

Mary T. Porter
25 Greenough Place
Newport
Newport County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-314

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
47-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

MARY T. PORTER HOUSE

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
47-

Location: 25 Greenough Place.

Present Owner: Capt. Frederick S. Holmes.

Present Occupants: Owner and other tenants.

Present Use: Residential.

Statement of Significance: This is a large Italianate granite house, an early example of the larger scale of summer houses being erected in Newport from the mid 19th century, and an example of the work of the architect Seth Bradford.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

The building is located in Plat 22, Lot 31 1/2. The following is an incomplete chain of title from Newport City Clerk's Records for the city of Newport. Reference is to number and volume of the Land Evidence Books, (LEB.--, p.--).

1859 Deed of October 15, 1859, recorded in LEB. 35, p. 1.

From: Andrew Robeson, Jr. and Daniel J. Swineburne
To: Mary T. Porter, of the State of Louisiana

"...a tract of land...bounded Westerly and Northerly by Greenough Place, Easterly by Ayrault Street, and Southerly by other land of this grantee, containing 80,000 square feet of land..."

1869 Deed of August 28, 1869, recorded in LEB. 40, p. 443.

From: Mary T. Porter
To: James G. Garner
For: \$50,000

1872 Deed of February 2, 1872, recorded in LEB. 42, p. 429.

- From: James G. Garner
To: Daniel J. Swinburne
- 1903 Deed of December 26, 1903, recorded in LEB. 83, p. 341.
From: Heirs of Daniel J. Swinburne (William J. Swinburne, Henry H. Swinburne, George K. Swinburne, Lena Woodward Swinburne)
To: Virginia S. Brownell and Harriet S. Hale, heirs at law of Daniel J. Swinburne (conveyed)
- 1929 Deed of February 9, 1929, recorded in LEB. 121, p. 471.
From: George H. Howard, Anna Gertrude Hall Brownell and Grace Hall Blashfield, executors of the will of William C. Brownell
To: Richard Washburn Child, 1/2 interest
- 1929 Deed of February 11, 1929, recorded in LEB. 121, p. 475.
From: Virginia S. Hale as administratrix of the Estate of Harriet S. Hale.
To: Richard Washburn Child, 1/2 interest
- 1930 Deed of October 15, 1930, recorded in LEB. 127, p. 312.
From: Richard Washburn Child
To: Frederick J.V. Wagner
- 1930 Deed of October 17, 1930, recorded in LEB. 129, p. 413.
From: Frederick J.V. Wagner
To: Richard Washburn Child
- 1931 Deed of June 22, 1931, recorded in LEB. 129, p. 416.
From: Richard Washburn Child
To: Dorothy Everson, wife of Richard W. Child
- 1933 Deed of November 6, 1933, recorded in LEB. 131, p. 501.
From: Investor's Counsel, Inc. of Boston
To: Dorothy Child

- 1938 Deed of December 16, 1938, recorded in LEB. 142,
p. 322.
From: Carlo A. Filipponi and Dorothy Child Filipponi
To: Angela C. Kaufman, widow of Joseph Kaufman
- 1939 Deed of January 4, 1939, recorded in LEB. 142, p. 314.
From: Dorothy Child Filipponi
To: Alexander Tietz, interest
- 1939 Deed of November 4, 1939, recorded in LEB. 142, p. 320.
From: Alexander Teitz
To: Angela C. Kaufman, interest
- 1945 Deed of February 7, 1945, recorded in LEB. 157, p. 44.
From: Angela C. Kaufman
To: Max Roth and wife, 1/2 interest
Abram David and wife, 1/2 interest
- 1946 Deed of July 29, 1946, recorded in LEB. 161, p. 273.
From: Max Roth and wife
Abram David and wife
To: Frederick S. Holmes

2. Date of erection: 1856
3. Architect: Seth C. Bradford
4. Builder: Seth C. Bradford
5. Original plans: None known
6. Alterations and additions: The large room on the east side of the first floor has been sub-divided with a balcony over one portion. This area has been made into an apartment for the owner.
7. Important old views: None known

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:
The house is reputed to be haunted. See Smith, Susy, Haunted Houses for the Millions, Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, Inc., 1967, pp. 43-45.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:
Records of Deeds in the Newport City Hall.
2. Secondary and published sources:
Newport Mercury, June 7, 1856.
Newport Bulletin, July 1, 1929, p. 37.
Providence Journal, September 27, 1965.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A large Italianate granite house, an early example of the larger scale of summer houses being erected in Newport at the mid 19th century, this is an example of the work of Seth Bradford.
2. Condition of fabric: The interior and exterior are in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: About 54 feet by 45 feet; main block plus rear ell; 3 bays; 2 1/2 stories.
2. Foundations: The foundations are of granite ashlar.
3. Wall construction: The structure is faced with regular coursed ashlar masonry of light grey Fall River granite.
4. Structural system: The entire construction is of masonry.
5. Chimneys: The chimneys are brick decorated with pilasters.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: At the center of the three bay facade is a two leaf panelled entrance door with a semi-circular toplight.
 - b. Windows: Most windows are double hung with four light sashes and bracketed granite pediments and sills. On the upper floors there are some round arched windows and some paired windows. Principal rooms on the ground floor have some French windows.

7. Roof: The hipped gambrel roof has a gable over the entrance bay of the facade. The boxed wooden eaves and gabled dormers are bracketed.
8. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads: The granite entrance porch is of smooth faced ashlar masonry.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The central hall plan has a single room to either side in the main block of the first floor. The unusually large rooms, 22 feet by 45 feet, have 18 foot ceilings. The service rooms are contained in the rear ell. On the second floor of the main block are four principal bedrooms. Each measures 22 feet by 22 feet, with 18 foot ceilings.
2. Stairways: The open well central hall stair is U-shaped. Turned balusters and panelled newels decorate the staircase.
3. Flooring: Floors are wood throughout.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls and ceilings are finished with plaster cornices.
5. Doorways and doors: The heavy panelled doors are set in complex molded doorways.
6. Special decorative features: There are louvered interior window shutters on the first and second floors. The round headed windows on the second floor are decorated with plaster spandrels. The mantels are marble.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south on a level lot in a residential neighborhood.
2. Historic landscape design: The plantings are informal.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Newport HABS Project -- 1969. Sponsored in cooperation with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Antoinette F. Downing, Chairman. Under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Osmund Overby, (University of Missouri), Project Supervisor, Jack E. Boucher, photographer.