

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

MC-998

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

 X New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Southold Town Milestones

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

19th Century Stone Milemarkers of Southold Town, Suffolk County, New York, 1829.**C. Form Prepared by:**

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Michael J. Lynch
Signature of certifying official

Deputy SHPO
Title

3/24/17
Date

NYS OPRHP
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Olivia A. A. A.
Signature of the Keeper

5/15/17
Date of Action

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Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 250 hours per response including 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, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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E. Statement of Historic Contexts

The Southold Town Milestones, installed in 1829, are spaced at approximately one-mile intervals along the Main Road in Southold Town (Suffolk County, New York). The series of historic stone road markers stretches sequentially from the town line at the hamlet of Laurel (Milestone 7) in the west to Orient Point (Milestone 30) at the eastern tip of the town. The milestones are significant under Criterion A in the areas of exploration/settlement and transportation. These stones represented the “state-of-the-art” in roadside guide-posting for their time, when the New York State legislature mandated that all major roadways (often known as “King’s Highways” and post roads) and other principal public roads be marked in this way.

The significance of the Southold milestones in the areas of exploration/settlement and transportation is best understood within the broader context of how roadways were built and marked throughout history, and more particularly in colonial America. Milestones were placed along the most efficient corridors that connected major cities, over which the mail and other important commerce were carried; the Colonial-era Main Road in Southold Town remains a vital corridor for eastern Long Island’s North Fork today. Southold was the only municipality on Long Island, however, known to have complied with the state’s Session Law of 1827 requiring the installation of milestones. The series of granite milestones is complete except for one, Milestone 21, which is a modern replacement stone replicated in slate. Each of the remaining 23 marks the actual distance in miles from the historic “Suffolk Court House” in Riverhead, the center of Suffolk County government since 1728 and the location of a post office since 1794. With few exceptions, no other series of historical milestones as complete as those in Southold Town has been discovered in New York, New England or the early colonies.¹ Their preservation is not entirely accidental. The roadway itself has changed little in over three centuries, but sections have been straightened and one important stretch – where the road turns north at Southold village and hugs the northern coastline of the town before rejoining the Main Road north of Greenport – was re-routed in the mid-19th century, with the result that several of the milestones were spared heavy traffic.

On Long Island, where the only rocks available for building or other purposes were the “erratics” left behind by the glaciers, the use of stone in construction and for other applications was never the norm. The use

¹ Boundary markers sawn from sandstone were set in 1792 to mark the ten-mile square boundaries of the District of Columbia. While not true “milestones” set to mark a traveler’s progress along a roadway, these markers are nevertheless similar in appearance and comparable in date to Southold’s milestones. Of the forty originally set around the nation’s Capital, a majority survive (*National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, “Boundary Markers of the Original District of Columbia,” December 17, 1990). The largest group appears to be the “Old National Pike Milestones” in Maryland, of which sixty-nine survive. Designated in 1974, these markers date from 1818 and vary in stone type including gneiss, quartzite, and white and grey limestone. Another notable series are the “1767 Milestones” located along the Upper Boston Post Road between Boston and Springfield, Massachusetts. Forty of these were listed on the National Register in 1971 (numbering “1” through “99”); it is estimated that Massachusetts has 129 surviving milestones.

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of stone for fabricating headstones serves as a good example. In the early Long Island settlements, for example, it appears that only the wealthy could afford carved headstones, and these were imported primarily from Connecticut. The middling classes employed wooden grave markers or ones shaped from large pebbles, while the indigent were interred with nothing of lasting value to mark their graves. By the end of the 18th century, after the successful quarrying of marble began in southern Vermont, those of average means could afford finely shaped mantel pieces, headstones and other marble products. It wasn't until after the celebrated commission for the Bunker Hill Monument in 1825, however, that the availability and popularity of granite for construction and later in the fabrication of headstones and other applications accelerated, eclipsing the use of softer stones such as brownstone, slate and marble. Despite its relative cost, Southold chose to import granite, the most durable and most common of all rock types, for their mile markers.

Southold's milestones are monuments to the post-Colonial Era, when most personal travel away from home was undertaken by foot or horsepower. The milestones are illustrative of a new nation in transition and one of laws, in which a local municipality complied with a New York State mandate requiring their installation, despite the fact that their function was fast becoming obsolete. By 1844, when the Long Island Railroad reached Greenport from New York City, personal transportation across Long Island was transformed forever. The new nation was on the move, but not necessarily on foot. The milestones that had marked a traveler's progress on foot or by horse and carriage from village to village in times past would soon become obsolete. Fortunately, the milestones that mark Southold Town's historic Main Road remain intact and well preserved, a reminder of its settlement patterns, transportation history, and the growth of Southold Town and the New Republic.

Geo-political Context: The Separation of Southold and Riverhead Towns

Southold Town, like Southampton, was one of two eastern Long Island communities founded in 1640, but unlike its neighbor to the south, it was settled as a "religious association" under the spiritual leadership of the Rev. John Youngs.² The governor and magistrates of the New Haven Colony, in which the fledgling association had originated, assisted in the endeavor by taking title to the land on the colonists' behalf and exercised jurisdiction over the Southold "plantation" for several decades.³ Like Southampton Town, the original colony grew through the purchase of additional lands from the indigenous Algonquin tribe – the Corchaugs – that occupied the region. Thus by the early 18th century, Southold Town encompassed all of the present North Fork of Long Island, extending from Orient Point on the east to the Brookhaven Town line at Wading River on

² Richard M. Bayles, *History of Suffolk County, New York* (New York: W.W. Munsell, 1882), 16.

³ Bayles, *History*.

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the west. The town's early population centers were the original Southold settlement and later Cutchogue and Mattituck to the west.⁴

Southold Town's Main Road is of early origins, having evolved from the circuitous paths that linked its satellite communities after the formation of the Southold "plantation" in 1640. Geographically, the road runs closer to the bays and creeks that border its southern shore than to Long Island Sound, its boundary to the north. The reason for this may be that the concentration of Native American encampments that preceded the arrival of the "English" was located along the more protected southern shore, and the roadways that evolved after the "Contact Period" naturally utilized these well-worn paths. The network of primary and secondary roads that developed in the 18th century also reflected the system of land allotments and divisions that were laid out in the 17th century.⁵ Southold's Main Road, then called the King's Highway, has always been a central artery connecting the principal towns and hamlets along its length. It was not until the mid-19th century and the coming of the railroad, when Pipe's Neck Cove and the adjoining swamps and marshes at Hashamomack were finally bridged and connected Greenport directly to Southold village, that any significant change in the old route occurred. With this exception, and that of several instances in which the roadway was straightened in modern times, the milestones follow the original route along Main Road from one end of the town to the other.

Riverhead, originally a hamlet situated in the western section of Southold Town, was settled in 1690 by John Griffing, who established a grist mill there five years later, and it has served as the county seat of Suffolk County since 1727.⁶ The growth of Riverhead was slow due to the remoteness of the place, however, and as late as 1804 it was described by a traveler as a "miserable hamlet."⁷ But Long Island's largest and longest river, the Peconic River, flows eastward from neighboring Brookhaven Town and empties into the Great Peconic Bay at Riverhead, forming the original border between Southold (north) and Southampton (south). The meadows and marshes that stretched north and south of the Peconic River, straddling the division between the towns, were known as Aquebogue after the Algonquin "land at the head of the bay or the cove place." Beginning in the late 17th century, Southold Town divided its Aquebogue woods and meadows into large allotments of land measuring between two hundred and fifty and three hundred acres, and by the end of the century further divisions were made. These "great lots" of Aquebogue stretched north from the Peconic River to Long Island Sound and were sparsely settled.⁸

⁴ See, especially, Benjamin F. Thompson, *History of Long Island*, vol. 2 (New York: Gould, Banks & Co., 1843).

⁵ Bayles, *History*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ President Dwight of Yale College, passing through in 1804, is quoted as saying that "Riverhead is the shire town of this county. The court-house, a poor decayed building, and a miserable hamlet, containing about ten or twelve houses, stand near the efflux of the river." In Benjamin F. Thompson, *History of Long Island*, Vol. I (New York: Gould, Banks & Co., 1843), 404.

⁸ Bayles, *History*.

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By the end of the 18th century, the residents of Riverhead and Southold's adjoining Aquebogue divisions advocated for the creation of their own town. In response, by an act of the New York State Legislature on March 13, 1792, the Town of Riverhead was formed out of the westerly portion of Southold Town.⁹ The north-south boundary line between the two towns was set near the present-day hamlet of Laurel. The Town of Southold, thus diminished in size from about 600 to 400 square miles, was now bounded to the north and south entirely by bodies of water. And while it continued as a center of agriculture, its numerous inlets, ports and harbors also supported the growth of maritime industries, including fishing, whaling, boat-building and trade. The newly formed Town of Riverhead did not enjoy these geographical advantages, however, and remained primarily agricultural, relying to a great extent for its economy on the vast expanse of woodlands that provided firewood for export via "landings" along its Long Island Sound shoreline.

The boundary line that was drawn between the towns of Southold and Riverhead in 1792 is especially important in the history of these milestones, because it was at Laurel that Southold Town set the first of its 24 numbered stones in 1829. The hamlet of Laurel, which is located seven miles from the county seat at Riverhead, received Milestone 7, carved appropriately "7 M/to/Suffolk/C[ourt] H[ouse]." Each of the town's other milestones were numbered from "8" to "30" and marked the distance from this Riverhead landmark in which the judicial business of Suffolk County had been conducted since 1727, a century before.¹⁰

There is some question as to whether the "CH" carved on Southold's milestones signifies "Court House" or "County Hall." In fact, the building in question – court house or county hall – was one and the same in the early 19th century when the milestones were carved. Both expressions appear simultaneously and interchangeably in town records; for example, William S. Pelletreau writes in Munsell's *History of Suffolk County, NY* (1882) of "a special town meeting held at the county hall Monday July 13th, 1812, to consider the pending war with Great Britain" and that "the town meetings from nearly the first were held in the county hall or court-house in the village of Riverhead."¹¹ It was only later in the 19th century that two separate buildings began serving the two purposes at the same time. Pelletreau wrote further that "after the new court-house was built the old one, being still used as a public hall, was continued as the place of holding town meetings."¹² Further evidence may be found in Paul Bailey's *Long Island a History of Two Great Counties Nassau and Suffolk* (1949):

⁹ One of the better accounts of the split is found in Paul Bailey, ed., *Long Island A History of Two Great Counties Nassau and Suffolk* vol. I (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1949), 183-185.

¹⁰ A bronze plaque mounted on the exterior wall of a three-story brick office building on Main Street opposite the intersection with Peconic Avenue now marks the spot where the old court house stood.

¹¹ Bayles, *History*.

¹² Bayles, *History*.

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The justices of the peace of Suffolk County at General Sessions held in September, 1727, sought an act of the Colonial Assembly enabling them to erect a “Convenient Court house and Gaol in the most Commodious place at or near a Place commonly called by the name of the head of the River Aquaboug [Aquebogue] or Pekonnik [Peconic].”

... the first County Hall and Jail at Riverhead was erected on the north side of Main Street on the site of the present Perkins building. David Horton lived in the court house and kept the jail.

... this first county court house at Riverhead was little used for at least three quarters of a century. Fifteen years after its erection a traveler described it as a “decayed, wooden building.” In 1804, Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, while touring the Island made the same observation. By 1825 the business of the courts had so expanded, however, that the old building had to be enlarged and remodeled.¹³

Thus, when the milestones were installed in 1829, it appears coincidental that the initials “CH” carved on them signified both “Court House” and “County Hall,” those being alternative names for the same building. And by this date the building also served as a post office, which was established on September 25, 1794.¹⁴ This post office served as the fourth in a series of seven established that year by the new Congress and situated along Suffolk County’s first post road, beginning with the Huntington post office (now Dix Hills) near the border with Queens County and ending at its eastern terminus at Sag Harbor.

National, State and Local Road Building

After the formation of the new Republic, projects were launched on the federal level to survey the nation for defensive and commercial reasons, and to aid in westward expansion. Road building on the national and state levels resulted in the legislation, planning and installation of milestones. Before the Revolution, formal roads were a haphazard affair, with many constructed as toll roads by for-profit companies or by the military to support specific campaigns. For example, Colonel George Washington, a surveyor by training, had accompanied the British General Edward Braddock in 1755 on the road that would bear Braddock’s name after his ill-fated assault on Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburgh) in the French and Indian War.¹⁵ The Braddock Road was built by the Ohio Company in 1751 as a strategic link between Forts Cumberland and Duquesne, both important military and trading outposts. In the early 19th century, construction of the Cumberland Road, the first of its kind to be sponsored by the federal government, replaced the Braddock Road. It was authorized by Thomas Jefferson in 1806 and with further expansion became the National Road. At its greatest extent, the National

¹³ Bailey, *Long Island*, 183-185.

¹⁴ John L. Kay, and Chester M. Smith, Jr, *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1980* (State College, PA: American Philatelic Society, 1982).

¹⁵ Geoffrey Hindley, *A History of Roads* (Secaucus, NJ: The Citadel Press, 1972), 85-87.

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Road stretched from Cumberland, Maryland, to Vandalia, Illinois, connecting the Potomac and Ohio Rivers for a total length of about 620 miles. Thousands of settlers followed the National Road to the new territories, and numerous features of the old road – bridges, toll houses, taverns, and milestones – survive from this early period of westward expansion. Much of the travel was made by slow moving wagons, horseback or on foot. Many of the road's surviving milestones are now designated as historic resources on the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁶ Other milestones from the late 18th and early 19th century may be found scattered along the major roadways that connected major cities such as New York and Albany (Albany Post Road), or Springfield and Boston. The re-routing, straightening, widening and maintenance of these roadways has resulted in the disappearance of many of these markers.

The New York State legislature regulated road building and setting milestones almost from the start. An act referencing milestones appears in the state Session Laws as early as 1797¹⁷ and in 1801 the following provision appeared within the context of a law regulating new highway construction:

And be it further enacted, That it shall be the duty of the commissioners of highways in the several towns of this State, to cause mile boards or stones to be erected, where not already erected, on the post roads and such other public county roads in their respective towns as they may think proper, at the distance of one mile from each other with such fair and legible inscriptions or directions as they may think proper; and if any person shall destroy, remove, injure or deface such mile boards or stones they shall be liable to pay ten dollars for each mile board or stone so destroyed, removed, injured or defaced to be recovered with costs of suit before any justice of the peace of the county where the offence shall be committed: Which penalties so levied and collected shall be paid to the commissioners, or any one of them, in the town where such offence shall be committed and it shall be the duty of the said commissioners forthwith to repair the mile boards or stones so injured or removed, out of the monies arising from such penalties.¹⁸

While the attention on levying penalties for defacing or removing milestones seems over-stated, it may be due to the fact that the cost of installing and repairing them was imposed on the municipalities and was therefore an “unfunded mandate.” Then, as now, political support for passing such a law may have necessitated this provision. By 1813, when a comparable highway bill was passed by the State Legislature, the infraction was considered a misdemeanor and the penalty had risen to fifty dollars and a prison term not to exceed three months!

¹⁶ National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, “Old National Pike Milestones,” August 1973; Hindley, *A History*, 85-87.

¹⁷ Elbert Floyd-Jones, *A Relic of the Highway* (Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Co., 1923), 30-31.

¹⁸ New York State, *Laws of the State of New-York, Twenty-fourth Session* (Albany, NY: Charles & George Webster, 1801), 537; Evidence in the *Riverhead Town Records* (Liber A, page 80) suggests that the town responded to this state law by voting to install mile boards along “the Post Road marking the Numbers of miles East and West from the County Hall.” No evidence of these boards survives today, if in fact they were ever installed.

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The state passed another such bill regulating highway construction in 1827, and Southold Town complied by voting to install milestones along the Main Road in 1829.¹⁹ Significantly, the state bill required that milestones be set “where not already erected” and only “on the post-roads, and such other public roads in their town, as they may think proper.” The old Main Road, formerly known as the “Kings Highway,” had functioned since the pre-Colonial era as the town’s central corridor, connecting its earliest villages – e.g., Mattituck, Cutchogue and Southold – and providing “through” travel from metropolitan New York and western Long Island to Orient Point, where passage across Long Island Sound was made by boat to Connecticut and beyond. Originally a native trail, the Main Road also connected Southold Town to other Long Island towns and hamlets to the west. Travelers from New York City to New England, especially Boston, could choose between the all-land route through Connecticut’s rocky terrain or a more gentler alternative that brought them east across Long Island to its terminus at Orient Point, where destinations such as New London, Boston, and other New England towns were reached via Long Island Sound. Neither route was especially comfortable; each took upwards of four days, but until the construction of rail roads in the mid-1840s which expedited transportation along both corridors, both served the purpose.²⁰ Southold Town’s Main Road was indeed a “public road” and thus qualified under the state’s mandate to install milestones.

On April 7, 1829, the trustees of Southold Town voted that “the commissioners of roads survey the post road from the western line of the town to Oysterponds point and set up mile stones lettered with a chisel.”²¹ While the state’s mandate had instructed towns to set up either mile boards (i.e., wooden) or milestones, Southold Town evidently elected for the latter which required lettering by a chisel rather than a paint brush. In compliance with the state statute, twenty-four milestones were erected from the town line at Laurel (Milestone 7) to the easterly most stone at Orient Point (Milestone 30) where the Main Road terminated on a wharf from which travelers booked passage by boat across Long Island Sound. With few modifications, the road survives today.

While the state mandated the installation of milestones, it was the responsibility of the counties and later the municipalities to build and repair their own roads prior to the Revolution. This was true throughout the colonies, and is illustrated by town records in which the appointment or election of road commissioners was a frequent and often annual occurrence.²² Historians agree that the Main Road in Southold is of ancient origins, and that the section leading west from Southold village through Cutchogue and Mattituck to the head of Peconic

¹⁹ *Southold Town Records*. April 7, 1829, Liber E, Page 43.

²⁰ The journey of Madame Knight (1704-05) is often cited as an early description of road conditions between Boston and New Haven, Connecticut, in the early colonies. See: “Sarah Kemble Knight,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Kemble_Knight>.

²¹ *Southold Town Records*. April 7, 1829, Liber E, Page 43.

²² *Southold Town Records*.

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Bay (now Riverhead) where it met the highway to Southampton was laid out soon after Southold's settlement in the 1640s. The following highway account of 1710 makes reference to the route as already in existence:

Whereas there was an Act of ye Govern't Councill and Representatives Of the Colony of N Yorke made in ye 2d year of ye reigne of our sovereign Lady Anne by ye grace of God of England &c Queen Defendr of ye faith &c for ye laying out Regulating clearing and preserving publick common high ways throughout ye sd Colony. And it was thereby Enacted that Commissioners to put ye sd Act in Execution according to ye true intent and meaning of ye same were nominated and appointed forye Respective Countyes in ye sd Colony vizt For ye County of Suffolke Mr. John Tuthill senr Lieut Joseph Peirson and Thomas Helme, which sd Commissioners have layd out and ascertained ye Publick common high ways within ye sd County of Suffolke as followeth:

.... The Highway from Peaconnuck river to Southold to be in ye usuall road from ye sd river to Mattatucke already layd out four poles wide at ye least, ye trees generally marked on ye south side of ye way, and at Mattatucke ye highway to be on ye north side of ye pond and soe directly leading to ye old road to ye town of Southold.²³

By 1703, the second year of Queen Anne's reign referenced in the document, the highways that were subject to regulation were evidently already considered "old" and described as "usuall [sic]," suggesting customary and well-travelled. The roadways that were subject to regulation were also generally called the "King's Road" or "Highway" as illustrated in the following document dated July 25, 1710, in which a new secondary road was established between Cutchogue and the landing at Robins Island Neck (New Suffolk):

Wee the undersigned Commissioners for laying out highways have layd out from the Kings Road (with the consent of the owners of the lands through which it leads) a two-pole Highway to run Southwardly on the east side of Charles Booth's land until it comes to Joshua Tuthill's land...²⁴

Reference to the width of this "highway" is significant. The pole (also called a rod or perch) was a surveyor's unit of measurement equivalent to 5 ½ yards or 16 ½ feet. Highways of four poles' width were therefore 66 feet wide; so-called "two-pole" highways were half of that, or 33 feet wide. The length of the pole as a standardized unit of measure is thought to have derived from the military pike, a wooden weapon of about the same length and popular at the time. The secondary or "two-pole Highway" referenced above connected the Main Road at Cutchogue with the future hamlet of New Suffolk, a waterfront community on the Great Peconic Bay. The commissioners of highways were therefore charged not only with maintaining the main thoroughfare or "Kings Road" and defending it against encroachment, but also with laying out new roads as communities expanded. Only the main or "public" road(s), however, were subject to the state's mandate to install milestones.

²³ *Suffolk County Deeds*, Liber A, page 142. Quoted in Charles Edmiston Craven, *A History of Mattituck, Long Island, N.Y.* (Mattituck, NY: Craven, 1906), 23-24.

²⁴ Bayles, *History*, 16.

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Suffolk County's Postal System and the Myth of Benjamin Franklin

The association of Southold's milestones with Benjamin Franklin, who served as the nation's first postmaster general under the Continental Congress (1775), is a myth that developed based on the incorrect belief that their purpose was to mark postal routes. While many milestones of the 18th and 19th centuries may have aided in the transportation of the mails, no evidence suggests that the Southold milestones, or any others of the period, were installed at the request or expense of the postal service, or indeed had any relationship with Franklin whatsoever. But still the myth persists; Alice Morse Earle, for example, was among several late 19th and early 20th century historians who helped to establish it. In *Home Life in Colonial Days* (1898), she relates:

It was not till [sic] postal affairs were placed in the capable and responsible hands of Benjamin Franklin that there were any regular or trustworthy mails.

... Benjamin Franklin set milestones the entire way on the post-road from Boston to Philadelphia. He rode in a chaise over the road; and a machine which he had invented was attached to the chaise; and it was certainly the first cyclometer that went on that road, over which so many cyclometers have passed during the last five years. It measured the miles as he travelled. When he had ridden a mile he stopped; from a heavy cart loaded with milestones, which kept alongside the chaise, a stone was dropped which was afterwards set by a gang of men.

A number of old colonial milestones are still standing. There is one in Worcester, on what was the "New Connecticut Path"; one in Springfield on the "Bay Path," and there are several of Benjamin Franklin's setting, one being at Stratford, Connecticut.²⁵

Again in 1900, Earle embellished the Franklin myth in her *Stage-coach and Tavern Days*:

When Benjamin Franklin was Postmaster-general, he set an indelible postmark in many ways on the history of our country; and many mementos of him still exist. Among them are the old milestones set under his supervision. He transacted this apparently prosaic business with that picturesque originality which he brought to all his doings and which renders to every detail of his life an interest which cannot be exceeded and scarcely equaled by the events recorded of any other figure in history.

He drove over the roads which were to be marked by milestones, seated in a comfortable chaise, of his own planning, and followed by a gang of men, and heavy carts laden with milestones. Attached to the chaise was a machine of his invention which registered by the revolution of the wheels the number of miles the chaise passed over. At each mile he halted, and a stone was dropped which was afterward set. The King's Highway, the old Pequot Trail, was thus marked and set. A few of these milestones between Boston and Philadelphia are still standing, one in New London, and another at Stratford, and are glanced

²⁵ Alice Morse Earle, *Home Life in Colonial Days* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1898), 335-336.

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at carelessly by the hundreds of thousands who glide swiftly past on wheels bearing more accurate cyclometers than that of Franklin.²⁶

By 1913, the historian Stephen Jenkins introduced solid research and scholarship to the topic of road-building in *The Old Boston Post Road*, but nevertheless repeated Earle's story. After citing a colonial law passed in New York on March 9, 1774, entitled "An Act to prevent the breaking or defacing the Mile Stones now or hereafter to be erected in this Colony," the author wrote that:

The positions of the milestones that formerly marked the Post Road – a few of which are to be found along the route, even in New York City – were determined by Franklin himself by means of an ingenious attachment to the wheel of his wagon, which showed each mile travelled. The spot was marked by a stake, and the stone post with its appropriate inscription was planted by the workmen. These milestones became favorite places for the location of taverns, and the tavern-keepers abreast of whose houses the milestones were placed considered themselves lucky.²⁷

Even Wesley Everett Rich, writing *The History of the United States Post Office to the Year 1829* (1924), accepted the theory that it was Franklin himself who employed milestones to improve the delivery of the mails when he stated:

[Franklin] made a long tour of inspection, visiting all the offices in the north, and as far south as Virginia. New surveys were made, new and shorter routes laid out, and the speed of travel increased on some of the old lines. Milestones were set up on some of the principal roads, as, for instance, on the route between Boston and Philadelphia. By making the mails travel at night between Philadelphia and New York, a letter sent from one place to the other could receive an answer on the following day.²⁸

Recent scholarship has proven this myth to be unsubstantiated. Benjamin Franklin, born in Boston in 1706, was apprenticed at the age of twelve to his brother James, a printer and founder of the Boston newspaper *New England Courant*.²⁹ Franklin moved to Philadelphia in 1723 where he set up his own print shop, purchased *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, and launched the popular *Poor Richard's Almanack*, which secured his fortune and professional future. As a newspaper publisher, Franklin understood the relationship between the mail and the distribution of newspapers because postmasters often decided which newspapers could travel free of charge or not at all. In 1737, he was appointed postmaster of Philadelphia by the British Crown Post, then becoming joint postmaster general for the Crown along with Virginia's William Hunter in 1753. It was at this early point in his

²⁶ Alice Morse Earle, *Stage-coach and Tavern Days* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900), 353.

²⁷ Stephen Jenkins, *The Old Boston Post Road* (New York, London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 18.

²⁸ Wesley E. Rich, *The History of the United States Post Office to the Year 1829* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 34.

²⁹ United States Post Office, "Benjamin Franklin, First Postmaster General,"
<http://about.usps.com/publications/pub100/pub100_007.htm>.

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career that Franklin surveyed the post roads and post offices throughout the northern colonies, introducing new accounting methods for postmasters, and having post riders carry the mail both day and night. Other initiatives of his are said to have resulted in the British Crown seeing its first profit from the North American mails by 1760. And in 1763, it is documented that Franklin traveled over 1,600 miles of postal routes and inspected post offices between New England and Virginia. However, there is no record of Franklin setting milestones along these routes, nor is there a record of the postal system itself incurring any expenses related to their installation.³⁰

Finding this connection has nevertheless tempted historians. Postal rates were charged by the distances the mail traveled, and verifying those distances was important in the context of making costs equitable and the postal system more profitable. But turning a profit was not necessarily the motive behind improving the management of the postal system in the 18th century. Gaining greater efficiencies and thereby reducing its “burthen” while expanding service to the population was the primary objective, as the following “Memorandum on the American Postal Service” addressed to the Lords of the Treasury on January 28, 1764, makes clear:

The beginning of last summer Mr. Franklin and Mr. Foxcroft, Deputy Post Masters General for North-America, undertook a Survey, which was proposed to extend at least, through the whole present Post Roads, in order to examine every where into the state and Management of the several Post Offices; to make such new Regulations as should appear to be necessary; and to observe what Improvements, the Revenue might be capable of in the different Colonies... particularly, That of rendering Correspondence in the vast Empire of America of the greatest utility to His Majesty’s Subjects; at the same time keeping in View the Improvements of the Revenue itself; though the Postage cannot for a long while, be expected to exceed the charges of Management, because in the Colonies, settled in part only, where the Towns are situated at a great distance from each other, there is a continual necessity of erecting new Offices... as a Country increasing in Wealth and Commerce, and so speedily multiplying its Inhabitants, cannot fail to keep pace in an Increase of Correspondence...³¹

Making the postal system in the American colonies more profitable was therefore envisioned to result from careful management, and the expectation that as the population grew and new post offices were built, an increase in “Correspondence” would generate enough revenue to “bear its own Expence.” History revealed that the burden of improving the system would soon fall to the colonies themselves, but the installation of milestones along postal routes, either before or after the Revolution, does not appear to have been the responsibility or concern of postal authorities.

Further evidence regarding the “Franklin myth” may be found in a review of the Founding Father’s own papers, begun at Yale University in 1954 under the direction of Dr. Leonard W. Labaree. In 1971, Labaree was

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ “The Postmasters General to the Lords of the Treasury: Memorandum on the American Postal Service.” Letterbook copy: General Post Office, London.

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asked to comment on Franklin's supposed involvement in their installation by a researcher interested in documenting milestones in Connecticut. Labaree's response leaves little doubt that Franklin had no involvement whatsoever in setting milestones. He wrote that:

... [in] all his papers written while he was in America prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution not one document in this very substantial mass of contemporary documents has been found to contain so much as a single reference to roadside milestones, erected by Franklin or by any other person.³²

Labaree elaborated on the larger context of the postal system and its relationship to postal routes by writing that:

The deputy postmasters general determined the specific routes on which the postriders traveled. The Post Office officials had no responsibility for the building and maintenance of these roads, bridges and ferries. The Post Office did not spend a penny on this work. Milestones, like bridges and other facilities and the roads themselves, would have been the responsibility of the local authorities, not of the postal service.

Milestones were essentially an embellishment, helpful on through roads from one town to another for the private traveler who might not be familiar with the road he was traversing, and would like to know how far he had come and how far he had still to go before reaching his destination, and who might also want to assure himself that he was on the right road. Milestones were of no particular use to the postal service, for the postriders were thoroughly familiar with the roads they traveled.

The convenience of other travelers, on the other hand, was not the Post Office's responsibility or concern.³³

Despite the lack of any evidence linking Franklin to the installation of milestones anywhere in the colonies, the myth persists especially in Southold Town, where a remarkable journal published in 1857 purports to support the story. Augustus Griffin (1767-1857), a nonagenarian and lifelong resident of Oysterponds (Orient), recounted in his journal that:

Dr. Benjamin Franklin passed through this island, from Brooklyn, to Southold Harbor, and in a carriage of his own construction. It was conceived, with clock work or machinery of peculiar make, that a bell would be struck at the termination of every twenty rods. By this means, the Doctor measured the distance accurately – his object, no doubt, being to ascertain the length of the island; and it seems a little strange that he did not proceed to the end. He stopped at the inn of my grandfather, Samuel Griffin, at the Harbor, and who took him, the following day, across the Sound to New London. The Doctor was on his way to Boston to visit his widowed mother.³⁴

³² Quoted in "Mylestoning in Connecticut, 1757 – 1971." Author unknown, c. 1973.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Augustus Griffin, *Griffin's Journal* (Orient, L.I., manuscript, 1857), 228-229.

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The year in which this event took place may be inferred within the context of the author's anecdotal recollection to have been 1755, or twelve years before Griffin's birth, and was therefore based on family tradition, not on personal observation. Hosting the celebrated Dr. Franklin in a country inn on eastern Long Island was certainly a cherished family memory, one that was retold by Samuel Griffin's grandson Augustus a century later. But as recent scholarship points out, Franklin's "widowed mother" Abiah Folger Franklin had died in Boston on May 8, 1752.³⁵ Her death therefore took place three years before the tradition recalls and a year before Franklin was appointed deputy postmaster to the northern colonies. It is therefore clear that the purpose of Franklin's trip to Southold was not about setting milestones; in fact, Griffin himself wondered why Franklin hadn't proceeded to the "end" (i.e., Orient Point).

Perhaps the inventor was simply experimenting with a new precision surveyor's tool, one of French manufacture, which greatly facilitated the recording of distances. An example of such a device, believed to be similar to one in Franklin's possession, survives in the collection of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia.³⁶ By measuring the perimeter of a wagon's wheel and calibrating distances as a function of its rotation, highly accurate measurements of miles travelled were easily calculated. Familiarity with this sophisticated surveyor's tool would have put Franklin in good stead, when, as deputy postmaster, he assumed the responsibility of measuring postal routes on two occasions. Griffin's fascinating account of Franklin's visit to Southold, regardless of his erroneous reference to the date of his visit to his "widowed mother," therefore bears no relationship to setting milestones.

In summary, there is no evidence that Benjamin Franklin had any involvement with the establishment of milestones, either in Southold Town or elsewhere in the northern colonies, which he managed as deputy postmaster general from 1753 until the outbreak of the Revolution. His interest in accurately surveying the postal routes that were under his control is significant, however, and relevant to the subject of how these arteries of communication and transportation were maintained, measured and improved. The installation of milestones along Southold's "King's Highway" in 1829 was, in the context of improving the roads of the period, an important commitment on the town's part to keeping its principal corridor properly signed in compliance with state law. And while Franklin's post riders of the earlier period may have relied to some extent on the patchwork system of milestones installed throughout the colonies, these improvements of the public roadways –

³⁵ "Josiah Franklin," <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josiah_Franklin>.

³⁶ Phillips Museum of Art, "Odometer, ca. 1763," <<http://www.benfranklin300.org/frankliniana/result.php?id=170>>. The odometer in the museum's Frankliniana Collection dates c. 1763 and is described in their online catalog as having been "used to measure the distance traveled by a wheeled vehicle. Franklin owned a similar device, listed in the inventory of his household made after his death as a 'French Weeweiser' (wayweiser)."

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like the bridges, toll houses and ferries of the same period – were simultaneous with but unrelated physically to Franklin’s work as deputy postmaster general.

Quarrying the Rock

Stone for construction or any purpose was always imported to Long Island since its settlement in the mid-17th century, due to the geological nature of the island itself. In this regard, it is helpful to understand in the broadest terms how Long Island evolved geologically and how its glacial and post-glacial history formed its shape over time. Long Island is a long, narrow island measuring about one hundred forty miles in length and varying in width from twelve to twenty miles between Brooklyn and Riverhead. Its eastern forks surround Peconic Bay and extend east to form the North and South Forks. The forks give a hint as to how the island as a whole was formed.

Beneath Long Island lies a foundation of ancient metamorphic bedrock dating over 400 million years old, above which lies a thick deposit of sand, clay and gravel measuring up to 2,000 feet in thickness (under Fire Island) that thins toward the island’s north shore and west end. These pre-glacial formations are seldom visible; more important are the glacial deposits left during the Wisconsin stage of the Pleistocene Epoch, the product of a massive continental glacier that advanced and retreated twice, creating the contours of Long Island familiar today. Two terminal moraines – the Ronkonkoma and later Harbor Hill – mark the southerly extremes of this glacier, whose accumulations of rock debris formed the prominent ridges or “spines” that stretch from west to east, creating a striking contrast in the island’s topography between the broad outwash plain that slopes south to the Atlantic Ocean, and the hilly topography along the shoreline of Long Island Sound. The Town of Southold is situated within a strip of land bordered south by the Harbor Hill moraine and north by Long Island Sound. It is not uncommon to find large pebbles and rounded boulders scattered along its beaches and embedded in its soil, these having been left behind as the last glacier retreated. This “debris” is Long Island’s only natural source of rock and all that was available to its early settlers for building or other purposes.

The most familiar examples of this rock “debris” now scattered across Southold Town and along Long Island’s north shore are numerous glacial “erratics” that were heaved forward from New England by the ice sheet. Glacial melting left these reminders of the Pleistocene Epoch resting on or projecting from the ground, some reaching colossal size. In the Town of Oyster Bay, for example, is one of the most celebrated of these erratics and one of the few that is actually named. “Shelter Rock” is a large granite boulder located on the border of Manhasset and North Hills. Estimated to weigh some 1,800 tons, it measures 55 feet high and 35 feet wide, and has a 30 foot overhang from which it derived the legend of having functioned as a Native American

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shelter. Other noted erratics on the North Shore include a gigantic example near the Hallock Homestead in Rocky Point, a group of three “sisters” near Wading River (Brookhaven Town), and another one on the beach at Orient Point (Southold Town). A notable collection of smaller erratics that demonstrate how common they were along the Island’s beaches may be seen on the shoreline of Plum Island off Orient Point, where virtually no habitation or exploitation of natural resources has taken place since the settlement period. Here pebbles large and small may be seen in abundance.

Smaller erratics than those which were later named were readily available for building dry walls and foundations, especially those that were gathered on the beach or collected while clearing the fields. Examples of simple headstones and footstones are also known to have been made from these pebbles, their initials or dates crudely carved on the surface of the rocks, which were often selected for their shape or color.³⁷ But these uses of Long Island’s native rock are limited and associated primarily with the coastal areas where they are found. For the most part, stones for building, crafting headstones or other purposes were imported. Sandstone was typical; quarried in the lower Connecticut River valley by the late 17th century, it was easily transported to Long Island. Sandstone is also found used as headstones, hearths, steps and especially for foundations. Lacking its own source of quarried stone, masonry building on Long Island was limited for the most part to brick construction, for which an ample source of clay is documented across the entire region. Extensive clay deposits were found in Southold Town, in Hashamomack and elsewhere including Fishers Island.³⁸

Southold’s milestones, which were quarried of granite, differ markedly from mid-18th century milestones, which were typically shaped out of more easily carved brownstone or slate. In fact, prior to the Revolution, granite could only be used for building or other purposes after blasting it into smaller pieces, whereas sedimentary sandstone and slate was softer and therefore more easily quarried.³⁹ These rock types yielded thin layers appropriate for construction, headstone manufacture, and other uses. Southold’s milestones are early examples of the emergence of granite as a new building material, a development that would have enormous consequences as quarrying techniques improved throughout the 19th century. It was only toward the end of the century, for example, that granite began to replace marble as the preferred material for headstones and monuments due to its durability. Previously, the relative softness of marble lent itself not only to simple tablets that were easily quarried, cut, carved, and polished but also used for elaborate monuments with sculptural and figural embellishments. The durability of granite, once the techniques of quarrying and finishing

³⁷ See, for example: Snodgrass, Joel C. and Zachary N. Studenroth. “Underhill Burying Ground, Lattintown, NY: Conditions Assessment & Recommendations for Conservation Treatment.” Unpublished Ms., 2014.

³⁸ Munsell, *Op. cit.*

³⁹ Stone Structures of Northeastern United States, “Stone Splitting Methods,”

<http://www.stonestructures.org/html/quarry_methods.html>. See also: Mary E. Gage and James E. Gage, *The Art of Splitting Stone* (Amesbury, MA: Powwow River Books, 2005).

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were developed and marketed at a competitive price, proved the demise of the marble trades. Southold's milestones are significant as artifacts surviving from the early years of the granite industry in this country.

The source of the Southold milestones was likely Quincy or nearby Rockport, Massachusetts, both of which became prominent centers of granite quarrying soon after the Revolution. According to geologist and historian A. T. Coons:

The stone [i.e., granite] industry in New England began in colonial times with the use of boulders and cobbles. The splitting of dimension stone from boulders was a crude operation... Split stone was used mainly in the construction of wharves, foundations, and wells, and cobbles were used for street paving. The sources of supply were within reasonable distance for transportation by water or by teams of oxen. About the beginning of the nineteenth century considerable granite was conveyed to Boston from Quincy, Mass., by ox teams and from Chelmsford (now Westford), Mass., by canal...

The first quarries of more than local importance were convenient to water transportation, on the coasts of Massachusetts and Maine.⁴⁰

The Quincy quarry became well-known following the 1825 commission of the Bunker Hill Monument, which commemorated the first major conflict between British and Patriot forces during the Revolution, fought on June 17, 1775. The 221-foot high obelisk, constructed from Quincy granite and erected between 1827 and 1843, was begun just two years before Southold's milestones were quarried. Despite delays due to lack of funding, and the eventual need to sell off land acquired for the monument to complete construction, the Bunker Hill Monument was dedicated by Daniel Webster on June 17, 1843. One of the most significant aspects of the project was the construction of a purpose-built railway – the first of its kind – which delivered the granite to the site. The notoriety of the Bunker Hill Monument, which was the nation's largest scaled memorial prior to the Washington Monument (1848-88), dramatized and popularized the use of quarried granite for new construction and other purposes such as the Southold milestones. As historian Coons pointed out:

The Quincy granite, owing, no doubt, to its reputation gained as the stone used in Bunker Hill Monument, to its favorable position near tidewater, and to the more advanced methods of quarrying it, was probably the leading building granite during this period, although other granites along the coast of Maine and Massachusetts were finding an equally extensive range of markets.⁴¹

Whether brought from Quincy, Massachusetts, or a neighboring community, the granite Southold milestones are locally significant as the first documented use of this material in the region. The first granite

⁴⁰ A. T. Coons, "The Production of Granite in the New England States," in *The Commercial Granites of New England*, ed. T. Nelson Dale (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1923), 436-441.

⁴¹ A. T. Coons, *Op. cit.*

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gravestones in Southold, for example, date from the 1870s, nearly half a century later. The only other documented use of granite – this time for building purposes – was in the construction of the nearby Riverhead Court House in 1854-5.⁴² The new facility was located on the outskirts of town and described as “[built] of brick and stone, and cost[ing] \$17,800... is two stories in height, and stands on a basement of stone.” Later in the century (1881), a new jail was erected behind the Court House, it having been “indicted by the grand jury 14 or 15 times as insufficient for the purpose.” The jail was an “octagonal building of stone.”⁴³ The stone referred to in these descriptions was unquestionably granite, as fragments of the jail’s foundation survive today, although the building has since been demolished.

Another use of imported granite (or gneiss, a variety) on Long Island in the 19th century was for stone posts, set deep in the ground for supporting gates and picket fences. More long lasting than wood (before the application of creosote or the invention of pressure-treated methods of wood preservation), granite posts were extremely durable. Many survive today. Despite their large size and considerable weight, the cost of importing stone posts must have justified their use, especially for “better” applications such as for enclosing burying grounds, municipal buildings and churches, and more opulent homes. Important examples of stone posts survive on Long Island’s East End, including fences at the old Shelter Island and Cutchogue Burying Grounds and at homes in Sag Harbor and North Sea (Southampton). This practice is only known to date from the mid-19th century on Long Island, however, and postdates the quarrying of the Southold milestones by several decades.

⁴² Bayles, *History*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

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F. Associated Property Types

There are 24 milestones spaced along the old Main Road in Southold Town at approximately one mile intervals, beginning in the hamlet of Laurel and ending at Orient Point (map included at end of section). The milestones are the sole property type within this nomination form. Of these, 23 are historic and are the subject of the nomination; one, which is a replacement stone, does not qualify for inclusion. The stones are numbered sequentially from west to east, from “7” to “30” respectively and are, with one exception, carved from granite. The non-historic exception to the group, which is a replacement stone, is Milestone 21 located on the outskirts of Greenport. It is distinct from the others in appearance because it is carved from slate rather than granite, and its carving is crisp, revealing it to be non-historic. Many of the milestones preserve a weathered, white painted finish with some carved letters and numbers highlighted in black. The stones were finished to stand a little over two feet high, with nearly three feet of roughly shaped bases anchoring them securely below grade. Evidence of damage and weathering – breaks, gouges, missing pieces and worn surfaces – are typical, although all but a few are easily deciphered and with the above exception, all survive from their installation in 1829. The placement of the Southold milestones at one mile intervals preserves the path of the old Main Road, formerly known as the “King’s Highway” and later the Post Road, which has stretched the length of Southold Town since the middle of the 17th century, as it does today.

Description

Each milestone in the series is characteristic of its early 19th century period of fabrication and installation, both in terms of the stone type that was used and in the abbreviations and styling of the carved numbers and letters. Each stone has been shaped from granite, a hard and coarse-grained, igneous rock consisting primarily of quartz, feldspar and mica that was not quarried or carved for building or monumental purposes in America until the late 18th century. Each stone measures about five feet long overall and weighs upwards of 450 pounds. While its upper end is carefully chiseled and squared to measure approximately 12 inches wide by six inches deep and 27 inches high, the larger bottom section measures nearly three feet long and is more roughly shaped and designed to anchor the stone securely below grade. The transition between the top and bottom sections is marked by a haunch that occurs where the longer, rougher section was meant to be concealed below grade. Evidence of the so-called “plug and feather” method that was used to quarry the granite may be visible on the lower section of the stone. The drill marks left by this early technique of quarrying, where they occur, are indicative of the late 18th and early 19th century period when this technology had become widespread, and before more sophisticated quarrying techniques were developed.

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Significance

Each of the 23 historic Southold milestones is significant under Criterion A in the areas of exploration/settlement and transportation, and for its association with the manner in which the network of roads in Southold Town evolved throughout the Colonial era. Each milestone, which is individually carved to show its unique distance in miles from the County Courthouse (Riverhead) to the west, is one of a distinct group of early 19th century granite wayfinding markers installed by Southold Town in 1829. Beginning with Milestone 7 located just beyond the Southold Town line in the hamlet of Laurel, the milestones are spaced at approximately one mile intervals along the old Main Road through the villages of Mattituck, Cutchogue, Peconic, Southold, East Marion, and Orient until the terminal Milestone 30 at Orient Point. The series begins at the west end of the town with Milestone 7, which takes its reference and distance of seven miles from Riverhead, where Suffolk County's Court House, County Hall and Post Office were located in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Changes in the old roadway, beginning with the extension of the Main Road from Southold to Greenport in the mid-19th century, have left several of the milestones on side roads although all remain at or near their original locations.

The Southold milestones are a uniquely intact collection, both on Long Island and in the Northeast of the United States. The milestones serve as reminder of the function and importance of the original Main Road, once the King's Highway and later the Post Road, which unites the town's hamlets along its 23 miles from Laurel to Orient Point. The milestones are physical remnants of the town's settlement history and their significance depends in large part on the fact that they survive as an intact group from the early 19th century.

Many of the stones preserve evidence of the so-called "plug and feather" method of how they were quarried. The technique was a significant development in stone quarrying; perfected by the 1820s, the technology is documented throughout New England first in foundations and later in building and other monumental work. Unlike the earlier and cruder technique of crushing and blasting granite, which produced rough pieces only suitable for crude foundation work, the Southold milestones preserve small round holes drilled six to seven inches apart which enabled the rock to be quarried into regular blocks of stone. The granite that was used, which is not native to Long Island except as "glacial erratics" left behind by the Ice Age, contains hornblende (dark green or black speckles) associated with quarries in Massachusetts, especially near Quincy and Rockport, which were opened by the early 19th century. This was likely the source of both the raw material and the finished stones, as working and finishing granite milestones would have been beyond the skill of Long Island stone carvers until later in the 19th century.

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Regarding the placement of the stones, each is situated on at the side of the old Main Road as it existed throughout the Colonial era, until the railroad pushed east on a straighter path that connected Southold village with Greenport in 1844. Prior to that time, the land route to Orient Point had turned northward in Southold village (present-day Boisseau Avenue), then hugged the beach along the coastline of Long Island Sound until re-joining the present-day Main Road as it travels north from Greenport. Milestones 18 through 22 are located along this former roadway between Southold and Greenport. Another anomaly which explains why some of the stones no longer face modern-day NYS Route 25 are instances in which the roadway has been straightened in the twentieth century to accommodate faster vehicles. This has resulted in several milestones now being situated along stretches of the “old road” (Milestones 7 and 28), or with distances between them that no longer equate with one mile increments (Milestones 25 and 26). In this way, each of the 23 milestones is significant of Southold Town’s more circuitous and historic Main Road.

Registration Requirements

Name of property type: Milestones associated with the Town of Southold’s historic Main Road.

In order to qualify for listing, the milestones must be one of the original 24 historic markers set in 1829 at approximately one-mile intervals along the old Main Road in the Town of Southold, Suffolk County (NY) between the hamlets of Laurel (west) and Orient Point (east). Each stone must be shaped in granite and measure approximately 27” high by 12” wide and 6” thick (above grade). Each must retain a high level of integrity, preserving carved lettering and numbering that is site-specific to the locality and characteristics of its early 19th century fabrication. The physical integrity of the stones is judged by the extent to which the above-grade portion retains sufficient mass and carving that identifies it as belonging to the series. Where the re-assembly or reattachment of broken pieces has been undertaken, more than half of the original stone must be present and the visible portion must be recognizable as a member of the series in order to qualify for listing.

While the overall condition of the milestones varies, all of the 23 surviving historic stones retain sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for listing. They survive (or have been re-set) at or near their original locations, usually several feet or yards from the actual roadbed of the old Main Road at approximate one mile intervals. Recent restoration (fall 2015) revealed that some of the milestones lack some of their lower portions, indicating prior damage and efforts to preserve and protect them from harm’s way. (Only one of the original series, Milestone 21, remains missing; it has been replaced with a modern stone and is therefore ineligible for listing.) Each of the surviving 23 historic stones preserves its unique inscription, marking its

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incremental distance in miles from the county center at Riverhead to the west (formerly “Suffolk CH”/court house).

Given their vulnerability at or near the side of the modern roadway, resetting and/or repositioning the milestones have been the natural and appropriate consequence of protecting them. Remarkably, that effort has succeeded in preserving all but one of the original stones. The loss of sections formerly hidden below grade due to vehicle strikes, and the result of resetting some behind guard rails or within several feet onto adjacent properties, does not compromise their integrity because they remain highly visible and predictable features of the old Main Road. Several of the stones, notably Milestones 8, 25, 26, 27 and 28 are known to have been rescued at various times by local residents who prevented them from being discarded, the result being that in 2015 they were reset in their original locations as determined by historical data and accurate measuring.

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G. Geographical Data

As NYS Route 25/Main Road travels east from the Suffolk County center at Riverhead, the route crosses the Town of Riverhead line and enters the Town of Southold at the hamlet of Laurel. At this point the “old road” veers to the left from the modern roadway and makes a brief detour until rejoining the Main Road several hundred yards later. This short length of the old roadway is now known as Franklinville Road, and it is near its intersection with Aldrich Lane that the first of the town’s 23 historic milestones may be found. Each of the milestones is marked with the number of miles that they measure from Riverhead, the location of the old Suffolk County courthouse, to the west. All but one of the stones is set slightly off the roadway along the south side of the road.

- **Milestone 7** is located in the hamlet of Laurel within the right-of-way of town-owned Franklinville Road (450 Franklinville Road). This brief detour at Laurel is one of four such places in which the old roadway was straightened to accommodate faster moving vehicles; the others will be noted below.
- Following the Main Road east toward Mattituck, **Milestone 8** is also located in Laurel just beyond the intersection of Laurel Trail, a private road that provides access to the Laurel Links Country Club. It is just to the west of here that the Long Island Rail Road bridges over the Main Road. The milestone is located within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (6600 Route 25) adjacent Country Club property, and has been reset several feet back from where its surviving base was found, a response to the fact that it was evidently struck by vehicles on more than one occasion and had been broken into four pieces.

Beyond Milestone 8, traveling east, the old road veers off to the right from the straight-away at the intersection of Bray Avenue. In this case, however, the road retains the name “Old Main Road” and rejoins the Main Road a short distance further along the route. Thus, the original route is physically intact here.

- **Milestone 9** is the first of Mattituck’s three stones, located west of Bay Avenue within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (11224 Route 25). There is a split rail fence set directly behind the stone, which marks the front property line of an adjoining private residence.

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- **Milestone 10** is located in Mattituck west of Maratooka Lane and within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (16596 Route 25), opposite a large five-bay farmhouse (16735 Main Road) situated at the intersection of Mill Lane. This milestone, like several others, had been struck and broken at grade; during repairs, it was discovered that the stone was previously reset in concrete, revealing its location to be especially vulnerable.
- **Milestone 11** is the last of three located in the hamlet of Mattituck. It is set east of Locust Avenue, on the boundary line between the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (21322 Route 25) and adjoining private property (SCTM #1000-109-1-37). Flat, open farmland that includes both a sod farm and vineyard stretches to the west and south while the roadway, which appears from the flanking properties to have been excavated and lowered to soften the grade, veers slightly to the left.
- **Milestone 12**, the first of Cutchogue's stones, is located west of Case's Lane within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (26832 Route 25). It stands near the northwest corner of 26840 Main Road, adjoining a residential property distinguished by its mature and varied tree specimens and a large Victorian farmhouse. Across the road is the mid-19th century Presbyterian Church and to the east is the Village Green, property of the Cutchogue-New Suffolk Historical Council, where several historical buildings are preserved including the 17th century Old House, thought to be New York State's earliest surviving English style dwelling (National Historic Landmark).
- **Milestone 13** is located to the east of the Cutchogue village center, west of Harbor Lane within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (32410 Route 25). It is surrounded by farmland, although the opposite side of the road is now improved with a large shopping center and is no longer rural. Cutchogue's Old Burying Ground, also owned and maintained by the Cutchogue-New Suffolk Historical Council, is located just to the east of Milestone 13 at the intersection of the Main Road and Harbor Lane.
- **Milestone 14**, the last of Cutchogue's three stones, is located east of Skunk Lane, on the boundary line between the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (37462 Route 25) and adjoining private property (SCTM #1000-85-3-5.1). The milestone is set well back from the roadway, either as a result of relocation or because the road itself occupies the more northerly side of its right-of-way. A large Victorian farmhouse stands across the road, a reminder of the rural character of the Main Road which is now dotted with commercial properties, especially near the village centers.

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- **Milestone 15** is one of two located in the tiny hamlet of Peconic, whose “center” is located north of Main Road where Peconic Lane crosses the railroad tracks. Extensive vineyards and farmland surround the stone on both sides of the road which is located east of Peconic Lane within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (42634 Route 25).
- Further to the east is the second of Peconic’s two milestones, **Milestone 16**, which also enjoys a rural setting. It is situated in front of Catapano Farms and east of the intersection with South Harbor Road, the milestone is located within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (48082 Route 25).
- **Milestone 17**, one of three located in Southold village, is situated within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (53162 Route 25) west of Wells Avenue, in the grassy verge between the road and sidewalk. The nearby First Presbyterian Church is a mid-19th century replacement of the original, built soon after the town’s settlement in 1640 and the adjacent burying ground preserves headstones dating from the 17th century.
- **Milestone 18** is located north of Southold Village within the right-of-way of town-owned Boisseau Avenue (2908 Boisseau Ave.) at the intersection where the old North (or Middle) Road continues west, by-passing the villages of the old Main Road. A three bay “half-house” of early 19th century period that preserves an early wind pump occupies the adjacent property.

While the present-day Main Road leads in an easterly direction toward Greenport, the route change came as a result of the railroad’s arrival to the North Fork in 1844. And with it came the engineering that was necessary to bridge the marshy area surrounding Hashamomuck Pond to the east of the village. The roadway soon followed suit. But before the coming of the railroad, the land route east from Southold first turned north and followed the path of today’s Boisseau Avenue to the North Road (Rte. 48). Milestone 18 and the four that follow it preserve the route of that earlier roadway.

- **Milestone 19** is the last of the three located in Southold village and is set east of Grove Road, within the right-of-way of county-owned Route 48 (52494 CR 48). Within view of the stone to the north and east is Long Island Sound, and within a short distance to the south is Long Creek, an extension of Hashamomuck Pond, an indication of how narrow this land connection was to the easterly settlements of Southold Town until construction of the railroad in the mid-19th century.

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- Proceeding eastward, **Milestone 20**, the first of Greenport's four stones, is located east of Albertson Lane within the right-of-way of county-owned Route 48 (57788 CR 48), at the edge of a wooded area. It is partially protected from oncoming traffic behind a guardrail.
- **Milestone 21** is a replacement stone and does not meet the eligibility requirements for inclusion.
- **Milestone 22**, which is located east of Madison Street and within the right-of-way of county-owned Route 48 (68650 CR 48), is embedded in a hedge that defines the northerly boundary of a property at that corner.

While each of these milestones is located within the boundaries of present-day Greenport, they mark the route which historically by-passed the hamlet at that time. That route rejoins the Main Road as it now runs north out of Greenport and turns eastward toward the hamlet of East Marion.

- **Milestone 23** is located in Greenport west of Shipyard Lane, opposite the Island's End Golf and Country Club and within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (4675 Route 25), on the outskirts of the village.
- **Milestone 24** is located east of Bay Avenue, and set into an embankment in front of the East Marion Chapel within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (10020 Route 25). The chapel is located at the intersection of Cemetery Road, which leads to the East Marion Cemetery. The Main Road has been graded lower at this point and a narrow driveway, now abandoned, rises and crosses the front yard between the milestone and the chapel. The driveway appears to have been the original approach to the cemetery.
- Heading east on the Main Road, **Milestone 25**, East Marion's second milestone is the only one of the series now set on the north side of the road. This was apparently the result of the re-engineering of the roadway, which forms a narrow causeway now reinforced with a rocky embankment along its southerly edge. Milestone 25 is said to have been salvaged during the project and reset on the north side of the road on the boundary line between the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (53162 Route 25) and an adjoining private parcel (SCTM #1000-23-1-5).

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The remaining five milestones are situated in Orient and Orient Point, the most easterly localities on Southold Town's mainland. The old roadway has been straightened in three places along this stretch of the route, the first between Milestones 25 and 26, the second between Milestones 28 and 29, and the last between Milestones 29 and 30. In each instance, the actual distance between the stones has been shortened. Despite the road work and the need to reset two of the stones (Milestones 26 and 27), each of them survives at or near its historic location. The gentle curve in the road between stones 25 and 26 is a change from the original route, which followed a straighter course that hugged the shoreline to the north and then made a right hand turn and rejoined the present road further east. Visual evidence for this can still be seen from the row of existing telephone poles that follows the older route.

- **Milestone 26** has been reset at its original location west of Village Lane and just to the west of Latham's Farms, within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (20714 Route 25). Like Milestone 27, Milestone 26 had been struck by a vehicle and remained in storage at the town's Highway Department for many years until reinstallation in 2015. While no base for the stone was found, earlier surveys and notes were used to determine its accurate placement along the roadway.
- **Milestone 27** has been reset within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (26142 Route 25) adjacent the Beaver Tree Farm, opposite a one-story, five-bay 19th century farmhouse located at 27339 Main Road.
- **Milestone 28** has also been reset at its historic location within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (30001 Route 25), and occupies a conspicuous place where the new road curves to the right and the old road (Old Main Road 83) forks to the left. The location is just to the east of one of Southold Town's earliest dwellings, which dates from the 17th century settlement period. A roadside marker describes the history of the building, known by historians locally as Peakin's Inn.
- After the old road rejoins the highway, **Milestone 29** is located one mile west of the Orient Point Ferry, across the road from the Terry farm within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (36166 Route 25).
- Finally, **Milestone 30** is set in a grassy strip between the Cross Sound Ferry departure lanes within the right-of-way of state-owned Route 25 (41324 Route 25). The roadway turns at a right angle at this point,

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and terminates at the water's edge where vehicles disembark from the incoming and departing ferryboats. Historic maps show a different configuration, in which a long wharf formerly extended to the south into Gardiners Bay, whereas the modern era shoreline is now bulk-headed, enabling vehicles to board the vessels directly from land.

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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

In 1990, when Southold Town observed its 350th anniversary, an effort was made to identify and restore the milestones. A booklet was published in 1991 that celebrated their significance, but no restoration was undertaken.⁴⁴ But 25 years later, when the town began planning its 375th anniversary, two enterprising boy scouts proposed a project to record and restore the milestones with training from a professional stone conservator. Nominating the 23 surviving historic Southold Town milestones to the National Register of Historic Places is part of that initiative.

The series of Southold milestones proposed for nomination is identified as a distinct group of early 19th century granite wayfinding markers that survive within or next to three roadways in this northeastern Long Island municipality: NYS Route 25, Suffolk County Route 48, and two local Southold Town roads (Franklinville Road and Boisseau Avenue). Beginning with Milestone 7, which is located just within the Southold Town line in the hamlet of Laurel, the milestones are spaced at approximately one mile intervals along the old roadway through the villages of Mattituck, Cutchogue, Peconic, Southold, East Marion, and Orient until the terminal Milestone 30 at Orient Point. The series begins at the west end of the town with Milestone 7, which takes its reference and distance of seven miles from Riverhead, where Suffolk County's Court House, County Hall and Post Office were located in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Changes in the old roadway, including sections that were straightened as well as its extension from Southold to Greenport in the mid-19th century, have left several of the milestones on side roads although all remain at their original locations.

The milestones are of a uniform size and design, and except for one slate replacement stone (non-contributing Milestone 21), are quarried from granite. They measure approximately five feet long overall with roughly shaped, three foot bottom sections meant to anchor the stones securely below grade. The upper ends are carefully shaped to a uniform specification measuring 12" wide and 6" deep, with a height of about 27" above grade as indicated by the haunches which occur at the transition from rough and unfinished (lower) to smooth surface finishes (upper). Clear evidence of the so-called "plug and feather" method used to quarry the rough granite is visible on the lower sections of many of the stones. This is indicative of the early 19th century period, when this technique had become widespread and before more sophisticated quarrying techniques were adopted.

The evidence of a white painted finish is more prominent on some milestones than others and some in fact have no paint whatsoever. Whether this finish was original to their installation is unknown. The carved numbers and letters are also highlighted with black paint on some of the stones. Forensic examination of the

⁴⁴ Long, Robert P. *Benjamin Franklin's North Fork Milestones: A Fascinating Heritage from 1755*. Cutchogue, NY: Cutchogue-New Suffolk Historical Council. 1991.

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stones has not determined the age(s) of these finishes, which is not documented in the literature of the time. As a series of historic wayfinding markers dating from the early 1800s, the Southold milestones are unique on Long Island and in the Northeast of the United States. Their integrity is very high and their location along Southold's Main Road makes them a visible feature of the town's historic roadway. Now restored, the milestones are a reminder of the function and importance of the Main Road, once the King's Highway and later a Post Road, which unites the town's hamlets along its 23 miles from Laurel to Orient Point. The milestones are physical remnants of the town's settlement history and their significance depends in large part on the fact that they survive as an intact group from the early 19th century.

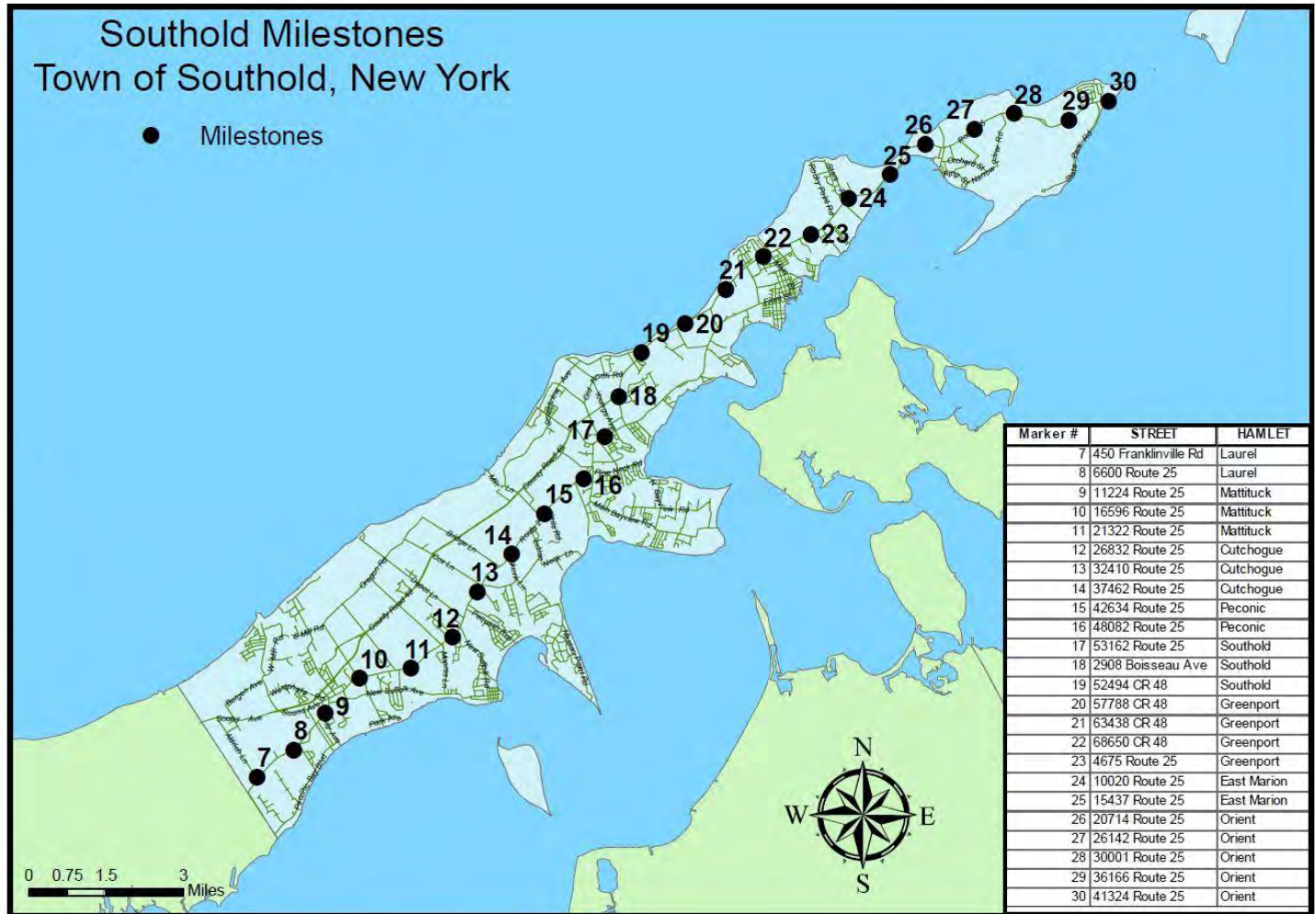
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SOUTHOLD MILESTONES:
LOCATIONS & COORDINATES



MILESTONE 7

450 Franklinville Road,
Laurel

Longitude -72.561409

Latitude 40.9695702



MILESTONE 8

6600 Route 25,
Laurel

Longitude -72.5477219

Latitude 40.9769936



MILESTONE 9

11224 Route 25,
Mattituck

Longitude -72.5358276

Latitude 40.9872437

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Southold Town MilestonesName of Multiple Property ListingSuffolk County, NYState**MILESTONE 10**

16596 Route 25,
Mattituck

Longitude -72.5228043
Latitude 40.996727

**MILESTONE 11**

21332 Route 25,
Mattituck &
SCTM #1000-109-1-37

Longitude -72.5037308
Latitude 40.9993095

**MILESTONE 12**

26832 Route 25,
Cutchogue

Longitude -72.4881134
Latitude 41.0078697

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MILESTONE 13

34210 Route 25,
Cutchogue

Longitude -72.478653
Latitude 41.020401



MILESTONE 14

37462 Route 25,
Cutchogue &
SCTM #1000-85-3-5.1

Longitude -72.4656448
Latitude 41.030899



MILESTONE 15

42634 Route 25,
Peconic

Longitude -72.4532471
Latitude 41.0420837

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MILESTONE 16

48082 Route 25,
Peconic

Longitude -72.4385071
Latitude 41.0517426



MILESTONE 17

53162 Route 25,
Southold

Longitude -72.4303436
Latitude 41.0632668



MILESTONE 18

2908 Boisseau Ave.,
Southold

Longitude -72.4249649
Latitude 41.0746498

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MILESTONE 19

52494 County Rte. 48,
Southold

Longitude -72.4162216
Latitude 41.0869102



MILESTONE 20

57788 County Rte. 48,
Greenport

Longitude -72.3997955
Latitude 41.0946579



MILESTONE 22

68650 County Rte. 48,
Greenport

Longitude -72.3703918
Latitude 41.11306

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MILESTONE 23

4675 Rte. 25,
Greenport

Longitude -72.3525772
Latitude 41.119175



MILESTONE 24

10020 Rte. 25,
East Marion

Longitude -72.3383408
Latitude 41.1290359



MILESTONE 25

15437 Rte. 25,
East Marion &
SCTM #1000-23-1-5

Longitude -72.3227921
Latitude 41.1353683

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MILESTONE 26

20714 Rte. 25,
Orient

Longitude -72.3093719
Latitude 41.1437111



MILESTONE 27

26142 Rte. 25,
Orient

Longitude -72.2910767
Latitude 41.1477089



MILESTONE 28

30001 Rte. 25,
Orient

Longitude -72.2762451
Latitude 41.1519051

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Southold Town MilestonesName of Multiple Property ListingSuffolk County, NYState**MILESTONE 29**

36166 Rte. 25,
Orient

Longitude -72.2559586
Latitude 41.1496696

**MILESTONE 30**

41324 Rte. 25,
Orient

Longitude -72.2410507
Latitude 41.1549072

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 3/31/2017 Date of 45th Day: 5/15/2017

Reference number:

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> CLG	

☒ Accept ☐ Return ☐ Reject ☐ Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236

Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments: No see attached SLR: No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



24 March 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following MPDF and seven nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Southold Town Milestones, Suffolk County
Southold Milestone 7 (Southold Town Milestones), Suffolk County
Winans-Huntting House, Dutchess County
Reformed Church of Melrose, Bronx County
PS 186, New York County
Henry's Garage, Essex County
Nelson Methodist Church, Madison County
John S. Tilley Ladders Company, Albany County

This is the last batch until your move is completed. Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office