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 Pitcher-Goff House
AND/OR COMMON Goff Mansion

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER 56 Walcott Street
CITY, TOWN Pawtucket
STATE Rhode Island

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY DISTRICT
X BUILDING(S) PRIVATE
X STRUCTURE BOTH
X SITE PUBLIC ACQUISITION
X OBJECT IN PROCESS

OWNERSHIP OCCUPIED
X UNOCCUPIED

STATUS WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
YES: RESTRICTED
YES: UNRESTRICTED
X NO

PRESENT USE AGRICULTURE
X COMMERCIAL
EDUCATIONAL
X ENTERTAINMENT
GOVERNMENT
INDUSTRIAL
X MILITARY
OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME Pawtucket Congregational Society
STREET & NUMBER 40 Walcott Street
CITY, TOWN Pawtucket
STATE Rhode Island

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Pawtucket City Hall, Registry of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER 137 Roosevelt Avenue
CITY, TOWN Pawtucket
STATE Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE Pawtucket Survey
DATE 1975-1976
FEDERAL X STATE
COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
CITY, TOWN Providence
STATE Rhode Island
The Pitcher/Goff mansion is an anomaly. Its imposing Italianate exterior appears now much as it did when the building was completed for the Pawtucket manufacturer, Ellis B. Pitcher, about 1840. The mansion's interiors, however, are notable for the fine Queen Anne woodwork installed throughout for the building's second owner, Lyman B. Goff, another prominent industrialist, about 1881. Unifying interior and exterior is a consistently high level of design. Pitcher and Goff were among the most successful Pawtucket manufacturers of their respective periods and the Walcott Street mansion clearly reflects their status.

The original form of the main house appears to have been a two-story rectangular block, roughly 43' X 38', placed with its longer side facing Walcott Street. From this block projects: a one-story tetrastyle portico centered on the southern (Walcott Street) facade; a two-story service wing measuring some 20' X 25' on the northern end; and a pair of two-story bays on the side elevations, that on the west being semi-octagonal, that on the east, rectangular. At the second floor level both end bays of the Walcott Street facade were set well back from the plane of the remainder of the front wall. This device created a facade composed of three second floor window-bays centered over a five-bayed ground floor arrangement, and successfully tied the portico into the facade both horizontally and vertically. The roof structure was a complex system of very low hips, rising over the main block of the house to a low six-sided cupola. Roof and cupola alike were carefully screened from view by the building's deeply overhanging eaves, and by a balustrade accented by framed panels aligned on each of the building's major axes.

Goff's remodelling in the 1880's only slightly altered the exterior appearance. The only changes visible outside involved rebuilding the chimney stacks in a typically Queen Anne manner, adding a one-story veranda around the semi-octagonal bay on the building's western side, adding a porte-cochere on the east, and constructing two new rooms (one on each floor) in the corner between the back wall of the main house and the ell. Goff also had a set of stained-glass windows inserted in the eastern wall above the landing of his handsome new staircase. Since Goff's time, the only major changes to the overall form and exterior appearance have been the removals of the porte-cochere and several of the chimney stacks above the roofline.

The building is of timber frame construction, with clapboards covering all exterior walls. The exterior trim dates largely from

(See Continuation Sheet # 1)
the period of original construction, and includes some very elaborate
     carved work. Of particular note are the capitals of the four fluted
     columns, which are composed of acanthus and lotus leaves and have a
     distinctly Egyptian flavor. The theme used here is repeated at
     smaller scale for the capitals of the two fluted columns in antis
     which flank the front door, and is echoed also in the pilaster caps
     which ornament the front and sides of the main block.

     Colonel Goff's remodelling of the house introduced a small amount
     of Queen Anne exterior detail, notably in the porte-cochère and the
     semi-octagonal western verandah. While a serious effort was obviously
     made to integrate the new work into the lines and character of the
     original design, still the later features are easily discernible,
     particularly by their use of a profusion of small round bosses
     characteristically applied to the necks of columns, piers, and pil-
     asters.

     The existing ground-floor plan (see continuation sheet #4) is a
     variant of the central hallway type, with the staircase located in
     a wide eastern cross-hallway at the building's rear. Of the
     four major rooms on this floor, three open from the central hall-
     way: the large single parlor on the east (now subdivided by a thin
     partition wall), the smaller front parlor, and the dining room on the
     west. The fourth room, the library added by Colonel Goff, is entered
     from the staircase hall. The service ell contains a back stair-
     hall in line with the central hallway, and a kitchen separated from
     the dining room by a pair of pantries and a narrow passageway (now
     blocked).

     If the current ground-floor plan is not largely original (bar-
     ring the additions by Colonel Goff), there is little evidence to in-
     dicate what the original plan might have been. The Walcott Street
     facade, which has not been altered, clearly indicates that a central
     entrance and, presumably, a central hallway were intended from the
     start. Surviving original interior trim, as well as the placement
     of the chimney stacks, suggests that the arrangement of the major
     rooms on the ground floor has not been changed. This still leaves
     the location of the original staircase and the room division in the
     ell in doubt, but there seems to be little evidence to go on.

     The second floor contains three large chambers over the main
     block of the house; a fourth large room in the section at the rear
     added by Goff; and a group of small rooms over the ell (presumably
     servants' quarters). How closely this resembles the original up-
     stairs layout is not known. A flight of stairs in the ell leads to
     the cupola, which is in fact another small room, well-lighted

     (See Continuation Sheet #2)
if low-studded.

The major thrust of Goff's remodelling occurred inside the house, where all of the original mantels and doors, the stair-case, and most of the standing trim were removed. Most of what original woodwork remains is found in the two ground floor par-lors. The window recesses in both rooms are finished with sunken flat panelling of Greek Revival character, and the eastern room still retains most of its original door and window trim — flat architraves carrying simple entablatures with strongly projecting cornices. The Queen Anne woodwork which Colonel Goff had installed in the rest of the house was constructed in a variety of rich woods, highly carved. Most remains unpainted to this day. One chamber in particular is rather unusual, being completely finished in bird's-eye maple — mantel, door and window trim, and baseboards. Walnut, cherry, and butternut mantels and mahogany doors are common through-out the house.

Perhaps the most elaborately finished room in the house was the library on the ground floor added by Colonel Goff. The fireplace end of this room is still panelled from floor to ceiling, and enough similar panelling has been discovered in the cellar to suggest that the entire room was once finished in this manner. The library also boasts a coved plaster ceiling ornamented with hundreds of tiny embossed flowers. At the center of each is a small hole, roughly one-half inch in diameter. These are the intake ducts for a ventilation system of a type common in the era of gaslights.

With the exception of the presumed removal of the panelling from the library, alterations made to the mansion's interior since the property was given to the Pawtucket Congregational Society in 1941, have been minor. A flimsy partition now subdivides the large east room on the ground floor; institutional green paint covers most of the plaster; composition tile has been laid on the floors and acoustical tile hung from the ceilings. In addition, a modern kit-chen has been installed in the basement of the ell, without the removal of the tremendous cast iron range (Arlington Range #8, Gardner Chilson, Boston, patented 1873), which Goff had installed on the main floor of the ell.

The Goff House stands some forty feet from the northern side of Walcott Street, facing south, on a lot which currently measures about three-quarters of an acre. The only other building on the

(See Continuation Sheet #3)
property, a Shingle Style carriage house built for Col. Goff about 1890, stands at the very rear of the lot. The property was formerly quite a bit larger, as Goff had bought up a total of eight adjoining lots. Some of these have been incorporated into the Pawtucket Congregational Church parking lot on the west, however, and the construction of Interstate 95 in the mid-1950's took all the land to within twenty-five feet of the mansion's southeastern corner. On part of the property lost to the highway was a magnificent garden, complete with lily pond, pink and white magnolias, and an ancient copper beech.

Walcott Street itself is one of the oldest thoroughfares on the eastern side of the river, and has long been considered a prime residential street. Mansion-caliber houses were being built on it at least as early as the turn of the eighteenth century, when the Federal-style Starkweather House was erected just east of the Goff House lot, on the other side of the street (since moved to #60 Summit Street). The area continued to develop as an upper-class residential district through the nineteenth century. By the end of that period, this section of Pawtucket had earned for itself the name 'Quality Hill'. The Pitcher/Goff mansion was, and is, in very good company.
The Pitcher/Goff House is Pawtucket's finest remaining early Italianate mansion, and is one of a mere handful of large early houses still standing in the city. It is located in a fine nineteenth-century neighborhood of which it is an integral part, and to which its destruction would be a severe blow. Built about 1840 for an important Pawtucket manufacturer, and remodelled about 1881 for another, the house has been the home of two of the families which directed Pawtucket's evolution from a small manufacturing village into a major industrial city. The Pitcher/Goff mansion is an extremely valuable part of Pawtucket's cultural heritage.

Stylistically, the building is transitional, displaying a number of traditional Federal and Greek Revival elements subordinated to an overall design which is basically Italianate. The most conservative aspect of the house is undoubtedly its floor plan -- its central hallways, end-chimney layout representing a type common since the late eighteenth century. Surviving original interior trim is also somewhat conservative, being chiefly derived from Greek Revival sources. The exterior, however, while retaining features from both earlier styles, is dominated by the strong cubical masses and boldly projecting bracketed eaves of the nascent Italian Villa style. The building which resulted from this mixture still stands as one of Rhode Island's most interesting early attempts in the Italianate manner.

Ellis B. Pitcher was the son of Larned Pitcher, a pioneer machinist whose firm eventually became the famous Pawtucket machine company of James S. Brown. Ellis, however, chose not to follow in his father's footsteps, but became involved in the manufacture of cotton textiles. The younger Pitcher formed a partnership with Alanson Thayer, and the company produced cotton goods in the old Yellow Mill on the eastern bank of the river for a number of years. In 1844, he went into partnership with a number of other Pawtucket investors to form the Pawtucket Manufacturing Company. A large mill was erected on the site of the old Buffington Mill at the southwest abutment of the Pawtucket Bridge, and production of cotton cloth was begun.

(See Continuation Sheet # 5)
Ellis Pitcher built his mansion house on Walcott Street sometime between 1836, when he purchased the lot (with an old house standing on it), and 1846, when the earliest extant Pawtucket tax records indicate that the mansion was already completed. As Pitcher did not marry until 1841, it would be logical to suppose that the house was not erected until about that date, or shortly before.

E. B. Pitcher died in 1869 and his heirs sold the estate to Colonel Lyman Bullock Goff the following year. Colonel Goff was related to the Pitchers by marriage (his brother, Darius L., had married E. B. Pitcher's daughter, Annie, in 1866), and the two families had long been neighbors on Walcott Street. The Pitchers may well have felt that the house was remaining 'in the family'.

Lyman B. Goff was the son of Darius Goff, one of Pawtucket's most spectacularly successful nineteenth century manufacturers. Lyman B. began his career in one of the family firms as a clerk. In 1872 he became a full partner with his father and brother, and the firm became known as D. Goff & Sons. In 1880, he assumed the position of treasurer of the Union Wadding Company, a firm started by his father, and said to have been the largest manufacturer of cotton batting in the world at that time. Upon the death of Darius Goff, Lyman B. was elected President of Union Wadding. In addition, he was involved in a great number of manufacturing concerns, not only in Rhode Island, but in other states and Canada as well. He became a director of several Rhode Island banks, including the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company, he organized with his brother Darius L. the Pawtucket Electric Company, and he became a power in the Republican Party locally and nationally.

Colonel Goff deeded the Walcott Street mansion to his daughter, Elizabeth Goff Wood, in 1922. Nineteen years later, Mrs. Wood gave the property to the Pawtucket Congregational Society, specifying that she wished the house to be offered to the Red Cross, rent-free, for use as a chapter house. The Red Cross accepted the offer, and has occupied the building for the past twenty-five years. The rising cost of maintaining the house, however, has now driven the service organization into less elaborate quarters - the Goff mansion has been standing empty since February.

(See Continuation Sheet #6)
Concern for the mansion's future is already high in Pawtucket. The most promising current proposal comes from a group interested in establishing a children's museum in Pawtucket. This group considers the Goff mansion a prime location for the museum, and is now actively seeking financial support.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet # 7

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A Zone 3024715

EASTING

NORTHING

B Zone

EASTING

NORTHING

C VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Stephen J. Roper/Senior Survey Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

16 April 1976

STREET & NUMBER

150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE

(401) 277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

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

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 30, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPer OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
Pitcher/Goff House

Bibliography.


Murphy, Jeanne R. "A House Fit for A Queen - If She Happens to be Victoria." *Pawtucket (Rhode Island) Times*, February 9, 1976, pps. 1, 10.


Pitcher/Goff House.

Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Stephen J. Roper. April 1976

Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

Exterior from southeast.

1.
Pitcher/Goff House.

Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Stephen J. Roper. April 1976

Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

Portico from southwest.

2.
Pitcher/Goff House.

Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Louis Federici. March 1976

Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

Pilaster capital, first floor southeast corner.

3.
Pitcher/Goff House.

Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Louis Federici. March 1976

Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

Front staircase.

4.
Pitcher/Goff House.

Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Louis Federici.  

March 1976

Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

Front staircase newel post, first floor.

5.
Pitcher/Goff House.
Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Louis Federici. 

March 1976

Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

Dining-room mantelpiece.

6.