

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Kent	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER JUN 8 1972	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Gaspee Point

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Namquid (or Namquit) Point

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Reached by Namquid Drive

CITY OR TOWN:  
Warwick

STATE: Rhode Island, 02888      CODE: 44      COUNTY: Kent      CODE: 003

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Shoreline beach area</u>

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Spring Green Corporation

STREET AND NUMBER:  
459 Namquid Drive

CITY OR TOWN: Warwick      STATE: Rhode Island, 02888      CODE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Warwick City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:  
3275 Post Road

CITY OR TOWN: Warwick      STATE: Rhode Island, 02886      CODE: 44

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Not so represented

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Gaspee Point in Warwick, Rhode Island, is a windswept, triangular piece of land which projects into Narragansett Bay from its western shore. The Point is approximately five miles south of the head of the Bay and less than a mile by water from Bullock's Point on the east shore of the Upper Bay. Gaspee Point lies just west of longitude 71° 22' 30" and south of latitude 41° 45' 00".

The historic Point is adjacent to Occupasnetuxet, now Spring Green, which was settled by John Greene, "Surgeon," in 1642--the second colonial settlement on the west side of the Bay. Initially known as "Namquit Point," it is part of the original 620-acre farm which was bought by John Brown, "Merchant of Providence," from Greene descendants, and it remains today in Brown family ownership.

Definition of Gaspee Point is as follows:

Beginning at a point on Passeonkquis Cove which forms the northern boundary and running easterly for approximately 3600', then making an acute interior angle and running southwesterly for approximately 2025' along a sandy beach to meet the edge of the "salt-marsh" immediately south of the entrance road; the western boundary of the triangle is defined by following the "top of slope" contour which begins 50' west of the "salt-marsh" and runs irregularly north until it meets the point of beginning on Passeonkquis Cove. (See Town of Warwick, Plat 305, Lot 58.) The area so designated "Gaspee Point" includes approximately 15 acres.

The terrain of Gaspee Point is a combination of sand, marsh-grass, beach-grass, small trees and scrub growth. The "salt-marsh" is found in the middle section of the triangle. Access to the Point is by a narrow dirt road running north-easterly down to it from Namquid Drive. Namquid Drive, which forms an arc along the western bounds of the Point, is lined with summer cottages built on leased land; approximately 289 such houses are crowded into this area. Spring Green Corporation holds title to all of this land, including Gaspee Point.

Approximately two-thirds of the Point lies under water. Today, a dredged ship channel designated "Bullock Point Reach" passes approximately 500 yards off the eastern tip of Gaspee Point and permits easy passage to the port of Providence. Water depths indicated on the U. S. Department of Commerce's Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 278, titled "Providence River and the Head of Narragansett Bay," show one- to five-foot depths in the flood plain of Passeonkquis Cove, one- to seven-foot depths along Gaspee Point Beach, and only one- to four-foot depths in the flood plain of Occupasnetuxet Cove. The tidal currents off Gaspee Point are extremely swift, and all recreational swimming there is prohibited. Shoal water lying off the submerged Point has created a hazard for shipping for over two hundred years.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1772

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

For Rhode Islanders, the burning of H. M. S. Gaspee on June 9/10, 1772--and not the Boston Tea Party--was the "First Blow for Freedom" which sparked the American Revolution. Certainly a wave of patriotic fervor swept the colonies after the Gaspee incident, which was a major act of rebellion.

The Gaspee, an armed British Revenue schooner, entered Narragansett Bay in March, 1772, "to protect shipping and prevent smuggling." In effect, she began forced inspection and harassment of all offshore commerce, and the colonists, furiously resentful after the recent imposition of the Stamp Act, reacted. Deputy Governor Darius Sessions, writing to Governor Joseph Wanton at Newport, complained, "She suffers no vessel to pass, not even Packet boats or others of an inferior kind, without a strict examination and where any sort of unwillingness is discovered, they are compelled to submit by armed force."

Twice the Governor asked Lieutenant Dudingston, commander of the Gaspee, for proof of his commission and authority; twice the lieutenant refused, and Admiral Montague, commanding all British naval forces in New England, wrote to Governor Wanton that if Rhode Islanders interfered, "I will hang them as Pirates."

High tension continued along the coast until the sloop Hannah, commanded by Captain Benjamin Lindsey of New York, set sail from Newport harbor for Providence on June 9, 1772. The Gaspee, in an attempt to overhaul the Hannah, ran aground in the shallow water off Namquid Point in Warwick. Word spread quickly through the streets, and a group of patriots led by John Brown, "Merchant of Providence," and said to include John Tillinghast, who owned the packet line employing Benjamin Lindsey, met at Sabin's Tavern at South Main and Planet Streets in Providence to plan its destruction.

About fifty men--led by Captain Abraham Whipple, who was an experienced privateer (and would become a commander in the American navy in the war to come),--including Ephraim Bowen, a partner of Obadiah Brown; Benjamin Page, a close business associate and prominent shipmaster; Captain John B. Hopkins, nephew of Stephen Hopkins, later Governor of Rhode Island and Signer of the Declaration of Independence;

(See Continuation Sheet.)



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(Continuation Sheet)

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8. Significance.

John Mawney, physician; Turpin Smith, shipmaster; and Joseph Bucklin, Providence businessman (who wounded the Gaspee's commander)--left Fenner's Wharf in eight longboats after dark. A boat from Bristol under direction of Captain Simeon Potter joined in the plot.

Just after midnight, the group boarded the Gaspee, took its complement by surprise and put them ashore in Warwick. They then sacked the ship and set her afire; as heat approached the magazines, their powder exploded and completed destruction of the vessel.

Lieutenant Dudingston, presumably recovered from his wounds in the on-board scuffle, later returned to face a court-martial in England; he was acquitted. Rewards offered by an irate King George--which included £ 500 for the two leaders of the raid, £ 500 for information about those involved in the burning, and £ 500 plus amnesty to any member of the party who would identify the leaders--were never collected. A special commission held in Newport on January 5, 1773, to investigate the burning found it impossible to produce any evidence in support of prosecution.

The British contended that the burning of the Gaspee was an act to protect interests of Rhode Island merchants. Certainly, John Brown and the other merchants, who had built their livelihoods and wealth upon maritime activities, had every reason to resist the British imposts and Navigation Acts. However, the burning of the Gaspee, as a first blow for freedom, has far larger significance as a symbol of the entire move for independence which subsequently spread throughout the colonies.