

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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

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Continuation sheet 47 North Kingstown MRA Item number 7

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NAME: Joseph Pierce Farm

LOCATION: 933 Gilbert Stuart Road

OWNER: Heirs of Virginia MacLeod, c/o Sherman Gifford
10509 Buffapple Drive
Richmond, VA 23233

CONDITION: Excellent; Altered; Original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Joseph Pierce House is a clapboarded, one-and-one-half-story, gambrel-roofed, eighteenth-century house, with nineteenth- and twentieth-century additions. The resulting structure is basically cruciform in plan. The well-preserved house rests on a stone foundation, the basement of the oldest part exposed to the west. It stands adjacent to a cluster of outbuildings atop a hill gently sloping to a pond, its rural setting virtually undisturbed by modern intrusions.

What is now the house's southern wing is the oldest section, dating from the mid-eighteenth century. Its fireplace (now surrounded by English tiles) and two raised-, four-panel doors date from the late Federal period. The beaded corner posts flare slightly at the top, suggesting that they may conceal chamfered posts. In the basement of this oldest wing is a large stone fireplace with a slightly arched stone lintel and an oven.

At a later date, perhaps the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, the house was extended to the north, the addition served by a new brick fireplace backed on the older fieldstone chimney. The fireplace's stone lintel was damaged and replaced by one of wood in the twentieth-century. Stairs were installed west of the chimney. Alterations to the earlier structure, including the Federal mantel and doors and transformation of the original gable roof to a gambrel, probably date from this time as well.

In the nineteenth century, a one-story, gable-roofed wing containing a milk room and dairy was attached to the northeast corner of the building. The present owners, who purchased the farm in 1939, expanded the north section to the west and added modern conveniences.

Outbuildings, gable-roofed with vertical board or board-and-batten siding, include a barn with attached privy, a tool shed, a hen house, a pump house, and several small connected sheds. A garage and trailer shed have been added since 1939; except for these last two, the outbuildings are typical vernacular structures of the nineteenth century.

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The wooded, gently undulating acres surrounding the house and outbuildings contain several fine stone walls.

PERIOD: 1700-1799, 1800-1899

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Agriculture, Architecture

SPECIFIC DATES: Unknown; mid-18th century, late 18th/early 19th century,
mid-19th century

BUILDER: Unknown

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Joseph Pierce House is significant as a well-preserved eighteenth-century farm house, able to document early agricultural life in North Kingstown. The successive additions to the house are significant in themselves and describe the adaptation of an early dwelling to the needs of later occupants. Equally important is the collection of nineteenth-century outbuildings near the house.

Joseph Pierce, who owned the property in 1819, is the earliest person possible to positively associate with the farm using the fire-damaged North Kingstown records. The farm may have begun as one of the Narragansett plantations, a type of agricultural development unusual in New England but common in this area in the eighteenth century. The decline of the plantation system after the Revolutionary War led to fragmentation of the large estates, and this farm appears to have shared that fate. The return of much of the land to untilled acreage and second-growth woods in the twentieth century again parallels a trend evident throughout North Kingstown as agricultural production suffered an overall decrease. Despite the discontinuation of active farming, the house, outbuildings and setting are an exceptionally well-preserved reminder of the area's early rural heritage.

ACREAGE: c. 18 acres

QUAD NAME: Wickford, R.I.

UTM REFERENCES:	A	19	296140	4599620	B	19	296180	4599420
	C	19	295790	4599330	D	19	295780	4599490

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The property nominated is Assessor's Plat 38, Lot 12; this boundary includes the historical resource and its agricultural setting and includes some land which has historically been associated with the house.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

Photo numbers 37-40