

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SWN.F
Historic Name:	Colony Historic District, The
Common Name:	
City/Town:	Swansea
Village/Neighborhood:	South Swansea; Gardner's Neck;
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	
Use(s):	Residential District;
Significance:	Architecture;
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register District (02/16/1990); Nat'l Register MRA (02/16/1990);
Building Materials:	
Demolished	No



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

Data available via the MACRIS web interface, and associated scanned files are for information purposes only. THE ACT OF CHECKING THIS DATABASE AND ASSOCIATED SCANNED FILES DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL, STATE OR FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS. IF YOU ARE REPRESENTING A DEVELOPER AND/OR A PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT, LICENSE OR FUNDING FROM ANY STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY YOU MUST SUBMIT A PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM TO MHC FOR MHC'S REVIEW AND COMMENT. You can obtain a copy of a PNF through the MHC web site (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc) under the subject heading "MHC Forms."

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Monday, June 27, 2022 at 7:41 PM

FORM A - AREA

OFFICE COPY
DO NOT REMOVE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02116

Area Letter Form numbers in this Area

F	(see District Data Sheet)
---	---------------------------

Town Swansea, Mass. MRA
Swansea

Name of Area (if any) The Colony Historic District

Present Use residential

General Date or Period 1896-ca. 1930

General Condition good

Acreage 4.31 acres (approx.)

Recorded by Preservation Plus/K. Broomer

Organization Swansea Historical Commission

Date March 1988/November 1989

Photos (3"x3" or 3"x5" black & white) Indicate on back of each photo street addresses for buildings shown. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient).

(see attached map)

UTM REFERENCE A 19 316610 4619690
 B 19 316330 4619580
 C 19 316390 4619770

USGS QUADRANGLE Fall River, MA-RI 1971/1979
 SCALE 1:25000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Colony, a cohesive waterfront cluster of late 19th and early 20th-century cottages, retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association and is significant on the local level. The Colony meets Criterion A for its association with summer resort and later suburban development in the shoreline areas of Swansea, and Criterion C as a well-preserved grouping of Shingle and Colonial Revival style cottages.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

The Colony (Photo #1) covers a small area of approximately 4.31 acres at the southeastern tip of Gardner's Neck in South Swansea. Passive and active use of adjacent water resources-- Mt. Hope Bay to the south and Lee's River to the east--was a factor in the development of the cottage cluster. The district consists of seven cottages on parcels ranging from one-third of an acre to one acre in size, at the end of Gardner's Neck Road and on both sides of Mattapoissett Avenue, a private road from Gardner's Neck Road to the shoreline. Two of the residences are noncontributing, one due to alterations and another due to its construction date. Two parcels in the Colony remain vacant, as does the eastern edge of the development immediately on the water.

Five contributing residences were built between 1896 and ca. 1930. The character of the district is determined by the compatible designs of the cottages, the most notable feature being the broad gambrel roofs. Other common features include the single-family use and small scale. The district's architectural significance lies in the distinctive characteristics

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain historical importance of area and how the area relates to the development of other areas of the community.

Arch. Sig. (cont'd): of the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles as they were popularized and adapted to seaside residential construction in the northeastern (see continuation sheet)

Hist. Sig.: The Colony's historical significance lies in its association with resort and ensuing suburban development in Swansea at the turn of the 20th century, a time when residents of neighboring industrialized cities such as Fall River sought alternatives to urban living. Early owners of these homes were mostly Fall River businessmen.

The land upon which the Colony was built was known in the late 17th century as Mattapoissett. Purchased from King Philip of the Wampanoags by the Brentons of Newport, the territory was conveyed in 1693 to Samuel Gardner and Ralph Chapman. The Gardner family farmed much of the southern portion of the territory--now known as Gardner's Neck in South Swansea--until construction of the Fall River & Providence Railroad across the Neck in 1865. With the railroad accessibility came subdivision of farms for the construction of summer homes in the last quarter of the 19th century. Greater accessibility generated by later transportation improvements such as the streetcar and the automobile contributed to steady suburbanization of the Neck beginning in the early 20th century.

In 1883 David Anthony, a founder of the Swift Meat Packing Company of Fall River, purchased Bay Point, or the southern tip of Gardner's Neck along Mt. Hope Bay. He operated a farm on

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
 Scully, Vincent J., Jr. The Shingle Style. Yale University Press, 1955.
 Wright, Otis Olney. History of Swansea, Mass. 1917.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: SWANSEA, MA.	Form No: F
Property Name: THE COLONY	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Architectural Significance (continued)

states. This is an intact complex of residences and is unique in Swansea. The houses are evocative of the simplified and informal life at the shore, at that time, a newly evaluated condition of American living.

Although the character and the significance of this district is in the similarities of the cottages, there are a few variations within the gambrel roof theme. Built in 1896, No. 28 Mattapoissett Avenue (F-148) was the first residence of the Colony. It is a two-story, three-bay structure which is distinguished by its gambrel roof with dormers, a wrapped porch with plain columns, an offset single chimney, and the unifying wood shingle exterior. Neighboring No. 15 Mattapoissett Avenue (F-147) was built in 1898. This is also a two-story gambrel, however, with four-bays and a three-sided porch, part of which is typically enclosed. There is a triple shed dormer with two over two lights, echoing the other windows. This cottage was designed and built by its owner, A.T. Marvel from Fall River. Nos. 28 and 15 Mattapoissett Avenue are two of the most preserved cottages of The Colony as they are still summer residences.

The third cottage built in The Colony in 1905 was No. 1536 Gardner Neck Road (F-152) and retains all the regular features such as two-story, gambrel roof, open and enclosed porch and shed dormers. However, it has a center gable under which is an enclosed porch that is directly over the front porch.

Built in 1920, No. 1562 Gardner Neck Road is the southernmost cottage directly on Mt. Hope Bay. Visually cut off from the other cottages of The Colony with dense landscaping, this residence has departed from the design of the typical Colony cottage, having undergone extensive rebuilding due to the 1938 and 1954 hurricanes.

Another cottage of the 1920s is No. 35 Mattapoissett Avenue. The original was larger but now retains the large garden to the east of the cottage as well as a six-stall garage/stable of original fabric. The residence is a modest structure not unlike the others in size and setting, however, it is a Dutch Colonial that diverges from the characteristic Colony house in that it has no porch and is not shingled.

A vernacular Colonial Revival cape at 45 Mattapoissett Avenue is also compatible with the earlier houses in size, scale, and materials but features a broad, low-pitched gable roof rather than the gambrel roof of the other cottages. The house at 1550 Gardner's Neck Road is a contemporary cottage built ca. 1950.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: SWANSWA	Form No: see <i>DDS F</i>
Property Name: The Colony H. D.	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Historical Significance (continued)

the western end of the property until 1895, when he built a large Queen Anne house, now 98 Bay Point Avenue (1895, MHC #F149). Anthony's house is one of the earliest summer homes on Gardner's Neck. In 1896 Anthony sold "four acres across from his farmhouse", the present Colony property, to Robert A. Wilcox and Eric Borden. The parcel was divided into eleven lots with a private road (Mattapoissett Avenue) extending from Gardner's Neck Road to the river. Unique to this development was the fact that the owners were deeded certain rights in common: use of the private road, right-of-way to the beach and boat landing area, and use of the well water then drawn from two of the lots.

According to plot plans, seven families purchased lots in the development for the construction of summer homes between 1896 and 1902. At least two of the original houses, the vernacular Shingle Style cottages closest to the Lee's River, are extant. One cottage belonging to Abner P. Davol, owner of a Fall River mill, is 28 Mattapoissett Avenue (1896, MHC #F148). This residence was built by J.M. Darling of Fall River, and may have been designed by Edward Marvel, a local architect then active in the development of the Neck. The second cottage, 15 Mattapoissett Avenue (1898, MHC #F147), was owned by Annie P. Marvel and designed by Edward Marvel. Shingle Style houses, though comparatively rare in the immediate region, were typically associated with this type of coastal resort development in the 1880s and 1890s. [MHC, 147]

The district's remaining houses reflect the steady suburbanization of Gardner's Neck in the early decades of the 20th century. The gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival at 1536 Gardner's Neck Road (ca. 1905, MHC #F152), is typical of local suburban construction of its period in Swansea. Later but visually compatible houses include the Dutch Colonial Revival H. M. Prescott House (ca. 1920, MHC #F165), built on the site of an earlier house of ca. 1902, and the vernacular Colonial Revival cape at 45 Mattapoissett Avenue (ca. 1930). It is unclear whether this cape, an altered Colonial Revival anchoring the southern end of the development at 1562 Gardner's Neck Road (ca. 1920, MHC #F164), and the contemporary house at 1550 Gardner's Neck Road (ca. 1950), were built on sites of earlier summer cottages in the Colony. Severe hurricanes in 1938 and 1954 account for the extensive rebuilding of #1562 and possibly the new construction at #1550, as these two lots have direct water frontage. Nonetheless, the lots and cottages at this southeastern tip of Gardner's Neck retain their identity as the Colony seaside community of South Swansea.

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The Colony Historic District consists of all lots comprising the 1896 subdivision known as the Colony. Although two of the original lots support contemporary or noncontributing buildings, the development maintains its identity as a single unit. See attached assessor's map for boundaries.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: SWANSEA, MA.	Form No: F
Property Name: THE COLONY	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Bibliography and/or References (continued)

Assessors Records - Swansea

Deeds - Bristol County Registry of Deeds, Fall River, MA.:

- D.M. Anthony to Robert A. Wilcox and Eric Borden - 1896, Book 31, p. 287.

Plans - Bristol County Registry of Deeds, Fall River, MA:

"The Colony" by Robert A. Wilcox and Eric Borden - 1901, Plan Book 3, p. 19.

Massachusetts Historical Commission State Survey Team. Historic and Archaeological Resources of Southeast Massachusetts. Boston: MHC, 1982.

District Data Sheet
The Colony Historic District, Swansea, Massachusetts

<u>Map #</u>	<u>MHC #</u>	<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Resource</u>
40/1	F152	--- stone wall	1536 Gardners's Neck Rd.	ca. 1905 ca. 1950	C NC	Colonial Rev. ---	B St.
40/2A	---	---	1550 Gardner's Neck Rd.	ca. 1950	NC	---	B
40/3B	F164	---	1562 Gardner's Neck Rd.	ca. 1920	NC	slt. Col. Rev.	B
40/4	F147	A. T. Marvel Hse. garage	15 Mattapoisett Avenue	1898 ca. 1950	C NC	Shingle Style ---	B B
40/5	F148	A. P. Davol House	28 Mattapoisett Avenue	1896	C	Shingle Style	B
40/6	F165	H. M. Prescot Hse. garage	35 Mattapoisett Avenue	ca. 1920 ca. 1902	C C	Dutch Colonial ---	B B
40/7	---	---	45 Mattapoisett Avenue	ca. 1930s	C	Colonial Rev.	B

Key: Map # = sheet number of assessor's map/property number in district
Capital letter at end of property number denotes noncontributing property

C = contributing NC = noncontributing B = building Si. = site St. = structure O = object

	contributing	noncontributing
Buildings	6	3
Sites	0	0
Structures	0	1
Objects	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	6	4

FORM A - AREA

**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02116**

Area Letter Form numbers in this Area

F	(see Data Sheet)
---	------------------

Town SWANSEA, MA - MRA

Name of Area (if any) _____

The Colony

Present Use Residential

General Date or Period _____

1896-1902

General Condition _____

Good

Acreeage 4.31 acres (approx.)

Recorded by Preservation Plus

Organization Swansea Historical Commission

Date March 1988

Photos (3"x3" or 3"x5" black & white). Indicate on back of each photo street addresses for buildings shown. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient).

(see Attached Map)

UTM REFERENCE A 19-316400-4619760

B 19-316580-4619680

C 19-316320-4619580

USGS QUADRANGLE Fall River, MA 0 RI

SCALE 1:25,000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Colony is a small, cohesive, waterfront cluster of late 19th - early 20th century shingle-style cottages. The Colony possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and meets criterion A in its representation of the shingle style as it was popularized in the northeastern states. The Colony meets criterion C in its association with the nationwide, turn-of-the-century movement of land development. During this period, The Colony was created on farmland for summer residences.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

The Colony covers a small area of approximately 4.31 acres at the southeastern tip of Gardner's Neck in south Swansea. With Mt. Hope Bay to the south, the Lee River to the east, the water resources - both passive and active - are the primary reason for the location of these residences. The district consists of seven cottages on nine parcels of land, only 1/3 to 1 acre in size. Two of the residences are non-contributing due to their incompatible architectural styles and construction dates. Two of the nine parcels are vacant lots.

The five contributing residences were built in the two and one half decades between 1896 and 1920. The character of the district is determined by the homogenous design of the cottages. The identifying features are: single family, small in scale, simple and informal in feeling, and shingle clad with gambrel roofs and porches.

The architectural significance of the district lies in the distinctive characteristics of the shingle style as it was popularized and adapted to the seaside resorts of the northeastern

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain historical importance of area and how the area relates to the development of other areas of the community.

The Colony's historical significance is in its association with the broad turn-of-the century land development movement -- when cities were crowded and industrialized the surrounding countryside was looked to for relief. The Colony was developed from farmland to summer residences on the water for mostly Fall River businessmen.

The land, upon which The Colony was built, is documented as having been part Wampanoag Indian territory and was known as Mattapoissett. The Brentons of Newport purchased the area from King Philip of the Wampanoags and sold it in 1693 to Ralph Chapman and Samuel Gardner, thus becoming Gardner Neck. The Gardner family owned this particular land and used it for farming and grazing until 1867. In 1883 David D. Anthony had purchased it and the period of significance for The Colony begins.

It was at this time when Anthony sold "four acres across from his farmhouse"¹ to Robert A. Wilcox and Eric Borden that The Colony was conceived. This parcel of land was divided into eleven lots with a private road (Mattapoissett Avenue) bisecting them from Gardner Neck Road east to the Lee River. Unique to this group of lots was the fact that the owners were deeded certain rights in common: the right to use the private road, the right-of-way to the beach and boat landing area and the use of the well water then on two different lots.

Between 1896 and 1902 seven families purchased and built summer homes in this area called The

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses, Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
 Scully, Vincent J., Jr., The Shingle Style, Yale University Press, 1955.
 Wright, Otis Olney, History of Swansea, MA., 1917.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: SWANSEA, MA.	Form No: F
Property Name: THE COLONY	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Architectural Significance (continued)

states. This is an intact complex of residences and is unique in Swansea. The houses are evocative of the simplified and informal life at the shore, at that time, a newly evaluated condition of American living.

Although the character and the significance of this district is in the similarities of the cottages, there are a few variations within the shingle style theme. Built in 1896, No. 28 Mattapoissetts Avenue (F-148) was the first residence of the Colony. It is a two-story, three-bay structure which is distinguished by its gambrel roof with dormers, a wrapped porch with plain columns, an offset single chimney, and the unifying wood shingle exterior. Neighboring No. 15 Mattapoissett Avenue (F-147) was built in 1898. This is also a two-story gambrel, however, with four-bays and a three-sided porch, part of which is typically enclosed. There is a triple shed dormer with two over two lights, echoing the other windows. This cottage was designed and built by its owner, A.T. Marvel from Fall River. Nos. 28 and 15 Mattapoissett Avenue are two of the most preserved cottages of The Colony as they are still summer residences.

The third cottage built in The Colony in 1905 was No. 1536 Gardner Neck Road (F-152) and retains all the regular features such as two-story, gambrel roof, open and enclosed porch and shed dormers. However, it has a center gable under which is an enclosed porch that is directly over the front porch.

Built in 1920, No. 1562 Gardner Neck Road is the southernmost cottage directly on Mt. Hope Bay. Visually cut off from the other cottages of The Colony with dense landscaping, this residence has departed from the design of the typical Colony cottage, having undergone extensive rebuilding due to the 1938 and 1954 hurricanes.

Another cottage of the 1920s is No. 35 Mattapoissett Avenue. The original was larger but now retains the large garden to the east of the cottage as well as a six-stall garage/stable of original fabric. The residence is a modest structure not unlike the others in size and setting, however, it is a Dutch Colonial that diverges from the characteristic Colony house in that it has no porch and is not shingled.

The two non-contributing structures on two of the original nine lots are 1550 Gardner Neck (ca. 1950) and 45 Mattapoissett (ca. 1930). These are incompatible in design and association with the homogeneous shingle style Colony cottages.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: SWANSEA, MA	Form No: F
Property Name: The Colony	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Historical Significance (continued)

Colony. The plan for The Colony by Robert A. Wilcox and Eric Borden is in the Bristol County Registry of Deeds in Fall River dated 1901.

One of the original seven houses of The Colony is 28 Mattapoissett Avenue built in 1896 by Abner P. Davol, owner of one of the Fall River Mills. In 1898, Annie P. Marvel was the original owner of 15 Mattapoissett Avenue. Other original lot/house owners were Richard S. Thompson, Melvin B. Horton and Asa Mills of 35 Mattapoissett Avenue (1920).

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: SWANSEA, MA.	Form No: F
Property Name: THE COLONY	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Bibliography and/or References (continued)

Assessors Records - Swansea

Deeds - Bristol County Registry of Deeds, Fall River, MA.:
- D.M. Anthony to Robert A. Wilcox and Eric Borden - 1896, Book 31, p. 287.

Plans - Bristol County Registry of Deeds, Fall River, MA:
"The Colony" by Robert A. Wilcox and Eric Borden - 1901, Plan Book 3, p. 19.

1/1

District Data Sheet
Colony Historic District, Swansea, Massachusetts

<u>MAP #</u>	<u>MHC #</u>	<u>HISTORIC NAME</u>	<u>STREET ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>STYLE</u>	<u>RESOURCE</u>
40-1	F152	-- Stone Wall	1536 Gardner's Neck Rd.	ca. 1905 ca. 1950	C C	Col. Rev. --	B ST
40-2	--	--	1550 Gardner's Neck Rd.	ca. 1950	NC		B
40-3	F164	--	1562 Gardner's Neck Rd.	ca. 1920	C	Altered Shingle	B
40-4	F147	A.T. Marvel House 2-Car Garage	15 Mattapoissett Ave.	1898	C NC	Shingle --	B B
40-5	F148	A.P. Davol House	28 Mattapoissett Ave.	1896	C	Shingle	B
40-6	F165	Hazel Mills Prescott House Garden 6-Stall Garage	35 Mattapoissett Ave.	ca. 1920 -- ca. 1902	C C C	Cape -- --	B SI B
40-7	--	--	45 Mattapoissett Ave.	ca. 1930	NC	--	B

Map number indicates: accessors #/general number



1536 Gardner's Neck Road (right), 28, 15, 35 Mattapoissett Rd (left). March 1988.
East view.
SWN.F