

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received JUN 5 1985
date entered JUL 19 1985

Continuation sheet 4

Item number 7

Page 4

NAME: Crowfield Historic District (*North Kingstown MRA*)
LOCATION: Boston Neck Road
OWNERS: Multiple; see owners list on file at Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission
CONDITION: Excellent; Altered; Original Site

DESCRIPTION:

The Crowfield Historic District encompasses a small cluster of early 20th-century shingled houses set on the gentle, wooded slope between Boston Neck Road and the Narragansett Bay shore. The houses are set well back from Boston Neck Road and are reached via dirt tracks through the woods which screen the houses from the road and from each other. The district includes four houses: Crowfield, Jamieson House, Champ de Corbeau, and Orchard House, and their dependencies all constructed as second residences between 1906 and 1924. All are 1½- to 2½-stories, wood-frame structures, covered with shingles, and built in simplified versions of the Shingle Style.

Dry-laid stone walls, some of which pre-date the houses, thread through the woods surrounding the houses. The buildings of the district have been little altered since construction.

INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES:

Contributing structures are defined as those constructed during the period of significance, 1906-1924, during which Crowfield was developed as a summer residential area for the Cope family and their associates.

BOSTON NECK ROAD

Crowfield (1906, c. 1915): A 2-story shingled house, designed by Philadelphia architect James P. Jamieson for Eliza Cope. The house is rectangular with a high gambrel roof, slightly flared at the eaves and pierced by several dormers which light the second floor. Two asymmetrically-placed brick chimneys rise above the roof. The center entrance is deeply recessed under a porch protruding from the east elevation, and is flanked on each side by three large, nearly square windows. The interior is plainly finished: ornamentation is minimal, fireplaces have no mantels, the stairway has treads but no risers, and the doors are re-used and all different, perhaps coming from Pennsylvania or Europe. A lower, gambrel-roofed extension from the northwest corner houses a kitchen and was added around the time of World War I by the architect Thomas Cope, son of Eliza Cope.

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The boundary of the Crowfield Historic District has been drawn to encompass all those properties associated with the development of the district as a summer resort compound and, in addition, some land which has been associated historically with these properties. This land, still wooded as it was during the period of significance, is an important component of the setting of the district's building; its inclusion within the district documents the environmental and visual relationship of the houses to each other, to the road, and, most importantly, to the water's edge which originally prompted a summer settlement here.

All numbers refer to plats/lots: The boundary begins at the southwest corner of 42/201, proceeds north along the east side of Boston Neck Road to the northwest corner of 42/197, west along the north lines of 42/197 and 42/196 to the northeast corner of 42/196; then southeast along the east, north, and east lines of 42/196 and 42/194, then east along the north line of 42/190 to the shore of Narragansett Bay, south along the shore to the southeast corner of 42/190, then west along the south lines of 42/190, 42/187, and 42/201 to the point of beginning.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: State

Photo numbers 1-5

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Kingstown where resort development ordinarily consisted of isolated houses or was oriented to earlier seacoast villages.

Crowfield began in 1906 when Philadelphian Eliza Middleton Cope, widow of architect Walter Cope, joined her aunt Mary and uncle Owen Wister in the purchase of one hundred and twenty acres from the heirs of Oliver Greene. They named the property "Crowfield" after the estate of an English ancestor. Mrs. Cope immediately began plans for a summer house which also became known as Crowfield. The architect was James P. Jamieson, who had been the chief draftsman in Walter Cope's architectural firm and became a partner after the death of Walter Cope. Simultaneously, Jamieson began construction on his own house at Crowfield. By 1920 the house had been sold to Eliza Cope and soon thereafter became the home of her daughter Elizabeth Cope and her husband Dr. Joseph Aub, a Boston physician.

Owen Wister began construction on his house Champ de Corbeau, designed by Grant LaFarge (a friend and former neighbor in Saunderstown), in 1909-1910. It was not occupied until 1913. Wister was already an important figure in American literary life as author of The Virginian (1902), a popular Western, the stage version of which played for years, and of a non-fiction best seller about European politics at the time of World War I.

The last addition to the Crowfield Historic District was the 1924 Orchard House, built for Derrick January and Oliver Cope, son of Elizabeth Cope.

Crowfield today is little changed from the early decades of the twentieth century. Some major alterations have been made to the houses but they are for the most part well preserved. Equally important is the setting; there have been no intrusions constructed and the woods separating the houses from each other and the road have been preserved as have the views to the shore of the Narragansett Bay which originally attracted the Cope family. Crowfield remains a peaceful, scenic summer retreat.

ACREAGE: c. 56.3 acres
QUAD NAME: Wickford, R.I.
UTM REFERENCES:

A	19	298280	4600930	B	19	298250	4600680
C	19	297400	4600270	D	19	297230	4600500

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Boston Neck Road (cont)

Jamieson House (1906): Built simultaneously to Crowfield and designed by the same architect--here building for his own family--Jamieson House is smaller than the Copes' house. One-and-a-half stories, it is complexly-massed: a small, gambrel-roof section is nearest the bay and stands almost independent of the flank-gable roofed mass behind it. At a right angle to the latter is an ell covered by another gambrel roof. Dormers, chimneys, a variety of door and window shapes, and a mixture of shingle and clapboard covering, add further variety to the building's composition. Several simple, shingled outbuildings are located on the property.

1600 Champ de Corbeau (1905-1910): A large, 2½-story shingled house, designed by New York (and Saunderstown) architect Grant Lafarge for his friend Owen Wister. Set under a wide gambrel roof, the house is rectangular in mass and covered in shingles; a large wing projects from the northwest corner. The house has an asymmetrical facade on its (west) entrance side, with the entry set under a flat-roofed porch with Tuscan columns. The more formal eastern elevation faces the bay, with its center Colonial Revival entrance, projecting first floor bays, and symmetrically arranged windows and dormers.

A small caretaker's house, constructed with the main house and designed by the same architect, is set to the west of Champ de Corbeau. It is a one-and-one half-story, shingled building with a gambrel roof echoing that of the larger house. A recessed veranda runs along the east side.

Orchard House (1924; 1950s): The smallest of the summer houses in Crowfield Historic District, Orchard House was built originally for Oliver Cope and Derrick January. Two stories high, it has the shingled walls and gambrel roof which are characteristic of the district. The entrance is recessed under a southeast corner porch with a low pyramidal roof. A 1-story gable-roofed addition (from the 1950s) is attached to the house by a covered walkway.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1900-


AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Literature, Other; Recreation

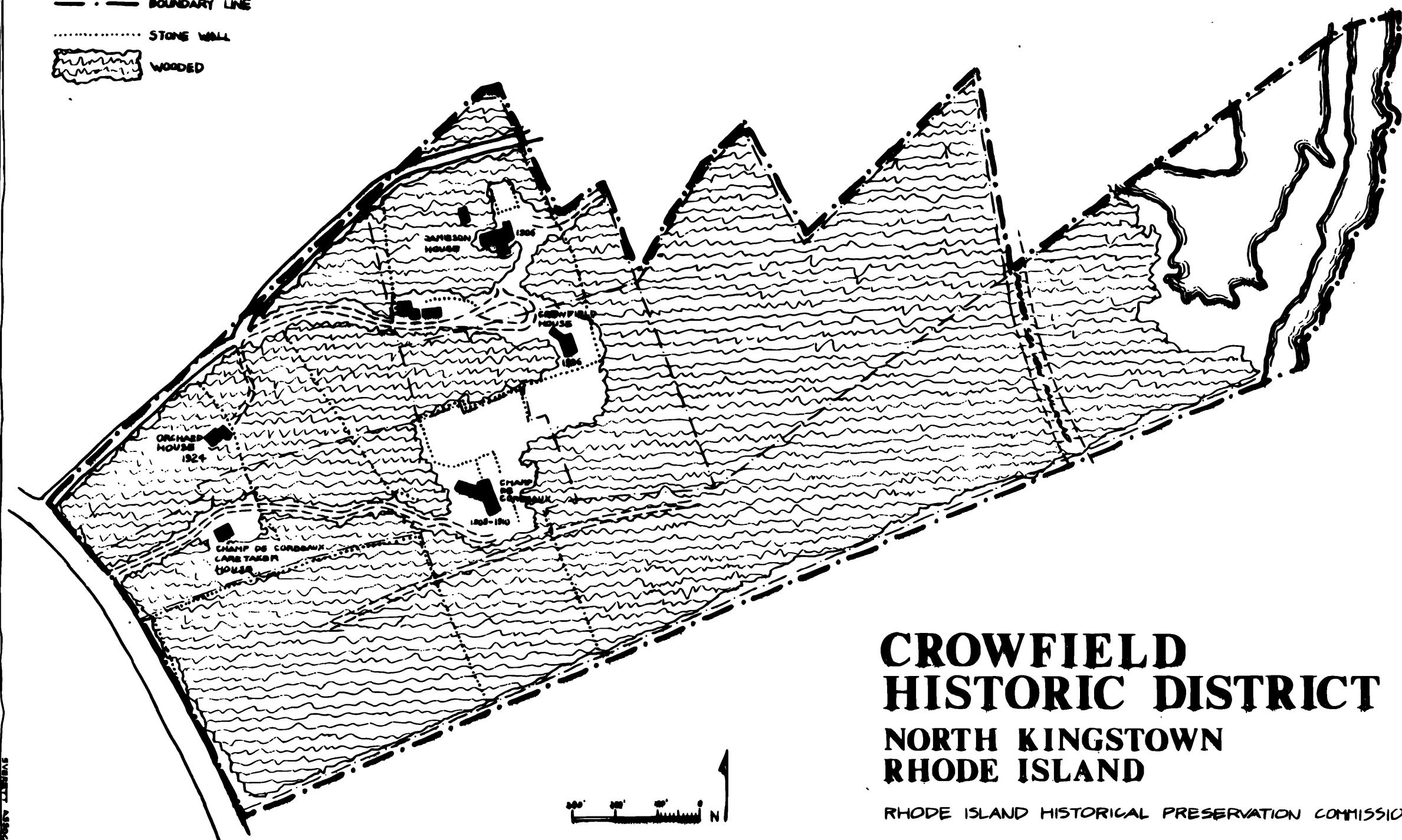
SPECIFIC DATES: 1906, 1909-1910, 1924

BUILDER/ARCHITECT: See inventory entries

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Crowfield Historic District is significant as a well-preserved early twentieth-century summer resort compound built for members and friends of an extended family and for its association with Owen Wister, author of the first popular western novel. The district is unusual in North

- · — BOUNDARY LINE
- STONE WALL
-  WOODED



**CROWFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT
NORTH KINGSTOWN
RHODE ISLAND**

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

SUPPORTER LAMBERT

1981