

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service~~DEC 20 1989~~

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Historic Resources of Swansea, Massachusetts
other names/site number Swansea Multiple Resource Area

2. Location

street & number Incorporated Town Limits of Swansea, Mass. N/A not for publication
city, town Swansea N/A vicinity
state Massachusetts code MA county Bristol code 005 zip code 02777

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒
- private
-
- ☒
- public-local
-
- ☐
- public-State
-
- ☐
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒
- building(s)
-
- ☒
- district
-
- ☒
- site
-
- ☒
- structure
-
- ☒
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>155</u>	<u>70</u>	buildings
<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>20</u>	<u>4</u>	structures
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	objects
<u>184</u>	<u>77</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 2

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Valerie A. Talmage
Signature of certifying official Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical
State Historical Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

Dec. 20, 1989
Date Commission;

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

- ☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

02-16-90

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single DwellingSecondary StructureHotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single DwellingSecondary Structure**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

ColonialGeorgianFederal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stonewalls Wood WeatherboardShingleroof Asphalt, Slate

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

INTRODUCTION

The Swansea Multiple Resource Area encompasses an area of approximately 22 square miles. The predominantly rural, residential town is in the southeast region of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Swansea is separated from the industrial mill city of Fall River by the Taunton River and the Town of Somerset, which was once part of Swansea. On the north, Swansea is bordered by Dighton, Rehoboth, and Seekonk. The west border is approximately six miles of state line between Massachusetts and Rhode Island, separating Swansea from Barrington and Warren, Rhode Island. Swansea's southern edge is on the Lee's and Cole's Rivers. Swansea is within the Southeast Regional Planning Area in Bristol County and is approximately sixty miles from Boston.

The present-day community was shaped primarily throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, although settlement did occur as early as 1664. At the time of the 1667 land grant from the Court of Jurisdiction of New Plymouth, Swansea included the present day Somerset, then known as Shawomet; Barrington, Rhode Island; and most of Warren, Rhode Island.

Swansea is informally divided into five villages or areas, each having unique characteristics articulating the area's development. Because of the irregular shape of Swansea with a long northern border and southern peninsulas separated by rivers, the villages are separated from one another by large tracts of land, much of which is threatened by major development pressures. Beginning in the northwest corner of the town is Barneyville, also known as North Swansea. East of Barneyville on the northern edge near Rehoboth is Hortonville. Swansea Village is near the Somerset line and at the head of the Lee's River, while Luther's Corner, also known as Swansea Center, is north of the Cole's River and near primary transportation routes. South Swansea is the area bordering on the rivers, with easy access to Mt. Hope Bay. Gardner's Neck, Ocean Grove and Touisset are the three shoreline areas of South Swansea.

The topography has played an important role in the development of the five distinct villages/areas as well as the isolation of these areas from one another. The general contour of the terrain is gently rolling land with sandy

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Swansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MA

Section number 6 Page 1

6. Function or Use (Continued)

Historic Functions:

Agriculture/Subsistence:

Processing
Storage
Agricultural Field
Animal Facility
Agricultural Outbuilding

Education:

School
Library

Government:

Town Hall
Post Office

Industry/Processing/Extraction:

Manufacturing facility - Mill

Social:

Meeting Hall

Funerary:

Cemetery

Current Functions:

Agriculture:

Processing
Storage
Agricultural Field
Animal Facility
Agricultural Outbuilding

Education:

School
Library

Government:

Town Hall
Post Office

Industry/Processing/Extraction:

Vacant - Storage facility

Social:

Meeting Hall

Funerary:

Cemetery

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Swansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MA

Section number 7 Page 1

7. Description (Continued)

Architectural Classification:

Mid-19th Century - Greek Revival

Late Victorian - Italianate

Second Empire - Mansard

Queen Anne - Queen Anne Revival

Shingle Style

Romanesque - Richardsonian Romanesque

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals - Colonial Revival - Georgian Revival

Elizabethan Revival

Late Gothic Revival - Collegiate Gothic

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements - Bungalow

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 2

to gravelly soil and is part of the New England coastal lowlands. From the lowlands there are four significant outcroppings of conglomerate glacial rock, all of which served as native shelters. Due to the proximity to the Taunton River and Mt. Hope Bay, the several brooks and tidal rivers within Swansea are part of the most extensive and intricate drainage system in Southeastern Massachusetts. The brooks and streams of Swansea drain into either the Palmer River (aka Warren River) near Barneyville or the Cole's and Lee's Rivers at South Swansea. Located in North Swansea between Barneyville and Hortonville is the Warren Reservoir, which flows into the Kickamuit River. The river shore line at South Swansea has provided easy access to Mt. Hope Bay while contributing to the development of three distinct communities. Touissett is on the western bank of the Cole's River, while Ocean Grove is at its head and is connected to Gardener's Neck, which is a peninsula between the Cole's and Lee's Rivers.

Although Swansea was not formally incorporated as a town until the 1785 Act which declared every town as a 'body politic', it was settled as early as 1667 at which time the Township of Swansea was granted by the Court of Jurisdiction of New Plymouth to Captain Thomas Willet and his neighbors. The land grant included all of Swansea, Somerset, and the present Barrington, Rhode Island, and most of the present Warren, Rhode Island. The boundary between Swansea and Rehoboth was left to the discretion of the trustees of the two townships and this was agreed upon and established by 1670. Although there were several petitions for Somerset (then known as Shawomet) to be set off as a new town, Somerset was not incorporated until 1790. However, as early as 1717 Barrington, Rhode Island, was set off from Swansea, and Warren separated from Swansea in 1747.

Historic Overview

Today Swansea is a residential community with some remaining resort area, although most early 20th-century summer houses have been converted for year-round use. There is a substantial amount of commercial activity, primarily retail and service, most of which is located on the high-speed, four-lane highway that crosses the town, U.S. Route 6. Interstate 195 also cuts across the agricultural landscape from northwest to southeast. In 1967 it was reported that the population was 11,767. The 1987 population was 15,053, which indicates a steady increase in recent decades.

Prior to historic settlement of Swansea, there were Wampanoag and Pocasset settlements, in large part due to the wealth of natural

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 3

resources in the area. The rivers and their accessibility to Mt. Hope Bay, and by extension Narragansett and Buzzards Bays, meant that the area was part of the larger system of native settlements.

European settlement first occurred in 1664 when the Reverend John Myles formed the Baptist church in what is now Rehoboth. The land of present-day Swansea was granted in 1667 and the name of the township was derived from the Welsh native town of the Rev. Myles, Swan Sea. Dispersed 17th- and 18th-century agricultural and fishing settlements were scattered throughout the area known as Swansea as is evidenced by the five distinct villages that evolved. Numerous family burial grounds are also evidence of the dispersed farmsteads. Limited industrial development occurred in Hortonville, the site of saw, grist and cotton mills; Barneyville, the location of a significant shipbuilding business; and Swansea Village, where several small industries followed after the Swansea Union Cotton Manufacturing Co. Throughout the 18th and 19th century, farming and fishing continued to be key to the economic base of Swansea.

With the coming of railroad transportation and advanced technology to surrounding areas such as Fall River and Taunton, Massachusetts, as well as Providence, Rhode Island, industrial activity in Swansea declined. Agriculture remained the mainstay of Swansea's economy, and summer home construction became a dominant feature in the town's late 19th-century development. Opening of a street railway system in the late 19th century and automobile corridors in the early 20th century contributed to suburbanization across the town, particularly on desirable shoreline properties at South Swansea.

The post-war development has radically changed parts of the expansive agricultural landscape that linked the historic villages of Swansea. The high-speed U.S. Route 6, lined with shopping centers, and widespread residential suburban development have become a threat to the historic landscape.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**Early European Settlement (1664-ca. 1700)**

Colonial settlement of old Swansea occurred in 1664, soon after the Rev. John Myles relocated his Baptist church from Rehoboth to the area west of Barneyville in present Barrington, Rhode Island. Rev. Myles also built a garrison house (burned 1909) at Barneyville. At approximately the same time, King Philip conveyed the land of Mattapoissett to the south, later to be known as Gardner's Neck, to

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 4

William Brenton of Newport. A garrison house was built (1664) and was destroyed during King Philip's War. In 1667 Captain Thomas Willet, the Rev. Myles, and their neighbors were granted the land that was to be known as Swansea by the Court of Jurisdiction of New Plymouth. The grant spanned five necks south of Rehoboth and Taunton, between the Taunton River on the east and the Providence River on the west. The Rev. Myles was directed to settle the northern boundary with Rehoboth. Land within the newly incorporated township was apportioned according to a three-rank system that is said to have been singular to Swansea. The 1670 order designated the selectmen to decide the rank of a new inhabitant, thereby giving one of the first rank one acre, of the second rank two acres, and of the third rank three acres of land.

While the early settlers used the native trails that had been established over the generations, water routes were of greater importance. The rivers provided direct routes to Mt. Hope and Narragansett Bays. Native trails spanned the northern section of Swansea following the present Marvel Street, Cummings Road, Locust Street, and Vinnicum and Old Providence Roads. To the south, native trails paralleled the Cole's and Lee's Rivers along Gardner's Neck Road.

Swansea was the location of the first bloodshed of King Philip's War. Although there were approximately forty garrison houses in Swansea by 1674, all were destroyed during the war beginning in June of 1675. Two sites of garrisons are marked: the Myles Garrison Site on Old Providence Road near the Palmer River (Barneyville) and the Bourne Garrison Site on Old Gardner's Neck Road (South Swansea).

Growth in Old Swansea (ca. 1700-1790)

As in most southeastern Massachusetts communities, this was a period of significant growth in which patterns of development were established. While agriculture and fishing continued to be the base of the economy, there were also forges and ironworks on the northern section of the Cole's River. Most of the population and settlement growth occurred near the Lee's, Cole's, and Palmer Rivers. A late 17th/early 18th-century settlement developed at Myles Bridge (also known as Miles Bridge), on the Palmer River, the site of one of the earliest bridges erected in Bristol County. The area is also the location of the ca. 1700 Baptist meetinghouse. Neither the original bridge nor meetinghouse is extant. Gardner's Neck (also known as Mattapoissett) between the Cole's and Lee's Rivers was purchased in 1693 by Samuel Gardner and Ralph Chapman, both of Newport, Rhode

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 5

Island. New houses were erected here to replace those destroyed during King Philip's War, and Cedar Cove at the Cole's River was developed for the fishing and shipbuilding industries. Other settlement clusters occurred in Swansea Village, which was settled by the Zachariah Eddy family and by Jonathan Hill. Hill purchased 100 acres of farmland in 1720, and built his house (MHC #D-65) and several other substantial dwellings close to the road.

During this period, parts of Old Swansea were set off to form other towns. In 1717 Barrington separated from Swansea and in 1747 a large portion of the northwestern section was set off and became the Town of Warren, Rhode Island. It was not until the end of this period of development that Swansea achieved its present size when Somerset was set off in 1790. Through the 1700s there were many petitions requesting this division.

Construction of early religious buildings across Old Swansea ensured the continued development of the area. The First Baptist Church was organized in 1663. The first building located in what is now Barrington was destroyed during King Philip's War; the second one was moved to North Swansea in 1700 and replaced in 1717 with the building that preceded the present First Baptist Church (1848, MHC# 7) at Baptist Street and Route 6. The Church of Christ, Swansea (1833, MHC # 10), was organized in 1693 and built its first meetinghouse in 1720. This building, heavily damaged in a gale of 1815, was substantially rebuilt in 1833 and survives at the intersection of Route 6 and Maple Street. In 1701 the Swansea Meeting of Friends was organized and a meetinghouse was built in the eastern section of Swansea, now part of Somerset.

Roads connecting the settlement areas were improved. Old Warren Road was laid out to provide access from Swansea Center to Gardner's Neck and to Warren. Hales Hill Road, Dillon Lane, and Sharps Lot Road connected the 18th-century farms in the northeast section of town with Swansea Village and the rivers to the south. Stevens Road led from Main Street in Swansea Village to the Taunton River through what was later to become Somerset. Water transportation remained vital to the area.

Swansea: The Five Villages Evolve (1790-1865)

During this period Swansea was reduced to its present size due to the setting off of Somerset as a new town in 1790. Population figures do not accurately reflect the growth of the present town until after 1790 because earlier figures include the area that later

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 6

became Somerset. Thus, the unremarkable growth suggested by a population of 1,933 in 1820 compared to 1,840 in 1765 is misleading. Between 1825 and 1875 there was a slow decline in population, which rebounded at the end of the nineteenth century. The decline in the mid 1800s was in large part caused by a shift away from local industry in favor of the rapidly expanding industrial cities nearby. In addition to the dispersed farmsteads that characterized Swansea during its Colonial development, small villages evolved around major road junctions or emerging locations of industrial or harbor activity. The road network did not change significantly during this period of development and water routes continued to be a primary means of transportation.

Swansea Village, then known as "Scrabbletown," was an active community near the site of the Swansea Union Cotton Manufacturing Co. (established 1814) on Lewin Brook. In 1815 Israel Brayton built a general store on the corner of Elm and Main Streets, and other village-oriented businesses followed. In 1840 a mill at the end of Wood Avenue (then known as Paper Mill Lane and later to be called Ledge Road) was erected for the manufacturing of paper.

The Swansea Post Office, established in 1800, was moved from the home of the first postmaster Reuben Chace ("The Buttonwood," west of the Village) to Swansea Village in 1814. At least one of the town's twelve one-room schoolhouses was built at Swansea Village. In 1838 the school system was redistricted into ten independent district schools, one of which was in the Village. Other early institutional construction included the Union Meeting House (1830) on the site of the present Town Hall. In 1846 Christ Church, an Episcopal parish, was organized and in 1847 a board and batten, Gothic Revival style building was constructed in the Village.

Residential construction concentrated at the Elm Street-Main Street intersection, ranging west along Main Street with equal numbers of 2 1/2-story houses and 1 1/2-story capes surviving. In the 1850s the Birch/Stevens family settled in Swansea Village, building a "mansion on the Village Street" in 1855 (MHC #D-61). The Stevens family became Swansea's primary benefactors later in the century.

The Barney Shipbuilding Co. (1802-1861) on the Palmer River was the catalyst for the development of Barneyville, or North Swansea. The Barney family settled this rural area by ca. 1750; the family homestead (MHC #A-3) is extant and set back on the east bank of the river. In the late 1700s, Jonathan Barney began building small boats for local farmers and fishermen. In 1802 his son, Maso, took

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 7

over and transformed Barneyville into a well-known shipbuilding center. The industry thrived until the late 1850s. By 1861 the shipbuilding company had closed due to the financial panic of 1858 coupled with the increasing demand for iron ships.

Hortonville in the 18th century was characterized by farmsteads with expansive agricultural fields. Family burial grounds attest to the long-term presence of some of the village's original families. In the first half of the 19th century, several mills were established on the Cole's River, including the Swansea Cotton Manufacturing Co. (1806-1836) and grist mills. The cotton factory and dam were constructed by Oliver Chace from Rehoboth and continued operating after his 1809 departure for the Fall River Manufacturing Co. Cotton manufacturing in the village ended when the factory burned in 1836; the factory was not rebuilt. Hortonville grew slowly, acquiring its own schoolhouse and religious organization, the First Universalist Society, by 1838.

Luther's Corner, also known as Swansea Center, evolved around a major road intersection. Old Warren Road was part of an important east-west route from Providence to Fall River; Maple Avenue and Pearse Road were on the north-south transportation route from Rehoboth to Mt. Hope Bay. Members of the Luther family had settled in the area in the early 18th century. However, it was a later generation that developed the commercial center at this major crossroad in the early 19th century. James Luther built a tavern (MHC #B-19), which was a stagecoach stop in the early 1800s, while another family member built a store (MHC #B-17) on another corner. Other development was limited to farmsteads.

South Swansea, of which Gardner's Neck is the most prominent area, was of primary importance for its association with the local fishing industry. Menhaden were a common catch and were used for the menhaden oil, which had become a substitute for whale oil at the end of the War of 1812 when whaling had been interrupted. Settlement of South Swansea before the Civil War was confined to dispersed farms, ranged primarily along Pearse Road at Touisset and Gardner's Neck Road on the Neck. As a peninsula between the Cole's and Lee's Rivers, the Neck was relatively isolated, its only connection to the rest of town being a dirt road leading north to Swansea Village.

Swansea: The Emerging Residential Suburb (1865-1939)

The introduction and expansion of rail service to the area in the third quarter of the 19th century contributed to the centralization

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 8

of industry in surrounding cities. This in turn precipitated a decline in Swansea's industries. The same rail service brought residential development to Swansea in the form of summer resort construction and year-round suburban commuters' homes. In 1865 the Fall River-Providence Railroad was completed and passed through South Swansea. The electrification of the steam train in the 1890s revolutionized this mode of transportation, and the corresponding impact on residential development was seen particularly in South Swansea, where stations were built on Gardner's Neck and at Touisset. By 1901 the Providence and Fall River Street Railroad Co. operated electric trolley cars from Fall River to Providence. The "Snake Line" trolley that travelled along the present Route 6 carried commuters from Swansea to Fall River. In the early 1900s, Route 6 was a significant thoroughfare with the beginnings of what would become major commercial strip development. Route 6 became a U.S. Highway in the 1920s, linking cities such as Providence, Fall River, and New Bedford. Use of waterways for transportation was confined to freight traffic.

From the 1870 population of 1,294, there was a steady increase to 1,456 in 1890. By 1915, there was a substantial increase to 2,558 persons living in Swansea, no doubt a result of the town's suburbanization due to the electric trolley and improved rail service. The suburban and summer home community was concentrated close to the shoreline at Gardner's Neck, Touisset, and Ocean Grove. Limited residential growth also occurred at Swansea Village and the area immediately east. Increased suburbanization and subdivision during the early 1900s is evidenced by the number of new schools built in the 1920s and 1930s. Five new public school buildings and two new parochial buildings were constructed by 1936.

Swansea Village emerged as the town's civic core, and industry there declined. The site of the former paper mill on Wood Avenue (now known as Ledge Road) was not used for many years until the late 1800s when a new mill (MHC #D-72) housed several short-lived business ventures, including a bakery, a bleachery, and in the early twentieth century the Swansea Print Works. In 1891, village resident Frank S. Stevens financed the construction of the present Town Hall (MHC #D-67). After his death in 1898, money became available for the Public Library building (MHC #D-66) and Christ Church (MHC #D-68). In the early 1900s, his widow, Elizabeth Case Stevens, donated the Frank S. Stevens School (1908, MHC #D-45) and the Joseph Case High School (1927, MHC #D-46). Other estate funds were used to establish the Frank S. Stevens Home for Boys at the family mansion after Mrs. Stevens' death.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 9

Barneyville became the site of a jewelry manufacturing company, which was established in the old shipyard lot and later moved to Old Providence Road. Daniel R. Child (1827-1914), a former ship's carpenter, manufactured buttons and sleeve links. D. R. Child & Co. was later known as the North Swansea Manufacturing Co. Workers commuted to the factory on the street railway until after World War I, when the railroad was discontinued and the factory closed down. This was the end of new development and growth in Barneyville, which then became strictly a residential community.

Hortonville, also known as Swansea Factory, continued to develop as a separate village despite the 1836 burning of the cotton manufactory. Its distance from Swansea Village and the railways was a determining factor for the continued self-sustaining growth of this small village in the northern section of Swansea. A schoolhouse, a post office (established in 1885), a church for the Universalist Society of Swansea and Rehoboth, and several stores were clustered at the eastern end of Locust Street near the grist and saw mills on Hortonville Road. With the closing of these mills and the centralization of town services by the early 20th century, Hortonville reverted to a residential and agricultural community.

Luther's Corner/Swansea Center was a focal point due to its location on the street railway and proximity to the train route and resort development. The area continued to grow, and by 1889 a separate post office was established at Luther's Corner. The first Roman Catholic parish in Swansea, Saint Dominic's Church, was established and located near Swansea Center in 1911. By that time the number of foreign-born in Swansea had increased and the new parish ministered to a number of French Canadians. Swansea's civic focus had shifted to Swansea Village by the early 20th century and commercial enterprises lined Route 6 to the north. Most of the commercial buildings at Luther's Corner were converted to residential use by ca. 1920.

Major growth in Swansea during this period of development was in South Swansea. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the fishing industry continued to thrive as fish fertilizers became an important byproduct of the menhaden oil industry at the W. J. Brightman & Co. on Cole's River at Touisset. At the turn of the century, real estate development escalated. The Colony at Gardener's Neck (MHC #F147-152) was developed by David Anthony of Fall River between 1896 and 1902. At the same time a picnic grove, Shady Isle Park (1902, MHC #E-130), was established at Ocean Grove and the Wilbur Land Company created a subdivision. To accommodate

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 10

the rising population, the South Swansea Union Church, Gardner's Neck Road (1916, MHC #F-138) was established in 1916.

Recent Development (post 1939)

Population has increased rapidly since World War II, jumping from 2,300 in 1922 to 11,767 (1966) and most recently 14,757 (1985). Most of the residential growth until the 1950s was concentrated on Gardner's Neck and Touisset. In the 1940s, many summer homes were winterized. Construction in the 1960s of the New England Power Company across Lee's River on Brayton Point in Somerset presented an aesthetic and environmental blight to South Swansea. Real estate values fell and the Lee's River became polluted. The only significant modern residential development has been Smoke Rise, a government housing project of the 1960s. Also in the 1960s, Interstate 195 was cut through Swansea, crossing south of Route 6 and northeast of Luther's Corner.

Swansea Village has remained the town's civic center, and commercial properties there have been converted to residential use. The only extant industrial property is the Swan Finishing Company at the end of Ledge Road, now a commercial storage facility. The commercial activity of Swansea is now concentrated along Route 6. In the late 1970s, the Swansea Mall became the first mall in the area. Despite the development pressures and the ever-increasing commercialization of Route 6, there are large expanses of intact rural landscapes remaining in Swansea. The most prominent example is the 300+ acre Baker's Farm on Locust Street in Hortonville, where a slaughterhouse currently operates. Barneyville and Hortonville have become primarily residential areas.

ARCHITECTURE

The individual properties and districts included in the proposed Multiple Resource area nomination represent the full range of Swansea's extant 18th, 19th, and early 20th-century architecture. The following discussion is organized by building type.

Residential Buildings

The five village centers at Barneyville, Hortonville, Luther's Corner, Swansea Village, and South Swansea have evolved over the course of the four major periods of development. Examples of each period survive in nearly all of the villages.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 11

The prodominante building type is the single-family, wood frame, gabled dwelling, sheathed in clapboards or shingles. Georgian and Federal-style dwellings are 1 1/2-story cottages or 2 1/2-story houses. Most are near Hortonville, Barneyville, or Swansea. Construction in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles, generally 1 1/2-story, gable-end or pitched roof dwellings, is seen less frequently than the Georgian and Federal-style buildings. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was a surge in construction of Queen Anne, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival houses in the town, particularly in South Swansea. Most of these are shingled and represent the summer resort and commuter life of Swansea. Well-preserved examples of the 1 1/2-story bungalow bearing Craftsman or Prairie-style influences also survive.

There are no surviving examples of dwellings built in the early settlement period prior to 1700. In part this is due to the destruction of the First Period garrison houses during the King Philip's War in 1675. One site marker indicates the Site of the Myles Garrison House at Old Providence Road (1912 marker, MHC #A-5). There is a marker for the Bourne Garrison Site on Old Gardner's Neck Road, across from the North Gardner Cemetery (MHC #800); however, the exact location of the site is in question. Most construction that occurred after King Philip's War was likely similar to the remaining early Colonial capes and Georgian houses.

The most common 18th-century house forms in Swansea are the 1 1/2-story cape and 2 1/2-story double-pile house of wood frame construction. Most are sheathed in clapboards, although some are shingle clad. Variations in the number of bays range from the three-bay half house to a four-bay three-quarter house to the traditional five-bay, center entrance house. Most roofs are gabled although there are several gambrel roofs, which were more common to southeast Massachusetts than other regions of the Commonwealth. There is almost no elaboration of architectural detail. The architectural style and period is Georgian, although all houses of this period are of a vernacular form and accentuate the limited means and practical way of life of the time.

There are at least eleven 1 1/2-story cottages in the Cape Cod tradition remaining from the 18th century, half of which have gambrel roofs. Nearly all are five bays. An exception is the Joseph Gardner House, 1205 Gardner's Neck Road (ca. 1790, MHC #F-143), which started out as a four-bay cottage with center chimney and gabled roof. In 1877, it was enlarged to nearly double its size in 1877 with the 17-foot extension, including a new entrance door

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 12

and two window bays. The Daggett House, 22-24 Barneyville Road (1771-1774, MHC #A-2), believed to be the earliest double-chimney house in Swansea, is slightly different due to the six-bay, two-door facade of the double house. The earliest surviving cape is the five-bay Sisson House, 2 Seaview Avenue (ca. 1710, MHC #122) with steeply pitched roof and later connecting ells. Examples of vernacular cottages with gambrel roofs include the Luther House, 177 Market Street (ca. 1740, MHC #8), a shingled five-bay, center-chimney dwelling, with 12/12 sash, and the Samuel Gardner House, 1035 Gardner's Neck Road (ca. 1768, MHC #F-141), a clapboarded, five-bay, center-entry house with added 19th-century dormers.

Most of the 2 1/2-story vernacular Georgian houses in Swansea are five-bay, with one or two interior chimneys and clapboard sheathing. All have gabled roofs with the exception of the John Brown IV House, 703 Pearse Road (ca. 1752, MHC #120), which has a gambrel-style wood shingle roof. The clapboard house has 12/12 sash and dentils. The enclosed entrance portico, dormers, second-story tripartite window, and the one-story projecting box bay on the side are all 1932 additions. Situated near a streamlike section of the Cole's River in Hortonville is the Benjamin Martin House, 24 Locust Street (1757, MHC #C-36), a fine example of the Georgian farmstead with five bays, 6/6 sash, center chimney, and an enclosed projecting entrance portico. In Barneyville, the Barney House, 166 Old Providence Road (ca. 1750, MHC #A-3) is another fine example of a five-bay, Georgian house with 9/9 sash on the first floor, corner quoins, and squared pilasters flanking the center entrance. While most of the town's Georgian dwellings are five-bay, center-entry buildings, there are a few that started as three-bay half-houses with an end-bay entrance. Sometimes additions have been made in such a way that the entrance bay is not in the center. The Slade House, 167 Elm Street (1755, MHC #D-92), appears to have been a three-bay half house with the entrance at the middle bay. Two bays were added, forming a five-bay house with an off-centered entrance. Short's Tavern, 282 Market Street (ca. 1742, MHC #9), was also a three-bay dwelling that was expanded to four bays. The massing and scale of the traditional Georgian house is retained.

The five-bay, 1 1/2-story Cape Cod cottage and the 2 1/2-story Georgian/Federal house continued to be the two most common building forms in Swansea until well into the mid-19th century. By the early 1800s, Greek Revival details were beginning to appear on these building forms. Swansea Village, Barneyville, and Hortonville have several examples of Federal-style houses including the James Mason

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 13

House, 15 Main Street ca. (1795, MHC #D-63), which is a 2 1/2-story Federal house with twin interior chimneys and 6/6 and 9/9 sash, and a pedimented door surround flanked by full-length sidelights. In Hortonville, the Marvel House, 5 Locust Street (ca. 1810, MHC #C-37), is a five-bay Federal house with a two-story side ell. Barneyville's most prominent house, the Mason Barney House, 1 Barneyville Road (1802-12, MHC #A-1), is an example of an early 19th-century Federal house that was updated in the late 19th century with Colonial Revival details. Nevertheless, it maintains its Federal massing and prominent location at the intersection of Barneyville and Old Providence Roads.

Vernacular capes with Greek or Gothic Revival details survive at some villages, although Swansea lacks high-style examples of either style. In Hortonville are two capes on Locust Street, each of 1 1/2 stories, five bays, with Greek Revival sidelights flanking the central entrance doors. They are the Mason Farmstead, 831 Locust Street (1822, MHC #C-24), and the Daniel Hale House, 416 Locust Street (ca. 1845, MHC #C-25). Later variations to the vernacular cottage form that are found in Swansea Village are the Gothic Revival center-gable house with roundheaded gable window and Greek Revival door surround and sidelights, as articulated in the two dwellings at 64 and 72 Main Street (ca. 1850, MHC #D-57; ca. 1870, MHC #D-56).

By the 1830s and 1840s, the gable-end, side-hall-plan, 1 1/2-story Greek Revival cottage was appearing in Swansea. Again, most of the remaining examples are in or near the villages. On Main Street in Swansea Village are three bracketed Italianate versions of the form. The Stevens Cottages, 86, 92, and 96 Main Street (ca. 1860, MHC #D-54, D-53, D-51).

The most elaborate residential building in Swansea is the Italianate Stevens Mansion, 24 Main Street (1855, MHC #D-61) in Swansea Village. Built by Julia Chace Birch and James Birch, the house soon became the Stevens Mansion following the death of Birch and the marriage of Mrs. Birch to Frank Stevens. The mansion is an important example of the style with a hipped roof, raking cornice with decorative brackets, paired roundheaded windows at the third-story level, and wrap around porch. The mansion and adjacent outbuildings are in excellent repair and retain their architectural integrity.

From 1865 to the early 1900s, there was a fair amount of residential development in Swansea characterized by new building forms and

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 14

architectural styles. Residential construction in Hortonville was limited to simple 1 1/2-story, five-bay cottages with Italianate detail in doorhoods, wrap porches with brackets, and cornice brackets. The William J. Hale House, 410 Locust Street (ca. 1894, MHC #C-26), the Dexter Nichols House, 67 Locust Street (ca. 1870, MHC #C-32), and 39 Locust Street (ca. 1890, MHC #C-34) are all examples of this type of dwelling.

In Swansea Village where there was a good deal of civic building construction during this period, the Colonial Revival style was used to develop properties in keeping with the surroundings. However, prior to this late 19th and early 20th-century construction, the basic five-bay cottage form was still used with varying degrees of elaboration. There are few dwellings with mansard roofs in Swansea, among them a cottage, the Thomas Chace House, 52 Main Street (ca. 1870, MHC #D-59).

The 2 1/2-story building form continued to be used, as is demonstrated in the Colonial Revival conversion of Case Hall into the Hawkins House, 757 Stevens Road (ca. 1870/1905, MHC #D-71). Once a barn and meeting hall, the new house has five bays of 6/6 sash, a projecting curvilinear portico with second-story balustrade and tripartite, second-story window, and templar side gables with Palladian-style windows in the gable ends. The Colonial Revival-style suburban dwelling with gambrel roof oriented to the street is represented by 147, 155, and 157 Elm Street (ca. 1910, MHC #D-89). These shingled dwellings have the side-hall plan of the mid 19th century gable-end cottages. Later examples of the style include the side-gambrel Dutch Colonial with full-width shed dormer, seen at 127 Elm Street (ca. 1920, MHC #D-88).

Also represented, in Swansea Village especially, is the bungalow house type. At 90 Elm Street (ca. 1915, MHC #D-82) is one of the town's few examples of a simple Craftsman-style shingled bungalow with gabled roof, exposed rafter ends, integral porch, and short columns. More unusual versions of the building type include a concrete block bungalow with clipped gable roof at 108 Ledge Road (1908, MHC #D-74), and a fieldstone bungalow with hipped tile roof at 36 Riverview Avenue (1913, MHC #F-137).

The large part of new construction as well as the diversity of styles is best represented by the summer houses built in South Swansea at the end of the 19th century. One of the first summer houses built on Gardner's Neck is the David M. Anthony House, 98 Bay Point (1895, MHC #F-149). Constructed in the Queen Anne style, the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 15

house is shingle-clad, has a hipped roof, cross-gables, a wrap porch, and corner tower. One of the most popular seaside styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is the Shingle Style, which is best represented by the dwellings on Gardener's Neck known as the Colony. Designed by Fall River architect Edward Marvell are 15 and 28 Mattapoisett Avenue (1898, MHC #F-147; 1896, MHC #F-148), both of which have gambrel roofs and little elaboration other than shed dormers and plain wraparound porches.

In addition to the bungalow, other suburban house forms constructed in Swansea include the large, four-square Colonial Revival house, such as the Francis L. Gardner House, 1129 Gardner's Neck Road (1903, MHC #F-142). This shingle-clad, 2 1/2-story, hipped-roof dwelling has a full-width porch and second-story balcony with urn-shaped finials on the corner balusters. The house was also designed by local Fall River architect Edward I. Marvell.

There are very few architect-designed houses in Swansea; most are located in South Swansea, particularly the resort and suburban area of Gardner's Neck. One of note is the Harold Horton Anthony House, 132 Bay Point Road (1922, MHC #F-150). Designed by R. Clipston Sturgis of Boston, the Georgian Revival house is unusual for its use of brick in a shoreline summer house. Details include the two-story projecting portico with Doric columns, the gabled wall dormers flanking the main entrance, and the enclosed columned porch on the rear elevation between angled side wings.

Institutional Buildings

Although there are no remaining 18th-century churches or meeting houses in Swansea, there are records that describe the buildings that preceded certain 19th-century edifices. There was a 1717 structure for the First Baptist Church and Society, said to be 40 feet long and 33 feet wide, unplastered and open to the roof until 1802. This congregation was the first Baptist Church in Massachusetts and the fourth in America. The first building on the site of Church of Christ, Swansea (now the First Christian Congregational Church), was built in 1720 and had two platforms of brick for charcoal fires, an unusual feature for churches.

Several institutional buildings were constructed from 1790 to 1865. In 1807 twelve school districts were established, and for each there was a one-story, gable-end structure with three bays in the gable end. None survive. The only schoolhouse to survive since the mid 1800s is the Hortonville School, 77 Locust Street, (ca. 1830, MHC

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 16

#C-31). With two entrances in the gable end, the small one-story clapboard building with ornamental doorhoods is the only example of a pre-20th century school in Swansea. Other buildings from the same period that are no longer extant include the 1838 Liberty Hall/Union Chapel of the First Universalist Society in Hortonville, the Union Meeting House, which was located on the site of the Town Hall, and the 1847 board and batten, Gothic Revival building for the Christ Episcopal Church at Swansea Village.

Two Greek Revival churches survive in Swansea. The Church of Christ, Swansea (now First Christian Congregational Church), G.A.R. Highway (1833, MHC #10) is a white, clapboard, templar gable-end building with three bays, two stories, a center entrance, and a fine three-staged square and octagonal steeple and belfry. The First Baptist Church, Baptist Street (1848, MHC #7) also has a templar gable end and three-bay facade. There is only one story, and the truncated tower is squared and simple, unlike the attenuated design of the tower on the earlier church.

During major suburban growth in Swansea from the late 19th century through the 1930s, a number of civic and religious buildings were constructed. Swansea Village emerged as the civic core of Swansea, mostly due to the financial assistance of well-known local benefactor Frank Stevens (continued after his death by Mrs. Stevens). Three stone buildings were constructed, all designed by Boston architects. The first was the Town Hall, Main Street (1891, MHC# D-67), a Romanesque Revival building designed by J. Merrill Brown and constructed of fieldstone with Longmeadow brownstone trim. Stevens bequeathed a portion of his estate to fund buildings for the Swansea Public Library and the Christ Church. Buildings were designed by Boston architect Henry Vaughan. The Frank Stevens Library, Main Street (1900, MHC #D-66), is a multi-gabled Elizabethan Revival building of granite and Potsdam sandstone. Christ Church, Main Street (1900, MHC #D-68), is also constructed of granite in the late Gothic Revival style. Mrs. Stevens also funded construction of the two schools in the village. Frank Stevens School (1908, MHC #D-45) was designed in the Georgian Revival style by Henry Vaughan. The 1 1/2-story height, rectangular massing with portico and brick wings, and octagonal cupola are elements that reappear in later Swansea Schools. A major building is the town's first high school (1927, MHC #D-46). Designed by James Ritchie, this prominent 2 1/2-story Georgian Revival brick building is the largest historic school in Swansea.

A Shingle style club building was built as the Dorothy Brown Rebekah

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 17

Lodge, 98 Ledge Road (1899, MHC #D-75). The shingled building has an open three-bay, double-pedimented porch projecting from the gable end. Another Shingle Style structure is the Gardner's Neck South Swansea Union Church, Gardner's Neck Road (1916, MHC #F-138). There are Victorian Gothic elements in the pointed arched windows and the complex plan.

Most 20th-century institutional buildings in Swansea are constructed of brick and incorporate elements of Colonial Revival or Georgian Revival design. In addition to schools at Swansea Village, most notable are three elementary schools--Gardner (1924), Joseph Luther (1930), and Mason Barney (1936). St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church (1922) on Ocean Grove Avenue displays a Moderne influence in its stylized steeple.

Commercial and Industrial Properties

Few buildings originally constructed for commercial use are extant, and none continue to serve their original intent. All reflect the domestic scale and styles of architecture. The Luther Store, Old Warren Road (1815-1818, MHC #B-17), is unusual in Swansea for its saltbox design. The store, the earliest known example of brick construction in Swansea, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. Built and operated as a tavern from 1812 to 1857 was the James Luther Tavern, 159 Old Warren Road (ca. 1812, MHC #B-19). The five-bay, center-entry building is similar to residential buildings of the same period with its overhanging gable ends.

Only one industrial property survived the expansion and changes of Swansea. Although the early mill structures are not extant, a part of the late 19th-century industrial complex that is now Swan Finishing Co., Ledge Road (ca. 1889, MHC #D-72) remains. Many small businesses preceded the present one on this Lewin Brook site; and several mill buildings, no longer extant, preceded the present brick and wood structures. The two-story warehouse structure with low-pitched roof and tower resembles those of early 20th-century mill complexes.

Cemeteries

Swansea contains over 40 public and private cemeteries and family burial grounds. Four--the Hale Family Ground (1784) at Hortonville, and the Eddy Family Ground (1696), Christ Church Cemetery (1847), and the Old Burial Ground (ca. 1737) at Swansea Village--are

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 7 Page 18

included in the historic districts at their respective villages due to their associations with important early families or events in the development of those villages and therefore meets exception D of the National Register of Historic Places. Each is marked by a stone wall, and the Christ Church Cemetery has a stone entrance gate with Gothic Revival-style pointed arches.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The potential for archaeological resources is an important factor in the future planning of Swansea. Due to the known pre-historic settlements, the proximity to important waterways used by the native population, and the lack of major development projects in the area, there are significant resources that have yet to be studied. There have been inconclusive surveys done since the 1939 founding of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society. Woodland Period sites have been noted in South Swansea along the river outlets to Mt. Hope Bay. There are known Indian burial grounds at Gardner's Neck. There are ten documented sites in the South Swansea region and six additional sites have been classified in the northern section of town. Based on regional studies, the Taunton River basin has a high archaeological site density potential.

METHODOLOGY

The Swansea Multiple Resource Area nomination is based on a comprehensive communitywide survey, which was administered by the Swansea Historical Commission and carried out by preservation consultant Katherine Flynn. The project was financed by a matching Survey and Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The survey was conducted on a townwide basis with concentration in the five identified villages: Barneyville, Hortonville, Luther's Corner, Swansea Village, and South Swansea.

The survey methodology followed the Massachusetts Historical Commission guidelines and five types of survey forms were used: Form A for each village, outlining an overview pattern of development for the area; and individual property forms including Form B for buildings, Form C for site markers (as monuments), Form E for burial grounds, and Form H for landscape features or parks. The Area forms help to identify each cluster of development. Individual properties within the areas are documented on the appropriate type of individual form.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Swansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MA

Section number 7 Page 19

Katherine Flynn was retained to prepare this Multiple Resource Area nomination. All surveyed properties and areas were studied and evaluated according to the National Register criteria. Additional site visits were made to each potential property to determine appropriate boundaries and to affirm the integrity. Districts reflecting historic and architectural development described in the survey were identified for inclusion in the Multiple Resource Area nomination. Of primary consideration was the architectural integrity of a property and its ability to contribute to an understanding of the local development through its architecture. Of primary consideration was the architectural integrity of a property and its ability to contribute to an understanding of the local development through its architecture.

For the purposes of the National Register nomination, periods of development were established to recall pivotal points in Swansea's history: Early European Settlement (1664-ca.1700), Growth in Old Swansea (ca.1700-1790), The Five Villages Evolve (1790-1865), and The Emerging Residential Suburb (1865-1939). Early documented settlement of Swansea occurred on Gardner's Neck and in the Barneyville vicinity in 1664. Old Swansea grew and its original boundaries were refined in the period between the aftermath of King Philip's War and 1790, the year Somerset was set off as a separate town. The mid 19th-century date of 1865 marks the introduction of railroad transportation in Swansea, which generated summer home and later suburban development.

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8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locallyApplicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☒ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ArchitectureAgricultureReligionExploration / SettlementCommunity DevelopmentEducationIndustry

Period of Significance

1664 - 17901790 - 18651865 - 1939

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/ASignificant Person N/A

Architect/Builder

Vaughn, Henry; Beattie, William

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

INTRODUCTION

The Swansea Multiple Resource Area includes 24 individual properties and five districts for a total of 184 resources proposed for the National Register. As a group, the nominated properties chart the growth of Swansea from a dispersed colonial settlement dependent on farming and fishing to a flourishing suburban and resort community in the early 20th century. Some resources are also associated with the town's limited 19th-century industrial activity, including shipbuilding and cotton cloth and jewelry manufacturing. Five villages of varying architectural cohesiveness emerged as foci during the town's development: Swansea Village, Hortonville, Barneyville, Luther's Corner, and South Swansea. In addition, scattered development that characterized the routes between and beyond the villages survives today. A majority of the town's extant historic buildings are residences, many of them vernacular interpretations of period high styles. The nomination also includes architecturally significant institutional and religious buildings, most of them concentrated at the town's civic core at Swansea Village. As a whole, the Swansea Multiple Resource Area retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association, and meets Criteria A and C and Exceptions A and D of the National Register on the Local level.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PATTERNSEarly European Settlement (1664-ca. 1700)

Early settlement of Old Swansea focused on Mattapoissett, located between the Lee's and Cole's Rivers at present South Swansea, and New Meadow Neck, located in the Barneyville vicinity between the Palmer (also known as Warren) River and Barrington River. William Brenton of Newport purchased Mattapoissett, now Gardner's Neck, from King Philip in 1664. Evacuated in 1675 during King Philip's War, Mattapoissett reverted to wilderness for almost twenty years. In

☒ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Swansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MA

Section number 8 Page 1

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Architect/Builder:

Edward I. Marvell Fall River, MA
R. Clipston Sturgis, Boston, MA
J. Memill Brown, Boston, MA

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 2

1693 Brenton's sons sold the land to Samuel Gardner and Ralph Chapman of Newport. The Gardner family was primarily responsible for settlement and farming of the Neck well into the 18th century. Also in 1664, a group of Baptists led by the Rev. John Myles and Capt. Thomas Willet settled the area straddling the present Swansea and Barrington (Rhode Island) boundary, after being forced to leave Rehoboth due to religious persecution. Arriving at New Meadow Neck, Myles oversaw construction of both a Baptist meetinghouse in present Barrington and his own garrisoned house at Barneyville. In 1667 the two settlements were joined under a single land grant from the Court of Jurisdiction of New Plymouth to Myles, Willet, and their neighbors. This grant for the town of Swansea covered the entire area south of Rehoboth and Taunton, between the Taunton River to the east and the Providence River to the west.

Consisting of five main peninsulas or necks separated by six rivers emptying into Narragansett Bay--Taunton, Lee's, Cole's, Palmer, Barrington, and Providence (east to west)--Old Swansea was well-suited to a fishing economy, which complemented the agricultural activity away from the shoreline. Proximity to these major water resources attracted the settlers and offered them a viable environment.

The responsibility for the disposition of land to the early settlers was given to Captain Willet and five others as part of the formalization of the town government. Records of Town Meeting from 1670 indicate a three-rank plan, in which each newcomer to Swansea would be assigned to a rank and land would be apportioned according to one's rank; one acre to persons of the first rank, two acres to second-rank persons, and three acres to those of the third rank. Religious tolerance and a structured educational system were part of the initial settlement. In 1673, provision was made for a school and schoolmaster's salary. The establishment of schools was indicated in the early partition of lands, in which a lot was reserved for a pastor, a teacher, and a schoolmaster. In 1673, the Rev. John Myles, who was the local pastor, became the first schoolmaster, thus laying the foundation for the Swansea public schools.

Growth in Old Swansea (ca. 1700-1790)

With the advent of the new century came the development of permanent settlement. Religious institutions were established and houses of worship were built. Schooling, which had only started before it was interrupted by the 1675 King Philip's War, developed an ongoing

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 3

program in the early 1700s. Farmsteads, family burial grounds, and other dwellings, many still extant, were constructed.

The Baptist Meeting House, having been built in what is now Barrington, was moved to North Swansea in 1700 and rebuilt in 1717. This religious institution, upon which Swansea was founded, was firmly established. In 1701, a Friends Meeting was organized. And in 1720, the Church of Christ, Swansea, which had been established in 1693, built its first meetinghouse in the northwest part of town.

The tolerance and proliferation of the early religious denominations emphasized and perpetuated the original premise on which Swansea was settled. The importance of religious tolerance resounded from the Town Meeting of 1712, when the residents voted to refuse to pay the 100-pound tax for a Puritan minister and voted, instead, to freely tax themselves 500 pounds and whatever else it would cost them to chose their own minister and to defend that stand in court. The only residents who disagreed were those in the west part of town, now Barrington. This, no doubt, contributed to the 1717 setting-off of Barrington as a separate town.

At the turn of the century, the public schools also became firmly established as a permanent and necessary institution of Swansea. In 1702 the selectmen were requested to procure a grammar schoolmaster, and after 1709 there was a permanent schoolmaster who received his stipend from the town. In 1743 and in 1755, there are accounts of discussions about establishing a permanent school building.

Important early families of Swansea were for the most part descendants of original land grantees or purchasers. The Martins, descending from John Martin, road surveyor, who settled in Swansea in 1665, developed a 100-acre farm and built one of the town's oldest surviving houses, the Martin House (1728). Martins were also present at Hortonville, although the primary landholders there were the Hales and Eddys. John Hale (then spelled Haile) (1677-1718) moved to the area in 1709 and established what was to become one of the more extensive farmsteads in Swansea. On the opposite side of Locust Street (part of an early Colonial road) was the Eddy farm, which later became known as the Baker Farm Complex (ca. 1750, 1835, MHC #s C-28, C-29, C-30). This is an excellent example of an 18th/19th century farmstead retaining much of its agricultural setting. The farm reflects the importance of agriculture as a mainstay of Swansea's economic development throughout its history.

Early families at what is now known as Swansea Village were the

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 4

Eddys and the Hills. Zachariah Eddy (1639-1718), the family patriarch, moved to Swansea from Middleboro in the late 1600s. On his farm he set aside land for the family burial ground (MHC #D-818), in which the earliest marker was placed in 1687. Ebenezer Eddy (b. 1675) sold his farm to Jonathan Hill in 1720. Hill's Georgian homestead (ca. 1750, MHC #D-65) still stands on Main Street as a reminder of the early development there. At Barneyville, Jonathan Barney, whose grandfather settled in Swansea in 1690, built a family homestead on the east bank of the Palmer River (ca. 1750, MHC #A-3). Beyond the villages, scattered 18th-century farmsteads were also located on the primary roads to surrounding towns, namely Market Street and Old Warren Road (to Warren), Hortonville/Hornbine Road (to Rehoboth), and Sharps Lot Road (to Dighton).

Although farming was paramount to Swansea's economy, fishing also was important, and South Swansea was the focus for this industry. Throughout the 1700s, descendants of the first Samuel Gardner fished and farmed on Gardner's Neck. Peleg Gardner (1719-1789), who is best remembered for the many descendants from his sixteen children, turned solely to fishing. A pier was built at Cedar Cove on the Cole's River and the mainstay was menhaden, which in later years was salted and shipped abroad. The first recorded Gardner homestead was built in 1719; however, only later dwellings, such as 1035 Gardner's Neck Road (ca. 1768, MHC #F-141), survive as reminders of this important South Swansea family. On the opposite bank of the Cole's River, farmsteads dotted two routes with water access: Pearse Road at Touisset, and Cedar Avenue further inland to the north.

Swansea: The Five Villages Evolve (1790-1865)

At the onset of this period of development, Somerset was set off as a separate town in 1790, thus determining Swansea's present geographic size. At this time, the town was primarily a collection of scattered farmsteads, with no fewer than thirty burial grounds as evidence of their dispersed character. There were already pockets of concentrated settlement at Gardner's Neck where there was substantial fishing and farming activity, and at Barneyville, where Jonathan Barney started a shipyard in the late 1700s. During the next sixty years, the five distinct villages of Swansea evolved, each representing varying development patterns. Each was geographically isolated from the others and for this reason became somewhat self-reliant.

Barneyville's small boat building business on the Palmer River was taken over in 1802 by Mason Barney, son of Jonathan Barney, who had

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 5

begun the yard. Under Mason Barney's rule, the shipyard became well known around the world, continuing operations until 1861. The yard produced gunboats, whalers, merchant ships, and barges. Ships were built of native timbers with planking from Attleboro and Seekonk. Barneyville developed into a small but flourishing village with its own hotel, store, post office, and several residences on Barneyville Road and Old Providence Road.

Luther's Corner evolved around main transportation routes--Pearse Road and Maple Avenue from the Cole's River to the interior, and Old Warren Road connecting Swansea to Warren. Although Lt. Hezekiah Luther (1676-1763) lived in Swansea from as early as 1704 (when he married Martha Gardner), it was his descendants who developed Luther's Corner as the town's first commercial center. Dominating the intersection are Luther's Tavern (ca. 1812, MHC #B-19), built by James Luther and operated as a tavern and stagecoach stop until 1857, and the Luther Store (1815, MHC #B-17), owned and operated by John Brown Luther (1794-1823) and later by Joseph Gardner Luther (1789-1859). The Luther family was also active in the development of surrounding houses that comprised the loosely organized village, also known as Swansea Center.

Hortonville on the winding upper stretch of the Cole's River was the location of 18th- and 19th-century saw and grist mills (none extant). In addition, the village supported one of the first large cotton mills in Massachusetts, operating with 200 to 300 spindles. The Swansea Cotton Manufacturing Co. was built in 1806 by Oliver Chace on Factory Lane, now known as Maiden Lane at the river edge. It burned in 1836 and was not rebuilt. During the 19th century, there were at least seven mills total at Hortonville, and with this scale of industry there evolved a self-reliant community similar to Barneyville. Construction of a district school (MHC #C-31) and the First Universalist Society's Liberty Hall at Hortonville by the late 1830s affirmed the village's growth by mid-century.

Swansea Village, at the head of the Lee's River and on Lewin Brook, had some small-scale industry and several stores. Israel Brayton (1792-1866) built a house and store at the corner of Elm and Main Streets and developed a substantial commercial business trading local products for imported items. The theme of liberal religious tolerance persevered in Swansea, and was manifested at Swansea Village with the construction of the Union Meeting Hall (ca. 1830, site of present Town Hall), which was used by several different denominations, and Christ Episcopal Church (1847, site of present church). A paper mill began operating on Lewin Brook at the foot of

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 6

the present Ledge Road ca. 1840. Cottage industries also thrived in the village, including straw hat making, shoemaking, and cloth weaving from yarns spun in local cotton manufactories.

One of the most illustrious Swansea residents of this era was James E. Birch, who made his fortune by founding the California Stage Company on the West Coast in 1854. He married Julia A. B. Chace of Swansea and built the most elaborate house in Swansea Village, the Birch-Stevens Mansion (1855, MHC #D-61), to which he retired in 1856. Birch then turned his attentions to the promotion of transcontinental coach mail. However, in 1857 he was lost at sea while returning from a trip to California. His widow married his closest friend and business partner, Frank Shaw Stevens (1827-1898) in 1858. The town of Swansea benefited from the Birch-Stevens wealth in ensuing decades.

As the other four villages hosted a range of commercial, industrial, and institutional activities, South Swansea--consisting of Gardner's Neck and Touisset--remained a farming and fishing community. Menhadens were the common catch and were used for menhaden oil, which had become a substitute for whale oil at the end of the War of 1812, when whaling was interrupted. The Gardners still owned most of the land and businesses on the Neck, and new farmhouses were constructed on Pearse Road at Touisset and Cedar Avenue connecting to Swansea Center.

Townwide developments of the period include the 1807 establishment of school districts. Schoolhouses were built in each part of town, including the five villages. The school system was redistricted in 1838, and records of the one- and two-room schoolhouses built survive. In the same period, post offices were opened in each area, thus accentuating the self-reliant aspect of each village. The town's older religious societies built new structures, the independent church of Christ meetinghouse at Swansea Center (1833, MHC #10) and the Baptist Church near Barneyville in North Swansea (1848, MHC #7).

Swansea: The Emerging Residential Suburb (1865-1939)

In spite of limited industrial growth earlier in the 19th century, the rise of nearby Fall River and New Bedford as industrial cities of national reputation after the Civil War precluded further industrial development in Swansea. Of the three villages with active industry--Swansea Village, Hortonville, and Barneyville--only Barneyville maintained an industrial focus through the early 20th

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 7

century. By contrast, the basis of Swansea's economy became increasingly agricultural. In 1865, the town's 191 farms produced large quantities of Indian corn, potatoes, and beef, which could be shipped east or west via the newly opened Fall River, Warren & Providence Railroad. By the end of the century and into the early 20th century, dairy farming accounted for nearly one quarter of Swansea's agricultural production, with market gardening and poultry also figuring prominently.

Regular transportation improvements fueled Swansea's residential growth from the late 1860s through the early decades of the 20th century. The Fall River-Providence railroad connection opened seaside South Swansea to summer home development, with construction in 1882 of South Swansea Station on Gardner's Neck, and later, Cole's Station at Touisset. Some of the seasonal residents, many from Fall River, acquired the area's older homes; others built new residences. The 1895 opening of the Dighton, Swansea, & Somerset Street Railway prompted the gradual suburbanization of Swansea, with modest single-family houses constructed across town, from the neighborhoods east of Swansea Village at the Somerset town line, to Barneyville/North Swansea in the west, and along Wilbur Avenue (Route 103) to the south.

The most dramatic changes to the landscape during this period occurred in South Swansea, where farmland was subdivided for the construction of large summer homes, and later, suburban developments. Summer communities cropped up at Gardner's Neck where various branches of the Gardner family began to sell land for subdivision, and at Touisset. Businessmen from Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford moved to Gardner's Neck, including Andrew Borden, William Almy, and George Manchester. David Anthony, another Fall River businessman, bought the southern tip of Gardner's Neck, built "Bay Point" (1895, MHC #F-149), and subdivided much of the remaining land for residential construction. The Colony, a late 19th-century single-family development at the foot of the Neck, is a result of land sold to Robert Wilcox and Eric Borden. The Wilbur Land Development Company surveyed and developed the area west of Gardner's Neck Road known as Ocean Grove. Development at Ocean Grove also included the Shady Isle Picnic Grove (1902, MHC #E-130), reached by a footbridge over the Cole's River. Amidst the rapid residential development was the continued farming of a large portion of land on the Neck by the sons of Leland Gardner, who engaged in large-scale market gardening. Fishing also continued as a viable business at Touisset. In the 1880s and 1890s, there was a market for fish fertilizer from menhaden produced by the William J.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 8

Brightman Fish Works. In addition, at least two oyster businesses operated on either side of the Cole's River.

In Barneyville, the Barney shipyard site was used for a jewelry factory, established in 1878 by former shipbuilder Daniel Child (1827-1914). The self-sufficiency of the village declined with the advent of trolley service there in 1901, as the trolley brought workers to the factory from other areas. Thus Barneyville slowly evolved into a predominantly residential community by the end of World War I. The demise of the streetcars in the early 1920s precipitated the closing and eventual demolition of the jewelry factory.

Hortonville continued to thrive with several small businesses operating into the early 20th century. Nathaniel Baker Horton (1820-1900), from whom Hortonville takes its name, became active in the community from the mid 1800s when he moved back to his family homestead on Hornbine Road in Rehoboth after working as a mason for twenty years in Fall River. Horton retained business interests in several Fall River cotton mills and banks. He contributed to community life in Rehoboth and later in the village of Swansea Factory, now known as Hortonville. There Horton built houses for his daughters and helped establish a branch post office in 1885. A meeting hall, post office, church, and school existed at Hortonville as late as ca. 1900. While farming was always a mainstay in the village, the last industry was a grist mill on the Cole's River that was dismantled and moved to Fall River at the turn of the century.

With the advent of the railroad in 1865 and the electric train in the 1890s, Luther's Corner continued to prosper as a commercial center and was for a time the town's unofficial civic core. Joseph Luther (1837-post 1924), proprietor of the Luther Store following his father's death in 1857, was an incorporator of the railroad. He also served as town clerk, tax collector, town treasurer, and justice of the peace. The Luther Store remained in business until 1903. In 1871 Seth Wilbur Eddy (1836-1916) opened a store (MHC #B-18) at Luther's Corner and continued in business until his death in 1916. His son, John Baker Eddy, assisted with the store and repaired clocks and watches; he also sold pianos for Briggs and Jewett Pianos. The same building housed another store opened in 1903 by the Cole Brothers. In 1889 Luther's Corner received its own post office; a district school was built in the early 1900s. A branch of the library was always stationed in one of the stores. Thus, the community appeared to have a thriving commercial nucleus. There still remained an avid interest in farming, and in the late

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 9

1800s the Swansea Agricultural Library Association was established with a meeting place on Milford Road. This was not long lived and when it disbanded in 1902, the books were donated to the Swansea Free Public Library.

Swansea Village evolved into the civic center of Swansea in the last quarter of the 19th century. In 1880, when Joseph Luther retired after fifteen years as town clerk, village resident Henry O. Wood became clerk, and the Village became the location of town business. Wood was also town treasurer and tax collector and used his home to conduct the town business until the Town Hall was constructed in 1891. Industry, never a major force in the village, remained confined to a site on Lewin Brook. A late 19th-century bleachery on the former paper mill site became Swansea Print Works, later an outlet for Fall River Print Cloth.

Construction of the architect-designed Town Hall (MHC #D-68) at the Village was funded by Frank Shaw Stevens (1827-1898) and family. A village resident, Stevens was active in community affairs, invested in mill businesses and banking in Fall River, and eventually served in the State Senate for two terms. Stevens's first wife, Julia Chace, had died in 1873 and Stevens remarried Elizabeth Case of Swansea Village's hotel family. The continued generosity of Elizabeth Case Stevens made possible the Frank S. Stevens School (1908, MHC #D-45) and the Joseph Case High School (now Jr. High, 1927, MHC #D-46). After her death, the Stevens Mansion was converted to a school for boys.

Two outgrowths of increased suburban development in Swansea in the early decades of the 20th century were the formation of new churches and construction of new schools. Swansea's first Catholic parishes--St. Francis at Barneyville and St. Dominic's at Swansea Center--were established in 1910-1911 by Fr. Bernard Percot of St. Anne's in Fall River to minister to the town's growing French and Portuguese populations. While the Barneyville church was short-lived, St. Dominic's Church (1912) is extant on the G. A. R. Highway (U.S. Route 6). Two churches were established at South Swansea, the South Swansea Union Church on Gardner's Neck (1916, MHC #F-138) and St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church at Ocean Grove (1922, MHC #E-127). A third Catholic parish, St. Louis de France, was formed by French-speaking residents in the developing eastern section of Swansea in 1928. Six public and parochial schools were built in the town after World War I; some of the public schools replaced earlier schoolhouses. In addition to the Stevens School and Case High School at Swansea Village, other schools constructed

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 10

were the Gardner School (1924) on Gardner's Neck near Ocean Grove, St. Michael's School (1931, MHC #E-127) at Ocean Grove, the Joseph Luther School (1930-1931) near Luther's Corner, Mason Barney School (1936) at Barneyville, and the Ecole de St. Louis de France (1929) in the developing neighborhood east of Swansea Village.

Once the automobile became the primary mode of transportation, Swansea developed into a commuter suburb of Fall River, Taunton, and Providence. The villages in which there had been some commercialization and/or industrial activity generally reverted to strictly residential use. Shops, small businesses, and branch post offices closed. All civic activity was and has remained confined to Swansea Village, while commercial activity cropped up along Route 6, which became a U.S. Highway connecting Providence and Cape Cod in the 1920s.

Recent Development (post 1939)

New residential construction in Swansea subsided by the late 1930s and resumed in earnest in the 1950s. Many summer homes have been converted to year-round use. There has been substantial population growth since World War II, which has led to continued residential construction and commercial strip development along the major interregional transportation route, Route 6. Many rural landscapes through the town were sacrificed to the construction of Interstate I-95 in the 1960s. Most recent residential construction has been single-family subdivisions, although there are increasing pressures to build multiple-family and clustered housing units.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES

In 1941, the Swansea Historical Society was formed to "procure, hold and maintain documents, records, data, historical landmarks and monuments and other evidence relating to the history of Swansea and its vicinity and the people thereof." The Luther Store at Luther's Corner was donated to the Historical Society and has served as a museum and meeting place since 1965 after extensive restoration.

In 1965 the Swansea Historical Commission was formed and worked closely with the Historical Society. A survey of historic buildings was conducted by the Historical Society in 1977-1978, and in 1978 two properties were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Luther Store (160 Old Providence Road, MHC #B-17) and the Martin House (22 Stoney Hill Road, MHC #162).

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Swansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MA

Section number 8 Page 11

Publications, which enhance the public awareness of the historic resources and contribute to the success of preservation activities, include the town's 300th birthday publication Swansea Tercentenary: 1667-1967 and the Swansea Historical Society's The Swansea Stage Coach. Both publications have combined architecture and development patterns with geneology.

In 1985, the Swansea Historical Commission applied for and received a Survey and Planning Grant to complete a townwide historic resource inventory. This was completed and more than 150 properties were documented. This project led to the preparation of the Multiple Resource Area nomination, which was wholly funded by the Town of Swansea. The Commission is planning to develop a sign program to recognize the districts that will be designated by this nomination.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSwansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MASection number 8 Page 12

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of prehistoric occupation in Swansea are poorly documented, any surviving sites would be significant. Prehistoric sites in this area offer the potential for indepth analysis of coastal settlement and subsistence during later periods and the effects of changing sea level rise on these aspects of study during earlier periods. Wetland and coastal nonability in Swansea also offer the potential for an analysis of varied site types and functions, possibly containing complete examples of particular settlement and subsistence systems during different periods of prehistory. In close proximity to the mouth of the Taunton River, prehistoric sites in Swansea may be important in understanding native settlement in that drainage area.

Historical archaeological remains described above have the potential for providing detailed information on the changing social, cultural and economic patterns that characterized a First Period settlement area in southeastern Massachusetts. Archaeological survivals can help document the location and nature of the town's early settlement for which no examples and few locations survive. Historic period survivals can also expand on the data base of individuals, institutions and industries responsible for the development of the towns five villages. Furthermore, the differences between historic period remains can also help document Swansea's role in King Philip's War which basically started in Swansea where the first bloodshed occurred. Every structure in the town was apparently burned as a result of the war. Archaeological survivals also offer the potential for a study of early bridge technology at the site of Myles Bridge on the Palmer River. Seventeenth through 19th century survivals of fisheries operations are also important in documenting components of that industry including fish oil operations piers, wharves and other shore-based facilities.

In general, Swansea's residential/resort character with limited commercial activity should increase the potential for both prehistoric and historic survivals in the town. These factors combined with the range of potential resources for both periods indicate archaeology as an important component of this community.

(end)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Local Publications:

Brayton, Alice, Trading in Scrabbletown (Newport, RI, 1952)

Cool, Robert N. (ED), The Swansea Stage Coach (Swansea Historical Society Swansea, MA, 1976

Friends of the Bluff, Calendar (Annual publication with photographs of Ocean Grove)
Bristol Co. Development Council.

☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested

☒ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings

Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State historic preservation office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☒ Local government

☐ University

☒ Other

Specify repository:

MHC; Swansea Historical Commission;

Swansea Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 22.12 square miles

UTM References

A
Zone Easting Northing

C

B
Zone Easting Northing

D

See Individual and District Nomination Forms

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Swansea, MA Multiple Resource Area is the boundaries of the town with Mt. Hope Bay on the south, Somerset, MA on the east, Dighton, Rehoboth and Seekonk, MA on the north and Warren and Barrington, R. I. on the west.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary justification for the Swansea, MA Multiple Resource Area is the legal limits of the town as justified in their statutes since the historic resources are reflective of the whole town.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Kathy Kelly Broomer, ed.

name/title Kay Flynn and Gretchen Schuler w/ Betsy Friedburg, NR Director

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission

date March, 1988

street & number 80 Royston Street

telephone 617 - 727 - 8470

city or town Boston

state MA

zip code 02116

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Swansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MA

Section number 9 Page 1

9. Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

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Somerset, Dighton and Swansea Directory, 1908, 1921, 1927-28 1940.
Fall River Directories, 1904, 1908.

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State House Library (zeroxed copy in Swansea Public Library)

1849 "Map of the Town of Swansey, Bristol County, Mass."
L. T. Talbot, C. Engineer
(possibly Walling) - Swansea Public Library

1871 Atlas of Bristol County, Mass. F. W. Beers & Co. New York, N.Y.
Notes names of heads of households - pg. 30-31 - Swansea Public Library

1895 New Topographical Atlas, Everts and Richards, Philadelphia, PA
Notes structures in outline of massing/footprint and color codes materials
Swansea Public Library

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Swansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MA

Section number 9 **Page** 2

1909 Blue Print Layout of Gardner's Neck Road - The Colony
Bristol County Court House - Fall River, MA

USGS Maps For Town of Swansea:

Scale 1:25 000

East Providence, R.I.- MA, 1971/79

Fall River, MA, R. I., 1967/79

Somerset, MA - Bristol, Co. 1985

(end)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 **Page** 3

Swansea Multiple Resource Area
Swansea, MA

Previously Listed on the National Register:

Luther Store, 160 Old Warren Road, 5/22/1978;

Martin House and Farm, 22 Stoney Road, 10/2/1978.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Swansea MRA
Bristol County, MASSACHUSETTS

Date Listed

Cover

~~Substantive Review~~Accept *Beth L. Sarge* 02-16-90
Cover

1. Anthony, David M., House

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

2. Anthony, Harold H., House

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

3. Bark Street School

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

4. Barneyville Historic District

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

5. Bend of the Lane

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

6. Brown, John, IV, House

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

7. Buffington, Deacon, John, House

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

8. Church of Christ, Swansea

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

9. Cole, Benjamin, House

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper *Helene Byers* 2/16/90

Attest _____

10. Colony Historic District

~~Substantive Review~~*for* Keeper *Beth L. Sarge* 02-16-90

Attest _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Swansea MRA
Bristol County, MASSACHUSETTS

Date Listed

11. First Baptist Church and Society

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Melvyn Byer 2/16/90

Attest _____

12. Gardner, Francis L., House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Melvyn Byer 2/16/90

Attest _____

13. Gardner, Joseph, House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Melvyn Byer 2/16/90

Attest _____

14. Gardner, Preserved, House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Melvyn Byer 2/16/90

Attest _____

15. Gardner, Samuel, House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Melvyn Byer 2/16/90

Attest _____

16. Hooper House

~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

Beth L. Savage 8/8/90

Attest _____

17. Hortonville Historic District

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Melvyn Byer 2/16/90

Attest _____

18. Johnson, J. V., House

~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

Beth L. Savage 8/8/90

Attest _____

19. Luther House

~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

Beth L. Savage 8/8/90

Attest _____

20. Luther's Corner

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Melvyn Byer 2/16/90

Attest _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

1/2/90

Swansea MRA
Bristol County, MASSACHUSETTS

Date Listed

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 21. Luther, William, House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Helene Byers</u> 2/16/90 | Attest _____ |
| 221 Norton House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Helene Byers</u> 2/16/90 | Attest _____ |
| 23. Short's Tavern | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Helene Byers</u> 2/16/90 | Attest _____ |
| 224. Simcock House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Helene Byers</u> 2/16/90 | Attest _____ |
| 25. Smuggler's House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Helene Byers</u> 2/16/90 | Attest _____ |
| 26. South Swansea Union Church | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Helene Byers</u> 2/16/90 | Attest _____ |
| 27. Swansea Willage Historic District | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Helene Byers</u> 2/16/90 | Attest _____ |
| 28. Walkden Farm | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Helene Byers</u> 2/16/90 | Attest _____ |
| 29. Mason, William P., House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper <u>Butch Savage</u> 8/8/90 | Attest _____ |