

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 26 1980

DATE ENTERED

MAR 28 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

The Allen-Madison House

AND/OR COMMON

Quarters A (Building D-272)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Davisville U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Center,  
Post Road

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

North Kingstown

VICINITY OF

2 Hon. Edward Beard

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY

Washington

CODE

009

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" 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"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Commanding Officer, Davisville Naval Construction Battalion Center

STREET & NUMBER

Post Road

CITY, TOWN

North Kingstown

VICINITY OF

STATE

Rhode Island 02852

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

North Kingstown Town Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

80 Boston Neck Road

CITY, TOWN

North Kingstown

STATE

Rhode Island 02852

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

An Historical Survey of U.S. Navy Property in Rhode Island

DATE

1974

—FEDERAL  STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903

436599

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Allen-Madison House, dating from 1801, stands on a somewhat isolated and elevated site in the northeasterly part of what has been the Navy's Davisville Construction Battalion Center since 1941, which stretches from Post Road (U.S. Route 1) on the west to Narragansett Bay on the east. This bayside area is known by its Indian name Quidnessett.

The dwelling, together with a modern, innocuous, wooden garage, is reached by a fairly long drive in from the active parts of the naval reservation. Set amidst mature trees and sloping lawns, it is well screened from most of the base. The house faces east over rolling moors that reach down to Allen's Harbor. It has a view across the bay to Prudence Island.

John Allen acquired this property in 1760 with an eighteenth-century house already standing; that structure was burned by British forces during the Revolutionary War, and Allen did not build a new residence until two decades later. Allen's new Federal-style residence is a two-and-a-half-story timber-framed structure set on a stuccoed stone foundation; it has clapboard wall cover and gable roof (see figure 1). The house is an oblong, five bays wide across its entrance (east) front and two rooms deep. It has a brick center chimney serving three hearths on the first floor and two on the second.

Additions have been made to the house in the course of time, but none of them really damage its over-all appearance. A one-and-one-half-story gabled ell, four bays in length and two in width, was apparently added in the first half of the nineteenth century, attached at the rear (northwest end) of the house. The ell is said to have been originally a schoolhouse which stood nearby on the Allen land. Now the ell has a shed-roofed gallery or porch along its south side (figure 2). Later in the nineteenth century a one-story columned and screened sitting-porch was built out along the north end of the main house. There is a shed-roofed, dormer-like, one-room projection at the northwest part of the second floor just on top of the jointure of the aforementioned ell. The rear entrance door at the southwest corner received a small bracketed late nineteenth-century hood, and a tilted square, or "diamond-shaped," window glazed with colored glass.

Exterior trim is sparse but effective, a characteristic of Federal-style country buildings. A fascia-board capped by modest moldings runs under the eaves and up under the gable-ends. Second-floor windows on front and rear are placed high, as in earlier houses, so that on these elevations the cornice molding breaks out over them and forms the capping to their otherwise plain enframements. Other windows have simple flat splayed lintels, and all have plain board sills with a stretch

(See Cont. Sheet #1)

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

of ovolo molding below. Expressive of the plank wall construction, the window frames project noticeably outward from the wall cover, and while most of them have now (and probably for a very long time) six-over-six paned sash, there remain at the rear part of the north elevation one window with twelve-over-twelve sash and two narrower ones with nine-over-nine sash. The principal decorative feature is the pedimented front entrance (figure 3), a treatment popular in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Fluted Doric pilasters on low plinths support the full entablature and pediment; the semi-circular fanlight has wooden ribs, beaded lead festoons between the ribs, and a molded keystone. The front door has six panels.

The 1801 portion of the house has a typical five-room plan with central chimney (see Plan). The chimney has a large base (with a commodious niche in one side) of about 7 by 8 feet in the dirt-floored cellar. In front of the chimney is the small central entrance in which the staircase rises in three tightly-angled runs (figure 4). This stair has a closed, molded string and a simple rail with slim, square balusters. Beneath the second run is a low cupboard whose slant-topped door has two raised panels, and at the landing level above is another cupboard with a one-panelled door. Doors at either end of the entry open into a parlor and a dining-room, each with fireplace; the southern room has a china-cupboard next to the fireplace. These rooms in turn open into the former kitchen with its wide fireplace and ovens. Flanking this room are two small spaces which occupy the rear corners of the main body of the house. One of them now contains a small passage and a modern bathroom (which still, however, has old clothes-pegs on its walls). The other is a back entry- and stair-hall. A door from the former kitchen leads into the rear ell which contains two rooms, one of them now equipped as the modern kitchen.

On both first and second floor interior trim is simple. Windows and doors have very plain flat enframements; doors generally have four raised panels, although there are some of side battens. Corner posts are cased. There are no wainscots or chair-rails (these may have been removed when walls were re-plastered) except in the original kitchen, which does have a wainscot of wide horizontal boards. This "keeping-room" has a plain surround for its fireplace opening and ovens, with a shallow mantel shelf supported on curved brackets above. In the northeast and southeast rooms on both main floors there are

(See Cont. Sheet #2)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

2

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

3

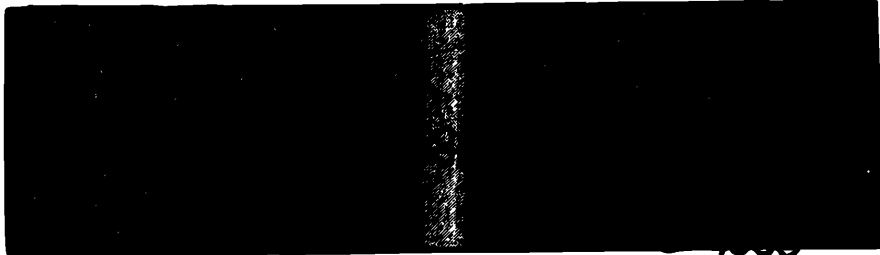
excellent mantels of Federal design, featuring the sharp moldings, shallow panels, and projections of this style (figure 5). Those in the two northeast rooms each have Doric pilasters, and the pilasters of the first floor mantel are not only fluted but also given (rather unusually) entasis. These mantels, the front staircase, and main entrance are the most outstanding features of the house beyond its intact proportions, fenestration and plan.

Such changes as have occurred since original construction are not great, visually offensive, or irreparable. The rear ell and the northern porch do not injure the old fabric. Except for the original first floor kitchen, the wide board flooring has generally been overlaid by hardwood.

Old plaster ceilings have been replaced by composition boards. On the first floor only, the old hearth projections of brick have been replaced by modern square tiles. All of the roof timbering is plainly work of recent decades. No original rafters remain. When reroofing was done the upper portion of the chimney was rebuilt in much smaller dimensions, though its original size at that stage (about 4 by 5 feet) can still be seen in a patched area of the garret floor. During two-family occupancy as naval officers' quarters from 1940 until 1974, an additional kitchen and bath were created on the second floor, but without altering the room divisions there.

No barns or other outbuildings survive, although there is a clapboarded two-car garage to the rear of the dwelling. Vestiges of a gravel carriage-drive encircling the house remain. There are good lawn and garden areas, as well as those formerly in orchard and pasture use--one marked off by two stretches of dry-laid stone wall; and there are numerous tall old trees. The house and its grounds, which have some potential archeological significance, at present are unused but kept under Navy security surveillance, and therefore have not suffered from vandalism. It is understood that the Construction Battalion center wishes to preserve the Allen-Madison house once there is assurance that its historic value calls for such action.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET

3

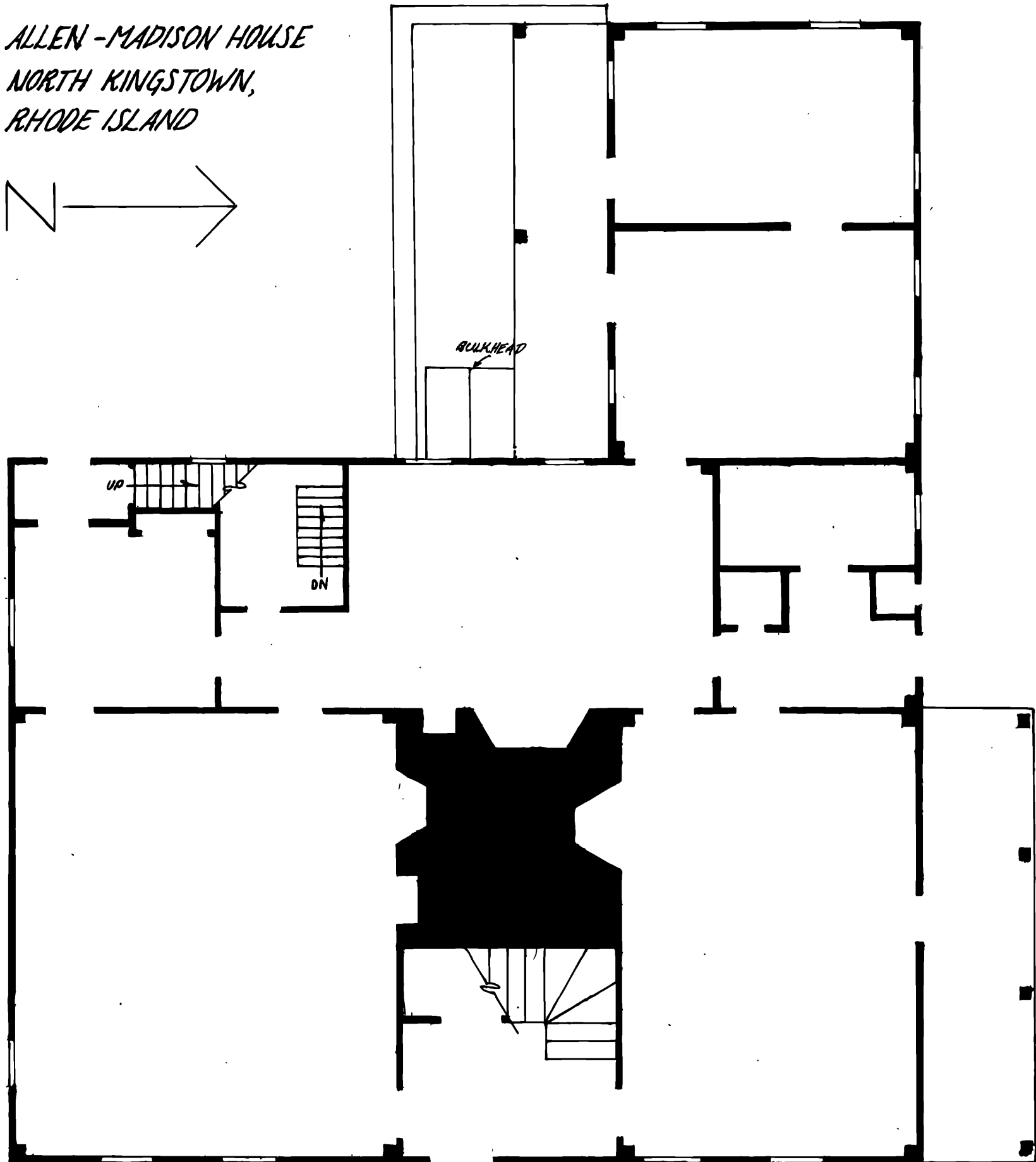
ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

4

*ALLEN-MADISON HOUSE  
NORTH KINGSTOWN,  
RHODE ISLAND*



# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Allen-Madison House is significant primarily for its architectural typicality and integrity, but it also has some associations with events in local history.

The Allen-Madison House, in the northeastern part of the town of North Kingstown, is in an area known as Quidnessett. It was originally settled by Narragansett Indians, who gave it its name and occupied the land until the mid-seventeenth century. Soon after the Atherton Purchase of 1659, Quidnessett was divided and white settlers took up the land. Robert and Katherine Westcott and their children, the first Europeans in this part of Quidnessett, built a home and took up residence here in 1671. During King Philip's War (1675-1676), Robert Westcott was killed and the farm was run by his descendants until 1769, when it was sold to John Allen. At this time, Quidnessett was an important farming area and carried on trade with other parts of Narragansett Bay. Aside from farming, John Allen was in the building stones business; his sloop traveled to various Narragansett Bay ports, particularly Newport, from the cove now known as Allen's Harbor.

During the Revolutionary War, when Newport was occupied by British forces and the shores of the Bay were held by American forces, John Allen carried supplies to the Colonial Army on the Tiverton shore and served for a time as an enlisting officer in East Greenwich. But coastal settlements were vulnerable to British attack, and according to one tradition early in June, 1779, a British landing force captured John Allen and held him captive in Newport for 18 weeks, and burned his house and another nearby residence. (An alternate version of the story states that Tory neighbors captured Allen.)

John Allen moved to East Greenwich, but continued running his Quidnessett farm. In 1801, he built the present house near the site of the house burned during the war, and returned with his family. He acquired Hope Island, in Narragansett Bay, where he grazed his animals. Judge Allen, as he was known in later years because of his service on the state Supreme Court, died in 1813. His son, Ray Greene Allen, acquired the estate and managed it until his death in 1825. Soon after, his wife leased the place to Joseph Matteson. After several years, it was acquired by Joseph Matteson (who changed the spelling of his last name to Madison).

(See Cont. Sheet #4)

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- D. B. Allen, "History of Quiddnessett," typescript, Rhode Island Historical Society Library, 1898.
- D. W. Chase, An Historical Survey of U.S. Navy Property in Rhode Island, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Providence, 1974.

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about 2 acres  
 UTM REFERENCES

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

A | 19 | 29,828,0 | 461,010,2,0 |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 C | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 D | | | | | | | | | |

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

This nomination covers the home itself and acreage immediately surrounding it, which would include the original dooryard of the farmhouse and the site of the barn shown on nineteenth-century maps northeast of the house.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE David Chase, Deputy Director, Richard B. Harrington (consultant) & Walter Nebiker (Preservation Planner) October, 1977

ORGANIZATION Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE Revised Sept. 1979  
 STREET & NUMBER 150 Benefit Street TELEPHONE 401-277-2678

CITY OR TOWN Providence STATE Rhode Island 02903

**12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION**

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

YES  NO

NONE

*Frank Williams*  
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *Frank B. Beck*

TITLE Director, Real Property & Natural Resources, ODASD (ISH) DATE Feb 19, 1980

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Sally J. Oldham* DATE 3/28/80  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAELOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST *Marie M. Darsel* DATE 3/26/80  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

4

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE 2

This part of Quidnessett remained agricultural throughout the nineteenth century, and most of the farms here were like Joseph Madison's. In mid-century, his 175-acre tract (with 150 acres of improved land) supported a variety of farm animals, including milk cows, working oxen, sheep and swine; his fields were planted to Indian corn, Irish potatoes, rye and hay, and he produced wool, butter and cheese. The farm remained in the Madison family until 1909.

In 1941, the United States government acquired a large tract of land here, including the former Allen-Madison farm, for a military base, and the house was used as officers' quarters until the force was reduced in 1974. Although part of a military establishment, the house was set off from the main area of operations, and the building and surrounding land are still essentially well-preserved and relatively free from unsympathetic intrusions. The Allen-Madison House, a typical Federal style rural residence, has special meaning locally as the sole surviving early house in the neighborhood, and because of its indirect association with events of the Revolution.