

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH030024/DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED OCT 8 1975  
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **Gurleyville Historic District**

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

**Intersection of Gurleyville and Chaffeeville Roads**

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**Mansfield**

VICINITY OF

**2nd - Christopher Dodd**

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

**Connecticut**

**09**

**Tolland**

**013**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME **Multiple Ownership**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

**Mansfield Town Clerk**

STREET & NUMBER

**954 Storrs Road**

CITY, TOWN

**Mansfield**

STATE  
**CT**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE ~~Historic American Engineering Record~~  
~~New England: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites~~

DATE

**1975**

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

**Library of Congress**

CITY, TOWN

**Washington**

STATE  
**DC**

PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE <b>except #12</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1876</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Gurleyville Historic District is a small village located at the intersection of two wooded country roads. The district consists of about a dozen houses, primarily from the 19th century, an 18th-century grist mill, other industrial remains along the nearby Fenton River, a cemetery, and buildings, now used as residences, which once were stores, schools and a parsonage. Although most of the surrounding land is reforested, the district includes meadowland on its north, west and south sides. In this way, the physical relationship of the village and its agricultural setting is preserved.

The industrial sites along the river are somewhat separated from the village, which is built on a natural terrace between the river and a high ridge. The Royce Silk Mill (1) is the first site one encounters when entering the district on Gurleyville Road, the main approach. This consists of the ruins of a timber and earth dam, with hewn crosspieces fastened with iron tie rods; a millrace, several hundred feet long, constructed of earth and unmortared rubble; and foundations and cellars of the mill and boarding house built in 1848. Like all of Gurleyville's mills, it was very small by New England textile mill standards.

Further downstream are the gristmill and dam(2) begun by Benjamin Davis in 1749. The ruined dam reveals criss-crossed logs held together with wooden pegs. The gristmill is built of roughly hewn granite ashlar of local origin with some fairly regular courses and some randomness. It is 2 stories of stone with a gable roof and a framed and clapboarded attic. The roadside facade is backfilled so that the entrance is to the second floor. The original wheel (probably under-shot) was replaced by a turbine in the 1870's. Machinery, including a corn sheller, cob grinder, two sets of stones (one of French buhrstone), and a silk flour bag, remains in workable order. Other features of this property include the foundation of an adjacent saw mill built in 1724, ruins of another dam upstream, and the 1½ story clapboarded house across the road which was occupied by the miller. The latter has undergone such additions as a bay window and a veranda in its front facade, an ell, and possibly, a raised roofline.

The village itself is built along Chaffeeville Road, with houses closer together as one approached the center of the village, the intersection with Gurleyville Road. On the outskirts are a series of 1½ story structures: the former schoolhouse (3) built in 1876, two houses built in the period 1840-1850 (4,5) and the Benjamin Davis, Jr. House (6), built in the 1750's with a later ell. The latter was also the residence of Ephraim Gurley (1765-1845), for whom the village was named.

Toward the center of the village is the Lewis Brown House (7), believed built by Edwin Fitch, a local architect-builder who worked in the second quarter of the 19th century. The facade of this 2½ story house is distinguished by pilastered corners, simply molded capitals and an unadorned frieze and cornice. The sidelighted entrance is framed in a comparable manner. In the pasture behind this residence is the site of the trip hammer shop of Ephraim Gurley and the first silk mill in the village (the second in America); depressions in the pasture may indicate traces of the millrace, known as the "Ditch," which served these mills.

Next to the Brown house are two houses built by Lucius Gurley in 1831. The first (9) is a simple 1½ story structure and the second (10) a 2½ story house whose one-story wing was once a store. This house has been modified by the

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Gurleyville Historic District

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one

Only the Grist Mill is represented in the HAER inventory. The other buildings are in

Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources  
1975 - State

Connecticut Historical Commission  
Hartford, CT

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one

addition of oriel windows; a lean-to extends from the rear of the building. On the opposite side of the road is the Methodist parsonage (8), built about 1875, a 2½ story house which once had a porch running along its front, which may account for the uneven placement of the door and other elements on the facade. A bay window projects from the first story on one gable end, and there is a two story ell. North of this building, which also at one time had a store in it, is the site of the Methodist church, razed in 1946.

On a slight knoll in the center of the village is the house built by Lucius Gurley in 1842 (11). Next to it is a woodshed which Gurley converted into a dwelling. Both are 1½ story clapboarded structures; the former is distinguished by its more pronounced cornice and the molding around its side-lighted door. Across Gurleyville Road is a small garage which was the first schoolhouse (12) in the village. Built in the late 18th century, it was removed from its foundation further up the ridge after 1876. Although a door has been cut in one end, small windows are found on the other three walls and inside are visible heavy posts and sills which reveal its age.

Chaffeeville Road continues north of the village as Codfish Falls Road. Here are two houses dating from the mid to late 1860's. The first (13) is a 2½ story house with a porch across the facade and a bay window which projects from both stories on the gable end. Next to it is a simple 1½ story house (14) with a wing of similar size and construction.

Also in the center of the village is the David Royce House (15) built in 1735. The house is one room deep and two stories tall; an original ell was replaced by a 20th-century one of similar proportions. A tavern in the 18th century, this house has a swinging partition on strap hinges which makes the upper floor into one large room. The end chimneys, though not original, have been rebuilt to their proper size, and are part of attempts to restore the 18th-century appearance of the house. Next to it is a 1½ story stable (16) converted to a dwelling around 1870. Across the Road is the Emory B. Smith House (17) in the front room of which presided the Justice of the Peace. The house was built before the Civil War and is in a simple Italianate style: flat roofs, horizontal flush siding, bracketed cornices, a veranda on two sides and secondary wings on an asymmetric plan. In the 1870's, however, a gable roof and clapboarded attic were substituted for the flat roof over the main part, bringing the height to 2½ stories.

Leaving the village on Gurleyville Road one finds the 2½ story house (18) built in the 1870's for one of the children of millowner James Royce. This is the only house in Gurleyville built with the gable end facing the street. Other features are two-story bay windows on the side, a veranda on the front and side, segmental pointed arches above the windows, a round-arched attic light,

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two

a one-story ell and a large frame barn with gable roof and cupola. Finally, in leaving Gurleyville, one encounters by the river the cemetery acquired in 1847.

Except for the modern houses on Codfish Falls Road, the least trafficked entrance to the district, Gurleyville is free of intrusions. The modern structures on Gurleyville Road are set back from the road and are shielded by stands of evergreens, and with the exception of minor outbuildings, such as a garage or a greenhouse, there are no intervening intrusions. Nor does the effect of alterations significantly reduce the historical character of the area. In some cases, such as the E.B. Smith House (17) the modifications are themselves of historical interest; in most cases, such as the Benjamin Davis Jr. House (6), the alterations - dormers, an ell, rebuilt stack - still do not obscure the basic lines and details of the house. Finally, Gurleyville's impact as a historic district depends less on the integrity of any individual structure than the total impression gained from the area. Gurleyville today retains the sense of scale, closeness to agriculture, simple building and population density which set it apart in the 19th century from both the larger towns and the rural countryside.

Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings Within the Gurleyville Historic District

1. Royce Silk Mill (1848-1921), ruins: timber and earth dam, millrace, mill and boarding house foundations.
2. Grist Mill (134 Stone Mill Road): foundation of saw mill, 1724; ruins of 2 dams, 1 with pegged timbers; miller's house, 1½ story, clapboarded, early 18th century, 20th century veranda; grist mill, c.1750, granite, 2½ stories.
3. Schoolhouse (644 Chaffeeville Road): built 1876, 1½ story, clapboarded, scrolled cornice brackets, small paired windows, remodelled as residence, 1946
4. House (656 Chaffeeville Road): built 1841, steep roof, 1½ story, clapboarded, later wing and apparant reworking of window openings.
5. House (657 Chaffeeville Road): built c. 1850, 1½ story, clapboarded, later porch.
6. Benjamin Davis, Jr. House (662 Chaffeeville Road): built between 1752 and 1760, 1½ story, clapboarded, later ell, shed dormers, replaced central stack.
7. Lewis Brown House (667 Chaffeeville Road): built 2d quarter 19c. by Edwin Fitch, 2½ story, clapboarded, pilastered corners and doorway, sidelighted; pasture is site of trip hammer shop (1801-1848) and silk mill (1814-1946).

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three

8. Methodist Parsonage (670 Chaffeeville Road): built c. 1875, 2½ story, clapboarded, three bays wide, door placed off-center, bay window on end, formerly a porch across front; at one time, a store. The church was located on the next lot north, razed 1946.
9. House (671 Chaffeeville Road): built 1831 by Lucius Gurley, 1½ story, clapboarded.
10. House (673 Chaffeeville Road): built 1831 by Lucius Gurley, 2½ story, clapboarded, lean-to at rear; wing, now a garage, was once a store; considerable reworking of facade in 20th c., including oriel windows.
11. Lucius Gurley House (326 Gurleyville Road): built 1842, 1½ story, clapboarded, side-lighted doorway with trabeated molding; shed remodelled by Gurley into 1½ story dwelling (676 Chaffeeville Road).
12. Schoolhouse (Garage, 2 Codfish Falls Road): built late 18th c., 1 story, shingled and clapboarded, moved from original nearby site 1876.
13. House (2 Codfish Falls Road): built between 1865 and 1869, 2½ story, clapboarded, bay window on gable end, porch across front.
14. House (4 Codfish Falls Road): built between 1863 and 1866, 1½ story with 1½ story wing, asbestos shingles.
15. David Royce House (309 Gurleyville Road): built 1735, 2 stories, clapboarded, one room deep, end chimneys, 20th c. ell replacing similar original ell; former tavern, swinging partition in interior of upper story.
16. Stable (305 Gurleyville Road): built as stable for 15, converted to 1½ story clapboarded dwelling in 1880's.
17. E.B. Smith House (310 Gurleyville Road): built 2d quarter 19th c., 2 stories, Italianate, flush siding, cornice brackets, secondary wings; gable roof and clapboarded gable added in 1870's; court held in front room.
18. House and Barn (304 Gurleyville Road): built 1875, 2½ story, clapboarded, gable end facing street, veranda on front and side, bay windows on side, 1 story ell, segmental arches above windows, frame barn with cupola.
19. Cemetery (Gurleyville Road near bridge): stones dating from late 1840's.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Gurleyville Historic District effectively preserves the physical contours of 19th-century rural village life. In its scale, density and relationship with its surroundings the district as a whole evokes the past in a way which individual buildings cannot. Architecturally the district illustrates the plainness and conservatism of country construction. The ruins of dams and mills and the grist mill which still stands are significant not only for themselves and what they reveal about early industrial building, but also as symbols of the transformation of Gurleyville from a mere rural crossroads to a village.

The ability of the district to recall the 19th century is aided by the detailed documentation written by one villager born in 1862: Wilbur L. Cross, the popular and progressive governor of Connecticut from 1931 to 1939. Cross was born in the house across from the mill (2), then lived in the Gurley house (11) and worked in the store across the street (10). He describes in detail the contents of the store, the horse-trading and political discussions which took place there, the family disputes settled in the home of Justice of the Peace E.B. Smith (17), lessons in the old school (12) in which the children sat four abreast at one desk, his father's job as miller and in many other ways, reveals the fabric of life in a village where everyone was acquainted if not related. The schools, stores and houses mentioned by Cross are almost all still standing, with the Methodist church and the silk mills most notably absent. Moreover, Gurleyville today retains the sense of compact centrality which made this cluster of buildings a lively meeting place.

The architecture of the district is marked by an adherence to traditional forms. The typical house is a 1½ or 2½ story, clapboarded, gable-roofed block with the ridgeline parallel to the road. Similarly conceived ells were built when the original rectangle did not enclose enough space. The Royce house (15), 1735, one of Gurley's 1831 houses (10) and the Methodist parsonage (8), 1875, show a remarkable continuity over 140 years. In each case the object is defined almost entirely by mass, not line, and the problem of enclosing a given amount of space is solved with the simplest of shapes. The force of older forms and materials was so great that the only house in Gurleyville with an unusual design, the Italianate Smith house (17), was remodelled in the 1870's with a gable roof and then partially clapboarded.

A corollary of traditionalism is the absence of elaboration. Some houses (e.g., 13) after 1860 were built with bay windows, but this feature was not well integrated and in most cases seems extraneous to the design of the house; indeed, the effect is little different from that of a house 150 years older (2) which has had bay windows added. Only one house (18) successfully integrates all its nineteenth-century features. Even the Lewis Brown house (7) is plain by

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Interview with Annarie Cazel, Mansfield Historical Society, June 20, 1975.
- Cross, Wilbur L. Connecticut Yankee, an Autobiography. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943.
- Mansfield History Workshop, Chronology of Mansfield, Connecticut 1702-1972. Mansfield: Parousia Press, 1974.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 58

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	73,0	7,0,0	4,6	3,3	0,7,0	B	1,8	73,1	1,4,0	4,6	3,2	2,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
C	1,8	73,0	7,0,0	4,6	3,2	0,0,0	D	1,8	73,0	2,8,0	4,6	3,2	8,4,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This district is bounded as follows: beginning at a point on the west bank of the Fenton River, approximately 630' north of Gurleyville Road, and 10' upriver from the entrance of the millrace (inventory item 1), the boundary follows the western bank of the millrace at a distance of ten feet until the millrace turns from its southerly course toward the river. At this point the boundary runs south until it intersects with Gurleyville Road. South of this road it runs parallel to the west bank of the river at a distance of 150' for 650'. From this point it

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Bruce Clouette, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

July 7, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*John W. Shannon*

TITLE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE 9/29/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

*John W. Shannon*

DATE 12/20/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE DEC 20 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



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one

comparison with other houses by the same architect: the pilasters are not fluted or otherwise shaped and there is no carving on the friezes or classical molding on the cornice. This house, built for a mill owner, displays only the most basic suggestion of Greek Revival ornamentation, and yet it is the most elaborate house in Gurleyville.

Among Gurleyville's industrial sites is the grist mill (2) built by Benjamin Davis around 1750. It is perhaps the most important single building in the district. An early mill, it is typical in its stark outline and unusual in its stone construction. Its excellent state of preservation, including workable machinery from the 19th century, makes it an outstanding artifact, an example of the mills which served local farmers in the pre-industrial age. The grist mill and the earlier saw mill, the homes built by the miller's family (2, 6) and the contemporary tavern (15) and school (12) formed a core of 18th-century buildings around which the village grew. Already Gurleyville was a center providing certain services for the surrounding farmers.

Nineteenth - century growth was encouraged by small industries which made products for a larger market. In 1801 Ephraim Gurley set up a trip hammer shop and made screw augurs which were widely sold. He and his family built several houses in the village which bears his name. A silk mill was built in 1814 and in the 1830's became the first mill to make mechanized winding a commercial success. Mansfield, including Gurleyville, produced a great deal of raw silk in the 19th century, and mills located near the supply; later, raw silk was imported from Asia. In 1848, James Royce built a large silk mill (1), perhaps five times as large as the grist mill. This was the height of industrialization for the village. Stores, a church and eventually, a new school were built to accommodate the increased population.

Although decline did not occur until the 20th century, the village never became very large. The Royce mill was bigger and, as the remains point out, involved more elaborate engineering than the 18th-century mills, but it still represented small-scale manufacturing. The industrial remains, the physical structures of the village and their simple architecture combine to illustrate the historical developments which made Gurleyville, and other villages like it, distinct from both the mill towns and the surrounding farms.

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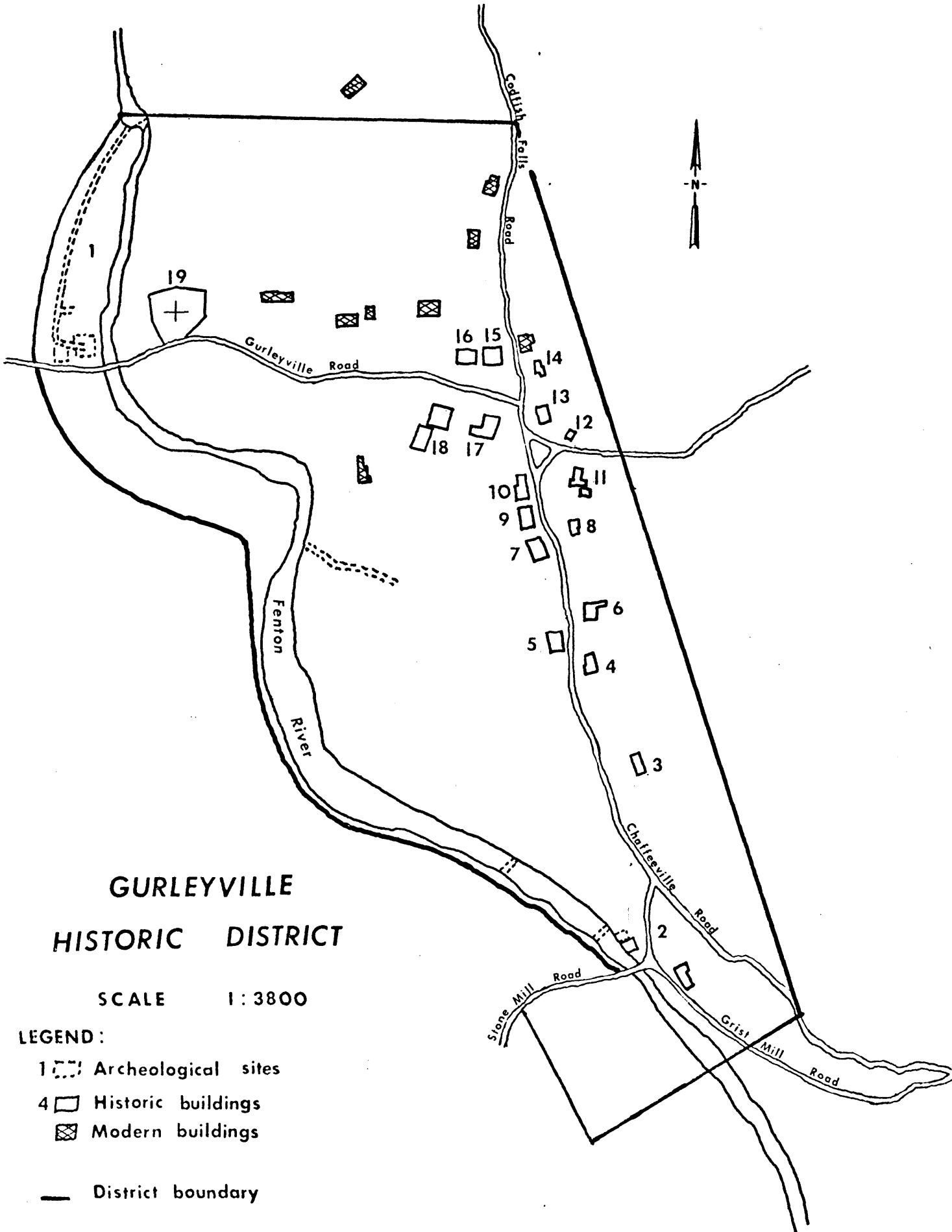
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Gurleyville Historic District

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one

runs south until it is ten feet from the western bank of the river, and it continues to parallel the river at a distance of ten feet until it intersects with Stone Mill Road. On the southern side of this road the boundary coincides with the property line of Mansfield Lot 62, Map 30 which runs southeasterly from Stone Mill Road. From the extreme southern vertex of this lot it runs northeasterly along the property line, continuing in this direction until it intersects with the western side of Chaffeeville Road. From this point it runs in a northwesterly direction until it reaches that point which is the intersection of the western side of Codfish Falls Road and a line drawn due east from the starting point. From there the boundary runs to the first point.



# GURLEYVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

SCALE 1:3800

**LEGEND:**

- 1 Archeological sites
- 4 Historic buildings
- Modern buildings
- District boundary