

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0666645

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DATE ENTERED

DEC 28 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC **Potter-Remington House**

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *W of Cranston on*
~~Immediately east of 571 Natick Road~~

CITY, TOWN

Cranston

VICINITY OF

District 2 - Rep. Edward Beard

STATE

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY

Providence

CODE

007 ✓

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME **Richard Serdjenian** ✓

STREET & NUMBER **571 Natick Road**

CITY, TOWN

Cranston

VICINITY OF

STATE **Rhode Island**

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Cranston City Hall**

STREET & NUMBER **Park Avenue**

CITY, TOWN

Cranston

STATE **Rhode Island 02910**

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE **Rhode Island Statewide Survey**

DATE **1977-1978**

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS **Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission**

CITY, TOWN

Providence

STATE **Rhode Island**

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Set back from the road atop a gentle rise east of 571 Natick Road, the Potter-Remington House is 2½-story clapboarded building dating from the late 18th century. (See Figure 1.) Five bays wide and sited facing south, the house measures 36' 6" X 26' 6" and has a flank gable roof, a stone foundation, and a large brick center chimney. (See sketch plan.) It sits in the middle of a 21 acre site (9.5 of which are included for nomination) which includes old stone walls and over-grown fields, as well as large old trees. The old Remington family cemetery is located on adjoining property.

Significant changes were made in the late 19th century, resulting in the refenestration of the entire building. Windows are filled with large two-over-two double-hung sash, and the central doorway is articulated by a projecting pedimented doorhood supported by convoluted scrolls. A two-story ell, measuring 22' 3" X 14' 4" was added to the west of the building.

Although a new roof was recently installed, the house is in generally poor repair; the windows are boarded, the clapboards are unpainted, and the sills are rotting.

Nonetheless, the building, at the end of a dirt road which runs parallel to Natick Road by the old Remington family cemetery, retains the visual appearance of a late 18th century farmhouse. It is of the traditional five-room, central-chimney plan. A slightly off-center front door leads into a tiny entrance hall with a triple run stair that backs against the chimney. With the exception of this front hall, the window and door frames of the entire first floor share the typical 19th century bulls-eye motif. To the west of the hall lies the original kitchen, and to the east, the parlor. In the rear are three smaller rooms in a row, the central one somewhat diminished by the installation of closets to the east.

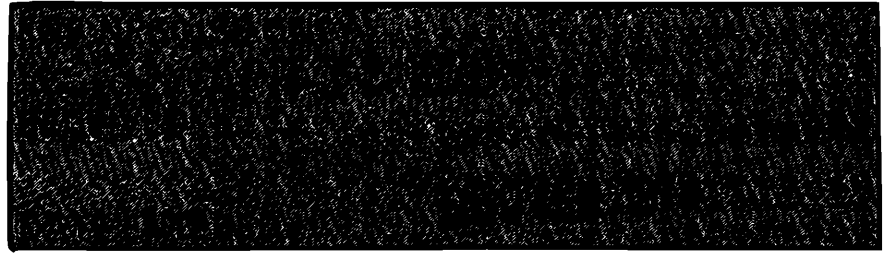
The kitchen contains a large fireplace, flanked on the left by a brick oven and wood bin. (See Figure 3.) An unusual element is the straight flag-stone stairway leading directly from the kitchen to the basement under the parlor. Mortared continuously with the foundation wall and the chimney stack, the stairway is an original component of the house.

The fireplace of the dining room (center rear) has an elegant restrained Federal mantel; raised vertical panels flank a raised central rectangle with scalloped corners. Above and below are rows of mitered bolection molding. The firebox is presently blocked.

See continuation sheet 1

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The most interesting architectural detail in the house is found in the parlor. The fireplace is surmounted by an unusually elaborate Federal mantel. (See Figure 4.) Thin pilasters flank the fireplace opening and support raised panels, each with two raised concentric squares placed on the diagonal. A denticulated cornice surmounted by two moldings runs across the entire mantel. The frieze is articulated by sixteen reeded vertical panels, approximating pilasters. At present, the fieldstone of the fireplace has been painted over to simulate brick.

The configuration of the staircase, a constant width of 33" with angled steps at the turns, is original, although the treads and risers themselves have been replaced, probably in the early 20th century. (See Figure 5.) The balustrade is of a simple late 18th century design. The balusters are square in section. The handrail is curved on top and slightly reeded, and climbs the flight in three runs that are punctuated by simply turned newel posts. The rail makes a marked jump at each turn, as much as 3½' at the third post.

The plan of the second floor parallels that of the first. Only the largest bedroom has a fireplace. The stair to the attic has three runs but climbs with a left and right turn to accommodate the rise of the roof. In the attic are two large rooms, with very low ceilings. These two rooms were finished after 1885. Each has a window with four-over-four, double-hung sash, whose frames perhaps date to the original construction of the house, but were probably not here when the first addition was built about 1870.

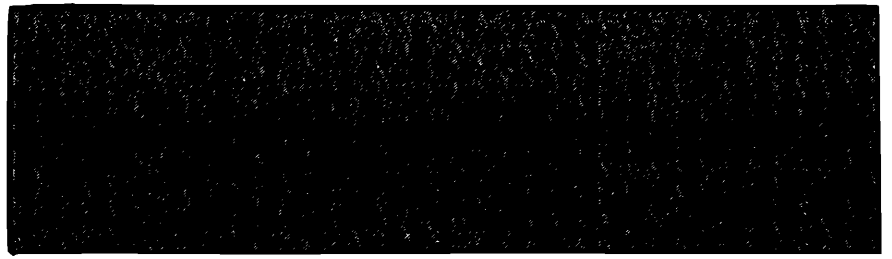
The ell was actually constructed in three stages. (See Figure 2.) The first, c. 1870, is an 11' 6" X 11' 8" kitchen with a small brick chimney and a rear stairway. The second stage was built c. 1900, without a foundation, and includes two rooms to the west -- a pantry and a buttery. The second floor of the ell is exactly the same as the first, including identical sink fixtures. The final stage (c. 1925) comprised a 5' 8" X 6' 7" hall on the north which encloses a stair and uninsulated foyer, with separately poured concrete floors. The foyer has a separate roof and exterior siding of wood shakes.

Approximately 75 feet northeast of the house is an early twentieth century barn, which has been blown over. About 250 feet east of the barn stand the stone foundations of several outbuildings, at

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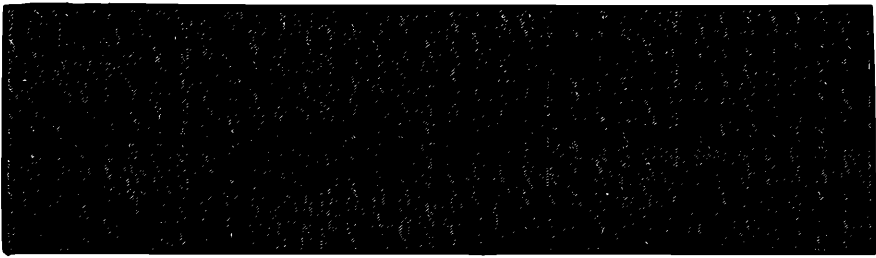
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least one of which appears to have been a barn built into the side of the hill. A stone wall runs to the east of the foundations and makes a corner approximately twenty-five feet south. From there it continues westerly to the drive leading to the house itself.

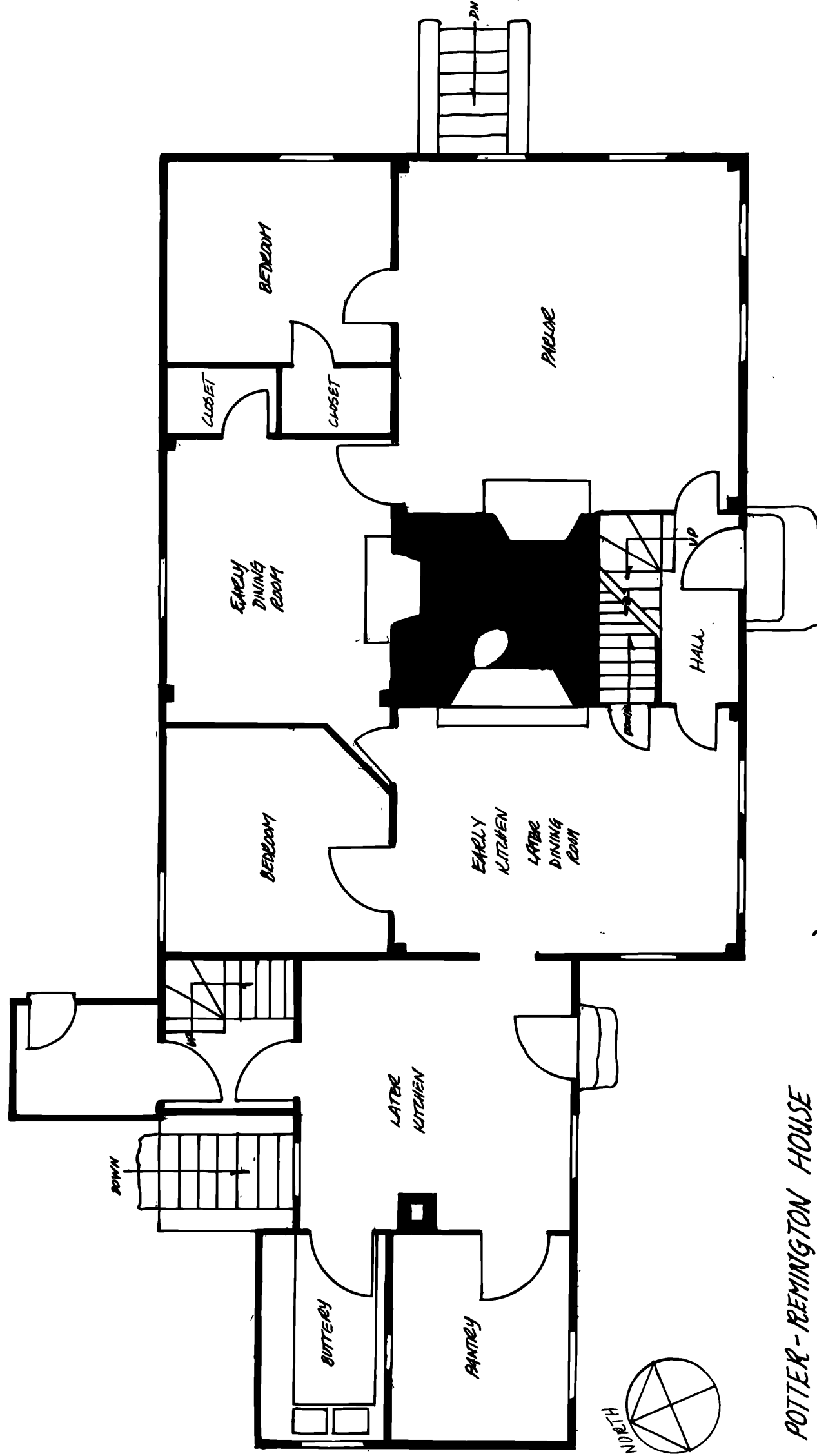
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POTTER - REMINGTON HOUSE

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Potter-Remington House is one of the best remaining examples of late eighteenth century farmhouses in the city of Cranston, an outstanding representative of the country building that characterized rural Rhode Island. With its many alterations, clearly visible and well-documented, the house presents a complete picture of the evolution typical of many five-room, central-chimney-plan rural dwellings.

The Potter family had settled in Cranston by 1696, and its homestead, Rivulet Farm, stood to the west of the present Potter-Remington House. The present house was built sometime between 1790 and 1795 by Caleb Potter (1725-1797), and sold to Benjamin Remington (1752-1837) in 1804. In 1842 Benjamin Remington's grandson, Thomas, plowed up a 1795 Spanish milled dollar, giving rise to a legend that the property associated with the house was acquired from the Indians in 1795. Although the legend can hardly be true, the discovery of the coin may serve to confirm the c. 1795 date for the construction of the house.

In 1812 Benjamin Remington gave a portion of the farm and the house to his son Jonathon, who had married Ardeliza Rice the previous year. Both lie buried in the family cemetery. Jonathon was among the wealthiest farmers in western Cranston. He was one of only three men from Cranston included in c. 1820 list of Principal Men of Rhode Island.

The first owners of the house were thus relatively well-to-do farmers, and the dwelling reflects the country builders' attempts to achieve elegance.

The country builder worked within a broad tradition which colloquially interpreted high-style architectural motifs. The mantels in the Potter-Remington House graphically illustrate the idiomatic quality of country building. The parlor mantel is an outstanding example of how the country builder created his own design by his colloquial re-working of a Doric frieze. The house is thus an important example of the vernacular interpretation of the Federal style in Cranston.

The presence in the house of doors from almost every period -- early batten doors whose latches have been worn paper-thin, Federal,

See continuation sheet 4

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bayles, Richard M., History of Providence County, Vol 1. New York: W.W. Preston and Co., 1891. Chaps. XIV, XV.

Bern, M.A. Remington Family Genealogy, manuscript, 1942.

See continuation sheet 5

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9.5

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	2 9 2 6 8 0	4 6 2 3 8 9 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The central portion of Plat 22, Lot 124; bounded easterly on the west bound of Plat 22, Lot 111 and continuing the line of that bound in the same direction south to meet the roadway leading west from Natick Avenue; bounded southerly on that roadway; bounded westerly on the east bound of Plat 22, Lot 117, and following in a straight line northerly from the northeast corner of Lot 117 to meet the north bound of

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES Plat 22, Lot 124.

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert Freeman, Survey Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

February - 1978

STREET & NUMBER

150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE

401-277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

Providence, Rhode Island

STATE

Rhode Island

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Frederick Williams

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 31, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles G. ...

DATE

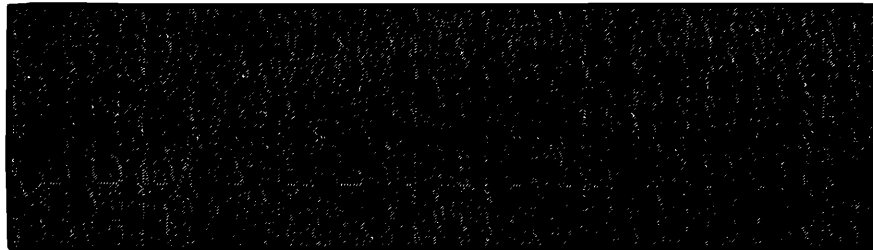
12/26/78

DATE

12-26-78

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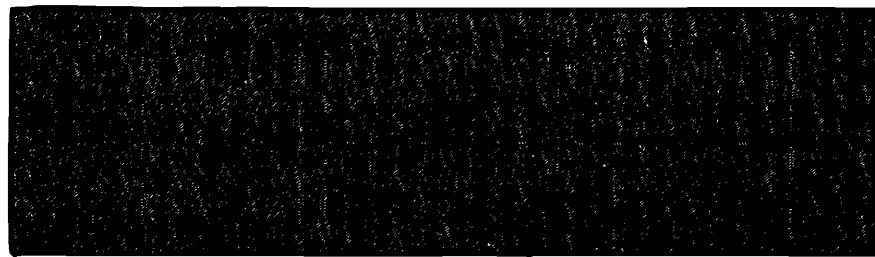
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Greek Revival, and early twentieth century doors -- demonstrates simultaneously the country home-owner's practicality in reusing old components and his desire to keep abreast of new styles. The other alterations -- the late Victorian sash and door hood and the two-story addition -- all clearly illustrate the nineteenth century owners' attempt at modernization.

The Potter-Remington House displays both rudimentary attempts at elegance, and late Victorian and early twentieth century efforts at convenience and is an important representative of the on-going evolution of country homes in rural Rhode Island.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 5

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Brayton, Gladys, "A Mile of Memories," The Cranston Historical Society Newsletter. Cranston: June, 1977.

Potter, Charles Edwin, Genealogies of the Potter Families and Their Descendants in America. Boston: Alfred Mudge and Sons, 1888.

Potter, Jeremiah, Genealogy of the Potter Family Originating in Rhode Island. Phenix, Rhode Island: John H. Campbell, 1881.

Remington, Boyd Scott, Remington Descendants of John Newbury and Rowley, Mass. Third Edition, Ames, Iowa, 1957.

Updated Article in R.I.H.S. Scrapbook (c. 1940).

Record of Deeds Cranston, R.I.: Books 7, 8, 12, 31, 49, 67, 68, 135, 137, 142, 293, 357, 364, 373, 378, 401.

Record of Wills. Cranston, R.I.: Books 9, 12.