildings and improvements being the same conveyed to George S Dow by Chas Potter and wife et al, and the same purchased by me at auction in 1878. Bounded: S by Charles Smith Street 50'; E by Robert Purkis 92'; N by S Townsend 50'; W by heirs of Moses Eddy...Deed Book 126, page 236, in Providence City Hall.

1892 Property was taxed to George W Hall Est.

1908 Property taxed to Robert S Allen

1941 Property taxed to Charlotte W Reed

2. Date of acquisition: 1882-1939 (see Supplemental Information below on property valuations and records of ownership)

B. Supplemental Material: The following material regarding the history of the house is in the possession of the present owner, and kept in the house:

1. A letter from William G. Roelker of the Rhode Island Historical Society to Mrs. Frederick B. Reed, June 23, 1947. In discussing the sale of the house, the letter lists the following property valuations for this address: 1882 - \$2,700; 1887 - \$9,000; 1890 - \$9000; 1891 - \$10,900.

2. An unidentified typewritten statement the property valuations for the house as follows: 1882 - \$14,500; 1893-1894 - \$15,000; 1895-1896 - \$17,000; 1897-1898 - \$18,000; 1899 - \$17,000; 1901 - \$15,400; 1903-1905 - \$20,000; 1906-1907 - \$20,700; 1908-1909 - \$21,500.

3. The following information is from papers of Philip Allen, a former owner of the house: Charles Field Reed was born in 1806. According to Providence Messenger: Rev. James Hill, minister of the First Congregational Church, 1806 at this address at least by 1830 and remained here until 1865; before him, William H. Townsend, son of the owner of the property Solomon Townsend, lived at this address from 1830 to 1835. An article on William H. Townsend appeared

in the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, vol. R.I.H.S., no. 9 (July, 1938), pp. 65-67. The plan is probably contemporary with the house. A drawing and a letter dated October 2, 1925 from George Frederick Hall, Architect, to Philip Allen concerns pending to be added to an unidentified chamber in the house, probably one of the two front bedrooms.

Prepared by **Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Govey** for the Providence Preservation Society and **Samuel R. Govey, Architect**

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a medium-sized, frame house, built 1895-1898, with typical detail and trim for the period in a late Federal style, not yet showing Greek Revival influences.

2. Condition: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Rectangular main block, about 40' (five bays) x 36', two-and-a-half stories, facing south, plus small one-story rear wing.

2. Foundations: Stone, regular ashlar on sides and rear, regular coursed ashlar in front.

3. Wall construction: Chert blocks, three-and-a-half inch exposure of bottom courses slightly wider toward the top. Front corner quoins. Exterior walls about 8" thick, inner core filled with brick.

4. Steps: Granite entrance stoop with double flight of steps. Four steps one side, five other side, original stone. Rear wall slightly more elaborate than similar walls in Providence.

5. Chimneys: Four brick chimneys in outside walls.

6. Openings:

a. Doors and Windows: Eight-panel entrance door, six panels, Ionic surroundings with four fluted columns and entablature surrounding door and side lights. Rear door from rear wing.

- b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows, double molded architraves on window frames. 10" x 15" glass. No shutters.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, shingled
- b. Cornice: Deeply projecting molded cornice, elaborate bed mold with beading and pendants.
- c. Eaves: Wide shed-roofed eaves on front and rear, with small horizontal windows treated like typical Providence mansions on contemporary hip roofs, with lattice work balustrade.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor Plan: Central hall. Four-room plan with kitchen extending into rear wing. Slightly modified with modern lavatory at rear of central hall, bathrooms added on second floor reducing the size of the two rear bedrooms. Central hall 7'-6" wide, first floor ceilings 10'-6" high.
2. Flooring: Wide floor boards.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster
4. Doors and doorways: Six-panel doors, flat sunk panels. Various types of deeply molded pilaster trim with either bull's eye or curved corner blocks. Double doorway between parlors on east side of house.
5. Trim: Large, deeply molded, ceiling cornices. Window trim matches doors. Underwindow panels match doors.
6. Hardware: Butt hinges, brass knobs on mortise locks.
7. Lighting: Electric
8. Heating: Modern central heat. Four fireplaces on each floor - cooking fireplaces in kitchen. Three black-marble mantels on first floor, two with simple Ionic pilasters, wood mantels in bedrooms on second floor with high paneled entablatures, deeply projecting shelves with complex moldings, some with colonettes.

D. Site - The site is a small lot in a residential and university area, with a house on the south front, a driveway on the west, and a small service yard in the north rear.

1. General Setting: Small lot in residential and university area, house on sidewalk line at south front, driveway on west, adjoining property on east, small service yard in north rear.

2. Enclosures: High brick walls of adjoining University property on west fence.

3. Outbuildings: Early barn at rear of property, remodeled as a garage.

4. Walks, Driveways: Flagstone sidewalk in front, asphalt driveway.

Prepared by Oswald E. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
April 1962.

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