Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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The churchyard cemetery and one-time artillery park of Jamestown is located at the corner of two primary roads near the island's southern end. It is enclosed by a stone wall with some serpentine portions and with jagged rocks set along its top. The yard is about two feet above street level, and there are a few steps up to it at the gate that opens on North Road. The lot now measures about 100 feet by 150 feet (much less in space than originally) and is lined along the street sides with tall and leafy trees, while coniferous trees grow randomly inside the yard. The ground slopes up gently to a plateau in the north-east corner, the most distant from the streets.

Headstones stand sparsely all around the yard, but in the northeast corner are the oldest of them. Mostly having curved tops, these display typical Colonial carved or incised designs of mourning or resurrection motifs. They bear epitaphs, of which a typical one reads: "In memory of Capt Benedict Remington died Novembr 22nd 1744 in ye 31rd year of his age." Many of these monuments now exist as little more than very weather-worn pieces of stone stuck in the ground.

The yard is to-day overgrown with thick grass, and weeds, berry-bushes, fallen branches are scattered about--contributing to the extremely picturesque character of this site in the centre of a small island town.

PERIOD (Check One or More as			
☐ Pre-Columbian	16th Century	■ 18th Century	20th Century
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This open space importantly located in the centre of town, has always been a community facility, for the original survey of Jamestown Island in 1656 set aside a sizeable piece of acreage (larger than it is to-day) for an "Artillery Garden, a place for burial of ye dead ... and for other public uses." It is quite evident that the second proposed use was fulfilled, and the space was undoubtedly much used for its first-named purpose of military practice originally, inasmuch as the threat of attack by nearby Indian tribes was a long-lasting and very real one.

Fifty or seventy-five years after 1656, this threat was not great, and from 1731-1745 a part of the town's land was let to John Martin--who lived nearby--for farming and grazing, except that "the Town shall have the liberty of burying there their dead." At a later date Martin took another lease on the plot and promised in 1759 to fence it in.

So, for part of the XVIII Century, the Artillery Park served placed agricultural, pastoral and burial purposes until the real flaring of colonial rebellion in 1775, when the local militia probably marched and practiced on it again.

Much aware of Jamestown's strategic importance, dominating the Narragansett Bay passages, the British landed an occupying force on the island in December, 1775. These marines and soldiers marched across Jamestown from east to west, burning almost all buildings along their route. Recording the event in his diary, the illustrious Reverse Stiles of Newport reported:

"At the Cross Rodes [i.e., Narragansett Avenue and North Road: the Artillery Park] there was a Skirmish our pple. killed one Officer of Marines and wounded 7 or 8. Not one Colonist was killed or hurt in the Skirmish. The Kings forces fired on Mr. Jno. Martin aet 80 standing at his Door and wounded him badly ..."

(See Continuation Sheet.)

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9.	MAJOR	BIBLIOGRAI	PHICAL R	EFERENC	CES							
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August 22, 1972

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

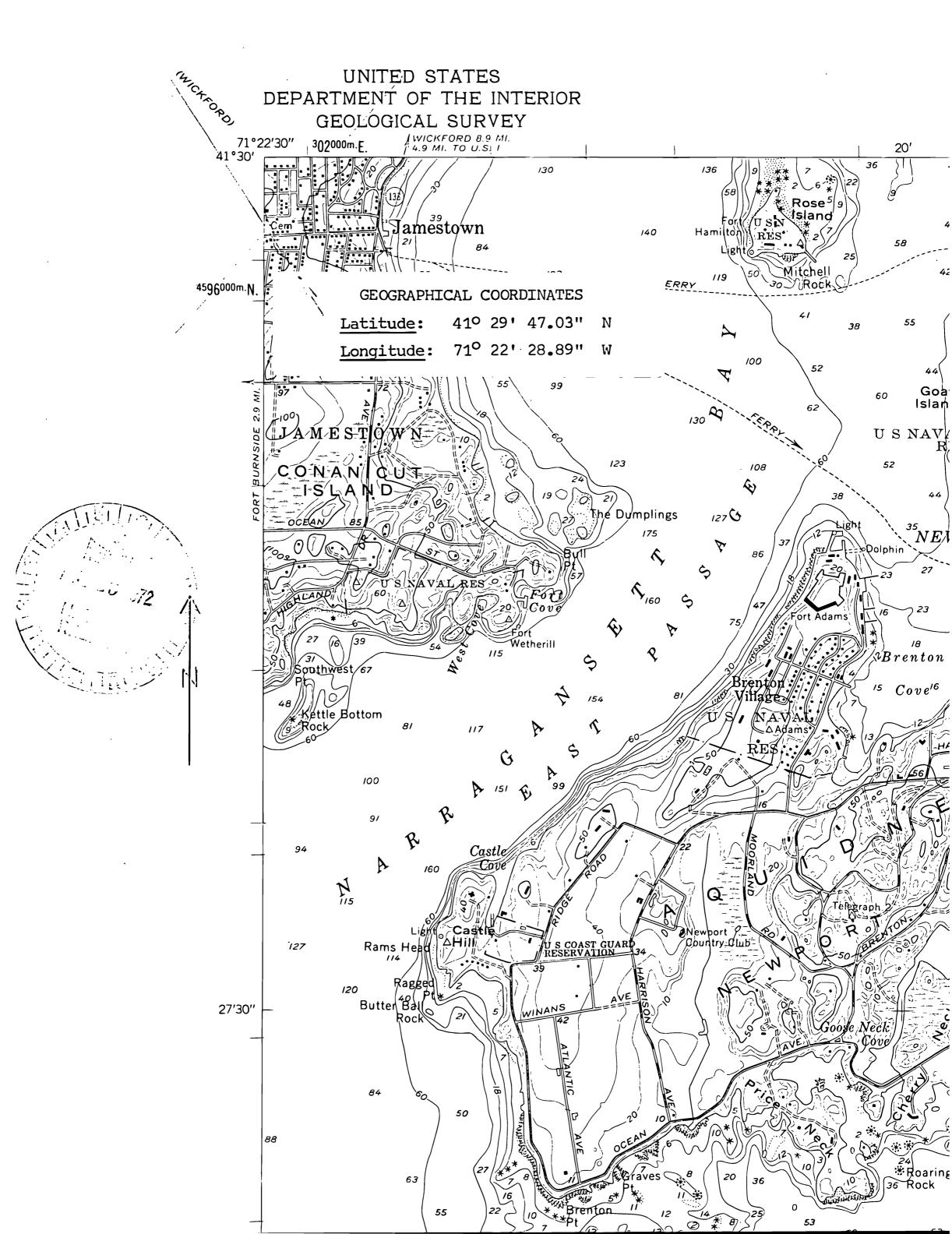
(Continuation Sheet)

Rhode Island	
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(Number all entries)

8. Significance.

During their subsequent occupation of Jamestown, the British found the old Artillery Park and cemetery area a convenient point from which their guns could be moved to earthworks on either side of the island, effectively controlling the east and west water-passages. It is said that such usage at that time was also promoted by the thought that the gravesites of American rebels would also be noticeably desecrated.



ACTINETY PORT CONVERTANCE CONCINTY)

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