

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	DATE
DEC 5	1972

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Brick School House

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Meeting Street School; Providence Preservation Society

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
24 Meeting Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Providence

STATE: Rhode Island, 02903      CODE: 44      COUNTY: Providence      CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
City of Providence

STREET AND NUMBER:  
City Hall, Dorrance Street at Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island, 02903      CODE: 44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Dorrance Street at Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island, 02903      CODE: 44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

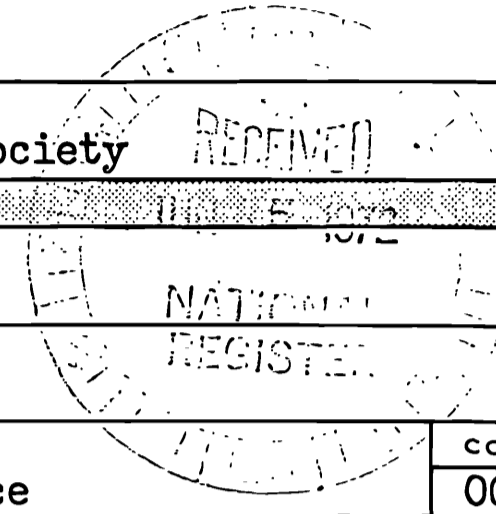
DATE OF SURVEY: 1957, 1962       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: II

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:	
COUNTY:	
ENTRY NUMBER	DEC 5 1972
DATE	

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent   
  Good   
  Fair   
  Deteriorated   
  Ruins   
  Unexposed

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(Check One)

Altered   
  Unaltered

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(Check One)

Moved   
  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Brick School House, completed in 1768, is a rectangular two-story timber-framed brick building, five bays wide by two bays deep, set on a foundation of rough-cut stone. It is covered by a hipped roof (now asphalt-shingled) in its main portion, and a chimney rises at each end. The entrance elevation, facing south, has in its center a two-story gabled pavilion or projection, pierced by the front door and one window above, which houses the principal staircase. This doorway has a Doric surround with fluted pilasters and a pediment (which is probably a 20th-century "restoration" or application); there is a secondary entrance on the north side of the building. A slightly-projecting brick belt course runs between stories, and there is a molded wooden eaves cornice. The windows have new twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash set in plain wood frames with molded sills; there are segmental arches in the brickwork over the windows of the first story.

The first floor of the building was originally a single large room with a fireplace at each end, but has now been divided, with the east end converted into four small rooms now used for display, storage, and toilets. The old floor is covered by modern composition tile. There is a high wainscot of horizontal boarding to window-sill level; above, walls and ceiling are plastered.

The second floor, also originally one room, now has been partitioned across its east end to allow for a shallow kitchen. Rear stairs are set in the northeast corner. Above a boarded wainscot reaching to the sills of the high-placed windows, walls are plastered; the ceiling is plastered along the inner side of the hipped roof, above the wooden trusses. The hardwood floors are later replacements. Recent renovations include painting the plaster walls white, and treatment of the wainscoting and wooden work with a mixture of paint and glaze in a dark brown color simulating the color discovered underneath later paint layers.

Throughout the building, trim is very simple. Both the main stair at south center and the secondary one (in the northeast corner, probably added later) are enclosed, of U-shape, and have plain open railings of long boards. Windows and doors are very modestly trimmed; some of their plain, mitered architraves are probably original. The windows were equipped in 1965 with folding interior shutters copied from 18th-century models (and such were quite likely in place originally) to allow for darkening the rooms. The two remaining fireplaces, with splayed hearths, one at the west end of each floor, are completely devoid of mantels or other surrounding trim; the matching fireplaces at the east end of the building have been covered over.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian
- 15th Century
- 16th Century
- 17th Century
- 18th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1768

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <u>Active center for</u>                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | <u>preservation and</u>                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | <u>restoration</u>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | <u>programs</u>                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Brick School House is an example of the type of plain, utilitarian building erected for community purposes in the eighteenth century. It has been altered in the course of a succession of uses but remains in good condition and close to its original appearance.

Historically, it has a first significance in being the first brick-built, permanently-purposed school structure in Providence and one of the first free schools in the United States. Moses Brown had called for various school constructions in Providence in 1768, and--although his proposal was voted down by the town--it was somehow resolved, according to Staples's Annals of the Town of Providence, "to build a brick school house, 30' x 40' and two stories high, near the court house." Deed Book 17, page 476, in the Providence City Hall further informs that

I, Ambrose Page of Providence ... mariner ... do covenant, agree [to grant estate to Town of Providence if Town builds] a Good and convenient School House on the Lot in Providence whereon the Late Court House which was burnt down did stand lying [near] John Waterman's House ...

In The History of Brown University, Walter Bronson notes that when what was originally called Rhode Island College decided, c. 1770, to bring itself from Warren into Providence, classes were held in the Brick School House; and the corporation met there to determine a final location in the city:

The students ... at certain hours met in one of the chambers of the old brick schoolhouse, with the officers, for recitation ... the Committee for settling the spot for the College ... met at the New-Brick [sic] School House.

During the Revolutionary War, the school house is said to have been taken over for use by the colonials as an arsenal and gunpowder manufactory, and allusion pointing to such a rôle is found in Edward Field's Revolutionary Defenses in Rhode Island:

(See Continuation Sheet.)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bronson, Walter C.: The History of Brown University (Providence, Rhode Island, 1914), pp. 53-55.  
 Cady, John Hutchins: The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957), pp. 41, 43, 52, 62, 102.  
 U. S. Works Progress Administration. Federal Writers' Project: Rhode Island. A Guide ... (Boston, Massachusetts, 1937), p. 266.  
 Staples, William R.: Annals of the Town of Providence ... Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Vol. 5 (Providence, Rhode Island, 1843), pp. 496-513.

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 TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		41° 49 ' 42.92" N	71° 24 ' 33.80" W	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
B. Christopher Bene, Surveyor-Researcher

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: March 18, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 201, 265 Melrose Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02907 CODE: 44

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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: *Donald R. Williams*

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: June 5, 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

*Robert G. Utley*  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 12/5/72

ATTEST:

*William H. Stewart*  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 12-4-72

19/200910/116333410  
 12-11-75-um  
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
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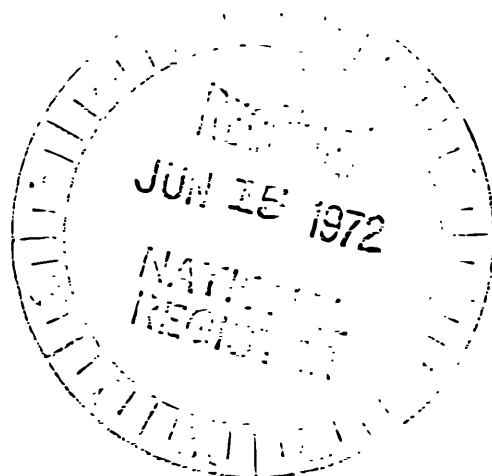
(Number all entries)

8. Significance.

1. That the Town Arms and Accoutrements be Devided [sic] into three equal Divisions: to be lodged in the hands of three discreet men in each District of the Town--Viz. above or near the Court House ...

Eventually inadequate for public school uses, the building nevertheless remained in municipal ownership and somehow avoided destruction. Under lease, it has in this century housed the Meeting Street School, a foundation for the teaching and treatment of muscularly and cerebrally afflicted children which has achieved great accomplishment and reputation. Now removed, this effective organization has chosen to retain the name it took when first working in the Brick School House.

Again under lease from the city, the building has since 1960 appropriately housed the offices, the community programs and information services of the Providence Preservation Society, which with its own funds has undertaken a step-by-step restoration of this historic structure, locally well-known and still in lively use.



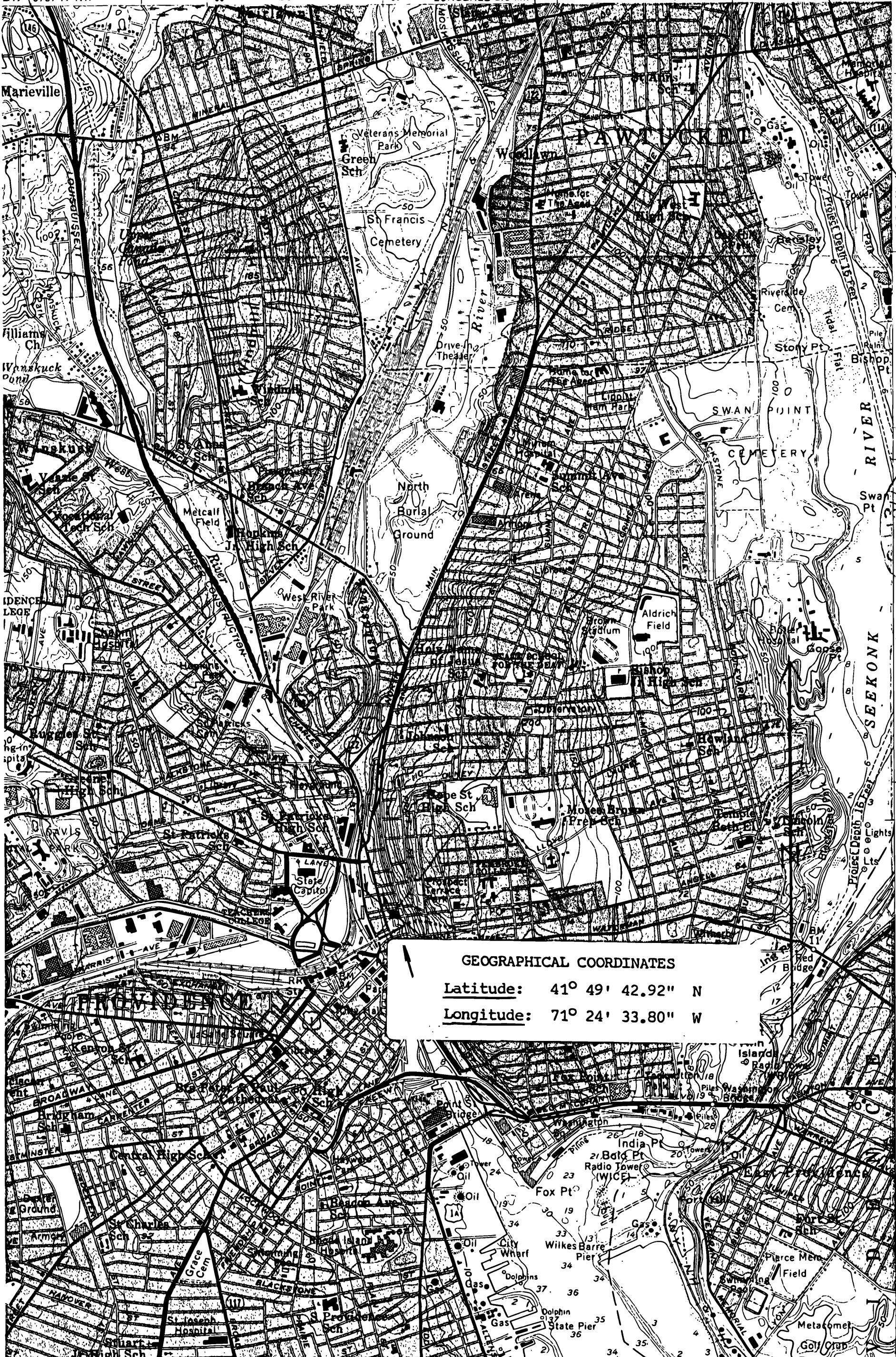
PROVIDENCE QUADRANGLE  
RHODE ISLAND  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

BOSTON, MASS. 40 MI.  
SOUTH ATTLEBORO, MASS. 2.2 MI.  
5300 FEET

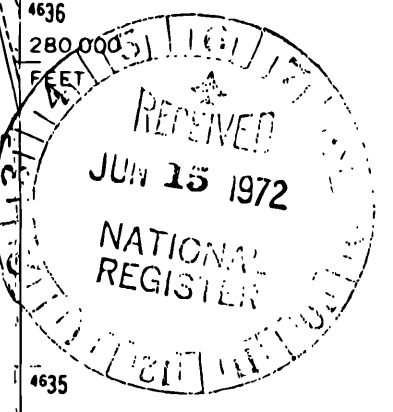
71° 22' 30"  
41° 52' 30"

6767 IV NE  
(ATTLEBORO)

MI.  
116  
ETJ 6767 IV NW



4638  
RUMFORD 2 MI.  
BARRINGTON 11 MI.  
4636  
280 000  
FEET  
4635  
4634  
50'  
4632  
4631



↑  
GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES  
Latitude: 41° 49' 42.92" N  
Longitude: 71° 24' 33.80" W

TAUNTON, MASS. 16 MI.  
PLYMOUTH, MASS. 42 MI.  
4632  
4631

(EAST PROVIDENCE)  
RIVERSIDE 4 MI.  
BARRINGTON 7.5 MI.  
RUMFORD 3.4 MI.  
8.9 MI. TO U.S. 1  
H SEEKONK, MASS. 3.5 MI.  
FALL RIVER, MASS. 15 MI.