

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.4.38.000	DATE 4/3/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Brackett (Charles) House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Corliss (George H.) House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
45, Prospect Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 38 COUNTY: Providence CODE: 607



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In Process <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	rear wing used	
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	as offices	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
Estate of Charles Brackett and Brown University

STREET AND NUMBER:
Prospect Street at College Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 38

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Recorder of Deeds, City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Dorrance Street at Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 38

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: LESS THAN TEN

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
College Hill Demonstration Grant Study. Project R. I., D--1.

DATE OF SURVEY: 1959 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Providence Redevelopment Agency

STREET AND NUMBER:
10, Dorrance Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 38

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The present appearance of the house is entirely its original one. It is, in its main portion, of three full storeys above a low basement, with a corner tower of four full storeys; at the rear is a service wing of two diminished storeys over a basement, through which runs a ramp or tunnel serving as porte-cochère. Attached to a corner of the service wing is a two-storey stable block forming a rear courtyard. The massing of the main house and its projections is asymmetrical, in the "Italian Villa" style, employed monumentally.

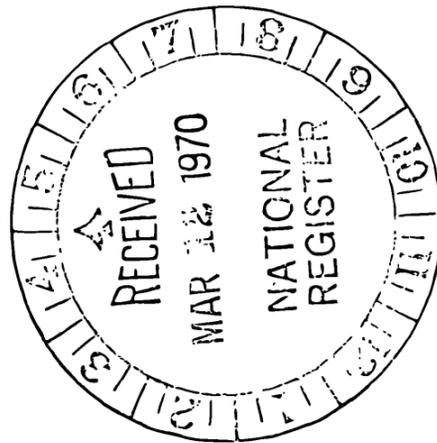
Construction is of brick with brown sandstone trim (entrance porch, terrace, window sills and lintels, balconies etc.), cornices and some minor appendages being of wood. The various roof areas are of painted metal and are of hipped form with surmounting balustrades (one hipped area conceals, however, a sizeable roof terrace with observation platforms). Windows are mostly double-hung, 1 over 1 of large plate glass, and are square-headed except for the third storey, where they are segmental-headed.

Interior trim throughout the many rooms is elaborate and varied, displaying moulded and carved wood, marble mantels, a variety of applied wall treatments, of hardware and lighting fixtures. One or two reception rooms "done over" near the turn of the century were in 1929 restored to a correct Victorian appearance.

With the exception of very small areas of damage due to minor leakage or cracks in plaster, the house remains inside and outside in practically pristine condition, having had, ever since its construction and to this moment, the most thorough and careful maintenance and repair.

Considering the date of its construction, c. 1875 ff., the house is perhaps slightly retardataire in its surface design or style, but this seems to have been a definite choice of the owner-architect.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian <input type="checkbox"/>	16th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	18th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	20th Century <input type="checkbox"/>
15th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	17th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	19th Century <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1875--c. 1882

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Science <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Architecture</u>
Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Invention <input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/>	
Art <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>	
Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input type="checkbox"/>	Theater <input type="checkbox"/>	
Communications <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	
Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Music <input type="checkbox"/>		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

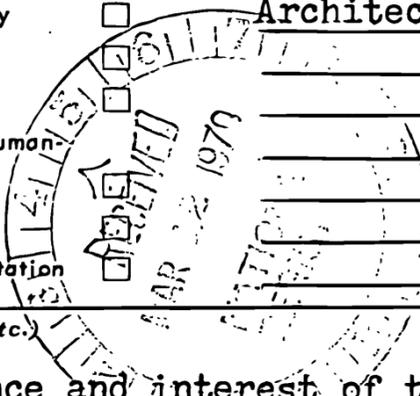
SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The permanent significance, importance and interest of this house are spread over several areas--the chief one of which is its place as a remaining example of American XIX Century architectural history and taste. In that respect it is important in New England, and also well beyond it, for there remain anywhere very few very formally and monumentally treated durable masonry examples of the "Italian (Tuscan) Villa" style. This large example, upon which expense was not spared, stands intact externally; the interior is also preserved, with its parade of Victorian décor, luxury, equipment and convenience. (The furniture is likely to leave the house, but it is perhaps only incidental to the decorated rooms.) The house will be greatly rewarding to any historian or collegian making a study and even to the travelling sightseer making a passing inspection.

Second, the house by its character, size and particular ^{setting} siting (high on an embankment on an important street-corner) fills a special function as a landscape and cityscape "anchor" to its locale--its adjacent buildings and spaces. These include XVIII and XIX Century residences, a "Gothic" octagonal domed library of Brown University, a modern dormitory complex of the Rhode Island School of Design. It very perceptibly is a cornerstone of its entire surroundings and it defines one boundary of the Brown campus. From more distant points of view it is a towering landmark of Providence's high East Side.

Third is the matter of close association with a personality of note: George Corliss was a figure of genius and importance in the industrialisation and mechanisation of this country. This is the house he planned, designed for himself in his success and prosperity--to include, within the exterior of his choice, all the comfort and convenience of living, all the modern apparatus and devices he could envisage. Though other persons no doubt were asked to handle the more fussy details of interior decoration, the house importantly is the product of both the aesthetic and practical, or mechanical, sides of a great and inventive mind.

Brown University, as designated recipient of this house, hopefully will realise the cultural significance of its possession and will accord it both the sympathetic use and careful maintenance it deserves.



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cady, John Hutchins: The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950 (Providence, R. I., The Book Shop, 1957), pp. 155-156, 171 (the illustration shown is erroneously not of the Corliss House but of a demolished neighbouring one).

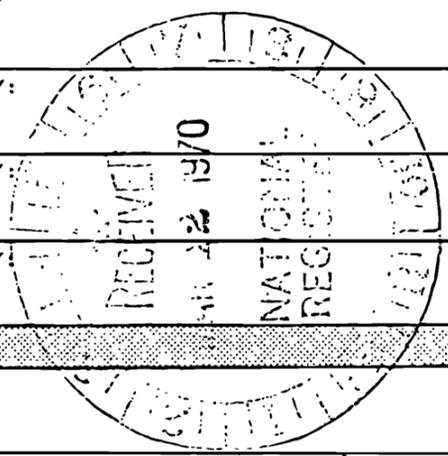
Providence City Plan Commission: College Hill Demonstration Grant Study. Project R. I., D--1 (Providence, R. I., 1959, and 2nd ed., 1967), p. 67.

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 ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 49' 40.0" N	71° 24' 19.2" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard B. Harrington

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island State Historical Preservation Commission DATE: Sept. 20, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:
24, Meeting Street,

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 38

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 Frederick C. Williamson

Frederick C. Williamson

Title State Liaison Officer

Date March 9, 1970

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

Ernest Allen Connolly
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

APR 2 1970

Date _____

ATTEST:

William J. Kuester
Keeper of The National Register

APR 27 1970

Date _____

19/300229 4633210
 UTM REF
 12-11-75 am
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-4-38-0001	DATE 4/3/70

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. Significance.

In addition to producing the over-all architectural design of his house, George Corliss also incorporated into it engineering innovations which reflect the extraordinary inventive character of the owner.

This dwelling stands as a landmark in housing history and improvement, being possibly the first one in America to be warmed by radiant heat, thermostatically controlled: In the stable complex adjoining the house Corliss installed a steam boiler and a small version of his famous steam engine. This engine drove a fan which sent air, through steam-heated ducts, through a tunnel and into the main house. There the heated air was distributed through ducts built into the walls, thus heating all rooms by radiation from their walls. These wall ducts all collected in the attic, from which the air was returned to the stable and re-circulated in order to conserve and re-use any heat which it still contained.

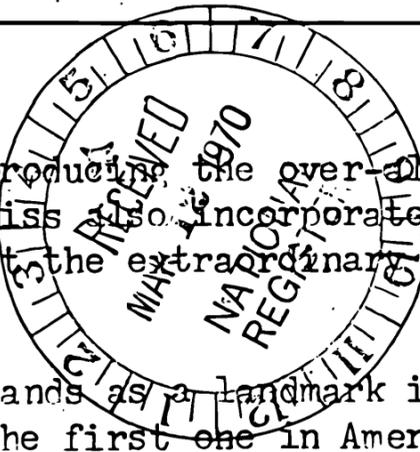
This heating (i. e., the steam engine effecting its distribution) was controlled by a thermostat--surely one of the earliest known--located in the main hall of the house. On the ceiling of this hall and running its full length was a rod of metal alloy which expanded and contracted markedly with changes in the house temperature. Through mechanical linkage, this rod regulated a governor on the engine driving the fan, and this regulated the flow of warmed air to the radiant heating duct-work of the house.

(Besides the above heating arrangements, Corliss made his own designs for other conveniences in his house, such as an hydraulic elevator, concealed sliding insect screens for windows etc.)

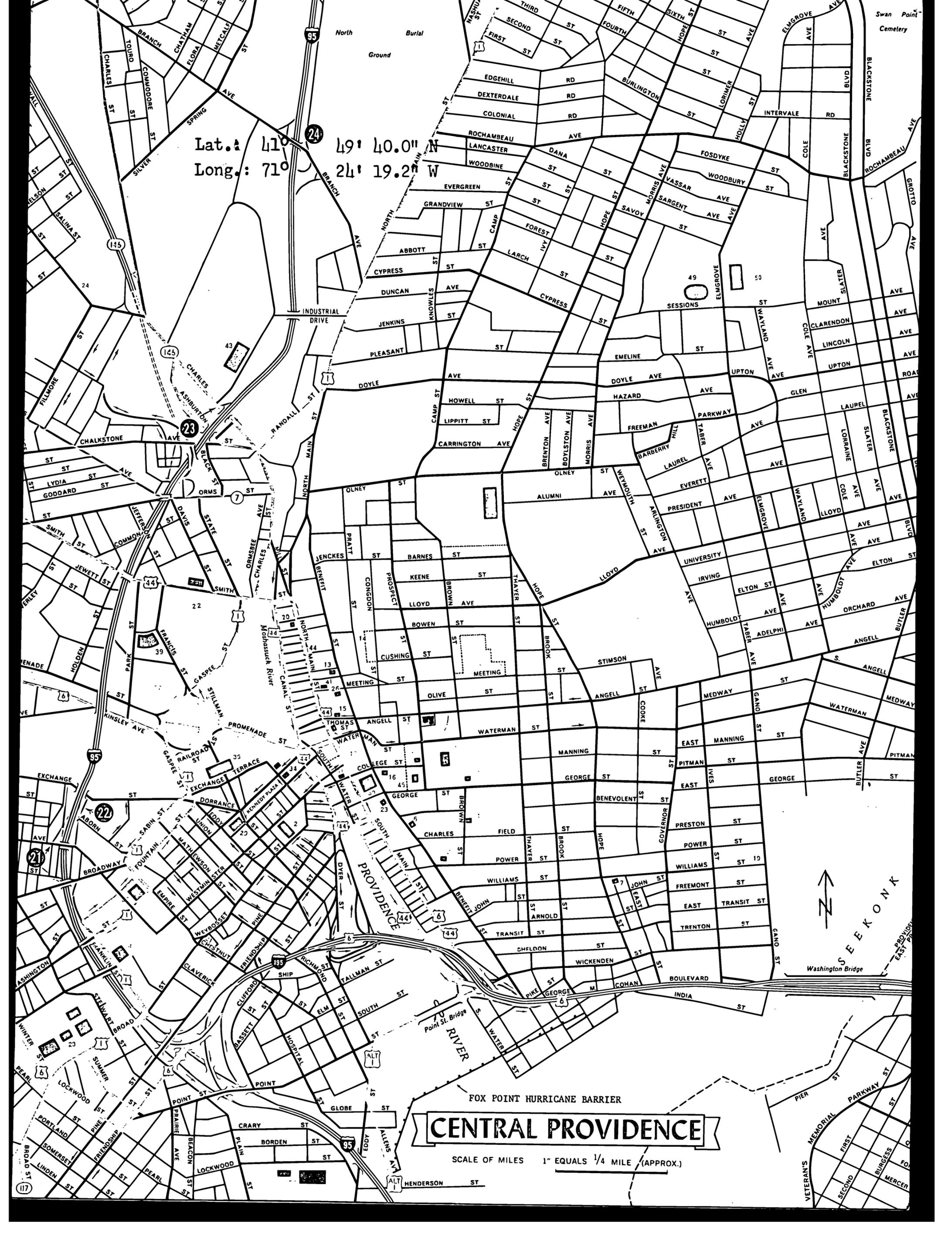
Following the death of Corliss's daughter--who evidently understood this remarkable heating system but failed to pass her knowledge on--later heirs and their maintenance contractors could discover no visible heating system at all. They were then accustomed to central heating through conspicuous steam radiators and consequently installed such a system throughout the house. The workmen employed in doing this also did not perceive the older system and so left its elements largely intact, as it still is except for some comparatively recent dismantling and alteration of the stable area.

What Corliss designed for this house was a first-of-its-kind in centrally generated, radiant heating and an unique example of XIX Century inventiveness, direct from the mind of a man who was a monumental personality in the technological progress of that era.

William Slater Allen,
Registered Professional Engineer.

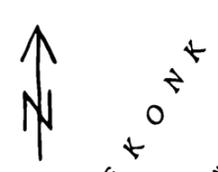


Lat.: 41° 49' 40.0" N
Long.: 71° 24' 19.2" W



CENTRAL PROVIDENCE

SCALE OF MILES 1" EQUALS 1/4 MILE (APPROX.)



SEKONK

FOX POINT HURRICANE BARRIER

Washington Bridge

HENDERSON ST

MERCER

FO

BURGESS

FO

SECOND

FIRST

MEMORIAL PARKWAY ST

PIER

VETERAN'S

INDIA ST

BOULEVARD

COMAN

WICKENDEN

SHFDON

TRANSIT ST

ARNOLD

JOHN ST

ST

ST

ST

WILLIAMS ST

POWER ST

PRESTON ST

GOVERNOR

BENEVOLENT ST

GEORGE ST

EAST LIVES

PITMAN

EAST MANNING

ST

MEDWAY

WATERMAN

ANGELL

BUTLER

ORCHARD

AVE

HUMBOLDT

AVE

ELTON ST

IRVING

UNIVERSITY

AVE

ARLINGTON

ST

WENMOUTH

AVE

OLNEY

ST

BOYLSTON

AVE

BRENTON

AVE

HOPE

ST

THAYER

ST

KEENE

ST

PROSPECT

ST

CONDON

ST

BENNETT

ST

PRATT

ST

OLNEY

ST

LAUREL

AVE

BARBERRY

HILL

FREEMAN

AVE

PARKWAY

AVE

HAZARD

AVE

DOYLE

AVE

EMELINE

ST

SESSIONS

ST

ELMGROVE

ST

WOODBURY

ST

WASSAR

AVE

MORRIS

AVE

SARGENT

AVE

SAVOY

ST

HOPE

ST

FOREST

ST

CAMP

ST

EVERGREEN

ST

WOODBINE

ST

LANCASTER

ST

ROCHAMBEAU

AVE

COLONIAL

RD

DEXTERDALE

RD

EDGEHILL

RD

THIRD

ST

SECOND

ST

FIRST

ST

FOURTH

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FIFTH

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SIXTH

ST

SEVENTH

ST

EIGHTH

ST

NINTH

ST

TENTH

ST

INTERVALE

RD

COLE

AVE

BLACKSTONE

BLVD

ROCHAMBEAU

AVE

BLACKSTONE

BLVD

GROTTO

AVE

MOUNT

AVE

SLATER

AVE

CLARENDON

AVE

LINCOLN

AVE

UPTON

AVE

WAYLAND

AVE

COLE

AVE

LAUREL

AVE

LAUREL

AVE

SLATER

AVE

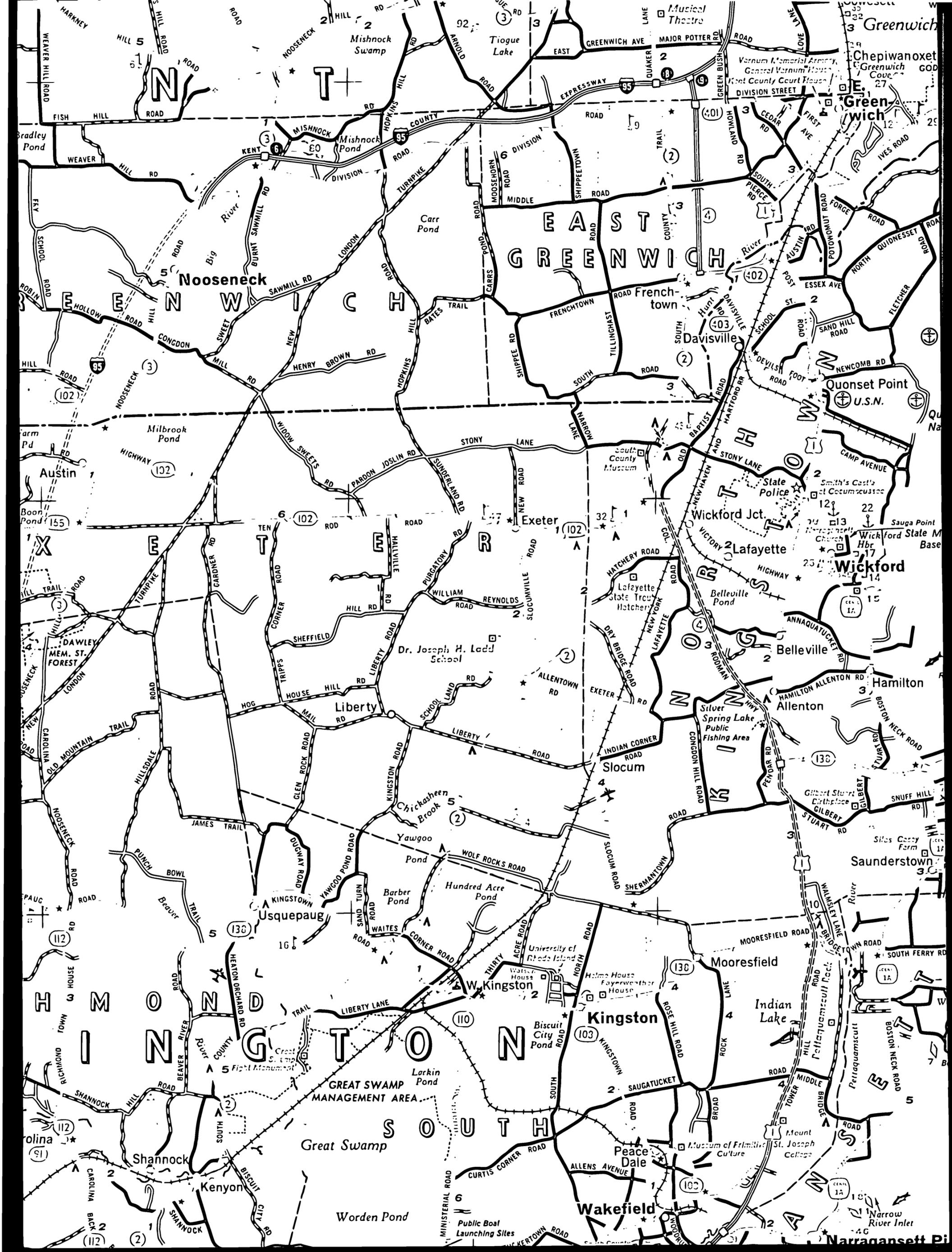
BLACKSTONE

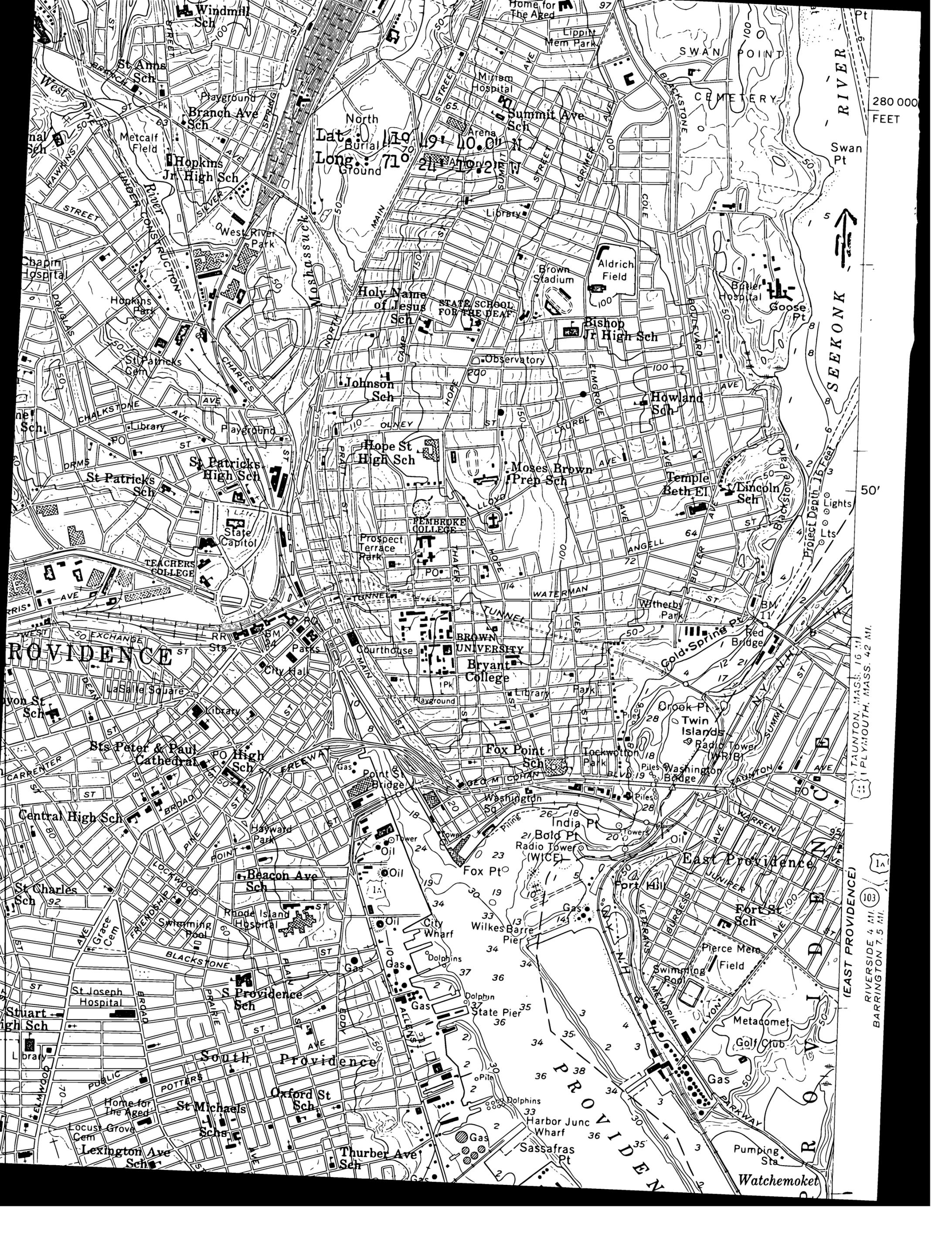
BLVD

ROCHAMBEAU

AVE

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Lat: 41° 49' 40.0" N
Long: 71° 24' 10.2" W

280 000
FEET



SEEKONK RIVER

50'

TAUNTON, MASS. 16.31
PLYMOUTH, MASS. 42 MI.

(EAST PROVIDENCE)

RIVERSIDE 4 MI.
BARRINGTON 7.5 MI.

PROVIDENCE

PROVIDENCE

EAST PROVIDENCE

FOUR

STATE

ROUTE

103

1A

103

1A

103

1A