

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Windmill Hill Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

*N of Jamestown at*

STREET & NUMBER Eldred Avenue and North Main Road

CITY, TOWN

Jamestown *RI*

STATE

Rhode Island

VICINITY OF

CODE

44

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#1 Rep. Fernand J. St. Germain

COUNTY

Newport

CODE

005 ✓

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jamestown Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

71 Narragansett Avenue

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Jamestown

Rhode Island 02835

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Jamestown Broadbrush Survey; National Register

DATE

August, 1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

R.I. Historical Preservation Commission 150 Benefit Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Providence

Rhode Island

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" 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

The Windmill Hill Historic District includes approximately 772 acres on Conanicut Island bounded by Eldred Avenue on the north, East Shore Road on the east, Great Creek on the south and Narragansett Bay on the west. The District is comprised of rolling fields and forests containing six farmsteads, an eighteenth-century burial ground, an eighteenth-century Quaker Meetinghouse and an eighteenth-century windmill and miller's house. (see map) The cleared land is primarily used for pasture and is divided by numerous stone walls, and three seventeenth-century roads: North Road, the principal North/South artery that bisects the District; Weeden Lane, connecting North Road with East Shore Road; and Eldred Avenue, the northern boundary of the district. Picturesque, tree-lined farm lanes provide access to the farms on the west side of North Road. The district also contains the archeological remains of several Indian settlements. The greatest concentration of these along the shores of Great Creek and Narragansett Bay has been proposed for inclusion in the National Register as the Great Creek Archeological District.

The northernmost of the farms, Cedar Hill Farm, occupies a rise of 100 feet elevation that overlooks the lower lying Watson and Hodgkiss Farms with a vista that continues southward across the island to the Newport Bridge and Jamestown Center. The other principal topographical feature of the district is the 80 foot eminence of Windmill Hill on the east side of North Road in the center of the district. On this hill are the windmill and the miller's house, with the Friends' Meetinghouse standing close by on the side of the hill sloping southward to Great Creek. The Friends' Meetinghouse and the windmill are already listed on the National Register as individual entries.

The Cedar Hill farmhouse (Map #4) occupies the most commanding site in the district on a high terraced podium facing south across the district toward Great Creek. The wealth of its builder, George C. Carr, is reflected in the ten-foot-high, stone retaining wall constructed on the hillside to elevate the house above the surrounding land and provide it with a level front garden. The house is adjoined on the north by numerous late nineteenth- and twentieth-century farm buildings of traditional design. All of these are excellently maintained, weathered cedar shingle-clad buildings grouped in farm yards enclosed by dry-laid stone walls. In addition to several small sheds (Maps #5, 6, 9) there is a corn crib (Map #7), a chicken coop (Map #10) and a large barn. (Map #8)

George C. Carr, a prosperous Jamestown farmer and businessman, erected the 2½-story, five-bay, flank-gable, clapboarded farmhouse about 1870 to replace the early eighteenth-century Carr homestead

(See Cont. Sheet #1)

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that stood nearby on his ancestral farm. The house was made fashionable by the addition of wooden brackets at the eaves and a one-story bracketed veranda across the entrance front on the south side. The traditional center hall plan, the sidelighted front door and simple Greek Revival interior detailing all demonstrate the conservatism of rural building at the period. Reflecting newer heating concepts, the house was designed to be heated with stoves, and contains no fireplaces.

Adjacent to Cedar Hill Farm on the west is the Benjamin Carr Farm. Unlike the other farms in the district, little remains of the original acreage of the Carr Farm, which has recently been platted into house lots. Although still partially in a natural state today, the future development of the farm into the proposed subdivision will surround the remaining five acre farmstead with suburban construction.

? }  
}

Photo #4

The farmhouse (Map #1) was probably constructed by Benjamin Carr before 1760. It is a 2½-story, center-chimney, four-bay, flank-gable, shingled structure with an early nineteenth-century, 1½-story ell on the west side. The exterior of the building was altered in the 1960s by the addition of a small, one-story, one-bay projection in the center of the north elevation. A covered balcony was constructed over the entrance vestibule on the south elevation about the same time. Although the exterior has suffered from modern alterations, the interiors, which still contain most of their eighteenth-century features, are remarkable for their excellent state of preservation.

Photo #1

The nineteenth-century barn (Map #2) on the west side of the house is the only remaining farm building on the property.

Photo #6

To the south of Cedar Hill Farm, at a lower elevation, is the Watson farm. This eighteenth-century farmstead has an interesting range of outbuildings and barns behind the main house. These include an eighteenth-century frame barn (Map #14) and stone chicken coop (Map #13) as well as an early twentieth-century board-and-batten wagon barn (Map #12) and a large nineteenth-century stone-and-frame cattle barn (Map #15).

Photo #5

The farmhouse (Map #11) is believed to have been constructed by Job Watson about 1796. The 2½-story, center-chimney, flank-gable, five-bay, structure faces south and has an eighteenth-century, one-story, shingled ell on dry-laid stone foundations extending from

(See Cont. Sheet #2)

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the rear or north elevation. The house is shingled, except for the clapboarded west elevation. The exterior is severely plain, ornamented only with splayed lintel blocks over the windows and a simple, panelled front door without transom, sidelights or entablature.

Southernmost of the farms west of North Road is the Hodgkiss Farm, which includes the land between the Watson Farm and Great Creek. The farmstead contains a range of well-maintained outbuildings including a nineteenth-century barn (Map #20) and three twentieth-century buildings of traditional design including a barn (Map #19), a well house (Map #18) and a garage (Map #17). The farm complex is unified by the weathered cedar shingle cladding and white board trim used on all the buildings.

Photo #9

Photo #8

Photo #7

The 2½-story, center-chimney, flank-gable, five-bay farmhouse (Map #16), which differs from the Watson House principally in its pilastered and dentil-enriched pedimented door treatment on the south elevation, is believed to have been built soon after 1802 by Borden Watson. It faces south and has a twentieth-century, 2-story ell of traditional design on the north side. The Hodgkiss farmhouse, now completely shingled, also has splayed lintel blocks over the windows.

Across North Road from the Watson and Hodgkiss farms on Windmill Hill are the windmill, miller's house and Friends Meetinghouse all constructed around 1787. The windmill (Map #22), already listed on the National Register, is still functional, but has had its exterior and interior fittings extensively restored several times since it ceased operation in 1896, the most recent restoration occurring in 1960 after it was damaged in a storm. Constructed of hand-hewn timbers diagonally braced and covered with shingles on a rubble foundation, the mill is three stories high, octagonal in shape and has a domed top made to rotate on a track independently of the rest of the tower so that the four twenty-five-foot vanes can be turned into the wind. The main door on the south side of the structure opens into the first floor grinding room where the mill stones pulverize the corn which is poured through a chute from the second floor feeding room. The third floor contains the gears that transmit the wind power from the vanes to the mill shaft that turns the grinding stones. A few tiny windows at each level admit enough light to illuminate the grinding operation. The building is now cared for by The Jamestown Historical Society.

(See Cont. Sheet #3)

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Photo #10  
Photo #11  
About two hundred feet west of the mill is the modest 1½-story, flank-gable, five-bay, shingled, miller's cottage (Map #23). Although believed to have been built in 1787, it was extensively altered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when its fenestration was changed and the center chimney rebuilt. Just north of the cottage, which stands by the side of North Road, is the dilapidated, nineteenth-century, shingled, miller's barn (Map #24).

To the south of the mill at the corner of North Road and Weeden Lane is the small, one-story, frame Friends' Meetinghouse (Map #21), erected in 1787. This simple flank-gabled structure, already in the National Register, is notable for its simplicity of design. The two identical four-panel doors on the south elevation -- one for men and one for women in accordance with Quaker custom -- are enframed with simple board trim as are the six-over-six windows with their battened, single-leaf shutters. A window on each of the gable ends and two windows on the north elevation complete the fenestration. The trim on the building is limited to plain corner-, eaves- and sill-boards, now painted white to contrast with the weathered cedar shingling.

Also included in the district is the Old Friends' Burial Ground (Map #34) on the north side of Eldred Avenue across from Cedar Hill Farm. This small burial plot is enclosed with a low stone wall and screened by cedar trees. Originally the site of the Friend's Meetinghouse before the congregation moved to the present site, this plot has served as Conanicut's Friends' cemetery since 1710. The tombstones are arranged in rows and date from the early eighteenth century through the nineteenth century. In keeping with Friends' tradition, there are no pretentious monuments, but the neatly carved well-preserved stones are good examples of simple funerary art.

The remainder of the district is comprised of the fields, groves and marshes on the east side of North Road. Most of this land is included in two farms: the Joseph F. Dutra, Jr. Farm (Map #'s 29-33) on the north side of Weeden Lane and the Gordon T. Neale Farm (Map #'s 25-28) on the south side of Weeden Lane. Although these farms have been cultivated continuously since Colonial times, all of the eighteenth-century buildings have been destroyed and the present structures are primarily of twentieth-century construction of only slight architectural value. The open fields and pastures, however, are encompassed by stone walls, and rows of trees that maintain the traditional agricultural ambience of the land surrounding the Windmill

(See Cont. Sheet #4)

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and Friends' Meetinghouse and are necessary to the visual integrity of the Windmill Hill District.

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WINDMILL HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

Farm names are their common names or the names of their current owners. Individual buildings are given the name of their builder or earliest known occupant.

\*Buildings marked with an asterisk contribute positively to the historic character of the district.

- (1) *b* \*Benjamin Carr House (c. 1760). A 2½-story, gable-roofed, center-chimney, 4-bay, Georgian farmhouse with an early-19th-century, 1½-story ell on the west side. The building, now covered with wood shingles, has had the fenestration altered and a mid-20th century balcony added above the early 19th-century vestibule on the South elevation. The interior is notable for its excellent panelled mid-Georgian fireplace breasts and many original features.
- (2) *b* \*Stable (mid-19th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled building with a lean-to addition.
- (3) Two-car garage (mid-20th century). A 1-story concrete block structure.

Cedar Hill Farm

- (4) *b* \*George C. Carr House (c. 1870). A 2½-story, gable-roofed, 5-bay, Victorian farmhouse with bracketed cornices and a 1-story veranda on the south elevation. The clapboard and imbricated shingle covered structure has a 1½-story ell to the north and a small late 19th-century, 2-story addition on the west.
- (5) *b* \*Shed (late 19th century): A 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled shed.
- (6) Garage (late 19th-century modernized mid-20th century). A long 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled building with a storage room with Queen Anne style, multipane windows at the west end and a two car garage with modern roll-up doors on the east end.

(See Cont. Sheet #6)

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- (7) *B* \*Corncrib (late 19th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled barn with full height doors on the west side and a 1-story, gable-roofed addition to the south.
- (8) *B* \*Barn (late 19th century). A 2-story, gable-roofed, shingled barn with full height doors on the west side and a 1-story, gable-roofed addition to the south.
- (9) *B* \*Lean-to (early 20th century). A 1-story, shed-roofed, frame, sheep shelter open to the west.
- (10) *B* \*Chicken coop (mid-20th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled, building.

Thomas Carr Watson, Jr. Farm

- (11) *B* \*Job Watson House (1796). A 2½-story, gable-roofed, center-chimney, 5-bay, clapboard-and-shingle, Late Georgian farmhouse with a 1-story ell of 18th century construction on the north elevation. The house has very simple detailing consisting only of splayed lintel blocks over the fenestration, including the unarticulated front door on the south elevation which lacks both a transom and sidelights.
- (12) *B* \*Barn (early 20th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, board-and-batten barn with carriage doors in the north gable end.
- (13) *B* \*Chicken Coop (late 18th century). A small, rectangular, 1-story, gable-roofed, stone building built into the side of a hill.
- (14) *B* \*Barn (18th and 19th centuries). A long, rectangular, 2-story, gable roofed, shingle barn with stone foundations. The western portion of the barn may be late 18th century while the eastern end is 19th century. There is a 1-story gable-roofed 19th-century addition at the east end.
- (15) *B* \*Barn (19th century). A long, rectangular, 2-story gable-roofed, shingled barn on stone foundations.

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Gertrude M. Hodgkiss Farm

- (16) <sup>6</sup> \*Borden Watson House (c. 1802). A 2½-story, gable-roofed, center-chimney, 5-bay, shingled Georgian farmhouse with a 2-story ell on the north side built in the 20th century. The principal architectural features of the exterior are the splayed lintel blocks over the windows and the dentil-enriched, pedimented door treatment of the main entrance.
- (17) Garage (mid-20th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled garage with a roll-up door on the south elevation.
- (18) <sup>5</sup> \*Well House (mid-20th century). A small, rectangular, 1-story, gable-roofed, enclosure for the well pump.
- (19) <sup>6</sup> \*Barn (20th century). A 2-story, gable-roofed, shingled barn with double doors on the south gable end.
- (20) \*Barn (19th and 20th century). A 2-story, gable-roofed, shingled barn with double doors on the south elevation. The 2-story wing on the west side was built in the 19th century while the main part of the barn is probably early 20th century.
- ~~(21)~~ \*Friends Meeting House (1787). A plain, 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled building with two 4-panel doors on the south elevation. There is a small, shingled privy behind the meetinghouse.
- ~~(22)~~ \*Windmill (1787). A shingled, 3-story, octagonal, domed tower with four 25 foot wind vanes.
- (23) <sup>6</sup> \*Miller's cottage (c. 1787). A 1-story, gable-roofed, center-chimney, 5-bay, shingled house with an ell on the north elevation. The chimney and fenestration were altered in the 19th century.
- (24) <sup>6</sup> \*Miller's Barn (mid-19th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled barn with doors on the west elevation.

(See Cont. Sheet #8)

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Gordon T. Neale Farm

- (25) Farmhouse (early 20th century). A 1½-story, gable-roofed, shingled bungalow.
- (26) \*Barn (19th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled barn on stone foundations.
- (27) \*Barn (20th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, shingled barn.
- (28) \*Barn (19th century). A 1-story, gable-roofed, frame barn.

Joseph F. Dutra, Jr. Farm

- (29) \*Farmhouse (Late 19th century). A small, 2-story, gable-roofed, shingled cottage.
- (30) \*Barn (19th century). A 2-story, gable-roofed, shingled barn.
- (31) Barn (19th and 20th century). A large, 2-story, gable-roofed, shingled 19th-century barn with a long, 1-story concrete block addition on the south end.
- (32) Garage (20th century). A 1-story, 4-car garage.
- (33) Lean-to/machine shed (20th century). A 1-story garage-type structure open to the ground.
- (34) \*Old Friends' Burial Gound (18th-20th centuries). Less than 1 acre plot enclosed by a drylaid stone wall with a wrought-iron gate containing simple tombstones in rows. R. I. Historical Cemetery, Jamestown #6.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

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SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Windmill Hill Historic District is significant for its excellently preserved eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture, including agricultural, religious and residential structures, and its unspoiled rural landscape, that is the best example of an eighteenth-century Quaker farming community still extant in Rhode Island.

Conanicut Island was purchased from the Narragansett Indians by a group of ninety-eight Newport colonists in 1656, primarily for its value as pastureland. The Indians who had inhabited the island for centuries, had, at one time, lived within the boundaries of the Windmill Hill Historic District along the shores of Great Creek and Narragansett Bay.

The proprietors, who were mostly Quakers, divided 4800 acres of the island's 6000 acres among themselves and laid out a township of 260 acres in the center of the island near the site of present-day Jamestown Center. Most of the land was held for speculation until the 1670s when the first settlement began to occur.

By 1675, a ferry was in operation between Conanicut and Newport and the island gradually became settled. Among the largest landowners was Caleb Carr, who subsequently became Governor of Rhode Island.

The farms that now comprise the bulk of the Windmill Hill Historic District were established in the early eighteenth century and attained their peak of prosperity before the Revolution. Cedar Hill Farm, at the southwest corner of North Road and Eldred Avenue, was settled in the early eighteenth century by a grandson of Governor Caleb Carr, Thomas Carr, who built a substantial, frame house in the first quarter of the eighteenth century (demolished). The Thomas Carr Farm was typical of farms of the period on Conanicut and produced corn, barley, oats and livestock.

The Carrs, like most of their prosperous neighbors, kept slaves, usually between three and seven; Thomas Carr possessed four at his death in 1776. As early as 1708, of the 206 inhabitants of Conanicut, 32 were slaves. The growing prosperity of Jamestown and the expansion of agriculture throughout the eighteenth century is reflected in the

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growth of the slave population to 131 in 1774 in spite of the mounting Quaker sanctions against slavery.

These servants labored alongside their masters in the fields and usually lived in the attic of the farmhouse or, if their number was great enough, in outbuildings, as on the Carr farm. A burial plot of unmarked stones on the farm is said to be the Carr slave cemetery.

Thomas Carr's farm was bordered on the south by the Governor Hutchinson farm of 592 acres which included the land now contained in the Watson and Hodgkiss farms. This property was operated as two tenant farms by the Hutchinsons who lived in Boston. To the west of Thomas Carr's place was the farm occupied by his son, Benjamin, who probably built the present farmhouse before 1760. The land on the east side of North Road was also in cultivation by various families, including the Carrs.

The hub of the Windmill Hill area in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the intersection of North Ferry Road (now Eldred Avenue) and North Road, where the Town House (demolished) was located. These roads provided the vital transportation link with the north and south ends of the island and with the outside world by means of the ferries that had been established at either end of Eldred Avenue as Conanicut's increasing population and agricultural production required new water links with Aquidneck Island and the mainland. The Howland Ferry at the east end of Eldred Avenue connected the Windmill Hill area farms with Newport, while Slocumb's Ferry at the west end of Eldred Avenue provided a link to the mainland at North Kingstown as early as 1707.

The increasing productivity of the Conanicut farms in the eighteenth century soon made it necessary for the community to build a grist mill. Although the hand grinding of cornmeal had been adequate to meet local needs in the early years of settlement, by the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the need to produce large quantities of cornmeal for export to burgeoning Newport and to feed Jamestown's substantial population had made this technology obsolete. There is speculation that an earlier mill had existed on the island although it must have been destroyed before 1728 when the town subscribed funds to build a windmill on the farm of

(See Cont. Sheet #10)

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Nicholas Carr near his home on North Road. This mill was apparently destroyed before 1760 and a new mill and miller's cottage were not constructed on the site until 1787 when the present structures were completed.

At the same time that the growth and prosperity of the community necessitated expanded ferry service and a new grist mill, the spiritual needs of the increasingly numerous settlers required a larger meeting house. Newport was the center of Quakerism in Rhode Island and Quakers were among the first settlers of Conanicut, quickly becoming the dominant religious sect on the island. In fact, for almost 170 years they were the only organized sect -- it was not until 1841 that another denomination built a church on Conanicut. The first Friends' Meetinghouse had been constructed on North Ferry Road (Eldred Avenue) in 1709-10. By 1734 the growing congregation required a larger building located closer to the center of population, which had become concentrated near the main ferry at the present site of Jamestown Center. Nicholas Carr subsequently donated 1/4 acre on North Road near the windmill and the thrifty Quakers moved their meetinghouse to the new site and added an eighteen foot lean-to addition. The former site on North Ferry Road has remained in use as the congregation's cemetery and is now known as the Old Friends Burial Ground (Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Jamestown #6).

By 1775 Conanicut had reached the peak of its prosperity as an agricultural adjunct of Aquidneck Island. The slave-owning Quakers had much of the island under cultivation and their fortunes rose with the ascendancy of Newport over New England trade before the Revolution. In 1775, however, the British invaded Newport and Jamestown. The occupation of Conanicut began with the burning of Jamestown village and the surrounding farms on December 10, 1775, and continued until the departure of the British fleet in 1779. Most of the Quaker inhabitants evacuated the island in 1775 and upon their return four years later they found a ruined, deserted land of burned farmsteads that had been totally deforested by the occupying forces scavenging for firewood. Newport's trade had been destroyed by the long British occupation and with it went the basis for Jamestown's prosperity.

Nevertheless, a brief flurry of building activity ensued in the late eighteenth century as the islanders struggled to rebuild their community. The 1780s and 1790s witnessed the rebuilding of the Windmill Hill area after the depredations of the war. In 1787 the

(See Cont. Sheet #11)

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present windmill was constructed on the site of the earlier one on 1/2 acre given by the State General Assembly from the confiscated farm of Col. Joseph Wanton, a Newport Tory. In the same year, the miller's house was also constructed. The mill remained in use until 1896 when competition from cheap western grain made the home production of cornmeal and feed uneconomic, and operations ceased.

In 1786-1787 the Friends built the present meetinghouse on the site of the earlier one that had been severely damaged during the British occupation. The new meetinghouse was smaller than the previous structure as a result of the greatly decreased population of Conanicut after the war.

Across North Road, the confiscated Hutchinson Farm was divided into two farms and sold by the three Continental Army officers who had been given the property in 1782 as compensation for their services during the struggle for independence. By 1794 Job Watson had acquired both farms, which have remained in the possession of his descendants to the present. The houses now on the farms were probably constructed in the 1790s and early 1800s by the Watsons. The Carrs of present-day Cedar Hill Farm continued to occupy the early-eighteenth-century Thomas Carr House (demolished) which had survived the war and the somewhat later Benjamin Carr House nearby.

The optimism of the rebuilding period belied the loss of Jamestown's economic base. The market for Conanicut's agricultural production vanished with Newport's maritime trade, and the decline of Newport was reflected in the dwindling population of Jamestown to less than half the 600 inhabitants of 1774. In fact, over a century was to pass before the population would exceed that of 1775. Gradually, the Conanicut farms sank into self-sufficiency. The remarkable preservation of the buildings in the Windmill Hill District can be attributed to the thrifty and conservative nature of the Quaker farmers and to the economic stagnation the island experienced throughout the 19th century.

An exception to the generally straitened circumstances of the inhabitants was George C. Carr who consolidated his family's wealth to become one of Conanicut's most prosperous residents by 1870. His prominence was reflected in the Italianate farmhouse he constructed on his farm, now Cedar Hill Farm. Within 30 years he had razed his ancestral home on the property, the early-eighteenth-century Thomas Carr House, because of its advanced state of deterioration. The

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George C. Carr House, the only significant nineteenth-century building in the Windmill Hill District, reflects the unusual case of an enterprising native who subsequently made a fortune speculating in Jamestown land and improvement projects during the period when the island was developing into a summer resort in the late nineteenth century.

From the 1870s to the present, few significant changes have occurred within the district. Although the eighteenth-century farm buildings on the two farms east of North Road were replaced with new structures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the four farms on the west side of the road have been well preserved. The meticulously maintained buildings still exist in an unspoiled landscape of rolling fields and forests criss-crossed by stone walls, with only an occasional glimpse of the Newport Bridge to suggest the presence of the twentieth century. Much of the land continues in agricultural use by the same families who have owned it since the eighteenth century, and with the Windmill, the Meetinghouse and the Old Friends Burial Ground, the district affords the most complete picture of the eighteenth-century Quaker farm life extant in Rhode Island.

Today, the Windmill Hill District is under attack from forces that threaten to destroy its historic character. The proposed construction of an interstate highway and a new bridge and bridge access road would divide the district and isolate the historic structures from their pastoral setting. The pressure for subdivision of the farms for tract housing is another menace to Windmill Hill that has already claimed much of the acreage of the Benjamin Carr Farm. The recognition and protective sanctions of National Register listing will aid in preserving this important remnant of Rhode Island's historic development.



## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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(Providence, R.I.) (see cont. sheet #13)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 772 acres  
UTM REFERENCES

*D-19/ 300-020 / 4598-840*

<i>E</i> 1,9	3 0 1 0 0 0	4 5 9 9 78 0	<i>A</i> 1,9	3 0 2 6 2 0	4 5 9 9 6 9 0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
<i>B</i> 1,9	3 0 2 4 4 0	4 5 9 7 9 8 0	<i>C</i> 1,9	3 0 1 4 1 0	4 5 9 7 4 2 0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

E 19:300020 : 4598840

All of Lots 2, 3, 18, 23 of Plat 6; Lots 6, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 87, 164 of Plat 7; Lot 46 of Plat 14; The Old Friends Burial Ground.

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

Leslie J. Vollmert

February, 1978

ORGANIZATION

R.I. Historical Preservation Commission

TELEPHONE

150 Benefit Street

(401) 277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

## 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Frank Williamson*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 31, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

*10/2/78*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

*William Lebowitz*

DATE

*5/25/78*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



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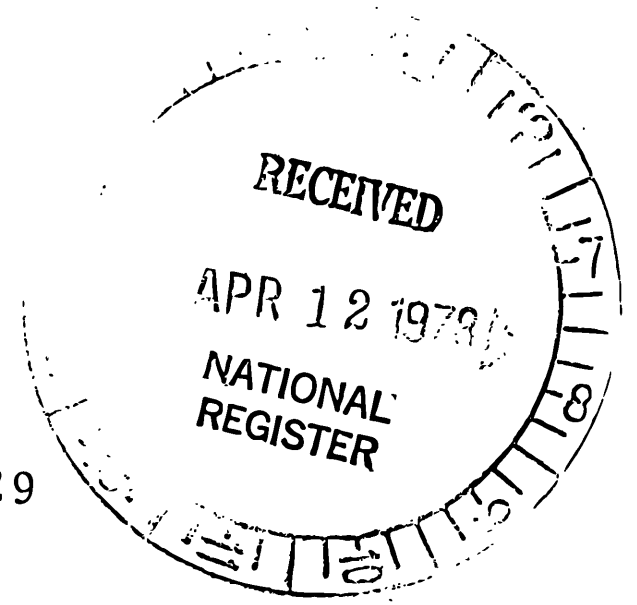
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Watson, W. L. A Short History of Jamestown on the Island of  
Conanicut, R.I. (Providence, R. I., 1933).  
History of Jamestown  
(Providence, R.I., 1949).  
Research Compiled by Mrs. Marston W. Keeler and Mrs. William  
Miner from various sources.

Windmill Hill Historic District

Owners of record as of March, 1978

Buckingham Group c/o John J. Egan P.O. Box 678 Newport, R.I. 02840	Plat 7, Lot 29
Alfred B. Arruda P.O. Box 655 Newport, R.I. 02840	Plat 7, Lot 28
Joseph F. Dutra, Jr. East Shore Rd. Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 7, Lot 19
Robert R. McCallen North Road Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 7, Lots 87, 22
Mr. Henry Armbrust, President Jamestown Historical Society 131 Narragansett Avenue Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 7, Lot 21
Jamestown Society of Friends Hull's Cove Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 7, Lot 20
Gordon T. Neale Weeden Lane Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 7, Lot 6
Audubon Society of R.I. c/o Alfred Hawkes 40 Bowen St. Providence, R.I. 02906	Plat 7, Lot 164
George W. Scott & Margaret R. Scott Dumplings Drive Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 7, Lots 178, 179, 4
Gertrude M. Hodgkiss North Road Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 6, Lot 2
Thomas Carr Watson, Jr. Conanicus Avenue Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 6, Lot 18
Murray W. Keeler Highland Drive Jamestown, R.I. 02835	Plat 6, Lot 23



Ms. Rosamund Tefft, Clerk  
Town Hall  
71 Narragansett Avenue  
Jamestown, R.I. 02835

Plat 6, lot 3

C. B. Joyner Co.  
Eldred Ave.  
Jamestown, R.I. 02835

Plat 14 Lot 46

WINDMILL HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 AMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND  
 1" = 100' TO SCALE

