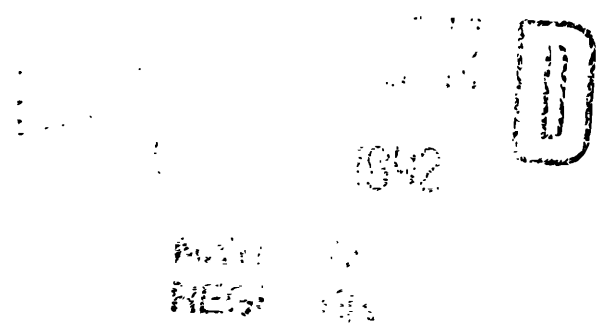


1541

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Whipple - Jenckes House

other name/site number: Liberty Jenckes House

## 2. Location

street & number: 2500 Diamond Hill Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Cumberland vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Providence code: 007 zip code: 02864

## 3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building(s)

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

*Frederick R. Williamson*

30 Sep 1992

Signature of certifying official

Date

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**

entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

*Alonzo Byers*

11/5/92

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain):

*for* Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic: DOMESTIC

Sub: single dwelling

Current: DOMESTIC

Sub: single dwelling

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification:

Colonial

No Style

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials:	foundation	<u>STONE</u>	roof	<u>ASPHALT</u>
	walls	<u>SHINGLE</u>	other	_____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1750 1903

Significant Dates: ca. 1750 \_\_\_\_\_ 1903 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

X See continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 7

Page 5

### Description

Located on a steep south-facing slope on the east side of Diamond Hill Road, just north of the intersection with Fairhaven Drive, the Whipple-Jenckes House is a mid-eighteenth-century, 1 1/2-story, weathered-shingle-sheathed house with an asymmetrical 4-bay facade (entrance in second bay from west), flank-gable roof, and parged brick, off-center chimney.

Window and door openings, with simple trim, are framed just below the cornice line. The present windows were added in the twentieth century and are predominantly six-over-six double-hung sash. An early 1-story ell at the rear northwest corner connects to a 1-bay, gable-roof, twentieth-century, shingled garage. The well preserved house was probably originally constructed by Samuel Whipple shortly after 1750 as a half house (west end) and enlarged to the east before 1780. Double posts (now encased) located in the north wall of the kitchen and the south wall of the front stairhall indicate the joint of the halves. The house's immediate setting retains several early features: a narrow terrace with a low stone retaining wall across the front of the house and three mature maple trees planted on an angled line southwest of the house that mark the former alignment of Diamond Hill Road. The larger agricultural setting has been lost to twentieth-century subdivision housing. The nominated property contains the house (contributing) and one small wood-frame shed (non-contributing). It is not known whether foundations or other remains of a house and a barn which once stood on the property near the existing house survive. The archaeological remains of an earlier house and a nineteenth-century barn may exist just north and east of the house on this or adjacent lots.

The Whipple-Jenckes House rises from a low fieldstone foundation. Wood shingles over vertical plank sheathing and plain corner boards are common to all the exterior walls. The house is approximately 37 feet long and 22 feet wide, with its roof ridge oriented west-east. The roof is fairly steeply pitched at 45 degrees, with a narrow cornice overhang, a moulded cornice and gable end returns. It is currently sheathed in asphalt shingles, although wood shakes remain under the asphalt at the overhang. The massive chimney of parged brick projects from the front (south) of the roof ridge and is located slightly east of the center of the house. A smaller brick chimney rises in the small rear connector.

The openings on the asymmetrical facade consist of one window and the off-center entrance with plain board surround in the oldest, west section, and two windows in the east section. The east end has two windows on the first floor and one attic window, and the west end has three windows on the first floor and two in the attic. The rear elevation has an off-center

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetProperty name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RISection number 7

Page 6

entrance and one picture window flanked by six-over-six sash. The windows are all six-over-six double-hung sash with the exception of the picture window and four windows on the west end: two four-over-four sash on the first floor and two attic casement windows. The sash appears to have been replaced in the twentieth century. Both the front and rear doors are plank doors with strap hinges, but are probably not original.

The gable roof line of the ell connector runs perpendicular to the main house and that of the garage is parallel to the house. The garage sits on the site of an earlier outbuilding structure, as indicated by a nineteenth-century map.

The house has a cellar under the west, oldest section, measuring on the interior approximately 14 feet long by 20 feet wide by 7 feet in depth. The chimney base is at ground surface level in the crawl space under the eastern section of the house. The cellar has mortared fieldstone walls and is divided into two nearly equal sized rooms, separated by a vertical plank wall. The hewn floor joists in the north room run north-south, and those in the south room run west-east. The ceilings and plank walls were originally finished in horsehair plaster on accordian split lath, of which some remains in the southern room.

The interior first floor was originally two rooms deep with the chimney at the east end of the house. The current plan is a five-room, center-chimney arrangement which developed with the extension of the house in the eighteenth century. The majority of the interior finishes have been preserved, including wide board floors, plaster walls, beaded corner post casings, paneled fireplace mantels with cupboards, original painted graining, 4-panel and board doors, and door hardware. The major change in the interior trim has been the addition of new window casings by a prior owner, which are wider and have a deeper profile than the original casings.

The first floor of the oldest section of the house contains the west parlor, the entrance and stair hall, the kitchen, and two small rooms west of the kitchen. The west parlor has simple beaded mopboards and beaded corner post casings in the four corners. Its main feature is the fireplace surround incorporating recessed side and overmantel cupboards with raised panel doors. The doors connecting this room to the stair hall and kitchen are typical of those throughout the first floor of the house. They have four raised panels, are hung on HL hinges, and have thumb latches.

The kitchen contains the largest fireplace, with the bake oven to the left (east) side and overmantel cupboards. The walls have horizontal board wainscoting with plaster above. The joint of the two sections of the house

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 7

Page 7

is visible in the double-width cased posts in the exterior wall opposite the bakeovens, and in the exposed ceiling framing above the fireplace. The second floor joists run north-south. Of the two smaller rooms west of the kitchen, one is now a bathroom and the other a pantry. Access to the cellar is through a door leading from the pantry to the ell.

The front stair hall contains a second double-width cased post in the south exterior wall on a line with that in the kitchen. The stairs are enclosed, with a quarter turn at the bottom and top. Evidence found by the present owner indicates that they were originally a dogleg configuration leading to the west room of the second floor and were rebuilt.

The east half of the first floor contains the southeast parlor, the northeast room, and the two small sections of the kitchen and stairhall rooms that were part of the extension. The east parlor fireplace has an over mantel recessed cupboard with raised panel doors and is most notable for its rich early grained paint which has been exposed around the firebox and overpainted elsewhere. The room also has beaded corner post casings in the two eastern corners and simple mopboard moulding. The chairrail is a recent addition and is based upon dimensions and location of a shadow line found in the plaster walls. The northeast room has a corner post in both the northeast and southwest corners and a single window. The door connecting this room to the parlor was added by the present owners, based on physical evidence. Previously, the parlor and kitchen had been directly connected (see plan).

The second floor contains two rooms, the stairhall, and a hall closet on the east side of the chimney. There is no ornamentation, and the doors are board-and-batten. The east wall of the west room, in the older section of the house, has a small fireplace with recessed overmantel shelving, flanked by a closet door hung on strap hinges and a hall door cut at an angle to fit the roof slope. The roof framing is partially exposed in this room, with hewn rafters and collar beams visible. The east room is fully plastered and has no fireplace.

The house is approached up a steep driveway from Fairhaven Drive along the east side of the lot and the house. The sloped front lawn contains a few large pine trees and three mature maples planted on a southwest line which marks the former eastern side of Diamond Hill Road. In front of the house a series of two small terraces with drylaid stone retaining walls provide a level walking and garden surface. The rear of the lot is very close to the house and is delineated by a low retaining wall along the north side of the driveway where it turns to enter the garage. The lot

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 7

Page 8

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drops off west of the house and the small shed behind the garage to the old alignment of Diamond Hill Road.

Early maps, deeds, and other sources indicate that an earlier house, referred to as a blockhouse and later used as a boatbuilding shop, was sited a short distance north and east of the house into the nineteenth century. A large barn sat just southeast of the house in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The present owners possess copies of sketches drawn from ca. 1900 photographs which show the barn and the rear of the house. The location of these structures has not been verified through site investigation.

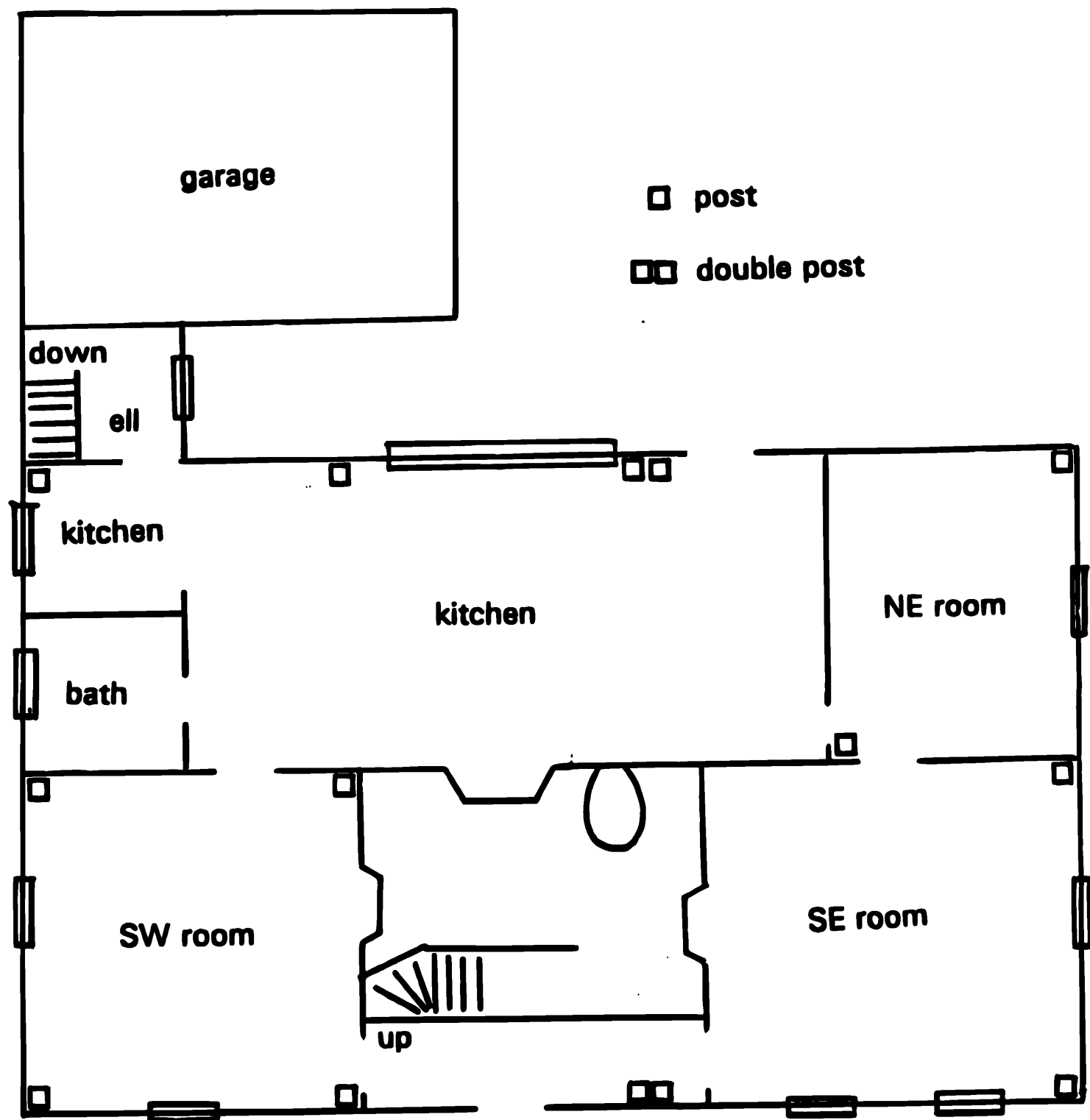
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 7

Page 9



**WHIPPLE-JENCKES HOUSE  
2500 DIAMOND HILL ROAD  
CUMBERLAND  
PROVIDENCE COUNTY, RHODE ISLAND  
FIRST FLOOR SKETCH PLAN, not to scale**





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 7

Page 10

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### PHOTOGRAPHS

Whipple - Jenckes House  
2500 Diamond Hill Road  
Providence County  
Cumberland, Rhode Island

Photographer: Virginia H. Adams

Date: April 1992

Location of Negatives: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission,  
150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903

[Above information applies to all photographs]

1. South facade, looking north
2. North elevation, rear connector and garage, looking west
3. Kitchen fireplace, looking southwest
4. Southeast parlor fireplace, looking west
5. West bedroom fireplace, looking east

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 8

Page 11

### Significance

The Whipple-Jenckes House is significant as a well preserved example of mid-eighteenth-century rural vernacular domestic design, and illustrates the evolution of the half house to a full center chimney form. It is also of local historical interest for its broad associations with the development of the town of Cumberland. Built by a member of one of Cumberland's early settlement families, the house remained in that family for several generations, and became one locus of two of the town's important nineteenth- and twentieth-century economic pursuits: small-scale boat building and farming. Although its setting has been altered by mid-twentieth-century residential development, the Whipple-Jenckes House possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It meets National Register criteria C at the local level.

The Whipple-Jenckes House was constructed by Samuel Whipple beginning about 1750 when he inherited this property from his father, William Whipple. At that time, the property also contained an earlier house, which is sometimes referred to in deeds as "Samuel Whipple's old house" and in secondary sources as a "blockhouse". Its construction date is not known, but it stood immediately northeast of the present house well into the nineteenth century. Diamond Hill Road was one of the area's first primary north-south roads and is described in early deeds as the road between Providence and Franklin, Massachusetts.

Although William Blackstone had built a house in Cumberland about 1635, consistent settlement of the town did not occur until the cessation of active hostilities between the Native Americans and the European settlers at the end of King Philip's War in 1676. Ensign David Whipple of Dorchester, Massachusetts, and the grandfather of Samuel Whipple, was one of the earliest settlers of the Diamond Hill area. In 1692, he purchased land on the Blackstone River from William Blackstone's son, John Blackstone, and built a house in the vicinity. Upon his death, the land passed to the next generation, and about 1750, Samuel Whipple (1718-1780), inherited the land on which the Whipple-Jenckes House stands from the estate of his father, William Whipple of Attleborough. No actual deed of inheritance has been found, but the transfer is referenced in a deed of other lands from Israel Whipple to Samuel Whipple in 1752 (Book 2:83, 10/4/1752).

Samuel Whipple built the house standing today in two phases between about 1750 and 1780. Expansion likely occurred in response to the growing size of the family, which numbered seven daughters at his death on 19 August 1780. Samuel Whipple was a yeoman farmer, whose agricultural

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 8

Page 12

activities appear to have been typical of New England subsistence farmers in the eighteenth century, primarily providing adequate sustenance for his family. His probate inventory indicates that he kept a variety of livestock -- cows, heifers, bulls, sheep, pigs, and one mare -- and grew English hay, meadow hay, flax, and rye. His household possessions were relatively few and simple. In his will, he left the use of his personal and real estate to his wife, Elizabeth, during her natural life. The "smallish" of his dwelling houses, probably the older house, and one acre of land went to a daughter, also Elizabeth Whipple. Further pieces of the estate were bequeathed to seven daughters and two grandsons (Probate Records 5:385, 388-389, 1780).

The main portion of the property passed to Hannah Whipple Wilkinson (daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Whipple) and her husband, Simon Wilkinson. In 1797, they sold all their rights to the land and buildings formerly belonging to Samuel Whipple to their son-in-law, David Sheldon (1769-1839), yeoman and husband of Vienna Wilkinson (1768-1833). The homestead property included in total about 73 rods of land. The house and barn lot was 38 1/2 rods with two dwelling houses and a corn barn. The deed included rights to the easterly end of the hay barn and the right to pass from the east end of the barn to the cellar under the old house. The description of the barn indicates it was a bank barn with a central threshing floor (Book 10:188, 8/27/1787). David Sheldon was involved in a nail manufacturing business with Joseph Staples and Simon Wilkinson and served as supervisor of highways for the town of Cumberland from 1802 until 1811.

By 1812, David Sheldon had purchased the remains of the estate from the heirs of Samuel Whipple and deeded the property and buildings as described in the earlier deeds, along with other lots in Cumberland, to his son James Manning Sheldon for \$600. It included 38 1/2 rods of land, two houses (a dwelling house and the old house formerly belonging to Samuel Whipple), a corn crib, and the easterly end of the hay barn (Book 19:253, 2/12/1812).

James Manning Sheldon (1791-?) was a farmer and boat builder. He operated the small family farm and also participated in the local small boat building economy, running a boat shop from either the cellar of the old house or the barn southeast of the house. The abundance of excellent forest timber for boat building in Cumberland spawned a lively cottage industry in the nineteenth century, and there were at least 19 shops in northern Cumberland manufacturing small boats for overland shipment to coastal Massachusetts and Rhode Island towns.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 8

Page 13

The property was inherited by James' daughter Lucina Wilkinson Sheldon and her husband James Thompson, who in 1844, sold it to Barton Cargill. Three years later, in 1847, Liberty Whipple Jenckes purchased the property, including 10 acres of land with buildings, for \$900 (Book 25:314, 3/4/1847). Liberty Whipple Jenckes (1829-?), whose relationship if any to Samuel Whipple is not known, married Ann Elizabeth Razez. He owned the property until 1903. His name has been commonly associated with the house, as it appears on nineteenth-century maps and remained in oral tradition well into the twentieth century. The property was mortgaged in 1879 to Adin E. Follett (Mort. Book 37:3, 12/9/1879). During Liberty W. Jenckes' ownership, Diamond Hill Road was cut, filled, and straightened in 1872 (Street Plats & Profiles Book No. 2:20, 1872).

In 1903, Liberty Jenckes had defaulted on the mortgage and Adin E. Follett had died. The property was purchased at auction by Owen and Maggie Murphy for \$1530 (Book 52:248, 4/22/1903). Murphy was an Irish farmer who came to Cumberland in 1884. Under his ownership, the small homestead farm became the core of a large and successful dairy farm, with 150 acres in Cumberland and Massachusetts. Although industries fostered much of Cumberland's economic growth after about 1850, agriculture remained an important activity for many residents and helped preserve the agrarian cultural landscape well into the twentieth century. Between 1940 and 1988, the property changed hands several times and, in the mid-1950s, was subdivided, creating the present small lot.

The house has lost its agrarian outbuildings and setting, but remains valuable as a simple, relatively unaltered, mid- to late-eighteenth-century, vernacular house, and as an excellent example in Cumberland of its type and period. Its construction and appearance, as well as the evolution of its form during the first quarter century after it was built, reflect building technologies and rural lifeways of the period. The survival of intact interior painted graining finish in at least one room, as well as chimney mantels, doors, and trim are of further note. Sets of double posts near the center of both the south and north interior walls provide physical evidence of the two phases of construction. As a rural agrarian town, Cumberland's pre-Revolutionary War domestic architecture was predominantly constructed in this type of unassuming form. The Whipple-Jenckes House ably illustrates the kind of houses built by the town's yeoman farmers and settlers in the first century of town formation.

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>300990</u>	<u>4647540</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description:  See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification:  See continuation sheet.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title: Virginia H. Adams, Sen. Architectural Hist./Senior Archaeologist

Organization: The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Date: 4/92

Street & Number: 387 Lonsdale Avenue Telephone: 401-728-8780

City or Town: Pawtucket State: RI ZIP: 02860

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 9

Page 14

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### Major Bibliographical References

Land Evidence Records, Town of Cumberland

Probate Records, Town of Cumberland

File of genealogical information (no source given), in possession of owner

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. Historic and Architectural Resources of Cumberland, Rhode Island. Virginia Adams Fitch. Providence: RIHPC, 1990.

Simpson, Robert V. North Cumberland, A History. Privately printed, 1975

Nelson, Newell. Map of the Town of Cumberland, RI. Boston: White, Aaron, Jr., 1838.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Whipple - Jenckes House, Providence Co., RI

Section number 10

Page 15

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### Geographical Data

#### Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property boundaries are defined as Town of Cumberland Assessor's Plat 24, Lot 126.

#### Boundary Justification:

The boundaries conform to the present lot associated with the property, encompassing the house and its immediate setting, as distinct from adjacent roadways and mid-twentieth-century house lots.