

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	DATE
	MAY 1 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Olney (Captain Stephen) House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
138 Smithfield Road

CITY OR TOWN:
North Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02908

CODE: **44** COUNTY: **Providence** CODE: **007**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Craven

STREET AND NUMBER:
138 Smithfield Road

CITY OR TOWN:
North Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02908

CODE: **44**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
North Providence Town Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:
2008 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN:
North Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02908

CODE: **44**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1954** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

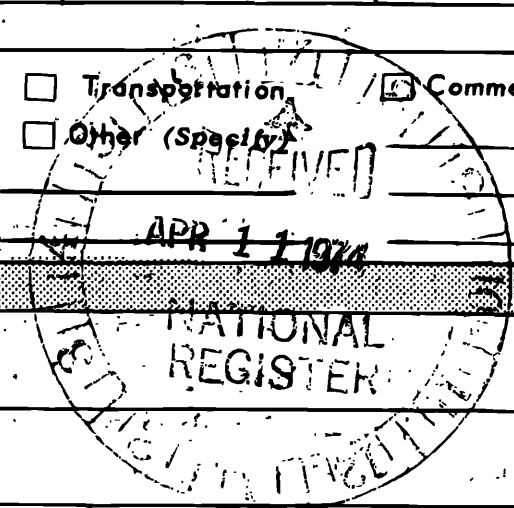
STREET AND NUMBER:
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
District of Columbia

CODE: **11**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:
COUNTY:
ENTRY NUMBER: **1**
DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house which Stephen Olney built about 1802 for himself and his family stands close to the south side of Smithfield Road at the head of acreage (now extremely reduced) sloping off to east and south and extending also up an incline to the west. Though built in the Federal period, this dwelling erected in what was then a rural area does not exhibit in its externals any of the ornamental details characteristic of the incoming sophistications of the Federal style: it appears more as a roomy, robust, late-XVIII-Century farmhouse; such would be what Olney was accustomed to seeing and what country housewrights were still accustomed to building. This house may also have been a conforming but dominant expansion of a smaller one, of Colonial style, already existing on the site.

With its five-bay entrance front facing east over land and a view, and its north end close to the roadway, this is a two-and-a-half-storey oblong structure with a gable roof. It is set upon a stone basement and has clapboarding over its timber frame. A gabled and clapboarded two-and-a-half-storey wing is attached at the south. Except for a pilastered and pedimented main doorway enframing in the centre of the east elevation, exterior trim (moulded eaves cornice, capping mouldings on the protruded window-frames) is simple and sparse. The main house has two interior chimneys serving the hearths of a central, halfy-four-room plan, and the wing has one interior chimney.

The southern wing, or ell, obviously dates--by its internal trim--from the 1840's or early 1850's. However, indications in its cellar, where walls and chimney-base are of massive stonework, lead one to believe that here, in the XVIII Century, was a house--perhaps only of cottage size--which possessed a sizeable cooking hearth and which was demoted to the status of kitchen wing when the larger 1802 house was built onto its north end. By 1840-1850 this ell may have become dilapidated or been thought old-fashioned; so it was razed and a two-and-a-half-storey wing (containing simple Greek Revival interior detail) erected in its place. At this time, when large cooking hearths were no longer required, the kitchen was, it seems, relocated in the south-west corner of the main house of 1802.

Internally the house has not been greatly altered in plan or in trim, excepting what appears to have been more than one rearrangement of the south-west kitchen area and turn-of-the-century replacement of some mantels and most door hardware. The central stair-hall runs through the house to a secondary rear entrance passage and contains a stairway whose slim, plain woodwork is more typical of the Federal period than is the house's exterior. This open-string stair rises in two right-angled runs, and below the turn there is one applied, sawn scroll ornament; grander houses would have had one below each tread. Two good wooden Federal-period mantels remain in first-floor rooms of the main house, one or more upstairs, and there is a simple Greek

(See Continuation Sheet 1.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Captain Stephen Olney built his substantial house on family farming acres around 1802 when he was in his late forties--long retired from a youthful and outstanding military career, permanently settled in his native North Providence, engaged in successful agriculture and important and active in local affairs. As often happened to houses of American families which continued and prospered after the Revolution, the old, pre-Revolutionary dwelling in which he was born seems to have been retained, but only as an appendage of the more roomy and imposing new one. There had been Olneys in the North Providence area for five generations, and Captain Olney provided a dwelling in which successors would live for more than one hundred and fifty years. Externally it to day appears basically as built; internally it underwent slight changes which are recognisable and are being corrected by the present owners.

Stephen Olney was a prominent figure in Rhode Island history, military and otherwise. Throughout nearly all of the campaigns and battles of the Revolutionary War he was on hand and was given, increasingly, responsibilities and rank which were conspicuous recognition of his intelligence and intrepidity, his personal bravery. Born in North Providence in 1756, he became member of a local, chartered company of private militiamen, the North Providence Rangers, in 1774. By 1775 this group was taken in as part of three regiments which the Colony of Rhode Island decided to raise to maintain order and protection. Olney, then only eighteen or nineteen years old, was taken on as ensign in Captain John Angell's company, which formed part of the Second Rhode Island Regiment. This regiment, soon after the Concord-Lexington affair, was sent to Boston, where it remained on active duty until after the British evacuation in March, 1776. The corps to which Olney belonged was then sent to Long Island, and there he first personally captured some important and informative prisoners and next participated in the Battle of Long Island, having been raised to the rank of lieutenant.

Next, he went across the Hudson and southwards with Washington's army and was present at the Battle of Princeton on January 3, 1777, upon which occasion he rescued the wounded James Monroe, later a President of the United States. In March, 1777, by then raised to the rank of captain, Olney took a short leave to return to Rhode Island

(See Continuation Sheet 1.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Williams, Mrs.: Biography of Revolutionary Heroes: Containing the life of ... Captain Stephen Olney. (Providence, Rhode Island, 1839), pp. 145-298.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

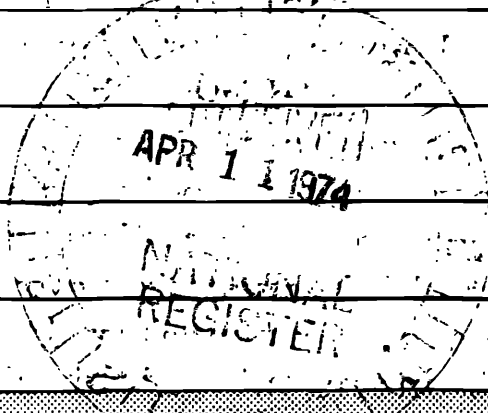
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 51' 21.10" N	71° 27' 5.29" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM
19/296500
4630-130
CL

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Three and one-half 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



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission** DATE: **October 31, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER:
John Brown House, 52 Power Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Providence** STATE: **Rhode Island, 02906** 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: *Richard Williams*
Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: APR 1 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

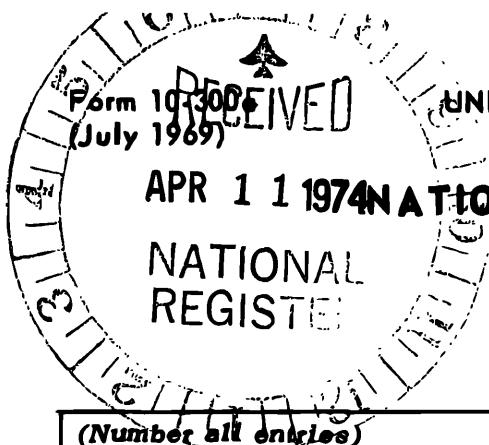
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. Purolet
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/1/74

ATTEST:
Wm. P. ...
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 5.1.74



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)-1

STATE Rhode Island	
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(Number all entries)

7. Description.

Revival one of wood in a first-floor room of the wing. The house, acquired only in recent years from the last Olney owners, is now undergoing the beginning of such little restoration as it needs.

The Olney house stands to-day on only three-and-one-half acres of its original spreading farmland, most gradually sold off to developers whose ranch houses the farmhouse overlooks but to which it is not overly close. Except for a wooden shed of no great age at the west, which now serves as a garage and storage place, no barns, henneries or other out-buildings remain. The residence, however, is still largely the same house that Stephen Olney, retired Revolutionary War officer and prospering farmer, built in his middle age and which the next generation somewhat enlarged.

8. Significance.

to see his family and his farm. During his stay of a month or so he took the innovative precaution of having a newly-available smallpox inoculation. Returning to military duty, he remained in that status for a long time before taking another leave and participated in the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey, in June, 1777; he stayed on with the army through the New York and Hudson River campaigns of 1780. In 1781 Olney came home again for a time but left Rhode Island in July in order to reach his command, then involved in the war's closing phases in Virginia. He was active in the long siege of Yorktown, during which he became a familiar of the Marquis de Lafayette and during which he also received a serious wound. He was able, however, to be present at the British surrender on October 19.

Afterwards, at home in North Providence, Captain Olney devoted himself to his family and his land, although he did not resign his army commission until March, 1782 (and in later years he availed himself of the federal pension to which retired Revolutionary War officers were entitled). An admired personage in his town and state, he served as president of the North Providence town council and as representative in the Rhode Island General Assembly. He was conspicuous during Lafayette's return visit to Rhode Island in 1824, when the latter remembered Olney well, and with emotion. A placid but productive post-war life ended, in the house described, on November 23, 1832, and Captain Olney was buried in the family lot on his own acreage.

The house stayed with his descendants until the 1960's, though the homestead property had gradually diminished as North Providence and

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)-2

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
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	MAY 1 1974

(Number all entries)

8. Significance.

real estate development there grew concomitantly (and probably Olney family finances nevertheless did not). After the death of Miss Mary Olney the house came into the ownership of a young family who occupy it, are aware of its historic association and are undertaking step-by-step restoration of the fabric. Three-and-one-half acres sloping south and east off the old Smithfield Road have stayed with the house; but forty-two contiguous acres which include the Olney family burying-ground--containing Captain Stephen--remain an open area, having been given by Miss Olney in her will to the Town of North Providence in order to preserve that burying-ground. When the house has had its restoration completed it will not be open to the public, but it will be deserving of attention as the birthplace locale and the place of retirement of a personage notable in both local and national military history.

