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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

APR 5 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions. How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 45A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Minot's Ledger Lighthouse Shore Station, Gulf Island; U.S. Lighthouse
historic name Service Shore Station Reservation, Gulf Island

other names/site number Government Island Historic District (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Border Street N/A not for publication

city or town Cohasset N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Norfolk code 021 zip code 02025

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough 3/31/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough Date Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Date of Action

Patrick W. Andrews

5/12/94

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	3	buildings
1		sites
3		structures
6	6	objects
13	9	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: water related

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

GOVERNMENT: public works

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: water related

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum,

outdoor recreation

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: granite

walls WOOD: weatherboard

BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other METAL: bronze, copper, steel

CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☒ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☒ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENGINEERING

MARITIME HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1825 -1947

Significant Dates

1855

1860

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Totten, Joseph G.

Alexander, Barton S.

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 7.35 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	19	352280	4677660
Zone	Easting	North	ing
2	19	352420	4677640

3	19	352440	4677380
Zone	Easting	North	ing
4	19	352280	4677520

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared ByJudith Fitzsimmons/David Wadsworth, Cohasset Historical Commission, and Anne McCarthy
name/title Forbes, NR Edit. Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHCorganization Massachusetts Historical Commission date March 1994street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone (617) 727-8470city or town Boston state MA zip code 02116**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Cohassetstreet & number Cohasset Town Hall, 41 Highland Ave. telephone (617) 383-9900city or town Cohasset state MA zip code 02025**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Government Island Historic District
Cohasset (Norfolk County)
Massachusetts



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7. DESCRIPTION

The Government Island Historic District, Cohasset, is comprised of the remains of the shore station for the oldest surviving lighthouse in this country constructed directly in the sea, the second lighthouse on Minot's Ledge (NR TRA 1987). The lighthouse is located 2.65 miles to the north off the entrance to Cohasset Harbor. The buildings, objects, sites, and structures here represent a rare survival of an extremely rare type of facility--the mainland base for both the construction and operation of an off-shore "wave-swept" lighthouse. The shore station was developed over a five-year period from 1855 to 1860 on the northern half of this rocky island, then called Gulf Island, in the southern part of Cohasset Harbor between the mouth of the swiftly flowing Gulf River to the west and the more sluggish Bailey's Creek to the east. A large rock ledge fills much of the southern section of the property. The west side of its highest portion, a pinnacle called Beacon Rock (formerly Castle Rock), descends precipitously to Border Street, which defines the curving southwest and southern edge of the district. Six buildings (three contributing and three noncontributing) are located between Beacon Rock and the harbor, as are several objects and structures. The two main surviving buildings of the shore station stand at the north foot of Beacon Rock facing out over the harbor; the third, a small brick fuel-storage building, is located at the northeast corner of the property near the shore. A long stone wharf juts into the harbor at the northwest corner of the island; a small sand beach is located just to its east. Among the contributing engineering structures and objects here are the two circular platforms used as temporary foundations for the cutting and fitting of the stone blocks for the lighthouse, and two items moved here from the lighthouse itself--its fog bell, and its entire top story housing the original lighthouse "watchroom." The watchroom still contains the rotating mechanism for the flashing second-order light that was installed in the tower in 1894. The stones of the watchroom were reassembled here and surmounted by a replica of the lighthouse lantern house and copper-domed roof. A small grassed park area now surrounds the foundations, bell, and watchroom/lantern house.

The few modern buildings, structures, and objects associated with the present-day public use of the island intrude only minimally on the character of the island. Most, such as flagpoles, fences, and park furniture, are small. Of the three noncontributing

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buildings, the two for the Cohasset Sailing Club, located near the eastern edge of the property, are designated by law as temporary, and are built without foundations. A small dirt parking lot (screened by trees from the contributing resources) is also located on the eastern portion of the island. Short asphalt roads that branch from the property entrance to the wharf, parking lot, and sailing club largely follow the former circulation network of paths around the shore station. In spite of the relatively heavy public use of the property at the present time--for the sailing club, passive recreation area, and the public fishing landing--because of the prominence of its surviving engineering structures, buildings, and natural rock formations, the property retains its integrity as a mid-nineteenth century engineering and residential facility.

Government Island is part of an active harbor at the eastern edge of Cohasset, a coastal community with an eclectic character that results from development over the course of several historic periods. A narrow saltmarsh east of the island separates it from a street of ca. 1890s wood-frame houses and a small industrial facility. Border Street, formerly the "road from Cohasset" to Scituate, skirts the district from west through south, its outer side lined with modest nineteenth-century residences in a variety of vernacular styles. The entrance to the facility is located at the island's northwest corner, opposite a modern bridge which carries Border Street over a narrow channel at the mouth of the Gulf River. The town center, founded in the eighteenth century, lies .7 miles west of the bridge. Use of the shoreline of the inner harbor just west and north of Government Island dates back to the late 1600s, when it began its long development as a fishing and ship-building site. Referred to as "Ship Cove," over the ensuing two centuries this village grew up as a distinct harborside community. Among its many houses are the clapboarded and shingled residences of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sea captains, merchants, sailors and farmers. While the predominant house-types are the Cape Cod cottage and the larger two-story Federal house, on the north shore of the harbor are illustrations of the area's later development as an affluent summer colony. Visible across the harbor from the island are two of the largest estates from that period--the brick Colonial Revival William Cox House (MHC #242), and John Bryant's "Hominy Point" (MHC #279), designed in 1880 by H.H. Richardson. Although the shipyards are gone, the old "Ship Cove" is today a bustling fishing and yachting harbor, where facilities for pleasure-boating and the local lobstering industry predominate. Close to Government

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Island northwest of the bridge, four stone wharves dating from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century are still in heavy use, two retaining early wooden buildings. Doane's Wharf, just across the Gulf River from the island, marks the site of a 1792 tidal grist mill, and one can still see remnants of the mill dam that once spanned the channel between the mainland and Government Island. The town (and county) line runs down Bailey's Creek and north through Cohasset Harbor opposite the Government Island wharf; hence the view from the northeast to east is of the grassed and wooded islands, marshes, and tidal flats of Scituate, Plymouth County.

Although the exact construction dates of its earliest buildings and structures are unknown, the Government Island district acquired its significant character as a shore station facility in the middle of the nineteenth century, between 1855 and 1860, the years of the construction of the second lighthouse on Minot's Ledge. Two wood-frame buildings--a small engineer's office and a 2 1/2-story double-house for the lighthouse keepers--remain from the original cluster that once included several more.

Both of these are gable-roofed vernacular structures typical of a lighthouse-associated facility of that time. Situated at the foot of the island's most prominent natural feature, Beacon Rock, they face north toward the harbor over the most unique part of the entire facility--the pair of flat, 30-foot diameter stone rings that temporarily served as foundations or templates for the cutting and fitting of the lighthouse stones. At the harbor's edge are two other contributing resources--a large stone wharf, probably built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and a small brick oil or kerosene house, which was apparently built in the early 1890s. With the additions to the site in the 1970s to 1990s of the Minot's Ledge fog bell and the lighthouse watchroom with lantern replica, the sense of direct connection with the structure on Minot's Ledge has actually been heightened in recent years.

At the height of the lighthouse construction in the late 1850s at least eight other buildings and structures, including stone-cutting sheds and a blacksmith shop, stood here. Several were demolished in the late 1870s or early 1880s; those that remained until relatively recently, including a sizeable dwelling for the head lighthouse keeper, a shed, and a barn or storage building, were primarily associated with the property's conversion to a domestic, rather than a construction, use in

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1859-1860. Adjacent to the east side of the wharf were an 1850s boathouse and storehouse. The boathouse was demolished early in this century, but in the late 1940s the storehouse (not part of the present nomination) was moved east to become part of an adjacent commercial property on Parker Avenue. A small round glassed "observatory" was erected near the top of Beacon Rock, and on the pinnacle of the rock was an iron signal tower, of which some pieces remain embedded in the granite.

Through the early part of the nineteenth century, Government Island formed the northernmost section of the large Bailey Farm, all of which was then part of Scituate. The island may have been used as pasture land or a woodlot; it is unknown whether any outbuildings stood here at that time, although at least one extant building, the doublehouse for the assistant lighthouse keepers, shows evidence of having once been a barn. In 1823 the Bailey property was annexed to Cohasset, and subsequently the section that included Government Island was acquired by one of Cohasset's leading merchants and shipowners, James Cutler Doane. The large stone wharf (MHC #941) here is believed to pre-date 1855, and may have been built as one of Doane's many commercial enterprises. Constructed of large dry-laid granite blocks, now topped with asphalt and braced with wooden pilings, the Government Island wharf is still heavily used today as the town's main commercial fishing landing.

It is likely that the first building actually erected here by the government in 1855 was the Engineer's Office (MHC #4, Photo #2). A small, 1 1/2-story T-plan building with a gabled asphalt roof, it is sheathed in clapboards and stands on a granite-block foundation. It has six-over-six-sash windows with flat, unadorned surrounds, and a lunette in the gable of the north entry ell. (The door is modern four-panel replacement.) Other detailing is extremely simple, consisting of wide corner- and rake-boards, and an unboxed roof overhang with exposed rafter-ends and flat, unmolded trim. Used today for the storage of marine equipment, the building is presently in fair to good condition, with some windows boarded over. Although the central chimney was cut off at the roof line several years ago, the interior arrangement of two main rooms with loft, and a small room in the entry ell, remains.

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The surviving residential building, and the largest on the site, is the two-family Lighthouse Keepers' Dwelling (MHC #3, Photo #1), the on-shore home of the assistant keepers and their families. (The other house, demolished in the late 1960s, was a smaller residence for the head keeper. Possibly a former outbuilding, it may also have housed two families at one time.) The extant residence (MHC #3) is a large 2 1/2-story doublehouse. Recent work on the building has revealed an exceptionally heavy post-and-beam frame, an unusually thick lower floor, and a loft door in the east gable-end, corroborating 1850s photo evidence that it may have been converted from a barn. If that is the case, then this may be one of the ca. 1849 buildings mentioned on an 1886 government survey of the site. As the same survey indicates that some buildings here were rebuilt in 1859, this building may have undergone a conversion from a barn to a residence at that time, acquiring its three distinctive facade gables in the process. From the time the lighthouse began operation in 1860, this house was the living quarters for the assistant lighthouse keepers and their families. Sheathed in wood clapboards, it has an asphalt-shingled gable roof pierced at the ridge by a pair of brick chimneys, and stands on a granite-block foundation. A former central cross-gabled wing at the rear was demolished prior to 1928. Early in this century, a pair of side ells were added flanking the rear corners; in 1993 they were found to be structurally unsound, and were replaced by new two-story wings of the same footprint. The main section of the house is two bays deep. Its facade is symmetrical, with a pair of center entries that have been replaced (1993) by modern glassed and sidelighted doors. Above the second story, three broad wall gables pierce the roofline; the outer two each contain a single 2-over-2-sash window; the central one has paired windows. (Most of the windows, formerly 6-over-6 and 2-over-2 sash, have recently been replaced by new 2-over-2 sash; the pair of windows on either side of the main entries has each been replaced by a triple 2-over-2 sash units.) The facade entries are sheltered by a turn-of-the-century porch supported on short double and triple Tuscan columns on high granite-block bases. As in the Engineer's Office, the architectural detailing in this building is minimal, with narrow unadorned corner- and rake-boards, and a recently rebuilt unboxed roof overhang. Additional 1993 renovations include the reconstruction of the central rear wing, and the removal of some interior walls and staircases (see attachment A: Updated photo).

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The third contributing building on the site is a small, windowless Oil (or Kerosene) Storage Building (MHC #2, Photo #3), located close to the shore on a concrete apron at the northeast corner of the property. Typical of such buildings found on many lighthouse sites, both the walls and interior floor are of red brick (laid in common bond), and the roof, clad in wood shingles, is steeply pitched. The narrow entry, which is centered in the west gable end, has a modern replacement door set into the original segmental-arched opening. The date of this building is uncertain; it is first shown on the 1903 atlas map, indicating that it may have been built in conjunction with the replacement of the light with a new flashing signal in 1894. Presently in good condition, the exterior was formerly painted. The building is leased by the Cohasset Sailing Club, which uses it for its original purpose--the storage of fuel and other supplies.

On the flattest section of the island, between Beacon Rock and the wharf, are the most unusual structures on the island, the Temporary Lighthouse Foundations or Lighthouse Templates (Photo #6). These are a pair of 30-foot-diameter circular rings of granite blocks, their top surfaces set flush with the ground, on which the cut-stone courses for the lighthouse were temporarily constructed and fitted prior to their installation on Minot's Ledge. Set into the center of each circle is a square stone block with a central iron fitting, probably intended to support a derrick or other construction apparatus. The two rings are not identical; the perimeter of the western circle consists of all granite blocks, the easternmost alternates granite blocks with sections of brick. The area between the perimeter stones and the center of each circle is filled with small stones embedded in concrete. Although a road to the stone wharf ran over the circles for many years, they are now in good condition, having been cleared of soil and debris in the late 1960s. At that time, the area immediately around the templates was graded and grassed into a small public park, and a low stone retaining wall (made of granite pieces from the site) and an iron chain fence with granite posts were added. (The wall and fence are noncontributing objects in the park area, as are four wooden benches, a flagpole, and a boulder fitted with plaques commemorating the importance of the site. [Photo #6])

In recent years, the park area has become even more of a focal point for the island, with the installation on the site of three items from the Minot's Ledge Lighthouse itself. In 1972 the Minot's Ledge Fog Bell (MHC #900) was removed from the lighthouse

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and given to the town. It is now mounted next to the temporary foundation circles in an iron frame supported by a slate and granite base. The bell was cast in bronze by William Blake & Co., Boston, in 1878. Restorations and repairs to the lighthouse in 1987-1988 necessitated the replacement of all 42 granite blocks that composed the exterior wall of its top story, which housed the original Lighthouse Watchroom. The U.S. Coast Guard donated this disassembled section of the structure, along with the Rotating Mechanism for the flashing light installed in 1894, to the town of Cohasset. Under the guidance of the Cohasset Historical Commission, the Watchroom, with the rotating mechanism re-installed inside, was reassembled here next to the template circles on top of the foundation of a former Shore Station storage or stone-cutting building. This ongoing project has been surmounted by a full-scale replica of the lighthouse lantern, with domed roof and globe finial, executed from the original 1855 plans. The dome and globe are made of copper to match the originals still in place at the lighthouse, the lantern balustrades and struts are brass, and its windows are modern safety glass. The window frames, deck plates, and the curved door of the watchroom are of steel, rather than the original bronze. Future plans include moving the fog bell to its original position on the watchroom gallery, and the installation, in their original stone fittings, of davits for the lighthouse lifeboats.

Several other objects on the island that are believed to remain from the early years of the lighthouse construction and operation also contribute to the character of the site. High on the sloping north face of Beacon Rock is a flight of stairs (MHC #942, Photo #5) cut directly into the stone just below the pinnacle where the signal tower was located. It is commonly accepted that they were made by the lighthouse stone-cutting crew. Marking the northwest entrance to the shore station are two granite posts and a short section of dry-laid stone wall.

Government Island today is actively used by the public, and thus contains other noncontributing buildings and objects in addition to those located in the small park area. Three modern buildings of the 1960s and 1970s are located on the northern end of the island: a small wooden Harbormaster's Office (Photo #4) near the entrance overlooking the inner harbor, and at the property's northeast corner, two gable-roofed, wood-shingled buildings (Photo #10) of the Cohasset Sailing Club--a large clubhouse and a small storage building. Under the terms of a lease from the town, the Sailing Club buildings are required to be temporary in

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nature. Hence they have no foundations, and are set upon low piles or legs extending above ground level. The Sailing Club also maintains a flagpole, and a float stage for its boats adjacent to the property's northeast shore. A narrow asphalt access road follows the original route from the entrance of the property to the wharf, with secondary drives branching east to the sailing club, the Engineer's Office and Lighthouse Keepers' House, and continuing on to a small parking lot. (The latter is not visible from either the park area or the historic buildings.) The island's edge in the area of the small beach on the north shoreline is currently shored up by a granite retaining wall constructed in the 1980s.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded within the district, it is possible that sites are present. One site is recorded in the general area (within one mile). That site, 19-PL-19, recorded in Scituate reportedly may be a village site possibly 25 acres in size. The site may extend into or about the proposed district along its southern boundary. The physical characteristics of the property, particularly its location near fresh water wetlands and marine related ecosystem indicate favorable locational criteria for Native settlement and subsistence activities. Other characteristics of the area including shallow soils and rock outcroppings may limit types of possible sites to small, special purpose type sites. Volcanic dikes in outcroppings may indicate the presence of lithic materials which could be used for stone tool manufacture or quarrying activities. Given the above information, the size of the district (7.35 acres), and the fact that historic period disturbances have likely impacted potential resources in the area, a moderate potential exists that significant sites are present.

There is a high potential for significant historic archaeological remains within the district. Several structures associated with the U.S. Lighthouse Service period of significance are no longer extant but may survive archaeologically. These structures include the second Lighthouse Keepers' Dwelling Home used to house families of the Head Keepers, a boathouse and storage shed at the site of the existing stone wharf, a small Observation Building located near the peak of Beacon Rock and a set of two temporary foundations used as templates to assemble granite blocks prior to their transport off shore for lighthouse

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construction. At least two occupational type features are also present including privies associated with both Keepers' houses and a well located near the present Sailing Club. Trash deposits are also probably present including, domestic refuse associated with the Keeper's houses and lithic refuse associated with masons activities shaping granite blocks for lighthouse construction. Archaeological survivals may also exist which predate the mid 19th century U.S. Lighthouse Service period of significance. Agricultural related outbuildings and features may survive from the Bailey Farm located in this area in the early 18th century, however, an 1840 map shows no structures on Government Island related to the farm. Some evidence also exists that a private wharf pre-dated the stone wharf on Government Island. The existence of an earlier wharf might also indicate potential survivals related to fisheries/shipbuilding or other maritime related activities including coastal transportation of farm products.

(end)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Government Island, Cohasset, is a rare example of a mid-nineteenth century shore station for the construction, and for eighty-six years the operation, of an off-shore lighthouse. It includes the remaining buildings and engineering structures associated with the country's oldest "wave-swept" lighthouse, built in the late 1850s 2.65 miles away on Minot's Ledge, as well as three items that were moved here from the lighthouse itself. These survivals provide a vivid representation of the engineering triumph involved in what is commonly acknowledged as the most difficult lighthouse construction ever attempted along the country's east coast, as well as a glimpse into the domestic and off-duty lives of the keepers who took on what a government report called "one of the most undesirable shore assignments that can be given a man." (Scheina 44). This shore station is a key contextual element for the network of Massachusetts lighthouses listed as a National Register Thematic Resource Area in 1987. If Minot's Ledge Lighthouse, as stated on the 1987 nomination form, is "a monument to the skill of the engineers and stone masons who worked on this complex and difficult construction project," then the description is equally true of this shore station at which so much of the construction work took place. The lighthouse was recognized as a National Historic Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1977, at least partly for

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the technical procedures and innovations that were initiated here on Government Island.

The district occupies the entire shore reservation purchased by the U.S. government in 1858 except for a small strip deeded to the town for the widening of Border Street in 1935. It comprises nearly all of the original harbor island (formerly called Gulf Island), except for its southern edge, which is occupied by Border Street and several houses aligned along a point of land beyond it. Three buildings, three structures, six objects, and one site on the island are deemed as contributing to the district. One building originally part of the district has been moved just east across a small salt marsh to Parker Avenue, and is not included in the present nomination. In spite of the loss of some resources and the addition of others, the combination here of simple vernacular architecture typical of buildings constructed by the U.S. Lighthouse Service in the eighty-seven years of its existence, along with innovative engineering devices on a site which was uniquely suited for its purpose, contributes to an understanding of lighthouse construction better than any other facility in Massachusetts. It also adds substantially to our understanding of the day-to-day operation of a dangerous offshore beacon and the daily lives of those associated with it. The district thus retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register on the local and state levels. The period of significance for Government Island is 1825-1947, reflecting the construction date of the stone wharf to when the lighthouse was automated, and the need to maintain residences for the keepers and their families on Government Island ended.

For over a century before the building of a lighthouse on Minot's Ledge, the nearby community that is now the town of Cohasset was largely supported by a maritime economy. It has two natural harbors; the easternmost, Cohasset Harbor, which is oriented south to north with its mouth opposite Minot's Ledge, is well sheltered. Indians fished and clammed here at Conahasset (Quonahassit) long before Captain John Smith discovered the harbor in 1614. After the European settlement, Conahasset was first an outlying part of Hingham, originally used for pasture and hay production. By the late 1600s a village had been established at what is today Cohasset center, and by 1708 shipbuilding operations were underway just to its east at Cohasset Harbor, then called "Ship Cove." During the eighteenth

(continued)

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century, cod and mackerel fishing became a major means of livelihood, with fleets of family-owned fishing schooners, many of them constructed in shipyards at the harbor, working the offshore Atlantic fishing grounds, and by 1750 traveling as far as the West Indies. In 1770 Cohasset, as a district, was formally separated from Hingham; it was incorporated as a town in 1775.

By the end of the eighteenth century, ship and schooner owners had constructed at least three stone wharves on the south side of the harbor west of Government Island. A sizeable corn mill was built at the mouth of the Gulf River in 1792, and extensive saltworks along the coast produced salt for the preservation of mackerel. (During this time, Government Island itself was the northern section of a large farm within the borders of Scituate. It remained part of Scituate until the farm, with 90 acres, was annexed to the town of Cohasset in 1823.) Fishing and shipbuilding activity at the harbor reached its peak in the 1840s, with 22,967 barrels of mackerel packed here in 1848. In 1845 Cohasset ranked fourth in size as a fishing port in Massachusetts, and in 1851 it had 44 fishing vessels and 561 people employed in the fishing business. Although by the middle of the nineteenth century Cohasset shipbuilding had expanded to include barks, brigs, and other ships as large as 788 tons, it declined rapidly after the Civil War, and the last sailing vessel was built in a Cohasset shipyard in 1883. Schooner fishing, too, became increasingly unprofitable during that time, and effectively ceased by 1895. The town's economy maintained some degree of diversity, however. Vacationers had begun coming here well before 1850, and by the 1870s Cohasset was a mecca for wealthy Boston summer residents attracted by its rocky coastal site (the only one south of Boston) and its sheltered harbor. Large estates were built, and many steam and sailing yachts were berthed in the harbor. Today, although Cohasset is increasingly considered a commuter suburb of Boston, its maritime orientation continues. As in many New England harbors, both commercial and pleasure boating coexist here. Cohasset Harbor is the base for a local fleet of lobster and fishing boats that use the Government Island wharf as their main landing, and both sailing and power boats operated for pleasure are numerous during the summer months.

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Toward the 1840s, shipping activity increased, not just at Cohasset, but all along the coast of Massachusetts. One of the most dangerous areas for vessels entering the port of Boston or traveling the coast was the Quonahassit Rocks or ledges, just inshore of the southeast approach to Boston Harbor. In 1847, after a disastrous record of shipwrecks in the waters around the most notorious of the rocks, Minot's Ledge, where from 1832 to 1841 over 40 vessels had foundered, the U.S. government made plans to build a lighthouse there. Constructed over a period of two years, this was a seventy-five foot high structure built on nine iron piles sunk deep into the ledge. The light was first lit on January 1, 1850, but in an April storm in 1851 the entire lighthouse was swept off the rock, taking two lighthouse keepers with it.

Although the choice of an iron pile structure had seemed sound for such an exposed location and difficult building site, in retrospect it was apparent that only a much stronger lighthouse would withstand the extreme force of the sea that could build up in the area of the ledge, where waves can break at a height of 100 feet. A study conducted by the newly established U.S. Lighthouse Board revealed that the former site on Minot's Ledge was still the most desirable location for the lighthouse, and that a tapered cylindrical stone-block structure of the type developed at Eddystone Light in England would be best suited to withstand the elements. General Joseph G. Totten, former chief engineer of the United States, was chosen to design the lighthouse, which was to become the most famous adaptation of the Eddystone type of lighthouse in America.

The practical obstacles to the building of such a structure on the offshore ledge at first appeared nearly insurmountable. Although it was determined that the base of the lighthouse needed to be thirty feet in diameter, at most only a twenty-five foot area of rock was exposed above water at extreme low tides, and for only an hour or two on the calmest of days. To work out some of the engineering problems, a scale model was built from Totten's final plans. Two master model-makers from Cohasset, Richard Bourne and Zaccheus Rich, constructed the model over two winters in a small shop at the head of the harbor.

In April of 1855, Captain Barton S. Alexander of the U.S. Corps of Engineers assumed the job of superintending the lighthouse construction. Fully aware that only a precious few work hours could be spent on Minot's Ledge itself, one of his first acts was

(continued)

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to arrange for the use of Gulf Island (today's Government Island) as a shore base for most of the construction operations. Government Island was eminently suited for the purpose. It was close to the ledges, and its "Beacon Rock," which commanded a direct view out the harbor entrance to the lighthouse site, could be used for observation of sea conditions and of boats moving between Minot's Ledge and the shore station. A circular "observatory" structure (now demolished) was constructed near the peak for that purpose. Beacon Rock also came to serve as the communications point, via a semaphore and flag-signal tower, between shore station and ledge. Deep-water docking facilities were of course necessary for the loading of granite on and off boats. The stone wharf (believed to have been built prior to 1855 by merchant James Cutler Doane, also builder of the nearby Lawrence Wharf), provided just such a place. The wharf was even large enough for a sizeable boathouse and storehouse to be built on pilings along its east side. There was ample room on the northern section of the island for all the buildings necessary for the construction operations, and two or three existing farm outbuildings may actually have been utilized for the purpose. Perhaps most important, a short distance above the wharf was a large flat area that could serve as a temporary platform for the fabrication of not just one, but two full-diameter sections of the lighthouse at a time. The island was apparently first leased to the U.S. government by J.C. Doane, who had acquired it sometime after its 1823 annexation to Cohasset; it was purchased from him in 1858.

Captain Alexander's work plan called for one crew to carry out two separate operations--the stone-cutting and preliminary assembly at the shore station and, in the few hours that tide and weather conditions permitted, the construction at the ledge. The notes he kept reveal that these were hardy, daring, and highly skilled men, undaunted by the dangerous conditions and the constant discomfort of working in soaking clothes. Most were local men from Cohasset or stone cutters from Quincy, and the group included some of the most proficient in their specialties. Among them were Captain John Cook, a well-known Cohasset rigger who designed the derrick used at the ledge, and Clark Cutting, whose oxen teamed the massive Quincy granite blocks with flawless positioning to the cutters. Captain Nichols Tower, one of a family of noted Cohasset skippers, commanded the first vessels used to transport the finished stones to the ledge, and Wesley P. Dutton and George Reed superintended the selection of the stone. Captain Alexander proved far ahead of his time in his strictly

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enforced safety policies: he required that every man know how to swim and handle a small boat, that workboats never operate singly, and that a boat manned by three men stand by the ledge at all times to pick up anyone washed into the sea. As a result, the entire five-year operation was completed with neither a loss of life nor a serious injury. Alexander was also noted for his exacting standards in all aspects of the operations, from the precision of the stone fitting to the "perfect-running" pulleys made by Richard Bourne, the model builder.

Although work began at the ledge in June of 1855, it was not until July of 1857 that the first stone was laid there. The surface of the ledge required laborious preparation, and the wreckage of the old tower pilings had to be removed. In all, only 130 hours of work took place at the rock the first season; all the rest was spent on Government Island, most of it preparing the stones and the iron fittings and apparatus needed to secure and erect them. Hours at the rock increased to 157 in 1856, when a multi-purpose iron scaffold was constructed on the ledge. Preparation of the surface of the rock was then begun, to ready it for the foundation stones.

The first scaffolding did not survive the winter, however. A ship crashed into it in January of 1857, breaking off the legs and shattering much of the prepared rock surface. In the spring, John Cook's new scaffold and derrick was erected to replace the first (this one had higher, twenty-five foot legs), and a considerable area of the stone surface had to be recut. Still, although work at the rock again only totaled 130 hours, 1857 saw the laying of the first four of the seven massive, irregularly shaped foundation stones.

It was at this point that Captain Alexander solved one of the most perplexing of his engineering problems--how to keep the hydraulic cement in place long enough to adhere the stones of the first three courses to the rock under water. Experiments carried on at the shore station finally presented a solution in the use of a large piece of muslin. The cloth was laid on the ground and covered with a layer of cement. The finished stone was laid on the cloth and its vertical sides mortared. The muslin was then folded up around the stone for a few minutes until the mortar was set. This procedure was successfully utilized on staging at the ledge, and when the stone was placed onto the rock surface, the cloth protected the mortar from being washed away.

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Once the underwater foundation was finished in 1858, construction of the lighthouse at the ledge proceeded more quickly. Not only was most of the work there now performed above the waterline, it was greatly facilitated by the nearly complete finishing of the stone blocks on shore. Although it was still not possible to transport more than a few to the ledge at a time, the blocks needed little or no preparation for assembly when they got there. They had all been cut to size, each finished with the notching or "dovetailing" system pioneered a hundred years before at the Eddystone Light, and preassembled on the two thirty-foot template circles on Government Island. 1850s photographs of the shore station show that in effect each section of the tower was built twice--once without mortar on one of the stone circles on the island, then dismantled and built again on the ledge, this time mortared and bolted in place.

By the end of the 1858 season, in 208 hours spent at the ledge, the tower was completed to the sixth course. In 1859, in 377 hours, the crew finished 26 more courses, to a height of sixty-two feet above low tide. Finally, on June 29, 1860, the last stone of the lighthouse, in the top course of the watchroom that now stands on Government Island, was laid in place. The lantern, hauled from Boston to Cohasset by oxen, was installed later that summer, and the lamp, with a state-of-the-art fresnel lens, was officially lit on the night of the fifteenth of November, 1860. To the people of the south shore it was a momentous event; they set scores of bonfires along the shore, and at the first flash of light from the tower, fireworks shot into the sky in celebration from both Scituate and Cohasset.

During the fall the first keepers had been hired, and the focus and function at both the ledge and the shore station gradually turned from lighthouse building to operation. Over the five years of construction several utilitarian buildings and structures, many of them temporary, had been built on Government Island. Some, such as the large derrick at the foundation circles and an unknown number of sheds associated with the stone-cutting, probably disappeared shortly after the lighthouse was completed. The main storehouse and the buildings at the wharf, however, remained for decades, adapted to new uses. At least four or five buildings and structures were intended from the start to serve as part of a permanent shore reservation associated with the lighthouse. Among them were the two keepers' residences, probably converted from barns or other utilitarian buildings in 1859, and the engineer's office, which had

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undoubtedly been Captain Alexander's headquarters when he was on the island. After the lighthouse went into operation, the office may have continued in administrative use, or been utilized for storage, as it is today, although maps as early as 1876 show that it, too, was used as a residence. For many years the signal tower on Beacon Rock continued as the main means of communication between the shore and the ledge, and it is said to have signaled the news of President Lincoln's assassination to the keepers at the light in 1865. The stone steps leading up to it, probably cut into the rock by members of the stone-cutting crew that built the lighthouse, now shortened the climb up the rock to the tower.

The most prominent of the Government Island buildings, however, were the two lighthouse-keepers' residences, the larger of which remains. As had been the case with the first lighthouse on Minot's Ledge, because of the dangerous and isolated location of the rock, the practice of having a head keeper and two assistants, who worked weeks-long rotating shifts on and off the ledge, was continued at the second lighthouse. This team approach required more housing than was usual for a lighthouse in a more hospitable location; hence Government Island had two or three keepers' dwellings instead of one. The first keepers hired in 1860 were Joshua Wilder [Jr.] as head keeper, and A.W. Williams and William S. Taylor as first and second assistants. In contrast to their long hours maintaining what has been called the most dangerous beacon in the United States, during their shifts on Government Island the keepers were apparently able to carry on near-normal lives in residence with their families. Their houses formed part of a residential compound that included privies, two sheds, and a barn (now demolished) that had originally been the main storehouse during the years of lighthouse construction.

Over the years several residents of these houses distinguished themselves by their courage and fortitude just as the lighthouse builders had before them. In 1861 James J. Tower succeeded Joshua Wilder [Jr.] as head keeper. He brought as his assistant Thomas Bates (later the well-known head keeper of Boston Light), who is still remembered for his daring sea rescue of Tower in which he leapt into the lighthouse boat, suspended eighty feet above the waves, and let it crash to the sea. It would have been during Tower's tenure that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow visited the lighthouse (in 1871), and the 1878 fog bell, now displayed on Government Island, was installed on the watchroom gallery. The longest career as head keeper was that of Milton Harvey Reamy,

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who assumed the position in 1887. Unshaken in the belief that nothing but an earthquake could ever topple the lighthouse, he went through the great "Gale of '88," in which the sea dashed over the 102-foot top of the lantern, and oversaw the 1894 replacement of the original lamp with a revolving system, its mechanism still seen today in the watchroom, which changed the beam to the well-known one-four-three ("I love you") flash. Indicative of the double life led by the keepers on and offshore, for many years Milton Reamy also worked in Cohasset as a photographer. He was succeeded as keeper by his son, Octavius Reamy; together their careers at Minot's Ledge spanned nearly forty years. When Octavius Reamy was transferred to Graves Light in 1924, Per S. Tornberg was appointed the new keeper. He served until 1936, when he was succeeded by the lighthouse's final keeper, George H. Fitzpatrick.

In 1947, eight years after the country's lighthouses were taken over by the U.S. Coast Guard, the light on Minot's Ledge was automated, and the need to maintain residences for keepers and their families on Government Island ended. The reservation had been declared surplus property by the War Assets Administration in 1946, and on February 19, 1947, the shore station was purchased by the Town of Cohasset for \$29,000. The town government subsequently administered both keepers' houses as multi-family rental dwellings and established a public landing at the stone wharf for commercial boats, which are restricted from using the town's other public dock. The storehouse at the wharf was acquired by a nearby furniture company, which moved it to its facility, now Cohasset Colonials, on Parker Avenue just east of the island.

Although the change to town ownership and use by the public necessitated the introduction of intrusions on the property, it also led to the preservation of the resources that remain in the Government Island district today. Because of their water-related functions, the three modern buildings here occupy nearly the only locations available for them at the harbor. The small harbormaster's office just inside the shore station entrance is positioned to afford the greatest visibility of the harbor, entrance channel, and the public wharf. Under the terms of its lease from the town, the two 1960s-1970s buildings of the Cohasset Sailing Club, which needed just such a site for its float and boat storage, must be regarded as "temporary" in nature; hence their lack of foundations. Ironically, although the town tore down the deteriorated head lighthouse keeper's

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Cohasset (Norfolk County)
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house in about 1970, it has been public use and ownership that has ensured the preservation of the rest of the shore station. The town maintains the property, and has been highly active over the years in promoting Government Island as the appropriate repository for items removed from Minot's Ledge. Having solicited the donation of the fog bell in 1972 and subsequently made it a centerpiece of the park, the town prepared the way for the relocation of the damaged watchroom to this site fifteen years later.

Private nonprofit organizations, working jointly with the town through the Cohasset Historical Commission, have been responsible for much of the preservation and restoration here. The Government Island commemorative park, dedicated in 1968, was sponsored by the Town of Cohasset and the Cohasset Historical Society and funded by private donations. Within the past year, when deteriorating condition threatened demolition of the remaining lighthouse keepers' dwelling, a group of local citizens, the Cohasset Lightkeepers Corporation, arranged to lease it from the town and is presently renovating the building to house a public meeting hall on the first floor and apartments on the second. The community garden club has landscaped the building's front yard with plantings and a new stone wall. The other ongoing project, the restoration of the lighthouse watchroom and the construction of the lantern house replica, is being carried out under the Cohasset Historical Commission with funding solely from private donations. The Commission's present fund raising efforts are dedicated to completing the project with the installation of a fresnel lens. In fitting tradition for a site imbued with the spirit of hard work at sea interspersed with a different life on shore, most of the labor for the lantern metalwork has been donated by local fishermen working in the off season. Placement on the National Register of Historic Places would greatly encourage future support for all these efforts and help to ensure the preservation of the shore station as both a unique surviving engineering facility and an interpretive site for the public.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of prehistoric occupation in Cohasset are poorly understood, any surviving sites would be significant. Prehistoric sites in this area may offer the potential to further document the extent and effects of Native settlement in the Boston Harbor/Boston Bay locale and the relationships and/or

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differences between that area and coastal Native settlement to the south in the North River and Plymouth Harbor Areas. Prehistoric sites in the Government Island area can contribute to a greater understanding towards the effects of sea level rise on Native settlement and subsistence through time. Possible quarry sites in this area also indicates the potential for technological studies during the prehistoric period.

Historic archaeological remains described above have the potential to further document the activities of the U.S. Lighthouse Service in this area from the first lighthouse keeper in the mid 19th century to the last keeper in the 1940s. Structural remains of the Keeper's House and other related outbuildings can help reconstruct the entire layout of the station. Detailed analysis of occupational related features including potential trash areas, probably two privies and at least one well can provide important social, cultural and economic information on the lives of Head Keepers' and their families as well as Assistant Keepers' and their families. This information can be important in reconstructing the day to day lives of these people while not officially on duty. Lithic refuse deposits from masonry activities shaping granite blocks can contribute technological information on granite masonry particularly as it relates to lighthouse construction. Discarded tools may also be present in granite refuse deposits. Excavation and analysis of till materials from the stone wharf can document when the wharf was constructed and possibly identify earlier wharf components incorporated into the present wharf. This information can potentially identify earlier maritime uses of the Government Island locale. Archaeological survey and testing can also identify potential agricultural survivals related to pre 1850-1860 use of the area. Each of the above sources can be important in reconstructing the complete landuse history of the Government Island area and how that area changed through time.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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(end)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is that of the parcel shown as "Gulf Island," Plot 10 on the accompanying detail of the Cohasset Assessor's Map #37. The northwest and northern boundary of the property is the high-water mark on the shorelines of the Gulf River, Cohasset Harbor, and the mouth of Bailey's Creek. The parcel is bounded on the east by Plot 11 of Cohasset Assessor's map #37 (see above) and on the south and west by Border Street.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the entire 7.35-acre parcel of land referred to in a deed of February 19, 1947, as "Minots Ledge Light Station," which was declared surplus by the United States government in 1946 and purchased by the town of Cohasset in 1947. Except for a narrow 21,640-square-foot crescent of land conveyed to the town of Cohasset in 1935 for the widening of Border Street, this is the property that was designated as the Minot's Ledge Shore Station Reservation from the time of the building of the second lighthouse on Minot's Ledge in 1855-1860.

(end)

GOVERNMENT ISLAND HISTORIC DISTRICT
Cohasset (Norfolk County)
Massachusetts
DISTRICT DATA SHEET

MHC#	RESOURCE	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	STATUS	TYPE
3	Lighthouse Keepers' Dwelling	ca. 1849-1855	C	B
4	Engineer's Office	ca. 1855	C	B
2	Oil - Kerosene Storage Building	late 19th Century	C	B
941	Stone wharf	ca. 1825-1850	C	St
942	Beacon Rock		C	Si
	Stone stairs, Beacon Rock	ca. 1855-1860	C	O
	Granite Posts at entrance (2)	unknown	C	O
	Stone Wall at entrance	unknown	C	O
	Road network	1855-present	C	St
<u>At park area:</u>				
	Lighthouse templates (temporary foundations)	1855	C	O
900	Minot's Ledge Lighthouse: Fog Bell	1878 (moved 1972)	C	O
940	Minot's Ledge Lighthouse: Watch Room and Lantern Replica	1860 (moved 1987-1988) 1987-present	C	St
	Minot's Ledge Lighthouse: Rotating mechanism	1894	C	O
	Stone Wall at Templates	1968	NC	O

GOVERNMENT ISLAND HISTORIC DISTRICT
Cohasset (Norfolk County)
Massachusetts
DISTRICT DATA SHEET

MHC#	RESOURCE	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	STATUS	TYPE
901	Memorial Boulder	1968	NC	O
	Park flagpole	1990	NC	O
	Park benches (4)	ca. 1968	NC	O
	Harbormaster's Office	ca. 1975	NC	B
	Sailing Club Headquarters	1970	NC	B
	Sailing Club Storage Building	1960s	NC	B
	Granite retaining wall at beach	ca. 1980s	NC	O
	Sailing Club flagpole	ca. 1970s	NC	O

TOTAL RESOURCES: 13 Contributing, 9 Noncontributing

3	Contributing Buildings	3	Noncontributing Buildings
3	Contributing Structures	6	Noncontributing Objects
6	Contributing Objects		
1	Contributing Sites		

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Cohasset, Mass.Border Street

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s)	FormNo.
B	COH 3

Government Island Area; Assistant Lighthouse Keepers' Dwelling now renovated by Cohasset Lightkeepers Inc. during winter and spring of 1992 - 1993.

Attached photograph taken May 1993 showing changes to gable end and front facade as further described in accompanying written addendum to our National Register nomination documents.

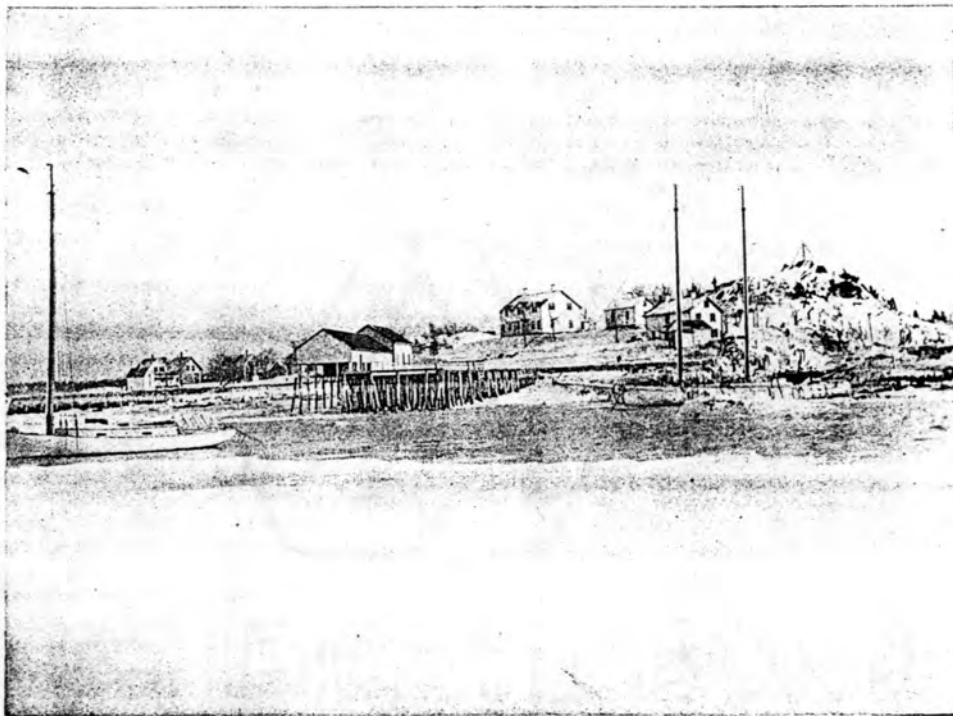




Area COH B.

Cohasset COH 3
Government Island, Border St.
May 1993

ATTACHMENT B: ca. 1890s view of Government Island



Government Island from Barretto P.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY *Government Island Historic District*
NAME: ~~Minot's Ledger Lighthouse Shore Station, Gulf Island~~

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Norfolk

DATE RECEIVED: 4/05/94 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/19/94
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/05/94 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/20/94
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 94000424

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 5/12/94 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA *accept*
REVIEWER *Patricia Andrus*
DISCIPLINE *Historian*
DATE *5/12/94*

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

☐ count ☐ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

☐ historic ☐ current

DESCRIPTION

☐ architectural classification
☐ materials
☐ descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period ☐ Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates ☐ Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ applicable criteria
☐ justification of areas checked
☐ relating significance to the resource
☐ context
☐ relationship of integrity to significance
☐ justification of exception
☐ other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

☐ acreage ☐ verbal boundary description
☐ UTM's ☐ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

☐ sketch maps ☐ USGS maps ☐ photographs ☐ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Signed _____ Phone _____

Date _____



Government Island - Lighthouse Keepers Dwelling #1
94-96 Border Street

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

1 of 18 10

U.S. Lighthouse Service Keepers' House,
duplex, at Government Island, on north slope
of Beacon Rock.

MHC# B-3



Government Island - Lighthouse Engineering Office #2
Border Street

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

#2 of 18

Former Lighthouse Service Engineering Office
at shore station facility, Government Island,
now Harbormaster's equipment storage
building

MR # B-4

DW



Government Island-Oil Storage Building #3
Border Street

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

#3 of 18

Former U.S. Lighthouse Service Oil Storage
Building for Minot's Ledge Lighthouse.
Bailey's Creek beyond. (looking east)

MHC# B-2



Government Island - Harbor Master's Office #4

Border Street

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

#4 of 18

Office of the Harbor Dept., Town of Cohasset;
view looking toward the entrance to the Gulf.
Boatyard beyond. (looking west)

Also visible is map #14, chain link fence.



Government Island - Stone Stairs #8

Border Street

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

#5 of 18

Steps cut into north face of Beacon Rock
(MHCH 3-942)
approaching the pinnacle of the ledge,
former site of lighthouse signal
structure.



Government Island - Historical Park

Border Street

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

#6 of 18

Northeast

View of historical park dedicated to the construction
of Minot's Ledge Lighthouse. Includes map
items #9 (stone wall), #10 (Memorial Boulder),

#11 (Fog bell), #12 (lighthouse replica), #5 (sailing club
building), #3 (oil storage building), #16 (granite
post & chain fence), #13 (float stage), #18 park
benches), #24 (Lighthouse temporary foundations)

MHC # B-900

MHC # B-940

MHC # B-2



Government Island - View northerly, of Cohasset Harbor.

Border Street 24

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset.

7 of 18.

View northerly from the pinnacle of Beacon Rock, overlooking the middle part of Cohasset Harbor. Lobster & fishing boats at left & center, Yacht Club boats at right. House across harbor at center is on Howard Gleason Road; building at far right is Cohasset Yacht Club. Foreground is the north slope of Beacon Rock.



Government Island - view westerly, of Cohasset Harbor.

Border Street

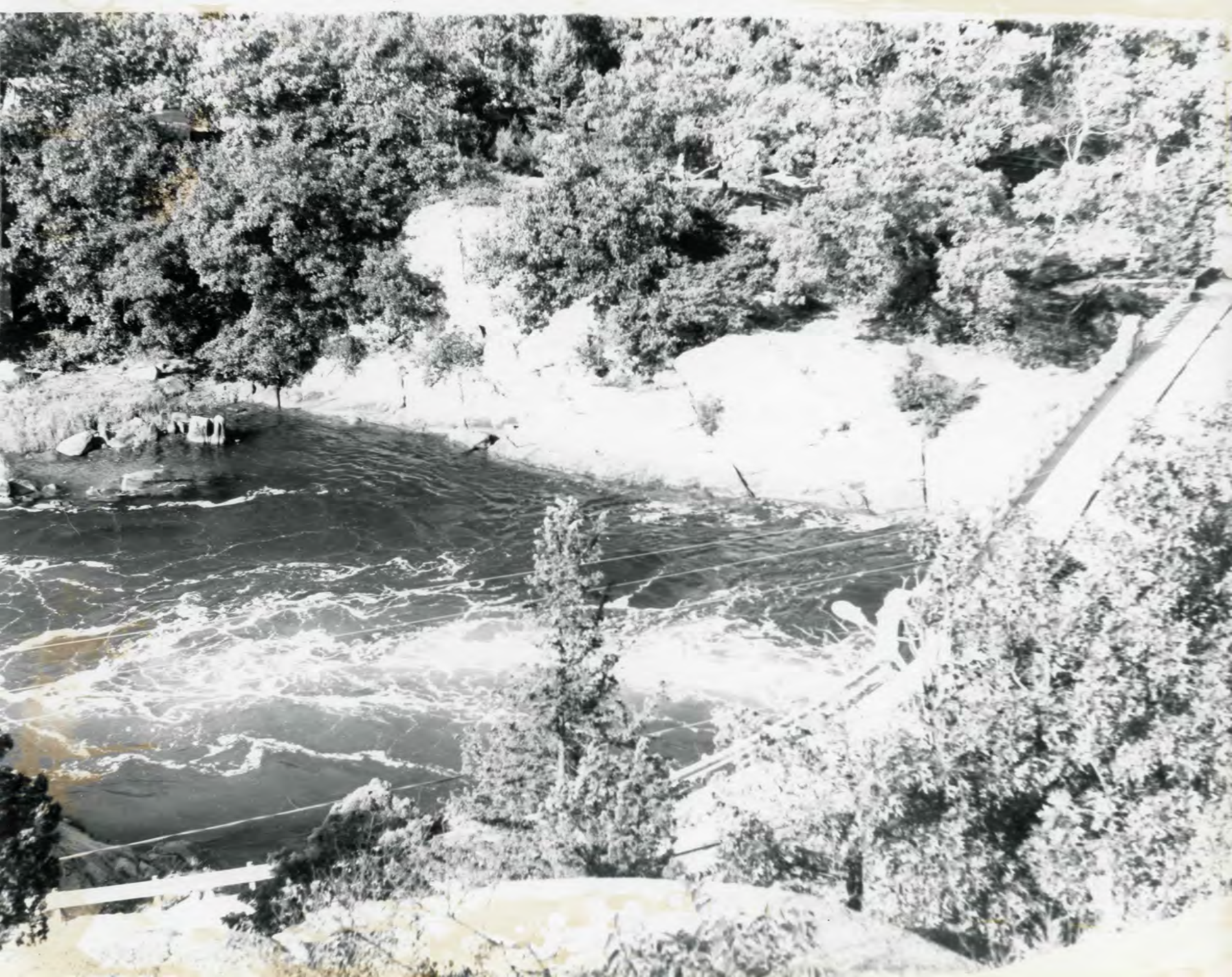
Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset.

#8 of 18

View westerly from pinnacle of Beacon Rock, overlooking the entrance to the Gulf, boatyard beyond, Border Street running to the restaurant at Tower's Wharf, with opposite shore of the harbor (Margin Street) in background.



Government Island-view southerly, of the Gulf.

Border Street

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury, Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

#9 of 18

View southerly from the pinnacle of Beacon Rock. Tidal estuary with reversing falls, called "The Gulf" seen below. Border Street in foreground and running up to the right; Mill Bridge crosses the Gulf. The peak of Beacon Rock appears in the immediate foreground.



Government Island - Buildings at North East
corner of the reservation.

Border Street

Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991

Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

10 of 18

View of the north east corner of the former U.S.
Lighthouse Service Shore Station. Buildings

Visible are: #5 Sailing Club building (at left)

#3 Oil storage building (at center), #6 (Sailing Club
storage building (at right). Entrance to

#13 Sailing Club Float Stage visible extreme
right. Driveway in foreground.



Government Island - View North East toward Boundary
and off-site buildings.

Border Street
Cohasset MA

Hamilton Tewksbury Oct. 1991
Historical Commission Files, Cohasset

#11 of 18

View looking ^{east} along entrance driveway to the
Cohasset Sailing Club area (hidden in left
background). Buildings to right of center are
beyond the property line of the reservation;
a private business known as "Cohasset Colonials,"
furniture makers. Visible at extreme left
is #12 Lighthouse Replica. Also, part of #16
Granite post and chain fence. Beyond is the
mooring area of Bailey's Creek with work
and pleasure boats visible. Also, at left
of center, part of #9 stone wall around park.



GOVERNMENT ISLAND
BORDER ST-
COHASSET, MA

- STONE WHARF, MHC # B-941



E 1993

N



JUNE 1993

N

ANNE FORBES, JUNE 1993, MHC

PHOTO #12 OF 18



GOVERNMENT ISLAND
BORDER ST.
CONASSOT, MA

NORFOLK CO.

- view of district, looking SB.

N



N



PHOTO #13 OF 18

ANNIE FORBES, June 1993, MTR



GOVERNMENT ISLAND
BORDER ST.
COWASSSET, MA

- looking north from Lighthouse



JUNE 1993

Keepers' dwelling



JUNE 1993

PHOTO # 14 OF 18

ANNE FORBES, JUNE 1993, MHC



GOVERNMENT ISLAND
BORBOR ST.
COWASSIST, MA

- MINORS LGTH WHICH
ROOM, WITH
LANTERN REPLICA
MHC# B-940

PHOTO # 15 OF 18

AND FORBES, JUNE 1993,
MHC



JUNE 1993



GOVERNMENT ISLAND
BORDER ST.
COHASSET, MA.

2

- MINOT'S LIGHT POB
MHC # B-900 BELL

JUNE 1993



PHOTO # 16 OF 18

AND FARGUS, JUNE 1993
MHC



GOVERNMENT ISLAND
BORDOX ST.
CONASSOT, MA

-GRUNBERG'S OFFICE, SOUTH SIDE



JUNE 1993

N

MHC # B-4



JUNE 1993

PHOTO # 17 OF 18

ANNEX FORBES, JUNE 1993, MHC



GOVERNMENT ISLAND
BORDER ST.
COHASSET, MA

- Beacon Rock, with Stone Stairs



JUNE 1993

N



JUNE 1993

MITC# B-942

PHOTO # 18 OF 18

ANG FORBOS, JUNE, 1993, MITC

Cohasset
Government (or Gulf) Island
Assessors Plats #37 and 33.
Scale 1" = 80'

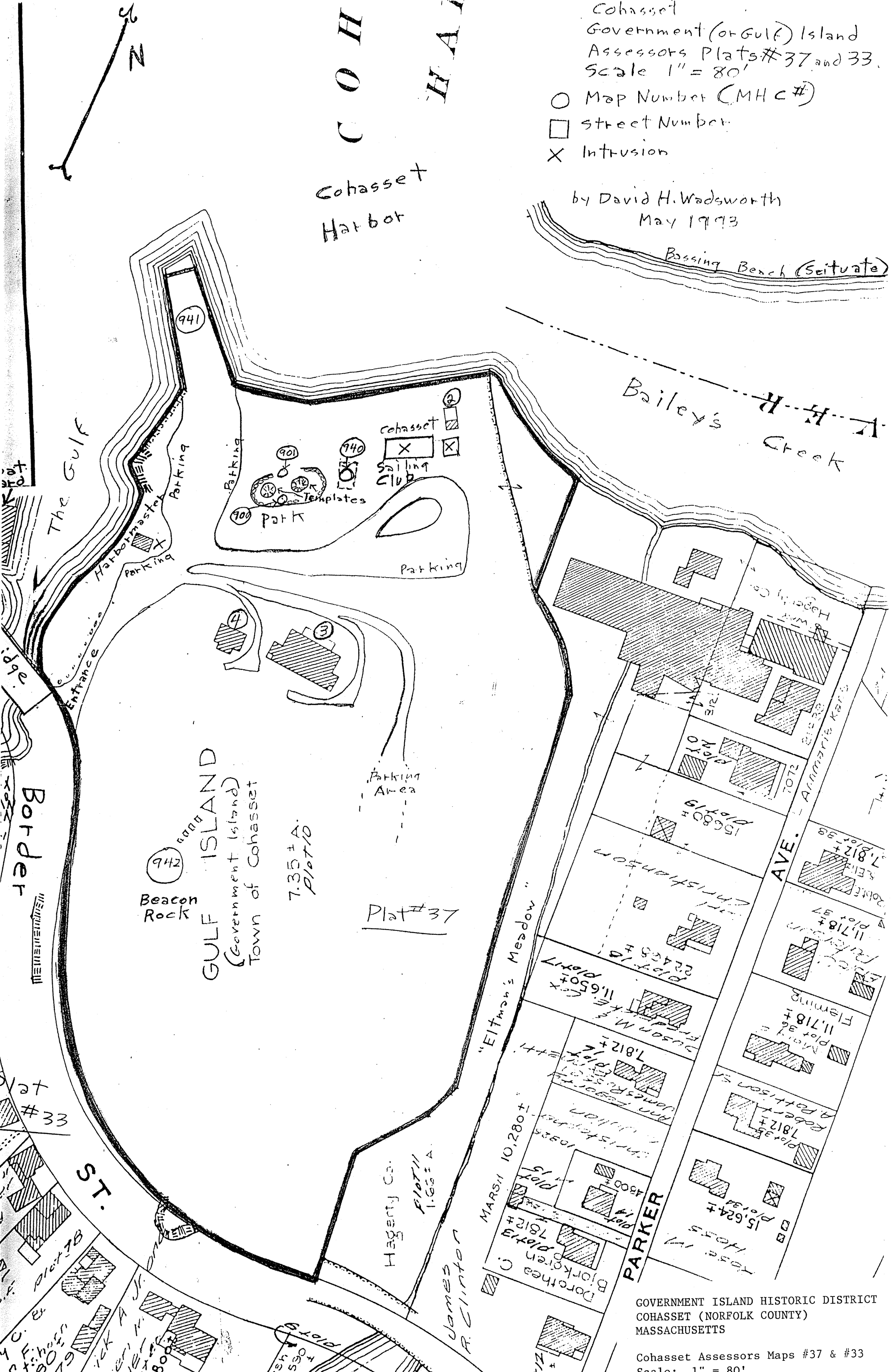
- Map Number (MHC #)
- Street Number
- X Intrusion

by David H. Wadsworth
May 1973

Bassing Bench (Seituate)

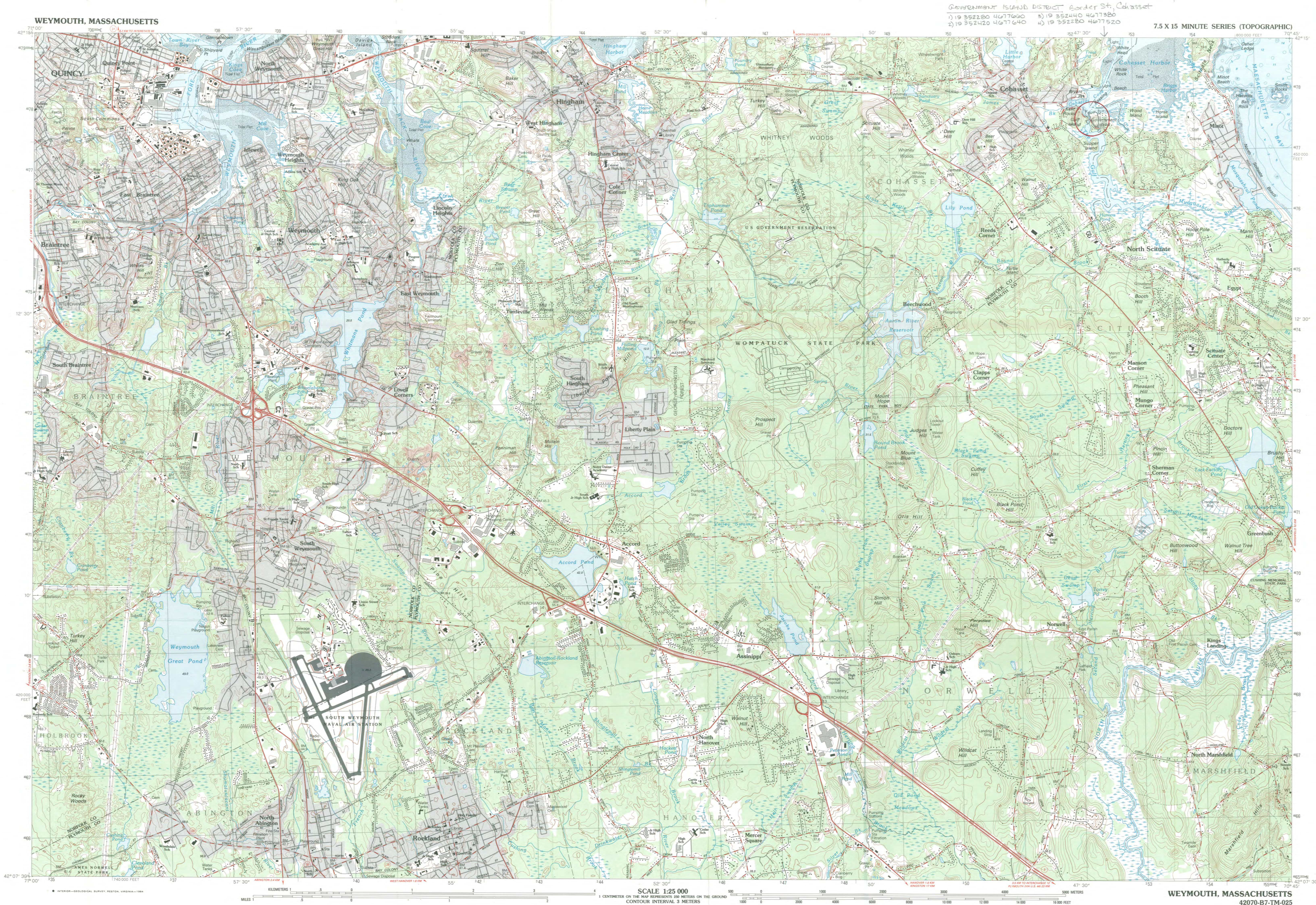
Bailey's Creek

Cohasset
Harbor



GOVERNMENT ISLAND HISTORIC DISTRICT
COHASSET (NORFOLK COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

Cohasset Assessors Maps #37 & #33
Scale: 1" = 80'



Weymouth

MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric topographic map

7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1984

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1978. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1984
Supersedes Weymouth and Cohasset 1:25 000-scale maps dated 1971 and 1974
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 13269 (1980) and 13270 (1982). This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19: Universal Transverse Mercator
10 000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 6 meters south and 42 meter west as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM of 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 1.5 METER
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS
DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SOUNDINGS SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.7 METERS

THIS MAP COMPLEES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS	
Meters	Feet	UTM grid convergence (declination (MM)) at center of map		UTM grid convergence (declination (MM)) at center of map	
1	3.2808	1° 1' 11" E		1	Boston South
2	6.5617	1° 1' 11" E		2	Hull
3	9.8425	1° 1' 11" E		3	Norwood
4	13.1234	1° 1' 11" E		4	Schuette
5	16.4042	1° 1' 11" E		5	Brookline
6	19.6850	1° 1' 11" E		6	Whitman
7	22.9658	1° 1' 11" E		7	Dunbury
8	26.2467	1° 1' 11" E			
9	29.5275	1° 1' 11" E			
10	32.8084	1° 1' 11" E			

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

UTM grid convergence (declination (MM)) at center of map
Diagram is approximate

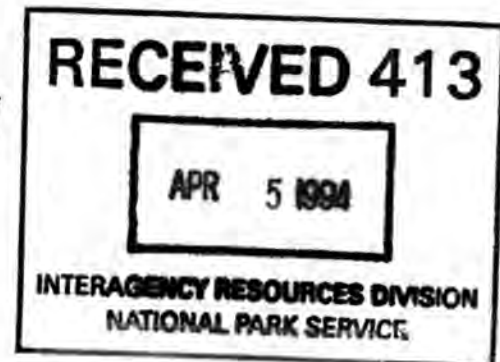
1 Boston South
2 Hull
3 Norwood
4 Schuette
5 Brookline
6 Whitman
7 Dunbury

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

Topographic Map Symbols

Symbol	Description
Primary highway, hard surface	Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road, trail	Unimproved road, trail
Route marker: interstate, U. S. State	Route marker: interstate, U. S. State
Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage	Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage
Bridge: drawbridge	Bridge: drawbridge
Roadbridge, overpass, underpass	Roadbridge, overpass, underpass
Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
House; barn; church; school; large structure	House; barn; church; school; large structure
Boundary:	Boundary:
National, with monument	National, with monument
State	State
County, parish	County, parish
Civil township, precinct, district	Civil township, precinct, district
Incorporated city, village, town	Incorporated city, village, town
National or State reservation; small park	National or State reservation; small park
Land grant with monument; found section corner	Land grant with monument; found section corner
U. S. public lands survey: range, township, section	U. S. public lands survey: range, township, section
Range, township, section line: location approximate	Range, township, section line: location approximate
Fence or field line	Fence or field line
Power transmission line, located tower	Power transmission line, located tower
Dam; dam with lock	Dam; dam with lock
Cemetery; grave	Cemetery; grave
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument
Windmill; water well; spring	Windmill; water well; spring
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave	Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave
Contour: national section: vertical section: spot elevation	Contour: national section: vertical section: spot elevation
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand	Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand
Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate	Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp	Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp
Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland	Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland
Salt; mangrove	Salt; mangrove
Orchard; vineyard	Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request



March 31, 1994

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Government Island Historic District, Cohasset (Norfolk County),
Massachusetts, 02025.

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owner was notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and was afforded the opportunity to comment. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has received a letter of support from the president of the Cohasset Lightkeepers Corporation.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Noel Ripley, Chairman, Cohasset Historical Commission
David Wadsworth, Cohasset Historical Commission
Edwin Tebbetts, Chairman, Board of Selectmen
Anne McCarthy Forbes, Preservation Consultant
Richard Hayes, Librarian, Paul Pratt Memorial Public Library



TOWN OF COHASSET

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
41 Highland Avenue
Cohasset, Massachusetts 02025

Tel: (617) 383-9900
Fax: (617) 383-1630

APR 1 - 1994

April 13, 1994

Congressman Gerry E. Studds
1212 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169

Dear Congressman Studds:

The Town of Cohasset's Board of Selectmen wishes to enlist your assistance in getting expedited approval of its application to the National Register of Historic Places for the Government Island Historic District.

The effort to bring the application to this point in the process has been a community effort, and this property deserves prompt recognition for its historical significance.

Thank you for your assistance.

Very truly yours,

Gregory J. Doyon
Executive Secretary

GJD:ew
Encl.

cc: Noel Ripley

GERRY E. STUDDS
TENTH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE
AND FISHERIES
CHAIRMAN

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT
AND NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

WASHINGTON
237 CANNON BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2210
202-225-3111

SOUTH SHORE 1-800-794-9911

QUINCY
1212 HANCOCK STREET
QUINCY, MA 02169
BROCKTON
FEDERAL BUILDING
166 MAIN STREET
BROCKTON, MA 02401

PLYMOUTH
225 WATER STREET, SUITE 401
PLYMOUTH, MA 02360

CAPE COD AND ISLANDS 1-800-870-2626

HYANNIS
146 MAIN STREET
HYANNIS, MA 02601

April 25, 1994

Ms. Marilyn Merrill
US Department of the Interior
Room 3210
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

I am contacting you on behalf of my constituent, Mr. Gregory Doyon, Executive Secretary for the Town of Cohasset. I would appreciate your efforts to expedite the application for the Government Island Historic District to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Please respond to Mary Lou Butler in my district office at 1212 Hancock St, Quincy, MA. 02169.

Very respectfully,

Gerry E. Studds
MC, 10th District, MA

Enclosure

5-1039

Control # : 100806A6
Final Due : 5-23-94
Assigned To : CULTURAL RESOURCES
Name : STUDDS FOR GREGORY J. DOYON 4/25/94
Park : National Park Service
Subject: : National Register
Description : REQUEST TO HAVE TOWN OF COHASSETS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER
Document Title : LET - 90524
Signature Level/Action : Direct Resp.Assoc. Dir
Draft Due : N/A
Date Received : 5-16-94
NPS Status : ASSIGNED
Congressional? : Y
Case Worker : D. LOWERY 208-6328



H32(413)

25 MAY 1994

P. Andrews 5/19/94
Baland 5/19/94
Shaw 5-20-94
H. Bowers 5/23/94

Honorable Gerry E. Studds
Member, United States House of Representatives
1212 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169

Dear Mr. Studds:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituent Mr. Gregory Doyon regarding the Government Island Historic District, Norfolk County, Massachusetts. We are pleased to inform you that the Government Island Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 12, 1994.

The National Register is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service under the Secretary of the Interior in partnership with the State historic preservation offices. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The listing of a property in the National Register often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts of private citizens and public officials to preserve these resources as living parts of our communities.

We appreciate your interest in the Government Island Historic District and in the historic preservation programs of the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jerry L. Rogers

Jerry L. Rogers
Associate Director, Cultural Resources
and Keeper of the National Register
of Historic Places

Copy to your Washington, DC office

bcc: 001-Kennedy
400-Rogers
400-Bowers
202-CCU
190-Congressional Liaison

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN 413
FNP:PANDRUS:nlc:05/19/94:343-9536:H:\USERS\NCOX\STUDDS.LTR