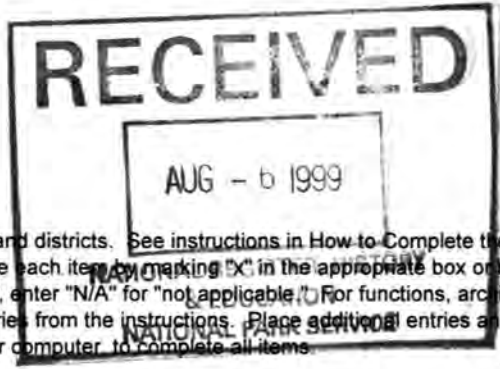


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 "X" in 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 EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number FURNACE VILLAGE

2. Location

street & number HOWLAND, GURNEY, WASHBURN COUNTY RDS. not for publication

city or town FREETOWN vicinity

state MASSACHUSETTS code MA county BRISTOL code 005 zip code 02717

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

7/27/99  
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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

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

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

9/9/99

East Freetown HD  
Name of Property

Bristol, 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	
47	22	building
18		sites
13	2	structures
2		objects
80	24	Total

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

0

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC single dwelling
- FUNERARY cemetery
- INDUSTRY manufacturing facility, waterworks
- RELIGION religious facility
- SOCIAL meeting hall
- TRADE department store
- TRANSPORTATION road related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC single family dwelling
- EDUCATION library
- FUNERARY cemetery
- INDUSTRY manufacturing facility
- RELIGIOUS religious facility
- SOCIAL meeting hall
- TRANSPORTATION road related

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Colonial      Georgian      Late Victorian
- Queen Anne      Other: Cape Cod

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation granite
- walls clapboard
- roof asphalt
- other

**Narrative Description**

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

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1East Freetown Historic District  
Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.

The East Freetown National Register Historic District is an industrial village center in a semi-rural setting, one of several centers in the Town of Freetown. It developed in a compact area along the course of the Fall Brook and its mill pond, and two north-south roads leading to neighboring towns. The houses, church, library, former stores, cemeteries, stone arched bridges, industrial sites and dams are sited with a good deal of space around them so that each stands out with individuality. The district, composed of styles ranging from the Colonial to the Neo-Colonial, comprises a comprehensible entity revealing its development over time. Its period of significance extends from 1727 when Philip Rounsevell established his homestead there to the closing date of 1949, which includes the Post World War II housing.

The district is located in the eastern part of Freetown, to the southwest of Long Pond. Gurney Road, Washburn Road and County Road describe a rough C shape as they adopt the higher ground around the northern limits of Bolton Cedar Swamp. Historic settlement relates to the major roads and respects a rough setback from them, but the historic industrial sites are located behind these routes, at the falls of Fall Brook. Also set back from the road on a seventeen-acre site is the Gurney Saw Mill, 8 Gurney Road (c. 1870/1946, Map # 49) founded in East Freetown in 1870. A family burial ground (Map # 47.1) is located well behind a Colonial-period cottage fronting Gurney Road.

The district is composed of a total of 104 resources. Of them, eighty are contributing (retaining architectural integrity and constructed within the period of significance) and twenty-four are noncontributing. Of the noncontributing resources, the two structures and twenty-two buildings were built after the period of significance and of these, six are outbuildings. None are noncontributing because their alterations resulted in a loss of character sufficient to prevent them from adding to the associations and architectural qualities for which the district is significant. The contributing resources include forty-seven buildings, thirteen structures, eighteen sites, and two objects.

The district is characterized by frame construction, mainly in clapboard, with shingle and artificial siding occasionally used to replace or cover original cladding. Granite quarried from a near-by Rocky Woods pit is used for the stone arched bridges, the iron furnace and the foundations of the former industrial structures. Most of the cottages are set on massive granite foundations. Granite also appears as fieldstone in walls and porch supports. All but one of the residences are 1 ½ stories high. Most are modest in size and have compact massing. Many buildings were enlarged by accretion, with additions to the rear, side or even front in order to accommodate larger families, newer fashions or because the roadway had been shifted. The Christian Congregational Church, 4 Washburn Road (Map # 17, photo #9) is the only tall or large remaining building. Its site just off County Road, a main route, makes it a focal point for the district.

(continued)

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Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.

Water plays an important role in the landscape: Fall Brook flows under Death Curve Bridge, County Road (1921 and 1941, Map # 11, MHC # C-902) and New Bridge over Fall Brook, Gurney Road (1822, Map # 40, MHC # C-901, Photo # 5) and widens to form the broad millpond and shallow shore visible from Washburn and Gurney Roads. The Rounsevell Cemetery on County Road (1740, Map # 2, MHC # C-827) provides an open, orderly green space, but the rising ground to the east cuts off the vista. Washburn and East Howland Roads bend and turn so that views are gradually revealed, making the village appear more bucolic than would a grid of streets. A rocky outcropping on East Howland Road gives texture to the experience of the district.

The oldest object in the district is the original Mile Square Marker on Gurney Road (1727, Map # 44.2, MHC # C 118) which delineates a corner boundary of the Mile Square at Fall Brook, one of thirty lots in this section of the Pocasset Purchase division. The granite marker is less than two feet high and about ten inches square. It is sited close to Gurney Road, originally laid out as the Proprietor's Way or the roadway accessing the adjacent lots.

The informally laid out Rounsevell Cemetery, County Road (c. 1740, Map # 2, MHC # 827) is enclosed by a fence of rough, quarried granite posts with slim iron rod rails. Earliest headstones are slate, often are surmounted by angel heads or sun rays, and from the mid to late 18th century an unusual scroll design was used. Federal Period commemorative stones, sometimes in marble, feature urns and weeping willow trees, while granite was generally used from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Most of the stones are in fairly good condition but are affected by lichen.

Dates for the two Rounsevell dams on the Fall Brook, the Furnace Dam, Washburn Road (c. 1727?-1784, Map # 27), and the Rounsevell/G. S. Allen Dam, County Road (c. 1727?-1770, Map # 13.2) have not been established. Both these dams, with their associated saw and grist mills are indicated on the maps of 1794 and 1831, but the dams, and mill foundations have probably been repeatedly rebuilt. The Rounsevell/G. S. Allen Dam with its two spillways has contemporary concrete facings over the fieldstone foundations. Some gearing and shafting remain. The stone faced granite foundations of the Rounsevell/Allen Saw Mill (c. 1735 Map # 13.1) now altered in part with concrete, still shows the combination of rubble granite retaining wall topped with rough ashlar granite lining the brook banks. A ca. 1920-1925 addition for a garage was supported on concrete piles. The masonry foundations of the Rounsevell Grist Mill, 174 County Road (c. 1727, Map # 14.1) are similar in construction.

The Mill Pond created by the impounding of Fall Brook in the eighteenth century was enlarged in ca. 1956 and again in 1960 for an industrial use just outside the district boundaries. The Furnace Dam, Washburn Road (Map # 27) may have been built by 1727 or 1746, but it was clearly in place by 1784 when it harnessed the slight falls of Fall Brook to power a Blast Furnace

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3East Freetown Historic District  
Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.

(1784) rebuilt as a Cupola Furnace (1818, Map # 27.1, MHC # C-116, Photo # 4) for iron smelting. The approximately 25 foot long fieldstone dam incorporates 10 foot sluice or spillways on either side. Random coursed ashlar and rubble retaining walls line both sides of the stream at this point. A large, rectangular stone structure upstream of the dam once served as the foundations of a Saw Mill (1800s, Map # 27.3) which spanned the brook. A small, plain, concrete block Pump House (c. 1950, Map # N 27.7) is not intrusive.

Only parts of the foundations of the Blast/Cupola Furnace remain, but they are extraordinary. Two rough-cut granite rubble walls meet at right angles: on one is the ca. 20 foot diameter semi-circle remains of the furnace structure. It is formed of massive rock-faced granite voussoirs which are graduated in size, taper and slope down and inwards to form an open half-dome like shape. The unusual shape, large size and fine workmanship make it a distinctive structure.

The rugged "New Bridge" curves slightly as it takes Gurney Road over the Fall Brook, (c. 1822, Map # 40, MHC # C-901, Photo # 5). It is a low structure of dry-laid, uncoursed granite rubble with a single, semi-circular arch at its center. The large voussoirs of the arch are roughly worked while the top course of the bridge is formed of very large, ashlar, stone-faced granite blocks. The simple rail is composed of slender iron rods. In 1998 it was closed by the State for vehicular traffic.

The Death Curve Bridge, County Road at Fall Brook (Map # 11, MHC # C-902) was built in 19 to replace a c.1823 bridge, but was extensively remodeled in 1941. The single arch structure is faced in rough cut stone with a thin, ashlar course at the coping and belt courses. Its graceful curve recalls the original, more dangerous, double curve design.

The following description of key and representative buildings in the district is organized chronologically.

Two very similar Colonial period cottages survive, although altered. The Ashley House, 11 Gurney Road (c. 1747, Map # 48) and the William Rousevell House, 16 Washburn Road (c. 1735-1739, Map # 22, MHC # C-115) are both 1 1/2 stories high, have low proportions, and are set on slight rises. Both have steeply pitched side-gable roofs framed without returns. Although the facade of the Rousevell House may have originally been three bays long, a possibly later addition currently makes the front elevation five bays long. Both houses were altered with relatively new one story porches. The Ashley house features a side gable overhang, a framing technique for the gable end commonly used in the seventeenth century, but which ceased to be used except in the area surrounding Freetown by the late eighteenth century.

Its south-facing placement on a slight rise near the crossroads gives the Rousevell Tavern, 170 County Road (c. 1727, Map # 10, MHC # C-110, Photo # 1) a prominent position. A pre-1870s

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photograph shows a Colonial style, 1 1/2 story house with tight eaves, center door and chimney and 12/12 windows in its five-bay facade. Most distinctively, small 12 pane windows light the high attic floor, giving the house taller proportions than others in the district. After a fire in the 1870s or perhaps somewhat later the house was altered in the Queen Anne style. Added were a continuous dormer in the plane of the facade topped by twin pediments over the pairs of the end windows, two bracketed and spindle frieze porches, a hip roof tower and ell to the rear. However, the narrow door with simple entablature could be original.

Two cottages thought to have originated as ells on this house were moved to their present sites. The Silas Rousevell House, 161 County Road (c. 1727?, Map # 3, MHC # C-114, photo #2) was moved about 1836, and may have been altered at that time. The compact cottage is 1 1/2 stories high, with the door in the first three bays of the facade. The deep side-gable roof is kept close to the house with no rake overhang. The Walter Rousevell House, 11 Washburn Road documented to 1777 but clearly of earlier construction, (Map # 19, MHC # C-117) was moved to its site about 1872. Also 1 1/2 stories and with a simple, projecting closed cornice, it forms the eastern portion of the L-shaped house.

The William Rousevell, Jr. House, 32 Washburn Road (c. 1767, Map # 32, MHC # C-102, photo # 3) is the most intact of all the Colonial Period examples. Set facing south on ashlar granite foundations, this Georgian-style Cape cottage is 1 1/2 stories with low proportions and a tight eaves line. Its five-bay facade is symmetrically arranged, with the central door topped by a five-light transom and framed by narrow pilasters with simple, high capitals. The large central chimney was replaced. The windows surrounds strongly project from the wall plane in the Georgian manner. The roof is framed with a simple projecting and perpendicular fascia board.

The Dr. James Ashley/Edminister House, 9 East Howland Road (ca. 1803, Map # 38, MHC # C-100) is a full Cape cottage with center entry and chimney, low Georgian proportions and a high pitched roof. The door surround, with high, plain entablature, suggests the Federal style, but the Italianate door with round arched glassed panels was a ca. 1850-1870 addition. Two large barns are sited close to the house: one has a full transom over the barn doors.

The L-shaped Ben. Snow/Elam Nelson Davis House, 2 East Howland Road (ca. 1851, Map # 36, MHC # C-101) a good example of a Greek Revival cottage. It may have been built by either of its first two owners, carpenters Benjamin Snow or E. N. Nelson. The gable end turned to the street is three bays wide, with the entry in the first of the bays. Wide corner pilasters, a deep frieze under the cornice circling the building, a full pediment, and a door surround with full length sidelights are typical of the vernacular Greek Revival style.

The Pierce/Brown/Nesbit House, 14 Washburn Road (Map # 20, MHC # C-105) appears to have been constructed in several stages. The original structure, now to the rear, may have been

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Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.

erected between c. 1750 and 1800. The side-gabled block on the west was probably added between c. 1800 and 1830, and the easternmost, front-gable block was added c. 1843-1850. This Italianate style portion has widely overhanging eaves supported on decorative brackets and a pointed, Gothic Revival gable field window. The elaborate Neo-Federal entry pavilion and wide shed roof dormer were added about 1920-30.

The cottage of blacksmith Horatio Braley, 17 Washburn Road (Map # 23, MHC # C-104, Photo # 7) was erected in 1849 in the Gothic Revival style. 1 1/2 stories high with a side-gable roof, the house has the higher proportions and overhanging roof which distinguishes building of the mid-19th century. A high, steeply pitched gable dormer in the plane of the facade is centered over the center entrance. Both dormer and open-rake side-gables are trimmed with gable-field ornaments possibly installed in the 1880s, when the house had a porch and one-story ell added. The door surround is composed of classic pilasters with dentils, narrow sidelights and a low pediment over the door with dentil trim.

The 1 1/2 story, cross-gabled house built by Elam N. Davis, and later the home of Capt. Charles Bosworth, 31 Washburn Road (c. 1857, Map # 31) has lost its lacy Gothic Revival bargeboard trim which elaborated the pointed eaves, bracketed bay window and Gothic porch with slim pillars connected by delicate curving brackets. However, it retains its basic form. The Captain Granville Allen's House, 173 County Road, (c. 1858-1864, Map # 12, MHC #C-108, Photo # 6) is an eclectic combination of Gothic Revival and Italianate styles. The one-story, five-bay house has a tall central gabled dormer in the plane of the facade, and a second lower one over a rectangular, triple-windowed bay. Openwork gable screens or ornaments decorate the dormers and side gables, and the bargeboards are elaborated in the Gothic Revival manner. The modified Palladian windows, usually a later feature, coexist with more standard round head Italianate window.

Few houses were built in the district in the Late Industrial Period (1870-1915). Displaying the higher proportions of Italianate building is the home of mill worker Fisher Cleveland at 167 County Road (Map # 8, MHC # C-111, photo # 8). It may have been constructed about 1872, possibly with lumber from the Webber Tavern, site of 26 Washburn Road (c. 1820s-demolished c. 1871-72, Map # 30.1). The 1 1/2 story cottage is five bays long under a side-gable roof, with the door in the center. A high gabled dormer in the plane of facade is centered over the entry. The roof is framed with returns, 2/2 windows have small cornice hoods. The major decorative element is the one story entry porch, which has a bracketed flat roof, paired chamfered pillars and lacy, Queen Anne style jig-saw cut brackets.

Similar in form is the Seth Chace House, 165 County Road (c. 1873-1880, Map # 6, MHC # C-113, photo # 8). Here the central dormer is roofed by a tall, steep Gothic Revival gable. Decorative screens of truss-like forms and lacy cutouts elaborate the gable fields. A one-story

(continued)

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Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.

porch across the facade with columns above a rail, and an octagonal bay window on the side are trimmed with stock Carpenter Gothic-Queen Anne work: small Italianate style brackets and appliquéed bosses. Double doors with glass panels are the decorative feature of the center entry.

The Gurney Saw Mill, 8 Gurney Road (Map # 49) established about 1870, may have moved to Gurney Road as early as 1870, although it does not appear on the maps of 1871 or 1895. The Office (Map # 49.1), whose construction date is unknown, was originally a stable but was reused as the administrative building. It is utilitarian in design, with narrow dimensions, vertical siding and shed roof. Other utilitarian pre-World War II buildings include the Solder Shed (c. 1930s Map # 49.1) and a section of the Saw Mill (c. 1926-1940/1960, Map # 49.2). The buildings are grouped well off the road in a functional layout around a circular drive.

The Abial S. Ashley House, 166 County Road (c. 1877, Map # 7, MHC # C-112), was built by its original owner, the prolific designer-builder of the the Chace and Masons Corner schools outside the district, the Grange, and Congregational Church (discussed below) and the George Braley House, (c. 1897, Map # 37) moved to 8 East Howland Road. His house is two-stories by virtue of its mansard roof, which has an unusual front gable pediment perched on its top. Some of its lumber may have come from the demolished stables of the Rounsevell Tavern, 170 County Road (Map # 10, MHC # C-110, Photo # 1). It is complex in form, having 1 1/2 story cross gables and a porch which wraps the house. A conical turreted corner porch projects from the side, and a second floor balconied porch is inserted in the center of the facade. Its somewhat later Shingle Style barn, (c. 1883-1894, Map # 27.1) uses an unusual device of heavy shingled consoles on the front elevation.

The Christian Congregational Church, 4 Washburn Road (Map # 17, MHC # C-106 Photo # 9) was erected in 1888 by builder Abial S. Ashley to the eclectic design of architect Clothier Franklin Edminister. The one story wing added in 1954 was built on the site of a carriage shed. Now vinyl sided, its original features are intact. A tall tower projects from the center of the front-gable facade. The tower's lowest level is recessed for an entry porch whose Gothic-arched braces between the porch pillars are emphasized by trellis work. Above the porch, a mansard roof within the pediment of the gable front supports a tall stage with Queen Anne multipane window, and finally a square, open belfry topped by a tall, pyramidal roof.

The vernacular Shingle Style/Neo-Colonial East Freetown Grange, 26 Washburn Road (Map #30, MHC # C-103, Photo # 10) was erected by builder Abial S. Ashley with assistance from the community in 1916. The one-story shingled building is composed of two, high hip roofed blocks. The smaller contains the distinctive porch with thin columns standing on Craftsman style square, high, fieldstone bases and supporting a deep shingled frieze with shallow arches

(continued)

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 7East Freetown Historic District  
Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.

between the columns. Centered on its roof is a tiny gabled dormer lit by a minuscule semicircular window.

Built in 1929, the house at 24 Washburn Road (Map # 29) is a modest Craftsman style cottage. Its most characteristic feature is the gable roof which has been clipped back at its peak as a jerkin head, and wide overhanging eaves with Craftsman style brackets. The front porch with shingled rail is intact, although new windows have been inserted. Another Craftsman Style house, the Bralei/Warren Gurney House, 15 Washburn Road (c. 1850, Map # 21) was converted from a carriage refinishing barn in 1913. The exposed rafters and shingled upper floor are popular, vernacular features of the style.

The White Memorial Library, 5 Washburn Road (1947, Map # 18) is residential in scale and modest in design. The Neo-Colonial Cape Cod Cottage building was built privately for public use. One story high, it is five bays long with a center entry framed by three-quarter length sidelights and topped by a shallow pedimented cornice.

Houses built in the 1940s tend to employ the Neo-Colonial style, as at 18 Gurney Road, (c. 1945, Map # 44) and continue to use clapboard or shingle. The houses built after this period are modest in scale and are either traditional in design or are modified ranch style cottages respectful of the historic buildings in the district. The major intrusion is Massachusetts Route 140 (1957-61, Map # E 24), a major four-lane, divided highway bringing traffic from Boston to New Bedford, which crosses the district. However, because it is elevated on high concrete columns well above the buildings and mill pond, it allows the views and continuous road system that an at-grade highway would not.

### Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are recorded in the district or in the general area, sites may be present. Environmental characteristics of the district represent several locational criteria (slope, drainage, distance to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for many types of prehistoric sites. Much of the district includes level to moderately sloping areas of well drained glacial outwash in close proximity (within 1000 feet) to Fall Brook and related wetlands, including Bolton Cedar Swamp. Fall Brook is part of the Taunton River drainage and flows into Long Pond less than 0.5 miles east of the district. Prehistoric settlement has also been documented in this area of southeastern Massachusetts for the full period of human habitation thusfar recognized for the northeastern United States. Earlier periods of settlement including the Paleoindian (12,000-9,000B.P.) and Early Archaic (9,000-8,000B.P.) periods are also better demonstrated in southeast Massachusetts than in other areas of southern New England. Major concentrations of prehistoric sites have also been documented along the main drainage of the Taunton River located in the western portion of Freetown. Nineteenth century documentary sources and oral tradition have also identified

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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East Freetown Historic District  
Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.

several Native American sites in or near the district although the exact locations for most have yet to be identified. Rocky Woods is reported to be the site of King Philip's Cave, a short term campsite supposedly used by the Native American leader during King Philip's War. A Native American burial site was also reported behind the houses south of Fall Brook on the west side of County Road as far as Chase Road. Given the above information and the size of the district, a high potential exists for the recovery of prehistoric archaeological resources in the district.

A high potential also exists for the recovery of historic archaeological resources in the district. The district is included in the "Mile Square" original lot of the 1681 Pocasset Purchase. Actual lands in the district were part of the Second Division of the Pocasset Purchase that occurred sometime before 1698. Little evidence for 17th century settlement in the district exists, however, some level of settlement may have occurred. The Pocasset Purchase was made by three English settlers on behalf of themselves and their partners. All early records of the proprietors have been lost. Some sources identify Proprietors Way, now Braley/Gurney Road as laid out, possibly as early as 1683, but clearly by 1727. Stratigraphic evidence of this roadway could exist along it's route. Structural evidence of 17th century homesteads may also be present though none have been identified to date. During the 18th and 19th centuries, residential homes increased in the district along the Washburn Road/County Road/Gurney Road corridors in direct response to industrial centers developing at the intersection of Fall Brook and Washburn Road and also at County Road. Many structures and residences constructed during the district's period of significance are still extant, however, structural evidence from buildings that no longer survive should also be present though few have been identified to date. Structural evidence may survive from the Rounsevell House/Tavern originally located at 170 County Road. The house was built as a residence in c.1727 then became a tavern by 1781 or earlier. Two ells from the Rounsevell Tavern were moved and incorporated into new structures beginning in 1836 with the Silas Rounsevell House at 161 County Road and in 1872 with the Walter Rounsevell House at 154 County Road. A cabin, originally located on the Tavern site might also survive as the core of the Philip Rounsevell House at 154 County Road. Some structural evidence might also survive from the Reuel Washburn House (c.1851), demolished about 1951 for Route 140 construction. Structural and/or feature type evidence may also survive related to the remodeling and rebuilding of several residential structures in the district. The Captain Allen's Little House (c.1844) was originally a barn on the Lawrence House property then moved across the road to its present site. The house was later remodeled to house unmarried mill workers. Other homes including the Horatio Braley House at 17 Washburn Road have been remodeled at least three times in their history. Structural evidence may also exist from several other commercial structures originally located in the district. Archaeological resources may exist from the Webber Tavern (c. 1820's), originally located at 26 Washburn Road, the Company Store (c. 1749), also located on Washburn Road and the Lawrence Cooper Shop site (c. 1860), originally located across the road from 2 Washburn Road. Occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells)

(continued)

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Continuation Sheet

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East Freetown Historic District  
Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.

should also be an important archaeological resource type in the district. These features should exist with standing structures in the district as well as those that are no longer extant.

While the domestic and commercial historic archaeological resources described above may include several important sites in the district, known and potential sites associated with the district's two industrial centers are responsible for the districts 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century growth and represent most of the archaeological sites known in the area. Both industrial centers date to the damming of Fall Brook, probably by 1727 or shortly later. Actual dates for the dams have not been established. The original dams may have been completely built over and have been repeatedly rebuilt. One dam, Furnace Dam is located south of Washburn Road at the eastern end of Mill Pond. Furnace Dam currently includes the remains of a fieldstone dam with spillways and retaining walls on both sides of the dam. Structural evidence from earlier stages of dam construction may exist as well as evidence of additional mill canals. Archaeological evidence might also survive from 18<sup>th</sup> century saw and grist mills located near the dam by 1746 or earlier, a Blast Furnace (1784) later rebuilt as a Cupola Furnace (1818) for iron smelting and, a Sash, Blind, and Door Factory (1871). Foundation remains are visible from several of these enterprises in that area today. The second industrial center and dam in the district, the Rounsevell/Allen Dam and Mill Site, is located near the intersection of Fall Brook and County Road. That dam was probably built about the same period as the Furnace Dam (c.1727) and includes similar known and potential resources. Structural evidence from the original dam may exist as well as evidence of later rebuilding episodes. Two spillways and retaining walls are also visible. A shaft and gearing probably associated with some power transfer system is also present. Archaeological evidence of additional mill canals may also be present. Existing stonework from the dam, power canals and mill foundations are often fieldstone or rubble granite, at times with concrete facing. Some walls are also topped with granite, possibly identifying a specific rebuilding episode. Structural evidence may also exist from 18<sup>th</sup> century saw and grist mills constructed at the Rounsevell/Allen Dam. Similar evidence might also exist from a Box, Board and Shingle Mill constructed on the south side of the brook about 1858. Occupational related features, especially trash or refuse deposits associated with industrial production may also exist near mill locations.

(end)

East Freetown HD  
Name of Property

Bristol, 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)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

INDUSTRY

**Period of Significance**

1727-1949

**Significant Dates**

1727 1747 1784

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

Clothier Franklin Edminster

Abial S. Ashley

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
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Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.Section number 8 Page 1**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The East Freetown Historic District is located in a compact area which is almost completely contained in the "Mile Square" original lot of the 1681 Pocasset Purchase. The hamlet developed around grist and saw mills, and an iron foundry established in 1784 at the falls of Fall Brook. The foundry gave the settlement the lasting name of "Furnace Village". As well as a residential center, it became the commercial and civic focus for East Freetown with stores, post offices, cemetery and a library. Blacksmithing, sash, door and shingle production became important from the mid-19th century, while saw milling, a district business before 1746, continues today. Its period of significance extends from 1727 to 1949. Located in an area annexed sixty-four years after the establishment of the Town of Freetown, "New Freetown's" Patriot sentiment contrasted with the Loyalist position of Assonet in "Old Freetown". District resident Capt. Levi Rounsevell and the men who responded to the Minute Men's first call were all residents of East Freetown. The East Freetown Historic District possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Significant at the local level, it meets criterion A for its role in East Freetown's town development and criterion C for its broad range of architecture examples from the Colonial to the Neo-Colonial Styles.

**Historic Significance:****Colonial Period: (1675-1775)**

The area was seasonally used by the Wampanoag natives. Their path system probably included County Road, with a ford at the present bridge (Map # 11), turning west into Rocky Woods just north of the district to emerge on Washburn Road near 32 Washburn Road (Map # 32) and then continuing north as East Howland Road. The western part of the unimproved road is still shown on a USGS map of 1937. Rocky Woods is the site of King Philip's Cave, so named as he is said to have rested there on his flight during King Philip's War (1675-1676). Nineteenth century residents of the district reported an extensive Native American burial site behind the houses south of Fall Brook on the west side of County Road, (Map #s 8, 6, 3) and as far as Chace Road, as well as a circle of campfire stones on the point behind the White Memorial Library, 5 Washburn Road (Map # 18).

We have little information about the Pocasset Purchase of 1678-1681 as the early records of the proprietors are lost. It appears that three English settlers, on behalf of themselves and their partners, purchased the land from a few Pocasset natives who had assumed English names and sided with the English in King Philip's War. However, payment was divided between these natives and the Plymouth Colony government, which, as victor in that war with the Pocassetts, felt it owned the land. The Proprietor's Way, now Braley/Gurney Road, was laid out, perhaps as

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early as 1683, but clearly by 1727. It may have been a paper road, as it does not appear on the map of 1794. The area in which the district is located, part of the Second Division of the Pocasset Purchase, was divided into lots before 1698. Eight shareholders were the first owners of the Mile Square at Fall Brook.

By 1727 Philip Rounsevell, a cloth dresser originally from Hummeton in Devonshire, England, then of Middleborough, began buying up the Square from the original purchasers, as did his sons William and John. The Mile Square Boundary Marker, Gurney Road (Map # 44.2, C-118) delineates the southeast corner of that mile square. By 1746 and probably earlier, a dam, saw mill and grist mill were located on Fall Brook, as Philip excepted them from sale in a deed that year.

At this time, the wide Pocasset Purchase was part of the town of Tiverton, which stretched south and east of the Freeman's Purchase (now Freetown and Fall River) and west into what is now Rhode Island. A commission established to adjust the boundary between Massachusetts and Rhode Island decided in 1746 that what is now East Freetown would join Massachusetts and what is now Tiverton would unite with Rhode Island. In 1747 East Freetown was annexed to the Town of Freetown. The identity of the two parts of town remained quite distinct: for some period of years separate sets of Assessors records were kept, and after 155 years it was still called "New Freetown" by some residents of Freetown.

The district was rich in water resources with Fall Brook, near by Long Pond, or Lake Apponequet, as well as the swamps on its edges. Dense surrounding forests would provide raw materials once power could be harnessed to cut and work the harvested wood. But the land was suitable only for small crops, orchards and subsistence farming.

Philip Rounsevell I settled in a cottage on the site of the Rounsevell House/Tavern, 170 County Road (Map # 10, MHC # C-110) possibly as early as 1727 or soon thereafter. It is not clear, however, whether that building remained in place, or whether it or a subsequent building was moved, possibly to the site of Philip II/Marcus/Edwin Rounsevell House, 154 County Road (c. 1744-59/1840, Map # 1). Philip I controlled much of the property in the Square on Fall Brook: his saw and grist mill made him the community's wealthiest resident. A ca. 1850-1870 photograph shows a substantial and uniquely proportioned 1 1/2 story Colonial style house.

Of five other Colonial Period houses in the district, four are believed to have been built by members of the Rounsevell family: the William Sr. Rounsevell House, 16 Washburn Road (c. 1735-1739, Map # 22, MHC # C-115) and the William Junior Rounsevell House, 32 Washburn Road c. 1767, Map #32, MHC # C-102). The Silas Rounsevell House, 161 County Road (c. 1727-1790, Map # 3, MHC # C-114) and the Walter/Philip Rounsevell House, 11 Washburn

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Road (c. 1740-1770, Map # 19, MHC # C-117) originated as ells on the Philip Rounsevell House on County Road and were moved to their sites. The other Colonial Period house is the Ashley House, 11 Gurney Road (c. 1747, Map # 48).

Buried in the Rounsevell Cemetery, County Road (c. 1740, Map # 2, MHC # 827) between 1740 and 1826 are twenty seven members of this powerful family; Philip, d. 1763, his first wife Mary, d. 1744, and his second wife Rachel, d. 1745, as well as scores of other early residents of the community. Besides working in the family's grist and saw mills and later in the iron foundry, these men were farmers and perhaps orchardists.

The water power of Fall Brook was exploited soon after settlement. Possibly two dams and a saw mill were mentioned in a document discussing their sale which occurred within the Square Mile in 1746. A grist mill was excepted from the sale. Thus, one or two dams could have been built soon after 1727 and certainly between 1635 when Rounsevell bought more land, and 1746. The location of the dam or dams, however, is not known. One could well have been the Rounsevell/Allen Dam off County Road (Map # 13.2), the other the Furnace Dam off Washburn Road (Map # 27).

**Federal Period: (1775-1830)**

Before the Revolution the residents of East Freetown were mainly Whigs while the generally wealthier residents of Assonet were conservative Tories/Loyalists, ready to resist the growing nationalism of the Patriots. In 1768 Levi Rounsevell (1739-1815) was a Tory, but before 1775 he became a Whig, politically active as a member of the Committee of Correspondence and an Inspector of Safety. As Captain of the Minute Men, (all from East Freetown) he "responded to the "Lexington Alarm", April 19, 1775, though the company mainly served in the area. Levi, who lived at 16 Washburn Road (ca. 1735-1739, Map # 22, MHC # C-115) had two wives and six children. His war record probably earned him a seat as Representative to the Massachusetts General Court for Freetown in 1784. He also served as Moderator of Town Meeting and Selectman in 1786 and 1787.

About 1784 Capt. Levi, a third generation resident of the district, with his uncle Philip Rounsevell, Capt. Abraham Morton of an old East Freetown family, and several investors from nearby communities built a Blast Furnace, Washburn Road (Map # 27.1, MHC # C-116) at the Dam on the Fall Brook (Map # 27). The industrial complex was to have enormous impact on the small community which developed around it. The furnace smelted iron ore, which was used in the manufacture of a variety of hollow ware products such as pots and kettles. Power for the factory came from the brook, while the raw materials were also local. Iron ore was dug at Assawamsett Pond in Middleborough and brought by cart. The wood or charcoal for the furnace from the surrounding forests was abundant and cheap.

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The map of 1794 shows a pair of saw and grist mills located at the Furnace site (Map # 27.6) and another pair at the Rounsevell/Allen site (Map # 14.1). The Mill Pond itself seems to have been narrower than it appears on the 1871 map. It is said to have flooded an existing peach orchard on the site.

The Rounsevell family soon began purchasing that part of the furnace which was not already in their hands, and it became known as the Rounsevell Furnace. However, in 1811 the company went out of East Freetown control when James Alger and Salmon Forbes of Bridgewater, and Gen. Cromwell Washburn of Taunton bought three-quarters, and by 1814 it was wholly owned and managed by Alger and Forbes. The firm also ran two Saw Mills perhaps those at Map #s 27.2 and the Rounsevell/Allen Saw Mill (Map # 13.1), a Grist Mill (possibly Map # 27.6), a blacksmith shop and the Furnace/Washburn Store on Washburn Road, (c. 1784, Map # 26.1). It was under this vigorous ownership that the firm employed about fifty workers.

In 1818 the furnace again changed hands, going to Samuel Slater and others of Providence and Cranston, R. I. Slater, famous as the originator of the cotton mill industry in the United States, and his firm, the Providence Foundry Company, took the wise step of employing Capt. Calvin Thomas from Pembroke as their superintendent. Thomas bought the old William Rounsevell House, 32 Washburn Road (c. 1767, Map # 32, MHC # C-102) and became a part owner of the company. Born in Pembroke in 1791, he had trained in the iron foundry business, perhaps in Bridgewater and Providence. In 1822 he married Louise Washburn and they had at least five children, descendants of whom still live in the house.

Calvin also purchased the granite quarry in Rocky Woods just north of the district. The granite foundations, industrial structures and bridge materials so distinctive of the district were probably quarried at this location, while the granite characteristic of the Assonet Historic District was quarried near Assonet Village. In 1833 and 1835 Calvin served as one of three Freetown Assessors.

The firm demolished the original furnace and built a cupola furnace, probably reusing the stones. It also abandoned the use of the local iron ore, and began importing already refined iron "pigs" from New Jersey which were brought by water to Assonet, then carted by ox team to East Freetown. One of its best known products was the iron rail for America's first interior mall, Bucklin and Warren's 1828 Arcade Building in Providence. Power for the forge and bellows was produced by water wheels. The "New Bridge" over Fall Brook at Gurney Road (c. 1823, Map # 40, MHC # 826) may have been built to take the heavy pig iron loads.

Perhaps before, but certainly by 1771, the Philip Rounsevell House, 170 County Road, c. 1727, Map # 10, MHC # C-110) had become a tavern. A sign attesting that Sally and John Rounsevell offered civil entertainment was dated that year. It provided a stop on the stage coach line that ran from New Bedford to Boston once a week. Another commercial establishment was the

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Company Store on Washburn Road, (c. 1784- demolished ca. 1949-1950, Map # 26.2).

**Early Industrial Period: (1830-1870)**

As East Freetown grew its transportation options broadened. As shown by the map of 1794 the district had been served only by East Howland Road, Washburn Road and County Road from its juncture with Mason Road to the south. Its north end halted at its intersection with Washburn Road. Gurney Road must have existed but was not shown on the map of that year. By the map of 1831, Dr. Braley/Gurney Road appears, as does the Chace Road, which connected the district to Assonet by way of the presently named Gurney Road. County Road's northern terminus was still Washburn Road. By the time the 1851 map was drawn, County Road, which may previously been an unimproved track, was extended as a listed road northward into Lakeville.

Opportunities for rail transport came when, in 1840 the New Bedford and Taunton Railroad from Boston to Providence opened with a depot on Chace Road not far west of the district. Its coming may have stimulated the economy in the district: several houses were enlarged, others were constructed and a second store appeared. About 1844 carpenter Elam N. Davis purchased a piece of Rounsevell land and constructed a one story building on County Road, now 2 Washburn Road (Map # 16, MHC # C-107). In 1854 it was purchased by Joseph Rounsevell who ran it as a store. Six years later it was sold to David Lawrence, who added a second story on the original building and constructed an addition on Washburn Road. Lawrence continued the store, and operated a Cooper Shop (c. 1860, Map # 18.2) across Washburn Road. The Dam (ca. 1800?, Map # 18.3) upstream of the bridge may have related to the shop.

The three grog shops in the eastern part of town, among them the Webber Tavern (on the site of 26 Washburn Road c. 1825-1872, Map # 30.1) and the Rounsevell Tavern, 170 County Road (ca. 1727, Map # 10, MHC # 110) were perceived as a problem, and the East Freetown Washingtonian Temperance Society was established in 1846 to cope with their effects. Its membership came to include district residents James Ashley, Horatio Braley, Fisher Cleveland, Arad Leach, Marcus M. Rounseville and store-owner Reuel Washburn, Secretary and Treasurer. Several men of the district joined the approximately seventy men who left Freetown for California when gold was discovered, among them Arad Leach of 36 Washburn Road (Map # 34), and Joseph Rounseville of 2 Washburn Road, (Map # 16) as well as a Webber of the Webber Tavern (Map # 30.1) and Walter S. Rounsville who never returned. [By the mid-19th century, the traditional spelling of *Rounsevell* was gradually changing to include alternative forms of *Rounseville* and *Rounsavill*.]

The enterprising Reuel Washburn, purchased the old company store from the Providence Iron Foundry and built a large Gothic Revival house on Washburn Road (c. 1851-1957, Map #25.1).

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By 1852 he had become Postmaster, as the Post Office, closed in East Freetown for thirty years, was reestablished in his store. A member of the School Committee from 1855 through 1857 and 1859-1861, he served as Assessor from 1847 through 1853 and again in 1855, 1857, '64 and 1865.

In 1849 Horatio A. Braley erected his neat Gothic Revival house at 17 Washburn Road (Map # 23, MHC # C-104). Curtis Braley was the builder. Horatio was a blacksmith whose shop stood east of the house on Washburn Road as shown on the map of 1871.

Sea Captain Granville S. Allen opened a Box, Board and Shingle Mill at the Rounsevell Dam off County Road (c.1727?-1780, Map # 13.1) on the south side of the brook about 1858. These firms turned out the plentiful, cheaper, short pieces of wood and from them made boxes for storing or shipping all sorts of produce. He seems to have run the mill in conjunction with Marcus M. Rounseville's Grist Mill on the brook's north side (c. 1727?-1780, Map # 14.1). Allen married Rachel Lawrence and built his house opposite the mill at 173 County Road (c.1858-1864, Map # 12, MHC # C-108). Allen represented East Freetown on the School Committee, serving from 1862-1864.

Remodeled to house the mill's unmarried male workers, Captain Allen's Little House, 176 County Road (c. 1844, Map # 15, MHC # C-109) was originally a barn on the Lawrence House property at 2 Washburn Road (Map # 16). It was moved across the road to its present site, possibly to make way for the Lawrence House addition.

A number of East Freetown residents participated in the Civil War, among them Fisher Cleveland, Calvin Thomas Jr., and Lieut. Charles G. Bosworth, (31 Washburn Road, (c. 1857, Map # 31) who had come to the "Furnace District" in 1850 as a carpenter and married Rachel Ashley in 1852. Bosworth enlisted as a private in 1861 and was soon promoted to Sergeant, then Lieutenant. Terribly wounded at the Battle of The Crater, he recovered "mainly by force of will," but could only do light work as carpenter when he returned.

**Late Industrial Period: (1870-1915)**

About 1855 the Providence Foundry Company closed the furnace and went out of business. By 1871 H. E. Wilcox had purchased the old house at 14 Washburn Road (c. 1800-1820 Map # 20) and opened a Sash, Blind and Door Factory on the prime industrial furnace site across the brook (Map # 27.4). Among the district residents who worked at the factory were Arad Leach, 36 Washburn Road (Map # 34) and Fisher A. Cleveland, 167 County Road (c. 1872, Map # 8, MHC # C-111). Not long after the Cleavelands built on County Road, their daughter Jenny married sailor Seth Chace and they built a house next door at 165 County Road c. 1873-1880, Map # 6, MHC # C-113). When the sash, blind and door factory closed in the in 1895, the water power

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was used to drive a lumber mill owned by Leonard Reynolds. The Furnace/Sash, Blind and Door factory burned in 1911.

East Freetown's earliest industry and most one of its most consistent business was saw milling and wood products manufacture. Jonathan R. Gurney established a steam powered saw mill off Chace Road in 1870, but apparently moved the business soon afterwards to 8 Gurney Road (Map # 49), although it is not indicated there on the maps of 1871 or 1895. Portable steam equipment freed him from the requirement of locating the mill on a brook or river and it was sited nearer Gurney Road than presently. The Gurney Saw Mill Office (c. 1920s, Map # 49) was recycled from a former stable. In 1947 when the mill was partially destroyed by fire it was still operating on steam powered equipment. It was moved to its current location on the same site and electric powered machinery was installed when it was rebuilt after the fire. Still owned and operated by members of the Gurney family, the firm continues a use which existed as early as 1746 in the district, over three hundred years after a saw mill was erected on Fall Brook.

In the early 1880s the members of First Christian Church found their pre-1831 meeting house near Masons Corner too small, and resolved to build a new one at 4 Washburn Road (Map # 16, MHC # C-106). About 1883, the Ladies Friendly Circle, which had recently been organized for quilting and community service, began to raise funds for a new Congregational church. The organization, which met in a room over the Furnace/Washburn Store (Map # 26.1), now continues its meetings in the Parish House of the church. The Circle raised money for the church's construction and purchased much of the furniture. A real community effort, it was designed by recently graduated architect Clothier Franklin Edminister of 9 East Howland Road (Map # 38), built by contractor Abial S. Ashley of 166 County Road (Map #7), with the construction help and funding coming from the residents of East Freetown, and sited on land donated by Alphonse C. Braley living in the Washburn House on Washburn Road, (Map # 25.1), and mill owner Capt. Granville Allen of 173 County Road (Map # 12). With donations from 137 subscribers and 55 days of volunteer labor, the building was finished in 1888.

The church is an integral part of the East Freetown Historic District, deriving its primary significance from its architectural distinction and association with the development of the community. After 1938 it became the Christian Congregational Church, and in 1964 it changed its name to the Congregational Christian Church. In 1954 Nahum Morse donated a small piece of land for a parish house addition. The addition, which is used for community activities, replaced a five-stall carriage shed.

The location of the East Freetown Post Office changed depending whether the Republicans or Democrats controlled Federal appointments. In 1885 the post office, which had been in Republican Reuel Washburn's Store, Washburn Road (Map # 26.1) since 1852, moved to Democrat David Lawrence's Store, 2 Washburn Road (Map # 16, MHC # C-107) after Grover

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Cleveland, a Democrat, won the election. After David's death, his wife Rachel became Postmistress. In 1915 she was succeeded by the Rounsevell/Allen mill owner Lincoln E. Chace. In 1918 the Post Office once more returned to the old Furnace/Reuel Washburn store, now rented by George Braley, who kept it there until 1940. So while it moved quarters, it stayed within the district for nearly one hundred years, removing only in 1963.

After Granville Allen's death in 1894 his grist and saw mills (Map # 14.1 and 13.1) closed. The saw mill reopened in 1902 under the ownership of Lincoln Chace, continuing this historic land use. The same year County Road was paved when it became a state highway.

**Early Modern Period: (1915-1949)**

In 1898-1899 an electric trolley was built from New Bedford to Middleborough. Although the line passed through East Freetown it was well east of the district. In 1902 the Commonwealth improved County Road from New Bedford to Lakeville. These transportation improvements seem to have had little affect on the district. Even the development of Long Pond's lakefront as a modest summer resort just north of the district around the turn of the century had minimal effect on its steady life.

In 1916 East Freetown residents joined to erect a meeting place for East Freetown Grange, # 307. Grange Hall, 26 Washburn Road (Map # 30, MHC # C-103) was built by Abial S. Ashley with the help of the community on land donated by neighbor Francis Paul, 36 Washburn Road (Map # 34), a New Bedford ice-house owner and local historian and his wife. The Grange was erected on the former site of the Webber Tavern, (Map # 30.1), demolished around 1872.

The little building at 168 County Road, (c. 1877/1919/1960, Map # 9) has had multiple uses and repeated additions to accommodate them. About half of the south end was originally a pump house built ca. 1877 for the house of next door neighbor Abial S. Ashley, (Map # 7, MHC # C-112). It was moved forward on the lot in 1919 and rebuilt by Nathan Rounsville for Herbert Sharrock to run as a butcher shop/grocery store. The southern half was originally an outbuilding topped by a windmill. Sited next to the barn, it was used as a kennel, beauty shop and later the Windmill Tea Room run by Mrs. Sharrock and her daughters. In 1940 this piece was joined to the grocery, which had just added the function of Post Office, to become the East Freetown Post Office. Its most recent use has been as a book bindery.

Probably in the 1930s Washburn Road was raised to relate to the newly raised water line of the Mill Pond. The stone wall (Map # V-3) west of the Grange remains to indicate the difference in the height of the elevated road on its south and the much lower open field on its north. A more significant change in County Road occurred in 1919 after a young couple headed for New Bedford the year before was killed when their car failed to navigate the treacherous double curve

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of the ca. 1823 bridge over Fall Brook. The road was widened from twenty to forty feet, a new rail was installed and the curve was reduced. However, fatal accidents continued to plague Death Curve Bridge (Map # 11, MHC # C-902) as it was locally known, and in 1941 the bridge was substantially rebuilt by the state when it was widened to twice its former size and the S curve was removed.

From 1893 through 1924 the East Freetown Library had been housed in the Lawrence Store at 2 Washburn Road. It moved into an upper floor of the Washburn Store, Washburn Road (Map # 26.1) for four years before its demolition. To save the books, May Gurney took them to her home at 15 Washburn Road, (Map # 21) and kept the library from the house.

East Freetown resident James White of Middleborough Road had long been anxious to erect a library in memory of his grandfather. In 1947 he and a board composed of Leonard H. Chace, Frank Kendrick, Albert Edminster and Mark Ashley, Jr. opened the White Memorial Library, 5 Washburn Road, (Map # 18) It was built with lumber from the White family farm by the Mark Ashleys Jr. and Sr., on land donated by the Lawrence family. The entire community pitched in to finish the building when funds on hand were not sufficient to cover its completion. Although it receives Town funds, the Library is still privately owned and run by a Board of Trustees.

The district suffered a major loss when the much deteriorated Furnace/Washburn Store, (ca. 1784, Map # 26.1) built ca. 1784 but certainly by 1811, was demolished c. 1949. The simple, two story, low hip roofed Federal style commercial block was successively owned by the Rounsevell family, Alger and Forbes, the Providence Foundry Company, Reuel Washburn and his family and George Braley. When the elaborate Reuel Washburn House, Washburn Road (Map # 25.1) was also demolished around 1957 to make way for the construction of Route 140, little but the name of the road and two stone walls (Maps #26.2 and 25.2) were left of an institution which had been a central feature of the small industrial community.

After Chace Road extended eastward to join County Road in 1957, that part of the old Chace Road which had originally turned sharply north to meet Washburn Road at East Howland Road was renamed Gurney Road in honor of the family which had owned land and worked in this area for over a century. Another road constructed through the district in 1957-1961, Route 140 (Map # E 24) would provide efficient car and truck access to the state and interstate highway system, but its erection would mean the introduction of an intrusive concrete structure above the Mill Pond. Fortunately, being elevated, it did not physically or visually divide the community. It also caused the demolition of the highly visible and significant Washburn House mentioned above.

In 1961, shortly before her death, Mrs. Julia Lawrence donated the Lawrence House to the East Freetown Congregational Church. It was used as a Sunday School and parsonage.

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The housing built in the district during the decade after World War II was primarily for members of East Freetown families, some of whom returned from serving in the war. While Route 140 gave highway access to neighboring and distant communities, the district remained a tightly knit unit with inter-related families or families that had been neighbors for generations.

**Architectural Significance:**

Remarkably, the Mile Square Boundary Marker, Gurney Road (Map # 44.2, C-118) remains from its installation about 1727, almost certainly at its original location. A small, crude, granite post, this tangible link to the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlement of East Freetown demonstrates the sturdy will of the settlers, their concern about property lines, and the utilitarian methods they employed to insure the permanent record of their holdings.

The East Freetown Historic District is significant at the local level for the fine quality of its architecture which tells the story of the community's development from the early 17th century to just after World War II. Although not all have survived intact, the district is fortunate in retaining at least four houses dating between c. 1727 and 1767: the Philip Rounsevell House, 170 County Road (c. 1727, Map # 10, MHC # C-110); and the Cape Cod cottages of William Sr. Rounsevell, 16 Washburn Road (c. 1735-1739, Map # 22, MHC # C-115); the Ashley House, 11 Gurney Road (c. 1747, Map # 48); and the William Rounsevell Jr., 32 Washburn Road (c. 1767, Map # 32, MHC # C-102). Three more Capes are thought to pre-date 1800 but are more difficult to date: the Philip I./R. C. Rounsville House, 154 County Road (c. 1744-1759, Map # 1); the Silas Rounsville House, 161 County Road (c. 1727-1790/1836, Map # 3, MHC # C-114); and the Philip/Walter Rounsevell House, 11 Washburn Road (c. 1740-1777/1872, Map # 19, MHC # C-117). The last two were originally ells on the Philip Rounsevell House but moved to their present locations.

A photograph of the Rounsevell House/Tavern, 170 County Road (Map # 10, MHC # C-110) taken before ca. 1870 shows a traditional plan type with unusual variations. The standard 1 1/2 story fixed-bay façade is extended upwards with the introduction of four small, square twelve-light casement or fixed pane windows in the attic story. This higher attic floor gave the house distinctly different proportions from other Colonial houses in the district, and indeed, the town. It is notable that the stylistic innovation in the house of East Freetown's leading family does not appear to have been replicated. The tall 12/12 windows of the first floor has slightly splayed lintels. After a fire the house was remodeled in the Queen Anne style with new windows twin gabled dormers, porches and a tower, hiding its Colonial lines. Its narrow, simple trabeated door surround may remain.

Most of the houses are very similar, built on the Cape Cod Cottage model of 1 1/2 stories, with five bays and a central entry and chimney. Eaves are kept tight to the house and cornice returns

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do not appear until after 1800, when they are generally very small. Roof height is relatively low and there is minimal decoration. Probably the earliest house in the district, the William Sr. Rousevell House, 16 Washburn Road (c. 1735-1739, Map # 22, MHC # C-115) is the only one built as a house at three bays long.

Both the Ashley House, 11 Gurney Road (c. 1747, Map # 48); and the Philip I./R. C. Rounsville House, 154 County Road (c. 1744-1759, Map # 1) display the locally prevalent side gable overhang, a function of projecting the triangle formed by the side gable field as to overhang the wall surface below. This framing technique was sometimes used in Colonial domestic building, but it persisted in the immediate area of southeastern Massachusetts and is a marked feature of Georgian and Federal building in nearby Assonet.

The simple but handsome and well preserved William Rousevell Jr./Calvin Thomas. House, 32 Washburn Road (c. 1767, Map # 32, MHC # C-102) could be the prototype of the house-form which was to be continuously repeated, with slight changes to accommodate new styles, through the next one hundred years. The longevity of the Cape Cod form lay, perhaps in its economical construction, easily passed on to younger builders, weather tight design, and iconic image of home.

The best example of Federal style building in the district is the Dr. James Ashley House, 9 East Howland Road (c. 1803, Map # 38, MHC # C-100). It is not much different from the earlier Cape Cod Cottages but it has small eaves returns, tiny crown mold lintels and a simple, high entablature. The Italianate door itself was a mid-19th century addition: its twin arched glass panels are typical of that style. Two large barns set close to the house make clear the importance of farming to its residents until well into the 20th century.

The New Bridge Over Fall Brook, Gurney Road (1822, Map # 40, MHC # C-901) is the only bridge in East Freetown remaining from the intensive town-wide building effort Freetown undertook between 1820-1824. As such, it is of much significance for the community. The dry-laid, carefully worked masonry and beautifully constructed center arch with massive, hand cut voussoirs tells a story of the skill, workmanship and mastery of structural principles available at the local level. The granite was probably locally quarried and worked. It is believed that the heavy masonry construction was required to take the loads of the of iron "pigs" carted by oxen from the docks in Assonet to supply the Providence Foundry Company's Furnace, Washburn Road (1784, Map # 27.1, MHC # C116). Thus the bridge is a critical visual link in understanding the industrial development of the Furnace district, the major cause of its residential and institutional growth.

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No complete buildings or structures are left of the industrial complex of the Furnace Site, Washburn Road (1784, Map # 27), but what does remain on the abandoned, overgrown site, especially the Furnace (Map # 27.1 MHC # C116, photo #4), is particularly impressive, with its beauty of workmanship and sculptural shapes. While the ruins of the Furnace structure will be key in fully analyzing the development of the site, its quarried and fieldstone wall and dome formed of graduated, tapering, inward-slanting granite voussoirs is a tangible example of the high standard of the community's capacity to construct in masonry.

Of the two clearly Greek Revival houses in the district, the Benjamin Snow/Elam N. Davis House, 2 East Howland Road (c. 1851, Map # 36, MHC # C-101) is the most complete. The cottage turns its gable end to the street to reflect the shape of Greek temples admired by a new democracy seeking a uniquely American style. A cornice wraps the house to make a pediment, and a cross gable and low ell extend the narrow confines imposed by the temple form. The housewright found a unique solution to the problem of limited space. The door, squeezed into the first of three bays, uses the building's broad cornerboard as one flanking pilaster, while a narrower pilaster is placed on the other side. The cottage's low proportions and homemade solutions make it an engaging composition, but its significance lies partly in its willingness to experiment with a new form.

The original part of the Pierce/Brown/Nesbit House at 14 Washburn Road (Map # 20, MHC # C-105) could have been built in the mid-18th century, and had an addition on the west in the early 19th century. Probably about 1843 or 1844 it received a major addition in the Italianate style. The much larger addition also placed the gable end towards the street, a habit developed during the Greek Revival stylistic period, but its high proportions and bracketed roof line are hallmarks of the Italianate style and the pointed window lighting the attic refers to the Gothic Revival style. The Neo-Colonial entry protico was probably added in the 1920s when the Romantic idiom of the Italianate was out of fashion and high style Georgian and Federal architectural styles were again appropriated.

Four cottages in the district share very similar proportions and form but vary the basic design with a few stylistic details at the eaves and porch. They are the Braley/Gurney House, 17 Washburn Road (c. 1849, Map # 23, MHC # C-104), the G. S. Allen House, 173 County Road (c. 1858-1864, Map # 12, MHC # C-108), the Fisher Cleveland House, 167 County Road (c. 1872-1875, Map # 8, MHC # C-111), and the Seth Chace House, 165 County Road (c. 1873-1880, Map # 6, MHC # C-113). The economical five bay long Cape Cod cottage, the standard since the Colonial Period, was now built with higher proportions, then a center gabled dormer in the plane of the facade was pushed up to expand the interior and provide a screen on which to add stylistic embellishments. An entry porch at the center door made a transition between interior and exterior spaces and could also be used for additional decorative statements. Thus, the

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builders took an essentially conservative, traditional form, raised the ceiling height, and updated the details with the changing styles.

Probably the first of these, the Braley/Gurney House, may have served as a model. It has a simple Greek Revival door surround but combines this with a high pitched Gothic Revival dormer with decorative gable field trim. The more expansive G. S. Allen House is the most eclectic of the quartet. It has not one but two high pitched dormers and adds an eyebrow window just under the eaves to light the attic. Its one story porch across the facade is halted by a projecting bay window. A variety of window styles, Italianate round-headed, modified Palladian and paired in the bay window seem to display the extent of the builder's knowledge. In the Fisher Cleveland House the lower dormer is topped by a gabled pediment instead of the Gothic high peak used in the other three, and its striking porch just shelters the door. Its paired, chamfered pillars, small brackets and curving scrolls invoke an Italianate image. In the larger Seth Chace House, the Gothic inspired high peaked dormer and gable fields are decorated with truss work. The hip roof of the exuberant front porch across the facade is supported in six bracketed pillars. The large matching barn to the rear is significant both for its picturesque design and its association with East Freetown's agricultural history.

Several of these houses may have been designed and built by the same hand. Carpenters Benjamin Snow, Elam Nathan Davis, and Charles Bosworth, as well as Arad Leach, who worked in the Sash, Blind and Door Factory, and builder Abial S. Ashley were all living in the district. The E. N. Davis/Bosworth House, 31 Washburn Road (c. 1857, Map # 31) is believed to have been built by Davis. Now missing its lacy elaborate Gothic Revival trim at the eaves, its cross gable form is the only one in the district, after the brief Greek Revival experiment, which breaks up the traditional rectangular form.

Even the mansard roof house that Abial S. Ashley built for his family at 166 County Road (ca. 1877, Map # 7, MHC # C-112), makes use of the center dormer in the plane of the facade, and gives it an unusual balcony to emphasize its effect. The design uniquely places a gable roof on top of the mansard roof. A Queen Anne porch wrapping the house is extended with a corner turreted pavilion. This, the single mansard roof to appear on a house in the district was repeated in the Christian Congregational Church, also in association with a gable roof, as if the architects and builders of the district were not willing to completely give up the familiar pitched roof for the French import. Ashley designed and built the relatively high style, Shingle Style barn at the rear (c. 1880-1890, Map #7.1).

The Christian Congregational Church, 4 Washburn Road (1888, Map # 17, MHC # C-106) was designed by Clothier Franklin Edminister of 9 East Howland Road (Map # 38) and built by Abial S. Ashley. Edminister, a local architect, had recently graduated from the Pratt Institute in

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Brooklyn and later taught there. He also designed the Unitarian Church in Middleborough. The church is eclectic in style, grafting onto the traditional gable front facade a bell tower which is carved away at the ground floor to provide a sheltered entry porch and elaborated within the pediment with a mansard roof. The open square belfry perched on the truncated hip roof of the tower and eye-catching, tall, flared pyramidal roof provide a visual focus for the district. The Parish House addition on the former site of the carriage sheds was designed by architect I. T. Almy and erected in 1954-1955 for \$10,000. The lower ell set back on the site seems designed as a modest background to the more dramatic church structure.

Ashley probably designed as well as built the East Freetown Grange Hall, 26 Washburn Road (1916, Map # 30, MHC # C-103) in a modified Shingle style. The relatively utilitarian, blocky building is dominated by the porch across the facade with deep scalloped frieze and the four high fieldstone bases for the slender columns. Centered on its roof is a small Neo-Colonial, gabled dormer with a semicircular light. The Grange's upright symmetry, interlocking hip roofs and slim columns look forward to the Neo-Colonial style. Just recently, the community has been actively engaged in restoring the building. Their commitment and energy should go far to return it to its original design and condition.

Death Curve Bridge, County Road at Fall Brook (Map # 11, MHC # C-902) was built in 1919 to replace the ca. 1823 bridge at the site and was rebuilt with a wider roadway in 1941. The 1941 structure significantly recalled the 19th century bridge's masonry construction, wide single arch and curved crossing of the brook, but managed to provide a roadway which was safe for state road traffic.

The White Memorial Library, 5 Washburn Road (1947, Map # 18) is designed to suggest a traditional residence as much as an institution. Built as an enlarged Cape Cod Cottage, its Neo-Colonial style was part of a scaled down American idiom which gained ascendancy in the nation after World War II and continued to be the dominant style through the period of significance. The library's latch came from the 1831 Second Christian Meeting House at Mason's Corner which had preceded the present church. James White, for whom this library is named, served as the church's first deacon in 1853.

**Losses, Preservation, Conclusion**

An analysis of the East Freetown Historic District's architecture reveals several themes. The district developed strong local building traditions and held to them over long periods of time. It also quite naturally drew on local carpenters, builders, and architects for its designs. The thrifty, somewhat isolated community tended to recycle its buildings whenever possible. Another frequently employed strategy was to move buildings or building parts to new sites. Finally we have seen how the community cooperated to construct its -quasi-public buildings or institutions.

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Losses in the district which occurred after the period of significance have been few but significant. The large Queen Anne style Washburn House (c. 1850, Map # 25.1) was demolished for the construction of Route 140 about 1957. The mills on both Furnace (Map # 27) and Rounsevell/Allen (Map # 13, 14.1) sites, no longer used, fell into disrepair and were demolished between the mid-1940s and the early 1960s.

The preservation of its built heritage is something of a tradition in East Freetown. The two ells originally on the Rounsevell Tavern, 170 County Road (Map # 10) were moved and remodeled as houses beginning in 1836 with the Silas Rounseville House, 161 County Road (Map # 3), and the Walter Rounsevell House, 11 Washburn Road (Map # 19) moved in 1872. And a cabin originally on the tavern site could well form the core of the Philip Rounseville House, 154 County Road, (Map # 1).

The Horatio Braley House, 17 Washburn Road (Map # 21, MHC # C-104) built in a local amalgam of Greek and Gothic Revival styles, was remodeled in 1888-1890, had an ell added about 1900, and was restored after a long period of vacancy in 1976, removing a porch and restoring rotting floors. A carriage refinishing barn, now at 15 Washburn Road (Map # 21) on the property was turned on the lot and remodeled as a residence in 1913, reusing some of the old stone foundations and materials from the demolished blacksmith shop on the site.

Residents are still restoring their houses, as at the Seth Chace House, 165 County Road (Map # 6), where the fine facade is benefiting from the removal of an inappropriate solid porch railing. And the community has again united to restore the East Freetown Grange, 26 Washburn Road (1916, Map # 30, MHC # C-103).

Finally, there is a tradition of village residents collecting information about the history of East Freetown, much of which was left out of the local history text published in 1902. Their dedicated documentation of the community's past forms a solid basis for the preservation of its heritage.

Two important preservation challenges must soon be resolved. The New Bridge Over Fall Brook, Gurney Road (1822, Map # 40, MHC #C-901), the only remaining arched stone Federal Period bridge in East Freetown, is currently closed as unsafe for heavy loads. The Town and its residents will have to find a way to provide for safe vehicular access while preserving a structure of undoubted architectural and historic significance to the community. The privately owned Rounsevell Tavern, 170 County Road (c. 1727, Map # 10, MHC # C-110) is currently vacant, vulnerable to vandalism and fire, and badly deteriorating. A key building in its development, it is also a visual focus of the district. If stabilization and security are not made priorities the continued existence of this critical house is doubtful.

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Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.Section number 8 Page 16Archaeological Significance

Since overall patterns of prehistoric settlement in Freetown are poorly understood, any surviving sites in the district could be significant. Recent survey efforts during the 1980s by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Prehistoric Survey Team and other professional archaeologists have increased our overall understanding of prehistoric settlement in the Taunton River drainage, however, several parts of that area remain underreported and undocumented. In Freetown, several sites along the Taunton River have been documented through the lifetime efforts of local collector Roy Athearn and the reporting of his collection by the MHC. These sites are, however, biased by their location in a very restricted area along the eastern shore of the Taunton River. Most of the 30 prehistoric sites recorded in the Freetown area are poorly documented, especially sites in interior locales. Any prehistoric sites in the district locale have the potential to further document patterns of prehistoric settlement and subsistence in the town of Freetown. These patterns can also document the role of interior sites along tributary streams of the Taunton River with larger sites in the area of the Taunton River estuary. Prehistoric sites in the district may also contain information that helps to better understand the effects of sea level rise on site distribution and frequency through time. Interior locales including the district may contain information that helps explain the absence of sites along the main basin of the Taunton River through their submergence by rising sea levels. Interior sites may represent segments of settlement models that no longer exist along the main river drainage, especially with earlier sites.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to document the social, cultural and economic characteristics responsible for the growth of an industrial village center in a semi-rural setting in Southeastern Massachusetts. Further documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing can help document patterns of landuse or settlement which may have occurred in the district area during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Land was purchased and divided in the area by English settlers during that period, however, all early records of the proprietors have been lost. Archaeological research may be the only source of evidence for landuse during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century period. Industrial archaeological resources dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries may represent the most important archaeological resources in the district. The combination of documentary research and archaeological testing can be used to locate and date the sequence of dams constructed at both the Furnace and Rounsevell/Allen sites. Archaeological evidence may be present which documents 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century dam building technologies and the techniques through which water power was divided between various mills at each dam. Archaeological evidence may also be present which documents specific forms of water power technologies in use at each dam and how these forms changes through time. Actual power related machinery has been documented at the Rounsevell/Allen Dam site. Archaeological resources may also be present which documents the technologies in use and products manufactured at each mill in the district. Information may be present that documents patterns of reuse at each dam site and the extent to which later mills reused the facilities of

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earlier mills. Archaeological testing can be used to identify the sequence of industrial use at each dam site and the level of technology and production in use at each mill. A saw mill and grist mill were in production at each dam site well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological testing can help locate the remains of these mills and their components and information relating to the technologies in use at each mill. Information may be present that indicates how these technologies changed through time especially as competition for water resources increased and alternative forms of power developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the Furnace Dam site, archaeological research can also gather information relating to the iron industry at the site of a Blast Furnace constructed in 1784 and later rebuilt as a Cupola Furnace in 1818. Information may be present at this site relating to the technological aspects of iron smelting and the changes that occurred during the rebuilding of the furnace. Archaeological research at the site of the Sash, Blind, and Door Factory (1871) might also contain information relating to technologies in use at that mill and products that were produced. Information may be present indicating the extent to which these industries produced products for the local and regional economy or both. Archaeological and historical research might also identify a relationship in the production process between the nearby saw mill(s) and the Sash, Blind, and Door Factory. Except for iron production, industrial production at the Rounsevell Dam site also followed a pattern of a wood related industry accompanying saw mill and grist mill production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological research at the site of the Box, Board, and Shingle Mill (1858) may also produce information relating to the technologies and production process in use at that mill. This information might also indicate the extent to which that production served local or regional needs including maritime industries in the western part of Freetown. The combination of further historical research combined with archaeological testing can also contribute significant information on known and potential 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century residential and commercial structures no longer extant in the district. These structures developed in direct response to industrial growth that occurred in the village and some limited agriculture. Most contributing structures built during the district's period of significance appear to survive, however, several potential archaeological sites are known and more sites are expected. Archaeological research can help determine the sequence of construction episodes of the Rounsevell House/Tavern (ca.1727) at 170 County Road. That research may determine whether the structure that remains is part of the original house or, a rebuilt structure after portions or the entire structure were moved to other locations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological research can also be used to identify the extent of rebuilding and adaptive reuse at residential structures including the Captain Allen's Little House (ca.1844) and Horatio Braley House. Information may also be present at the Captain Allen's Little House that identifies specialized changes made to the house to house unmarried mill workers. Potential structural remains can also help reconstruct the form of residential and commercial buildings that no longer exist including the Reuel Washburn House, Webber Tavern, Company Store, and Lawrence Cooper Shop site. Detailed analysis of the contents from occupational related features can also provide significant information on the occupants and

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activities conducted at existing residential and commercial structures and those that no longer survive. Occupational related features at the Rounsevell House/Tavern may contain specialized and/or stratigraphic deposits that contrast private, domestic life at the house with its commercial use as a tavern. At the Captain Allen's Little House, similar deposits may exist that enable a detailed study of the lives of unmarried mill workers. The analysis of occupational related features at different structures in the village may also form the basis of comparison for the study of socio-economic stratification in village life through the analysis of features associated with the homes of mill owners and workers.

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Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.Section number 9 Page 1**Maps and Atlases**

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East Freetown HD  
Name of Property

Bristol, MA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** c. 94 acres

**UTM References See continuation sheet.**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	336250	4626640	3. 19	337460	4626240
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2. 19	337250	4626450	4. 19	337480	4626000
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 Heli Meltsner, Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date June 1999

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. NPS Form 10-900 OMB No.

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**UTMs (continued)**

5.	19	336800	4626070
6.	19	336840	4625810
7.	19	336280	4625860

**Boundary Description**

As shown by the dotted line on the Assessors maps 227, revised January 1, 1997, and 228, revised January 1, 1996.

**Boundary Justification**

The East Freetown Historic District focuses on the most densely settled area of the original "Mile Square" purchase and the approximate area of the village as shown on the map of 1871. It includes properties along the Contact and Colonial period regional routes of East Howland – Washburn – County Roads, with the extensions as Gurney (Chace) Road and County Road north from Washburn Road, as well as the industrial sites off the roads along Fall Brook.

On the west the district includes the Colonial Period Proprietor's Way, now Gurney Road, the ca. 1870 Gurney saw mill which continues an historic East Freetown land use, and ca. 1747 house at 11 Gurney Road with a family cemetery at the rear, (now on an adjoining lot). Gurney Road is also the site of an 1822 bridge and the Mile Square marker which fixed the bounds of the original division of the 1678 Pocasset Purchase. East Howland Road was the original route to Assonet, and two of the houses on it are shown on the map of 1871, the other was moved there within the period of significance.

On the north the district includes the buildings on both sides of Washburn Road. The industrial sites just off it were at the economic heart of the district and the houses, church and Grange building along it represent the development of the community over its period of significance. One contemporary house sited well back from Washburn Road has been excluded, although the portion fronting the road is retained.

The district extends on the west to include the resources on both sides of County Road from its intersection with Mason Road and the Silas Rounsevell house at 161 County Road, (probably moved from the site of the P. Rounsevell house and tavern at 170 County Road about 1836) to those resources on the northern end indicated on the map of 1871. The non-contributing properties on the west side of County Road just north of its intersection with Mason Road were excluded. The district does not include properties along the Chace Road extension connecting Gurney Road to County Road as it was begun in March, 1957, after the period of significance.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetEast Freetown HD  
Freetown (Bristol Co.), Mass.Section number  $\frac{10}{\text{photos}}$  Page 2

The old East Freetown Freight House now on County Road was considered for inclusion in the district. However, as its significance would be derived from its relation to rail transportation, and it has been removed from its original track-side location, it was not eligible. While the contemporary sash and door factory adjacent to it is an historic land use in the district, the factory buildings were constructed after the period of significance, and were therefore not eligible as a property anchoring a boundary.

The boundaries generally follow lot lines. In a few instances the boundary cuts across a lot where the remainder of the lot is vacant or the resource would not significantly add to the district.

(end)

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Heli Meltsner Date: May 7, 1998  
Negatives: at Massachusetts Historical Commission

1. Rounsevell Tavern, 170 County Road, map #10 looking north
2. Silas Rounsevell House, 161 County Road, map #3 looking southwest
3. Rounsevell/Calvin Thomas House, 32 Washburn Road looking northeast  
map #32
4. Furnace Site, off Washburn Road, map #27.1 looking southwest
5. New Bridge over Fall Brook, Gurney Road, map #40 looing northwest
6. Streetscape: Lawrence House, 2 Washburn Road, map #16  
Capt. Granville Allen House, 173 County Road, map #12 looking northwest
7. Horatio Braley House, 17 Washburn Road, map #23 looking southwest
8. Streetscape: Fisher Cleveland House, 167 County Road, map #8  
Seth Chace House, 165 County Road, map #6 looking east
9. Christian Congregation Church, 4 Washburn Road, map #17 looking northeast
10. East Freetown Grange, 26 Washburn Road, map #30 looking northwest

(end)

East Freetown Historic District							
Freetown, Massachusetts							
Map #	MHC #	Historic Name	Address	Date	Stat.	Style	Res. Map-BI.-Lot #
			County Road				
1		Philip I/R.C. Rounseville	154 County Road	ca. 1750-1790	C	Colonial Period	B 227 - 106
Z 1.1			garage	ca. 1960	NC		B
V-1		Hearse House Site			C		Si 277 - 105
2	827	Rounsevell Cemetery	County Road	1740	C		Si 227 - 85, 86
3	C-114	Silas Rounseville/	161 County Road	1727/1836	C	Georg. Cape (moved)	B 227 - 50
A 3.1		E. A. Braley	garage	ca. 1990s	NC	utilitarian	B
4		Snell	162 County Road	1915	C	Neo-Colonial	B 227 - 84
4.1			garage	ca. 1930s	C	utilitarian	B
5		Rounseville	164 County Road	ca. 1896-1900	C	Italitalianate Cape	B 227 - 83
5.1			well house		C	utilitarian	St
6	C - 113	Seth H. Chace House	165 County Road	ca. 1873 -1880	C	High Vict. Gothic Cape	B 227 - 51
6.1		Mrs. T. J. Harper	barn		C	Gothic Revival	B
7	C - 112	Abiel Ashley House	166 County Road	ca. 1877	C	Mansard/Queen Anne	B 227 - 82
7.1			barn/carriage house	ca. 1880-1890	C	Shingle Style	B
8	C - 111	Fisher Cleveland House	167 County Road	ca. 1872-1875	C	Italianate/Eastlake Cape	B 227 - 52
9		Grocery/Tea Room/PO	168 County Road	1877/1919/1940/1960	C	Neo-Colonial	B 227 - 81
10	C - 110	P. Rounsevell Tavern	170 County Road	ca. 1727/1870-1890	C	Queen Anne	B 227 - 80
10.1		MM.R/Lincoln Chace	retaining wall		C		St
11	C - 902	Death Curve Bridge	County Road/Fall Brook	1919/1941	C	utilitarian	St NA
			Stone Bridge site	ca. 1823			
12	C - 108	Capt. Granville Allen	173 County Road	ca. 1858-1864	C	Ital./Gothic Rev. Cape	B 227 - 63

Map #	MHC #	Historic Name	Address	Date	Status	Style	Res.	Map-BI-Lot #
			<b>County Road</b>					
13		Rounsevell/Allen Mills Site/	County Road	1727-1770/1850	C	utilitarian	Si	227 - 79
13.1		Allen Saw/Box Brd./Garage/		ca. 1735?-1780/1920s	C		Si	
13.2		Dam/ shaft & gearing	County Road	ca. 1700s/1850s/1900s	C	utilitarian	St	227 - 79/78
B 14			174 County Road	1955	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 78
14.1		Rounsevell/Allen Grist Mill Si.	County Road	ca. 1727-1735	C	utilitarian	Si	227 - 78
15	C - 109	Granville Allen's Little House	176 County Road	ca. 1840-1860s/c.1888	C	utilitarian	B	227 - 77
15.1			Greenhouse	ca. 1940s	C	utilitarian	B	
			<b>East Howland Road</b>					
36	C - 101	Snow/Elam N. Davis/ Mrs. J.H. Spooner	2 East Howland Road	ca. 1851	C	Greek Revival	B	227 - 17
37		Geo. Braley/Charles Allen	8 East Howland Road	1897/1920/1950	C	Queen Anne	B	227 - 16
C 37			garage		NC	utilitarian	B	
38	C - 100	Dr. JamesAshley/Edminister	9 East Howland Road	ca. 1803	C	Federal Cape	B	227 - 14
38.1			barn	ca. 1900	C		B	
38.2			barn	ca. 1940	C		B	
			<b>Gurney Road</b>					
49		Charl. Gurney Saw Mill	8 Gurney Rd. Office/stable	ca. 1870/ 1946	C	utilitarian	B	227 - 40
49.1			solder shed	ca. 1930's	C	utilitarian	B	
49.2			saw mill	ca. 1947/1960s	C	utilitarian	B	
W 49.3			new mill	ca. 1984	NC		B	
X 49.4			planner mill	1976	NC	utilitarian	B	
Y 49.5			pole barn	1971	NC	utilitarian	B	
48		Ashley House	11 Gurney Road	ca. 1747	C	contemp/Georgian	B	227 - 8
U 48.1			garage	ca 1950s	NC	utilitarian	B	
T 47			13 Gurney Road	1966	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 9
47.1	826		James E. Ashley Cem.	1856-1909	C		Si	extnds to 228

Map #	MHC #	Historic Name	Address	Date	Status	Style	Res.	Map-BI-Lot #
			<b>Gurney Road</b>					
S 46			14 Gurney Road	1953	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 38, 39
R 45			16 Gurney Road	1952	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 37
44			18 Gurney Road	1948	C	Neo-Colonial Cape	B	227 - 36
44.1			garage	ca. 1948	C	utilitarian	B	
44.2	C - 118		Mile Sq. Boundary Marker	ca. 1727	C		O	
P 43			20 - 22 Gurney Road	1950	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 35
Q 43.1			garage	ca. 1970s	NC	utilitarian	B	
42			24 Gurney Road	ca. 1940	C	contemporary	B	227 - 34
42.1		Garage	26 Gurney Road	ca. 1940s	C	Neo-Colonial	B	227 - 34
M 41			30 Gurney Road	1990	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 33
			playhouse	1990				
40	C - 901	New Bridge over Fall Brook	Gurney Road/Fall Brook	1822	C	utilitarian	St	NA
K 39			34 Gurney Road	1964	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 32
L 39.1			barn	1980s	NC	utilitarian	B	
			<b>Washburn Road</b>					
16	C- 107	David Lawrence House	2 Washburn Road	1844/1860	C	Greek Revival	B	227 - 62
17	C - 106	Christian Cong. Church	4 Washburn Road	1888/1954	C	Queen Anne/Stick	B	227 - 62
17.1			stone wall	ca. 1888	C		St	
18		J. White Mem. Library	5 Washburn Road	1947	C	Neo-Colonial	B	227 - 54
18.1		Native Amer. camp site			C		Si	
18.2		Lawrence cooper shop site		ca. 1860	C		Si	
18.3		dam		ca. 1700s	C		St	227 54-52
		Right of Way	8 Washburn Road					227 - 61

Map #	MHC #	Historic Name	Address	Date	Status	Style	Res.	Map-BI.-Lot #
			<b>Washburn Road</b>					
19	C - 117	Walter/Philip Rounsevell	11 Washburn Road	ca. 1740-1770/1872	C		B	227 - 55
						utilitarian		
20	C - 105	Peirce/Brown/Nesbit	14 Washburn Road	ca.1800-1820/1843	C	Georgian/Italianate	B	227 - 60
V - 2		Former site 8 Howland Rd.		1897-1920	C		Si	227 - 56
21		Braley/Gurney House	15 Washburn Road	1850/1913	C	Craftsman	B	227 - 57
21.1			garage	ca. 1930	C	utilitarian	B	
D 21.2			barn	1995	NC	utilitarian	B	
			blacksmith shop site	ca. 1840-1913	C		Si	
V - 6								227 - 53
22	C - 115	Will. Sr, Levi/Rounsevell Peirce/Washburn	16 Washburn Road	ca. 1735- 1739	C	Georgian	B	227 - 59
23	C - 104	Horatio Braley House	17 Washburn Road	1849	C	Greek Rev./Queen Anne	B	227 - 58
E 24			Route 140	1957-1961	NC	utilitarian	St	
F 25			20 Washburn Road	ca. 1960	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 24
25.1		Reuel Washburn House Site		ca. 1851-1957	C		Si	
25.2			wall	ca. 1930	C		St	
G 26			21 Washburn Road	ca. 1970s	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 25
26.1		Furnace/Washburn Store Site		ca. 1784-1949-1950	C		Si	
			wall	ca. 1784	C		St	
27		Furnace dam	Washburn Road	ca. 1727/1960	C		St	227 - 26
27.1	C - 116	blast/cupola furnace site		1784/1818-1855	C		Si	
27.2		saw mill site		ca. 1727	C		Si	
27.3		saw mill across brook		1800s	C		Si	
27.4		sash factory site		ca. 1850s	C		Si	
27.5		Cross Lot Road		ca. 1784	C		St	
27.6		grist mill site		ca. 1727	C		Si	
N 27.7		pump house		ca. 1950s	NC		St	

Map #	MHC #	Historic Name	Address	Date	Status	Style	Res.	Map-BI.-Lot #
			<b>Washburn Road</b>					
H 28			22 Washburn Road	1954	NC	Contemporary	B	227 - 23
I 28.1			garage	1954	NC	utilitarian	B	
29			24 Washburn Road	1929	C	Craftsman	B	227 - 22
30	C - 103	East Freetown Grange	26 Washburn Road	1916	C	Colonial Rev./Shingle	B	227 - 21
30.1		Webber Tavern Site		ca. 1825-1872	C		Si	
V - 3			wall	ca. 1930s	C		St	227 - 20
V - 4			mill pond shore					227 - 27
31		E. N. Davis/Ben Snow/	31 Washburn Road	ca. 1857	C	Gothic Revival	B	227 - 28
31.1		Charles G. Bosworth	boat house	ca. 1930	C	utilitarian	B	
32	C - 102	W. Rounsevell Jr./Ashley	32 Washburn Road	ca. 1767	C	Georgian Cape	B	227 - 19
32.1		Hathaway/Calvin Thomas	stone wall		C		St	
J 33			35 Washburn Road	1963	NC	contemporary	B	227 - 29
33.1			granite fence posts		C		O	
V - 5			field					227 - 30
34		Durfee/Snow/Leach House	36 Washburn Road	ca. 1776?1840/1867	C	Greek Revival Cape	B	227 - 18
34.1			garage	ca. 1930	C	utilitarian	B	
34.2			barn	ca. 1940	C	utilitarian	B	
35			37 Washburn Road	ca. 1935	C	Craftsman	B	227 - 31
35.1			garage	ca.1935	C	utilitarian	B	

		<b>Total Resources: 104</b>						
		Contributing Buildings 47	Noncontributing Buildings	22				
		Contributing Structures 13	Noncontributing Structures	2				
		Contributing Sites 18						
		Contributing Objects 2						
		<b>Total 80</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>				
		<b>Key</b>						
		C = Contributing resource						
		NC = Noncontributing Resource						
		B = Building						
		St = Structure						
		Si = Site						
		O = Object						

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY East Freetown Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Bristol

DATE RECEIVED: 8/06/99 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/20/99  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 99001115

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 9/9/99 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

ENTERED SEP 9 1999

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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



PHOTO # 1

ROUNSEVELL TAVERN

170 COUNTY ROAD, FREETOWN

MAP # 10

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

BRISTOL CO., MA



PHOTO #2

SILAS ROUNSEVELL HOUSE

161 COUNTR ROAD, FREETOWN

MAP #4

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

BRISTOL CO. MA



PHOTO # 3

ROUNSEVELL / CALVIN THOMAS HOUSE  
32 WASHBURN ROAD, FREETOWN

MAP # 32

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

BRISTOL CO, MA



PHOTO # 4

FURNACE SITE

OFF WASHBURN ROAD, FREETOWN

MAP # 27.1

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

BRISTOL CO., MA.



PHOTO # 5

NEW BRIDGE OVER FALL BROOK

GURNEY ROAD, FREETOWN

MAP # 40

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

BRISOL CO. MA



PHOTO # 6

STREETSCAPE : COUNTY ROAD

LAWRENCE HOUSE, 2 WASHBURN ROAD, MAP # 16

CAPT. GRANVILLE ALLEN HOUSE, 173 COUNTY ROAD, MAP # 12

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT,  
BRISTOL CO., MA

FREETOWN



PHOTO # 7

HORATIO BRALEY HOUSE

17 WASHBURN ROAD

MAP # 23

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT,

FREETOWN

BRISTOL CO., MA



PHOTO #8

STREETSCAPE : COUNTY ROAD

FISHER CLEVELAND HOUSE, 167 COUNTY ROAD, MAP # 8

SETH CHACE HOUSE, 165 COUNTY ROAD, MAP # 6

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT,

FREETOWN

BRISTOL CO., MA



PHOTO # 9

CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

4 WASHBURN ROAD

MAP # 17

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT, FREETOWN

BRISTOL CO., MA



PHOTO # 10

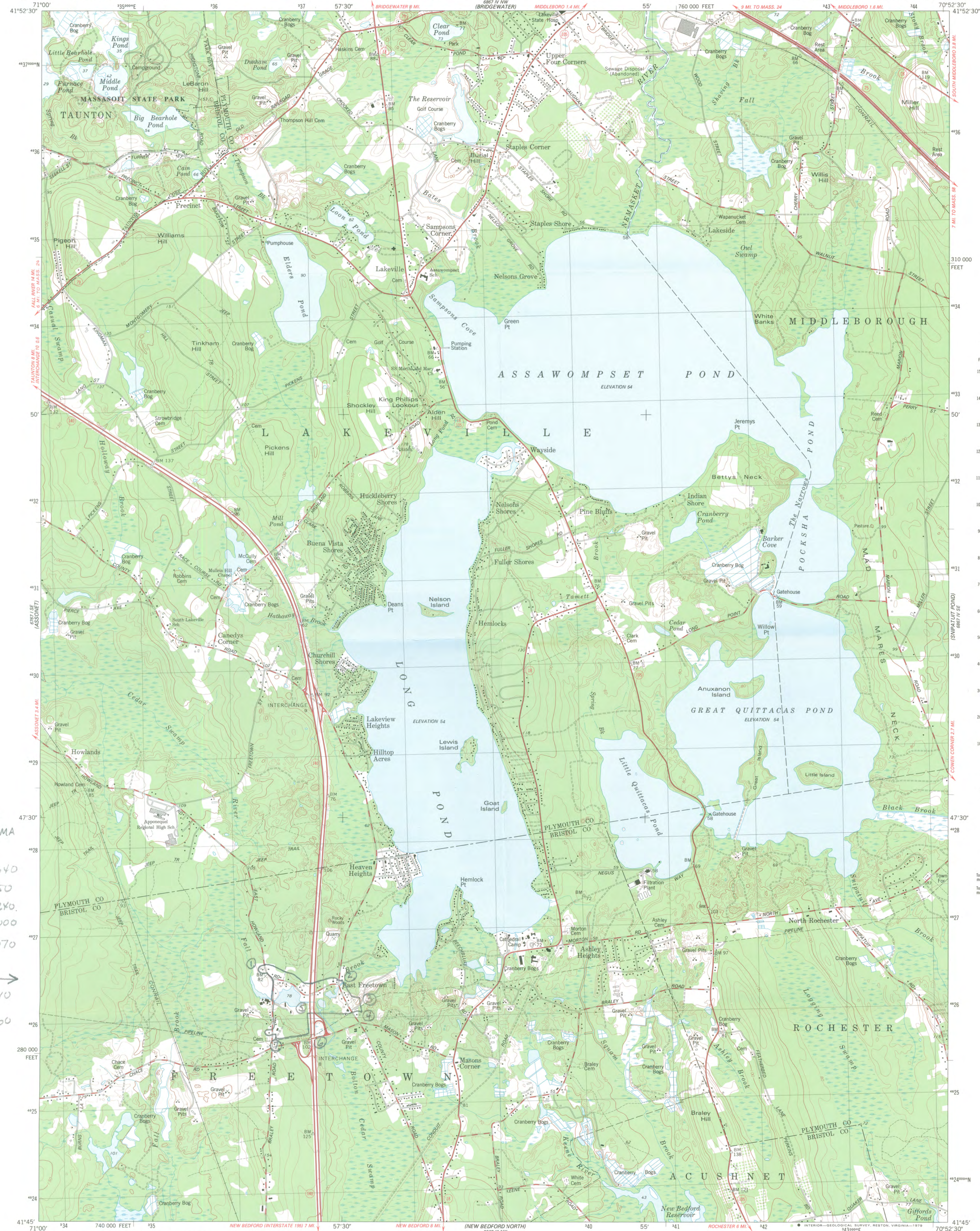
EAST FREETOWN GRANGE

26 WASHBURN ROAD

MAP # 30

EAST FREETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT,

FREETOWN, BRISTOL CO, MA

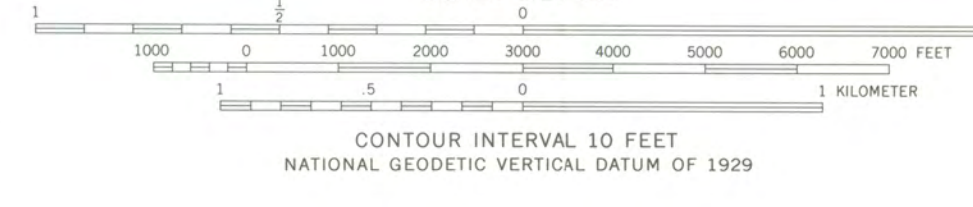
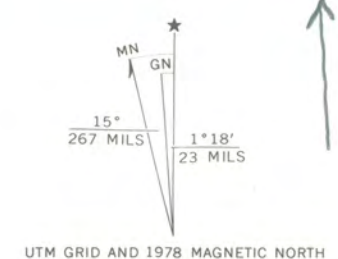


Feet	Meters
1	0.3048
2	0.6096
3	0.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

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

- EAST FREETOWN HD  
FREETOWN (8/21/10) MA  
ZONE 19
- 1) 336250 / 4626640
  - 2) 337250 / 4626450
  - 3) 337460 / 4626240
  - 4) 337480 / 4626000
  - 5) 336800 / 4626070
- 
- 6) 336840 / 4625810
  - 7) 336280 / 4625860

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
Topography by planimetric surveys 1937. Revised from aerial  
photographs taken 1974. Field checked 1975. Map edited 1978  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface ——— Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ———

Secondary highway, hard surface ——— Unimproved road ———

○ Interstate Route    □ U. S. Route    ○ State Route



ASSAWOMPSET POND, MASS.  
N4145—W7052.5/7.5  
1978  
AMS 6867 IV SW—SERIES V814

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

EAST FREETOWN NR HISTORIC DISTRICT  
FREETOWN, BRISTOL CO., MA



THIS MAP IS FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES. IT IS NOT VALID FOR LEGAL DESCRIPTION OR CONVEYANCE.

THE HORIZONTAL DATUM IS THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM.

PHOTOGRAPHY DATE: APRIL 9, 1994

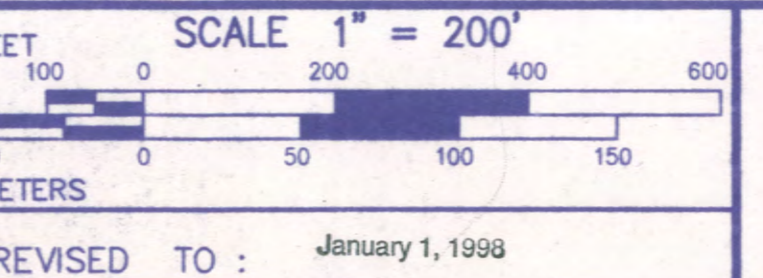
COMPLETION DATE: MAY 1, 1995

PRODUCED IN 1995 BY  
**CARTOGRAPHIC ASSOC. INC.**  
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 MUNICIPAL MAPPING - GIS - LAND SURVEYING - PROPERTY APPRAISAL  
 11 PLEASANT STREET, P.O. BOX 267, LITTLETON, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03561  
 (603)444-8768 - 1(800)322-4540 - FAX (603)444-1366

**LEGEND**

AREA SURVEYED ..... Ac  
 AREA CALCULATED ..... Ac  
 RECORD DIMENSION ..... 100'  
 SCALED DIMENSION ..... 100'S  
 MATCH LINE ..... M.L.  
 WATER ..... W

EXEMPT PROPERTY, SUBDIVISION LOT NO., BUILDING, RIGHT OF WAY, COMMON OWNERSHIP, WETLANDS.



PROPERTY MAPS BOUNDARY =

# FREETOWN

MASSACHUSETTS

INDEX	DIAGRAM	MAP NO.
219	220	221
228	226	
241	242	243
		<b>227</b>



THIS MAP IS FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES. IT IS NOT VALID FOR LEGAL DESCRIPTION OR CONVEYANCE.

THE HORIZONTAL DATUM IS THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM.

PHOTOGRAPHY DATE: APRIL 9, 1994

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 11 PLEASANT STREET, P.O. BOX 267, LITTLETON, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03581  
 (603)444-8788 - (800)322-4340 - FAX (603)444-1368

AREA SURVEYED ..... Ac  
 AREA CALCULATED ..... AcC  
 RECORD DIMENSION ..... 100'  
 SCALED DIMENSION ..... 100'S  
 MATCH LINE ..... M.L.  
 WATER ..... W

LEGEND

EXEMPT PROPERTY ..... (E)  
 SUBDIVISION LOT NO. ..... (L)  
 BUILDING ..... (B)  
 RIGHT OF WAY ..... (R)  
 COMMON OWNERSHIP ..... (C)  
 WETLANDS ..... (W)

FEET SCALE 1" = 200'

0 100 200 400 600

METERS

0 50 100 150

REVISED TO: January 1, 1998

PROPERTY MAPS BOUNDARY =

# FREETOWN

MASSACHUSETTS

INDEX DIAGRAM

218	219	220
228	227	
240	241	242

MAP NO. **228**



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission



August 3, 1999

Ms. Carol Shull  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

East Freetown Historic District, Freetown (Bristol Co.), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the properties included in the district were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Beverly Dickinson, Chair, Freetown Historical Commission  
Heli Meltsner, Preservation Consultant  
Christopher McCarthy, Chair, Freetown Board of Selectmen  
Mary Brown, Freetown Historical Commission  
Joel Plissey, Chair, Planning Board  
Mim Gurney, Freetown Historical Commission