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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two-story, gable-roofed, end-chimney house shown as "Hall's" on an estate map of 1802 and known as the Palmer-Northup house, near the Post Road just north of Wickford, is located in the immediate vicinity of the trading post Roger Williams established in 1638 and where soon after 1614 he built the permanent house he occupied for at least six years. It is adjacent to Smith's Castle, the trading post Richard Smith built at Cocumscussoc about 1641. Williams sold his trading post and other Cocumscussoc property to Smith in 1654, and there has been some confusion about the history of his house; but there is good reason to believe that the old part of the Palmer-Northup house may have been Williams's trading post and that it somehow--as Smith's Castle did not-survived the firebrands of King Philip's War.

As originally built, this part of the house, measuring only about 24' by 17', was a true gable-roofed, one-room, story-and-a-half "Rhode Island stone-ender," with a massive exposed stone chimney forming the major part of the northeast wall. Sometime before 1740 or 1745 the house was expanded on the south, raised to two full stories and covered with a new gabled roof; but the stone chimney--though increased in height by a new brick top--has retained its original form with cap intact.

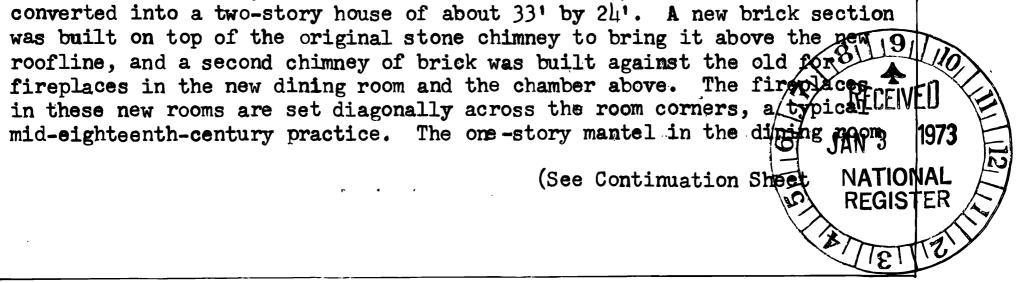
The original low-ceiled kitchen-keeping room measuring approximately 16' by 18', with its exposed and chamfered girts and posts and its (now cased) summer beam about 12" by 12" in section and running at right angles to the chimney, has also survived with comparatively little alteration and serves as an authentic example of early building practice. Probably when the house was enlarged the massive fireplace opening was reduced in size, a bee-hive oven built in on the right side and new mantel facings added, but the original lintel--about 12" deep--is still in the chimneybreast. The present staircase to the upper chamber runs up from the original old entrance on the southwest wall and past the southeast corner of the original house, where part of its original corner-post, together with the brace beam and the original roof plate, combine to indicate the original half-story height of the old attic chamber. The post for the northeast corner--this one complete with its tenon and measuring 3'4" from the attic floor--can also still be seen behind an attic closet door.

As said above, sometime before 1740 or 1745 the house was expanded on the southeast, when two rooms, a dining room and a second room now serving as a kitchen, were added on the ground story and the whole was

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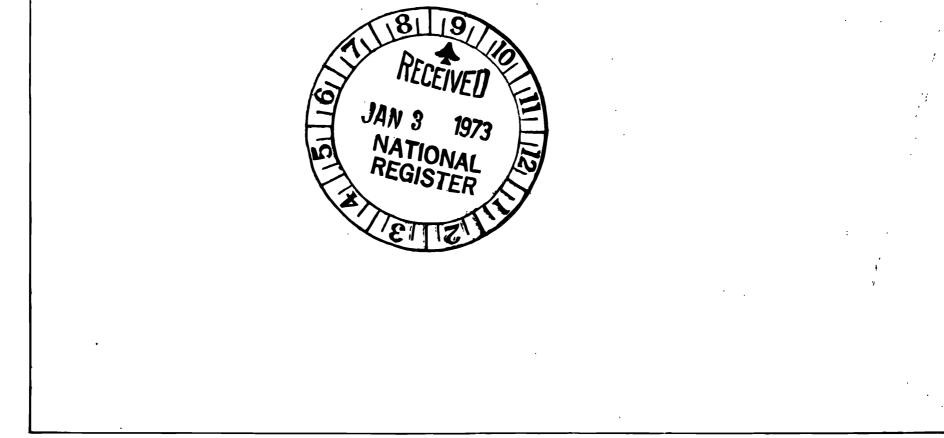
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| AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che | eck One or More as Appropri | ate) | |
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The 17th-century character of the original interior, chimney and frame, and the deed from Roger Williams to Richard Smith, coild establish this as a building from the first generation of settlement in Rhode Island. The house may well have been here before Cocumscussoc took its present shape and before the Indian war of 1675. As a trading post only a mile from the harbor landing which would become Updike's New Town (now Wickford), and across the trail from Cocumscussoc, it will have been an important station on a very old road which still serves the west coast of Narragansett Bay. Happily, this building was never thought of as large or important enough to warrant drastic restoration: therefore the character of the present interiors on the 1740 side of the house has survived, and the fireplace of the older side has not been restored to its original breadth and depth. Some exploration of the cavities in the chimney would be rewarding, as would an investigation of the largelyunexcavated area under the house. The floor framing was measured and drawn for the Historic American Buildings Survey plans of 1940.

The preservation of the Palmer-Northup house seems assured; its site is reasonably protected. With Cocumscussoc, it forms a small echo of some of the Massachusetts coastal-village associations of 17thcentury buildings with 18th-century accretions, and it also echoes such an ecology as the Hempstead and Huguenot houses in New London, Connecticut.

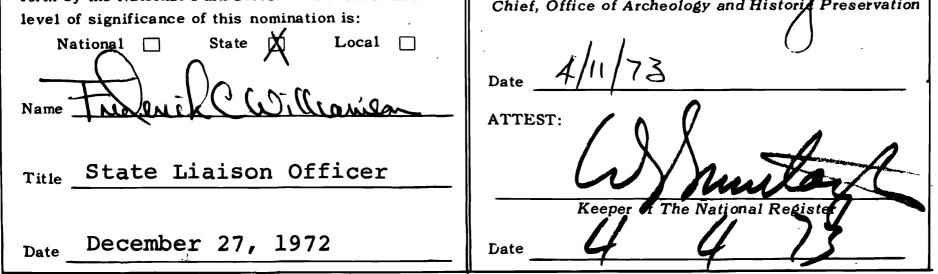


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| Form | 10-300a |
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| (July | 1969) |

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

| (Continuation Sheet) | |
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| STATE | |
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| Rhode Island | |
| COUNTY | |
| Washington | |
| FOR NPS USE ONL | Y |
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(Number all entries)

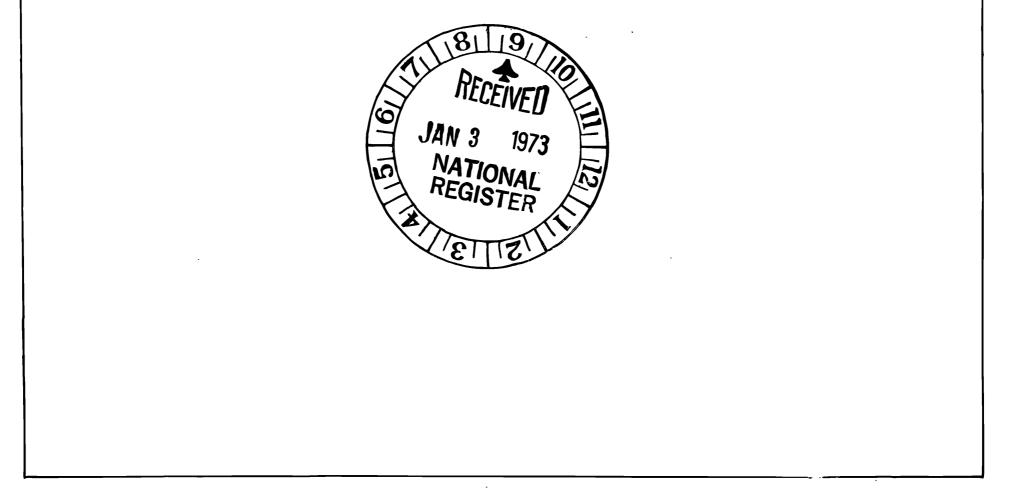
7. Description.

probably dates from after the Revolution, but the fireplace in the room above is finished with a panelled mantel-breast extending from floor to ceiling and belongs to the date of the house's enlargement. There is space on the floor between the upper reaches of the two chimneys to allow for a closet and a stairway to the new garret. Over the newer part of the house, the garret has a remarkable built-in room which utilizes for its uprights the braces of the rafters.

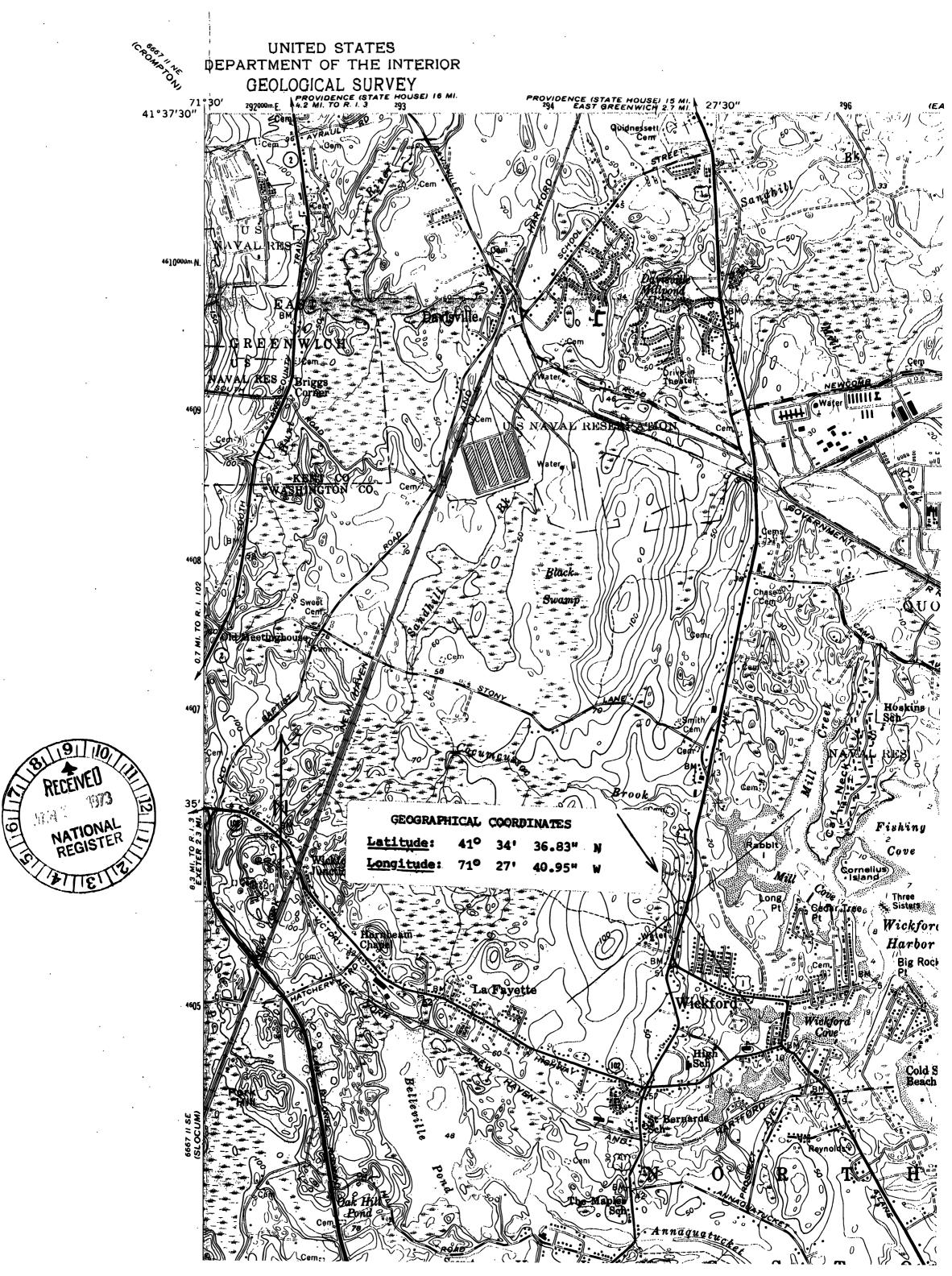
All the stairs appear to have been altered and are without architectural features. The original windows for the old part of the house have all been replaced, and the present windows (probably partly restorations by Norman Morrison Isham) vary from 12-over-12 and 9-over-9 to 6-over-6 sash. There are a number of early batten doors with long strap hinges and old latches, and the old kitchen fireplace has retained an 18th-century crane.

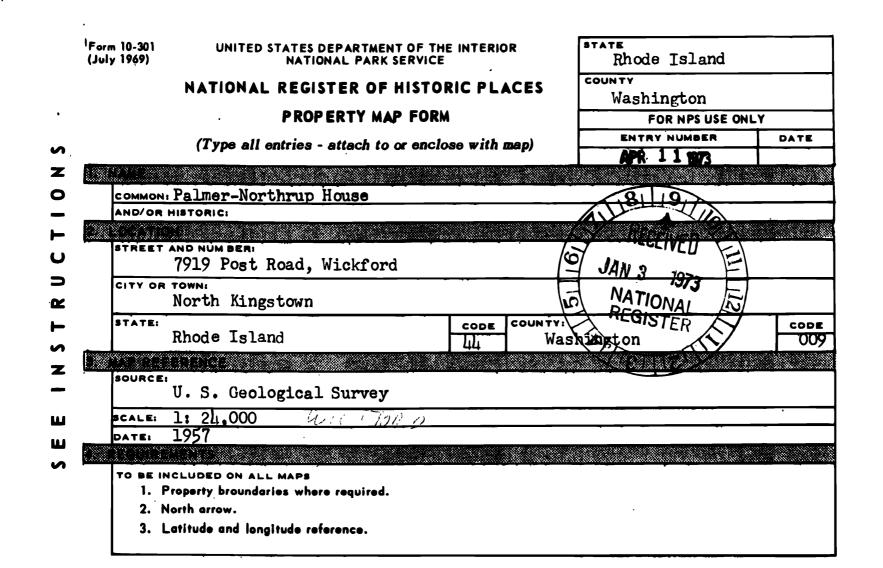
Externally the house is eye-catching because of its two chimneys of clearly different ages, its four completely different façades--none of which is symmetrical--and its picturesque placement in a disciplined enclave of stone walls within a wilderness of ledge and boulders.

Surrounding properties are largely state-owned--including an old burial-ground which may be that of the Palmer and Northup families--and are quite unlikely to suffer from modern subdivision; across the highway lies the protected estate of Cocumscussoc, the later home of Roger Williams's friend and buyer--this recently added to the National Register. The Palmer-Northrup house is occupied and well maintained by the present private owners.



GPO 921-724





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