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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mount Vernon Tavern as it stands today is a gable-roofed two-and-ahalf-story clapboarded house with a one-and-a-half-story ell to the west. It is set back only slightly from Plainfield Pike, on which it long served as a coachstop and tavern, and is surrounded by fields and those young woodlands which signify earlier cleared fields.

The oldest part of the house, a wing to the north with a "walk-in" fireplace, may have dated from 1740 but was demolished in the late 1800's. The extant main part of the house was built about 1760 and has the symmetrical five-bay front fenestration, central doorway, center chimney, and five-room plan typical of many mid-eighteenth century residences. Also characteristic of this period are the corner quoins and the flat cornice with second-story splayed window lintels framed into it.

The unusual architectural feature of the house is the very fine front doorway, probably added by Pardon Holden after he bought the house in 1814. The double door is flanked by fluted Ionic pilasters and capped by a handsome fanlight, delineated by wooden muntins and topped with a carved wooden keystone. In front of the doorway is a delicate portico with slender tapering, Doric columns and denticulated pediment cornice, a treatment of surprising sophistication for such a rural location.

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Most likely Holden was also responsible for the very simple wing to the west of the house which served as his general store until 1831 and the Mount Vernon Post Office from 1828 to 1864.

Notable features of the Tavern's interior include the three-run front staircase with scrolled riser ends and closed string course, the simple but well-proportioned mantels of the two downstairs chambers, and the generous fireplace of the keeping room. The whip rack in the back staircase hall and the built-in bar and trap door in the southwest "taproom" are evidences of the house's faithful service as a tavern. Upstairs in the southwest chamber is the built-in cupboard on whose shelves the Mount Vernon Bank is said to have kept its specie when it first opened in 1823. Downstairs in the ell is the Dutch-door over which Mount Vernon's mail was passed for thirty-odd years. All of these features are vivid reminders of Mount Vernon's varied and vital history. Despite minor modern alterations, the house retains much of the aura it must have had in Holden's time, when the quiet little village of Mount Vernon was alive with new enterprises by day and the Pike brought new visitors and old friends to the taproom by night.

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Mount Vernon Tavern is a landmark significant both for its surprising architectural refinement and its many and varied historic associations. Built by a member of the Clark family, early proprietors in southern Foster according to a 1734 plat map, the house was one of a dozen or so in Foster that were raised along the Providence-Norwich Road in the mid-eighteenth century.

The Road, later and presently called Plainfield Pike, was welltravelled as early as 1706 when residents of the area petitioned the General Assembly to make it a legal highway. The Assembly granted the petition in 1711, and by 1714 the way had been laid out from Providence through Foster to central Connecticut by way of Plainfield. The Pike quickly became a mail and stage coach route and an impetus to settlement along its course. It was along Plainfield Pike that Rochambeau marched his troops five thousand strong on their way from Newport to the battle of Yorktown in 1782.

The old homestead remained in the Clark family until 1802. After several changes of ownership the house and surrounding hundred-acre farm were bought by Pardon Holden. Thus began the liveliest period in the house's long history. Holden was an intelligent, capable, enterprising, and civic-minded individual who immediately turned the house into the Mount Vernon Tavern. It was probably Holden who built the handsome front portico and the one-and-a-half story ell to the west of the house which served as a general store and the village's first post office, after 1828. And it must have been Holden who installed the bar and wine cellar, respectively in and beneath the southwest chamber of the main dwelling house.

The Tavern quickly became popular as a center of local social activity and as a stagecoach stop. "Squire Holden," as he was known, dispensed not only rum but also various forms of social amusement: turkey shoots for Christmas, rabbit hunts in winter, games and contests in summer, and dancing every evening.

As the Tavern flourished so did the little hamlet of Mount Vernon. By 1823 Holden saw, and personally felt, the need for a local place of monetary exchange. He and sixty-six other local men petitioned

See continuation sheet 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERI	0R
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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iform 10-300a (July 1969)

> HABS (RI-38) 1958 Federal Library of Congress Washington, D. C.

8. Significance cont.

the General Assembly in June of that year for a state bank charter. The charter was granted in October, 1823, and the Mount Vernon Bank opened its doors the same month in the upstairs front west chamber of Holden's Tavern. In 1825 Holden bought a nearby stone building from his western neighbor, Dr. Thomas O. H. Carpenter, and leased it to the Bank. The Bank operated in this building until its removal to Providence in 1853. Holden served as the second President of the Bank from 1828 till his death in 1831.

In 1823 Pardon Holden had also concerned himself with the development of a new industry in Foster, that of manufacturing cast iron plows. He and his partner Daniel Wood set up their forge to the northwest of the Tavern and there turned out some of the first plows cast in Rhode Island. This partnership was the beginning of what later became B. I. F. Industries in Providence.

Eleven years after Holden's death, in 1842, the Holden family sold the farm to the Frys, who discontinued the Tavern but continued to operate the general store. For some period of time George Fry operated a printing press in the southeast downstairs chamber of the house. Just what manner of things he printed remains unclear. George Fry sold the house in 1888 and it has been used as a private residence ever since. Restoration work was begun in the 1940's and is being continued by the present owners. Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMEN		Rhode Isla	and
NATIONAL REGISTER OF	HISTORIC PLACE		
		Providence	2
PROPERTY PHOTOGR	APH FORM	FOR NPS US	EONLY
(Type all entries - attach to or	enclose with photogr	raph)	R DAT
1. NAME			
COMMON: Mount Vernon Tavern			
AND/OR HISTORIC: "Bank House Tave	ern"		
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
Plainfield Pike			
CITY OR TOWN: Foster			
Rhode Island	CODE COU	Providence	COD
3. PHOTO REFERENCE		TIOVIDENCE	1 00
PHOTO CREDIT: Ancelin V. Lynch			
DATE OF PHOTO: December, 1973			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island H	istorical Prese	rvation Commission	
52 Power Stree		Rhode Island 02906	
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
View of front facade, fro	m the southwest		
	-		



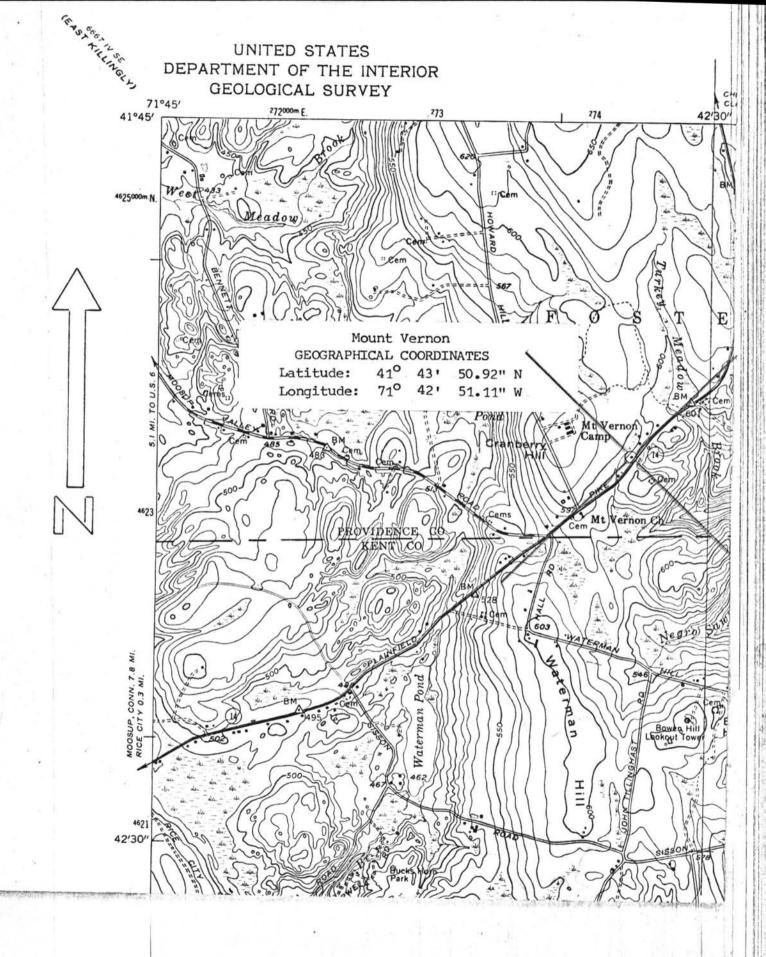
	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT NATIONAL PARK S		OR	STATE Rhode Island	
	NATIONAL REGISTER OF I	COUNTY			
	PROPERTY PHOTOGRA	PH FORM		Providence FOR NPS USE O	NLY
	(Type all entries - attach to or er	nclose with pho	tograph)	ENTRY NUMBER	DAT
1,	NAME				
	COMMON: Mount Vernon Tavern				•••••
-	AND/OR HISTORIC: "Bank House Taver	m"		тн. -	
2.	LOCATION				
1	STREET AND NUMBER: Plainfield Pike	0	•		
	CITY OR TOWN: Foster				
	STATE: Rhode Island	CODE	COUNTY: Provid	dence	CODE
3.	PHOTO REFERENCE	1 44	1 110010	uence	007
	PHOTO CREDIT: Ancelin V. Lynch				
	DATE OF PHOTO: December, 1973				-
	NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island His	storical Pre	eservation (Commission	
4.	TOCHTIFICATION		, knode is	Land UZ905	
	DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. Detail of front door, wi	ith portico,	fanlight,	and pediment.	



	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PARK SERV	THE INTER	RIOR	Rhode Islar	od			
	NATIONAL REGISTER OF HIS	Providence						
	PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM			FOR NPS USE ONLY				
	(Type all entries - attach to or enclo	se with nh	otostanh)	ENTRY NUMBER	DAT			
1	NAME	P.						
	COMMON: Mount Vernon Tavern							
	AND/OR HISTORIC: "Bank House Tavern"		· · · · ·					
2.	LOCATION							
	STREET AND NUMBER: Plainfield Pike							
	CITY OR TOWN: Foster							
	STATE: Rhode Island	CODE						
3.	PHOTO REFERENCE	44	Provide:	ence 00'				
	PHOTO CREDIT: Ancelin V. Lynch							
	DATE OF PHOTO: December, 1973							
4.	NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 52 Power Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906							
	DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.							
	Fireplace wall in southwes	t first	floor chamber					



	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF T NATIONAL PARK SERVIC		OR	STATE Rhode Island	
	NATIONAL REGISTER OF HIST	ORIC PL	ACES	Providence	
	PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH F	ORM		FOR NPS USE O	NLY
	(Type all entries - attach to or enclose	e with pho	otograph)	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
1. NAM	E				1
COM	MON: Mount Vernon Tavern				••••••••
AND	OR HISTORIC: "Bank House Tavern"				
2. LOC	ATION				
STR	EET AND NUMBER: Plainfield Pike				
CITY	Foster				
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РНО	TO CREDIT: Ancelin V. Lynch		····		
DAT	E OF PHOTO: December, 1973				
4. IDEN	ATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Histor 52 Power Street, Pr				
DES	Bar in southwest first floor	chambe	er, the tapro	om.	



1	Form 10-301 UNITED STATES I (Dec. 1968) NATIO	DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	Rhode	Island
	NATIONAL REGIS	TER OF HISTORIC PLAC	ES COUNTY Prov	vidence
	PROP	ERTY MAP FORM	FOR NPS U	SE ONLY
	(Type all entries -	attach to or enclose with map		
	I. NAME			
1	COMMON: Mount Vernon			
	AND/OR HISTORIC: "Bank Hou	se Tavern''		
	2. LOCATION			
0	STREET AND NUMBER: Plai	nfield Pike	2	
	CITY OR TOWN: Foster	к.		
	Rhode Island	CODE CO	Providence	CODE
	3. MAP REFERENCE			
	SOURCE: U.S. Geologic	al Survey		
	SCALE: 1:24,000			
	DATE: 1955; photore	vised 1970		
	4. REQUIREMENTS			
	TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS 1. Property broundaries when 2. North arrow. 3. Latitude and longitude ref			

9443.50