

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCARS use only  
received  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic William Mowry House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Farnum Pike / 622 GREENVILLE RD N.A. not for publication  
city, town North Smithfield N.A. vicinity of #1, Hon. Fernand J. St Germain congressional district  
state Rhode Island code 44 county Providence code 007

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N.A. in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Rose Calcagni  
street & number Farnum Pike (Greenville Road) RFD Woonsocket, Rhode Island  
city, town North Smithfield vicinity of state Rhode Island

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. North Smithfield Town Hall  
street & number Main Street Slatersville P.O.  
city, town North Smithfield state Rhode Island

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Route 104, Farnum Pike Reconstruction  
has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1979 federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 150 Benedict Str  
city, town Providence state Rhode Island

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The William Mowry House, constructed between 1802 and 1805, stands with a shed and a wellhouse on a 16-acre property in the still-rural Primrose section of southern North Smithfield. The largest acreage, behind the house, consists of a large cleared area, while the land across the road is wooded; but only a 2-acre parcel around the house is included in this nomination. The house, in the Mowry family for most of the nineteenth century, has been owned by the Calcagni family since 1898. Few changes have been made to the house, but there are no original outbuildings remaining.

This simple Federal farmhouse, sited near Farnum Pike, is two-and-a-half stories, gable-roofed, and of pegged, post-and-beam construction. Clapboards cover the plank walls on all sides. The house is set upon a basement of cemented and whitewashed fieldstone topped with a layer of dressed granite. A central, south-facing entry, is enclosed by a hip-roofed portico; this front porch and a matching larger rear porch were added in the early twentieth century. Simple window frames, with absolutely plain surrounds, project noticeably from the wall; the upper window frames are framed into the cornice in the traditional eighteenth-century style. Most of the original window sash were replaced in the early twentieth century by two-over-two pane sash; only the attic windows at the gable ends retain the former six-over-six pane sash. At the corners of the building are plain pilasters. The eaves extend out about a foot and display widely-spaced purlin ends, but the gable end cornice is flush with the exterior of the house. An ell at the center of the west end serves as a secondary entrance to the house and also encloses a stone stairway leading to the cellar.

On the interior, the plan is in general that dictated by a large central chimney serving three fireplaces on each principal floor. Customarily, this arrangement features three major and two minor rooms and a small, front, center stairhall on each floor. In the William Mowry House the kitchen and the living room flank the chimney. A large dining room takes up the central part of the rear, or north side, of the house, flanked by a pantry (accessible through the kitchen) and a bathroom. There is a modest-sized early twentieth century porch at the north end.

The small, first story front hall has a tightly-angled stairway, with winders, running up against the chimney wall. The balusters of the plain stair rail are slim and square; the newels are plain and square, with flat, cushion caps. The stairs leading to the second floor are at the right; at the left side is a simply-moulded, two-panel door. Doors to the right and left, like all other inside ones, are four-panelled; the one at the right leads to the living room, that at the left leads to the kitchen.

All the floors on the first floor are of wide boards, but these are hidden from view by carpeting or linoleum. Corner posts are cased throughout and the ceilings, about seven-and-a-half feet high, join the walls without any cornice or moulding. The kitchen contains the largest fireplace, about seven-and-a-half feet wide, with a four-and-a-half-foot-wide opening which was covered with tin about 1898. Made of brick, the fireplace still

(See Continuation Sheet #1).

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Continuation sheet 1

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contains its original crane inside the tin casing; a large, one-section, exposed hearthstone has been painted. There is a two-panel door left of the fireplace, and a simply-moulded, narrow shelf above a wide, plain entablature. The kitchen ceiling is covered with patterned sheet metal and around the sides is wainscoting of horizontal boards painted white, capped by a three-inch chair rail. The living room fireplace is the finest in the house, with plain pilasters, a broad, plain entablature, and a simple shelf, above which is a large, single-panel section, extending to the ceiling which is covered with composition tile squares. There is panelled wainscoting around the sides of the living room. The dining room features a small brick fireplace.

On the second floor are three large chambers and two smaller ones. Bedrooms are located on three sides of the chimney, while smaller, spare rooms, flank the north (rear) bedroom. This plan duplicates that of the first floor. The wide, handsome, exposed floor boards of the second floor are in good condition. The south (front) bedrooms have fireplaces with moulded surrounds; the southwest room fireplace is paneled above the mantel, while the southeast room fireplace contains two, single-paneled, off-center cupboard doors above the mantel.

A stair at the second floor landing leads up to the attic space, which is unfinished. The roof is supported by pegged rafters braced by square cross ties. There is no ridge pole. There is a six-over-six-pane window at each end, these being the only surviving original windows in the house. The brick chimney extends at a slight angle through the center of the attic.

Near the house is a shed built about 1909. A foundation at the rear marks the site of a 1919 garage which was deroofed in the 1938 hurricane and subsequently demolished. Several apple trees on the property are all that remain of the formerly more extensive orchards, which were destroyed in the '38 hurricane. The grounds around the house are well-maintained, contributing to the appearance of the fine old farmhouse. Across a dirt road north of the house is a cemetery (Rhode Island Historical Cemetery #22)-- a Mowry family burying ground--containing marked headstones of the Mowry family, the inscribed headstones dating from 1790 to 1922. Originally part of the William Mowry property, this parcel, containing the cemetery, was sold several years ago.

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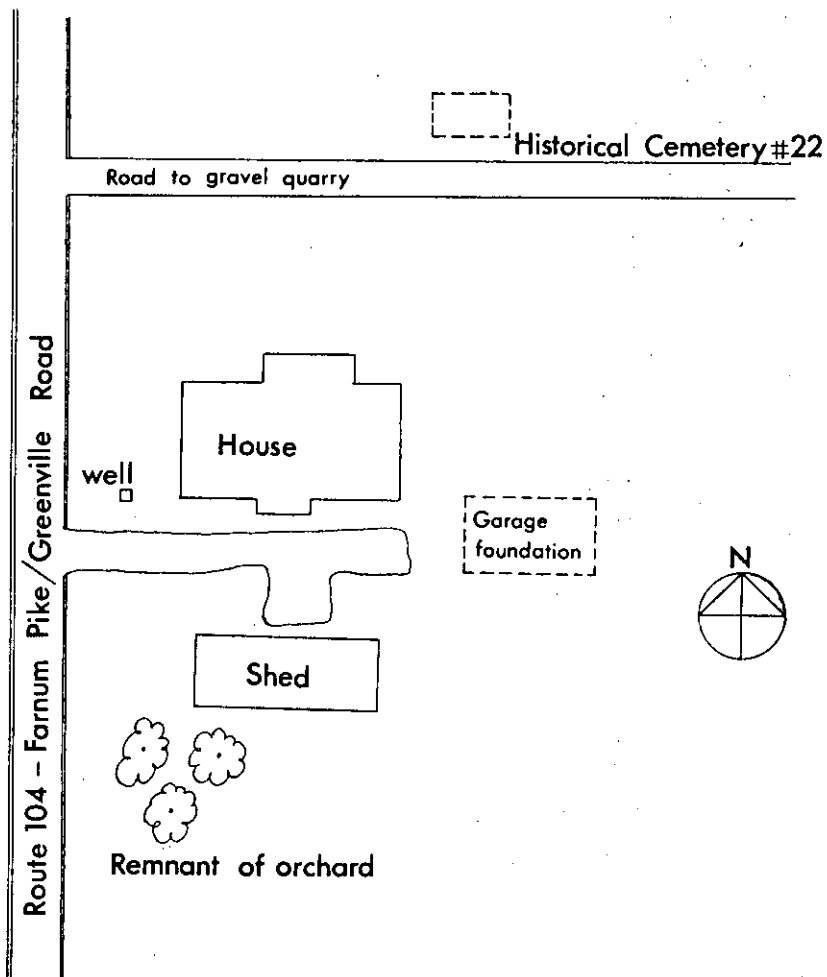
2

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William Mowry House

Route 104

North Smithfield, Rhode Island

Sketch plan - not to scale

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** c. 1802-1805 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The William Mowry House is a noteworthy local landmark both for its architectural qualities and its association with a locally-important family in this section of North Smithfield.

The William Mowry House is important because it has survived in relatively unchanged condition while many other contemporary houses in North Smithfield have suffered extensive renovations and changes. Set on an ample lot in a still sparsely-settled area, the house and property present a picture of rural life of earlier times.

From the time of the earliest settlement in this part of Rhode Island, this section of North Smithfield was owned and dominated by the Mowry family. John Mowry, a co-partner in the first land purchase in the present town in 1666, was the son of Roger Mowry who came to Providence at, or soon after, the initial settlement of Rhode Island in 1636. With each succeeding generation, the land was gradually parceled out to sons and daughters into progressively smaller tracts of land. Richard Mowry, born in 1747, gave to each of his sons, when they arrived at maturity, a "food farm, well stocked and with a supply of farming tools."

William Mowry, the eldest son of Richard, married in 1802 and built this house about that time. Many of the Mowrys, like William, were industrious, and highly respected, playing important roles in the local community often holding one of the many town offices. After William's death in 1840, the property was owned by several members of the family, including a cousin, Foster Mowry. Upon his death, another cousin, Ulysses, became the executor of the estate, and owned or controlled the farm until 1862, when he died, and the parcel sold to Warren B. Mowry. Unlike most of the Mowrys, who remained on the family farm or in the immediate area, Warren Mowry left home at an early age to seek his fortune. Described as a strong, vigorous, and successful businessman, he first kept a dry goods store in nearby Woonsocket for some years, then had a store in the Arcade building in Providence, and finally moved to Boston, where he ran a dry goods trade and eventually a

(See Continuation Sheet #3).

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general commission business. Reputedly, William B. Mowry lived here for ten years. In 1877, George A. Hicks purchased the place, and in 1898 it was acquired by James V. Calcagni, and has remained in the Calcagni family to the present.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the farm probably produced a variety of crops such as corn, barley, beans, and potatoes, and dairy products.

While the mill villages of North Smithfield were transformed into ethnic communities by the influx of large numbers of immigrants (Irish and French Canadians), the rural parts of town remained Yankee. But, by the end of the century, as exemplified by the William Mowry farm, newcomers, including young immigrants, were moving from the Providence area to the country to get more land.

James V. Calcagni, who purchased the farm in 1898, worked for several construction companies. He had the first garbage contract in Woonsocket, hauling the garbage to a pig farm on nearby Douglas Pike, where he kept upwards of 500 pigs. He built the present shed in 1909, and a garage for his trucks about 1919. James Calcagni also planted an orchard at or soon after his arrival. His apples--mostly Baldwins and Northern Spy--and some pears were sold in Woonsocket and from a fruit stand which stood along the road. He also made changes to the house, adding the enclosed portico and a larger rear porch. At this time also, probably in the early twentieth century, he may have replaced the original windows with the present two-over-two-pane ones, and may have enclosed the fireplaces and heated the house with woodstoves. Upon James Calcagni's death, the property went to his son, Vincent, who married Rose M. Cesario. The Cesarios, like the Calcagnis, came to the Primrose area at the turn of the twentieth century and became large landowners. Since 1967, when Vincent Calcagni died, the property has been owned by his widow, Rose, who has maintained the place in good order.

Although the original windows have been replaced and the porches added, the William Mowry House still reflects the architectural heritage of an early rural dwelling. Traffic along this section of Farnum Pike is relatively light, and the surrounding area is still lightly-settled; the farm retains, to some degree, the ambience of a nineteenth-century farm. In addition to its architectural value, the history of the farm is interesting and important. At first owned by generations of an early settling pioneer family, who worked it as a general subsistence farm, it was later acquired by an Italian immigrant, who essentially kept the house as it was while changing the nature of farm use. Although not a grand house or particularly outstanding architecturally, it is an important cultural resource in the town of North Smithfield.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Mowry, William A., The Descendants of John Mowry. 1909.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2 acres

Quadrangle name Georgiaville

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	9	2	8	7	8	8	0	4	6	4	6	9	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The westernmost part of North Smithfield Assessor's plat 15, lot 20 which immediately surrounds the house, fronting on Farnum Pike and extending back from the road approximately 250 feet.

### 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 Walter A. Nebiker

organization Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission date September 1980

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Frederick W. Williams

title \_\_\_\_\_ date December 23, 1982

**For HCRS use only**  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.  
date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register  
Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration \_\_\_\_\_





William Mowry House  
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger      September 1980  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

Exterior view from the west, of house, well-uso,  
house, and shed.

#1



William Mowry House  
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger      September 1980  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

Fireplace, southeast room (living room), first  
floor.



William Mowry House  
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger      September 1980  
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation  
Commission

Front hallway, first floor. View to kitchen door.

# 3





William Mowry House  
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

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