

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

For NPS use only

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

received **MAY 19 1987**
date entered **SEP 4 1987**

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

1. Name

historic Cowesett Pound

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Cowesett Road

N.A. not for publication

city, town Warwick

N.A. vicinity of Congressional District #2,
Honorable Claudine Schneider

state Rhode Island

code 44

county Kent

code 003

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name City of Warwick

street & number 3275 Post Road

city, town Warwick

N.A. vicinity of

state Rhode Island 02886

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Warwick City Hall

street & number 3275 Post Road

city, town Warwick

state Rhode Island 02886

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____

state _____

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cowesett Pound is a square enclosure constructed of irregularly laid unmortared granite fieldstone. It is about 30 by 30 feet, and its walls range from four to five feet. Probably built in the eighteenth century, the pound is situated on the north side of Cowesett Road, about 60 feet north of the pavement. It is about 600 feet east of the Love Lane-Cowesett Road intersection in the suburban southwest corner of the city of Warwick, a coastal community on Narragansett Bay. The pound is set in a hollow, approximately 8 to 10 feet below the present roadway elevation. Five feet west of the pound on the Daniel Lambert Farm lies a brook, which provided water for impounded stock. The Lambert Farm and the brook contribute to the integrity of the pound's setting.

The walls of the pound are 2½ to 3 feet thick at the base and taper to 1 or 1½ feet at their apex. Some of the upper stones of the south wall have fallen. The west end of the south wall has a 5-foot opening with a wooden gate, installed in a 1981 restoration. Formerly, Cowesett Road passed within twenty feet of the pound; in 1928 the roadway was relocated and reconstructed and this section of road was raised to a higher elevation. The absence of curbing or drainage causes occasional flooding of the pound and threatens the walls.

The construction of the pound follows traditional techniques and uses local stone. The west wall is the oldest and is part of the boundary line with the Lambert Farm (see sketch map). The original height of the pound walls is unknown, as the walls have been repaired and rebuilt over the years. The walls were probably topped with capstones originally; such stones would have provided greater stability. One capstone remains, in the south wall adjacent to the gate post. The other capstones may have been removed when the pound fell into disuse in the 1930s, but an oral history account also relates that a nineteenth-century pound keeper complained of the theft of good stones from his walls.

Now abandoned, the Cowesett Pound is still owned by the City of Warwick. Maintenance has been performed by nearby residents and by civic organizations. A major restoration and repair effort, under the direction of local historians Anne Crawford Allen Holst and Lewis Taft, was completed in May, 1981, by the 443rd Civic Company of the Army Reserves. Their work included the repair of fallen walls and the placement of new wooden gate and posts, using three wrought iron gate hooks found on the site.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1742 (?) Builder/Architect David Greene (?)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Cowesett Pound illustrates the role of animal husbandry in Warwick's eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century economy. Animal pounds were common in agricultural communities from the colonial period into the early twentieth century, and were designed to temporarily confine stray animals. The pound keeper (or pender, as he was sometimes called) was a town official, appointed or elected to care for impounded animals until they were reclaimed by their owners. By 1861, the Town of Warwick had established five pounds; of these, only the Cowesett Pound remains. The pound may have been erected in the mid-eighteenth century; it was used until the early 1930s, though its records, if any were kept, have not survived. Today, the city of Warwick is an intensively developed suburban center, and the Cowesett Pound is one of the few survivors from its agricultural past.

From the initial settlement of Warwick in 1642 well into the twentieth century, agriculture played an important role in the town's economy. Farming was practiced primarily on a subsistence level throughout the eighteenth century. Most of the land was used as pasture for dairy and beef cattle and sheep, while a smaller percentage was cultivated. Even with the advent nineteenth-century industrialism, farming continued to be important to the town's economy, though stock and crops were more often grown for an increasing market economy. In 1875, Warwick contained 302 active farms and farm land comprised about 71% of the total land area. From the mid-twentieth century on, Warwick has become a residential and commercial center and there is now little agricultural activity.

In agricultural communities of the colonial era, each settlement had a centrally located pound, a rectangular post-and-rail or stone enclosure, five to eight feet high with a gate. The role of the pound in a farming community was to prevent damage by stock which had broken out of their enclosures. A pound keeper cared for stray animals delivered to him and, after collecting a fine, returned strays to their owners. Keeping a pound was not a full-time occupation, and many keepers were farmers who lived conveniently near the pound.

During Warwick's early years, town fence-repair ordinances were passed as an attempt to prevent crop damage by strays. The

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet #2

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name East Greenwich

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 19 295080 4617580
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is coexistent with Lot 2 in Assessor's Plat 236, as defined by the City of Warwick and measures 900 square feet and is designated by the City as the "pound lot." The Cowesett Town Pound encompasses the entire pound lot.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael A. Hebert

organization

date April, 1987

street & number 1124 West Shore Road

telephone 401-737-7493

city or town Warwick

state Rhode Island 02889

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Theresa C. Williamson

title

date 4/23/87

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

Patricia Andrews

date 9/4/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Bert J. Savage*

date 9/4/87

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet 1

Item number 8

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earliest reference to a pound in Warwick is in 1649, but the location of this pound is unknown. The transactions of town government in the first century of settlement contain multiple references to pound construction and maintenance. The earliest pounds were apparently of post-and-rail construction. Edmund Calverly was appointed the town's first official pound keeper in 1666, when fines were set at four pence each for horses and two pence for all other animals. Every year thereafter, for over 250 years, the town elected several pound keepers.

In 1729, the Warwick Town Council authorized construction of a pound adjacent to the Cowesett Road to serve farms in that area of the town. The 1729 pound was probably of post-and-rail construction; its first keeper was John Rive III who owned an adjoining farm. By 1742, the Cowesett Pound needed repair, and the Town Council authorized David Greene to repair "the town pound that stands in Cowesett." However, the Council records note that Greene was paid £15 6s 10d "for building the town pound in Cowesett." It is possible that Greene replaced the wooden pound with one of fieldstone (which would account for the fairly large sum) and that the existing structure is Greene's handiwork. The Cowesett Pound was repaired in 1794, when Nicholas Arnold, whose farm adjoined the pound on the north and east, was paid for the work and was thereafter appointed pound keeper every year until 1804. Between 1857 and 1890 John R. Godfrey served as Cowesett pound keeper, and was succeeded by his son. The last keeper was Amasa Sprague. In 1933, the position was abolished and the pound fell into disuse.

Although it was no longer used, the pound was occasionally cared for and maintained. In 1948, Lockwood High School students cleared brush from the pound. In 1981, the pound walls were repaired by members of the 443rd Civic Company, Army Reserves, under the guidance and advice of local historians Anne Crawford Allen Holst and Lewis Taft; a replica of the wooden gate that had been in place in 1948 was installed.

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Continuation sheet 2

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Holst, Anne Crawford Allen, "Old Town Pounds of Rhode Island,"
Rhode Island History 3:1 (January 1944).

Holst, Anne Crawford Allen, "Cowesett Road 1870-1900," Rhode
Island History 30:2 (May 1971).

Jones, Robert O., Warwick, Rhode Island--Statewide Historical
Preservation Report K-W-1 (Providence: Rhode Island
Historical Preservation Commission, April 1981).

"Lockwood High School Students Repair Historic Cowesett Pound,"
Providence Sunday Journal, June 20, 1948.

Taft, Lewis, "History of the Cowesett Town Pound, Warwick, Rhode
Island," unpublished typescript, 1986.

Warwick Town Council Meeting Records, Vols. 1, 2, 3, 8.