

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 5 1985

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NAME: Saunderstown Historic District (North Kingstown MRA)

LOCATION: Boston Neck Road, Briggs Road, Cavanaugh Court, Church Way, Ferry Lane, Ferry Road, Gould Way, Keeley Road, Saunders Road, Stillman Road, Waterway, Waterway Extension, Willett Road

OWNERS: See list on file at R.I. Historical Preservation Commission

CONDITION: Good, Excellent; Altered; Original site, except 18 Waterway, moved within district

DESCRIPTION:

Saunderstown is a large historic district, containing 92 structures, most dating from the late nineteenth century, when the area served as a boat-building center, and the early twentieth century, when it became a summer resort. For the most part, houses are one-and-a-half- or two-stories, clapboarded or shingled, vernacular cottages or simple versions of popular architectural styles from the 1870s through the 1920s. The district is set in the southeast corner of North Kingstown, on a slope leading to the shores of Narragansett Bay.

Boston Neck Road crosses diagonally (southwest to northeast) at the western edge of Saunderstown; a small cluster of the district's buildings are set west of this major road. The district's three major roads are Ferry Road, which connects Boston Neck Road to the shore, and the Waterway and Willett Road which run parallel to the shore. The community is largely residential, though a tiny community center (Post Office and Town Recreation Building) is located at the intersection of Boston Neck Road and Ferry Road.

Houses are set on large lots, often well back from the road, and the landscape is still rough and semi-rural. Wooded areas visually separate many of the houses from each other and the roads. Streets are small and narrow, without sidewalks, and, in some cases, unpaved (some are not, in fact, public roads but remain private ways). Fine, dry-laid stone walls thread throughout the district, most marking lot lines, drives, or the road edge; some walls may document earlier agricultural uses of the land as they appear to mark field divisions.

INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

Contributing structures are defined as those which are relatively well preserved and which date from the period of Saunderstown's development as a late 19th-century boat-building center and early 20th-century summer resort. Few new structures were added to Saunderstown during the

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1930s, but throughout the 1940s to the present, building has continued in the area and Saunderstown is now becoming a year-round residential village. Many of the houses constructed since the 1940s are fine examples of how modern construction need not destroy the historic character of a district--their scale, materials, and siting respect the earlier buildings. A few of the newer houses are characteristic of the forms of development, such as suburban tracts. However, all of these later buildings have been defined as technically non-contributing; none meets the test of exceptionality, although many are attractive and sympathetic. Only a few are real intrusions on the historic character of the district, but they describe a later stage in the development of Saunderstown which, while not unimportant, is not so significant as the earlier stages. This accounts for the relatively large number of non-contributing structures; it should be understood that, while these buildings do not add in an exceptional manner to the district's character, neither do they significantly detract from it. When buildings from the period of significance are well preserved except for re-siding with vinyl or aluminum, they are described as contributing.

BOSTON NECK ROAD

- 2500 Saunderstown Country Store (c. 1914): A simple, 2½-story, shingled and clapboarded commercial building.
- 2549 Former Fire Barn, now Town Recreation Building (c. 1900): This simple, 2-story, shingled building was a community hall for theatricals, dances, and public suppers before 1905, when it was converted into a fire barn. By 1909, it housed the first motorized fire apparatus in southern Rhode Island. After the construction of a new Saunderstown fire station in the mid-1960s, it once again became a recreation center.
- 2590 Henry S. Newcombe House (1921): A 2½-story, Colonial Revival house designed by Jackson, Robertson and Adams of Providence, set well back on a private drive, and built on the foundation of the 17th-century Willet-Carpenter House. Owen Wister wrote most of his novel Lady Baltimore here but was dissuaded from purchasing the Carpenter House when the Misses Carpenter insisted upon a deed restriction forbidding alcohol on the premises.
- 2600 House (c. 1900): A 1½-story, gambrel-roofed structure with monitor dormers and a recessed front porch. North of the house is a small guest cottage, c. 1960 and non-contributing.

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CAVANAUGH COURT

- 1 House (c. 1915): A 1½-story bungalow with wide clapboards, a partially recessed porch around the southeast corner, and broad, shed-roofed dormers on the slopes of the gable roof.
- 2 House (c. 1915): Once similar to #4, this house has been altered by enclosure of its veranda, installation of a bay window, and vinyl siding.
- 3 House (c. 1915): A large gable projects from the front roof slope of this 1½-story, flank-gable-roofed house. The roof's exposed rafters cover a small veranda and are supported by piers of concrete blocks cast to simulate stone. The same type of blocks are used for the foundation. Clapboards cover the lower section of the house, with shingles appearing above.
- 4 House (c. 1915): Similar to #3, but somewhat smaller. It has a veranda across the entire front elevation.
- 5 House (c. 1915): Similar to #3, with a full front veranda; completely sheathed in shingles.
- 6 House (c. 1930): The jerkinhead roof of this small house is echoed by a jerkinhead door hood; a flat-roofed addition is set to the east.

CHURCH WAY

- 5 House (c. 1870): A 2-story, gable-roofed cottage with a veranda edging the east and south sides.
- 36 House (c. 1935): A 1½-story, shingled house with a screened porch to the east.
- 60 House (c. 1935): A gable roof covers this 1½-story, shingled residence.
- 70 House (c. 1935, c. 1945 additions): This 1½-story, shingled residence evolved from a 1-room cottage that was enlarged following the second World War.

FERRY ROAD

- 4 House (c. 1900): A 1½-story, gable-roofed house, covered with painted shingles and set on a stone foundation.

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Ferry Road (cont.)

- 20 Saunderstown Post Office, former Narragansett Baptist Church (1902): This 1-story, hipped-roof building with a 2-story, hipped-roof entrance tower was built in 1902 as a Baptist mission chapel. It became the Narragansett Baptist Church in 1908 when a large part of the congregation which had met at the South Ferry Baptist Church moved here. The tower was once open on the upper level with arched arcades.
- 53 William S. Nichols House (c. 1900): A cross-gable roof, its broad eaves cantilevered out by long, exposed modillions, covers this 2-story residence which is clapboarded on the first floor and shingled above. A veranda, which stretches along the north elevation and wraps around both corners, is supported by turned posts. A large wing was added to the south soon after the house was built; an attached garage has been built recently.
- 54 Saunders-Arnold House (c. 1855): This house was built by Stephen Saunders, one of four Saunders brothers who settled in the area around 1855, and had been owned by the Arnold family since 1865. The 2½-story house is gable-roofed; two small gables break the eave line of the facade; a front porch is now enclosed.
- 69 Reuben Garlick House (c. 1900): A 1½-story, gambrel-roofed house that is clapboarded on the first floor and shingled above. A veranda with turned posts faces Ferry Road.
- 99 Martin Saunders House (c. 1880): A 1½-story, gambrel-roofed house with a large ell to the rear and a veranda around the east and north sides. The lowest row of shingles has a zigzag edge where the second floor shingle covering meets the clapboards on the first floor. This house belonged to the Saunders family until 1960.
- 116 House (c. 1890): A 2½-story house with irregular massing; staggered shingles under the east gable accent the shingled exterior. A 1-story screened porch wraps around the east and south sides. The house is set far back from Ferry Road on a private lane.
- 122 House (c. 1915): A 2½-story, 5-bay house covered by a gable roof. A 1-story polygonal bay projects to the east. To the south and east a deck has been added.
- 136 House (c. 1915): The Georgian Revival proportions of this cubical, 2-story house are unusual in Saunderstown. The Tuscan-columned veranda runs along the south and part of the east elevations.

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Ferry Road (cont.)

- 137 House (c. 1910): A 2-story, shingled building with a veranda that runs across the front gable end and continues along the east side. A 1-story addition is set to the south. The building was used as a guest house for the John Dennis estate (28 Waterway) in the 1920s.
- 161 Daniel Saunders-Benoni Lockwood House (c.1855 and later): A rambling, 2-story, clapboarded house with several gables and eaves edged with decorated vergeboards. The core of the house was built by Daniel Saunders, one of the four brothers who came to Willettville (Saunders-town) in 1855 to found a marine railway and shipyard. After 1875, the house was occupied by Major Benoni Lockwood of New York, the first out-of-state summer resident in Saunderstown and creator, with his many friends and relations, of the Saunderstown summer community.
- 166 Saunders Homestead (c. 1853, 1930s): A 2-story, gambrel-roofed house with a projecting 2-story entrance bay with a pedimented, 2-story entrance bay and a large 2nd-story window over the front door, partially screened by a balustrade. This was the home of Captain John Aldrich Saunders, Jr., who moved to Willettville (Saunderstown) in 1855 in order to create the marine railway and shipyard. Stillman Saunders, steam ferry designer and founder of both the Narragansett Transportation Company and the Saunders House Hotel, later lived here. The house was at first a 2-story, gable-roofed cottage which was expanded and given the popular gambrel roof in the 1930s.
- 176 House (c. 1880): This 1½-story, clapboarded structure has a cross-gable roof. A veranda wrapping around the south, east, and north elevations is partially enclosed.
- 185 Bay Cottage (c. 1890): A fine example of picturesque late nineteenth-century design. A veranda overlooking the bay to the east wraps around the sides. A polygonal tower projects from the northeast corner, topped by a flared, pointed roof. The 2½-story, hip-roofed house also features hip-roofed dormers, corbelled chimneys, an inset balcony on the southeast corner of the second floor, and Colonial Revival detailing. The house was probably built by Edgar Logan, who worked at the Saunderstown shipyard.
- Willow Tea Cottage (1889): A veranda wraps around the gable end of this 1½-story, shingled structure that overlooks the bay. Above the veranda an unusual rectangular bay projects from the east facade. An ell extends to the north. The cottage was built and operated in conjunction with the Saunders House, once directly to the north, and continued to serve refreshments after the hotel was demolished in 1933.

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GOULD WAY

- 21 House (early 20th century): A 1½-story, shingled residence with a large veranda on the east and south.
- 22 Gould-Osborne House (c. 1900 with later changes): The original part of this house was built as a caretaker cottage for the LaFarge estate and occupied by Alfonzo Gould, a retired sailor. The house later was occupied by Margaret LaFarge Osborne and was much added to and much remodeled, some of it in a Colonial Revival mode by architect (and Osborne cousin) Alexander Knox.
- 30 House (c. 1900): Built as a barn and servants quarters for #22, this is a 1-story, shingled building.
- 31 House (c. 1900): A 1½-story, gable-roofed house with a screened veranda on the east and a 1-story extension, including a garage, to the west.

KELLEY ROAD (a private path linking Church Way with Old Boston Neck Road)

A. Livingston Kelley House (1928): A 1-story, flank-gable house. Kelley and the neighboring Staley family built houses at the same time and established a cooperative farm further down the road. The land was not divided until the 1970s.

SAUNDERS ROAD

- 12 House (c. 1935): A shed dormer displaying exposed rafters and staggered butt shingles runs across the entire front roof slope of this 1½-story, gable-roofed house. The house and its front veranda are on a high foundation.
- 18 House (c. 1900): This gambrel-roofed, shingled house has had an exterior brick chimney added in the past decade.
- 24 House (c. 1890): This 2-story house has a tall, steeply pitched, gable roof. The walls of the house are greatly recessed to create a broad piazza. Turned posts and carved brackets support the overhanging eaves.

STILLMAN ROAD

- 2 House (c. 1920): A 2½-story, shingled building with shed-roofed dormers protruding from the gable roof. An enclosed veranda runs across the south side.

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Stillman Road

- 7 House (c. 1905): The gable roof of this 2-story structure has rafters exposed beneath the eaves. A garage is incorporated into the first floor, and a porch extends to the east.
- 22 House (c. 1890): A large, 2½-story, gable-roofed structure that, judging from its irregular massing, has probably experienced some alterations. It was perhaps constructed in conjunction with the Saunders House.
- 32 House (c. 1915): Vinyl siding covers this bungalow which features a broad, flank-gable roof with a shed-roofed dormer, a deeply recessed porch, and a foundation of cast concrete blocks.
- 40 House (1889): A steeply-pitched gable roof covers this L-shaped, 1½-story cottage, built as part of the Saunders House complex.

WATERWAY

- 10 Captain George Kenyon House (mid-19th century, later alterations): The gambrel roof of this 2½-story house and the combination of clapboard and shingle wall covering probably date from about half a century after the initial construction of the house in the mid-1800s.
- 18 House (c. 1895; moved and additions after 1912): This 1½- and 2½-story house has a polygonal bay, pendant drops, broad eaves, and vertical board siding. The building originally housed the Saunders-town post office and probably stood near the intersection of Ferry and Saunders Roads. It was moved after 1912 to its present location and a large rear section was added.
- 22 House (c. 1895): A 1½-story, clapboarded cottage on a high foundation. On the south a veranda runs across the 3-bay facade, and shed-roofed dormers break the eave line of the gable roof.
- 25 Captain Alfonso Gould House (c. 1850): A 2½-story, clapboarded house which was rented by Owen Wister before he built his own house at Crowfield.
- 28 John Dennis House (c. 1900): This large, 2½-story, cross-gambrel-roofed house overlooking the water has had several additions. Inset cut shingles create diamond patterns under the gambrel ends.

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Waterway (cont.)

- 28 Garlick-Wharton House (late 19th and early 20th centuries): A 1½-story, L-plan, shingled house that was built in three stages in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The core of the house belonged to Captain Charles H. Garlick in the 1880s. The house was later owned by Frances Willing Wharton, a daughter of Benoni Lockwood and a once well known story writer, and her husband Henry T. Wharton. The Whartons were cousins of the novelist Edith Wharton who visited here frequently.
- 174 Spindrift (c. 1893): A large, 2½-story, gambrel-roofed, shingled, summer house built by H.B. Dexter, a Pawtucket lumber merchant. A large shingled garage/apartment stands by the road.

WILLETT ROAD

- 5 House (c. 1890): A 2-story, gambrel-roofed, shingled cottage. Ball-on-post newels flank the stairs leading to the veranda which is recessed on the east and south sides.
- 8 House (c. 1925): A tiny shingled cottage on a concrete block foundation.
- 15 Harry Saunders House (c. 1890): A 2-story, flank-gable house with a large gable centered in the front over a full-length veranda. There is a rear ell.
- 19 House (c. 1895): A gambrel-roofed, shingled cottage with a porch extending from the front. A large ell extends to the rear.
- 25 House (c. 1900): A 2-story, end-gable structure with a wing to the south. Recent alterations include addition of a bay window to the wing and vinyl siding.
- 34 House (c. 1925): A 2-story, gable-roofed structure, sheathed in shingles, with a first floor veranda. It is set well back from the road.
- 35 House (c. 1870): A 2-story, flank-gable-roofed structure with a handsome bracketed porch to the east and south and a large rear ell. Shingles cover the second floor, clapboards the first.
- 42 House (c. 1890): A 1½- and 2-story, gable-roofed structure set back from the road. Clapboards cover the first floor, with staggered butt shingles above.

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Willett Road (cont.)

- 45 House (c. 1890): A 2-story, shingled residence with an end-gable roof and a large, hip-roofed ell to the north.
- 54 "Rest Cottage" (c. 1890): This 2-story, gable-roofed structure was built by the Women's Christian Temperance Movement. Some decorative elements were unfortunately removed when vinyl siding was applied. A diagonal bay projecting from the southeast is surrounded by a veranda on the first floor.
- 65 Chapel of Saint John the Divine (1895, 1971): Land for this picturesque, gable-roofed, shingled chapel, with its pyramidal-roofed bell tower, was given by the Misses Carpenter, descendants of the Willett family, as a memorial to their sister. Elisha M. Robinson of Wakefield was the builder and the Reverend Philip M. Prescott, a summer resident from Washington, D.C., who donated \$2,200 to the building, oversaw its construction. Rockwell K. du Moulin was architect of a sympathetic new wing.
- 66 House (c. 1910): A 1½-story, gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival house, with large shed dormer. A door with sidelights is centered in the 5-bay facade. A wing extends to the northwest.
- 72 Thomas J. Gould House (c. 1870): Second floor windows break the eave line of this gable-roofed house and create gabled dormers. The shingled structure stands close to the road, the property edged by a tall stone wall.
- 75 St. Stephen's House (1902): A large, 2-story, gable-roofed, shingled house with central chimney and front porch. The house was originally owned by St. Stephen's Church.
- 90 Adolphe Borie House (1903): A large, 2-story, frame house with a hip roof. It was designed by the Philadelphia firm Zantzinger, Borie and Medary, for architect Borie's brother, Adolphe Borie, a well known artist. Some windows have been modernized and the porch on the south side filled in. Another building on the property was once a barn but has been converted into a residence. A handsome peacock weathervane is perched atop the latter's cupola.
- 126 House (c. 1920): A steep, cross-gambrel roof covers this 2-story, shingled house, which has a large glazed porch extending to the southeast and a Tuscan columned veranda to the southwest. A small carriage/caretaker's house near the road was built in the 1920s and also has a gambrel roof.

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Willett Road (cont.)

- 140 House (c. 1924): A tall gambrel roof with a broad shed dormer covers this 2½-story, clapboarded house. The recessed east porch overlooks a wide lawn that slopes to the Waterway. An ell has been added to the north.
- 156 House (1924): Similar to #140, but it has no northern ell and is shingled.

INVENTORY OF NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

BRIGGS ROAD

- 29 "The Shack" (c. 1940): A 1-story cottage with painted shingle sheathing and low gable roofs over its several sections.
- 44 House (c. 1950): A gable roof covers the irregular massing of this shingled residence.
- 56 House (c. 1945): A small, 1-story, shingled cottage.

CAVANAUGH COURT

- 16 Cottage (c. 1940): A low, shed-roofed dormer extends along the gable roof of this 1½-story house. The roof pitch flattens to cover a veranda on the east.

CHURCH WAY

- 20 House (c. 1955): A 1½-story, shingled residence with a gable roof.
- 35 House (c. 1966): A 1½-story residence with a 1-story section connected to the northwest by an open deck.
- 76 House (c. 1965): A 5-bay, Colonial-style house with a second-floor overhang. A garage is attached to the north.

FERRY LANE

- 3½ House (c. 1950): A shingled, 1½-story, gable-roofed house with a large shed-roofed projection from the southern roof slope.
- 33 House (c. 1950): A steep gable roof covers this 1-story house, which has a lower extension to the north and an asymmetrical gable hood over the front door. At each end under the gable is an unusual thin,

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Ferry Lane (cont.)

round-headed window with a keystone detail.

FERRY ROAD

- 33 House (c. 1950): A 1-story, gable-roofed house.
- 80 Winslow Ames House (1958): This modern shed-roofed house, clad in weathered vertical boarding was designed by Rhode Island architect Rockwell K. du Moulin for art historian Winslow Ames.
- 100 House (c. 1955): A broad driveway leads to the double garage which, owing to a slope, is set under the main floor of the house. A low gable roof covers the L-shaped plan.
- 110 House (c. 1945): A 1½-story, gable-roofed residence. The front roof slope has a large shed dormer.
- 131 House (c. 1950): Separated from Ferry Road by a large lawn, this is a 2-story, gable-roofed structure.
- 156 House (c. 1960): This 1-story, gable-roofed house with vertical board siding rests on a high concrete basement. An exterior stone chimney rises to the south.
- 190 House (c. 1940): A 1½-story, gable-roofed, shingled house set back from the road. A garage is attached to the west.

WATERWAY

- D.B. Wilson House (1950, 1968): The southern portion of this low, gable-roofed house was designed by the architect Alexander Knox in 1950; the northern section was added by Frederick Lansing Day of Boston in 1968. Horizontal flush board siding covers both sections. The house stands on the site of the Grant and Florence LaFarge house, which burned in 1945.
- 71 House (1954): The central section of this 1-story, cruciform plan house is slightly taller than the rest. A deck runs across the east facade. The house is sided with vertical boards.
- 77 House (1973): The broad eaves of the low gable roof of this 1-story house are supported by prominent cantilevers. A deck is attached to a pavillion extending eastward.
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Waterway (cont.)

- 78 House (1975): A gable roof form is created by joining right angle triangles back to back, which meet unevenly. The structure is covered with vertical boards.
- 110 House (1954): Vertical board siding covers this low, cross-gable house. To the east is a 1½-story, clapboarded structure that has a large stone chimney with a tapered brick cap. A 1½-story barn/residence by the road was built in 1965 and has a gambrel roof and clapboard siding.

WATERWAY EXTENSION

Saunderstown Yacht Club (1962): A long, gable-roofed building that extends parallel to the shoreline. The central section is taller; the entire building is covered in shingles. The building occupies the site of the Saunders House, built in 1889 and demolished in 1933, and the Saunders boatyard, active from about 1855 to 1911. The first clubhouse, erected shortly after the Saunders House was removed, was destroyed in the 1938 hurricane. The former Saunders House laundry shed was then converted and served as a clubhouse until the present structure was constructed.

WILLETT ROAD

- 8 House (c. 1945): A small shingled cottage.
- 95 House (c. 1955): A low, shingled structure with a large bay window.
- 110 House (c. 1965): A split-level house with a 2-story central gable, a double garage to the north, and a bay window in its south wing.

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PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1800-1899, 1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Other: Community Development, Recreation

SPECIFIC DATES: See inventory entries

BUILDER/ARCHITECT: Various; see inventory entries

SIGNIFICANCE:

Saunderstown Historic District is significant as a small, late nineteenth-century boat-building center (one of several on Narragansett Bay) and as an early twentieth-century summer colony, whose residents were attracted by the historic character of the old village, the rough wooded setting, and the exceptional location on the Bay.

Like many areas of North Kingstown, Saunderstown was farmed throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A major change was initiated in September, 1856, when John A. Saunders, Jr., his three brothers, Elias, Stephen, and Daniel, and William Caswell and Thomas J. Gould bought land here at what was then called Willettville, for the purpose of developing a marine railway and shipyard. The Saunders brothers were the sons of the shipwright John Aldrich Saunders who, first in Westerly and later in Newport, South Kingstown, and North Kingstown, built at least twenty-one sailing vessels, mostly for the coasting trade. At his North Kingstown site, near the Gilbert Stuart mill, Saunders had constructed the schooner Nonsuch, one of the most famous Rhode Island boats of the first half of the nineteenth century. The Saunders family, characterized by their descendant-historians as "compulsive boat designers and builders," kept at their trade at Willettville through John Aldrich Saunders, Jr., and, later, Stillman Saunders and his brothers. Between 1859 and 1874, three sloops were constructed at their shipyard, and many other vessels were repaired; their yard was located on the site now occupied by the Saunderstown Yacht Club. The six original settlers of the boat-building village had expanded to twenty families by 1878 in what by then was called Saunderstown. The male population was engaged in the coal trade, fishing, or in boatbuilding at the Saunders boatyard, which, by 1888, was run by the inventor and promoter Stillman Saunders.

Stillman Saunders, the colorful and dynamic moving spirit of his community in the first part of this century, designed six steam-screw ferry boats, construction of which was supervised by his brother, Martin Saunders. The West Side, the J.A. Saunders, the Narragansett and the 373-ton Newport carried people and goods from Saunderstown to Jamestown and to Newport. The Newport, built in 1907 for this run, was for some time the fastest and largest boat plying Narragansett Bay. The Wyona and Anawon, two earlier Saunders boats (1884 and 1893 respectively), were used principally on a Saunderstown-Wickford-Providence route.

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Capitalizing on his ferry business and, perhaps, taking a suggestion from the presence of Major Benoni Lockwood, a New Yorker who some fifteen years earlier had become Saunderstown's first summer resident, Stillman Saunders built in 1889 on part of the shipyard site, a hotel, Outre Mere, or Saunders House, and a group of dependent cottages. Travelers awaiting the next boat to Newport from the Saunders ferry wharf at the base of Ferry Road could stay overnight at the hotel. Some of them decided that the informal, working village-on-the-bay was more to their taste than their intended destination and stayed. Many of Saunders House's early guests were Benoni Lockwood's friends and became North Kingstown's most widely known residents.

Saunderstown's resort history is unique in North Kingstown for the national reputation in literary, artistic, and political realms of some of its denizens. Benoni Lockwood, who first rented (about 1875) and then purchased the Daniel Saunders House (161 Ferry Road), was a son of a Providence West India trader of the same name. Saunderstown's Benoni Lockwood came to North Kingstown to escape the consuming social life of Narragansett Pier, and his friends and family followed. His daughter, Frances Willing Wharton, a well-known story writer who published in magazines such as Lippincott's and Cosmopolitan, summered a little down Waterway, in the former home of her husband, Henry Wharton, a Philadelphia coal industrialist. The Whartons were cousins of the novelist Edith Wharton, who visited in Saunderstown from Newport.

Just south of the Wharton House stood the larger home of the Grant LaFarge family, which burned in 1945. Grant LaFarge was a son of a major American artist, John LaFarge of Newport, and was a well known New York architect. Grant LaFarge's wife, Florence, another Benoni Lockwood daughter, entertained the family's many friends and relations at daily croquet games followed by formal tea and her famous conversations, a university in talk for the numerous younger generation of the colony. President Theodore Roosevelt was a guest at the LaFarge house on several occasions, and Mrs. LaFarge was his guest at the White House.

The next generation of LaFarges included sons Christopher and Oliver who became authors. Christopher LaFarge's Hoxie Sells His Acres was a popular novel in verse published in 1934. In 1929, Oliver LaFarge won a Pulitzer Prize for Laughing Boy, a story about American Indians, and he is generally considered one of the most important ethnologists this country has ever produced. His preoccupation with Indian affairs may have begun during his boyhood summers in Saunderstown.

On the west side of the Waterway, at number 25, Owen Wister, a friend of Benoni Lockwood and the LaFarges, author of America's first western novel, The Virginian, rented the Captain Alfonso Gould House for ten years before building his own large summer house designed by Grant LaFarge two miles to

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the north (1600 Boston Neck Road). Wister was an important figure in American literary and political life early in the twentieth century as the author not only of a popular novel which generated years of traveling productions of its play version and several movies as well, but also of a non-fiction best seller about European politics at the time of World War I. Wister was a close friend of Theodore Roosevelt and was involved in diplomatic work in Europe. Other literary and artistic residents of Saunderstown, perhaps better known in their own day, lived in other modest shingle houses in this rustic bay-side setting, creating for themselves and their offspring memorable summers of vigorous outdoor pursuits--swimming, camping, hunting, fishing, riding-in--in the North Kingstown countryside, interspersed with equally vigorous discussions of matters scholarly, literary, and civic.

ACREAGE: c. 79 acres

QUAD NAME: Wickford, R.I.

UTM: A	19	298300	4597840	B	19	298010	4597340	
	C	19	297480	4597240	D	19	297360	4597600
	E	19	297910	4598410				

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

The boundary of the Saunderstown Historic District is drawn to encompass the greatest number of buildings which have participated in the district's significance as a boat-building village and summer colony and to exclude, insofar as is feasible, buildings which do not contribute to its historic character. The district proposed for National Register listing does not include all the area popularly known in North Kingstown as "Saunderstown." While there are some older buildings to the north and west of the boundary, development in these areas is more scattered and less oriented to the shoreline of Narragansett Bay. Only a handful of buildings on the west side of Boston Neck Road are included in the district: the Saunderstown Post Office, the former Fire Barn, and a single house (4 Ferry Road). These are included since the Post Office and Fire Barn mark a tiny community center, because they have been historically associated with the summer colony, and because they serve as a visual "sign" on the principal road passing through the area that Saunderstown is located here--without these buildings, the historic district is well hidden from the major thoroughfare.

All numbers refer to lots in Plat 1: the boundary begins at the shore on the southeast corner of 148, proceeds west to the southwest corner of 165, north along the east side of Willett Road, to a point opposite the southeast corner of 71, west along the south line 71, south, west, and north around 52, west on the south line of 28, north along the west lines of 28, 21, and 26, west across 24 to Boston Neck Road, northeast along the east side of the road, crossing Boston Neck Road to the southeast corner of 19, north along that lot's west bound, across 3 to the west line of 17, across 3 again to the southwest corner of 14, north, east, and south around 14, and across Ferry

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Road; then east along the south line of Ferry Road, across Boston Neck Road to the southwest corner of 31, north along the east side of Boston Neck Road to the northwest corner of 53, then east along the north lines of 53, 74, 88, 89, 101, 102, 110, 111, 112, and 127, to the shore, then south to the point of beginning.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

Photo numbers: 13-19