

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received OCT 23 1990

date entered

NOV 28 1990

Continuation sheet 37

Item number 7

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NAME: Bridgham Farm

LOCATION: 120, 148, 150, and 160 Pleasant Street

OWNERS: Martha Appleton Greig  
Box 4733  
East Providence, R.I. 02916

Samuel W. Bridgham  
Unit I-285  
North Farm  
Bristol, R.I. 02809

E.W. Sterling Graham, Jr., and Claire Ellis  
150 Pleasant Street  
East Providence, R.I. 02916

## DESCRIPTION:

Bridgham Farm is located off Pleasant Street on the western shore of Turner Reservoir, in a twentieth-century suburban residential neighborhood just north of the Rumford Historic District. It comprises farm dwellings surrounded by sheds, barns, garages, and a late nineteenth-century windmill, all set on a 46.6-acre tract of grassy fields and woodland bounded by dry-laid stone walls. Occupied by the Hyde Family in the 1760s, the property was acquired by Joseph Bridgham in 1781 and has been owned since then by Bridgham's descendants.

The focus of the complex is the Hyde-Bridgham House (120 Pleasant Street), a typical two-and-one-half-story, five-bay, gable-roofed, timber-frame dwelling with a stone foundation, clapboard-sheathed walls, and a massive central chimney of brick. Set into the chimney is a stone inscribed "E Hyde June 10 1767," referring to the original owner of the house, the Reverend Ephraim Hyde, pastor of the Congregational (now Newman Congregational) Church, and the date of the house's construction. A number of additions have been made to the main block of the house: a vestibule sheltering the main entrance; a rear (east) wing built one story high in 1854 and raised to two stories in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century; a wing on the north side, originally one story high and used as a public library, erected in 1865 and later raised to two stories; and an addition filling the "L" between the rear and north wings. This structure originally served as the farmhouse but was used by Joseph Bridgham's descendants as a country house. The other buildings on the property were successively built to house the tenant who farmed the Bridgham's land.

South of the Hyde-Bridgham House is the Bridgham Farm house (148 Pleasant Street). The farmhouse is a typical, very plain dwelling in the nineteenth-century vernacular style derived from Greek Revival models and commonly used

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for farmhouses and mill houses. It was built in 1880-1881 as a residence for the Bridgham's tenant farmer after the original tenant house next door was occupied by one of the Bridghams. The farmhouse is a one-and-one-half-story, side-hall-plan, wood-frame, gable-roofed cottage with an ell on the south side. It has a stone foundation and clapboard wall cover.

3 The Bridgham Tenant House (150 Pleasant Street) stands south of the Bridgham Farmhouse. Originally constructed to serve as a tenant farmer's residence, it was taken over and enlarged by Doctor Joseph Bridgham for use as his own residence. The older portion of the house, built in 1866, is a simple one-and-one-half-story, five-bay, wood-frame, gable-roofed, Greek Revival vernacular dwelling with a central entrance, a pair of small brick central chimneys, and two shed-roofed front dormers. The rear addition, built in 1882, was designed by Doctor Bridgham, who had worked briefly in the office of Richard Morris Hunt. It is a two-and-one-half-story, wood-frame, mansard-roofed block in a simplified version of the Stick Style, with shed-roofed dormers and a tall brick chimney. The building's foundation is of stone and exterior wall surfaces are covered with clapboards.

4 South of the Tenant House is the former First Baptist Church Parsonage (160 Pleasant Street). Built in 1831, it housed the ministers of the Baptist Church until 1889, when the Bridghams acquired the property and annexed it to their adjacent holdings. The parsonage is a two-and-one-half-story, timber-frame, side-hall-plan, gable-roofed dwelling with a stone foundation, clapboard wall cover, and extensive later additions to the rear. The facade (west side) has been substantially altered by the installation of a picture window in place of the original ground-floor windows. The original entrance with sidelights is intact, however. Its four thin, paneled pilasters are topped by consoles with guttae and recessed panels filled with a single vertical row of semicircular "fish scales." Between these consoles and below a straight, molded cornice are carved floral bosses and wreaths attached to a broad, flat frieze. This doorway is perhaps the finest extant piece of Federal wood work in East Providence.

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DATES: 1767, 1831, 1880-1881, 1882

## SIGNIFICANCE:

Bridgham Farm's chief significance lies in its evocation of East Providence's agrarian past. The farm's buildings and their surroundings constitute the only surviving property in the city that gives a sense of the community's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rural landscape. In addition, the farm is significant for its association with one of East Providence's most distinguished families. Its most famous owner was Samuel W. Bridgham (1774-1840), a prominent Rhode Island lawyer and politician who served as a state representative and attorney general and, from 1832 to 1840, as the first Mayor of Providence under the city charter.

Architecturally, the Hyde-Bridgham House is a fine example of mid-eighteenth-century domestic architecture with well executed later additions; the Bridgham Farmhouse and Tenant House are well preserved, representative examples of nineteenth-century vernacular architecture; and the First Baptist Church Parsonage is notable for its intricately detailed front entrance.

ACREAGE: about 46.6 acres

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Assessor's Plat 31, Lots 6,7,8,9,18,19,23,50,265, and 272

## UTM:

A)	19:	305620:	4634390
B)	19:	305170:	4634400
C)	19:	305140:	4634020
D)	19:	305500:	4633670

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

(See Continuation Sheet #40).