

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Arnold Mills

AND/OR COMMON Arnold Mills Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Nate Whipple Highway, Sneecech Pond Road, Whipple Road,
Abbott Run Valley Road

CITY, TOWN Cumberland VICINITY OF 1 Fernand J. St. Germain

STATE Rhode Island CODE 44 COUNTY Providence CODE 007

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Cumberland Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER 45 Broad Street

CITY, TOWN STATE Cumberland Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Preliminary Survey Report - Town of Cumberland

DATE March, 1977 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN STATE 150 Benefit Street, Providence Rhode Island

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Arnold Mills Historic District is located in the eastern part of the Town of Cumberland near the Massachusetts boundary. It includes the village of Arnold Mills and other historically related areas nearby. The suburbanization of the surrounding area has little affected the district itself, which retains stone walls, second-growth woods, fields, and other evidences of a rural, agricultural past. It contains a number of modest, frame, eighteenth and early nineteenth century dwellings, along with a few nineteenth century public buildings. The historic character and visual unity of Arnold Mills village, however, was sadly altered in 1963-64 with the construction of the Nate Whipple Highway. This wide, straight road obliterated a former carriage showroom and cut through the fields near the south side of the fields near the south side of the village. The district is divided into two sections which are separated by a 1000-to-2000-foot-wide tract, formerly of woods and fields, but now partly built up with tract housing.

The primary section of the Arnold Mills Historic District comprises the village of Arnold Mills, a tract of forest and fields to the north and northeast which borders on the Arnold Mills Reservoir, and a strip of land to the east of the village containing several houses of local historic and architectural significance (see district map). The larger part of Arnold Mills village is located on the west side of Abbott Run along Sneece Pond Road and Nate Whipple Highway. Sneece Pond Road is the old name for the east-west highway which bisects the district and village. This road was widened and straightened in 1963-64 and renamed the Nate Whipple Highway. It is now a two-lane road with wide aprons. The western end of the village is located along this new road. A 1000-foot section of the old, narrow road passing through the center of the village was, however, bypassed by the new Whipple Highway (see map). It crosses the Abbott Run stream on a plank-floored, turn-of-the-century, Pratt pony truss bridge. Whipple Road and North Attleboro Road (see map) are both narrow, two-lane, paved highways.

Arnold Mills village consists of about a dozen structures along a 1500-foot stretch of Sneece Pond Road and Nate Whipple Highway. The remains of the milling interests which brought the village into being are located where Sneece Pond Road crosses Abbott Run. Several hundred feet north of the bridge is a low, cut-stone dam impounding a small pond. At the dam's east end are the foundations and mill-race of the Arnold grist mill (map, No. 1). South of the road at the east end of the bridge is the Metcalf machine shop (map, No. 2; photo 2), the most important single extant structure in the district. Built in 1825 and later enlarged to the east, it first served as a water-powered, textile-machinery factory. On the west bank of Abbott Run, facing the stream, is a story-and-a-half, gambrel-roofed house (map, No. 3;

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photo 5) probably built by the Arnolds. Dating from the middle of the eighteenth century, it is probably the oldest structure in the district. On the north side of Sneece Pond Road, west of Abbott Run, are seven other one or two-story, flank-gable houses, with walls of clapboard or shingle (map, Nos. 4-10; photo 6). They date from the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth and reflect mainly the Federal and Greek Revival styles. Of these the Dr. Addison Knight house (map, No. 5, photo 7) deserves particular mention. It is a 1½-story, flank-gable, Greek Revival structure, with a porch of four Doric columns extending across the entire front. At the west end of the village is the Arnold Mills United Methodist Church (map, No. 13; photos 4-5), built in 1825-27 and extensively remodelled in 1846. In visual terms this is, next to the Metcalf mill, the most prominent structure in the village. It is a plain, relatively large, two-story, clapboard structure, with a small octagonal belfry, and stands well back from the Nate Whipple Highway behind a very broad lawn. A large classroom wing was added to the west side of the church in 1956-57, but without greatly disturbing the visual integrity of the church itself. An extensive paved parking area adjoining the wing on the west is discreetly masked with plantings on the street side.

The central part of Arnold Mills village along the bypassed part of Sneece Pond Road possesses an intimacy of scale that is partially due to the narrowness of the road and the old plank-floored bridge over Abbott Run. This intimate character is further enhanced by a profusion of fences, walls, large trees, and hedges and other plantings. Street-line fences are common. Three of the seven houses on the north side of the road have white picket fences in front. The Arnold house on the south side has a split-rail fence around it. Large old trees edge the road in many places and plantings, often overgrown, of flowering bushes such as rose and forsythia abound. The houses themselves are sited about fifty feet back from the street (except the Arnold house, which is much closer).

At the southeast tip of this part of the district is the "Colonial Cottage" (map, No. 17), a two-story, center-chimney, shingled house probably built in the middle of the eighteenth century, and a two-story, center-chimney, Federal-style dwelling (map, No. 18). Farther to the west is a fine two-story, end-gable, Greek Revival house (map, No. 16; photo 8).

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The second or western section of the Arnold Mills Historic District follows a 2500-foot section of Abbott Run Valley Road which skirts the eastern foot of Thompson Hill, a 300-foot ridge tending north-north-west to south-southeast. The area retains in large measure its rural character and hillside topography, the land sloping downward, here steeply, there gradually, from west to east. This section of the district contains a former Friends meetinghouse, a grange hall, two historic houses, and two early cemeteries, along with one twentieth century house. The Friends meetinghouse (map, No. 19; photo 10), built in 1809, stands in the triangle between Abbott Run Valley Road and Hillside Road. It faces south, away from the intersection. Originally a two-story, flank-gable structure, with a story-and-a-half, gabled front entry, it has been enlarged with various wings over the years to accommodate the Community House which now uses it. A fair-sized parking area adjoining it on the south is unobtrusive because of the care taken in preserving trees and in planting shrubs both alongside the road and next to the building. Cumberland Grange No. 2 (map, No. 20; photo 9), a frame, cross-gable, Queen Anne-Colonial Revival structure built in 1895, is located at the southeast corner of Abbott Run Valley Road and Whipple Road. It stands well back from the street behind a wide lawn and faces the intersection. North of the intersection of Whipple Road on the east side of Abbott Run Valley Road is the late eighteenth century house of Ebenezer Metcalf, Sr. (map, No. 21). It is a two-story, flank-gable, four-bay, center-chimney house with a fine Georgian entranceway. The house is separated from the street by a four-foot hedge. On the east side of Abbott Run Valley Road at the south end of this part of the district is the Davis Metcalf house (map, No. 22). It is a 2-story, frame, flank-gable, Federal structure. On the hillside across the road and south of the Community House are the early Peck and Metcalf cemeteries. They are enclosed by stone walls and surrounded by woods.

Within the bounds of the Arnold Mills Historic District there are three houses which do not contribute to the historic character of the area. One is situated behind the houses on the north side of Sneece Pond Road. It is not visible from Sneece Pond Road. The second is the Arnold Mills United Methodist Church parsonage. In the other section there is one 1920s house at the northeast corner of Abbott Run Valley Road and Whipple Road. The

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North Cumberland firehouse at Nate Whipple Highway and Whipple Road, a modern brick structure, also does not contribute positively. None of these structures, however, has a particularly negative impact. The buildings in the district are well maintained.

The following is an inventory of sites and structures which contribute to the historic character of the Arnold Mills Historic District:

1. Mill dam and foundations (see photo 1): This area contains the site of the Arnold saw and grist mills and the extant mill dam built in 1875. The sawmill was built about 1734 and closed in 1862. It was located at the west end of the dam. No remains are now visible. The grist mill, built about 1747 at the east end of the dam, stood until 1962. The stone foundation walls and mill-race are still in existence. The site has some archeological potential. Between the grist mill site and Sneeceh Pond Road is a one-story grain storage shed, now used as a gift shop. Built c. 1910, it possesses a flat roof and vertical-board walls. (Assessor's plat 25, lot 11.)
2. Metcalf Machine Shop (see photo 2): A long, two-story, clapboard, gable-roof structure, built in 1825 by Joseph and Ebenezer Metcalf as a textile machinery factory. The east half of the structure is a later addition. The factory, used at various times as a straw hat factory, grain mill, blacksmith's shop, and wagon shop, retains many remnants of the machine shop and grain mill machinery. Suspended from the second-story ceiling joists in the west section of the building are several wooden barrel-like drive shafts which held the upper ends of the belts which drove the machine shop machinery. The structure is now used as Sleepy Hollow Lawn and Garden Center. (Plat 25, lot 12.)
3. Amos Arnold house: (see photo 5): A one-and-a-half-story, gambrel-roof structure, built between 1745, when Arnold purchased the saw mill and mill privilege, and 1773, when he gave his son Rufus an undivided half interest in the house. Sold to Joseph Metcalf by the Rufus Arnold heirs in 1818-19, the structure remained under Metcalf ownership until 1896. The exterior, which had been faced with shingles, was clapboarded in the 1930s. Many of the windows evidently date from the mid-nineteenth century, when the house was made over into a duplex (it is now a single-family dwelling). The front entrance hall has been rebuilt as a kitchen and a central chimney has been removed,

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but a triangular chimney stack, with fireplaces running diagonally across the corners of the two south rooms, remains at the south end of the house. Nearby to the west is a modest, flank-gable, Late Victorian barn, with shingled walls and a small cupola. (Plat 25, lot 13.)

4. House (see photo 6): Built probably about 1800, and purchased by Gustavus A. Alexander in 1837. A 1½-story, five-bay, central chimney, frame structure, with large additions in back, it possesses a Greek Revival front entry with sidelights, and a small, evidently original shed dormer centrally positioned over it.

5. Dr. Addison Knight house (see photo 7): A story-and-a-half, flank-gable, frame dwelling built c. 1844-46. Sold in 1846 to Louisa Taft, whose husband Mowry was then part owner of the textile machinery factory, the property remained in the possession of the Tafts in 1900. Possessing a handsome pilaster-and-sidelight front entrance and a heavy Doric porch across the entire front, it is a fine Greek Revival structure, of a type not common in Rhode Island. The heavy picket fence in front is said to date from the time of construction of the house. There is a persistent local tradition connected with this house and another very similar dwelling which, before its burning in 1916, stood on the Clinton Johnson property on Whipple Road next to the fire station. According to this tradition, both structures were built by the same person as homes for his daughters. The Cumberland land records show that both houses were built by Dr. Knight -- the Sneece Pond Road dwelling c. 1844-46 and the Whipple Road structure c. 1846-51. The earlier house was sold to Louisa Taft in 1846; the later one was sold in 1851 by Knight's widow, Phebe, to Willard Pierce. It is clear from the records that the Knights sold both structures for their full market value. Louisa Taft may have been Addison Knight's daughter; Willard Pierce's wife, however, was a Metcalf. The records suggest that both houses were built by the Knights for their own occupancy. (Plat 56, lot 16.)

6. Mackenzie house: This two-story, flank-gable, center-chimney dwelling, probably originally an early-nineteenth-century Federal-style house, was extensively remodeled in 1913, when an open verandah extending around three sides and a projecting, centrally positioned two-story entryway pavilion, both Federal Revival in style, were added. Neil Mackenzie (1863-1931), a Nova-Scotia-born blacksmith,

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came to Cumberland in 1885, when the Diamond Hill Reservoir was being built, and in 1896 bought this house, along with the former machine shop, from the Metcalfs. (Plat 56, lot 17.)

7. Edwin R. Arnold house: Erected for a blacksmith between 1837 and 1850, it is a handsome 1½-story, clapboard, flank-gable, Greek Revival structure, with corner pilasters and cornice returns.

8. Former general store and doctor's office: Built c. 1819-24 by Lewis Arnold and sold to Halsey D. Walcott in 1824, it is a one-story, flank-gable, clapboard structure, with an end-gable shed at its right-hand end. Now a residence, the building was used in its early years by Dr. Halsey Walcott as a doctor's office and by him and his brother, William A. Walcott, as a general store. The door into the former doctor's office at the left side of the building has now been replaced with a window. The structure remained in use as a general store under the Perkinses and William Howe into the twentieth century. (Plat 56, lot 30.)

9. Dr. Halsey D. Walcott house: A plain Federal-style dwelling of the two-story, flank-gable, center-chimney type, with a flat-topped, sidelight-type front entrance. The structure, which is now clad in cedar shingles, is said to have been built by Dr. Michael Walcott, the father of Halsey and William A. Walcott. The Cumberland land records show, however, that it was erected c. 1819-24 by Lewis Arnold and sold in 1824 to Halsey Walcott (Plat 56, lot 31.)

10. House. This modest one-story, flank-gable, clapboard structure was owned in the nineteenth century by the Metcalfs. Built in the early 1800s, it has a central chimney and an entrance at each end of the facade, and probably was erected as a duplex. (Plat 26, lot 30.)

11. Arnold Mills Schoolhouse: A mid-nineteenth century one-story, end-gable, frame structure which originally had two doors at the street end (one has been removed). (Plat 26, lot 72.)

12. Former Freight Station: A small frame structure with a steep roof, probably built in 1877 when the Rhode Island and Massachusetts Railroad was completed through Arnold Mills. In 1933 the structure was moved to its present location east of the Methodist Church and dedicated as the Boy Scout cabin. (Plat 36, lot 12.)

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13. Arnold Mills United Methodist Church: A plain Federal and Greek Revival-style structure erected 1825-27. As originally built, the interior was a large, open room, with galleries on the sides and at the rear near the entrance. The pulpit was located in front of the rear or singers' gallery and between the entrances to the room. In 1846 the interior was entirely rebuilt. The first floor was made over into a vestry, which was in turn partitioned off into offices in 1966. A new audience room was constructed in a second floor built at gallery level. The pulpit was placed at the front of the room and a choir platform built at the opposite end, beneath the belfry. This new sanctuary saw few changes until 1961-62, when a wide chancel was built at the back. The interior finish, other than the chancel woodwork, is entirely Greek Revival in style. (Plat 36, lot 12.)

14. This much altered four-bay, two-story, flank-gable structure, dating probably from the latter half of the eighteenth century, served in the mid-nineteenth century as the home of Jacob Metcalf (1818-67), a son of Ebenezer Metcalf, Jr. Originally located on the site of the Henry A. Bishop house on the south side of Nate Whipple Highway nearly opposite the east end of Sneece Pond Road, this Metcalf house was moved across the street in 1882 when the Bishop house was built, and moved again in the 1920's when the Arnold Mills Reservoir was constructed. At the time of the second move, a central chimney was taken down and the original front entrance, with its simple molded architrave trim, replaced by the present fanlight-type one.

15. Henry A. Bishop house: This plain, shingled, two-story, end-gable structure was built in 1882. The contractor was John M. Hoag of Woonsocket.¹ The exterior has been shingled, a large bay window added to the front, and the original posts of a small door porch replaced with wrought iron supports. A one-story rear wing is said to have been a part of the Jacob Metcalf house that was left behind when the front portion was moved across the street in 1882. (Plat 25, lots 167, 168.)

¹"Memorandum of agreement made this day of ----- one thousand eight hundred and eighty-two between Henry A. Bishop of Cumberland R.I. farmer of the first part and John M. Hoag of Woonsocket R.I. builder of the second part." In possession of Mrs. Roger E. Alcott, Diamond Hill Rd., RD 3, Cumberland, R.I. 02864.

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16. William A. Walcott house: A substantial, sidehall-plan, two-story, end-gable, Greek Revival structure, built for Walcott (1799-1855), a local merchant, in 1838. A large gable fanlight, divided by mullions into three parts, and the paneled treatment of the pilasters used at the corners of the house and in the pilaster-and-sidelight doorway give this structure an appearance of considerable richness. A 1½-story rear wing, now clothed in Greek Revival dress, is said to pre-date the 1838 front portion. (Plat 25, lot 16.)

17. Walcott house: Said to have been erected by John Walcott before 1750, this two-story, center-chimney, flank-gable structure was owned by his son, Benjamin Walcott, at the time of the Revolution, and subsequently by Benjamin's son John. Porches have been added to both the front and back. The northern end of the house possesses a notable Greek Revival entrance with sidelights. The doorway trim has shoulders and slightly battered flanks. Serving as a cornice is a wide cyma recta moulding decorated with anthemions and other Greek-inspired designs. (Plat 25, lot 42.)

18. Walcott house: A c. 1800 two-story, flank-gable, center-chimney, Federal-style, frame structure. (Plat 25, lot 350.)

19. Community House. The original part of the structure was built in 1809-10 as a Friends meetinghouse. Converted into a residence in 1926, it has served since 1942 as the local Community House, a place for holding meetings and gatherings. Two single-story wings have been added to the north or back side of the building in the twentieth century, but the better part of the old meetinghouse exterior has survived. (Plat 26, lot 13.)

20. Cumberland Grange Hall: A two-story, cross-gable, clapboard and shingle structure, built in 1895 to house Cumberland Grange No. 2 (est. 1887), the first grange organized in northern Rhode Island. (Plat 26, lot 16.)

21. Ebenezer Metcalf, Sr., house (The Elms): This two-story, flank-gable, four-bay, center-chimney house was built in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It possesses a handsome Georgian front entryway consisting of fluted Tuscan pilasters upholding a flat-topped entablature with a heavy cornice highlighted by modillions. A large back wing is finished in a plain, mid-nineteenth-century

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style. Ebenezer, Sr., the first Metcalf to settle in the Arnold Mills area, was the father of the Ebenezer, Jr., and Joseph who established the Metcalf mill. (Plat 26, lot 91.)

22. Davis Metcalf House: Davis Metcalf (1778-1848), a son of Ebenezer, Sr., erected this Federal-style house early in the nineteenth century. It is a two-story, flank-gable, center-chimney structure, with a story-and-a-half wing extending to the right. Since 1962 a Federal-style, Tuscan-column door porch has been removed and the sidelight entrance given a fanlight and broad pediment with returns. (Plat 26, lot 116.)

23. Peck Cemetery (R.I. Historical Cemetery 19): A well maintained hillside burial ground, surrounded by woods and fenced in with rubble stone walls, dates back at least to 1754 and is the earliest local graveyard. It contains numerous fine slate and brownstone eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century headstones, and also a handsome granite-block-fronted receiving tomb erected for Joseph Whipple in 1825. (Plat 26, lot 10.)

24. Metcalf Cemetery (R.I. Historical Cemetery 20): A small graveyard surrounded by woods and enclosed by rubble stone and random ashlar walls, it contains twenty-five headstones dating back to the 1850's. (Plat 26, lot 11.)

25. Quaker Cemetery (R. I. Historical Cemetery 21): Surrounded by woods, this neglected, small, mid-Victorian burial ground is enclosed by granite-post-and-iron-rail fences. (Plat 26, lot 12.)

26. Arnold Mills Cemetery (R. I. Historical Cemetery 23): This burial ground, often referred to as the "New Cemetery" in its early days, was established not long after the construction of the Methodist Church.

27. Evergreen Cemetery (R. I. Historical Cemetery 22): This burial ground, with its border of evergreens on the east side and stone wall on the west, is an extension of the Arnold Mills Cemetery.

The following structures do not contribute to the historic character of the district:

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- 28. Firehouse. Assessor's plat 26, lot 72.
- 29. Arnold Mills United Methodist Church parsonage. Plat 26, lot 12.
- 30. House. Plat 56, lot 29.
- 31. House. Plat 26, lot 65.

B SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Arnold Mills Historic District is significant today as a well preserved rural, and essentially agrarian, settlement, one of relatively few in Rhode Island. Within it many of those structures and sites which together housed the significant community institutions and leaders are still intact. The Arnold Mills area bears great local significance as the site of milling operations from the eighteenth century down almost to the present. It is also locally important in that it retains the old meetinghouses of two churches of historic interest. The district also contains a number of structures of architectural importance.

Arnold Mills was founded in 1724 with the establishment of a sawmill by Richard Atwell, William Walcott, James Streeter, and Daniel Wilkinson. The sawmill was built on the west side of Abbott Run, north of the highway at the west end of the present stone dam, and operated until 1862. In 1745 the mill and land was sold to Amos Arnold. He added at the east end of the dam the grist mill which gave the settlement its name. The mill survived until 1962. It is believed that Arnold built the gambrel-roofed house on the south side of Sneece Pond Road just west of Abbott Run (photo 5).

The establishment of farms in the Arnold Mills area, which retained a predominantly agricultural character until the middle of the twentieth century, began to take place in the mid-1700's. Towards the close of the eighteenth century the beginnings of a social and commercial center for the area developed around the focal point provided by the grist and saw mills. A general store was established by John Walcott before 1800. Another general store in the village, founded between 1819 and 1824, was operated by Halsey D. and William A. Walcott and others into the twentieth century. The village became the home of physicians, Michael Walcott (1762-1821) being the earliest, followed by his son Halsey D. (1788-1842), and by Dr. Addison Knight and others. The Walcotts' combination store and doctor's office structure, along with the homes of Halsey D. Walcott and Addison Knight, are still extant.

In the first part of the nineteenth century two religious organizations existed locally, a Friends meeting -- one of many which Rhode Island, with its long tradition of religious liberty,

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possessed -- and a Methodist society. The 1809-10 Friends meetinghouse, having been closed in 1926, is now used as a community house.

A Methodist sermon was first preached in Cumberland in 1791 by the Reverend Jesse Lee, one of the pioneers of Methodism in New England. By 1799 a Methodist class, the first to be organized in all of Rhode Island north of Warren and East Greenwich, had been established. Services were often held at a Freewill Baptist meetinghouse and at the local schoolhouse. In 1825-27 the meetinghouse still used by the congregation was erected; it is now the second oldest Methodist church building in Rhode Island.

In the nineteenth century continuing commercial and industrial developments ensured the ongoing vitality of the area. Ebenezer Metcalf, Sr. (1748-1820), the progenitor of that large and prominent Cumberland family, arrived from Attleboro, Massachusetts, about 1775. By the end of the century, Metcalf, a farmer and blacksmith, had established a small machine shop. In 1818-19 Joseph Metcalf (1783-1868), 1867), son of Ebenezer, Sr., bought the Arnold mill properties. He and his brother, Ebenezer, Jr. (1781-1854), built the present mill in 1825 as a shop for the manufacture of textile machinery.

Joseph Metcalf sold his interests in all three mills to Ebenezer Metcalf, Jr., in 1840; Ebenezer sold out to Mowry Taft and Charles B. Carpenter in 1844. Charles Metcalf, brother of Ebenezer and Joseph, bought the mills in 1850, but operated the textile machinery factory only a short time. Thereafter, the building stood idle until the 1870's, when it was leased by Nicholas Brothers and reopened as a straw hat factory, utilizing straw braided by local women in their homes.

In 1896 Henry and Omar Metcalf, sons of Charles Metcalf, sold the former machine shop to Neil Mackenzie. Mackenzie utilized the east half of the structure as a wheelwright shop in which he built and repaired wagons and carriages. The shop consisted of a blacksmith shop, employing four hands and located in the basement, a woodworking shop (run by Elmer Whipple) on the first floor, and a paint shop upstairs. In the west end of the factory Mackenzie established a grain mill to crack and grind corn and grain.

See continuation sheet 11

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Nathan W. (Nate) Whipple, Jr., leased the grain mill in 1912, and in 1915 bought the entire structure. Although the wagon shop was closed, the blacksmith shop continued in operation for some time -- run by Neil Mackenzie until 1923 and by Malcolm Gillis for a few more years thereafter. Whipple ran the grain mill until 1926, when he sold the building to the City of Pawtucket, which was acquiring property near the site of its Arnold Mills Reservoir. Shelton C. Parker rented the mill from the City of Pawtucket and continued its operation, grinding and mixing grain for chickens, cows, horses, etc., until 1964.

Several among the district's other buildings are of local architectural significance. The Ebenezer Metcalf, Sr., house (Map, No. 21) possesses an elaborate (for a countrytown) Georgian front entrance. The Edwin R. Arnold house (map, No. 7) is a typical Rhode Island one-and-a-half-story, flank-gable, Greek Revival cottage of the better sort. Another one-and-a-half-story, flank-gable, Greek Revival dwelling which is most unusual for Rhode Island in having a wide, Doric-column, front veranda, is the Dr. Addison Knight house (map, No. 5; photo 7). The William A. Walcott house (map, No. 16, photo 8) is a fine and elaborately decorated two-story, end-gable, Greek Revival structure. Many of the other structures, although not as distinguished architecturally, are nevertheless important in that they typify rural Rhode Island housing of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The Arnold Mills Historic District contains a largely intact (despite the severe damage done by the construction of the Nate Whipple Highway) rural settlement of high historic, architectural, and aesthetic merit. In it early church, school, store, and mill buildings, along with the homes of most of the community's prominent residents in the village's heyday, survive.

N.B.
Metcalf Machine
Shop was destroyed
by fire 1987

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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See continuation sheet 12

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 100

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	3,0,1	3,3,0	4,6	5,0	4,4,0	B	1,9	3,0,2	4,2,0	4,6	5,0	2,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
C	1,9	3,0,2	1,1,0	4,6	4,9	4,4,0	D	1,9	3,0,1	1,9,0	4,6	5,0	2,1,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

E 19: 301000: 4649910
G 19: 301330: 4649320

F 19: 301090: 4650070
H 19: 301110: 4649280

See continuation sheet 13

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert O. Christensen, Survey Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

April, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

150 Benefit Street

401-277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Providence

Rhode Island

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Richard W. Williams

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE June 21, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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"History of Arnold Mills Methodist Church." Mimeographed outline history available at the church.

Maps

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Walling, Henry F. Map of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. New York: John Douglass, 1862.

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Village Section of District

The district boundary begins at the northeast corner of Nate Whipple Highway and North Attleboro Road. From this point it follows the north side of North Attleboro Road east 900 feet. It then turns north at a 90° angle to the course (at that point) of North Attleboro Road and runs in a straight line to the high-water mark of the Arnold Mills Reservoir. The boundary then follows the highwater mark of Arnold Mills Reservoir generally west-northwest to a point located such that a line drawn from it to the northeast corner of the Arnold Mills Cemetery will parallel the westerly boundary of said cemetery. The boundary then follows the above-described line to the northeast corner of the cemetery, and then along the north and west bounds of the Arnold Mills Cemetery and the west bound of the Evergreen Cemetery to the north side of Nate Whipple Highway. The district includes all properties located to the north or northeast of Nate Whipple Highway between the southwest corner of the above cemetery and the above-mentioned corner of North Attleboro Road within the boundaries described above. In addition, the district includes lot 72 in Cumberland Assessor's Plat 26 at the southwest corner of Nate Whipple Highway and Whipple Road. Further, the district includes the whole of each of the following lots located on the south or southwest side of Nate Whipple Highway and shown in Cumberland Assessor's Plat 25: lots 167, 168 and 16. Lots 350 and 42 at the southwest corner of Nate Whipple Highway and Ridgeland Drive comprise another section of the district.

Abbott Run Valley Road Section

The boundary of this section begins at the southwest corner of lot 16 in Cumberland Assessor's Plat 26. It runs east and then north along the south and east sides of said lot and continues northerly to the north side of Whipple Road. The line then runs west along the north side of Whipple Road to the southeast corner of lot 65 in Assessor's Plat 26. From there it runs northerly along the east sides of lots 65 and 91 in Plat 26 to the northeast corner of lot 91. The boundary then runs westerly along the north side of lot 91 and in the same course to the west side of Abbott Run Valley Road. It then follows the west side of Abbott Run Valley Road southward to the corner of Hillside Road. The line now follows the west side of Hillside Road southward to a point opposite the southwest corner of lot 9 in Assessor's Plat 26.

See continuation sheet 14

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From there it runs east and then south along the back of lots 9 and 10 in Plat 26 and continues south in the same course to the south side of Cross Road. The line then runs east along the south side of Cross Road and in the same course to the east side of Abbott Run Valley Road. From there it runs northward along the east side of the road to the southwest corner of lot 116 in Assessor's Plat 26. The boundary then follows the south, east, and north lines of lot 116 back to the east side of Abbott Run Valley Road. From here it follows the east line of Abbott Run Valley Road back to the place of origin.



Mill Dam and remains of saw and grist mill
foundations, north of Sneece Pond Road
Arnold Mills Historic District, Cumberland, RI

Beth F. Cohen

April, 1977

Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

View from the south.











House, Sneeck Pond Road west of Abbott Run
Arnold Mills Historic District, Cumberland, R.I.

Robert O. Christensen April, 1977
Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

Exterior from the south



Dr. Addison Knight house, Sneece Pond Road
Arnold Mills Historic District, Cumberland, R.I.

Robert O. Christensen April, 1977
Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

Exterior, from the southeast





CUMBERLAND GRANGE

Cumberland Grange No. 2, Abbott Run Valley Road
and Whipple Road
Arnold Mills Historic District, Cumberland, R.I.

Robert O. Christensen April, 1977
Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

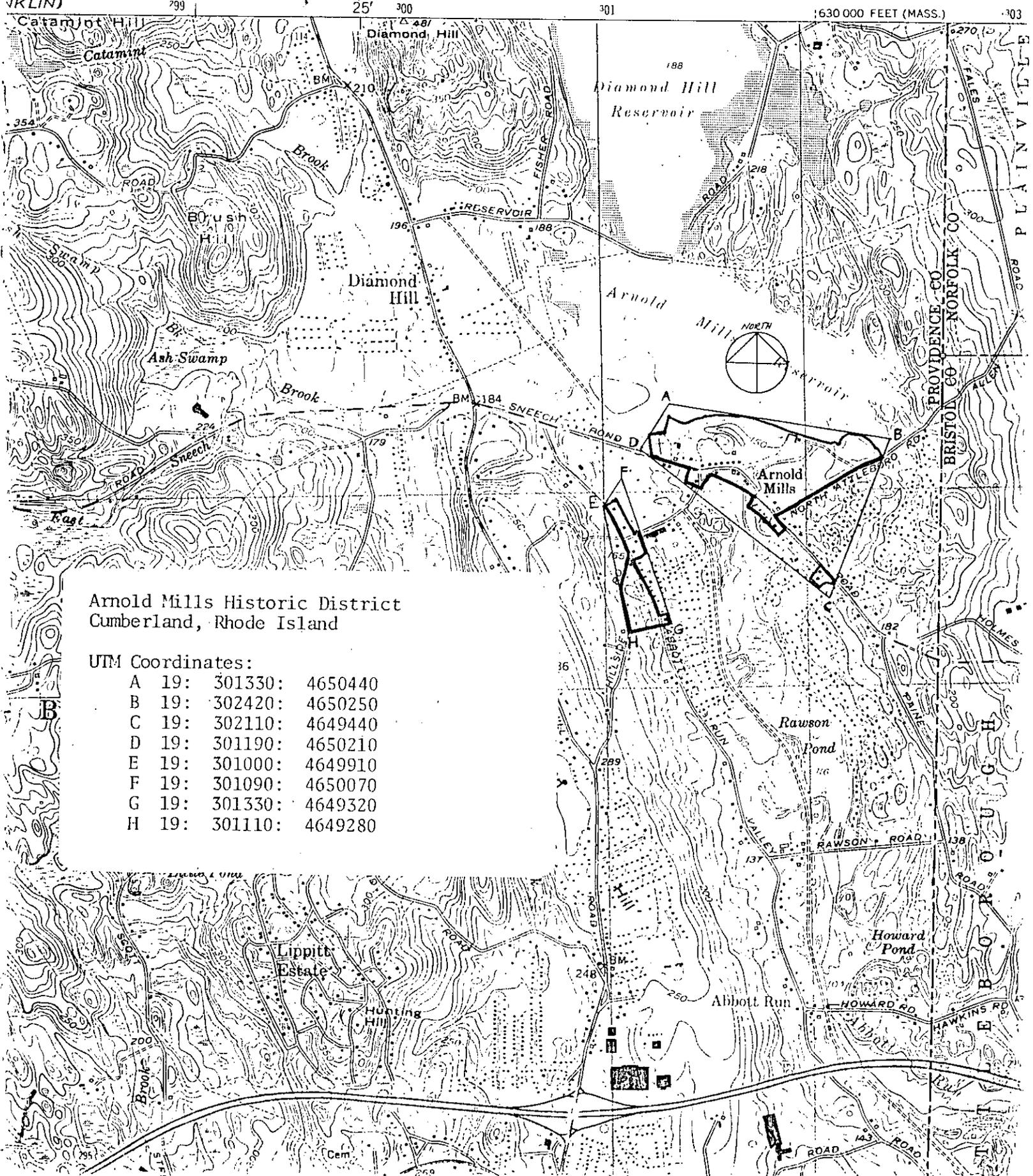
Exterior from the west



Arnold Mills Community House and Library,
Hillside Road
Arnold Mills Historic District, Cumberland, R.I.

Robert O. Christensen April, 1977
Negative filed: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

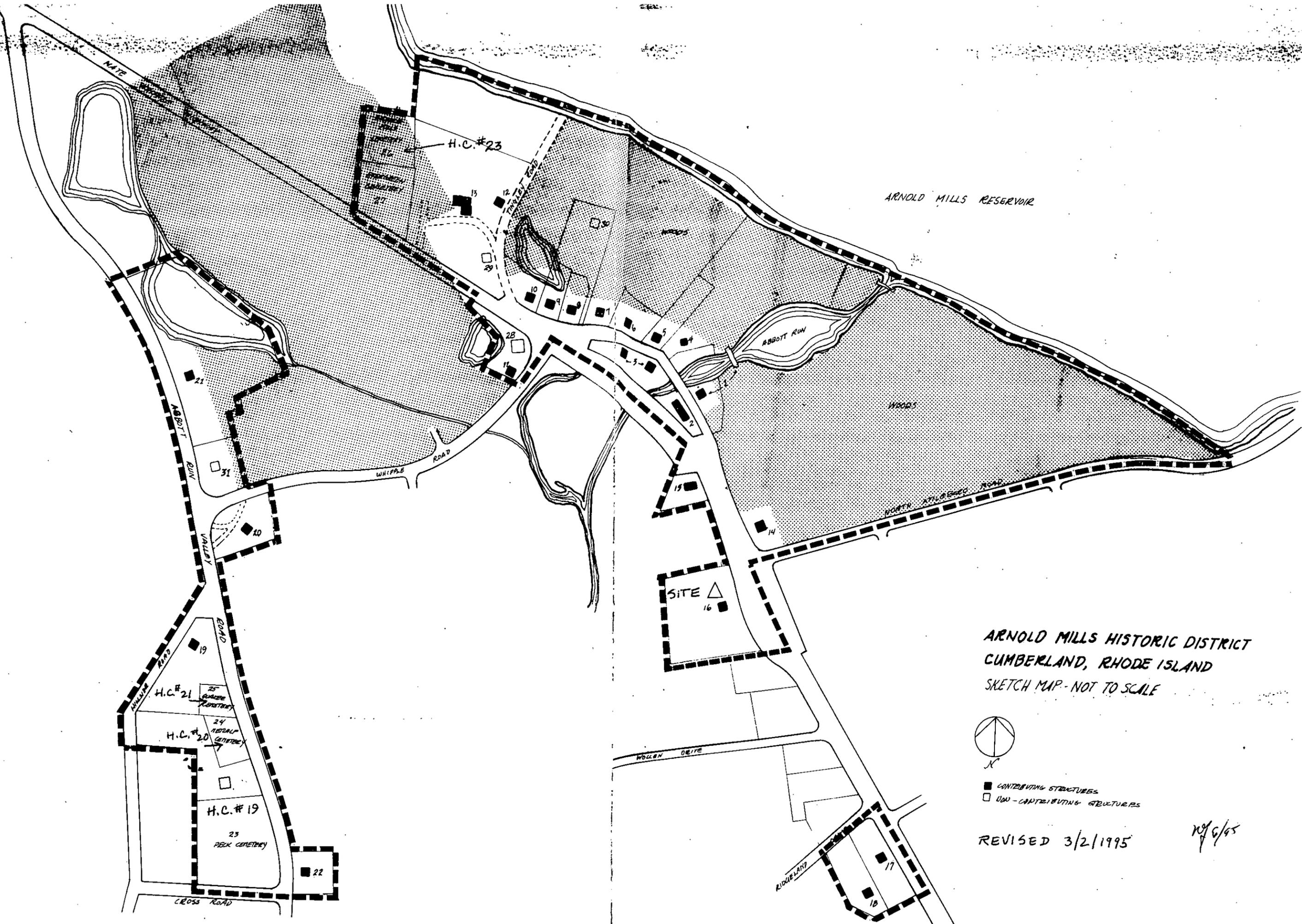
Exterior from the south



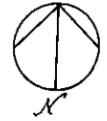
Arnold Mills Historic District
 Cumberland, Rhode Island

UTM Coordinates:

A	19:	301330:	4650440
B	19:	302420:	4650250
C	19:	302110:	4649440
D	19:	301190:	4650210
E	19:	301000:	4649910
F	19:	301090:	4650070
G	19:	301330:	4649320
H	19:	301110:	4649280



ARNOLD MILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT
 CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND
 SKETCH MAP - NOT TO SCALE



- CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES
- NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

REVISED 3/2/1995

w/g/95