UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM  

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS  

1. NAME  
HISTORIC  
The Sheffield House  
AND/OR COMMON  

2. LOCATION  
STREET & NUMBER  
Beach Road, Quonochontaug  

CITY, TOWN  
Charlestown  

STATE  
Rhode Island  

VICINITY OF  
2  
Representative Edward Beard  

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  

CODE  
44  

COUNTY  
Washington  

CODE  
009  

3. CLASSIFICATION  
CATEGORY  

OWNERSHIP  

PUBLIC  
PRIVATE  
BOTH  

STATUS  

UNOCCUPIED  
WORK IN PROGRESS  
ACCESSIBLE  
YES: RESTRICTED  
YES: UNRESTRICTED  
NO  

PRESENT USE  

AGRICULTURE  
COMMERCIAL  
PARK  
EDUCATIONAL  
PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
ENTERTAINMENT  
RELIGIOUS  
GOVERNMENT  
SCIENTIFIC  
INDUSTRIAL  
TRANSPORTATION  
MILITARY  
OTHER:  

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY  
NAME  
Mrs. Doris Sclater  

STREET & NUMBER  
Beach Road, Quonochontaug  

CITY, TOWN  
Charlestown  

VICINITY OF  

STATE  
Rhode Island  

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION  
COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  

Town Hall, Town of Charlestown  

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 2  

CITY, TOWN  
Charlestown  

STATE  
Rhode Island  

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS  
TITLE  
Survey of Rhode Island Architecture, National Society of Colonial Dames in Rhode Island  

DATE  
1932  

FEDERAL  
STATE  
COUNTY  
LOCAL  

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Rhode Island Historical Society Library  

CITY, TOWN  
Providence  

STATE  
Rhode Island
The Sheffield House, a shingled structure facing south and the ocean, is composed of one-and-a-half-story, gambrel-roofed section three bays wide, and a one-story gabled ell, with a massive stone chimney set between the two sections so as to serve both, making essentially a center chimney-center stair hall plan. Originally part of the Town of Westerly, this early farm is now surrounded by the houses of Central Beach, Quonochontaug, in Charlestown.

One of the most interesting aspects of the house is its plan, characteristic of the early houses of southern Rhode Island. The one-and-a-half-story section on the right or east is of basic three-room end-chimney plan and includes a large parlor with two small rooms at the rear. The ell on the left or west consists of a single room with a large cooking fireplace built into the massive chimney. On the second story, there is an open storage area above the entry with a garret to the west and the parlor chamber to the east. A narrow passage between the chimney and the gable garret originally provided access to a small chamber behind the chimney.

According to deeds and probate records, the house was probably constructed sometime between 1685 and 1713 by Joseph Stanton. A late nineteenth century continuation of the gabled ell to the west, a modern enclosed porch on the northwest side of the house, and a dormer on the north of the gambrel section are the only exterior alterations. The extent of the original gabled ell is easily determined by the dimensions of the stone basement beneath and the change from 3" x 3" hewn rafter to 2" x 4" circular-sawn beams in the attic above.

The framing of the house includes exposed posts in the corners of all original rooms and a still-exposed summer beam dividing the parlor from east to west. The ceilings have been lowered in all rooms except the parlor. The walls were all plastered on the interior and are presently papered. The original sash was replaced by a two-over-two form and the window frames changed in the nineteenth century. The house is built on a stone foundation with a crawl space below and a root cellar at the west end.

The entrance, placed on the south side in the most western bay of the two-story section, has a four-panel door with a horizontal line of three transom lights across the top (actually in the door and not the frame). Within, a small entry stair hall separates the parlor from the keeping room. Situated south of the large stone chimney, an enclosed stair of eleven risers ascends from the entry with a small closet beneath. Exposed hewn corner posts and plates, pegged and roughly chamfered, a 1" picture molding, and a beaded, vertically-panelled closet door complete the hall woodwork.

See Continuation Sheet 1
The kitchen in the one-story ell is dominated by the stone fireplace along its east wall. Approximately 5' high by 7' wide by 2½' deep, the fireplace opening has curved side walls, characteristic of early brick chimney construction than of stone and a beehive oven in the rear right corner. The lintel, charred and now covered by modern tin, could well be original. The mantel above is formed by a cyma reversa molding supporting a deep shelf. The wall above the mantel has replaced narrow, vertically-beaded, matched boarding, identical to the interior finish of the ell addition. The plain cornerposts are exposed, but a lowered ceiling conceals the girts and summer. The floor, composed of wide boards of various dimensions, appears to be original and has been painted.

The keeping room originally opened on the north into a bedroom behind the chimney. Another door on the north wall led outside where a modern enclosed porch has since been added. (Two walls of that porch show early exterior shingling painted a buff color.) A door in the west wall led into a small, unheated room, extending another six feet to the west, beneath which is a root cellar. The gable ell was lengthened in this direction during the second half of the nineteenth century; and today the area west of the keeping room includes a two-room kitchen and a bathroom.

The parlor east of the chimney is the most finely finished room in the house and is the only one on the main floor to maintain its original ceiling height. Corner posts, plates, and summer beam are still visible and are planed smooth and decorated by a large bead at their edges. The focus of the parlor is its panelled fireplace surround. Raised beveled paneling extends one yard to either side of the fireplace and from floor to ceiling. Two panels two feet across flank the height of the fireplace. Above, a horizontal line of five raised panels (roughly 2' x 1') define the form. At the top, two nearly square panels flank an oblong panel equal to the width of the fireplace and the three center panels of the second course. A later mantel shelf has been added between the second and third levels of panels. A good early bolection molding frames the fireplace opening. The original wide floor boards remain in this room. A door contemporary with the panelling leads from the parlor into the bedroom to the north. Chair railing completes the original woodwork of the parlor. Wood latches with latch strings are seen in this room and throughout the house. Several wrought iron hinges also remain.

Two bedchambers are located north of the chimney and the parlor in the gambrel section of the house. The requirements of closet space and central heating have changed slightly the shape of these rooms. However, exposed corner posts,
doorframes, and the mantelpiece still remain in the bedroom to the west as examples of early woodwork. Both the flooring and the fenestration have been altered. The west bedroom’s fireplace is the narrowest in the house and is finished by a panelled mantelpiece consisting of three small raised panels above the fireplace and a large oblong one above those. The opening of the fireplace is framed by a cavetto molding. Today, this back fireplace is partially filled in and a modern Franklin stove extends into the room.

On the second story, the open area at the top of the stairs was probably used for storage. To the west of this area runs the garret of the gabled ell which was never finished. The now-closed space between the garret and the chimney allowed passage from the stairs to the small bedroom north of the chimney. This room has hewn rafters, a door dating from the original construction of the house, wide beaded floor boarding (a feature unique to this room), but no fireplace.

The parlor chamber east of the stairs has been altered by the addition of a bathroom at its north-west corner and a partition running north and south to create a hall connecting the bath and rear bedroom with the stairs. As a result, the fireplace for this room is now located in the hall. Its treatment resembled that of the fireplace and mantelpiece in the northwest bedroom on the ground floor. However, the opening has been closed, a large panel at the top has been removed and its space converted to book shelves, and the edge of the mantelpiece has been obscured by the lowered ceiling. The bathroom at the end of the hall is lighted by a dormer, one of the few exterior alterations. Partitions along the north and south walls of the chamber hide the slant of the gambrel roof and create crawl spaces which have been used for storage. A tradition of these areas having been used by the Underground Railroad is without specific documentation.
### SIGNIFICANCE

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<td>INVENTION</td>
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### SPECIFIC DATES

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sheffield House is an outstanding example of a Rhode Island farmhouse, relatively unaltered from its construction at the turn of the eighteenth century. On the exterior, the only changes -- extension of the gable ell, addition of one dormer and an enclosed porch on the north side -- are sympathetic to the house's original character. The plan of contemporary one and two story sections with a central chimney set slightly within the two-story form is found locally in the South County area. On the interior, few changes have been made to the original plan. The rooms are distinguished by handsome panelling and mostly original doors.

The house was probably constructed by Joseph Stanton (1646-1714), third son of Thomas Stanton (d. 1677). Thomas, called "the Interpreter," sailed for America in 1635, landing in Virginia and travelling north to Boston. Because of his ability to understand Indian dialects, he was sent by Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts to settle legal matters in Connecticut and in 1637 settled in Hartford. When Winthrop sought an interview with Ninigret, the Narragansett sachem, at Wequetquoc (near Stonington, Connecticut), Stanton's talents were again required. This trip fostered an interest in the Pawcatuck Valley, to which he moved in 1650. Thomas' son, Joseph, settled on land his father acquired from the Narragansetts for service as an interpreter.

In 1685, Joseph is recorded in Boston as leasing "half the farm or neck named Quanneontague, where I do now live." This reference cannot be assumed to verify the construction of the house by this early date. In Joseph's will, probated February 14, 1713, he stated: "know by all men present that I Joseph Stanton, Senator from Westerly, Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, for divers good cause and consideration... and especially for love and affection... I bare my son Thomas... to him, a certain parcel of land... being a part of my farm I do now live on called Quomocontoge Neck and also my dwelling house I now live in." Neither document describes the house enough to definitely attribute this building to Joseph Stanton. Another early 18th century house and a ruin, both nearby on Quonochontaug Neck, could also be the "dwelling house" mentioned in Stanton's will. Joseph Stanton's name is connected with this house primarily by oral tradition.

Joseph's son, Thomas, had no surviving sons, so the farm was deeded in 1753 to his son-in-law, Nathaniel Sheffield, and hence the house's name today. The Sheffields sold the house in 1845 to the Pendleton family, who conveyed it
in 1886 to a Mr. Lucas, who used it as a summer house called "Locust Farm." There have been several subsequent owners all of whom have respected the integrity of the house. Although presently surrounded by a resort community, the Sheffield House remains a living document of early settlement and vernacular architecture in Rhode Island.

Its chief architectural significance rests not only on its excellent state of preservation but also, and more specifically, on its plan. The combination of two sections of varying heights around a common and thus central chimney is a feature found in a number of South County houses of early date. The study of these houses has isolated an early plan type that has not been previously identified.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
The National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island and
Providence Plantations. Old Houses in the South County of Rhode Island.
Boston: D. B. Updike, 1932,
Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island. Chicago: J. H. Beers
& Co., 1908.

See Continuation Sheet 4

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Approximately 3
UTM REFERENCES
A 19 27 33 33
C 19 17 93 33

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
10 17 93 33

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
1 17 93 33

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
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FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE: Keith N. Morgan, Museum Specialist
ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
STREET & NUMBER: 150 Benefit Street
CITY OR TOWN: Providence
DATE: February 26, 1975
TELEPHONE: 277-2678
STATE: Rhode Island

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE ___ DATE ___

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST ___ DATE ___

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER ___

GPO 892-453
Stanton, William A. A Record, Genealogical, Biographical and Statistical of Thomas Stanton of Connecticut and His Descendants, 1635-1891. Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1891.
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES, ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

NAME
HISTORIC The Sheffield House

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION
CITY, TOWN Charlestown

VICINITY OF

COUNTY Washington STATE Rhode Island

PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT Keith N. Morgan

DATE OF PHOTO December, 1974

NEGATIVE FILED AT Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

South facade

PHOTO NO. 1
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME
The Sheffield House
HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
CITY, TOWN Charlestown
VICINITY OF
COUNTY Washington
STATE Rhode Island

3 PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT Keith N. Morgan
DATE OF PHOTO December, 1974
NEGATIVE FILED AT The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

4 IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Fireplace, Keeping Room
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME
HISTORIC The Sheffield House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
CITY. TOWN Charlestown VICINITY OF
COUNTY Washington STATE Rhode Island

3 PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT Keith N. Morgan DATE OF PHOTO December, 1974
NEGATIVE FILED AT The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

4 IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Fireplace wall, parlor

PHOTO NO. 3
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1. NAME
   HISTORIC Sheffield House

AND/OR COMMON

2. LOCATION
   CITY, TOWN Charlestown
   VICINITY OF
   COUNTY Washington
   STATE Rhode Island

3. MAP REFERENCE
   SOURCE U. S. Geological Survey
   SCALE 1 : 24,000
   DATE 1942; revised 1953; photorevised 1970

4. REQUIREMENTS
   TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
   1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
   2. NORTH ARROW
   3. UTM REFERENCES