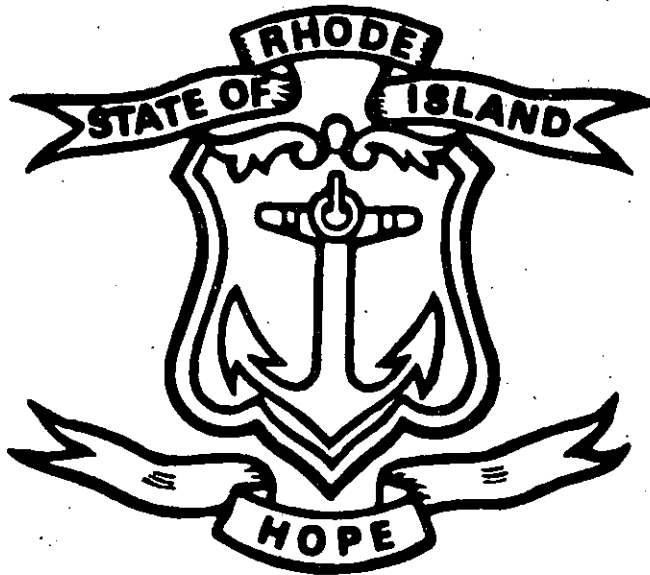


SPECIAL REPORT

JOHNSTON
PRELIMINARY REPORT



RHODE ISLAND
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

PRELIMINARY SURVEY REPORT

TOWN OF JOHNSTON

This document is a copy of the original survey published in 1976.
It has not been corrected or updated.

Since the original publication:

- >additional properties have been entered on the National Register;
- >some financial incentives referred to in these pages are no longer available;
- >some new financial incentives are available.

AUGUST 1976

For up-to-date information, please contact:
Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
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Providence, RI 02903
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The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission is your state agency for historical preservation. The Commission identifies and protects historic buildings, districts, landscapes, structures, and archaeological sites throughout the State of Rhode Island.

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION
150 BENEFIT STREET, PROVIDENCE RHODE ISLAND 02903

Preface

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, established by the General Assembly in 1968, is charged with the responsibility of safeguarding Rhode Island's heritage. In order to provide an overview of the physical record of this heritage, the Commission has initiated a "broadbrush" or preliminary planning survey of the rural and suburban towns of the state. The purpose of this initial inventory is to identify and record sites of historic, architectural, and archeological significance in each town. The objectives are to provide an immediate catalogue of these non-renewable cultural resources for statewide and local preservation planning; to recognize areas, districts, and structures eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; and thereby to establish priorities based on problems and potentials discovered as part of the survey process. Because it is the intent of the broadbrush survey to inventory as much of the state as possible in the shortest time, no qualitative evaluations are made, except that obviously significant properties are photographed and recorded on standard Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission survey forms.

The broadbrush survey is accomplished by driving all public rights-of-way in a given town and noting on large-scale United States Geological Survey maps (or other maps that may be more appropriate) each building or site of architectural, visual,

cultural, or historic significance. The map notations include use, condition, and architectural style or period if known. Sites of major interest are then surveyed--this consists of photographing each property and completing a standard survey sheet which records pertinent architectural and historical information. Archeological sites are covered in a separate but coordinated preliminary survey and are mentioned only incidentally in this study.

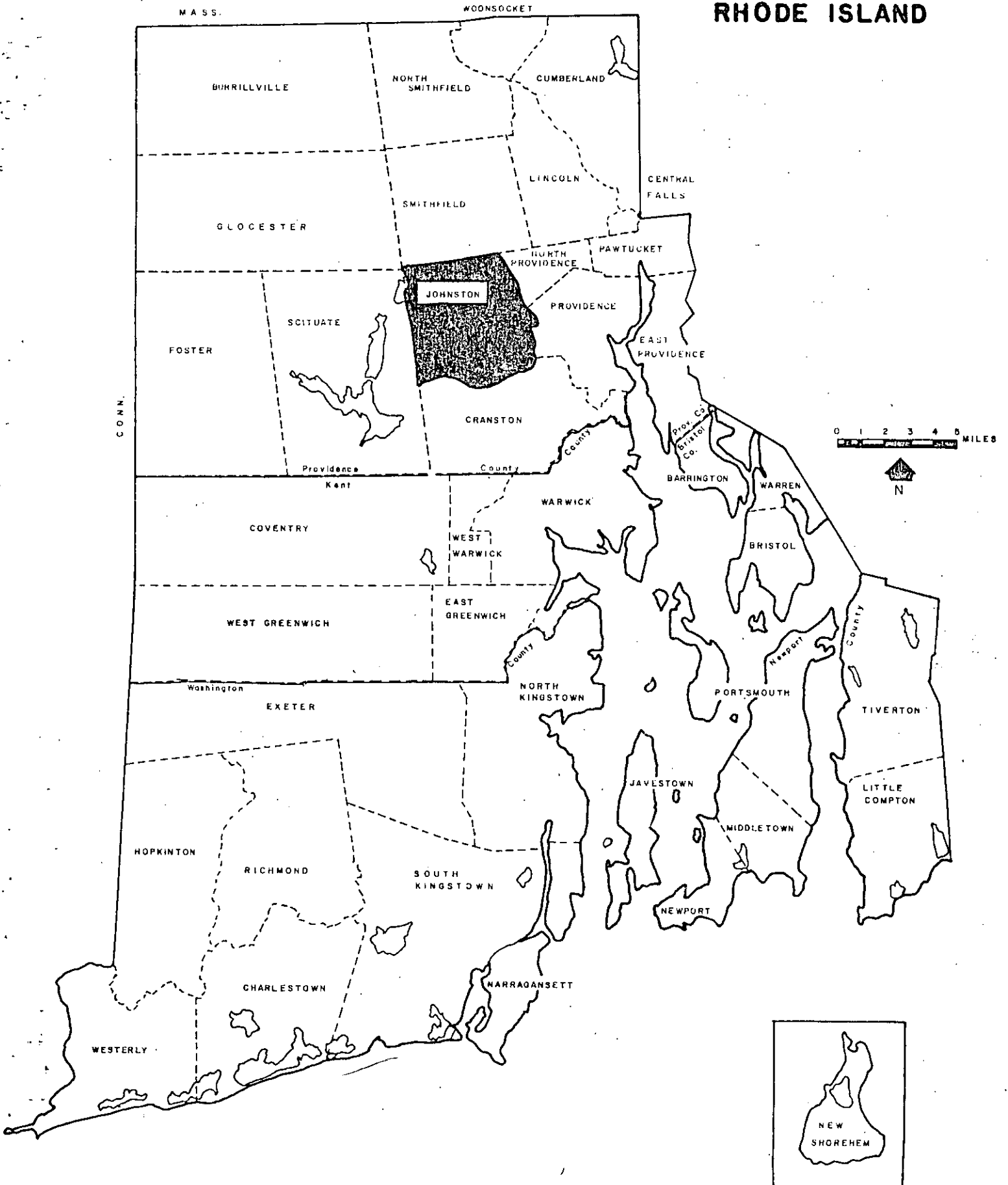
In addition, previous surveys are reviewed, and town histories, reports, and other readily available information is researched to ensure that all appropriate historic sites and structures are included in the study. Local historians are consulted whenever possible.

Upon completion of the survey, finished maps are developed and a brief report written. However, the information must be considered preliminary until a more complete, documented survey and illustrated report can be prepared.

The following study, then, covers the historical and architectural resources of Johnston. It is intended to provide basic information so that cultural resources can be properly considered in making future planning decisions at the local, state, and federal levels. In order to be properly understood, the report and its inventory must be used in conjunction with the cultural resources map of the town developed by the Historical Preservation Commission.

The Commission would like to thank the Johnston residents who provided assistance, who allowed the Commission staff to investigate their properties, and who reviewed this report.

RHODE ISLAND



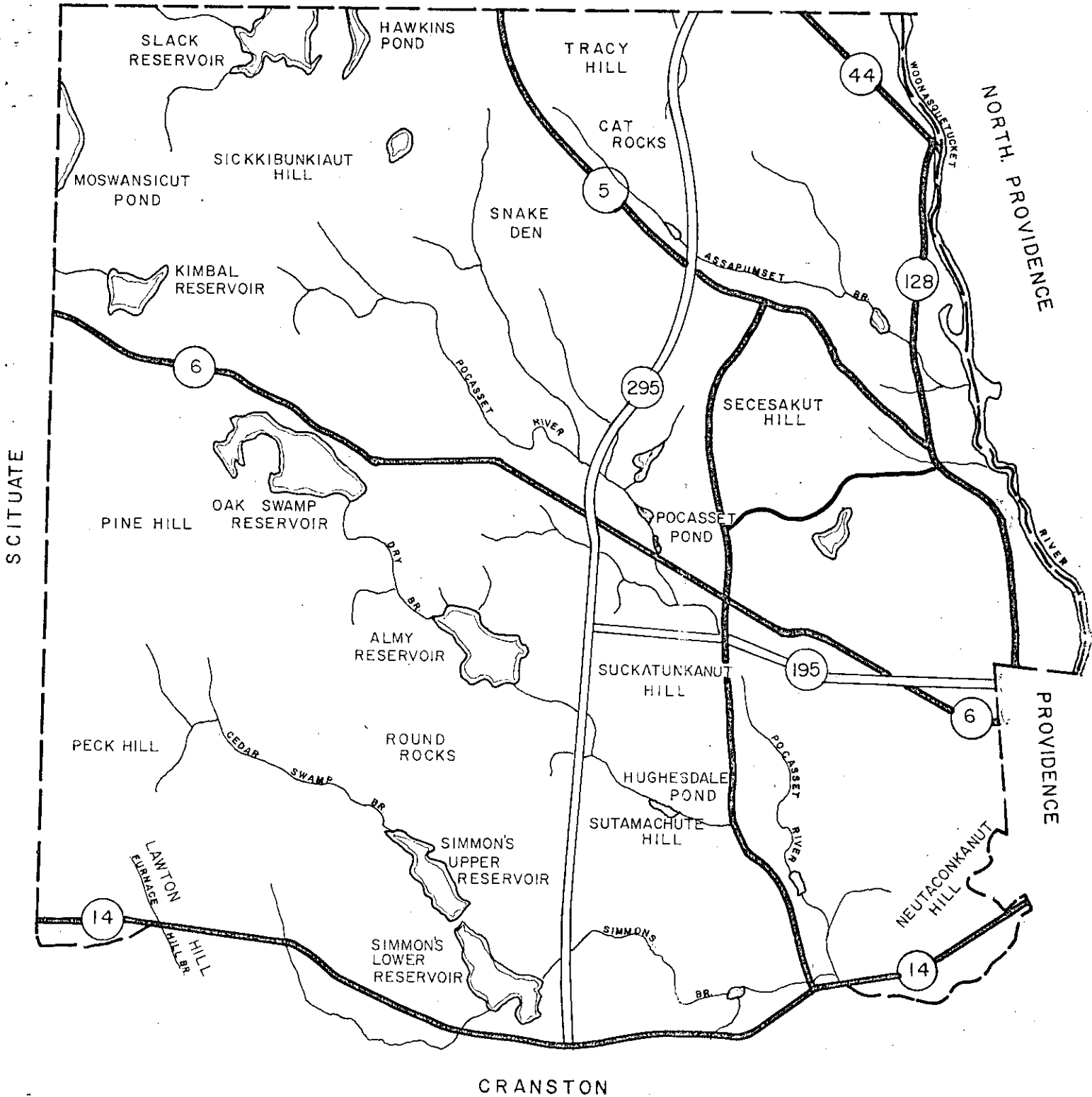
JOHNSTON

Johnston, a town of 24.4 square miles in north central Rhode Island, is bordered on the east by North Providence and Providence, on the south by Cranston, on the west by Scituate, and on the north by Smithfield. Established in 1636 as a part of Providence, the town was set off from Providence in 1759 and named for Augustus Johnston, Attorney General of Rhode Island from 1758 to 1766. The town has grown considerably in three and a half centuries and now has a population of more than 22,000. The average population density, 825 people per square mile, is unevenly distributed. Most people are concentrated in and around the villages of Thornton, Simonsville, Morgan Mills, Hughesdale, Manton, Centerdale, and Graniteville; central and western Johnston is relatively sparsely populated.

The topography is irregular. Hills occur throughout the town, the highest being 544 foot Pine Hill. Brooks and rivers flow generally to the southeast. Three of the town's villages were established along the largest waterway, the Woonasquatucket River, which forms much of the eastern boundary. Although smaller in size, the Pocasset River system, including its tributaries Dry Brook and Cedar Swamp Brook-Simmons Brook, drains most of the town and was the site of several early manufacturing villages. Several reservoirs - Oak Swamp, Almy, and Simmons - were built along the Pocasset system to store water. In the northwest corner of town are Moswansicut Pond, Kimball



SMITHFIELD



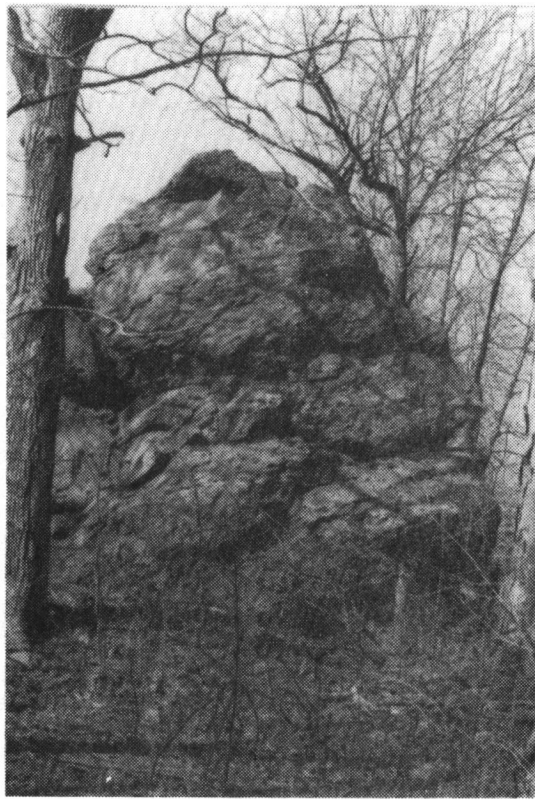
JOHNSTON, R.I.
 PHYSICAL FEATURES

NOT TO SCALE

Reservoir, Slack Reservoir, and Hawkins Pond.

Hipses Rock (#13 on the accompanying map and the list following), which is recommended for the National Register of Historic Places, was the northeastern boundary of the first purchase of land by Roger Williams in 1638 from Canonicus, a sachem of the Narragansetts. Thus, Neutaconcanut Hill in the southeastern part of Johnston was originally part of Providence. A former Indian Soapstone Quarry (5), which has been approved for the National Register, was worked by Narragansett Indians who manufactured stone bowls and pipes long before the arrival of European settlers. Thomas Clemence, a friend of Roger Williams, was one of the first white men to settle in present-day Johnston, purchasing property along today's George Waterman Road in 1654. The original house was destroyed in King Philip's War (1675-1676) and a new house was erected on the site in about 1680. This building is one of the few Rhode Island "stone ender" dwellings remaining. The Clemence-Irons House (4) is listed on the National Register.

By 1700 John Tripp had settled Tripptown (renamed Manton in the mid-nineteenth century), and most early settlement was in the eastern part of town, near the Woonasquatucket River and the Providence town center; but, gradually, the Johnston interior was settled for farming. The Brown Avenue Historic District (1), a National Register property centered around the late eighteenth-century Dame Farm, includes 500 acres of farm land, woodlots, orchards, pastures, fields, old burying grounds, and several



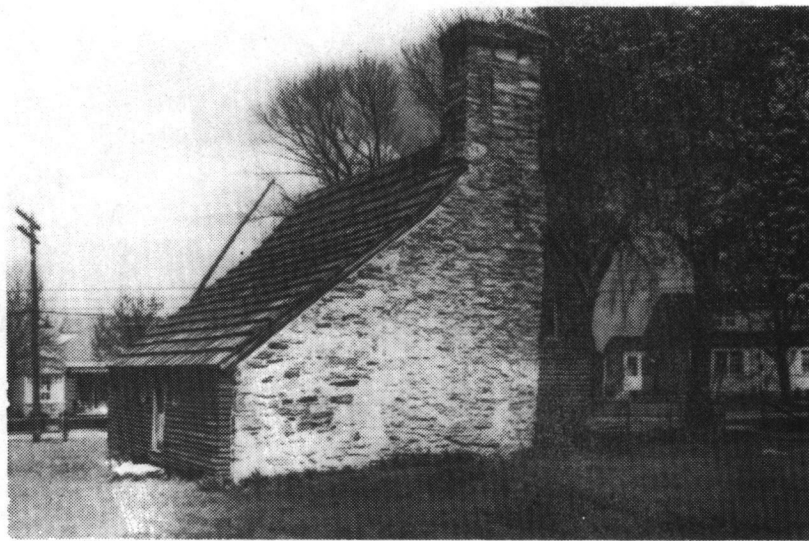
HIPSEY'S ROCK: Off Morgan Avenue. (Map 13.)



SIMONSVILLE TEXTILE MILL RUINS: early 19th century, Off
Simonsville Avenue. (Map #20.)

farmhouses. Nearby, atop Sikkibunkiaut Hill, is the Winsor Farm (16), a grouping of several old farm buildings in a well-preserved rural landscape, which is recommended for the National Register. Another fine rural area (71) is along Plainfield Pike in western Johnston. The Angell family in Johnston descended from Thomas Angell, who came from England as an apprentice with Roger Williams in 1631. The Angells were among the first settlers in town and owned a large tract of land in the present Graniteville area. Two eighteenth-century Angell farmhouses in that area are now on the National Register - the Daniel Angell House (3), c. 1725, on Dean Avenue, and the Edwin H. Farnum House (Angell House) (6), 1765, on Putnam Pike. Johnston, although heavily urbanized and suburbanized, has an unusual number of well-preserved eighteenth-century houses. Especially significant are three examples of two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, end-chimney houses with a one-and-half-story wing -- the Evans House (9), on Cherry Hill Road, the Clemence House (12), on Greenville Avenue, and the Winsor House (15), on Winsor Road; these have been recommended for nomination to the National Register. Another early farmhouse, the Mathewson House (10), c. 1710, on Greenville Avenue, is also recommended for nomination to the Register. In the Benjamin Belknap House (36), c. 1759, the first town meeting was held.

In 1776 a powder mill was built along the Woonasquatucket River near today's Centerdale. No trace remains of eighteenth-century mills in town, but several old stone quarries have



CLEMENCE-IRONS HOUSE: c. 1680, 17th century, George Waterman Road. (Map #4.)



EVANS HOUSE: early 18th century, Colonial, 325 Cherry Hill Road. (Map #9.)



MATHEWSON HOUSE: c. 1710, Colonial, Greenville Avenue. (Map #10.)

survived, unused for many decades. The Snake Den Quarry on the Waterman Farm (1) supplied granite used in the construction of the First Congregational Church in Providence about 1814, and the Bear Ledge Quarry (63), off Pine Hill Avenue, was the source of the columns for Providence's Arcade building.

Although the earliest highway through Johnston, the Providence-Norwich Turnpike (Plainfield Street), was completed in 1714, most major east-west roads were built in the early nineteenth century, including the Rhode Island and Connecticut Turnpike (Hartford Pike) in 1803, the Powder Mill Turnpike (Putnam Pike) in 1810, and the Foster and Scituate Turnpike (Central Pike) in 1822. The western end of Shun Pike includes a section of several hundred feet flanked by fine stone walls which have persisted for over a century and which still help to maintain the road's early visual character. These old highways are still Johnston's major east-west transportation arteries. In the past decade, two modern highways have been constructed, Route 195, paralleling part of Hartford Pike (Route 6), and Interstate Route 295.

Early turnpikes stimulated an increase in highway travel and encouraged the growth of taverns, several of which are now used as residences. These include the former Mathewson Hotel (10) on Greenville Avenue, which is being recommended for nomination to the Register; the Randall Hotel (47), later Shang Bailey's Hotel, on Hartford Pike; and Knight's Hotel (72), later H. Greene's Hotel, on Plainfield Pike.



DAME FARM COMPLEX: Farm House, c. 1790, Sheds, c. 1790, Barn, 1910, Silos 1925, Brown Avenue. (Map #1.)



BARN: mid 19th century, on Winsor Farm at Sikkibunkiaut Hill
Off Winsor Road. (Map #16.)



RANDALL HOTEL (SHANG BAILEY TAVERN): early 19th century,
Hartford Avenue. (Map #47.)

Johnston's greatest development occurred in the nineteenth century with the establishment of textile mills along several waterways. The three mill villages which developed along the Woonasquatucket River in Johnston are also part of adjoining towns. Centerdale has few remaining structures of historical interest, but the Graniteville Historic District (17), centered on Putnam Pike, includes one relatively well-preserved street of mill housing, Angell Street; several individual eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century houses; and the Graniteville Baptist Church. The Manton section, large and densely populated, encompasses a small area which has been approved for the National Register, the Greenville Avenue Historic District (2). It includes the Killey House, a handsome Early Victorian bracketed residence with a fine carriage shed. Across the road is the Barnes House, located on a large lot of land and noteworthy as the former residence of Sarah Dyer Barnes, the first woman school superintendent in Rhode Island. (At the time of printing this report, the Barnes House was scheduled to be demolished.)

Morgan's Mills (19) began about 1820 along the Pocasset River and at one time consisted of a large number of mills and houses, most of which are now gone; the recommended historic district contains several fine old houses and a later mill superintendent's house. At Hughesdale (18), another historic district, James F. Simmons started a bleachery and print and dye works before 1850, but its greatest growth occurred when Thomas Hughes built a chemical works along Dry Brook in 1849.



MILL HOUSE: c. 1850, Early Victorian, Simmonsville Avenue.
(Map #20.)



HOUSES: mid 19th century, Angell Street. (Map #17.)



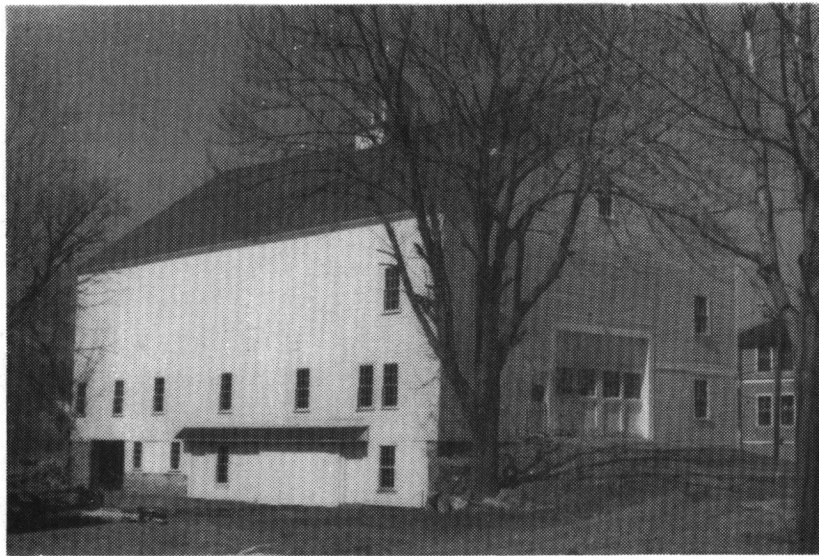
MILL HOUSES: early 20th century, Off Plainfield Pike, Thornton.
(Map #67.)

His village eventually included a post office (1876), a school, and a church, the Hughesdale Congregational Society (1877).

Today, several important residences (such as a Late Victorian, bracketed house; a Greek Revival house; and a pair of stuccoed-stone, double mill houses) are reminders of the formerly thriving community.

James Simmons also established a cotton mill in Simmons Upper Village, now Simmonsville (20) in the 1820's. Several stuccoed-stone mill houses, most of which survive, were built to accommodate workers, but stone foundations along Simmons Brook are the only reminders of the nineteenth-century mills. The village is also noteworthy because, by about 1880, B. F. Almy, one of the mill owners, brought in Italians--perhaps the first to come to Rhode Island as laborers--to operate the mills. During the late nineteenth century, members of many of these families went into farming, and now Italian Americans comprise the largest ethnic group in the community, playing a major role in its economic, social, and political life.

Today, Morgan's Mills, Hughesdale, and Simmonsville are essentially residential communities; their mills stopped working many decades ago. But another locality--Simmons Lower Village, now called Thornton--was established in the mid-nineteenth century and is still an important industrial center. This densely populated area was started by James Simmons, before 1831 in the southern part of Johnston, and today contains some significant buildings, including Simmon's own house (7), an outstanding,



BARN: late 19th century, Greenville Avenue. (Map #11.)



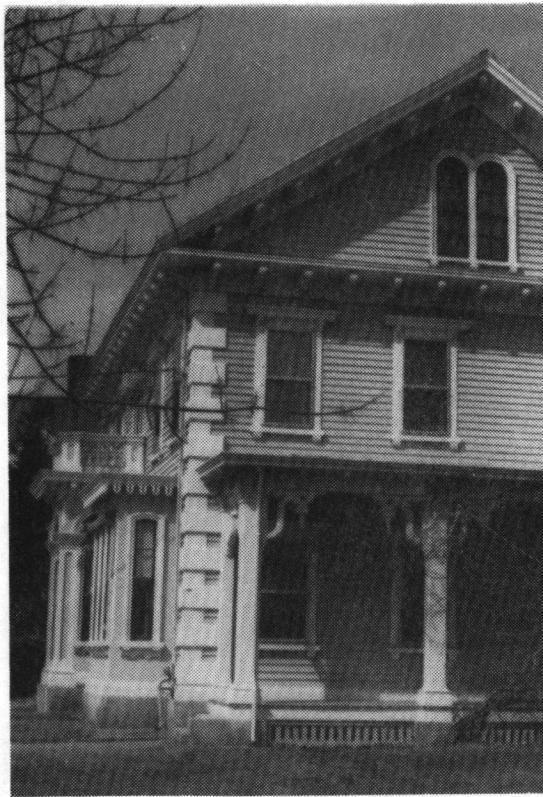
BARN: late 19th century, 228 Greenville Avenue. (Map #2.)



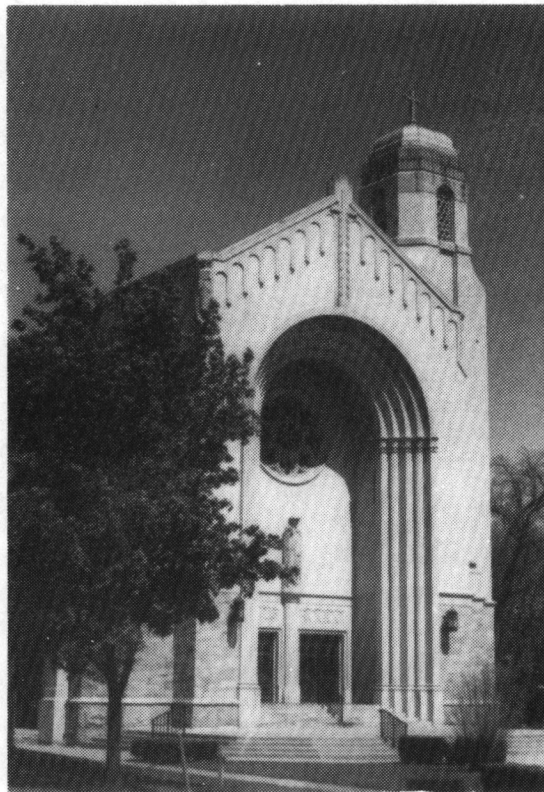
JAMES F. SIMMONS HOUSE: c. 1845, Greek Revival, Atwood Avenue.
(Map #7.)

Greek Revival, temple-form residence. Simmons was a political activist as well as a leading industrialist of his day, serving a number of terms in the U.S. Senate between 1840 and 1860. His mid-nineteenth-century residence is one of the finest buildings of the period in Rhode Island and is recommended for nomination to the National Register. St. Rocco's Church (25) (1951) is a focal point for the large Italian community. A large brick industrial building (54), the former British Hosiery Company, was founded in 1884 by R. W. Cooper and began operations with machinery and skilled workers imported from England. Charles Fletcher, an Englishman who set up the Thornton Worsted Mill, renamed the village Thornton in honor of his birthplace in England. Off Plainfield Street, the early twentieth-century growth of the village is shown in several blocks of mill houses (67). These one-and-a-half-story, double houses, with their gable ends to the street, are good examples of later mill housing.

In 1873 railroad passenger service was established in the Woonasquicket Valley and, together with the growth of industry and the proximity of Johnston to Providence, induced many new residents to settle in the eastern part of town. Johnston began to be a suburb in the modern sense. But, in 1898 and in 1919, Providence annexed the southeastern part of town. The loss of Olneyville and the Manton area east of the river, which included several major textile mills and the most productive area of Johnston's tax base, reduced Johnston's population by 60%.



KILLEY HOUSE: c. 1860, Early Victorian, 193 Greenville Avenue.
(Map #2.)



SAINT ROCCO'S CHURCH: 1951, mid-20th century, Oreste DiSaia,
architect, Atwood Avenue, Thornton. (Map #25.)

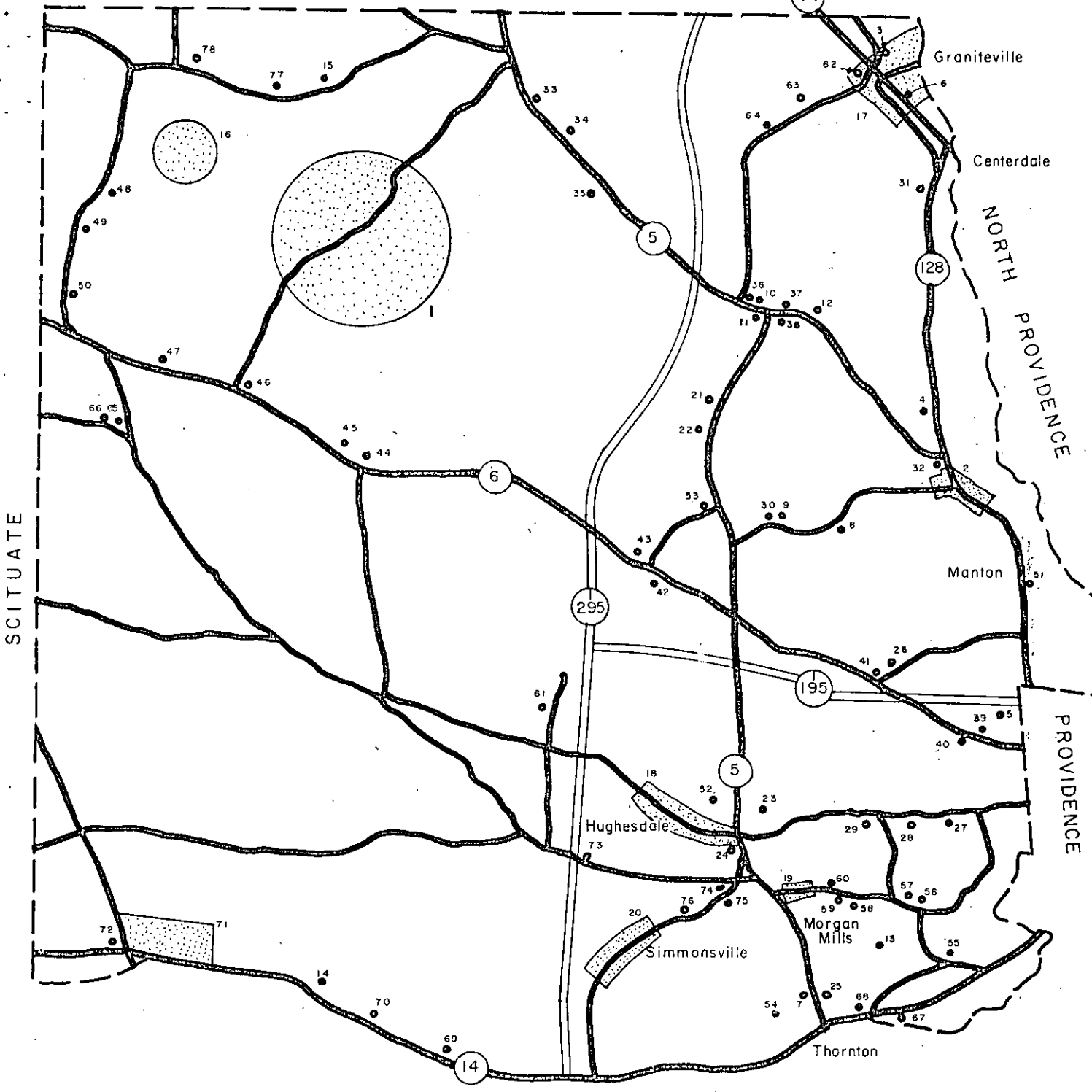
Although its eastern section was becoming industrialized and urbanized, most of the town remained rural in character. The quarrying, cutting, and selling of granite persisted into the twentieth century, as did farming. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Johnston's rich soil was utilized for pastures and for growing Indian corn, oats, barley, buckwheat, and potatoes. The numerous hills favored fruit cultivation, and many valuable orchards produced large quantities of cider. These pursuits continued into the twentieth century, augmented by the small truck farms and vineyards of the Italians who took to farming, particularly in the southeastern part of town.

Today, historically and geographically, Johnston is two separate areas. The densely populated eastern part, with its several compact villages, contrasts greatly with the less dense, central and western area, which still contains considerable farmland and woods. Taken together, all the historically significant properties identified in the initial survey reflect Johnston's rich and varied history, first as an Indian site, later as a rural community economically dependent on family farms and small manufacturing enterprises, and finally as a manufacturing town and suburb for the growing capital city.

The following list and accompanying map identify buildings, sites, and districts considered by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission to be of cultural significance to the town, state, or nation and worthy of preservation. Future planning discussions affecting these properties should take into consideration their importance.



SMITHFIELD



SCITUATE



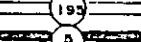

NORTH PROVIDENCE

PROVIDENCE

CRANSTON

JOHNSTON, R.I.

JULY, 1976

- Legend:
-  DISTRICTS
 -  STRUCTURES, SITES
 -  MAJOR HIGHWAYS
 -  MAIN ROADS

NOT TO SCALE

JOHNSTON: PRELIMINARY INVENTORY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES

This list is an annotated key to the preliminary survey map of Johnston. The numbers in the list refer to numbers found on the accompanying map* (e.g., 1-Brown Avenue Historic District). Material in the inventory is presented in three categories: properties which have been approved for the National Register, properties recommended for National Register consideration, and other properties of cultural significance. In these three categories, historic districts and areas are listed first, then streets are presented in alphabetical order. Dates and names which appear in parentheses at the end of notations refer to their identification on the D. G. Beers Rhode Island Atlas of 1870.

I. Currently on or approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

BROWN AVENUE

1. Brown Avenue Historic District (Dame Farm), an area of rolling rural landscape in the northwestern part of town crossed by the Pocasset River, a small waterway. The district includes 500 acres of farm land--woodlots, orchards, pastures, and fields. Since the 18th century it has been made up of five farms. Today, Dame Farm, with its dwelling house, barn, shed, and other outbuildings dating from the late 18th through the early 20th centuries, is a functional and visual focal point of the district. Other farms include those owned by the Waterman and Thomas Brown families. Brown Avenue runs in an irregular path through the district, which also includes family burying grounds and the Snake Den Quarry, whose granite was used to construct the First Congregational Church in Providence in 1814.

GREENVILLE AVENUE

2. Greenville Avenue Historic District, a small section along Greenville Avenue in Manton which contains about eighteen residences, most dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The area is generally

*A more detailed map, at a scale of 1":1000', which locates places and outlines districts more precisely, is on file at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

well preserved and retains much of its integrity despite intrusions by modern buildings and a commercial block to the north and south. Important buildings are:

- A. Barnes House, a 2½-story, early 19th-century house with interior end chimneys, an off-center portico, and a large wing at the rear; there are also several outbuildings. This is the former residence of Sarah Dyer Barnes, an activist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in political and educational affairs. She was the first woman school superintendent in Rhode Island. (1870-A. J. Barnes.) (At the time of printing this report, the Barnes House was scheduled to be demolished.)
- B. (#193) Killey House, a 2½-story, Early Victorian, bracketed dwelling, with quoins, bracketed eaves, bay windows, portico entry, and other, much elaborated details. A bracketed carriage shed with cupola is behind the house. (1870-J.S. Kelley.)
- C. (#228) a 2½-story mid-19th-century house, on a relatively large lot, between Cherry Hill Road and George Street, including a large wood-frame barn with cupola. (1870-J.S. Kelley.)

STRUCTURES AND SITES

DEAN AVENUE

3. Daniel Angell House, c. 1725, a 1½-story, gambrel-roof house built in two sections. The original part, the west end, contains a large, stone, center chimney. An ell, at the east end, was added prior to the Revolution. Another change was made in 1800; there was little change to the house thereafter. It was used as a tavern for a short time before 1800.

GEORGE WATERMAN ROAD

4. Clemence-Irons House, c. 1680. The original 1654 house was destroyed in King Philip's War of 1675-1676, and this house was later built to replace it. The extant dwelling is a 1½-story, frame structure with a stone-end chimney. It is the most carefully documented restoration of an early Rhode Island house in Providence County, an excellent example of a Rhode Island "stone-ender," and is now maintained as a museum by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. (1870-A. Irons.)

HARTFORD AVENUE

5. Indian Soapstone Quarry, a soapstone, or steatite, quarry "discovered" in 1878. It was worked by Narragansett Indians long before the coming of Europeans. Stone pots, dishes, and pipes were manufactured here. Much of the original quarry was destroyed by an industrial building and parking lot.

PUTNAM PIKE

6. Edwin H. Farnum House, (Angell House), 1765 and later, a 2½-story, center-chimney house originally built as a farmhouse by Stephen Angell; the Angells were among the first settlers in Johnston. The house was enlarged in the early 19th century and later extensively remodeled to its present appearance. At one time it served as a tavern. (1870-D. Sweet Estate.)

II. Recommended for nomination to the National Register.

ATWOOD AVENUE

7. James F. Simmons House, a two-story, Greek Revival house fronted by a monumental, tetrastyle ionic porch. James Simmons was an early industrialist and political leader. He started Simmonsville and Thornton Villages, served as U.S. Senator for several terms, and was one of the leading Whigs of Rhode Island. (1870-Mrs. Simmons.)

CHERRY HILL ROAD

8. (#38) Sessions-White House, a 2½-story, late 18th-century house with central doorway in a 5-bay facade. There is a large complex wing at the left and a large barn. (1870-G.W. White.)
9. (#325) Evans House, a 2½-story early 18th-century, end-chimney house with a 1½-story wing at the right side. A large stone chimney-stack ruin stands to the left rear. (1870-E.M.E. Evans.)

GREENVILLE AVENUE

10. Mathewson House, c. 1710, a 1½-story, frame, gambrel-roof, center-chimney house, with a 19th-century out-building to the left. (1870-W.H. Mathewson.)

11. Mathewson Hotel/House, a 2½-story, 18th-and early 19th-century center-chimney house, with a fine, early 20th-century, gambrel-roof, wood-shingle barn. (1870-P. Mathewson Hotel.)
12. (#475) Clemence House, a 2-story, early 18th-century, end-chimney house with a 2-story, gambrel-roof wing at the right side. (1870-S. Clemence.)

MORGAN AVENUE

13. Hipses Rock/Neutaconkanut Hill. "Notaquonchanot" was the name given to the hill by Roger Williams; it was the northwest corner of the first purchase in 1638. Hipses Rock is a huge, isolated boulder, 20 feet high, in the middle of a large open tract about .4 miles west of the summit of the hill. Reportedly, it is the site of Indian "pow-wows" in the early 20th century.

PLAINFIELD PIKE

14. Antioch Chapel, 1904, a 1-story, wood-shingled, country church with a small, open belfry in front.

WINSOR ROAD

15. S. Winsor House, a 2½-story early 18th-century, end-chimney "half house," with a 1½-story ell. (1870-S. Winsor.)
16. Winsor Farm, this large farm is located on Sikkibunkiqt Hill. The farmhouse is a 2-story, 18th-century, center-chimney building with a gambrel roof. There are other outbuildings, a fine wood-shingle barn, stone walls, and the old Winsor burying ground nearby. The farm has been in the Winsor family for several centuries. (1870-S. Winsor.)

III. Other districts, buildings and sites of architectural/historical significance.

DISTRICTS

17. Graniteville Historic District. The name derives from several granite quarries in the area. The village developed slowly along Putnam Pike and side roads; later some houses were built to

accommodate workers in the mill across the river (in Greystone), but Graniteville never industrialized. The most significant buildings include the Angell House (3), the Farnum House (6), and the following:

- A. Angell Avenue, several well-preserved, early 19th-century and Early Victorian houses along the north part of the street, including a Late Victorian carriage house.
 - B. a 1½- and 2½-story, early 19th-century, center-chimney house at 37 Dean Avenue. (1870-W.H. Smith?)
 - C. a 2½-story, Greek Revival house off Putnam Pike. (1870-P. Angell.)
 - D. a 2½-story, Greek Revival house with two interior end chimneys at 132 Putnam Pike. (1870-N. Barnes.)
 - E. a 1½-story, early 19th-century, center-chimney house at 100 Serrell Sweet Road. (1870-S. Nichols.)
 - F. Graniteville Baptist Church, a 1-story Early Victorian church with a square belfry in front; on Serrel Sweet Road. (1870-F.W. Baptist Church.)
18. Hughesdale Village Historic District. A small residential community along Central Pike, west of Atwood Avenue. Thomas Hughes established a chemical works along Dry Brook to manufacture dye stuffs in 1849. The village had a few services (such as post office, church, and school), all of which, including mills, are no longer functioning. Important buildings (all located on Central Pike) are:
- A. a 1½-story, Late Victorian, bracketed house.
 - B. (#423) a 1½-story, Greek Revival house.
 - C. a pair of mid-nineteenth-century, 1½-story, stuccoed-stone, double mill houses close to the road. The house to the east retains the integrity of the original buildings; the house to the west has undergone modern exterior changes.
 - D. (#424) Judge Patton Place, a 2-story, frame, early 19th-century, hip-roof house with two, brick, interior chimneys; a central entry in 5-bay facade; late Victorian additions. (1870-J. Patton.)
19. Morgan Mills Historic District. A hamlet, along Pocasasset River. There was an early stone factory here (destroyed in 1970's) and a small cluster of houses. Today, no mills from the early period or

early stone houses remain, but a few houses dating from the early period and later mill village days exist, including the following, all along Morgan Avenue:

- A. (#274) a 2½-story, early 19th-century, center-chimney house. (1870-A. & W. Sprague.)
- B. (#276) a 2½-story, center-chimney house with a one-story wing, c. 1789. (1870-A. & W. Sprague.)
- C. a 2-story, late 19th-and early 20th-century, cross-gambrel-roof, mill superintendent's house. It is the former residence of Leander W. Peckham, who bought the mills in 1897.
- D. (#310) Tom Pike Place, a 1½-story, early 19th-century, center-chimney house with a central doorway with transom lights. (1870-Mrs. A.E. Rathbone.)

20. Simmonsville Historic District. The village was established in 1822 when James F. Simmons built a mill and two large reservoirs. It was the scene of the disastrous flood of 1840. The mills were re-established later. In 1854 William A. Pierce began manufacturing cotton cloth. Subsequently, the mills went to B. F. Almy, who brought in Italian immigrant workers - perhaps the first to come as laborers to Rhode Island. In the early 20th century, many Italians purchased old farms in the area and made land improvements. Today the village is a mixture of styles and uses. Most significant are the following, on or near Simmonsville Avenue:

- A. a 1½-story, Greek Revival, center-chimney house. (1870-H. Young or Mrs. Remington.)
- B. a 2½-story, early 19th-century, stuccoed-stone mill house. (1870-W.H. Almy.) (Company house.)
- C. a 1½-story, early 19th-century, stuccoed-stone mill house. (1870-W.H. Almy.)
- D. (#170) a 2½-story, early 19th-century, stuccoed-stone mill house. (1870-A. & W. Sprague.)
- E. a 2½-story, early 19th-century, stuccoed-stone mill house. (1870-?)
- F. a 2-story, 18th-century, gambrel-roof house with a wing at rear. (1870-J.B. & E.S. Randall.)
- G. Ruins of Tillinghast Mill, later the mill of W. H. Almy, then G. F. Almy, along Simmons Brook in the east part of the village. (1870-Mill.) (B.F. Almy.)
- H. Abbie Pearce Place, a 1½-story, mid-19th-century, center-chimney house with several outbuildings. (1870-Mrs. Pirce.)

STRUCTURES AND SITES

ATWOOD AVENUE

21. Waterman House, a 2-story, 18th-century, gambrel-roof house, with original center chimney removed; the 1-story wing is at the left side. (1870-J. Waterman.)
22. (#1804) Waterman House (St. Robert Bellarmine Rectory), a 1½-story, Greek Revival, center-chimney house. (1870-C. Waterman.)
23. Allendale Insurance Company, 1970, a 3-story, cement and brick office building built in contemporary style on a large, well-landscaped tract, including a pond.
24. a 1½-story, frame, early 19th-century house with interior, end-wall chimneys. (1870-J. Smith.)
25. St. Rocco's Church, 1951, large, yellow brick church built in contemporary style, with a semi-circular recessed entry arch in the center and a circular window above. Designed by Oreste DiSaia, this church is an important focus of periodic Italian festivals.

BORDEN AVENUE

26. (#167) Coffin House, a 1½-story, stuccoed-stone, mid-19th-century house, which was once the center of the 100 acre farm of Edward B. Coffin, who came here in about 1850. Coffin invented a special machine for removing stones, which was patented; stone from the farm was used for his house and for other buildings in Olneyville and Providence. (1870-E.B. Coffin.)

CENTRAL PIKE

27. (#166) a 2½-story, frame, late 18th-century house, with two brick chimneys and an asymmetrical, 4-bay facade. Wings are at the right side and rear. (1870-W.H. Brown.)
28. (#240) a 2-story, frame, transitional Greek Revival, Early Victorian house, with an interior end-wall chimney and a central entry in 5-bay facade. (1870-J.M. King.)
29. (#262) 1½-story, early 19th-century house with central chimney, central entry in 5-bay facade. (1870-R. Whitman.)

CHERRY HILL ROAD

30. Waterman House, a 2-story, 18th-and early 19th-century, gambrel-roof house. (1870-L.E. Waterman.)

GEORGE WATERMAN ROAD

31. Angell House, a 1½-story, Early Victorian, gothic cross-gable dwelling, with two interior chimneys and a portico entry in 5-bay facade. (1870-N. Angell.)
32. (#266) Killey House, a 1½-story, Greek Revival house with an earlier 1-story wing. (1870-Mrs. J. Sweet.)

GREENVILLE AVENUE

33. (#785) a 2-story, early 20th-century, Spanish Colonial Revival style, stuccoed house, with a low-pitch tile roof and brick and tile trim.
34. Smith House, a 1½-story, 18th-century end-chimney house with a gambrel roof, flanked by small ells. (1870-B.F. Smith.)
35. a 2½-story, 18th-century, center-chimney house, with a central entry in 3-bay facade that faces south. (1870-E. Waterman.)
36. (#627) Benjamin Belknap House, c. 1758, a 2½-story house with a wing at the right side. The original center chimney was removed. The first town meeting was held here on April 18, 1759, and the first officers of Johnston town government were chosen. (1870-J. Belknap.)
37. a 1-story, frame structure, c. 1909, with a small square spire at front. Presently it is an American Legion Post; it was formerly School number 8. (1870-S. H.)
38. (#500) Belknap Community Church, a one-story, Late Victorian, country church with an open belfry in the front and a recent wing at the left rear.

HARTFORD AVENUE

39. a 2½-story, frame, center-chimney, 18th-century house with a two-story porch with an octagonal tower across the front and a 2½-story wing at the rear (north end) at a right angle. (1870-A.W. Smith.)
40. King Cemetery, a triangular burial plot bordered by stone walls along Hartford Avenue. It contains the grave of Samuel Ward King (1765-1851), among others.

King was governor during the Dorr War, from 1840-43; was town clerk, 1820-43; and served as an assistant surgeon in the War of 1812 and attended Capt. James Lawrence (of "Don't Give Up the Ship" fame) when mortally wounded in the Battle of the Chesapeake. (1870-Cem.)

41. (#1065) James Coffin House, a 2½-story Late Victorian-Queen Anne style, hip-roof house with a hexagonal corner tower and a fine Late Victorian carriage shed with cupola.
42. (#1560) a 1½-story, frame, Greek Revival house, gable end to road. (1870-J. Walch?)
43. (#1621) a 2½-story, frame, 18th-century, center-chimney house with a 1-story wing at the left side and large, Late Victorian, mansard-roof, rear wing. (1870-Miss S. Waterman.)
44. Brown House, a 2½-story, early 19th-century, center-chimney house with moderate alterations, including the entry and a 1-story bay window. There is a wing on the left side. (1870-T. Brown.)
45. Brown House, a 2½-story, frame, early 19th-century house with an asymmetrical 4-bay facade and a wing at the rear. (1870-M. Brown.)
45. Daniel Eddy Homestead, a 1½-story, 18th-and early 19th-century, center-chimney house, with a 5-bay facade and a wing at the right side. This is the former residence of Daniel Eddy, one of the first town councilmen (1759). (1870-A.H. Eddy.)
47. Randall Hotel (Shang Bailey Tavern), a 2½-story, early 19th-century building with three brick chimneys and a veranda at the front, a one-story wing at the rear. It served as a hotel in the first half of the 19th century. (1870-H. Randall Hotel.)

HOPKINS AVENUE

48. Thornton House, a 1½-story, frame, 18th-century, center-chimney house with a central entry in a 5-bay facade that faces south. It occupies a large lot, on which there is also a wood shingle barn. (1870-Deac Thornton Est.)
49. a 1½-story, frame, 18th-century, center-chimney house with a shed-roof addition at the south side. (1870-P. Thornton Est.)

50. Dean Kimball House, a 2½-story, 18th-century, center-chimney house with a central entry in a 5-bay facade that faces south. There is a wing at the rear. It is the former residence of Dean Kimball, one of the first town councilmen. (1870-M. Hopkins.)

KILLINGLY STREET

51. Nichols House, a 2-story, monitor-on-hip-roof, Greek Revival house with four corner chimneys and central dormers in a 5-bay facade. (1870-E.A. Nichols.)

LINWOOD DRIVE

52. (#17) John Brown House, a 1½-story, early 19th-century house with an interior chimney and a 5-bay facade that faces south. There are wings at each end. (1870-Brown Est.)

MEMORIAL AVENUE

53. Thornton House, a 2½-story, 18th-century, center-chimney house with an asymmetrical facade. (1870-J. Thornton Est.)

MILL STREET

54. American Foam Company (British Hosiery Company), a 4-story, late 19th-century industrial building. A major industrial event in Thornton was the founding of the British Hosiery Company by R. W. Cooper in 1884. The plant began operations with machinery and 120 skilled workers imported from England. Cooper was the first man in this country to offer English hosiery directly from the manufacturer. With the mill as a nucleus, Thornton became a model factory village.

MORGAN AVENUE

55. John White Place, a 2½-story, 18th-century, center-chimney house with a central entry in a 5-bay facade; there is a wing at the left. It is located on the south slope of Neutaconkanut Hill; several stone-walled terraces lead up from the street. (1870-Dr. Wilcox Est.)
56. (#153) a 2½-story, frame, 18th-century, center-chimney house with a 2-story wing at the right. (1870-Mrs. Latham.)
57. (#167) a two-story, gambrel-roof, 18th-century, center-chimney house, with a 2-story, gable wing to the right. (1870-C. Knight.)

58. Benjamin Harris House, c. 1750, a 1½-story, frame, center-chimney house with a central doorway in a 5-bay facade with an addition at the left side. An historical cemetery is located nearby. (1870-Harris Est.)
59. Abraham Latham Atwood House, 1789, a 1½-story, frame house with extensive mid-19th-century additions. (1870-A.C. Atwood.)
60. Welcome Alverson Place, 2½-story, frame, Greek Revival house with Late Victorian additions. A large, early 20th-century barn, a pair of silos, and a gable-roof house with a large, square, 3-story tower are the focus of the Crandall dairy farm, much of which is still open, rolling landscape. It also contains an historical cemetery. (1870-W. Alverson.)

OLD POCASSET ROAD

61. Briarcliff Nursing Home, a long, 2½-story, nursing home. The original section dates from late 19th-century, with later additions. There are several Late Victorian outbuildings.

PINE HILL AVENUE

62. a 2½-story, frame, early 19th-century house with an off-center chimney and a fine central doorway in 5-bay facade, near Graniteville. (1870- ?)
63. Bear Ledge Quarry, an old granite quarry worked in the early 19th century. One of several quarries in northern Johnston which comprised an important early industry; it supplied columns for the Arcade Building in Providence.
64. a 1½-story, frame, center-chimney, early 19th-century house, with a central entry in 5-bay facade. (1870-Mrs. Mathewson.)

PINE HILL ROAD

65. Smith House, a 1½-story, Greek Revival, center-chimney house with wings at the right side and rear. (1870-T. Smith.)
66. a 2-story, early 18th-century, center-chimney house with a gambrel roof. (1870-G. Randall.)

PLAINFIELD STREET

67. Mill Housing, two blocks of early 20th-century, 1½-story mill houses, with gable ends to the street, in Thornton.
68. a 3-story, masonry, mid-19th century mill along Pocasset River. (1870-D. Brown.)

PLAINFIELD PIKE

69. (#1931) a 1½-story, frame, mid-19th century, center-chimney house, with a central entry in 5-bay facade and a wing at the right side. (1870-J. Blanchard.)
70. a 2-story, 18th-century, center-chimney, gambrel-roof house with a 1-story, gable-roof wing. (1870-Mrs. Chapman?)
71. Farmscape, a relatively large area of open, rural landscape along Plainfield Pike in western Johnston, with fine stone walls, farm houses, and outbuildings, including large barns and silos. There is also an old burying ground.
72. Knight's Hotel, a 1½-story, early 19th-century building used as hotel in the early to mid 19th century. There is a 1½-story wing on the right side. In 1831 it was Knight's Hotel and in 1855 it became H. Greene's Hotel. (1870-W.S. Salisbury.)

SCITUATE AVENUE

73. Remington House, a 2½-story, 18th-century, center-chimney, wood-shingle house, with a central doorway in 3-bay facade. (1870-A.H. Remington.)
74. (#60) Sheldon Place, a 1½-story, mid-19th-century house with a central entry in a five-bay facade; there is a wing at the right. (1870-J. Tanner.)

SIMMONSVILLE AVENUE

75. Entwistle Place, a 2½-story, frame, center-chimney, Federal house with a central entry in 5-bay facade; there are wings on the left side and on the rear. (1870-J. Entwistle.)
76. a 1½-story, early, 19th-century house with central entry in a 5-bay facade and a 1-story wing. There are 3 barns and a greenhouse nearby. (1870-on.)

WINSOR ROAD

77. Winsor House ("Choice Acres"), a farm complex centered around a 2½-story, early 19th-century style house (possibly 18th Century); presently a large, well-managed horse farm. (1870-E. Winsor.)
78. M. Winsor House, a 1½-story, Greek Revival, center-chimney house, with a central entry in a 5-bay facade and a wing on the right. (1870-M. Winsor.)

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