Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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DATE

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ī.	NAME						
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	The Forge Farm	······································					
	Birthplace of Ma	ior-General Nat	hanael Gre	ene		-	
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	CITY OR TOWN:				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
	Warwick	• • •					
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	OWNER OF PROPERTY					_ 	
2.30	OWNER'S NAME:				·		
	Mrs. Thomas Case	y Greene					
	STREET AND NUMBER:		····		 		
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where he lived and helped with the family agricultural and commercial pursuits until he married and built a house elsewhere, to-day comprises 179 acres, of which a considerable part is still worked as farmland-at present growing alfalfa. On this land there stand the main Greene house and a number of subsidiary buildings; there are also woods, ponds, a sluiceway for the vanished Greene grist-mill and iron-forge, winding dirt roads, a flower garden and a vegetable one, a family cemetery. The grave of Nathanael Greene is not, however, in this last, as he died and was buried with honours in Georgia; but the grave of his brother Christopher, also a Revolutionary War officer, is in the enclosure.

The main house, whose core was constructed in 1684 by James Greene, is near the north-eastern corner of the property, where the land is quite elevated above Forge Road, and is reached by a gravel drive. It is also above the Potowomut (or "Greene's") River to its east, where the Greenes' iron and milling enterprises were located. Today, the house presents externally a mid-XIX-Century appearance, for not only was it re-cased in the latter half of the XVIII Century, but in 1862-1863 it was given an extension and some other alterations; its oldest portion remains, nevertheless -- within two coats of clapboarding -and on the interior the old plan is evident. It was built of timber framing (pinned by nails from the family forge, rather than pegged) and vertical sheathing, two-and-a-half storeys high above a low fieldstone basement, and carries a gable roof. The entrance is a central one (now brought forward in a tall, narrow Victorian projection) in its five-bay east front, and the house is two rooms deep--these rooms laid out about a centre chimney in the typical five-room plan: one room on either side of a small entry- and stair-hall, three rooms across the back of the house. Attached at the south was a gambrel-roofed ell (probably a summer kitchen) of a storey-and-a-half, which has been supplanted by a larger Victorian service wing, under a gable roof, truncated at one end, and with a connector to the main house; a sitting-porch with wide wooden arcades runs in front of wing and connector. During the 1860's remodelling the main house may have had the pitch of its roof raised to give greater top-floor accommodation, and it was given an eaves cornice carried on brackets of modest design. At the same time a central entrance "pavilion" of two-and-a-half storeys was protruded; this has the double, glazed front door, sheletered by a square one-storey porch carried upon square wooden columns; above are paired windows surmounted by a hood, and in the third-floor gable is a small single window whose top is of semi-hexagonal shape. Ground-floor windows retain their old capping mouldings, but all windows of the old house, where there used to be twelve-over-twelve sash, now have two-over-two or one-over-one sash.

Upon entering the main door in the projection, one is in a small hallway not greatly larger than the original one; from it a curving stairway, said to pre-date the 1862-1863 changes, ascends, showing a

(See Continuation Sheet 1.)

PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	18th Century:	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐X 17th Century	[X] 19th Century	• •
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicat	ole and Known) 1684 ff.		* *
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Appropriat	te)	
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The Forge Farm property is on a part of the XVII-Century "Potowomut Purchase" made from the Indians by a group of Warwick settlers, of whom one was John Greene, whose son James came to Potowomut after the Indian wars, erecting there a farmhouse (the core of the present dwelling). Later, James Greene's son Jabez, in company with Thomas Hill, improved an old Indian dam across the Potowomut River and constricted a sluiceway to provide water-power to operate a saw- and grist-mill, and a forge or smithy was established--from which the farm takes its name.

James Greene's farmhouse of 168h was enlarged and re-cased in the XVIII Century and again in 1862-1863--accounting for its present exterior appearance--although internally it retains many of its older features, such as corner-posts, panelling etc. and much hardware made at the family forge. It contains also furniture dating back to the earliest Quaker Greenes, as well as relics--such as his cradle and his militia sword--of Nathanael Greene. The house is in possession of the ninth generation of Greene descendants and is used as a residence, still the head-house of large farm acreage upon which stand various outbuildings and where the family burying-ground is maintained.

Historically, however, the house is generally assigned its greatest prominence as being the birthplace in 1742 of the famous Revolutionary War officer, Major-General Nathanael Greene, Rhode Island's outstanding figure in that conflict. The first thirty-two years of his life were spent at The Forge Farm, where he helped with its agricultural operations and with the running of the family's milling, forge and foundry enterprises. At the same time, he was also pursuing a course of reading and study which had been laid out for him by the eminent Newport divine and diarist Ezra Stiles, later to be president of Yale College. Greene became a freeman of the town of Warwick in 1765, and in the early 1770's he was a representative to the colony's General Assembly. In 1773 he became interested in military matters, for which he was expelled from the local Quaker meeting; and in 1774 he helped organise in nearby East Greenwich the militia body known as the Kentish Guards and still existing to-day.

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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rail with a heavy, turned newel at the bottom, and there is a niche in the conformingly-curved backing wall in front of the chimney, where originally a tight and angular stair would have been. To right and left (north and south) are sitting-rooms--one probably originally a diningroom--both of which have early wainscoting with large, square, raised and bevelled panels. The northern rooms retains all of its early (i. e., XVIII-Century) character, showing cased corner-posts and a low ceiling, as are seen throughout the rest of the house. In this room remains an early and prominent moulded wood cornice; the fireplace treatment incorporates heavy, rounded mouldings around the hearth and an oblong eared panel as over-mantel above the shelf; here the wall spaces are defined by early XIX-Century wallpaper borders carefully preserved. Most doors on this floor were replaced in the 1862-1863 renovations and have panel arrangements with heavy mouldings of the mid-Victorian period. The room to the south of the entry has a mantelpiece of the Federal period, and behind this room a new dining-room was pushed out in the 1860's: this has a semihexagonal western bay which extends to the floors above. The wing to the south, containing domestic offices and extra bedrooms, has already been mentioned.

On the second floor the old doors with six shallow panels remain, many with their original hardware from the Greene forge. The north-east chamber is the one in which Nathanael Greene was born, and his cradle is still there. The only change made in this room was the installation of a prominently-panelled mantelpiece of heavy Greek Revival-Victorian woodwork. Opening from this major bedroom is a smaller one in the north-west corner of the house which General Greene occupied as a youth. Another large bedroom is across the hall; smaller ones are at the rear of the house and in the wing. There are now also bedrooms at third-floor level in the main house. Furnishings and ornaments throughout are antiques of various periods brought here by many generations and branches of the family. House and contents are meticulously cared for and are not infrequently shown to interested groups and individuals upon request, although the farm is not open to the public in any general sense.

Not far to the rear of the house is a former wood-house and laundry of one storey, of the Victorian style in its plainer form; this has been slightly extended to form a guest-house. To the south-west of the house is a group of outbuildings of various ages, including an old barn moved from a more distant place on the property, enlarged and given a cupola and modest frontal trim in the Greek Revival period; there is also an early-XIX-Century wagon and storage shed. On the eastern border of the land, on Forge Road, are a small, old, one-storey farmhouse with its own barn or shed, and a former storehouse for the mill which until c. 1830-1840 stood nearby on the river, with the forge then on the opposite bank. The family

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECEIVED NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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cemetery is a stone-walled area a distance west of the house and screened by trees. It is of interest not only because of its succession of occupants but also because of the successive styles of grave markers, starting with the simplest of low, unengraved Quaker slabs of stone stuck in the earth at head and foot and progressing through imposing Victorian monuments to the plainer headstones of this century.

Since the time of Nathanael Greene and his brother Christopher, who inherited it, The Forge Farm has not descended in an unroken filial line but has sometimes gone collaterally to nephews or cousins. However, it has never had an owner not bearing the Greene surname or not interested in the traditions of the house and the land, and in their maintenance: this even seems assured for the future.

8. Significance.

When war broke out in 1775, Greene was placed in charge of raising, in Rhode Island and nearby Connecticut, 1500 men for the Continental Army, a group which he took to Massachusetts, where General Washington in Cambridge on June 22 created him a brigadier-general. Serving throughout the entire war closely with Washington, Greene was one of the latter's most admired and trusted officers. He was promoted to major-general in 1776 and was present in all the important areas and campaigns, from the earliest ones in Massachusetts on through the concluding ones in the south. He was known both as a strategist and as a brilliant, thorough and effective administrator. Leaving military service finally in 1783, Greene returned to Rhode Island for a short time but then returned south to live on and manage a plantation which the state of Georgia had presented to him as a gesture of gratitude (he also received an estate from South Carolina). Until his death in 1786, however, he returned annually to Rhode Island for extended visits and reunions with comrades-in-arms.

Nathanael Greene's brother Christopher also served as an officer in the Revolutionary War and was the son who received, lived on and maintained The Forge Farm. His grave is in the burying-ground on the property, together with an earlier one of Benjamin Franklin's sister, who had married into this family, and those of other Greenes, down to the late husband of the farm's present owner.

Aside from the values due to notable family associations and to the contents of the main house, the whole complex of residence, outbuildings, stone sluiceway, cemetery, fields and woods is a remarkable survival of a prosperous rural agricultural property—altogether itself a piece of "living history." In 1972 one must also state that this inherited and cared—for property, not far from a major highway and a popular camping—park, is a king—pin towards preserving its immediate and handsome private residential adjacency.

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

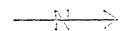
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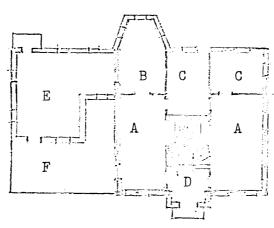
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(Continuation Sheet)-3

(Number all entries)





Sketch-plan of first floor done from memory and not to scale (the original structure is shaded).

A: Parlours

B: Dining-room

C: Small chambers

D: Entry and stair-hall

E: Added service area

F: Arcaded porch

Note: The vernacular-Gothic, steeple-like entrance tower in particular, as well as semi-hexagonal bay and the sitting-porch, are features much promoted in builders' handbooks of the late 1850's--both for new houses and to be applied, as here, to older ones.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

ITEM NUMBER TO PAGE 2

CONTINUATION SHEET 4

10 Geodraphical Data

UTM Coordinates

D• T6: S62480: 4eTTe80 C• T6: S62650: 4eTT450 B• T6: S624T0: 4eTS650 V• T6: S62300: 4eTS660

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Verbal boundary description
The nominated property includes city plat 211, lot 1, plat 212,

The nominated property includes city plat 211, lot 1, plat 212,

