

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

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

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received **OCT 24 1980**

date entered

**NOV 28 1980**

Continuation sheet 45

Item number 7

Page 46

NAME: Nathaniel Daggett House

LOCATION: 74 Roger Williams Avenue

OWNER: Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Dunbar  
74 Roger Williams Avenue  
East Providence, R.I. 02916

## DESCRIPTION:

The Nathaniel Daggett House is set close to the street on a large lot in a residential neighborhood that was first settled in the early seventeenth century but was largely built up in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much added to and altered over the years, the house was originally a two-story, gable-roofed, timber-framed, end-chimney dwelling, probably with only one room on each floor. A small entry and stair hall with front door opening to the south was squeezed in front of the chimney. A single-story lean-to with its own chimney was later added across the rear (north side) of the house and the roofline was altered to its present saltbox profile. By the turn of the twentieth century other additions had been made to the north and west. About 1900, the house was acquired by the American Electrical Works at nearby Phillipsdale and was renovated to provide housing for workers. The facade was extended two bays by an addition to the west side of the house; the staircase was rebuilt and the front entrance shifted to the east wall of the entry hall, facing the street; eighteenth-century nine-over-nine sash were replaced with newer windows; and gable windows and dormers were added to permit use of the garret as living space. More recent changes include the addition of a single-car garage connected by a short ell to the south of the house and the sealing off of the lean-to fireplace and demolition of its chimney above the roof line.

In spite of these changes, the house retains a number of original features. Except for the rebuilt staircase and relocated front entrance, the original plan is intact and can be clearly read amid the accretions of later periods. Cased posts can be seen in older portions of the house and many two-panel doors remain. The original walk-in fireplace still exists, though a smaller modern fireplace has been constructed within and slightly in front of it. For the most part the older sections of the house retain a "sense of their original" character; further restoration could make the structure's antiquity even more evident.

DATES: ca. 1700 et seq.

## SIGNIFICANCE:

The Nathaniel Daggett House, one of the oldest extant dwellings in East Providence, is a rare surviving example of early colonial domestic architecture. It is particularly noteworthy because the method utilized to enlarge

(See Continuation Sheet #46).

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Continuation sheet 46

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Page 47

the original end-chimney house--the addition of a rear lean-to with end fireplace in line with the original chimney--is more similar to northern Rhode Island building practice than to the mode customarily employed in Massachusetts (where houses were expanded by adding to the opposite side of the chimney, converting the structure into a center-chimney dwelling). This exhibits the close tie between Providence and western Rehoboth, a tie that developed and flourished even though the two communities were located in different colonies and, later, states.

The Daggett House has long been recognized as a historical site and is known to local residents as "the house that never moved," a designation referring to the fact that the house has stood in three towns and two states while remaining on its original site. It is thus a significant folk artifact reflecting a popular view of local history. The rather sentimental, nostalgic association of the house with the region's early history, particularly with the settlement planted by Roger Williams a short distance to the north (see entry for Roger Williams Spring, 89 Roger Williams Avenue) made the structure the focus of an early historical-preservation campaign. In the 1890s the Daggett House was threatened with demolition to permit realignment of Roger Williams Avenue to accommodate a streetcar line. The scheme caused such consternation that the Rhode Island Historical Society formed a committee of prominent area scholars and businessmen to work for preservation of the structure. The house was saved, but underwent extensive changes to adapt it for use as a workers' tenement. Today, the Daggett House's status as a historical and cultural artifact and architectural relic make it one of East Providence's more important historical resources.

ACREAGE: less than one acre

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Assessor's Plat 17, Lot 369

UTM: 19: 303810: 4634240

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

(See Continuation Sheet #47).