Form 10-300 (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Historic LandmidNHL nomination 2/20/ 2/20/72

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COUNTY: .	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections) I. NAME Stephen Hopkins House AND/OR HISTORICS Governor Stephen Hopkins House 2. LOCATION STREET AND NUMBER: 15 Hopkins Street, at Benefit Street, College Hill Providence COUNTY: CODE CODE Rhode Island Providence 3. CLASSIFICATION CATEGORY ACCESSIBLE OWNERSHIP STATUS (Check One) TO THE PUBLIC 7 Public Public Acquisition: District \mathbf{K} X Building Occupied Private In Process Restricted Structure Unoccupied Both Being Considered Preservation work Unrestricted X Object in progress No: PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) Government Agricultural \Box . Transportation Comments \Box Industrial Commercial Private Residence Other (Specify) Educational Military Religious Entertainment Museum Scientific 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY OWNERS NAME: Mrs Martha A. Greig, President, Rock Hill Farm, P.O. Box 146, State of Rhode Island; Jamestown, R.I. 02835, Administered and maintained by the National Society of Colonial Dames of America The Stephen Hopkins House, No. 18 Hopkins Street. in the State of R.I CITY OR TOWN: <u>Providence</u> 02903 Rhode Island 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ÉTC: City Hall, Recorder of Deeds STREET AND NUMBER: Kennedy Plaza. Dorrance and Washington Streets CITY OR TOWN: CODE <u>Providence</u> Rhode Island APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1-acre 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS <u>Historic American Buildings Survey</u> (15 sheets 7 photos DATE OF SURVEY: Federal X DATE OF SURVEY: 1937-38
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE Washington D.C



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Except for a 1707 ell, the Hopkins House was built by Stephen Hopkins in 1742-43. The L-shaped house is a two-story frame structure with gable roof, two chimneys, and clapboarded walls. First-story windows are topped by cornices. The north arm, four bays wide and one bay deep, measures about 14 by 31feet and the rear arm $20\frac{1}{2}$ by 24-feet in size. This rear ell, now two stories in height, incorporates the original one-story dwelling erected in 1707. The north (Hopkins Street) elevation, four bays wide, originally had a window in the first story of each bay. In 1928 a reconstructed door, with triangular pediment and pilasters typical of the mid-18th century, was inserted in place of the window that had occupied the second bay from the left corner. The new door became the main entrance. The original main entrance, a panelled door topped by a rectangular transom, was located in what is now in the west side, in the third bay from the rear corner of the ell; this door opened in to the "keeping room." Except for the addition of the new main entrance, the exterior of the house is otherwise littlealtered.

The new door opens into a central hall which contains the main stairway set against the east (left) wall. To the left of the Hall is the Governor's study and to the right the parlor. The parlor fireplace has a set of recessed shelves topped by : rounded headed and shell shaped carving set in the paneling above the hearth. The fireplaces in the study and keeping room have simple paneling. To the right of the parlor fireplace a door opens into a short passageway that in turn opens in the large keeping room. In the southeast corner, off the keeping room, is a small bedroom without a fireplace. Upstairs there are five bedrooms, and of these chambers two have fireplaces. The interior of the house, including the stairs, woodwork, floors, and fireplaces, is largely original. The structure was carefully restored by Norman M. Isham in 1927-28, when the house was moved to its present location. The building is maintained in excellent condition and is open to visitors as a historic house museum.



Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FOR NPS USE O	NLY
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(Continuation Sheet)

(Number	eli	antri	04)

8. Significance (1

Stephen Hopkins House (Governor Stephen Hopkins House)

From 1770 to 1775 Hopkins was a member of the Rhode Island General Assembly and chief justice of the superior court of the colony. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1776. He was compelled to return home in September 1776 because of declining health, but between 1776 and 1780 he served as a Rhode Island delegate to conventions of New England States and in 1777 was a member of the Rhode Island General Assembly.

Hopkins helped to establish a public subscription library in Providence in 1753 and a newspaper, the <u>Providence Gazette</u>; and <u>Country Journal</u>, in 1762. He was the first chancellor of Rhode Island College (Brown University), founded at Warren in 1764, and was instrumental in obtaining its removal to Providence in 1770. He was a member of the Philosophical Soceity of Newport, and in 1769 was concerned in erecting a telescope in Providence for observing the transit of Venus. He died at Providence on July 13, 1785 and was buried in the North Burying Ground. In his will Hopkins freed his Negro slaves.

HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

The oldest portion of the Governor Stephen Hopkins House, now a rear ell, is believed to have been built about 1707 and was originally a small one-story frame dwelling comprised of two first-floor rooms and a attic. Stephen Hopkins acquired the residence and in 1742-43 enlarged and remodelled the structure into the extant L-shaped two-story Georgian frame house. General George Washington was a guest in this house on April 6, 1776.

The house was originally located on the northeast corner of Hopkins and South Main Street. In 1804 it was moved to the east along the north side and about halfway up Hopkins Street. In 1927 the structure was moved a second time to the east, to its present location on the southwest corner of Hopkins and Benefit Street, to make way for the construction of a new court house. The Hopkins House was acquired by the State of Rhode Island in 1927 and carefully restored under the direction of the architectural historian Norman M. Isham in 1928. Still owned by the State, the grounds and exterior of the Hopkins House are maintained by the State; the interior is maintained, furnished, and exhibited to the public by the Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island.



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Esents, Etc.)

The home from 1742 to 1785 of Stephen Hopkins, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence for Rhode Island, merchant, politician, royal governor of Rhode Island, and jurist. The little-altered house is the only extant structure closely associated with Stephen Hopkins.

Brief Sketch of the Life of Stephen Hopkins, 1707-1785

Stephen Hopkins was born March 7, 1707 in the town of Cranston (1754-1868) (now a part of the City of Providence), Rhode Island. His boyhood, however, was mostly passed in the section that since 1731 has formed the town of Scituate. A farmer and surveyor, Hopkins married Sarah Scott in 1726, by whom he had seven children. She died in 1753 and in 1755 he married Mrs. Anne (Smith) Smith.

When Scituate was set off from Providence in 1731 Hopkins was made moderator of the first town meeting; in 1732 he became town clerk and in 1735 president of the town council. From 1732 to 1738 (with the exception of 1734) he represented Scituate in the Rhode Island General Assembly. In 1741 he was again elected assemblyman and he became speaker in 1742. In 1736 he was chosen one of the justices of the court of common pleas for Providence County, as well as justice of the peace, and in 1741 became clerk of the court of common pleas. About 1740 he joined his merchant brother in his commercial ventures and in 1742 Hopkins moved to Providence, where he resided for the rest of his life.

From 1744 to 1752 he served again in the General Assembly, from 1747 to 1749 he held the position of assistant justice of the Rhode Island superior court, and from 1751 to 1755 was chief justice. From 1755 to 1757 he was royal governor of Rhode Island. Hopkins attended the general colonial congresses of 1754, 1755, and 1757, where he favored a union of the English colonies.



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This house is said to have had its beginnings in 1707 as a small dwelling of two ground-floor rooms and an attic. That structure was acquired in 17h2-17h3 by Stephen Hopkins, who soon afterwards releated it to the subordinate position of ell, only, to the house of two storeys and attic which he erected and to which it became joined. Although it now stands at the top of a short, steep street, the entire present house was originally at the bottom of that street and more to the north. In 180h it was moved a short distance (south-east) to a site halfway up this incline, and in 1927 it was moved another very short distance (east) to its present location.

The house, of timber and clapboard construction, has not in the course of time and of these two moves suffered from enlargement, diminution or other detracting alterations. One small change has been made, but it is not detracting. On its original site, the house's main entrance remained a door opening into the 1707, or keeping-room, portion. In its last move the house was partially turned around: a new main entrance was cut, leading into the stair-hall of the two-storey addition and replacing a window there. This was skillfully and sympathetically accomplished by a knowledgeable architect who also oversaw whatever minor restoration work the house at that time required.

The original part of the house is low (plus attic) and squarish, and that added by Hopkins high and wide by comparison, but shallow. This later portion is only one room deep, with four bays across its (now) north front, one window only on each floor at the gable ends.

The interior of the Hopkins house has come through the years in remarkably intact state insofar as construction, stairs, woodwork (even floors), fireplaces, trim etc. are concerned. Interior paint colours now to be seen have been carefully researched or copied, as is also the case in respect to the present exterior colour.

While a possession of the State of Rhode Island, the house has for about forty years been in the active and meticulous care of the Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island, to which is due its fine maintenance and authentic appearance.

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		Music		Transportation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The primary importance or significance of this house is that of association with its owner and occupant, Stephen Hopkins (1707-1785). He was a figure intellectually and politically important not only in the history of his native Rhode Island but in the American Revolution and in the formative years of the republic.

Self-educated, Hopkins was possessed of a broad and acquisitive intellect which throughout his life he put to active use in many areas. He aided in the founding of the present Providence Athenaeum and, in 176h, of Brown University, of which he was chancellor until his death. He was a member of the Rhode Island General Assembly, Chief Justice of the Superior Court and ten times Governor of the State. He was a member of the First and Second Continental Congresses and a Signer of the Declaration of Independence. His place in history as scholar, merchant, scientist, writer, jurist and politician is too well known to need further review here, except to mention his friendships with both Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, his close association with Moses Brown and all important local personages. In 1776 he was overnight host to General Washington in this house.

The house, though modest, has nevertheless its own significance as an intact part of our architectural and social history—giving a good visual impression of the skills of the XVIII Century house—wright, of comfortable but unpretentious early domestic accommodation.

While the house has already been generally described in Section 7, mention should be made of its visible structural and decorative woodwork, its five original fireplaces and original chimneys. The fireplace in the parlour has an interesting ornamental treatment, peculiar to Rhode Island, in the panelling above the hearth, which has as its central feature a set of recessed shelves, round-headed and with shell carving. There is a simple wood cornice in this room, simple fireplace panelling in two other rooms and simple turned or cut design in the two stair-rails.

(See Continuation Sheet.)

Form 10-300s (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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FOR NPS USE ONL	Y
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (continued).
College Hill Demonstration Grant Study. Project R. I. D--1.
1959 (2nd ed., 1967).
Providence City Plan Commission,
10, Dorrance Street,
Providence, Rhode Island.

8. Significance (continued).

The house has been furnished throughout with pieces appropriate to the time of Hopkins's residence there (until his death), including a few small items which were used by him or his family. It gives a good and accurate picture of mid-XVIII Century domestic life as lived by cultivated but not rich persons.

Adjoining the house to its west, the small garden area of the house's present plateau (supported by a stone retaining wall bearing a wooden fence of period design) has been carefully laid out and planted with flowers, herbs etc. such as were used for family needs and pleasure at the time of Hopkins occupancy.

Historically important as a relic of Stephen Hopkins and through association with George Washington, the house with its small surrounding area has been preserved and is shown in such a way as to make a truly believable background for the person of Stephen Hopkins and an instructive reflection of his probable tastes and personality.

9.	MAJOR	BIBLIOG	RAPHIC	AL RE	FERENCES			.,						· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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2.	LOCATION			
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	15, Hopkins Street			
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	Rhode Island	38	Providence	007
3.	PHOTO REFERENCE	4		
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Form 10-301 (July 1969)

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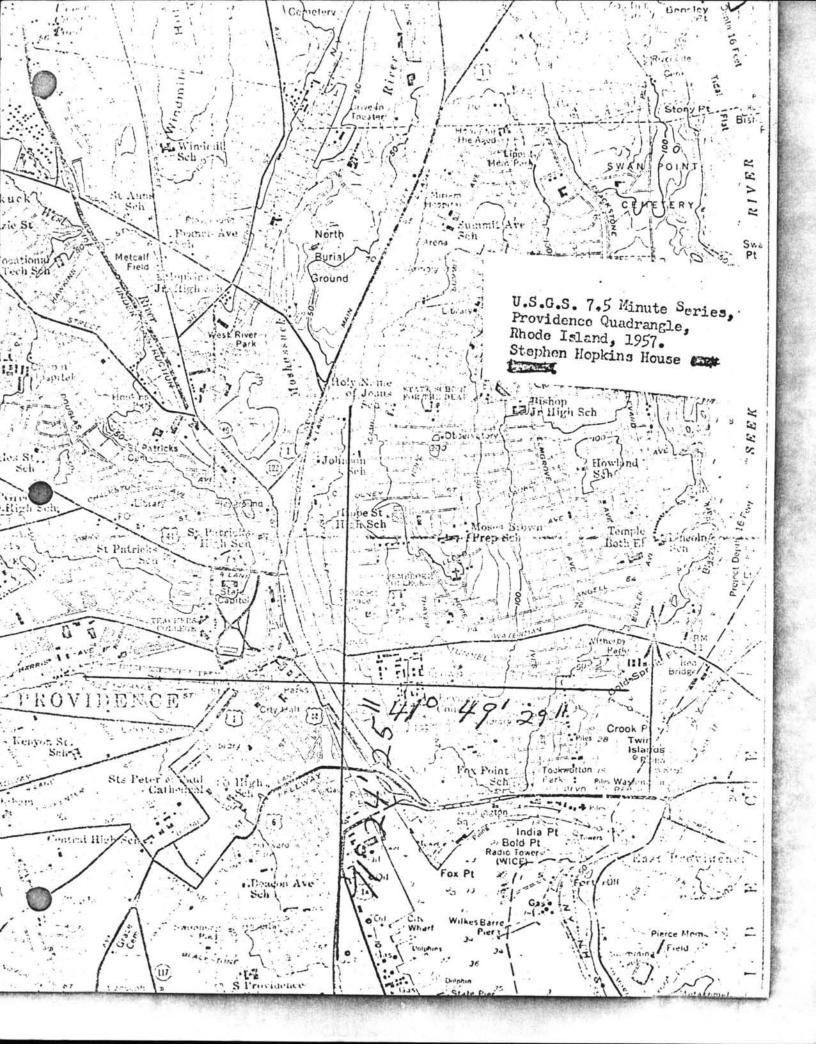
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

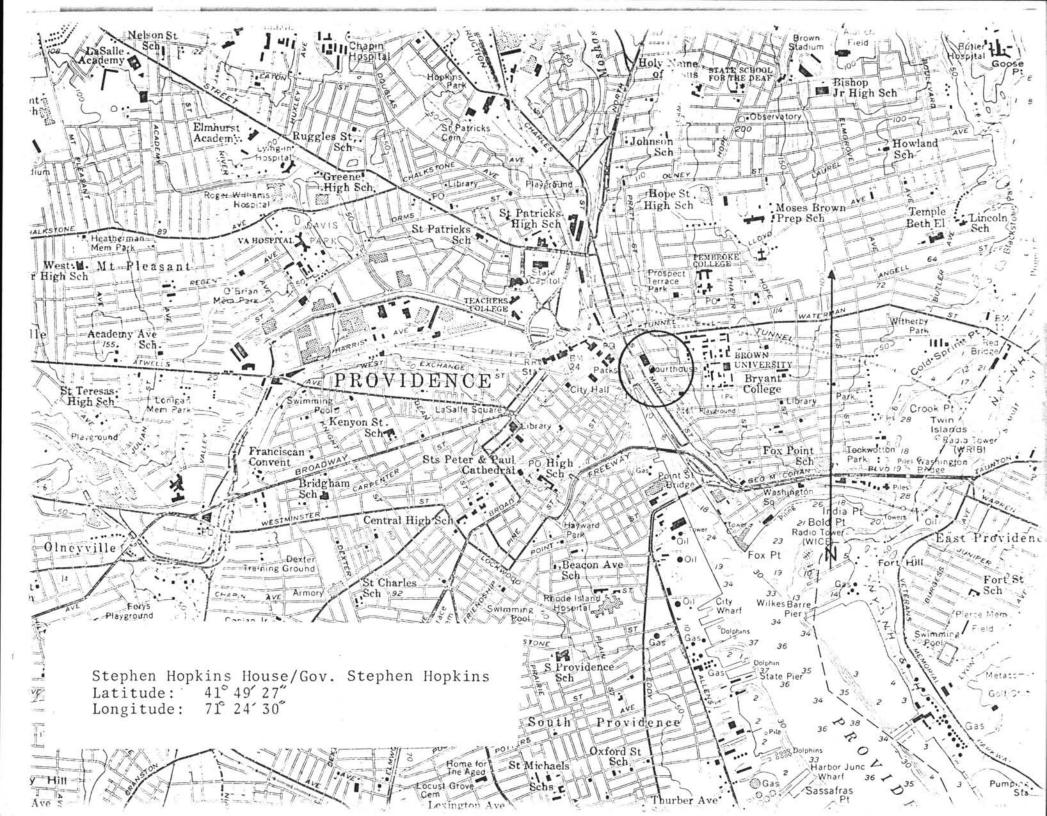
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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Form 10-300 (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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FOR NPS USE ONLY

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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