

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received JUL 5 1983
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Seamen's Church Institute of Newport

and/or common The Seamen's Institute

2. Location

street & number 18 Market Square N.A. not for publication

city, town Newport N.A. vicinity of #2 - Hon. Claudine Schneider
~~congressional district~~

state Rhode Island code 44 county Newport code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N.A. in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: institu-

4. Owner of Property

name Seamen's Church Institute of Newport, Inc.

street & number 18 Market Square

city, town Newport N.A. vicinity of _____ state Rhode Island 02840

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Newport Recorder of Deed's Office, City Hall

street & number Broadway

city, town Newport state Rhode Island 02840

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title "The Urban Design Plan, Historic Hill" (Project No. R.I. R-23) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-71 federal state county local

depository for survey records R.I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street

city, town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Seamen's Church Institute stands on the south side of Market Square in the heart of Newport's historic waterfront. Erected in 1929-30, the imposing Institute building was originally surrounded by a densely built-up commercial district. Urban renewal begun in the 1960s has removed entire blocks of nearby structures, and today it is one of the most prominently sited buildings downtown, related visually (across new boulevards, parking areas and squares) to such landmarks as Trinity Church and Perry Mill.

The well-preserved Seamen's Church Institute is a brick, 2½-story, Georgian Revival structure with a high podium, slate-clad gambrel roof, and parapetted end walls terminating in paired chimney stacks which give the building a distinctive, high-shouldered profile (Photo #1). Rising directly from the sidewalk line, the Institute occupies nearly the whole of its lot; landscaping is restricted to a small garden immediately to the east closed off from Market Square by a high brick wall. String courses, gauged brick window arches, and a moulded water table elaborate the Institute's Flemish bond brickwork. The east and south elevations, originally obscured by adjacent buildings, are somewhat irregular and are not fully articulated, but the always "public" west elevation and the north-facing entrance front are symmetrical and fully elaborated. Nine bays long and four wide, the building measures roughly ninety by thirty feet. The nine gabled dormers of the north front contain windows hung with 6/6 sash. Below a modillion cornice the segmental-head first- and second-story windows of this elevation have cast-stone lug sills and 9/9 sash. Twin twelve-light oculi flank a central entrance. Its cast-stone architrave bears a broken segmental pediment framing a draped urn and pine cone. The plate-glass entrance doors and transom replace the 1930 panelled doors and fan-pattern transom.

Like the exterior, the interior of Newport's Seamen's Church Institute remains intact, retaining not only most of its original layout, finish and fittings, but a number of original furnishings as well (see photos 2, 3, 4, and 5; detailed descriptions of the interior are contained in the Newport Daily News article and Memorial Chapel booklet referenced under item 9 below). The first floor (plan, see Continuation Sheet #4), reached by a short flight of steps from the entrance, contains a pine-panelled stairhall (now accommodating a snack bar) lit by four oculi and embellished with a false fireplace (in which is carved a dedicatory inscription) and, above the mantel a picturesque painted map of Narragansett Bay. To the left, off the hall, is the lounge (Photo #2), where a portrait of Senator George Peabody Wetmore hangs above the fireplace. To the right, off the hall, a service corridor gives access to a suite of offices and the former writing room, now also functioning as an office. The basement and a small, single-story rear ell contain a shower/laundry room, a former dispensary, locker rooms, and utility spaces. The second

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

floor central hall leads to what was a pine-panelled billiard room (intact but subdivided into offices occupied by the Women's Resource Center) and a panelled and bookshelf-lined library (Photo #3). A passage leads from the library to the back stairs and the chapel (Photos #4 and 5). Completed in 1934, the chapel is the most unusual and the finest interior in the building. This intimate, rectangular space has frescoed walls and ceiling and a floor covered with handmade glazed tiles incised with sea shells, coral, seaweed, and a compass. Above a marbleized wainscot murals portray a host of saints, all associated with the sea. A number of these figures bear the likenesses of well-known Newporters. Fictive cloth-of-gold drapery cast in plaster embellishes the altar niche and frontal. Piercedwork screens cover the chapel windows and the door is paneled in chevron-pattern marquetry. A back-lit, block-letter inscription from Psalm 107 which begins "They that go down to the sea in ships..." forms the room's cornice.

The attic story of the Institute is occupied by spartan sleeping quarters. Originally there were six single rooms and a dormitory, all sharing a common bath; now the dormitory has been subdivided to form two more singles. In addition, the west end of the attic story is set-off as a private, two-room suite with private bath.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

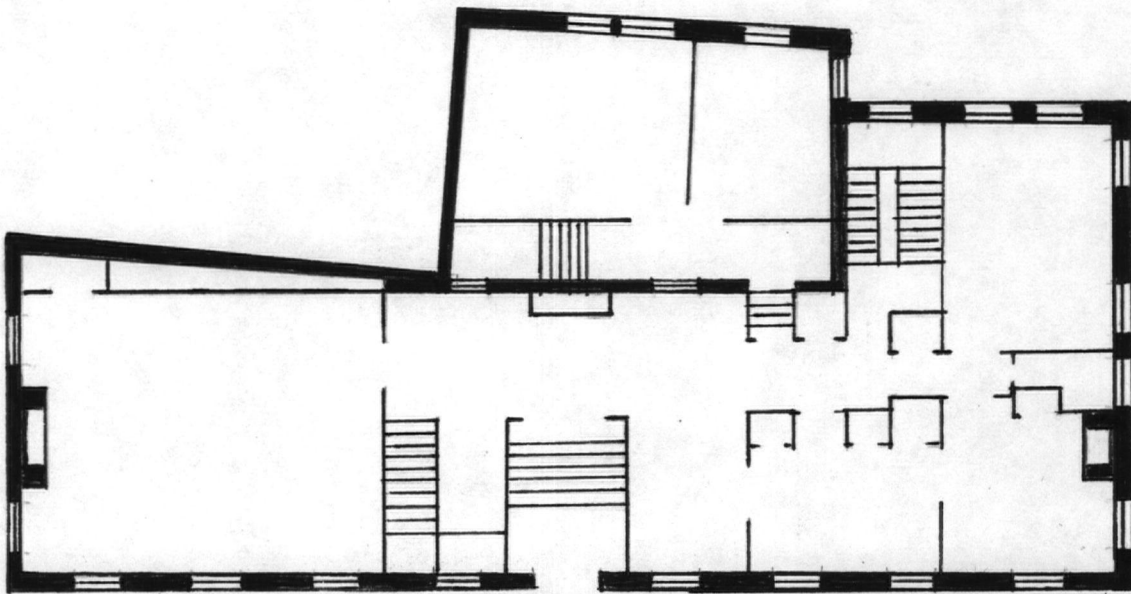
received

date entered

Continuation sheet 4

Item number 7

Page 3



Seamen's Church Institute
Market Square
Newport, RI 02840

Sketch plan: first floor
Not to scale

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				maritime heri- tage
Specific dates	1929-30	Builder/Architect	Frederic Rhineland King	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Founded in 1919, and harkening back in purpose to such nineteenth-century philanthropic organizations as the Newport Auxiliary Marine Bible Society and specifically inspired by the Coddington Point Hut which served the needs of Navy recruits training at Newport during the First World War, the Seamen's Church Institute of Newport is an Episcopalian institution created to minister to a large and largely transient population of sailors, fishermen, ferrymen and dockhands. Housed in rented quarters for the first decade of its existence, the Institute's own building, opened in 1930 and still in use, was erected on Market Square when that location was the hub of the waterfront: Government Landing, where all Navy sailors came ashore, was on the north side of the Square; the Jamestown Ferry docked at the foot of the Square; and the wharfs for fishing boats and cargo vessels were all around. By charter, the Institute's superintendent must be a clergyman and in the 64-year history of the organization, there have been but three superintendents: the Rev. Roy Magoun (1919-1945); the Rev. Archie Burdick (1946-1982); and the Rev. Dwight Hamblay, Jr. (1982-). With termination of ferry service in 1969, substantial reduction in the Navy force stationed at Newport in 1974, decreased commercial activity in the port and the radical transformation of Market Square and environs over the past decade-and-a-half, Seamen's Church Institute now serves fewer Navy men and more fishermen, yachtsmen, and people from the community at large. Newport's fishing fleet remains large, yachting has increased enormously, and the essentials of the Institute's mission remain little changed. It stands today both as an historic and a living element of Newport's rich maritime heritage.

Like so many Newport institutions, the Seamen's Church Institute has benefitted substantially from the support and leadership of the summer colony. The Institute's building testifies to this important aspect of local institutional life. Given by summer residents Maude and Edith Wetmore, it memorializes their parents, Senator and Mrs. George Peabody Wetmore. Similarly, the Institute chapel was donated by a summer Newporter, Mrs. Hamilton Fish Webster, in memory of her mother, Marie Caroline Post. Even the building's designers--the architect, Frederic Rhineland King, and the artist responsible for the chapel, Durr Freedley--were socially and professionally identified with the summer colony.

Both Wetmore sisters were active in the Seamen's Church Institute from its inception, but it was Miss Edith who had a particular interest in architecture, and it was she who took charge of erecting the building they funded. In 1929, she engaged her longtime friend Frederic King to design the new facility. This was the third commission Miss Wetmore brought him; earlier King had done her garden house at Chateau-sur-Mer,

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Art News, vol. 34, 7 January 1939, p. 14.

(See Continuation Sheet #

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Newport

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	1	9
---	---	---

3	0	1	6	5	1	8	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

4	1	5	9	1	5	2	1	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

C

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

The area nominated is the site of the Seamen's Church Institute, Newport assessor's plat 24, lot 239. The building itself and a small garden immediately to the east occupy almost the entire parcel.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Chase, Consultant

organization

date May 1983

street & number 5613 Boxhill Lane

telephone 301-435-8221

city or town Baltimore

state Maryland 21210

12. 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

Frederick Williamson

title

date 24 June 1983

For NPS use only

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

entered in the
National Register

date

8/4/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 8

Page 2

Newport, and a Hyde Park weekend retreat. Son of a prominent, old-line Newport family, Frederic King (1887-1972) attended Harvard, Columbia University School of Architecture, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. His New York-based practice was devoted mainly to the design of substantial residences in and around the city, at Newport, and as far afield as Honolulu and Palm Beach. Something of a departure from his usual work, Seamen's Church Institute is an accomplished exercise in Georgian Revival design, related to eighteenth-century prototypes like Harvard's Massachusetts Hall (1718) and Newport's own Colony House (1739). It is worth noting that at the very time King was working on the Institute, his patroness, Edith Wetmore, was also very much involved in a major restoration of the Colony House and there is much that relates these two buildings, from basic form to such eccentric details as their paired oculi.

For its artistic merit and interest, the Institute chapel deserves special praise. Executed between 1930 and 1934, it is a remarkably original achievement, combining traditional media and Trecento design conventions, iconography and text, into a striking "moderne" interior. Its little-known author, Durr Freedley (1888-1938), had a career as unusual as this emanation of his genius. A native of Indianapolis, upon graduating from Harvard in 1911 Freedley was hired as an assistant curator for decorative arts at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. His particular responsibility was finding and acquiring major period rooms for installation in the museum's planned American Wing; one of his most important catches was the famous polychrome panelled room from a great country house, Marmion, in Virginia. After World War I, Freedley left the museum and devoted himself to portraiture, living out the 1920s in Paris and Rome. In 1930 he settled in Newport, continued painting "society" portraits, exhibited his work in New York, and began executing mural decorations, many on religious themes. Intimate yet monumental, curious in conception yet full of repose, Durr Freedley's delightful Memorial Chapel in Newport's Seamen's Church Institute is a major work, exhibiting extraordinary skill, imagination and insight.

As an institution illustrating significant aspects of Newport's religious, philanthropic, maritime and social history, for its value as an example of early twentieth-century Colonial Revival civic architecture, and the artistic importance of its frescoed "moderne" chapel, the Seamen's Church Institute of Newport merits nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 3

Item number 9

Page 2

Benezit, E. (ed.), Dictionnaire des Peintres..., vol. 4, (1976), p. 512.

Breunig, M., "Durr Freedley Memorial Exhibition at Maynard Walker's,"
Magazine of Art, vol. 32, January 1939, pp. 51-52.

Hosmer, Charles, Presence of the Past, 1965, p. 219.

Jordy, William & Christopher Monkhouse, Buildings on Paper, R.I.
Architectural Drawings, 1825-1945, 1982, pp. 106, 220.

The Mainstay, Fiftieth Anniversary, 1919-1969, 1969, passim.

The Memorial Chapel of the Seamen's Church Institute of Newport,
n.d., passim.

Newport Daily News, 25 January 1930, p. 3.

Newport Mercury, 28 February 1824, p. 3.

Interviews with the Rev. Dwight C. Hambly, Jr., Superintendent of the
Seamen's Church Institute, May 1983.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Seamen's Church Institute of Newport
Newport County
RHODE ISLAND

Working No. JL 5 1983
Fed. Reg. Date: 2, 284
Date Due: 8/4/83 - 8/19/83
Action: ACCEPT 8/4/83
Entered in the RETURN
National Register REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*) _____

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property _____
Quadrangle name _____
UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
18 Market Square
Newport, Rhode Island 02840

Photographer: Ronald L. Manville
Date: May 1983
Negative filed at: 3 Fowler Avenue
Newport, RI 02840

View: General view from the northwest.

Photo #1

1



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
18 Market Square
Newport, Rhode Island 02840

Photographer: Ronald L. Manville
Date: May 1983
Negative filed at: 3 Fowler Avenue
Newport, RI 02840

View: General view of lounge on first floor from the southwest; portrait above mantel is of Senator George Peabody Wetmore.

Photo #2



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
18 Market Square
Newport, Rhode Island 02840

Photographer: Ronald L. Manville
Date: May 1983
Negative filed at: 3 Fowler Avenue
Newport, RI 02840

View: General view of library on second floor from
the northeast; door on left leads to back
stair and chapel.

Photo #3



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
18 Market Square
Newport, Rhode Island 02840

Photographer: Ronald L. Manville
Date: May 1983
Negative filed at: 3 Fowler Avenue
Newport, RI 02840

View: General view of chapel on second floor from the
northeast; Durr Freedley, artist.

Photo #4



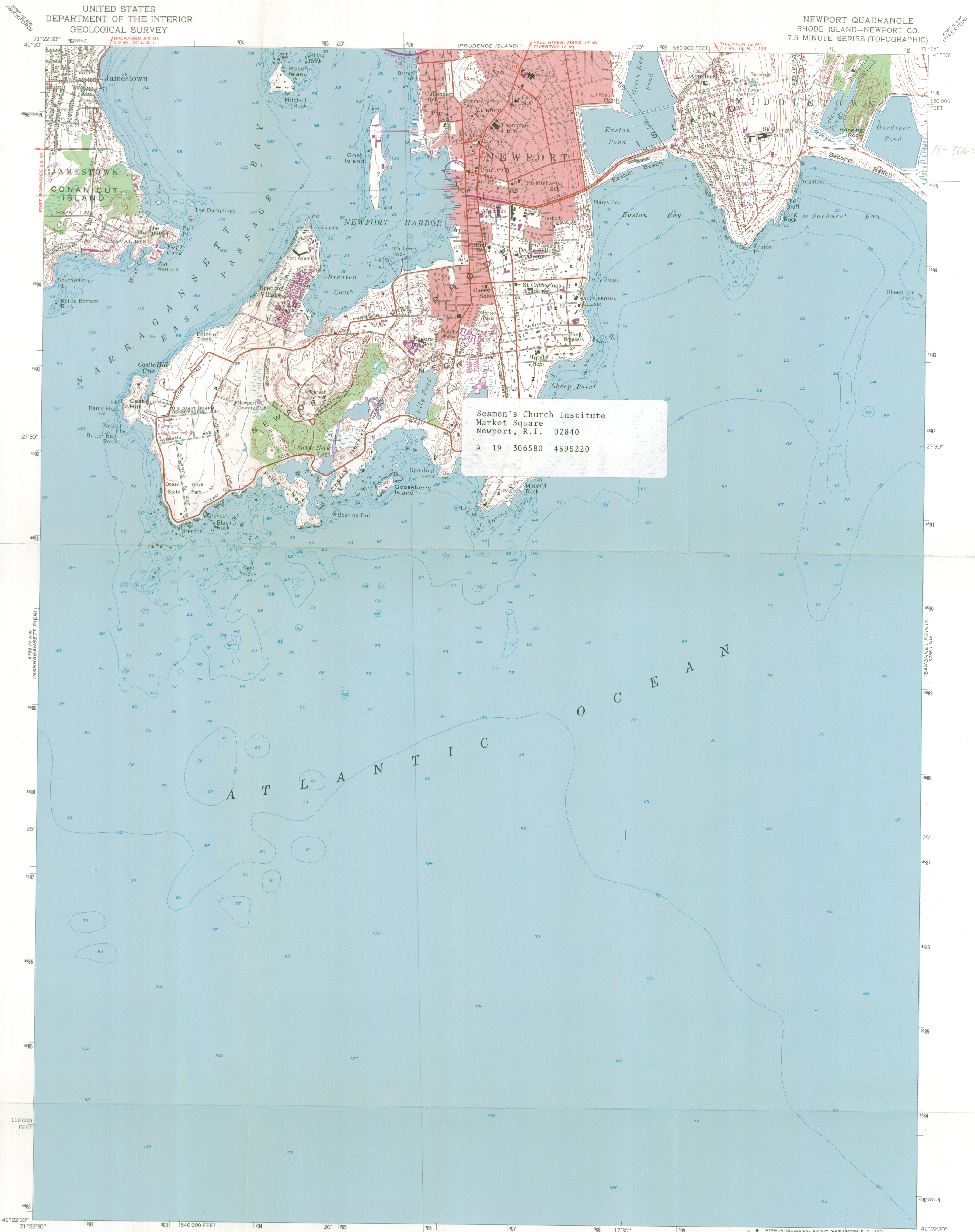
THIS CHAPEL IS GIVEN THROUGH THE LOVING MEMORY OF A DAUGHTER'S LOVING MEMORY OF

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
18 Market Square
Newport, Rhode Island 02840

Photographer: Ronald L. Manville
Date: May 1983
Negative filed at: 3 Fowler Avenue
Newport, RI 02840

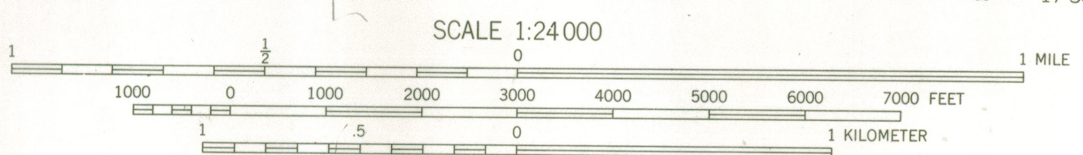
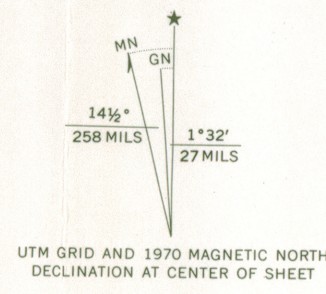
View: Chapel: detail of mural on north wall, with
portion of entrance door jamb on right; Durr
Freedley, artist.

Photo #5



Seamen's Church Institute
Market Square
Newport, R.I. 02840
A 19 306580 4595220

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USC&GS and USCE
Topography by planetable surveys 1939. Revised 1957
Hydrography compiled from USC&GS charts 236 and 1210 (1957)
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Rhode Island coordinate system,
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial
photographs taken 1970. This information not
field checked



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 3.5 FEET



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt - - - - -
○ State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

NEWPORT, R. I.
N4122.5—W7115/7.5
1957
PHOTOREVISED 1970
AMS 6766 IV NE—SERIES V815



THE CITY OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND 02840

*See file
James C. Ward
11/1/89 Npt*

May 25, 1983

Mr. Fred Williamson
State Historic Preservation Officer
Old State House
150 Benefit Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Mr. Williamson,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Seamen's Church Institute nomination of their property on Market Square to the National Register. On behalf of the City of Newport, I would like to express the City's support of the Nomination of the Seamen's Church Institute to the National Register. The Institute is truly an integral part of Newport's long and distinguished seafaring history.

The Seamen's Church Institute has been a well known and respected institution since its introduction to Newport in 1919. Today, in addition to the Institute's primary function for providing assistance and lodging to transient seamen, the Institute serves as the home for the battered women's crisis center, and as an information center for many recreational yachtsmen visiting Newport.

As you know the architecture of the Institute is Georgian Revival built in 1930. More importantly however, is the fact that the location, mass and character of the structure is such that it becomes the cornerstone of the overall historic atmosphere of the City's waterfront. By placing the structure on the register it is our hope the Institute building will be preserved.

Thank for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul L. Gaines,
Mayor

PLG/td