

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 Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District

other names/site number same

2. Location

street & number South Road and Church Street not for publication

city or town Aquinnah N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Dukes code 007 zip code 02535

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

1/6/99
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

Patrick Anderson

2/26/99

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District
Name of Property

Dukes, Massachusetts
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	building
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: town hall; SOCIAL: meeting hall;
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store; DOMESTIC:
camp; GOVERNMENT: post office; EDUCATION:
school; EDUCATION: library; RELIGION: religious
facility; RELIGION: church related residence

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: town hall; SOCIAL: meeting hall;
RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium;
VACANT/NOT IN USE; EDUCATION: library;
RELIGION: religious facility; RELIGION: church related
residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY; Greek Revival; LATE 19TH AND
EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:
Bungalow/Craftsman; NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE; STONE/Granite
walls WOOD/Shingle; WOOD/Weatherboard
roof ASPHALT; SYNTHETIC/Plastic
other Concrete

Narrative Description

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

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Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MASection number 7 Page 1

Description

The Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District is a roughly T-shaped area clustered around the municipal and approximate geographic center of town at South Road and Church Street. Gay Head is located at the extreme west end of the island of Martha's Vineyard and claims the distinction of being the smallest of the six towns on the island. The buildings within the district comprise a cohesive collection of public and semi-public (Parsonage) buildings and are set in a level topography with trees and shrubs. The six contributing buildings are located along South Road, including the **Gay Head Town Hall/Community Center, 128 South Road, 1929 (Map 5/169)**, the **Gay Head School/Library, South Road at Church Street, ca. 1844 (Map 5/178)**, and the former **Post Office/Residence, South Road, ca. 1920s (Map 9/89)**, and along Church Street, including the **Gay Head Community Baptist Church, Church Street, 1850 (Map 9/98, 99) and Outhouse**, and the **Minister's House/Parsonage, Church Street, 1856 (Map 9/89)**. Non-contributing resources consist of the newer Town Office Building (1989) and Fire Station (ca. 1959-60). Also included in the district are two contributing objects, **World War I Monuments, 1918 and 1919 (Map 5/169)** located in front of the Town Hall/Community Center. These buildings and monuments create a compact arrangement of the town's well-preserved civic structures and are representative of the early educational and religious efforts that took place in Gay Head beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. The buildings share similarities of massing, materials, and modest design qualities. All are one- to one-and-one half stories tall, of shingled, wood-frame construction, and possess restrained Greek Revival, Craftsman, or no architectural style reference. Although three of the buildings in the district have been moved to their present sites, these moves took place within the historic period and represent a significant event in the evolution of the town.

The **Gay Head Town Hall/Community Center, 128 South Road, 1929 (Map 5/169)**, on the north side of South Road is a one-story, five-by-three bay, rectangular, end-gable building set upon a concrete foundation and clad in wood shingles. A modest Craftsman-style building, the Town Hall/Community Center features exposed rafters, a centrally-located, end-gable entrance vestibule (south), and six-over-six double-hung sash windows (mostly replacement) with wood surrounds. The building's main entrance, now no longer in use, is centrally located on the three-bay facade (south) and features paired wood doors with lights in their upper portions set within a simple, classically-inspired wood surround. The Town Hall/Community Center and adjacent Town Office Building (1989) to the east are visually connected by walkways, a wood pergola, and ramps that run between the two buildings and to the parking lot at front. The complex is surrounded by foundation plantings with trees and a low stone wall to the rear (north) and is set back approximately 25 feet from the road, to the north of a gravel parking lot and driveway.

A one-story, gable-roof ell (original) set upon a high concrete foundation is located on the north end of the west elevation. The ell is comprised of two dressing rooms on the interior. An exterior brick chimney is located on the north roof slope of the ell. Attached to the west, is a lower, one-story, gable-

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roof ell (mid-twentieth century) also set upon a concrete foundation. On the building's north elevation (rear), stands a one-story, shed-roof ell with exposed rafters, a concrete block foundation, and a wood door with multi-lights in its upper portions. The ell is not shown on the 1928 plans of the building although it appears to have been built during the same time period to house bathrooms (Public Building Commissioners Records, Massachusetts State Archives).

A one-story, side-gable, rectangular ell (1929/1975) is located on the east side of the **Town Hall/Community Center** at its north end and currently houses the Police Station (1975). The 1929 western part of the ell stands upon a concrete foundation while the 1975 eastern portion is set on a concrete block foundation. A one-story, end-gable, two-bay projection with a pair of six-over-six windows is centrally-located on the south side of the ell. The present-day entrance into the Town Hall/Community Center is housed in the ell, in the 1929 section on the west end of the south elevation. A shed-roof door hood supported by a plain, single column marks the entrance. An interior brick chimney is located on the south roof slope of the ell.

To the east of the **Town Hall/Community Center** stand two non-contributing buildings, the Town Office Building (1989) and Fire Station (ca. 1959-60). The Town Office is a one-story, rectangular, side-gable building set upon a concrete foundation and clad in wood shingles. The building has been designed to reflect the Town Hall/Community Center through the use of similar construction materials and form. Windows on this building are single and tripled, six-over-six double-hung sash. Two entrances, both within end-gable, one-bay vestibules, are located on its west elevation. Also designed to fit in with the Town Hall/Community Center, the Fire Station is a one-story, rectangular, side-gable building set upon a concrete foundation and clad in wood shingles. An end-gable projection extends from the center of the facade and is flanked by large service doors.

There are two **Monuments** within the district, both located at the front of the **Town Hall/Community Center**, one to either side of the building's former entrance vestibule. The **West Monument** is comprised of a large stone approximately three-feet in height with a bronze plaque on the center bearing the following inscription: "Presented by/ Samuel W. McCall/ Governor of Massachusetts/ to the Town of Gay Head/ in recognition of its splendid service/ to the nation in the war for freedom, by/ furnishing to the army and navy of the/ United States, the largest number of men/ in proportion to its population of any/ town in New England." The monument was presented to the town by the Boston Post newspaper. The plaque is embellished with an eagle set within a decorative festoon in high relief at its top. The date on the bottom of the plaque reads "April 6, 1918."

The **East Monument** is similar except that its plaque is comprised of a high relief eagle set directly on top of the plaque and not integrated within the plaque itself. A banner in the upper portion of the plaque is comprised of two globes with the dates 1917 and 1919. This monument commemorates those who served in World War I from Gay Head. The inscription reads: "In honor of the/ men of Gay Head/ who

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served their country in the World War." and then lists 23 men (of whom only one was a casualty) including members of the Attaquin, Belain, Cook, Cooper, Crocker, Diamond, Haskins, Jeffers, Manning, Ryan, Smalley, and Vanderhoop families.

On the opposite side of the street, and slightly west of the **Town Hall/Community Center**, stands the former **Post Office/Residence, South Road, ca. 1920s (Map 9/89)**, a small, plain, one-story, one-by-one bay, shed-roof building set back approximately 30 feet from the road to the south of a dirt driveway. The building is a simple and unadorned structure notable for its use as the town post office in the early twentieth century. The roughly square building sits upon a wood foundation, and its roof is currently covered with a plastic sheet. The building is clad in wood shingles on its north, east, and west elevations while the rear (south) is exposed wood boards. The main entrance, comprised of a simple, vertical wood door with plain wood surround, is centrally-located on the facade (north). Windows are single, six-over-six double-hung sash with plain wood surrounds. There are no outbuildings associated with this property, which is currently unoccupied.

To the east of the Post Office/Residence, at the southwest intersection of South Road and Church Street, is the **Gay Head School/Library, South Road at Church Street, ca. 1844, moved 1878 (Map 5/178)**, a rectangular, one-story, end-gable building that rests on a granite foundation. This building was and is the only school building in the town of Gay Head and is a typical and good example of the modest, rural, one-room school of the mid-nineteenth century built across the state. Since 1975 it has housed the Gay Head Public Library. A modest Greek Revival-style structure, the building has a north facing three-bay facade and is four-bays in depth. The primary entrance, now no longer in use, is located on the north elevation within a one-story, one-bay, hip-roof vestibule that sits on a granite foundation and features vertical wood doors with iron hinges on the east and west ends accessible by concrete steps. A secondary entrance is centrally located on the south elevation of the building and is accessible by concrete steps. The building features six-over-six, double-hung-sash windows with splayed wood lintels and simple wood sills. The exterior wall fabric is wood shingle, and the roof sheathing is asphalt. One brick chimney rises from the center ridge of the roof. Other decorative features include cornice returns, cornerboards, and broad fascia boards. Landscape elements consist of a dirt drive that runs to the rear of the building and overgrown trees and shrubs to the south and west. Although there are currently no outbuildings associated with this property, the 1904 Annual Report indicates that there was an outhouse and at least one other outbuilding extant in the early twentieth century.

The interior of the **School** is comprised of one main room, one small room, and the former entrance vestibule. The small room at the south end contains a bathroom (ca. 1955) at its east end. Currently used as a media/computer room, it has shelving along the walls, wood floors, and contains two openings at either end that lead to the main room. The main room retains many original elements including blackboards which still hang on the wall, a small area of charred wood floor boards where a wood stove (ca. 1913) once sat, bull's eye molding around the doors and windows, and shelving along the east end

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which still contain the "cubbies" where children kept their belongings. A single, centrally placed wood door leads to the entrance vestibule at the north end of the building which is currently used for storage. The interior also features a dropped tile ceiling, painted wood walls, and a linoleum floor in the main room which were probably added in the mid-twentieth century.

Heading south along Church Street, on the west side of the road, stands the **Minister's House/Parsonage, Church Street, 1856, moved 1907 (Map 9/89)**, a rectangular, one-and-one-half-story, end-gable residence clad in wood shingles. The building, with its modest Greek Revival elements, is similar in size, shape, materials, and architectural details to several other buildings throughout the town built in the same period. It is in good condition and retains a high degree of architectural integrity. The primary entrance is located in the east bay of the three-bay facade (north) and includes a paneled wood door set below a four-light transom. Fenestration consists of single, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows with simple wood surrounds. The structural system of the building is timber frame, set upon a stone foundation. A single, shed-roof dormer with a three-light window is located on the east roof slope. An interior brick chimney pierces the roofline at the building's ridge, just west of the dormer. All roof surfaces are clad with asphalt shingles. Other notable architectural features include corner boards and returns. The building has been altered by a one-story, gable-roof ell with a stone foundation located on the rear (south) elevation. There are no outbuildings associated with this property which sits within a rural setting. A dirt drive leads to the house, a post-and-rail fence is located to the east, and the property is bordered by shrubs and trees.

On the east side of Church Street, set back about 25 feet from a dirt drive that parallels Church Street, stands the **Gay Head Community Baptist Church, Church Street, 1850, moved 1907 (Map 9/98, 99)**. This rectangular, one-and-one-half-story, end-gable church is notable as the only extant church building in Gay Head. It is a good example of a mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival-style building updated in the early twentieth century. The main block of the building has a symmetrical, three-bay, south-facing facade and is two-bays in depth. A tall, square entrance tower with pyramidal, hipped-roof and enclosed belfry stands on its south end. Early photographs of the building show an open belfry which appears to have been closed in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. As evidenced by a turn-of-the-century photograph of the building (Travers 1960:58), the church originally had a square belfry, embellished with pilasters and spires on the roof ridge, at the entrance end. The original belfry was blown down during a storm (Whitcomb 1953:12) and replaced in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. Subsequent changes to the belfry include the addition of louvered openings on its second story (mid-twentieth century).

The primary entrance is located on the west elevation of the belfry tower and consists of a simple, vertical wood paneled door set within a plain wood surround. Fenestration consists of single, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows set in simple wood openings. The structural system is timber frame set on a granite foundation. The exterior wall fabric is wood clapboard, and the roof sheathing is asphalt

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shingle. The building originally had an interior brick chimney at the ridge which was apparently changed to the west roof slope following the construction of the new belfry (Travers 1960:58). The building currently lacks chimneys. Other notable architectural features include cornerboards, returns, and a wide cornice. Additional alterations to the original appearance of the building include a one-story, gable-roof ell set on a stone foundation at the rear (north) elevation with a smaller, one-story, shed-roof ell set on a concrete block foundation (mid-twentieth century) on the east side of this ell.

A 1-story, shed-roof **Outhouse** (no longer in use) with vertical wood sheathing stands to the northeast of the Church and is partially obscured by overgrown trees and brush. According to a member of the congregation, the outhouse has not been used in her memory, probably due to the small congregation which only increased during the summer months. Modern plumbing facilities were just recently installed in the church in the summer of 1998 (personal communication, Gladys Widdiss).

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded within the district, sites may be present. One site is recorded in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the district represent locational criteria (slope, drainage distance to wetlands) that are favorable for many types of prehistoric sites. Most of the district is represented by a well-drained level to moderately sloping hilltop landform in close proximity (within 1000 feet) to wetlands. A small pond is located in the northwestern portion of the district immediately south of South Road. Unnamed freshwater wetlands are also present in the latter area. A small pond is also located immediately outside the southeastern district boundary. Given the above information, the size of the district (approximately 7 acres), levels of historic period landuse and available prehistoric settlement information for Martha's Vineyard, a high potential exists for the recovery of prehistoric resources in the district.

A high potential also exists for the recovery of historic archaeological resources in the district. Further documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing may identify Native American residential sites and burial grounds that could be present in the district locale. Similar research might also recover structural evidence and related features of the Old Gay Head Windmill reported on the hill at the present location of the parsonage. It has been reported that stones from the foundation of the windmill can still be found at the site. With the exception of the Post Office/residence, Town Hall/Community Center and War Memorials, all of the district's contributing structures were moved to the area from their original sites after South Road was laid out in 1870. The Gay Head School (ca. 1844), Baptist Church (1850), and Parsonage (1856) were originally located along the Old South Road corridor outside the district. The Gay Head School was moved to its present site in 1878. The Baptist Church and Parsonage were moved to their present sites in 1907. Structural remains from outbuildings

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and occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may survive with each of these structures. A 1904 Annual Report for the Gay Head School/Library indicates there was an outhouse and at least two other outbuildings extant in the vicinity of the school/library in the early 20th century. None of these outbuildings are extant today. An outhouse presently stands northeast of the Baptist Church, however, archaeological evidence of other outbuildings may also exist.

(end)

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District

Name of Property

Dukes, Massachusetts

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE; POLITICS/GOVERNMENT;

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: NATIVE AMERICAN

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

POLITICS / GOVERNMENT

RELIGION

Period of Significance

ca. 1832 - 1948

Significant Dates

ca. 1832 Baptist Church formed;

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hancock, Herbert C.; Millman, Lester J.

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Massachusetts Historical Commission

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Significance

The Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District is significant as one of the oldest and best preserved nineteenth-century settlement areas in the town of Gay Head, and as the town's center which evolved as the civic core of a small and tightly-knit community from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. The district contains municipal, educational, and religious buildings that were established by several of the founding Native American families of the community and reflects the historical progression of the town's settlement as well as the dramatic shift in residence patterns that took place during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. The district derives its architectural significance from its coherent, compact arrangement of a distinctive group of well-preserved and maintained historic buildings, including fine examples of modest and typical structures of different vintages and styles. The period of significance is ca. 1844 to 1948. The Gay Head Town Center Historic District retains integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, meeting National Register Criteria A and C at the local level. The district meets Criterion Consideration B for moved properties.

Native American and European Settlement and Organization, ca. 1641--1832

This section presents historical information that predates the period of significance of the district, but is important for a full understanding of the evolution of the Town of Gay Head/Aquinnah.

The first permanent European settlement of the island of Martha's Vineyard began about 1641, when Thomas Mayhew, Sr., an English colonist from Watertown, purchased the island along with Nantucket and the Elizabeth Islands. At this time, the island was divided into four sachemships of the Wampanoag tribe, including Chappaquiddick, Nunpaug, Takemmy, and Aquinnah. The first recorded Algonquin Indians who inhabited Gay Head gave it the name "Aquiniuh," meaning "land under the hill." The Aquinnah community occupied the far western section of the island and Massachusetts documents confirm the names of two sachems, Nohtooksaet, the earliest known sachem of Aquinnah, and his son Mittark, who became the ruling sachem of the native community and a Congregational minister (Glover and McBride 1992:31). Sometime before 1662, the area was referred to as Gay Head by the English due to its gayly colored cliffs as seen when approaching the island from the west (Attaquin 1970:11).

Mayhew made several grants to others for the purpose of establishing a town and sent his son, Thomas Jr., to establish a settlement on the eastern end of the island, excluding Gay Head. The first organized Christian church at Gay Head was of the Congregational order, which had its beginnings in this area with the conversion of Hiacomies in 1643 (Vanderhoop 1904:no page). The Mayhews began converting the Native Americans to Christianity, and by the time of Thomas Mayhew Jr.'s death in 1657, approximately 300 out of 1,500 adult Natives living on the island had been converted. Mittark himself was converted in the 1660s and ruled the Gay Head community as magistrate until his death in 1683. Although an agreement between Mittark and his chief leaders prohibited the sale of lands to non-Indians, in 1687 the

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~~lands at the far west section of Gay Head were reportedly sold to Thomas Dongon, the Governor of New York (Glover and McBride 1992:31).~~

The religious work of Mittark prospered until his death following which he was succeeded as pastor by Japheth Hannit who was preaching to 260 people in 1698 (Whitcomb 1953:8). A meeting house for this congregation had already been constructed along Old South Road (south of the district, on the south side of Old South Road, exact location not identified). How long Hannit preached is also unknown, but he died in 1712. The "Anabaptist Secession" occurred while Hannit was the regular pastor of the missionary church, and tradition holds that a Baptist congregation existed at Gay Head as early as 1693. This date constitutes the Gay Head Baptist Church as the oldest Indian Baptist Church in North America (Whitcomb 1953:5). The organization of this church has been attributed to Stephen Tackamason, its first pastor. Several credit Peter Folger with the organization of the Baptist congregation in 1693, although he had left Massachusetts for Portsmouth, Rhode Island in 1662 where he joined the First Baptist Church in Newport (Whitcomb 1953:8). Tackamason is recorded as preaching to "a church of about 30, ten men" in 1702. He died in 1708 and was succeeded by Isaac Decamy. Following Decamy was Josias Howwoswee, who preached here in 1727, "to a small society of Baptists." Following him were Ephraim Abraham, Samuel Kakenew, and in 1763, Silas Paul, who served for the next 25 years (Whitcomb 1953:9).

Whether there was any continuous Native ministry of the Congregational mission remains unknown, although missionaries from Chilmark and Tisbury visited the area (Banks vol. II, 1911:21). The congregation is later referred to as Presbyterian although no records yet located supply the story of the transition from Congregational to Presbyterian to Baptist. Stephen Tackamason appears to have been a Presbyterian who became a Baptist in 1690 (Whitcomb 1953:9).

Gay Head's first known attempt at establishing a school occurred as early as 1702 when a visitor to the area noted that there were "two schoolmasters chiefly for winter, Josias Hassawit [*sic*], the Anabaptist preacher, and Peter Chavin." Local preachers acted as teachers and used the Indian bible, primers, and catechisms as text books (Banks vol. II, 1911:25-26).

In 1711 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England acquired title of the Gay Head peninsula for the purpose of establishing a reservation for the Natives. The Gay Head peninsula formed the bulk of Dongon's "manor," and the lands were leased to the Native Americans under the stewardship of Matthew Mayhew. Gay Head was not officially included within the English township of Chilmark, which was incorporated in 1714. By 1712, there were 58 dwellings on 600 acres of land that consisted of framed houses, traditional wigwams, barns, and animal pens. Population fluctuated during this period and ranged from 112 in 1747 to 203 by 1786. A highly dispersed residence pattern continued throughout the eighteenth century, as evidenced by early maps, with residences concentrated in the western and southern part of the town (Banks vol. II, 1911:5-11) outside of the district.

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Silas Paul served as Baptist pastor until his death in 1787 after which he was succeeded in 1792 by Thomas Jeffers who was born in Plymouth and began his ministry at the age of 50 (Banks vol. II, 1911:24). The Baptists practically controlled the religious sentiment of the Natives by this time and in 1786 it was stated that the residents of Gay Head "were seldom favored with a congregational teacher" (Banks vol. II, 1911:21). The last infant baptism in the Congregational order had been in 1784 (Banks vol. II, 1911:22). The meetinghouse for the Baptist congregation was described in 1807 as "a small building, not more than twenty feet square," (Freeman 1807:93) although its exact location is unknown and it no longer survives. It may have stood along the Old South Road to the south of the district. Early preachers were largely natives who had been subject to Christian preaching throughout the Colonial period (MHC 1984:6).

Following the Revolutionary War, Gay Head was placed under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts and its residents were made wards of the state. It appears, however, that the day-to-day control over the area remained in the hands of the Natives.

By 1807 a school, held only in the winter season, was located in the basement of the small Baptist Church. During the school's early years, one of the first teachers was Ebenezer Skiff, the light keeper at **Gay Head Lighthouse (NR 1987)**, who walked a mile each day to teach. He was succeeded by Frederick Baylies, a missionary, who was also responsible for teaching the Native Americans at Nantucket, Narragansett, and Dartmouth. Baylies appears to have had no religious duties, limiting himself to education. In 1826 he reported that the Gay Head school was open for 12 weeks and was taught by two Native Americans, Mrs. Wamsley and Aaron Cooper. Mrs. Wamsley was paid by the Boston Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England while Mr. Cooper was paid by the Natives. Of the 37 members in the school, 14 could write and 10 could read in the bible (Koch 1990:149-150).

There appears to have been two extant meetinghouses during this same time since a meeting in 1811 of the proprietors of Gay Head was held at the "northern Meeting House." The Congregational meetinghouse, which by this time had been abandoned to the elements, was later dismantled and most of its timbers were reused as a dwelling. The remaining timbers from the building were given to Tristram Weeks (b. 1800), the schoolmaster, in partial payment for his services (Banks vol. II, 1911:22).

Religious Consolidation and Town Beginnings, 1832-1870

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Baptist congregation decreased and in 1830, with a congregation of only 15 members, it became affiliated with the Baptist Church at Holmes Hole (present-day Vineyard Haven). Two years later, on April 8, 1832, they were dismissed to form an independent society with Joseph Amos, a blind Marshpee Indian, as pastor (Banks vol. II, 1911:25). The first deacons were Simon Johnson and Johnson Peters, and Zacheus Howwoswee served as the parish clerk.

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Howwoswee soon became deacon and then senior deacon, serving in this position for 30 years (Burgess 1926:19). The congregation had grown to 47 members by 1838. Apparently this small congregation lacked an appropriate building for worship and met in the **School** as early as 1844 when a visitor to the town attended church services there (Koch 1990:157). This reference suggests that the present Gay Head School was constructed prior to 1844.

The first of two major shifts in settlement patterns occurred in Gay Head during this period. The new settlement was located in the south-central portion of Gay Head, focused along two primary east-west roads that existed in town by at least 1853 (Whiting 1853). These roads consisted of Old South Road, which branched off east of Black Brook and continued in a westerly direction toward the Gay Head Cliffs, and a northern route later known as the County Road from Chilmark (Banks vol. II, 1911:3). During this time, the population remained relatively consistent with approximately 235 residents who relied on cranberries, fishing, and the sale of clay as their economic base (Glover and McBride 1992:32).

Deacon Simon Johnson visited Boston in early 1850 to recommend that an appropriation be granted to construct a new church building. Governor George W. Briggs recommended to the Legislature that an appropriation be made for "erecting a decent and suitable house in which they can meet and worship God." A sum of \$600 was appropriated for this purpose and the **Gay Head Community Baptist Church** was dedicated December 10, 1850 (*Gazette* 12/6/1850). The sermon was given by Rev. Charles G. Hatch and as a token, a bound bible was presented to the church by Governor Briggs. In 1851, the Boston Society for the Propagation of the Gospel began making an annual appropriation of \$200 to the Baptist congregation. In 1856, following the death of the blind Reverend Amos, the Massachusetts Missionary Society began to supervise and give financial support to the church. The Society donated \$400 for a parsonage, hoping to attract a year-round minister (Koch 1990:157). By 1861, the church had approximately 60 members, reduced to 40 members in 1870 (Banks vol. II, 1911:25).

The **Gay Head School/Library** was also constructed during this period, about 1844, over 25 years prior to the incorporation of Gay Head as a town in 1870 (Burgess 1970:9). At this time, and until 1889, the Gay Head school system was controlled and funded by the State and governed by a state-appointed commissioner. The reports of the commissioners showed that the school had an inadequate supply of books and by 1849 was in "an unpromising and generally wretched state of affairs" (Banks vol. II, 1911:26-27). This report led to an investigation into the amount of money appropriated by the State for the school, which was found to be between \$50 and \$100 per year, accounting for the poor conditions within the school. This investigation resulted in the allowance of more state aid and gave the school opportunities to buy modern equipment, keep regular maintenance of the building, and interest teachers from other towns on the island to teach at Gay Head (Banks vol. II, 1911:27).

As early as 1857, the school was considered "quite up to date with comfortable seats and desks, a full set of Cornell's large atlases, and well-furnished with blackboards" (Anonymous 1956:125). Located north of Old South Road, just south of the present-day **Gay Head Community Baptist Church**, the school

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was apparently the second school for children in Gay Head (the first was in the basement of the previous Baptist church building) and reflects the population expansion and trends in primary education across the state in the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1862 the General Court established the reservation as the "District of Gay Head," and the legislature of 1863 passed a resolve which provided that the treasurer to the Marshpee tribe be authorized "to examine and fully and finally determine all boundary lines between the individual owners of land located in the Native District of Gay Head, in the county of Dukes County, and also to determine the boundary line between the common lands of said district and the individual owners adjoining said common lands" (Attaquin 1970:27). Although the Honorable Charles Marston was appointed to head the survey that would determine this boundary, he died before the survey was completed.

In 1866 the General Court authorized the Governor to appoint Richard L. Pease of Edgartown as commissioner of the survey. Pease completed the survey in 1871, which included a map of Gay Head lands and a complete census of the inhabitants and their occupations. The census concluded that the total population of the town consisted of 227 tribe members and 55 families, occupied as farmers, seamen, laborers, two teachers, and one mechanic (Glover and McBride 1992:38). During this period, the General Court passed two important measures: the enfranchisement of the Indians, and the final distribution of the lands of the tribe. However, because Gay Head had not been deemed a town, and was not part of any town, Natives were still not able to exercise voting rights. Therefore, the General Court of 1870 sent a committee to Gay Head to report on the Native's ability to "manage their affairs as an independent town." The committee concluded that "because they are capable of self-government, as their history since 1862 abundantly shows; because they are worthy and well qualified now as they probably ever will be under the dominion of any neighboring town ... we unanimously recommend that Gay Head be incorporated as a township by itself." Both houses concurred in the committee's recommendation and on April 15, 1870 Gay Head was incorporated as a town (Attaquin 1970:28).

New Town and Town Center, 1870-ca. 1907

The incorporation of the town in 1870 did little to change the settlement patterns of the community. Although all common lands, common fields, and all fishing and other rights were transferred to the town, it remained socially and politically under Native control. However, another event in that same year had a dramatic impact on community development: the surveying and construction, by the State, of South Road to the north of Old South Road. The road was roughly laid out along the existing road which connected the Lighthouse to Chilmark. This "new" South Road became an important area of nineteenth-century settlement. Following this improvement, many buildings, including the **Gay Head Community Baptist Church**, the **Minister's House/Parsonage** and the **Gay Head School/Library**, as well as several residences, which formerly stood within the Old South Road community in the nineteenth century, were "hauled up the hill" (Burgess 1926) to their new locations on South Road.

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The community created its first post office during the period immediately following the establishment of the town. Prior to this Gay Head had utilized the Squibnocket branch of the Chilmark post office. In 1866, the town petitioned the government to establish a post office in Gay Head following the removal of the Chilmark post office two miles further to the east (*Gay-Head Light* 4/11/1866). On February 14, 1873, Deacon Isaac Rose (b. 1811) was appointed the first postmaster for Gay Head (Attaquin 1970:43). Rose operated the post office for 11 years in his home, which stood on the north side of Old South Road opposite the Zacheus Howwoswee property to the southwest. The residence of Isaac Rose stood to the northeast of the site of the Congregational meeting house (not extant), within the earlier settlement on the north side of Old South Road (Burgess 1907:28). The house was moved, sometime after the construction of present-day South Road in 1870, to the south side of the road near the **Gay Head School/Library** (Anonymous 1956:125). This building, located to the east of the district, is currently used as a residence. Isaac's son, Alfred, was one of eight Gay Head men who fought in the Civil War and was the only casualty (Anonymous 1956:125). Since Rose did not own a horse, he had to travel on foot to Chilmark to pick up the mail for the town (Burgess 1926:28).

Following Isaac Rose's appointment as postmaster, he was succeeded by a succession of native appointees including William A. Vanderhoop (appointed December 11, 1884) and Pauline A. Vanderhoop (appointed November 14, 1893) (Banks vol. II, 1911:31). Pauline A. Vanderhoop, a grocer, ran the post office, which by this time was operating out of Linus Jeffers' house, to the north of the district (taped interview, Alfred Vanderhoop 1988). The next known postmistress was Mary A. Clegett Vanderhoop who was appointed September 13, 1907 (Boston Suburban Building Co. 1907:202-203).

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was an important period for the Gay Head community. It was during this time that land began shifting from tribal to non-tribal ownership, and by 1895, at least 18 non-tribal members owned land. By the turn-of-the-century, the population had reached 173, residents and by 1916, 43 non-tribal members owned land. The majority of these non-tribal members lived off island and therefore did not affect the non-resident population (Glover and McBride 1992:38). Furthermore, this increase in ownership of land by non-tribal members and the influx of non-Native settlers brought influences and ideas from other towns on the island as well as off island. As towns like Edgartown and Vineyard Haven were flourishing and becoming summer resorts, Gay Head also began constructing, moving, and renovating its public buildings in order to create a small town center clustered within the new settlement along South Road. Along with the shift in road patterns and settlement came the economic shift from communal land holdings and communal work patterns to individual lands and competitive work systems.

It was also during this time that town government in Gay Head was firmly established. As documented in early annual reports of Gay Head, the town had elected town officers, selectmen, and was preparing town reports on an annual basis since its incorporation (Annual Reports 1893-1900). Although a town hall had not yet been erected, the town was probably conducting meetings in the **Gay Head Community Baptist Church** and **Gay Head School/Library**. This assumption is supported by the fact that Church

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Street was originally known as "Meeting House Way," (personal communication, Alfred Vanderhoop 1998) and early meeting houses were commonly used for town meetings, as towns in Cape Cod and the Islands followed the New England pattern of using the meetinghouse, tavern, and private homes for meetings of the full town and its selectmen and committees (MHC 1987:217). A notice from 1879 located at the Dukes County Historical Society announces that voting for town government was to be held at the schoolhouse on November 4 of that year. Several other town meetings are recorded as taking place in the school house throughout the early twentieth century (*New Bedford Evening Standard* 11/23/1916).

In 1878, the **Gay Head School/Library** became the first of three buildings within the district to be moved and appears in its present location on a 1897-1898 map of the town (Hodgham 1897-1898). In 1889 state aid was withdrawn, and the town carried on financial support of the school, as evident in the increase in school term from eight to nine months as well as the school's ability to hire two teachers rather than one, and to offer scholarships (Banks vol. II, 1911:27-28).

The next building to be moved to this new area was the **Gay Head Community Baptist Church**. It was apparently just after this move that alterations to the building were made, including the construction of a new belfry and chimney. The church was moved from a site further south along Church Street near the Old South Road while the parsonage was moved from a site on the north side of Old South Road, at the southern end of what is now Church Street.

The pastors of the **Baptist Church** lived in the **Minister's House/Parsonage** that stood on a small tract known as the "Minister's Lot" just north of Old South Road (Burgess 1926). West of the former site of the building is the "Minister's Spring," also known as Laban's Spring (Burgess 1926:28). The land upon which the building originally stood had apparently been given for that purpose by Esther Howwoswee, daughter of Laban Howwoswee, its owner. In 1906, the then occupant of the house, Rev. George W. Hawkins, died. The following year, the building was moved up the hill, to a site near the **Baptist Church**, which had been occupied by the "old Gay Head Windmill" (Burgess 1926:28). It is believed that stones from the foundation of this windmill can still be found on this site (taped interview, Alfred Vanderhoop 1998).

By 1907, all three buildings had been moved to their present sites (Attaquin 1970:43) along the new South Road. At least two other buildings were also relocated from Old South Road to new sites, while others were simply abandoned and left to the elements. The reduction of the road system from numerous paths radiating out from Old South Road to one major east-west connector bisecting the town reduced the ease of physical access between neighbors and family, therefore shifting the social focus to this new town center. The **School/Library** and **Baptist Church** were used for community events and meetings in addition to their educational and ecclesiastical uses.

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Developments within this new settlement along South Road included renovations to the **Gay Head School/Library**. The Town Report for 1901 listed two pages of items including "carting lumber for the school house," "bringing things for the school house," "for freight for school house," and "for labor on the school house" totaling \$550.25. Local residents, including C.W. Vanderhoop, T.E. Manning, E.E. Mayhew, and C.B. Madison were paid from \$1.50 to \$100.00 for their labor. Cost of materials, including lumber purchased from Green and Wood for \$78.47, suggest that the town undertook major renovations of the building at this time (Annual Reports 1901:5-6). Renovations to the school were undertaken by the town again in 1904. Local resident Samuel J. Haskins was paid \$1.25 for doing work on the schoolhouse outbuildings as well as \$8.75 for building an outhouse, indicating that by this time at least three separate outbuildings stood on the property. An additional \$16.28 was spent that year on repairing the building (Annual Reports 1904: 3-5).

Consolidation of the Town Center, ca. 1907 – 1929

Following the construction of South Road and the removal of buildings to their new locations, Old South Road had become almost completely deserted. A study of Old South Road undertaken by Edward S. Burgess in 1926 indicates that the majority of nineteenth-century house lots along Old South Road were abandoned by the early decades of the twentieth century in favor of locations along the new South Road. By 1926, all that remained of the former settlement were cellar holes and one abandoned house (Burgess 1926:13).

This dramatic shift from the southern, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century settlement along Old South Road to a new settlement on South Road in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century led to the establishment of a new "town center" along South Road. To further solidify this center, the **Gay Head Town Hall/Community Center** building and the **Post Office/Residence**, were constructed along South Road near the church, parsonage, and school buildings.

The church, school, and parsonage continued to serve the community throughout this period. Following the moving of the **Gay Head Community Baptist Church** in 1907, Rev. Clarence L. Whitman served as pastor until at least 1911 (Banks vol. II, 1911:25). Whitman was the first pastor to occupy the **Minister's House/Parsonage** at its new site (Burgess 1926:28). John W. Belain held the position of mail carrier as early as 1907 until at least 1911 (Boston Suburban Building Co. 1907:203; 1910-11:215). By 1912, the town's postmaster was Thomas C. Jeffers, a local farmer (Boston Suburban Building Co. 1910-11:215), who apparently operated out of the Linus Jeffers House, set some distance to the north of the district, on Jeffers Way (nearly opposite Church Street, north of South Road).

Further renovations to the **Gay Head School/Library** took place in 1913, when the town paid \$14.55 for a wood stove to be installed in the schoolhouse, the mark of which is still visible on the floor in the main room (Annual Reports 1913:14). By 1914, the school covered grades one through eight and boasted 39 pupils. At this time, membership consisted of 22 boys and 17 girls, and the school term lasted approximately 8 months and 17 days. Teachers included James H. Hubert and Nannette C.E.

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Vanderhoop (Annual Reports 1914:13-16).

By 1916, the Superintendent of Schools began pleading with the town to secure the money to improve and enlarge the school so that it could be used for educational purposes, a town hall, and a library. The report stated that "The greatest need of your school at the present time is a better building. The building at present is too small for the needs of your community and the general arrangement is not what a modern building should be if your school building were of the proper size, with several rooms, you could use it not only for school purposes, but for a town hall, library, and for general entertainment purposes" (Annual Reports 1916:16-17). Following this report, the town immediately began making plans to accommodate the cost of the renovations. By 1917, the school employed one teacher rather than two with the hope that the money saved would go toward the improvement of the building, making it possible to have a proper town hall, library, and school. The Superintendent of Schools reported that the town was anxiously awaiting the alterations, which were to have been completed by the fall of 1918, stating that "the school children will benefit very much by the proposed alterations in the building and also the town will be benefitted, for, when the building is altered, the town will have a good town hall and library as well as a school building" (Annual Reports 1917:14-15).

These proposed alterations were never carried out and not addressed again until 1924. This six-year hiatus probably occurred as a result of Gay Head's involvement in World War I when the town had the largest proportion of enlisted men compared to any other town in New England. The town was presented with the "McCall Shield of Honor" (which is located on the **West Monument** in front of Town Hall) at a large island-wide celebration on Saturday July 13, 1918. The plaque was offered by Governor Samuel W. McCall to a city or town in any of the six New England states which, on April 6, one year after the entrance of the United States into World War I, had the largest number of men, in proportion to population, in the service of the United States Army and Navy. Gay Head had 17 enlisted men, totaling 11.4% of its population. An auto parade comprised of 170 floats and decorated automobiles began at Edgartown and ran through Oak Bluffs, Vineyard Haven, West Tisbury, and Chilmark before reaching Gay Head for a reception at the school. The plaque was presented to the town by the Governor with Lt.-Gov. Calvin Coolidge at his side. The plaque was originally affixed to the exterior wall of the school building until being moved to a monument at Town Hall. Following the presentation, the auto parade continued back to Oak Bluffs where a water pageant and illumination of the island were held ("McCall Shield of Honor" 1918).

The plaque on the **East Monument** also dates from this same period and may have been presented to the town soon after the war. Its original location, prior to the construction of the **Town Hall** in 1929, is unknown.

In 1924 the Superintendent of Schools reported that the schoolhouse would not easily lend itself to major additions and remodeling and the lot was not suitable for a playground. He reasoned that the proper solution would be to construct an entirely new building that would house a town hall, library, and school room (Annual Reports 1924:2-3). The schoolhouse did not experience any major alterations or additions

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during that period but was, however, used as a library and the place to take care of business and hold meetings until the **Town Hall/Community Center** was completed in 1929 (personal communication, Helen Manning 1998). Teachers during this period included Alice Attaquin, Stella Ryan, and Mary Jane Tilton (Attaquin 1970:43).

At this time the town also built a new **Post Office** building across the street from the Town Hall/Community Center. Probably constructed in the 1920s, the **Post Office** was built as a gift shop, selling clay and various souvenirs to tourists on their way to Gay Head Light and the Aquinnah Shops (personal Communication, Donald and Patsy Molonson 1998). It was used as a residence during the summer months both before and after it functioned as the post office (personal communication, Gladys Widdis 1998). The building functioned as the town's post office during its final years, having been located in a private home for most of its existence.

Town Hall and Continued Improvements, 1929 – present

Although town government was in place and discussion occurred in the first two decades of the twentieth century, there appears to have been no building constructed for the expressed purpose of the town until the construction of the **Town Hall/Community Center** in 1929. Early reports fail to mention a hall or building used for town meetings, although as early as 1920, the town was paying L.S. Jeffers \$18.00 dollars in rent for a "Town Office" (Annual Report 1920:5). The "town office" may have been located in the home of Linus S. Jeffers on Jeffers Way, which also housed a grocery store as early as 1907 (Boston Suburban Book Co. 1907:202) and the town post office (taped interview, Alfred Vanderhoop 1998). Jeffers continued to receive money for rent until 1929 (Annual Report 1929:7). It appears that Jeffers' home may have been used for offices of the elected officials while town meetings were held at the **Gay Head School/Library**.

Although it appears that the Linus Jeffers House was used as a residence, grocery store, post office, and town office in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the building is not immediately adjacent to the proposed district and is not included as such. Further research may be needed if in the future the district is extended to include additional properties in the surrounding area.

Jeffers was instrumental in the construction of the Town Hall as he was on the Board of Directors for the Gay Head Improvement Association, which donated the initial funds for the building. The **Town Hall/Community Center** was constructed in 1929 to the designs of architect Herbert C. Hancock of Vineyard Haven. Hancock was also responsible for the design of the Rodolphus W. Dexter House in Tisbury (MHC TIS.80) (Maker's Index). Plans of the Town Hall/Community Center, dated November 24, 1928 show the building as 44'-6" long and 62'-0" wide at its widest point (the rear). The T-shaped building was designed with an entrance vestibule that led into a small foyer and then to a large open space with a capacity for 200 people. The completed building, which included a cellar below the

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kitchen, was inspected and approved for occupancy on September 23, 1929 (Public Building Commissioners Records, Massachusetts State Archives).

It was shortly after this that the **Post Office building** became the residence of the then postmistress, Minnie Manning Molonson, who served as postmistress in the 1930s until Jeremiah Diamond replaced her (Gladys Widdis, personal communication 1998). The post office was closed during World War II, after which the town was served by a rural free delivery route (Attaquin 1970:43).

Throughout the early and mid-twentieth century the **Gay Head School** increased in attendance and holdings, requiring that boxes of books and school equipment be stored in the basement of the **Town Hall/Community Center**. The school housed the town library until the construction of the town hall in November 1929, when it was moved into an office it shared with the selectmen. Although the library started out with a collection of 900 books as well as furniture and equipment, the office could not accommodate the expanding collection, which had grown to almost 3,000 volumes by the 1950s (Smith 1954:no page). Around 1950, the library was moved back to the school building and located in the small room at the rear of the building. It remained there until the late 1950s (Annual Reports 1957:16) when it was located in the newly excavated full basement of the town hall. The basement was also used for recreational purposes. According to a local resident's 87-year-old father who lived in town at the time, a fire in the basement of the Town Hall/Community Center burned many of the library's books. There was some discussion about which books could be salvaged and which should be replaced because although some had their covers burned off completely, "the words were still there" (personal communication, Marjorie Spitz 1998).

Although the **Town Hall** had electricity since its construction, electricity did not arrive to the rest of the town until 1951. The town's municipal and civic buildings all benefitted greatly from this improvement. It was following this that indoor plumbing was installed in the **School/Library**. Other developments included the laying out of Lobsterville Road to the north of the district between 1944 and 1951 (USGS maps). By this period, the nineteenth-century pattern of communal agricultural and fishing activities had almost completely disappeared (*Gazette* 7/4/1986) within the town. Population continued to fluctuate, decreasing from 175 in 1915 to 127 by 1940. As the resident population of the town decreased, the number of off-island visitors and summer residents dramatically increased. The large influx of off-island visitors and excursionists traveling to Gay Head continued from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With this increase came the construction of numerous homes on the island for use as summer rentals.

The **Town Hall/Community Center** was used in the 1960s as the temporary site of the Gay Head Indian Museum which was open to the public in the summer months (Travers 1960:58). Numerous social activities have been held at the Town Hall/Community Center since its construction, including dances, plays, musicals, Boy Scout meetings, and local pageants. Due to the fact that no other building in the town could accommodate such gatherings, the Town Hall/Community Center was used for such social gatherings since its construction.

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During this period, the town made few alterations to the **Gay Head School/Library** building and concentrated on maintenance and upkeep. In 1946 the Tisbury carpentry class made and painted a flag pole (not extant) for the Gay Head School which was erected on the property shortly thereafter (Annual Reports 1946). During the summer of 1952 the interior of the school was painted, and a new entrance door was installed (Annual Reports 1952:20-21). Improvements continued in 1954 when water was piped from the Town Hall/Community Center, making it possible to install a bathroom in the schoolhouse, which was probably done shortly after this time (Annual Reports 1954:17).

Throughout the mid-twentieth century the School Committee and local residents were active with preservation activities and often raised money to assist with the cost of maintaining the building. Alterations included restoring the exterior of the building to its original color (red), re-shingling the exterior walls, replacing the windows and window casings, and building a well to allow for septic tank drainage (Annual Reports 1956:14-16). During this period, one-room schools were gradually vanishing and by 1956, only 35 one-room schools were operating throughout Massachusetts. While schools in town such as Chilmark and West Tisbury were averaging 22 students per year, attendance at Gay Head's school was slowly decreasing. In 1956 there were 10 pupils attending grades 1 through 6, prompting the Superintendent of Schools to declare that "the day of the small school is no longer economically feasible. The cost per pupil is too great." At this time, the school appropriations for Gay Head were the highest in the state, totaling \$9,500 with the teachers salary totaling \$3,300 and the cost per pupil averaging \$700 (Bright 1956:no page). During the last decade of the schools operation, the average class size ranged from twelve to fifteen students, slowly decreasing down to five students in four grades by 1968 (personal communication, Helen Manning 1998). Teachers throughout the mid-twentieth century included Mrs. Bertha A. Mayhew and Helen Vanderhoop Manning, who taught from 1956 to the school's closing in 1968.

Following the school's closing, the building probably stood vacant for a short period while children from Gay Head were sent to school in nearby Chilmark and Vineyard Haven. By 1975, the building housed the Tax Collector and Town Clerk while additions were made to the **Town Hall/Community Center**. That same year, the Library Trustees submitted a budget of \$1,900.00 to be used to complete the conversion of the schoolhouse into the town library which was estimated to be ready for service by May 1, 1975 (Annual Reports 1975:32).

The town also spent several years throughout the mid-twentieth century in efforts to raise money for the construction of a fire station for the town. Prior to the construction of the building, the town had to depend on the Gay Head Coast Guard and local bucket brigades in the event of a fire (personal communication, Donald Malonson 1998). The Fire Station, constructed ca. 1959-60, stands to the east of the **Town Hall/Community Center**, on the same lot. The first fire chief for the town was Donald Malonson, a current elder of the tribe.

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In 1975, the east side ell of the **Town Hall/Community Center** was extended, providing the town with much-needed office space for its municipal employees. This addition was designed by Lester J. Millman, an architect from Providence, RI, who had a house in Gay Head (personal communication, Marjorie Spitz 1998). The contractor for the addition was the Putnam Construction Corporation (Annual Report 1975:20). By the late 1980s, the town identified a need for enlarged office space and began to raise money for the construction of new town offices. At the annual town meeting in 1988, the town voted to appropriate \$50,000 in additional funds for a new, adjacent town office building, \$2,500 to construct a ramp providing access to the existing Town Hall/Community Center, and \$10,000 for the design and construction of a septic disposal system and water supply for the new town offices (Annual Report 1988:94-96). The town appropriated \$708,247 for the new building and hired DiMarinisi and Wolfe, an architectural and urban design firm from Boston, Massachusetts to design the building. Contractors for this new building were Parcon Incorporated. The building was constructed between the Town Hall/Community Center and Fire Station with walkways and ramps connecting the Town Hall/Community Center and the new building. Following this, in 1992-1993, the 1975 ell to the Town Hall/Community Center was updated for use by the town's police force which required new quarters. Interior changes were made to the ell, and a small addition was added to its east end.

Recent developments within the town include the changing of its name from Gay Head to its Wampanoag name, Aquinnah. The Wampanoag Tribe began lobbying for the change in 1991 but residents rejected it by 86 votes to 36. A second vote occurred in 1997, when a slender majority of 79 votes to 76 approved the change. The name was officially changed in May of 1998. The town continues to attract a large number of seasonal residents as evidenced by the current summer population of 1,350. Today, there are 350 year-round residents and approximately 350 houses (personal communication, Marjorie Spitz).

Today the district retains its architectural integrity as well as its original use as the civic core of the town. The original **Town Hall/Community Center** has been used in recent years for town functions such as Christmas pageants and plays. The **Gay Head Community Baptist Church** has continued to serve the Baptist community of Gay Head to the present day and remains the only extant church in the town. Its present-day congregation numbers only five or six people throughout the year, although summer residents add to the number of participants at services. The **Parsonage/Minister's House** continues to be owned by the church and is used as a rental property. The **Post Office** is currently unoccupied and is partially boarded up. The **Gay Head School/Library** has continued its use as the town's only library since 1975.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of prehistoric settlement and subsistence in Gay Head are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Prehistoric sites in this area may contain information that helps

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center HD
Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MASection number 8 Page 14

understand how environmental changes influenced population change and the nature of settlement through time. Information may be present at sites that indicates the effects of sea level rise on patterns of settlement and subsistence, especially at sites from earlier periods. Prehistoric sites in the area may also contain information to better understand patterns of lithic procurement and production, possibly indicating the importance of local raw materials and trade in the manufacture of specific tool types and changes in technology through time. Prehistoric sites in the Gay Head locale, especially sites from later periods, may also contain information which helps to understand how the four historic sachemships recognized during the historic period on Martha's Vineyard evolved. This information might demonstrate unique characteristics associated with the sachemship and socio/political group located at Gay Head. These characteristics could be represented in ceramic types, lithics, or site types and distributions.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to help better understand how Gay Head Native Americans were able to maintain aspects of their traditional culture during a period of constant change in the 19th and 20th centuries. Further documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing may produce information that helps understand the effects of incorporation on traditional forms of land-holding and other forms of Native culture. The identification of outbuildings and detailed analysis of the contents of occupational related features may contain information that helps better understand the 19th and 20th century growth of the new South Road civic focus for the town. The same analysis may also indicate the effect the abandonment of the Old South Road community had on family structure and changes in town government. Information might also exist indicating the effect that changes in ownership in land from tribal to non-tribal ownership had in the growth of the new South Road settlement focus. Occupational related features associated with the civic buildings in the district may also contain information which helps better understand changes in the Gay Head community in general. Specific evidence may exist indicating ways in which traditional culture persists in the midst of ever-increasing non-Native materials and beliefs. Structural and artifactual evidence from the Old Gay Head Windmill may also exist in the vicinity of the parsonage. These resources might contribute information relating to windmill technologies and construction.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center HD
Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MA

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(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center HD
Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MA

Section number 9 Page 2

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(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center HD
Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MA

Section number 9 Page 3

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Personal Communication, Marjorie Spitz, April 1998.

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1853 *Map of Gay Head and No-Mans-Land*. Henry L. Whiting.

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1866 *Map of Gay Head, Martha's Vineyard, Mass. Showing Lands of Individual Owners and the General Fields or Commons*. John H. Mullin.

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center HD
Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MA

Section number 9 Page 4

-
- 1866 *Sectional Plans of Indian Lands on Gay Head.* Richard L. Pease.
- 1897 *Topographic Sheet western part of Martha's Vineyard.* W.G. Hodgham.
- 1926 *Sketch Map of the Old South Road of Gay Head.* Edward S. Burgess.
- 1944 *United States Geological Survey Topographic Map.*
- 1951 *United States Geological Survey Topographic Map.*

(end)

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District
Name of Property

Dukes, Massachusetts
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 7 acres

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	348070	4577480
Zone	Easting	Northing
2. 19	348070	4578110
Zone	Easting	Northing

3. 19	348100	4578110
Zone	Easting	Northing
4. 19	348100	4578130
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 Mary Kate Harrington, Emily L. Palus, Virginia H. Adams, PAL with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date December 1998

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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center HD
Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MA**Section number 10 Page 1

5.	Z19	348150	4578125
6.	Z19	348150	4578090
7.	Z19	348130	4578090
8.	Z19	348130	4577480

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The bounds of the Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District are shown on the attached assessor's map. The bounds follow the lot lines and encompass assessor's map 5 lots 169, 178 and map 9 lots 89, 98, and 99.

The boundary of the Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District begins at the southern edge of the Minister's House/Parsonage lot on the west side of Church Street. The district proceeds north following the lot line of the Parsonage until it meets with South Road, extending east across the northern edge of the Post Office/Residence lot and the Gay Head School/Library lot. The district extends to the north side of South Road to encompass the Town Hall/Community Center lot and then continues south following the lot line of the Gay Head Community Baptist Church on the east side of Church Street. It then turns west at the southern edge of the lot and follows the lot line until it meets Church Street where it extends west to the Parsonage lot.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District are drawn to encompass the buildings which comprise the civic core of the town. The contributing properties within the area display architectural integrity and strong association with events that contributed to the town's development. The buildings reflect the historical progression of the town's settlement as well as the dramatic shift in residence patterns that took place during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century.

The northern, southern, eastern, and western boundaries are determined by the rear property lines of the buildings along South Road and Church Street. The northern boundary is drawn to exclude undeveloped land to the north not associated with the Town Hall/Community Center property. The town hall property is drawn to include the non-contributing Town Office building and Fire Station. These have been included

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

**Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center HD
Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MA**

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (Continued)

since they stand on the same lot as the Town Hall/Community Center and are visually connected to the town center area. The eastern boundary is drawn to exclude a cluster of five early-twentieth-century cottages, which stand several hundred feet down the road and are not visually connected with the town center. The southern and western boundaries are drawn to exclude buildings that are less than 50 years old and undeveloped land not associated with the historic properties. One late-nineteenth-century house stands to the southwest of the district although it has not been included since it does not have associations with the civic and municipal use of the district.

(end)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center HD
Aquinnah (Dukes Co.), MA**

Section number _____ Page _____

Photographs

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District
Gay Head/Aquinnah, Dukes County
Massachusetts

Photographer: Mary Kate Harrington and Emily L. Paulus
PAL

Date: April and June 1998
Negatives: Massachusetts Historical Commission

1. Wide angle view east on South Road showing intersection with Church Street.
2. Gay Head Town Hall/Community Center showing original portion, view looking northeast.
3. Wide angle view northeast from South Road, showing Town Hall/Community Center with adjacent Police Barracks and town office building.
4. Post Office/Residence, view looking east.
5. Gay Head School, view looking southeast.
6. Minister's House/Parsonage, view looking southwest.
7. Gay Head Community Baptist Church, view looking southeast.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

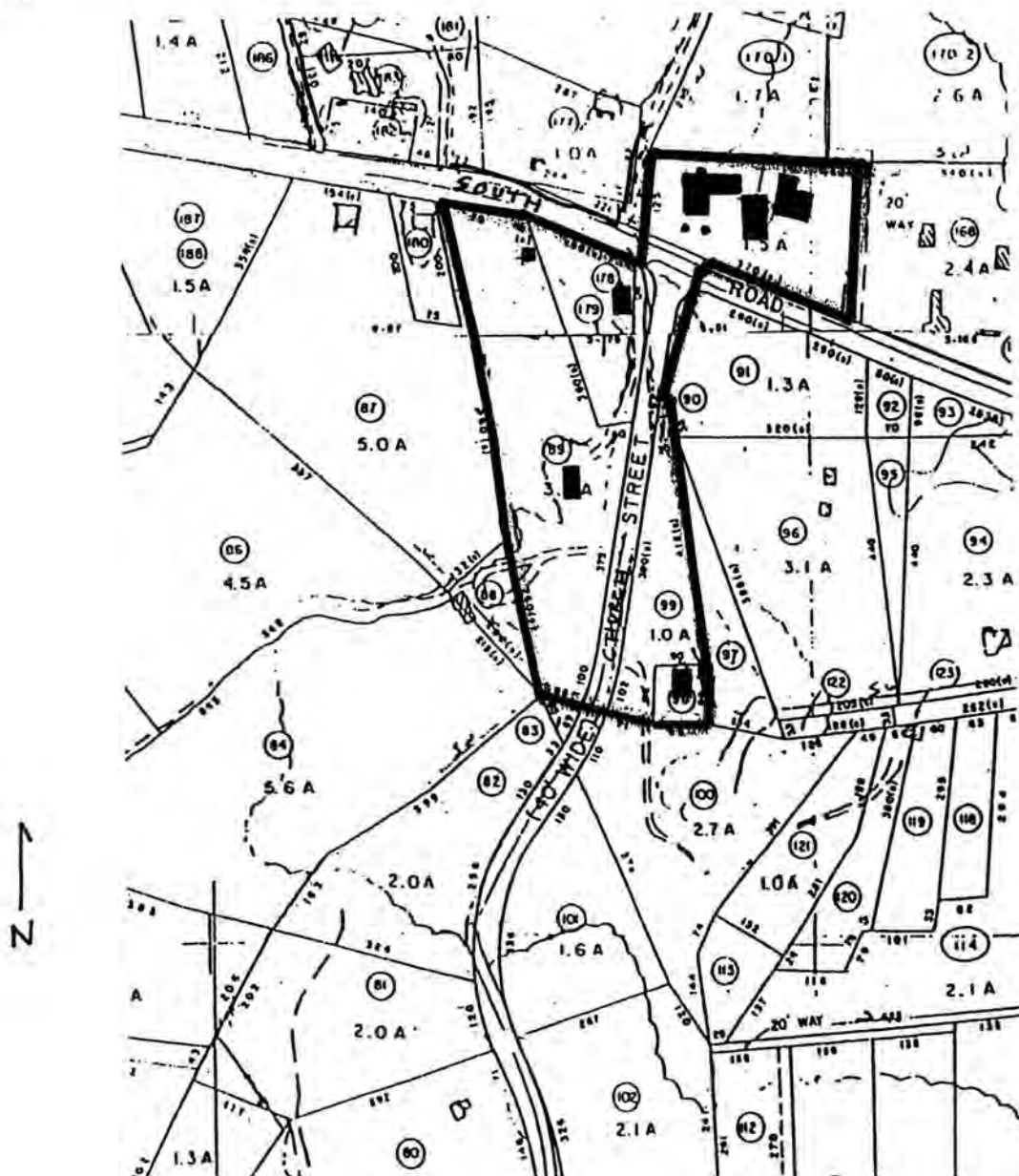
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District, Gay Head/Aquinnah, Dukes County, Massachusetts

Section number Photographs and Maps

Page 2

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District Map (source: Gay Head/Aquinnah Assessor's Maps 1980).



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

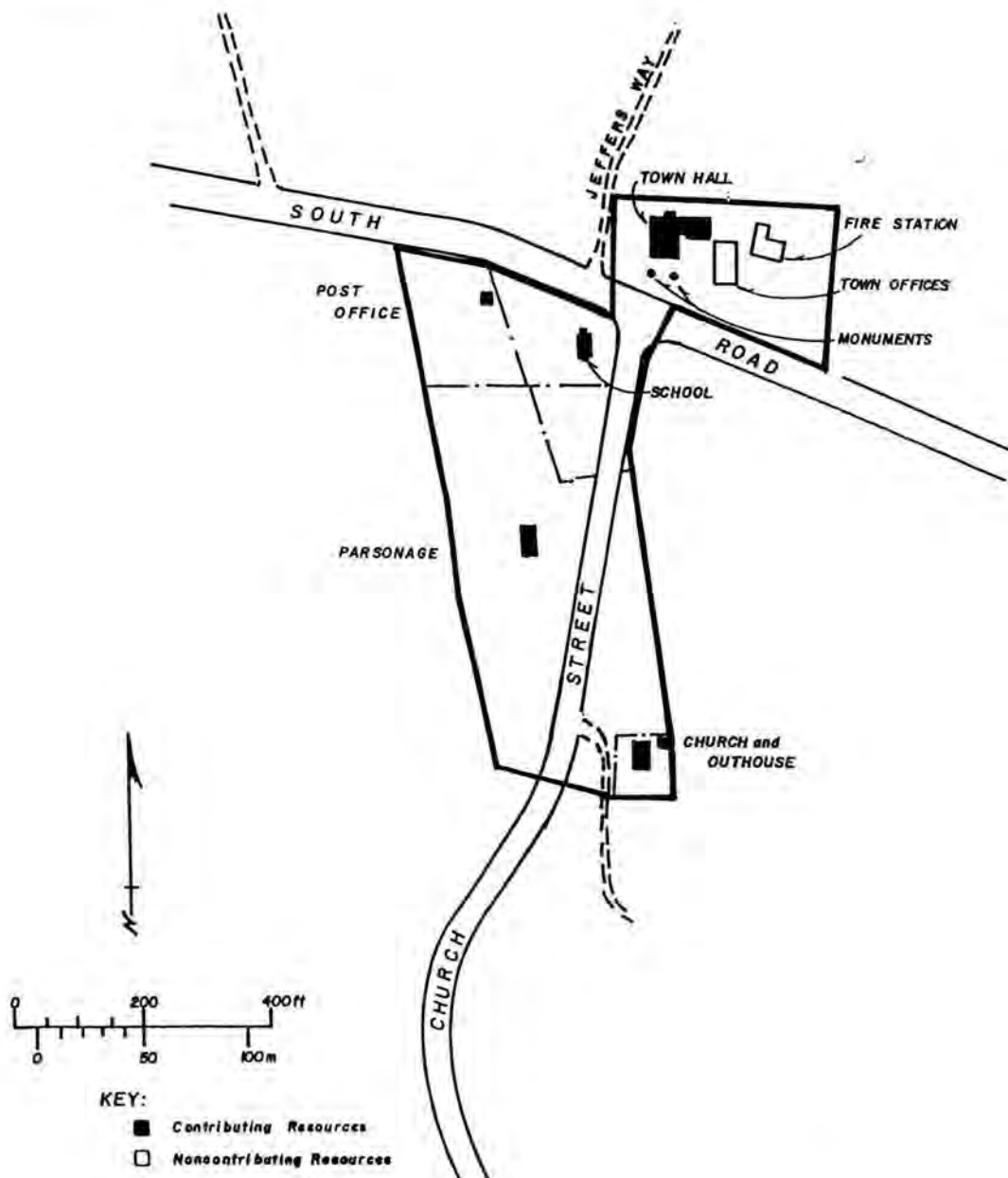
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District, Gay Head/Aquinnah, Dukes County, Massachusetts

Section number Photographs and Maps

Page 3

Gay Head/Aquinnah Assessor's Maps 5 and 9 showing boundary of Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center Historic District.



**GAY HEAD/AQUINNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT
GAY HEAD/AQUINNAH, MASSACHUSETTS
DISTRICT DATA SHEET**

MHC Number	Map/ Lot	Name/Function	Street Number & Name	Style	Date of Construction	Status/ Resource
	9/98, 99	Gay Head Community Baptist Church	Church Street	Greek Revival	1850	C/B C/B
	9/89	Minister's House/Parsonage	Church Street	Greek Revival	1856	C/B
	5/178	Gay Head School/Library	South Road at Church Street	Greek Revival	ca. 1844	C/B
	9/89	Post Office/Residence	South Road	No Style	ca. 1920s	C/B
	5/169	Gay Head Town Hall/Community Center	128 South Road	Craftsman	1929	C/B
	5/169	World War I Monument (east)	128 South Road	n/a	1918	C/O
	5/169	World War I Monument (west)	128 South Road	n/a	1919	C/O
	5/169	Gay Head Town Office Building	South Road	No Style	1989	NC/B
	5/169	Gay Head Fire Station	South Road	No Style	ca. 1859-60	NC/B

**Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center National Register District
District Data Sheet Summary/Key**

Total Resources Summary:

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
6	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
2	0	objects
8	2	TOTAL

10 Total resources identified

Key To Abbreviations:

(C)= Contributing

(NC)= Noncontributing

B= Building

O= Object

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Gay Head--Aquinnah Town Center Historic District

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Dukes

DATE RECEIVED: 1/13/99 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/26/99
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/11/99 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/27/99
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 99000187

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: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ ACCEPT ___ RETURN ___ REJECT ___ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA accept A&C

REVIEWER Patrick Andrews

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 2/26/99

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



Gay Head / Aquinnah Town Center Historic District
Dukes County, Massachusetts
Photograph # 1 of 7



Gay Head Town Hall / Community Center, Gay Head / Aquinnah Town Center
Dukes County, Massachusetts
Historic District
Photograph # 2 of 7



Gay Head Town Hall / Community Center, Gay Head / Aquinnah Town Center
Dukes County, Massachusetts
Historic District
Photograph # 3 of 7



Post Office / Residence, Gay Head / Aquinnah Town Center Historic District
Dukes County, Massachusetts
Photograph # 4 of 7



GAY HEAD
PUBLIC LIBRARY
HOURS
TUES 4-8
SAT 9-5

Gay Head School, Gay Head Town Center Historic District
Dukes County, Massachusetts
Photograph # 5 of 7



Minister's House / Parsonage, Gay Head Town Center Historic District
Dukes County, Massachusetts
Photograph # 6 of 7





Gay Head Community Baptist Church, Gay Head/Aquinnah Town Center
Dukes County, Massachusetts
Historic District
Photograph # 7 of 7

Gay Head/Aquinnah Town
Center Historic
District

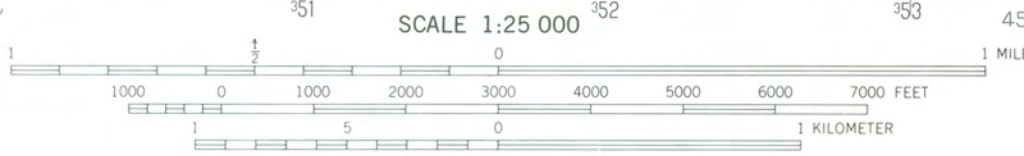
UTM Coordinates:

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2: 19/348070/4578100
3: 19/348100/4578110
4: 19/348050/4578125
5: 19/348050/4578150
6: 19/348050/4578175
7: 19/348130/4578090
8: 19/348130/4578100



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1939. Topography by planetable surveys 1942
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1972
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 264 (1970) and
1210 (1970). This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system, island zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid zone 19
Boundaries in tidewater areas from information furnished
by Massachusetts Department of Public Works

Map photoinspected 1977
No major culture or drainage changes observed



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.9 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

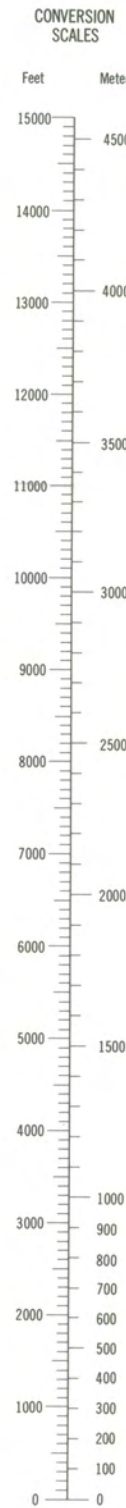
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 6 meters south and
42 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface ————
Secondary highway, hard surface ————
Unimproved road ————
Interstate Route ————
U. S. Route ————
State Route ————

SQUIBNOCKET, MASS.
41070-C7-TF-025

1972
PHOTOINSPECTED 1977
DMA 6866 IV SE—SERIES V814



Feet	Meters
1	3048
2	6096
3	9144
4	12192
5	15240
6	18288
7	21336
8	24384
9	27432
10	30480

To convert feet to meters
multiply by .3048
To convert meters to feet
multiply by 3.2808





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

January 5, 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:

Aquinnah/Gay Head Town Center Historic District, South Road and Church
Street, Aquinnah (Dukes 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.

Please note that until 1998 the town of Aquinnah was known as Gay Head, MA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Margerie Spitz, Citizens Advisory Commission
Virginia Adams/PAL, Preservation Consultant
Carl Widdiss, Chair, Aquinnah Board of Selectmen
Camille Rose, Chair, Town Planner