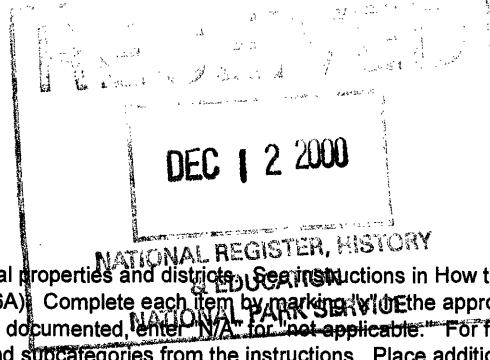


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any 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

historic name FORT HILL RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Fort Hill road and surrounding area, Cape Cod National Seashore not for publication

city or town Eastham vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

state Massachusetts code MA county Barnstable code 001 zip code 02642

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

12/4/2000  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Clate Brown  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
National Park Service

Feb 22 2001  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this 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

Patrick Andrews

Date of Action

4/5/2001

Fort Hill Rural Historic District  
Name of Property

Barnstable, MA  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	3	building
2		sites
8	4	structures
6		objects
18	7	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

3

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURAL/ agricultural fields, outbuildings

DOMESTIC/ single family, secondary structures

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURAL/ agricultural field

DOMESTIC/ single family

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ outdoor recreation,

museum

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Second Empire

MID 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY: Greek Revival

COLONIAL: Georgian

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone, brick

walls wood weatherboard, wood shingle

\_\_\_\_\_

roof asphalt, wood shake

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Fort Hill Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Barnstable, MA

County and State

**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 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**

(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)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1742-1943

**Significant Dates**

1868

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/a

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Cape Cod National Seashore, Wellfleet, MA

Fort Hill Rural HD  
Name of Property

Barnstable, MA  
County, State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** approx. 100 acres

**UTM References** See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	419960	4630400	3. 19	420000	4629520
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2. 19	420380	4629760	4. 19	419650	4629680
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing

x 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 By

name/title Sarah Korjeff, preservation consultant, Fort Hill Consortium with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date November 2000

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

### 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name multiple

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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 the 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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet****Fort Hill Rural Historic District  
Eastham (Barnstable Co.), Mass.**Section number 7 Page 1~~DESCRIPTION~~**INTRODUCTION**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District includes approximately 100 acres of field, forest, and salt marsh located east of U.S. Route 6 in Eastham, Massachusetts. The area roughly corresponds to the boundaries of two large farmsteads formerly owned by the Knowles Family and their relatives by marriage, the Captain Edward Penniman Family. The area is named after "Fort Hill," the most prominent feature of the site, providing expansive views of Nauset Marsh and the Atlantic Ocean. Fort Hill boasts a long and rich history of settlement and use. It was visited in 1605 by the explorer Samuel de Champlain, who reported that the land was partially cleared and inhabited by Native Americans. Fort Hill is most distinguished, however, for its uninterrupted ownership by members of a single family who farmed the property for more than 200 years, from 1742 to 1943. The creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961 played a significant role in limiting change since the end of the Knowles family ownership. The surrounding Town of Eastham and all of Cape Cod, by contrast, have experienced dramatic development and change during this period.

**GENERAL CONFIGURATION**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is located in the town of Eastham, Massachusetts, on the easternmost portion of the Cape Cod peninsula. The historic district is in the southeastern portion of the town, with dramatic views over Nauset Marsh to the Atlantic Ocean. The Fort Hill Historic District is within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore and the National Park Service owns the majority of the land and structures, though two privately-owned historic properties are also located in the district.

The district includes three historic residences and their outbuildings, as well as the open fields and other previously farmed areas which surround them. The eastern and southern boundaries of the historic district are defined by waterbodies. Nauset Marsh describes the eastern border, while Town Cove and Town Creek form the southern border of the district. The northern edge of the district is defined by the town-owned Hemenway Road and Hemenway Landing, and the western edge is defined by the Cape Cod National Seashore boundary.

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District includes four contributing buildings, comprising the three historic residences and one historic barn; eight contributing structures, including several stone walls and foundations; two contributing archaeological sites; and six contributing objects, including early property markers, landscape features, and a Native American sharpening stone. The district also includes three non-contributing buildings, and four non-contributing structures. Non-contributing resources in the district are primarily associated with National Park Service visitor facilities constructed in the 1960s.

Three of the contributing resources within the district were previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Captain Edward Penniman House and Barn were listed in 1976. In addition, two portions of the Fort Hill area, comprising 17.5 acres of National Park Service land, were listed in the National Register as part of the Nauset Archaeological District in 1991. The Nauset Archaeological District was also designated a National Historic Landmark in 1993.

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Eastham (Barnstable Co.), Mass.Section number 7 Page 2

The landscape of the Fort Hill Historic District has three distinct characteristics: the cluster of historic residences and outbuildings in the southwest portion of the district – the Fort Hill Road Area; the open fields and expansive views to the marsh in the eastern portion of the district – the Open Field Area; and the densely vegetated wetland area in the northwest portion of the district – the Red Maple Swamp Area.

## FORT HILL ROAD AREA

The Fort Hill Road Area occupies the southwest quadrant of the district. It includes the historic, western portion of Fort Hill Road and the historic structures clustered along it. It is distinguished from the other areas of the district by the thick wetland vegetation to the north and by the open fields to the east. The west end of Fort Hill Road is moderately to heavily vegetated, providing an effective visual buffer to development outside the district boundary. With the exception of one line of declining eastern red cedars planted six feet on center, the roadside vegetation is largely opportunistic. At least two houses have existed along the western portion of Fort Hill Road since before 1786, and the current cluster of three houses has existed in the same configuration since 1868. In general, certain critical characteristics of this area give this area a relatively high level of integrity. These characteristics include the proximity of the houses to one another, to the road, and to the adjacent farmland, and the relative absence of modern intrusions.

The Fort Hill Road Area's primary features are a cluster of three historic houses and their outbuildings. The historic structures are the Captain Edward Penniman House (c 1868, NR map #1) and the Penniman Barn (c 1880, NR map #2), which are owned by the National Park Service; the Sylvanus Knowles House (c 1864, NR map #3), which is privately owned; and the Seth Knowles House (c 1790, NR map #4), which is privately owned. In total, the area includes four contributing buildings, six contributing structures, two contributing objects, two non-contributing buildings, and one non-contributing structure.

**Captain Edward Penniman House** (c 1868, NR listing 5/28/76, NR map # 1, MHC#EAS.111, photos #2-4)

The Penniman House is located on the south side of Fort Hill Road and is owned by the National Park Service. It is open to the public on a seasonal basis. The Penniman House is a two and one-half story, wood frame structure in the grand, French Second Empire style. The building faces west high atop a terraced lawn, presenting an imposing facade to visitors arriving in the Fort Hill area. This building is the finest example of Second Empire style in Eastham, and is one of the finest examples of this architectural style on Cape Cod.

The building is three bays by two bays, and is sided with wood clapboards. The front facade is symmetrical with a central door and entry porch. The porch is flanked by paired columns with fluted shafts and composite capitals. Matching pilasters are located on either side of the front door. The roof of the porch includes a heavy balustrade which extends upward to the height of the first story cornice. The cornice is projecting, emphasized with a wide, divided band of trim, closely spaced brackets, and dentils. First floor windows are 2/2 lights, with simple entablature and small brackets imitating dentils. The north and south facades of the building each include a one-story bay window with simple entablature and brackets. The east or rear facade is similar to the west facade except the central entry is much less formal, with a simple projecting entablature and brackets. Decorative quoins are located on each

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corner of the house. The building has a straight mansard roof with a flare, and is patterned in wide horizontal bands of red and brown. Second floor dormer windows in every bay are hooded with triangular pediments and heavy brackets. The central dormer on the front facade is a paired hooded window directly above the front entry. All second floor window pediments are decorated with brackets. All windows are shuttered. A small, triangular dormer window is centered on the east and west faces of the shallow upper roof slope and reflects the second floor window pediments. An octagonal cupola with full arch windows and a moulded cornice with brackets tops the building. One internal chimney is centered on either side of the cupola.

The interior floor plan is a central hall plan. On the first floor, there are two main rooms on each side of the central hall, including two parlors, a dining room and a kitchen. A rear exterior door also gives access to a pantry and back stairs in the rear of the building. The second floor includes four bedrooms and a bathroom, with stairs to the attic in the rear. The attic story includes a finished bedroom with access to the cupola above. A basement is located below three quarters of the house. Interior woodwork and finishings are all still in place and are ornate. The main parlor retains wallpaper, ceiling paper and a wall-to-wall rug installed circa 1884. Windows in the southwest parlor, northwest parlor, and dining room have molded, recessed panels extending from the window apron to the baseboard. The front stair has a mahogany newel, handrail, and turned balusters. Doors on both the first and second floors have hand-painted grained finishes. The Penniman House was built with interior plumbing, with two sinks in the kitchen and a full bath on the second floor. Water is supplied by two cisterns, one located in the attic and another underground at the northeast corner of the house. This was the first indoor plumbing in the town. In the 1980s, the National Park Service installed reproduction wallpaper based on the original designs in several rooms. No other alterations have been made to the building since it was acquired by the Park in 1963.

The west lawn of the Penniman House is defined by a semicircular, decorative wooden fence (c 1868, NR map #5, photos #1-2). Two sets of wooden stairs lead from the west side of the upper terrace, through a break in the fence and down to Fort Hill Road. The north side of the lawn slopes down to a stone retaining wall (c 1868, NR map #6, photos #1, 3), broken on center by another set of wooden steps leading down to the road. A distinctive whalebone gate (c 1868, NR map #7, photo #3) is located at the east end of the retaining wall, through which an informal path leads up the north lawn. A row of former hitching posts (c 1868, NR map #8, photo #3) stands 10 feet on center in a line between Fort Hill Road and the north edge of the Penniman property. A flagpole socket (c 1868, NR map #9) is located approximately 20 feet from the northwest corner of the house. All of these landscape features date to the building's period of significance and are visible in early photographs of the property.

Southeast of the house is a two-story barn (c1880, NR map #2, NR listing 5/28/76, MHC#EAS.110, photos #3-4) which matches the Penniman House in style and appearance. The barn has a mansard roof, wood clapboard siding, square cupola, and otherwise simple architectural detailing. The north facade includes a large central door for carriages and a small door on the right which leads to a three-hole outhouse. An open shed with sloped roof projects from the left side of the front facade. On the second story, a loft access is located directly over the carriage entrance. One gabled dormer window is located on either side of the facade. The east and west facades of the barn each have a single gabled dormer window. To the north of the barn is a small, depressed parking area surfaced with gravel. The

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parking area is bordered on the west by the exposed foundation of the Penniman House, on the north by a retaining wall, and on the south by the front of the barn. Wooden steps lead from the east terraced lawn down to the parking area. With the exception of the parking area, these features are all visible in early photographs of the site. In the early 1880s, a greenhouse of wood and glass was constructed along the retaining wall. It was destroyed by a hurricane in the 1920s.

The Penniman House and the portion of the Penniman tract facing Fort Hill Road appear much as they did at the end of the period of significance. The lawn on the east side of the house slopes down to a gravel drive. Four large cottonwood trees line the west side of the driveway (photo #4). The distinctive terracing around the house, stone retaining wall, hitching posts, fence around the perimeter of the property, flagpole socket, whalebone gate, and cottonwood trees lining the driveway are important character-defining features of this site. The primary difference between the current features of the property and the period of significance is the amount of vegetation surrounding the house and the extent of the views from the house.

The land south of the Penniman House and Barn which used to be cleared fields and open to views of Town Cove is now thickly overgrown with vegetation. The land east of the Penniman House, which was open and fenced for use by animals during the period of significance, was also overgrown until recently. The Park Service has cleared much of this area, leaving only a narrow buffer between the Penniman House and the Seth Knowles House. Vegetation to the west of the house has also increased since the period of significance. A long stone wall (NR map #10) running south from the Seth Knowles house through the east part of the Penniman tract is largely obscured by vegetation. Much of the vegetation which has grown up since the period of significance, however, also serves to limit views of later 20th century development which has occurred outside of the district boundaries.

**Sylvanus Knowles House** (c 1864, NR map #3, photos # 5-7)

The Sylvanus Knowles House is a Greek Revival style house on the north side of Fort Hill Road, directly opposite the Penniman House. It is a privately owned residence on approximately 3 acres of land. The main block of the building is a two-story gable roof structure, two bays by three bays, with the gable end facing south to Fort Hill Road. The front facade of the main block has a door on the right side and two windows on the left. The second floor has three windows. The west facade of the main block has two windows evenly spaced, with a small one-story ell projecting to the rear. A one and a half-story gable ell projects to the east side of the original block, creating an L plan. The ell is four bays by two bays, with four bays facing Fort Hill Road. On the front facade of the ell, the first floor contains a bay window occupying the two left bays and a door and window on the right. On the second floor, a shed dormer with two windows projects over the bay window on the left side of the ell. A brick chimney projects from the center of the ell. The original portion of the house rests on a mortar and fieldstone foundation and is sheathed in clapboards. Architectural detailing is Greek revival in style, including corner boards, window and door surrounds, and cornice. The windows are primarily two over two sash. A covered porch was added to the east facade of the ell in 1950 and rebuilt in 1988. Also in 1988, the north and east sides of the ell were altered by removal of two shed-like structures to the rear and the addition of a large northeast facing ell with a gable roof.

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The interior of the Sylvanus Knowles House has been altered, but still retains portions of the original floor plan and a significant amount of the original woodwork. The first floor plan of the main block includes a small front entry and north and south parlors to the west. Steep stairs lead from the entry to the second floor. The second floor of the main block includes a hall and two bedrooms. The first floor plan of the wing includes two main rooms, divided by a central chimney. Partitions for several smaller rooms to the rear of the ell, and a small staircase to the second floor, were removed in the 20th century. The second story of the wing retains its two-room configuration, divided by the chimney. Early interior elements that survive include formal wainscoting, cornices and door and window surrounds in the west parlors, and simpler mouldings and cornices in the front entry, east parlor and second floor bedrooms. Wide wooden floorboards and four-panel doors also survive in many rooms.

The Sylvanus Knowles house and yard have undergone changes since the period of significance. The house was substantially enlarged in 1988-1989 with the construction of an ell at its northeast corner. A small garage (NR map #A) was also built northwest of the house. The front of the house is planted with a variety of neatly trimmed evergreen plants, both marking the foundation and dotted around the lawn. The front lawn is edged by a split-rail fence and buffered by additional evergreen shrubs. Two tall, conical evergreen trees mark the entrance to the property. Early photographs show that the fence and most of the plantings did not exist during the period of significance, but several deciduous trees were located in the front yard of the property in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The area to the west of the Sylvanus Knowles House driveway is heavily wooded, and a portion of a remnant stone wall (NR map #11) — perhaps marking the boundary of the property — is hidden in the woods. While this area was more open during the period of significance, there appears to have always been some vegetated buffer in this area. The rear (north) lawn of the property is open, and enclosed for privacy by a dense buffer of red maples. Early photographs indicate that this area to the north was open field during the period of significance. To the east, the property is partially shielded from an adjacent Park Service parking lot by a border of deciduous trees. Early photographs indicate that a driveway was originally located to the east of the house, and that a border of trees existed between the driveway and the open fields to the east.

**Seth Knowles House** (c 1790, NR map #4, photos # 8-11)

The Seth Knowles House is a Georgian style building located at the east end of the residential cluster, facing west. It is situated largely in line with Fort Hill Road, which curves sharply around to the north of the house. This structure is a two and one-half story wood frame house with a gable roof, paired center chimneys and a large center cross-gable. The main block is five bays by two bays. The front facade is a symmetrical five bays with a central front door, and is faced with clapboards. The second floor has five windows, aligned with the windows and door on the first floor. The third floor of the facade is formed by the center cross gable, and contains a single window. The front facade has detailed architectural trim at the eaves and on the front door surround, but relatively simple corner boards and window surrounds. The detail at the eave is composed of a cornice, raking cornice along the cross gable, dentil moulding, and a wide fascia board. The front door surround is comprised of flat pilasters on either side of the door, with a wide fascia, frieze, and cornice above. The sides of the main block are faced in weathered shingle and include two windows on each floor, with the third floor windows spaced more closely within the gable ends. Two small one-

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story ells with shallow hip roofs project from the north and south sides of the main block. At some time near the turn of the 20th century, these were added as one-story open porches. These porches are now enclosed and accessed from the interior. A two story gabled ell projects from the rear of the main block and is the width of the cross gable. This ell is four bays long, with a door and three windows on the first floor and two gabled dormers on the second floor.

The interior of the main block of the Seth Knowles House is a variation on the typical Cape Cod House plan, with a central chimney and entry hall, north and south parlors, and a large room in the rear. Early photographs (circa 1880) show a single center chimney which likely filled the central core of the house. Currently, the building has two internal chimneys on either side of the entry hall. The north and south parlors have been modified somewhat, but still maintain their general configuration and much of the original woodwork. The rear room of the main house block extends the width of the house and retains the original simple wainscoting, fireplace surround, and built-in cupboards. The second floor plan of the main house block is very similar to the first floor, with a narrow central stair hall, north and south bedrooms which fall roughly over the first floor parlors, and smaller rooms to the rear. The ceilings are much lower than those on the first floor, but architectural details in the north and south bedrooms are very formal. The rear rooms have little detailing and have been altered in the 20th century. The third floor of the main block also has a similar floor plan, with a central hall, two front rooms, and three smaller rear rooms. Portions of the ceiling on the third floor are coved, reflecting the central cross gable. The odd location of the coved ceilings in relation to the room arrangement suggest that the cross gable is not original to the structure. The two-story rear ell may have originally been a kitchen wing, and has been expended further west in the 20th century. A cellar is located under the ell, and a millstone is built into the south foundation wall. The original enclosed back staircase with simple wood panel walls still exists and leads to the second floor. Early interior elements that survive include plaster walls and ceilings, paneled wainscoting, cornices and fireplace surrounds in principal rooms, six panel doors, and wide wooden floor boards.

Evergreen shrubs serve as foundation plantings around the front of the house. The front (west) lawn is planted in grass, and marked only by a large cottonwood tree and a single flowering hydrangea. Early photographs show no foundation plantings, but a rounded gravel driveway with several shrubs planted along the outside edge. The rear (east) lawn is also largely open, consistent with early photographs. The north lawn extends to Fort Hill Road, and open fields are located on the far side of the roadway. Early photographs show that Fort Hill Road originally stopped at the house and that the north lawn extended to a large barn which was part of the farm complex. The barn survived into the mid 20th century. Aerial photographs from the early to mid 20th century show that the barn's footprint was significantly larger than that of the house. Circa 1880 photos indicate that the barn was a large gable roof structure with a north-south facing gable, a central cupola, and a large central door. An early stereoscope image and aerial photos from the early 20th century show an east-west facing gable ell attached to the north, perhaps reflecting a change to accommodate a different agricultural focus. All that remains of the barn is a small mortared fieldstone foundation (NR map #12, photo #11) measuring 15 feet by 16.5 feet which was under a small portion of the building. The south lawn is short and stops at a heavily vegetated area. The vegetation covers a long stone wall (NR map #10) that runs south from the house and consists of three unmortared courses. The stone wall is clearly visible only in the fall and winter. Early photographs show this area as primarily open field.

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Eastham (Barnstable Co.), Mass.Section number 7 Page 7

The Seth Knowles house retains a high degree of integrity. Like the Sylvanus Knowles property, the Seth Knowles property has been modified by the addition of new foundation plantings, and by the construction of a small garage (c 1964, NR map #B). Nevertheless, the west facade of the house basically appears much as it did in photographs taken at the end of the 19th century. The larger setting around the Seth Knowles house, however, has been changed by the developments of the past 50 years, and particularly since 1960. The extension of Fort Hill Road changed the status of the Seth Knowles house from being the prominent eastern terminus of the road, to being a house alongside the road. The loss of the large barn has altered the character, as has the construction of a small parking lot north of Fort Hill Road — clearly in view of the Seth Knowles house.

**Other Historic Features**

In addition to the barn on the Seth Knowles property, several other structures which existed during the period of significance no longer exist in the district. They are described below.

James Hatch Knowles House Site (Old House on North Farm). This house was located directly east of the Sylvanus Knowles House and was in existence from approximately 1780 to 1904. It was originally constructed as a full Cape house facing Fort Hill Road. A two-story addition was added circa 1830 directly to the west of the Cape. The addition was three bays by one bay, with a shallow pitched roof. A door was located in the left hand bay and had simple Georgian style architectural detailing. Old photographs circa 1880 show several one-story ells and sheds located to the rear of the building. All were gable roofed and sided in wood clapboard.

Thomas Knowles/Daniel Penniman House Site (location conjectural). This house and approximately 7 acres were purchased from the Knowles family by Scammell Penniman in 1829. The house and several outbuildings were all part of a homestead formerly owned by Thomas Knowles and were used by Daniel Penniman (Scammell's son) and his wife Betsy. The buildings existed from approximately 1800 to 1880. Archaeological investigations have not determined the exact location of these structures, but they are thought to have been southeast of the current Penniman house and barn, likely obscured by their construction.

Samuel Treat House (location conjectural). This house was built circa 1673 for Samuel Treat when he arrived to serve as minister. Treat also likely built a second house on the property circa 1704. The location of these structures is uncertain, but 19th century accounts state that a house was located southeast of the Seth Knowles House, near Town Creek, and that the cellar was visible until approximately 1832. A description of the buildings has not been found.

**Non-Contributing Features**

Non-contributing resources are generally associated with improvements to accommodate automobiles and National Park visitor facilities. They include a small garage on the Sylvanus Knowles property (NR map #A), a small garage on the Seth Knowles property (NR map #B), the lower parking lot (NR map #C), and National Park signage. Most of these structures have been set back from Fort Hill Road, and efforts have been made to reduce the impact of the parking lot through vegetative screening.

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Individual resources and landscape features here have experienced varying degrees of change since 1943. The portion of Fort Hill Road from the Penniman House to the Seth Knowles house was not paved until the 1960s. In addition, vegetation along the side of the road has changed. There may have been a row of horse-chestnut trees along the south side of the road, between the Penniman House and the Seth Knowles property. A single horse-chestnut tree now stands across from the parking lot on the north side of the road. There was less scrub vegetation on either side of the road, which may have given it a more open feeling. Views from the road south to the Town Cove and north to the Knowles farmland that were open in 1943 are now almost completely obscured by stands of black locust, cedar, and russian olive. Construction of the small parking lot east of the Sylvanus Knowles house has also given the road a more public feeling.

The most important change in the road was its extension in the 1960s eastward to the top of Fort Hill. Prior to that time, Fort Hill Road ended directly in front of the Seth Knowles house. The cluster of three houses was located on a cul-de-sac, while today they are located along a corridor which appears to continue eastward for an indefinite distance.

**OPEN FIELD AREA** (photos 12-16)

The open-field area forms the eastern half of the district and encompasses the majority of the land that was farmed by the Knowles families. This is the most frequently visited and recognizable area within the Historic District. While this zone has changed moderately over the past 50 years, it retains certain characteristics — such as its dramatic open quality — from the Willard Knowles period (1742-86) and perhaps even earlier. Consequently, the overall level of integrity of this zone is fairly high. The open field area extends from the wooded edge of the Red Maple Swamp and Skiff Hill to the mean high tide line along the edge of Nauset Marsh and Town Cove. Geologist Robert Oldale describes the area as exhibiting "classic, collapsed ice-age topography." Fort Hill and the farm fields surrounding it are the primary features of this area. The area also contains a contributing archaeological district, one contributing structure, three contributing objects, and one non-contributing structure.

Distinctive characteristics of this landscape include undulating folds of pasture and abandoned field divided by unmortared fieldstone walls. This area presents unobstructed views in every direction, though opportunistic vegetation encroaches on the area from all sides. The area contains several kettle hole wetlands with dense vegetation surrounding them. Open landscapes such as this once typified the Outer Cape and the entire region, but few remain due to the rapid pace of development.

Largely owing to the presence of Nauset Beach, which has acted as a protective barrier, the Fort Hill open-field area has been protected from the dramatic erosion characteristic of so many coastal areas on Cape Cod. Its coastline has thus experienced only moderate change over the past century. However, aerial photographs and historic maps indicate that encroaching vegetation has reduced the overall size of the field area since the 1940s. Whereas in 1938 these fields were open as far north as Skiff Hill, they now extend only to the northernmost stone wall. This zone's northern edge, which was formed by an irregular line of vegetation in 1938, is currently a straight wall of vegetation extending west from the shore.

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Eastham (Barnstable Co.), Mass.**Section number 7 Page 9Topography/Natural Features

The top of Fort Hill has an elevation of more than 40 feet. The view from here is panoramic. The land slopes away gently to the south, where it meets Town Creek and the marshy edge of Town Cove. Across the cove, modern residential development is visible. The view to the east looks over Nauset Marsh to the Atlantic Ocean. To the northwest and west, the open fields extend to the woodland edge of the Red Maple Swamp area, and to the wooded property lines of the three houses of the Fort Hill Road area. There are few modern intrusions visible in the viewshed, much the same as when Penniman and the Knowles built their houses here. The primary difference is the amount of vegetation visible, but the vegetation also hides some modern development which would otherwise be in the viewshed. The former U.S. Coast Guard Station (c 1936), located in the distance on the north side of Nauset Marsh, is one of the few other structures that are visible.

Three kettle-hole wetlands stand out from the surrounding field setting. Each is edged and partially filled with encroaching vegetation. Surface water is visible within each of the three wetlands, and the presence of wildlife is evident. The three ponds or wet areas first appear in the historic documentation of the site in a 1938 aerial photograph. Today they are being filled with grasses and shrub growth, and they are edged with encroaching vegetation. While certainly representing a character-defining feature of this site, their appearance has probably changed since the end of the historic period as the vegetation in and around them has grown denser.

Fields and Stone Walls

The most distinctive character-defining feature of this area is its pattern of small rectangular fields defined by stone walls. Three unmortared fieldstone walls (NR map #13, photos #14-15) are located in the open-field area, presumably built by Willard Knowles after he acquired the property in 1742. They are shown on Iardella's Coastal Map of Cape Cod, dated 1856. These stone walls are similar in size and appearance to the one south of the Seth Knowles House. All three run westward from Nauset Marsh. The northernmost of the three walls runs for 115 feet before reaching a gap of 115 feet. After that point, the line continues in the form of some isolated cobbles. The middle wall consists of two segments. The east segment is comprised of two to four courses of unmortared stone, and is 139 feet long. The west segment dwindles to one course, shows some gaps, and runs for 669 additional feet. The southernmost wall consists of two to four courses of unmortared stone and runs 718 feet. On the south side of the west end of this wall is an area of surface disturbance, but it does not appear to have affected the stone wall. Early records indicate the existence of at least four long, east-west stone walls extending to the water's edge, and several north-south walls of lesser length. Aerial photography dating from 1938 shows that all of these walls were extant at that time. Road grading done for a proposed circa 1960 residential subdivision on Fort Hill crossed the southernmost east-west wall in three places, damaging it severely. Parts of it, along with most of the other east-west walls and some of the north-south walls, were still extant in 1965. Today, only the three east-west walls remain, though some of the missing stones may simply be buried.

Several smaller features are found in the open field area, including a stone boundary marker. The Treat property marker (NR map #14) is a granite marker with the letter "T" engraved on its face. It was the northwest boundary marker for approximately 20 acres owned by Reverend Samuel Treat in the late 17th and early 18th century.

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"Quarried rock" (NR map #15), is located north of Fort Hill Road and north of the Seth Knowles House. Quarried rock is a partially buried boulder that shows drill holes and in which a fragment of metal is lodged. This rock was located during the archaeological reconnaissance survey in the 1980s. On the eastern slope of Fort Hill, near the marsh edge, another feature "rock with spike" (NR map #16) is located. This rock was likely used by settlers for anchoring and pulling in barges containing salt marsh hay harvested from the marsh.

Archaeological Site

The Nauset Archaeological District, listed on the National Register in 1991 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1993, includes portions of Fort Hill. The archaeological sites along Nauset Marsh represent components associated with the large decentralized settlement observed by Samuel Champlain and other chroniclers during the first decades of the 17th century.

Non-Contributing Features

A major change to the Fort Hill open field zone since the end of the Knowles period was the creation of roads in the 1960s. The private development proposed for the Seth Knowles farm circa 1960 called for the eastward extension of Fort Hill Road; it also specified the construction of a spur leading from that extension to the summit of the hill, and of another road around the perimeter of the hill. These roads were roughly graded, and several areas were leveled for house lots, before work was stopped by the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore. The scar is visible from the air as a depressed area along the west and south flanks of Fort Hill. The track is between 20 and 30 feet wide and, in some places, is as much as 4 feet lower than the surrounding field. Nevertheless, it is difficult to perceive the course of the abandoned roadbed when grasses are tall. The Park Service retained the road extension to the summit and added the upper parking lot/overlook (NR map #D) at the highest point of the hill, detracting somewhat from the historic character of the area. The trails developed by the Park Service around the perimeter of the Fort Hill area are far less intrusive. The paths tend to follow natural features of the land, and most of them were developed from trails that had been in use since the 1800s or earlier.

Views both to and from the Fort Hill open field zone have changed remarkably little since its occupation by the descendants of Willard Knowles (1786-1943). The site's acres of cleared, open land remain intact and securely buffered from Route 6 by a woodland. The area's uninterrupted views of the Town Cove, Nauset Marsh, and the Atlantic Ocean across open fields remain largely unchanged. The single most significant change to the view from Fort Hill is the cluster of modern residences visible on the southern shore of the Town Cove.

**RED MAPLE SWAMP AREA**

The Red Maple Swamp Area comprises the northwestern third of the district. It extends south from Hemenway Road to the open-field zone, and east from the Park Service property line to Nauset Marsh. In addition to the Red Maple Swamp, the area is distinctive because of Skiff Hill, a promontory of equal height to Fort Hill, but with its summit located closer to the edge of Nauset Marsh. This area of the district includes one contributing object, the Indian Rock, and three non-contributing structures, all associated with National Park Service interpretive programs.

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~~The Red Maple Swamp area is accessed from the north via Hemenway Road, or from the south via the Fort Hill Trail. National Park Service structures, including a public restroom (NR map #E) and an interpretive shelter (NR map #F), are located in this otherwise wooded and heavily canopied area. The Red Maple Swamp Trail and the Fort Hill Trail wind through the area and provide access to several open views over Nauset Marsh at Skiff Hill. This portion of the district offers a very different experience than the other parts of the Fort Hill District.~~

Natural Features/Swamp

The topography of this area ranges from 10 to 50 feet above sea level, with elevations of 30 to 50 feet in the eastern portion along the edge of Nauset Marsh. A relatively steep slope along the edge of Nauset Marsh in the area of Skiff Hill provides a good vantage point for viewing the Marsh and its surroundings. Sloping away from Skiff Hill, elevations gradually decrease to 10 to 15 feet to the west, where the swamp is the primary feature. To the south, elevations decrease more gradually to approximately 35 feet as they approach the open field area.

Historic maps and descriptions of the Fort Hill area indicate the presence of a wooded swamp in this location as far back as the middle of the 18th century. Aerial photographs confirm that such an area still existed in 1938. Consequently, the Red Maple Swamp as a whole represents a character-defining feature of the Fort Hill landscape as well as an agricultural resource which was important in the district's history. As early as the 18th century, the woods of the eastern Cape, especially in Eastham and Orleans, were largely destroyed by human activity. Wood became so scarce in these areas that peat, harvested from swamps, was used as the primary heating fuel. Three hundred years of harvesting wood for buildings and fuel, clearing for agricultural purposes, and mining "bog iron" and fuel peat decimated many of region's cedar swamps and in some cases prompted a transition to swamps dominated by red maples, which are faster-growing and tolerate a wide range of conditions.

In general, aerial photographs indicate that the Red Maple Swamp area is both larger and denser than it was at the end of the period of significance. The density and extent of vegetation has likely increased partly because of the decreased intensity of use of the open fields for farming and also because of the decreased harvesting of resources in the swamp itself. After the area was acquired by the National Park Service, a system of trails and boardwalks (NR map #G) was cut to provide access from Fort Hill and Hemenway Road through the formerly inaccessible wooded area.

Skiff Hill

The summit of Skiff Hill is approximately 48 feet above sea level and rises rather steeply from the edge of Nauset Marsh. The other slopes of the hill decrease gradually with gentle undulations similar to those found in the rest of the open field area. In contrast to the open field area, the majority of this area is heavily wooded. In the 1960s, the National Park Service cleared a wooded site on Skiff Hill that was open during the historic period and constructed an interpretive shelter (NR map #F) that features Indian Rock. The wooded area east of the shelter has been cleared and kept open, providing an unobstructed view of Nauset Marsh. The open view out over the marshes — although recently created — is a character defining feature because it existed historically.

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~~A second overlook or viewing area is located on the north slope of Skiff Hill, approximately halfway between Hemenway Road and the Interpretive Shelter. Historically, the slopes of Skiff Hill were fully cleared to the edge of the swamp, and it was part of the open fields associated with the northern Knowles farm in the district. The Park Service maintains the existing open areas and is considering clearing of additional views and lands to more closely represent the historic character of the area.~~

Indian Rock (NR map #17)

Indian Rock is a 20-ton granitic glacial boulder used by Native Americans for tool sharpening. Until 1965, it was located on the marsh just south of Hemenway Landing. Due to shoreline retreat and erosion, the boulder was almost lost in the marsh, so it was moved approximately 100 feet to the top of Skiff Hill. The original site is now under water. Shoreline erosion also destroyed any archaeological deposits that may have existed in association with the rock in its original location. Therefore, its actual history and specific use cannot be determined. Studies reveal that the long, moon-shaped grooves in the stone were probably used for sharpening bone items such as harpoon heads and fishhooks, while the wider depressions were used for sharpening stone axes. Indian Rock is currently surrounded by a small concrete paved area.

Non-Contributing FeaturesPublic Restroom (c 1969, NR map #E)

The public restroom is situated near the Hemenway Road entrance and is of concrete block construction. Because of the dense vegetation surrounding the building, the structure is not visible except for in its immediate vicinity. For this reason, the structure has little impact on the overall integrity of the district.

Skiff Hill Interpretive Shelter (c 1960, NR map #F)

The Skiff Hill interpretive shelter is located south of the restroom and near the edge of Nauset Marsh at Skiff Hill. The shelter is an open hexagonal design which is typical of numerous National Park Structures built in the 1960s. It is wood construction with weathered cedar shingles on the roof and low walls. The materials help the structure to blend in with the surroundings and reflect traditional building materials of the region. The Skiff Hill Shelter contains a wayside exhibit which focuses on Indian Rock and natural features of the area.

## CIRCULATION

The district is traversed by Fort Hill Road, which passes by the three historic homes in the district and continues to the summit of Fort Hill, providing impressive views of the surrounding marsh and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. Fort Hill Road also provides access to the two small parking areas within the district, one on the north side of Fort Hill Road adjacent to the Sylvanus Knowles House, and the other at the top of Fort Hill. Several walking trails also provide circulation through the district, linking the three distinct areas.

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The western portion of this road, extending as far as the Seth Knowles House, was in use during the 18th century. The eastern portion of the roadway, extending from the Seth Knowles House to the summit of Fort Hill, was constructed in the 1960s as part of a planned subdivision for the area. The subdivision was stopped with the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961, but the National Park Service retained and paved the eastern segment of the roadway to provide access to visitors.

Lower Parking Lot (c1970, NR map #C)

The area on the north side of Fort Hill Road east of the Sylvanus Knowles House (NR map #3) is a Park Service parking lot that can accommodate a maximum of 16 standard-sized vehicles. Mature black locust trees mark the property line between the parking lot and the Sylvanus Knowles property. These trees have been retained in an effort to limit the visual impact of the parking lot. Park interpretive signage is located at the northeast corner of the parking lot, marking a trailhead for the north branch of the Fort Hill Trail.

Upper Parking Lot (c1960, NR map #D)

As with the eastern portion of Fort Hill Road, the upper parking lot was constructed as a result of the proposed subdivision of this area in the 1960s. A road leading to the summit of Fort Hill was laid out and roughed in at the time the Cape Cod National Seashore was created. Using the existing access, the upper parking lot was created and paved by the National Park Service to provide access to Fort Hill and to offer panoramic views of Nauset Marsh, Town Cove, Coast Guard Beach, and the surrounding open fields. The upper parking lot can accommodate approximately 10 cars and is the trailhead for the south branches of the Fort Hill Trail. At an elevation of approximately 50 feet, it offers panoramic views in all directions and is heavily used. While the parking lot is perhaps the most obvious modern intrusion in the district, it does not have a significant visual impact on the district because it is only fully visible at the top of Fort Hill. The parking lot's visibility is kept minimal by its small size and by the wooden split rail fence which surrounds it and runs to the lower parking lot alongside the roadway.

Fort Hill Trail

The south branch of the Fort Hill Trail begins on the south side of Fort Hill Road at the rear of the Penniman House (NR map #1). The trail runs eastward through the woods south of the Penniman Barn (NR map #2) and the Seth Knowles House (NR map #4) and into the open fields. When this path reaches the open-field area, it becomes a grass path mowed to a width of about 6 feet that curves up to the top of Fort Hill. From the top of Fort Hill, the trail continues eastward to the edge of Nauset Marsh and then turns north and travels along the marsh to the edge of the woods south of Skiff Hill. Here the trail divides. One path continues north to the Skiff Hill Shelter (NR map #F). The other turns west to intersect with north branch of the Fort Hill Trail, which runs between Skiff Hill and the lower parking lot on Fort Hill Road. Portions of this trail, particularly those which follow the ledge along Nauset Marsh, are believed to be derived from early trails used by the Knowles Family in the mid 1800s.

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~~The north branch of the Fort Hill Trail begins at Skiff Hill and travels southwest through a lightly wooded area. When the trail reaches the open fields, it turns to follow the western edge of the open fields until it reaches the lower parking lot on the north side of Fort Hill Road. The majority of this trail is believed to have been in use since the mid 1800s, when it led from the Sylvanus Knowles House (NR map #3) to Skiff Hill.~~

Skiff Hill Trail

The Skiff Hill Trail is a paved path, constructed circa 1965, which leads from the east end of Hemenway Road to the Skiff Hill Shelter (NR map #F). The trail begins in a densely vegetated area, and almost immediately passes by the entrance to the Red Maple Swamp Trail and a public restroom (NR map #E). The trail continues southeast with a moderate uphill grade, reaching the Skiff Hill Shelter and several overlooks over Nauset Marsh.

Red Maple Swamp Trail

The Red Maple Swamp Trail is located in the northwest portion of the district. This trail was constructed circa 1967 and runs southwesterly from the east end of Hemenway Road, meandering through the swamp on a series of 4-foot wide boardwalks. The trail then serpentine eastward to meet the north branch of the Fort Hill Trail at the edge of the open field area.

Archaeological Description

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District contains a wide variety of documented and potential prehistoric and historic sites that may contain important information related to the district's significance. Forty-two prehistoric sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile) of the district including fourteen in the Fort Hill District. The Nauset Archaeological District, listed on the National Register in 1991 and designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1993 also extends into the district. Documented prehistoric sites in the Fort Hill Rural Historic District span the Late Archaic through Contact Periods of occupation. Site variability is complex including campsites, larger habitation sites, shell middens, flake scatters and burials. Thousands of prehistoric artifacts have been documented at sites in the district mainly as a result of collector activity, amateur excavations and a National Park Service survey of the National Seashore Property (McManamon 1985). Environmental characteristics of the district represent several locational variables (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are considered favorable indicators for many types of prehistoric sites. Well drained, level to moderately sloping knolls, terraces and other landforms are present throughout the district within 1000 of a variety of wetlands. Freshwater wetlands including three kettle holes, a cedar swamp and springs are present as well as several components of the Nauset estuary. Nauset Marsh comprises the eastern border of the district with Town Cove and Town Creek the southern border. Given the above information, the size of the district (approximately 100 acres) and known regional settlement patterns, prehistoric sites are documented in the district and a high potential exists that additional sites can be found. Additional research in this area should also increase our knowledge of site variability, function and temporal periods.

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Historic archaeological resources have also been documented in the Fort Hill Rural Historic District and a high potential exists that additional sites from this period will also be found. It is unknown exactly when the native settlements and planting fields observed by Champlain in 1605 and the Pilgrims in 1620 in the Nauset area were abandoned, however, they were probably gone by the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. Lands in and around Nauset Marsh were conveyed by Native Americans to Plymouth settlers in March, 1645. After that date Native Americans retained rights for shellfish and drift whales on the Nauset beaches only. European settlement of the Fort Hill District began in ca. 1673 when a house was built for Samuel Treat after his arrival to serve as minister. Treat reportedly also built a second house in the district in ca. 1704. Archaeological features and structural evidence of both houses, related outbuildings and occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may survive in the nominated district, however, their location is unclear. The remains of a Treat House were visible southeast of the Seth Knowles House near Town Creek until ca. 1832. It is unknown whether the above remains were from the first or second house. The location of the second house is conjectured near the present Burrill House, uphill from the likely site of the first house. In 1742, the Treat property was purchased by Willard Knowles who is assumed to have lived in the Treat house since 1780 maps of the area show only one house in the Fort Hill locale. Upon the death of Willard Knowles (1786), the division of his estate between two of his sons split the Fort Hill area into a northern and southern Knowles Farm. Seth Knowles inherited the Willard Knowles homestead that included a residence and several outbuildings that became the Southern farm. William Knowles inherited the northern part of the district that became the northern farm. William reportedly already had a house on Knowles property to the west of the Willard Knowles house. Structural evidence and related features may survive from the William Knowles House on the northern side of Fort Hill Road east of the extant Sylvanus Knowles House, built by his son. Foundation remains from a barn (ca.1800) are also reported north of Fort Hill Road and the Seth Knowles House. The evolution of the southern farmstead is highly conjectured with the existing farmhouse reported in varied accounts to be built by Seth Knowles in ca. 1790, his son James H. Knowles in 1821 or, built by Willard sometime after 1742, perhaps incorporating an earlier structure, possibly the Treat House. Archaeological features and structural remains associated with residences and outbuildings may exist throughout the northern and southern Knowles farms from revisions made to older buildings and new ones constructed throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Structural evidence from saltworks may also survive in the northeast part of the district just south of Hemenway Road and the town landing and along the marsh edge between the summits of Fort Hill and Skiff Hill. Structural evidence from outbuildings and occupational related features may also survive related to the Edward Penniman House (1868) located on Fort Hill Road. Archaeological evidence may exist from a late 19<sup>th</sup> century boathouse known to exist on the property, an older barn that predates the existing barn, a green house, agricultural buildings and a small building built as a dwelling for Edward's mentally incompetent younger brother.

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****INTRODUCTION**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District, including the grouping of the Knowles and Penniman houses, with the adjacent expanse of interdependent fields and woods, represents a pattern of settlement and land division characteristic of farms on Cape Cod from approximately 1750 to 1900. This general organization of the site endured at Fort Hill from the time of Willard Knowles' death in 1786 to the end of the Knowles ownership in 1943, and is still largely visible today. The relationship illustrates a regional trend that moved from communally based farming toward family farm clusters. Prior to 1750, the idea of *landschaft* – houses surrounded by common fields worked communally – was prevalent. By the time that the Knowles family began to work its Fort Hill holdings in the second half of the 18th century, however, *landschaft* had been replaced with a new social and economic order. This new system viewed land ownership as a calculated individual investment, under which innovation was rewarded with greater profits. It was characterized by clusters of extended families who jointly farmed adjacent parcels of individually held land.

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District in Eastham, Massachusetts, possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and associations. The district meets National Register Criterion A and C on the local level, reflecting important patterns of land use which represent traditional agricultural practices unique to the community and the region. The district includes all of the land commonly known as "Fort Hill" which was previously owned by the descendants of Willard Knowles, including the Fort Hill Road corridor, the large open fields, the Red Maple Swamp, and Skiff Hill. The period of significance extends from 1786 to 1943, when the property was under cultivation and attained its characteristic physical qualities.

Two portions of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District, comprising some 17.5 acres of National Park Service land, were listed in the National Register in 1991 for their archaeological significance. They are part of the Nauset Archaeological District, which consists of six discontinuous properties possessing high potential to contain deposits dating to the Historic Contact period (National Register Criterion D). The Nauset Archaeological District was also designated a National Historic Landmark in 1993 and included in a larger multiple-property National Register listing with the theme "Historic Contact: Early Relations Between Indians and Colonists in Northeastern North America, 1524-1783)."

The Captain Edward Penniman House and its barn were also listed in the National Register in 1975. Acknowledging the importance of the whaling industry to Cape Cod history, the nomination emphasizes that it is the only whaling captain's house in Eastham and that the two buildings are outstanding examples of French Second Empire style architecture. The nomination includes one acre of associated land.

The entire Fort Hill area retains a high level of integrity to 1943, the end of its period of occupation by the descendants of Willard Knowles. The three diverse zones within the proposed Fort Hill Historic District all exhibit moderate to high levels of integrity to the end of the period of significance. However, combining the zones into a single district produces an overall level of integrity that is higher than that of any single zone. One of the most

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important characteristics of the district is the juxtaposition of the diverse zones, from the residential cluster along Fort Hill Road, to the spacious open fields on Fort Hill, to the dark and enclosed Red Maple Swamp. This relationship appears to have been present by the early 1800s, and is clearly visible in maps and aerial photographs from the end of the period of significance. Fort Hill is unique in that all three of these distinct areas have survived together, relatively intact, until the end of the 20th century. This is in sharp contrast with so many of the remnants of Cape Cod's farming heritage, where the buildings may survive but not the surrounding land, or vice versa.

The field pattern at Fort Hill, with land divided into rectangular fields of varying size, represents a distinctive regional method of agricultural land division characteristic of late 18th and 19th century New England farms. New England's small fields reflected the gradual process by which land was cleared when first settled by Europeans. It also reflected the need to cultivate a wide variety of crops. The small field pattern has endured on Cape Cod to the present day, partially because of the need to grow a variety of crops in order to survive economically. While other parts of the country saw the large scale production of a single crop prove profitable, the Cape's small farms served local markets with a variety of fresh produce. The Knowles family did not engage in the production of specialty crops, such as asparagus or strawberries, to the extent that their neighbors did. However, throughout the Knowles period, the small fields at Fort Hill were used to grow a diverse range of crops. At the end of the Knowles ownership in 1943, the various enclosed fields at Fort Hill were used for growing sweet corn, hay and turnips, and for pasturing approximately 15 cows.

Integral to the character of the small fields at Fort Hill are the stone walls that define them. Stone walls represent a type of field and boundary demarcation common to 18th and 19th century farms in New England. Rocks cleared from fields in other regions of the country were frequently removed from the site or tossed in piles. In New England, these rocks were neatly assembled into stone walls, with the presence of stone walls partially explaining the small field pattern in New England. While this was common throughout most of New England, it was unusual on lower Cape Cod. Field improvements on most of the Cape did not include many stone walls, because the soil contained few stones to be removed. However, the area around Fort Hill was an exception to this, having a number of glacial boulders. Thus, the stone walls at Fort Hill — while characteristic of farms throughout the larger New England region — are rare on Cape Cod. The stone walls at Fort Hill are also unusual in that three of the four survive in the open field zone. This differs from the majority of stone walls in New England, which tend to be obscured by woods that have overgrown the originally open fields they once delineated.

**PRE-CONTACT AND CONTACT PERIOD SETTLEMENT (TO 1644)**

Fort Hill was part of an area in which there was long-term Native American presence. The French explorer Samuel de Champlain visited the Nauset Harbor area in 1605. He documented his visit with a narrative, in which he described the harbor as "entirely surrounded by little houses, around each one of which there was as much land as the occupant needed for his support." Champlain also prepared a map which depicts cleared land around Nauset Harbor and the Indian residents engaged in the practice of agriculture. A small expedition of Pilgrims also noted the presence of permanent native American settlements around Nauset Harbor in 1620, though no specific mention is made of Fort Hill.

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In 1993, the Nauset Archeological District, which includes Fort Hill and five other sites, was designated a National Historic Landmark for "yielding or possessing the potential to yield nationally significant information on Historic Contact in the Northeast." According to the nomination form, the overall distribution of the six sites "roughly corresponded to the dispersed pattern of individual wigwams and cornfields depicted by Samuel de Champlain on his 1605 map of the area." Investigations associated with the nomination revealed that Fort Hill contains a large, multi-component prehistoric site dating from the Late Archaic to the Late Woodland period. The Native Americans are believed to have maintained primary residences in the Nauset area, taking advantage of the wide range of food types available in the region. Their location allowed easy access to varying environments ranging from tidal flats and salt marsh to freshwater wetland and wooded upland, each contributing natural resources needed for a subsistence economy.

**ORIGIN OF THE NAME "FORT HILL" (17TH CENTURY)**

All of the land comprising the Fort Hill Rural Historic District is commonly known as "Fort Hill." The traditional explanation of the name "Fort Hill" derives from an act passed by the Plymouth Colony court on June 9, 1653 ordering that every town establish a place for defense with breastworks and flankers. The occasion for this act was a renewed naval war between the English and the Dutch, and the colonists' resultant fear of attack by the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam. Friction between New England and New Amsterdam had already arisen concerning trade relations with the Indians.

If defensive works were constructed in Eastham, Fort Hill would have been a logical location for them. The core of Eastham, within the expansive original boundaries of the town which include present day Wellfleet, Eastham and Orleans, lay just to the south and west; artillery on Fort Hill could have commanded the entrance to Nauset Harbor. There is no evidence in town or colony records that fortifications were ever constructed, much less provided with artillery. However, it seems reasonable that the name Fort Hill derived from this 17th-century legislation.

The name "Fort Hill" was first documented in Eastham in an early grant that conveyed land to Plymouth Colony Governor William Bradford. The description describes the parcel bounded by "a white oak tree above the fort hill." This is one of only two specific references to Fort Hill found in Eastham's 17th century records. The other dates from 1695 and refers to the same piece of land. The bounds of the tract were lost, and a committee was delegated to examine the land and renew the bounds. No other early references to Fort Hill have been found, nor is the name known to have appeared on any subsequent deed or map. The existence of the two 17th century citations, however, confirms that the term was not a creation of romantic 19th century historians.

**EARLY SETTLEMENT BY THE PLYMOUTH COLONY (1644 - 1672)**

Scarcely 20 years after beginning their endeavor in the New World, the Pilgrims in Plymouth were becoming disillusioned with the territory they had chosen. The Pilgrims' initial exploration of Massachusetts Bay, before they settled at Plymouth, had acquainted them with Nauset (later known as Eastham). Contacts with the native inhabitants there had been maintained, and food supplied from that area helped sustain Plymouth during times of scarcity. This gave Nauset a reputation as an agricultural land of plenty. William Bradford, an early governor of

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~~Plymouth Plantation, wrote that the Nauset soil "is for the most part a blakish and deep mould, much like that where groweth the best tobacco in Virginia." Nauset was therefore one of the locations suggested for resettlement. Two committees were sent from Plymouth to examine the area. The second committee concluded that Nauset would not be able to accommodate the current population of Plymouth, so there was no further discussion of relocating the entire town, but individuals were given permission to move.~~

In 1644, a group of 49 people left Plymouth to begin the settlement of Nauset. The migrants included most of the men who had composed the second exploratory committee. The prominent leader of the migrants was Thomas Prence, who had been governor of the Plymouth Colony for two years, and assistant governor many other years. Those who accompanied Prence were considered to be among the most respectable families of Plymouth. Prence was devoted to the Eastham settlement. Chosen governor again in 1657, he resisted moving back to the seat of government at Plymouth and received a special dispensation that allowed him to continue living in Eastham.

Nauset was incorporated as a town in 1646, and in 1651 changed its name to Eastham. The original settlers were given tracts of land, part of which they used and part of which they reserved for future need. The settlement pattern of Eastham differed from other early colonial patterns in the region in that it lacked any concentration of structures that might have been called a village center. With farming as the nearly universal source of livelihood, families lived close together and worked land scattered throughout the township. Early land records show that each resident was intended an assortment of land in three categories: meadow, upland, and woodland.

The ownership of the land around Fort Hill under the Plymouth Colony is unclear, though it seems to have been parceled out in small tracts. Prence was believed to have owned property on Fort Hill, but land grants only confirm that he owned land south of Fort Hill. It is known that at least one 5-acre tract of the Fort Hill area was granted to William Bradford in 1659. The land was described as upland and meadow, and was likely used for farming, as was most other land already cleared by the Native Americans.

**SAMUEL TREAT PERIOD AT FORT HILL (1672-1716)**

Samuel Treat (1648-1717) was the first white settler whose permanent residence at Fort Hill has been confirmed. He came from a distinguished family of colonial New England. His father was a governor of Connecticut and one of the founders of the Puritan settlement of Newark, NJ. Samuel Treat had graduated from Harvard College, and was apparently living in the home of his father in Milford, CT, when he received the call from Eastham to serve as its minister sometime between 1672 and 1675. Treat's tenure as minister lasted nearly 45 years, and he is probably best known for his work with Native American Indians, who were still numerous in his sprawling parish. He learned their language, traveled great distances to preach the gospel to them, and trained assistants from their people.

Treat's importance in the history of Eastham lies in the fact that he was the first person called from outside the town to be a full-time pastor, in the expectation that the town would furnish most or all of his support. Eastham in the 1670s was only marginally able to support a full-time minister, so six land grants were added to the clergy compensation package. While one grant was intended to be the location of Treat's house, he instead decided to reside

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~~upon another lot nearer to the meeting house, a parcel of land donated to the town for church use by Manasseth Kempton in 1662 — the same 5-acre tract that has been granted to William Bradford in 1659.~~

The land allocated to Treat was initially meant to be reserved for ministerial use by the town, but in March 1702, the town granted Treat "all the upland and meadow belonging to the house lot where he now lives" (on Fort Hill) in exchange for several other parcels which has been allocated him earlier. The town, however, reserved the right to repurchase if Samuel Treat left the work of the ministry and left town.

The location of Treat's circa 1673 house on the five-acre parcel on Fort Hill is uncertain. In March 1703 or 1704, the town granted Treat an additional small piece of land nearby to "set his house." Apparently, Treat planned to build a new house, and it is likely that he did so with the additional means he had by that time. The physical remains of a Treat house site were still visible in the 19th century, and the location was described as southeast of the Seth Knowles residence, near the brook which ran from the Cedar swamp to the Town Cove, and not far from an excellent spring of water, but it is not known whether the description is of the first or possible second house. If a second house existed, is was likely near the present Burrill house, uphill from the likely site of the first house. Research and field survey conducted for the Nauset Archaeological District focused on contact period information and did not identify the location of the house.

After additional land acquisitions in 1711 and 1712, Treat owned a substantial part of the southern portion of Fort Hill, all included within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. One of the 1711 grants refers to Treat's barn and other land records speak of extensive fences and stone walls, so it is likely that Treat engaged in subsistence farming.

**EARLY KNOWLES FARMS AT FORT HILL (1742 - 1800)**

At some point between the death of Samuel Treat (1716-1717) and the mid-18th century, the Treat homestead was passed to the Knowles family. Though a deed has not been found, evidence shows that the Treat property on Fort Hill was purchased by Willard Knowles in 1742. Willard Knowles' will refers to boundary stones at Fort Hill marked with a "T" for the former owner Rev. Treat. The will and inventory of his estate after his death in 1786 establish that Willard Knowles owned most or all of what is now known as Fort Hill, representing the first time the area was unified under one ownership. The Knowles ownership at that time comprised the entire Fort Hill Rural Historic District.

It is not known whether Willard Knowles lived in the Treat house, though it is likely. Coastal maps dated 1780 show only one house on Fort Hill, which presumably was the residence of Willard Knowles. Willard Knowles was a man of obvious prosperity, and was probably among the most affluent residents of Eastham. The inventory of his estate included large and varied landholdings totaling at least 210 acres scattered around the town. Willard Knowles also owned livestock: five cows, three heifers, one ox, two horses, two swine, and 16 sheep. Most were probably kept at the Fort Hill homestead. The inventory also shows that Willard Knowles was raising grain on his land: 48 bushels of Indian corn and rye, and eight bushels of wheat, are listed among his assets. Following the death of Willard Knowles in 1786, his land on Fort Hill was divided between his youngest sons Seth and William. Seth Knowles (1753-1821)

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was granted the homestead buildings of Willard Knowles, listed as dwelling house, barn, corn house, and "out Houses" located in the southern portion of the district. Willard Knowles' wife, Bethia Atwood Knowles, was granted the use and improvement of the buildings on Seth's land during her lifetime. Bethia died only three years after Willard (in 1789), at which time Seth gained unrestricted ownership of the house and farm buildings.

The northern portion of the district was granted to William (1755-1830). William Knowles already had a house nearby on Knowles property, just west of the Willard Knowles house. It was a Cape Cod style house with a two story addition to the west. Willard Knowles' division of his land between Seth and William created two Knowles family farms at Fort Hill, which would remain the most dominant and significant features of the site well into the 20th century. At some point, the two farms became known by the names of their respective owners in the late 19th century, when they reached their highest and most characteristic development. The southern farm became known as the "Seth Knowles" farm, named for the son of James H. Knowles and grandson of Seth Knowles. The northern farm became known as the "Sylvanus Knowles" farm, named for the son of William F. Knowles.

**REGIONAL FARMING PATTERNS (19TH CENTURY)**

Eastham at the beginning of the 19th century was an agricultural town, primarily by default. Wellfleet and Orleans had split off in the 18th century, taking with them the former town's best harbors. It remained a predominantly agricultural town well into the 20th century, although its population as such peaked in 1830. The types of activities conducted by Eastham farmers changed continually throughout the 19th century in response to external economic factors. These changes were part of a general trend seen on the Cape from the earliest years of settlement. Cape Codders' relatively isolated and often risky environment has always required them to be flexible in seeking a livelihood. Sometimes land-based activities were the most rewarding; at other times maritime pursuits were more lucrative. Many residents combined the two in varying proportions. Cape Codders have had to cope with rapidly changing conditions on both land and sea, relinquishing failing ventures and seizing new opportunities. The Fort Hill Rural Historic District remains as an excellent example of this local and regional pattern.

Cape Codders' option of turning to the sea to supplement farming income became increasingly necessary as much of the Cape's initially arable soil became exhausted. Periods when the maritime option was largely not available, such as during the Revolutionary War, put extreme pressure on the fragile farmlands. By 1800 about a thousand acres on the west, bay side of Eastham had become a sandy wasteland; observers reported that the topsoil had blown away, in many places to a depth of 10 feet. However, on the east, ocean side of Eastham remained good land. According to Rev. James Freeman in 1802, "Three cedar swamps on the west... guard it in a great measure against the irruptions of the sand." The Knowles farms comprised about a quarter of this fertile tract.

Early in the 1800s, corn, or maize, was Eastham's primary crop, with about 1,000 bushels being sent to market. Obtaining salt from seawater also became an important industry in the first half of the 19th century. Wheat growing and sheep raising were in decline by the mid 1800s. Instead, Eastham farmers were relying more on dairying, poultry

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raising, growing vegetables for nearby markets, and peat harvesting. The assessors records began listing "peat swamp" as a separate category in 1839-1840. Peat was apparently valuable as a fuel: peat land was assessed at \$100 an acre through the 1860s and 1870s, at a time when good tillage land was valued at \$40 an acre. Until the 1880s, land producing peat had a higher assessed value than land producing any other commodity, including cranberries.

In the latter half of the 19th century, peat harvesting declined, but dairying and poultry raising increased. This was largely due to the arrival of the Cape Cod Central Railroad extension from Orleans through Eastham arriving at Wellfleet by 1870. The railroad enabled Eastham farmers to participate in the market for fresh milk in the Boston metropolitan area. The farmers also began to focus on growing specialty crops such as cranberries and asparagus for the newly expanded market. By 1920, Eastham had 150 acres of "grass" (asparagus).

The evolution of the family farm cluster occurred gradually during the 18th and 19th centuries. It appears to have been motivated by an undesirable trend: as original land allotments were divided among sons, individual allotments became smaller and smaller. Jointly farming adjacent parcels of land provided the necessary area for a viable agricultural operation. On the Cape, where farmers such as the Knowles were required to continually adapt to changing market forces with the production of different crops, a larger expanse of land provided additional flexibility to pursue whatever was considered profitable at the moment. The clustering of residences on one part of the family land helped free the maximum amount of acreage for farming. The family farm cluster also offered protection from undesirable neighbors whose lack of husbandry skills could jeopardize the well-being of the family farm. Family farm clusters appear to have been common in southern New England and the Cape during the 19th century. 19th century maps of the Town of Eastham show several settlements made up of adjacent properties owned by members of the same family.

**19TH CENTURY KNOWLES FARMS AT FORT HILL (1800-1900)**

Through the 19th century and into the 20th century, the Knowles farms clearly exhibited the Cape-wide themes of continuity and adaptability. Continuity marked the farms' inheritance patterns. The two brothers who inherited Willard Knowles' Fort Hill land in 1786, Seth and William, were two years apart in age. Successive generations remained roughly synchronized, and the farms were transferred at similar intervals. Each farm was occupied by four full generations of Knowles families, for a total of five, including Willard Knowles.

The history of the property, by contrast, was characterized by a wide variety of constantly changing uses, as the Knowles family adjusted to changing markets and environmental conditions. Throughout this time, the southern farm remained the more prosperous of the two farms, with a ranking of the third most valuable property in town.

The Knowles family updated old buildings and erected new ones throughout the 19th century at Fort Hill. On the northern farm, William F. Knowles added a two-story wing to the Cape-style house that he inherited from his father William. This building is no longer standing (approximate location, NR map #C). Another dwelling was built to the west (the current Sylvanus Knowles house, NR map #3) in 1864, the year that William F. Knowles died. It appears that this house was built by William F.'s son Sylvanus, who gave up a seafaring life and came home to run the family farm at that time. Presumably William F.'s widow Betsey continued to live in the old house.

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The history of the southern farmhouse (NR map #4) is less clear. It may have been built by James H. Knowles in 1821, the year that he inherited the farm from his father Seth (1753-1821). More likely, however, the house was built by Seth circa 1790, or built by Willard sometime after 1742, perhaps incorporating an older structure. A variety of other structures stood on the Knowles farms during the 19th century. On the southern farm, a shoe shop was present in the mid 1800s, and a store house (locations unknown). The northern farm had a barn that stood until it burned in 1934 (approximate location, NR map #12).

Salt-making was one of the land uses practiced by the Knowles family during the 19th century at Fort Hill. Of 43 saltworks in Eastham in 1824, the southern Knowles farm had the eighth largest valuation. The northern Knowles farm ranked around 20th. In 1850, when salt-making was beginning to decline, the northern farm had 2,400 linear feet of saltworks and the southern farm had 2,000 feet. Saltworks disappeared from the southern farm in the late 1850s and on the northern farm in 1865. The saltworks were situated in low, flat areas reasonably close to the water. Iardella's *Coastal Map of Cape Cod*, 1856, shows the location of salt works on Fort Hill. One area of saltworks was located in the northeast portion of the district, just south of the current Hemenway Road and Town Landing. A second area of saltworks was located further south along the marsh edge, approximately halfway between the summits of Fort Hill and Skiff Hill. Though the low locations are still present, no traces of these activities exist. Many of the young Knowles men also spent some time at sea prior to taking up farming. Residents of both the southern farm and the northern farm also owned shares ranging from an eighth to a thirty-second interest in various types of ships in the mid to late 1800s.

Both Knowles families raised grain and potatoes and had orchards. A sizable orchard was located south of the house in the southern farm in the mid 1800s. Each farm also showed a corn house among its outbuildings, indicating the continued importance of corn. Peat swamps encompassed three-quarters to one acre on each of the two Knowles farms. Peat was assessed on the southern farm until 1877, and on the northern farm until about 1920.

Two or three cows and the same number of young stock were kept on each farm around the middle of the 19th century. These numbers of cattle would produce more milk than the ordinary family could consume, and butter and cheese were been produced. In 1873, the number of cows on both farms more than doubled, reflecting the completion of the railroad extension through Eastham and the expansion of the market for fresh milk. It is believed that Sylvanus and Seth Knowles were the first in town to take advantage of the railroad when in 1872 they began sending their milk cans twice a day to Provincetown, when the railroad was extended to the final terminus.

The Knowles family was only modestly involved in the production of specialty crops. Beginning around 1860, the northern farm included a small cranberry swamp of about 1/2 acre. The southern farm devoted approximately one acre to this activity. Asparagus was first listed on both farms in 1895. The northern farm had up to an acre for asparagus in some years, while the southern farm never exceeded one-quarter acre. Together, the produce was larger than required for a family's needs, but not large enough to represent a significant commercial quantity. Rather than focusing on specialty crops, the Knowles family concentrated on poultry raising. Hen houses were on the southern Knowles farm around 1880, and on the northern farm in the early 1890s. Between 1910 and 1920, the northern farm

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had more than 300 fowl, while the southern farm had over 200 fowl. The southern farm had more substantial and permanent poultry buildings. Beginning around the time of Seth's death in 1905, when the farm was listed under the name of his daughter Abbie May Knowles, hen houses were the only remaining outbuildings except the barn, and a "brooder house" was included from at least 1906 to 1915. These structures were valued higher than the barn on the northern farm.

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE PENNIMAN PROPERTY (1829 - 1961)**

The Penniman family first came to Eastham in May 1820, when Scammell Penniman purchased from Jesse Collins a homestead lot just west of the southern Knowles farm, then owned by James H. Knowles. The lot purchased by Scammell Penniman was described as "all the homestead formerly owned by Thomas Knowles," and probably comprised of six to seven acres. Thomas Knowles (1777-1820) was almost certainly the oldest son of Seth (1753-1821) and brother to James H. Knowles. Thomas probably earned his primary living from maritime activities, judging by the small size of his homestead, then acquired by Collins, a sea captain who was related to the Knowles family by marriage.

Scammell Penniman, then 56, was a carpenter who had become a merchant, having a large West Indian store on Commercial Street at the north end of Boston. His purchase of the homestead was apparently on behalf of his son Daniel (1802-1871), and may have been a wedding gift. On April 30, 1829, Daniel married an Eastham woman, Betsy Mayo. The purchase of the homestead was concluded the day after the wedding, and the couple lived in Eastham.

The property contained a house, outbuildings, and an orchard. In 1834, Scammell Penniman purchased five more acres adjoining his existing property on the west. He died in 1836, and all rights to the property were passed to Daniel. The Penniman property resembled a miniature version of the Knowles farms, with the same categories of land, buildings, and livestock present on a smaller scale. During the 1850s and 1860s, Daniel Penniman managed to enlarge his landholdings to 16-17 acres. As with the Knowles farms, the bulk of the land was listed as tillage (10-12 acres). Penniman also owned smaller amounts of salt meadow and fresh meadow (2 acres each), as well as small amounts of peat and cranberry bog. In 1861, Daniel was shown as owning a small barn, a wood house, and - until 1864 - a store house.

Daniel's daughter Elvira (b. 1829) was the first member of his family to be born in Eastham. His second child, Edward, was born in 1831. Edward married Betsey Augusta Knowles in 1859. She had lived across the road on the northern Knowles farm, being the daughter of William F. Knowles and the sister of Sylvanus D. Knowles. Edward enjoyed great success as in whaling and became a captain at 29 years of age. He was the only deep-sea whaling captain from Eastham and his wife Betsey accompanied him on three whaling voyages, bringing one of their children on each voyage. In addition to Edward's remuneration as captain, from 1861 through 1870 he owned 3/32 interest in the vessel he commanded, the "Minerva."

In February 1866, Edward purchased from his father Daniel a property that included 12 acres of land south of Fort Hill Road, a simple dwelling house, two barns, and several outbuildings. The house was the Thomas Knowles house

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that had been part of Scammell Penniman's original purchase. Local history states that the house was located southeast of the existing Penniman House. Edward and Betsey Augusta Penniman returned from a whaling voyage in April 1868. It had been a lucrative venture, with cash and notes worth \$4,000 credited to Edward. In 1868, Captain Penniman's house was valued at \$300, while in 1869 his dwelling was valued at \$3,000. Captain Penniman's new house was an impressive French Empire-style residence built by master builder Nathaniel Nickerson. The house was built on an 8-foot-high mound, formed from soil excavated from other areas to enable him to view the ocean and Cape Cod Bay from the cupola.

The Penniman's property served as a gentleman's farm, rather than a working farm as on the adjacent Knowles properties. The Pennimans had a greenhouse from the late 1890s until the 1920s. From the mid 1880s to almost the end of the century, they also owned a boat house. Other features distinguish the property in 1880 photographs, such as the whalebone gate, terraced yard, decorative wooden fence, hitching posts, retaining walls, and row of cottonwood trees. The original whalebone gate was a pair of jaw bones from a sperm whale. A second gate using jaw bones from a baleen whale was installed circa 1876 and remained until 1964. The current whalebone gate was installed circa 1969 and is from a finback whale. The whalebone gate and other landscape features, which still remain, distinguished the property from the Knowles' simple farmyards.

Two other buildings were later added to the site. A new barn was built between 1880 and 1882, the existing barn on the property today (NR map #2). A small dwelling (location unknown) was also added to the property around 1888 for George Penniman, the mentally incompetent younger brother of Edward. He died in 1911. Captain Edward Penniman died at his home in Eastham on October 16, 1913. The property passed to his wife, Betsey, and then to their daughter Betsey Augusta Penniman. She was an amateur photographer and took many pictures of the Penniman property. She died in 1957, leaving the property to her niece, Irma Penniman Broun Kahn (the granddaughter of Captain Edward Penniman). Based on descriptions by Kahn, the stone wall along the street and in the courtyard were whitewashed each spring, there were at least eight hitching posts where guests could hitch their horses. Trees were not allowed to grow in the field facing the ocean, providing a view of Town Cove, the ocean and the sand dunes. A hen house was kept in back of the barn, a large vegetable garden and strawberry patch were south of the barn. East of the house was a fruit orchard with apples, pears, grapes and plums which no longer exists.

**SALE OF THE KNOWLES FARMS (1905 - 1943)**

At the beginning of the 20th century, the two Knowles farms had reached their highest and most characteristic development. Thereafter, things changed rapidly. Seth, owner of the southern farm, died in 1905 at the age of 83. He had four children, none of whom married. He willed the farm to two of them, Seth Edgar and Abbie May, both then in their forties. Since Seth Edgar had suffered brain damage while at sea, operation of the farm was done by Abbie May. In 1906, the dwelling increased in value from \$1,200 to \$3,000, possibly indicating a reassessment or a major addition such as the cross gable. While cows and fowl were still kept, they were kept in much smaller numbers. When Abbie died in 1927, the farm passed out of the immediate family and was administered by her executor until its sale to Charles A. Gunn in 1936.

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Sylvanus, owner of the northern farm, died in 1911. He was succeeded by his son William Freeman Knowles, who continued to farm until his death in 1924 at the age of 50. The farm passed to his wife, Harriet, and farming was no longer conducted on a significant scale. In 1926, Harriet Knowles sold 10 acres of swamp south of Hemenway Road (a portion of the current Red Maple Swamp area) to Lawrence Hemenway. She continued living at the farm through the 1930s, but sold it in 1943 to Dorothy Lucile Kattwinkel. The remarkable parallelism of the two farms had persisted for nearly 140 years.

**FARMING DURING THE GUNN OWNERSHIP (1936 - 1950)**

Charles Gunn was a native of Nova Scotia. He came to Cape Cod after buying an ice business in Wellfleet and later became caretaker for the Albert Greene Duncan family, which owned a large farm not far from Fort Hill. Upon Mr. Duncan's death, Gunn acquired the farm. Meanwhile, he acquired the right to take hay off the nearby Knowles farms. This haying may have been responsible for keeping a large area of Fort Hill open, including the land between Fort Hill and Skiff Hill that has since grown up into a largely cedar scrub. Gunn negotiated to purchase the southern Knowles farm, succeeding only when a Knowles trustee pressured the heirs into selling. In 1936, he began to revive the agricultural use of the farm, registered under the name "Nauset Moors Farm."

The Gunns converted the barn for occupancy by milk cows and moved into the Knowles house in about 1938. Only a small foundation from a portion of this barn remains on the site today. They kept 20-25 milk cows, a greater number of cattle than had previously been kept on the southern Knowles farm. This was possible because, for the first time since 1786, both Knowles farms were being used in a unified operation. Gunn used the southern farm primarily for growing high-quality clover and alfalfa; he pastured the cattle on the northern farm by arrangement with the Kattwinkels. The Kattwinkels were active conservationists and apparently had an interest in maintaining the traditionally open quality of their land.

Gunn marketed his milk locally, through door-to-door sales, stores, and a school contract. His control of the local market reflects the decline in dairy farming in the town at this time.

**DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE ON CAPE COD (20TH CENTURY)**

While the traditional rural economy on Cape Cod was disintegrating, summer tourism was rising as a potent new force. The tourism industry in Eastham reflected that of Cape Cod in general, but it more specifically reflected the tourism industry of the Outer Cape towns, which have always been less populated and more dramatic in their landscapes. The Outer Cape's tourism industry was guided by the coming and going of the railroad, the improvement and extension of Highway Route 6, and the loss of other industry in the region. Tourism began in the latter part of the 19th century and accelerated into the 20th century. With these forces in the region, the younger Charles Gunn, as he was coming of age around 1950, stated that he would subdivide the property into lots and build cottages. The elder Gunn sought to preserve the farm and therefore sold the property to outsiders — James H. Leach, a veterinarian, and his wife Frances.

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The Leaches continued some farming and kept the land open, hiring a herdsman and converting the stable for occupancy by horses that were rented for recreational purposes. In 1960, however, they sold the former Seth Knowles/Nauset Moors farm to a development company, Mel-Con of Fitchburg, MA. Mel-Con planned to divide the property into 33 lots linked by a system of private roads with communal boat landings. By May 1961, Mel-Con had registered its subdivision and had started regrading the land and laying out roads, including a road leading to the summit of Fort Hill. It had sold 10 of the 33 "Fort Hill Estates" lots. One lot, which contained the Seth Knowles farmhouse on approximately 3/4 of an acre, was sold to the Burrill family. This house was the only building on the tract at that time. Further development was halted by the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961.

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OWNERSHIP (1961 - PRESENT)**

The initial planning to establish Cape Cod National Seashore apparently did not include either of the two former Knowles farms in the Fort Hill area. While the boundaries of the future park were still under discussion, a helicopter tour of the area was arranged in May 1961 for relevant House and Senate subcommittee members. During this visit, the helicopter landed on Fort Hill and members saw the beginnings of the Mel-Con subdivision, with stakes marking the future location of houses. The southern farm at Fort Hill was thereafter included within the proposed boundary. National Park Service acquisition of the eight lots and the balance of the tract which had been subdivided but not yet sold was accomplished despite some opposition. Once the southern farm was included in the National Seashore, it was sensible to add the rest of the Fort Hill area. The Captain Edward Penniman house, barn and farmland were purchased by the National Seashore on June 7, 1963. Included with the property were a few of the Penniman family's household furnishings, which are now stored at the Salt Pond Visitor Center. The northern Knowles farm was added to the National Seashore in October 1964, though the farmhouse and surrounding three acres of land were kept in private ownership. In 1965, the Park Service also acquired the 10 acres which had been conveyed out of the Knowles family in 1926.

The Park Service established several walking trails through the area, as well as a small parking area on the north side of Fort Hill Road, between the two Knowles houses. A restroom facility was added to the northern portion of the property, near Hemenway Road, in 1969. Also in the mid 1960s, the extension of Fort Hill Road and the parking area at the top of Fort Hill were paved. The Park Service has mowed the open fields, and performed two controlled burns in the 1970s. Pasture grasses have gradually been replaced by coarser vegetation, but the area retains its open feel, with some areas of increased vegetation that are the result of natural encroachment. In recent years, the Park Service has removed encroaching vegetation from several areas which were open during the period of significance, restoring some of the views and a more open feeling in the district.

Integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, and association are all present to a large extent in the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. Integrity of location and association are basically intact. Integrity of design is visible on a large scale in the overall organization of the site, and in the relationship of its three distinct zones to one another and to the scenic environment. The most notable detractor from the site's overall design is the extension of Fort Hill Road and the parking lot on the summit of Fort Hill. On a smaller scale, integrity of design, workmanship, and

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materials are apparent to varying degrees in the three contributing residential properties and the four stone walls within this district. The evocative natural setting — including views of the Town Cove, Nauset Marsh, and the Atlantic Ocean; the rolling topography and distinctive kettle holes; and the woodland buffer of the Red Maple Swamp — appears to have changed relatively little since 1943, contributing to the integrity of this site. Only the feeling of the site has changed significantly: no longer a working farm, with its characteristic activities, sounds, and smells, it is now a tranquil piece of parkland.

**Archaeological Significance**

While Fort Hill and the general surrounding area represents one of the higher prehistoric site densities on Cape Cod, most site interpretation in the area is still restricted to locational information and limited explanations of culture history and site variability based on artifact collections. Most of this information has been based on the efforts of artifact collectors and amateur excavations. Only recently, have professional archaeologists contributed to our knowledge of Outer Cape prehistory in a substantive way. The sum total of these efforts has also been limited with most efforts restricted to regional interpretations and intensive level sampling. Site examination level testing is still rare in the area. Given the above information, any surviving prehistoric resources in the Fort Hill area could be significant to the prehistory of the region and the Fort Hill area. More intensive survey and excavation of sites in the area may contribute much needed information that identifies periods of landuse in the region and the intrasite activities conducted at different sites. This information can be especially important in further understanding Native American settlement and subsistence during the Contact Period, a time reasonably well documented in the ethnohistorical literature but rarely documented with physical or archaeological data. Prehistoric sites in the Fort Hill area have the potential to document Outer Cape settlement and subsistence from at least the Late Archaic through Contact Periods. Earlier evidence dating to the Middle Archaic and possible Early Archaic periods would also not be surprising. Prehistoric sites in the Fort Hill locale may contain information that documents the social, cultural and economic evolution of Native Americans to the period of decentralized settlement and horticultural economy witnessed by Champlain in 1605. Archaeological resources can help document these early observations and contribute information on research topics related to lithic technology, ceramic technology, mortuary ceremonialism, environmental reconstruction, trade and other interests indicated by the environment, artifacts, and site types recognized in the area.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to provide detailed information on the social, cultural and economic history of an Outer Cape Cod community from the 17<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Additional documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing can help locate the remains of the Treat homestead, the home of the first minister in the community. Further research can help solve the debate over the existence of a second house and the possibility that the latter structure was incorporated into the extant Seth Knowles

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House (ca.1790). Archaeological sources may provide information on the architectural details of the First Period Treat structure(s) for which no data survives. Information derived from the analysis of outbuildings and the contents of occupational related features associated with the Treat House(s) may contribute significant information on the lifestyle of Samuel Treat and the extent to which it was typical of Eastham's First Period settlement. Information may be present that identifies the extent that agriculture or some level of barter was important for Treat's survival. Archaeological evidence may also survive supporting the thesis that Willard Knowles inhabited the Treat homestead after his purchase of the farm. Evidence may exist that identifies modifications to the structure and the functional change of outbuildings. Artifact stratification may also be present in occupational related features that enable a detailed examination changes in occupation and function at the farm. Structural evidence of residential buildings and outbuildings may also survive from the Northern and Southern Knowles farms deeded to William and Seth after the death of their father Willard in 1786. Structural evidence from the William F. Knowles house and related outbuildings can help reconstruct the layout of the northern farm through the late 18<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Sylvanus Knowles house was built (1864). At the southern farm, archaeological testing can help define the exact construction date for the house and the extent to which it may have incorporated an earlier structure. The remains from outbuildings related to both farms can also contribute information related to domestic life, agricultural production and additional economic activities that may have been conducted to supplement an agricultural and maritime economy. Information relating to shoe manufacture may be present at the site of an outbuilding known to be used for that industry on the southern farm in the mid 1800's. The analysis of contents from occupational related features can also contribute important information on the lives of the farm inhabitants and economical activities at the farm. This information may further define components of the 19<sup>th</sup> century family farm cluster, variability in Knowles family life and the mixture of farming, maritime and manufacturing pursuits. The sources and types of information described above may also contribute important information on the occupation and landuse at the Penniman property. Archaeological and historical information can help reconstruct the Thomas Knowles homestead, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century farm included in the Penniman property. Local history locates the Thomas Knowles house southeast of the existing Penniman house. Information may be present that indicates the role the Thomas Knowles homestead played in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Knowles family farm cluster. Structural evidence may also be present that helps reconstruct elements of the Penniman property no longer extant today. Any evidence that survives associated with the small dwelling built by Edward Penniman for his mentally incompetent younger brother may contribute information relating to Edward Penniman's view's toward the mentally retarded and how typical they were for the period. This information can help better understand Edward as an individual and the Penniman family in general. Archaeological evidence from outbuildings and the analysis of contents from occupational related features can also help understand gentleman farming on the Cape and how it might have been different from similar activities in other areas of Massachusetts. Archaeological evidence from transportation related facilities including the late 19<sup>th</sup> century boathouse and barn can be important in a study of gentleman farming as well

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as contributing maritime and horse/wagon related technological information. Outbuildings related to poultry raising and a greenhouse, no longer extant, can also contribute to a greater understanding of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century life on the Penniman property. Soil stratigraphy around the Penniman house can also contribute information related to landscape modifications created so that Edward Penniman could view the Atlantic Ocean and Cape Cod Bay.

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Zone	Easting	Northing
19	419965	4630400
	420365	4629780
	420000	4629540
	419665	4629660
	419525	4630180

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated district includes approximately 100 acres of land within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore and is largely described by natural features. The district is bounded on the south by Town Creek and Town Cove, on the east by Nauset Marsh, on the north by Hemenway Landing and Hemenway Road, and on the west by the Cape Cod National Seashore boundary which runs roughly parallel to U.S. Route 6 beginning at the western end of Fort Hill Road.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of the nominated district is drawn to include all of the property on Fort Hill which was previously owned and farmed by the Knowles family. The land is located within the Cape Cod National Seashore and, as such, has not been further subdivided and developed to the extent of most surrounding parcels.

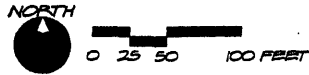
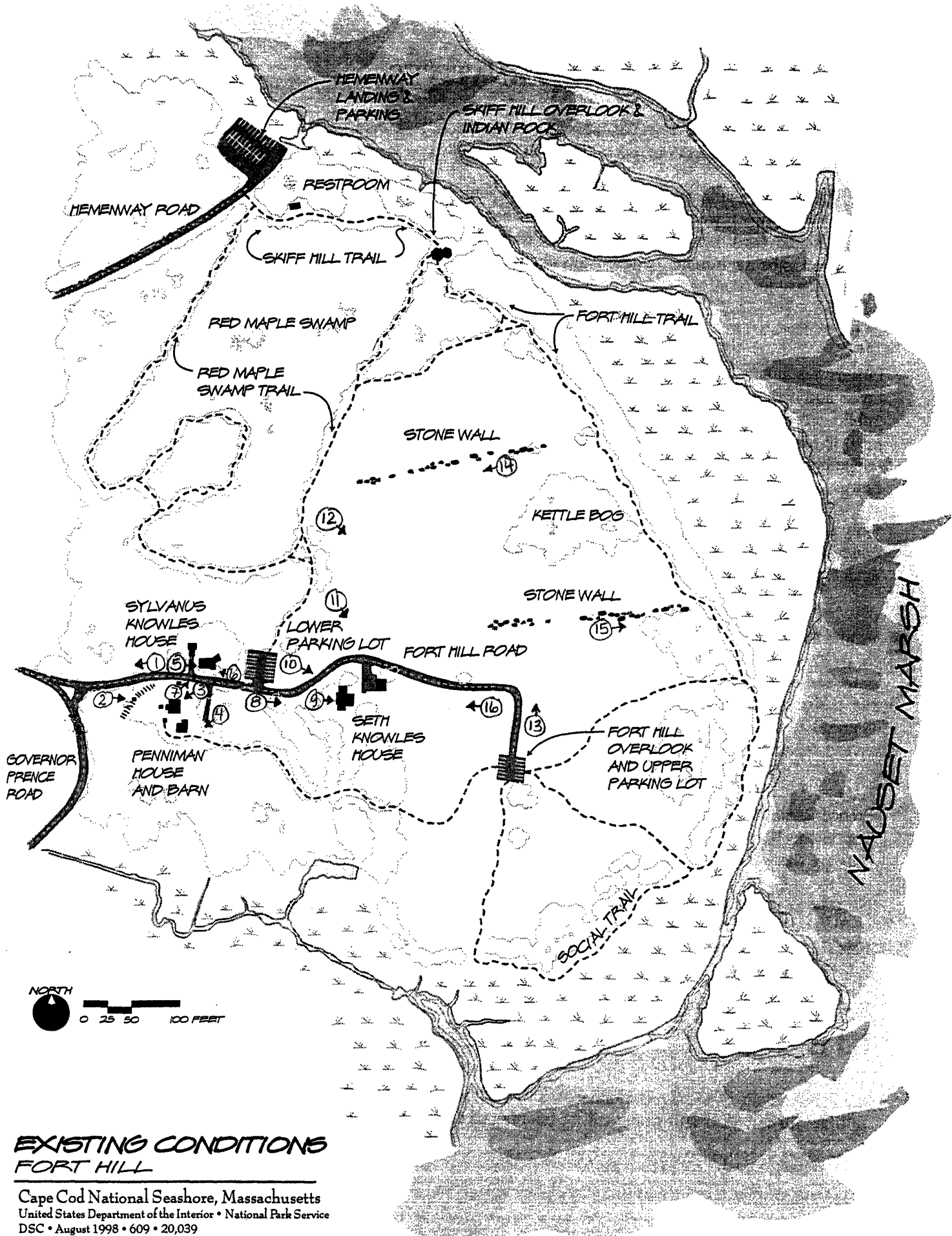
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FORT HILL RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
EASTHAM (BARNSTABLE Co.), MASSACHUSETTS

MAP#	MHC#	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE	RESOURCE	STATUS
1	EAS.111	Edward Penniman House	Fort Hill Road	1868	Second Empire	B	NR
2	EAS.110	Penniman Barn	Fort Hill Road	c.1880	Second Empire	B	NR
5		decorative wood fence	Fort Hill Road	c.1868		ST	C
6		stone retaining wall	Fort Hill Road	c.1868		ST	C
7		whalebone gate	Fort Hill Road	c.1868		ST	C
8		hitching posts	Fort Hill Road	c.1868		O	C
9		flagpole	Fort Hill Road	c.1868		O	C
3		Sylvanus Knowles House	Fort Hill Road	1864	Greek Revival	B	C
11		stone wall	Fort Hill Road	c.1750		ST	C
A		garage	Fort Hill Road	c.1950	utilitarian	ST	NC
4		Seth Knowles House	Fort Hill Road	c.1790	Georgian	B	C
10		stone wall	Fort Hill Road	c.1750		ST	C
12		barn foundation	Fort Hill Road	c.1800		ST	C
B		garage	Fort Hill Road	c.1964	utilitarian	B	NC
C		lower parking lot	Fort Hill Road	c.1970		ST	BC
13		stone walls	off Fort Hill Road	c.1750		ST	C
14		Treat property marker	off Fort Hill Road	c.1700		O	C
15		quarried rock	off Fort Hill Road	--		O	C
16		rock with spike	off Fort Hill Road	--		O	C
D		upper parking lot	Fort Hill Road	c.1960		ST	NC
--		Nauset Archaeological Dist.	off Fort Hill Road	pre-1650		S	NR/NHL
F		Skiff Hill sheleter	off Hemenway Road	1965	utilitarian	ST	NC
17		Indian Rock	off Hemenway Road	--		O	C
E		public restroom	off Hemenway Road	1969	utilitarian	B	NC
G		boardwalk	off Hemenway Road	1967		ST	NC
		Fort Hill					
		Skiff Hill					

FORT HILL RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
EASTHAM (BARNSTABLE Co.), MASSACHUSETTS

MAP#	MHC#	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE	RESOURCE	STATUS					
		Red Maple Swamp										
		Open fields	cultivated ca.	1742-1943		Si	C					
		Agricultural Trails	ca.	1742-1943		St	C					
		James Hatch Knowles House Site (Old House on North Farm)										
		Thomas Knowles/Daniel Penniman House site	exact location unknown									
		Samuel Treat House site	exact location unknown									
TOTALS		Buildings	2C	3NC	Objects	6C	Structures	8C	4NC	Sites	2C	
		Previously listed on National Register/National Historic Landmark										
							2 buildings			1 site		



**EXISTING CONDITIONS  
FORT HILL**

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