

124

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JUN 21 1988

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Nathan Westcott House

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 150 Scituate Avenue

n/a not for publication

city, town Cranston

n/a vicinity

state Rhode Island

code R.I.

county Providence

code 007

zip code 02920

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 6/15/88 Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 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 the Keeper: [Signature] Date of Action: 1-5-89

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)COLONIAL

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONEwalls WOOD/wetherboards

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roof ASBESTOSother 

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Nathan Westcott house is a small three-bay, one-and-half-story house with a low gambrel roof and clapboard sheathing. It has a large central pilastered brick chimney. Standing on the south side of Scituate Avenue at an elevation slightly lower than the road, the house is half hidden from the streetside. The present north facade facing the road was originally the back of the house. The roofline was extended in salt-box fashion.

The house lot is surrounded on two sides--to the west and south--by the that of the Joy Homestead, already listed in the National Register.

Internal evidence indicates that the house was probably constructed as a half-house. The deep stone cellar, approximately twenty feet square, roughly corresponds to the keeping room above. The house was then enlarged later in the eighteenth century with the addition of a parlor to the west, and with the salt box extension of the roof, the house was extended along the north facade adding two more rooms, a new entry hall with a brick floor and a buttery.

The house is entered through a simple plank door; a large slab of uncut granite acts as a stoop. The entry hall itself is small, dark and cramped. A very steep, narrow stair leads to the garret, directly into one bedroom; the second bedroom is reached by stepping across the gap created by the stairwell. The floors are all wide planks and the ceilings quite low, under six feet. The corner-posts in the lateral rooms are encased but project into the rooms. The windows, repaired and replaced over time, are varied, some with six-over-six sash, some with nine-over-nine, and others with twelve-over-twelve sash. The hardware is all reproduction.

To the east of the entry hall is the keeping room, now the kitchen. In the keeping room the ceiling beams are exposed. The brick fireplace with bake-oven is simply detailed with a plank board mantel with a narrow shelf. Just behind the keeping room

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7.2

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is a bathroom, which took the place of a buttery. To the west of the entry is a small parlor with a simple fireplace. To the rear of the west parlor is a larger second parlor, once two rooms, with a shallow narrow fireplace; the third served by the large chimney. The detailing in this room with cupboards and shelves above and beside the fireplace is all mid-nineteenth century.

The upstairs garret bedrooms are very simple and have no architectural embellishment.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance  
c. 1770

Significant Dates  
c. 1770

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. 1790  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. 1790  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Unknown

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

The Nathan Westcott House is a good example of a small eighteenth-century dwelling built by a modest farm family. A small, simple structure, even its alterations and additions, as well as minor repairs are in the same rustic, primitive spirit. As such, it is rare in Cranston, where most earlier houses were altered in later, more affluent times.

Together with the abutting Joy Homestead, the Westcott House formed the nucleus of a small village known in the eighteenth century as Joytown. Through the years, the owners of the Westcott property sold off parcels of their land to the Joy family next door; by 1882 the Joys owned the house as well. The result of this pattern of acquisition is the relatively open space between the two properties, retaining their original relationship in a fashion unusual for this relatively built-up part of Cranston.

The house is associated with two other prominent Cranston and Rhode Island families. Around 1895 the house was acquired by Samuel Fenner, a descendant of the family that settled much of northern Cranston and built one of the two remaining stone-enders in the city. Early in the twentieth century the property was bought by the Knight family who farmed much of this area (their c. 1760 homestead stands at 1900 Scituate Avenue).

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

"Cranston, Rhode Island, Statewide Historical Preservation Report, P-C-1," Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Providence, 1980.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Specify repository:

Rhode Island Historical  
Preservation Commission

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one

UTM References

A 

1	9	2	9	3	9	4	0	4	6	2	7	9	4	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

  
C 

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B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

  
D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the Nathan Westcott House is the line of Cranston Assessor's Plat 12/6, lot 3109.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

This boundary encompasses the Nathan Westcott House and its immediate setting.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Vivian Lasky  
organization Consultant date \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number 18 Savoy Street telephone 401-272-6692  
city or town Providence state Rhode Island zip code 02906

11/22/88

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8.2

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Period of Significance: The Nathan Westcott House is nominated for its architectural significance, that is, for its ability to document the modest late eighteenth-century houses built by the town's small farmers. The period of significance therefore corresponds to the house's dates of construction; internal evidence indicates that the house was probably constructed in two stages (see #7) but neither construction date is known exactly. It is estimated, again on the internal evidence of the quality and character of the house, that the original construction date is c. 1770 and that the addition was constructed c. 1790. Hence, the periods of significance are defined as c. 1770 and c. 1790.