National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2010

Revised: 4/2025



Atwood-Higgins 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: Atwood-Higgins Historic District

Resource Classification: Cultural Landscape

CLI Identification Number: 650114

Parent Landscape: 650114

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:

The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is located on Bound Brook Island, in the town of Wellfleet, Barnstable County, Massachusetts. The 24-acre property, part of Cape Cod National Seashore, was donated to the National Park Service in July 1961 by George and Katharine Higgins. At its core is a collection of historic buildings that include the Atwood-Higgins House, gravel driveways, fences and gates laid out across two distinct level areas. These features, constructed between 1730 and 1960, are set amongst lawns and meadows dotted with trees and shrubs, and surroundeded by woodlands. The Atwood-Higgins Historic District today offers an impression of rural New England, reflecting the Lower Cape's colonial history, settlement, architecture, and tourism.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Atwood-Higgins house was built by Thomas Higgins sometime around 1730, or roughly 7,000 years after human presence was first documented in the area. Passed down through generations of early New Englanders, the homestead has borne witness to the full course of American history, from the naval barricades of the Revolution to the twentieth century's most destructive storms.

At the time when the Atwood-Higgins House was first constructed, the landscape of Bound Brook Island and surrounding area was already characterized by the marks of colonial settlement begun almost a century earlier in the 1640s (Holmes et.al. "Higgins Hollow…" 1995:15). Initially used for agricultural purposes, the region was only lightly wooded and already prone to erosion in the mid-1700s. The development of Bound Brook Island transformed it into an important coastal settlement in what would later become the town of Wellfleet. As maritime activities increased, the convenience of the landscape was solidified by the many sheltered hollows and easy ocean accesses it offered its inhabitants.

By 1771 some 30 vessels were operating out of Wellfleet, then known as Billingsgate, and its population approached 1,000 (Everett 1920:n.p.; Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:11). Bound Brook Island boasted twenty families, salt works, windmills, and whale lookout stations. The hardships of the Revolutionary War were unforgiving to this increasingly seafaring community, yet the town soon overcame these and continued to grow. Wellfleet had no less

than thirty-seven operating salt works in 1837, along with a robust commercial fishing industry that harvested oysters, cod, herring, and mackerel (Lombardo 2000:26). Packet boats bustled back and forth from Boston, while the Bound Brook Island community held Methodist camp meetings and constructed its own schoolhouse (Fader 1980:9; Doane n.d.:5).

Various natural and social changes, combined with the construction of the new Cape Cod Railway, soon ended the development of the island. The gradual shoaling and silting of Duck Harbor became so severe that by the latter half of the nineteenth century it was no longer navigable to large ships (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:14). In response the town center shifted south to the mouth of Duck Creek, where Wellfleet Harbor offered the necessary infrastructure support. Bound Brook Island promptly experienced an exodus, as houses were picked up and relocated with their inhabitants. The last full-time occupant of the Atwood-Higgins House, Thomas Atwood, Jr., died in 1873 (Higgins 1960:9; Higgins 1950:13).

Following his death the property was uninhabited for almost fifty years, during which time it passed through the hands of several different owners. By 1930 Wellfleet's population had shrunk to a low of 823, symptomatic of the area's increasing dependence on the tourist industry (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:13). George Kimball Higgins, a descendant of previous owners, acquired the property in 1919 and immediately began clearing the land and using salvaged historic materials to reconstruct the house to a livable condition. Over the next half century the local landscape underwent substantial change, as the island grew over with vegetation and George Higgins and his wife Katharine transformed the property into a quaint yet modernized vacation destination. Major developments at this time were the construction of a Garage (1923, rebuilt 1929), Barn (1924-5), Guest House (1929), Country Store (1947), and Summer House (1936, rebuilt 1960) as well as two relocations of the old town road to accommodate these alterations. Although most of the property was left to reforest with self-seeded native growth, Higgins was conscientious about maintaining the open land immediately surrounding the buildings. Throughout his ownership these roughly twenty-four acres were enclosed with split-rail fences, mowed regularly, and subject to various planting projects and other work.

By the time the Higginses transferred their land and buildings to the National Park Service in 1961 they spent most of their summers on Bound Brook Island, with the company of various friends and other visitors (Higgins 1950:157). The property became part of the new Cape Cod National Seashore, which was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy that same year. The journal Higgins donated upon his death three years later proved crucial in the subsequent listing of the house and surrounding twenty-four acres to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 (Fader 1980:2; Lowenthal 1996:1).

The Development Concept Plan written by the National Park Service in the 1970s anticipated the use of the building and grounds to "exhibit ways of life from the seventeenth century into modern times." (Lowenthall 1996:10). Yet no sooner was this perspective voiced than it was subject for debate, a shift made necessary by the conclusions of a carefully researched Historic Structures Report published in 1980 (Lowenthall 1996:10). Higgins's original claim that the Atwood-Higgins House had been built in 1635–40, information which had proved fundamental in the property's listing on the National Register, was here thrown into question as the more recent analysis cited a construction date of no earlier than 1730.

As this new date became the accepted account of events, plans for the Atwood-Higgins property were scaled back from the originally intended interpretive and exhibit focus. Since the 1980s the National Park Service has given tours of the house and used the other buildings and grounds for limited interpretation and housing, as well as keeping horses. After Hurricane Bob took out the site's power in 1991, use of the Guest House as a seasonal residence was discontinued. Today the property is 'off the beaten track' and receives few visitors compared to other historic properties in the National Seashore.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is significant under National Register criteria A, C, and D at the local level. Under Criterion A in the area of exploration/settlement, the property is significant for its association with the Colonial period development of the Town of Wellfleet, particularly the extant Atwood-Higgins House built in 1730. Under Criterion A in the area of tourism, the property is also significant for its transition in the early-twentieth-century from a year-round residence to a seasonal retreat as undertaken by George K. Higgins. Under Criterion C in the area of architecture, the Atwood-Higgins House is significant as one of the earliest and best-preserved local examples of an early-eighteenth-century Cape Cod cottage. Under Criterion D in the area of historic non-aboriginal archeology, excavations have yielded important information about the history of the Atwood-Higgins House and have identified the potential to yield

information regarding early settlelement of the island, early agriculture on the Lower Cape, and the establishment and modification of transportation networks. The period of significance for the historic district begins in 1730, the approximate construction date of the first building on the property, and ends in 1961, when ownership of the property was transferred to the National Park Service.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

Many of the historic characteristics and features of the Atwood-Higgins Historic District are still intact. The domestic core is still set within lawns and meadows surrounded by trees. The spatial relationships between the main house and the surrounding outbuildings, driveways, and the remaining fences are also intact. The gravel driveway still provides access as it loops around the various outbuildings, while traces of roads moved during the historic period also remain. Extant historic buildings and structures include the Atwood-Higgins house, Guest House, Country Store, woodshed, barn, summer house, garage, wellhouse, arbor, as well as various privies, wells, sections of fences, and portions of gates. Some ornamental plantings around the buildings and lawn trees also remain.

Since the historic period, the influence of natural landforms, native vegetation, and the Herring River on the property's development have become less apparent due to the natural succession of vegetation on the island and surrounding wetlands. This growth has also impacted views within the site and to the surroundings. Several buildings in structures are in poor condition, and some fences have collapsed or are gone, though some have been replaced. Several planting beds and trees have also been lost, and some areas of lawn have not been regularly mowed and have given way to wildflowers.

The Atwood-Higgins Historic District landscape is considered to be in "fair" condition primarily due to the loss of historic plant material, the spread of non-native invasive species and the effects of successional vegetation on views, and the deteriorated condition of some of the outbuildings. Some degree of corrective action will be needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm the the property's cultural and natural values. Without such action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the landscape characteristeics will cause the site to degrade to poor condition.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is one of eighteen cultural landscapes within Cape Cod National Seashore. The additional landscapes include Doane Homestead, Dune Shacks of the Peaked Hill Bars, Fort Hill, 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, Truro Highlands Historic District, and Wellfleet Ponds.

Landscape Type:

Historic Site

Other Names:

Other Name:	Atwood-Higgins Historic District	**Other Name Type:**	Current
Other Name:	Atwood-Higgins House	**Other Name Type:**	Historic
Other Name:	Thomas Atwood House	**Other Name Type:**	Historic

Site Plan



Site plan for Atwood-Higgins Historic District, 2010. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 2010).

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 09/09/2010

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

A working list of cultural landscapes was tentatively agreed on by CACO park staff and OCLP CLI team at a site meeting on August 16, 2000. The working list yet needs to be reviewed further and submitted to the Superintendent for approval. The Atwood-Higgins complex was identified as one landscape. It was also discussed that the landscape may also include Bound Brook and Griffin Islands.

As of 2010, a report entitled “Atwood-Higgins Historic District Cultural Landscape Report and Outbuildings Historic Structures Report” is currently in draft form. The report was written by Emily Donaldson, Conservation Associate, Margie Coffin Brown, Historical Landscape Architect, and Andrew Louw, Conservation Associate, of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, and Lauren H. Laham, Architectural Historian, of the the Northeast Region’s Historic Architecture Program. Field work for the CLR was completed in 2007, 2009, and 2010.

The primary contact at Cape Cod National Seashore is Bill Burke, Cultural Resources Manager. He can be reached at (508) 255-3421 x14.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Atwood-Higgins Historic District
Cape Cod National Seashore

Cape Cod National Seashore concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Atwood-Higgins Historic District including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Should Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair

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 Atwood-Higgins Historic District is hereby approved and accepted.

9/9/10

Superintendent, Cape Cod National Seashore Date

Park concurrence form, September 9, 2010.

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 Atwood-Higgins 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): 24

Land Tract Number(s)

Boundary Description:

The boundaries of this Cultural Landscape Inventory are consistent with the boundaries of the 24-acre Atwood-Higgins Historic District, as defined in the district's National Register of Historic Places documentation prepared in April 2010. The boundaries include the historic resources and associated landscape features that contribute to the property's setting and the architectural and associative significance. The east and south boundaries follow historic legal property lines, and the west and north boundaries follow historic fence lines, as depicted on a 1950 map of the George K. Higgins's estate included in his journal. The historic district primarily contains the actively used, developed portion of Higgins's former property. The boundaries exclude additional forested land to the north and west that Higgins amassed during the mid-twentieth century and all other land within the Cape Cod National Seashore (National Register 2010, Sec.10:1).

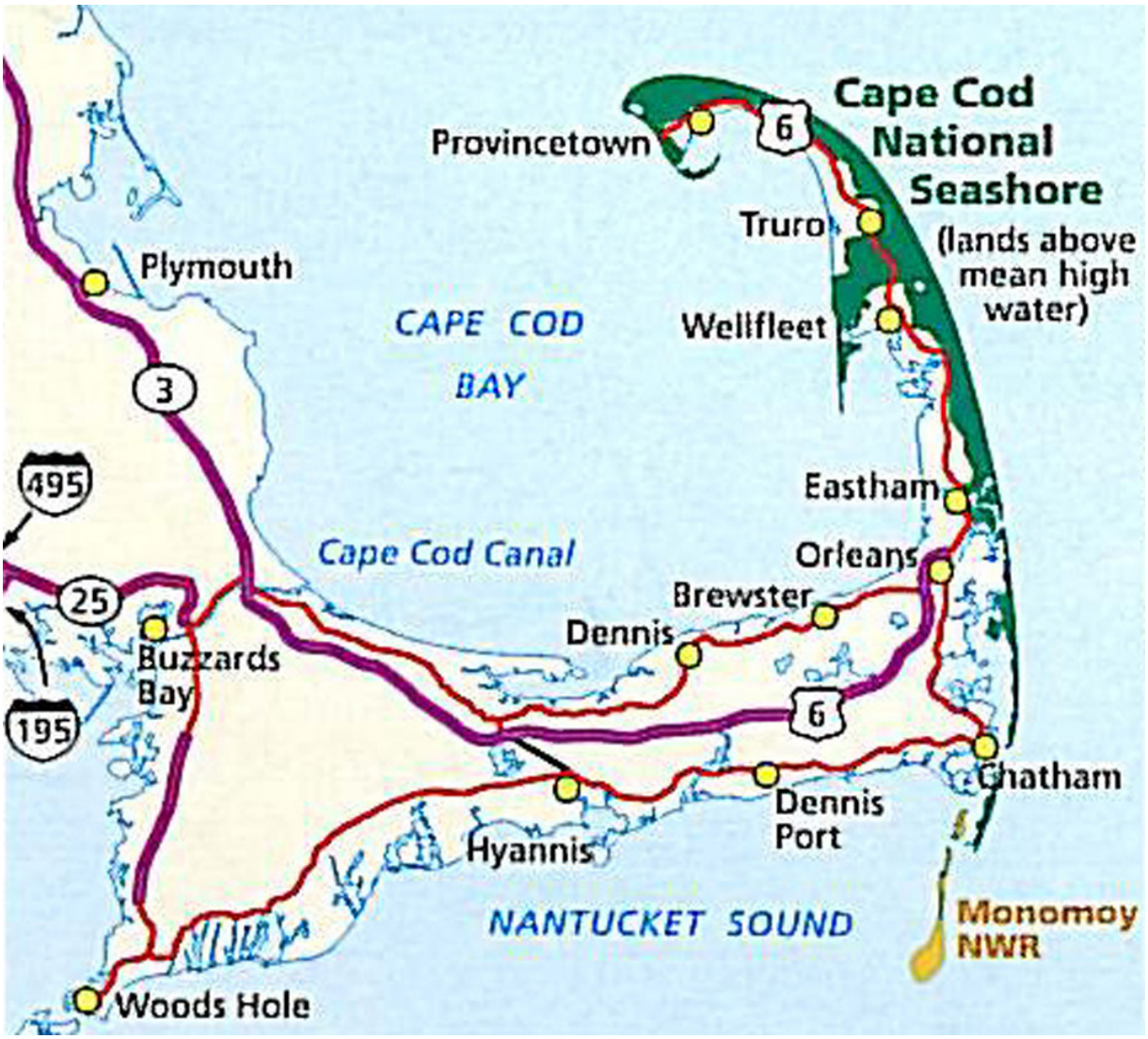
Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-70.0590289123009	41.9532233473911	
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-70.0578068955308	41.9515593905662	
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-70.058199331108	41.9512135239635	
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-70.058638533002	41.9515066918224	
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-70.0587578181592	41.9506949997336	
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-70.0600209114773	41.9511967189652	
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-70.0604360223352	41.9522196350782	
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-70.0605960147881	41.9531368277883	

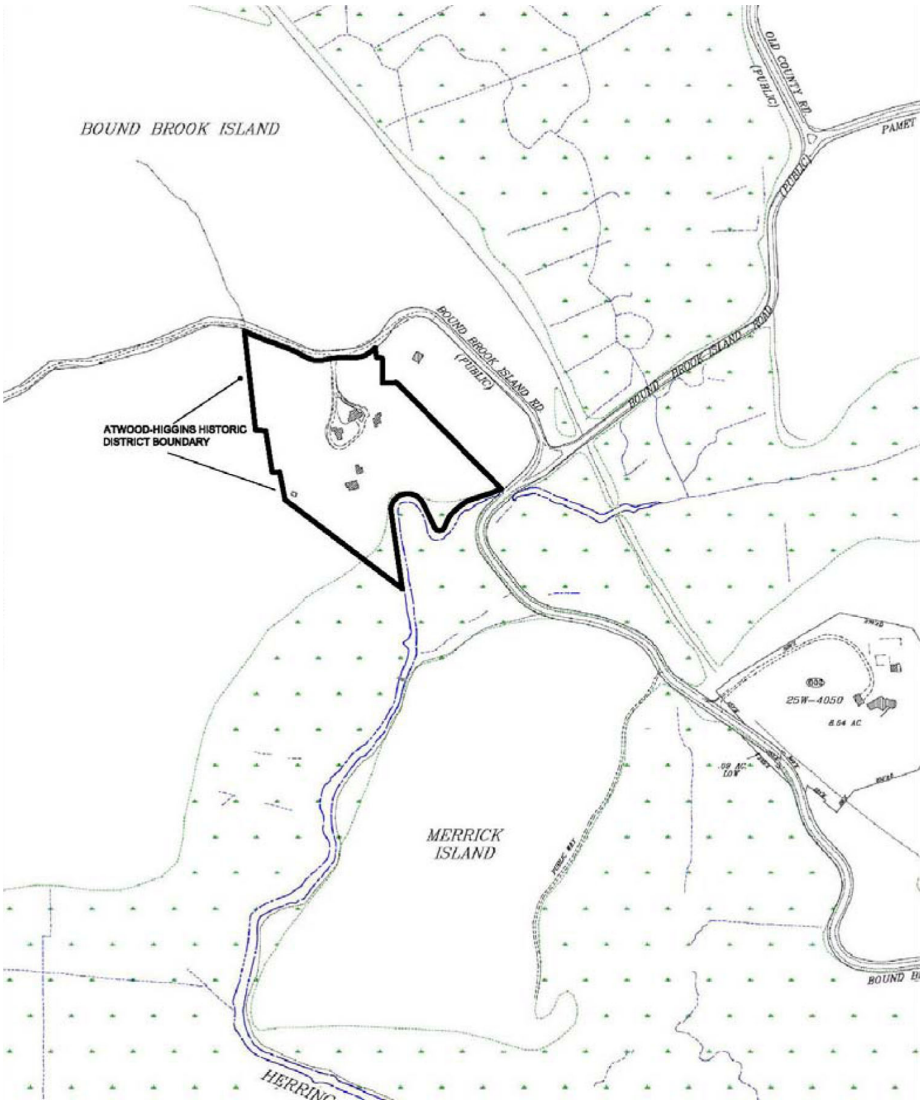
Location Map:



Map showing the Atwood-Higgins Historic District, north of Wellfleet (center of map). (Park website)



Map showing Cape Cod National Seashore. (Park website)



The boundary of the Atwood-Higgins Historic District, from the Town of Wellfleet Assessor's Atlas, Sheet 7. (National Register of Historic Places, Atwood-Higgins Historic District, 2010: Graphical Information,2)

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is located on the south side of Bound Brook Island. Although it is no longer an island, low marshlands border it to the north along Bound Brook and fill what was formerly Duck Harbor to the south. To the east Bound Brook meets the Herring River before winding through additional marsh areas and joining several more small streams. On the north side of the brook to the east are Pamet Point and Paradise Hollow, while just to the south lies Merrick Island. The west side of Bound Brook Island is lined with beaches and tidal flats along Cape Cod Bay. The site is accessed from the paved Bound Brook Island Road, which branches away from Old County Road just to the south of Bound Brook Island (see Regional Landscape Context graphic).

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Bound Brook Island is within the municipal boundaries of Wellfleet, Massachusetts, a town of over 3,500 year-round residents located between Eastham and Truro in the crook of the forearm that encircles Cape Cod Bay (Fifield 2004:n.p.). Each summer the Wellfleet population swells to some 17,000 people, who mostly travel by way of U.S. Route 6 to enjoy the town's beaches, ponds, village center, harborside restaurants, and other attractions. Visitors spend days, weeks, or months in seasonal homes, local inns, and campgrounds, and enjoy the simplicity and beauty of a rustic coastal town, the seashore, and other scenic areas. The population continues to grow as it has over recent decades, a trend which has been marked by an increasing number of adults and senior citizens (Town of Wellfleet 1994:n.p.).

Type of Context: Political

Description:

The entirety of Bound Brook Island is contained within the administrative boundary of the Cape Cod National Seashore, though there are numerous privately-owned parcels within this area.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Should be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/09/2010

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Atwood-Higgins Historic District meets the management category ”Should be Preserved and Maintained.” The property meets National Register of Historic Places criteria based on documentation of the historic district entered in the National Register on July 28, 2010. The property is also compatible with the park’s legislated significance and was included within its boundaries when the park was authorized on August 7, 1961. The park’s 1998 General Management Plan notes that “Cape Cod’s beauty, sense of solitude, and other aesthetic values have created a place for people to come for inspiration and renewal for over 100 years” (General Management Plan 1998:3). The purposes of the Cape Cod National Seashore are 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,” and to “provide opportunities for current and future generations to experience, enjoy, and understand these features and values.” The General Management Plan specifically lists the Atwood-Higgins complex as one of the park’s priority properties to be interpreted for visitors and to be actively managed and maintained as federally owned historic property (General Management Plan 1998:48).

Management Agreements:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Entered Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

The 24-acre Atwood-Higgins property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 30, 1976 under Criterion C in the area of architecture. On the documentation form, the periods '17th century' and '18th century' were indicated, with "a half house, a double house by 1800" noted as specific dates. While this documentation recognized the Atwood-Higgins house as one of the oldest intact examples of a Cape Cod cottage on the Lower Cape, it did not address the significance of later periods of development undertaken by George K. Higgins or the property's archeological resources.

On July 8, 1996, the Massachusetts Historical Commission reconfirmed the listing of the Thomas Atwood House on the National Register and recommended that the nomination should be amended to include the potentially contributing buildings on the property that reflect later use and significance in the twentieth century as the Colonial Revival vision of then-owner, George Higgins.

On July 28, 2010, extensive documentation of the 24-acre Atwood-Higgins Historic District was entered in the National Register. Areas of significance at the local level were identified; under Criterion A in the areas of exploration/settlement and tourism, Criterion C in the area of architecture, and Criterion D in the area of historic-non-aboriginal archeology. In the documentation, the period of significance begins in 1730, the approximate construction date of the first building on the property, and ends in 1961, when George K. Higgins transferred ownership of the property to the National Park Service. Contributing resources identified in the documentation include eleven buildings and structures (Atwood-Higgins House, Woodshed, Country Store, Barn, Guest House, Guest House Privy, Summer House, Garage, Wellhouse, Atwood-Higgins House Privy, and Northwest Privy) and two sites (Atwood-Higgins Archaeological Site and Atwood-Higgins Grounds). The Atwood-Higgins Grounds also include ten associated features (gate, split rail fence network, driveway, Old Town Road segments, meadow landscape and house lawn, planting beds and trees, dry well, hand pump, arbor, and sundial base).

For purposes of the CLI, the status of National Register documentation for the Atwood-Higgins Historic District is considered "Entered-Documented" because the resources of property are adequately documented in the National Register.

Eligibility: Eligible -- Keeper

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 07/28/2010

Concurrence Narrative:

Significance Level: Local

Contributing: Individual

Classification: District

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is significant under National Register criteria A, C, and D at the local level. Under Criterion A in the area of exploration/settlement, the property is significant for its association

with the Colonial period development of the Town of Wellfleet, particularly the extant Atwood-Higgins House built in 1730. Under Criterion A in the area of tourism, the property is also significant for its transition in the early-twentieth-century from a year-round residence to a seasonal retreat as undertaken by George K. Higgins. Under Criterion C in the area of architecture, the Atwood-Higgins House is significant as one of the earliest and best-preserved local examples of an early-eighteenth-century Cape Cod cottage. Under Criterion D in the area of historic non-aboriginal archeology, excavations have yielded important information about the history of the Atwood-Higgins House and have identified the potential to yield information regarding early settlement of the island, early agriculture on the Lower Cape, and the establishment and modification of transportation networks. The period of significance for the historic district begins in 1730, the approximate construction date of the first building on the property, and ends in 1961, when ownership of the property was transferred to the National Park Service.

CRITERION A

Exploration/Settlement:
The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is significant under Criterion A for its association with Colonial period development of the Town of Wellfleet. Initially part of Eastham, Wellfleet's first European settlement occurred in the mid- to late seventeenth century and was focused around the hamlet of Billingsgate. The town of Wellfleet was set off from Eastham in 1763. Constructed about 1730, the Atwood-Higgins House is one of the oldest and best preserved Colonial Period dwellings in the town. For more than 150 years, the occupants of the house were ancestors of the Nauset settlers who were associated with the maritime industry and used the property in a manner consistent with typical local cultural patterns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (National Register 2010, Sec.8:1).

Tourism:
The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is significant under Criterion A in the area of tourism. The early-twentieth-century transition in use of the Atwood-Higgins property from a year-round residence to a seasonal recreational retreat exemplifies regional trends in tourism and the historic restructuring of the local economy. The Atwood-Higgins Historic District, including the house, outbuildings, landscape, and ancillary features comprise George K. Higgins's personal version of an ideal, historic Cape Cod homestead, which was acquired and improved in an effort to create a specific experience of place for leisure purposes. By the onset of the twentieth century, the negative effects of urbanization and mass-production resulted in a decreased quality of life for many Americans, in which interpersonal relationships, natural human connections to the land, and the formation of personal identity through historical associations with people or places were drastically diminished. Paired with the increased mobility enabled by the automobile, these factors fueled a new scenic and heritage tourism market. Tourists, typically from middle and upper class families, sought naturally scenic, rural destinations that fulfilled a nostalgic desire to experience simpler times, unique places, and to reconnect with their historic origins. Cape Cod was quickly identified as a destination that possessed all of these assets and the region was popularized by the substantial amount of travel writing and advertisements published during the 1920s and 1930s. These documents placed additional emphasis on the local history through detailed nostalgic descriptions of quaint historic landscapes or objects, historical contexts, folklore, and instructions on how to experience the feeling of local places (National Register 2010, Sec.8:1).

This enhanced fascination with both national and personal heritage inspired many vacationers to visit their ancestral communities, often renting or purchasing historic houses there to use for summer recreation. George Higgins annually left his home in Brookline, outside Boston, to vacation on his Colonial family homestead in a rural area of Cape Cod every summer. His development of the property into a highly individualized, ideal Colonial complex, personalized with physical expressions of childhood memories that contributed to his personal identity, represents the twentieth-century recreational trend of experiencing an intact or re-created historic place. While the assemblage of re-created buildings and aesthetic improvement of the landscape around a period Cape Cod Cottage is not consistent with trends in the growing professional preservation movement of the time, his use of the estate as a summer resort and an indulgence of historical interests provides insight into the popular culture of the early twentieth century. Advocates and scholars involved in the preservation movement during this period supported a more scientific methodology for restoration and maintenance of historic buildings, based on research, documentation, and physical evidence of historic characteristics. The acceptance of this methodology by supporters of the emerging preservation movement followed debates regarding the retention of material

and design integrity during restoration projects. Higgins valued the historic characteristics of the Atwood-Higgins house and property, but based his improvements on nostalgic family memories, and personalized interpretations of history and aesthetics (National Register 2010, Sec.8:1-2).

CRITERION C

Architecture:
The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as one of the earliest and best-preserved local examples of an early-eighteenth-century Cape Cod Cottage, constructed with typical Plymouth Colony building techniques. The house is a remnant of the gradual expansion of the original Nauset Grant settlement in Eastham, which did not extend north into Wellfleet until the late seventeenth century. Historic additions to the house are characteristic of the building type and relate to the continuous use of the property as a year-round residence. Higgins's subsequent efforts to restore and preserve the house ensured its survival, making it one of the few Colonial Period Cape Cod Cottages remaining in the region, where the national building type evolved. The house retains a high degree of architectural and structural integrity (National Register 2010, Sec.8:2).

CRITERION D

Archeology:
The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is significant under Criterion D in the area of post-contact period archeology. Archeological excavations conducted on the property to date have yielded valuable corroborative information about the specific construction chronology of the house, ca.1730, and also have yielded information about previously undocumented building and repair campaigns both inside and outside of the house. Furthermore, the identification of an intact topsoil stratum containing eighteenth-century domestic debris and cultural features suggests the potential for additional intact soils on the property containing similar deposits. These deposits, in turn, have the potential to address questions of local and regional importance including the early settlement of the island, early agriculture on the Outer Cape, and the establishment and modification of transportation networks (National Register 2010, Sec.8:2).

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

Area of Significance:

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: Exploration - Settlement

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Other

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

National Register Criteria Consideration:

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

Time Period: CE 1730 - CE 1961

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Recreation	Tourism	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Colonial (1600-1730)	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Georgian (1730-1780)	
Peopling Places	Colonial Exploration and Settlement	American Exploration and Settlement	

NRIS Information:

NRIS ID:	76000154
Primary Certification Date:	07/30/1976

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number:	WLF.S
Name:	Atwood-Higgins Complex Historic District
Listed Date:	07/30/1976

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
BCE *	Established	Hills and hollows of the Lower Cape are formed by streams of melt-water draining westward into Glacial Lake Cape Cod (Newman 2001).
BCE *	Established	By this date, Bound Brook Island, Griffin Island, and Great Island have been formed (Newman 2001).
BCE *	Established	Outwash plains of Cape Cod are formed by rising sea levels and marine erosion (McManamon and Borstel 1984:96).
BCE * - 8000	Inhabited	Paleoindians are present on Cape Cod (UMass 2004:70).
BCE 7000	Established	Cape Cod landscape is marked by red maple, tupelo, black gum and other shrubs (McManamon and Borstel 1984:102).
BCE 6000 - 5700	Inhabited	The earliest pottery and arrowhead remains date from no later than this period (UMass 2004:70).
CE 1620	Explored	Pilgrims explore the Cape Cod bay area for the first time (Fader 1980:7).
CE 1635 - 1640	Built	The Atwood-Higgins House is possibly constructed, though its earliest component dates to 1730 (Holmes et al. 1995:15).
CE 1644	Colonized	Early settlers occupy Bound Brook Island and found the original site for the town of Wellfleet (then called Nauset). The island is a favored sheltered area, and remained there until the `town` moved slowly eastward to its present site (Nye 1920).
CE 1720	Built	The first public highway out to the Lower Cape is constructed using sand (Doane n.d.:1a).
CE 1723	Settled	Wellfleet becomes the Billingsgate Parish of the Town of Eastham (Holmes et al. 1995:11).
CE 1727 - 1747	Settled	Thomas Higgins moves to Wellfleet (Holmes et al. 1995:15).
CE 1730	Built	The Atwood-Higgins House is most likely constructed; its earliest component dates to this year (Holmes et al. 1995:15).
CE 1763	Settled	Wellfleet becomes its own district (Holmes et al. 1995:11).
CE 1768	Altered	The General Court passes legislation forbidding the pasturing of animals on Bound Brook Island, meant to curb the rapid sand filling of the Herring River due to clearing and wind erosion (Holmes et al. 1995:18).
CE 1771	Developed	There are 30 whaling ships operating out of Wellfleet (Nye 1920).
CE 1775	Altered	Wellfleet becomes a town under the Revolutionary General Act of August 23, 1775 (Holmes et al. 1995:12).
CE 1776	Settled	Wellfleet has a population of 1,235 people, up from 928 in 1765 (Holmes et al. 1995:11).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1778 - 1802	Altered	Following the Revolutionary War, Bound Brook Island undergoes great change, and whaling ceases almost entirely. By 1802 the majority of Wellfleet`s 25 fishing vessels are engaged instead in mackerel or cod fishing (Doane n.d.:6).
CE 1794	Developed	There are 10 houses and a windmill on Bound Brook Island (Doane n.d.:1b).
CE 1795	Developed	A windmill is depicted on the western portion of Bound Brook Island, on a map from this year (Holmes et al. 1995:13).
CE 1800	Built	The ship Freemason is constructed on the south shore of Bound Brook Island by Reuben Rich (Holmes et al. 1995:17).
CE 1800	Developed	Salt making begins as a local industry around this date, along various creeks in the area including the Herring River (Holmes et al. 1995:12).
CE 1805	Purchased/Sold	Thomas Atwood buys the Atwood-Higgins House for $53.62 (Fader 1980:14).
CE 1830	Settled	Wellfleet has a population of 2,046 people (Holmes et al. 1995:12).
CE 1831	Developed	A map from this year depicts 17 structures on Bound Brook Island, including the Atwood-Higgins building complex (Holmes et al. 1995:13).
CE 1841	Developed	Map of Bound Brook Island from this year depicts the school (Holmes et al. 1995:13).
CE 1844	Built	The Bound Brook Island school is constructed, also known as the Pine Hill School (Doane n.d.:5).
CE 1848	Developed	Map from this year shows saltworks on the western side and southwestern shore of Bound Brook Island (Holmes et al. 1995:14).
CE 1869 - 1870	Developed	The Cape Cod Central Railroad is extended into Wellfleet Center (Holmes et al. 1995:12; Fader 1980:7).
CE 1873 - 1919	Neglected	Thomas Atwood dies, leaving the Atwood-Higgins House to fall into seasonal use and near abandonment until George Higgins` purchase of the property in 1919 (Doane n.d.:7).
CE 1880	Altered	A map from this year depicts 12 houses in the Wellfleet portion of Bound Brook Island, as well as the railroad running along the eastern edge of the island. A road also crosses Duck Harbor just west of the Atwood-Higgins building complex, and development is concentrated in the northwest corner of the island (Holmes et al. 1995:14).
CE 1897	Purchased/Sold	The Atwood-Higgins House comes back into the Atwood and Higgins family (Higgins 1950:20,25).
CE 1900	Altered	The population of Bound Brook Island is down to about six houses, from the mid-nineteenth century peak of about 16 houses. The Atwood-Higgins House is unoccupied (Holmes et al. 1995:14).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1908	Altered	The town of Wellfleet installs dikes in the meadows east of Bound Brook Island, to facilitate the agricultural use of the area and allow for the production of fresh rather than salt hay (Doane n.d.:2).
CE 1915	Altered	Wellfleet is associated primarily with tourism, and population figures no longer represent the actual use of the area due to summer visitors (Holmes et al. 1995:13).
CE 1919	Restored	George Higgins begins his restoration of the Atwood-Higgins House (Pearce 1973:1).
CE 1919	Land Transfer	George Higgins is given a half-interest in the Atwood-Higgins House and surrounding land by his half-great uncle, Captain Edward B. Atwood, on the condition that Higgins care for the property (Holmes et al. 1995:15; Doane n.d.:7; Higgins 1950:27).
CE 1919	Built	The old town road is built up to withstand the tides. It runs roughly east to west between the present locations of the Higgins house and Barn (Higgins 1950:2).
CE 1920	Land Transfer	Captain Edward B. Atwood dies, leaving the Atwood-Higgins property to his widow who deeds the remaining half-interest to George Higgins (Higgins 1950:34).
CE 1920	Altered	House is reshingled (Higgins 1950:36).
CE 1920 - 1929	Planted	Austrian pines planted at the site; these lasted 25 years before George K. Higgins removed them (Higgins 1950:50).
CE 1920 - 1929	Memorialized	A stone marker is donated by Nehemiah Hopkins to mark the location of the old school (Holmes et al. 1995:24).
CE 1922 - 1923	Built	Hand pump and shelter are built outside the kitchen door of the house to the north. It is 61 feet deep (Higgins 1950:40, 44).
CE 1922	Altered	An old millstone is placed at the front door of the house. This is a different stone from the one at the kitchen door, which is original to the house (Higgins 1950:46).
CE 1922	Built	A lattice-work structure is built around the outhouse west (of the house?) (Higgins 1950:44).
CE 1922	Purchased/Sold	In April Higgins buys the gate which in the `60s stood at end of fence by the [wood]shed (Higgins 1950:46).
CE 1922	Rehabilitated	George Higgins has the chimney in the house repaired by raising it two courses and installing a new cap (UMass 1999:23).
CE 1923	Built	An addition to the Woodshed is built in this year on its north side, to provide shelter for stacked wood (Holmes et al. 1995:23).
CE 1923	Planned	Plans for the Barn are drawn up in the fall and winter of this year, with significant input from Richard Higgins, George K. Higgins` father, to try to achieve as close a replica of the old Barn (which was almost at the same location) as possible (Higgins 1960:9).
CE 1923	Planned	Dredging of the Herring River is planned (Higgins 1950:48).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1923	Built	George Higgins constructs trellises on either side of the front door of the house, which then serve to support roses (UMass 1999:24).
CE 1923	Built	George Higgins constructs a Garage on the edge of the meadow near Pamet Point Road (Higgins 1950:48).
CE 1923	Planted	George Higgins plants roses on either side of the front door of the house (UMass 1999:24).
CE 1924	Graded	Land on the north side of the building complex is graded so that the new Barn can be built on flat ground (Higgins 1950:94).
CE 1924 - 1925	Built	Barn is built south and slightly east of the old Barn site (Higgins 1950:53; Higgins 1960:9).
CE 1924 - 1925	Planted	New maples are planted on the east side of the house, where black locust had been blown down and lost in 1924 (Higgins 1950:54).
CE 1925	Purchased/Sold	Collection of hand-hewn beams is secured from an old Barn, to be used in construction of the Guest House and the Country Store (Higgins 1950:57).
CE 1925	Built	A house cesspool is built slightly south and east of the Woodshed, on the downhill side. Fifty feet of pipe is also installed running to the house (Higgins 1950:57).
CE 1925	Moved	The Herring River is dredged, changing the course of the stream (Higgins 1950:56).
CE 1925	Built	Well is driven 50 feet down inside the present Barn (Higgins 1950:56).
CE 1925	Rehabilitated	Around this date a series of old beams under the house are replaced (Higgins 1960:6).
CE 1926	Moved	In February the old town road is rerouted north, so as to run just north of the current Guest House (then not yet built) and east of the Barn. The old route went straight through the present Guest House and Garage sites (Higgins 1950:2).
CE 1927	Rehabilitated	Town repairs the town road running past the Barn (Higgins 1950:61).
CE 1927	Built	Gate to the Barnyard (entrance gate) constructed by David Curran, a replica of one he had seen in Ipswich, Mass (Higgins 1950:61).
CE 1927	Built	In December an east annex is added to the east side of the Barn, complete with its own cellar (Higgins 1950:63).
CE 1928	Built	In January a lean-to is added to the west side of the Barn (Higgins 1950:65).
CE 1928	Planned	Guest house is planned by George Higgins during the winter of this year (Higgins 1960:12).
CE 1929	Built	Guest house is built, planned as an authentic reproduction (Holmes et al. 1995:18,24; Lowenthal 1996:2; Higgins 1960:12).
CE 1929	Moved	The Garage is rebuilt northwest of the Atwood-Higgins House, using materials from the old structure that was built across the meadow near Pamet Point Road in 1923 (Lowenthal 1996:2; Higgins 1950:69).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1930	Planted	A Burre pear tree and a poplar tree are planted to the north of the Guest House (Higgins 1950:75; Quarles 1995:4).
CE 1930	Built	An old outhouse is built to the east of the Guest House (Higgins 1950:72-3).
CE 1931	Inhabited	First full season of house occupancy by George Higgins and his wife (Higgins 1950:77).
CE 1934	Built	The pump house well pipe is extended (Higgins 1950:80).
CE 1936	Built	The Summer House is built (Lowenthal 1996:2; Higgins 1950:91).
CE 1938	Built	The roof of the south side of the Woodshed is raised, and a laundry room and bathroom are installed (Holmes et al. 1995:17; Higgins 1950:84).
CE 1938	Preserved	An old apple tree blown down by a hurricane in this year is saved by propping it up (Higgins 1950:86).
CE 1943	Military Operation	Camp Wellfleet opens as the home of the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Training Center, which was used as a Navy radar school. It was put on standby status in 1945 and closed in 1961 (Holmes et al. 1995:13).
CE 1943	Built	New roads laid out, to complete a circle around the Barn and then out to the west, following the same path as the present Bound Brook Road (Higgins 1950:96).
CE 1945	Planned	Plans for the Country Store begin (Higgins 1950:98; Higgins 1960:15).
CE 1945	Demolished	In September the old town way, running by the Guest House, is closed and filled. Traffic is diverted to the new and present location of Bound Brook Road, above the Barn (Higgins 1950:98).
CE 1945	Moved	Entrance gate to the Barnyard (with stone balance) is moved in September to its present location as the entrance gate to the site (Higgins 1950:98).
CE 1945 - 1955	Removed	Austrian pines planted in the 1920s are removed (Higgins 1950:110).
CE 1947 - 1948	Built	The Country Store and post office are constructed using hand-hewn beams from an old Barn (Holmes et al. 1995:24; Lowenthal 1996:2; Higgins 1950:102).
CE 1947	Graded	A hill which existed where the present Country Store is located, once 15 feet high, is removed to provide ground for the Country Store and the road (Higgins 1960:16).
CE 1947	Purchased/Sold	Central beam for the Country Store is purchased in New Hampshire and shipped to Wellfleet (Higgins 1950:104).
CE 1947	Built	A water pipe is built leading out from the Country Store (Higgins 1950:104).
CE 1947	Built	Additional electrical cables and a water pipe are laid underground (Higgins 1950:106).
CE 1948	Planted	George Higgins seeds the land by the Country Store with winter rye, which grows to a height of over 5 feet the following spring before he mows it to stubble (Higgins 1960:16).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1950	Memorialized	George K. Higgins puts together a compilation of his memories of his property, in a Journal he later leaves to the National Park Service (Lowenthal 1996:3).
CE 1950	Maintained	The roof of the Summer House is reshingled (Higgins 1950:123).
CE 1951	Built	An additional bedroom and a bath, cellar, heating and electric wiring are added to the Guest House (Lowenthal 1996:2; Higgins 1960:12).
CE 1951	Built	A well is dug by the Guest House, to provide it with a water supply independent of the old house (Higgins 1950:117).
CE 1952	Planned	Plans are drawn up for the kitchen facilities addition to the Guest House, written by George Higgins during the winter of this year (Higgins 1960:12).
CE 1952	Built	The pullman kitchen is added to the Guest House (Holmes et al. 1995:24; Higgins 1960:12).
CE 1953	Planned	Electrical rights of way for the property are discussed (Higgins 1950:131).
CE 1954	Destroyed	The old apple tree blown down by a hurricane in 1938 is again blown down, and this time lost (Higgins 1950:137).
CE 1959	Planned	The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments officially recommends that the National Park Service should accept the Atwood-Higgins House, Barn and Country Store as a valuable historic and architectural resource, should George Higgins offer to donate the property; the Secretary of the Interior approves these plans on February 16 (Lowenthal 1996:4; NPS n.d.).
CE 1959	Planned	George Higgins plans to reconstruct the Summer House (Higgins 1950:147).
CE 1960	Reconstructed	George Higgins rebuilds the Summer House, using the roof of the old Summer House, in the same location in which it stood before (Higgins 1950:161-2).
CE 1960	Preserved	George Higgins records a taped statement concerning the Atwood-Higgins House and property, in August (Higgins 1960).
CE 1960	Removed	The Cape Cod Railroad is completely removed from Wellfleet (Fader 1980:7).
CE 1960	Built	A photograph from this date illustrates a wooden lattice framing the front door of the house, on the south side (Robinson 1960).
CE 1960	Planted	A photograph from this date illustrates flower beds on either side of the front door of the house, on the south side. Vegetation reaches up to the height of the bottom window sashes (Robinson 1960).
CE 1960	Planted	A photograph from this date illustrates a wide bush which grows right up against the eastern side of the house (Robinson 1960).
CE 1960	Planted	A photograph from this date illustrates a tree standing by the southwest corner of the house, only a few feet west of the cellar door (Robinson 1960).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1960	Planned	On February 16 of this year, the Secretary of the Interior issued an approval for the NPS to go ahead with the Atwood-Higgins property donation as a National Historic Site (NPS n.d.).
CE 1960	Preserved	A Cape Cod Survey I is conducted of the property by the Historic American Buildings Survey, including measured drawings (Fader 1980:2).
CE 1961	Land Transfer	The Atwood-Higgins property is accepted by the National Park Service as a National Historic Site on June 28 of this year. On July 2 an informal ceremony presenting the property to NPS Director Conrad L. Wirth is held, and on July 5 George Higgins signs a Cooperative Agreement to donate about 45 acres of the land, including the buildings. The Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall signs the Cooperative Agreement on August 30 for all 154 acres of land (Lowenthal 1996:5; NPS n.d.).
CE 1961	Established	Public Law 87-126 establishes the Cape Cod National Seashore (NPS n.d.).
CE 1962	Purchased/Sold	Bill of Sale transfers the contents of the old house and Guest House to the National Park Service on September 20, and expresses the intent of property use (NPS n.d.).
CE 1962	Established	The Bill of Sale for the Atwood-Higgins collections is accepted on behalf of the U.S.A. by Assistant Director Ben H. Thompson, on October 10 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1962	Planned	An amendment is made to the Cooperative Agreement on November 9, eliminating the retained life estate in favor of a Special Use Permit (Fader 1980:2).
CE 1963	Preserved	In February a letter of appreciation is sent by Director Wirth to Mr. and Mrs. Higgins, acknowledging the donation of the Atwood-Higgins homesite as a National Historic Site (NPS n.d.).
CE 1963	Preserved	Additional donations are made to the historic site on February 24 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1963	Preserved	On May 2 NPS Superintendant Gibbs reconfirms the intent to designate the Atwood-Higgins homesite as a National Historic Site (NPS n.d.).
CE 1973	Built	A photograph from this year illustrates a split rail fence with three rails curving around along the drive to the west of the Country Store and up the old town road to the west (Pearce 1973).
CE 1973	Built	A photograph from this year illustrates a split rail fence with three rails running down the hill to the east of the Woodshed (Pearce 1973).
CE 1973	Planted	A photograph from this year illustrates a vine growing up the east side of the Woodshed to the level of the windows (Pearce 1973).
CE 1973	Built	A photograph from this year illustrates a wooden lattice with vines growing on it, placed above and to the right of the Woodshed`s south-facing door (Pearce 1973).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1973	Planted	A photograph from this year illustrates a thick vine growing on the east side of the Barn, in the open space beside where the adjoining shed extends east (Pearce 1973).
CE 1973	Built	A photograph from this year illustrates two posts by the southeast corner of the Barn, one short and granite and the other taller, made of what appears to be wood (Pearce 1973).
CE 1973	Built	A photograph from this year illustrates a split rail fence with three rails running west from the Barn, presumably to border the driveway. The third post west from the Barn is part of a gate (Pearce 1973).
CE 1973	Planted	A photograph from this year illustrates a large tree growing just beside the Barn, to the right of the western door on the building`s south side (Pearce 1973).
CE 1973	Planted	A photograph from this year illustrates two large trees growing just southwest of the Guest House. A lilac bush also grows in the northwestern crook of the building, between the two sections (Pearce 1973).
CE 1973	Planned	Preliminary interpretive planning reconnaissance is conducted by the Mid-Atlantic Region NPS, on January 30 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1973	Planned	A Planning Directive is issued on June 7 for the preparation of a Development Concept Plan for Atwood-Higgins (NPS n.d.).
CE 1973	Planned	On July 10 the Interpretive Planning Concepts is reviewed, preliminary to the Development Concept Plan (NPS n.d.).
CE 1973	Planned	On October 19 Mrs. Higgins concurs with Superintendant Arnberger that the Maker house can be relocated to the Atwood-Higgins homesite area as a caretakers` residence (NPS n.d.).
CE 1974	Planned	Regional Director Chester Brooks approves the Atwood-Higgins Development Concept Plan, on February 7 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1974	Planned	The DCP and Environmental Assessment for the Atwood-Higgins site are transmitted to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for Section 106 review on July 2 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1974	Planned	On September 19 the ACHP concurs in a determination of no significant affect for the work proposed on the Atwood-Higgins historic structures (NPS n.d.).
CE 1976	Established	The Atwood-Higgins House is first opened to the public during the summer of this year, featuring a twice weekly guided tour of eight visitors (Fader 1980:2).
CE 1976	Altered	In January, Superintendant Lawrence C. Hadley signs the Agreement for the Mutual Cancellation of Permit, releasing the Federal Government and Katherine F. Higgins of their respective obligations as described in the Special Use Permit signed on December 23, 1962 (Hadley 1976).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1976	Preserved	The Atwood-Higgins House and surrounding 24 acres are listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 30, as the Atwood-Higgins Historical Complex (Holmes et al. 1995:23; Lowenthal 1996:2; Fader 1980:2).
CE 1976	Preserved	A Draft Historic Structures Report is issued for the Atwood-Higgins structures, on October 1 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1976	Preserved	The Collections Management Plan for Atwood-Higgins is completed and submitted to the Superintendant for implementation, on December 22 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1977	Planned	The Atwood-Higgins Interpretive Prospectus is approved by the Regional Director, Jack E. Stark, on November 30 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1978	Planned	The Comprehensive Design, Building and Site Improvements, Drawing No. 609/41032 is approved by the Acting Regional Director, Gilbert Calhoun, on May 31 (NPS n.d.).
CE 1978	Inhabited	The Atwood-Higgins Barn and surrounding area are used as an NPS horse Barn and pasture, beginning on August 8 (Hadley 1978).
CE 1979	Planned	In November a Proposed Revision is submitted for the Scope of Collections for Cape Cod National Seashore (NPS n.d.).
CE 1980	Preserved	Marsha L. Fader publishes a Historic Structures Report for the Atwood-Higgins House (Fader 1980).
CE 1982	Planned	In January a Proposed Revision is submitted for the Scope of Collections for Cape Cod National Seashore (NPS n.d.).
CE 1991	Abandoned	Hurricane Bob knocks out power to the Atwood-Higgins Historic Site, and all inhabitants leave (Burke 2007).
CE 1994	Preserved	An unpublished Final Report: Archaeological Testing at the Atwood-Higgins House, 1992 and 1994 Field Seasons, Cape Cod National Seashore is researched and written by Leslie A. Mead for the National Park Service (Mead c. 1992).
CE 1995	Altered	Five standing historic structures were inventoried by the National Park Service on Bound Brook Island: Atwood-Higgins House, Ebenezer L. Atwood house, Henry Atwood house, Baker house and Bryne house (Holmes et al. 1995:15).
CE 1995	Preserved	An Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey is conducted of the Atwood-Higgins Complex by Richard D. Holmes, Carolyn D. Hertz and Mitchell T. Mulholland (Holmes et al. 1995).
CE 1996	Planned	An Historical Assessment of the Atwood-Higgins Property is written by Larry Lowenthal (Lowenthal 1996).
CE 1999	Planned	An essay on the National Register Eligibility of the Atwood-Higgins House is written by Mitchell T. Mulholland of the University of Massachusetts (Mulholland 1999).
CE 1999	Preserved	The University of Massachusetts writes an Amendment to the National Register for the Atwood-Higgins building complex (UMass 1999).

Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods. It is extracted from the report entitled “Atwood-Higgins Historic District Cultural Landscape Report and Outbuildings Historic Structures Report,” which is currently in draft form. Graphics associated with this section are located at the end of this report.

CONTACT PERIOD (Pre-1620)

The hills and hollows of the area from Orleans to Provincetown, also known as the Outer or Lower Cape, were formed by streams of melt-water draining westward from the South Channel Lobe into Glacial Lake Cape Cod, about 23,000 years ago (Newman 2001: n.p.). On its south and north perimeters, the Wellfleet Plain is bordered by deposits left from contact with the ice around this time (Holmes et.al. "Higgins Hollow…" 1995:7). Known as a late Wisconsin glacial landform, the Cape rests upon Precambrian and Paleozoic crystalline basement rocks 50 to 275 meters below sea level, and was gradually transformed into outwash plains by rising sea levels and marine erosion about 15,000 years ago (McManamon and Borstel 1984:96).

As the glacier retreated and the sea level rose, the piles of remaining glacial debris became islands. By about 18,000 years ago Bound Brook Island, as well as the neighboring Griffin and Great Islands to the south, had been formed (Figure 1) (Newman 2001: n.p.). Meanwhile Bound Brook, Duck Harbor, and the Herring River became protected inlets of open water. Gradual silting and softened tidal flows soon fostered salt marsh vegetation in these areas (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:7).

Like its neighbors to the south and the other land nearby, Bound Brook Island was formed by deposits from the Wellfleet Plain, which is the highest and largest glacial outwash plain on the Lower Cape. The outwash material is composed primarily of gravelly sand, scattered boulders, and some clay.

Humans first came to these sandy environs of the Lower Cape thousands of years ago. Likely evidence for the presence of Paleoindians on Cape Cod dates from 10,000 to 12,000 years ago (York et.al. 2004:70). The local population increased during the Early and Middle Archaic Periods from 6,000 to 8,000 years ago, though the rising sea level and severe land erosion have probably destroyed some of the material from this time. The oldest pottery and arrowhead remains on the Lower Cape date to this period, no less than 7,700 years ago (York et.al. 2004:70). From the subsequent Late Archaic Period, or between 3,000 and 6,000 years ago, two burial sites were found in Eastham and Orleans (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:9).

Wellfleet and the surrounding areas were historically inhabited by a branch of the Wampanoag federation of tribes, specifically the Punanokanits or Nausets (Lombardo 2000:13; Holmes et.al. 1995:56). These early settlers of Cape Cod concentrated their activities mainly in estuary and embayment areas (McManamon and Borstel 1984:95). They generally lived in one area for up to ten or twelve years, or until soil nutrients were depleted to the point of compromising crop yields, before seeking better land. The Pokanoket used slash-and-burn techniques to clear land for cultivation, and their dwellings were typically constructed in coastal areas with easy access to fin- and shell-fishing (Arato and Eleey 1998:1). Water sources were readily available to early inhabitants, as a branch of Bound Brook is fed by springs in Paradise Hollow (Higgins 1960:8). The nearby Herring River connected Herring Pond, Higgins Pond, and Wellfleet Harbor, while the salt water of Cape Cod Bay bordered the island on its west side. Protected hillsides such as those found on Bound Brook Island were favored for cultivating corn (Zea mays), squash (Cucurbita, sp.), beans (Phaseolus vulgaris) and tobacco (Nicotiana tabacum) ("Amendment to Register" 1999:15; York et.al. 2004:70).

The Bound Brook Island area was also likely used by the Punanokanit for fishing, hunting, and gathering. This theory is supported by George Higgins's discovery of part of an "Indian tomahawk" beneath the Atwood-Higgins House around 1925 (Higgins 1960:6). In addition, a Levanna Triangle projectile point was found in the eroded bluff soil in the vicinity of the house during the 1980s, which dated to between 1,600 and 445 years ago (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:10). As later observed by English settlers, Wellfleet's sheltered bay was especially attractive for its excellent oyster beds, as well as its facility for drawing in fish and drift whales (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:11). Although surveys of Bound Brook Island's prehistoric sites have been scantily documented, a shell heap and the aforementioned projectile point have been recorded near the house, in addition to some quartz and fire-cracked rock in the vicinity (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:10).

The Lower Cape's shifting sand and eroded soils make it difficult to estimate how the landscape would have appeared to early human inhabitants. Maps and written accounts have more recently been the best available guide to the area. The bay side of the Cape was explored by the Pilgrims for the first time in 1620 as part of their effort to find land for cultivation. They ultimately chose to settle across the bay at Plymouth, only to settle Bound Brook Island a few decades later (Fader 1980:7).

On the whole, dramatic change took place in the local landscape of Bound Brook Island during the contact period. Wellfleet's unbroken shoreline split into a group of islands running north along Cape Cod Bay. Pine, red maple, tupelo, black gum and other shrubs marked the landscape 7,000 years ago. These species persist in forested areas today, with slightly more oak and less pitch pine present (McManamon and Borstel 1984:102). In later years of early habitation various pieces of land were cleared and cultivated on a rotating basis, which created open areas with crops off-set by more dense vegetation elsewhere (McManamon and Borstel 1984:100). The diversity of the local environment meanwhile allowed the Pokanoket to use the area for fishing, hunting, and gathering. Existing structures during this time were probably mostly temporary, and likely similar to the Wampanoag "wigwams" described by the Pilgrims on Cape Cod in 1620 (Chase 1984:173).

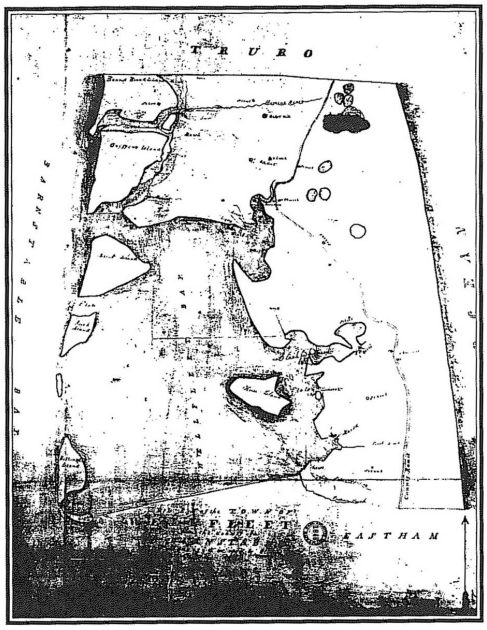


Figure 1. Map of Cape Cod from 1841, showing historic Bound Brook Island (upper left) and surroundings. (Holmes et al. n.d.:237)

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT (1620–1680)

A look at the history of the Lower Cape reveals a story typical of island settlement patterns. Early explorers recorded an abundance of plant species including oak, pine, sassafrass, juniper, birch, holly, ash, and walnut. French explorer Samuel de Champlain described a Native American settlement along a section of the Nauset shoreline as dotted with houses and small agricultural plots, in 1605 (Chase 1984:168). Yet like the wealth of trees surrounding them, these settlements did not last. A smallpox epidemic introduced by Europeans in 1615 devastated the Native American population of Wellfleet. By 1620 there were only about 100 Punanokanits left in the area (Lombardo 2000:13).

With most of the Native American population gone, the Lower Cape was flooded by colonists from Plymouth in the 1640s, seeking new land on which to establish farms. The Bound Brook area, then known as the northern part of Eastham or Billingsgate Parish, was settled in 1644 by English farmers who began cultivating corn as their staple crop (Holmes et.al. “Higgins Hollow…” 1995:15). They brought “neat cattle,” or domesticated bovines, as well as sheep and pigs, or swine. Many households also had their own orchard, vegetable garden, turnip and tobacco yards (Lowenthal 1996:16).

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what kind of soil conditions existed as European settlement began, though the landscape of Bound Brook Island and its surroundings clearly underwent a dramatic shift. A full forty percent of Wellfleet is arable land, yet the town today has some of the least fertile soil on the Lower Cape. All the soil types found in Wellfleet are either poorly suited or unsuited for the more intensive style of crop cultivation brought by the English (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:7-8). Most of Bound Brook Island is composed of Carver coarse sand, while along the Herring River and Duck Harbor are several types of poorly drained soil including Maybid silt loam, Freetown and Swansea mucks, and Pipestone loamy coarse sand (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:7-8).

Thus the strident clearing methods and intensive agricultural practices of early Europeans, combined with widespread deforestation, resulted in an almost total loss of the fertility held in the sandy soils of the Lower Cape. From diverse beginnings the island’s vegetation rapidly gave way to open fields of corn and other crops, broken only by the occasional homestead, barn or orchard. Before long the loamy topsoils once sheltered by trees dried up and blew away with the wind. By 1663 the soils of Nauset were so drained of nutrients that settlers were moving on to seek better land elsewhere (“Amendment to Register” 1999:2; Holmes et.al. “Higgins Hollow…” 1995:16).

Those who stayed in the Wellfleet area were forced to redirect their attention to the ocean, where they found untapped riches. Bound Brook Islanders were privileged with easy access to the water, and no doubt enjoyed the scenic views of the ocean, harbor and salt marsh offered by many of the hills and dales, geologically termed kames and kettles, where they built their homes (Doane n.d.:1a). Although the island’s hilly topography had done little to further its agricultural promise, it proved ideal for settlement due to the valuable shelter it provided from whipping wind and sea. Wellfleet’s inhabitants, despite their original intentions for the land, thus found themselves settling the area in accordance with access to streams and harbors as it was fishing, not agriculture, which proved capable of supporting life on Cape Cod. The resource exhaustion of these early years and afterwards, reminiscent of island settlements around the world, hints at the scale of isolation felt on the Lower Cape for much of its history.

COLONIAL PERIOD, EARLY FEDERAL PERIOD, AND HIGGINS OWNERSHIP (1680–1805)

At the outset of the colonial period, boats continued to provide the easiest method of transportation to the Nauset area. The generally poor roads and distance to the mainland left the Lower Cape more sparsely settled than the Upper Cape, which included Sandwich, Barnstable and Yarmouth. The first public highway leading to the Lower Cape was built in 1720. Known as the King's Highway, it was described as a rutted, sandy trail just barely passable to men and horses (Doane n.d.:1a). Land transportation issues were exacerbated by severe soil erosion in the area, which persisted up to the time of the Revolutionary War (Holmes et.al. "Higgins Hollow…" 1995:16). This, combined with a growing maritime industry meant that the centers of community life and activity tended to focus on the ocean. For example Wellfleet's first two meeting houses, constructed in 1712 and 1734, were built at Chequessett Neck and the head of Duck Creek, respectively (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:11). The town's first wharf was built on Griffin Island sometime before 1720, where it welcomed ships carrying molasses, sugar, and other staples from the West Indies (Lombardo 2000:22).

The Lower Cape's fragile agricultural economy suffered not only from poor soil and limited land area but from the constantly moving sand, which buried vegetation with merciless persistence. Even the town meadows of Truro and Provincetown were not safe from the onslaught, threatening to disappear completely in the 1730s. Finally, an act passed in 1739 by the Massachusetts General Court forbid the grazing of animals on any affected areas and required residents to plant beach grass (Ammophila breviligulata) each year. Other vegetation planted to help control the drifting sand included Scotch broom (Cytisus acoparius), native pines (Pinus, sp.), bayberries (Myrica pensylvanica) and buckwheat (Fagopyrum esculentum) (Holmes et.al. 1995:17).

The Lower Cape's battle against erosion continued into the nineteenth century even as agriculture in the area declined. Fed by giant fishing vessels and salt works hungry for timber, the land continued to be depleted of its woods and forests for the next 150 years (Holmes et.al. 1995:17).

Thomas and Abigail Paine Higgins:
The growing number of colonial style homes on Cape Cod also contributed to this trend. Around 1730 the first, eastern half of the Atwood-Higgins House was built by Thomas Higgins (1704–1789), who was a fourth generation descendant of a pioneer settler at Plymouth and Eastham, Massachusetts named Richard Higgins (Fader1980:3). Though one estimate places the building's construction date between 1635 and 1640, a more recent assessment indicates that this is incorrect (Higgins 1960:5; "Amendment to Register" 1999:1; Fader 1980:3). The original foundations of the house were most likely set using local field stones, which had become increasingly available as the surrounding land was cleared. This first section of the house and its more recent second half were built with local pine timbers (Pearce1973:1). In 1727 Thomas Higgins married Abigail Paine (1707–1743) and they had eight children, including six boys and two girls, born between 1727 and 1743. He began participating in civil affairs locally in 1747, following construction of his Bound Brook Island home (Fader 1980:3,16).

Similar to other old Cape Cod houses, the Atwood-Higgins House was built with a ridgepole along the east-west axis and a front door facing south (Doane n.d.:3; Higgins, "Draft Appendage" n.d.:3). Sited in response to its surrounding environment, the structure hugs the ground so as to evade the constant wearing of wind and sand. Its simplicity speaks to the early religious fervor which possessed colonial Massachusetts, and which strictly discouraged excessive adornments or decorations (Doane n.d.:2). The tradition of a south-facing front door was perpetuated on the Cape for two reasons. First, the fireplace for the south side, or that which heated the small front parlor, was never lit except for special occasions such as minister's visits, weddings, or funerals. When it was not lit, settlers depended upon the sun alone to heat this room. Second, this arrangement allowed the sun's path to be used as a method of telling time, in an era when clocks were few. Thus noon was when the sun poured in the front windows of the house (Doane n.d.:3).

As the local population of settlers grew, the character of the Lower Cape landscape was increasingly marked by colonial homes and outbuildings. The Provincial Census of 1765 reported 928 inhabitants of the Wellfleet area, including 14 African Americans and 11 Native Americans. With the

Revolutionary General Act of August 23, 1775 Wellfleet officially became a town, and by 1776 its residents had swelled to 1,235 (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:11-12). By 1792 the Punanokanits numbered less than half a dozen, and “the last Wellfleet Indian,” a woman by the name of Delilah Sampson Gibbs, died some time after 1838 (Lombardo 2000:18).

Despite its growing numbers and changing demographics, for a limited time the soil in northwest Wellfleet and the Bound Brook Island area remained fertile enough to support productive fruit trees, grain, and other crops. Sheep were kept for their wool and in the fall children would gather bayberries, which were used to make candles (Doane n.d.:5). Although it has been suggested that the earliest families of Bound Brook Island were those of whaling captains, the island’s isolation and resourceful method of survival suggests that these families were not terribly wealthy (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:17). Archeological investigations in close proximity to the Atwood-Higgins House uncovered a trash midden with domestic debris, which provides information on the materials owned and discarded by the early household.

The settlers’ combined use of farming and agriculture early on did not last, as maritime activities came to dominate the Lower Cape almost exclusively by the nineteenth century (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:17). In particular, the colonial period in Wellfleet saw significant developments in whaling, oystering, and fishing for cod and mackerel. Whaling was exceptionally popular among early colonists, due to the help which Native Americans initially offered in catching “blackfish,” or pilot whales (Globicephala melaena) (Doane n.d.:6). What began as a tradition of driving stray whales aground in the shallow waters of the bay quickly grew into a full-blown industry, and in 1771 Wellfleet had thirty whaling vessels in pursuit of the pilot whale’s valuable blubber, bone, teeth, and oil (Nye 1920:n.p.; Lombardo 2000:32; Holmes et.al. “Higgins Hollow…” 1995:19). By the Revolutionary War, no less than a third of the town’s population was engaged in deep-sea whaling (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:17).

As the industry grew, unrestricted fishing and whaling practices had begun taking their toll on marine resources as early as 1715. By 1775 cod and mackerel fishing were already beginning to replace whaling as Wellfleet’s most important industries (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:11; Doane n.d.: 6). Oystering was similarly faltering at this time, as the town’s oyster beds had recently failed due to a combination of disease, silting, and overharvesting. Concerns about the increasing scarcity of natural resources became secondary with the onset of the Revolutionary War. Tensions escalating since the 1760s suddenly flared, and the British immediately established an uncompromising blockade of the New England coast. The Lower Cape’s fishing and deep-sea whaling activities came to an abrupt and painful halt, and many local fishermen found themselves forced to farm, smuggle, or privateer in order to survive (Holmes et.al. “Higgins Hollow…” 1995:20). Despite the fragile state of the soils agriculture thrived once again, and entire herds of dairy, sheep and pigs were slaughtered along with chickens, ducks, and geese (Lowenthal 1996:19).

With the end of the war the blockade was lifted, yet years passed before the area’s economy fully recovered from its impact. Relations with Great Britain afterwards remained strained, and in 1783 all American fish exports were prohibited from entering the West Indies. In an effort to stimulate the nation’s ailing commercial fisheries, the federal government granted bounties in 1789 and 1792. Fishing slowly began to pick up again. Cape Cod’s industry in particular now benefited from its central location, as short voyages out to George’s Bank were increasingly encouraged by the tense political circumstances (Holmes et.al. “Higgins Hollow…” 1995:20). Despite efforts to similarly revive deep-sea whaling, by 1802 Wellfleet was home port to only five whaling schooners (Lombardo 2000:22).

Solomon, Sr. and Abigail Pierce Higgins:
One of Wellfleet’s ship captains around this time was Solomon Higgins (1743–c. 1808), a son of Thomas Higgins and a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Upon his father’s death in 1789, Solomon received the Atwood-Higgins House and property. It is thought that the younger Higgins had by this time been living in the house with his parents for some time, as an addition on its west side had increased the size of the original house by a fourth between 1775 and 1790 (Fader 1980:42). Captain Higgins was married twice and had one child by his first wife, Margaret Holbrook (1735–c.1773), and six children by his second wife, Abigail Pierce (1755–unknown) (Fader 1980:16).

He deeded the house to his oldest surviving son Solomon in 1796, and by 1805 the building had reached its current “double-cape” size, or roughly twice that of the original structure built by Thomas Higgins (Fader 1980:14,42).

The earliest school and tax lists for Bound Brook Island date from to 1768 (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:16). In the late 1700s, the island community consisted of twenty families and included operational salt works, windmills, and whale lookout stations (Nye 1920: n.p.; Lombardo 2000:56). According to one source, by 1794 Bound Brook Island boasted ten dwelling houses and a windmill (Doane n.d.:1b). These structures stood amidst an open landscape, grazed perhaps by sheep or cows and almost entirely cleared of mature trees. The ocean was likely visible from almost any hilltop on the island, its strong, salty scent detectable even from the sheltered colonial homes. The resulting expanse of open, rolling hills was not unlike that of the settlement period, only more extensive. It no doubt gave a charming, pastoral atmosphere which appealed to the settlers’ memories of England. Although there is no recorded evidence for historic grading of the Atwood-Higgins House lawn, it is likely that this area and other similar hillside building sites on the island were leveled to make way for colonial construction.

Thus, the eighteenth century saw the initiation of Bound Brook Island as a proper settlement, with a landscape dotted by homes and other industrial structures built to sustain its small but thriving population. In spite of the poor condition of the roads, the local community learned to use the sea, and to a lesser extent the land, to support itself. Ready access to the ocean continued to prove essential to this way of life, as Bound Brook Island enjoyed some of its final days as a true island. As late as 1780 it was surrounded by open water like its neighbors Griffin, Merrick, and Great Islands to the south (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:7). So deep was the passage along the southern shores of Bound Brook Island that in 1800 Reuben Rich built a one hundred-ton schooner at the base of the hill below the Atwood-Higgins House, reported to be the first ship of its kind built in Wellfleet (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:17; “National Register, Atwood-Higgins, House” 1976). Dubbed the Freemason, the knees of this ship were harvested from black locust trees taken from the hillside above, not far from the Atwood-Higgins House (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:17; Higgins 1950:4). That same year a new fleet of packet boats began operating between Wellfleet and Boston, connecting the town to the hub of social, political, and economic growth in Massachusetts (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:12). It was not long before this crucial development in transportation made its mark on the growing town as well as on Bound Brook Island.

LATE FEDERAL PERIOD, INDUSTRIAL PERIOD, AND ATWOOD OWNERSHIP (1805–1919)

Thomas, Sr. and Abigail Hatch Atwood:
Captain Thomas Atwood (1762–1831) and his wife Abigail Hatch (1761–1836) bought the Atwood-Higgins House and surrounding property from Solomon Higgins on February 9, 1805, for the price of $53.62 (Fader 1980:14. Thomas Higgins's mother was Abigail Higgins Atwood). They raised their seven children on the property. They apparently had a barn on the property that perched "north and slightly west of the present barn," on a slope which allowed a carriage to be stored underneath it (Higgins 1960:9; Higgins 1950:58). It is also estimated that the Woodshed was built next to the house sometime during the nineteenth century, to help ease the supply of necessary materials to the newly enlarged house (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:23).

Throughout Thomas Atwood's life on Bound Brook Island, packet boats to Boston were essential to local commerce, as they carried both people and materials to and from the city. Their services would continue for seventy years, interrupted only once by the War of 1812 (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:12).

Thomas, Jr. and Mercy Atwood:
On April 15, 1825 the Atwood-Higgins property was bought by Thomas Atwood's son, Thomas Atwood, Jr. (1799–1873), for $150.00 (Higgins 1960:13; Fader 1980:14). The younger Atwood married twice and had four children. In 1822 he married Abigail (Nabby) Rich (c. 1800–1829) and had a daughter and son, Noah who died as an infant. In 1829 he married Mercy Atwood and had a son, Thomas, and daughter, Jerusha. In the 1850 census Thomas Atwood is listed as a farmer with "400" as the value of real estate owned. During his residence on the island nearby Duck Harbor became the focal point of local maritime activity, prompting many Wellfleet families to build their homes on the conveniently located Bound Brook, Merrick and Griffin Islands to the north and west (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:14). A new town wharf was built at the mouth of Duck Creek in 1830 (Lombardo 2000:23). By this time Wellfleet's population had grown to 2,046, while Bound Brook Island supported at least seventeen structures in 1831 (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:12). Types of livestock typical of the Lower Cape during this period included sheep, horses, pigs, and cattle, while poultry did not become common until just before the Civil War (Lowenthal 1996:21). On the Atwood-Higgins property, "a lead pipe with a wooden plug and quill furnished constantly fresh water for the cattle" (Higgins 1960:11). In 1832 the Atwood-Higgins property register listed both a dory and livestock, providing a final example of the combined use of natural resources common to Bound Brook Island in earlier years.

With the increase in its population, the island's infrastructure developed as well. In the early days on Cape Cod it had been the custom to hold school on a rotating basis in pupils' homes, rather than in a central schoolhouse (Doane n.d.:5). Yet this practice ended on Bound Brook Island in 1844, when a local schoolhouse was constructed to the northeast of the Atwood-Higgins building complex. Also indicative of local growth is the possible existence of an additional house at the eastern end of the meadow, and northeast of the present Guest House, around this time. Though there is no physical or documentary evidence, George Higgins believed the Hopkins family house stood in the meadow and was inhabited only through the early part of the nineteenth century. There is a reasonable chance that it may have been flaked, or cut up and moved, to Wellfleet not long before the start of the twentieth century (Lohr, "Memorandum to Superintendent 1973; Higgins, "Draft Appendage" n.d.:1). A depression in the meadow is all that remains to mark its former location.

The popularity of Bound Brook Island among settlers during the nineteenth century was due in no small part to the open water still surrounding the island at the time (see Figure 1). Another attraction for new residents and fishermen here was the Herring River, which flows along the southeast edge of the island and was a crucial component of Wellfleet's early economy. Alewives were fished commercially out of the Herring River in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to be shipped by barrel overseas to Boston, New York, and the Caribbean (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:14). By the mid-nineteenth century, the mouth of the river had grown so popular that it functioned as one of Wellfleet's three harbors. Another industry which grew during this period was the harvest of salt-meadow grass, which was used to provide feed and bedding for cattle and came

from the marshes around Bound Brook Island.

Salt production was Bound Brook Island's other major industry in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. The sun's rays were used to extract the salt from sea water using saltworks, or small structures built near the ocean (Holmes et al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:17). In an age before fresh fish could be preserved by refrigeration and ice, salt was essential to Wellfleet's robust maritime economy (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:17). The town had no less than thirty-seven saltworks operating in 1837, some of which were located along the south and southwestern portions of Bound Brook Island, judging from an 1848 map (Lombardo 2000:26; Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:17). Saltworks were typically found in close proximity to windmills, which were used to pump the seawater into large vats for evaporation (Lombardo 2000:26). Other structures located in proximity to the water's edge included storage sheds used for fishing gear.

Continuously feeding the need for this development was the region's expanding fishing industry. In 1837 no less than thirty-nine boats and 496 men sailed from the new Wellfleet wharf at Duck Creek (Lombardo 2000:23). During the 1830s Cape Cod fishermen had begun tracking the migration routes of seasonal fish like mackerel, whose fickle appearance and disappearance had once seemed so mysterious. Armed with their new discovery, fishermen could now pick up schools in Virginia and follow them all the way up the coast to Nova Scotia (Holmes et.al. "Higgins Hollow…" 1995:20). From 1837 to 1845 Wellfleet was the only Lower Cape town able to keep an equal number of fishing vessels in the two leading local fisheries, cod and mackerel. In 1845 it had sixty fishing vessels, second in size only to Gloucester, and in 1850 the town population hit a peak of 2,411 (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:12). The mackerel and cod industries of Wellfleet reached a high in 1870, supported by a hefty 100 vessels (Lombardo 2000:35). In comparison, farming of the area had become insignificant. In 1865, only twenty-five farmers are documented as having worked the land of Wellfleet (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:12).

With the growth of fishing and associated activities Wellfleet's oyster industry revived as well, and Chesapeake oysters were reseeded in old Cape oyster beds (Lombardo 2000:30). The peak year of transplanting was 1850, when 150,000 bushels of oysters were seeded (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:12). Wellfleet's oyster industry subsequently flourished, boosting the local economy and recalling the oyster plenty of earlier days.

Local development could not last, however, for even as it grew the economy was once more changing in response to the environment. Over the course of 150 years Wellfleet's maritime activity had been centered around Duck Creek and Duck Harbor. By the second half of the 1800s the Duck Harbor area was succumbing to heavy shoaling and silting; a process already hinted at by earlier maps of the area (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:14). The harbor finally closed in 1870, when the Cape Cod Railway built a causeway across Duck Creek in order to reach Wellfleet Center (Figure 2) (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:12). Cut off from the open sea by the newly constructed dikes, inhabitants of Bound Brook Island were no longer able to keep boats off of the island, and found themselves isolated from their livelihoods. Despite a past as one of the best fishing areas on the coast, Bound Brook Island and its neighboring islands lost their importance as centers of social and economic activity, and were gradually abandoned. Many structures were relocated directly from Bound Brook Island to Wellfleet and Wellfleet Center, while others were left to deteriorate. A similar process unfolded in nearby Brook Village, where the population dwindled as civic life was drawn away by the bustling activity of Wellfleet Center (Lombardo 2000:44). The relocation process from Bound Brook Island has been called an exodus, as one by one, houses and other structures were flaked and hauled away by oxen (Higgins, "Draft Appendage" n.d.:1). Some buildings were also floated to new sites by barge (Lombardo 2000:22).

The Atwood-Higgins House was vacated by Thomas Atwood, Jr. upon his death in 1873, having lived there for almost fifty years (Higgins 1960:13). Atwood, Jr. was the last full-time occupant of the property, and during his lifetime witnessed the peak as well as the steady decline, abandonment and dislocation of his neighborhood (Lowenthal 1996:1). In a map dated 1858 Bound Brook Island is shown with about sixteen houses, but by 1880 this number was reduced to twelve, and from there continued to drop (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:14). Also in 1880 two house sites were documented east of the Atwood-Higgins complex and just south of Bound Brook Island Road,

probably within the boundary of the current Atwood-Higgins property (Holmes et.al. Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:16). Neither of these have associated names or owners indicated.

Cape Cod Railroad and Early Tourism:
Contributing in no small way to local growth was the Cape Cod Railroad, which arrived in Wellfleet amidst much fanfare on December 28, 1870 (Lombardo 2000:96). This development was pivotal not only to the social and political changes it brought to Bound Brook Island, but to the impact it had on transforming the local economy. To make way for the new railway and its constant flow of people and products Wellfleet's inner harbor, long a crucial natural resource and local fixture, had been diked off and quickly relegated to a thing of the past. Thus began the Lower Cape's new function, as a tourist destination. By 1871 the old packet boat service to Boston had been put out of business, and rail passengers came rolling in to stay at resorts throughout both the settled and rural areas of Wellfleet (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:12). Not only were people coming to spend a few days or weeks, but some came to stay the whole summer. In 1896 no less than fifteen to twenty percent of neighboring Eastham's land was owned by non-residents, who quickly formed their own social groups and yachting clubs. The new summer residents excluded locals from their activities but also gave a boost to the local economy with their demand for fresh produce, a delicate trade-off which soon became as natural to the Cape as the Atlantic tides (Lowenthal 1996:26). So began Wellfleet's golden age of resorts, which lasted from the 1890s through the 1930s. For the first time, "pleasure yachts and elegant inns shared the same shore as the houses of fishermen and their weathered shellfish boats" (Lombardo 2000:107).

The tourist boom on Cape Cod reflected what was occurring on a larger scale across the country. During this period, the nation's transition from fishing and farming to industry allowed families enough extra money to afford vacations for the first time (Lombardo 2000:107). Improved transportation by railroad, higher levels of wealth and leisure, and a more developed sense of recreation after the Civil War had combined to produce the new institution of American tourism. Under these circumstances, Wellfleet and the rest of the Lower Cape presented themselves as alluring destinations, similar to other areas of low economic potential but high scenic value. Rural environments were heavily romanticized, and the restoration of old and historic buildings became a popular trend among those who could afford it. The contemporaneous and in many ways complimentary Colonial Revival Movement fostered appreciation for the past as well as one's ancestors. Sentiments originally sparked by the Centennial celebrations of 1876 blossomed into a serious interest in the nation's history, as the preservation and restoration of colonial period buildings became widespread. Many younger generation descendants of colonial settlers were thus drawn to restore the ancestral homes their parents and grandparents had left behind (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:18).

One particularly successful combined historic restoration and tourist venture was Wellfleet's Chequessett Inn. In 1885 Lorenzo Dow Baker bought the old Mercantile Wharf and by 1902 had converted it into an elegant new inn featuring sixty-two rooms and built out over the water on what is today known as Mayo's Beach.

Bathhouses and cottages quickly sprang up along the beaches next to the new hotel. So popular was the Chequessett Inn that Baker was soon compelled to construct a series of Bluff Cottages at Mayo's Beach, to absorb overflow guests (Lombardo 2000:116). Emblematic of the shift in the local economy was the diking of the Herring River in 1908, a waterway which had once been one of Wellfleet's oldest and most productive marine resources. Pesky saltwater mosquitoes suspected of breeding in the river were found to be driving vacationers away from the tranquil Mayo's Beach. In the 1905 season alone, they cost Wellfleet's tourist industry as much as $20,000. The Boston Herald declared the whole town "stung" in 1907, and following the suggestion of the American Mosquito Extermination Society a dike was promptly built across the mouth of the Herring River in order to drain the marshes above (Lombardo 2000:121). Thus while in earlier years this area had been auctioned off to fishermen by the town of Wellfleet, the dike acknowledged the financially superior benefits of the tourist industry over a maritime economy (Driver 2004:130).

As it turned out, blocking the Herring River did not ultimately improve the insect problem; yet tourism continued to grow nonetheless. Over the succeeding decades lodging houses popped up and flourished throughout town and provided competition for the Chequessett Inn, including the Holiday

House (now the Inn at Duck Creeke), the Indian Neck Hotel, the Holbrook House, the Milton Hill Cottages and the Wellfleet Hotel (Lombardo 2000:122). For Cape Cod, where local fishermen had only a century before been described as "too poor to live there, and…too poor to remove," the swell of tourists with their eager spending habits was perhaps a welcome change (Holmes et.al. "Higgins Hollow…" 1995:20).

Still, some of the Lower Cape's seafaring ways persisted despite the unchallenged advance of tourism. The new railway allowed fish to be frozen and shipped in large quantities straight to market, rather than having to be cured using salt and transported by boat. Cod and mackerel continued to be the principal fish caught by local fishermen, and were joined by herring, whiting, squid and flounder as weir fishing became popular during the 1870s (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:21). Now equipped with the tools to store fresh fish, the local catch was iced and sent out by the barrel. Weirs were usually operated by crews of five and included young men as well as teenagers, who had previously been excluded from the more dangerous practice of deep-sea fishing (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:21). A depression in the 1890s further encouraged weir fishing, as many fishing firms crumbled under bankruptcy and were forced to sell their vessels. Even as weir ownership shifted toward absent owners, stock companies and other corporate groups in subsequent years, the practice remained important to the Lower Cape economy through the beginning of the twentieth century. One such weir is documented as sitting across the Herring River at the base of the hill below the Atwood-Higgins House on Bound Brook Island, just opposite a whale blubber try works which was likely a remnant of the island's earlier days (Higgins 1960:4,8).

Near the end of the nineteenth century Wellfleet's oystering was also thriving and in competition with that of the Chesapeake Bay. Meanwhile, the town's other fishing industries began to dwindle. Deep sea whaling had died out entirely and the larger, more modern hulls of the boats now required by most fishing activities had outgrown the relatively shallow depth of Wellfleet Harbor. With limited success, town residents tried to diversify the local economy by opening factories for shoes and pants, and an oil works in 1903. The year 1903 also marked the famous dispatch of Guglielmo Marconi from the Wellfleet radio towers, which was the first two-way transatlantic wireless message from America to England. Sent on behalf of the President of the United States to the King of England, Edward VII, it read:
In taking advantage of the wonderful triumph of scientific research and ingenuity which has been achieved in perfecting the system of wireless telegraphy, I extend on behalf of the American people most cordial greetings and good wishes to you and all the people of the British Empire. Theodore Roosevelt, Wellfleet, Mass. (Lombardo 2000:9,103)

The King sent a short but successful reply, and Wellfleet entered the world's history books. Later it was these very towers which not only allowed the U.S. Navy to finally retire its homing pigeons, but made possible the saving of 712 lives from the wreck of the "Titanic" by the "Carpathia" in 1912 (Lombardo 2000:99). Yet this flurry of innovation in Wellfleet was short lived. Marconi's radio towers shut down after fourteen years, while the local manufacture of textiles folded even more quickly (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:13). By 1920 the trials of World War I, combined with the erosion of the outer bank, had brought an end to Marconi's South Wellfleet Station (Lombardo 2000:106).

Jerusha Atwood and Changes in Ownership, 1880s and 1890s:
Change came to the Atwood-Higgins House as well, during the final years of the nineteenth century. On May 18, 1880 Jerusha Atwood, daughter of Thomas Atwood, Jr. by his second marriage, became the administrator of her father's estate. Her husband was Robert Emery Higgins, a sea captain who sailed with Captain Lorenzo Dow Baker (Higgins 1960:13). No evidence exists to show that the couple spent time living at the Atwood-Higgins House, and on March 19, 1891 Jerusha sold the property to Mary A. Ackerman for $100.00. Only two years later the town of Wellfleet became its new owner, due to the nonpayment of taxes in the amount of $2.75 (Fader 1980:23). Captain Edward B. Atwood, who had been born in the house, next came forward to claim it. On December 18, 1897 he and his siblings, Anthony Atwood and Abbie F. Cole, bought the property from the town for the sum of $40.00 (Higgins 1950:20,25).

Bound Brook Island Residences and the Schoolhouse:

The quick turnover of Atwood-Higgins House owners during this period reflects a more general shift in the population of the local area. Mirroring the pattern witnessed earlier on Bound Brook Island, the number of Wellfleet residents dropped to 1,291 in 1890, 826 in 1920 and to an ultimate low of 823 in 1930. Yet despite the town's meager numbers and the deserted state of Bound Brook Island at the turn of the century, the island school managed to produce some of the town's most famous citizens during this period.

Decline of Industry, Growth of Tourism:
As the twentieth century progressed Wellfleet's oyster industry dwindled, and the economy of the Lower Cape became almost entirely devoted to seasonal visitors. By 1915 the Wellfleet population had decreased by fifty-five percent since 1870, and permanent residents made up only a fraction of the summer traffic along the new Route 6 highway from Eastham to Truro (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:13). The numbers of Bound Brook Island dwellings were similarly depressed, with a mere six houses documented there in 1900. The Atwood-Higgins House and land, like much of their surroundings, were deserted. During their roughly twenty years of ownership, Captain Edward B. Atwood and his siblings were accustomed to visit the island only for a week or two during the summer season. Their visits were casual vacations, which might include relaxation and golf on the island hills (Higgins 1950:29). As a result, the buildings and grounds were seldom inhabited and untended for forty-six years, or up until 1919 (Higgins 1960:3; Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:18).

Envisioning a landscape equipped for golfing provides some idea of the openness of the Atwood-Higgins property at this time. Those pieces of land which had not originally been cleared for agriculture had in the nineteenth century been cleared for wood, and were likely sparsely vegetated, eroded or coated with far-flung sand. With Bound Brook Islanders' intensified focus on the ocean, what little animal husbandry remained in this period likely had little effect on the existing landscape. For roughly a hundred years the island was saturated with development, including the construction of houses, saltworks and windmills, only to recede gently back into tranquility by the start of the nineteenth century. Briefly the site of over twenty structures, many of which were associated with fishing, the island landscape gradually assumed a more land-bound aspect as the surrounding open water shrunk and the salt marsh grew. Still dominated by the wide open vistas of earlier periods, the hills were by the end of the 1800s even more strikingly bare as most of the structures, like the trees before them, had disappeared from the island. Around the same time local cows were kept on the island, and can be assumed to have aided in keeping the land clear of woody vegetation to some extent (Higgins 1950:31,42,50). By the early 1900s some small areas were nonetheless becoming overgrown, as seen in photographs from the period.

In the meantime, the conceptual distance separating Bound Brook Island from the rest of Wellfleet had diminished. Over the course of the eighteenth century transportation to the area had become increasingly developed as the early packet boats gave way to the railroad, followed by improvements to the old town road. These carriage and cart routes were used in turn by local fishermen, sundry summer visitors and local farmers as they alternately lived, worked and played in the unique landscape.

With the introduction of the automobile in the early twentieth century, the condition of the old town road leading to the island became a matter of increasing concern. This route still remained vulnerable to the fluctuating tides at this time, as evidenced by an account of thatch floating "under the horse's belly" during the high-tide crossing from Bound Brook Island to Merrick's Island (Higgins, "Draft Appendage" n.d.:2). As a result, the question of whether to dike off the meadows south of the island was raised at the annual town meeting of Wellfleet, around 1906. It was argued that diking would not only improve the condition of the road and general island access, but would allow the town to use the meadow lands for various agricultural purposes, including the production of fresh hay. The area was subsequently diked in 1908, though several more years passed before the issue of road access to the island was entirely resolved (Higgins 1960:5).

Just west of Boston the future owner of the Atwood-Higgins property was establishing himself as an entrepreneur. A descendant of the land's previous owners, George Kimball Higgins was born in 1887 in Cambridge, where he lived at least through 1912 (Lowenthal 1996:1). Not long afterwards he became an independent businessman dealing in real estate, insurance and mortgages from an office

in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Despite the wealth of materials he left to the National Park Service upon his death, little is known of George Higgins's personal life. It is known that he served in the military during World War I, but no evidence has been found to assert that he ever attended college (Lowenthal 1996:1,16). By his own account, Higgins's childhood memories included trips to a country store near North Pomfret, Vermont, where his mother's parents lived (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:24).

Higgins also dated his earliest awareness of history to this place and time. Playing with an old pewter tea pot at the age of six or seven, he recalled being struck with its value and apparently asked his grandmother if he could keep the pot. Thus began a life-long penchant for collecting historic objects, a habit which would play a strong role in later developments at the Atwood-Higgins property.



Figure 2. Map of Wellfleet in 1880. Note the reduced size of Duck Harbor and the newly built Cape Cod Railway. On the edge of the Herring River the home of "Mrs. M. Atwood" would later become known as the Atwood-Higgins House. (Holmes et al. n.d., 250)

GEORGE K. HIGGINS OWNERSHIP (1919–1961)

George K. Higgins was discharged from the army on February 28, 1919, and that April accompanied his father on his first trip to Bound Brook Island in many years (Higgins 1950:20). Born in Wellfleet, Higgins's father had lived and spent much of his boyhood on the Atwood-Higgins property (Higgins 1950:8). No doubt attracted by its history and ancestral links, George Higgins that year acquired a half-interest in the property from his half-great uncle Captain Edward B. Atwood, on the understanding that he would care for the property in Atwood's absence. With the Captain's death the following year his widow deeded the remaining half of the house and surrounding land to Higgins, on October 18 (Higgins 1950:27,34).

At the time of transfer, the House and Woodshed, and possibly a privy, were the only existing structures on the property. Finding these in a state of disrepair, Higgins remarked that the House had obviously been "neglected and almost abandoned since the death of Thomas Atwood in 1873" (Higgins 1960:3). In 1920 he also mentioned how "state boys who tended cows for neighboring families were accustomed to stone the property and to spend idle hours inside" the House (Higgins 1950:31). As a result, he spent much of his first few years of ownership restoring the buildings and the rest of the property to livable condition.

Higgins himself planned and designed all building renovations and construction to the property, including each of the structures which he added around the House in subsequent years. When he first acquired it he remarked upon how the landscape was littered with the remnants of industries past, describing the approach to the site thus:
"In these early days, we always passed by the gear house [on the creek to the north of the road], following the north edge of the creek, to the hill and up through the locust grove to the house. During the twenty years of Captain Atwood's ownership and for two or three years after my appearance this was our only way." (Higgins 1960:10)

Beside this "house for fish gear" stood an old fishing weir spanning the Herring River, or what Higgins

called the creek. He recalled how the "forefathers caught and shipped herring [here], in the spring" before the industry died out soon after his arrival on Bound Brook Island (Higgins 1960:8).

Higgins also mentioned what he calls an old try-works, located on the south side of the road as it crossed the railway tracks leading west to Bound Brook Island and "adjoining the freight house" which stood beside the train tracks (Higgins 1960:4). Another such structure stood not far away on the island, in a location described as "on the meadows abreast but slightly to the south and west" of the old Biddle property.

Island Access and Bound Brook Island Road:
Having eagerly relocated to this landscape of ghostly structures and shadows of the past, Higgins wasted little time in establishing himself. First, at the top of his list of concerns was the issue of road access to the island, which despite the 1908 diking continued to cause problems. According to Higgins, "six to ten inches of water usually covered the meadow, and also the road," making it "impassable to an automobile…[and] almost too much for a horse" (Higgins 1960:3,10). As crossing the meadow was only possible with a horse and wagon, the nearest approach to the island by car was to the east, at the end of Pamet Point Road (Higgins 1960:3). Moreover, as Higgins described in a 1950 interview a wheelbarrow became the only mode of transport for bringing building and landscape supplies onto the island when a horse and wagon were not available (Higgins 1960:5).

With Higgins's ongoing demand for building and other materials on the island these limitations quickly became a nuisance, slowing plans for improvement to the otherwise uninhabited island. In time, Higgins asserted that a better road to the island was achieved by "the efforts on the part of the town, and myself, to improve these conditions, during the years 1920, and '21…but for some years the water on the meadow would remain to hamper and annoy us" (Higgins 1960:10).

The new town road was reinforced to withstand the tides and followed the path of the old town road roughly east to west, leading between the locations of the Atwood-Higgins House and future Barn and crossing through spaces which in later years would accommodate the Higgins's Guest House and, further west, the Garage (Higgins 1950:2).

Home and Landscape Improvements:
With the road repaired to useable condition, Higgins pressed on with improvements to his new property. In 1920 these included the reshingling and painting of the House and the planting of some Austrian pines around the building complex (Higgins 1950:36,50). Judging from historic photographs, this work also involved a significant amount of clearing (Figure 3).

In 1921 Higgins continued to plant, and in April added four apple trees to the "very old grandfather tree" in "the center of the grounds," or what he then called the lawn area in front of the house (Higgins 1950:40). These seem to have been arranged in a square grid, and included a macintosh red (Higgins 1950:40).

While working on the property during these early years Higgins stayed at an "old hotel" in Wellfleet, run by Jim and Ma Curran. Over the years these three developed a strong friendship, and Higgins came to rely heavily upon their son, David Curran, as a builder, friend, and consultant (Higgins 1950:16). The people associated with the Atwood-Higgins property expanded further on May 20, 1922, when George Higgins married Frances Katharine Christian of Willard, Ohio, known thereafter as Katharine Higgins (Higgins 1950:46).

As George Higgins began preparing his island home for housing himself and his new wife, he found that resources were increasingly becoming an issue. Although water could easily be obtained from wells, there were no perennial sources of fresh water on the island (Higgins 1960:8). According to Higgins, in 1921 the water for the house was supplied by a pump located downhill and to the south of the Woodshed. By this time said pump was in poor condition, however, despite having a platform built around it that same year (Higgins 1950:40). When it ceased working altogether in early April of 1922, Higgins found to his chagrin that water for the house had to be "lugged in pails from the cellar of the old Curran house ([or the] first house hole on the east side of road beside railroad track as you enter onto the Island)" for the whole season (Higgins 1950:44). By October plans were made to

remedy this situation, and work on the new pump began on November 11. Relocated to a spot just north of the kitchen, this well was drilled to a depth of sixty-one feet and still stands outside the Atwood-Higgins House today (Higgins 1950:44).

During his first decade of summer occupancy on Bound Brook Island Higgins noted that the hills around the property were entirely bare, a statement confirmed by historic photographs from the period (Figure 4) (Higgins 1950:41). These acres of cleared land were in part due to his dedication to removing the "trees, stumps and underbrush" that once grew there, not to mention his "introduction of new soil and sod, seeding and fertilizing and rolling," which also contributed substantially to the altered landscape (Higgins 1950:14). Reflecting further on the maintenance of his property over the years, Higgins was quick to point out that "many years of constant, hard and expensive work went into the clearing and recovery of the land. Blackberry vines covered the ground where now a lawn exists almost to the kitchen door" (Higgins 1950:12).

Higgins mentions in his Journal that during the 1922 season "the old horse and wagon continued to cart away the limbs, trees, branches, grass and briars which constantly piled up everywhere" (Higgins 1950:46). Beginning with his early days of ownership, much of George Higgins's time at the Atwood-Higgins complex was thus spent on maintenance of a site which required almost constant attention. A large portion of this work consisted of trimming pine and locust trees, activity whose woody debris prompted the 1923 construction of a woodshed addition for storage (Higgins 1950:31,50,80).

In addition to his other landscape activities, Higgins used vegetation to enhance the appearance of the property. For instance in 1923 he built trellises to the left and right sides of the front door of the house. To cover this frame he had "'Excelsior' rambler rosebushes" planted, while a trumpet vine (Campsis radicans) was planted to grow over a similar Woodshed trellis (Higgins 1950:50).

Due to the damage caused by local cows, maintenance of the landscape also included the construction of fencing in the early 1920s. Higgins wrote that it was originally wire and post and rails, and that fence enclosures were also placed around young trees (Higgins 1950:42).

Additional historic evidence for the presence of cows on the island can be found in Higgins's recollection of how his grandfather once "drove his cattle to water at the base of the hill," near the present Pump House. In this location once stood an old spring, which during the lifetime of George Higgins was still productive but had fallen out of use (Higgins 1950:50).

Outbuildings and Continued Landscape Improvements:
Meanwhile, as Higgins continued to develop his property automobile access remained an ongoing concern. With this in mind he built a garage in 1923, or what he described as a "slab-sided, pitch-roofed building at the bend of the road as it crossed the meadow" (Higgins 1950:48). This was placed by invitation on the land of a friend, Frank Williams, who at the time was also serving as Town Treasurer. Only a year before, the town had dredged the so-called creek on the meadow, or what was presumably the Herring River, into a more direct line leading from Merrick's Island to the railroad bridge. In the process the river's "numerous courses" had been eliminated, which Higgins disliked because it got rid of "the curve which approached so close to my land, the nearest point almost at the base of the bank below the Engine House," or what is now called the Pump House (Higgins 1950:48). As a result he protested the changes, and "the curve was left" (Higgins 1950:48).

Even as Higgins developed access to his house and property on Bound Brook Island, he also tackled improvements for the rest of his property. Before long he had added a wooden gate to the House area in 1922, a hand pump and shelter in 1922 or 1923, the Woodshed addition in 1923, a barn in 1924 to 1925, with an annex and open lean-to in 1927 to 1928, a guest house with a cellar in 1929, and a guest house privy brought to the site in about 1930 (Higgins 1950:46; "Amendment to Register" 1999:8).

The year of 1924 was otherwise quite eventful for Higgins. By way of adding to his island property he purchased "the land of the Baker Estate which ran to the middle of the Brine Garden" (Higgins 1950:54). In August a small tornado cleared the land to the east of the House, robbing the structure of its shade and prompting Higgins to plant two twenty-foot maples in place of the fallen trees. More

trouble arrived in December when the House was burgled of food, a gun and some clothing. Higgins employed a detective to track down the culprits, hoping to use this opportunity to publicize his concern about the vandalism (Higgins 1950:53).

Frank Williams, or the same man who allowed Higgins to build a garage on his land, also contributed a whale's jaw bone to the Atwood-Higgins property. This decorative element was installed in the fence line just north of the house sometime after 1924. Over the years Williams also helped with the construction of the Barn and some smaller structures on the property (Higgins 1950:16). His whale bone post was according to Higgins "lost for many years in the fence line on the south side of Pamet Point Road" before being found and put in the Atwood-Higgins fence (Higgins 1960:5). Williams claimed that the object "was known to him in his youth as having been made aboard ship, during a whaling voyage, by one of his ancestors" (Higgins 1960:5). The post still remains in the fence opposite the Woodshed today.

Even as he was beginning to settle into the Atwood-Higgins House on Bound Brook Island, Higgins was establishing his lifetime career back in Boston. In 1925 he and his wife moved to Brookline, where they resided, and he kept his office, for the next forty years (Lowenthal 1996:16; Letter, Higgins to Rose, 29 January 1952). In general, throughout this time the couple wintered in Brookline and spent their summers at their Bound Brook Island property. Judging from scrapbooks associated with George Higgins's journal and interviews with those who knew them, they enjoyed entertaining friends at their island home (Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007). Perhaps in anticipation of these future years of use, in June of 1925 Higgins built a large cesspool for the house, "slightly south and east of the Woodshed on the down-hill side. Fifty feet of soil pipe was required to connect it with the house," and he remarked that this tank could easily be cleaned by removing the cover (Higgins 1950:57).

Road Access, Fence Improvements, Horse Paddock, and More Buildings:
While improvements to the property continued Higgins continued to express concern about access, as well as the poor condition and inconvenient location of the town road. As a result, he remarked that before long the old path of the road "was discontinued by agreement between the town and myself in February, 1926, as witness Town records, running thereafter by the Guest House and Barn" (Higgins 1950:2). In March of 1927 Wellfleet moreover "undertook to fix" the new road that now ran by the Barn (Higgins 1950:61). That same year, Higgins gave the town $50.00 to "build an old-fashioned bridge where the Bound Brook crosses the meadow. The design was that of an old bent rail bridge" (Higgins 1950:63). Construction continued in October when a new barnyard, or entrance, gate to the complex was constructed by David Curran. This feature was a carefully constructed replica of an old gate Higgins had seen in Ipswich, Massachusetts (Higgins 1950:61).

By the end of 1927 Higgins had fenced in the new island road from the eastern edge of his property west, all the way to the building complex. At the point where it reached the Barn area was the Ipswich-style gate described above, while "on the north, a small picket fence with a picket gate joined the annex to the Barn" (Higgins 1950:61). The fence and gate which stood on the northwest side of the Barn in 1941 was perhaps the same old gate described by Higgins on the edge of the Barn area. In order to build all this fencing Higgins had been buying cedar fence rails and posts "at least 100 at a time" (Higgins 1950:61). Meanwhile materials salvaged from the garage built in 1923 were in 1929 used to construct a new structure to the northwest of the Atwood-Higgins House. The replacement building, or current Garage, was of an original design and sat in a much more convenient location for accessing the rest of the property (Figure 5) (Lowenthal 1996:2; Higgins 1950:69,71). According to Higgins a considerable amount of leveling was necessary to build this structure, a process which included the "bulkheading" of a sandbank on its north side with railroad ties.

The relocation of the Garage heralded a new phase of construction at the Atwood-Higgins site. As the Higginses began taking greater enjoyment in using and sharing their property near the end of the 1920s, they no doubt felt a need for more space and amenities for their guests. An east annex with a cellar was built onto the Barn in 1927, and soon followed by a lean-to on the west side of the same structure in 1928. At the same time Higgins drew plans for a guest house during the winter of 1927/28, illustrating a building with "two rooms, the bedroom and the living room. Work was started in the spring of 1929" (Higgins 1960:12). Although the House well had never run out of water, the

new Guest House was nonetheless provided with its own separate water supply from the rest of the site. This ensured better water pressure in all the buildings, and was easily accomplished as ample water could be found “at 40 or 45 feet” under the Guest House (Higgins 1960:23).

Improvements to the Guest House continued during the spring of 1930, when Higgins devoted time to landscaping around the building and planted vines, lilacs, forsythia and a poplar tree, along with some lilies on the south side of the structure (Higgins 1950:73). The Guest House Privy was also probably relocated to its current location, to the east across the meadow from the Guest House, sometime around 1930 (“Amendment to Register” 1999:9).

The spring, summer, and early fall of 1931 became the Higginses “first complete season of occupancy” at their Bound Brook Island property, and also the first year that Katharine Higgins kept a horse in the Barn (Higgins 1950:77). Additions to the building complex at this time were closely linked to increasing its capacity to host the guests of its owners. The Pump House was built at the bottom of the hill “just above creek level” east of the House, in 1932 (Higgins 1950:77a). At the same time “a round 1500 gallon reservoir of brick washed with cement” was also installed “below grade level to the north and east of the garages on the hill” (Higgins 1950:79). Next came the construction of the Summer House in 1936, a building which had long been the dream of George Higgins’s father. Upon the death of the elder Higgins in 1935, George had this structure constructed in his memory (Higgins 1950:161-162). For years it was the one place where the younger Higgins and his guests were allowed to watch television on the property, though George Higgins later kept his television in the Country Store (Interview with Moore, 23 May 2007; Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007). The year of 1936 was also the first time the Higginses spent their Thanksgiving holiday on the island, a practice which over subsequent years became a family tradition (“Amendment to Register” 1999:8; Higgins 1950:83).

In a faint reflection of the nation’s own economic and technological changes during the 1930s, Higgins remarked that 1938 was a year of transition from the hardships of earlier seasons to a greater degree of comfort and convenience (Higgins 1950:84). Indeed, during this year the Woodshed roof was raised and a laundry and bathroom were installed in the building’s southern half (Lowenthal 1996:16). This development was arranged to allow improved convenience to the House occupants without disturbing the structure’s historic character (Higgins 1950:84; Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007). To service the new amenities a large septic tank with a manhole cover was built to the north and east of the shed (Higgins 1950:86). For the first time, gas was pumped into the House kitchen from outside tanks by way of a trench that had been “boxed, insulated and covered with concrete in an attempt to retain warmth” (Higgins 1950:84).

Hurricane of 1938 and Grounds Maintenance:
While the 1930s brought many conveniences to island living, natural disaster created considerable setbacks. On September 14th the Hurricane of 1938 mercilessly ravaged the Northeastern United States, and Cape Cod proved particularly vulnerable. Covering the front yard of the House entirely with fallen trees and other debris, the storm made the structure completely inaccessible. It took four men over a week to clear the Atwood-Higgins land. Higgins propped the old apple tree up using block, tackle and wire and with the help of some tree surgeons eventually restored it to health (Higgins 1950:86).

The Hurricane of 1938, among others, drove home how difficult it was to maintain the site’s inner twenty-four acres, and Higgins found himself relying again on the hired help he had used almost every summer since 1919. In addition to building construction, these usually young and local hands assisted with gardening and other activities related to the upkeep of the Atwood-Higgins land, including planting and maintaining grass, trees and flowers as well as periodically fertilizing areas with cow and horse manure (Higgins 1950:77).

Another important part of ongoing maintenance was burning “the grounds” in the spring, which Higgins had done at least six times over the years to encourage growth (Higgins 1950:100). In some cases the plants he introduced in his landscaping efforts were ill-suited to the unique environmental conditions of the Lower Cape. One group of 1000 Austrian pines which he bought in 1923 and planted on the southeastern border of his land, as well as just south of the Country Store, turned out

to be an almost complete failure. The trees only remained healthy until about 1948, when Higgins had them removed due to their stunted and diseased appearance (Higgins 1950:50,110).

Wellfleet Tourism, Road Relocation, and Facility Improvements:
As George Higgins transformed the structure and style of his property each year, the local community of Wellfleet was changing as well, and blossoming into a true tourist destination. The new movement of visitors to the town had a distinct impact on the local population, as leisure pastimes like picnicking and swimming became popular among Wellfleet residents and vacationers alike (Lombardo, 2000:123). Even the area's fiercest storms proved incapable of having any lasting impact on the industry. For example, during the winter of 1934 the popular Chequessett Inn was ripped apart and destroyed by ice floes. Also in the 1930s one of the Milton Hill Cottages was toppled like a house of twigs by a hurricane, and Billingsgate Island, for years a prime picnic spot, was swallowed up by hungry ocean waves (Lombardo, 2000:126). This era marked the end of the Lower Cape's "golden age;" yet tourists continued to flood the area on a seasonal basis.

In view of these developments, and perhaps in direct response to the growth of local tourism, George Higgins soon took action to ensure the privacy of his property. On October 21, 1942 he purchased thirty-eight acres of "meadow and shore frontage" from the neighboring L.D. Baker Estate (Higgins 1950:3). In his own words, "[I thereby] completed a plan I had long cherished. It not only gave the property a goodly amount of shore frontage but best of all it gave us independence" (Higgins 1950:93).

The very next year Higgins continued with his own plans for development by launching a new construction project and leveling a hill that stood southeast of the Barn. Speaking of this event he remarked:
"A hill existed about 15 ft. above average grade level, where now the country store stands. The removal of this hill was necessary to provide ground for the country store and the roads. When this was accomplished, I seeded it to winter rye, which the following spring [or 1944] grew to a height of over 5 ft. Since I could not plow it in, as is usual, I mowed it and left the stubble, in order to increase the nitrogen in the soil." (Higgins 1960:16)

Thus by the summer of 1944 the hill was gone, and the land where it had stood was ready for Higgins's anticipated construction of the Country Store (Higgins 1950:95-96).

Yet with the commencement of World War II work on the property became slow to progress. Higgins switched jobs to work in public safety, and the local populations of Wellfleet and the surrounding towns were drained of their young men (Higgins 1950:93). In 1944 Higgins was required to do his own yard work for the first time in over a decade, due to the shortage of young and able men for summer hire (Higgins 1950:96). Steadily continuing with his plans nonetheless, that autumn he decided to re-route the old town road for a second time, so that it would circle the Barn on its way west and furnish his property with a greater degree of privacy (Figures 6 and 7) (Higgins 1950:96).

As part of his restructuring of Atwood-Higgins property in response to local growth, Higgins had Frank Williams build a "stone balanced gate" across the new entrance to the building complex in October of 1945, the same gate of which a portion still stands today (Higgins 1950:98). The fences he soon had built to line the new road were "complete to secure and protect the property" from cows and humans alike (Higgins 1950:98). As in the previous year Higgins also seeded the area marking the future location of the Country Store with a healthy crop of winter rye, having beforehand manured and top dressed the spot with soil (Higgins 1950:96-97).

In 1947 these crops were finally replaced with the so-called Country Store, which became Higgins's office as well as a favorite entertainment spot. Although the Country Store itself was only a replica built partially of historic materials and filled with antiques, Higgins seems to have had a special affection for it. He furnished it with painstaking detail, including fake mail in the mailboxes and waxed fruit and vegetables on display (Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007). The structure itself copied the style of a similar building he had known in North Pomfret, Vermont, where he had visited as a child and his grandfather once ran a working farm. As the years passed Higgins noted of the Country Store that "like old wine in a barrel, the atmosphere of its reality seems to have increased with age"

(Higgins 1960:17; Higgins 1950:13,99). The last of the major buildings which he added to the property, it is perhaps appropriate that this structure's construction seems to have been so closely linked to Higgins's nostalgia for his youth.

This same devotion to a vision of the past was equally evident in a contract Higgins signed in 1947 to shelter his property from modern developments. Together he and his neighbors agreed that no telephone or electricity poles would appear outside the woods of his land on Bound Brook Island, and that all future electrical cables across his building complex would be laid underground (Figure 8) (Higgins 1950:100-101).

Otherwise, smaller improvements to the Atwood-Higgins property continued. In 1950 the roof of the Summer House was reshingled and Higgins made plans to add a new bath and extra room to the Guest House, which Katharine Higgins "had long desired" (Higgins 1950:114,123). These additions were built during the spring and summer of 1951, at the same time that heating and electric wiring were installed in the Guest House (Higgins 1960:12). During the winter of the following year a "Pullman kitchen" was also added to the south side of the Guest House, a construction that had been delayed by a February 17 storm that covered the Cape in twenty inches of snow (Higgins 1950:128). Around the same time a rustic-looking street lamp was likely installed on the corner of the drive, just south of the Country Store (Figure 9). The granite post to the south of the Guest House was also probably added around this time, as this feature did not precede George Higgins and began appearing in photographs during the 1950s (Holmes et.al. "Atwood-Higgins…" 1995:22). The post is probably the base for the sun dial mentioned by Higgins in a later interview and described as "just outside of the door [to the Guest House], dated 1778 and made in Salem, Mass." (Higgins 1960:14). The sun dial could easily have been part of the continuing effort to create a welcoming space around the Guest House for visitors. Adding to the home-like feel were the various flowers carefully kept by Higgins around each of the structures. For example, in 1950 irises grew on the downhill side of the Woodshed, near a pipe from the original pump for the Atwood-Higgins House (Higgins 1950:40).

Indeed, despite his efforts to preserve his own privacy and shelter the property from tourism, Higgins remained welcoming in his approach to visitors. In 1951 the Atwood-Higgins House, Country Store and Barn were toured by no less than 135 people, led by the Wellfleet Historical Society (Higgins 1950:123). That same year Higgins's advancing age became painfully evident when he suffered a coronary thrombosis, on April 10. This event hampered that year's plans for the property as he was confined to the hospital until June 12, yet work on the land and structures continued in the succeeding years (Higgins 1950:119). The rest of the 1950s saw the removal and replanting of climbing roses and rose beds around the house and Guest House, in addition to other landscape changes and improvements. In what would prove to be his last building project, Higgins planned a reconstruction of the Summer House in 1959. The structure was rebuilt in 1960 and retained the roof of the old building, intact (Higgins 1950:147).

The alterations of these years were likely driven, at least in part, by a series of severe storms which required subsequent repairs (Higgins 1950:112). After one impressive storm in 1954, Higgins remarked:
"The big farm gate to the Barn was blown open and wrecked by the wind. Most destruction was around the main house with the loss of so many trees, making it look bare and different. However, there is more light in the house now than there was before. Four large locust fell on the Woodshed carrying with them the wisteria and part of the trumpet vines and damaging the building to some extent." (Higgins 1950:138).

The same decade was moreover marked by what had become an ongoing problem with various wildlife on the property. One persistent colony of bees stubbornly infested the Guest House walls for almost ten years, in spite of Higgins's repeated efforts to have them removed (Higgins 1950:124). This ordeal in some ways recalled the damaging squirrel invasion of the House during the winter and spring of 1941 (Higgins 1950:91). Furthermore, according to Higgins "moles in the front lawn [of the house] bothered us badly in the late summer and fall" of 1942, while a raccoon with kits was removed from the Guest House chimney in 1960 (Higgins 1950:123,151).

Planning for Future Stewardship:

As the property weathered these changes and Higgins himself advanced in age, the question of its future took on increasing importance. By 1959 the establishment of the Cape Cod National Seashore was imminent, and with a view toward the preservation of his land George Higgins began corresponding with the National Park Service through his friend and lawyer, Silas Clark (Higgins 1950:146-147). These communications also perhaps help to explain some of the motivation behind Higgins's journal, which was later donated to the National Park Service along with his property. During his final years on Bound Brook Island he compiled this written and visual record of what he knew about the house and land, as well as the work that he had undertaken there. It can be reasonably surmised that at this point, with old age setting in and no children or close relatives, Higgins saw the Cape Cod National Seashore as a safe and responsible guardian for his beloved summer home (Lowenthal 1996:3).

Documentation of the landscape and buildings had already begun in 1959, when two researchers from the Library of Congress visited to take pictures of both the interior and exterior of the well tended house (Figure 10). Their visit apparently held no association with the National Park Service, but the information they collected undoubtedly contributed to the developments of the following year, when Charles S. Dotts researched and recorded the site in the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) (Higgins 1950:148; Lowenthal 1996:8; Corson and Fader n.d.:1).

The year of 1960 also saw the first meeting between George Higgins and the National Park Service. Held in Brookline, Higgins and Silas Clark met with the National Park Service Regional Director Ronald F. Lee and Chief of Lands Donald E. Lee, to discuss plans to convey:
"the old house, the old buildings and 50 or 60 acres of land (more or less) on the south side of the town road…to the Department of the Interior as a national historic shrine." (Higgins 1950:150).

In an interview that same year, George Higgins took advantage of the opportunity to express some of his concerns and wishes for his property. He made it clear "that the encroachment of the pine trees to any proximity to the houses [should] be prevented at all costs" due to the fire hazard (Higgins 1960:19-20). He also wanted the pump outside the House removed and replaced with one "similar to that in the Barn" (Higgins 1960:19-20). He went on to detail some general landscape guidelines for the property, including some hints as to his own treatment of it in the past:
"It is self-evident that any landscaping should be very simple. Formality and ostentation does not fit this place. It has been my custom to have two simple beds of old-fashioned flowers in front of the main house and a simple bed of tall and dwarf marigolds interspersed, on the end towards the door, with heliotrope, coleus, and so forth. This, in front of the Guest House. We would insist, as we have previously indicated, that the post and rail fences about the buildings and fields should be maintained." (Higgins 1960:20).

Not only was Higgins very particular about the type of landscaping planned for the land, but he paid special attention to building materials. For example, he pointed out that he always used cedar for his fence posts, which were cut into 6 foot long logs and split down the middle (Higgins 1950:53). He also recommended that a wood preservative be used on the posts to prevent decay, such as "Wood Life or its equivalent," and specified that this needed to be applied to the fencing along "the south side of what is now called the Pine Road, being that road which passes in its direction to the west, just north of the Garage" (Higgins 1960:21). Higgins then suggested dismantling "a post and rail fence" which adjoined "the fence behind the garage" before running along the south side of Pine Road, or what is now known as the old town road (Higgins 1960:21). He explained how he had struggled to preserve the wood by fastening two locust prongs to each of the fence post bases, as "time and exposure has caused the post[s] to decay at ground level" (Higgins 1960:21). Higgins decided upon locust wood for these repairs because of its high resistance to rot and thus ability to reinforce the soundness of each post (Higgins 1960:21).

Around the time the property was transferred the fence which ran along the north side of Bound Brook Island Road, or what Higgins called Pine Road, continued west only a short distance before turning north and joining an enclosure along the old town road which apparently held the Higgins pasture (Higgins 1960:21). Higgins speculated that this area would eventually be swallowed up by pines; a prediction which was realized in fairly short order (Higgins 1960:21). On the other hand, it can be assumed that the open land north and east of the Guest House was then roughly similar in

appearance to what is there today, for Higgins called it “the ‘meadow’” (Higgins 1960:22). Speaking of this open area, he mentioned that “there will be found lilies, lilac bushes, and on the crown of this land, a depression where formerly a house had stood,” presumably referring to the remains of the old Hopkins house (Higgins 1960:22).

As for the prickly pear cactus present throughout the site in the 1960s and still extant in various spots today, Higgins added the following:
"The cactus growing by the old house outside the kitchen door is a native of Mexico. It was there when my great grandparents were alive and may be found here and there in the immediate locale. The least clipping of this cactus will take root wherever it may fall and it is extremely hardy. It was probably brought by ship in much earlier days and was so durable it survived all sorts of seasons and complete neglect." (Higgins “Draft Appendage” n.d.:5).

This image of endurance is perhaps an appropriate one with which to conclude George Higgins’s ownership of the Atwood-Higgins property. Since his acquisition of the property in 1919 his work on it had been constant and unrelenting, a pattern marked by the methodical application of linseed oil to the roof of the House every other year (Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007). The steady constancy of this lifestyle is equally evident in his city life. At the time of his death in 1962 Higgins resided at 30 Dean Road in Brookline, and had been operating out of the same business office at 1318 Beacon Street for over fifty years (Fader 1980:2; Letter, Higgins toRose, 29 January 1952).

During the same period of more than half a century, as Higgins was modifying and adding new buildings to the Atwood-Higgins property, the surrounding and untended landscape of Bound Brook Island was undergoing drastic change. Despite the small parcel of maintained land surrounding the building complex, the island’s once clear and open land swiftly grew over with oak, pine and black locust (see Figure 8) (Higgins 1960:8). The Cape Cod Railroad, which passed by the southeastern edge of Bound Brook Island and had in earlier years been plainly visible, was first obscured and then completely removed in 1960 (Fader 1980:7). Brought to life in Higgins’s wistful memories, these changes clearly marked the end of an era, not only for Bound Brook Island and the town of Wellfleet, but for George Higgins and his wife.

So ended the period of George Higgins’s ownership of the Atwood-Higgins Historic Site, during which time he had built some eight structures and miles of split-rail fences on the property. Indeed, the thickly wooded landscape and carefully maintained building complex he transferred to the National Park Service in 1961 was entirely different from that which he acquired as a young man in 1919. A landscape described in 1935 as a “high, attractive, cleared plateau type of country, a little wooded but mostly open” was by the 1960s already a thing of the past (“Certificate of Title” 2 July 1935). The herds of cattle that once roamed the island were now gone, and views of the salt marshes and across the open hills of Bound Brook Island, once so easily visible from the Atwood-Higgins property, had disappeared (Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007). Meanwhile introduced maple, roses, iris and other flowers continued to distinguish the site from its surroundings, as had the installment over time of two wells, electrical lines and plumbing in the Guest House.

The influx of summer visitors to the island had in the meantime grown, adding to the convenience of the improvements Higgins had made to the twice re-routed town road. The once troublesome salt marshes of Duck Harbor were now filled in to the point of supporting a stable road for easy use by automobiles. The Atwood-Higgins structures had seen their peak of care and activity ebb and flow, as hinted by the vines coating the outside of the Barn in a thick green blanket (Figure 11). Nearby the Bound Brook Island house sites which remained, such as the hole for the old Curran house mentioned in Higgins’s journal, had most likely disappeared beneath vegetation by the second half of the twentieth century.



Figure 3. Chopping down an apple tree south of the Atwood-Higgins House in 1920. (Cape Cod NS archives; Higgins 1950:30)

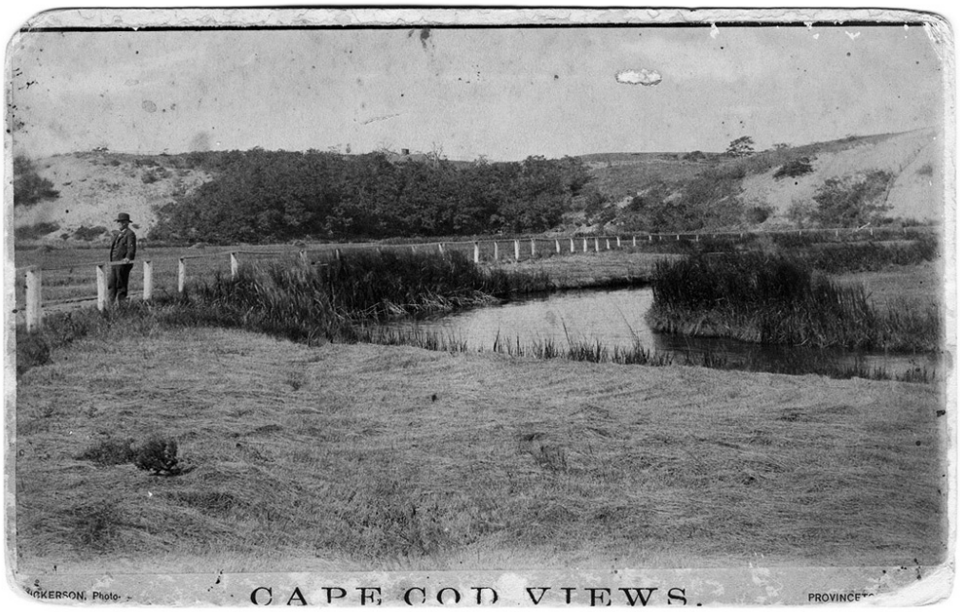


Figure 4. View looking northwest from the salt marsh toward Atwood-Higgins House in the 1920s or '30s. Note the clear path of the Herring River (curving at right), Old County Road (coming from left), and the open landscape. (Cape Cod NS archives, H6-275)



Figure 5. Looking south at the new Garage, in 1929. (Cape Cod NS archives)



Figure 6. View of the building complex and fencing from the north, with the Barn at left, Country Store at center, and the Garage barely visible at far right, in 1948. (Cape Cod NS archives)

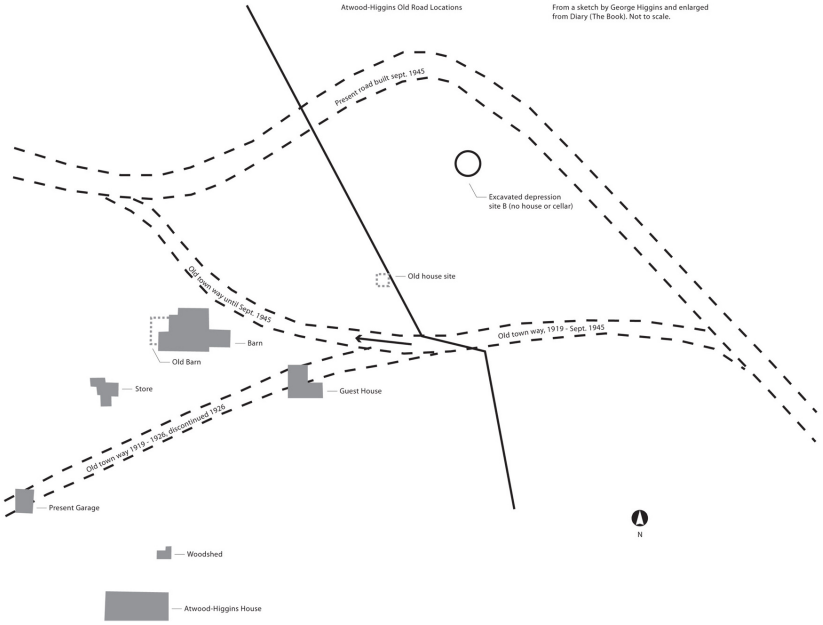


Figure 7. Diagram showing changes to the road alignment based on a sketch by George Higgins. (Traced by OCLP)



Figure 8. Looking east toward the Country Store, Barn, chimney of the Guest House (at left), and the hills beyond, likely from Bound Brook Island Road in the 1950s. Note there are no telephone and electricity lines. (Cape Cod NS archives, H6-014)



Figure 9. George Higgins with Katharine (far right) and friends, looking northwest likely in the 1950s. Note the street lamp in the foreground with possibly a rose growing at its base. The Country Store is in the background. (Cape Cod NS archives, H6-139)



Figure 10. View of Atwood-Higgins House, lawn, and Woodshed looking north, in a photograph likely taken for the Library of Congress in 1959. (Cape Cod NS archives, H6-115)



Figure 11. George and Katharine Higgins in front of the Barn with the Country Store beyond, looking west in, 1959. Note the heavy covering of vines on the Barn. The area defined by a log bumper just north of the Guest House. (Cape Cod NS archives, H6-199)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OWNERSHIP (1961–PRESENT)

Transfer of Ownership and Continued Higgins Occupancy:
In 1961, the same year that the Cape Cod National Seashore came into being through Public Law 87 -126, George Higgins transferred his land to the National Park Service by both gift and sale ("Events Significant…" n.d.). A ceremony held on the property on July 2 featured the signing of the deed for the transfer of "about 50 acres" by George and Katharine Higgins as well as National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth (Higgins 1950:157). The Secretary of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall, signed the document to transfer 154 acres on August 30 ("Events Significant…" n.d.; Lowenthal 1996:15). A Cooperative Agreement for the property signed the same year states that:
"when the historic site is established and exhibited for public use, visitation, and enjoyment, it shall be administered so as to faithfully depict to the public, as far as practical, the way of life existing in the vicinity of the historic site and to reflect as far as possible the past history of the house, its adjoining buildings, and surrounding area as representative of Cape Cod." (Cooperative agreement, 25 July, 1961, Article III, Section C)

The Higginses meanwhile agreed to maintain only a life interest in the land. Higgins asserted that he and his wife were "completely happy, comforted by a sense of assurance, that all will be well with the old place, that the Department will carry out our wishes as to its future." (Higgins 1950:157). Their property became a new feature in the Cape Cod National Seashore, which was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy on August 7. The stated purpose of this park was in part to:
"preserve the nationally significant and special cultural and natural features, distinctive patterns of human activity, and ambience that characterize the Outer [Lower] Cape, along with the associated scenic, cultural, historic, scientific and recreational values." (General Management Plan1998:9)

The Higginses as well as the National Park Service looked forward to having the Atwood-Higgins Historic Site contribute to this new entity and its interpretive value.

At the time, most of the Atwood-Higgins land was likely characteristic of the agricultural abandonment typical of Cape Cod and included significant amounts of scrub pine (Lowenthal, 1996:15). The total property acquired by the National Park Service encompassed 154 acres of land plus thirty-eight additional acres in the salt meadow south of Bound Brook Island and adjacent to Cape Cod Bay,

which Higgins had purchased in 1942 (Figure 12) (Higgins 1950:3). In accordance with his wishes, the land and buildings were called 'Atwood-Higgins' because of the past 156 years of Atwood ownership." (Higgins 1950:157). As early as 1962 the National Park Service had already begun recording and interpreting the site, as evidenced by a family tree created in that year to explain the ownership history of the Atwood-Higgins House to visitors.

In these last few summers when the Higginses were alive, the couple continued to enjoy the property as a place to relax and entertain. Stories recounted by their last summer hire, Harold Cutler, shed some light on how the couple may have used the property in earlier years. In an interview he described how his job there in the early 1960s included not only maintaining the grounds but from time to time serving cocktails and hors d'oeuvres to guests out on the lawn by the Guest House. What Cutler referred to as "the afternoon crowd" often included the Marshalls of North Truro, neighbor Silas Clark and his wife, the Kennys (also likely of Cape Cod) and Mrs. Higgins's cousin Caroline and her husband Joe, if they happened to be visiting from Ohio.

Around the same age as the Higginses, the Ohio cousins were also the couple's last surviving relatives. Caroline and Joe would occupy the Guest House and might accompany the Higginses on various outings, though in their old age they did not go often to the Bound Brook Island beachfront property. Other trips might include a drive to the theater in Dennis, which according to Cutler Mrs. Higgins took in her 1956 convertible, with Kathy Marshall. Mr. Higgins by then watched television in the southern part of the Country Store, rather than up at the Summer House, no doubt to avoid having to climb the hill. In the Higginses final years of occupancy this structure was apparently only rarely used by Mrs. Higgins, and the path leading out to it from the Garage had grown over (Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007).

As for the appearance of the landscape around 1962, Cutler recognized minimal difference from the way it appears today. Cutler worked for the Higginses as a summer boy from 1962 to 1964, he remembered mowing the lawn areas and planting marigolds around the buildings (Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007). Flower beds lay about ten feet out in front of the House on either side of the front door, while some locust trees grew in the House lawn. This open land in front of the House was bordered by scrub pine, while the woods to the south and east prevented any views out over the countryside. Provided with free and unlimited use of the Higginses' mint condition 1953 Chevy pickup, Cutler was responsible for taking care of the majority of the yard work during these years. He recalled digging out some 43 locust tree stumps around the buildings, in 1963. He also remembered helping with domestic duties such as washing dishes and running errands, tasks which the Higginses might have taken care of themselves in their earlier and more youthful years (Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007).

That spring, on May 2, 1963, Superintendent Gibbs reconfirmed the National Park Service's intention to designate the Atwood-Higgins home site as a National Historic Site (Fader 1980:2; "Events Significant…" n.d.). Later the same year George Higgins died, and on November 9 the retained life estate clause in the original Cooperative Agreement was eliminated in favor of a Special Use Permit for Katharine Higgins (Interview with Cutler, 17 October 2007; Fader 1980:2). Perhaps partially due to Higgins's death or the continued occupancy of Katharine Higgins, the park did not take an active role in managing the property. A 1966 draft Master Plan for the Cape Cod National Seashore failed to include Atwood-Higgins among its "Historic Buildings and Sites," and a revised 1970 version of the same document skimmed only briefly over the property's historic resources (Lowenthall 1996:9).

Site Documentation and Planning:
The site's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places was not completed until 1973, and relied heavily upon information supplied by George Higgins's journal for information. That same year a Historic Structure Report was also completed for the property and included photographs of most of the structures in the building complex. Judging from a 1972 topographic map of the area, the hills of Bound Brook Island and the marshes surrounding it had by then changed little since Higgins ownership had ended (Figure 13). In preparation for a Development Concept Plan the National Park Service made an interpretive planning visit to the property on January 30, and a Planning Directive was submitted on June 7, 1973 ("Events Significant…" n.d.).

An additional Historic Structure Report from that year made careful note of the layout of the Atwood-Higgins property. An underground electric cable was found running northeast to the Woodshed from a sixty amp panel on the north wall of the house cellar (Pearce 1973:3). A telephone cable running underground from the house northeast to the Woodshed was also noted (Pearce 1973:5). On August 2, Katharine Higgins apparently commented that the present location of the Barn is very close to, if not actually upon, the old Barn site used by Thomas Atwood (Lohr, "Memorandum…" 1973). Also in 1973 a "buttery-cistern" was found a little over 100 feet northeast of the Hopkins house site, or in the vicinity of the current National Park Service residence. Trenching of the spot revealed "only a modern piece of glass, a couple of dish shards and a few oyster shells" with no structural remnants. It was concluded unlikely that anything was ever built or installed there (Lohr, "Memorandum…" 1973).

On February 7, 1974 National Park Service Regional Director Chester Brooks approved the Atwood-Higgins Development Concept Plan, and subsequent to the submission of Section 106 documents the ACHP concurred with a determination of no significant affect for the proposed work at Atwood-Higgins, on September 19 ("Events Significant…" n.d.). In January of 1976 Superintendent Lawrence C. Hadley signed an Agreement of Mutual Cancellation of Permit releasing Katharine Higgins from the Special Use Permit signed December 23, 1962 (Letter, Hadley to Robbins, 14 January 1976). This alteration to previously made plans is thought to have been largely owed to Katharine Higgins's failing health. The property was first opened up to public visitation during the summer of that year, and featured twice-weekly guided tours of eight visitors at a time, by reservation only (Fader 1980:2). On July 30, 1976 the Atwood-Higgins House and surrounding 24 acres were listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as the Atwood-Higgins Historical Complex (Fader 1980:2; Lowenthal 1996:1).

Although not published until 1980, a new Historic Structures Report written by Marsha Fader and available in draft form in 1976 had a lasting effect on the National Park Service's treatment of the Atwood-Higgins complex from this point onward. For the first time, this document challenged George Higgins's estimate for the date of the original house construction. While he had suggested that the structure was built as early as 1635–40, using structural analysis Fader estimated that construction had instead taken place around 1730. With these findings in mind the National Park Service revised its approach to the site in 1976, returning to the 1974 Development Concept Plan (DCP) in order to revise guidelines for the property's future preservation and use (Lowenthall 1996:10).

The old plans, which had foreseen a site where "essentially the buildings and grounds will exhibit ways of life from the seventeenth century into modern times," were revisited in a National Park Service meeting on June 3, 1976 (Letter, Stark to Denver Service Center, 16 February 1977). It was decided that no buildings other than the Atwood-Higgins House would be open to the public, and recreating an historic scene was removed from the list of property goals (Lowenthall 1996:11-12). The Barn, Country Store, Guest House and other outlying buildings were concluded to merit less than full historic status but were protected from demolition in honor of the original commitment made to the Higgins family (Letter, Stark to Denver Service Center, 16 February 1977; Letter, Hadley to Regional Director, 8 July 1977). These altered views were contained within a final Interpretive Prospectus, which thereafter guided the use and maintenance of the site. Though the house was opened up for public tours, the Guest House and Country Store were strictly identified for use as interesting and educational exhibits. Having been judged as inauthentic reproductions of historic structures, these buildings' survival now depended on their adaptive use (Cornson and Fader n.d.:17). The National Park Service has since used the Country Store for interpretive purposes, while the Guest House has housed park staff. The Barn was used to keep Park Ranger horses starting sometime after 1978, as part of a Cape Cod National Seashore horse patrol operation (Letter, Hadley to Regional Director, 26 July 1978). However, ever since Hurricane Bob knocked out the Guest House power in 1991 no one has lived at the site (Interview with Bill Burke, 23 May 2007).

House maintenance has meanwhile continued, and the National Park Service has kept its immediate vicinity clear for public tours (Figure 14). Responding as they likely had in the past, park employees removed storm-damaged trees from the lawn south of the Atwood-Higgins House in January of 1992.

As for other work on the site, several surveys have taken place since Fader researched her report in 1976. The location of the buttery cistern was reconfirmed in 1979, yet it was not observed during

later research by Holmes et al. in 1995 (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:22). Also in 1979 “a well and other water system apparatus” were documented in a walking survey of the ground southeast of the old barn site, or in the vicinity of the present Barn (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:21). Remnants of past human habitation on the island meanwhile remains manifest in the vegetation. In the 1980s rhubarb patches and lilac bushes could be seen marking the old, abandoned house sites spread out along Bound Brook Island Road, including the Atwood-Higgins House, the Ben Atwood/Ebenezer L. Atwood house, the Henry Atwood house, the Baker house and the Bryne house (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:15).

Most recently, the 1995 archaeological survey of the Atwood-Higgins complex completed by Holmes et al. recorded no existing remnants of the old Bound Brook Island schoolhouse (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:24). However researchers found a couple of concrete markers, some of which marked boundaries, spread along the length of the old town road as it crossed the Atwood-Higgins building complex from Bound Brook Island Road and continued west into the woods (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:22). As for the Hopkins house in the eastern end of the meadow and northeast of the Guest House, surface inspection revealed several pottery fragments ranging in date from between 1780–1820 and 1820–1900. Green bottle glass, window glass and an electric fence insulator made of plastic were also recovered. This suggests a fairly late occupation of the Hopkins site and does not necessarily confirm its habitation, as the area has also been cultivated in the past (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:22). At the time of the survey the integrity of the site was recorded as good, with no evidence of significant disturbance (“Amendment to the National Register” 1999:4).

The question of who may have lived in the old Hopkins house meanwhile remains a mystery. Katharine Higgins believed it to be the home of the missionary Dr. Nehemiah S. Hopkins. However, Dr. Hopkins’s grand-niece, Joan Hopkins Coughlin, knew a different location as the site of her grand uncle’s home. Investigators concluded that if the house site in the meadow of the Atwood-Higgins complex was indeed inhabited by members of the Hopkins family, they lived there at some point earlier than the mid-nineteenth century (Holmes et.al. “Atwood-Higgins…” 1995:21).

Another perhaps more important matter of ongoing discussion for the National Park Service has been the historical significance of the buildings, their contents, and the landscape features associated with the Atwood-Higgins property. Although George Higgins’s intentions were optimistic, the National Park Service has attributed the limited use of the property primarily to a lack of funding (Lowenthall 1996:15). Today the complex is sparsely visited, the buildings are unoccupied, landscape maintenance is minimal, and many of the buildings have fallen into disrepair.

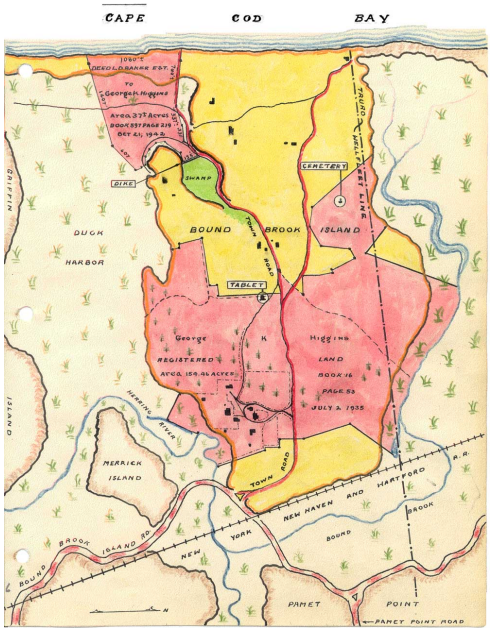


Figure 12. Map drawn by George Higgins in 1935 showing the full 190 or so acres of his property, as it was transferred to the National Park Service in 1961. (Cape Cod NS archives)

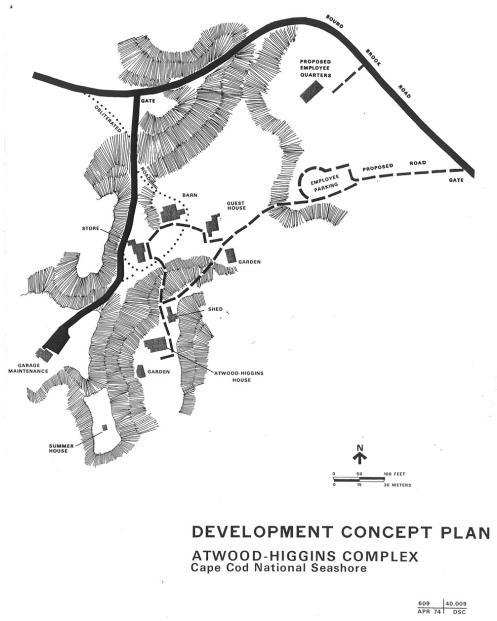


Figure 13. Changes proposed to the Atwood-Higgins complex as part of the 1974 Development Concept Plan included using the old town road trace for staff parking and using the garage for maintenance operations.



Figure 14. Looking north at the Atwood-Higgins House during a period when it was open for public tours in 1978. (Cape Cod NS archives, H6-002)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Domestic (Residential)	Camp	Camp	Yes	No	No
Domestic (Residential)	Single Family Dwelling	Single Family House	Yes	No	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Museum (Exhibition Hall)	Exhibit	No	Yes	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Recreation	Yes	Yes	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative:

The grounds of the Atwood-Higgins Historic District are open to the public. Free guided tours of the Atwood-Higgins House are given in the summer months on selected days. Reservations are required.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Landscape characteristics identified for the Atwood-Higgins Historic District include natural systems and features, spatial organization, topography, land use, circulation, vegetation, buildings and structures, views, and small-scale features. Of these, circulation, vegetation, and buildings and structures are the most important. Many of these characteristics have associated with them features that contribute to the site's overall historic significance and identity, as well as features that do not contribute or are undetermined.

The physical integrity of the Atwood-Higgins Historic District landscape is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1730-1961) with current conditions. Many of the landscape's historic characteristics and features are still intact. The domestic core is still set within lawns and meadows surrounded by trees. The spatial relationships between the main house and the surrounding outbuildings, driveways, and the remaining fences are also intact. The gravel driveway still provides access as it loops around the various outbuildings, while traces of roads moved during the historic period also remain. Extant historic buildings and structures include the Atwood-Higgins House, Guest House, Country Store, Woodshed, Barn, Summer House, Garage, Wellhouse, arbor, as well as various privies, wells, sections of fences, and portions of gates. Some ornamental plantings around the buildings and lawn trees also remain.

Since the historic period, the influence of natural landforms, native vegetation, and the Herring River on the property's development have become less apparent due to the natural succession of vegetation on the island and surrounding wetlands. This growth has also impacted views within the site and to the surroundings. Several buildings in structures are in poor condition, and some fences have collapsed or are gone, though some have been replaced. Several planting beds and trees have also been lost, and some areas of lawn have not been regularly mowed and have given way to wildflowers.

INTEGRITY

The cultural landscape at Atwood-Higgins retains sufficient integrity to convey the significance of the landscape for the period of significance from 1730 to 1961. All of the buildings and most landscape features remain in their original locations and the rustic, secluded setting of the property has been preserved. The buildings retain their historic designs, and the majority of materials remain in the contributing buildings. The Atwood-Higgins Historic District embodies the feeling of a rural Cape Cod retreat that includes an early-eighteenth-century homestead. The neglected condition of the landscape and the growth of the surrounding woods are reversible and thus can still convey the character of this historic resource.

Location:
Location is defined by the National Register as the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The Atwood-Higgins House and outbuildings remain in their historic locations and the property retains the land associated with the Atwood-Higgins Historic District.

Design:
Design is defined by the National Register as the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The layout of the Atwood-Higgins buildings, associated outbuildings, driveways, and most small-scale features landscape features remains intact from the early 1960s, when George K. Higgins donated the property to the National Park Service. Some of the ornamental vegetation around the buildings remains, though is not as well tended. The deterioration and recent collapse of some of the fences and the loss of ornamental flower beds near the house diminishes the spatial organization and definition of spaces within the historic district.

Setting:
Setting is the physical environment of a property and the general character of the place. During the historic period, the Atwood-Higgins property began to show the effects of vegetative succession, transitioning from an open agricultural landscape to a wooded island with cleared areas around the domestic core. This vegetative succession has continued, creating an enclosed setting for the historic district within a pine and oak forest. The loss of views of the adjacent estuary to the south of the property diminishes the setting, yet overall the property

retains its rustic, rural, isolated character.

Materials:
Materials are the physical features that were combined or deposited during the period of significance in a particular pattern or configuration to give form to the property. In terms of built materials, Atwood-Higgins retains the wood frame buildings, stone and brick foundations, cedar fences, whale-bone fence post, and markers. The general palette of plant materials, including the lawn, specimen trees, ornamental shrubs, and perennials remains from the historic period, although reduced in quantity and quality.

Workmanship:
Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts and methods of construction used during the specified historic period of significance. The Atwood-Higgins property retains workmanship characteristic of its historic period. Repairs have been made to the structures in keeping with the historic materials and methods of construction. In the case of the outbuildings, such as the barn, country store, Guest House, and privies, a limited level of maintenance has preserved much of the original workmanship and materials, though repairs are needed.

Feeling:
Feeling is the expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time resulting from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey a property's historic character. The Atwood-Higgins property evokes the sense of place created by George and Katharine Higgins in the early 1960s, though the property now feels abandoned.

Association:
Association is the direct link between an important event or person and the property. Although the Atwood-Higgins property is no longer in private ownership, evidence of its connection to the Atwood-Higgins family is evident due to the presence of the buildings, ornamental plantings, and some small-scale features.

The following section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property’s National Register eligibility for the historic period (1730-1961), contributes to the property’s historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource.

Landscape Characteristic: **Natural Systems and Features**

This characteristic is comprised of the natural aspects that shape the landscape. Included within this characteristic is the natural vegetation (woods), but not managed vegetation (see vegetation characteristic); natural landforms, but not built topography (see topography characteristic). The Atwood-Higgins House ouse and associated outbuildings were constructed on this site in part due to its natural features, including its proximity to the Herring River, its south facing slope, and availability of a fresh water spring. Overall, the natural systems are less visible due to natural succession of vegetation on the island and surrounding wetlands.

Herring River:
The Herring River forms its southeast boundary of the Atwood-Higgins Historic District. Historically, the Herring River, Bound Brook, and Duck Harbor connected Duck Creek, Blackfish Creek, and Wellfleet Harbor to the Cape Cod Bay. These waterways cut between the Bound Brook, Griffin, Great, and Billingsgate islands along the west side of Wellfleet. Thus the Herring River was one of several corridors that provided water transportation, which was vital to the early settlement and maritime economy of Wellfleet. The Herring River formerly separated Bound Brook Island from the rest of Wellfleet. Now reduced in size due to sedimentation, diking, and vegetative succession, the river course is diminished and is now primarily salt marshes. Views of the river are now obstructed by the steep wooded slopes to the south, east, and west of the domestic core of the property (Figure 15).

Bound Brook Island:
The Atwood-Higgins Historic District is sited on the southeast side of Bound Brook Island. The island is part of the Wellfleet Plain, formed during the maximum extent of the Wisconsin Glacial Episode about 18,000 years ago. As the glacier retreated, piles of glacial debris formed Bound Brook Island, as well as the neighboring Griffin and Great islands to the south. The soil consists of gravelly sand, scattered boulders, and some clay. The island is surrounded by Bound Brook and its salt marshes to the north, Herring River and its salt marshes to the east, the former Duck Harbor to the south, and Cape Cod Bay to the west. The sedimentation and vegetative succession of the surrounding wetland areas diminishes from the island’s character during the historic period.

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
Herring River	147495	Contributing					No
Bound Brook Island	147497	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 15. Looking east from the house lawn terrace into the woods, filled with predominantly Norway maple and black locust trees. Note the wellhouse and the Herring River below. (OCLP 2007)

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Spatial organization is defined by the arrangement of elements creating the ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces. From the eighteenth through the early twentieth century, the spatial organization of the Atwood-Higgins property reflected the vernacular pattern of a Colonial period settlement. From 1919 onward the spatial organization was altered by the nostalgic interests of George K. Higgins. His addition of several buildings, fences, ornamental plantings, and other features reflected the growing trend of tourism on Cape Cod. Higgins embellished his property to celebrate the history of Cape Cod and his ancestor's associations with the property, to create a summer retreat, as well as to accommodate relatives and guests.

Atwood-Higgins Grounds:
The Atwood-Higgins grounds are listed as a contributing site in the National Register documentation (2010) and cover the 24-acre historic district. As a contributing resource, the grounds encompass numerous associated features including the natural features, topography, views, buildings, circulation features such as the driveway and Old Town Road trace, fences and gates, the rolling upper meadow, and house terrace front lawn, the wood arbor, granite sundial base, planting beds and trees, a hand pump, and dry well (National Register 2010, Sec.7:2-3).

The Atwood-Higgins House is centrally located in the Atwood-Higgins grounds and faces south, away from the outbuildings, with an open front lawn and an arched wood arbor at its southern end. Additional outbuildings associated with the house, deteriorating fence sections, and overgrown paths are located in the woods east and west of the house. At a higher elevation and north of the house is the route of the former town road. As described in more detail under circulation, a trace extends east from the upper meadow and west from the Guest House, now part of the driveway

loop, and continues west past to the north of the Garage and on to associated land outside the district. The Barn is oriented to face the former Old Town Road. A granite sundial base is located a few feet east of the Guest House (National Register 2010, Sec.7:3).

The driveway provides circulation through the property, and has the aesthetic of a historic country road. The majority of the driveway is sand with grass growing in the middle. The north section near Bound Brook Island Road has a layer of gravel that is covered with pine needles. Since the drive is comprised of natural materials, it blends in with the surrounding landscape and follows its natural contours.

During the Higgins period of ownership from 1919 to 1961, informal planting beds and trees were added to provide visual interest to the property. The extant ornamental plantings now comprise less than half of those on the property during the first half of the twentieth century. Climbing roses, iris, lilac, day lilies, and English ivy plants remain against some of the buildings. The majority of the forest retains a native mixture of pine, oak, and locust trees. Prickly pear, cactus, yucca, sycamore maple, and Norway maple remain in the open areas around the buildings. Both maple species have self seeded in the surrounding woods. Other species that have self seeded in the meadow, around structures, and in the woods include chives, phlox, dandelions, garlic mustard, Japanese honeysuckle, pin cherry, and cedar.

The property's system of split-rail fences delineates spaces within the property and reflects the end of the argicultural use of the island. The fence network includes sections with two and three rails that span approximately 8 to 10½ feet between cedar posts. The fence system was reconfigured several times after its initial construction in the 1920s and historically included a horse paddock west of the Barn. Notable fence features include a whale-bone post immediately north of the house and the weight box for a swing gate near the entrance to the property. Remnanat of additional gates are found in the woods. The split-rail fence continues along Bound Brook Island Road and Bound Brook Way outside the district (National Register 2010, Sec.7:3).

George K. Higgins added electric and telephone utilities to the property, which are partially present. Similarly, his water system installed in the 1920s and 1930s is visible immediately north of the house where a hand pump and hose hookup remain. The base of a second hose hookup is located at the east side of the Woodshed. The original 1,500 reservoir tank and more than 600 feet of pipe are underground. Additionally, a manhole cover set into concrete in the ground northeast of the Woodshed marks the location of a 1938 septic tank that served the house. A historic period dry well is located east of the house (National Register 2010, Sec.7:4).

The meadow currently retains its open character but now consists of a mix of grasses and broad-leaf wildflowers, including dandelion, English plantain, Queen Anne's lace, red sorrel, hawkweed, and garlic mustard. The loss of some of the split-rail fences within the meadow area and the growth of the trees surrounding and in the meadow have slightly altered the character of the space.

Features noted with a (*) are listed on the National Register.

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
Atwood-Higgins Grounds *	147499	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

Topography is defined as the manipulated, three-dimensional form of the landscape (natural landforms are addressed under the natural systems and features characteristic). Prior to the construction of the Atwood-Higgins homestead in the 1730s, the natural landform was manipulated to provide a level terrace for the home. Subsequent earth moving occurred in the upper meadow area, notably in the vicinity of the barn sites, garage sites, Country Store, and to a lesser extent for the Guest House. Overall, the amount of earthmoving was minimal and each building was sited to conform to the rolling coastal landscape. Similarly, the Old Town Road, Bound Brook Island Road, and Atwood-Higgins driveway were laid out across the landscape, with minor changes to the natural grade (as detailed under circulation features).

House Lawn Terrace:
Since its construction in c.1730, the Atwood-Higgins House has rested on a flat terrace, which appears to have been cut from the steep slope of the southeast side of Bound Brook Island. The terrace was covered with grass and remained open throughout the historic period, with minimal vegetation adjacent to the historic house. The house lawn currently retains its open character and is mowed infrequently, which has allowed a mix of grasses and broad-leaf wildflowers to thrive. A row of trees, most likely black locust and a split-rail fence defined the north side of the space. The growth of the trees surrounding the lawn has altered the character of the space, creating a more enclosed feeling as it is no longer possible to view Duck Harbor or the Herring River salt marshes. The loss of the split-rail fences surrounding the house and lawn terrace has also altered the character of the space (Figure 16).

Upper Meadow:
In a taped interview, George K. Higgins recalled that the original barn stood to the northeast of the current barn on a steep slope. The original bank barn configuration allowed livestock and carriages to enter at two levels. This barn was gone by the early twentieth century. During his tenure beginning in 1919, George K. Higgins documented several grading projects associated with buildings he added in the upper meadow including a new Barn, constructed in 1924 with minimal grading. He noted that a considerable amount of earth leveling was necessary to construct a Garage in 1929. Installed the same year, the Guest House included a cellar. Higgins also installed a cesspool to the southeast of the house in 1925, relocated the road to the north in 1929, and buried a water reservoir to the northeast of the garage in 1932. His most extensive earth moving project appears to have been the leveling of a hill west of the barn in 1943 in preparation for the construction of the Country Store.

At the end of the historic period, when Higgins's gifted their property to the National Park Service, the open upper meadow surrounding the Country Store, Barn, and Guest House was bounded by split-rail fences and surrounded by successional vegetation including black locust, oak, and pine. The meadow was predominantly grass, but not carefully clipped, resembling an agricultural pasture with a rolling terrain. With no subsequent earth moving, the topography remains as it was during the historic period (Figure 17).

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
House Lawn Terrace	147501	Contributing					No
Upper Meadow	147503	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 16. View looking north at the house lawn terrace, showing the south elevation of Atwood-Higgins House and the arbor. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 17. View looking southeast along the driveway loop across the upper meadow toward the Guest House and Barn. (OCLP 2010)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

This characteristic describes uses that affect the physical form of the landscape. During the historic period, the property was used for leisure, passive recreation, agriculture, and pasturing livestock, and also included a small pier for boats. In the early 1900s, the Lower Cape became an increasingly popular destination for people seeking an escape from the lives they led elsewhere. As the culture of tourism grew throughout the United States, U.S. Route 6 provided reliable road access to the tip of Cape Cod in the 1920s. The Lower Cape region transitioned from a maritime and agricultural economy to a tourist economy, and Bound Brook Island changed from an open pastoral landscape to one of dispersed summer residences tucked in secluded wooded settings, accessible by lightly traveled sand drives.

During the historic period, occupants of the Atwood-Higgins House relied on local agriculture and fishing for sustenance and worked in the maritime industries. Such agriculture and maritime uses diminished in the late 1800s and are no longer practiced on Bound Brook Island. The use of the Atwood-Higgins property as a destination for recreation and leisure correlates with the acquisition of the property by George K. Higgins in 1919. The Higgins family used the property seasonally in the summer, and added a Guest House to accommodate visitors. George Higgins advocated for improvements to the roads and bridges to Bound Brook Island to improve vehicle access. The pasturing of horses and cattle continued into the twentieth century. The Higgenes had a horse, and a 1920s photograph shows a cow standing by the Woodshed. The National Park Service also stabled patrol horses at the barn in the late 1900s.

The Atwood-Higgins property is no longer occupied, but Bound Brook Island consists of predominantly seasonal residences used for recreation and leisure. Access is limited by Bound Brook Road, which becomes a sand drive after passing the Atwood-Higgins property. Though underutilized at present, the Atwood-Higgins property can continue to offer opportunities for recreation and leisure, and as stated in the park's 1977 Interpretive Prospectus, depict "the way of life existing in the vicinity of the historic site and to reflect as far as possible the past history of the house, its adjoining buildings, and surrounding area as representative of Cape Cod."

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Circulation describes systems of movement through the landscape. During the early historic period, occupants of the Atwood-Higgins House relied predominantly on boats for transportation. Cart paths, and later carriage and automotive roads, were rough and often flooded until the early twentieth century. George K. Higgins played a lead role in improving roadways, adding bridges, and rerouting roads to improve access to Bound Brook Island and preserve a rustic setting for the Atwood-Higgins home.

Old Town Road Segments:
The original road across Bound Brook Island traveled east to west across the Atwood-Higgins property, between the house and original barn. After purchasing his property in 1919, George K. Higgins shifted the alignment of the road north in 1926 and further north in 1944, leaving the trace of the original road, referred to as the Old Town Road or Old Town Road trace. The original alignment is still evident as a footpath and portion of the Atwood-Higgins driveway. A foot path extends west from Bound Brook Island Road to the upper meadow and aligns with the guest cottage. On the west side of the guest cottage, the Old Town Road serves as a portion of the driveway to the Garage. West of the Garage, the Old Town Road becomes a trace or footpath again. Eventually it reconnects with a road across the island.

Driveway:
The driveway to the Atwood-Higgins property descends south from Bound Brook Island Road via a gravel and dirt driveway that leads to a wooden swing gate. The gate has a weight box at one end to facilitate opening and closing. From the gate, the driveway descends to a gently rolling meadow in the center of the property. A cluster of inward-facing, rustic outbuildings, including the Barn, Country Store, and Guest House, are located in the center of the meadow, which is spotted with trees and low plantings. The drive loops around the Country Store and Barn and west of the Guest House. The northern portion of the driveway, notably the access from Bound Brook Island Road is the most recent section of driveway, and was added after 1944 when the Bound Brook Island Road was relocated to the north. As described above, the relocation was carried out at the request of George K. Higgins to enhance the seclusion of his property (Figure 18).

The section of driveway that connects from the driveway loop to the Garage and overlays the original Old Town Road alignment. The oldest section of the driveway extends south from the driveway loop to the rear of the house. This section of driveway originally connected the house to the Old Town Road, and led across the road to the original barn, which is no longer extant. George K. Higgins successfully advocated that the town relocate the Old Town Road to the north of his barn in 1926 and to the ridge north of his property in 1944. As a result the original driveway to the Atwood-Higgins House is now separated from the road. The original driveway to the back of the house is intact and in fair condition. It descends down a steep slope and is gullied in the center, with two partially effective water bars to slow the flow of storm water. The driveway continues to provide access to the house (Figure 19).

Features noted with a (*) are listed on the National Register.

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
Old Town Road Segments *	147505	Contributing					No
Driveway *	147507	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 18. View looking south at the driveway, fences, and the gate weight box. In the background is the Barn (image left) and the Country Store. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 19. View looking south at the terminus of the driveway that leads to the Atwood-Higgins House. The Woodshed is at image left. (OCLP 2010)

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

This characteristic focuses the managed trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous materials in the landscape. Because the management of vegetation at the Atwood-Higgins site is now minimal, areas of successive vegetation are also described where they influence the character of the landscape. Broad patterns of vegetation are described under natural systems and features characteristic, the role of vegetation in defining areas is described under spatial organization, and the effect of vegetation on views is described under views and vistas.

Late nineteenth century photographs and descriptions of Bound Brook Island indicate that the landscape was very open, save a few apple and shade trees. Grazing, farming, and regrading for structures had stripped the island of its fertile soil. When grazing diminished at the beginning of the twentieth century, tree species that required little moisture or soil fertility colonized the landscape, including scrub pine, scrub oak, black locust, and blackberry. When the Higginses purchased the property in 1919, George recalled removing “trees, stumps, and underbrush” and thorny blackberries and introducing “new soil and sod,” plus “seeding and fertilizing and rolling.” He set out Austrian pines, which did not survive. He retained some aged apple trees, removed those in decline, and planted four new apple trees in 1921 to the south of the house, none of which are extant.

Photographs from the 1920s through 1960s chronicle the transition from an agricultural homestead to a well-tended summer retreat with numerous flower beds. While the hardier vegetation has persisted with minimal maintenance, many of the ornamental herbaceous plants are not longer present. In unmanaged areas, non native species have spread throughout the wooded edge including Norway maple, euonymus, forsythia, and most recently, garlic mustard.

Planting Beds and Trees:
When George Higgins purchased the property in 1919, several mature trees including apple trees persisted on the property, while young pines, oaks, and black locusts were quickly colonizing the abandoned pasture areas. The cultivated trees that were extant in 1919, notably several apple trees, are gone. It is likely, however, that some of the young pitch pines, oaks, and black locusts are still standing and certainly others have grown up during the Higgins period of ownership from 1919 to 1961. During this same period, George Higgins planted several trees, vines, and herbaceous plants.

Collectively the planting beds and trees, both retained and planted with in the historic core, are a contributing associated feature in the historic district. In the draft “Cultural Landscape Report for the Atwood-Higgins Historic District,” the configuration and species are described in detail for the Atwood-Higgins House plantings (Figure 20), fence and water pump flower beds (Figure 21), Woodshed plantings, Barn plantings and Guest House plantings (Figure 22), Country Store plantings (Figure 23), Garage plantings, and Guest House garden.

Meadow Landscape and House Lawn:
Historic photographs and recollections by George Higgins indicate that during the historic period the lawn areas were predominantly clipped grass, with few broadleaf plants (weeds). The lawn areas now contain an abundance of broadleafs including drifts of red sorrel (Rumex acetosella), hawkweed, English plantain, and Queen Anne’s lace. The areas are mowed infrequently, thus there are typically an abundance of wildflowers. The lawn areas associated with the domestic core are a contributing associated feature within the historic district though the appearance and level of maintenance differs from that of the historic period (see Figures 16 and 17).

Features noted with a (*) are listed on the National Register.

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
Planting Beds and Trees *	147551	Contributing					No
Meadow Landscape and House Lawn *	147553	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 20. View looking north at vegetation south of the House and Privy. Plants contributing to the historic character include cultivated rose by the house, spirea in the lawn, and globe arborvitae, vinca, and English ivy on the lawn edge. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 21. View looking north to vegetation north of the Atwood-Higgins House. Cultivated pink rose, prickly pear cactus, iris, day lilies, phlox, English ivy, and surrounding black locust trees contribute to the historic character. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 22. View looking northeast toward the Barn (image left) and Guest House. Among the historic plants are black locust and Virginia creeper around the Barn, and lilac and two black locusts north of the Guest House. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 23. View of roses blooming on the south side of the Country Store, on the south facing wall of the "Study" room. Other plants added in this area during the historic period include prickly pear cactus, yucca, and a sycamore maple. (OCLP 2010)

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

This characteristic includes the three-dimensional constructs, with buildings defined as constructs for shelter such as houses, barns, and garages; and structures as constructs that do not provide shelter, such as fences and gates. While all of the Atwood-Higgins buildings are clustered within the core of the larger property formerly owned by the Higginses, three buildings are visually clustered, while others are set apart, either in the woods or at varying elevations. The three clustered buildings, which face each other, are the Country Store facing east, the Barn facing south, and the Guest House facing west. Set at a lower elevation are the Garage and the Atwood-Higgins House, which also faces south. At a distance and obscured by a slope and vegetation is the three bay Garage to the west and Summer House to the southwest. Set apart but visible are the Guest House Privy and Atwood-Higgins House Privy. At a lower elevation near the Herring River is the Well House. Tucked in the woods and in a dell is the privy associated with the Country Store, also known as the Northwest Privy. Fence lines with various gates and openings surround most of the buildings, though many have collapsed or are gone. During the twentieth century George Higgins also added a reservoir, underground pipe system, and septic system to the property.

Atwood-Higgins House:
The Atwood-Higgins House is located downhill from the majority of the outbuildings at the terminus of the driveway through the property. It faces south toward a flat lawn and the woods that obstruct views of the Herring River to the southeast. The house is a one-and-one-half-story, post-and-beam, Cape Cod cottage constructed in approximately 1730 as a half-cape. The main entrance is located in the middle bay of the south elevation. An addition was erected by 1850 and has a door comprised of two wide boards on the south elevation. Because of the keen preservation interest of George K. Higgins, the house was not substantially altered in the twentieth century. Changes were generally limited to repairs and surface treatments, including the removal of shutters in 1919, replacement of the roof and east wall shingles, replacement of the sills, and repainting. Overall, the house is in good condition and retains a high degree of structural, architectural, and material

integrity that reflect its use over time (Figure 24).

Woodshed:
A portion of the Woodshed likely dates to the eighteenth century. At the time of George K. Higgins' first occupation of the property in 1919, the Woodshed was a simple one-and-a-half-story, single room structure with a fieldstone foundation, flush vertical wooden batten siding, and a shingled north-south gabled roof. In 1920, when the shingles were removed from the main house roof, George K. Higgins placed these on the north and south elevations. In 1923, a second single room, open woodshed was constructed adjacent to the existing woodshed. The new space allowed the old structure to be used for general storage. In 1938, George K. Higgins added a laundry/bath addition to the east elevation of the original woodshed.

The Woodshed has three foundations, all corresponding to each period of construction of the structure. The exterior cladding on all four elevations is wooden shingles laid in a coursed pattern. There are three doorways and three window openings, and the roof is an assembly of gable-shaped roofs clad in sawn wooden shingles. The siding of the building is unpainted except for the trim which is painted red. Due to weathering, some areas have little paint left. In his journal George Higgins cites that the Woodshed was last painted with "Pittsburg Barnhide Red" paint in 1965. The National Park Service carried out extensive repairs to the north elevation in the 1990s and the trim has not been repainted (Figure 25).

Atwood-Higgins House Privy:
A privy was likely associated with the original house, though there is no documentation for the structure. The existing Atwood-Higgins House Privy was reconstructed in 2007 utilizing some of the fabric from the original and constructed to its original dimensions. During the reconstruction it was re-oriented to face south, instead of east toward the house. The Privy is located approximately 18 feet from the southwest corner of the house near the edge of the woods. The wood-frame structure has a front gable roof, painted plank trim, and rests on pressure-treated wood. All exterior surfaces are clad in wood shingles. Similar to the Guest House Privy, it has a centered plank door on the south elevation, and a small window and access hatch on the north elevation (see Figure 20).

Barn:
George K. Higgins designed his Barn in 1923, constructed it in 1924–25, added an annex in 1927, and a lean-to in 1928. The Barn is a wooden-framed, compound plan that consisted of a one-and-a-half story principal mass with a one-story, two-room projection on the north side. Higgins finished the interior of the Barn with boards from an abandoned Barrel Factory located on the Baker estate on Bound Brook Island. He also recycled boards to built an annex on the east elevation. Shortly afterward, a lean-to open porch roof was constructed on the west elevation. In 1930, a bird refuge was constructed and placed in the interior of the Carriage Room east wall gable peak with an accompanying door and platform on the exterior east elevation gable peak. Minor alterations occurred after this time. In 1951 the south side of the roof was reshingled with clear white cedar shingles and the building was wired for electricity. In 1955 the barn doors were replaced with lumber from Shelbourne, New Hampshire. The Barn is currently in fair condition and in need of structural repairs. The siding on the south elevation of flush vertical wooden boards is deteriorated. The five doorways that punctuate the exterior of the Barn and ten window openings are also in need of repairs. The exterior is primarily unpainted with red trim (Figure 26).

Country Store:
Between 1947 and 1949 George Higgins constructed the Country Store, which was largely inspired by his childhood memories of the general store in his grandfather's hometown of North Pomfret, Vermont. It consists of a wooden, balloon-framed structure with a compound plan made up of one-and-a-half stories and several rooms that contained a post office, drygoods department, hardware department, shoe counter, and grocery department. A porch extended from the east side of the structure. The majority of the Country Store is unpainted with the exception the trim which is finished in red. The original building is in fair condition and has not been substantially altered (see Figure 26).

Guest House:

Constructed in 1929, George Higgins sought to create an authentic reproduction of a Cape Cod house. He reused hand hewn beams from an abandoned barn on Bound Brook Island and relocated a privy from elsewhere on the island as well. The two-room, single-story structure housed guests and employees. In 1951, desiring more "modern" living, George K. Higgins added a bathroom, a new bedroom, and a closet addition, and in 1952 he added a Pullman-style kitchen to the southwest corner. The Guest House is in fair condition and rests on a brick foundation. There are four doorways that punctuate the structure's exterior and a total of 15 window openings that fenestrate the house. With the exception of the red trim, the majority of the house is unpainted (Figure 27).

Guest House Privy:
George Higgins received the Guest House Privy from a friend on Bound Brook Island and placed it in its current location in 1930, though the structure dates to the 1800s. The green-painted privy door faces south and is located more than 100 feet west of the Guest House, not far from the woodland edge where the land drops steeply to the Herring River. The Guest House Privy is a one-story, one-bay-wide, wood-frame, unpainted wood-shingle clad structure resting on concrete blocks set into the ground. It is in fair condition.

Garage:
The 1929 Garage was built from the materials of a garage constructed in 1923 that was located northeast of the main house. The site of the new Garage required substantial regrading. The three-bay Colonial Revival style structure was constructed as a salt-box gabled, wooden-framed, single-story, two-room compound plan. It has a poured concrete foundation, and is sided in flush wooden vertical boards, and roofed in weathered wooden shingles. With the exception of the gutters, which are painted red, the structure is unpainted. The roof and the wooden shingles on the southwest elevation were replaced in 2007 and are in excellent condition, and the shingles on the southeast elevation appear to have been replaced as well. Several gutters are missing and those that exist are in poor condition (Figure 28).

Summer House:
George K. Higgins and his father, Richard Higgins carefully chose the isolated ridge overlooking Bound Brook estuary for the site of the Summer House constructed in 1935-36, and rebuilt in 1960. The Summer House, located on the ridge southwest of the main house, is a twelve square foot wood-framed, single-story, single room structure with a wood-shingle, pyramidal hipped roof. It rests on a concrete block foundation. The lower half is sided with horizontal wooden clapboards and the upper portion consists of eight window openings and awning-style wooden shutters. The only entrance is located on the east elevation. The exterior of the structure appears to have been painted red at one time, but due to environmental conditions the paint has deteriorated (Figure 29).

Wellhouse:
George K. Higgins constructed the Wellhouse in 1932 as part of a piped water system that included a 1,500 gallon brick reservoir to the northeast of the Garage, and hose connections near the shed and Guest House lawn. He extended water system connections to the Barn and Country Store in 1947, and to the main house lawn the following year. The Wellhouse is in fair condition and stands on the steep slope to the southeast of the house not far from the riverbank (see Figure 15).

Northwest Privy:
There is little historic documentation for the Northwest Privy. It was likely constructed in association with the Country Store. The most obscure of the three privies on the property, the Northwest Privy is located in the wooded hollow about 100 feet west of the driveway and west of the Country Store. It is a one-story, one-bay-wide, wood-frame structure similar in design to the Guest House privy. The structure is currently in poor condition and barely standing. The front gable roof has rotted through and only the rafters remain. Wood shingles cover the rest of the exterior, and an unfinished, plank door is centered on the southeast elevation.

Gate:
Shortly after his purchase of the property in 1919, George K. Higgins erected numerous fence lines, purchasing cedar posts by the hundreds. In the early 1920s Higgins employed David Curran to

construct a fence and gate to keep out livestock from neighboring properties, while also creating a barnyard around his 1925 barn. The gate was a carefully constructed replica of an old gate Higgins had seen in Ipswich, Massachusetts that included a weight box (Higgins 1950:61). The fence followed the realigned Bound Brook Island Road (or new island road), which was relocated to the north side of the Barn in 1926.

By the end of 1927 Higgins had fenced in the new island road from the eastern edge of his property west, all the way to the building complex. At the point where it reached the Barn area was the Ipswich-style gate described above, while "on the north, a small picket fence with a picket gate joined the annex to the Barn" (Higgins 1950:61). The fence and gate which stood on the northwest side of the Barn in 1941 was perhaps the same old gate described by Higgins on the edge of the Barn area.

After George K. Higgins successfully advocated for the relocation of Bound Brook Island Road to the ridge north of his buildings in 1944, he extended his driveway to meet the new road alignment. Higgins had Frank Williams build the "stone balance gate" across the new entrance to the building complex in 1945. The gate and fences served to "protect the property" from cows and humans alike. The current wooden swing gate and weight box is made up of replacement parts and in poor condition as it is missing the gate itself (see Figure 18).

Split-rail Fence Network:
George K. Higgins constructed a network of split-rail fences, which both added to the agricultural aesthetic of the property and preserved the domestic core from grazing cattle, which were still prevalent on the island in the early 1900s. The fence network includes sections with two and three rails that span approximately 8 to 10 1/2 feet between posts. The fence system was reconfigured several times after its initial construction in the 1920s and historically included an animal enclosure west of the Barn. Notable fence features include a whale-bone post immediately north of the house and a weighted swing gate near the entrance to the property (described above) and several openings for gates (Figure 30, see also Figure 18). The split-rail fence continues along Bound Brook Island Road and Bound Brook Way outside the district. George K. Higgins pointed out that he always used cedar for his fence posts, which were cut into 6 foot long logs and split down the middle. He also recommended that a wood preservative be used on the posts to prevent decay, such as "Wood Life or its equivalent," but struggled to preserve the wood. Higgins decided upon locust wood for these repairs because of its high resistance to rot and thus ability to reinforce the soundness of each post. The fence network is divided into sections and described in detail in the draft "Atwood-Higgins Historic District Cultural Landscape Report and Outbuildings Historic Structures Report."

Arbor:
A decorative white-painted arched arbor stands 108 feet south of the Atwood-Higgins House. There is little recorded information, but an arbor appears in a 1921 photograph that closely resembles the existing feature and is in the same location. The arbor was one of several similar structures added by the Higginses including a grape arbor in the middle of the house lawn and trellises on the house, Woodshed, and Guest House. The arched arbor has been reconstructed in the early 2000s and appears to be supported on pressure-treated boards, painted white. The arbor is in good condition (Figure 31).

Hand Pump, Well, and Shelter:
According to Higgins, in 1921 the water for the Atwood-Higgins House was supplied by a pump located downhill and to the south of the Woodshed. The pump was in poor condition and ceased working altogether in early April 1922. Higgins constructed a new well the same year just north of the kitchen and drilled to a depth of sixty-one feet. Higgins installed a hand pump on the well head and constructed a shelter over the pump and surrounded the platform with ornamental plantings and a bench. The hand pump is extant but the shelter is gone (Higgins 1950:44) (see Figure 21).

Dry Well:
There is little documentation about the dry well. However it dates to the historic period and is an associated contributing feature (Figure 32).

Septic Tank by Woodshed:
In 1938 George Higgins installed a bathroom with a flush toilet in the southern half of the woodshed (Lowenthall 1996:16). This allowed the house occupants access to a modern bathroom without disturbing the structure's historic character (Higgins 1950:84; Cutler interview 2007). To service the new amenities a large septic tank with a manhole cover was built to the north and east of the shed (Higgins 1950:86). The tank and cover remains and reflects the built features added during the Higgins period of ownership of the property.

Underground Reservoir and Pipes:
In 1932 Higgins constructed a piped water system with a covered 1,500 gallon brick reservoir northeast of the garage, a wellhouse (see Buildings and Structures), and hose connections near the shed and Guest House lawn. The water system includes more than 600 feet of pipe with connections added to the barn and Country Store in 1947 and to a hose connection serving the house lawn the following year (Higgins 1950:44).

Features noted with a (*) are listed on the National Register.

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
Atwood-Higgins House *	147509	Contributing	7489		Location	38505	Yes
Woodshed *	147511	Contributing	40423		Location	38512	Yes
Atwood-Higgins House Privy *	147513	Contributing	40437		Location	38514	Yes
Barn *	147515	Contributing	7490		Location	38506	Yes
Country Store *	147517	Contributing	7491		Location	38507	Yes
Guest House *	147519	Contributing	7492		Location	38513	Yes
Guest House Privy *	147521	Contributing	40422		Location	38515	Yes
Garage *	147523	Contributing	40421		Location	38509	Yes
Summer House *	147525	Contributing	40409		Location	38510	Yes
Wellhouse *	147527	Contributing	40425		Location	38511	Yes
Northwest Privy *	147529	Contributing					No
Gate *	147531	Contributing					No
Split-Rail Fence Network *	147533	Contributing	40445				No
Arbor *	147535	Contributing	40445				No
Hand Pump, Well, and Shelter *	147537	Contributing	40432				No
Dry Well *	147539	Contributing	40396				No
Septic Tank by Woodshed	147547	Contributing					No
Underground Reservoir and Pipes	147549	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 24. View looking north at the Atwood-Higgins House. The Woodshed is at image right. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 25. View looking southeast at the Woodshed. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 26. View looking west at the Barn (image right) and the Country Store. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 27. View looking northeast at the Guest House. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 28. View looking west at the Garage. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 29. View looking northeast at the Summer House. (OCLP 2010)

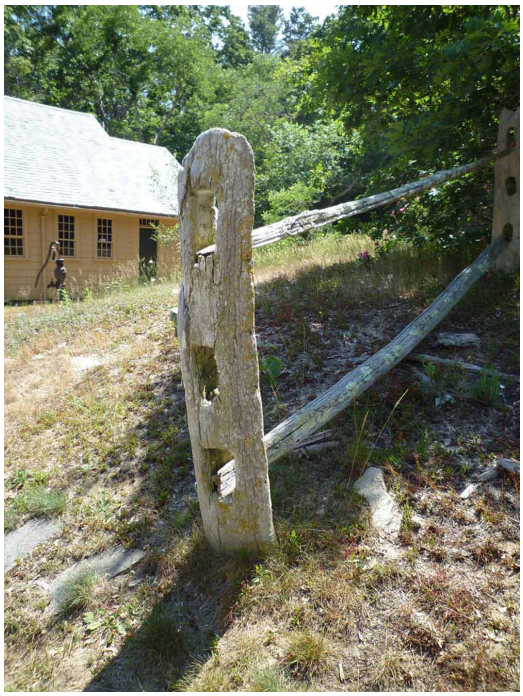


Figure 30. View looking southwest at the whale bone fence post, with the Atwood-Higgins House in the background. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 31. View looking north at the Atwood-Higgins House, Privy, and arbor. (OCLP 2010)



Figure 32. View looking north at the Woodshed and dry well. (OCLP 2010)

Landscape Characteristic: **Views and Vistas**

Views are generally broad prospects, while vistas are designed or directed. During the historic period, there were broader views of the surrounding landscape, but the loss of grazing on the island resulted in a gradual reforestation of the island and loss of views. The lack of designed vistas within the Atwood-Higgins property reflects the unique assemblage of re-created buildings by George Higgins, who sited each building individually and not in accordance with a master plan.

Views from House:
Historic photographs from the late 1800s and early 1900s show the open views to the south and southeast from the Atwood-Higgins House and adjacent lawn. However, during the Higgins period of ownership from 1919 to 1961, these views became increasingly obscured by tree growth around the perimeter of the house lawn. Intense storms, notably in the 1920s, 1930s, 1950s, and most recently in the 1990s blew down many of the trees, particularly black locust, that would have obscured the view south, underscoring the dynamic nature of the viewshed for the property. To the southwest of the house, a ridge obscures views of the marsh. A partial view of the salt marsh from the house is currently obscured by native trees.

Views from Summer House:
The Summer House was designed for outward views of the landscape. Set atop a ridge to the southwest of the house, the screened structure captured breezes from the ocean and allowed for views of the surrounding landscape. The views are now partially obscured by trees.

Views from Country Store Porch:
After its construction in 1949, the Country Store porch provided a seating area for guests of George K. and Frances Katharine Higgins. From the porch visitors could gaze north towards the grove black locusts, northeast to the barn, east to the Guest House and meadow, southeast to the salt marsh, and south to the roof of the Atwood-Higgins House. Today, the views to the north, northeast, and east remain. The views to the southeast of the marsh and south to the house are obscured by tree growth.

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
Views from House	147555	Contributing					No
Views from Summer House	147557	Contributing					No
Views from Country Store Porch	147559	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: **Small Scale Features**

Small-scale features are the elements that provide detail and diversity in the landscape for utility or aesthetics, including such things as benches, markers, and signs. During the historic period there were numerous small-scale features within the core of the Atwood-Higgins property that reflected its use as a seasonal home for recreation and entertainment. They included a light post, a "Post Office" sign for the Country Store, a sundial by the Guest House, and a grinding stone by the Barn as well as a weathervane on the roof of the Barn. Also present was a variety of features for outdoor seating, including a milking stool by the Barn, seats and benches on the Country Store porch, a bench by the old apple tree, and a bench by the water pump. The only feature that remains is the base of the sundial.

Sundial Base:
In the early 1950s George K. Higgins likely installed the granite post to the south of the Guest House as it appears in a 1951 photograph. In a taped interview Higgins describes the sun dial as "just outside of the door [to the Guest House], dated 1778 and made in Salem, Mass" (Higgins 1960:14). While most of Higgin's historic artifacts were stored within his buildings, this was one of a few features that was placed in the landscape. The sundial is currently in the park's museum collection, however its granite base is still located a few feet southeast of the Guest House.

Features noted with a (*) are listed on the National Register.

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
Sundial Base *	147561	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: **Archeological Sites**

Atwood-Higgins Archaeological Site:
The Atwood-Higgins Archaeological Site covers an area of 4,650 square feet that includes the Atwood-Higgins House. Archeological features located within this area include a heavily disturbed builder's trench and brick walkway along the north foundation of the house; a cobble platform or floor inside the existing chimney; a relic eighteenth to early-nineteenth-century yard surface underneath the western half of the house and extending into the south and west lawns; a late-eighteenth to early-nineteenth-century midden deposit in the east lawn; a possible clay-lined drainage conduit; and an early-eighteenth to early-nineteenth-century midden feature at the cellar entrance along the west foundation wall and extending beneath the west addition. The site is relatively undisturbed and has the potential to provide additional information regarding the evolution of the house, early agriculture, transportation networks, as well as landscape organization and household succession among the Atwood and Higgins families during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (National Register 2010, Sec.7:12-13).

Hopkins House Site:
There is no physical or documentary evidence, but George Higgins believed the Hopkins family house stood in the meadow and was inhabited only through the early part of the nineteenth century. The building may have been flaked, or cut up and moved, to Wellfleet not long before the start of the twentieth century (Lohr 1973:n.p.; Higgins n.d.:1). A depression in the meadow is all that remains to mark its former location.

Features noted with a (*) are listed on the National Register.

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
Atwood-Higgins Archaeological Site *	147563	Contributing					No
Hopkins House Site	147565	Undetermined					No

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 9

Next Assessment Due Date: 04/08/2034

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 04/08/2025

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Although hazardous tree work has been accomplished, the loss of plant material, spread of invasives, access and parking, and the poor condition of some structures remain as issues at the site.

Condition Assessment: Fair

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: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/09/2010

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The Atwood-Higgins Historic District landscape is considered to be in “fair” condition primarily due to the loss of historic plant material, the spread of non-native invasive species and the effects of successional vegetation on views, and the deteriorated condition of some of the outbuildings. Some degree of corrective action will be needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm the the property’s cultural and natural values. Without such action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the landscape characteristeics will cause the site to degrade to poor condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Much of the original plant material is gone due to lack of maintenance caused by reductions in permanent and seasonal staff. If maintenance reductions continue, other aspects of the landscape's character may be lost.

Date Identified: 09/20/2010

Type of Impact: Neglect

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Several historic outbuildings, such as the privies, are in poor condition. Numerous historic fences that defined spaces throughout the property have collapsed or are gone.

Date Identified: 09/20/2010

Type of Impact: Other

Other Impact: Abandonment

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: None of the structures are used regularly or inhabited, giving the property a sense of abandonment.

Date Identified: 09/20/2010

Type of Impact: Other

Other Impact: Access

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Access to the site's resources and accessible parking are issues at the site.

Date Identified: 09/20/2010

Type of Impact: Vegetation/Invasive Plants

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Some ornamental vegetation has been lost since the end of the historic period, and much of what does remain is only in fair condition. The spread of non-native invasive plants is noticeable in the adjacent woodland, which has also blocked some of the outward views.

Date Identified: 09/20/2010

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Preservation

Treatment Completed: No

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

Treatment of the Atwood-Higgins Historic District landscape is addressed in the “Atwood-Higgins Historic District Cultural Landscape Report and Outbuildings Historic Structures Report,” which is currently in draft form. The General Management Plan does not prescribe a treatment approach for the Atwood-Higgins property. The plan outlines broader goals to preserve and protect cultural landscapes and to preserve or restore historic buildings or rehabilitate as necessary, particularly those that are adaptively reused (General Management Plan 1998:45-49). The plan states “the highest priority will be to preserve and maintain those historic structures that best exemplify the character of the Outer Cape,” such as the Atwood-Higgins complex (General Management Plan 1998:49). Furthermore, “efforts to maintain or improve the condition of historic buildings within the national seashore will continue, in accordance with new servicewide goals, such as pursuing increases in appropriations for preservation efforts, staffing, and other creative solutions” (General Management Plan 1998:49).

For the Atwood-Higgins landscape, the draft report recommends an overall treatment of preservation with a designated zone for rehabilitation, recognizing the high level of historical integrity to the historic period as well as the opportunities for adaptive reuse and to develop a sustainable approach to protecting the property that meets cultural and natural resource management objectives.

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Treatment Type:	Bulk Import TBD
Treatment Completed:	No
Document Type:	Cultural Landscape Report
Document Date:	2010-01-01
Title:	Atwood-Higgins Historic District: Cultural Landscape Report and Outbuildings Historic Structures Report, Cape Cod National Seashore, National Park Service
IRMA Link:	https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2187471
Narrative:	

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

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Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Burke, Bill. Cultural Resource Manager, National Park Service.

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Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Cutler, Harold. Friend and employee of Higginses.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

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Supplemental Information:

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Supplemental Information Narrative:

“Wellfleet Local Comprehensive Plan,” Draft, 1994.
http://www.wellfleetma.org/Public_Documents/WellfleetMA_LocalCompPlan/index

Landscape Documents:

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

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