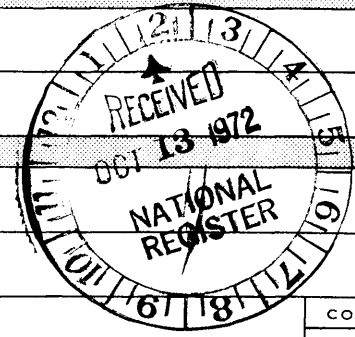


Hon. William D. Hathaway

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Piscataquis	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
APR 11 1973	



1. NAME

COMMON:
Chesuncook Village

AND/OR HISTORIC:
'Suncook

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Northwestern shore, Chesuncook Lake

CITY OR TOWN:
Township 5 Range 13 (T5 R13)

STATE: **Maine** CODE: **23** COUNTY: **Piscataquis** CODE: **021**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments Provides <u>lodging for sportsmen.</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Various owners

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Piscataquis County Registry of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

Dover-Foxcroft **Maine** **23**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	Maine
COUNTY:	Piscataquis
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FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Chesuncook Village is at the head of the lake of the same name in Piscataquis County near the mouth of the West Branch of the Penobscot River.

When Henry David Thoreau arrived at the village in the fall of 1853 he recorded that there was "quite a harbor" and settlement there. He was impressed with the lake itself though it did not reach its present size of 26,200 acres until the construction of Ripogenus Dam by the Great Northern Paper Company in 1916.

Thoreau was pleased with the spaciousness of Ansell Smith's log house which was eighty feet long. He especially liked its rough appearance. "For beauty," he insisted, "give me trees with the fur on." Smith had several other buildings, an ice house, a handsome barn and a blacksmith shop. He owned two miles of shore by half a mile back, though he had only about one hundred acres cleared in 1853. He was able to cut about seventy tons of hay on this land.

The first land was cleared on the lake in 1838; these few acres were extended in 1849. Ansell Smith hired Joshua Folsom as an accountant in 1851 to handle his own expanding activity and the affairs of the Chesuncook camp which was rapidly becoming the focal point for the loggers.

Smith over extended himself by 1859 and the Chesuncook settlement was acquired by John H. Eveleth of Greenville. He built in 1863, in partnership with two of the Folsom's, the large frame building called the Chesuncook House. Soon several other men and their families squatted on nearby state land and supported themselves by raising hay, oats, and potatoes for the lumbermen.

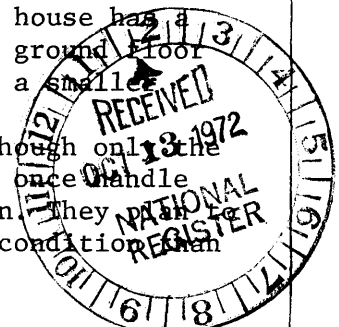
Farrar described the village as "dreary" in 1889. There were sixty-five residents in 1900; twenty years later there were two hundred and forty-seven. In 1971, what was once a "collection of rickety sheds" was made a plantation of the state though only twelve years later, when the population had dropped to below seventy, it was disorganized. By 1950 there were only sixteen people left, and today there are only two year-round residents.

The village is far from being a ghost town, however. Mr. and Mrs. Burt McBurnie own and manage the Chesuncook House as a hotel for sportsmen. All of the house of the village are privately owned and are generally in good condition. In the summer the village has many people.

The so called "Main Street" (Photo #1) is typical of the two other "streets" of the village. On it is the Chesuncook House (Photo #2), the most notable building in the village. The house is constructed of hand-hewn timbers. It is a two and one half story frame structure, the front part of which is 40'6" x 30'6". The dimensions of the southwestern extension are 40' x 40'. Much of this is taken up by the kitchen which is 20' x 20'. The front and the southwestern side of the main house has a large porch. Once open, it is now two-thirds enclosed. The ground floor has a parlour, once called the lobby, a large dining room, a small dining room, and a small study-workroom.

On the second and third floors are ten guest rooms though only the second floor is currently used. The Chesuncook House could once handle forty guests; today the McBurnies take a maximum of fifteen. They plan to renovate the top floor which, not being used, is in worse condition than the rest of the house.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Number all entries)

#7b

The Chesuncook House is a pale yellow, clapboarded building; originally it was painted white. It is now used only between May and November because it is not insulated. At one time the hotel continuously employed two men to provide fire wood. The floors are all of pine planking. The first floor walls are covered with an embossed tin plating; the others are wall-papered. The main part of the house has a deep cellar with stone foundation. It has an inside toilet and bathroom. Running water is provided by a nearby pond. The house also has a generating plant for electric lights.

Behind the Chesuncook House and perpendicular to it is a large roughly hewn barn which was probably built around the same date. It is 51' x 60' and was originally constructed without nails. The beams are massive and run the full length of the barn. At two and one half stories, it is in incredibly fine condition. It was once used to house about thirty horses. (Photo #3)

The first building (Photo #4) down the lane (Main Street) from the Chesuncook House is owned by a sportsmen's club of New Bedford, Massachusetts. It is a one and a half story clapboarded building with two gables overlooking the lake. It is 35'6" wide and 17'6" long. There are several attached sheds on the side and back of the building.

Beside it is another one and a half story building (Photo #5) with a single gable. It is 32'2" wide and 26'2" long. It is fronted by a glassed in porch which extends along the southwestern side of the house. The first story is shingled, while the second is clapboarded. The first floor interior walls are wainscotted. The building is in good condition though the foundation beams need work or replacement.

The next house (Photo #6) is 42'7" wide and 16'4" long. It is one and a half stories. The first is shingled, and the second clapboarded. It has two gables. The building is fronted by a glass enclosed porch. There is an addition and a shed on the building running from the back towards the northwest.

The last house (Photo #7) is a rambling structure the main part of which is 24' wide and 28' long. It is one and a half stories and has five gables. The building is shingled with the exception of the front gables which are clapboarded. It is fronted by a porch with badly deteriorated floor boards. The back of the house has a two story addition. This building was probably the village post office and store.

At the end of the lane is "Graveyard Point" which is presently occupied by buildings (Photo #8) owned by the Great Northern Paper Company. There were used until 1971 in connection with the West Branch log drive. There are five large buildings and several smaller on the site. All are in good condition. Two are of the same size--16'9" x 31'5"--and were used as bunk houses. Another building was used for the same purpose and is 26'4" x 34'4". It has two small windows and a door on each end; each side has four windows. It has siding made of simulated brick tar.

Between the Chesuncook House and the first house on "Main Street" the lane branches off and runs up the field behind the houses. On this hill overlooking the village is the church/school house (Photo #9) which was built by the Great Northern Paper Company. Though the windows are now boarded up, the school house was once the social center of the community.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maine	
COUNTY	
Piscataquis	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
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	APR 11 1970

(Number all entries)

#7c

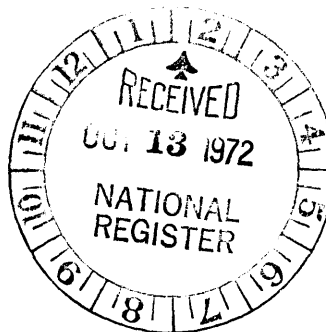
During the week Mrs. Oscar Gagnon taught the children in the building and on Saturday night the desks were cleared away for a fish supper and social. On Sundays the villagers worshiped with or without a clergyman.

Further up the hill beyond the school house and in the midst of a heavily wooded area is the village cemetery. It was moved here from "Graveyard Point" when the water level of the lake was raised by Ripogenus Dam. The earliest grave dates from the 1850's and several plots are still reserved. Particularly notable is a row of graves marked unknown. These are the resting places of rivermen drowned on the West Branch drive.

DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDARY OF CHESUNCOOK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Beginning at a point which at the intersection 46°02'59" North Latitude and 69°24'05" West Longitude which point is approximately 1,010 feet above sea level; thence at right angles in a Northwesterly direction 7,500'+ to a point at the intersection of 46°03'50" North Latitude and 69°25'29" West Longitude; thence at right angles in a Northeasterly direction 3,250' to a point in Chesuncook Lake, which point is the intersection of 46°04'13" North Latitude and 69°25'00" West Longitude; thence in a South-easterly direction 7,500' to a point in Chesuncook Lake, which point is the intersection of 46°03'23" North Latitude and 69°23'36" West Longitude; thence in a Southwesterly direction 3,250'+ to the point of beginning.

Said above described area encompasses a total of 560 acres±.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **Since 1849**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

_____ 1972 _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Chesuncook Village is the outstanding example of its type: the Maine woods frontier settlement which attracted people to serve the lumbering industry and then dwindled away when lumbering techniques changed. The village predated the heavy logging, which began in the area around 1856, by only a few years. Originally it was a camping ground for the Abnaki Indians on their way to Mt. Kineo on Moosehead Lake for flint.

It was lumbering and the "hell roaring days" that made the village a viable proposition. Like Chamberlain Farm, the prospects of Chesuncook Village were immeasurably improved by the Chesuncook dam which had been built in the 1840's at the head of Ripogenus Lake. The dam raised the water level and made log driving on the West Branch, which enters the lake just above the village, a paying business.

In the nineteenth century Chesuncook was a wilderness outpost. It was sixty miles to the nearest sign of civilization--either Tom Fowler's on Millinocket Stream or the town of Greenville. The village stood at the end of two supply routes from Bangor. One extended to the settlement via Greenville and Northeast Carry; the other via Katahdin Iron Works and the Grant Farm. As one old lumberer put it: "'Suncook represented the outside world to us; buried, as we were in the bush for five and six months at a time."

All types of people found their way to Chesuncook. There were roaming Indians and sight-seeing "dudes". Theodore Winthrop stumbled across an ex-bartender from New York who had been "promoted into a frontiersman, but was mindful still of fleshpots." The man cooked doughnuts for ravenous woodsmen and Winthrop grudgingly admitted that they were not at all bad.

For a long time the residents thought that the village would become a city but the 20th century killed all hope of that. With the construction of paper mills at Millinocket and East Millinocket the nature of lumbering in Maine's north woods began to slowly change. The drive on the West Branch and the lake continued for a time to provide the villagers with some income which they supplemented by fur trapping. The construction of Ripogenus Dam and its supply road to Greenville provided the little village with improved access to the rest of the state. It is now only eighteen miles down the rough waters of Chesuncook to the first signs of the outside world. With the road came new educational opportunities for Chesuncook children. After completing their elementary training they finished their schooling either in Millinocket or Greenville. Most of them never returned. As Leonard Smith described it: "They're like the fish, they're gone over the dam, and there isn't any easy way to get back."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Articles: Piscataquis Observor, 2/25/32, 3/3/32, 10/6/32; Lewiston Journal, 8/3/46; Portland Sunday Telegram, 11/10/40, 7/16/72; The Northern, 8/22. Farrar, C. A. J. Down the West Branch. Boston, 1889. Hempstead, A. G. The Penobscot Boom. Orono, 1931. Thoreau, H. D. The Maine Woods. Boston, 1868. Winthrop, T. Life in the Open Air. Boston, 1863.

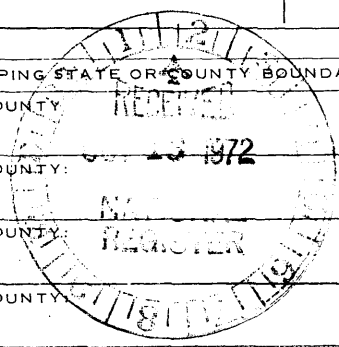
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 560

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Kenneth-M. Morrison

ORGANIZATION: Department of History DATE: August 18, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: Stevens Hall, University of Maine

CITY OR TOWN: Orono STATE: Maine CODE: 23

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: James H. Mandy

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: 10-9-72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert H. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/11/73

ATTEST: C. J. [Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 4.3.73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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STATE Maine	
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#8

The village had another function which it still serves. It was a stopping place for travelers on the Allagash-St. John river and the West and East Branch canoe trips. The Chesuncook house, presently run by Margaret and Burt McBurnie, still caters to the needs of canoeists and sportsmen. The rest of the village is owned by non-residents who visit only occasionally. One writer summed it up:

Otherwise the town has leaned for notoriety on its ability to outlast the wilderness which long since has reclaimed half a dozen other north-woods villages, or 'farms' which came into existence about the same time and under virtually the same conditons as did Chesuncook--somebody made a stake in the woods and 'sat back to wait for the new city to grow.'



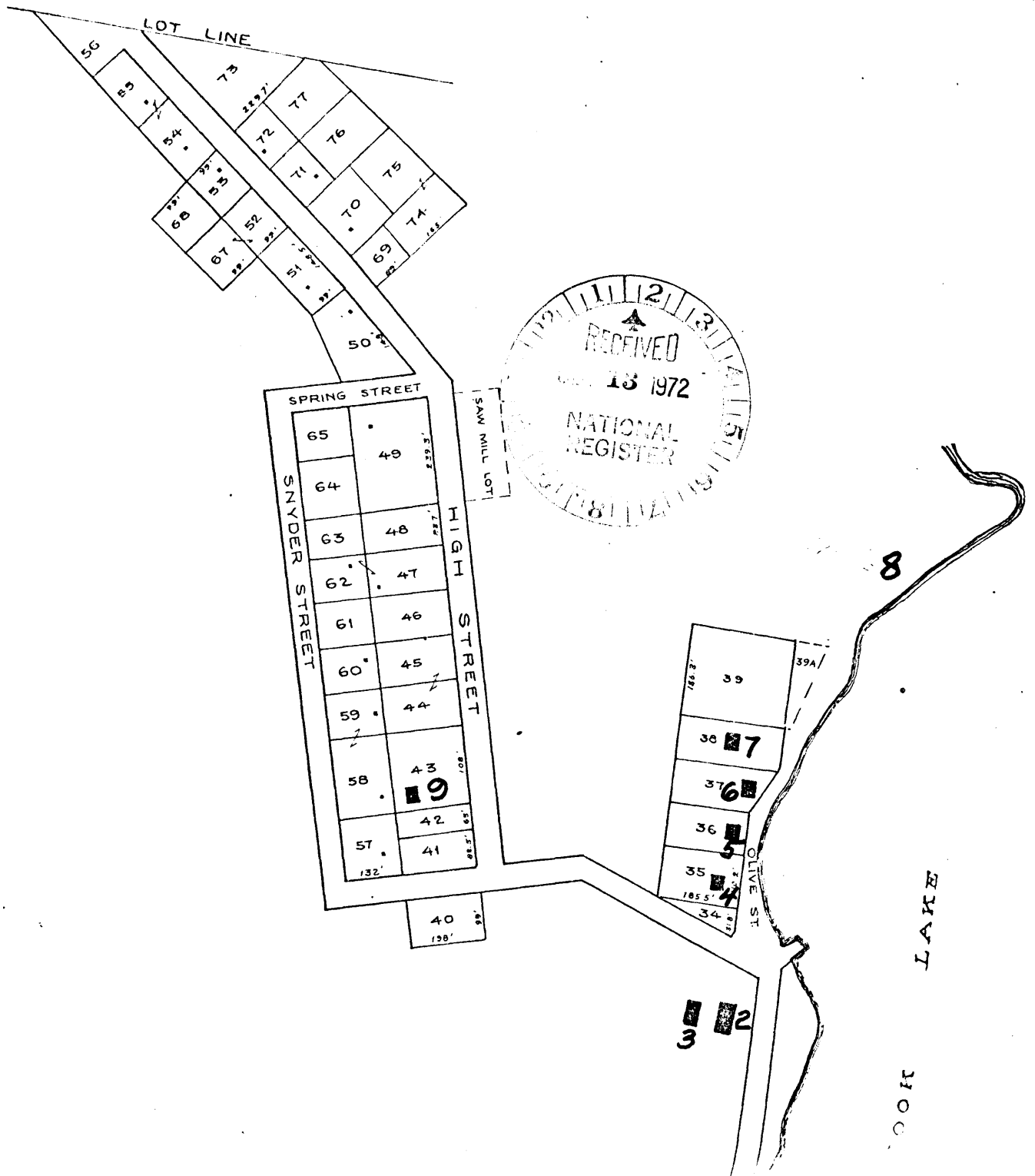


Photo numbers: