

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0685917

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED OCT 10 1978  
DATE ENTERED NOV 28 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Simon Lillibridge Farm

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Summit Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Exeter

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF 2 - Honorable Edward Beard

STATE Rhode Island

CODE 44

COUNTY Washington

CODE 009

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Peter V. Lacouture and Margaret P. Lacouture (See also

STREET & NUMBER Summit Road

Continuation sheet #8)

CITY, TOWN Exeter

VICINITY OF

STATE Rhode Island

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Tax Assessor's Office, Exeter Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER Victory Highway

CITY, TOWN Exeter

STATE Rhode Island

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE "Preliminary Survey Report, Town of Exeter"

DATE December, 1977

FEDERAL  STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN Providence

STATE Rhode Island

# 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 outbuildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED house	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>C. 1810</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Simon Lillibridge Farm is an almost complete farmstead located on approximately thirty-eight acres of its original rock-strewn tract of land in sparsely settled western Exeter. The complex includes a modest story-and-a-half, enter-chimney frame house with two ells, a series of remarkable well preserved nineteenth-century outbuildings (shed, outhouse, barn, and wagon shed), and a small fenced family cemetery.

The farm straddles Summit Road, a narrow, stone-wall-lined dirt track which winds south from Ten Rod Road, a major east-west cattle-droving road connecting the Rhode Island coast with the hinterland and Connecticut as early as 1702. The acreage remaining with the complex is now covered in second growth forest; on the west it still runs to its original boundary, the Wood River, carrying with it over the sharply declining hillside the straggling stone walls which mark former fields. Diagonally across the road from the house, a small spring-fed brook has been dammed to form a pond. South of this are two cut-granite walls, part of the foundation of horse barn.

The house faces east, set back from the road about thirty feet. Its small dooryard, partly enclosed by a low railed picket fence on a granite base, is sheltered by two large old sugar maples. Flat granite slabs form a path to the well and doorsteps for both front entrances. The original portion of the house, with its slightly irregular five-bay facade and prominent stone chimney rising well forward of the roof ridge, was probably built in the last half of the eighteenth century. The small, almost square, gable-roofed ell on the rear was added early in the nineteenth century; and the longer, three-bay ell on the north, set back slightly from the plane of the main house facade, is a slightly later nineteenth-century addition, probably built about 1840.

Although its basic mid-nineteenth-century form remains intact, the house has been subjected to numerous alterations in the twentieth century. Exterior changes have been, primarily, the enlargement of the front windows in the original part of the house, replacement of almost all window frames and sash, the addition of new windows in the gable peaks and across the back of the house, and the (1977) addition of an enclosed porch behind the north ell (see plan). On the interior, the standard five-room plan -- originally varied by the division of one back corner room into two and by the unusual depth of the kitchen due to the position of the chimney in front of the roof ridge -- has been changed by the enlargement of the kitchen on the north (see plan) and the removal of the front staircase.

See Continuation Sheet 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The present woodwork, reflecting a series of changes, is very plain. The horizontal plank wainscoting in the kitchen, and the peg rails there and in the two front rooms are typical early nineteenth-century finish. The mantel and cornercupboard in the south parlor date to about 1830, while the mantel in the north room is eighteenth century, installed in the early twentieth century. Some floors appear to be original but the doors generally are not. Ceiling joists, originally lathed and plastered, are now exposed. Worth noting is the fact that these are hand-hewn except in the north front room and the front hall, where they are up-and-down sawn and pegged into the hewn plates and girts from the bottom, clearly later replacements. This replacement lends credence to the theory that the house was probably moved to this location early in the nineteenth century.

Behind the rear or western ell, almost but not quite touching it, is a long, low, clapboarded shed. To its west is a four-seater outhouse. These buildings give the house, at first glance, the appearance of the "connected architecture" typical of northern New England farms. Indeed, a frame for a door leading from the ell into the loft of the shed was found during recent work. The shed appears to date from the early nineteenth century and is set on a foundation of cut granite of varying height. It is partitioned into two unequal sections with loft space above the eastern end. The larger western section appears to have been built as an ice house: a brick patch in the north wall of the stone foundation suggests that some kind of drainage was originally needed; additionally, this section is completely enclosed, with only a small door leading into it, and its dirt floor, now deeply covered in sawdust, pitches steeply down at the rear. The eastern section of the shed has an open doorway wide enough to accommodate a small wagon. The outhouse, which appears to be of slightly later, mid-nineteenth century vintage, is in excellent condition and stands over its original stone-lined trap, sheltered by a choke cherry tree.

About 150 feet north of the house, beyond two rectangular vegetable and flower gardens set within a stone-wall-enclosed mown area, is the barn, the architectural focal point of the Lillibridge farm complex. It is a gable-roofed, two-story frame and granite structure set flank to the road. A full-depth one-story open shed on the south end, closed in at the southeast corner, and a pent-roofed enclosed "bunk room" on the northeast corner vary the rectangular shape and fairly rigidly defined functions of the main portion of the barn, which was built

See Continuation Sheet 2

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

2

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

following traditional barn construction and layout: a threshing floor, formerly served by full-height sliding doors on east and west, occupies the central third of the barn; stalls with built-in wooden feeding troughs for cows, with a hay loft above, occupy the southern third; and two areas of unequal size separated by a one-story, plank-wall partition, take up the northern third. One area was used for some kind of storage, probably for grain, and the other may have been used as a stall for horses or oxen.

One fifth of the ridge pole is missing, extra uprights above the main level running to the roof peak have been added, and some diagonal corner braces have been replaced; but, by and large, the original hewn framing remains essentially intact. Vertical plank sheathing is exposed on the east and west; on the north and on the rear shed, clapboards provide wall cover; and the south end is shingled. The original large barn door on the east flank, facing the road, has been replaced by vertical sheathing, into which a man-sized hinged door with window above has been cut; but on the west, the full barn door remains, still operable on its iron pulleys and track. The visual effect of the alterations to the eastern facade, which include several other small open windows cut into the sheathing, is minimized by the impact of the two sections of wall thirty-four inches high made of single monolithic pieces of cut granite set between the two original human doors. Similarly impressive cut granite work forms the first four and a half feet of the southern wall of the barn facing the house.

At a right angle to the barn, running east toward the road, is a separate three-bay wagon shed set on a three-foot granite foundation. This appears to have been built in the early nineteenth century about the same time that the barn and the shed behind the house were constructed. The hand-hewn framing and granite work of the wagon shed closely resemble those in the other buildings; and the wagon shed, like the barn, is sided with exposed vertical plank sheathing.

Across the road, set well back into and disguised by the present woods, stand the near-ruins of a shed, originally a late nineteenth-century chicken coop later converted for use as a small cottage. The roof caved in during the winter of 1976-1977, and the owners have no plans to repair the damage. They do, however, intend to maintain and use their other outbuildings and are just completing re-roofing

See Continuation Sheet 3

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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



CONTINUATION SHEET 3

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

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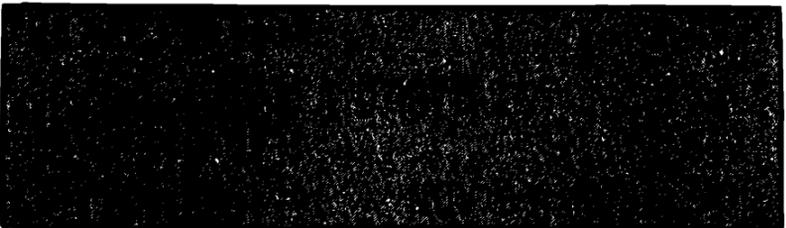
the shed at the northeast corner of the barn. They are responsibly, if unknowingly, carrying out the provisions of Simon Lillibridge's will\* that his buildings should be kept in good repair.

The final element in the Simon Lillibridge farm complex is the family cemetery, now designated Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Exeter #6, located about 250 feet south of the house on a grassy rise at a bend in the road. It is defined on all sides by a fence of iron rails set between tapering cut granite posts, and a granite retaining wall bounds the southeast corner where the land falls away. The cemetery contains about a dozen burials, the earliest being that for Simon's mother Sarah, who died in 1817. Simon's father, Gardiner, was interred here in 1834, as were other family members including Simon's brother Wanton, in 1819, and Simon himself in 1876. All the graves are marked by the simplest of nineteenth-century granite markers, some with round-arched heads.

\*First draft of will, 1870

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

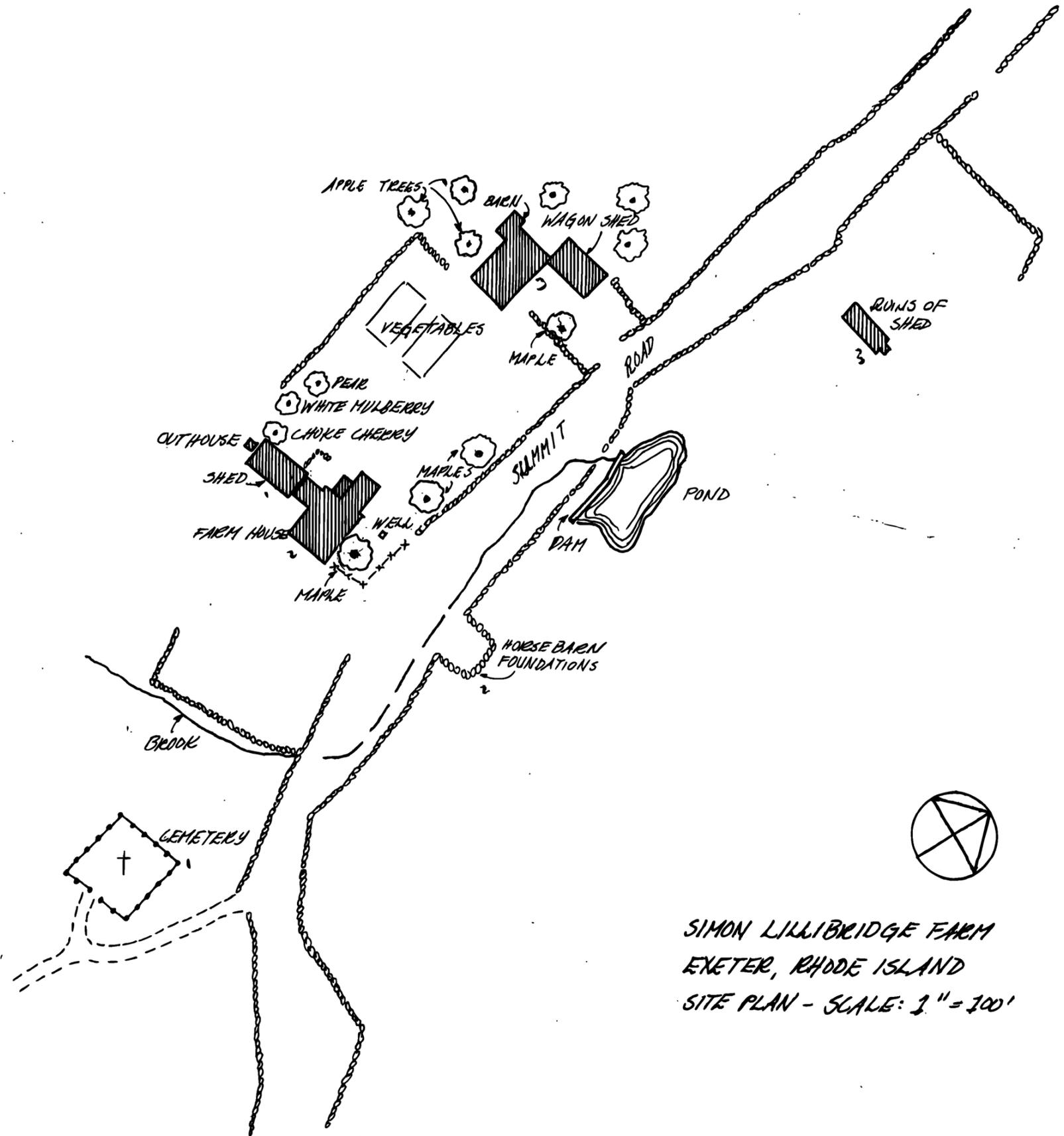
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET 4

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 5



SIMON LILLIBRIDGE FARM  
EXETER, RHODE ISLAND  
SITE PLAN - SCALE: 1" = 100'

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



CONTINUATION SHEET

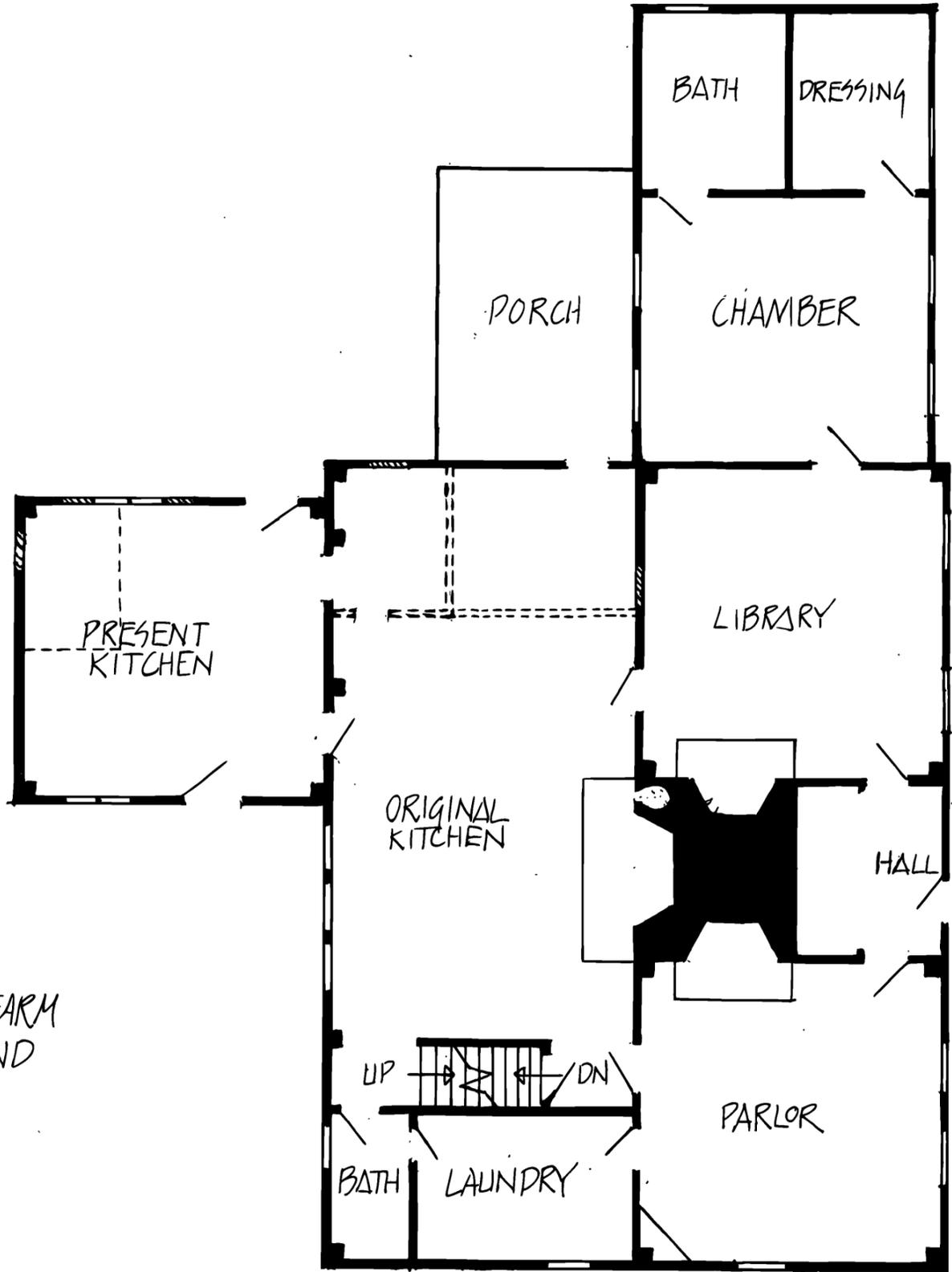
5

ITEM NUMBER

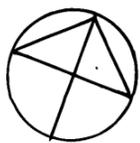
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PAGE

6



SIMON LILLIBRIDGE FARM  
EXETER, 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 importance of Simon Lillibridge Farm lies only tangentially in the particular histories of the successive families who lived and farmed here. The property's prime significance rests in its physical evolution and its present remarkable state of preservation, in the completeness of its complex of buildings and in the presence of long-established landscape elements, including stone walls, fruit trees, and the small family cemetery. All of these features provide a potentially rich source for the study of agricultural existence on a family farm in the hard-scrabble hill towns of western Rhode Island in the nineteenth century.

The history of the house itself remains inconclusive despite a fairly extensive search through Exeter land and probate records. The land of the farm, 200 acres when Simon Lillibridge owned it, was acquired by him through two purchases of a hundred acres each, one in 1810 and another in 1818. Neither deed of sale mentions any buildings whatsoever. It seems highly probable, however, that the house, at least, was on this site before 1817, when the first burial in the family cemetery took place. The lack of reference to buildings in the land evidence becomes very puzzling when viewed in light of the physical fabric of the house, which seems to date from the eighteenth century. Such interior details as the hand-hewn framing, accordion lathe, and the fairly heavy quarter-round moulded eges of the doorframes and cornerpost casings; such exterior stylistic elements as the slight asymmetry of the five-bay facade, the beaded cornerboards, and the complex moulding of the fragments of original cornice and return moulding still remaining; and above all, the low ceilings inside -- eighty inches from the floor to the bottom of the kitchen ceiling joists -- argue strongly for an eighteenth-century date. Although later woodwork and the cut granite foundation facing above ground suggest a construction date in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the rest of the house seems earlier.

One plausible explanation, which also makes sense of the unusual replacement of ceiling joists in the north front room and hall, is that the house may have been moved to this location by Simon Lillibridge after his first hundred-acre purchase in 1810. The sturdiness and

See Continuation Sheet 4

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Eno, Joel N., A.M. The Lillibridge Family and Its Branches in the United States. The Tuttle Company, Printers, Rutland, Vermont, 1915.

Exeter, Town of. Land Evidence, particularly Book 6, page 528 and Book 8, page 166. See Continuation Sheet 6

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY <sup>41</sup> approximately 38 acres

UTM REFERENCES

D	1,9	27,340,0	4,60,547,0	A	1,9	27,404,0	4,60,578,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
B	1,9	27,408,0	4,60,539,0	C	1,9	27,340,0	4,60,537,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The northern portion of plat 66, lot 10.

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

Ancelin V. Lynch, National Register Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

R.I. Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

September, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE

401-277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Richard W. Wilkerson*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE September 29, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<i>[Signature]</i>	DATE <i>11/22/78</i>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <i>[Signature]</i>	DATE <i>11/22/78</i>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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

CONTINUATION SHEET

6

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

handsomeness of his outbuildings, particularly when contrasted with the plainness of the house, suggest that Simon's priorities lay with the land and the buildings required to make it produce, not with residential ease and elaboration. A sentence from his obituary, published in the local newspaper, the Wood River Advertiser, January 18, 1877, supports this contention: "He was a man worthy of imitation in all his business, in his agricultural pursuits every thing was done in order, with neatness and in its season."

To judge from the 1850 census, Simon Lillibridge's "homestead farm" was a relatively prosperous one for Exeter. In addition to raising comparatively high yields of such staples as Irish potatoes, hay, and orchard products, the farm produced, from five "milch cows," 250 pounds of butter and 400 pounds of cheese, a substantial amount when compared to production of other farms in the community. Simon Lillibridge was a fairly wealthy man for his community: his will reveals that he has sizeable savings accounts in several Rhode Island and Connecticut banks and his real estate holdings were many and constantly changing. He was locally referred to as "Esquire," in deference, apparently, not only to his material well-being, but also to the fact that he served as a notary public and as Justice of the Peace. (Simon Lillibridge's signature as Justice of the Peace appears throughout the 1850 Federal Census return for Exeter, attesting to certification that the census had been carried out properly.)

After Simon's death in 1876, the "homestead farm" passed to his wife Sarah, thereafter devolving to their sons Christopher P. and Greene Lillibridge. They soon, however, in 1890, sold the property to Charles E. Bliven. According to local tradition, Mr. Bliven drank and ran the property down considerably before he forfeited it to John Barber in 1918. Walter Barber inherited the farm in 1922 and sold it in 1935 to a small family corporation which held the property until 1977, when the Lacoutures acquired a portion of it including the house and outbuildings.

The land was farmed intermittently at least as late as Charles Bliven's ownership and perhaps as late as 1935; the unusually good condition of the outbuildings suggests that they were used fairly consistently well into this century. Fortunately, although the farm was owned primarily as a ~~summer~~ home after 1935 and only limited agricultural use was made of the land, Johnycake Acres, Incorporated,

See Continuation Sheet 5

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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

CONTINUATION SHEET

57

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

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made a conscious decision to maintain the outbuildings. This is a rare and happy circumstance, for outbuildings, once their use is discontinued, become a luxury to maintain. Sturdy construction is not the prime factor in their preservation; use and maintenance are.

Whatever specific facts of family history and farm life future research may reveal, the over-riding importance of Simon Lillibridge Farm is its survival as an almost intact physical entity. It is among the finest early nineteenth-century, hill-town farm complexes remaining in Rhode Island today.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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



CONTINUATION SHEET

8

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

Lam, Mrs. William C. Interview, September, 1978.

Lorenson, Donald S. Interview, September, 1978.

U. S. Census, Rhode Island, Exeter, 1810, 1820, 1850, and 1860,  
esp. 1850 "Productions of Agriculture."

Wood River Advertiser, pub'd at Hope Valley, Rhode Island, v. 2  
# 3, Jan. 18, 1977.

# 4 Ownership (continued)

Ownership of Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Exeter # 6

The Memorial Hospital  
c/o The Trustees ✓  
Prospect Street  
Pawtucket, R.I. 02860

The Rhode Island Hospital  
c/o The Trustees ✓  
593 Eddy Street  
Providence, R.I.

Home for Aged Women  
c/o The Trustees ✓  
180 George M. Cohan Boulevard  
Providence, R.I. 02906

Young Men's Christian Association of Greater Providence  
c/o The Trustees ✓  
160 Broad Street  
Providence, R.I. 02903

Young Women's Christian Association of Greater R.I.  
c/o The Trustees ✓  
62 Jackson Walkway  
Providence, R.I. 02903

The Heirs of Greene Lillibridge  
c/o Daniel Thurston Lillibridge ✓  
Scotland Road  
Norwich, Connecticut