

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Clemence-Irons House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
38 George Waterman Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Johnston

STATE: Rhode Island, 02919 CODE: 44 COUNTY: Providence CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

STREET AND NUMBER:
141 Cambridge Street

CITY OR TOWN: Boston STATE: Massachusetts CODE: 25

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Johnston Town Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
1351 Hartford Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Johnston STATE: Rhode Island, 02919 CODE: 44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1936, 1937, 1939 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered and since restored	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Probably built c. 1680, although its mammoth stone chimney may date from before 1650, the Clemence-Irons house is a one-and-one-half-storey Rhode Island "stone-ender." It has been carefully restored--this work based on internal evidence as much as possible, and an excellent and voluminous record, consisting of text, photographs and drawings, of the restoration process has been compiled. The house is capped by a steep gabled roof, which extends over the rear lean-to at a slightly reduced pitch; the roof is now covered with heavy, hand-split shingles. The house faces south, and almost its entire western end is made up of a stone chimney wall which rises to conclude in a very large pilastered stack. The lean-to part of this chimney wall was built when the house was restored in the 1940's, after evidence was discovered proving that the four-room lean-to plan was original. (The house's roof may originally have been thatched--a thought suggested by the spacing of the purlins for the roof framing.)

Unlike most houses of the seventeenth century in the Providence vicinity, the exterior walls here are studded; they are closed with vertical boarding and covered on the exterior with narrow, weathered clapboards. The very small casement windows, glazed with diamond-shaped panes of leaded glass, were installed in the course of restoration, as was the front door, made of three thicknesses of planks bound together by knob-headed nails.

The four-room plan, which is original, is almost square in dimensions. The entrance leads into the keeping-room, fifteen feet square and with a huge stone fireplace across its west end; here a winding staircase beside the fireplace rises to the garret. A fifteen-by-seven-foot bedroom adjoins the keeping-room in the front of the house. The lean-to across the rear consists of two rooms. A stone fireplace built into the west wall of the larger lean-to room was constructed as part of the restoration, making a typical Rhode Island widened chimney with fireplaces set side by side. There is a cellar reached through a trap-door in the floor, and the garret contains one chamber.

The magnificent heavy-timber framing of oak is fully exposed on the interior. The mortise-and-tenon construction is secured with wooden tree-nails; the girts and the summer-beam, which runs perpendicular to the fireplace, are all chamfered and stopped. As in some other seventeenth-century houses, the sills are set on top of the floor joists, above the very wide pine floorboards, so that they must be stepped over upon entering the house. The ceiling consists of the exposed joists and floorboards of the garret above. Interior walls and doors are sheathed with wide vertical boards finished with bevelled and beaded moldings along their edges.

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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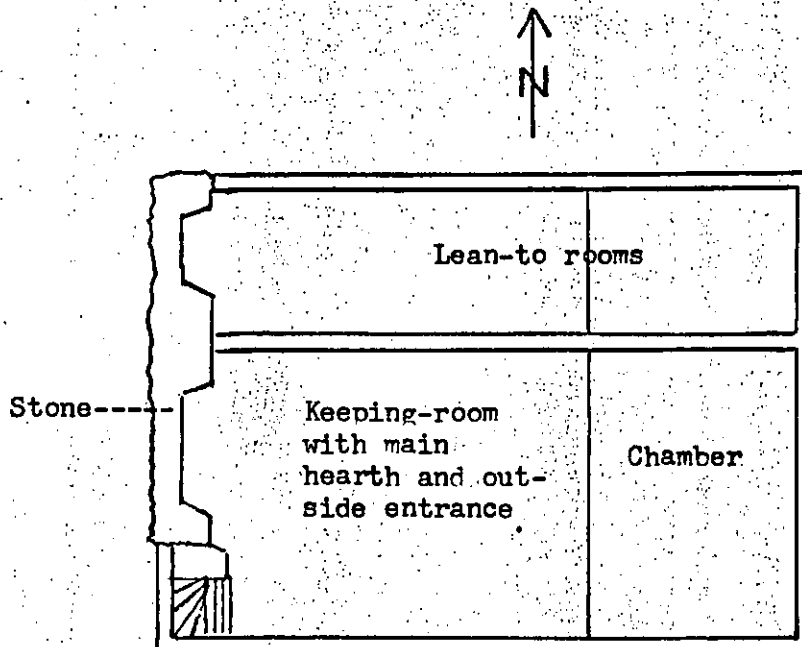
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Rhode Island	
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(Number all entries)

7. Description.

Much of the material of the house dates from its restoration by the Rhode Island architect Norman M. Isham after 1938, although in design and construction he carefully followed both seventeenth-century tradition and clear evidence found in the house itself. In the restoration work everything not part of the original house was removed, including the roof and later wall coverings, the sash windows and doors, some adjoining ells and a later rear lean-to--thus leaving only the basic frame and the early fireplace in the keeping-room. Structural evidence in the garret indicated the presence of an original lean-to which was then reconstructed, and a fireplace was built for the lean-to room. Much of the wall sheathing is original, but no internal evidence was left to show the size and type of the old windows.



Approximation of first-floor plan (not to scale).

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1680

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Clemence-Irons house is one of the earliest dwellings still preserved in the state, and it is the most carefully documented restoration of an early Rhode Island house in Providence County. It is an extremely fine example of the Rhode Island "stone-ender" and is maintained as a museum.

Thomas Clemence, a friend of Roger Williams, officially bought the property, then part of Providence, on January 9, 1654, from an Indian, Wissowyamake, although he was already living there by 1650, according to the tax lists. Active in political affairs, he became constable in 1661. He represented the town of Providence at a Court of Commissioners at Portsmouth in 1663, at a Court of Deputies at Newport in 1665 and there again in 1671. In 1667 he was chosen Providence town treasurer.

Clemence was one of the twenty-seven men of the area who stayed to defend the town while the other citizens evacuated during King Philip's War in 1676. It is thought that the original house was burned at this time and that the present dwelling may have been a re-building against the surviving stone chimney-wall of the destroyed house.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cady, John Hutchins: The Thomas Clemence House (c. 1680), in "Old-Time New England," July, 1948 (Boston, Massachusetts, 1948).
 Downing, Antoinette F.: Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia, 1937).
 U. S. Works Progress Administration. Federal Writers' Project: Rhode Island. A Guide ... (Boston, Massachusetts, 1937), p. 459.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41 ° 50 ' 20.72" N	71 ° 29 ' 03.98" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Clifford M. Renshaw, III, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: May 27, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
 State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02903 CODE: RI

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

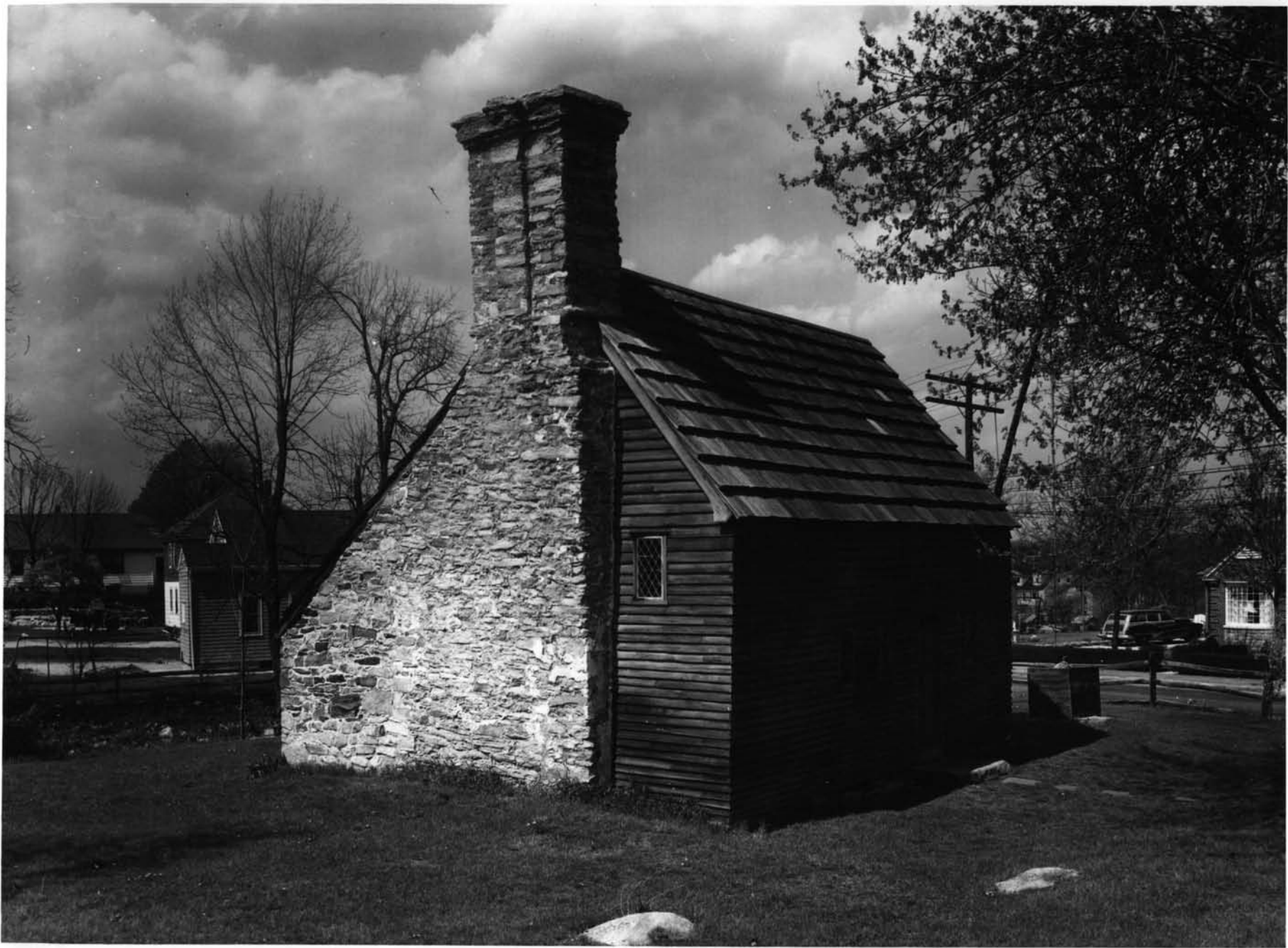
Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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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38 George Waterman Road

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Johnston

STATE:

Rhode Island. 02919

CODE

111

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Clifford M. Renshaw, III

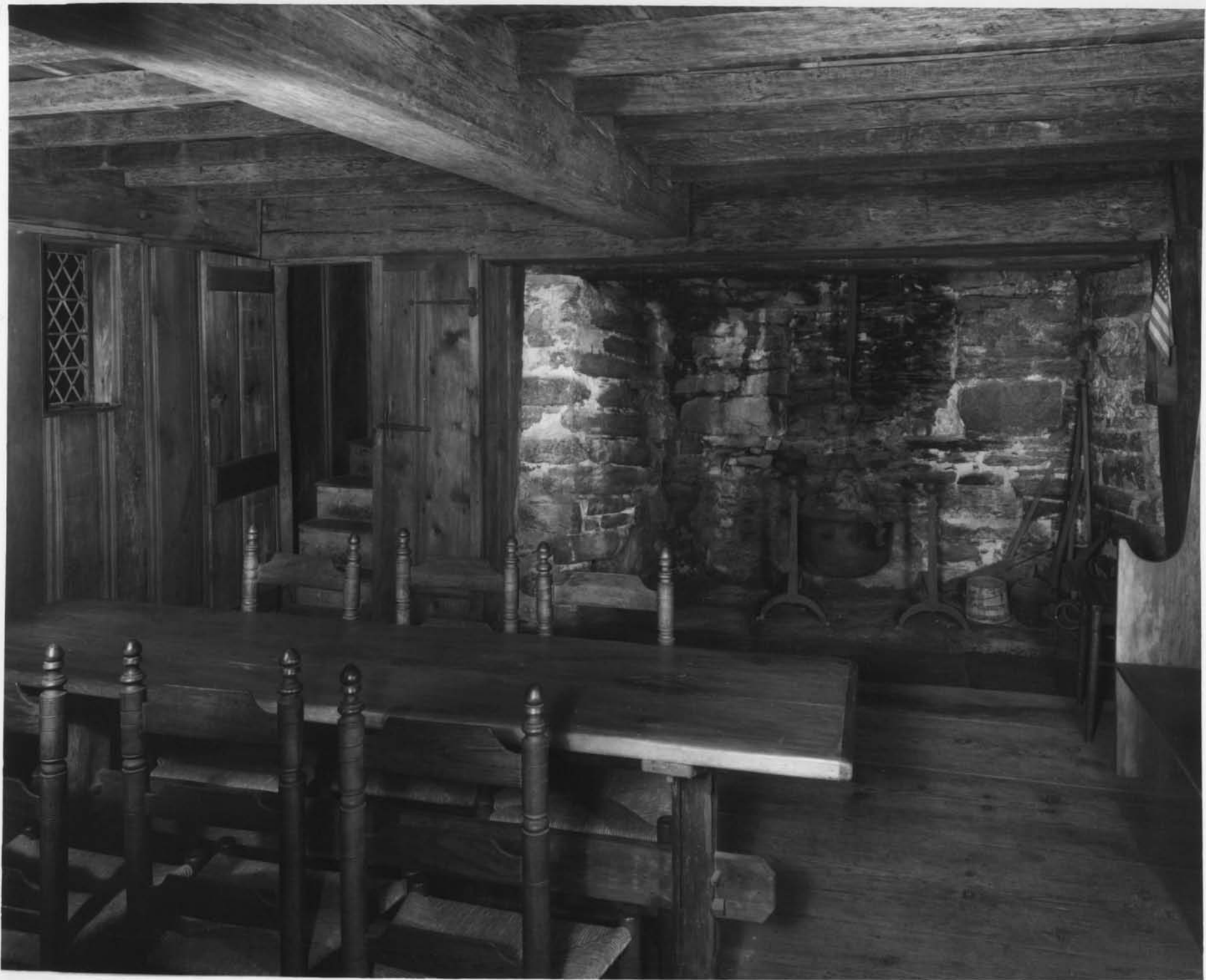
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission,
John Brown House, 52 Power Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02906

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Exterior from the south-west.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)

2. LOCATION

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Providence

TOWN

Johnston

STREET AND NUMBER

38 George Waterman Road

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Richard Cheek for
the Society for the Preserva-
tion of N.E. Antiquities

DATE

December, 1972

NEGATIVE FILED AT Society for the
Preservation of New England
Antiquities, 141 Cambridge St.,
Boston, Mass. 02114

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

View of the great hall



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CITY OR TOWN: Johnston			
STATE: Rhode Island, 02919	CODE 44	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Laurence E. Tilley			
DATE OF PHOTO: C. 1960-1970?			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Laurence E. Tilley, 58 The Arcade, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. Hearth at west end of keeping-room.			



GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 50' 20.72" N

Longitude: 71° 29' 3.98" W

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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

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CITY OR TOWN:

Johnston

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:

U. S. Geological Survey

SCALE:

1: 24,000

DATE:

1957

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.