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Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Mass.	
COUNTY: Worcester	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 6 1973



1. NAME	
COMMON:	Blackstone Canal
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION	
STREET AND NUMBER: East of Route 122	
CITY OR TOWN: Northbridge, Uxbridge	
STATE: Mass.	COUNTY: Worcester
CODE: 025	CODE: 027

3. CLASSIFICATION	
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP
☐ District ☒ Site ☐ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☐ Private ☒ Both Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☒ Being Considered
STATUS	
☐ Occupied ☒ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC	
Yes: ☐ Restricted ☒ Unrestricted ☐ No	
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)	
☐ Agricultural ☐ Commercial ☐ Educational ☐ Entertainment ☐ Government ☐ Industrial ☐ Military ☐ Museum ☐ Park ☐ Private Residence ☐ Religious ☐ Scientific ☐ Transportation ☒ Other (Specify) open space no present use	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY	
OWNER'S NAME: Multiple: public (town of Northbridge) and private	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:
	CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION	
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Worcester County Registry of Deeds	
STREET AND NUMBER: Main Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Worcester	STATE: Mass.
	CODE: 025

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS	
TITLE OF SURVEY: Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth	
DATE OF SURVEY: 1972	☐ Federal ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Massachusetts Historical Commission	
STREET AND NUMBER: Office of the Secretary, State House	
CITY OR TOWN: Boston	STATE: Mass.
	CODE: 025

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Mass.	COUNTY: Worcester	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
		FEB 6 1973	
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The section of the Blackstone Canal in Massachusetts was twenty-seven and one-half miles long and was completed in 1828. It ran from the town of Worcester in a south/southeast direction through the Blackstone River Valley and the towns of Millbury, Sutton, Grafton, Northbridge, Uxbridge and Mendon.¹ At Mendon the canal joined its Rhode Island counterpart and completed its course to the headwaters of Narragansett Bay At Providence. The Blackstone Valley is a low interval area dominated by the shallow (average depth 3 feet) and meandering Blackstone River. The source of the River is North Pond in Worcester. As the River travels south, it serves as a watershed for the valley.

The section of the Blackstone Canal herein submitted is 3.5 miles long and located in the towns of Uxbridge and Northbridge. In this section, the Canal runs in a southerly direction and is located west of the Blackstone River and east of the Providence Rd (Route 122). Within the proposed boundaries, the area on the immediate west side of the canal is wooded and uninhabited while the land on the east side is wooded and marshy and characterized by the meandering of the River. At the Northbridge-Uxbridge boundary line and south of it, the river expands over a flood plain called Rice City Pond. Thus, the area is in a natural state and except for the canal, it has suffered little from man-made intrusions.

The proposed section begins in Northbridge forty yards north of Church Street. At this point the canal trough widens along its west embankment to form a basin. Along the section in Northbridge and Uxbridge, the towpath is on the east side of the canal and the horizontal berm or embankment is on the west side. On the west embankment, adjacent to the basin, is the foundation of a "trading house."² Except for its north wall, the trading house foundation consists mainly of granite slabs set in the ground enclosing an area approximately 20' x 30'. The north wall, which also is the basin embankment, is 4' high and is constructed of rough, irregular boulders. The basin extends the length of the wall and is probably where the boats tied up while they loaded and unloaded their freight. Adjoining the west end of the foundation is a cellar hole, 8' wide, 20' long and 4' deep, whose walls are constructed of rough, irregularly sized boulders. In the canal trough opposite the trading house foundation are the remains of a lock, consisting of several displaced granite slabs, regular in size and shape.

Crossing under the Church Street Bridge, the canal runs south about 350 yards to a dirt road which crosses its path. The canal begins again on the south side of the road and continues 1.8 miles, until it comes to a point in Northbridge just northeast of a place known as Goat Hill (USGS Uxbridge, Mass.-R.I., 1953). At this point is located a canal lock intact except for some stones which have been dislodged from the top of its granite walls. Continuing south the canal crosses the Northbridge-Uxbridge town line and enters the lower end of the Rice City Pond flood plain. Waters from the pond have obliterated most of the canal and left only parts of the towpath visible.

1. In 1845, Blackstone was incorporated as a town from the southern part of Mendon. In 1916, Millville was incorporated as a town from part of Blackstone so that today the canal route no longer lies in Mendon.

2. The trading house belonged to Israel Plummer, Northbridge merchant and trader. Worcester County Registry of Deeds information dates the trading house to 1836/37.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Mass.	
COUNTY Worcester	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 6 1973

(Number of entries)

RECEIVED
JUN 2 1972
NATIONAL
REGISTER

Northbridge-Uxbridge: The Blackstone Canal

2. Boundaries. The area on both sides of the Blackstone Canal necessary to preserve the integrity of the canal is as follows: along the west side of that portion of the canal from Church Street in Northbridge to Hartford Road in Uxbridge, an area 60 rods wide, from the west bank; from Hartford Road to a point 100 yards north of Stanley Mills, an area 23 rods wide, from the west bank; on the east side of the canal from Church Street in Northbridge to a point in Uxbridge which is opposite and parallel to the above termination point behind Stanley Mills, an area 60 rods wide from the eastern edge of the towpath (east bank) of the canal (except in those places where the distance from the eastern shore of the Blackstone River to the towpath is greater than 60 rods, then the area will exceed 60 rods and include the area from the eastern bank of the Blackstone River to the canal towpath).

The southern boundary is a line 100 yards north of the Stanley Mills in Uxbridge. Church Street in Northbridge forms the northern boundary except for the section which extends 40 yards north of Church Street and includes only that area encompassing the towpath, canal trough, warehouse foundation and basin.

7. Description.

At Hartford Road in Uxbridge, the canal leaves Rice City Pond and passes under the Hartford Road bridge. Immediately south of Hartford Road are located the remains of a dam and a set of water gates. The water gates were built across the canal circa 1852 after use of the canal had stopped. The gates regulated the water flow along the canal which was utilized by nearby mills to supply water power for their machinery. The dam which was built in the towpath and perpendicular to the water gates sometime after the canal was discontinued, broke in 1955 and has not been repaired. As a result a 40' section of the towpath has been obliterated. Presently, water from the pond flows under the Hartford Road bridge along the canal to the water gates and then over the dam where it joins the Blackstone River east of the canal. From the dam and water gates, the canal continues south for 1.2 miles to the Stanley Mills, Mendon Street in Uxbridge, whose buildings were constructed on it.

Conditions for construction of the canal, including this section, were generally favorable. There was very little solid rock and the soil was loose and easy to excavate. The water supply for the canal and its numerous locks was obtained through the utilization of the Blackstone River and the damming of the ponds in the vicinity of Worcester. The canal route was surveyed in 1822 and the specifications called for a 10' wide towpath on one side (east) and a 5' wide horizontal berm on the opposite. The canal was to be 32' wide at the top, 18' side at the bottom and 3½' deep.

3. An Account of the Proposed Canal from Worcester to Providence. Worcester William Manning, 1822, p. 5.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Mass.	
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(Number all entries)

Northbridge-Uxbridge: The Blackstone Canal

7. Description, cont.

The engineer's estimate required a total of 62 locks for the entire 45 mile length which represented a 451½' descent from Worcester to Providence. The section in Massachusetts would include 41 locks which were constructed of granite blocks most of which were quarried in Uxbridge and Northbridge.

The present dimensions of the canal vary somewhat from the 1822 specifications. Thus, south of Hartford Road the canal is somewhat wider than 32' while north of Hartford Road it is somewhat narrower than 32'. The use of various contractors to build sections of the canal, as well as the subsequent growth of vegetation may account for the discrepancies in dimensions.

4. The exact number of locks built is difficult to ascertain. It seems, however, that less than the proposed number were actually built.



6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☐ 18th Century | ☐ 20th Century |
| ☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☒ 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1822-28

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| ☐ Aboriginal | ☐ Education | ☐ Political | ☐ Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | ☐ Engineering | ☐ Religion/Philosophy | ☐ Other (Specify) _____ |
| ☐ Historic | ☐ Industry | ☐ Science | _____ |
| ☐ Agriculture | ☐ Invention | ☐ Sculpture | _____ |
| ☐ Architecture | ☐ Landscape Architecture | ☐ Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| ☐ Art | ☐ Literature | ☐ Theater | _____ |
| ☒ Commerce | ☐ Military | ☒ Transportation | _____ |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Music | | |
| ☐ Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The idea for a canal connecting the inland markets of Worcester and the Connecticut Valley with the coastal trading centers of Boston and Providence was widespread at the end of the eighteenth century. General Henry Knox, Secretary of War under Washington and a native of Massachusetts, commented in 1796 that "a canal from Worcester either (Or both) to Boston or Providence is undoubtedly practicable." In that same year, several interested citizens of Providence successfully petitioned the Rhode Island legislature for an act of incorporation to build a navigable canal from Providence to Worcester. A similar petition to the Massachusetts General Court met resistance, however, and was denied since many of the Boston merchants feared the loss of their inland markets. The high promise of the Middlesex Canal, completed in 1803, spawned plans for canal routes from Boston to Worcester and the Connecticut Valley. However, these ideas never went beyond the planning stage. On the other hand, interest in a canal from Providence to Worcester remained and increased with the growth of cotton, woolen and leather mills along the Blackstone Valley.

In 1822, a route was surveyed and found favorable and overwhelming popular support in Worcester County forced the Massachusetts General Court to grant the necessary incorporating act the following year. In 1827, the two state canal corporations merged to form the Blackstone Canal Company. In 1828, the canal was completed. It was forty-five miles long, twenty-seven and one-half miles of which were located in Massachusetts. According to the survey, there were sixty-two locks on the canal to compensate for the 451½' descent from Worcester to the headwaters of Narragansett Bay. The Canal cost \$750,000, with two-thirds of the stock subscribed by eager Rhode Island citizens.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Manning, William, An Account of the Proposed Canal from Worcester to Providence. Worcester, 1822.
 Blake, James B., Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass. Miscellaneous Documents and Letters. Worcester Historical Society, Worcester Mass.
 Dickson, Brenton H., "Comparison of the Blackstone and Middlesex Canals," Old-Time New England, vo. 58, The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1967-8.
 Plummer, Col. Israel, "History of the Backstone Canal," Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity, vol 1, no. 3, 1878.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

CORNER	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY		R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES	
	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		DEGREES MINUTES SECONDS	DEGREES MINUTES SECONDS
NW	42° 07' 33"	71° 39' 01"			
NE	42° 07' 42"	71° 38' 04"			
SE	42° 05' 12"	71° 36' 20"			
SW	42° 04' 49"	71° 37' 16"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 189 Acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:		COUNTY:	
STATE:		COUNTY:	
STATE:		COUNTY:	
STATE:		COUNTY:	

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Anne R. Wardwell, Acting Survey Director (J. Michael Franceschi)
 ORGANIZATION: Massachusetts Historical Commission
 STREET AND NUMBER: Office of the Secretary, State House
 CITY OR TOWN: Boston
 STATE: Mass.
 CODE: 025
 NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

☒ State ☐ National ☒ Local

Name: John T. J. [Signature]
 Secretary of the Commonwealth,
 Chairman,
 The Massachusetts Historical Commission

Date: 5/22/72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 [Signature]
 Date: 2/6/73
 ATTEST:
 [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register
 Date: 1-25-73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

UTM Ref 922-75 w m
 A 19/081140/4667450
 B 19/080540/4666500
 C 19/080780/4667450
 D 19/083160/4667750

DATE OF RECEIPT 6/2/72 YES NO NUMBER REGISTER: Worcester

DATA PAGE

73000328

FEB 6 1973

PHOTO (S)

PHOTO DESCRIPTION (S)

MAP (S)

MAP DESCRIPTION (S)

LOGGED

ACKNOWLEDGE 6/2/72

RESUBMIT

REVIEW

HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

Inventoried By HAMR 6/1/73 End

ARCHITECT

ASST. KEEPER

KEEPER

WRITER/EDITOR

DIRECTOR, OAHF

EDITORIAL PROCESSING, EDITOR

Federal Registry Entry 3/6 Annual Edition EntryLogged FEB 6 1973 Card FEB 6 1973

COMMENTS:

WORKING NUMBER 6.2.72.837

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

Harold D. Donohue (#4)



Blackstone Canal

Uxbridge, Mass

72.9L

South/East from Hartford Rd

1/72

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 2/6/73

Title: Blackstone Canal

Loc. Worcester, Mass

view looking southeast

①

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Mass.	
COUNTY Worcester	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FEB 6	1973

1. NAME

COMMON: Blackstone Canal
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

East of Route 122

CITY OR TOWN:

Northbridge, Uxbridge

STATE:

Mass.

CODE

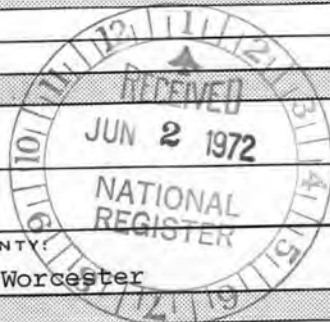
025

COUNTY:

Worcester

CODE

027



3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:

USGS: Blackstone, Mass - R.I.; Uxbridge Mass-R.I.; Grafton Mass.

SCALE: 1:24,000

DATE: 1953, 1969, 1953

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Northbridge-Uxbridge, Mass.

Blackstone Canal

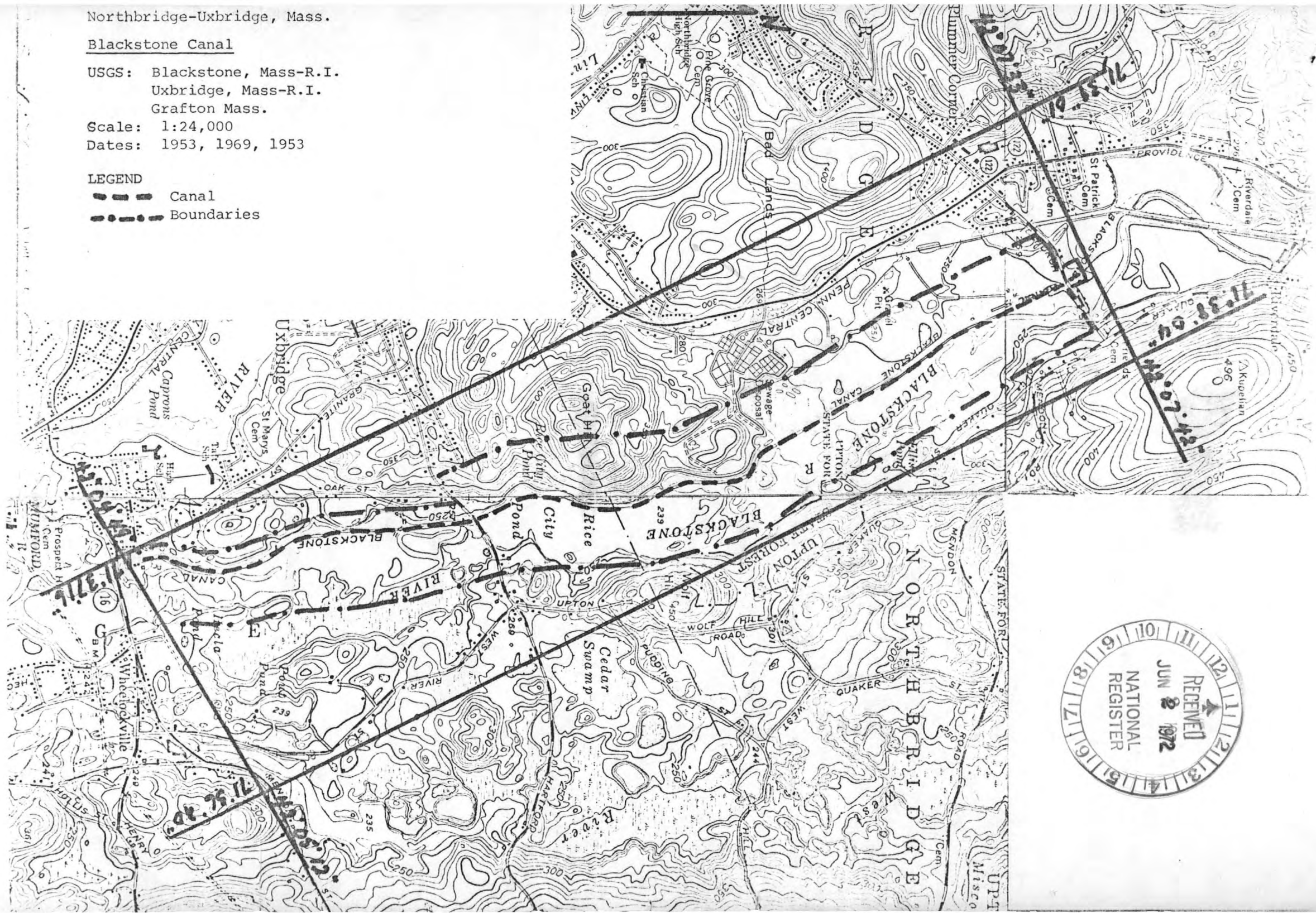
USGS: Blackstone, Mass-R.I.
Uxbridge, Mass-R.I.
Grafton Mass.

Scale: 1:24,000

Dates: 1953, 1969, 1953

LEGEND

- Canal
--- Boundaries





1 of 3 maps

UTM REF

9-22-75 Wm

A 19/281140

19/4667450

B 19/284540

19/4662520

C 19/283160

19/4661750

D 19/285760

19/4667480

4662520

4661750

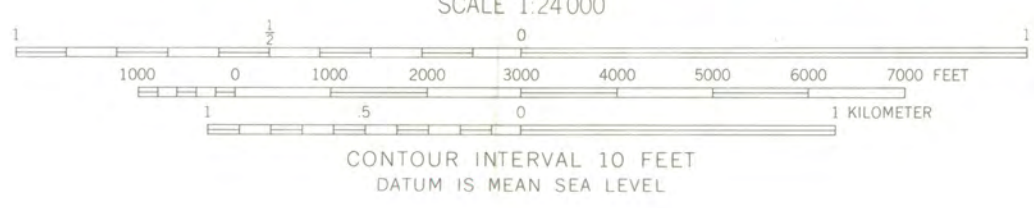
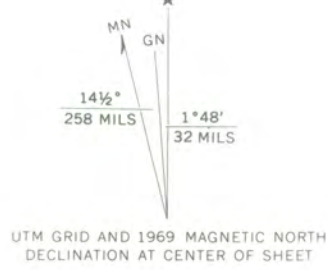
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

UXBRIDGE QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS—RHODE ISLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1942-1943. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1969.
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and Rhode Island coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, unimproved road, fair or dr weather
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Unimproved road, fair or dr weather
State Route



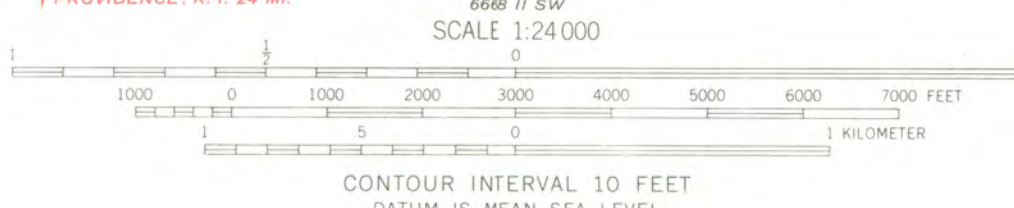
UXBRIDGE, MASS.—R. I.
N4200—W7137.5/7.5

1969

AMS 6668 II SW—SERIES V814



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1942-1943. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1969
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Area covered by dashed light-blue pattern is subject to
controlled inundation by West Hill Dam



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, all weather, hard surface
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route



GRAFTON, MASS.
N4207.5—W7137.5/7.5
1969
AMS 6668 II NW—SERIES W814



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the Secretary
State House, Boston 02133

John F. X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth

May 30, 1972

Registration and Nominations Branch
National Register of Historic Places
Room 3207-A
1100 L Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

CERTIFIED MAIL



Attention: Miss Mary Means

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed are National Register submissions for:

- ack. 1. Middlesex Canal, running through Woburn, Wilmington, Billerica,
6/2 Chelmsford, and Lowell, Massachusetts.
2. Blackstone Canal, running through Northbridge and Uxbridge, Massachusetts.

These have been declared eligible for submission by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the State Review Board, and have been signed by Secretary of the Commonwealth, John F. X. Davoren, Chairman, Massachusetts Historical Commission and designated the State Liaison Officer.

Yours sincerely,

Richard W. Hale, Jr.
Acting Chairman
Massachusetts Historical Commission

RWH/akc
enclosures

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered FEB 6 1973

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Blackstone Canal	Northbridge, Uxbridge Worcester County
Hancock Town Hall	Hancock Berkshire County
Old Harvard Yard	Cambridge Middlesex County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Robert Drinan
Hon. Silvio O. Conte
Hon. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.

Director, Northeast Region

State Liaison Officer
Hon. John F. X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
Commission
40 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

PHR

NRowland:mm

2/8/73