

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet 37

Item number 7

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Name: Lime Kilns

Location: Kiln #1--off Old Louisquisset Pike, Lincoln
Kiln #2--off Sherman Road, Lincoln
Kiln #3--off Dexter Rock Road, Lincoln

Classification: Structures: Private and Public: Unoccupied; Accessible--
restricted; Other: not in use

Owners: Kiln #1--State of Rhode Island, Board of Regents
22 Hayes Street

Providence, RI

Kiln #2--Mr. Gerald Olean

Sherman Avenue

Lincoln, RI

Kiln #3--Mr. Robert Tucker

Dexter Rock Road

Lincoln, RI

Condition: Ruins; Altered; Original site

Description:

Kiln #1: Set on the west side of Old Louisquisset Pike, on the grounds of the Flanagan Campus of the Community College of Rhode Island, Kiln #1 is the largest yet located in Lincoln, almost twenty feet in diameter. The kiln is in ruins, but its basic cylindrical form can still be discerned. Built of unmortared rubble, its stone work is rough. Large trees now surround it and even grow from its center and smaller vegetation grows in its walls.

Kiln #2: This lime kiln is located on the south side of Sherman Road near its junction with Louisquisset Pike (Route 146). The best-preserved of the three kilns being nominated here, Kiln #2 is located just outside the boundaries of the Lime Rock Historic District. Built against an embankment, Kiln #2 seems to have been constructed in an oval shape, its builders using the embankment as a back wall. The bank has apparently slid into the center of the kilns and small trees now grow from it. The walls of the kiln, now about eight feet high, were once taller, and are constructed of heavy dry-laid rubble stone. Three semi-circular openings are still visible at its base.

Kiln #3: This is a ruined lime kiln located on the south side of Dexter Rock Road. Like the others, it is built of unmortared rubble; only a single section of the kiln wall remains. A small brook now flows through the kiln--in face, its course is directly through the single semi-circular opening still visible. Heavily grown over and filled with

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detritus carried by the stream, it is barely recognizable as a kiln.

Period: 1700-1799, 1800-1899
Areas of Significance: Industry
Specific Dates: c. 1750-1850 (?)
Builder/Architect: Unknown

Significance:

These three kilns are important remnants of one of the oldest quarrying and processing operations in the United States. Limestone has been mined in Lincoln since the 1660s when the vital mineral (necessary for the production of strong mortars and also used in plaster, tanning and bleaching) was located. Production was dominated by the Harris and Dexter families for almost 200 years and a substantial village, Lime Rock, grew up around the quarries on Great Road and Louisquisset Pike where David Harris, the great lime entrepreneur of the eighteenth century located his operations; Lime Rock Historic District was entered on the National Register in 1974. The village today is well preserved and contains one of Lincoln's surviving seventeenth-century stone-ender houses, an important collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century houses ranged along early roads, several institutional buildings, an old tavern, several quarries, the ruins of two limehouses, and several kilns.

These three kilns are essential complements to the Lime Rock Historic District. As the sites of the primary processing of lime, they help to tell the story of lime operations here in Lincoln. The kilns are circular or semi-circular cylinders of rubble stone and are of varying dimensions. Quarried limestone was placed in the kilns, set in alternating layers with wood or charcoal; the whole mass was then set alight and the fire regulated through several arched openings at the base which admitted air. Once fired, the kilns were tended for several days by two men, working twelve-hour shifts until the stone had been reduced to usable lime. The product was then shoveled out through the base openings, loaded into casks and carried to the village to await shipment along the turnpike.

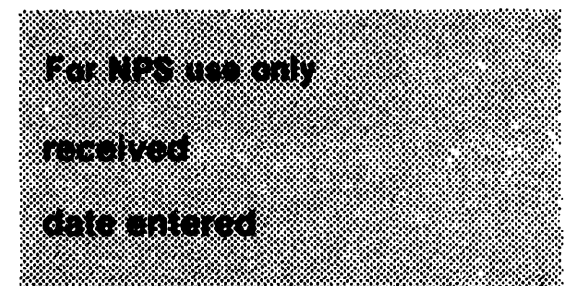
It is reasonable to speculate that these kilns were located so far away from the quarries so that they would be near timber supplies. The kilns were voracious consumers of wood, and timber was an important component of the limestone economy. Woods around the village were quickly cleared in the eighteenth century and cutting rights at more distant locations were often sold to the quarry operators.

At present it is not possible to date these kilns with much accuracy. However, it is known that similar kilns in the Lime Rock Historic District

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were modernized with brick and sheet iron in the nineteenth century. None of these three kilns gives any evidence of ever having been similarly modified and, given the development of the lime industry here, it is reasonable to suppose that they were constructed in the second half of the eighteenth century or the first half of the nineteenth.

Acreage: less than one each

UTM Reference:	Kiln #1:	A	19	296000	4641280
	Kiln #2:	A	19	296320	4643740
	Kiln #3:	A	19	298740	4643380

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of each kiln is an arc drawn around each kiln, having as its center the center of the kiln, ten feet as its radius, and its ends at the road right-of-way; as the kilns are roughly 10-15 feet in diameter, this boundary is intended to nominate only the land on which the kiln is constructed and its immediate edge. It is possible that the land surrounding the kilns may yield archeological evidence of the presence here of lime-burners but, at present, no sampling has been undertaken; nor is there enough information available to indicate the extent or nature of that archaeological evidence. For example, it is not known whether lime-burners returned to their village at the end of each shift or whether they were sheltered at the kiln site--and, if they remained at the site, whether their shelters were relatively permanent or temporary. Lacking a strong basis for suggesting a model to predict the presence near each kiln of archeological evidence, only the kilns themselves are here nominated.

Kiln #1: Plat 43, lot 17. Kiln #2: Plat 24, lot 13. Kiln #3: Plat 21, lot 3.

Level of Significance: State

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