

N03M00115

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Mowry, Tyler, House

other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number: 112 Sayles Hill Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: North Smithfield vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Providence code: 007 zip code: 02896

## 3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name Mowry, Tyler, Hse, Sayles Hill Rd, Prov. Cty., N. Smithfield, RI

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria.

     See continuation sheet.

Fredrick C Williamsen  
Signature of certifying official

11 July 1996  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria.

     See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register            
     See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register            
     See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic: Domestic  
      
      
Current: Domestic  
      
    

Sub: Single Dwelling  
      
      
Sub: Single Dwelling

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**7. Description**

Architectural Classification:

Federal

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation Granite/Stone roof Asphalt shingle  
walls Clapboard other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: State

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1825

Significant Dates: c. 1825

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: 3 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>292420</u>	<u>4648700</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description:  See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification:  See continuation sheet.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title: Roberta Randall/Historic Preservation Architect

Organization: RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission Date: 5/96

Street & Number: 150 Benefit Street Telephone: 401 277-2678

City or Town: Providence State: RI ZIP: 02906

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### Description

Facing south on Sayles Hill Road, the Tyler Mowry House is a highly intact rectilinear center-hall-plan house with an integral kitchen ell to the east built at the same time as the house (ca. 1825). The interior of the main house is a typical Federal plan; with a central hall containing the stair to the second floor; two rooms to either side of the center hall at the first floor and the second floor, larger front rooms and smaller rear rooms separated by chimneys which contain fireboxes for each of the four rooms on the first floor and the two front rooms on the second floor. The ell, also rectilinear, contains two rooms separated by a large cooking fireplace with a beehive oven, and a pantry with shelving. The interior spatial configuration remains as built with no alterations.

The main block of the house is thirty-six feet wide and twenty-eight feet deep, with gable roof. The facade is a two-story, five-bay front with a Federal, flat-headed, panelled, and sidelight center entry framed by banded "Gothick" colonettes. The overdoor panel contains a characteristically Federal patera, and the door is the original six-panel door. The windows of the main house are original projecting plank frames with simple sloped caps and original twelve-over-twelve sash and wood shutters. The house retains early clapboards in good condition. The one story ell measures twenty-eight feet wide by twenty-one feet deep, also with gable roof. The facade of the ell has a similarly detailed entry although much simplified. The windows are original plank frame with later six over six sash, although the original twelve over twelve sash were saved and are presently stored in the attic. The ell also has early clapboards which are presently covered with asphalt shingles. All other elevations of the house as well as the ell are in similar condition to the facade. The exterior of the building maintains a high degree of integrity.

On the interior, the center hall contains a typical Federal stairway with a simple rail and square balusters. The open string stair is beautifully detailed with sawn scroll ornamentation below each tread and a drop pendant showing at the first floor ceiling below the second floor newel post. The center hall is also decorated with a chairrail, which is typical throughout the house. The southeast and the southwest parlors are detailed with matching pilastered mantels similar in style to the front entry detailing. Both of these rooms have plaster walls and ceilings and are decorated with chairrails and beaded, cased corner posts. The southeast parlor has a shelved closet to the west of the chimney and an entry to the rear room to the east of the chimney, as well as an entrance to the ell

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along the east wall, while the southwest parlor has only one door, other than the center hall door, that leads to the rear room. The two rear rooms are much plainer, with simple mantels and over cupboards with panelled doors. The northwest room also contains a shelved closet to the east of the chimney. These rooms have doors which lead back to the center hall which is now separated by a wall running east-west at the end of the stair run. The rear of the center hall contains a door to the exterior.

The second floor plan matches the first in room layout and dimension, except for the small room located at the head of the stair above the rear of the center hall. The second floor, like the first, has tall ceilings typical of the Federal period. The southeast and southwest chambers have pilastered mantels similar to, but smaller than the first floor mantels. These rooms are plastered and also have chairrails and beaded cased corner posts. Each room has only one door leading to the center hall. The rear rooms have no fireplaces, but have two closets each on either side of the chimney. The northeast room's east closet contains access to the ell attic as well as a ladder stair to the main attic. There is also a enclosed stairway to the main house attic above the main stair in the center hall. The west chimney remains intact and is offset from the mass below at the attic level so that it will fall centered on the ridge of the roof. The chimney mass at the attic has buttressed sides to provide extra support for the severe offset. The east chimney has been rebuilt from the attic floor up through the roof although it is apparent from the visible evidence that it originally matched the west chimney. The attic retains its original framing and is in good condition except at one rafter bay at the east end of the north slope where water damage developed and exacerbated a large hole.

The ell cooking fireplace has been blocked but remains intact behind, except for one cheek, which has been straightened. The beehive oven, however remains intact. The mantel is plain with an overmantel cabinet. In the northeast corner of the ell, there is a pantry with decorative shelving on four sides of the room. The northwest corner of the ell contains a secondary stair to the attic space above. The ell contains doors to the exterior at both the south and north elevations.

All of the original four-panel, raised-panel interior doors with original hardware remain in place throughout the house and are in good condition. This is true of all other materials as well, including the mantels, stairway, window sash, door and window trim, chairrails and much of the flooring. The house has never had a heating system, or hot running

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water. The ell contains a sink that had pumped cold water from a well directly outside. The house has a water closet but has never had a bathroom or septic system.

The vernacular agricultural landscaping directly around the house also remains much as it looked during the period when the farm was operating. Several granite fence posts, stonewalls, cattle paths, bull pen, and granite steps remain as evidence of the earlier dairy farm.

The property has been unoccupied for the past year and seriously neglected for several years prior. The result has been some water damage at the rear of the building to the basement framing and first floor flooring at the northwest corner. There is also roof damage at the northeast corner of the main roof which has resulted in damage to the framing below at both the attic floor and the second floor. All of this damage is easily repairable with no further loss of original fabric.

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Photographs

3. Photographer:

4. Date:

5. Negative: RIHP&HC

(The above information applies to all photographs)

6. View: South facade, looking north.

7. Photo #1

6. View: South facade, looking north.

7. Photo #2

6. View: North facade, looking south.

7. Photo #3

6. View: Front (south) entrance door.

7. Photo #4

6. View: Center hall stairway, looking north.

7. Photo #5

6. View: Southwest parlor mantel, looking north.

7. Photo #6

6. View: Northeast room mantel, looking south (first floor).

7. Photo #7

6. View: Kitchen fireplace/bake oven, looking east.

7. Photo #8

6. View: Southwest chamber mantel, looking north.

7. Photo #9

6. View: Agricultural landscape showing cow path, looking north.

7. Photo #10



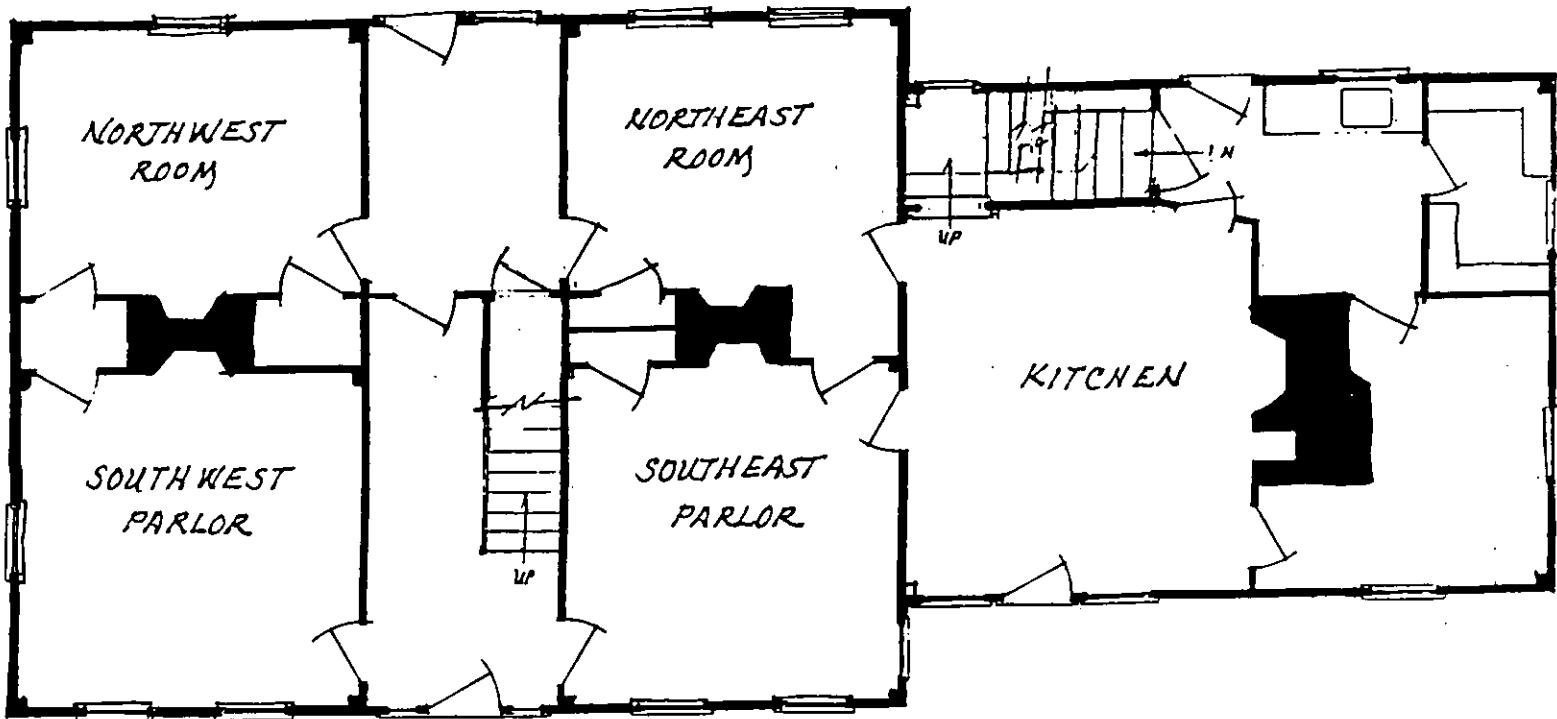
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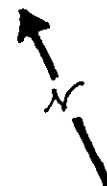
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First floor sketch plan--not to scale



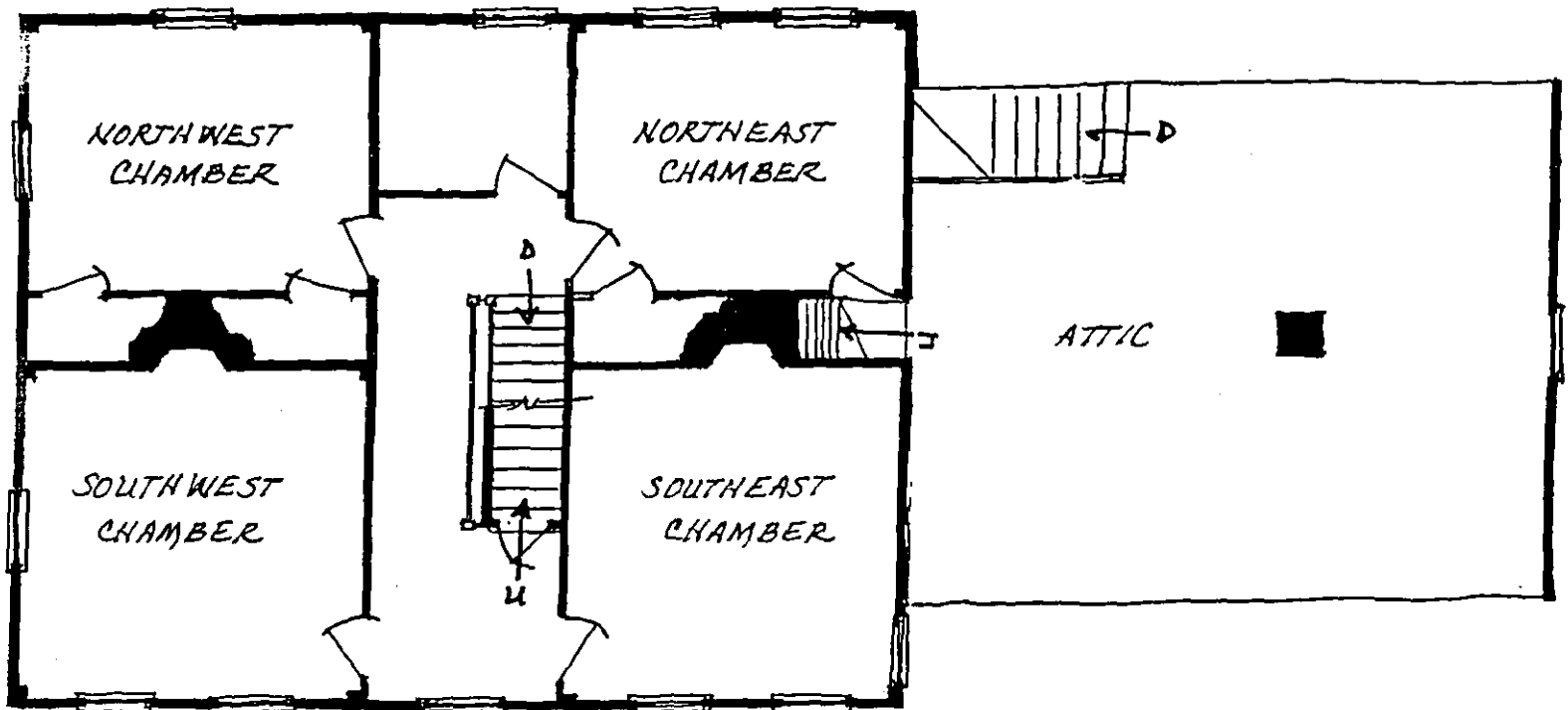
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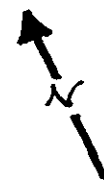
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Second floor sketch plan--not to scale



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### Significance

The Tyler Mowry House is a significant example of Federal domestic architecture which exhibits a level of architectural sophistication and quality more typically found in urban areas than in rural northern Rhode Island. No changes or alterations of any significance have been made to this house since it was originally built, including modernization of any kind. It is uniquely unaltered on the exterior and on the interior.

The Mowry House follows the general format of later Federal houses in Rhode Island. The center hall, four-room plan dwelling with integral service ell became common in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The Mowry House is distinguished, however, by stylish detail unusual in a remote rural setting, notably the entrance surround and the fine mantelpieces in the front rooms on both floors. "Unpedimented doors of some elaboration became more common after 1810," Downing further notes and describes variations on the Adam fan motif as decoration for the frieze of such entrances.<sup>2</sup> The mantelpieces, framed by engaged colonnettes supporting a broad frieze and topped by an exaggeratedly projecting mantel shelf, are closely related to those published in Asher Benjamin's pattern books.<sup>3</sup> The repetition of the form used on the first story in smaller scale on the second story suggests greater sophistication on the part of the designer/builder than in most rural houses.

Due to industry and transportation developments, housing during the nineteenth century in Northern Rhode Island grew considerably in what had been rural farmland prior to this time. Many houses of the Federal period were built in growing villages developing along new transportation routes, but this large, center hall house in its rural agricultural setting is a rare example not only due to its elaborate size and decoration for its setting when constructed in the early nineteenth century, but also for its unaltered appearance today. The integrity of the Mowry House is remarkable. All the original exterior and interior trim remains intact, and in most places the paint is at most two or three layers deep. The rear rooms

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<sup>1</sup>Antoinette F. Downing, Early Homes of Rhode Island  
(Richmond, 1937): 323.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, pp. 339-342.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 371.

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upstairs appear to retain original painted surfaces. Seldom in the completion of the statewide survey for historic resources has a house which combines this age and integrity been counted.

The area which is now North Smithfield was settled in 1666 as a part of the Town of Providence and remained primarily agricultural through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This particular part of town, known as Sayles Hill, developed more after the construction of the nearby Great Road, which went through here from Providence to Worcester, Massachusetts. In 1731 the Town of Smithfield was set off from Providence; in 1871 North Smithfield became a separate town, with boundaries as we know them today. In the twentieth century, nearby Woonsocket saw rapid growth with the coming of the automobile. Highway improvements to Great Road made the area more accessible than ever before and transformed the rural areas of North Smithfield into suburbia.

In May, 1666, 2000 acres in North Smithfield was deeded to John Mowry, his brother Nathaniel and Edward Inman, who became the first settlers on Sayles Hill. Nathaniel Mowry built his homestead on this site shortly thereafter, and the property, which included the house and a large successful farm, was passed down through four generations to Tyler Mowry (1792-1852), who improved upon the already prosperous farm to make it one of the finest. His wealth and prosperity is evident in this sophisticated house which he built on the farm site, probably around the time of his marriage to Uranah Sayles on March 16, 1815. Following his death, his daughter Sarah Ann occupied the large farm of several hundred acres with several outbuildings. Sarah Ann Mowry never married and the property had passed out of the family to Charles Irons by 1895. In 1919 the large farm was purchased intact by the Marcotte family, who farmed it through the 1960s and continue to own it. The farm was never modernized and new innovations in farming were never used. As a result, the farm had a difficult time competing with larger mechanized farms. The land was slowly sold off throughout the years that the Marcotte family owned it. By 1970, the farm, no longer operating, was reduced to the three acres immediately surrounding the house. The surrounding area is now a modern suburban residential neighborhood filled with small contemporary houses.

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### Major Bibliographical References

Beers, D. G. & Co. Atlas of the State of Rhode Island and Providence  
Plantations. 1870.

Downing, Antoinette F. Early Homes of Rhode Island. Richmond, 1937.

Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. Historic and  
Architectural Resources of North Smithfield, Rhode Island: A Preliminary  
Report. Providence, 1980.

Town of North Smithfield. Land Evidence Records.

Town of Smithfield. Land Evidence Records.

Walling, H. F. Map of Providence County, Rhode Island. 1851.

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### Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The property nominated includes all of North Smithfield Tax Assessor's Plat 17, Lot 12. This parcel is all that remains of the land historically associated with the property.



KEEP  
OUT!

NO TRUCKS

TRUCKS  
KEEP OFF

NO  
TRUCKS

Tyler Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smith field, R.I.

Photo # 1 of 10





NO  
TRESPASSING

KEEP  
OUT!

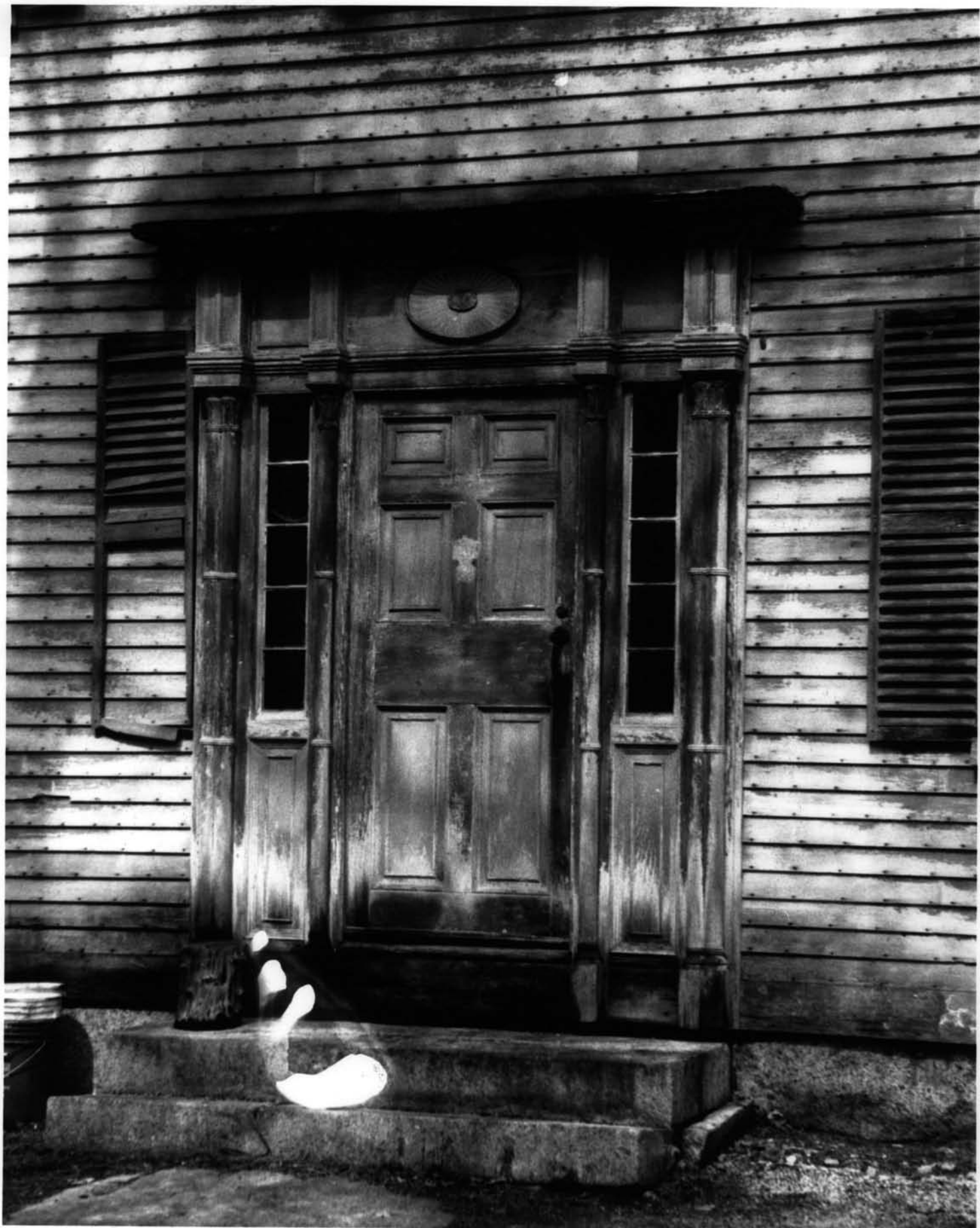
tyler Mowry Husa  
Providence County  
N. Smithfield, R.I.

Photo #2 of 10



Tyler Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smithfield, R.I.

Photo #3 of 10



Tyler Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smithfield, R. I.

Photo # 4 of 18



Tyler Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smith Field, R.I.

Photo # 5 of 18





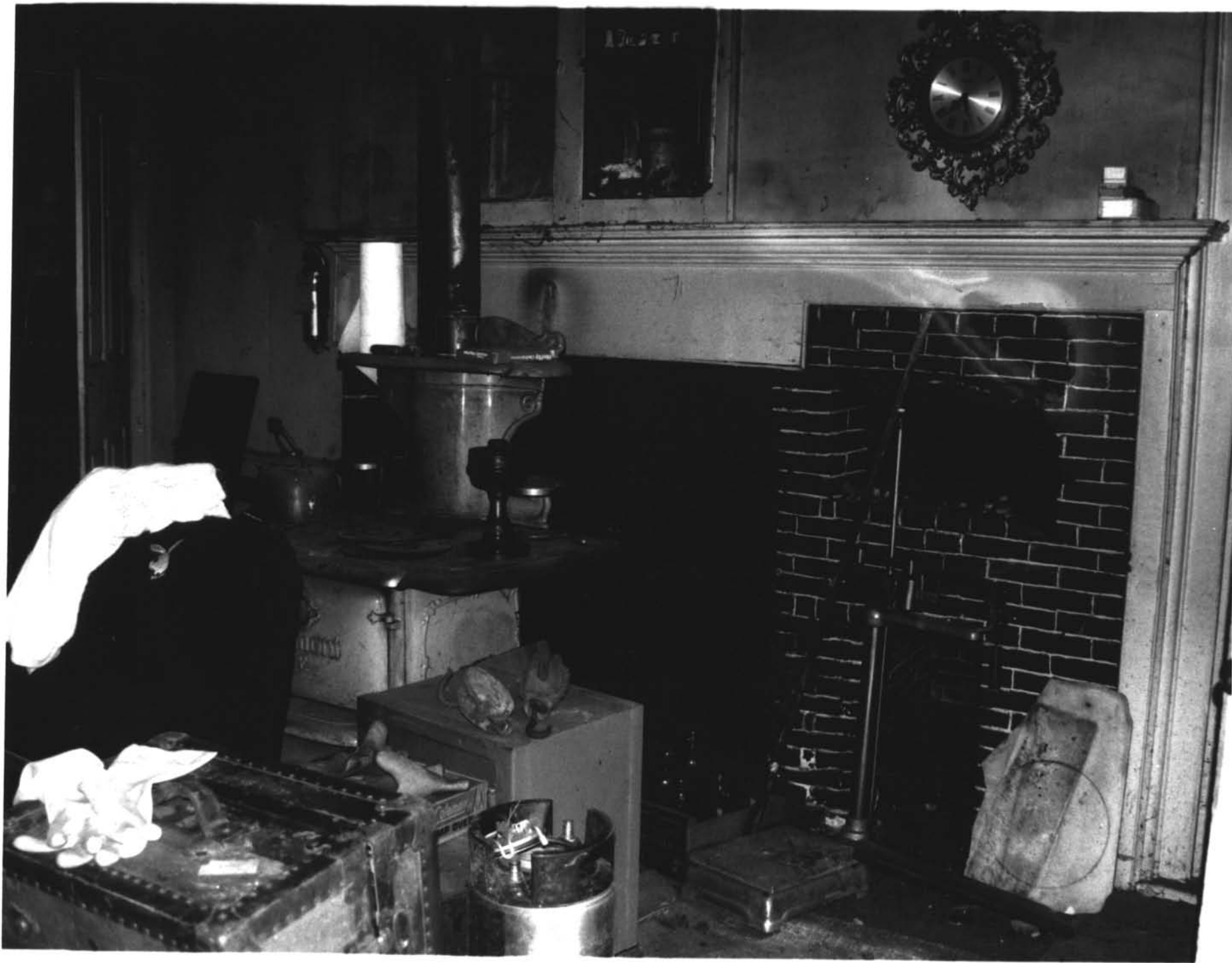
Tyler Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smithfield R.I.

Photo # 6 of 10



Tyler, Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smithfield, N.H.

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Tyler Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smithfield, R.I.

Photo #8 of 18



Tyler Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smith field, R.I.

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Tyler Mowry House  
Providence County  
N. Smithfield, R.I.

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