

Thomas Clemence House (1679)  
(Elder Sweet House)  
George Waterman Road  
Johnston, Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-6

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RI  
4-JONTO  
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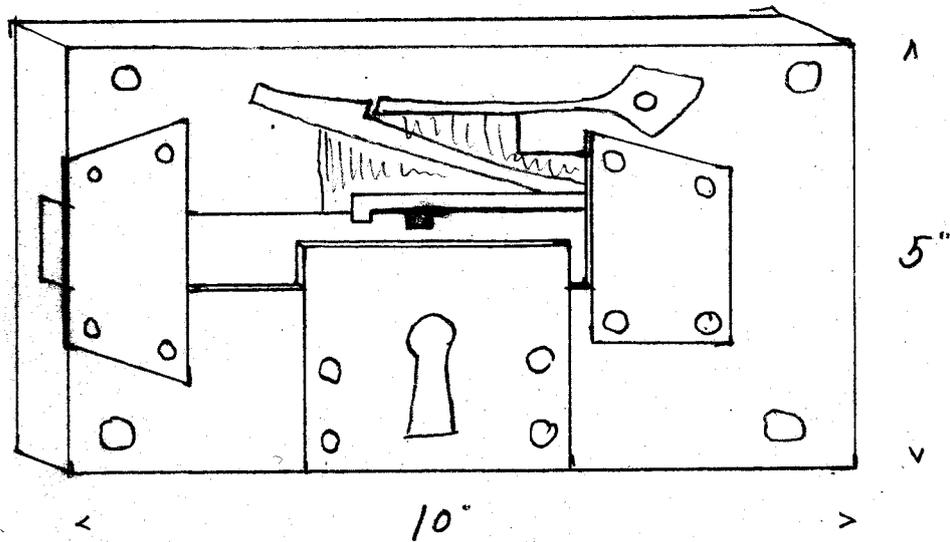
PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
Rhode Island District

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

Thomas Clemence house  
~~Avon~~, Rhode Island  
Johnston,

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< 10" >  
LOCK OF THE OLD SPANISH TREASURY -  
1638 - AT ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA.  
A VERY GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY  
WOODEN LOCK OF SIMPLE FORM.

HABS 14 College Street,  
Providence, R. I.

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10/31/41

Mr. T. C. Vint,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Vint:

In regard to the Thomas Clemence House, R. I. #6, Pri. #82.

Please cancel all priority and index cards on the Thomas Clemence House which you have and substitute the enclosed Priority and Index Cards for your files. Please return to us our cards marked office in pencil - yours marked Wash.

REASON- Previous to 1938 all research on this house was in error. In 1938 under the Direction of Mr. N. M. Isham - carpenter started to restore the house to its 1679 condition. At once Mr. Isham found he was in error when he wrote his book in 1895. Also all writers who used his book therefor were in error. The R. I. Historical Society Collections - Pamphlet Vol. XXXIV, July 1941 #3 by J. H. Cody (Who was co-Architect on the job with Mr. Isham) is the only Authentic Record. Mr. Cody spent over a year on the research. (I measured the job in 1939 and know all about it). Our drawings R. I. #6 sent in in 1937 Sheets #1 to 12 are for the house as measured at that time.

We are making drawings Sheets #13, to 24 of the restored house. The restored house drawings Sheets #13 to 24 are to be used in preference to the drawings Sheets #1 to 12.

The work shown on Sheets #1 to 12 - at the house - has all been thrown away - therefor it is not advisable for the Library of Congress to send out any prints of sheets #1 to 12 any more.

In regard to the photos and data book which you have received - for instance - PICTURE & FILM - A - Probable restoration of drawing of original one room house. This should be canceled. Later research shows this is an error. If it could be taken out of the Library of Congress it should be and returned to us (or destroyed or marked VOID) It never existed.

PICTURE AND FILM - B - Probable plans and elevations of original one room house. This should be canceled. It never existed.

PICTURE & FILM - C - 1937 South West Elevation is correct.  
" " " D - 1937 South East " is correct.  
" " " E - 1937 Corner Post and End Girt is correct.  
" " " F - 1937 Detail Ell Fireplace is correct.  
" " " G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N taken Dec. 1939 show the restored house and are correct.

Waiting to be printed are some more pictures.

Therefor pictures A & B should be taken out of the files as they are in error - never existed.

If you ever received any data sheets - they are in error. Please cancel them. We are making new sheets.

I am

Yours very truly,

(Sgd. ) Edward W. Husband  
Supervising Draftsman  
(Mr. Creers office)

R. I. #6 - Drawing Sheet #10 of 12 sheets should be removed entirely - as nothing on the sheet ever existed.

R. I. #6 - Drawing Sheet #11 of 12 sheets should be removed entirely as nothing on the sheet ever existed.  
Nobodys fault.

HABS  
#14 College Street,  
Providence, R. I.

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February 4, 1942.

Mr. T. C. Vint,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Under a separate cover we are sending photographs, Thomas Clemence House, #38 George Waterman Road, Manton, Town of Johnston, R. I.

RI-#6-3	Mounted film and print - view from the East
6-4	" " " " - of Outside of the South Door.
6-6	" " " " - " Inside of North Door
6-2	" " " " - " Lock and key on inside of North door.
6-1	" " " " - " Leaded Glass Outside Windows (closed)
6-5	" " " " - " " " " " (open)

Review our letter of October 31, 1941 about this house. The above photos are of the Restored House (back to 1679 period) All of the work and material is of the 1679 period. This is the only house strictly restored back to its 1679 condition - it is weathering nicely as all of the photos show.

Print #RI-6-4 shows the front door (south) - this door is held closed by a wooden bar on the inside - the handle is a knocker and also raises the latch on the inside.

Prints #RI 6-6 and 6-2 shows the North Doorway. This doorway was probably not on the original house but - the caretaker had to get in - so a door and lock was put on the North Side of the house. An oak cased lock with a long key was made. This lock is a copy of the Old Spanish Treasury Lock -163F at St. Augustine, Florida. (Question: Did Florida send in a Lock like this?)

Mr. Norman M. Isham, the noted Colonial Architect, who had charge of this house, made the house drawings, and the drawing of this lock, and a local locksmith made the metal parts and Mr. Joseph Bullock the noted Colonial Builder, who did all the restoration of this house made the oak case, assembled the parts and put it on the door. I got from the locksmith, Mr. Isham's original drawing and it blueprinted. The enclosed tracing (with the photos) is a copy of the inside of the lock. This tracing can be put in the Data Book. Mr. Isham's mind has failed - so I can't find out what book he got all the information from. The lock works every day - as the caretaker opens the house for visitors. We took the door off and carried it out doors so as to get better light for photographing - last summer.

summer.

Prints #RI-6-1 and 6-5 show the leaded glass outside windows, closed and open. These are authentic copies of sash from houses of the period. All glass is cut from 4"x6" pieces, lead comes very thin in section; wood cross bars support the lead work.

I am

Yours very truly

(SGD) Edward W. Husband  
Supervising Draftsman

(Mr. Creer's Office)

Addendum to  
Thomas Clemence House (Clemence-Irons House)  
38 George Waterman Road  
Johnston  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-6

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## THOMAS CLEMENCE HOUSE

An Addendum to:

Clemence-Irons House  
338 George Waterman Road  
Johnston, Rhode Island  
and  
Clemence House  
38 George Washington Road  
Manton, Rhode Island  
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Note: These two entries are for the same house, and the addresses are incorrect in both cases.

Address: 38 George Waterman Road, Johnston, Providence County, Rhode Island.

Present Owner: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

Present Use: Museum

Brief Statement of Significance: This house, now restored and open as a museum, is probably the most authentic surviving example of a seventeenth-century Rhode Island House.

HISTORY: Following the death of Ellen E. Irons in 1938, the house was purchased by Henry D. Sharpe. It was restored for him under the direction of Norman Morrison Isham and John Hutchins Cady, architects. Mr. Sharpe gave the house to the present owners in 1947.

The HABS drawings of the house were made before the restoration following purchase by Mr. Sharpe in 1938. Sheets 10, 11, and 12 show a conjectural restoration for the house based on theories about the evolution of New England houses developed by Mr. Isham. The conjectural restoration presented in the drawings was proven to be inaccurate in the course of the actual restoration. A comparison of the drawings with the photographs of the restored house shows the differences between them.

Mr. Isham's interpretations of early Rhode Island architecture are presented most completely in the important early work; Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, Early Rhode Island Houses (Providence: Preston and Rounds, 1895), where this house is identified as the Manton House. For a criticism of Isham's interpretations, see: Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and the Early Republic

THOMAS CLEMENCE HOUSE  
HABS No. RI-6 (Page 2)

(New York, 1922), p. 14; and Anthony N. B. Garvan, Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial Connecticut (New Haven, 1951), pp. 117-120. For a report on the restoration of the house, see John Hutchins Cady, "The Thomas Clemence House," Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 65-77.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby  
Yale University  
May 1963