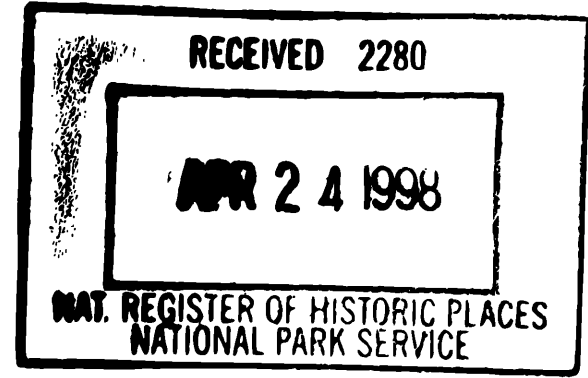


574

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1. Name of Property

historic name: Tower-Flagg Barn Complex

other name/site number: Same

2. Location

street & number: 100 Abbott Run Valley Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Cumberland

vicinity: N/A

state: RI

county: Providence

code: 007

zip code: 02864

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: buildings

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	_____	buildings
<u>1</u>	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>5</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

 See continuation sheet.

Frederick Williamson
Signature of certifying official

15 Apr 1998
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

 See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.

 determined eligible for the National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

Edson H. Beall

5/20/98

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE

Sub: animal facility storage

Current: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE

Sub: animal facility storage

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

NO STYLE

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation stone roof asphalt
walls weatherboard other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: state

Applicable National Register Criteria: A & C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): none

Areas of Significance: Architecture
Agriculture

Period(s) of Significance: 18th c 19th c between 1930 and 1934

Significant Dates: N/A _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 5

Description

The Tower-Flagg Barn Complex contains one principal structure, a complex of three connected barns dating from the mid-eighteenth through early nineteenth centuries and the early twentieth century; three smaller subsidiary agricultural buildings constructed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and one early eighteenth-century house site. The cluster forms a distinctive expression of rural Rhode Island agriculture from the eighteenth through the twentieth century, notable primarily for the survival of unusually early post-and-beam barn framing. All four buildings are contributing elements to the property, which is bounded on the east by Tower Hill Road, and encompasses roughly the northeast portion of a town assessor's lot, surrounded by lawn, trees, an outdoor riding ring, and unpaved drives. The buildings are set behind the site of the early eighteenth-century Tower-Flagg House, now an archaeological site following its destruction by fire in 1928. The lot also includes a dwelling, constructed between 1930 and 1934 and substantially altered and expanded in the 1970s, and a large, indoor riding ring, constructed in the 1990s; neither is included in the boundaries of the nomination.

The nominated buildings and site are located at the core of a former approximately 100-acre farm which was established in the early eighteenth century. The farm acreage, located on the west side of Tower Hill Road and the western edge of the fertile Abbott Run valley, remained largely intact until the mid-20th century. Increasingly, the town of Cumberland's agricultural and forested landscape has been subdivided for residential development. This intense development has threatened to engulf its discrete villages and destroy the town's historic development pattern of individual villages separated by extensive rural land (Fitch 1990:4). The Tower farm once extended to at least Lonesome Pine Drive; it is now surrounded by mid-to-late twentieth-century residential development. In 1995, the lot reached its current configuration.

The oldest portion of the barn complex is the Tower Barn, composed of two distinct buildings (North and South Sections), joined together following construction, plus a shed-roof extension to the North Section. The sequence is not immediately apparent on the exterior or interior first level of the building but is clearly apparent on the second, loft level.

Both sections of the Tower Barn appear to have been constructed in the mid-eighteenth or early nineteenth century. They were likely joined in the early nineteenth century. Description and dating estimates are based on a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 6

detailed field investigation of the two buildings in July 1997. Given of the nature of traditional construction techniques and lack of primary historic archival data, exact dating of the buildings, and changes to the buildings, has not been possible.

The combined North and South Sections, plus the west shed roof extension on the North Section, together possess a roughly square footprint and share a common floor plan on the first level consisting of a central aisle flanked by horse stalls. The first level's concrete floor and stalls were probably installed in the early 1930s. Early construction features are not visible in the South Section. One full height post is visible in the North Section. The west shed extension framing is also visible, though now covered by plastic sheeting to keep the rain out.

The Tower Barn - South Section is a three-bay, scribe-rule, gunstock-post English barn. It rests on low stone footings with its gable ridge oriented west-east and has a central entrance on the south elevation. The building is covered in wood shingles with remnants of white paint. Small two-pane windows added in the 1930s are located on the south and east elevations to light horse stalls on the first level. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles (now covered by tarpaulin on the south flank). The building is in only fair-to-poor condition; deterioration from the weather is confined to the south wall, where the south end of a beam has rotted and is no longer connected to the plate.

The building's second level hay loft is less altered, although some framing members along the south side are deteriorating. The loft measures approximately 30 by 25 feet, with three equal bays. The post-and-beam framing consists of massive hewn posts, girts, plates, and tie beams, stabilized by up-and-down-sawn angle braces and roof collar ties. The posts are 6-7 inches by 6-7 inches with gunstocks measuring 7 by 9-10 inches and 36 inches high. The two tie beams of the central aisle bent, as well as plates and girts, are 8 by 8 inches, while the bracing and collar ties are 4-5 inches by 4-5 inches. Mortises for treenails were drilled with a spoon bit auger, an early auger gradually replaced by the screw lead auger in the late eighteenth century. The roof framing shows common rafters framed to the plate with a bird's mouth joint, pegged, with no ridge pole, and braced by one collar tie. Secondary rafters were added between the main rafters, probably in the early twentieth century. The original central bay framing is visible in the upper level of the building. Mortises in the bottom of the central bay tie beams offset about 3 feet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 7

from the north wall indicate the presence of intermediate posts, now removed, supporting the beam from the first floor.

The exterior walls of the building are covered in vertical wide tongue-and-groove boards that appear to date from the nineteenth century; the roof sheathing is horizontal, from the same period. Whitewash marks on the wall sheathing below the level of the current loft floor suggest that the original loft may have been lower and probably consisted of two lofts in the outer bays, leaving the center bay open to the roof framing. There is no evidence of any former window openings in the gable ends. The entire north wall of the building is attached to the Tower Barn - North Section and its west shed extension (described below).

At least two types of Latin scribe rule framer's marks are present in the building. The Latin scribe rule, used in New England until the early 1800s, is a medieval European technique for matching framing members and for leveling and aligning the building during construction. The two rear (north) wall posts flanking the central bay have circular and X-shaped scribe lines on the exterior face, approximately 24 inches down from the plate. Other posts are probably marked on their exterior faces, but are now covered by exterior sheathing. In addition, the post, tie beam, rafter, and collar tie of each bent are marked at the southern end with a set of semicircular chisel gouges, increasing in number sequentially. This use of chisel gouges is an unusual variant on the more typical method of marking with Roman numerals to match framing elements as they were cut and fitted.

The north wall of the building retains elements of its former exterior wall and roofing elements. Here nails, sawn off nails, and nail holes of former exterior sheathing are present, as well as lapped oak roof sheathing and shingles in the section of the north roof flank now covered by the north building. All wall and roof sheathing and roof shingle nails are machine cut nails with machined heads, of a type manufactured beginning in the early nineteenth century. It is possible that earlier nails could have been used for wall sheathing and have been cut off, leaving only the shank within the plate.

The Tower Barn - North Section is a two-bay gunstock-post English barn, attached on its south side to the north wall of the South Section. The North Section rests on low stone footings with its gable ridge oriented north-south (perpendicular to the South Section) and has a central entrance on the north elevation. A shed-roof extension was added along the entire

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 8

west side. The building is covered in wood shingles. Small two-pane livestock windows, possibly added in the 1930s, are located on the west and east elevations to light horse stalls on the first level. The roof is covered in asphalt shingle. The building is in fair-to-poor condition; damage is confined to the west plate and west shed extension.

Like the South Section, the most important features of the North Section barn are visible in the second level hay loft, which is less altered. The building is approximately 22 by 24 feet, with two equal bays about 10 feet wide. There is no evidence of mortises for braces in the north and south end wall posts that would indicate the presence of a third bay, later removed.

The North Section post-and-beam framing is similar to that of the South Section, but differs in that all members are hewn, including posts, girts, plates, tie beams, angle braces, and roof collar ties. Only later, intermediate roof rafters are sawn. Like the South Section, the North Section posts are 6-7 inches by 6-7 inches with gunstocks measuring 7 by 9-10 inches and 36 inches high. The central bent tie beam as well as the plates and girts are 8 by 8 inches, while the bracing and collar ties are 4-5 inches by 4-5 inches. Mortises for treenails were drilled with a spoon bit auger. The roof framing is composed of common rafters that are framed to the plate with a bird's mouth joint, pegged with no ridge pole, and braced by one collar tie. Secondary rafters were added between the main rafters, probably in the early twentieth century. Mortises in the bottoms of the central and south wall tie beams (offset about 3 feet from the east wall) indicates the presence of intermediate posts, now removed, that supported the beams from the first floor. It was not possible to determine the location of the original entrance; however since the South Section entrance was on the opposite side of the building from the intermediate posts, it can be supposed that the North Section entrance was in the west wall.

The North Section of the barn is overall approximately 15 inches lower than the South Section. All the posts appear to have been cut down and have had their lower portions replaced. It is hypothesized that the building was lowered when it was moved, either because the bottom of the posts had rotted, or in order to better fit the two buildings together.

The exterior walls of the building are sheathed in vertical wide tongue-and-groove boards that appear to be nineteenth century; the roof sheathing is horizontal and of the same period. No whitewash marks were

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 9

visible on the wall sheathing below the level of the current loft floor. Each gable end formerly contained a window, evidenced in angled gains (notches) present in the endwall collar ties for the upright studs that framed window openings.

Semicircular chisel gouges mark each bent. The marks are located on the east side of the building and the north side of each framing element, increasing in number from south to north. No Latin scribe rule marks were seen on posts.

The south wall of the North Section (once the exterior) retains nails, sawn off nails, and nail holes of former exterior sheathing. While most nails are machine cut nails with machined heads, dating from the early nineteenth century, three hand-wrought rosehead nails, used in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and, to a lesser extent in the nineteenth century, are present. One nail is located in the exterior surface of the plate; two others are located in the collar tie gain for the north gable end window framing. It is possible that additional early wrought nails could have been used for wall sheathing and have been cut off, leaving only the shank within the plate.

The Flagg Barn sits offset from the Tower Barn approximately 10 feet to the southwest. Its northeast corner is joined to the southwest corner of the Tower Barn South Section by a small, gable-roof, shingled connector on the second, loft level. The Flagg Barn, constructed between 1930 and 1934, is a narrow, rectangular structure of balloon-frame construction. The barn rises from a concrete slab to a steeply pitched gable roof oriented north-south with a gable peak projection at the north end over a loft-loading door. The building is sheathed in lapped novelty siding, painted red. Three entrances of different sizes are spaced across the east elevation, and small windows are located on the west elevation. The interior plan consists of an open aisle along the east side and horse stalls along the west side, with stairs to the hay loft in the northeast corner. Stall doors and walls are varnished wood and appear unaltered since original construction. The loft level consists of a single space with a loft door centrally located in the east and north walls. An early-twentieth-century hay hoisting mechanism with hook remains in place at the roof ridge. The building is used as a horse barn.

The Shed is located southeast of the Tower Barn. This is a simple one-story structure, with a nineteenth-century post-and-beam frame; a late twentieth-century plywood shed extends its west side. The post-and-beam

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 10

structure rests on a fieldstone footing covered in part with concrete. It has a dirt floor and is clad in novelty siding painted red. The roof covering is asphalt shingle, over two older wood-shingle roofs. The interior of the building has exposed framing in two bays. The framing members are hewn and sawn, measuring 6 by 6 inches. The framing is typical of simple nineteenth-century construction and has been partially repaired. The building is used to house animals and store equipment.

The Tack Building is a long, five-by-one-bay, rectangular, one-story building directly east of the Flagg Barn. Constructed in the nineteenth century, the building rests on a low fieldstone footing covered in part with concrete and is sheathed in wood clapboards, with a wood-shingled gable roof. The building is framed in a combination of hewn and sawn post-and-beam members measuring roughly 6 by 6 inches. The framing appears to combine new, old, and reused materials, with the west three bays of the building possibly constituting the original building. The interior is a single room with exposed framing. Plywood paneling covers walls between the framing members. This building may have originally been a blacksmith shop and is currently vacant.

The Milk House is located southeast of the Tack Building and is a small, one-story one-by-one-bay building with a gable roof. The walls are clad in wood shingle and the roof in wood shakes. The building is constructed with dimensioned lumber using the balloon framing technique which indicates its was built in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The building is used for storage.

Little is know about the Tower House Archaeological Site, which is the ruins and buried elements of the Tower House, constructed in the early eighteenth century between 1713 and 1724 by Benjamin Tower and destroyed by fire in 1927. It is located approximately 40 to 50 feet from Tower Hill Road, between the road and the Milk House and Tack Shop. This area also contains a small outdoor riding ring constructed in the 1990s. Whether construction of the rig destroyed the site is not known. Fieldstones, mortar, brick and small fragments of ceramic are visible in an east-facing slope cut into the ground to level the west side of the ring. Additional research, including subsurface field investigations is needed to determine the configuration, extent, and integrity of the archaeological record.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 11

Photographs

3. Photographer: Kirk Van Dyke
4. Date: July 1887
5. Negatives: R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 150
Benefit Street, Providence, RI

8-by-10-inch prints

6. View: Tower Barn, view northeast.
7. Photo #1
6. View: Flagg Barn, view northwest.
7. Photo #2
6. View: Tower and Flagg Barns, view southeast.
7. Photo #3
6. View: Tower Barn, South Section interior, loft, view northeast.
7. Photo #4
6. View: Tower Barn, North Section, interior, loft, view northwest.
7. Photo #5

3½-by-5-inch prints

6. View: Tower Barn, North Section, view southwest.
7. Photo #6
6. View: Tower Barn, South and North Sections, first floor, view
northeast.
7. Photo #7
6. View Tower Barn, South Section, loft framing detail and looking
through cut in original roof to North Section, view north.
7. Photo #8
6. View: Tower Barn, loft framing details, south endwall of North Section,
original roof exterior of South Section, and deteriorated Shed
Section southeast corner, view west.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 12

-
-
- 7. Photo #9
 - 6. View: Tower Barn, South Section, loft framing detail, northeast corner, view northeast.
 - 7. Photo #10
 - 6. View: Flagg Barn, view northeast.
 - 7. Photo #11
 - 6. View: Flagg Barn first floor, view north.
 - 7. Photo #12
 - 6. View Flagg Barn, loft, roof framing detail and hay hoist mechanism.
 - 7. Photo #13

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

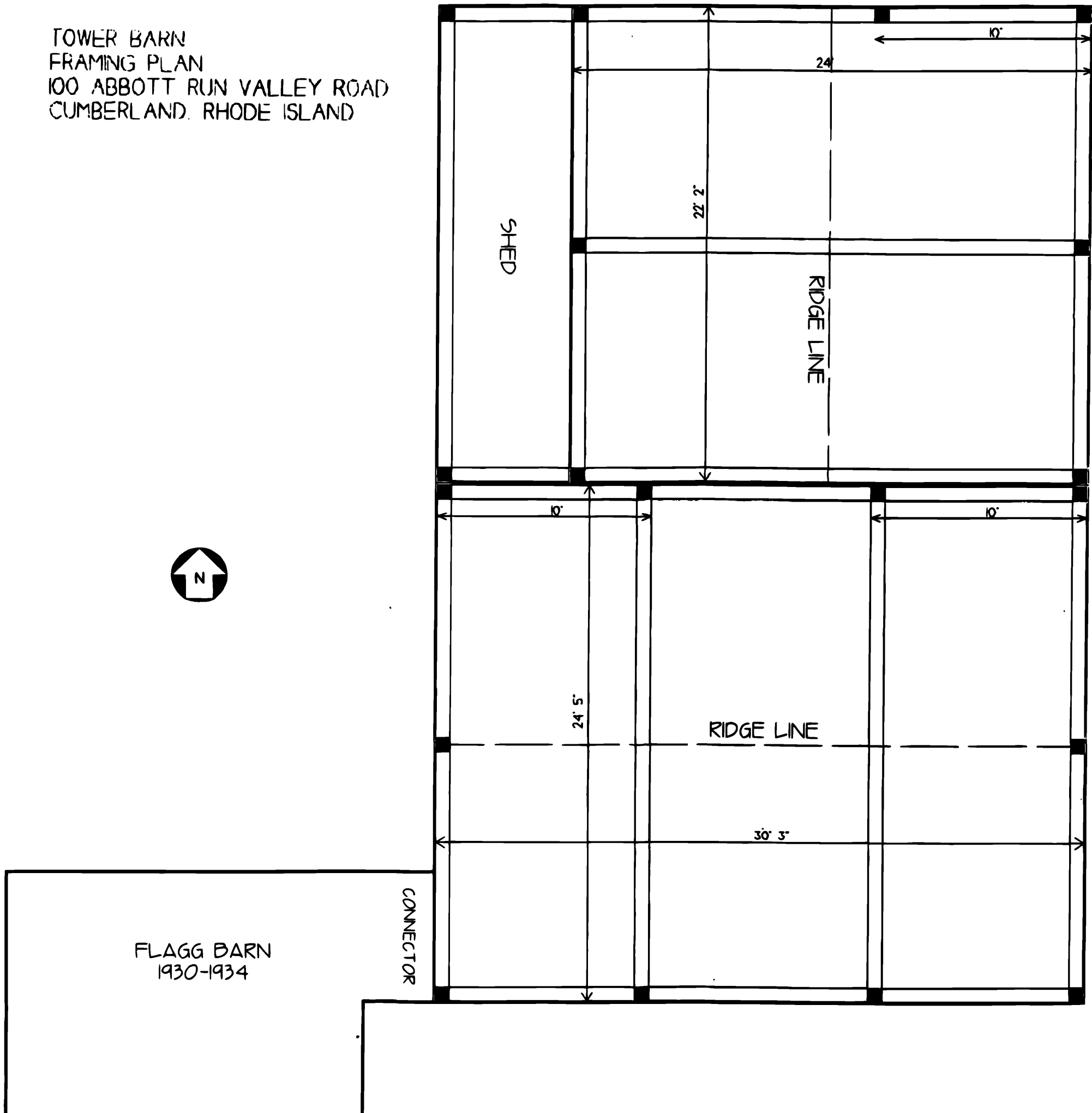
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 13

TOWER BARN
FRAMING PLAN
100 ABBOTT RUN VALLEY ROAD
CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND



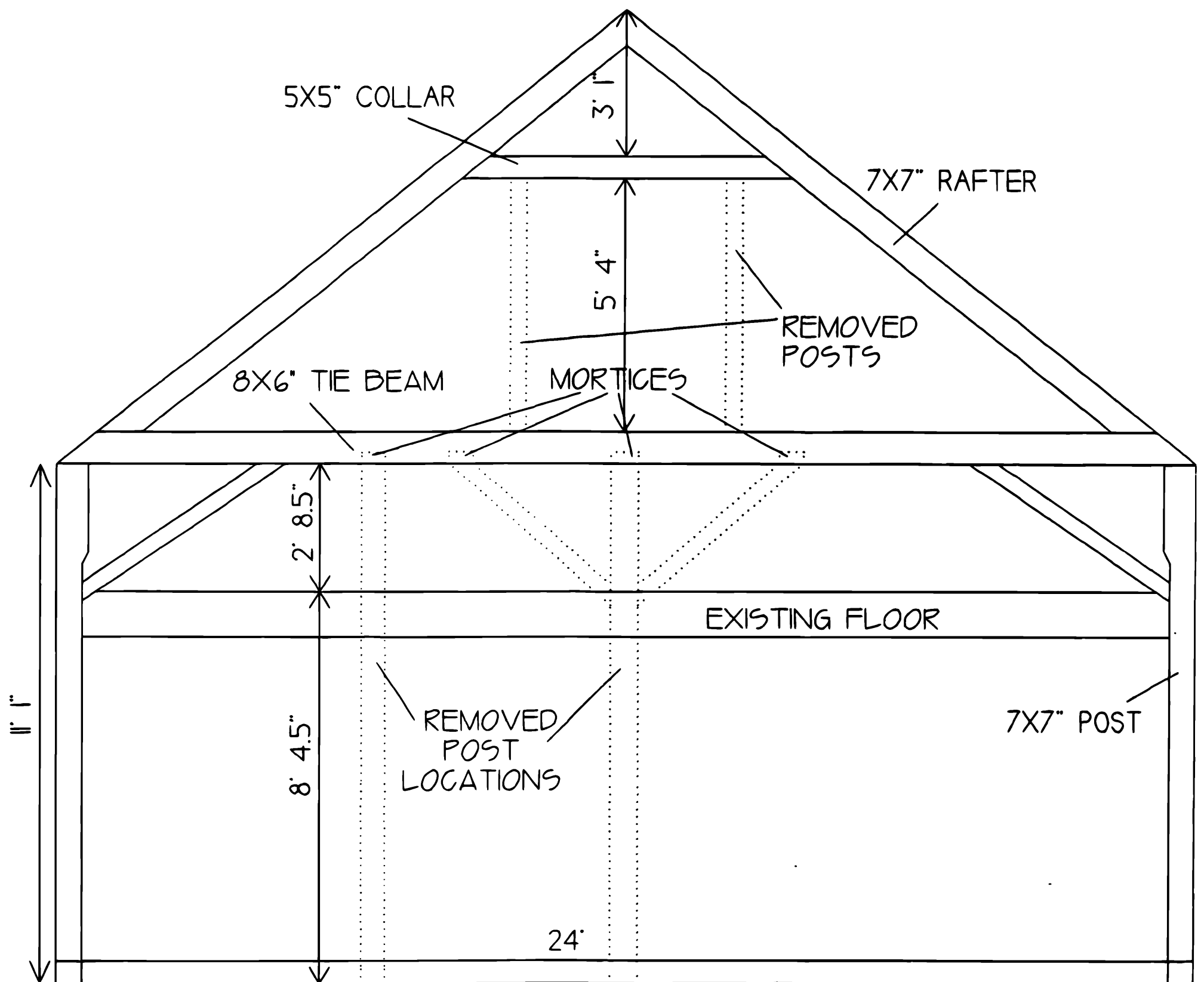
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 7

Page 14



TOWER BARN-NORTH SECTION
FRAMING CROSS SECTION-SOUTH WALL BENT
100 ABBOTT RUN VALLEY ROAD
CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND

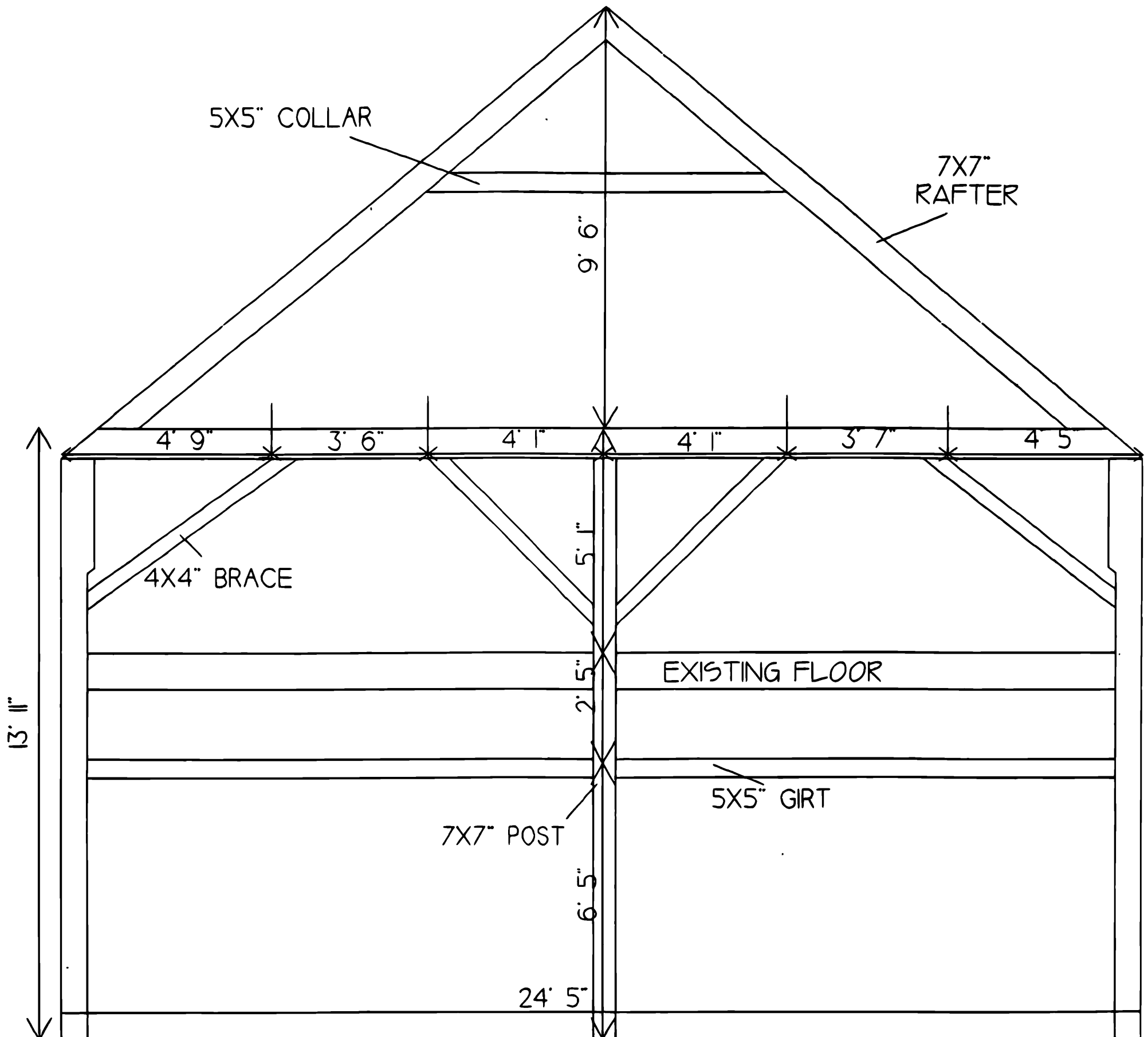
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Page 15

Section number 7



TOWER BARN-SOUTH SECTION
FRAMING CROSS SECTION-EAST WALL BENT
100 ABBOT RUN VALLEY ROAD
CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 8

Page 16

Significance

The Tower-Flagg Barn Complex is architecturally significant because it provides two examples of the eighteenth- (or early nineteenth-) century English barn. Such barns were once common in Rhode Island; they are now extremely rare. The few examples which survive contain valuable information about the persistence of early forms in farm buildings, construction methods, spatial arrangements, and building design. One of the barns may have been moved early in its history, but this does not diminish its ability to convey information about early buildings. The significance of the complex is enhanced by the other elements: a fine 20th-century barn, several small farm utility buildings, and an 18th-century house site. In addition, the complex has important historical associations with the history of Cumberland and the history of agriculture in Rhode Island. The property was owned for over a century by Towers, one of the first European families to settle in Cumberland after King Philip's War (1675-6), and was operated as small general farm, typical of its region and its era. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the complex was the core of a modest model farm operated by Charles O. Flagg, a founder of the state's Agricultural Experiment Station, later the University of Rhode Island, and thus played a role in the history of agricultural education in the state. Though several of the complex buildings have deteriorated, they retain sufficient integrity to document their significance.

At least a portion of the Tower Barn, possibly the North Section, may have been constructed in second or third quarter of the eighteenth century, prior to 1792, when it is referenced in the probate inventory of Captain Benjamin Tower (1715-1792). Benjamin was the great-grandson of John Tower (born Hingham, England), the first of the Tower family to come to America. John settled in Hingham, Massachusetts, married Margaret Ibrook, and had a son, John, and a daughter, Hannah. John's grandson, Benjamin (1643-1743) married his cousin, Deborah Whipple in Rehoboth, and acquired land in the Attleborough Gore and Tower Hill areas of Cumberland. Benjamin was the first Tower to settle in Rhode Island. Between 1713 and 1731, Benjamin purchased land in the area from Ben Robinson, William Whipple (his brother-in-law), Job Whipple, and John Wilkinson. According to the Tower family genealogy, Benjamin built a house on his land during the period between 1713 and 1724 when he purchased land on the east side of the highway by Abotts Run adjacent to his homestead (Tower 1891:69).

Benjamin Tower died in 1743, leaving to his wife, Deborah, one-half of his personal property, as well as the improvement of his homestead lot and six acres of land. His son Gideon received one shilling and land

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 8

Page 17

previously given to him. His son John received one-quarter right to Benjamin's land in Attleborough and his son Joseph received the whole "of my home-lot, together with a six-acre lot." Benjamin had previously given land to his sons John and Benjamin (Tower 1891:71).

This area of early Cumberland settlement in the Abbott Run Valley where Benjamin Tower settled included early saw mill and other industrial development along the small river, as well as the construction of the first meetinghouse about 1700. In 1749, the local Baptists erected the Elder Ballou Meetinghouse (destroyed by fire 1966) and about the same time established a nearby burial ground. Cumberland's population in 1748, including Woonsocket, at the time of the first recorded town census in 1748 was 806 permanent inhabitants (Fitch 1990:6-7). During this period, the Benjamin Tower house was the site of the first Cumberland town meeting in 1747, as well as subsequent meetings (Town Council Records, 1746-1759; Simpson 1975:47). In 1752, a commission for settling the Rhode Island north boundary dispute met in the house (Simpson 1975:47).

Deborah Tower died in 1755, leaving a "plat" of land, comprising part of the homestead of Benjamin Tower and containing between 40 and 50 acres in Cumberland, Rhode Island, to her four sons, Gideon, John, Benjamin (the next owner of the property), and Joseph (Tower 1891:71).

Captain Benjamin Tower (1715-1792), Benjamin and Deborah's son, was born in Attleborough, Massachusetts. He worked as a cooper and blacksmith and served as the Captain of the First Company of the Cumberland Militia from 1762 to 1770 during the Revolutionary War. According to local tradition, Cumberland militia men camped on his property (Ray 1990:7). Captain Benjamin apparently received his father's property via the will of his mother, Deborah, although no record has been located. Benjamin ran a tavern or inn in the house between 1779 and 1783, and possibly longer, when he purchased a license from the town of Cumberland to run a public tavern in his house (Town Council Records). This is the first mention of a house found in primary records. The barn relocation and the two smaller early outbuildings may date from his period of ownership. In particular, the "Tack Building" may have been used as a blacksmith shop and/or a cooper shop.

In his will of 1792, Captain Benjamin Tower left "the improvement of the whole of my homestead farm, together with all the buildings, conveyances, and privileges thereto belonging and also my other lots of land in Attleborough and Cumberland" to his wife Ruth (Land Evidence Book 6:294). Genealogies and other sources do not record Ruth's maiden name or

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 8

Page 18

the date of marriage. Ruth and Benjamin had no children, therefore, he left one-half of his homestead and buildings as the sole property of his wife Ruth, and the other half to his nephew, Morris Jackson, upon the death of Ruth (Land Evidence Book 6:294). The probate inventory of Benjamin's possessions is quite extensive, including numerous household possessions and farm equipment valued at a total of 256 pounds. The inventory does not specify buildings, but mentions a barn which is may one of the barns which stands there today. Also noted are several items relating to his cooper and blacksmith skills, including two drawing knives and one cooper's axe and adze, as well as one old shop bellows, old iron, and old bullet molds (Land Evidence Book 6:297-300).

Deborah Tower appears to have died in 1799, for in November 1799, Morris Jackson, of Pomfret, Vermont, had inherited his half of the Tower land and sold to William Sheldon for \$800. This purchase is described as one-half of the land formerly owned by Benjamin Tower, late of Cumberland. William Sheldon received the rights to Morris Jackson's one-half portion of land and the dwelling house, barn, and all other buildings thereon. In May 1802, William Sheldon sold the property to Tillson Aldrich for \$1150. The land was described as one-half of the land of the late homestead farm of Captain Benjamin Tower, "the whole of said farm estimated 100 acres" (Book 9:270; 5/29/1802). David Farrington, a cordwainer from Wrentham, Massachusetts, received one-eighth of the property, possibly from Ruth Tower's half, prior to April of 1804, when he sold this portion to Tillson Aldrich for \$30 (Book 9:332; 4/6/1804). The fate of Deborah Tower's sole-owned half of the Benjamin Tower property is not entirely clear; however, the property can be said to have passed out of Tower-family ownership in 1799.

By December 1804, the two halves of the Benjamin Tower property (Deborah Tower's and Morris Jackson's) apparently were reunited when Ebenezer Metcalf, John Bishop, Jr., William Bishop, and Tillson Aldrich sold the property, estimated at 100 acres, to James Smith for \$2600 (Book 9:336; 12/15/1804). James held onto the property until 1813 when he granted the property to his son Job (Book 11:75; 8/17/1813). Job sold the property to Mowry and Louisa Taft in 1834 (Book 16:5; 4/7/1834). The property is identified on the 1838 map as belonging to Mowry Taft (Nelson 1838). In March 1845, the Tafts sold to Caleb Paine, of Attleborough, Massachusetts, three lots of land on the "west side of the road leading from Friends Meeting House to Lanesville" for \$3,000. The property included a dwelling house, barn, corn house, and other buildings standing on the northwest corner of land belonging to Jason Cargill. The property included 55 acres and 17 rods (Book 19:169-70; 3/25/1845). The barn is no

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 8

Page 19

doubt the barn now standing. The corn house might be the small Shed, but is more likely a corn crib that is no longer extant.

The property passed through numerous hands over the next 50 years. Subsequent owners of the property included Albert Briggs (Book 20:349; 7/7/1849) and Francis Newell (Book 23:282-83; 1/21/1854). Between 1855 and 1895, the property seems to have been in the same family of Belcher, Gould, and Cargill. According to tax records, Evelina Davis Belcher, who acquired the property in 1855 (Book 24:145; 3/9/1855), and her husband, Dr. Caleb Belcher, a well-known local physician, resided in the house from 1855 to 1875 when Caleb died and Evelina became the head of the family and owner of the house. The property was valued at \$2000 in 1862 and \$2400 in 1870 (Tax Records). Also included in this household according to census records were Andrew B. Gould, grandson, born in Providence, RI, a 22 year-old farmer; and Mary Knight, a 35 year-old mulatto servant. Census records also indicate that Jason Cargill, "father", and Electa M. Cargill, "mother," both born in Cumberland, resided in the house. Their relationship to the Belcher family is not yet understood; the Cargill family owned property immediately to the north and northeast of the Belcher farm. Evelina lived in the house until her death on November 3, 1877. Her will, written before her husband's death and dated August 14, 1871, described the property which she left to her daughter, Sophronia D. Gould, as "my house and the land around it beginning at the Butternut Tree at the N.E. corner of the garden thence west to the Barn, thence south to the corn house, thence west to the wall to the wet lot, then south by the wall and wet lot to Darwin M. Cargill's land, thence East to the country roads by said road first mentioned" (Prob. Book 26:111; 8/14/1871).

Sophronia granted the property to [her son?] Andrew B. Gould in 1878 (Book 35:347; 3/19/1878); it was valued in the 1879 tax records at \$2200. Andrew held the property for just two years, selling it to David Olney Cargill in 1880 (Book 35:489; 2/4/1880). In 1880, tax records list David as the owner of the property, known as the "Belcher farm," valued at \$2200. Tax records from 1881 to 1905, list the value of the land as \$2000. David also owned the Cargill-family land in Cumberland adjacent to the "Belcher farm", including a lot valued at \$2500, a wood lot, and the Cargill homestead, valued at \$6000. In addition to farming, D.O. Cargill developed the Abbott Run Hay Grain and Ice Company with Halsey C. Rawson. Taking advantage of rail, rail station, and water facilities at the Abbott Run the company handled cattle, milk, hay, grain, and farm equipment, as well as operating a saw and grist mill (Simpson 1975:49). The facilities, valued at \$6000 in 1884, were located on Rawson Road about one-quarter mile from the farm (Tax Records). In 1884, the jointly owned mill estate was valued

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 8

Page 20

at \$6000 dollars. In 1895 Cargill was listed as one of the surveyors of lumber for the town of Cumberland and in 1901, he sat on the school committee.

In 1895, David Olney Cargill sold the property to Charles Otis Flagg, his brother-in-law, by virtue of Cargill's marriage to Flagg's sister, Sarah E. Flagg (Book 43:445; 2/7/1895). Charles had married Celinda Evelyn Alexander in 1877. She was the granddaughter of Dr. Caleb and Evelina Belcher, the daughter of William and Martha (Belcher) Alexander, and niece of Sophronia D. Gould. William Alexander owned the farm immediately across the street, as shown on the 1895 map (Everts & Richards 1895).

Charles Flagg was an early and key participant in the implementation of land-grant education in Rhode Island and in the development of Rhode Island's first agricultural school which later became the University of Rhode Island (Eschenbacher 1967:29). He had graduated from the Massachusetts Agricultural College at Amherst in 1872, after which he worked for one year in a market garden in Montgomery, Alabama. He also worked on a farm in Westminster, Massachusetts prior to serving as head of the farm on the Henry B. Metcalf estate in northern Rhode Island. He then worked the Belcher farm, probably under the ownership of David O. Cargill, which he acquired in 1895, and became the first Master of the Cumberland Grange (Eschenbacher 1967:409; Simpson 1975:48).

Following passage of the Hatch Act in 1887 which authorized \$15,000 a year to each state for the establishment of an agricultural experiment station, Flagg presided over the first meeting of interested farmers at a farmers' field day at Oakland Beach. He was instrumental in securing a transfer of funds from Brown University, which had received the original award but had shown little interest in developing an agricultural curriculum, to a new establishment, that became the University of Rhode Island in Kingston. He was appointed the temporary director of the Agricultural Experiment Station in July 1888, and reappointed in November as the permanent Director with a yearly salary of \$1500. He was one of five instructors forming the nucleus of the first faculty and in January 1890, was named Professor of Geology, becoming Professor Emeritus in 1897 (Eschenbacher 1967:33, 37, 82).

The 1895 Everts & Richards map shows the property of C. O. Flagg as consisting of a house with an offset ell and an L-shape barn. Tax records for that year list Charles O. Flagg as owning a farm at "Arnold's Mill" valued at \$2000. In the fall of 1928, the house, then known as the "Biscuit House" due to numerous additions burned down. The 1929 tax

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetProperty name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RISection number 8

Page 21

records report a revaluation of the property, listing the land valued at \$1000, but the buildings at only \$300. A new house (heavily altered in the 1970s and not included in this nomination) and barn (Flagg Barn) was constructed on the site prior to 1934 when Caleb B. Flagg (born March 24, 1884), was listed as the owner in the tax records of property valued at \$4600. Charles died December 6, 1939 at the Fuller Sanitarium in Attleborough, Massachusetts, and was buried at Arnold Mills Cemetery, Cumberland, Rhode Island. The property passed into the hands of his three children (no deed found), Martha Rebecca Flagg, Caleb Belcher Flagg, and Laura M. Flagg by 1962 when they sold the property to Robert and Caroline Egerton (Book 177:183-86; 3/22/1962). The Egertons raised cows on the farm and owned the property until 1970 when they sold it to Alfred J. San Souci (Book 222:3; 6/5/1970). While under San Souci's ownership, the real estate was valued at \$17,580 in 1971, and the buildings and improvements were valued at \$32,520 in 1982. San Souci was responsible for the construction of an addition and other improvements to the house in the 1970s. Between 1982 and 1996, the property changed hands several times until being purchased by Barbara Garber in 1996 (Book 678:392; 8/2/1996).

Architecture

Beyond its significance as an historic resource that clearly reflects aspects of patterns of early settlement and agricultural development in Cumberland, as well as the birth of agricultural education in the State of Rhode Island, the Tower-Flagg Barn Complex possesses architectural significance through retention of two early timber-framed English barns and other agricultural buildings. The three-bay, side-gable English barn, constructed of heavy pegged timbers, gunstock posts, and framed with the Latin scribe-rule method that required custom fitting each component, perpetuated construction traditions dating at least to the Medieval era and possibly earlier in Europe and Great Britain. This type of barn was the barn built in New England up until about 1820, although they are infrequently found to survive today. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, changes in technology and changes in agricultural practices led to the development of the so-called "New England Barn". This later barn form, characterized by larger proportions and end gable openings became the ubiquitous barn and dominates the New England agricultural landscape today. These later barns were built using a square-rule method that allowed parts to be cut to predetermined dimensions. They increasingly employed sawn rather than hewn members, and by the second half of the nineteenth century, balloon-frame construction.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 8

Page 22

The Tower-Flagg Barns exhibit classic features of the English barn. Both possess traditional post-and-beam framing with gunstock posts and low footings, with no basement. The three-bay South Section reflects the standard interior arrangement for these barns, combining livestock and grain storage functions that were traditionally separate in England under one roof. Although the interior first floor is altered, it no doubt was arranged with a central threshing floor, flanked by an animal tie-up on one side and a hay mow on the other. The functional configuration of the North Section is less obvious, as it appears to have been built as a two-bay structure. It may have been used for specialty storage, such as for sheep or as a hay barn. The size of both the North (22 by 24 feet) and South Sections (30 by 24 feet) are in keeping with the standard size (30 by 20 feet) for an older English barn (Hubka 1990:50); later barns were typically 30 by 40 feet (Visser 1997:61). Both were built as freestanding structures, and the arrangement of the South Section with the nearby contemporary Shed forms a "sheltered, sunny dooryard" facing west (Visser 1997:63).

The barns possess potential for future study, both in comparison with each other, and with other surviving English barns in the region. Establishment of a firm date of construction for the buildings has not been possible and is unlikely due to the persistence of traditional techniques over time. However, the overall similarity of the two buildings in proportions and framing methods in combination with the dissimilarities of sawn versus hewn lumber and the presence of verifiable handwrought nails in only one buildings could provide material for further analysis of construction and chronology. The chisel-formed framer's marks, for example, may be a possible basis for identification of a builder or a local building tradition.

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>301700</u>	<u>4647790</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Virginia H. Adams/Director of Architectural Projects, with Mary Kate Harrington and Jessica Snow, and Myron Stachiw, Consultant

Organization: The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Date: August 1997

Street & Number: 210 Lonsdale Avenue Telephone: (401) 728-8780

City or Town: Pawtucket State: RI ZIP: 02860

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 9

Page 23

Major Bibliographical References

Chapin, Howard M.
n.d. Our Rhode Island Ancestors.

Eschenbacher, Herman F.
1967 The University of Rhode Island; A History of Land Grant Education in Rhode Island. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, NY.

Everts & Richards
1895 New Topographic Atlas of Surveys.

Fitch, Virginia Adams
1990 Historic and Architectural Resources of Cumberland, Rhode Island. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Providence, RI.

Halsted, Byron D.
1977 Barns, Sheds, and Outbuildings; Placement, Design, and Construction. The Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, MA.

Hubka, Thomas C.
1984 Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England. University Press of New England, Hanover and London.

Nelson, Newell
1838 Map of the Town of Cumberland, RI. White, Aaron, Jr., Boston, MA.

Ray, Judith Jencks
1990 Founders and Patriots of the Town of Cumberland, Rhode Island. Gateway Press, Inc., Baltimore, MD.

Rawson, Richard
1990 The Old House Book of Barn Plans. Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., New York.

Simpson, Robert V.
1975 North Cumberland, A History. Privately printed.

Stachiw, Myron
1997 On site inspection by Historical Consultant, former Director of Research, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 9

Page 24

Tower, Charlemagne

1891 Tower Genealogy; An Account of the Descendants of John Tower of
Hingham, Mass. John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, MA.

Town of Cumberland

1875 Census Records

Town Council Records

Probate Records

Land Evidence Records

Tax Records

Visser, Thomas Durant

1997 Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings. University Press
of New England, Hanover, NH.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Tower-Flagg Barn Complex, Providence County, Cumberland, RI

Section number 10

Page 25

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property of the Tower-Flagg Barn Complex is a portion of Cumberland Assessor's Map 24, Lot 223, as shown on the copy of the attached map. The boundaries are described as follows:

Beginning at the northeast corner of Lot 223 on Abbott Run Valley Road, the boundary runs west for 114.52 feet, north for 85 feet, and west for approximately 180 feet following the boundary of Lot 223 to a bend in the north boundary. Here the boundary turns and runs south following a line of convenience for about 160 feet. The boundary turns east on a line of convenience for about 80 feet, then south on a line of convenience for about 40 feet, then east on a line of convenience for about 120 feet to Abbott Run Valley Road, then north on Abbott Run Valley Road for about 110 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property boundaries are drawn to encompass the attached Barns, three secondary buildings, and one archaeological site that constitute the intact Tower-Flagg Barn Complex and their immediate setting. The boundaries are drawn to exclude buildings that would be considered noncontributing to the nomination.