National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2008

Revised: 4/2025



# Fort Hill Rural Historic District

Cape Cod National Seashore

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# Introduction

## The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

### Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

### The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

### Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

### Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

# General Information

## Property Level and CLI Numbers

**Inventory Unit Name:** Fort Hill Rural Historic District

**Resource Classification:** Cultural Landscape

**CLI Identification Number:** 650072

**Parent Landscape:** 650072

**Inventory Status:** Complete

**Park Information**

**Park Name:** Cape Cod National Seashore

**Alpha Code:** CACO

**Park Organization Code:** 1730

**Park District:** CACO

**Region:** Northeast

**Restricted:** Yes

**Landscape Description:**

Located in the Town of Eastham, Massachusetts, on the easternmost portion of the Cape Cod peninsula, the Fort Hill Rural Historic District occupies an elevated and open area of land that provides expansive views of the Nauset Marsh and Atlantic Ocean. The property encompasses approximately 100 acres of federal (96.5 acres) and privately-owned land (3.5 acres), which was once two large farmsteads owned by the Knowles family and their relatives by marriage, the Penniman family, from the 1740s through the 1940s. Much of the property was farmed until it changed ownership in the 1950s. The National Park Service later acquired the majority of land between 1963 and 1965 as part of Cape Cod National Seashore. The district contains the Captain Edward Penniman house and barn, Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house, Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house, long stone walls, stone boundary markers, and several archeological features including a sharpening rock used by Native Americans.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The name “Fort Hill” is the vernacular name of the area of salt marsh and elevated upland located in the Town of Eastham on Outer Cape Cod. Fort Hill has a long and rich history of settlement and use. In 1605, it was visited by the explorer Samuel de Champlain who reported that the land was partially cleared and inhabited by Native Americans. Fort Hill was part of an area in which there was long-term Native American occupation (Condition Report for Fort Hill Rural Historic District, hereafter CR, 2007: 4).

In 1644, a group of forty-nine people left the Plymouth Colony to begin the settlement of Nauset. Among them was Governor Thomas Prence, a distinguished figure in the Colonial history of Cape Cod and Massachusetts, who owned a farm of 200 acres in Eastham, including land at Fort Hill. Samuel Treat (1648-1717) was the first European settler whose permanent residence at Fort Hill has been confirmed. He served as Eastham’s minister for nearly forty-five years, owned a substantial part of the southern portion of Fort Hill, and appears to have been engaged in farming (CR, 2007: 4).

The Knowles family was among the early settlers of Eastham. At some point after the death of Samuel Treat in 1716 or 1717, the Treat homestead came into the possession of the Knowles family. Willard Knowles (1711-1786) owned

most or all of what we now know as Fort Hill, representing the first time that the area was unified under one owner. Willard Knowles was prosperous, and was probably among the most affluent residents of Eastham. Following the death of Willard Knowles in 1786, his land on Fort Hill was divided between his youngest sons Seth (1753–1821) and William (1755–1830). As a result of this land division, the Fort Hill area entered into its most characteristic development as two separate Knowles family farms, a land use pattern that was sustained well into the twentieth century. Despite the continuity of ownership, this property constantly changed uses, as the Knowles farmers adjusted to changing markets and seized new opportunities. Throughout the nineteenth century at Fort Hill, the Knowles family replaced older buildings and erected new ones. The family's farming included a variety of activities over the years, including raising livestock and poultry, peat digging, salt-making, and cranberry and asparagus crops. What most distinguishes the Fort Hill area is its uninterrupted ownership by members of the Knowles family for nearly two hundred years, from 1742-1943. During their long tenure at Fort Hill, the Knowles and Penniman families, who were relatives by marriage, made a substantial, though at times subtle, mark on this landscape (CR, 2007: 4-5).

The Fort Hill landscape has experienced minimal change since the end of the Knowles period in 1943. Charles A. Gunn offered to purchase the "Seth" Knowles farm in 1936 and he farmed the land until he sold it to James H. Leach in the 1950s. The Leaches sold the farm to the development company Mel-Con. The development company planned to divide the property into 33 lots, to be linked by a system of private roads with communal boat landings. This plan was halted by the creation of Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961 (CR, 2007: 5).

The National Park Service acquired the majority of the 100-acre property at Fort Hill between 1963 and 1965, excluding approximately 3.5 acres of land, which remained under private ownership. The Park constructed parking lots, a road to the top of Fort Hill, trails, a boardwalk, a comfort station, a shelter, and waysides. The open fields were periodically mowed to maintain the open appearance but there has been a gradual replacement of pasture grasses by coarser vegetation and the kettle-hole wetlands have become drier due to natural processes of eutrophication (CR, 2007: 5).

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is significant under National Register Criteria A and C within the areas of agriculture, community development, and architecture. It also derives significance under Criterion D, archeology, for its potential to reveal significant information regarding the Historic Contact period. The period of significance extends from 1786 to 1943, with a significant date of 1868. The beginning date of the period of significance is marked by the death of Willard Knowles and the division of his land between his two sons, Seth and William, creating the two Knowles family farms at Fort Hill. These two farms remained in the family's ownership well into the twentieth century. In 1868 Captain Penniman, who married Betsy Augusta Knowles, constructed an impressive French Second Empire-style residence, which remains a prominent feature within the district. The end of the period of significance, 1943, is the year that the property was sold by the Knowles family.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY

While the majority of agricultural landscapes found on the Outer Cape have reverted to woodland, the Fort Hill Rural Historic District retains its historic open character. The most important landscape characteristics and features associated with the Fort Hill Rural Historic District are natural systems (Kettle-hole wetlands), topography, spatial organization, buildings and structures (Captain Edward Penniman house and barn, Burrill [formerly Seth Knowles] house, Avery [formerly Sylvanus Knowles] house, stone walls, and stone boundary marker), vegetation (Open fields, Red Maple Swamp), views and vistas (Views across open fields to Nauset Marsh), and archeological sites (Quarried rock, rock with spike, and Indian Rock). Other significant landscape characteristics and features include land use, circulation (Fort Hill Road, Fort Hill Trail, Penniman house driveway), and small-scale features (Penniman decorative wooden fence, hitching posts, and whalebone gate).

After 1943, minor changes were made to the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. In the 1960s, rough grading was undertaken for roads and several house lots as part of a proposed private development within the vicinity of Fort Hill. However, the district's overall topography was not affected because the plan was not fully implemented. Other changes to the landscape are primarily associated with National Park Service visitor facilities, which date to the 1960s. These features include but are not limited to the upper and lower parking lots, Red Maple Swamp and Skiff Hill trails, the Skiff Hill shelter, the comfort station, split rail fencing, signage, and seating found within the trails. Non-historic vegetative features include encroaching native and non-native vegetation such as blackberry, multiflora rose, lupines, and black locust.

The cultural landscape within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District retains overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association. Feeling is the only aspect of integrity that has diminished since the historic period. Although visible remnants of farming remain within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District, agricultural activities, with their characteristic sounds and smells, no longer exist in the area, replaced by tranquil parkland.

CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is considered to be in good condition. Although successional vegetation and invasive plant species have caused disturbances to the site, overall, they are minimal, and the cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. In 2007, the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation collaborated with the staff at the Cape Cod National Seashore to develop a five year open fields management plan to preserve the natural and cultural resources associated with the open, formerly agricultural landscape. By the fall of 2007, rehabilitation projects had removed most of the non-native invasive plant species, returning the landscape to its historic character with open views of the Nauset Marsh.

**Landscape Hierarchy Description:**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is one of eighteen cultural landscapes within Cape Cod National Seashore. The other landscapes include Atwood Higgins, Doane Homestead, Dune Shacks of the Peaked Bars, Truro Highlands, Fresh Brook Village, Great Island, Hollows, Long Point, Nauset Light Area, North Beach, North Truro Air Force Station, Pamet Cranberry Bog, Penniman House, Race Point, Salt Pond Visitor Center, Small Pox Cemetery, and Wellfleet Ponds.

**Landscape Type:**

Historic Vernacular Landscape

**Other Names:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Other Name:** | Fort Hill Area | **Other Name Type:** | Historic |
| **Other Name:** | Fort Hill | **Other Name Type:** | Historic |
| **Other Name:** | Samuel Treat proprerty | **Other Name Type:** | Historic |
| **Other Name:** | Fort Hill Rural Historic Dist. | **Other Name Type:** | Current |

## Site Plan




*Existing Conditions of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, hereafter OCLP, 2008).*

# Concurrence Information

## Concurrence Status:

**Park Superintendent Concurrence:** Yes

**Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:** 05/29/2008

**Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:**

In April 2008, existing conditions at the Fort Hill Rural Historic District were inventoried and mapped. Historical Landscape Architect Michael Commisso and Student Conservation Association intern Jake Tisinger with the National Park Service's Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston completed the fieldwork. The park contact for the Cultural Landscapes Inventory is Bill Burke, Cultural Resources Program Manager. He can be reached by telephone at (508) 255-3421 or by email at Bill_Burke@nps.gov.

## Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Fort Hill Rural Historic District
Cape Cod National Seashore

Cape Cod National Seashore concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Fort Hill Rural Historic District including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Should Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

**Good:** indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

**Fair:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

**Poor:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Fort Hill Rural Historic District is hereby approved and accepted.

for Superintendent, Cape Cod National Seashore — Date: 5-29-08

*Park concurrence form, May 29, 2008.*

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory**
**CLI Update Certification Form**
**2025**

Cape Cod National Seashore
Atwood-Higgins Historic District, Dune Shacks of the Peaked Hill Bars,
Fort Hill Historic District, Truro Highlands Historic District

Cape Cod National Seashore concurs with the updates for the following CLIs, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT:
Fair – Atwood-Higgins Historic District
Good – Dune Shacks of the Peaked Hill Bars
Good – Fort Hill Historic District
Good – Truro Highlands Historic District

**Good:** indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

**Fair:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

**Poor:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI Updates at Cape Cod National Seashore are hereby approved and accepted.

Superintendent, Cape Cod National Seashore — April 8, 2025 — Date

*Park concurrence form, April 8, 2025.*

## Revision:

| Revised By | Type of Revision | Revision Date | Revision Narrative |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jeff Killion | CLI Update | 04/08/2025 | Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Fort Hill Rural Historic District CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park. |

# Geographic Information

**State and County:**

| State | County |
|---|---|
| Massachusetts | Barnstable County |

**Size (Acres):** 96.5

**Land Tract Number(s)**

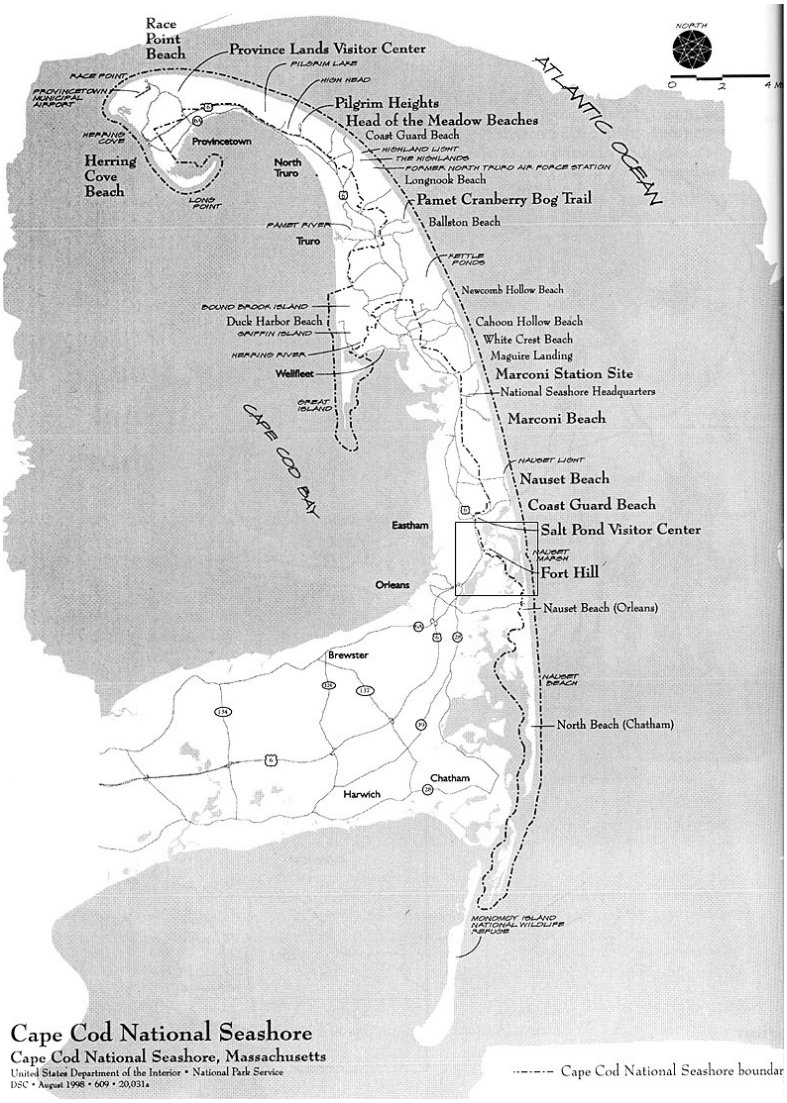
**Boundary Description:**

Encompassing approximately 100 acres of federal (96.5 acres) and privately owned land (3.5 acres), the Fort Hill Rural Historic District is located within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore and is largely defined by natural features. On the south, the district is bounded by Town Creek and Town Cove, on the east by Nauset Marsh, on the north by Hemenway Landing and Hemenway Road, and on the west by the Cape Cod National Seashore boundary, which runs roughly parallel to U.S. Route 6 beginning at the western end of Fort Hill Road.

**Boundary Coordinates**

| Source | Type of Point | Latitude | Longitude | Narrative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| USGS Map 1:24,000 | Area | -69.9637083268154 | 41.8233601607799 | |
| USGS Map 1:24,000 | Area | -69.958809244516 | 41.8178168628586 | |
| USGS Map 1:24,000 | Area | -69.9631708780423 | 41.8156187038752 | |
| USGS Map 1:24,000 | Area | -69.9672198636323 | 41.8166655113722 | |
| USGS Map 1:24,000 | Area | -69.9689758034637 | 41.8213343174078 | |

**Location Map:**




*Cape Cod National Seashore (Cape Cod National Seashore General Management Plan, 1998).*




*Location of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District (Cape Cod NS brochure).*



**Regional Landscape Contexts:**

**Type of Context:** Political

**Description:**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is located within Barnstable County and the Town of Eastham. The town has a permanent population of approximately 4,441 and is bounded on two sides by land, the other two by water, the Atlantic Ocean and Cape Cod Bay. About eleven percent (1,500 acres) of the Town is included within Cape Cod National Seashore.

**Type of Context:** Physiographic

**Description:**

The natural systems and landforms found within Cape Cod National Seashore were shaped almost entirely of material deposited by glaciers that retreated approximately 14,000 to 18,000 years ago. The area is comprised of mostly Eastham Plain deposits, with some marsh and beach deposits. The predominant soil types are Freetown and Swansea mucks, Ipswich, Pawcatuck, and Matunuck peats, and Carver coarse sand.

**Type of Context:** Cultural

**Description:**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is located within Cape Cod National Seashore. Cape Cod National Seashore preserves the nationally significant and special cultural and natural features, distinctive patterns of human activity, and ambience that characterize the Outer Cape, along with the associated scenic, cultural, historic, scientific, and recreational values. The national seashore comprises 43,608 acres of shoreline, salt marshes, freshwater kettle ponds, lighthouses, a life-saving station, dune shacks, and Cape Cod-style houses.

# Management Information

**General Management Information**

**Management Category:** Should be Preserved and Maintained

**Management Category Date:** 05/29/2008

**Management Category Explanatory Narrative:**

As identified in the 1998 General Management Plan, the Fort Hill Rural Historic District meets all of the requirements of the “Should be Preserved and Maintained” category. The site meets National Register criteria A, C, and D within the areas of agriculture, community development, architecture, and archeology and is compatible with the park’s legislated significance. The site is also compatible with the park’s enabling legislation that states, “to preserve the nationally significant and special cultural and natural features, distinctive patterns of human activity, and ambience that characterize the Outer Cape, along with the associated scenic, cultural, historic, scientific, and recreational values.”

**Management Agreements:**

**Legal Interests:**

**Type of Interest:** None - Privately Owned

**Narrative:**

**Type of Interest:** Fee Simple

**Narrative:** With exception to the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house and Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house, the National Park Service owns the majority of land within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District.

**Located in managed wilderness?:** Unknown

## Adjacent Lands Information

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** Yes

**Adjacent Lands Narrative:**

Although the Fort Hill Rural Historic District encompasses approximately 100 acres, the National Park Service owns only 96.5 acres. The remaining 3.5 acres are privately-owned and includes the Burrill house (formerly the Seth Knowles house) and Avery house (formerly the Sylvanus Knowles house).

# National Register Information

## National Register of Historic Places

**Documentation Status:** Entered Documented

**Documentation Narrative Description:**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is adequately documented in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the findings of this Cultural Landscapes Inventory. Located within Cape Cod National Seashore, the Fort Hill Rural Historic District contains one previously listed National Register designation and one National Historic Landmark designation. The Captain Edward Penniman house and barn (NRIS #76000155) were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 28, 1976. The National Register nomination form notes that the house and barn are significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, and maritime history. A portion of the Fort Hill area was included in the Nauset Archeological District (NRIS #93000607) in 1991 and designated as part of a National Historic Landmark on April 19, 1993. It was identified as having aboriginal significance. The approximately 100-acre Fort Hill Rural Historic District (NRIS #00001656) was listed in the National Register on April 5, 2001. According to the National Register nomination form, the district is significant in the areas of agriculture, architecture, and community planning and development.

The List of Classified Structures (LCS) database identifies five extant buildings and structures within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. They include the Captain Edward Penniman house (LCS #000105), Captain Edward Penniman barn (LCS #000106), Captain Edward Penniman-decorative wooden fences (#040431), Captain Edward Penniman-stone retaining walls (LCS #04030), and Fort Hill area stone walls (#04035).

**Eligibility:** Eligible -- Keeper

**Concurrence Eligibility Date:** 04/05/2001

**Concurrence Narrative:**

**Significance Level:** Local

**Contributing:** Individual

**Classification:** District

**Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is significant under National Register Criteria A and C within the areas of agriculture, community development, and architecture. It also derives significance under Criterion D, archeology, for its potential to reveal significant information regarding the Historic Contact period. The period of significance extends from 1786 to 1943, with a significant date of 1868. The beginning of the period is marked by the death of Willard Knowles and the division of his land between his two sons, Seth and William, creating the two Knowles family farms at Fort Hill. These two farms remained in the family's ownership well into the twentieth century. In 1868 Captain Penniman, who married Betsy Augusta

Knowles, constructed an impressive French Second Empire-style residence, which remains a prominent feature within the district. The end of the period of significance, 1943, is the year that the property was sold by the Knowles family.

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is significant under Criterion A within the areas of agriculture and community planning and development. The field pattern at Fort Hill, with land divided into rectangular fields of varying size, represents a distinctive regional method of agricultural land division characteristic of late eighteenth and nineteenth-century New England farms. New England's small fields reflected the gradual process by which land was cleared when first settled by Europeans. Throughout the Knowles period, the small fields at Fort Hill were used to grow a diverse range of crops. Integral to the character of the small fields at Fort Hill are the stone walls, which represent a type of field and boundary demarcation common to eighteenth and nineteenth-century farms in New England but rarely found on Outer Cape Cod. As a result, the Fort Hill stone walls, located in the open field area, are rare on Cape Cod (Fort Hill Rural Historic District National Register Nomination Form, hereafter NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 1).

The grouping of the Knowles and Penniman houses, with the adjacent expanse of interdependent fields and woods, represents a pattern of settlement and land division characteristic of farms on Cape Cod from approximately 1750 to 1900. The relationship and general organization of the buildings and fields illustrates a regional trend that moved from communally based farming toward family farm clusters. The Fort Hill Rural Historic District nomination states, "Prior to 1750, the idea of "landschaft"— houses surrounded by common fields worked communally—was prevalent. By the time that the Knowles family began to work its Fort Hill holdings in the second half of the 18th century, however, "landschaft" had been replaced with a new social and economic order. This new system viewed land ownership as a calculated individual investment, under which innovation was rewarded with greater profits. It was characterized by clusters of extended families who jointly farmed adjacent parcels of individually held land (NR, 2001)."

The Captain Edward Penniman house and its barn are significant under Criterion C as outstanding examples of French Second Empire style architecture. As the only whaling captain's house and barn in Eastham, the buildings represent the prosperity of the whaling industry on Cape Cod. In addition, the residences and associated outbuildings of Seth and Sylvanus Knowles are examples of Colonial Georgian architecture and mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival.

Two portions of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District, comprising some 17.5 acres of National Park Service land, were listed in the National Register in 1991 as significant under Criterion D within the area of historic aboriginal archeology. They are part of the Nauset Archeological District, which consists of six discontiguous properties possessing high potential to contain deposits dating to the Historic Contact period. The Nauset Archeological District was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1993. The "Nauset Archeological District" Nomination is the primary documentation for the Nauset Archeological District as the history and significance differs from the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. As specified in the National Register nomination form, the district has two discontinuous periods of significance, 1500 to 1599 and 1600 to 1649.

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District retains sufficient integrity, including location, design, setting, workmanship, and association, to convey its significance to Knowles family occupation. Extant landscape features include but are not limited to the Captain Edward Penniman house and barn, Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house, Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house, stone walls and foundations, boundary markers, a Native American sharpening stone, and numerous archeological sites. Non-historic features in the district are primarily associated with National Park Service visitor facilities, which date to the 1960s. These features include but are not limited to the upper and lower parking lots, Red Maple Swamp and Skiff Hill trails, the Skiff Hill shelter, the comfort station, split rail fencing, signage, and seating found within the trails. Other non-historic features include encroaching native and non-native vegetation such as blackberry, multiflora rose, lupines, and black locust.

**National Register Significance Criteria:**

A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

D - Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history

**National Register Criteria Consideration:**

**National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):**

**Time Period:** CE 1786 - CE 1943

| Historic Context Theme | Subtheme | Facet | Other Facet |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expressing Cultural Values | Architecture | Georgian (1730-1780) | |
| Expressing Cultural Values | Architecture | Greek Revival (1820-1840) | |
| Expressing Cultural Values | Architecture | Second Empire (1850-1890) | |
| Peopling Places | Development of the Colonies | Physical Development | |
| Peopling Places | The Earliest Inhabitants: | Archaic Adaptations Of The Northeast (Including The Ohio Valley Region) | |

**Area of Significance:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Agriculture

**Area of Significance Subcategory:**

**Explanatory Narrative:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Archeology

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** Historic-Non-Aboriginal

**Explanatory Narrative:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Architecture

**Area of Significance Subcategory:**

**Explanatory Narrative:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Community Planning and Development

**Area of Significance Subcategory:**

**Explanatory Narrative:**

**NRIS Information:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **NRIS ID:** | 76000155 |
| **Primary Certification Date:** | 05/28/1976 |
| **NRIS ID:** | 93000607 |
| **Primary Certification Date:** | 04/19/1993 |
| **NRIS ID:** | 00001656 |
| **Primary Certification Date:** | 04/05/2001 |
| **Other Certifications and Date:** | MM/dd/yyyy |

**State Register Documentation:**

**National Historic Landmarks:**

**National Historic Landmark?** No

**Theme:**

**Contributing:**

**NHL ID:**

**NHL URL:**

**Date:**

**Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:**

**World Heritage Site:**

**World Heritage Site?** No

**Category:**

**WHS ID:**

**WHS URL:**

**Date:**

**Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape:** No

# Chronology and Physical History

**Chronology:**

| Year | Event | Major Event Narrative |
|---|---|---|
| CE 1605 | Explored | French explorer, Samuel de Champlain, visits the Nauset Harbor. |
| CE 1620 | Explored | English Separatists note the presence of permanent Native American settlements around Nauset Harbor. |
| CE 1644 | Settled | A group of forty-nine people leaves Plymouth to settle in Nauset. |
| CE 1646 | Established | Nauset is incorporated as a town. |
| CE 1651 | Altered | Nauset is renamed Eastham. |
| CE 1653 | Established | The name “Fort Hill” is derived from an act passed by the Plymouth Colony ordering that every town establish a place for defense with breastworks and flankers. |
| CE 1659 | Land Transfer | A five-acre tract of the Fort Hill area is granted to William Bradford in 1659. Land is described as upland and meadow, likely used for farming. |
| CE 1672 - 1675 | Land Transfer | Same five-acre tract given to William Bradford in 1659 is granted to Samuel Treat. |
| CE 1702 | Land Transfer | Town of Eastham grants Samuel Treat “all the upland and meadow belonging to the house lot where he now lives.” |
| CE 1703 | Land Transfer | Town of Eastham grants Samuel Treat an additional parcel of land adjacent to his property. |
| CE 1711 - 1712 | Land Transfer | Samuel Treat acquires additional land. Treat owns a substantial part of the southern portion of Fort Hill, all included within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. |
| CE 1717 | Purchased/Sold | Samuel Treat dies in 1717 and the Knowles family acquires the property. |
| CE 1742 | Purchased/Sold | Willard Knowles purchases the Fort Hill property. The period of ownership by Willard Knowles represents the first time the Fort Hill area, encompassing the entire Fort Hill Rural Historic District, was unified under one owner. |
| CE 1780 | Built | Coastal maps show the presence of one house on Fort Hill, presumably the residence of Willard Knowles. |
| CE 1786 | Land Transfer | Following the death of Willard Knowles, his land is divided between his youngest sons Seth and William. Seth receives the homestead buildings located in the southern portion of the district, while William receives the northern portion. The division of the property created two Knowles family farms at Fort Hill. |
| CE 1800 - 1900 | Built | Knowles family renovates and constructs buildings and structures throughout nineteenth century including a shoe shop and store house. |
| CE 1821 | Land Transfer | James H. Knowles acquires the southern portion of the district upon the death of his father Seth Knowles. |
| CE 1821 | Built | Although uncertain, the southern Knowles farmhouse may have been built by James Knowles. |

| Year | Event | Major Event Narrative |
|---|---|---|
| CE 1824 | Farmed/Harvested | Of the forty-three salt works in Eastham, the southern Knowles farm is valued as the eighth largest, while the northern Knowles farm is ranked around twentieth. |
| CE 1829 | Purchased/Sold | Scammell Penniman purchases property from Jesse Collins just west of Knowles property. Prior to Collins ownership, Thomas Knowles owned the property. Thomas Knowles was the oldest son of Seth Knowles. The property contains a house, outbuildings, and an orchard. |
| CE 1834 | Purchased/Sold | Scammell Penniman purchases five-acres adjoining his existing property on the west. |
| CE 1836 | Land Transfer | Scammell Penniman dies, and all rights to the property go to Daniel Penniman. |
| CE 1850 | Farmed/Harvested | Knowles families raise grain, potatoes and had orchards. Two or three cows are kept on each farm for the production of milk, butter, and cheese. |
| CE 1850 - 1860 | Purchased/Sold | Daniel Penniman enlarges his landholdings to approximately seventeen acres. Similar to the Knowles farms, the majority of Penniman land was used for tillage, while the remaining encompassed salt meadow, fresh meadow, and peat, and cranberry bogs. |
| CE 1850 - 1920 | Farmed/Harvested | Peat swamps encompass three-quarters to one acre on each of the two Knowles farms. Peat is assessed on the southern farm until 1877 and on the northern farm until approximately 1920. |
| CE 1860 - 1895 | Farmed/Harvested | Cranberry swamps and asparagus fields are found on both farms, averaging just under an acre. |
| CE 1864 | Land Transfer | Following the death of William Knowles, his son Sylvanus acquires the northern portion of the district and builds a new house. William's wife continues to live in the older home. |
| CE 1865 | Abandoned | Salt works are no longer present on the Knowles family farms. |
| CE 1869 | Purchased/Sold | Edward Penniman, son of Daniel Penniman, purchases twelve acres of land south of Fort Hill Road. The property includes two barns, several outbuildings, and the Thomas Knowles house that had been part of Scammell Penniman's original purchase. |
| CE 1869 | Built | Master builder Nathaniel Nickerson constructs Edward Penniman a new house. The house is an impressive French Empire-style residence built on an eight-foot high mound. |
| CE 1872 | Land Transfer | Seth Knowles, son of James Hatch Knowles, acquires property upon the death of his father. |
| CE 1873 | Farmed/Harvested | The number of cows on both farms more than double, reflecting the completion of the railroad and the expansion of the market for fresh milk. |

| Year | Event | Major Event Narrative |
|---|---|---|
| CE 1880 - 1920 | Farmed/Harvested | Poultry is raised on the Knowles family farms. Hen houses are found on the southern Knowles farm around 1880, and on the northern farm in the early 1890s. Between 1910 and 1920, the northern farm has more than 300 fowl, while the southern farm has over 200 fowl. The southern farm has more substantial and permanent poultry buildings. |
| CE 1880 - 1882 | Built | Penniman family constructs barn, which currently stands today. |
| CE 1880 - 1920 | Built | Features found on the Penniman property c. 1880 include a boathouse (1880s-1900s), greenhouse (1890s-1920s), whalebone gate (c. 1876), terraced yard, decorative wooden fence, hitching posts, retaining walls, and a row of cottonwood trees. |
| CE 1888 | Built | Edward Penniman builds a small dwelling on property for his brother George Penniman. |
| CE 1905 | Land Transfer | Seth Knowles dies; two of his children, Seth Edgar Knowles and Abbie May Knowles, acquire southern farm. |
| CE 1911 | Land Transfer | Edward Penniman's wife, Betsey Augusta Penniman, acquires property following the death of Edward in 1911. (Note: Betsey Augusta Penniman is the daughter of William F. Knowles). Betsey later passes the property on to their daughter, Betsey. |
| CE 1911 | Land Transfer | William Freeman Knowles acquires northern farm following the death of his father Sylvanus Knowles. |
| CE 1924 | Land Transfer | William Freeman Knowles dies and leaves his wife, Harriet Knowles the northern farm. |
| CE 1926 | Purchased/Sold | Harriet Knowles sells ten acres of swamp south of Hemenway Road (a portion of the current Red Maple Swamp area) to Lawrence Hemenway. |
| CE 1937 | Purchased/Sold | Charles A. Gunn purchases the southern Knowles farm following the death of Abbie Knowles in 1927. Property is referred to as "Nauset Moors Farm." |
| CE 1938 | Altered | Gunn family converts the barn for occupancy by milk cows and moves into the Knowles house. Only a small foundation of the barn exists today. |
| CE 1943 | Purchased/Sold | Harriet Knowles sells northern farm to Dorothy Lucile Kattwinkel. |
| CE 1943 - 1950 | Farmed/Harvested | For the first time since 1786, both Knowles farms are used as a unified operation. Charles Gunn uses the southern farm primarily for growing high-quality clover and alfalfa; he pastured the cattle on the northern farm by arrangement with the Kattwinkels. |
| CE 1950 | Purchased/Sold | Charles Gunn sells the southern farm property to James H. Leach, a veterinarian, and his wife Frances. |

| Year | Event | Major Event Narrative |
|---|---|---|
| CE 1957 | Land Transfer | Betsey Augusta Penniman, daughter of Edward and Betsey Penniman, dies, leaving the property to her niece Irma Penniman Broun Kahn (the granddaughter of Captain Edward Penniman). Based on her descriptions, the property consisted of stone walls, eight hitching posts, a hen house, a large vegetable garden, and strawberry patch. East of the house was a fruit orchard with apples, pears, grapes, and plums, which no longer exists. |
| CE 1960 | Land Transfer | Leach family sells the southern Knowles/Nauset Moors farm to a development company, Mel-Con of Fitchburg, MA. |
| CE 1961 | Platted | Mel-Con registers its subdivision and starts regrading the land and laying out roads, including a road leading to the summit of Fort Hill. It sells ten of the thirty-three “Fort Hill Estates” lots. |
| CE 1961 | Purchased/Sold | Robert and Sarah P. Burrill purchase one of the “Fort Hill Estates” lots. It contains the Seth Knowles farmhouse on approximately three quarters of an acre. |
| CE 1961 | Established | Cape Cod National Seashore is authorized on August 7, 1961. |
| CE 1961 | Purchased/Sold | The National Park Service acquires the former southern Knowles farm, excluding the Seth Knowles/ Burrill farmhouse, promptly ending the development of the “Fort Hill Estates” subdivision. |
| CE 1963 | Purchased/Sold | The National Park Service acquires the Penniman property, which includes the Captain Edward Penniman house, barn, and farmland, from Maurice Broun and Irma Penniman Broun. |
| CE 1964 | Purchased/Sold | The National Park Services acquires the former northern Knowles farm, excluding three acres around the farmhouse, from the Kattwinkel family. The Avery family currently owns the three-acre parcel, including the farmhouse. |
| CE 1965 | Purchased/Sold | The National Park Service acquires additional ten acres, which had been conveyed out of the Knowles family in 1926. |
| CE 1965 | Built | An interpretive shelter is constructed at the Kattwinkel overlook on Skiff Hill. |
| CE 1965 | Moved | Indian Rock is relocated to the Skiff Hill shelter. |
| CE 1966 | Altered | The extension of Fort Hill Road and the parking area at the top of Fort Hill are paved. |
| CE 1966 | Established | Cape Cod National Seashore is established on June 1, 1966. |
| CE 1966 | Built | Cast-aluminum interpretive signage is installed at the Penniman House. |
| CE 1967 | Built | Job Corps personnel construct the Red Maple Swamp Trail. In addition, an already existing trail from Hemenway Landing to Skiff Hill is paved. |
| CE 1967 | Built | A parking lot is constructed on the north side of Fort Hill Road, between the two Knowles houses. |

| Year | Event | Major Event Narrative |
|---|---|---|
| CE 1969 | Built | A comfort station is built along the trail from the Hemenway Road entrance to Skiff Hill. |
| CE 1984 | Altered | Cast-aluminum signage at the Penniman House is replaced with current signage. |
| CE 1984 | Altered | Existing trails running from the Kattwinkel property to an overlook at Skiff Hill and from the parking lot east of the Avery House to Skiff Hill are improved. |
| CE 1984 | Altered | Parking lot, located on the north side of Fort Hill Road, is paved. It still is present today. |
| CE 1985 - 1990 | Restored | The Penniman house, the decorative wooden fence, and retaining walls are restored. In addition, invasive vegetation is removed. |
| CE 1980 - 2000 | Rehabilitated | The National Park Service performs prescribed burning and mowing of fields to clear unwanted invasive woody plants and maintain open character of the historic district. The duration and frequency of treatments are inconsistent. |
| CE 2007 | Rehabilitated | The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation and staff at the Cape Cod National Seashore develop a five-year open fields management plan to preserve the natural and cultural resources associated with the open, formerly agricultural landscape. By the fall of 2007, many non-native invasive plant species were removed. |

**Physical History:**

**INTRODUCTION**

The history of the Fort Hill area is extracted from the "Fort Hill Rural Historic District National Register Nomination Form" completed by Sarah Korjeff and Betsy Friedberg on April 5, 2001.

**PRE-CONTACT AND CONTACT PERIOD SETTLEMENT (TO 1644)**

Fort Hill was part of an area in which there was long-term Native American presence. The French explorer Samuel de Champlain visited the Nauset Harbor area in 1605. He documented his visit with a narrative, in which he described the harbor as "entirely surrounded by little houses, around each one of which there was as much land as the occupant needed for his support." Champlain also prepared a map, which depicts cleared land around Nauset Harbor, and the Indian residents engaged in the practice of agriculture. A small expedition of English Separatists also noted the presence of permanent Native American settlements around Nauset Harbor in 1620, though no specific was made of Fort Hill (Fort Hill Rural Historic District National Register Nomination Form, hereafter NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 2).

The Nauset Archeological District, which includes Fort Hill and five other sites, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1943 for "yielding or possessing the potential to yield nationally significant information on Historic Contact in the Northeast." According to the nomination form, the overall distribution of the six sites "roughly corresponded to the dispersed pattern of individual wigwams and cornfields depicted by Samuel de Champlain on his 1605 map of the area." Investigations associated with the nomination revealed that Fort Hill contains a large, multi-component prehistoric site dating from the Late Archaic to the Late Woodland period. The Native Americans are believed to have maintained primary residences in the Nauset area, taking advantage of the wide range of food types available in the region. Their location allowed easy access to varying environments ranging from tidal flats and salt marsh to freshwater wetland and wooded upland, each contributing natural resources needed for a subsistence economy (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 3).

Origin of the name "Fort Hill" (Seventeenth Century):
All of the land comprising the Fort Hill Rural Historic District is commonly known as "Fort Hill." The traditional explanation of the name "Fort Hill" derives from an act passed by the Plymouth Colony court on June 9, 1653 ordering that every town establish a place for defense with breastworks and flankers. The occasion for this act was a renewed naval war between the English and the Dutch, and the colonists resultant fear of attack by the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam. Friction between New England and New Amsterdam had already arisen concerning trade relations with the Indians (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 3).

If defensive works were constructed in Eastham, Fort Hill would have been a logical location for them. The core of Eastham, within the expansive original boundaries of the town, which include present day Wellfleet, Eastham, and Orleans, lay just to the south and west. Artillery on Fort Hill could have commanded the entrance to Nauset Harbor. There is no evidence in town or colony records that fortifications were ever constructed, much less provided with artillery. However, it seems reasonable that the name Fort Hill derived from the seventeenth century legislation (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 3).

## EARLY SETTLEMENT BY THE PLYMOUTH COLONY (1644-1672)

Scarcely twenty years after beginning their endeavor in the New World, the English Separatists in Plymouth were becoming disillusioned with the territory they had chosen. The English Separatists initial exploration of Massachusetts Bay, before they settled at Plymouth, had acquainted them with Nauset (later known as Eastham). Contacts with the native inhabitants there had been maintained, and food supplied from that area helped sustain Plymouth during times of scarcity. This gave Nauset a reputation as an agricultural land of plenty. William Bradford, an early governor of Plymouth Plantation, wrote that the Nauset soil "is for the most part a blakish and deep mould, much like that where groweth the best tobacco in Virginia." Nauset was therefore one of the locations suggested for resettlement. Two committees were sent from Plymouth to examine the area. It was concluded that Nauset would not be able to accommodate the current population of Plymouth, so there was no further discussion of relocating the entire town, but individuals were given permission to move (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 3-4).

In 1644, a group of forty-nine people left Plymouth to begin the settlement of Nauset. The migrants included most of the men who had composed the second exploratory committee. The prominent leader of the migrants was Thomas Prence, who had been governor of the Plymouth Colony for two years, and assistant governor many other years. Those who accompanied Prence were considered to be among the most respectable families of Plymouth. Prence was devoted to the Eastham settlement. Chosen governor again in 1657, he resisted moving back to the seat of government at Plymouth and received a special dispensation that allowed him to continue living in Eastham (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 4).

Nauset was incorporated as a town in 1646, and in 1651 changed its name to Eastham. The original settlers were given tracts of land, part of which they used and part of which they reserved for future need. The settlement pattern of Eastham differed from other early colonial patterns in the region in that it lacked any concentration of structures that might have been called a village center. With farming as the nearly universal source of livelihood, families lived close together and worked land scattered throughout the township. Early land records show that each resident was intended an assortment of land in three categories: meadow, upland, and woodland (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 4).

The ownership of the land around Fort Hill under the Plymouth Colony is unclear, though it seems to have been parceled out in small tracts. Prence was believed to have owned property on Fort Hill, but land grants only confirm that he owned land south of Fort Hill. It is known that at least one five-acre tract of the Fort Hill area was granted to William Bradford in 1659. The land was described as upland and meadow, and was likely used for farming, as was most other land already cleared by the Native Americans (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 4).

**SAMUEL TREAT PERIOD AT FORT HILL (1672-1716)**

Samuel Treat (1648-1717) was the first white settler whose permanent residence at Fort Hill has been confirmed. He came from a distinguished family of colonial New England. His father was a governor of Connecticut and one of the founders of the Puritan settlement of Newark, New Jersey. Samuel Treat had graduated from Harvard College, and was apparently living in the home of his father in Milford, Connecticut, when he received the call from Eastham to serve as its minister sometime between 1672 and 1675. Treat's tenure as minister lasted nearly forty-five years, and he is probably best known for his work with Native American Indians, who were still numerous in his sprawling parish. He learned their language, traveled great distances to preach the gospel to them, and trained assistants from their people (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 5).

Treat's importance in the history of Eastham lies in the fact that he was the first person called from outside the town to be a full-time pastor, with expectation that the town would furnish most or all of his support. Eastham in the 1670s was only marginally able to support a full-time minister, so six land grants were added to the clergy compensation package. While one grant was intended to be the location of Treat's house, he instead decided to reside upon another lot nearer to the meetinghouse, a parcel of land donated to the town for church use by Manasseth Kempton in 1662, the same five acre tract that was granted to William Bradford in 1659 (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 5).

The land allocated to Treat was initially meant to be reserved for ministerial use by the town, but in March 1702, the town granted Treat “all the upland and meadow belonging to the house lot where he now lives” (on Fort Hill) in exchange for several other parcels which has been allocated him earlier. The town, however, reserved the right to repurchase if Samuel Treat left the work of the ministry and left town. The location of Treat's c. 1673 house on the five-acre parcel on Fort Hill is uncertain. In March 1703 or 1704, the town granted Treat an additional small piece of land nearby to “set his house.” Apparently, Treat planned to build a new house, and it is likely that he did so with the additional means he had by that time. The physical remains of a Treat house site were still visible in the nineteenth century, and the location was described as southeast of the Seth Knowles residence, near the brook which ran from the cedar swamp to the Town Cove, and not far from an excellent spring of water, but it is not known whether the description is of the first or possible second house. If a second house existed, it was likely near the present Burrill house, uphill from the likely site of the first house. Research and field survey conducted for the Nauset Archaeological District focused on contact period information and did not identify the location of the house (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 5).

After additional land acquisitions in 1711 and 1712, Treat owned a substantial part of the southern portion of Fort Hill, all included within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. One of the 1711 grants refers to Treat's barn and other land records speak of extensive fences and stone walls, so it is likely that Treat engaged in subsistence farming (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 5).

**EARLY KNOWLES FARMS AT FORT HILL (1716-1800)**

At some point between the death of Samuel Treat (1716-1717) and the mid-eighteenth century, the Treat homestead was passed to the Knowles family. Though a deed has not been found, evidence shows that Willard Knowles (1711-1786) purchased the Treat property on Fort Hill in 1742. Willard Knowles' will refers to boundary stones at Fort Hill marked with a “T” for the former owner Rev. Treat. The will and inventory of his estate after his death in 1786 establish that Willard Knowles owned most or all of what is now known as Fort Hill, representing the first time the area was unified under one ownership. The Knowles ownership at that time comprised the entire Fort Hill Rural Historic District (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 5).

It is not definitively known whether Willard Knowles lived in the Treat house, though it is likely. Coastal maps dated 1780 show only one house on Fort Hill, which presumably was the residence of Knowles, Willard Knowles was a man of obvious prosperity, and was probably among the most affluent residents of Eastham. The inventory of his estate included large and varied landholdings totaling at least 210 acres scattered around the town. Willard Knowles also owned livestock, which included five cows, three heifers, one ox, two horses, two swine, and sixteen sheep. Most were probably kept at the Fort Hill homestead. The inventory also shows that Willard Knowles grew grain on his land including forty-eight bushels of Indian corn and rye, and eight bushels of wheat (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 6).

Following the death of Willard Knowles in 1786, his land on Fort Hill was divided between his youngest sons Seth and William. Seth Knowles (1753-1821) was granted the homestead buildings of Willard Knowles, listed as dwelling house, barn, corn house, and outhouses located in the southern portion of the district. Willard Knowles' wife, Bethia Atwood Knowles, was granted the use and improvement of the buildings on Seth's land during her lifetime. Bethia died only three years after Willard (in 1789), at which time Seth gained unrestricted ownership of the house and farm buildings (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 6).

The northern portion of the district was granted to William (1755-1830). William Knowles already had a house nearby on Knowles property, just west of the Willard Knowles house. It was a Cape Cod style house with a two-story addition to the west. Willard Knowles' division of his land between Seth and William created two Knowles family farms at Fort Hill, which would remain the most dominant and significant features of the site well into the twentieth century. At some point, the two farms became known by the names of their respective owners in the late-nineteenth century, when they reached their highest and most characteristic development. The southern farm became known as the "Seth Knowles" farm, named for the son of James H. Knowles and grandson of Seth Knowles. The northern farm became known as the “Sylvanus Knowles” farm, named for the son of William F. Knowles (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 6).

**REGIONAL FARMING PATTERNS AND KNOWLES FARMS AT FORT HILL (1800-1900)**

Eastham at the beginning of the nineteenth century was an agricultural town, primarily by default. Wellfleet and Orleans had split off in the eighteenth century, taking with them the former town's best harbors. It remained a predominantly agricultural town well into the twentieth century, although its population as such peaked in 1830. The types of activities conducted by Eastham farmers changed continually throughout the nineteenth century in response to external economic factors. These changes were part of a general trend seen on the Cape from the earliest years of settlement. Cape Codders' relatively isolated and often-risky environment has always required them to be flexible in seeking a livelihood. Sometimes land-based activities were the most rewarding and at other times, maritime pursuits were more lucrative. Many residents combined the two in varying proportions (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 6).

Cape Codders' option of turning to the sea to supplement farming income became increasingly necessary as much of the Cape's initially arable soil became exhausted. Periods when the maritime option was largely not available, such as during the Revolutionary War, put extreme pressure on the fragile farmlands. By 1800 about a thousand acres on the west, bay side of Eastham had become a sandy wasteland; observers reported that the topsoil had blown away, in many places to a depth of ten feet. However, on the ocean side of Eastham remained good land. According to Rev. James Freeman in 1802, "Three cedar swamps on the west... guard it in a great measure against the irruptions of the sand." The Knowles farms comprised about a quarter of this fertile tract (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 6).

Early in the 1800s, corn, or maize, was Eastham's primary crop, with about 1,000 bushels being sent to market. Obtaining salt from seawater also became an important industry in the first half of the nineteenth century. Wheat growing and sheep raising were in decline by the mid-1800s. Instead, Eastham farmers were relying more on dairying, poultry raising, growing vegetables for nearby markets, and peat harvesting. The assessor's records began listing "peat swamp" as a separate category in 1839-1840. Peat was apparently valuable as a fuel: peat land was assessed at $100 an acre through the 1860s and 1870s, at a time when good tillage land was valued at $40 an acre. Until the 1880s, land-producing peat had a higher assessed value than land producing any other commodity, including cranberries (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 7).

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, peat harvesting declined, but dairying and poultry production increased. This was largely due to the arrival of the Cape Cod Central Railroad extension from Orleans through Eastham arriving at Wellfleet by 1870. The railroad enabled Eastham farmers to participate in the market for fresh milk in the Boston metropolitan area. The farmers also began to focus on growing specialty crops such as cranberries and asparagus for the newly expanded market. By 1920, Eastham had 150 acres of "grass" (asparagus) (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 7).

The evolution of the family farm cluster occurred gradually during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As original land allotments were divided among sons, individual allotments became smaller and smaller. Jointly farming adjacent parcels of land provided the necessary area for a viable agricultural operation. On the Cape, where farmers such as the Knowles were required to continually adapt to changing market forces with the production of different crops, a larger expanse of land provided additional flexibility to pursue whatever was considered profitable at the moment. The clustering of residences on one part of the family land helped free the maximum amount of acreage for farming. It also offered protection from undesirable neighbors whose lack of husbandry skills could jeopardize the well-being of the family farm. Family farm clusters appear to have been common in southern New England and the Cape during the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century maps of the Town of Eastham show several settlements made up of adjacent properties owned by members of the same family (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 7).

Through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the Knowles farms clearly exhibited the Cape-wide trends of continuity and adaptability. Continuity marked the farms inheritance patterns. The two brothers who inherited Willard Knowles' Fort Hill land in 1786, Seth and William, were two years apart in age. Successive generations remained roughly synchronized, and the farms

were transferred at similar intervals. Each farm was occupied by four full generations of Knowles families, for a total of five, including Willard Knowles (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg.7).

The history of the property, by contrast, was characterized by a wide variety of constantly changing uses, as the Knowles family adjusted to changing markets and environmental conditions. Throughout this time, the southern farm remained the more prosperous of the two farms, with a ranking of the third most valuable property in town (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 7).

The Knowles family updated old buildings and erected new ones throughout the nineteenth century at Fort Hill. On the northern farm, William F. Knowles added a two-story wing to the Cape-style house that he inherited from his father William (this building is no longer standing). Another dwelling was built to the west (currently the Avery house) in 1864, the year that William F. Knowles died (Figure 1). It appears that William's son Sylvanus, who gave up a seafaring life and came home to run the family farm at that time, built this house. Presumably, William widow Betsey continued to live in the old house (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 7).

The history or the southern farmhouse is less clear. James H. Knowles may have built it in 1821, the year that he inherited the farm from his father Seth (1753-1821). More likely, however, the house was built by Seth c. 1790, or built by Willard sometime after 1742, perhaps incorporating an older structure (Figure 2). A variety of other structures stood on the Knowles farms during the nineteenth century. On the southern farm, a shoe shop was present in the mid-1800s, and a store house (locations unknown). The northern farm had a barn that stood until it burned in 1934 (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 8).

Salt-making was one of the land uses practiced by the Knowles family during the nineteenth century at Fort Hill. Of the forty-three salt works in Eastham in 1824, the southern Knowles farm had the eighth largest valuation. The northern Knowles farm ranked around twentieth. In 1850, when salt-making was beginning to decline, the northern farm had 2,400 linear feet of salt works and the southern farm had 2,000 feet. Salt works disappeared from the southern farm in the late 1850s and on the northern farm in 1865. The salt works were situated in low, flat areas reasonably close to the water. Iardella's "Coastal Map of Cape Cod," 1856, shows the location of salt works on Fort Hill. One area of salt works was located in the northeast portion of the district, just south of the current Hemenway Road and Town Landing. A second area of salt works was located further south along the marsh edge, approximately halfway between the summits of Fort Hill and Skiff Hill. Though the low locations are still present, no traces of these activities exist. Many of the young Knowles men also spent some time at sea prior to taking up farming. Residents of both the southern farm and the northern farm also owned shares ranging from an eighth to a thirty-second interest in various types of ships in the mid-to late 1800s (Figure 3) (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 8).

Both Knowles families raised grain and potatoes and had orchards. A sizable orchard was located south of the house in the southern farm in the mid-1800s. Each farm also showed a corn house among its outbuildings, indicating the continued importance of corn. Peat swamps encompassed three-quarters to one acre on each of the two Knowles farms. Peat was assessed on the southern farm until 1877, and on the northern farm until about 1920 (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 8).

Two or three cows and the same number of young stock were kept on each farm around the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1873, the number of cows on both farms more than doubled, reflecting the completion of the railroad extension through Eastham and the expansion of the market for fresh milk. It is believed that Sylvanus and Seth Knowles were the first in town to take advantage of the railroad when in 1872 they began sending their milk cans twice a day to Provincetown, when the railroad was extended to the final terminus (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 8).

The Knowles family was only modestly involved in the production of specialty crops. Beginning around 1860, the northern farm included a small cranberry swamp of about one-half acre. The southern farm devoted approximately one acre to this activity. Asparagus was first listed on both farms in 1895. The northern farm had up to an acre for asparagus in some years, while the southern farm never exceeded one-quarter acre. Together, the produce was larger than required for a family's needs, but not large enough to represent a significant commercial quantity. Rather than focusing on

specialty crops, the Knowles family concentrated on poultry raising. Hen houses were on the southern Knowles farm around 1880, and on the northern farm in the early 1890s. Between 1910 and 1920, the northern farm had more than 300 fowl, while the southern farm had over 200 fowl. The southern farm had more substantial and permanent poultry buildings. Beginning around the time of Seth's death in 1905, when the farm was listed under the name of his daughter-Abbie May Knowles, hen houses were the only remaining outbuildings except the barn, and a “brooder house” was included from at least 1906 to 1915. These structures were valued higher than the barn on the northern farm (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 8-9).



*Figure 1. View of the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house in c. 1880. Note the Penniman whalebones to the right (Cape Cod National Seashore, hereafter Cape Cod NS, H10-099).*



*Figure 2. Photograph of the view east towards the Burrill (or Seth Knowles) house, showing the trees along Fort Hill Road, circa 1880 (Cape Cod NS, H10-085).*

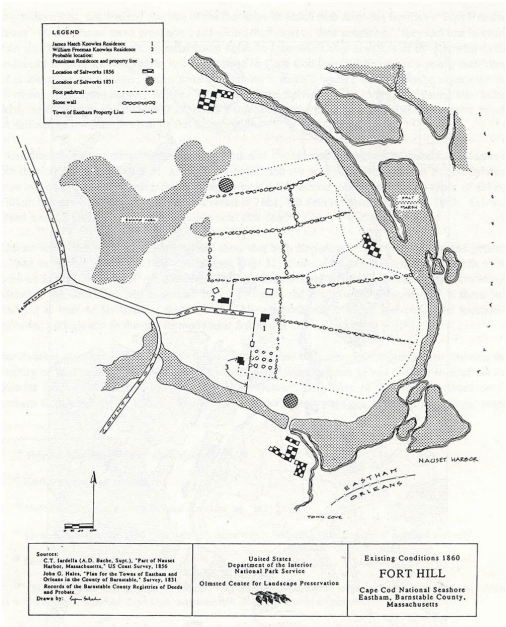



*Figure 3. 1860 Existing Conditions Plan of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District (OCLP, 1995).*

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE PENNIMAN PROPERTY (1829-1963)**

The Penniman family first came to Eastham in May 1820, when Scammell Penniman purchased from Jesse Collins a homestead lot just west of the southern Knowles farm, then owned by James H. Knowles. The lot purchased by Scammell Penniman was described as “all the homestead formerly owned by Thomas Knowles,” and probably comprised of six to seven acres. Thomas Knowles (1777-1820) was almost certainly the oldest son of Seth (1753-1821) and brother to James H. Knowles. Thomas probably earned his primary living from maritime activities, judging by the small size of his homestead, then acquired by Collins, a sea captain who was related to the Knowles family by marriage (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 9).

Scammell Penniman, then 56, was a carpenter who had become a merchant, having a large West Indian store on Commercial Street at the north end of Boston. His purchase of the homestead was apparently on behalf of his son Daniel (1802-1871), and may have been a wedding gift. On April 30, 1829, Daniel married an Eastham woman, Betsy Mayo. The purchase of the homestead was concluded the day after the wedding, and the couple lived in Eastham (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 9).

The property contained a house, outbuildings, and an orchard. In 1834, Scammell Penniman purchased five more acres adjoining his existing property on the west. He died in 1836, and all rights to the property were passed to Daniel. The Penniman property resembled a miniature version of the Knowles farms, with the same categories of land, buildings, and livestock present on a smaller scale. During the 1850s and 1860s, Daniel Penniman managed to enlarge his landholdings to approximately seventeen acres. As with the Knowles farms, the bulk of the land was listed as tillage (ten to twelve acres). Penniman also owned smaller amounts of salt meadow and fresh meadow (two acres each), as well as small amounts of peat and cranberry bog. In 1861, Daniel was shown as owning a small barn, a wood house, and until 1864, a store house (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 9).

Daniel's daughter Elvira (b. 1829) was the first member of his family to be born in Eastham. His second child, Edward, was born in 1831. Edward married Betsey Augusta Knowles in 1859. She had lived across the road on the northern Knowles farm, being the daughter of William F. Knowles and the sister of Sylvanus D. Knowles. Edward enjoyed great success as in whaling and became a captain at twenty-nine years of age. He was the only deep-sea whaling captain from Eastham and his wife Betsey accompanied him on three whaling voyages, bringing one of their children on each

voyage. In addition to Edward's remuneration as captain, from 1861 through 1870 he owned 3/32 interest in the vessel he commanded, the “Minerva” (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 9).

In February 1866, Edward purchased from his father Daniel a property that included twelve acres of land south of Fort Hill Road, a simple dwelling house, two barns, and several outbuildings. The house was the Thomas Knowles house that had been part of Scammell Penniman's original purchase. Local history states that the house was located southeast of the existing Penniman House. Edward and Betsey Augusta Penniman returned from a whaling voyage in April 1868. It had been a lucrative venture, with cash and notes worth $4,000 credited to Edward. In 1868, Captain Penniman's house was valued at $300, while in 1869 his dwelling was valued at $3,000. Captain Penniman's new house was an impressive French Empire-style residence built by master builder Nathaniel Nickerson. The house was built on an eight foot high mound, formed from soil excavated from other areas to enable him to view the ocean and Cape Cod Bay from the cupola (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 9-10).

The Penniman's property served as a gentleman's farm, rather than a working farm as on the adjacent Knowles properties. The Penniman’s had a greenhouse from the late 1890s until the 1920s. From the mid- 1880s to almost the end of the century, they also owned a boathouse. Other features distinguish the property in 1880 photographs, such as the whalebone gate, terraced yard, decorative wooden fence, hitching posts, retaining walls, and row of cottonwood trees. The original whalebone gate was a pair of jaw bones from a sperm whale. A second gate using jaw bones from a baleen whale was installed circa 1876 and remained until 1964. The current whalebone gate was installed c. 1969 and is from a finback whale (Figures 4-6) (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 10).

Two other buildings were later added to the site. A new barn was built between 1880 and 1882, the existing barn on the property today. A small dwelling (location unknown) was also added to the property around 1888 for George Penniman, the mentally incompetent younger brother of Edward. He died in 1911. Captain Edward Penniman died at his home in Eastham on October 16, 1913. The property passed to his wife, Betsey, and then to their daughter Betsey Augusta Penniman. She was an amateur photographer and took many pictures of the Penniman property. She died in 1957, leaving the property to her niece, Irma Penniman Broun Kahn (the granddaughter of Captain Edward Penniman). Based on descriptions by Kahn, the stone wall along the street and in the courtyard were whitewashed each spring, there were at least eight hitching posts where guests could hitch their horses. Trees were not allowed to grow in the field facing the ocean, providing a view of Town Cove, the ocean and the sand dunes. A hen house was kept in back of the barn, a large vegetable garden and strawberry patch were south of the barn. East of the house was a fruit orchard with apples, pears, grapes, and plums (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 10).



*Figure 4. View of the whale bones, cottonwood trees, stone walls, and the Penniman house and barn looking southwest, circa 1880 (Cape Cod NS, H10-360).*




*Figure 5. Photograph showing the Penniman House grounds, from the east, seen c. 1880. Note the open fields, which allowed for expansive views of Nauset Marsh (Cape Cod NS, H10-068).*




*Figure 6. Photograph looking east showing the cottonwood trees along the Penniman house driveway, circa 1880. Young pine trees are also visible to the front entrance to the Penniman house (Cape Cod NS, H10-173).*

**SALE OF THE KNOWLES FARMS (1905-1943)**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the two Knowles farms had reached their highest and most characteristic development. Seth, owner of the southern farm, died in 1905 at the age of 83. He had four children, none of whom married. He willed the farm to two of them, Seth Edgar and Abbie May, both then in their forties. Since Seth Edgar had suffered brain damage while at sea, operation of the farm was accomplished by Abbie May. In 1906, the dwelling increased in value from $1,200 to $3,000, possibly indicating a reassessment or a major addition such as the cross gable. While cows and fowl were still kept, they were kept in much smaller numbers. When Abbie died in 1927, the farm passed out of the immediate family and was administered by her executor until its sale to Charles A. Gunn in 1936 (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 10).

Sylvanus, owner of the northern farm, died in 1911. He was succeeded by his son William Freemen Knowles, who continued to farm until his death in 1924 at the age of fifty. The farm passed to his wife, Harriet, and farming was no longer conducted on a significant scale. In 1926, Harriet Knowles sold ten acres of swamp south of Hemenway Road (a portion of the current Red Maple Swamp area) to Lawrence Hemenway. She continued living at the farm through the 1930s, but sold it in 1943 to Dorothy Lucile Kattwinkel. The remarkable parallelism of the two farms had persisted for nearly 140 years (Figure 7) (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 11).



*Figure 7. Aerial photograph looking southwest and showing cows grazing in the open fields at Fort Hill in the 1940s (Cape Cod NS archives, courtesy of William Quinn).*

**FARMING DURING THE GUNN AND LEACH OWNERSHIP (1936-1961)**

Charles Gunn was a native of Nova Scotia. He came to Cape Cod after buying an ice business in Wellfleet and later became caretaker for the Albert Greene Duncan family, which owned a large farm not far from Fort Hill. Upon Mr. Duncan's death, Gunn acquired the farm. Meanwhile, he acquired the right to take hay off the nearby Knowles farms. This haying may have been responsible for keeping a large area of Fort Hill open, including the land between Fort Hill and Skiff Hill that has since grown up into a largely cedar scrub. Gunn negotiated to purchase the southern Knowles farm, succeeding only when a Knowles trustee pressured the heirs into selling. In 1936, he began to revive the agricultural use of the farm, registered under the name “Nauset Moors Farm” (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 11)

The Gunns converted the barn for occupancy by milk cows and moved into the Knowles house in about 1938. They kept 20-25 milk cows, a greater number of cattle than had previously been kept on the southern Knowles farm. This was possible because, for the first time since 1786, both Knowles farms were being used in a unified operation. Gunn used the southern farm primarily for growing high-quality clover and alfalfa; he pastured the cattle on the northern farm by arrangement with the Kattwinkels. The Kattwinkels were active conservationists and apparently had an interest in maintaining the traditionally open quality of their land. Gunn marketed his milk locally, through door-to-door sales, stores, and a school contract. His control of the local market reflected the decline in dairy farming in the town at this time (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 11).

While the traditional rural economy on Cape Cod was declining, summer tourism was rising as a potent new force. The tourism industry in Eastham reflected that of Cape Cod. In general, but it more specifically reflected the tourism industry of the Outer Cape towns, which have always been less populated and more dramatic in their landscapes. The Outer Cape's tourism industry was guided by the coming and going of the railroad, the improvement, and extension of Highway Route 6, and the loss of other industry in the region. Tourism began in the latter part of the nineteenth century and accelerated into the twentieth century. With these forces in the region, the younger Charles Gunn, as he was coming of age around 1950, stated that he would subdivide the property into lots and build cottages. The elder Gunn sought to preserve the farm and therefore sold the property to James H. Leach, a veterinarian, and his wife Frances (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 11).

The Leaches continued some farming and kept the land open, hiring a herdsman, and converting the stable for occupancy by horses that were rented for recreational purposes. In 1960, however, they sold the former Seth Knowles/Nauset Moors farm to a development company, Mel-Con of Fitchburg, Massachusetts (Figure 8). Mel-Con planned to divide the property into thirty-three lots linked by a system of private roads with communal boat landings. By May 1961, Mel-Con had registered its subdivision and had started regrading the land and laying out roads, including a road leading to the summit of Fort Hill. It had sold ten of the thirty-three “Fort Hill Estates” lots. One lot, which contained the Seth Knowles farmhouse on approximately three quarters of an acre, was sold to the Burrill family. This house was the only building on the tract at that time. Further development was halted by the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961 (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 12).



*Figure 8. Aerial of Fort Hill area, April 20, 1960, clearly showing fields, though young cedar trees are visible on Skiff Hill and north and south of the Avery and Penniman houses. Three wetland areas are visible as dark spots in the fields (Cape Cod NS).*

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OWNERSHIP (1961-2008)**

The initial planning to establish Cape Cod National Seashore apparently did not include either of the two former Knowles farms in the Fort Hill area. While the boundaries of the future park were still under discussion, a helicopter tour of the area was arranged in May 1961 for relevant House and Senate subcommittee members. During this visit, the helicopter landed on Fort Hill and members saw the beginnings of the Mel-Con subdivision, with stakes marking the future location of houses (Figure 9). The southern farm at Fort Hill was thereafter included within the proposed boundary. National Park Service acquisition of the eight lots and the balance of the tract, which had been subdivided but not yet sold, was accomplished despite some opposition. Once the southern farm was included in the National Seashore, it was sensible to add the rest of the Fort Hill area. The National Park Service purchased the Captain Edward Penniman house, barn, and farmland on June 7, 1963. Included with the property were a few of the Penniman family's household furnishings, which are now stored at the Salt Pond Visitor Center. The northern Knowles farm was added to the National Seashore in October 1964, though the farmhouse and surrounding three acres of land were kept in private ownership. In 1965, the Park Service also acquired the ten acres, which had been conveyed out of the Knowles family in 1926 (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 12).

The National Park Service established several walking trails through the area, as well as a small parking area on the north side of Fort Hill Road, between the two Knowles houses. A restroom facility was added to the northern portion of the property, near Hemenway Road, in 1969. Also in the mid-1960s, the extension of Fort Hill Road and the parking area at the top of Fort Hill were paved. Since pasture grasses have gradually been replaced by coarser vegetation, but the area retains its open feel, with some areas of increased vegetation that are the result of natural encroachment. Since the 1980s, the National Park Service has removed encroaching vegetation from several areas, which were open during the period of significance, restoring some of the views and a more open feeling in the district. However, the duration and frequency of treatments have been inconsistent (Figure 10) (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 12).

In 2007, the National Park Service Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation collaborated with the staff at the Cape Cod National Seashore to develop a sustainable treatment approach for the 100-acre Fort Hill cultural landscape. Using a combination of controlled burns alternating with seasonal mowing, the park initiated a five-year open fields management plan to preserve the natural and cultural resources associated with the open, formerly agricultural landscape. As of fall 2007, many non-native invasive plant species have been removed.



*Figure 9. Aerial of the Fort Hill area, February 21, 1974, showing fields on the eastern half of the property. A scar from the initial grading of a road for the proposed Mel-Con subdivision can be seen within the fields (Cape Cod NS).*



*Figure 10. Aerial of the Fort Hill area, September 6, 1987 showing fields on the eastern side of the property surrounded by trees and shrubs and delinated by recreational paths. Three wetland areas are surrounded by taller vegetation (Cape Cod NS).*

# Uses

### Functions and Uses:

| Major Category | Category | Use/Function | Historic | Current | Primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture/Subsistence | Agricultural Field | Agricultural Field | Yes | No | Yes |
| Domestic (Residential) | Secondary Structure (Garage) | Secondary Structure (Garage) | Yes | No | No |
| Domestic (Residential) | Single Family Dwelling | Single Family House | Yes | Yes | No |
| Recreation/Culture | Museum (Exhibition Hall) | Museum (Exhibition Hall)-Other | No | Yes | No |
| Recreation/Culture | Outdoor Recreation | Outdoor Recreation-Other | No | Yes | Yes |

### Public Access:

**Public Access:** Unrestricted

**Public Access Narrative:**

### Associated Ethnographic Group

**Ethnographic Study Status:** No Survey Conducted

**Ethnographic Narrative:**

# Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

**Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:**

The physical integrity of the Fort Hill landscape is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1786-1943) with current conditions. Significant landscape characteristics identified for the district are natural features, topography, spatial organization, land use, circulation, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, small-scale features, and archeological sites. Contributing characteristics or features possess historic integrity and are related to the areas of significance. Non-contributing characteristics or features no longer possess historic integrity, or are unrelated to the area of historic significance. The most important landscape characteristics identified for the Fort Hill Rural Historic District are natural features, topography, spatial organization, buildings and structures, vegetation, views and vistas, and archeological sites.

The natural systems and topography that define the Fort Hill Rural Historic District are essentially unchanged since the historic period. Three kettle-hole wetlands stand out amid the former agricultural fields, despite being partially filled with encroaching vegetation. The district's three distinct zones — the residential cluster (Captain Edward Penniman house and barn, Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house, Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house), the spacious open fields, and the dark and enclosed red maple swamp—remain unaltered, illustrating a pattern of settlement and land division characteristic of farms on Cape Cod from approximately 1750 to 1900. Although farming activities no longer exist within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District, the landscape remains open and the eighteenth and nineteenth-century patterns of land division are still evident as rectangular field patterns defined by stone walls. Similar to the historic period, Fort Hill Road continues to serve as the primary vehicular route to the site. Views of Nauset Marsh, Town Cove, the Atlantic Ocean, and surrounding areas are still intact throughout the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. However, encroaching vegetation continually threatens the open character of the area.

Since 1943, there have been slight modifications to the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. In the 1960s, rough grading was undertaken for roads and several house lots as part of a proposed private development within the vicinity of Fort Hill. However, the district's overall topography was not affected because the plan was not fully implemented. Other changes to the landscape are primarily associated with National Park Service visitor facilities, which date to the 1960s. These features include but are not limited to the upper and lower parking lots, Red Maple Swamp and Skiff Hill trails, the Skiff Hill shelter, the comfort station, split rail fencing, signage, and seating found within the trails. These modifications are not ideal and do detract somewhat from the historic character of the district, but collectively they do not diminish the site's overall integrity.

ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY

The National Register identifies seven aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association). Retention of these qualities is essential for a property to convey its significance; however, not all seven qualities of integrity need to be present to suggest a sense of past time and place. The cultural landscape within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District retains overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association. Feeling is the only aspect of integrity that has diminished since the historic period (1783-1943). While visible remnants of farming remain within the district, the characteristic sounds and smells associated with agricultural activities are no longer present, replaced by tranquil parkland.

Location:
Integrity of location remains intact at Fort Hill Rural Historic District. Two houses have existed along Fort Hill Road since before 1786, and the current cluster of three houses has existed in the same configuration since 1864. Although encroaching vegetation has affected the areas, the locations of the open fields and Red Maple Swamp have remained the same since the historic period.

Design:
Integrity of design is visible in the overall organization of the site. The district remains spatially divided by three distinct areas: the cluster of historic residences and outbuildings, the open fields, and Red Maple Swamp. The most notable detraction from the site's overall design is the extension of Fort Hill Road and the parking lot on the summit of Fort Hill. On a smaller scale, integrity of design is apparent to varying degrees in the three

contributing residential properties and the four stone walls within this district. As a result of renovation efforts completed by the National Park Service in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the Late Victorian (French Second Empire) Penniman House and a portion of the property facing Fort Hill Road generally appear similar as they did at the end of the historic period. The distinctive terracing around the house, stone retaining wall, hitching posts, fence around the perimeter of the property, flagpole socket, and whalebone gate are important to the site and contribute to its design. Historic photographs of the Penniman House's east yard show it as open and forested for use by animals. Likewise, the southern portion of the site was a field that extended uninterrupted down to the Town Cove. These portions of the property are now overgrown with invasive vegetation.

The Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house has also undergone changes since the period of significance. The mid-nineteenth century (Greek Revival) house was substantially enlarged in 1988-89 by the construction of an addition at its northeast corner. A small garage was built northwest of the house and a grouping of evergreen and perennials were planted in the front of the house. The Colonial (Georgian) Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house has been modified with the addition of new foundation plantings, and construction of a small garage. These changes collectively have diminished the integrity of both properties. A large dairy barn located north of the house in 1943 is no longer standing. A capped foundation from a portion of the barn is all that remains.

The fields at Fort Hill, encompassing the eastern portion of the district, retain the distinctive pattern of rectangular fields defined by stone walls. This pattern is found on nineteenth century maps and in records from as early as 1800.

Setting:
The evocative natural setting, including the views of the Town Cove, Nauset Marsh, and the Atlantic Ocean, the rolling topography and distinctive kettle holes, appears to have changed relatively little since 1943, contributing to the integrity of this site. In addition, the spatial relationship of the cluster of historic residences and outbuildings, the open fields, and Red Maple Swamp remain preserved.

Materials:
With exception to Fort Hill Road and some walks being paved and the loss or replacement of individual plants at the Captain Edward Penniman house, the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house, and the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house, the original materials found throughout Fort Hill are preserved.

Workmanship:
The buildings and structures found along Fort Hill Road represent historic integrity in varying degrees. The Captain Edward Penniman and Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) houses have not been substantially altered since the historic period. They still display the work of the designers and craftsmen who built them. The Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house has been modified since the period of significance, diminishing its historic building craft. Most landscape features found at the Penniman House, as well as the stone walls in the open fields along the eastern boundary of the district, have not been substantially altered. As a whole the Fort Hill Rural Historic District retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling:
The Fort Hill Rural Historic District no longer possesses the feeling of agricultural life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During the historic period, farming activities such as raising livestock and poultry, orchards, peat digging, salt-making, and cranberry and asparagus crops marked the sweeping landscape at Fort Hill. Although visible remnants of farming remain within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District, agricultural activities, with their characteristic sounds and smells, no longer exist in the area, replaced by tranquil parkland.

Association:
The Fort Hill Rural Historic District continues to be recognized as a landscape of distinctive character that embodies the area's architectural and agricultural past. Extant characteristics and features include the field patterns, stone walls, views across open agricultural fields to the water, and associated historic buildings and outbuildings.

**Landscape Characteristic: Other - Natural Systems and Topography**

Historic Condition:
The geology of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District is characterized as being post-glacial Eastham Plain deposits, with some marsh and beach deposits. The predominant soil types are Freetown and Swansea mucks, Ipswich, Pawcatuck, and Matunuck peats, and Carver coarse sand. Freetown and Swansea mucks occur in areas of glacial lake deposits and are poorly suited to woodlands because they are generally wet. The northwest and northeast portions of the Fort Hill Rural District consist mostly of Freetown and Swansea soils. Nauset Marsh, located on the eastern and southern boundaries of the district, contain Ipswich, Pawcatuck, and Matunuck peats, which are deep and poorly drained soils that occur in tidal areas subject to daily saltwater inundation. The majority of the Fort Hill landscape is comprised of Carver coarse sand soils. These soils are poorly suited for pasture or cultivation.

Throughout the historic period, the topography of the Fort Hill area included a wide range of conditions, from the flat lands around the buildings and structures along Fort Hill Road, to the undulating lands at Fort and Skiff Hills. From the paved parking lot and overlook at the top of Fort Hill, the land slopes away gently to the south, where it meets the Town Creek and the marshy edge of Town Cove. To the east, the land slopes to the Nauset Marsh, and to the northwest and west, the open fields slope to the woodland edge of the Red Maple Swamp, and to the wooded property lines of the three houses along Fort Hill Road. Similar in size to Fort Hill, Skiff Hill is located in the northeast portion of the district near the edge of Nauset Marsh. The summit of Skiff Hill is approximately forty-eight feet above sea level and rises rather steeply from the edge of Nauset Marsh. The other slopes of the hill decrease gradually with gentle undulations similar to those found while atop Fort Hill. In contrast to Fort Hill, the area encompassing Skiff Hill is heavily wooded.

Historic maps and descriptions of the Fort Hill area indicate the presence of a wooded swamp in the northwestern section of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District as far back as the middle of the eighteenth century. Aerial photographs confirm that such an area existed in 1938. The wooded swamp, known as Red Maple Swamp, is a contributing feature within the historic district as it was an agricultural resource during the historic period.

Historically, three kettle-hole wetlands stood out from the surrounding field setting along the eastern portion of the historic district. The wetlands first appeared in the historic documentation of the site in a 1938 aerial photograph. (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 9)

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
The geology and topography of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District remains similar today as they did during the historic period. However, the topography within the vicinity of Fort Hill was minimally altered as a result of the proposed private development in the 1960s. Although the development never came to fruition, roads were roughly graded and several areas were leveled for house lots. The scar is visible from the air as a depressed area along the west and south flanks of Fort Hill.

Based on aerial photographs, the Red Maple Swamp is both larger and denser that it was at the end of the period of significance. The density and extent of the vegetation has likely increased because of the decreased intensity of use of the open fields for farming and the decline in the harvesting of resources in the swamp itself. After the National Park Service acquired the area, a system of trails and boardwalks was cut to provide access from Fort Hill and Hemenway Road through the formerly inaccessible wooded area.

Three kettle-hole wetlands still exist within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District, but are now edged and partially filled with encroaching vegetation. Surface water is visible within each of the three wetlands and wildlife is evident. Their appearance has changed since the end of the historic period as the vegetation in and around them has grown denser.

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kettle-hole wetlands | 131870 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Red Maple Swamp | 131872 | Contributing | | | | | No |

**Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization**

Historic Condition and Existing Conditions:
The Fort Hill landscape has always been spatially divided by three areas: the cluster of historic residences and outbuildings in the southwest portion of the district; the open fields and expansive views to the marsh in the eastern portion of the district; and the densely vegetated wetland area in the northwest portion of the district. Today, these areas are divided into three distinct zones: the Fort Hill Road Zone, the Open Field Zone, and Red Maple Swamp Zone.

The Fort Hill Road zone lies astride the main, western half of Fort Hill Road. This section of road begins at the intersection of Governor Prence Road, which provides access to the area from Route 6 and ends at the Burrill property line. The north boundary of the zone is the Red Maple Swamp and the south boundary is the creek flowing into Town Cove. The zone is distinguished from other areas by the thick wetland vegetation to the north and by the open fields to the east. The western portion of the zone is moderately to heavily vegetated, providing an effective visual barrier to development outside the district boundary. The zone's primary features are a cluster of three historic houses and their outbuildings located along Fort Hill Road, and a National Park Service parking lot. The three houses are the Captain Edward Penniman house, the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house, and the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house.

The open-field zone forms the eastern half of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District and encompasses the majority of the land that was farmed by the Knowles family. Surrounding the east end of Fort Hill Road, the open-field zone extends from the Fort Hill Road zone to the Nauset Marsh, and from the wooded edge of the Red Maple Swamp and Skiff Hill southward to Town Cove. Distinctive characteristics of this landscape include undulating folds of former pasture and abandoned fields divided by stone walls, kettle-hole wetlands, unobstructed views in every direction, and opportunistic vegetation encroaching from every end. Largely owing to the presence of Nauset Beach, which has acted as a protective barrier, the open-field zone has been protected from dramatic erosion characteristic of so many coastal areas on Cape Cod. Its coastline has thus experienced only moderate change over the past century (CR, 2007: 4-5) (Figure 11).

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**

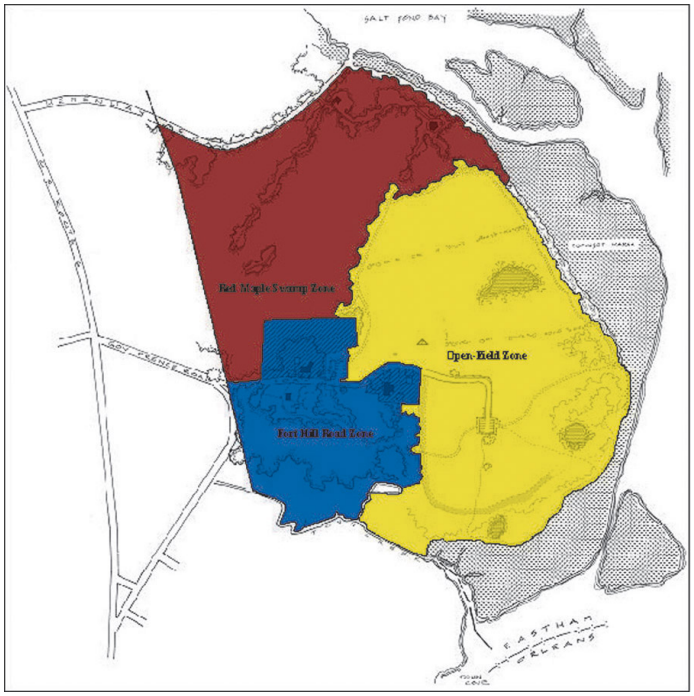



*Figure 11: Map of the spatial organization of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. The district is divided into three zones: Red Maple Swamp, Fort Hill Road, and Open Field Zones (OCLP, 2007).*

**Landscape Characteristic: Land Use**

Historic Condition:
During the historic period, Fort Hill functioned primarily as a domestic and agricultural landscape for the Knowles and Penniman families. During their long tenure at Fort Hill, the Knowles and Penniman families, who were relatives by marriage, made a substantial mark on the landscape. Following the death of Willard Knowles in 1786, his land at Fort Hill was divided between his youngest sons Seth and William. As a result of this land division, the Fort Hill area entered into its fullest and most characteristic development as two separate Knowles family farms. While changes in Knowles family ownership would occur over time, agricultural activities on both properties would continue throughout the historic period. The family's farming included a variety of activities over the years, including raising livestock and poultry, peat digging, salt-making, and cranberry and asparagus crops.

During the historic period, the Penniman property was a smaller scale version of the Knowles farms, with various outbuildings and a house. However, unlike the Knowles properties, the Penniman property served as a gentleman's farm rather than a working farm. Penniman family farming activities included peat digging, raising livestock and poultry, and harvesting cranberry crops. They also had a small domestic orchard.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
Fort Hill experienced minimal change following the end of ownership by the Knowles family in 1943. Charles A. Gunn, who purchased the southern "Seth" Knowles property in 1937, continued to farm the land until he sold it in the 1950s. Agricultural activities at Fort Hill ended shortly thereafter. In 1960, the Leach family sold the southern "Seth" Knowles property to the development company Mel-Con. The company planned to divide the property into 33 lots, to be linked by a system of private roads with communal boat landings. The plan was halted with the creation of Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961. The National Park Service acquired most of the land at Fort Hill between 1963 and 1965 and constructed parking lots, a road to the top of Fort Hill, trails, a boardwalk, a comfort station, a shelter, and waysides. In order to maintain and preserve the open character of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District, fields are periodically mowed and burned.

The National Park Service acquired the Penniman property in 1963. It is open to the public on a seasonal basis. The Avery and Burrill houses, formerly the Sylvanus and Seth Knowles farmhouses, are privately-owned inholdings.

**Landscape Characteristic: Circulation**

Historic Condition:
Beginning at the intersection of Governor Prence Road, which provides access to the area, Fort Hill Road has existed presumably since the eighteenth century, extending as far as the Seth Knowles house. Since the historic period, the Captain Edward Penniman house, the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house, and the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house and associated outbuildings have existed on Fort Hill Road. While there is no documentation that specifically references the circulation patterns found on the Avery and Burrill properties, the dirt driveway and gravel path found on the Penniman property were likely developed c.1868. It can be assumed that throughout the historic period, the Knowles and Penniman families created trails. The Fort Hill Trail is presumed to have existed during the period of significance.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
As part of a planned subdivision for the area, the eastern terminus of Fort Hill Road was extended from the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house, to the summit of Fort Hill. The subdivision was stopped with the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961, but the National Park Service retained and paved the eastern segment of the roadway to provide access to visitors. A scar that is visible from the air and on the ground thirty years later remains from the roadwork

conducted as part of the subdivision layout. The scar remains from the initial grading associated with a road and is a depressed area along the west and southern flanks of the property. The graded track is between twenty and thirty feet wide and, in some places, is as much as four feet lower than the surrounding field. Nevertheless, it is difficult to perceive the course of this abandoned roadbed from the overlook during the growing season, now that the fields have been overgrown with invasive woody plants, including multiflora rose, blackberry, black locust, and privet (CR, 2007: Pg. 10-11).

Following its acquisition of the majority of land at Fort Hill between 1963 and 1965, the National Park Service constructed two small parking areas and several walking trails. The lower parking lot, located on the north side of Fort Hill Road and east of the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house, can accommodate a maximum of sixteen standard-sized vehicles. As with the eastern portion of Fort Hill Road, the upper parking lot was constructed as a result of the proposed subdivision in the 1960s. A road leading to the summit of Fort Hill was laid out and roughed in at the time the Cape Cod National Seashore was created. Using the existing access, the upper parking lot was created and paved by the National Park Service to provide access to Fort Hill and to offer panoramic views of Nauset Marsh, Town Cove, Coast Guard Beach, and the surrounding open fields. The upper parking lot can accommodate approximately ten cars and is the trailhead for the south branches of the Fort Hill Trail. While the parking lot is perhaps the most obvious modern intrusion in the district, it does not have a significant visual impact on the district because it is only fully visible at the top of Fort Hill (Figure 12) (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 9).

The Fort Hill Trail, presumably a pre-existing trail used by the Knowles family during the historic period, was introduced when the National Park Service started managing the site in 1963. The south branch of the Fort Hill Trail begins on the south side of Fort Hill Road at the rear of the Penniman House. The trail runs eastward through the woods south of the Penniman Barn and the Seth Knowles House and into the open fields. When this path reaches the open fields, it becomes a grass path mowed to a width of about six feet. It eventually curves up to the top of Fort Hill. From the top of Fort Hill, the trail continues eastward to the edge of Nauset Marsh, then turns north, and travels along the marsh to the edge of the woods south of Skiff Hill. From that point, the trail divides with one path continuing north to the Skiff Hill Shelter. The other path turns west to intersect with the north branch of the Fort Hill Trail, which runs between Skiff Hill and the lower parking lot on Fort Hill Road. The north branch of the Fort Hill Trail begins at Skiff Hill and travels southwest through a lightly wooded area. When the trail reaches the open fields, it turns to follow the western edge of the open fields until it reaches the lower parking lot on the north side of Fort Hill Road (Figure 13) (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 13).

The Red Maple Swamp Trail is located in the northwest portion of the district. This trail was constructed c. 1967 and runs southwesterly from the east end of Hemenway Road, meandering through the swamp on a series of four-foot wide boardwalks. The trail then serpentines eastward to meet the north branch of the Fort Hill Trail at the edge of the open field area (Figure 14) (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 14).

The Skiff Hill Trail is a paved path, constructed c. 1965, which leads from the east end of Hemenway Road to the Skiff Hill Shelter. The trail begins in a densely vegetated area, and almost immediately passes by the entrance to the Red Maple Swamp Trail and a public restroom. The trail continues southeast with a moderate uphill grade, reaching the Skiff Hill Shelter and several overlooks over Nauset Marsh (Figure 15) (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 14).

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fort Hill Road | 131874 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Fort Hill Trail-gravel, grass, and sand paths | 131876 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Driveway and path to Penniman house | 131878 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Upper parking lot | 131880 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Lower parking lot | 131882 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Fort Hill Trail-Asphalt road | 131884 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Fort Hill Trail-Concrete around Skiff Hill shelter | 131886 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Fort Hill Trail-Concrete steps and paving at comfort station | 131888 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Red Maple Swamp Trail | 131890 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Skiff Hill Trail | 131892 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Driveway to the Burrill house | 131894 | Undetermined | | | | | No |
| Driveway to the Avery house | 131896 | Undetermined | | | | | No |

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 12. View looking north from Fort Hill Overlook upper parking lot, which is bounded by split-rail fencing (OCLP, 2007).*



*Figure 13. Photograph looking northeast along the Fort Hill Trail showing the natural color of the soil. Note how the view of Nauset Marsh is blocked by shoreline vegetation (OCLP, 2007).*



*Figure 14. View of the Red Maple Swamp Trail boardwalk, constructed of partially recycled material, leading through the swamp (OCLP, 2007).*



*Figure 15. View looking northwest of the Skiff Hill Trail, constructed c. 1965. Note the Skiff Hill shelter area with Indian Rock in the foreground (OCLP, 2007).*

**Landscape Characteristic:** **Buildings and Structures**

Historic Condition:

The first recorded structure in the Fort Hill area was the Samuel Treat house. The house was built c. 1673 for Samuel Treat when he arrived to serve as minister. Treat also likely built a second house on the property c. 1704. The locations of these structures are uncertain, but nineteenth century accounts state that the house was located southeast of the Seth Knowles House, near Town Creek.

In 1742, Willard Knowles purchased the Fort Hill property. Although uncertain, the former Treat house may have been occupied by Willard. Coastal maps, dated 1780, show only one dwelling within the Fort Hill area, which would presumably have been the residence of Willard Knowles. Following the death of Willard Knowles in 1786, his land was divided between his two youngest sons Seth and William. Seth Knowles was granted the southern portion of the property, including the house and outbuildings. William received the northern portion of the property. William Knowles already had a house nearby on Knowles property, just west of the Willard Knowles house. It was a Cape Cod styled house with a two-story addition to the west. The southern farm would later be known as the “Seth Knowles” farm, named for the son of James H. Knowles and grandson of Seth Knowles. The northern farm became known as the “Sylvanus Knowles” farm, named for the son of William F. Knowles.

The Knowles family updated old buildings and erected new ones throughout the nineteenth century at Fort Hill. On the northern farm, William F. Knowles added a two-story wing to the Cape-style house that he inherited from his father William (this building is no longer standing). Another dwelling was built to the west in 1864, the year that William F. Knowles died. It was later known as the Sylvanus Knowles farmhouse. The northern farm had a barn that stood until it burned in 1934. The history of the southern farmhouse is less clear. James H. Knowles may have built it in 1821, the year that he inherited the farm from his father Seth (1753-1821). More likely, however, the house was built by Seth c. 1790, or built by Willard sometime after 1742, perhaps incorporating an older structure.

A variety of other structures stood on the Knowles farms during the nineteenth century. On the southern farm, a shoe shop was present in the mid-1800s, and a store house (locations unknown). Early photographs show that Fort Hill Road originally stopped at the house and that the north lawn extended to a large barn, which was part of the farm complex. Aerial photographs from the early to mid-twentieth century show that the barn's footprint was significantly larger than that of the house. In 1936, Charles Gunn purchased the southern farm and converted the barn for occupancy by milk cows (NR, 2000: Sec. 8, Pg. 7-8).

In 1829, Scammell Penniman purchased approximately seven acres from the Knowles family. The property included a house and several outbuildings, which were all part of a homestead formerly owned by Thomas Knowles. The buildings existed from approximately 1800 to 1880. In 1868, Captain Edward Penniman had master builder Nathaniel Nickerson construct an impressive French Empire-style residence. The house was built on an eight-foot mound with retaining walls. Three other buildings were later added to the Penniman property including a greenhouse (c. 1890s), barn (c. 1880), and small dwelling for George Penniman, younger brother of Edward (c.1888).

Stone walls were located within the open fields on the eastern portion of the historic district. Presumably built by Willard Knowles after he acquired the property in 1742, the stone walls were first shown on Iardella’s 1856 Coastal Map of Cape Cod. Early records indicate the existence of at least four long, stone walls, oriented east to west, extending to the water’s edge, and several north-south walls of lesser length. Aerial photography, dating from 1938, shows that all of these walls were extant at that time. Other features that were found in the open fields included late seventeenth-and early eighteenth-century stone boundary markers (CR, 2007: Pg. 11).

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
A cluster of three houses and their outbuildings are currently located along Fort Hill Road. The three houses are the Captain Edward Penniman house, the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house, and the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house.

The Captain Edward Penniman house, built c.1868, is located on the south side of Fort Hill Road,

east of its intersection with Governor Prence Road. The house is owned by the National Park Service and is open on a seasonal basis. The Penniman House is a two and one-half story, wood frame structure in the grand, French Second Empire style. The building faces west high atop a terraced lawn, presenting an imposing facade, to visitors arriving in the Fort Hill area. This building is the finest example of Second Empire style in Eastham, and is one of the finest examples of this architectural style on Cape Cod. The building is three bays by two bays, and is sided with wood clapboards. The front facade is symmetrical with a central door and entry porch. The porch is flanked by paired columns with fluted shafts and composite capitals. Matching pilasters are located on either side of the front door. The roof of the porch includes a heavy balustrade, which extends upward to the height of the first story cornice. The cornice is projecting, emphasized with a wide, divided band of trim, closely spaced brackets, and dentils. First floor windows are 2/2 lights, with simple entablature and small brackets imitating dentils. The north and south facades of the building each include a one-story bay window with simple entablature and brackets. The east or rear facade is similar to the west facade except the central entry is much less formal, with a simple projecting entablature and brackets. Decorative quoins are located on each corner of the house. The building has a straight mansard roof with a flare and is patterned in wide horizontal bands of red and brown. Second floor dormer windows in every bay are hooded with triangular pediments and heavy brackets. The central dormer on the front facade is a paired hooded window directly above the front entry. All second floor window pediments are decorated with brackets. All windows are shuttered. A small, triangular dormer window is centered on the east and west faces of the shallow upper roof slope and reflects the second floor window pediments. An octagonal cupola with full arch windows and a molded cornice with brackets top the building. One internal chimney is centered on either side of the cupola. In the 1980s, the Captain Edward Penniman house and grounds, including the retaining walls, were restored to their historic appearance (Figure 16) (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 2-3).

The Captain Edward Penniman barn, constructed c. 1880, is a two-story barn, which matches the Penniman House in style and appearance. Located southeast of the house, the barn has a mansard roof, wood clapboard siding, square cupola, and otherwise simple architectural detailing. The north facade includes a large central door for carriages and a small door on the right, which leads to a three-hole outhouse. An open shed with sloped roof projects from the left side of the front facade. On the second story, a loft access is located directly over the carriage entrance. One gabled dormer window is located on either side of the facade. The east and west facades of the barn each have a single gabled dormer window (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 2-3).

The Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house, constructed in 1864, is a Greek Revival style house on the north side of Fort Hill Road, directly opposite the Captain Edward Penniman house. It is a privately-owned residence on approximately 3 acres of land. The main block of the building is a two-story gable roof structure, two bays by three bays, with the gable end facing south to Fort Hill Road. The front facade of the main block has a door on the right side and two windows on the left. The second floor has three windows. The west facade of the main block has two windows evenly spaced, with a small one-story ell projecting to the rear. A one and a half-story gable ell projects to the east side of the original block, creating an L plan. The ell is four bays by two bays, with four bays facing Fort Hill Road. On the front facade of the ell, the first floor contains a bay window occupying the two left bays and a door and window on the right. On the second floor, a shed dormer with two windows projects over the bay window on the left side of the ell. A brick chimney projects from the center of the ell. The original portion of the house rests on a mortar and fieldstone foundation and is sheathed in clapboards. Architectural detailing is Greek revival in style, including corner boards, window, and door surrounds, and cornice. The windows are primarily two over two sash. The Sylvanus Knowles house and yard have undergone changes since the period of significance. A covered porch was added to the east facade of the ell in 1950 and rebuilt in 1988. Also in 1988, the north and east sides of the ell were altered by removal of two shed-like structures to the rear and the addition of a large northeast facing ell with a gable roof. While the date of construction is uncertain, a small garage was built northwest of the house (Figure 17) (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 4).

The Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) House was constructed c.1790. It is a Georgian style building located at the east end of the residential cluster, facing west. It is situated largely in line with Fort Hill Road, which curves sharply around to the north of the house. This structure is a two and one-

half story wood frame house with a gable roof, paired center chimneys, and a large center crossgable. The main block is five bays by two bays. The front facade is a symmetrical five bays with a central front door, and is faced with clapboards. The second floor has five windows, aligned with the windows and door on the first floor. The third floor of the facade is formed by the center cross gable, and contains a single window. The front facade has detailed architectural trim at the eaves and on the front door surround, but relatively simple corner boards and window surrounds. The detail at the eave is composed of a cornice, raking cornice along the cross gable, dentil molding, and a wide fascia board. The front door surround is comprised of flat pilasters on either side of the door, with a wide fascia, frieze, and cornice above. The sides of the main block are faced in weathered shingle and include two windows on each floor, with the third floor windows spaced more closely within the gable ends. Two small one-story ells with shallow hip roofs project from the north and south sides of the main block. At some time near the turn of the twentieth century, these were added as one-story open porches. These porches are now enclosed and accessed from the interior. A two-story gabled ell projects from the rear of the main block and is the width of the cross gable. This ell is four bays long, with a door and three windows on the first floor and two gabled dormers on the second floor. All that remains of the barn, historically located north of Fort Hill Road across from the house, is a small-mortared fieldstone capped foundation. Like the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) property, the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) property has been modified by the construction of a small garage, built in 1964. Nevertheless, the west facade of the house appears much as it did in photographs taken at the end of the nineteenth century (Figures 18 and 19) (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 5-6).

National Park Service acquisition of most of the Fort Hill area in the 1960s resulted in the construction of a comfort station and shelter. The public comfort station, constructed c.1969, is sited near the Hemenway Road entrance. The structure is of concrete-block construction with concrete steps leading up to its entrance. The Skiff Hill Interpretative Shelter, constructed c.1965, is located south of the comfort station and near the edge of the Nauset Marsh at Skiff Hill. The shelter is an open hexagonal design, which is typical of numerous National Park Service structures built in the 1960s. It is wood construction with weathered cedar shingles on the roof and low walls (Figure 20) (NR, 2000: Sec. 7, Pg. 12).

Three stone walls currently exist in the open fields on the eastern portion of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. All three walls run westward from Nauset Marsh. The northernmost of the three runs for 115 feet before reaching a gap. After that point, the line continues in the form of some isolated cobbles. The middle wall consists of two segments. The east segment is comprised of two to four courses of unmortared stone, and is 139 feet long. The west segment dwindles to one course, shows some gaps, and runs for 669 feet. The southernmost wall consists of two to four courses of unmortared stone and runs 718 feet. On the south side of the western portion of this wall is an area of surface disturbance but it does not appear to have affected the stone wall. There was once a fourth stone wall in the area, but the proposed 1960 subdivision damaged it severely. No trace of this wall is visible today. The stone walls have been kept partially clear through the burning process. Where portions of the stone walls have collapsed, stones are now laying within the surrounding vegetation. Another short section of stone wall runs N-S and is located south of the Burrill property (Figure 21).

A stone boundary marker can still be found in the open fields. The Treat property marker is a granite marker with the letter “T’ engraved on its face. It was the northwest boundary marker for approximately twenty acres owned by Reverend Samuel Treat (CR, 2007: Pg. 11).

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Captain Edward Penniman House (E-35-77) | 131898 | Contributing | 105 | | Location | 37949 | Yes |
| Captain Edward Penniman Barn (E-35-78) | 131900 | Contributing | 106 | | Location | 37950 | Yes |
| Captain Edward Penniman-Stone Retaining Walls (E-322aG) | 131902 | Contributing | 40430 | | | | No |
| Captain Edward Penniman-Stone Retaining Walls (E-322aG)[Stone wall south of the Burrill property line] | 131904 | Contributing | 40430 | | | | No |
| Burrill house and garage (Seth Knowles house) (privately owned) | 131906 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Avery house (Sylvanus Knowles house) (privately owned) | 131918 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Capped barn foundation | 131912 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Fort Hill Area Stone Walls (E-200aG) | 131922 | Contributing | 40435 | | | | No |
| Stone boundary marker (Treat property marker) | 131924 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Burrill garage | 131926 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Avery garage | 131928 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Skiff Hill shelter | 131930 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Comfort station | 131932 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 16. View looking east at west facade of Penniman house, perched on terraced lawn as seen from the south side of Fort Hill Road. A decorative fence surrounds the lawn (OLCP, 2007).*



*Figure 17. View looking northeast at west and south sides of the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house (at right) on north side of Fort Hill Road (OCLP, 2007.*




*Figure 18. View looking east at west facade of the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house and barn on south side of Fort Hill Road, and the entrance to the NPS lower parking lot (OCLP, 2007).*



*Figure 19. View looking southeast showing the capped foundation of the Gunn dairy barn at center of photo. The Burrill barn, Fort Hill Road and Fort Hill Overlook are visible in the background (OCLP, 2007).*



*Figure 20. Skiff Hill shelter surrounded by encroaching vegetation with partial views of Nauset Marsh in the distance (OCLP, 2007).*



*Figure 21. View looking northwest showing a stone wall obscured by multiflora rose on the north side of the open fields (OCLP, 2007).*

**Landscape Characteristic:** **Vegetation**

Historic Condition:

Prior to settlement by English Separatists, much of Cape Cod, including the Fort Hill area, was heavily forested. As settlers enlarged their farms, they cleared forests for lumber, firewood, and fields. Eventually land clearing, burning, agricultural practices, and grazing by animals would reduce vegetation, leaving Cape Cod bare of most forest by the mid-nineteenth century. When Seth and William acquired Fort Hill in 1786, it encompassed a mosaic of wooded and open land. While the northwestern portion of the property consisted of a wooded swamp, the majority of the landscape was open fields. Historically a cedar swamp, the wooded swamp, later known as Red Maple Swamp, was dominated by red maples. The open character of the Fort Hill area allowed for uninterrupted views of Nauset Marsh and Town Cove, stone walls, and kettle holes.

In addition to eastern red cedars found along the entrance road, the vegetation during the historic period varied within the cluster of housing along Fort Hill Road. According to c.1880 photographs, foundation plantings were found on the Captain Edward Penniman property, as well as cottonwood and horse chestnut trees lining the driveway. A fruit orchard, vegetable garden, and strawberry patch were also located on the Penniman property.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
Today the Fort Hill area contains at least seven plant communities, including open grassland and herbaceous cover, scrublands, hardwood forest, cedar/pitch pine forest, and freshwater and saltwater wetlands. Grassland encompasses much of the southeastern half of the area, with pockets of encroaching shrublands, mixed cedar, and pines on the eastern and southern banks of Fort Hill near Nauset Marsh. The hardwood forest, including the red maple swamp, covers much of the northwestern area of the site.

Although in poor condition and interspersed amongst opportunistic vegetation, lines of eastern red cedar trees are still found along Fort Hill Road. On the Captain Edward Penniman property, four cottonwood trees to the west of the drive were lost during a storm in 2005. Only two cottonwood trees remain to the east of the drive. The land north and south of the Penniman House and Barn, which historically was cleared for fields, is now thickly overgrown with vegetation. The land east of the house, extending to and south of the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) property, used to be equally overgrown. However, the National Park Service has cleared much of this area, leaving only a narrow buffer between the Penniman house and the Burrill property (Figures 22 and 23).

The Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) and Burrill properties have undergone changes since the period of significance. The front of the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) house was planted with a variety of neatly trimmed evergreen plants. Two conical evergreen trees mark the entrance to the property. The area to the west of the Avery driveway, historically open in character, is now heavily wooded. The area on the north side of the house is open, enclosed by a dense buffer of red maples. Evergreen shrubs create a foundation planting around the front of the Burrill (formerly Seth Knowles) house. The front west lawn is planted with grass and contains a large cottonwood tree and a single flowering hydrangea. The rear east lawn is largely open.

Mature black locust trees and woody plants including multiflora rose and blackberry mark the property line between the parking lot and the area on the north side of Fort Hill Road, east of the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) Avery house. A single mature and declining horse-chestnut tree stands on the south side of Fort Hill Road directly opposite the entrance to the parking lot. It is possible that this tree is the sole survivor of a line of horse-chestnut trees that once existed along the south side of the Fort Hill Road between the Penniman House and the Burrill inholding.

Since its acquisition in the 1960s, the National Park Service has managed to preserve the open character of the Fort Hill landscape by burning and mechanical cutting. While these efforts have largely succeeded in halting succession, encroaching invasive native and non-native woody plants continue to spread throughout the area. Invasive native and non-native plant species include Norway maple, multiflora rose, privet, locust, lupines, and blackberry. As a result of prescribed burning, bluestem grass has also established itself in parts of the open fields. However, the grass does not detract from the historic setting. Features such as the stone walls and kettle holes have been encroached upon by vegetation and are no longer visible. Aerial photography indicates that the area encompassing the Red Maple Swamp is both larger and more dense than it was at the end

of the period of significance. The density and extent of vegetation has likely increased because of the decreased intensity of use of the open fields and the decreased harvesting of resources from the swamp. Invasive woody plants, such as Japanese knotweed and locust, have been found in the swamp (Figure 24).

In 2007, the Cape Cod National Seashore and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation initiated a five-year open fields management plan to preserve the natural and cultural resources associated with the agricultural landscape at Fort Hill. Using a combination of controlled burns alternating with seasonal mowing, the majority of woody and invasive plant species within the open fields have been removed.

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Open fields | 131934 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Red Maple Swamp | 131936 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Cottonwood trees at Penniman house driveway | 131938 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Horse chestnut trees at Fort Hill Road | 131940 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Line of eastern red cedars | 131942 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Foundation planting at Penniman house | 131944 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Woody shrubs and trees in fields | 131946 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Lupines | 131948 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Woodland edge to kettle-hole wetlands and vegetation in kettle-hole wetlands | 131950 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Little bluestem grass | 131952 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Vegetation edge at shoreline with Nauset Marsh | 131956 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Black locust trees at the lower parking lot | 131960 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**

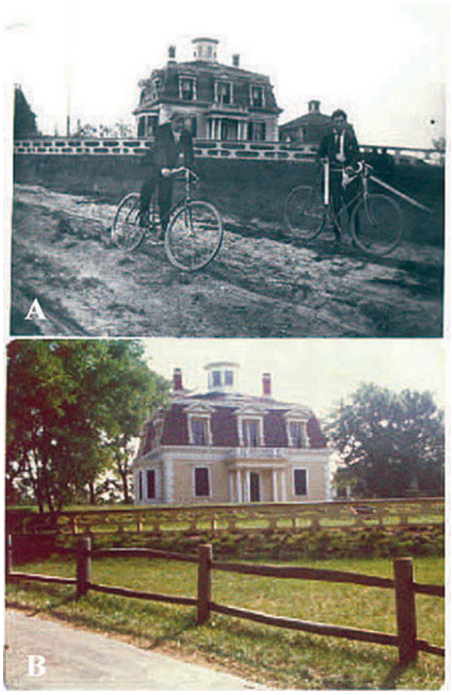



*Figure 22. (A) View of the Penniman house from the entrance road, circa 1888. Note the open landscape (Cape Cod NS arch, H10-016); (B) View of the Penniman house from the entrance road, September 1978. Note the shade trees(Cape Cod NS arch, H10-342).*



*Figure 23. (Top) Historic image showing view northwest across the open fields from the Penniman house lawn. (Bottom) Recent image looking west across the Penniman house lawn, taken from similar vantage point as above(Cape Cod NS, H10-096, OCLP, 2007).*



*Figure 24. View looking northeast of a kettle hole wetland located in a recently burned field within the eastern portion of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. Note the encroaching vegetation surrounding the kettle hole wetland (OCLP, 2007).*

**Landscape Characteristic:** **Views and Vistas**

Historic Condition:
Topography, land use, and vegetation played a vital role in defining the views and vistas from within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District during the historic period. In addition to the undulating topography, the use of the land for agriculture kept the land open and free of encroaching vegetation, allowing for long and unobstructed views of the surrounding area. The summits of Fort Hill and Skiff Hill offered panoramic views of Nauset Marsh, Town Cove, and the surrounding open fields. In addition, the open character of the agricultural fields provided the opportunity to view kettle-hole wetlands and stone walls that were located within them. In 1868, Captain Edward Penniman had his French Empire-style residence built on an eight-foot high mound, formed from soil excavated from other areas to enable him to obtain better views of the Atlantic Ocean.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
The landscape character of Outer Cape Cod has changed dramatically over the last 100 years. Open meadows and grazed lands that historically covered the area are now abandoned, replaced with a wooded residential landscape. The open landscape, which allowed frequent views to the Atlantic Ocean, has all but disappeared from many areas of the Outer Cape. However, views both to and from Fort Hill appear to have changed remarkably little since its occupation by the descendants of Willard Knowles. The acres of cleared, open land remain safeguarded, securely buffered from US Route 6 by a woodland edge, and views of Nauset Marsh, Town Cove, and the surrounding open fields can still be obtained.

As a result of the proposed subdivision in the 1960s, the upper parking lot on the summit of Fort Hill was constructed. It offers panoramic views of Nauset Marsh, Town Cove, Coast Guard Beach, and the surrounding open fields. In the 1960s, the National Park Service cleared a wooded site on Skiff Hill and constructed an interpretive shelter. The wooded area east of the shelter and overlook was kept open in the past, providing an unobstructed view of Nauset Marsh and Salt Pond Bay. At present the wooded area surrounding the shelter is overgrown and allows only limited views to the marsh and ocean.

Clusters of modern residences are visible on the southern shore of the Town Cove. However, this visual intrusion is put into perspective by the fact that historic maps of the area indicate that residences have existed in this area since the nineteenth century.

No longer serving as an agricultural landscape, successional vegetation remains as an immediate threat to the views and open character of the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. Areas of open fields have decreased by the spread of woodland and features such as stone walls and kettle holes have been encroached upon by vegetation. As a result, key unrestricted views from within the district are in danger of being lost, including views from the Fort Hill Road, Penniman house, and trails. While efforts are underway to address these issues, the preservation of the open character of the district will continually be a management and maintenance issue for park staff (Figure 25, see also figures 12-24).

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Panoramic view of Nauset Marsh from overlook at Skiff Hill | 131962 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Panoramic view of Nauset Marsh and Town Cove from the summit of Fort Hill | 131964 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Panoramic view of Nauset Marsh and Town Cove from Penniman house | 131966 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| View of the entrance from Penniman house | 131968 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Panoramic views over the open fields and stone walls | 131984 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Views from Fort Hill trails over the open fields to the kettle-hole wetlands. | 131986 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| View from Fort Hill Road to Penniman house, Avery house and Burrill house | 131978 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| View of the capped barn foundation | 131990 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| View from Fort Hill Trail to the comfort station | 131992 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 25. View looking northeast of recently burned fields within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. Nauset Marsh can be seen in the distance (OCLP, 2007).*

**Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features**

Historic Condition:
With exception to the small-scale features found on the Captain Edward Penniman property, no documentation has been found supporting descriptions of small-scale features on the site during the historic period. Based on 1880 photographs, features found on the Captain Edward Penniman property included a whalebone gate, decorative wooden fence, hitching posts, and a flagpole. The original whalebone gate was a pair of jaw bones from a sperm whale. A second gate using jaw bones from a baleen whale was installed c.1876 and remained until 1964 (see figures 22-24).

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
The majority of the features found on the Captain Edward Penniman property appear much as they did at the end of the period of significance, with exception of the flagpole. The flagpole socket remains in the west lawn of the property, but the flagpole is no longer extant. In c.1969, the current whalebone gate was installed from a finback whale.

Most of the remaining small-scale features with the Fort Hill Rural Historic District reflect its development and use as a historic district within Cape Cod National Seashore. Features such as wooden split rail fences, interpretive signs, and benches, were all installed after the National Park Service acquired the property in the 1960s (Figures 26 and 27). Small-scale features found on the Avery (formerly Sylvanus Knowles) and Burrill properties include a wooden split rail fence and a flagpole.

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Captain Edward Penniman-Decorative Wooden Fences (E-322bG) | 131994 | Contributing | 40431 | | | | No |
| Captain Edward Penniman-Stone Retaining Walls (E-322aG) [Whalebone gate at Penniman House] | 131996 | Contributing | 40430 | | | | No |
| Flagpole socket at Penniman House | 131998 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Hitching posts at Penniman House | 132000 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Wooden split rail fence at Penniman House | 132002 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Wooden split rail fence at Fort Hill parking lots | 132004 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Signage, waysides | 132006 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Seating on trails | 132008 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |
| Wooden split rail fence at Avery house | 132022 | Undetermined | | | | | No |
| Flagpole at Burrill House | 132024 | Undetermined | | | | | No |

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**




*Figure 26. View looking east showing the Indian Rock used as a sharpening stone, with an interpretive sign in the foreground and Nauset Marsh in the distance (OCLP, 2007).*



*Figure 27. View looking northeast showing the benches at the top of the slope overlooking the Nauset Marsh (OCLP, 2007).*

**Landscape Characteristic: Archeological Sites**

Historic Condition and Existing Conditions:
Fort Hill is designated as part of the Nauset Archeological National Landmark District because it contains two nationally significant, multi-component prehistoric sites dating to the Late Archaic to the Late Woodland period. The two sites, CACO00107 (19BN0308) and CACO00110 (19BN0323), encompasses approximately 17.5 acres of National Park Service land.

During the period of significance for the Fort Hill Rural Historic District, 1786 to 1943, the following archeological features existed within the historic district area: Indian Rock (Native American sharpening stone); Quarried Rock; Rock with spike; Former Thomas Knowles farmstead; Penniman House Greenhouse; Penniman Boat House; Penniman House Vegetable Garden, and Penniman Hen House. With exception to the Indian Rock, Quarried Rock, and Rock with spike, the previously listed features no longer exist within the Fort Hill Rural Historic District. Non-contributing archeological features, which still exist, include the Gunn Dairy Barn foundation, and road traces from the failed subdivision development by Mel-Con in the 1960s (see figures 13 and 26).

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nauset Archeological District-Fort Hill Site-16.5 acres | 132026 | Contributing | | CACO00107 | | | No |
| Nauset Archeological District-Fort Hill Site-1.0 acre | 132028 | Contributing | | CACO00100 | | | No |
| Indian Rock (Native American sharpening stone) | 132030 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Quarried rock | 132032 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Rock with spike | 132034 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Former Thomas Knowles farmstead site | 132036 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Penniman House greenhouse site | 132038 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Penniman boat house site | 132040 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Penniman House vegetable garden | 132042 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| Penniman hen house | 132048 | Contributing | | | | | No |
| 1960s development traces | 132050 | Noncontributing – Compatible | | | | | No |

# Condition

**Assessment Interval (Years):** 9

**Next Assessment Due Date:** 04/08/2034

**Condition Assessment and Impacts**

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 04/08/2025

**Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

The overall landscape is well-maintained and in good condition.

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 09/21/2021

**Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

Provisional. The condition reassessment for this CLI has been delayed due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages. In the meantime, the most recent condition assessment will remain in place until it is reassessed as part of a comprehensive update of the entire CLI. Planning and scheduling this update will occur in FY 2022.

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 05/29/2008

**Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District is considered to be in good condition. Although successional vegetation and invasive plant species have caused some disturbances to the former agricultural fields, overall, the site's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. There are no immediate corrective actions required to maintain its current condition. Cape Cod National Seashore and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation recently initiated a five-year open fields management plan to preserve the natural and cultural resources associated with the agricultural landscape.

## Impacts

**Type of Impact:** Release To Succession

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** Both Internal and External

**Impact Narrative:** Maintaining the formerly agricultural landscape as an open and free of woody vegetation at Fort Hill has been an ongoing challenge for Cape Cod National Seashore staff since its acquisition in the 1960s. While efforts have been made to control the succession of woody plants, fields consisting of pasture grasses have gradually been replaced by coarser vegetation. In 2007, Cape Cod National Seashore and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation initiated a five-year open fields management plan to preserve the natural and cultural resources associated with the agricultural landscape. Using a combination of controlled burns alternating with seasonal mowing, most of the woody and invasive plant species were removed and the landscape was rehabilitated to return to its open character.

2025: Controlled burns were paused by NPS in 2019 but are slated to resume April 2025.

**Date Identified:** 09/08/2008

**Type of Impact:** Vegetation/Invasive Plants

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** Both Internal and External

**Impact Narrative:** Besides the succession of woody plant material, exotic and invasive vegetation have been encroaching into the district from all boundaries. Currently, the area is infested with a multitude of exotic species including multiflora rose, oriental bittersweet, black locust, bristly locust, Japanese honeysuckle, Morrow's and Tartarian honeysuckle, and autumn olive. In 2007, the Northeast Exotic Plant Management Team treated approximately half of the Fort Hill field area with herbicide. In addition, a five-year open fields management plan was developed to control invasive plant species by establishing scheduled herbicide, burning, and sickle mowing treatments.

**Date Identified:** 09/08/2008

**Type of Impact:** Exposure to Elements

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Narrative:** Deterioration of trail and boardwalk surfaces as a result of weathering in Red Maple Swamp is an ongoing issue.

**Date Identified:** 04/08/2025

**Type of Impact:** Inundation/Sea Level Rise

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** External

**Impact Narrative:** If sea levels continue to rise, deterioration from Salt Pond Bay's water and/or tides may cover coastal or estuarine land.

**Date Identified:** 04/08/2025

**Type of Impact:** Inundation/Storm Surge

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** External

**Impact Narrative:** Bay water temporarily covering land as a result of amplified tides during severe low pressure weather systems may occur.

**Date Identified:** 04/08/2025

# Treatment

### Stabilization Measures

## Treatment Documents

**Treatment Type:** Rehabilitation

**Treatment Completed:** No

**Document Type:** Other Document

**Document Date:** 2007-08-01

**Title:**

**IRMA Link:**

**Narrative:**

As stated in the 1998 General Management Plan, Cape Cod National Seashore should “identify, manage, and maintain cultural landscapes that are on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.” Specific to Fort Hill, the plan stated: “The Management Plan for the site is (1) to preserve and maintain the historic features and qualities of the culturally significant structures, landscape, and archeological resources, while protecting natural resources; and (2) to encourage pedestrian use of the site to support contemplative activities, public education, and the serenity of the environment. Improvements being considered include improving way finding and interpretative information, reconfiguring parking, using shuttles from the visitor center for events and tours, improving Penniman house maintenance and accessibility, restoring additional cultural landscape features, and focusing trail use at the Hemenway Landing area in cooperation with the town of Eastham.”

While the park’s 1998 General Management Plan does not specifically state a treatment approach for Fort Hill, park management and staff identified rehabilitation as the preferred treatment in the development of the 1995 Cultural Landscape Report for Fort Hill. General guidelines for rehabilitation are outlined in the report (Cultural Landscape Report for Fort Hill, 1995:95-100).

In 2007, a Condition Report for the Fort Hill Rural Historic District was prepared in order to review previous treatment and management recommendations presented in the “Cultural Landscape Report for Fort Hill (1995), Site Plan and Environmental Assessment for Fort Hill (1998),” and “Cape Cod National Seashore Prescribed Burn Plan, Fort Hill 1999-2004.” The “Condition Report for Fort Hill Rural Historic District (2007)” provides an updated evaluation of the condition of the property as well as updated guidance for both day-to-day and long-term landscape management and interpretation. Guidance on the long-term management of the cultural and natural landscape is intended to be both broad, encompassing the overall character of the landscape, as well as specific, relating to individual features. Recommendations include improving circulation, signs, and waysides throughout the entire district, reestablishing views to surrounding fields and Nauset Marsh, rehabilitating trails, preserving stone walls, conserving kettle hole wetlands, removing invasive non-native woody plants, and replanting historically significant vegetation.

**Approved Treatment Costs**

**Estimate Level:** Similar Facilities

**Cost Narrative:**

(PMIS #125319) Develop Exhibits to Interpret Captain Penniman, $200,000.
(PMIS #138606) Construct Red Maple Swamp Boardwalk, $202,500
(PMIS #129267) Rehabilitate Cape Cod Trails, Dunes, and Beaches, $152,500.
(PMIS #90132) Rehabilitate Cape Cod Trails, Dunes, and Beaches, $152,500.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Treatment Type:** | Bulk Import TBD |
| **Treatment Completed:** | No |
| **Document Type:** | Cultural Landscape Report |
| **Document Date:** | 1995-01-01 |
| **Title:** | Cultural Landscape Report for Fort Hill, Cape Cod National Seashore |
| **IRMA Link:** | https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2186310 |
| **Narrative:** | |

**Approved Treatment Costs**

**Cost Narrative:**

# Bibliography and Supplemental Information

**Bibliography:**

| Citation Author | Citation Title | Year of Publication | Citation Publisher | Citation Type | Citation Location | Citation Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blodgett, Nell, with Ken Clark, David Crary and Juna Hickner | “Cape Cod National Seashore Fire Management Plan Environmental Assessment” | 2004 | UMASS and Cape Cod National Seashore, MA: National Park Service | | | |
| Gilmore, Andrea | “Historic Structure Report-Captain Edward Penniman House” | 1995 | Boston, MA: National Park Service | | | |
| Haenraets, Jan, and Margie Coffin Brown | “Condition Report for Fort Hill Rural Historic District” | 2007 | Boston, MA: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service | | | |
| Kneedler-Schad, Lynn, with Katharine Lacy, and Larry Lowenthal | “Cultural Landscape Report for Fort Hill, Cape Cod National Seashore” | 1995 | Boston, MA: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation | | | |
| U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service | “Cape Cod National Seashore Prescribed Burn Plan Fort Hill 1999-2004” | 1999 | Cape Cod National Seashore, MA: National Park Service | | | |
| U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service | “Forging a Collaborative Future, General Management Plan, Cape Cod National Seashore Massachusetts” | 1998 | Barnstable County, MA: National Park Service | | | |
| U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service | Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Invasive Plant Species Control at Cape Cod National Seashore” | 2003 | Cape Cod National Seashore, MA: National Park Service | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service | “National Register Nomination for Fort Hill Rural Historic District, Cape Cod National Seashore” | 2001 | Cape Cod National Seashore, MA: National Park Service | | | |
| U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service | “Site Plan and Environmental Assessment for Fort Hill” | 1998 | Cape Cod National Seashore, MA: National Park Service | | | |

**Supplemental Information:**

**Supplemental Information Title:** "National Register Information System Database."

**Supplemental Information Narrative:**

National Register of Historic Places, Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 2007.

**Supplemental Information:**

**Supplemental Information Title:** "List of Classified Structures."

**Supplemental Information Narrative:**

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Park Historic Structures Program, Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 2008.

**Landscape Documents:**

| File Name | Date | Attachment Type |
|---|---|---|
| CACO_Atwood Higgins-Dune Shacks-Fort Hill-Truro Hisglands_CLI Update Notes_2025.pdf | | |

| Source |
| --- |
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