

**PPS RECORDS FOR
142 TRANSIT STREET
(Formerly 112 Transit Street, until 1895)**

PLAT 16, LOT 363

**JABEZ ROUNDS HOUSE
Built ca. 1810**

DESCRIPTION:

A Federal style, 2-1/2 story dwelling set very close to the front property line with gable roof, clapboard siding, and a 4-bay façade with wood 6/6 windows and off-center entrance; the doorway has slim pilasters at the sides and an entablature above. A 1-story, gable roofed, cement block 2-car garage stands at the rear northeast corner of the lot (built between 1919-1926).

The house stands on a 3,990 sq.ft. lot on the north side of Transit Street between Thayer and Brook Streets. The lot has about 47 feet of frontage and measures about 84 feet deep.

HISTORY:

Jabez Rounds, a mason, bought a lot of land from Job Carpenter in 1810, and apparently built this house shortly thereafter. Jabez Rounds died in 1844, but his heirs continued to own the property at least through 1875, although apparently they did not live here after Jabez's death. By 1889 the property had been sold to Thomas and Bridget Gavin, who retained ownership at least through 1908. Since then, the house has changed hands at least seven times. The current owner, Judy Ann Vilmain, bought the house in 2000.

Although the house's Federal style does suggest an early 19th century construction date, scant records were found to confirm it. Since the property stayed in the same family for more than 65 years, it is reasonable to assume that Jabez Rounds built this house soon after he bought the lot in 1810, but the exact year of construction could not be determined. Building permits were not required or issued in the early 19th century. Whether or not Jabez Rounds lived here is unknown; the first city directory was published in 1850, six years after Rounds died. Tax records as early as 1827 indicate that Jabez Rounds owned real estate in Providence, but the location of that real estate is not confirmed until the 1854 tax records, by which time Jabez Rounds' heirs owned this property. The earliest atlas depicting this house was published in 1857.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT¹:

The Fox Point neighborhood was part of the original settlement of Providence in 1636, and in the 17th and early 18th centuries the land now occupied by Transit Street was part of the Tillinghast family's property. In 1754, after William Tillinghast's death, a new "Road to India Point" (now Transit Street) was laid out between what was then called New Street or Back Street (now Benefit Street) and the Ferry Road to India Bridge (now Hope Street).² Most roads in the neighborhood were named after adjacent property owners, but this one was named for an astronomical event, the "transit" of the planet Venus, which occurred in 1769 and resulted in an observatory being built on this street (later demolished).

"Transit Lane" began to see new construction of houses in the mid-late 18th century, but those houses did not have numbered street addresses until well into the 19th century. Between 1832 and 1846, street addresses with even numbers could be found on the north side of the street, and odd numbers on the south side. In 1847 this system was reversed, with odd numbers located on the north side of the street and even numbers on the south side. In 1872 the street was renumbered again, with even numbers back on the north side of the street and odd numbers on the south side. In 1895 the street was renumbered one last time, but the odd numbers remained on the south side of the street.

DESIGNATIONS

142 Transit Street is a contributing building within the College Hill National Landmark Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places; the inventory lists the property as the Jabez Rounds House, 1810.

The house is also located within the College Hill local historic district zone designated by the City of Providence.

RECORDS (*All Records were found in Providence City Hall unless otherwise noted*).

Maps and Atlases (All in Archives unless otherwise noted)

1798: "A Map of Owners of Lots in Providence," compiled by Henry B. Chace in 1912: Plate I shows the Road to India Point (now Transit Street), laid out between Benefit Street and the Ferry Road to India Bridge (now Hope Street). Thayer Street (which did

¹ Sources: Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources, by Edward F. Sanderson and William McKenzie Woodward, published by the RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 1986; research by former City Archivist Carol Pace (records at RI Historical Society); and PPS records for 109 and 123 Transit Street.

² Contemporary property deeds refer to a "Plat of a Highway through Land Formerly of William Tillinghast and Others" and identify specific numbered lots on that plat. No map of this plat was found at Providence City Hall.

not exist in 1798) is only shown as a paper street laid out from Power Street to John Street; it does not yet reach all the way south to Transit Street. Arnold Street (which did not exist until 1800) is also shown as a paper street. James Arnold owned a large parcel of land south of Arnold Street, whose southern boundary is now the north side of Transit Street; the future site of 142 Transit lay within this parcel. No buildings are shown on this map.

1809: "John I. Clarke Plat," surveyed and platted by Daniel Anthony on June 18, 1809, recorded in Deed Book 33, Page 50 on August 18, 1809, copied on plat card 391. This map (which is not titled on the map itself, but is indexed under the name John I. Clarke Plat), shows 17 lots on Transit Street, numbered 1 through 17 from left to right. No cross streets or directional arrows are shown to indicate where on Transit Street these lots are located, but later records confirmed that Lot #5 on this map is the future site of 142 Transit. Lot #5 measures 47 feet wide by 86 feet deep on this map. (*Registry of Deeds*)

1857: "Map of Providence," by H.F. Walling shows the block bounded by Transit, Thayer, Brook, and Arnold Streets. On the north side of Transit Street, the house at 142 Transit is depicted standing on the third lot west of Brook Street; no street number, owner name, or lot size is indicated.

1875: "Atlas of the City of Providence," by G.M. Hopkins Co., Vol. 1 (Wards 1, 2, and 3), Plate Q shows the block bounded by Transit, Thayer, Brook and Arnold Streets. On the north side of Transit Street, the third lot west of Brook Street is numbered #5, contains 3,990 s.f., and has a house standing on it, owned by the J. Rounds Heirs. This house is identified as 112 Transit (the previous address of 142 Transit). Most of the block is built out by this time.

1882: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 1, shows the block bounded by Transit, Thayer, Brook and Arnold Streets. On the north side of Transit Street, the third lot west of Brook Street is numbered #5 and has a house standing on it. No street address, lot size, or owner name is indicated.

1895: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by Everts & Richards, Plate 7 (pages 36-37), shows 142 Transit Street on a 3,990 s.f. lot. No owner's name is indicated.

1902: Assessors Plat Maps, Plat 16 shows Lot 363 as 142 Transit Street, measuring 47 feet wide by 84-88 feet deep (3,990 s.f.). This map does not show any buildings or indicate owner names.

1908: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by L.J. Richards Co., Plate 8: shows 142 Transit Street standing on a 3,990 s.f. lot owned by Bridget Gavin.

1918: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 18: shows 142 Transit Street standing on a 3,990 s.f. lot owned by W. Parvoo. The map refers to the J.I. Clarke Plat (no plat card number is indicated).

1926: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 18: shows 142 Transit Street (with a large outbuilding behind and northeast of the house) on a 3,990 s.f. lot owned by W. Parvoo. The map refers to the J.I. Clarke Plat on plat card 391.

1937: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 18: shows 142 Transit Street (with a large outbuilding behind and northeast of the house) on a 3,990 s.f. lot owned by G.R. Pavao et ux. The map refers to the J.I. Clarke Plat on plat card 391.

Deeds (Registry of Deeds)

Deed Book 34, Page 156: On May 16, 1810, Job Carpenter of Providence sold to Jabez Rounds of Providence, a mason, for \$135, a lot of land on the north side of Transit Street, measuring 47 feet wide by 80 feet deep, being Lot #5 on the plat made by Daniel Anthony on July 18, 1809 and recorded in Deed Book 33, Page 50. Being the same lot the grantor bought of Oliver Kane and Ephraim Bowen, Jr. executors of the last will of John I. Clarke, deceased (reference to Deed Book 33, Page 68).

This deed mentions no buildings on the property, but presumably the house was constructed shortly after the land was purchased, thus the date ca. 1810.

Intent to Build Records (Archives)

These records are not available for 1810.

Tax Records (Archives)

Tax records are available from 1827 to the present. Prior to 1854, tax records were published in a book listing the property owner alphabetically by name, the total assessment for any real and personal property (without specifying where real estate was located), and the total tax due. Beginning in 1854, the city kept ledgers (organized by property owner name) indicating the plat and lot number of any real estate and the assessed value and taxes therefor.

Tax Book of 1827 (first available): Jabez Rounds was taxed for real estate he owned in Providence, but the specific location of that real estate is not identified.

Tax Ledger A2, Page 270: As of August 1, 1854, the Jabez Rounds Heirs owned Plat 16, Lot 363 (3,990 s.f.); the property was assessed at \$997 for land and \$1,000 for buildings.

Directories (Archives)

Providence City Directories, first published in 1850, contain a street directory, noting all existing streets, and a residents' directory organized alphabetically by last name.

1850: No one named Rounds lived on Transit Street.

Other Records (Archives)

Providence Index of Births, Marriages, and Deaths: Jabez Rounds died April 30, 1844, age 62.

Assessor's Chain of Title Cards (Assessor's Office)

AP 16, LOT 363: TRANSIT STREET

Thomas Gavin and wife Bridget owned the property as of November 1, 1889.

Bridget Gavin owned the property as of December 1, 1892.

Margaret Greenwood owned the property as of November 1, 1909.

William Parvoo and wife Annie owned the property as of November 1, 1911.

Guilherme Rego Pavao and wife Conceicao owned the property as of November 1930.

Conceicao Pavao, widow of Guilherme R. Pavao, owned the property as of May 1939.

Conceicao Pavao, widow of Guilherme R. Pavao, owned the property for life as of January 1942.

Joseph Pavao, trustee, owned the property as of May 1948.

Joseph Pavao and wife Phyllis V. Pavao owned the property as of August 1953.

Margaret Neild, probate #85305, owned the property as of August 25, 1992.

Theodore S. Scripsack and Rayna M. Daley owned the property as of December 1997 (ref Deed Book 3522/Page 334).

Edgar L. Laguinia owned the property as of August 25, 1999 (ref DB 4165/308).

Judy Ann Vilmain owned the property as of September 3, 2000 (ref DB 4460/222).

Current owner: Judy Ann Vilmain

*Research compiled by Kathryn J. Cavanaugh
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