

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Rhode Island</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Providence</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	<b>MAY 22 1973</b>

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Esek Hopkins House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**97 Admiral Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Providence**

STATE <b>Rhode Island</b>	CODE <b>44</b>	COUNTY: <b>Providence</b>	CODE <b>007</b>
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<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	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**City of Providence**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**City Hall, Dorrance Street**

CITY OR TOWN: <b>Providence</b>	STATE: <b>Rhode Island</b>	CODE <b>44</b>
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Registry of Deeds, Providence City Hall**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Dorrance Street**

CITY OR TOWN: <b>Providence</b>	STATE: <b>Rhode Island</b>	CODE <b>44</b>
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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

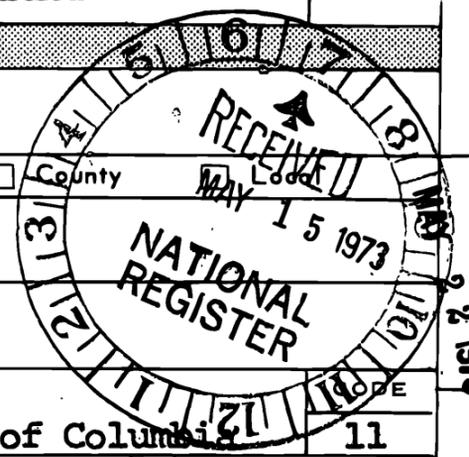
TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1956**     Federal     State     County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Library of Congress**

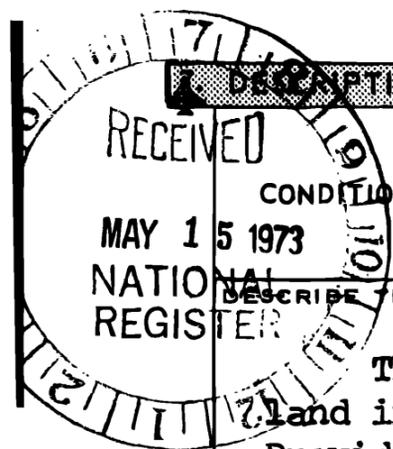
STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S.E.**

CITY OR TOWN: <b>Washington</b>	STATE: <b>District of Columbia</b>	CODE <b>11</b>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY



DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  Ruins  Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered  Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Esek Hopkins House is situated on slightly over three acres of land in a rapidly deteriorating area on the northern outskirts of Providence. It faces southwest onto Admiral Street and consists of three distinct structures. The main section is a two-story gable roofed house of one room side hall plan. Adjoining is a one-and-a-half story, gambrel roofed structure, three bays wide, with modified five room plan. At the rear of the main house is a long one-story gable roofed ell. A portion of this ell is shingled, but otherwise the house is clapboarded and a wide, wooden watertable conceals much of the fieldstone foundation. There is one brick interior end chimney in the main section, two interior chimneys in the gambreled section, and one in the ell.

Throughout the house the windows have twelve-over-twelve double hung sash with old glass. These are restorations which replaced Victorian two over two sash. The window caps have cyma recta mouldings, the frames are beaded, and the sills are thick and projecting. On the front slopes of the gambreled section there are two shed dormers joined by an inappropriate balustrade, all probably added in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The present entrance is crowned by a wide, projecting cornice with panelled soffit and Greek fret design.

Just before the house was given to the City of Providence in 1908 it was "restored" by the last <sup>direct</sup> descendant of Esek Hopkins. During this restoration the Victorian features were removed from the doorway and the sash returned to twelve over twelve. Inside, except for the ell the house was papered and painted. In the late 1950's the interior underwent thorough renovation. At this time new chair rails and baseboards were installed and the walls, with the exception of the southwest room, were replastered. The rear of the house was remodeled for modern bath and kitchen facilities while the second story was made into a caretaker's apartment.

The architectural detail in the hall and front rooms is all light in scale and typical of Federal work of the period from 1810 to 1830. The fireplace in the southwest parlor has a wide, plain frieze, pilasters with recessed panels, and a plain, moulded cornice which breaks outward over the pilasters. In the two parlors of the gambreled section is a matching pair of more elaborate fireplaces. On either side of the opening is a half column set on a high base while above there is a wide frieze bordered by recessed panels and capped by a rope moulding beneath the cornice. The front hall staircase has square, balusters and columnar newel posts, each having a mushroom cap set on a rectangular block, moulded capital, and moulded base.

The rear ell contains a room traditionally known as the dining room, behind that a large kitchen and finally a horizontally sheathed passage off of which are the storeroom and well house. Both the architectural

(See Continuation Sheet)

\*Early accounts indicate that this is the part built in 1756, but its interior detail is now early nineteenth century.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet) 1.

STATE	
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	MAY 22 1973

(Number all entries)

**Description**

trim and the one-story mantel of gray marble in the dining room are typical of Early Victorian work with modified Greek Revival characteristics. The walls in this room are covered with early pictorial wallpaper, depicting a hunting scene, which warrants special study. The kitchen has a large, unaltered cooking fireplace with side oven and wood storage niche. In this room are two doors of eighteenth century type on which are excellent early open face latches.

The house remained in the Hopkins family until 1908 when it was deeded along with the land and a very good collection of family furnishings to the City of Providence by Mrs. Frederick L. Gould, a great-great granddaughter of Esek Hopkins, and her son, Mr. C. M. Gould, who stipulated in the deed that the property be well-maintained, used for patriotic purposes, and kept as a park.

Today the house stands isolated from the surrounding community, encircled by a high chain link fence and open to visitors by appointment only. A major highway will soon pass to the east of the property while the neighborhood is one of the poorer areas in the city. It is hoped that public awareness of its national historical significance will promote general interest in the Esek Hopkins House and action to improve its environment.



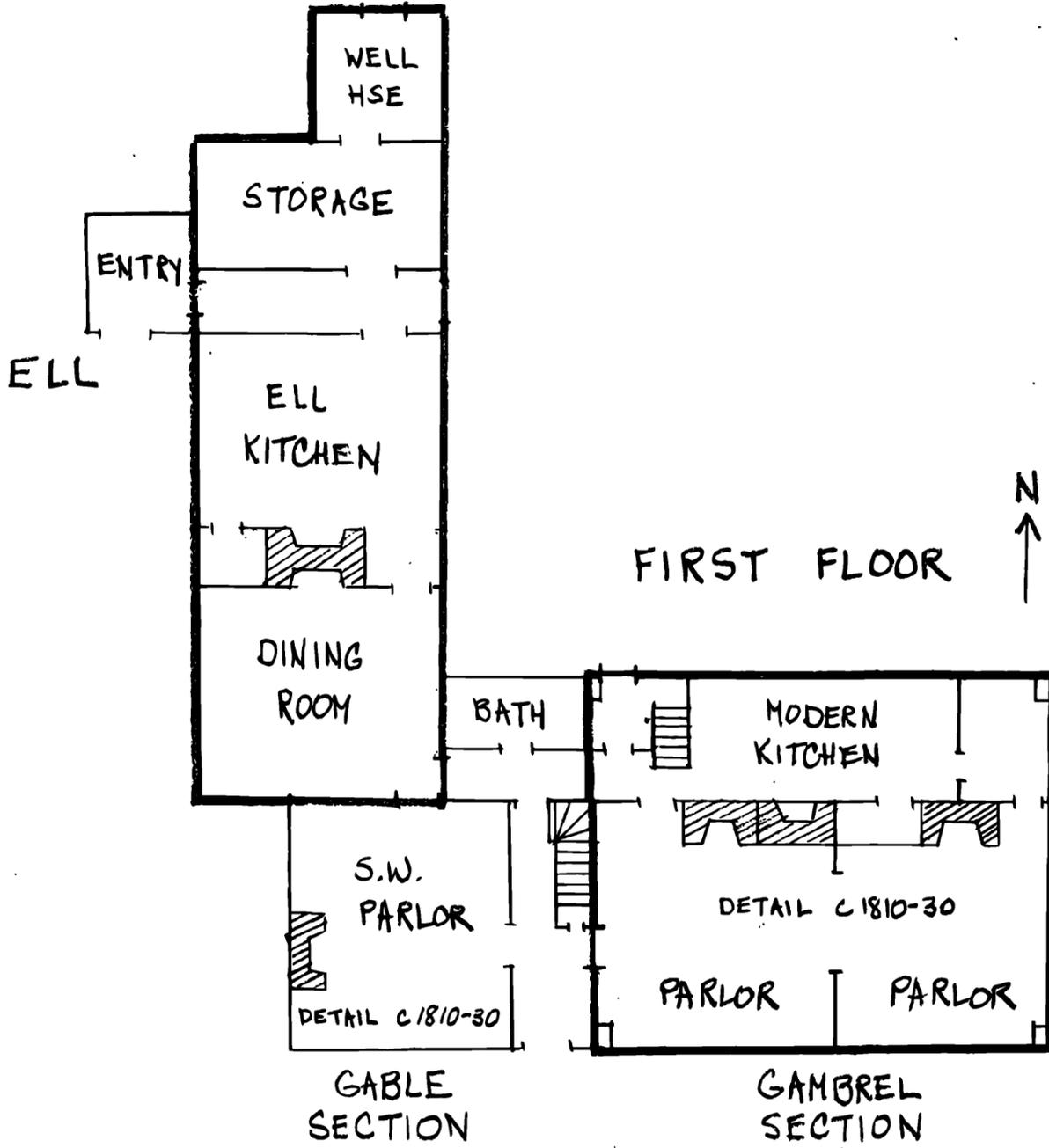
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 2.

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 22 1973

(Number all entries)

Description



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet) 3.

STATE	
Rhode Island	
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Significance

ships Hopkins set out in February of 1776 to harass British shipping off the coast of Virginia. Rough weather forced him to abandon his mission and Hopkins sailed to New Providence in the Bahamas. There he captured the fort protecting that city and seized a vast quantity of military stores desperately needed by Washington's army.

When he returned to Providence, Hopkins discovered that the local merchants and sailors preferred privateering to continental service due to the profit involved. He made an unsuccessful attempt to have the Rhode Island General Assembly declare a moratorium on privateers but the influential merchants of Providence blocked the measure. Hopkins was thus forced to fit out one ship at a time as finances permitted. Gradually the citizens of Providence became hostile to the fleet, believing its presence would draw the British. Discontent among the officers over prize money and promotion further hindered the effectiveness of the fleet. The final setback was the arrival in December, 1776, of a British fleet off Newport, thereby trapping the American navy in Narragansett Bay.

In Congress opposition to Hopkins was also growing. The wealthy merchants were lobbying for his dismissal so that their privateering could continue unchecked. Other naval officers were looking for advancement and the anti-New England bias of the Congress was well known. On April 15, 1777, Hopkins was dismissed. He served in the Rhode Island General Assembly until 1785 and in 1802 died at his home in Providence.

Esek Hopkins was far from the incompetent commander which history has made him out to be. The man and the navy were overpowered by men whose private ambitions exceeded their patriotism. When Hopkins was relieved of his command, all hope for concerted fleet operations was lost. As the war dragged on, a few American warships engaged the British but only in indecisive single ship encounters. With the dismissal of Esek Hopkins the Continental Navy never again became a cohesive fighting force.



**SIGNIFICANCE**

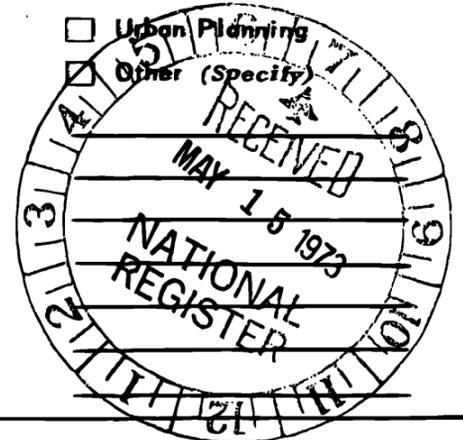
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1756

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             |
| <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 significance of the Hopkins House lies in its association with Esek Hopkins. The house itself has been altered over the years and there is no clear record of its 1756 appearance. Esek Hopkins is a figure of national importance in military history as he was the first Commander-in-Chief of the American Navy. He commanded the only major naval victory of the Revolution and dared to oppose the influential merchants of the colonies in order to strengthen the Navy. In Rhode Island Hopkins prevented, as commander of all state forces, the British occupation of Newport before war was declared, was a prominent Providence merchant, and served in the Rhode Island General Assembly for eight years.

Born a Rhode Islander, Esek Hopkins began his life at sea, at the age of twenty. Using trade and war to best advantage, he at one time owned seventeen ships and at his death left a large estate. He engaged in the slave trade and privateering, first against the Spanish and later the French during the French and Indian War, along with his more respectable mercantilist activities. About 1751 Hopkins moved his family from Newport to Providence where he later bought two hundred acres of land north of Providence. As the land was unsuitable for farming, the sea remained his sole pursuit.

When the American Revolution broke out, Hopkins was given the task of defending the city against possible attack by the British fleet off Newport. His experience as a privateer and familiarity with long guns had provided the necessary background. In October of 1775 he was made Commander-in-Chief of all Rhode Island state forces. While at this post his most notable achievement was his negotiations with Commander James Wallace of the British fleet off Newport. They agreed to stay out of Newport, thus making that city neutral. In this way Hopkins avoided any major clashes with the British in the eight months before independence was declared.

In November of 1775 the Naval Committee of the Continental Congress, of which his brother Stephen was a member, named Esek Hopkins Commander-in-Chief of the newly-created American navy. With a squadron of eight

(See continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Field, Edward, Esek Hopkins, Providence, 1898.  
 Miller, Charles H., Admiral Number One, New York, 1962.  
 Preble, George Henry, Esek Hopkins, The First "Commander-in-Chief"  
of the American Navy, New York, 1885.

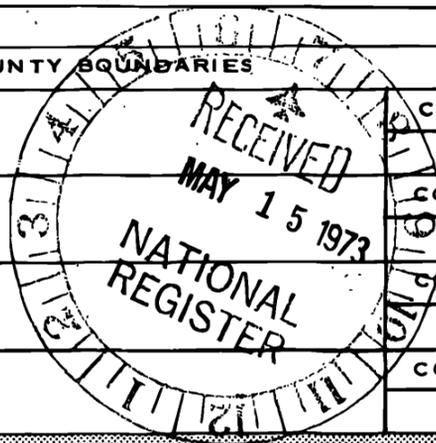
**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	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	° ' "	° ' "		41° 50' 30.27	71° 25' 15.06	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **3 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



19/299009/4634800  
 12-12-75  
 DTM Ref  
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Mr. & Mrs. Richard P. Sullivan, Consultant and Grants Administrator**

ORGANIZATION: **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission** DATE: **April 16, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**52 Power Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Providence** STATE: **Rhode Island 02906** CODE: **44**

**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

*Richard P. Williams*  
 Name **State Historic Preservation Officer**

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date **5/7/73**

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

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

Date **5/22/73**

ATTEST:

*James A. [unclear]*  
 Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date **5/18/73**

PROVIDENCE QUADRANGLE  
RHODE ISLAND  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

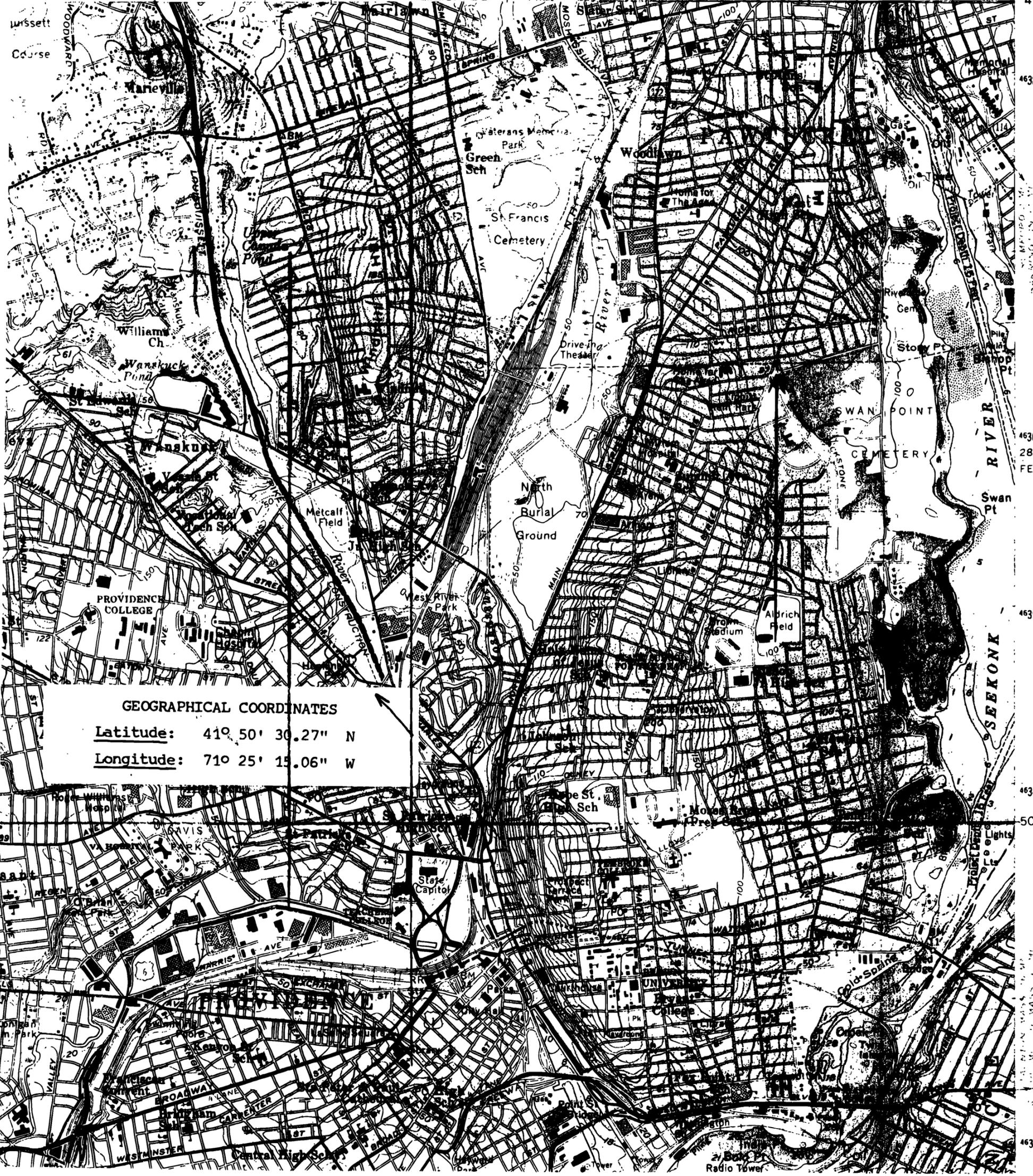
6787 IV NE  
(ATTLEBORO)

JUNE 21 1947 22 MI  
1.6 MI TO P. 1 1.6  
(PAWTUCKET) 16767 IV NW

WOONSOCKET 12 MI  
LONSDALE 2.6 MI

BOSTON MASS 40 MI  
SOUTH ATTLEBORO MASS 22 MI  
530 00 FEET

71° 22' 30"  
41° 52' 30"



GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 50' 30.27" N  
Longitude: 71° 25' 15.06" W

4638

4636  
280 000  
FEET

4635

4634

50'

4632

MAY  
NATIC  
REGIS

Radio Tower