

Robert S. Burroughs House
110 Benevolent Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-227

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
127-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

ROBERT S. BURROUGHS HOUSE

Address: 110 Benevolent Street, Providence, Providence
County, Rhode Island.
Plat 13, Lot 201.

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RI,
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127-

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop Aldrich.

Present Use: Dwelling.

Brief Statement
of Significance: This is a large, frame house from the early
nineteenth century, now a home of Ambassador
Winthrop W. Aldrich.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

This property is part of the property platted by Daniel Anthony in 1803 and recorded in 1811 for the heirs of Nicholas Cooke being two certain lots of land laid out in House Lots on the North end of the Young Orchard (so-called). - Deed Book 33, page 74, in Providence City Hall. 110 Benevolent Street includes numbers 24, 25, 23, 39, 40, and 41 on the said plat.

1817 Mary Allen, devisee, sells for \$120 to Robert S. Burroughs "a Certain lot of land in the SE part of Providence being lot #41 on the Young Orchard Place (so-called) at the junction of Benevolent (or Olney) Street and Cooke Street... Bounded: S by Benevolent Street 50'; E by Cooke Street 113'. - Deed Book 41, page 29, in Providence City Hall.

1820 Daniel C. Cushing gives power of attorney to Henry Bowen, also dower rights of his wife Susan. - Deed Book 42, page 663, in Providence City Hall.

1821 Henry Bowen sells for \$60 to Robert S Burroughs a certain lot of land being lot #40 on the Young Orchard Plat, so-called and being part of the property conveyed to me by Daniel C Cushing for the benefit of his creditors. - Deed Book 42, page 672, in Providence City Hall.

- 1827 AGREEMENT Robert S Burroughs agrees to sell and convey to Benjamin Cozzens by warranty deed his house on Benevolent Street and all the lot on which it stands, being 100' front and 220' deep and being lots #24, 25, 40, and 41 on the Young Orchard Plat (so-called) on a six months credit... for \$5,500. - Deed Book 51, page 558, in Providence City Hall.
- 1838 Samuel Dexter et al, assignees of Benjamin Cozzens sell for \$6,600 to Samuel B Wheaton lots #24, 25, 40, 41 on plat of lots known as the Young Orchard Plat. - Deed Book 70, page 380, in Providence City Hall.
- 1839 Nicholas Brown for \$325 sells to Samuel B Wheaton, wholesale grocer and trader, a lot of land bounded E by S B Wheaton owned and occupied by him and being lot #23 in the Young Orchard Plat. Also bounded N on a continuation of George Street 50'; S by Joseph S Cooke, W by lot #22.
- 1840 Joseph S Cooke sells for \$400 to Samuel B Wheaton a certain lot of land measuring 50' front and rear and 113' deep...it being lot #39 in plat of Young Orchard. - Deed Book 33, page 374, in Providence City Hall.
- 1846 Samuel B Wheaton sells for \$10,000 to Samuel B Tobey, surgeon and physician, one lot of land with DWELLING HOUSE in the Young Orchard Plat the said lot embraces the whole of six lots to wit: #23, 24, 25, 39, 40, and 41. - Deed Book 103, page 128, in Providence City Hall.
- 1850 FIRE RECORD: Samuel Boyd Tobey for \$9000 on house on N side of Benevolent Street..wood. 41'x45'.. addition 30'x26' all three stories high front and rear. Another addition 7'x40' one story high.. whole occupied for a Dwelling House. - mss. fire insurance records of the Providence Mutual Insurance Company at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island, Vol. 43, policy #18593.
- 1868 Sarah F and John F Tobey ex u/w Samuel B Tobey sell for \$43,010 to Samuel M Noyes, the highest bidder at public auction, a certain parcel of land with a Dwelling House, bounded:

N by George Street
E by Cooke Street
S by Benevolent Street
W by Robert Ives and Milton S Morse

...it being the same premises conveyed to S B Tobey from Samuel B Wheaton in 1846.- Deed Book 181, page 430 (and Joseph Brown in 1847...a 1' strip). Deed Book 106, page 93, in Providence City Hall.

1902 Samuel Noyes Douglas sells to Nelson Aldrich a certain tract of land with Dwelling House bounded:

N by George Street
E by Cooke Street
S by Benevolent St
W by Herreshoff & Bailey

it being the same conveyed by deed from S F and J F Tobey ex u/w Samuel B Tobey and the same premises devised to grantor u/w Samuel Noyes (Wills Book 32, page 209, in Providence City Hall): "I give and bequeath to my wife my homestead Estate on Benevolent, Cooke, and George Streets until my grandson Samuel Noyes Douglas shall attain the age of 21 years.- Deed Book 451, page 205, in Providence City Hall.

The property was taxed to the following persons in the year designated:

1902 Nelson Aldrich
1917 Abby P Aldrich, widow
1918 Abby P Aldrich heirs
1927 Lucy T Aldrich
1955 Winthrop W Aldrich

From the Providence Directory

1828 to 1836 Benjamin Cozzens
1838 to 1844 Samuel B Wheaton
1847 to 1866 Samuel B Tobey
1868 Sarah F Tobey, widow
1870 to 1891 Samuel M Noyes
1891 Nelson Aldrich

2. Date of erection: From the deeds, it would appear that the original house was built between 1817 and 1827 for Robert S. Burroughs, and then enlarged between 1838 and 1846 for Samuel B. Wheaton when the value of the place nearly doubled. The present house matches the one described in the 1850 fire insurance record.
3. References: Article in the "Rhode Islander" magazine section of the Providence Sunday Journal, July 13, 1958.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
May 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large rectangular, frame house, in the traditional plan and detail.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent condition, elegantly furnished.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Rectangular main block, 45' (five-bay south front) x 41', three stories high; complex of rear wings, three stories at northeast wing with services and servants' rooms, one story at northwest with high parlor.
2. Foundations: Plastered brick.
3. Wall construction: Frame, clapboards, wood quoins at the corners.
4. Porches, stoops, etc.: One-story wood entrance porch at center of south front, paired Roman Doric columns at corners, modillion cornice. Granite steps, iron railings. Long one-story porch on east side of main block, similar detail.
5. Chimneys: Four brick chimneys in main block, one in east wall and one in west wall serving southeast and southwest rooms, two in north wall serving northeast and northwest rooms and rooms in rear wing. One chimney in service wing.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Four-panel main entrance door, elliptical doorway with side and top lights, pilaster trim. French doors on entire length of west side, opening to porch from main block and to garden from rear parlor.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows on first and second floors, three over six light windows on third floor. Molded wood frames, with cornices on first and second floors. Louvered shutters. Palladian window over doorway apparently later.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape: Low-pitched hip roof with small monitor.
- b. Cornice: Modillion cornice with large dentil course bed mold, Roman profiles on moldings. Cornice balustrade with turned balusters and solid panels.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central hall, four-room plan in main block. Central hall 7'-8" wide. First floor ceiling height 10'-4". Main block has three parlors, at the southeast and two on the west joined by a double sliding door; and dining room at northeast of main block; kitchen in northeast wing, large parlor in northwest wing. Bedrooms on second and third floors in similar arrangement.
2. Stairways: Main stair in central hall, curved U-shape, open well, open string, sawn scroll step end ornaments. 11" treads, 7-1/2" risers, 3' wide. Two heavy turned balusters per step; molded handrail, scrolled at the bottom, continues unbroken to third floor.
3. Flooring: Hardwood floors, some in herring bone patterns.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Four and six-panel doors, flat sunk panels; large ogee, Greek Revival moldings on main floor, small scale, complex moldings on upper floors. Pilaster trim on doorways with deeply cut moldings and carved foliated corner blocks.
6. Trim: Window trim similar to doors. Plaster ceiling cornices with undercut moldings and with fine scale, patterned bands in principal rooms; some rooms have wainscoting or walls marked off in panels by fine scale bolection moldings.
7. Hardware: Mortise locks, butt hinges, silver plated knobs.
8. Lighting: Electric. Several early lanterns and crystal chandeliers.

9. Heating: Central, hot air. Fireplaces in all principal rooms, most with black marble mantels, with paneled Ionic pilasters or colonettes, entablatures with incised panels and deeply projecting marble shelves.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Faces south at northwest corner of Benevolent and Cooke Streets, set back from the sidewalks on the south and east. Service yard at northeast, garden at the west and north.
2. Enclosures: Open wood fence on south and east.
3. Walks, driveways: Flagstone walks.
4. Landscaping: Informal garden, very well tended, with lawn, trees, flowers, shrubs.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
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