

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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NAME: Forge Road Historic District

LOCATION: ~~Both sides of~~ Forge Road from Ives Road, to the Potowomut River

OWNERS: Mrs. Thomas Casey Greene

40 Forge Road  
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Mr. and Mrs. Paul J. Choquette, Jr.

57 Forge Road  
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Mr. and Mrs. Reid T. Westmoreland, Jr.

77 Forge Road  
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Breslin, Jr.

107 Forge Road  
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Paul A. Anderson  
1500 Turks Head Building  
Providence, RI 02903

CONDITION: Good; Altered; Original Site

DESCRIPTION:

The Forge Farm Historic District is located in a low-density suburban residential neighborhood on Potowomut Neck. It includes all the properties along both sides of Forge Road from Ives Road to the Potowomut River. A bridge carries Forge Road across the river. Above the bridge, the fresh-water stream is dammed to form a pond; below the bridge, the river widens into a tidal river which is an inlet of Narragansett Bay. The overall character of the district is strongly rural. The Forge Farm, already a National Register property, encompasses all the land on the southwesterly side of Forge Road. Opposite it are four dwellings of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century vintage, some with associated out-buildings. The only non-contributing structure is the one on the lot at the corner of Forge and Ives Roads, a modern dwelling erected in 1979. Buildings in the district are set at various distances from the road, with open lawns and wooded land surrounding them. The road is bounded by a variety of fencing: post-and-rail, post-and-board, picket, and dry-laid stone walls. On the southwesterly side of the road near the river's edge is a stone memorial to General Nathanael Greene, who was born at Forge Farm. Adjoining this monument is the remnant of a stone-walled head race for an early nineteenth-century mill that stood near the bridge.

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INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

FORGE ROAD

- 40 Forge Farm (1684 et seq.): A large tract of about 165 acres containing a rectangular, two-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, timber-framed, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with a projecting, gable-roofed central pavilion, a center chimney, an entrance portico, and a side ell fronted by an arcaded porch. The property also contains a one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, three-bay tenant's farmhouse (106 Forge Road), several barns and sheds (one converted to a dwelling at 112 Forge Road), and a family burial ground. The property was first settled by James Greene (1626-1698) in 1684 and his dwelling supposedly is incorporated in the present main house. Between 1720 and 1730 an anchor forge--one of the earliest manufacturing establishments in Rhode Island--was opened here. The main house was enlarged and altered in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1742 Nathanael Greene, the famous Revolutionary War general, was born on the farm. The general's brother Christopher Greene (1748-1830) inherited the farm and bequeathed it to his son Richard Ward Greene (1792-1875), a noted lawyer who served for many years as a judge in the Rhode Island Superior Court. Judge Greene had the house altered to its present form in 1862-1863 after similar renovations were made to the house across the road (now 57 Forge Road), which belonged to the judge's niece and her husband. The Forge Farm is one of the most historically and architecturally significant properties in Rhode Island. It was entered on the National Register on 11 January 1974.
- 57 The Grange (ca 1776, ca 1860): A rectangular, two-and-one-half-story, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with a jerkin-head roof, a center chimney, a projecting, gable-roofed central pavilion, a front entrance portico, and side and rear ells. It is set far back from Forge Road overlooking the Potowomut River, on a large lot planted with evergreen, beech, willow, and maple trees. The property also contains several outbuildings, among them a one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, shingle-clad, early twentieth-century cottage; a three-car garage; and two sheds. The main house is a Colonial-style structure erected, according to family tradition, by Elihu Greene (1746-1827), a brother of General Nathanael Greene and Christopher Greene. Elihu's son Franklin Greene (1780-1864) was born here and later inherited the property. Two of Franklin's daughters, Elizabeth (1818-1848) and Emily (1825-1883), successively married Rufus Waterman (1817-1896), a prominent Providence industrialist and financier. The house was altered to its present form about 1860 by

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Forge Road (cont.)

Rufus and Emily Greene Waterman.

- 77 House (mid-nineteenth century?): A rectangular, two-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with paired interior chimneys and a two-story, gable-roofed rear ell with two one-story subsidiary ells, one to the rear with a hip roof, the other to the side with a gable roof. Though set close to the road, the house is almost totally obscured from view by overgrown arborvitae shrubs. The exterior is Greek Revival in character, but the symmetrical five-bay facade and paired chimneys may indicate an earlier construction date, and Greene family tradition attributes the construction of the house to Elihu Greene (1746-1827). The house has a central entrance with side lights framed by pilasters supporting an entablature. Windows are flanked by louvered shutters. The property contains several outbuildings. Behind the rear ell is a one-and-one-half-story, clapboard-sheathed cottage with a three-bay facade, central entrance with a gabled porch, and a gable roof extending at the rear into a shed roof of different pitch. In line with the cottage, to the northwest, is a one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed carriage house with three gabled front dormers, and a central doorway with a gabled hood flanked by two carriage doorways. Elsewhere on the property, set further from the road, are a large, gabled-roofed barn with board-and-batten siding; a small, rectangular, screened gazebo; and a one-story, gable-roofed shed.
- 106 Forge Farm Tenant House (18th or 19th century): A one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with an end chimney, a three-bay facade, and an off-center Greek Revival doorway with side lights and transom framed by architrave trim with corner blocks. It is set close to Forge Road and is part of the Forge Farm property. Though Greek Revival in character, it reputedly dates from the eighteenth century and was altered later.
- 107 House (nineteenth century): A rectangular, two-and-one-half-story, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with a gable roof with eaves returns; a five-bay facade; paired interior end chimneys; narrow corner pilasters; a central entrance portico with columns, gable roof, and pediment; and a side ell. Its windows are flanked by louvered blinds. It appears to be a mid-nineteenth-century Victorian vernacular dwelling, and a structure appears on this site on an 1855 map.

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Forge Road (cont.)

- 112 Shed/House (1920): This long, narrow, one-story, gable-roofed, clapboard-sheathed structure was originally a shed and was converted to a dwelling about 1929. It is part of the Forge Farm property.

INVENTORY OF NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

IVES ROAD

- 1300 House (ca 1979): A modern rustic dwelling composed of several one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, shingle-clad units massed together.

PERIOD: 1700-1799, 1800-1899, 1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

SPECIFIC DATES: 1684, mid-18th century, ca 1776, 1862, 1863, 1880s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT: Not applicable

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Forge Road Historic District is significant for the architectural quality of its constituent parts and for the associations of the properties to people prominent in national, state, and local history. The district is also notable as one of very few areas remaining in Warwick which conveys a sense of the community's rural character prior to World War II.

The houses in the Forge Road Historic District are typical examples of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century vernacular architecture. The Forge Farmhouse and the Grange are especially interesting as Colonial-style dwellings with Victorian additions that give them a particular picturesque charm. The buildings within the district derive added importance from their proximity to each other, for they form a roadscape that has changed little over the past century.

The Forge Road area was part of a huge agricultural tract that came into the possession of the Greene family in 1684. An anchor forge was established south of Forge Road on the west side of the bridge about 1720 or 1730. The anchors were shipped to other Narragansett Bay ports via the Potowomut River, an inlet of the bay. During the Revolution, to prevent incursions by British troops then occupying Newport, local residents dumped debris in the Potowomut River to make it unnavigable. These obstructions could not be removed after the war, and the tiny Forge Road settlement never resumed its function as a port. In the

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early nineteenth century, a cotton mill was built on the riverbank and a few nearby workers' dwellings were constructed over the years. In the 1880s some elements of this small manufacturing village were demolished and the remainder were moved away, transforming the district into an area of quiet farms and country retreats. Few changes have occurred since the removal of the mill and mill housing.

Among the historical figures associated with properties in the district, the most celebrated is Revolutionary War General Nathanael Greene (1742-1786). General Greene was born and raised at Forge Farm and worked as a youth at the family's anchor forge here. A nephew of General Greene, Richard Ward Greene (1792-1875), later owned and occupied Forge Farm. Richard Greene was an eminent jurist who served as a judge in the Rhode Island Superior Court. Two daughters of Richard's cousin, Franklin Greene, were married successively to Rufus Waterman (1817-1896), a noted Providence industrialist and financier. Waterman and his wives used the Grange as a country retreat and later as their principal residence. Waterman was at various times president or treasurer of the Providence Tool Company, the Providence Forge and Nut Company, the Union Oil Company, and the Exchange Bank. He was also a director of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company and a trustee of Butler Hospital and Swan Point Cemetery. Waterman played an instrumental role in determining the present environmental character of the district, for he undertook the removal of the mill and mill housing near the Forge Bridge.

ACREAGE: c. 193 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME: East Greenwich, R.I.

UTM:	A	19	296520	4612880
	B	19	295880	4611400
	C	19	295310	4611720
	D	19	295560	4613080

**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION:**

Beginning at the intersection of the southeasterly curb of Ives Road and the northeasterly lot line of lot 9, Assessor's Plat 208; thence southeasterly along the northeasterly line of lot 9 to a corner; thence southwesterly along a portion of the southeasterly line of lot 9 to the northeasterly (rear) lot line of lot 3; thence southeasterly along the rear lot line of lot 3 to the northwesterly lot line of lot 18; thence northeasterly along the northwesterly lot line of lot 18 to

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a corner; thence southeasterly along the northeasterly lot lines of lots 18 and 4, continuing to the Warwick-North Kingstown city line in the middle of Potowomut River; thence southwesterly and southerly along said city line to a point opposite the southerly line of lot 1, Assessor's Plat 212; thence northwesterly along the southerly lines of lots 1 and 2, continuing across Potowomut Road to follow the southerly line of lot 7 and continuing in a straight line to the Warwick-North Kingstown city line, in the middle of Potowomut River; thence northwesterly along said city line to a point opposite the northwesterly line of lot 7; thence northeasterly, easterly, and northeasterly following the irregular northwesterly boundary of lot 7 and continuing across Potowomut Road to the eastern curb of said road; thence northerly along the eastern curb of Potowomut Road to the northern boundary of lot 1, Assessor's Plat 211; thence easterly, northeasterly, easterly, and northeasterly, following the irregular northerly boundary of lot 1 to the southwesterly curb of Forge Road; thence southeasterly along the southwesterly curb of Forge Road to a point opposite the southeasterly curb of Ives Road; thence across Forge Road and continuing along the southeasterly curb of Ives Road to the point of beginning. The district contains all buildings and structures that contribute historically and architecturally to its significance together with surroundings that provide a visually appropriate setting. The extensive size of the district results from historical land-ownership patterns, some dating back nearly 300 years, which are an important feature of the historical significance of these properties.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: STATE

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