

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

William Waterman House

AND/OR COMMON

Potter-Hall-Moore House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

R. I. Route 102

-- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Coventry

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

-- VICINITY OF Number 2, Honorable Edward Beard

STATE

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY

Kent

CODE

005

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Daniel Moore

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Route 102

CITY, TOWN

Coventry,

-- VICINITY OF

STATE

Rhode Island

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Coventry Town Hall

STREET &amp; NUMBER

75 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Coventry

STATE

Rhode Island

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic and Architectural Resources of Coventry, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report

DATE

February 1978

-- FEDERAL  STATE -- COUNTY -- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Providence

Rhode Island

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

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To the north of the stairhall is the parlor, the most finely detailed room in the house. The Federal mantel is ornamented with three, short, fluted pilasters which divide it into two sections; a grooved molding strip supports the mantel shelf. The cornice molding is similar, and cyma recta window moldings project noticeably from the cornice. The cased, beaded corner posts are painted.

Accessible from both the keeping room and parlor, the middle rear room contains a simple fireplace with floor-to-ceiling paneling and a cupboard on the south wall which extends into the next room. That much of the window glass in the house is original is especially evident in this room.

The ell to the south, formerly two rooms (kitchen and pantry), is now one large kitchen with a small, exposed-brick fireplace at its southern end.

The second floor is similar in plan to the first. It retains its corner posts in each room and the simple mantels in the two front rooms.

The interior has been divided into a two-family house, with the second floor more noticeably renovated to accommodate a kitchen in the rear middle room. Except for the insulation of exterior walls and the installation of central heating throughout, the house has undergone few major alterations beyond accommodating modern bathrooms and kitchens.

There are three outbuildings: the barn to the southwest of the house, the corncrib directly in back of the ell, and a later garage to the north, reconstructed from timbers salvaged from an old house. The western portion of the large barn is probably contemporary with the main house. Evidence of its age is clearly revealed in its pegged post-and-beam construction on the interior and in the fieldstone foundation of the cellar. The newer section to the east was added in the 1880s, and in this century the present owner built the southern addition, set at right angles to the main block, to be used for dairy cows. The entire barn complex was remodeled into a summer house in 1960.

Stone walls still remain on the property, bounding fields to the north, west, and south of the property. At the northernmost boundary along the west side of Route 102 is the family cemetery (Rhode Island Cemetery Number 11).

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The William Waterman House is a well-preserved example of the vernacular farmhouse type that appeared throughout western Rhode Island during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Facing east from the most elevated portion of the property, the house overlooks Scott Hollow and the hills beyond. Comprising about 115 acres, the farm is located just north of the junction of Route 102 and Route 117. The property includes the two-and-a-half-story, five-bay, center-chimney, gable-roof late eighteenth-century dwelling, subsidiary outbuildings, and the current residence of the owner (a two-story, hip-roof structure, built ca 1926, immediately to the south of the older house).

Built from wood taken from the lot, the eighteenth-century dwelling is of timber-frame construction with vertical plank walls covered by wooden clapboards. The front and sides of the foundation are quarried granite blocks from a quarry in Oneco, Connecticut, installed in the 1940s; the rear is of the original fieldstone. The main block of the house is augmented on the south side by a small, one-story, two-bay ell with a lean-to shed at its rear.

Exterior ornamentation is restricted to the central doorway with its pedimented portico supported by slender columns. Paired Doric pilasters flank the door jambs--the outer set fluted and the inner ones plain--and are surmounted by a semicircular, simply carved, wooden fanlight. The ceiling of the portico is arched into a simple barrel vault, which continues the shape of the wooden fanlight above the door. Windows project markedly from the exterior wall surface. Across the facade and the north side of the house, sash are twelve over twelve, except for the center window on the second story of the facade, which has twelve-over-eight sash to accommodate the portico's triangular pediment below it. Windows on the rear and the south side are nine-over-nine sash. Window frames are simple, with straight, narrow lintels capping the first floor windows. The simply molded caps of the second-story windows project from the cornice molding.

The house is built following the traditional eighteenth-century center-chimney, five-room plan. The narrow and cramped front hall has triple-run stairs set in front of the chimney. Of heavy proportions, they have closed string molding, posts with ball caps, acorn-shape drops, and half balusters which abut the posts--all characteristic of early to mid-eighteenth-century stairs, but found later in the century especially in rural dwellings. The top run has no balusters. A smoking chamber for meat is concealed behind a door under the stairs.

The keeping room is located in the south front room. This arrangement occurs elsewhere in Foster, Scituate, and Coventry. The cooking fireplace has a baking oven set at the left and closed with a wooden, vertical-plank door with iron hinges. The hearth is composed of two granite slabs. The southwest cornerpost of the chimney is set at an angle, into which the splayed mantelpiece fits. Wainscoting stops about a foot and a half from the east side of the fireplace, which suggests that the original fireplace may have been somewhat larger. Doors are of four panels, with wrought-iron hinges. The floor boards are original. Cornice molding is narrow and plain. The dado is composed of wide horizontal boards topped with simple chair rails. Windows are surrounded with plain, narrow frames and have deep-set sills.

See continuation sheet 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

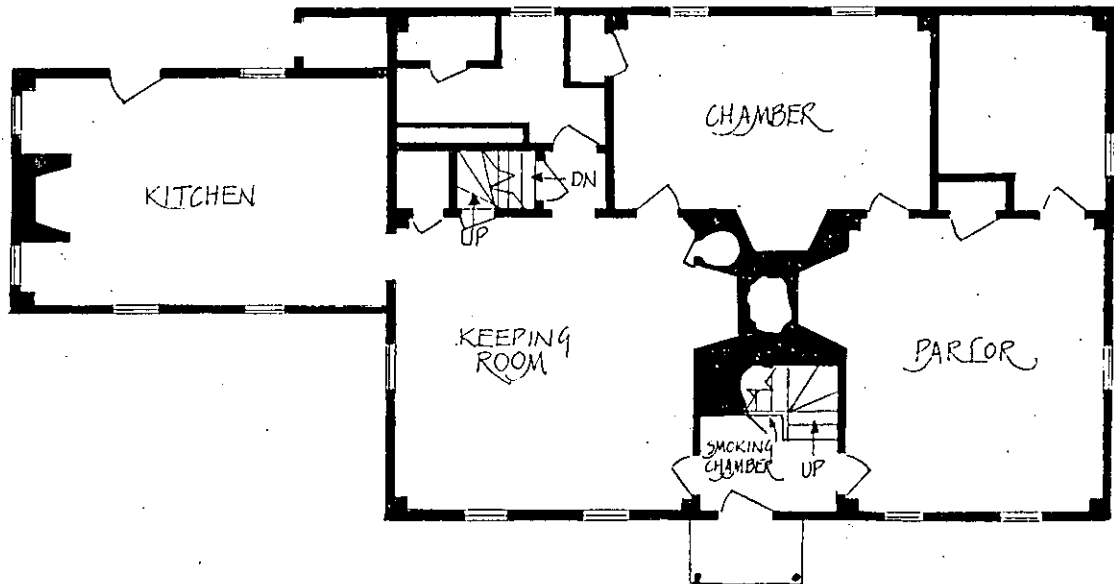
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

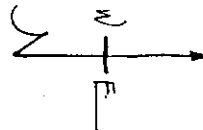
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PAGE 3



WILLIAM WATERMAN HOUSE  
(POTTER - MOORE - HOUSE)  
VICTORY HIGHWAY  
COVENTRY, RHODE ISLAND

SKETCH PLAN - NOT TO SCALE



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

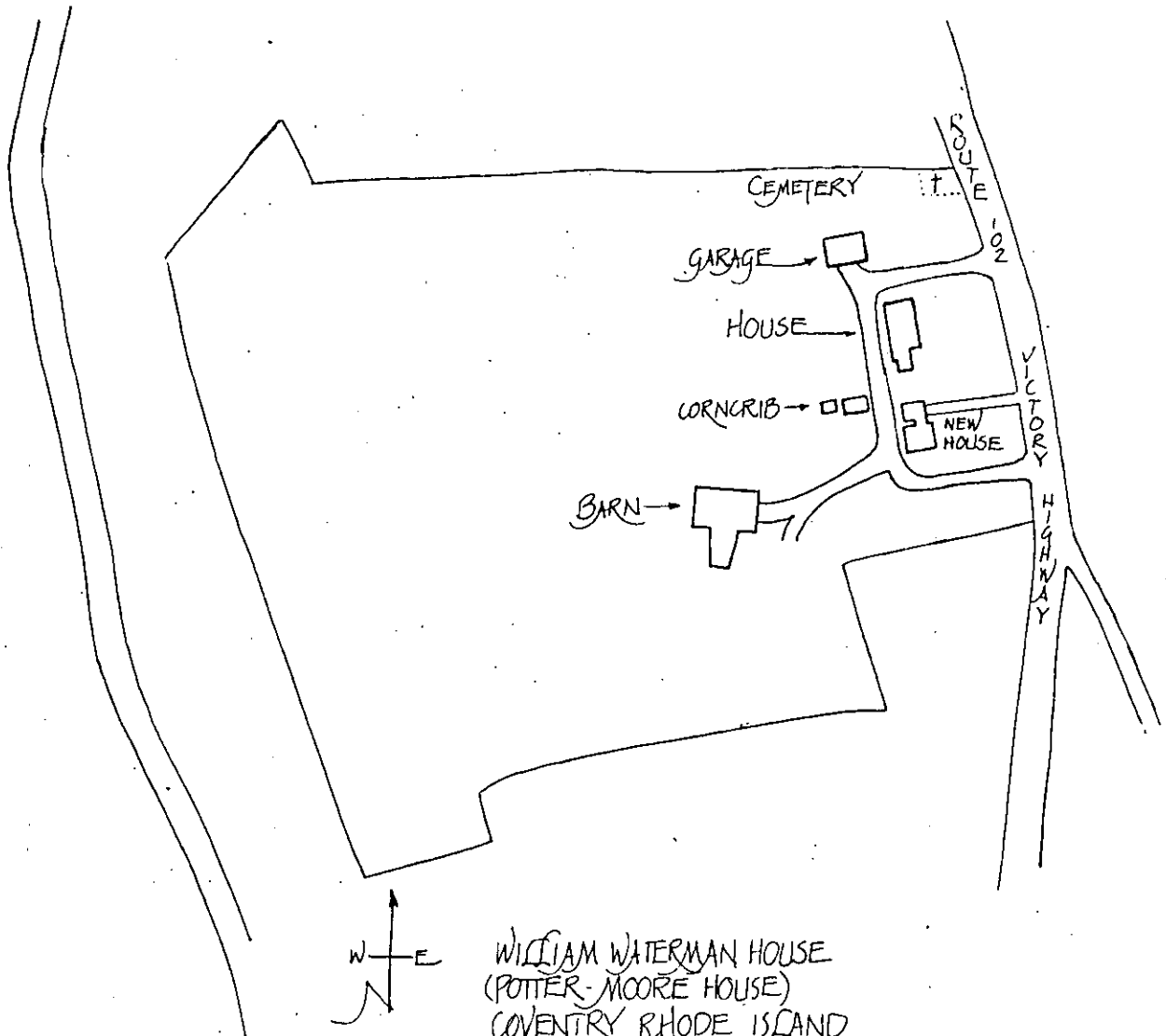
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CONTINUATION SHEET 3

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 4



WILLIAM WATERMAN HOUSE  
(POTTER-MOORE HOUSE)  
COVENTRY, RHODE ISLAND  
SITE SKETCH PLAN - NOT TO SCALE

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES Before 1793

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Situated in the western end of Coventry in what is still a rural section, the William Waterman House and its surrounding property form a representative, intact Rhode Island farm complex of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its simplicity lends aesthetic appeal to this fine eighteenth-century farmhouse, a well-preserved survivor important to the history of Rhode Island architecture. The relatively undisturbed surroundings of the farm complex amply recall the property's long association with Rhode Island agriculture. Further, the property has interesting associations with prominent former residents.

Typically Federal in style, the house is refined and severe. The delicacy of the front portico--the only ornamental feature on the exterior--with its slender columns and light gable roof is characteristic of the period, when forms were becoming less massive and robust than those of the preceding period. Its interior decoration, particularly the cornice and mantelpiece molding in the parlor, is equally delicate and simple.

Despite the construction of the twentieth-century dwelling to the south of the house, the Waterman House and the surrounding property retain the ambiance of what was once a vital, working farm until the middle decades of this century: evidence of its original function represented by the pegged post-and-beam construction barn to the southwest, the corncrib behind the house, the vestiges of once-flourishing orchards, and the old stone walls marking off the fields to the south, west, and north.

Through most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the property functioned as a dairy and chicken farm. The remaining foundations of the chicken coops can still be found, running east-west at the rear of the property, and former milking stalls for cows remain in the southern addition to the barn.

The property originally belonged to William Waterman, a direct descendant of Colonel Richard Waterman, founder of the Rhode Island Waterman family, who followed Roger Williams to the area in 1638. Born in 1763, William Waterman served as a colonel in the local militia during the Revolutionary War. After receiving a pension from the government, he settled in Coventry to engage in farming. The latest date he would have settled there would have been the year of his marriage to Hannah Gorton in 1793, thus narrowing the construction date of the house to the last two decades of the eighteenth century.

Both of William Waterman's sons achieved prominence in the nineteenth century. Oliver (born in 1794) represented the Town of Coventry in the General Assembly as well as serving as Commissioner of the Hartford-Fishkill Railroad, which had one of its major stations in nearby Summit. Horatio (born 1806) was for many years the General Foreman of the A. & W. Sprague Company, Rhode Island's pre-eminent manufacturer of calico during the middle years of the nineteenth century.

See continuation sheet 4

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William Waterman and his son Horatio sold the farm property--at that time around 123 acres--to Holden and Holden W. Potter of Scituate in 1836. Under the Potter ownership, the property continued to function as a working farm. In 1874, Holden W. Potter's widow, Sally, and her son Charles sold the property to Emery Hall of West Greenwich, and the property has devolved through the same family to the present day.

As suburban development spreads farther into the country from the greater Providence area, fewer large tracts of farmland remain untouched. The William Waterman House and farm provide an excellent example of the type of farm complex that sustained the agricultural economy of western Rhode Island well in to the twentieth century.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 5

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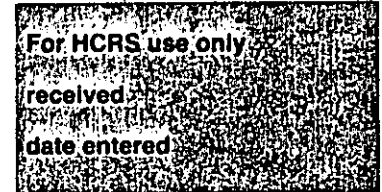
Town of Coventry, Rhode Island. Land Records. Deed Books 20, 24, 29.

Town of Coventry, Rhode Island. Record of Deaths: 1843-1900.



United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

6

Item number 10

Page 2

acreage of nominated property 21 acres

## UTM references

A 19:275530: 4620450  
B 19:275710: 4619950  
C 19:275540: 4619920  
D 19:275380: 4620460

## Verbal boundary description and justification

Town of Coventry, Rhode Island, Tax Assessor's Plat 48, lots 53 and 54, those portions of which front Victory Highway to 500 feet west of the west edge at the highway. The boundary was drawn to include that portion of the William Waterman farm which includes both houses, three out buildings, the family cemetery, and all the farm land still kept open. (The treeline is approximately 500 feet west of the road.)



←  
William, Waterman, House  
Potter-Hall-Moore House  
Coventry, Rhode Island

*Kent Co.*

Photographer: Warren Jagger  
Date: October, 1978  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical  
Preservation Commission

*JUL 24 1980*

View of house from the east.

Photo #1/2



William Waterman House  
Potter-Hall-Moore House  
Coventry, Rhode Island

Photographer: Walter Nebiker  
Date: October, 1980

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

View of property from the east, showing 1926 house in  
the foreground.

Photo #3.



William Waterman House  
Potter-Hall-Moore House  
Coventry, Rhode Island

*Kent Co.*

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: October 1978

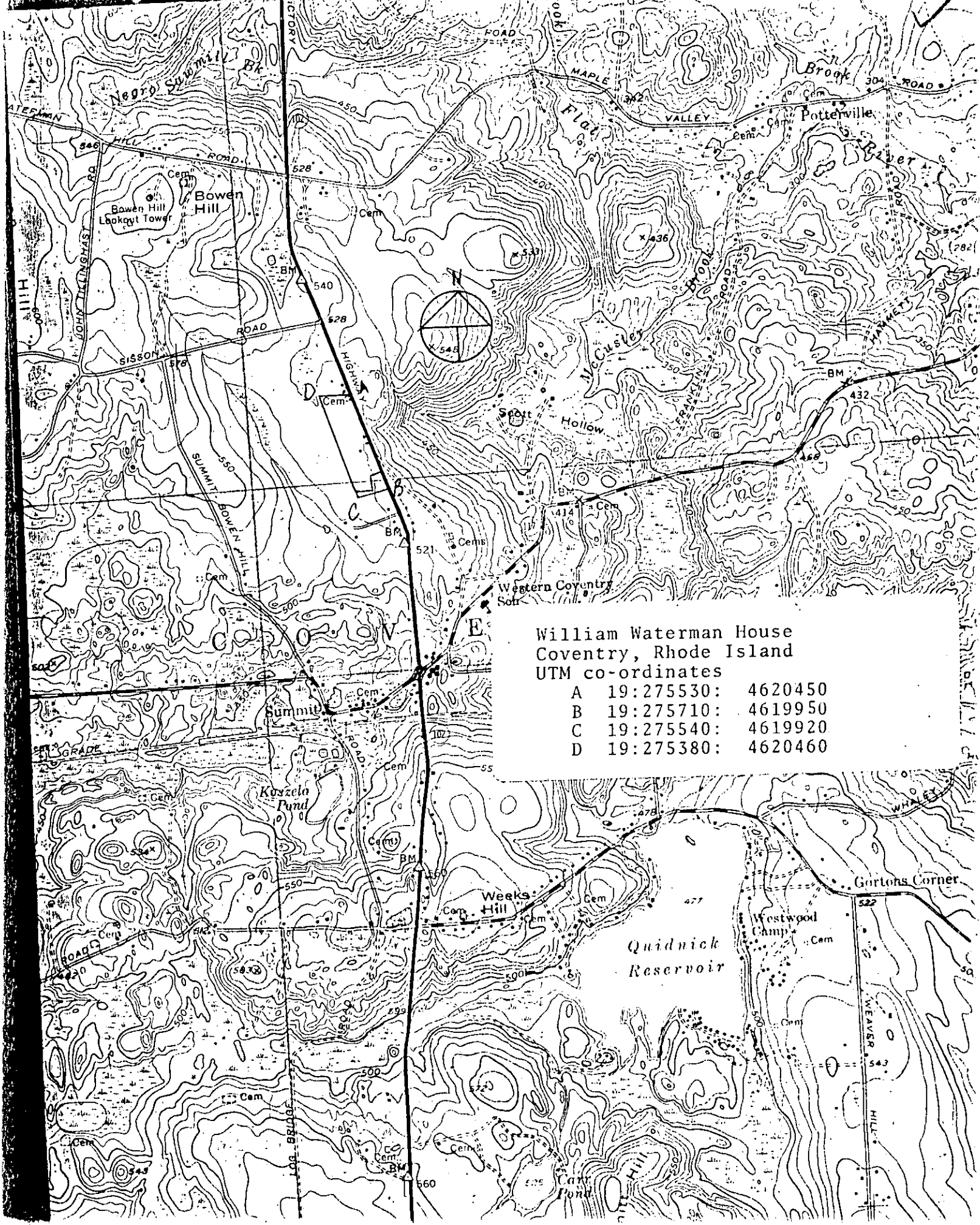
Negative: Rhode Island Historical  
Preservation Commission

**JUL 24 1980**

Northeast parlor.

Photo #2/2





William Waterman House  
Coventry, Rhode Island  
UTM co-ordinates

A	19:275530:	4620450
B	19:275710:	4619950
C	19:275540:	4619920
D	19:275380:	4620460