

FORM A - AREA SURVEY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

Form numbers in this area	Area no.
N1-30	MM



Town \_\_\_\_\_

Name of area (if any) Newtown

Marstons Mills

General date or period 1790-1930  
earlier cellar holes; later buildings

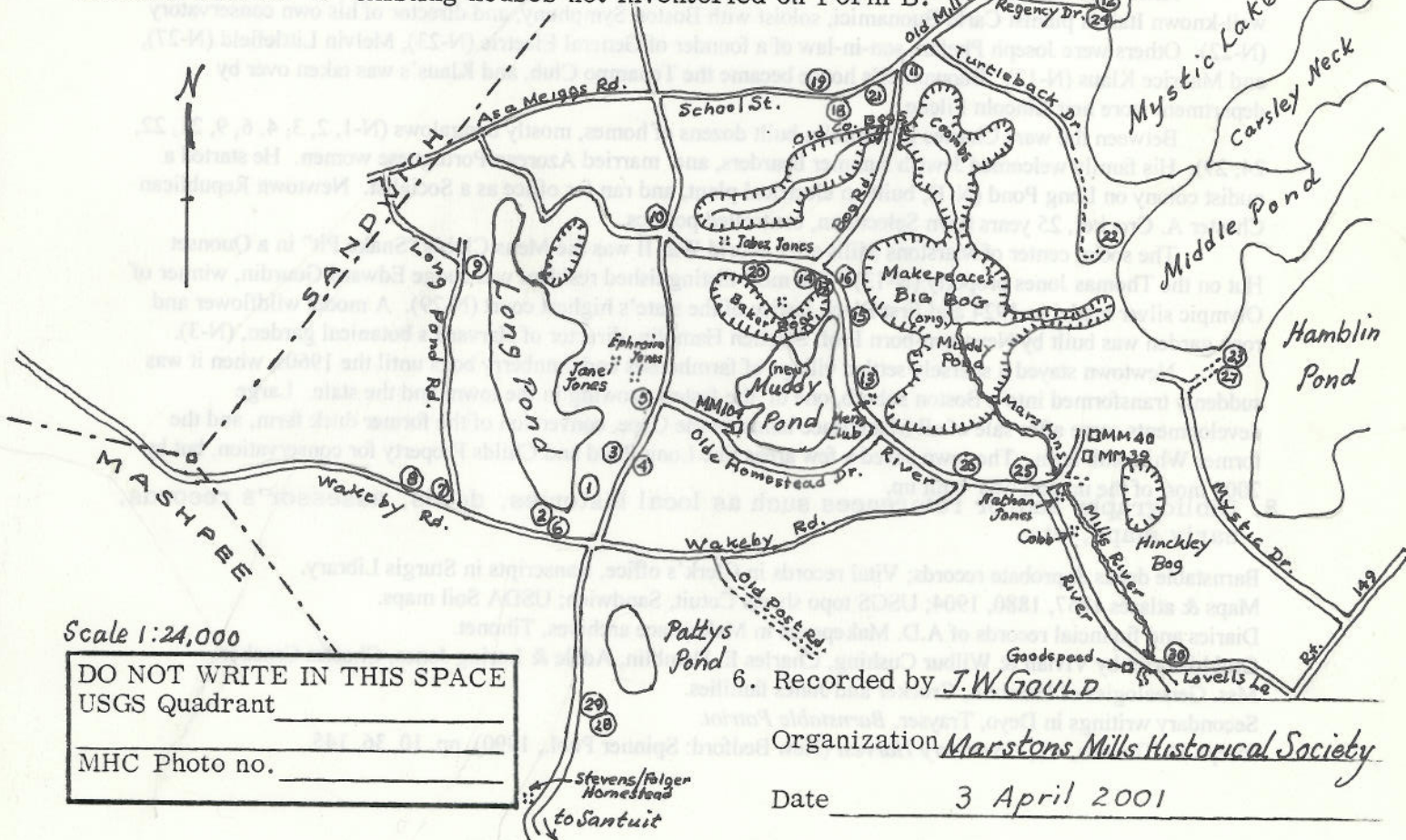
Is area uniform (explain):

in style? Mostly post 1975 tract houses with scattered farmhouses, Gk. Revival,  
in condition? \_\_\_\_\_

in type of ownership? Private, conservation

in use? Residential, agricultural

5. Map. Use space below to draw a general map of the area involved. Indicate any historic properties for which individual reports are completed on Forms B thru F, using corresponding numbers. Show street names (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. Indicate with an "x" existing houses not inventoried on Form B.



(over)

7. **Historical data. Explain the historical/architectural importance of this area.**

Newtown, in Marstons Mills, lies at the extreme west end of the town of Barnstable, bounded by Mashpee and Sandwich. Marstons Mills River rises in swamps 50 feet above sea level, converted to cranberry bogs the late nineteenth century. It is ringed by Long Pond, Patty's, Lovell's Pond and Mystic Lake and Middle Pond

Productive waters and protected location favored early settlement, as 5000 year old artifacts on nearby Baxter Neck and Santuit show.

Colonial Newtown was sparsely settled by families which moved south from East Sandwich and West Barnstable: Crockers, Joneses, the Hamblins, intermarried with South Sandwich families Backus, Meiggs Percival and-Nye. Family genealogies are scant, for distance from the church and courthouse led to burials in back lots, and failure to register vital statistics. Yeomen had rich wet pasture for cattle, abundant fish and game, turpentine and pitch, and fertile fields, as strait lines of colonial cowfences show. Selectman Crocker (in Trayser) pictured the isolated life in the forest.

We know not whether Newtown was "new" from the church in West Barnstable, or from the mill town of Marstons Mills. But the name first appears in town records in 1829 in the road from Santuit. Its population warranted building a school in 1839, still standing on School St. (N-19).

Newtown changed after 1876 when future Cranberry King Abel D. Makepeace (1832-1913) converted the marshes into cranberry bogs. This energetic Hyannis harness maker founded large-scale fruit production by draining and planting out Muddy Pond in "Big Bog". Capital of George Baker and others of Harwich helped develop neighboring bogs, the productive Baker Bog, the Old Company bogs, and the Hinckley bogs, creating over 57 acres in Newtown. The river was canalized, Muddy Pond disappeared, and the old herring run to Middle Pond moved southward. Heavy drainage and dyking was done by locally born Stephen C. Hamblin, brother-in-law of Makepeace, who built his own home here before he moved to West Barnstable (N-14). Cranberries were picked by Yankee families, after 1900 by Portuguese immigrants from islands of the Azores, then the Cape Verdes. Makepeace built barracks for the workers (N-13), some of whom became permanent residents, like the Rodericks (N-25).

After 1900 Boston hunters built gunning shacks on the west side of the ponds. Among them was the well-known Italian pianist Carlo Buonamici, soloist with Boston Symphony, and director of his own conservatory (N-22). Others were Joseph Phelan, son-in-law of a founder of General Electric (N-23), Melvin Littlefield (N-27), and Maurice Klaus (N-12). Buonamici's house became the Tenampo Club, and Klaus's was taken over by department store heir Lincoln Filene.

Between the wars Charles L. Hamblin built dozens of homes, mostly bungalows (N-1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 21, 22, 24, 29). His family welcomed Jewish summer boarders, and married Azorean Portuguese women. He started a nudist colony on Long Pond (N-1), built an electrical plant, and ran for office as a Socialist. Newtown Republican Chester A. Crocker, 25 years town Selectman, controlled politics..

The social center of Marstons Mills after World War II was the Mens Club's "Snake Pit" in a Quonset Hut on the Thomas Jones property (N-13). The most distinguished resident was Judge Edward Gourdin, winner of Olympic silver medal in 1924 and first Black justice of the state's highest court (N-29). A model wildflower and rock garden was built by Newtown-born Prof. Stephen Hamblin, director of Harvard's botanical garden, (N-3).

Newtown stayed a sparsely settled village of farmhouses and cranberry bogs until the 1960s, when it was suddenly transformed into a Boston suburb, one of the fastest growing in the town, and the state. Large developments came after sale of all Makepeace lands on the Cape, conversion of the former duck farm, and the former Whitcomb farm. The town saved a few areas like Long Pond and Childs Property for conservation, but by 2000 most of the upland was built up.

8. **Bibliography and/or references such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.**

Barnstable deeds & probate records; Vital records in Clerk's office, transcripts in Sturgis Library.

Maps & atlases 1857, 1880, 1904; USGS topo sheets Cotuit, Sandwich; USDA Soil maps.

Diaries and financial records of A.D. Makepeace in Makepeace archives, Tihonet.

Oral histories by Vivian & Wilbur Cushing, Charles E. Hamblin, Adele & Loring Jones, Charles Crocker.

Mss. Genealogies of Hamblin, Crocker and Jones families.

Secondary writings in Deyo, Trayser, *Barnstable Patriot*.

Joseph D. Thomas, ed., *Cranberry Harvest* (New Bedford: Spinner Publ., 1990), pp. 10, 36, 145.



36433- 1

Newtown Area

R. Hamblin 2. Crocker  
from (S.) Baker Bog  
by J.W. Gould

12 Feb. 2001  
neg. in Barn. Hist. Comm.

36433- 5

Newtown Area

R. Hamblin <sup>1. base + 2. Crocker</sup>  
from (SW)  
Baker Bog  
by J.W. Gould

12 Feb. 2001  
neg. in Barn. Hist. Comm.

36433- 3

Newtown Area

R. Hamblin  
barn from Baker Bog (S)  
by J.W. Gould

12 Feb. 2001  
neg. in Barn. Hist. Comm.