

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:
Whitman Farm

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Winsor-Swan-Whitman Farm

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
116 Eaton Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE: Rhode Island, 02918

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| CODE 11 | COUNTY: Providence | CODE 007 |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------|

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building S <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <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 | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | | |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Prescott Whitman

STREET AND NUMBER:
116 Eaton Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02918

CODE:
11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Providence City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Dorrance Street at Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02903

CODE:
11

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Not so represented

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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 | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Whitman Farm property, once the centre of extensive agricultural lands, but now reduced to the site of the homestead and some small outbuildings, is in a north-western part of the city of Providence, where it is now surrounded by closely-spaced dwellings erected after World Wars I and II and near the campus of Providence College (whose acreage was once also neighbouring farmland). The fenced, well cared-for and small site facing on busy Eaton Street includes the farmhouse, a wagon-shed, a one-room schoolhouse, a corncrib-cum-hennery structure, a workshop-shed and a small, ornamentally-covered well-head; the cattle and horse barn once across Eaton Street disappeared long ago. While the little early XIX-Century schoolhouse is of much interest, the homestead itself is of course the most important survivor in this contained complex.

The house dates from about 1750 or slightly earlier (at least its site was recorded as being owned by Olney Winsor in 1753, who probably was already living on the property) in its central core, but an important addition was made across the north end--now forming the entrance front of the house--c. 1800-1810, and an ell was extended from the south apparently at the same time or shortly thereafter. So, the whole is made up of three distinctly separate but conjoined parts, best noticed as one views the structure from the south-east. The earliest part (now the middle portion) is one storey and a half in height, timber-framed above a stone cellar, gable-roofed with ridge running north-south, and clapboarded. In plan it has four rooms (one now divided in two) around a central chimney which serves an angled or corner fireplace in each room. One cannot to-day determine the original uses of these four rooms ... for example, which was the kitchen; but presumably there were a kitchen, a parlour or keeping-room and two bedchambers. These are now used as a sitting-room, a dining-room and three bedchambers. A bathroom has been inserted in a corner of one of them and clothes-cupboards built out into another, concealing within these conveniences two of the original nine-over-nine-sashed windows that now face upon a wall or a passage of the later front and rear additions. In the deep cellar below this old core of the house is the extremely massive boulder-and-mortar base of the centre chimney; above, and under its gable roof, which is plastered internally and has a western dormer, is additional sleeping-space.

In the early 1800's a two-and-one-half-storey, three-bay-wide, one-room-deep addition with one end chimney was built across the north end of the XVIII-Century house, providing it with a new (north) main entrance, hallways opening to two rooms on the first floor and three on the second, and a garret. This higher addition is also gable-roofed, though its ridge runs east-west while that in the older part of the house runs, as mentioned, north-south. At the same time, or nearly the same time, a one-storey gabled ell, to contain a new kitchen, was stretched out from the rear (south) of the old dwelling. This has not

(See Continuation Sheet 1.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) -1

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| STATE Rhode Island | |
| COUNTY Providence | |
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| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | |

(Number all entries)

7. Description.

as high a roof-ridge as the original structure, nor is it as wide; it has an inside end chimney which served the cooking-hearth and, later, stoves. At some time this ell was widened on its east side by about two feet, given a small pent from the roof over this two-foot stretch and also given a plain, shallow, shed-roofed porch along that side. None of these progressions in the house's size and shape is to be seen from Eaton Street, where it presents a symmetrical, two-storey, three-bay entrance elevation.

On its exterior the Whitman house shows the plainest of white-clap-boarded walls, the only trim being minimal eaves- and gable-cornices, the capping-cornices on the plain protruded window enframements, the architrave-and-cornice surround of the six-panelled front door and its five-pane transom. Windows are generally of six-over-six sash, though some sash surviving in windows (blocked-up in cupboards) of the XVIII-Century dwelling core have more and smaller panes, and window sash (possibly re-used or brought from elsewhere) in the kitchen ell are varied, including one opening with a twelve-over-eight arrangement of panes.

Interior trim is in general simple and economically used, too. In the old centre portion of the house the four corner fireplaces are nearly the only adornments of its four rooms: two of these have bolection mouldings surrounding the hearth openings with panels and shallow cupboard openings above; the other two have simple mantels surmounted by shallow shelves. In this part of the house there is wainscoting of wide, horizontal boarding topped by a moulded rail. (One room, a present sitting-room, in this old portion was given "up-to-date" décor in the form of Greek Revival trim in its simplest, carpenter-executed style for its two windows, probably in the 1810's.) Old wide-board flooring is still in several of the rooms of both the earlier and later parts of the house. Staircases are--both fore and aft--enclosed and rather cramped. The frontal, 1800's section has two fine Federal mantels in the west rooms of the first and second floors, that on the first floor featuring fluted half-columns and both having crisp, angular mouldings along their mantel-shelves.

The house is in an intact, well-maintained condition and shows its history. The only changes made over a long period are minor: the upper part of the centre chimney had to be rebuilt in recent decades; fireplace openings in the centre and rear parts have been closed; a bathroom has been inconspicuously inserted; electricity was not installed until 1922; and "new" flooring was laid in the sitting-room, dining-room and two bedrooms in 1932.

Besides the homestead itself, there still exist on this fragment of the farmland some subsidiary structures, although the original large barn

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1750, c. 1800-1810

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | Unusual remnant of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | early farm property |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | in XX-Century city |
| <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 small, compact and picturesque group of dwelling, well-head, wagon-shed, corncrib, schoolhouse and workshop on the Whitman Farm land to-day constitutes one of the last vestiges of a farm property in the city of Providence, whose central area was once ringed by sizeable agricultural lands, all of which are now covered by dense residential and commercial development--usually without a trace of the original homesteads or dependencies.

The Whitman Farm has been traced back more than two hundred years to ownership by Olney Winsor in 1753, and the central part of the house would appear to be of about that date. Its considerable acreage at that time had as its southern boundary the Powdermill Turnpike (now Smith Street) and extended as far north as Admiral Street. Its western boundary was the present Sharon Street (once called Swan Avenue after later owners of the land), and on the east it ran to the present River Avenue. Eaton Street is one of the thoroughfares which now run (east to west) through this property, and the surviving farmhouse fronts directly on the sidewalk of this street, across which there remained into this century the old barn for horses and other livestock.

Later in the XVIII Century the property in its entirety passed into ownership of the Swan family, and in subsequent years and through several generations the large acreage became divided and shared by Swan offspring and heirs and those whom they married (including one Amasa W. Angell, who established a forge and wheelwright operation near the barn), though the homestead site with its close-by ancillary structures remained intact. From 1801 to 1839, two Misses Winsor of the former owning family ran behind their old home a "dame school" for girl students, of whom some were presumably boarders in the house. It is within this period--and probably c. 1810--that the house was enlarged at front and rear and that the schoolhouse to the south was erected. It is of interest to compare the modest Federal-style elegancies of the dwelling's additions to the strong trim mouldings and bold panels seen in its centre portion. In 1839 a large southern part of the property went to C. E. Swan, great-grandfather of the present owner, by whose will it was divided among his five children, a daughter receiving the homestead. From her (who married a Whitman) it has de-

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)-2

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| STATE Rhode Island | |
| COUNTY Providence | |
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| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | |

(Number all entries)

7. Description.

across Eaton Street, as said, is gone. Close to the rear of the house is a well-head canopied by a somewhat "Gothick" wooden bonnet on four slim pillars. There is a wide, gable-roofed wagon- and wood-shed near this, a corncrib to which a hennery has been attached, a one-room schoolhouse, a small workshop shed. Of these, the schoolhouse, dating from c. 1810, is the most interesting: its function was to house the private education of a small group of girls. It lies just back of the wagon- and wood-house, is of one storey and has a (east-west) gable roof, a plain doorway with transom lights, several windows (again, many-paned and perhaps re-used). It is rough-plastered inside from floor to ceiling and was heated by a primitive central iron stove which is still there, as are one or more of the old school benches. The present owner of the Whitman Farm has rejected offers to sell the schoolhouse to be re-erected and displayed elsewhere; so it remains, still to-day, a part of the small homestead property.

8. Significance.

scended to the present occupants, and thus has long been called the "Whitman Farm," even though land was eventually sold off for bungalows and small houses, and the barn disappeared, and farming operations consisted only in the operation of a hennery.

Except for the closing of some hearths and the replacement of the upper portion of the centre chimney, the dwelling has suffered little alteration. The outbuildings immediately adjacent, including the quaint schoolhouse, have been retained and maintained as well as the house itself has been. Thus, in the midst of closely-packed small homes of the 1920's-1930's and ranch-houses of later date, there still remains the architecturally interesting old Winsor-Swan-Whitman dwelling and its contents, protected in front by a decorous picket fence and sharing its site with the smaller outbuildings seen close to it as a grouping. Its like is not to be found elsewhere within the city. It is has been given thoughtful preservation, which should continue.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

None.

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 | 0 . . | 0 . . | | 41° 50' 34.62" | 71° 26' 34.41" | |
| NE | 0 . . | 0 . . | | | | |
| SE | 0 . . | 0 . . | | | | |
| SW | 0 . . | 0 . . | | | | |

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:
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: Jan. 15, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
John Brown House, 52 Power Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02906 CODE: 44

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 _____
State Historic Preservation Officer

Title _____

Date APR 1 1974

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

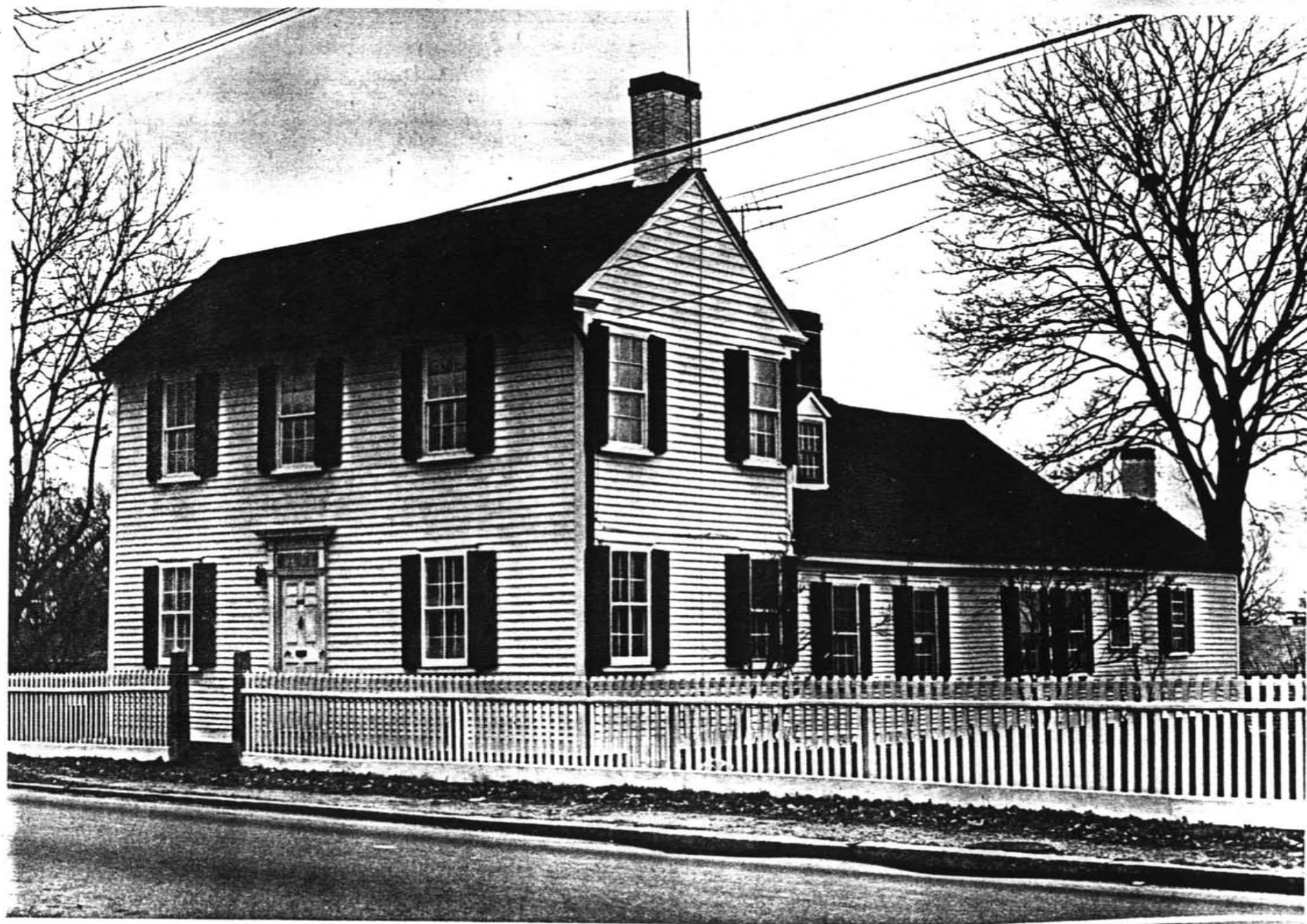
Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

the large acreage became divided and shared by Swan offspring and heirs and those whom they married. (including one Israel Ansell, who established a forge and wheelwright operation near the barn), though the homestead site with its close-by ancillary structures remained intact. From 1801 to 1839, two Misses Swan ran at their home a "dame school" for girl students, of whom some were presumably boarders. It is within this period--and probably c. 1810--that the house was enlarged at front and rear and that the schoolhouse to its rear was erected. It is of interest to compare the modest Federal-style elegancies of the dwelling's additions to the strong trim outbuildings and bold panels seen in its centre portion. In 1839 a large southern part of the property went to C. E. Swan, great-grandfather of the present owner, by whose will ~~it~~ it was divided among his five children, a daughter receiving the homestead. From her (who married a Whitman) it has descended to the present occupants, and thus has long been called the "Whitman Farm," even though ~~some~~ land was eventually sold off for bungalows and small houses, and the barn disappeared, and farming operations consisted only in the operation of a hennery.

Nevertheless, the dwelling has not suffered alteration, except for the closing of some hearths and the replacement of the upper portion of the centre chimney--and it was not until 1922 that electricity was introduced. The outbuildings immediately adjacent, including the quaint schoolhouse, have been retained and maintained as well as has the house itself. Thus, in the midst of ~~a~~ closely-packed small houses of the 1920's ^{-1930's} and ranch-houses of later date, there still remains the architecturally interesting old Winsor-Swan-Whitman dwelling and contents, protected in front by a decorous picket fence and sharing its site with the smaller outbuildings seen close to it as a grouping. Its like is not elsewhere within the city. It has been given thoughtful preservation, and such should continue.

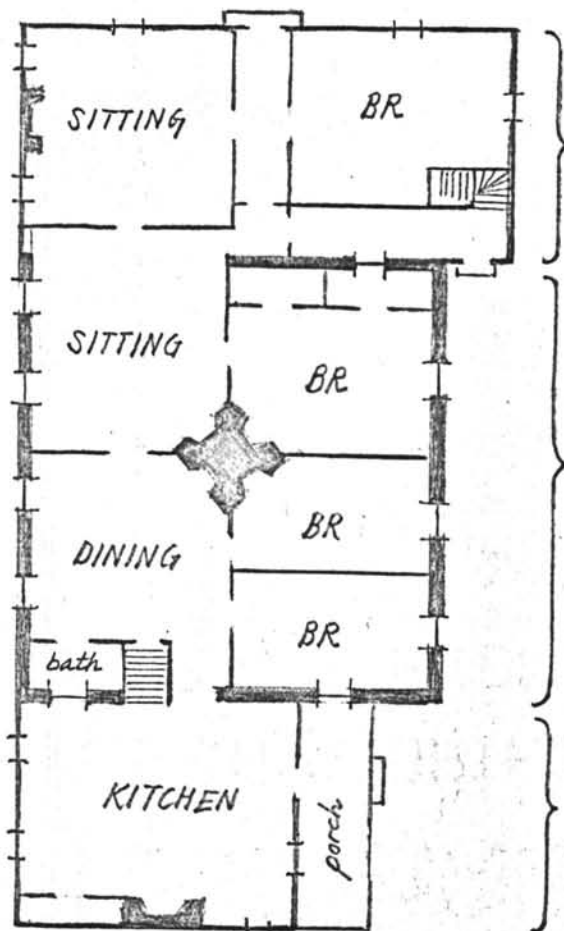
R. B. Harrington.



Removed 12/12/91 Ted for Act 1.92



Eaton Street



Frontal addition,
c. 1800-1810.

Original mid-XVIII-
Century house.

Kitchen addition,
c. 1800-1810.

□ Well

WHITMAN FARM,
416 EATON STREET,
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.

Sketch-plan
(not to scale),
1974.

Wagon-house
and woodshed

Corncrib
and
hennery

School-
house

Workshop

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

1. NAME

COMMON

Whitman Farm

AND/OR HISTORIC

NUMERIC CODE *(Assigned by NPS)*

2. LOCATION

STATE

Rhode Island

COUNTY

Providence

TOWN

Providence

STREET AND NUMBER

416 Eaton Street

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Richard B. Harrington

DATE

January, 1974

NEGATIVE FILED AT Rhode Island
Historical Preservation Com-
mission, John Brown House,
52 Power Street, Providence,
Rhode Island, 02906

4. IDENTIFICATION

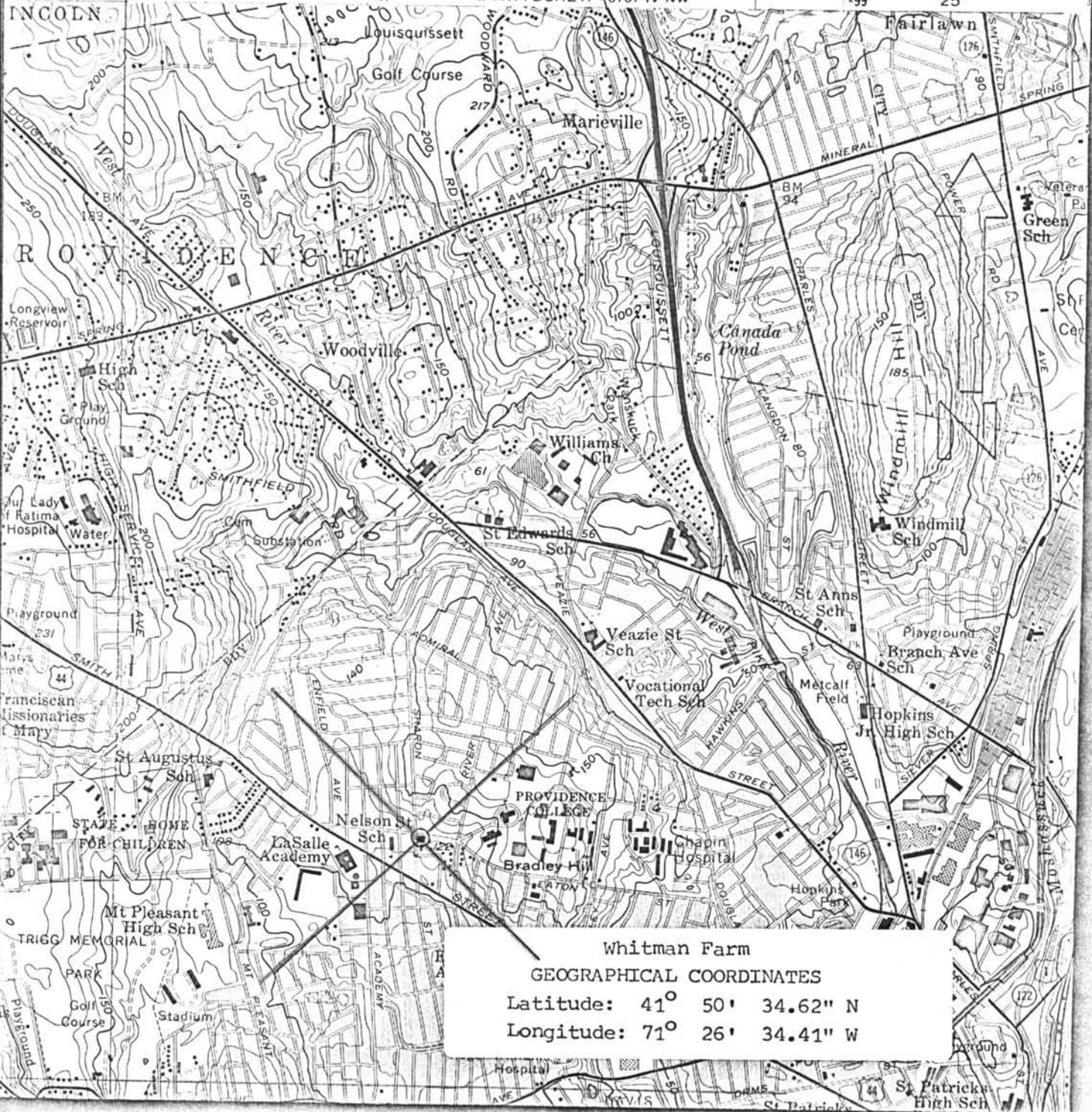
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Sketch-plan of the house and outbuildings
(not to scale).

1 MI.
116 27'30"

WOONSOCKET (JUNC. R. I. 104) 9.2 MI.
4.6 MI. TO R. I. 116
(PAWTUCKET) 6767 IV NW

299 25'



Whitman Farm
GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES
Latitude: 41° 50' 34.62" N
Longitude: 71° 26' 34.41" W

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

| | | | |
|--|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1. NAME | | | |
| COMMON: Whitman Farm | | | |
| AND/OR HISTORIC: | | | |
| 2. LOCATION | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: 416 Eaton Street | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: Providence | | | |
| STATE: Rhode Island | CODE 44 | COUNTY: Providence | CODE 007 |
| 3. MAP REFERENCE | | | |
| SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey | | | |
| SCALE: 1:24,000 | | | |
| DATE: 1957; photorevised 1970 | | | |
| 4. REQUIREMENTS | | | |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS | | | |
| 1. Property boundaries where required. | | | |
| 2. North arrow. | | | |
| 3. Latitude and longitude reference. | | | |