

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Joseph Stanton House/Wilcox Tavern and General Stanton Monument

AND/OR COMMON

Wilcox Tavern and Joseph Stanton Monument

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Post Road (U.S. Route 1)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Charlestown

VICINITY OF

2 Hon. Edward Beard

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Rhode Island 02813

CODE 44

COUNTY Washington

CODE 009

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input 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 Mrs. Joseph Szydowski

STREET & NUMBER Post Road

CITY, TOWN Charlestown

VICINITY OF

STATE

Rhode Island 02813

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Charlestown Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER Route 2

CITY, TOWN Charlestown

STATE

Rhode Island 02813

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE not so represented

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

The building, known now and in the nineteenth century as Wilcox Tavern (Photo #1), was constructed before 1739 by Joseph Stanton as a family residence. It stands above fieldstone retaining walls part way up a low bluff overlooking the Boston-to-New York Post Road (U.S. Route 1) to the south. Beyond the road, lands once owned by the Stantons, who were farmers and horse-breeders, stretch to Quonochontaug Pond and the shoreline of Block Island Sound. Although the building's site is now reduced to less than three acres, this is an adequate surround to the tavern. There are no longer any significant outbuildings; but a twentieth-century shed stands east of the house and southeast of the house is the simple granite obelisk, within a granite-post-and-iron-rail fence, erected by the State of Rhode Island c. 1910 in memory of General Joseph Stanton, Jr., one of the first two U. S. Senators from Rhode Island (Photo #2). Although the tavern is now used primarily as a summer-season eating-place and has had rather rambling rear and lateral extensions of some size attached to it (in the 1930's), the main house has not lost its original domestic character. Its plan and architectural detail, which are typical of substantial Rhode Island houses of the first half of the eighteenth century, remain largely intact.

The house is a large two-and-one-half-story, timber-framed structure covered by a gable roof whose ridge runs east-west. Set on a granite foundation, and built on the typical center-chimney five-room plan (see plan), the house is five bays wide and two generous bays deep; the wall cover is weathered shingling. The massive central fieldstone chimney has been rebuilt above the roofline in brick. Most of the window and door openings are original, including two windows in each end-gable; exceptions include one first-floor window in the east facade, which has been widened into a pair, and openings at the rear, which have been enlarged and/or added to and lead into shingled, one-story restaurant additions of recent decades.

As built, the house must have presented a rather barren effect externally. The present front entrance is a handsome Greek Revival doorway with sidelights, panelled pilasters and a strong entablature which would date from about a century after Stanton built his house. Such front doorways were very common decorative improvements made in the 1825-1845 period to much older houses. Windows (filled with six-over-nine sash, which are restorations) have plain board surrounds and sills without any edge moulding or bevel; those on the second floor are set, in typical early eighteenth-century way, so high that their upper "surround" is formed by the plain, approximately eight-inch, fascia board under the eaves. The fascia has no moulding or cornice

See continuation sheet 1

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surmounting it except at the gable-ends, which treatment appears to date from the time the front door was "improved"; the structure may have been re-roofed at the same time although this cannot be verified because the garret story has been converted into an apartment, thus concealing the roof framing. Here, the considerable dimensions of the fieldstone chimney, plastered and whitewashed but still rough in surface, can be seen.

Internally, the trim is sparse. The principal entrance door has two full-length panels, typical of the Greek Revival style. The older doors elsewhere throughout the house are four-panelled, the panels being raised and bevelled on one side and of flat inset form on the other, and preserve their original "H" hinges with leather-collared nails and their iron thumb-latches. In the front entry the stairway rises tightly in three runs and two landings in front of the chimney (Photo #3). It has a closed moulded string course, sawn, flat, S-shaped balusters, a flat-topped moulded rail, and plain square newel posts with flat "pad" tops. The space under the second run and second landing is screened by unpainted raised panelling which includes the door to a cupboard under the second landing.

Doorways lead from the entry to the east and west parlors, which have similar detailing: narrow, moulded window and door architraves; cased corner posts; and chair rails. The fireplace walls are panelled with bolection moulding enframing the fireplace openings (Photo # 4). Ceiling cornices occur only above the panelled fireplace walls.

From each of the two parlors a doorway opens into the long keeping-room which takes the greater part of the rear of the first floor. This room has a large fireplace for cooking with a brick bake oven to its right (Photo # 5). The mantel framing this fireplace has slim mouldings, a frieze-board and shallow shelf; its "1800's" character suggests that it is a replacement. From the fireplace wall two cased and beaded summer-beams extend across the ceiling. A room at the northeast corner (probably originally a downstairs bedroom) has now been divided into office and lavatory spaces. A door in the northwest corner of the keeping-room opens to a rear staircase, and between this stair and the west parlor is a small room, now utilized as a service bar. It may have been so used when the house was first opened as a tavern in the early nineteenth century. The east parlor and the

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keeping-room, plus northerly and easterly extensions from the latter, are now used as dining-rooms. The west parlor is furnished as a sitting-room with a miscellany of antiques and is unchanged from early use.

The second and third floors of the house are now used by the tavern-owner's family. The principal east and west rooms of the second floor each have fireplaces lower and smaller than those below them; one has a mantel of modest design, the other, only an enframing moulding. On this floor the large rear room above the keeping-room has no fireplace, but it does display a single summer-beam running out from the chimney-wall to lock into a rear plate. The smaller rear rooms have now been made into a kitchen and a bath. From a corner of the small frontal stair-hall, behind a door, rises a stairway to the third floor.

In spite of varied uses, the house has come down to the present day in remarkably intact condition and fine state of maintenance. There have not been mutilations of its basic fabric or inappropriate replacements. Its grounds are well tended, and a two-level grassed terrace at its west, within stone retaining walls, is attractive. Above more old retaining-walls at the rear is a stand of trees, among which are two stone-lined pits said to have been made by Indians to contain signal-fires.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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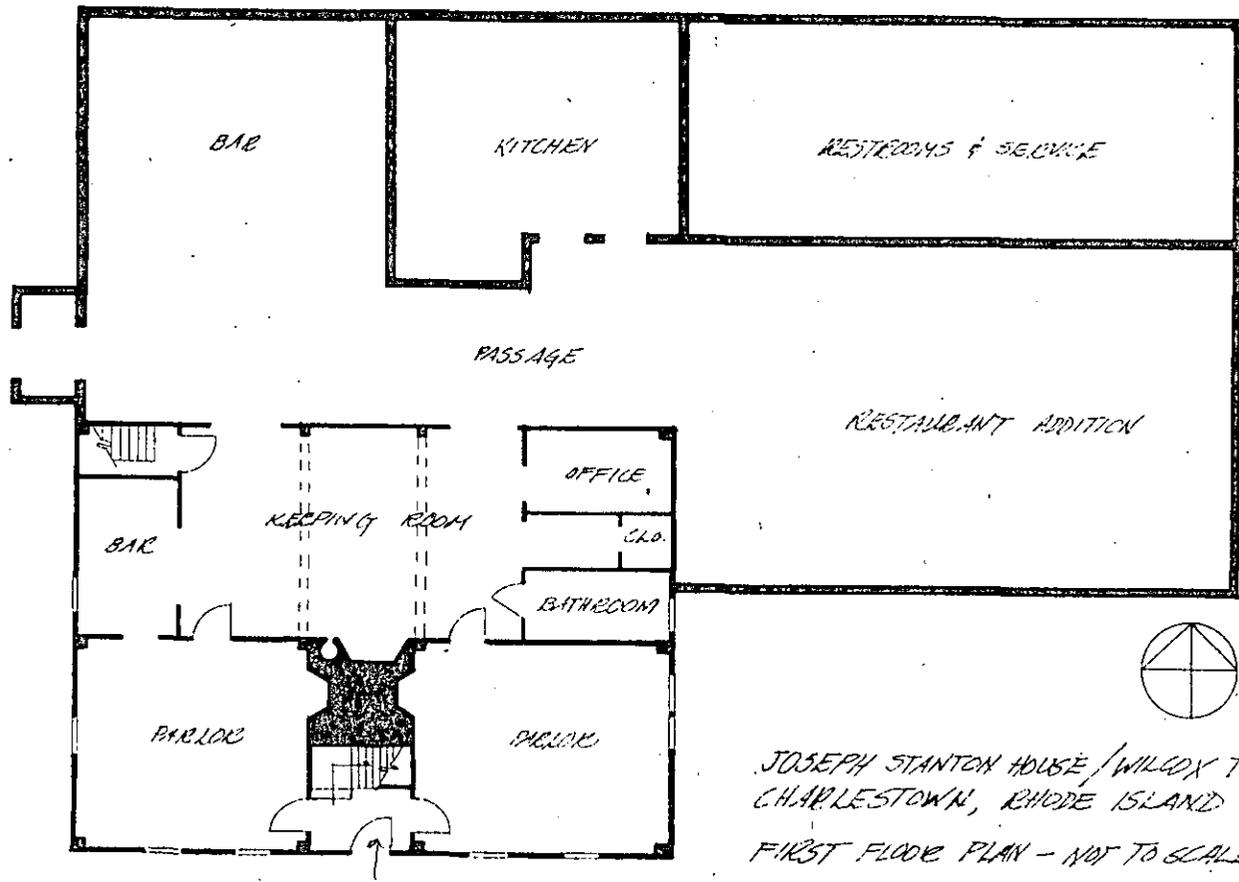
3

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## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input 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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joseph Stanton House, later and presently known as Wilcox Tavern, is important as a good example of eighteenth-century vernacular building; as the home of several illustrious Charlestown families, the Stantons and the Wilcoxes; for its sporadic and continuing role as a place of public gathering; and as a local landmark, well-known to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Post Road travellers alike. The nearby monument to General Joseph Stanton -- included in this nomination -- commemorates that individual's years of public service.

The house was built, sometime before 1739, by Joseph Stanton II, a respected member of the community who served, for a time, as Assistant to the Colonial Council representing Westerly. (Charlestown was part of Westerly until 1738.) Joseph Stanton II deeded the house to his son, Colonel Joseph Stanton III, in 1739, who in turn deeded the property to his son, Joseph Stanton, Jr., in 1766.

Joseph Stanton, Jr., was born in the house July 19, 1739. At the age of twenty he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Rhode Island regiment raised for the expedition against Canada in 1759 during the French and Indian War; Stanton served throughout the war. In 1768, he was elected to the Rhode Island General Assembly, where he served until 1775. An unnamed record, cited in a 1907 newspaper article,<sup>1</sup> described him at that time as follows: "He owned a lordship in Charlestown a tract of (sic) four and a half miles long and two miles wide, kept 40 horses, as many slaves, and made a great dairy." In 1776 he was a member of the Committee of Safety. That same year he entered the Continental Army as Lieutenant-Colonel of the First Regiment, Rhode Island Militia; he was soon promoted to Brigadier-General,<sup>2</sup> with William Barton as Lieutenant-Colonel under him.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The State's First U.S. Senator, "Providence Journal, April 28, 1907."

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

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At the close of the war, Stanton retired to his farm at the cove, but was soon active in public service again. In 1790, he was a delegate to the state convention to ratify the new constitution of the United States (which he personally opposed) and that same year was elected one of Rhode Island's first two U.S. Senators. He served from June 25, 1790, to March 3, 1793. Thereafter he served in the Rhode Island House of Representatives almost continuously for eight years, including two terms as Speaker. In 1801, he was elected Representative to the U. S. Congress, serving until March 3, 1807, when he retired.

According to an old newspaper account, "Near the end of his life his affairs did not go well, as all his slaves had been sold and he still clung to the business methods which had proved successful in earlier days . . ."4 Perhaps this explains why Stanton sold the home-  
stead property in 1811, ten years before his death.

"Some years after his death his fellow citizens, recognizing the value of his services to State and nation, and knowing him as a patriot, a statesman, a soldier, and last, but not least, a neighbor, wished to commemorate him in a fitting way, so they erected a statue in the village."5 In 1907, the Rhode Island General Assembly appropriated \$50. to renovate this marker, which had fallen into disrepair. It appears that the money was expended, not to repair the old statue, but to raise a new memorial, the obelisk which still stands near the tavern.

Edward Wilcox, who purchased the Stanton house in 1811, inaugurated its public life when he opened therein a country store. About 1820, he or some other family member began the "Wilcox Tavern" which soon became a regular stop for the stage coach on the Post Road. Edward Wilcox served the public in more formal fashion as Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Rhode Island from 1817 to 1821.

Sometime later the tavern reverted to single-family residency and thereafter, was converted into apartments. In the early 1930's, Dr.

4Ibid.

5Ibid.

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Fritz Swanson purchased the house and returned it to public use as a restaurant "Old Wilcox Tavern." The restaurant business was interrupted by World War II use of the property for U.S. Naval officers' housing. In 1955, the property was purchased by the present owner. Since then it has been used as a dining place. This third life of the "Old Wilcox Tavern" is a lively one, especially in summer, when Rhode Island's beaches draw vast numbers of visitors to this area.

Fortunately, the Wilcox Tavern has passed relatively unscathed through the variety of uses it has served since Joseph Stanton built it as his residence. The house and the General Stanton Monument have an abiding place in both local and state history.

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Stanton, William A. A Record, Genealogical, Biographical,  
Statistical, of Thomas Stanton, of Connecticut, and His  
Descendants 1635-1891. Albany, New York, 1891

"The State's First U. S. Senator," Providence Journal, April 28,  
1907, section IV, page 8.

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Beginning at a point in the northerly line of the highway known as Post Road, Route U.S. 1, said point being marked by a Rhode Island Highway bound, said point being also the southwesterly corner of the tract herein described; thence turning an interior angle of  $86^{\circ} 34'$  with said northerly line of Post Road and running northerly a distance of 87.60 feet to a drill hole in a boulder; thence turning an interior angle of  $91^{\circ} 06'$  and running easterly a distance of 81.30 feet to a drill hole at wall corner; thence turning an interior angle of  $268^{\circ} 32'$  and running northerly a distance of 28.59 feet to a drill hole at a wall corner; thence turning an interior angle of  $89^{\circ} 28'$  and running easterly a distance of 165.30 feet to an oak hub; thence turning an interior angle of  $274^{\circ} 39'$  and running northerly a distance of 169.72 feet to a drill hole in a boulder at a wall intersection; thence turning an interior angle of  $101^{\circ} 21'$  and running northeasterly a distance of 384.92 feet to a nail in an oak hub at a wall intersection; thence turning an interior angle of  $68^{\circ} 53'$  and running a distance of 254.63 feet to an oak hub set in the northerly line of land of Thomas J. Clark; thence turning an interior angle of  $108^{\circ} 38'$  and running westerly a distance of 97.79 feet to an oak hub; thence turning an interior angle of  $261^{\circ} 34'$  and running southerly a distance of 77.73 feet to an iron pipe set in the northerly line of the Post Road; these last two courses bounding southerly and easterly on land of Thomas J. Clark; thence turning an interior angle of  $90^{\circ} 00'$  and running westerly by and with said northerly line of the Post Road a distance of 190.41 feet to a Rhode Island Highway bound; thence turning an interior angle of  $178^{\circ} 52'$  and continuing westerly by and with said northerly line of the Post Road a distance of 127.87 feet to a Rhode Island Highway bound; thence turning an interior angle of  $180^{\circ} 23'$  and continuing by and with said northerly line of the Post Road a distance of 173.56 feet to the point and place of beginning. This tract containing an area of 2.7067 acres.

Also included in this nomination is the small piece of the highway right-of-way on which the Stanton monument stands, which is owned by the State of Rhode Island. This has no plat or lot designation in the Assessor's Records.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Charlestown Land Evidence Records.  
Fletcher, Margaret. Notes on the tavern compiled 1978.

Manual with Rules and Orders for the Use of the General Assembly of the  
State of Rhode Island 1971-1972. Rhode Island, 1971.

See continuation sheet 6

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.7 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	27,249,9,0	4,518,152,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

That certain tract or parcel of land with all the buildings and improvements thereon standing, known as the "OLD WILCOX TAVERN", situated on the northerly side of the State Highway known as the Post Road, in the Town of Charlestown, County of Washington and State of Rhode Island, and bounded and described as follows, to-wit:

See continuation sheet 7

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Richard B. Harrington, Margaret Fletcher, Ancelin Lynch

ORGANIZATION R.I. Historical Preservation Commission DATE Fall 1977, revised August 1979

STREET & NUMBER 150 Benefit Street TELEPHONE 401-277-2678

CITY OR TOWN Providence, STATE Rhode Island

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE Richard B. Williams

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE October 1, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

OLD WILCOX  
TAVERN  
EST. 1730



Joseph Stanton House / Wilcox Tavern.  
and General Stanton Monument  
Charlestown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger      January, 1979  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

View looking west northwest, showing south  
and east facades of original house and 20th  
century restaurant ell at right.

Photo #1



ALAZAR W. ...  
FATHER OF ...  
BORN ...  
DIED ...  
A. S. ...  
MAY 18 ...  
MAY 18 ...

Joseph Stanton House / Wilcox Tavern  
and General Stanton Monument  
Charlestown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger January, 1979  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

View of General Stanton Monument from the north  
east (or Old Post Road) side; open landscape  
and Quonochontaug Pond in the distance.

Photo #2

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Joseph Stanton House / Wilcox Tavern  
and General Stanton Monument  
Charlestown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger      January, 1979  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

View of the main staircase from the southwest.

Photo #3

---



Joseph Stanton House / Wilcox Tavern  
and General Stanton Monument  
Charlestown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger    January, 1979  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

View of chimney breast in southeast parlor.

Photo #4



Joseph Stanton House / Wilcox Tavern  
and General Stanton Monument  
Charlestown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger      January, 1979  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

View of keeping room / tavern room, with  
large fireplace, federal period mantel; from  
the northwest.

Photo #5

RIOR

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS.

PROVII

ALTON 5.6 MI.

BRADFORD 2.2 MI.

272 440000 FEET

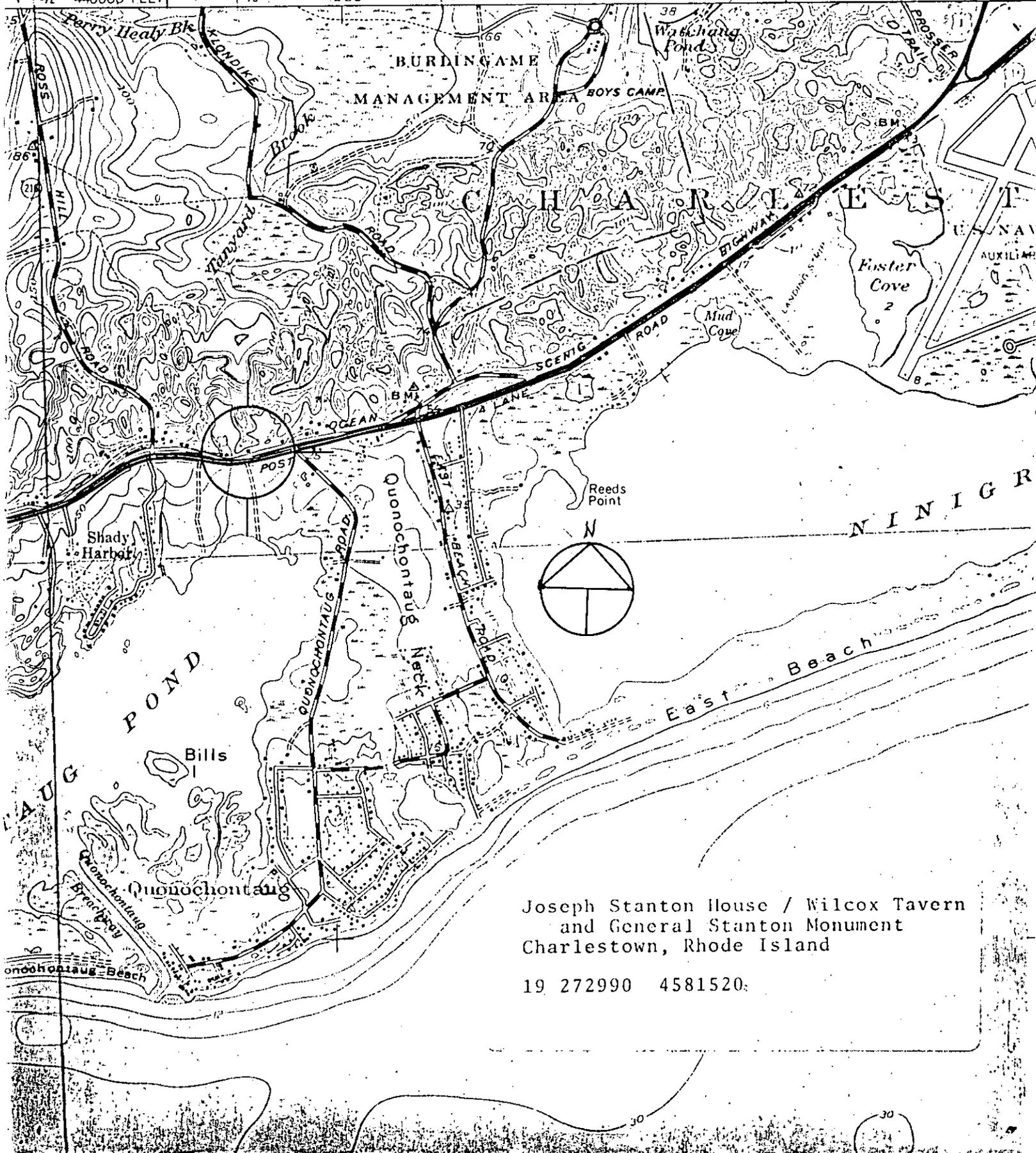
1773

42°30'

1774

5666 1 NW  
(Carolina)

1776



Joseph Stanton House / Wilcox Tavern  
and General Stanton Monument  
Charlestown, Rhode Island

19 272990 4581520