

6-50-73

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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	APR 2 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Slatersville Historic District**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**North Smithfield**

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY **Multiple**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**multiple**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
**Memorial Town Building**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**--**

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

**North Smithfield Rhode Island 44**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**North Smithfield Historical Survey**

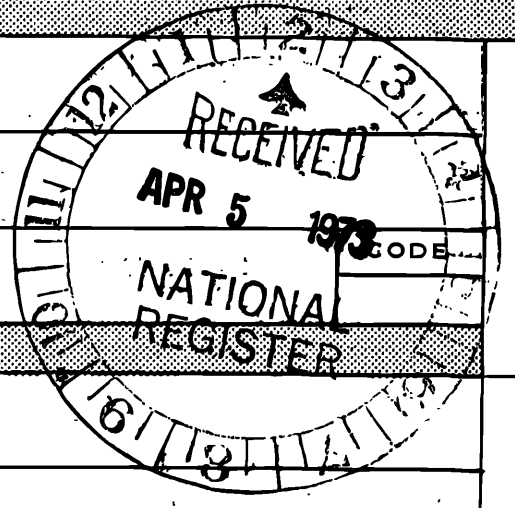
DATE OF SURVEY: **1972-73**  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**52 Power Street**

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

**Providence Rhode Island 44**

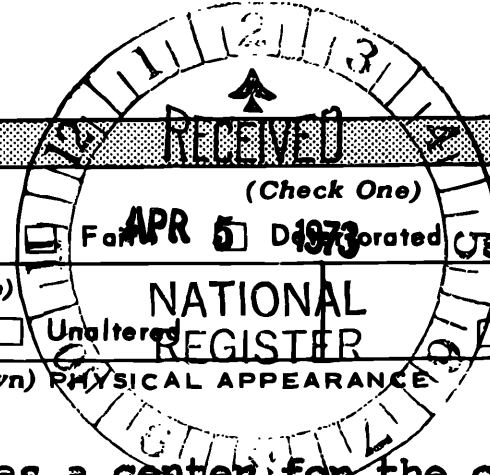


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FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION



CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent    Good    Fair    Dilapidated    Ruins    Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered    Unaltered    Moved    Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Slatersville came into being as a center for the cotton textile manufacture in 1805. Located in the still rural town of North Smithfield, the village is set on the banks of the Branch River below a reservoir constructed to furnish power for the mills. It's five principle thoroughfares -- Main Street, North Main, Green Street, School and Railroad Avenue -- converge haphazardly around the village mills, forming a radial transportation network linking it to surrounding villages and highways. Rows of one and two-and-a-half story frame houses are ranged compactly along its streets forming a quiet, homogeneous foil for the principle architectural accents of the village: the mill complex in the river valley and, dramatically sited on the high land above, the twin commercial blocks and the village green with its church. They are the functional as well as the visual focal points of Slatersville.

The mill buildings are situated beside power canals parallel to the river. The complex is dominated by a large four story stone mill ("A" on the site plan) built in 1826 to replace a mill of c.1806 destroyed by fire. The 1826 mill had a clerestory monitor roof; its asymmetrically placed stair tower was finished with a rather ecclesiastical two stage belfry and steeple. The building has undergone major alterations: the clerestory monitor was replaced by an additional full story beneath a near flat roof, and the tower made taller, the old belfry and spire supplanted by a smaller arcaded belfry. Behind the 1826 mill stands a second stone mill (1843, "B"). Modifications similar to those of the 1826 mill are found here. Adjacent to the 1826 mill is a brick weave shed ("C") added in 1894. Opposite the weave shed on the banks of the river stands a small one and a half story clapboard clad mill structure ("D") with "trapdoor" monitor roof. This last building is all that remains of the original 1806 mill complex.

The twin commercial blocks ("E" and "F") on Main Street were erected by the mill owners. Though nearly identical, they were built two decades apart -- the first in 1850, the second in 1870. They stand three and a half stories tall and have pitched roofs. Each was designed to hold three stores. Their walls are of stone rubble construction faced with brick on the principle facade above the ground floor. Monolithic granite piers and spandrels form the skeletal framework of the ground floor elevation.

The North Smithfield Town Hall ("G") is located beside the commercial blocks. This 1920 brick neo-Georgian structure was built on the site of a long established hotel and boarding house. The Town Hall, of minor architectural importance, achieves a measure of dignity by virtue of its colossal pedimented porch and its situation atop high ground. The commercial blocks and the Town Hall occupy the center of Slatersville. But they are central in more than a geographic sense: by function, design and

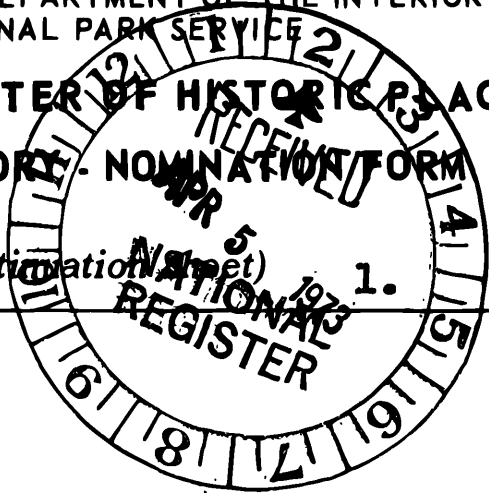
(See Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY-NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation of Sheet) 1.



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7. Description

material they have a monumentality which defines the village center. They constitute a nucleic "downtown."

Slatersville is one of two villages in Rhode Island with<sup>an</sup> extant common. The Slatersville common ("H") is a triangular tree-planted greensward set on an elevated plateau overlooking the mill complex. A row of six dwellings face the common from the Green Street side. Dating c.1810-c.1820, they are gable-roofed clapboard structures, two and a half stories high, with central chimneys and central entrances, built to house mill workers. School Street, forming the southern edge of the common, runs along the crest of the hillside which descends to the mills. A low stone wall borders the street. At the head of the common stands the Congregational Church ("I"). This Greek Revival building, erected by the mill owners in 1838 and enlarged in 1895, is a fine example of the small but imposing rural churches of the period. It is a frame structure, clapboard on the back and sides, clad with flush boarding on the front. The entrances are set within a colossal tetrastyle Doric portico which has a full entablature and pediment surmounted by a two stage belfry and octagonal spire (a diminished version of the original spire which toppled in the 1438 hurricane).

A Roman Catholic Church, Saint Joseph's ("J"), on Church Street, is on the outskirts of the village. This ample Carpenter Gothic structure, now considerably altered, was built in 1872. It was erected by the French Canadian community which composed the major portion of the population of Slatersville in the late nineteenth century. The Kendall Dean School ("K") on Greene Street illustrates the spiritless neo-Georgian made common in the 1930's. Both the school and the Catholic church are inconspicuously sited. Their position in the layout of the village masks their important role in the life of Slatersville.

The majority of the houses which form the background for the focal buildings of the village were built by the mill owners for their employees. The pre-1840 dwellings follow eighteenth century prototypes; this is best exemplified by the houses which face the common on Greene Street and the nearby houses beside the church on School Street. Mill housing dating c.1840 - c.1870 is more modest in scale -- small double cottages with rudimentary Greek Revival detail.

In the first decades of the textile manufacture at Slatersville the homes of mill owners, agents and the houses belonging to independent business men were very much akin to the housing provided for mill operatives. By the 1850's this situation began to change. The large Greek Revival house at 2 Greene Street ("L") with Doric portico and side porch was built by Dr. Elisha Bartlett, John Slater's son-in-law. The now demolished Slater family mansion, of a somewhat later date, had a high mansard roof and four

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7. Description

story corner tower. At North Main Street is the Queen Anne Style J. H. Parkis House (c.1880, "M"). Parkis ran the general store and post office. His house was in an area beyond the village center where the houses of independent business men are concentrated.

The bounds of the Slatersville Historic District are as follows: Starting at the intersection of Victory Highway (Route 102) and North Main Street, all the lots on either side of North Main Street south to Main Street and Greene Street are within the district; all lots on either side of Ridge Road, Myrick Drive and Church Street are within the district; all lots on either side of Greene Street from North Main Street to Pacheco Drive are within the district; all lots on either side of School Street from Greene Street to the southeast property line of lot 237, plat 3 are within the district, also all lots between School Street and the Branch River as far as the southeast property line of lot 237, plat 3; all lots on either side of Providence Pike from Main Street to Graham Drive; all property between Graham Drive and the Branch River and continuing east from the end of Graham Drive along the river bank as far as a point opposite the southeast boundary line of lot 237, plat 3; and from there running north to join the southeast boundary of that lot; all lots on either side of Main Street from North Main Street to the western border of lot 11, plat 4, and from there the district boundary runs down to the Slatersville Reservoir; the district includes the reservoir and all property surrounding it to a distance of 200' from the shore line (see site plan).



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

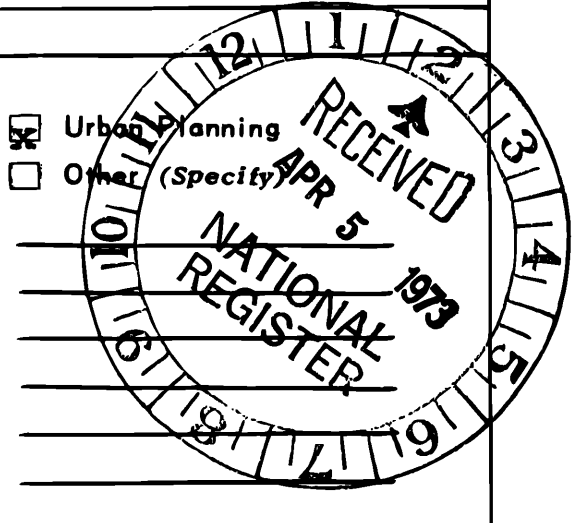
- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1805, 1807**

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/Phi-            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention           | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          | itarian   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military            | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |

- Urban Planning  
 Other (Specify)



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1790 the firm of Almy and Brown, with the essential assistance of Samuel Slater, had established the first successful cotton mill in America. In that undertaking, the Slater Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, these three men developed industrial and business techniques which made cotton textile manufacture the earliest major mechanized industry of the United States. Fifteen years after establishing the Pawtucket mill, Almy and Brown joined as equal partners with Samuel and John Slater in a new and again pioneering enterprise: the Slatersville mills.

By 1800 the site of what became Slatersville, referred to in deeds as "Buffam's Mills" or "Buffam's Bridge", was occupied by a grist mill, sawmill, several dwellings, and a hatter's shop. Between May, 1805 and March, 1806, Almy and Brown bought 230 acres at "Buffam's Bridge" and half the water power rights. In May, 1806 they sold a half interest in these holdings to Samuel and John Slater for \$4,641. In subsequent years, they bought up the remaining water rights at "Buffam's Bridge", began construction of the cotton mill complex, store and housing for mill operatives. The mill was set in operation July 4, 1807. It did not take long for the name "Slatersville" to come into use, and in 1832 the Slaters took full financial control. Members of the family owned the property through 1900.

Slatersville was the first textile mill village in Rhode Island, perhaps in the nation. The venture proved that a rural mill site could be a success, provided it had a good water privilege improved with a technically adequate mill, and the owners could attract operatives by supplying decent housing and wages. Slatersville also displayed the advantages of a heavily capitalized operation. It was the largest textile undertaking in Rhode Island for some twenty years, being valued at \$240,000. in 1832.

The ethnic history of Slatersville is as telling as its economic history. The original settlers at "Buffam's Bridge" were of English extraction. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century Slatersville remained a predominantly Anglo-Saxon community, from mill owner to operative. The Rhode Island census of 1875 revealed a radical change. By this date 87%

(See Continuation Sheet)

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Nebiker, Walter A.; North Smithfield Survey Report; Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission; 1973.

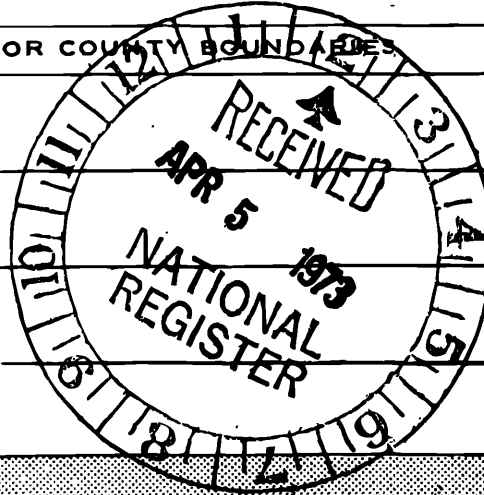
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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	
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds 42 ° 0.0' 31.84"N	Degrees Minutes Seconds 71 ° 35 ' 6.62 W	Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "	Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "		
NE	42 ° 0.0' 5.93"N	71 ° 34 ' 7.06 W				
SE	41 ° 59 ' 13.80"N	71 ° 34 ' 46.73 W				
SW	41 ° 59 ' 39.70"N	71 ° 35 ' 46.46 W				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 310 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: **D. W. Chase, Survey Director**

ORGANIZATION: **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission** DATE: **March 1, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER: **52 Power Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Providence** STATE: **Rhode Island** 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: *Frederick C. Williams*  
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 3/28/73

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

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

Date: 4/24/74

ATTEST:

*Arthur V. ...*  
 Keeper of the National Register

Date: 4/16/73

PNW 19/287 260 / 4652740  
 SE 19/2863 10 / 4651350  
 SW 19/284200 / 4652200  
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS  
 4653700  
 CD



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet) 3.

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8. Significance

of the population was either foreign born or of foreign parentage. A small portion of this immigrant population was Irish, the vast majority French Canadian. Slatersville, like so many manufacturing centers, became a focus of settlement for immigrants aspiring to a better life. Yet the mills and village itself remained in the hands of the Protestant Slaters. Social and economic structure of the village is revealed in the suggestive contrast between the site of the Congregational Church on the green and the visually unimportant site of Saint Joseph's on Church Street.

The beauty of Slatersville -- of its setting, its architecture, and its picturesque layout -- have long been admired. This is due, in part, to the efforts of Henry P. Kendall, who purchased the Slatersville mills and village in 1915. Mr. Kendall was an idealist. He wanted to make Slatersville a model, a place of high principle and moral rectitude, based on a sentimentalized conception of the typical New England village. According to a newspaper article of 1930, Kendall was transforming Slatersville into "...one of those typical New England villages which are frequently found in settlements never dominated by industry." He directed that the "bare" mill houses be individualized by adding porticoes and side porches, building arbors, planting trees and by painting the houses different colors.

In 1954 Slatersville ceased to be a company town. The mill closed and the houses were sold. Despite the idealizing efforts of Henry Kendall, we still perceive the intimate relationship between mill and village which was the reason for the existence of Slatersville for 150 years. As an observer reported in the second decade of the XIX century, "who can look upon such manufacturing villages as this, without regarding them as the germ of the future Manchesters of America?"

What is particularly appealing about Slatersville is its comprehensibility - the way in which its physical being conveys the life of the community a century ago. Each component expresses an activity or function vital to the community -- reservoir, mill, stores, Town Hall, church and dwellings. They are interrelated and bound together by the street pattern, the background buildings and the topography to create a unified and well defined village matrix.





SLATERSVILLE SITE PLAN

- A. 1826 mill
- B. 1843 mill
- C. 1894 weave shed
- D. 1806 mill structure
- E. 1870 commercial block
- F. 1850 commercial block
- G. Town Hall, 1920
- H. common
- I. Congregational Church, 1838
- J. St. Joseph's Church, 1872
- K. Kendall Dean School, 1930's
- L. Bartlett House, c. 1845
- M. Parkis House, c. 1880

