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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 Jeffrey House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Town House Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Charlestown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

#2

Hon. Edward Beard

STATE

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY

CODE

000

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Anne Marshall

STREET & NUMBER

Meadowbrook Road

CITY, TOWN

Wyoming

VICINITY OF

STATE

Rhode Island

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Charlestown Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Route 112

CITY, TOWN

Carolina

STATE

Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Charlestown Broadbrush Survey (draft)

DATE

July 1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

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 Joseph Jeffrey House, built in the early eighteenth century, is located on a nine-and-a-half-acre tract bordering south on Sawmill Pond in rural Charlestown. The site is heavily wooded, especially around its perimeters, and a low stone wall bounds the property to the west, along Town House Road. The southerly-sited house and an early twentieth-century carriage house are located approximately two hundred feet east of the road on an elevated clearing in the midst of handsome early twentieth-century gardens, and just south of Sawmill Brook, which flows west from the pond over a dam, stand the foundations of an early eighteenth-century sawmill, now much deteriorated.

The Jeffrey House, built in at least two stages, consists of a one-and-a-half-story, gambrel-roof, center-chimney frame structure, twenty-eight by forty feet, joined at the northeast to a smaller one-story, gable-roof ell. A low, square (twenty-eight by twenty-eight feet) fieldstone foundation supports the eastern part of the building, while more finished quarried granite sill stones lie under the western, twenty-eight-by-twelve-foot portion. Except for the clapboarded west wall, the house is sheathed in weathered natural wood shingle on walls and roof. The five-bay facade has a central entrance, with a small transom light, flanked by six-over-nine, double-hung sash windows. Windows on the other walls are similar, except for the six-over-six windows under splayed lintels on the west wall. Shed dormers with casement windows have been added in this century; three on the facade and one on the north side. A modern, six-over-six triple window is located in the attic story of the east wall, and a similar quadruple complex--with one blind section--is centered on the north wall. The ell has irregular fenestration.

The first floor arrangement of the interior is now the standard, mid-eighteenth-century five-room plan which gives little indication of the earlier four-room plan with off-center chimney. The front door opens into a small hall with a single-turn staircase, which runs along the face of the chimney. Under the stairway is a filled-in firebox and a hearthstone. To the east and west of the stairhall are two approximately sixteen-four-square chambers, each with a fireplace. The east chamber has an exposed summer beam--not chamfered--and joists, cased corner posts. The bevel wainscoting and chimney breasts are fine examples of mid-eighteenth-century paneling found in other South County dwellings. The south wall of the east chamber has a floor-to-ceiling crack in the plaster about four feet from the southeast corner post, and beneath the plaster portions of the lathe have been patched across an approximately three-foot-wide space; further, the original floor boards have been patched in this area. The west chamber also has cased corner posts, and a simple, Federal mantel surrounds the fireplace, which has one-piece side jambs of

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

1

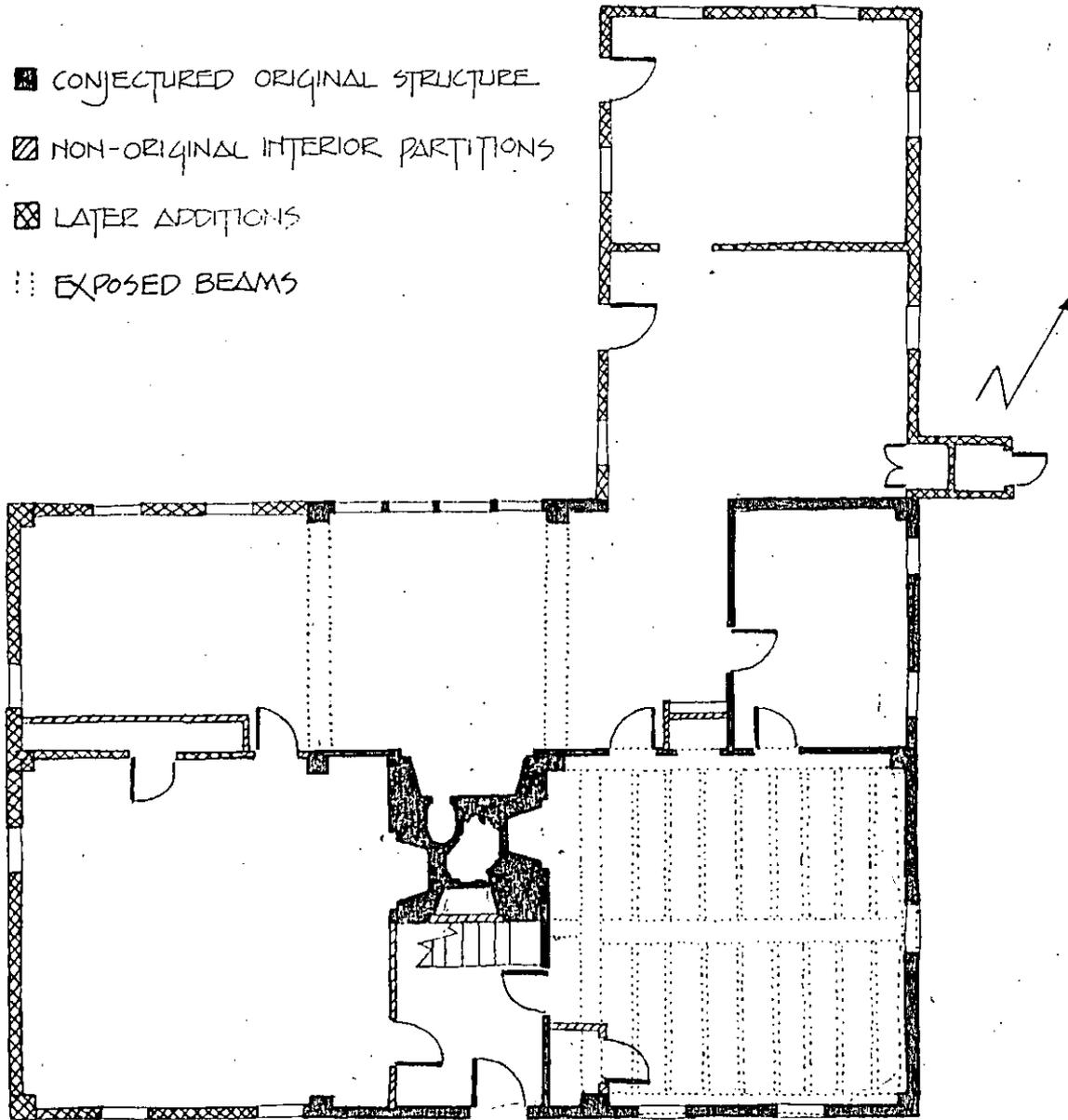
ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

2

- CONJECTURED ORIGINAL STRUCTURE
- ▨ NON-ORIGINAL INTERIOR PARTITIONS
- ⊠ LATER ADDITIONS
- ⋮ EXPOSED BEAMS



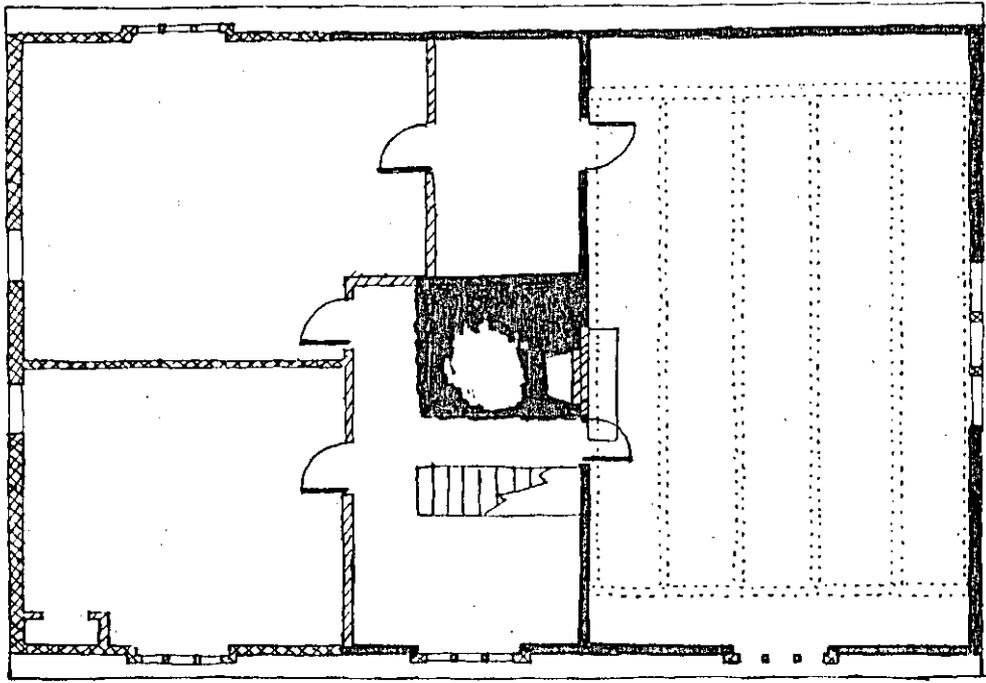
(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

- CONJECTURED ORIGINAL STRUCTURE
- NON-ORIGINAL INTERIOR PARTITIONS
- LATER ADDITIONS
- EXPOSED BEAMS



(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

3

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

4

quarried and hand-dressed granite unlike the split-surface ledge stone in the rest of the chimney. The west chamber contains two "corner posts," approximately three feet west of the room's east wall, and an "end" girt in the ceiling connects them and continues through to the post in line on the rear wall of the house (see plan). Partitions in the rear portion of the main block have been removed, leaving a small room in the northeast corner and a large room occupying the remaining space. In the rear room, a large cooking fireplace, with a baking oven in its rear wall, is surrounded by simple bolection molding. The interior of the ell reflects changes effected in the twentieth century, but its corner posts reflect the early origins of this portion of the house.

The staircase terminates at the second story in a hall which gives access to three chambers, two on the west and one on the east. The chimney, exposed on two sides in the hall, rakes sufficiently to the north to allow a two-foot-wide passage between the staircase and the chimney. The knuckle beams and tie beams for the roof truss are exposed in the large east chamber, and a large hearthstone (approximately fifty-six inches long) remains in the floor in front of a filled-in firebox in the room's west wall. In the simple, unembellished west chambers, the posts which carry the knuckle beams of the roof frame rest on the "end" girts evident in the rooms on the first floor; the knuckle beam ends at these posts, and a laff joint above the post was used to extend the knuckle beam twelve feet to the west wall.

In the peak section of the gambrel roof, the rafter sets in the east side of the building are marked in Roman numerals with a lumber scribe. The rafter pairs are numbered from I at the east wall to VIII at the twenty-eight-foot mark. The remaining rafters are also marked in Roman numerals, but with a struck chisel beginning with I at the west wall and running east to IV.

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 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 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joseph Jeffrey House, built on land held by the Narragansett Indians until the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century, is an important Rhode Island architectural and cultural resource. The eighteenth-century evolution of its form and its condition make the house significant to the history of Rhode Island architecture, for while the structure displays all the earmarks of a typical five-room-plan dwelling, structural evidence points to an earlier, less-prevalent form. Its early ownership and the contemporary activity at the nearby sawmill are further revealing of colonial Rhode Island social history.

The basic original form of the house is evinced by its structure. The twenty-eight-foot square fieldstone foundation under the eastern portion of the main block, the location of posts at the corners of this foundation, the framing of the eastern portion, and the enumeration of the rafter sets indicate that the original dwelling was twenty-eight feet square with its chimney off center near the western end of the structure. The location of the chimney, the filled-in firebox in the entry hall, and the use of more finished members and a Federal mantel in the west chamber fireplace--suggesting a later date for this fireplace--posit an original configuration similar to those of dwellings built in Newport and in South County during the second quarter of the eighteenth century (see plan of the Townsend House, Continuation Sheet 4).

While the house follows this general plan, its particular original scheme is open to question. The repaired lathes and floorboards on the south wall of the east chamber suggest this location for an earlier entrance, but the placement of beams and joists in the ceiling precludes the location of a staircase to the second story in this room. The stairs could easily have been located in the northeast chamber--a location similar to that in the Townsend House in Newport (see plan, Continuation Sheet 4)--but later construction in that location completely obscures any structural evidence for this conjecture.

Sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, the house was expanded twelve feet to the west and assumed its present form. Both the style of the mantel and the use of splayed-lintel windows in the west wall support this later dating.

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

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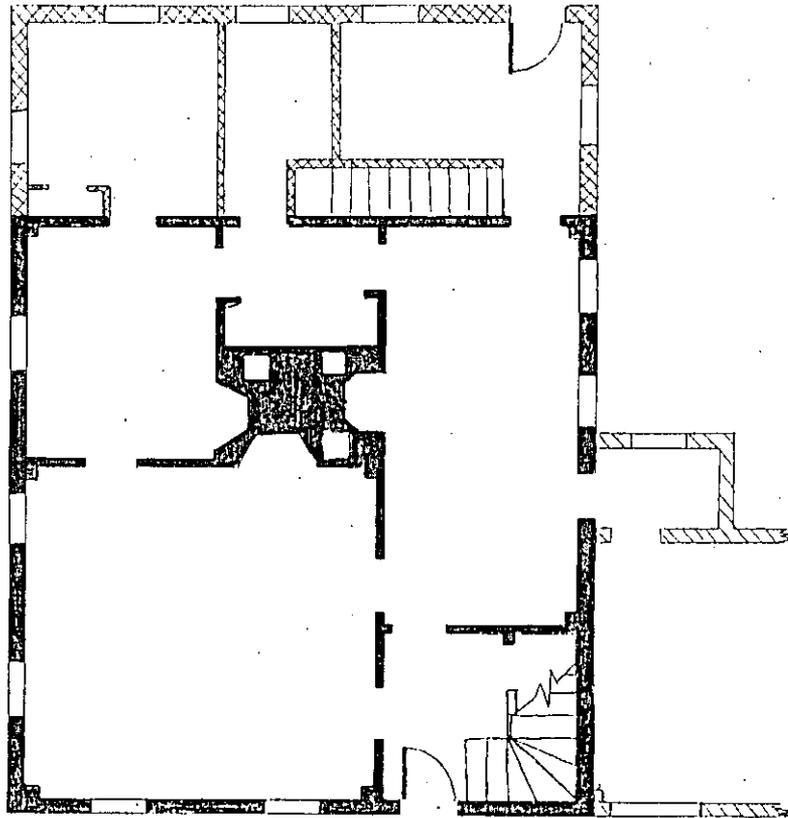
4

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE 2

-  ORIGINAL PORTION OF DWELLING
-  ADDITION TO DWELLING
-  SHOP



CHRISTOPHER TOWNSEND HOUSE & SHOP, 74 BRIDGE STREET
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

BUILT AFTER 1725 & BEFORE 1750

(NOT TO SCALE)

(See Continuation Sheet #5)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

5

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

The Jeffrey House is thus important not only as a well-preserved eighteenth-century rural dwelling, but also as a fine example of evolutionary expansion of a residential structure. Few known contemporary houses so fully evince the use of two standard eighteenth-century plans or demonstrate so graceful a transition from the earlier to the later form. Further study of this house during the imminent restoration by the owners will no doubt reveal more information of the structure's early form and evolution.

The early history of the activity at the nearby sawmill and at the house remains obscure, but land records, nineteenth-century histories, and local tradition strongly indicate that both structures were built by Narragansett Indians who retained control of the site until around 1800. The probable Indian involvement sheds interesting light on early colonial history.

In 1709, an approximately nine-square-mile tract, including this property, was set aside as a reservation for the Narragansett Indians (this area, the Historic Village of the Narragansett Indians, was entered in the National Register in 1973). Until 1769, the lands were owned and controlled by the Chief of the Narragansetts, advised by a tribal council;¹ individual parcels were granted to tribal members for their own use, but deed transfers were not recorded, and the land remained legally in the hands of the Chief. In 1769, an insurgent council deposed King Tom and his council and assumed authority within the tribe to transfer land.

Joseph Jeffrey had been a member of Thomas (King Tom) Ninigret's advisory council, and the land on which his house stands was granted to him by King Tom. Jeffrey retained the property through the 1769 insurgency, but appears to have lost it while he was fighting with the Continental Army during the Revolution, for he accused the insurgent council in 1785 of expropriating his land without cause.²

¹"The role and powers of the council are unclear and almost impossible to define in the period before 1769....it seems that...the council acted merely as an advisory body not as a governing body with veto powers..." Glenn LaFantasie, Letter, 12 November 1977)

²Petition of the Narragansett Indians, 1785, Rhode Island Historical Society Library

(See Continuation Sheet #6)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

6

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE 4

Jeffrey, an important member of the Narragansett Tribe, carried his livelihood as a wheelwright and sawyer. These professions were common among the Narragansetts, but Jeffrey appears to achieved a greater level of proficiency and success than many of his fellow tribesmen. This success and position within the Tribe is reflected in Jeffrey's house: while the Narragansett Indians had begun to adopt English cultural standards by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, their acculturation was a gradual process. The sophistication of the Jeffrey House demonstrates an early, conscious, and proficient use of American colonial building forms.

This early acceptance of the colonists' cultural standards by an important member of the indigenous population is well represented by the Jeffrey House and sawmill site. The property's importance to both social and architectural history makes it a significant resource worthy of inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cole, J. R. History of Washington and Kent Counties. New York: W. W. Preston & Co. 1889.

LaFantasie, Glenn. Letter. 12th November 1977.

Land Evidence Records of the Town of Charlestown.

Saglio, Dean. The Old Mill Road House. Unpublished Manuscript. 1976.

Tucker, William Franklin. Historical Sketch of the Town of Charlestown.

Westerly, Rhode Island: B. B. & J. H. Utter. 1877.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9.5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	2,7,7	3,2,0	4,5	8,9	6,9,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				
C				D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is bounded on the north by Saw Mill Pond and on the west by Old Mill Road. Southern and eastern boundaries are indistinct because of the dense woods that grow in these areas.

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

Wm. McKenzie Woodward, Historic Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

December 1977

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Frederick Williams

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

1-11-78

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



JOSEPH JEFFREY HOUSE
CHARLESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: March 1977

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
View of the exterior from the northwest



JOSEPH JEFFREY HOUSE

CHARLESTON, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: March 1977

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

View of Dam and Indian Sawmill Site



JOSEPH JEFFREY HOUSE
CHARLESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: March 1977

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

View of the exterior from the southeast



JOSEPH JEFFREY HOUSE

CHARLESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: March 1977

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

View of the east chamber, the west wall



JOSEPH JEFFREY HOUSE

CHARLESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: March 1977

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

View of kitchen fireplace in rear chamber



JOSEPH JEFFREY HOULE

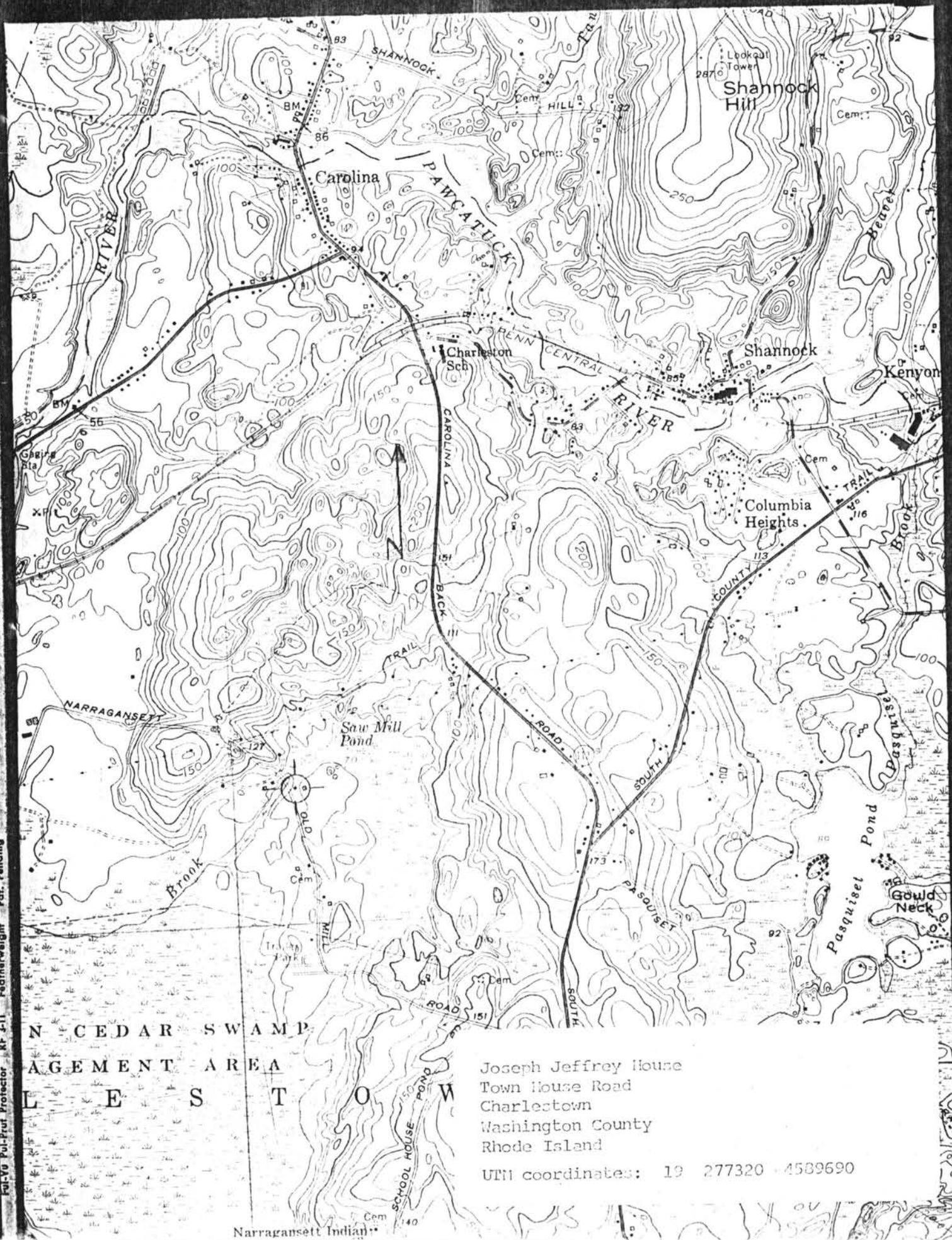
CHARLESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: March 1977

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

View of East Chamber on Second Storey



N CEDAR SWAMP
 AGEMENT AREA
 L E S T O W

Joseph Jeffrey House
 Town House Road
 Charlestown
 Washington County
 Rhode Island

UTM coordinates: 19 277320 4589690