# Dorrance (Captain George) House

**Location**
- **Street and Number:** Jencks Road
- **City or Town:** Foster
- **State:** Rhode Island, 02825

**Classification**
- **Category:** Building
- **Ownership:** Private
- **Present Use:** Private Residence

**Owner of Property**
- **Owner's Name:** Peter Backes Flint
- **Street and Number:** Jencks Road
- **City or Town:** Foster
- **State:** Rhode Island

**Location of Legal Description**
- **Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.:** Foster Town Hall
- **Street and Number:** Foster Center Road
- **City or Town:** Foster
- **State:** Rhode Island

**Representation in Existing Surveys**
- **Title of Survey:**
- **Date of Survey:**
- **Depository for Survey Records:**
- **Street and Number:**
- **City or Town:**
The Captain George Dorrance house in Foster is an extremely well preserved five-bay-wide, two-and-one-half story, gable roof house with a rear lean-to. While the house is now of a five-room, symmetrical plan, it was originally of only two rooms on each story, these on either side of the massive, central, "Connecticut" stone chimney. It dates from the early XVIII Century (c. 1720). A three-room lean-to was added at the rear of the first story, as is indicated by the slight difference in floor levels; and the detail in these rooms suggests a date c. 1750. Exterior covering is of large, hand-split wooden shingles. Windows are 12-over-12 double-hung sash except on the ell, where they are 8-over-12. The doorway is unadorned, and the original plank door has been replaced.

On the first story, the keeping-room and the stairway reflect the early construction date of the house. The unchamfered cornerposts and girts, and the joists and floorboards of the chamber above are exposed in the keeping-room, as is the summer-beam, which is chamfered. A bake-oven is recessed into the back wall of the large, ten-feet-wide fireplace in this room, and there is evidence that there were originally two ovens. The triple-run stairway is outstanding. It abuts an exposed chimney wall of beautifully pointed and matched stone; and there is no evidence that this wall was ever plastered. The newels are square, with ball-shaped caps; the turned balusters are of refined proportion; and the stairs are encased by a panelled string course.

Opposite the keeping-room, the more sophisticated detail of the parlour suggests that it was remodelled in the middle of the XVIII Century, perhaps at the time the rear lean-to was added. Here, girts, cornerposts and the summer-beam are chamfered, and the ceiling is plastered. The fireplace, originally of large dimensions, was rebuilt with finished stone to the smaller size seen today, with plain mouldings and large, simple, wooden panelling above. Interior detail in the dining-room is even more simple, with only a narrow wooden moulding distinguishing the fireplace. This fireplace is also built of finished stone, though the rear wall and hearth are brick. The small dimensions of this fireplace suggest that this lean-to room must never have served as the kitchen, as was usually the case with houses of similar plan.

The second floor consists of two bedrooms above the two original rooms of the first story. Gunstock cornerposts are exposed in both rooms, as are the beams and floorboards of the attic. While the original feather-edge vertical sheathing along the fireplace wall of the chamber above the keeping-room has recently been restored, the sophisticated, simple panelling along the fireplace wall of the other chamber is perfectly preserved and has never been painted. The other walls of these rooms are plastered.

* Typical also of Rhode Island's South County.
** The mantel tree was replaced during a recent restoration.
7. Description.

Much of the hardware and several of the panelled doors throughout the house are original. Both the interior and the exterior of this house appear today almost exactly as they must have appeared when the lean-to was added in the middle of the XVIII Century.
The Captain George Dorrance house is an exceptionally fine example of the early XVIII-Century "saltbox" house, and its plan is somewhat unique. It is one of the best preserved early houses in Rhode Island. This dwelling makes evident the change in architectural taste from the early XVIII Century to the middle part of that century in the contrast shown between the primitive detail of the keeping-room and the later, more sophisticated panelling and detail in the parlour and lean-to. The stairway which abuts the exposed stone chimney is outstanding. Except for some minor—yet skillfully-handled—restoration work, this house fully retains its early character.

Of equal significance is the fact the the Dorrance house is still part of an untouched rural environment. The house, with adjacent pond, stream, and later farm outbuildings, still maintains its original relationship with its setting. This rare quality is essential for the full appreciation of early rural architecture.
### Geographic Data

#### Latitude and Longitude Coordinates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corner</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
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#### Defining a Rectangle Locating the Property

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Corner</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0° 12' 12&quot;</td>
<td>71° 47' 12&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>SW</td>
<td>0° 12' 12&quot;</td>
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#### Defining the Center Point of a Property of Less Than Ten Acres

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<tr>
<th>Latitude</th>
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<tr>
<td>47° 12' 12&quot;</td>
<td>71° 47' 12&quot;</td>
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#### Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property

Less than 10 acres, but otherwise not given.

#### List All States and Counties for Properties Overlapping State or County Boundaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
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### Form Prepared By

**Name and Title:** Clifford Renshaw, III, Consultant

**Organization:** Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

**Date:** March 9, 1971

**Street and Number:** State House, 90 Smith Street

**City or Town:** Providence

**State:** Rhode Island, 02903

### 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:**

**Title:**

**Date:**

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

**Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

**Date:**

**Attest:**

**Keeper of The National Register**

**Date:**
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME
COMMON: Dorrance (Captain George) House
AND/OR HISTORIC: 

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: Jencks Road
CITY OR TOWN: Foster
STATE: Rhode Island
CODE: 02825
COUNTY: Providence
CODE: 44

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT: Richard Benjamin
DATE OF PHOTO: October, 1971
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Providence Journal-Bulletin
75 Fountain Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903

4. IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
keeping-room
### 1. Name

**Common:** Dorrance (Captain George) House

**And/or Historic:**

### 2. Location

**Street and Number:** Jencks Road

**City or Town:** Foster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>02825</td>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Photo Reference

**Photo Credit:** Richard Benjamin

**Date of Photo:** October, 1971

**Negative Filed At:** Providence Journal-Bulletin

**75 Fountain Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903**

### 4. Identification

**Describe View, Direction, Etc.:** parlour
**1. NAME**

**COMMON:** Dorrance, (Captain George) House

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Jencks Road

**CITY OR TOWN:** Foster

**STATE:** Rhode Island, 02825

**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Richard Benjamin

**DATE OF PHOTO:** October, 1971

**NEGATIVE FILED AT:** Providence Journal-Bulletin

**4. IDENTIFICATION**

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.:**

exterior from the south-west
NAME

COMMON: Dorrance (Captain George) House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Jencks Road
CITY OR TOWN: Foster
STATE: Rhode Island
CODE COUNTY: Providence CODE: 007

MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey
SCALE: 1:24,000
DATE: 1953

REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS:
1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.
CAPTAIN GEORGE DORRANCE HOUSE
Foster, Rhode Island

FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR

PLAN
1. NAME
   COMMON: Dorrance (Captain George) House
   AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: Jencks Road
   CITY OR TOWN: Foster
   STATE: Rhode Island
   COUNTY: Providence
   CODE: 441

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   PHOTO CREDIT: William Gerold
   DATE OF PHOTO: 1970
   NEGATIVE FILED AT: No negative

4. IDENTIFICATION
   DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
   Sketch-plans (not to scale) of first and second floors.