

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

1. NAME

COMMON: Smith-Appleby House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Stillwater Road, approximately 300 feet to the southeast of its intersection with Capron Road			
CITY OR TOWN: Smithfield		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: #2: Robert O. Tiernan	
STATE Rhode Island	CODE 02917	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 type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" 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) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Smithfield Historical Society		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN: Smithfield	STATE: Rhode Island	CODE: 02917-44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Town Clerk's Office		
STREET AND NUMBER: 64 Farnum Pike		
CITY OR TOWN: Smithfield	STATE: Rhode Island	CODE: 02917-44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey RI-80		
DATE OF SURVEY: 1955 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> 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

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Smith-Appleby House is a clapboarded two-and-a-half-story gable-roofed house with a two-story ell on the south side and a one-story "shed" addition on the north. It faces south and originally fronted on the early 18th century road between Providence and Smithfield. It now overlooks Georgia-ville Pond which was created when Stillwater Brook was dammed for industrial purposes in the middle 1800's.

The house, built according to genealogical records in 1713 by Elisha Smith, was originally a saltbox with two main chambers, one on either side of the massive stone chimney, and three very small chambers to the rear or north. Structural evidence -- the framing, wall treatment, and suggestions of casement windows in the upstairs southwest chamber -- indicate that the western half of the house was originally two stories high. The eastern half may also have been two stories high or it may have been only one and a half stories, with the unfinished half story used as a sleeping loft. In either case, both halves were united under the common saltbox roof on the north.

About 1750 a one-story shed addition was built along two thirds of the northern wall to enlarge the middle and western of the three small rear rooms. At this time also the roof of the house was raised to a full two and a half stories, causing the saltbox roofline to disappear and creating three small northern chambers on the second story. The casement windows were also altered into much larger double-hung twelve-over-eight windows whose frames protrude from the surface of the clapboards and whose caps, at second-story level, are framed into the cornice of the house.

The two-story ell which extends from the front of the house was built about the time of the Revolutionary War. It displays similar window treatments and has an interior end brick chimney.

The last significant change to the house occurred in the opening decades of the 19th century -- the installation of the doors that presently lead into the main house and into the ell. The central six-panel front door has a handsome Federal flat-headed frame distinguished by sidelights and four slender flanking pilasters. The other doors are also six-panel with simple flat-headed frames.

The interior of the Smith-Appleby House is a delightful puzzle. The staircase in the spacious entry hall, dating from the 1750's reworking of the house, rises in three short runs and has an astragal-molded closed string course, handsome turned balusters, molded railing, and acorn pendants.

(See Continuation Sheet 1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet) - 1

STATE Rhode Island	
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7. Description

To the right or east of the hall is the keeping room, which retains its excellent early woodwork details. The summer beam and all of the massive oak girts and corner posts (except those on the south side where the ell was added and the front door, changed) are chamfered with lamb's tongue stops. The walls are vertically sheathed with wide beaded-edged planks which have never been painted. A flat plank with a beaded edge surmounts the heavy lintel of the large granite fireplace, which has, at the rear, a brick beehive oven.

Three rooms open off the keeping room to the north. The two most easterly of these were originally one room and were probably made two when the shed addition was built onto the rooms adjoining them on the west in the 1750's. The westerly room of the pair was, at the same time, turned into a cupboard or pantry and still retains its original shelving.

The third room opening off the keeping room was originally the middle room under the one-story part of the saltbox roof and was enlarged on the north by the shed extension of the 1750's. An addition to the original chimney, built also of stone on a triangular plan, was probably installed at this time to accommodate corner fireplaces in each of the two enlarged rooms. Certainly the fine fireplace woodwork -- the bolection-molded surround, the horizontal raised panel beneath the shallow molded mantel, and the pair of raised panels flanking the glazed "deacon's cupboard" -- dates from this period.

So, also, does the somewhat simpler woodwork surrounding the corner fireplace in the northwest corner room. The walls of this northwest chamber are covered with handsome stencilled floral motifs with stylized cornice and painted base, which date from the decades immediately following the Revolutionary War. They are in surprisingly good condition in spite of their cracking plaster background. The southern wall of this chamber follows an irregular course, determined by the space occupied by the sizeable closet to the west and the curve-backed cupboard built into the north wall of the front chamber -- both most likely mid-eighteenth-century features.

The front southwest chamber is approximately the same size as the keeping room just across the entry hall from it. The room's originally-exposed framing members have been covered over by a later, and necessarily lower, plaster ceiling and by the beaded-edged corner post encasements. As in the

(See Continuation Sheet 2)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet) 2

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7. Description

keeping room, the corner posts for the fireplace wall are not in the corners but are, rather, set into the room by about two feet. The fireplace treatment is typical of the 1750's period: bolection-molded surround, with two raised panels of unequal widths, one above the shallow mantel shelf and one below it. The round-headed arched built-in cupboard on the north wall, with its panelled doors below and glazed doors above, is of the same vintage. The floors of the room are painted to resemble marble and are in remarkably fine condition.

Two main chambers flank the stairhall on the second floor. Restoration work in the southwest chamber has revealed the original beaded-edged vertical wall sheathing which bears the outlines of earlier smaller casement windows on the south and west walls. That the present windows are later additions is made clear by these outlines and also by the fact that the original ceiling beams on the south and west have been cut out for the taller heads of the 1750 windows. The diagonal cross braces on the west wall, the four gunstock corner posts, and the lamb's-tongue-stopped chamfering of the southern, northern, and eastern ceiling beams and of the two eastern corner posts (again set into the room by about two feet) are eloquent reminders of the building's earliest form. The small brick fireplace with its plain bolection molding surround is probably original to this finely-finished room.

The southeast chamber, in direct contrast, was never well finished in the builder's sense of the term and has no fireplace; which facts, along with various alterations in the framing members, lead to a conclusion that this may not have been a full-story room originally.

The three small northern rooms are sheathed with fine wide beaded-edged planks which have never been painted. Only the westernmost of these rooms has a small fireplace. An L-shaped hallway in front of these rooms passes behind and to the east of the chimney. From this hallway the original large smoke closet, built abutting the south side of the chimney is accessible.

The staircase to the attic is a continuation of the main front staircase with identical astragal molding and acorn pendant detail. It was originally open all the way up to the attic. Delicate willow tree stencilling is still visible on the plaster wall beside it.

(See Continuation Sheet 3)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet) - 3

STATE		Rhode Island
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(Number all entries)

7. Description

The spacious attic is itself interesting for its structural revelations. The original heavy roof rafters immediately surrounding the chimney have been retained but have been cut and pieced to lengthen them. Elsewhere the rafters have been replaced with more modern (c. 1750) timbers -- another indication that the roof has been raised. The fact that the chimney is of stone to within a foot of the roof peak and is finished above this in brick also suggests roofline alterations.

The two-story ell built against the eastern side of the south front of the house contains a single room on each floor. The first-story room is a kitchen complete with brick fireplace and bake oven, and built-in sink, possibly dating from the Greek Revival period. Just inside the western wall of the ell an enclosed staircase leads up to the rather plain, plaster-walled second-story chamber.

Various structural changes made to the house in the course of the first one hundred years of its existence account for many of its architecturally unusual features. Among these are uneven fenestration on all sides, roof gables which do not peak directly over the center of the gable ends, a "central chimney" which is not exactly central, a variety of interior floor levels, and ragged and replaced framing in the south wall where the ell was let into it.

An 1860 one-and-a-half story barn, a small shed, and a one-seater "biffy" to the east and south of the house are included in this nomination.

9. Bibliography

Steere, Thomas: History of the Town of Smithfield (Providence, 1881).

Waring, Janet: Early American Stencils on Walls and Furniture (New York, 1968).

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1713; additions c. 1750, c. 1780

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 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 Smith-Appleby House is a living record of the architectural evolution of a dwelling. Evidences of the house's growth from saltbox origins in 1713 through formal elegance at mid-century to gawky conglomerate following the Revolutionary War, are abundant and, more important, have been little altered since 1810 or '20. Lamb's-tongue-stop chamfered beams, beaded-edged sheathing, hardware, four-panel doors, and wall stencilling have remained in most cases untouched since the day they were installed.

The house was, as has been said, begun by Elisha Smith in 1713. Elisha was the grandson of Roger Williams' compatriot John Smith, who established the first grist mill in Providence in 1646, and was granted a tract of land in what later became Smithfield in 1731. John Smith's son John, Elisha's father, settled in the wilderness of Gloucester. Elisha settled on part of his grandfather's tract; and may have been, like his grandfather, a miller by trade. The foundations of an early grist mill still remain to the west of the house along the old course of the Stillwater Brook.

Thomas Appleby, born in 1760 in Smithfield, was the first Appleby to live in the house. He married Elisha's daughter Wait sometime before 1787 and was probably responsible for the changes made to the house following the Revolutionary War.

Remarkably, descendants of the Smith and Appleby families have occupied the house continuously until as recently as 1959. This may well account for the fortunate happenstance that only minimal changes have been made to this outstanding early dwelling since the beginning of the 19th century. The house is an incomparable living document of architectural history; and has just been acquired by the Smithfield Historical Society, which plans to restore it as a museum house.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Beers, J. H. & Co.: Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island (Chicago, 1908).  
 Downing, A. F. and Cady, J.H.: Historic American Buildings Survey RI - 80. (Washington, 1955).  
 Sasso, Laurence J., Jr.: "Campaign to Restore Smith-Appleby House Begins," The Observer (Greenville, Rhode Island, January 24, 1974).  
 "Smith Appleby Drive Moves on Several Fronts," The Observer (Greenville, Rhode Island, February 7, 1974).  
 (See Continuation Sheet 3)

**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 ° 54 ' 7.25"	71 ° 31 ' 6.18"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Ancelin V. Lynch

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission      DATE: March 29, '74

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date APR 12 1974

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



616191 Fred Meyer



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Smith-Appleby House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

Stillwater Road

CITY OR TOWN:

Smithfield (Esmond)

STATE:

Rhode Island, 02917

CODE

38

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Robert P. Foley

DATE OF PHOTO: May, 1970

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street,  
Newport, Rhode Island, 02840

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Exterior from the south, showing original front façade and later  
ell at right.



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STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Rhode Island, 02917	38	Providence	007
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Robert P. Foley			
DATE OF PHOTO: May, 1970			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 02810			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
Original main (south) entrance.			



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

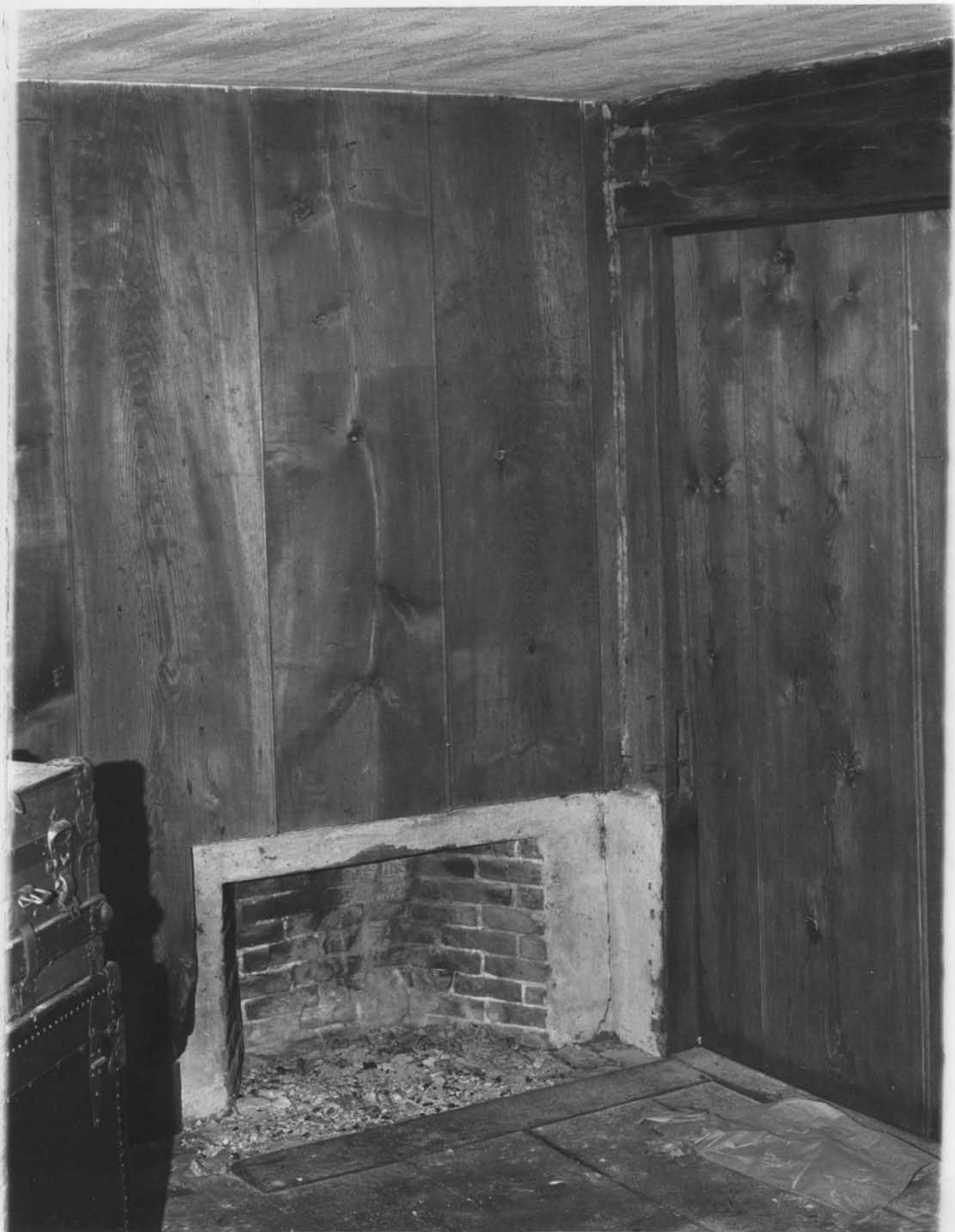
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STATE: Rhode Island, 02917	CODE 38	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
<b>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</b>			
PHOTO CREDIT: Robert P. Foley			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1969			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 02840			
<b>4. IDENTIFICATION</b>			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. View in second-floor bedroom, showing timber construction.			



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Robert P. Foley

DATE OF PHOTO: 1969

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street,  
Newport, Rhode Island, 02840

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

View in second-floor bedroom, showing unfinished original fireplace.





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DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Fireplace wall of living-room, showing wallpaper copying  
original stencilled design.



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DATE OF PHOTO: 1969			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 02840			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. Wall of keeping-room, showing hearth and ovens.			



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DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Exterior from the east.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

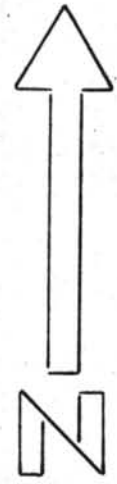
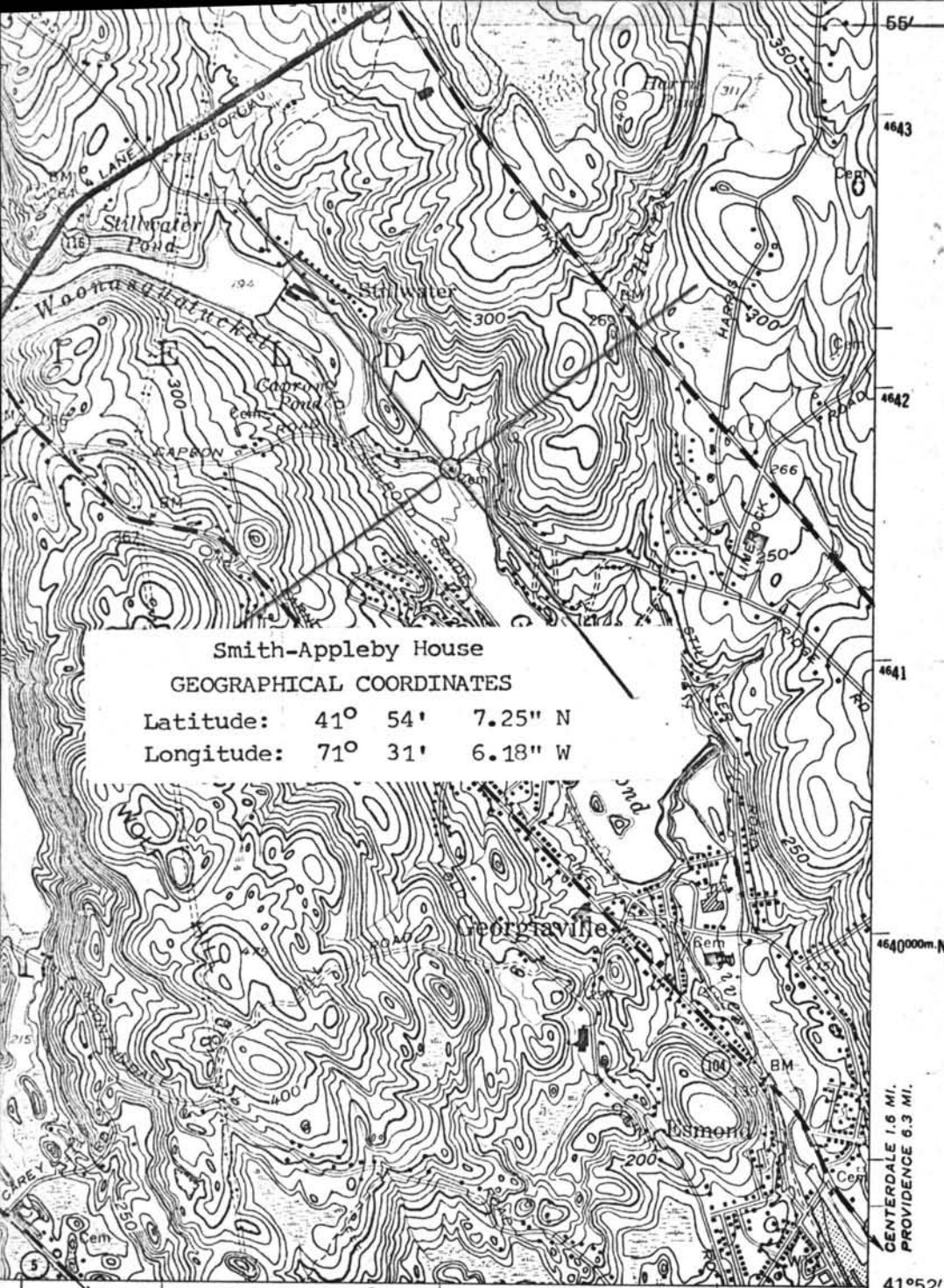
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NEGATIVE FILED AT: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 02880			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. Exterior seen from the north.			



Smith-Appleby House  
 GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES  
 Latitude: 41° 54' 7.25" N  
 Longitude: 71° 31' 6.18" W

55'  
 4643  
 4642  
 4641  
 4640000m.N.  
 CENTERDALE 1.6 MI.  
 PROVIDENCE 6.3 MI.  
 41°52'30"  
 71°30'

FOUNTAIN SPRING 1 MI.  
 CRANSTON (CITY HALL) 8.5 MI.  
 INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C.—1972  
 291  
 292000m.E.

- ROAD CLASSIFICATION
- Heavy-duty Light-duty
  - Medium-duty Unimproved dirt
  - U. S. Route
  - State Route
  - Interstate Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

GEORGIAVILLE, R. I.  
 N4152.5—W7130/7.5

VILLAGE GREEN ASSOCIATES, INC.  
 LAND SURVEYING - PLANNING - TECH. SERVICES  
 162 COLUMBIA STREET  
 PEACE DALE, RHODE ISLAND 02883

1954  
 PHOTOREVISED 1970  
 AMS 6667 I NE—SERIES V815

(PROVIDENCE)  
 6767 N 5 W



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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CODE

44

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:

U.S. Geological Survey

SCALE:

1:24,000

DATE:

1954; photorevised 1970

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

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