

Dodge-Brown House  
Providence, Rhode Island

HABS No. 3-7

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
13-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. 3

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Harold H. Davis, District Officer  
29 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Conn.

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
13-

DODGE-BROWN HOUSE  
10 Thomas Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

Owner: Providence Art Club.

Date of Erection: 1786.

Architect: No record.

Builder: No record.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: Two storey (raised one storey).

Materials of Construction: Wood.

Other Existing Records: See text.

Additional Data: See following pages.

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The house was built between 1786 and 1789 by Seril Dodge on property leased from Moses Brown. In 1789 the property was bought by Nicholas Brown, with the Dodge house thereon, and occupied by him, his wife Avis and their daughter Hope. It is said that John Brown stayed here while building his house at Power Street. In 1791 the property was owned by the guardian of Hope Brown who was later married here. Mrs. Avis Brown gave the trees planted in the First Baptist Church yard opposite and contributed funds for maintenance of the grounds.

In 1798 the building appears as follows in the Providence Tax list at the Rhode Island Historical Society, in the "A" list No. 1 from "A to O" inclusive, District Downtown:

Occupant: Avis Brown  
Owner: Nicholas Brown heirs  
Bounded: S. on cross street north of Baptist meeting house  
E. on Seril Dodge (now the Art Club main building)

Description: 29 by 36 feet, two stories with a back kitchen 10 x 12, wood  
a chaise house, wood 2 stories  
15 x 19

Windows:	No.	No. Squares	Size Glass
	22	24	7" x 9"
	4	16	"
	2	12	"

Area: 12 perches 81 sq. ft.

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Value: \$1400

In the general index tax list of 1798 volume "D", a brief summary of the above appears under item #106. At that time, the only immediate neighbor was list in volume "A" list uptown "A" to "D" as follows:

Occupant: Nicholas Hoppin and Nehemia Dodge, tenants.

Owner: Seril Dodge

House: 29' x 39' 3 stories brick, addition back 29' x 7' wood 1 story, a barn 15 x 19, lot 29 by 92 feet.

Bounded: S. on cross street  
N. on Nathan Angell  
E. on Edw. Knowles

26 windows 6 perches

This latter building is the one now occupied by the Providence Art Club as their main gallery, etc. and the Seril Dodge-Avis Brown house is used as an annex, connecting on the second floor level.

About 1906, the fireplace mantels were removed from the east and west parlors and installed in the house of Morris K. Washburn, Love Lane, East Greenwich, Rhode Island.

About 1909, the architects Sheldon, Stone, Carpenter and Wilson removed both chimneys and all remaining fireplaces and mantels, except the dining room mantel, raised the building, otherwise intact, one full story, constructing a grocery store at the street level.

At that time, extensive repairs were made; all but two of the original windows were replaced by modern sash and frames, the increased jamb thickness being accommodated by boxing outside around the old jambs, and re-setting the interior trim with a deeper reveal with an added molding to cover the insufficient trim thickness at the return to the plaster. Overflooring was added in the kitchen, dining room, second floor sitting room and bedrooms, except at the northeast. The latter, and the attic are the only floors not extensively patched or renewed. One kitchen window was relocated, a dining room window enlarged and new partitions added at the second floor N.W.

In the minutes of the Board of Managers of the Providence Art Club, November 13, 1919, the plans of Martin and Hall, Architects, and business contracts, with the owner of the Seril Dodge-Avis Brown house (Mrs. Adams, grocer) were approved, authorizing alterations to connect with the additions to the Art Club proper. The minutes of September 16, 1920 report the work complete save for lighting fixtures. This work comprised the second floor arched brick passageway connecting with the former first floor east parlor, and necessitated the removal of two windows, one at the east end of the east parlor and the same on the floor above. At the same time,

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three doorways were added through the party wall.

Sources: Verbal information from Mr. Norman M. Isham  
and Miss Tucker, Secretary of the Providence  
Art Club

Providence Tax List, "A" list, No. 1, 1798,  
"A to O" inclusive, District Downtown.

Compiled by Kenneth Young

Approved: Harold N. Davis

*Revised 1936, H.C.F.*

## SERIL DODGE HOUSE

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13-

Address: 10 Thomas Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island.

An Addendum to  
Dodge-Brown House  
10 Thomas Street  
Providence, Rhode Island  
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Providence Art Club

Present Use: Gallery and club house

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This frame house is a typical example of the  
smaller buildings of the period, with unusually  
fine detail in the stairway and the mantels.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following chain of  
title is extracted from George Leland Miner, Angell's  
Lane, The History of a Little Street in Providence  
(Providence: Akerman-Standard Press, 1948), p. 103:

1786 Moses Brown buys 80' Angell lot.

1789 Seril Dodge buys west half from Moses Brown, on  
which Dodge "has built a dwelling house in which  
he now lives."

1791 Seril Dodge sells to Moses & Nicholas Brown junior  
executors, and guardians of Hope Brown. Hope and  
stepmother Avis move in.

1792 Hope marries Thomas Poynton Ives in Dodge House  
parlor.

1798 Mrs. Avis Brown gets a life interest.

1814 Brown & Ives, owners.

1826 Avis Brown's death: Dodge House reverts to Nicholas  
Junior and Hope Brown Ives.

- 1842 Heirs of Hope Ives to Ann Brown Francis (m. Marshall Woods 1888).
- 1844 Nicholas Brown Junior wills to two granddaughters.
- 1897 Owned by Marshall Woods and wife.
- 1901 John Carter Brown Woods.
- 1906 Providence Terminal Co.
- 1906 N.Y., N.H. & H. R.R. Co.
- 1906 Sidney F. Adams buys and raises house a story.
- 1918 Margaret I. Adams
- 1919 Purchased by Providence Art Club for \$15,000.
2. Date of erection: Between 1786 and 1789.
3. Sources of information: John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), pp. 64,66.

Antoinette Forrester Downing, Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, 1937), pp. 166, 302-304.

HABS Inventory prepared by John Hutchins Cady, June 18, 1956.

George LeLand Miner, Angell's Lane, The History of a Little Street in Providence (Providence: Akerman-Standard Press, 1948).

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Mrs. Avis Brown, widow of the prominent merchant Nicholas Brown, moved into this house in 1791. In a famous wedding in Providence history, her daughter Hope Brown married Thomas Ives in the southwest sitting room of this house in 1792.

Prepared by Natalie Saltonstall  
for the Providence Preservation Society  
and Osmund R. Overby, Architect  
National Park Service  
April 1962.