

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	GLO.AA
Historic Name:	Dogtown
Common Name:	
Address:	
City/Town:	Gloucester
Village/Neighborhood:	Dogtown Common
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	
Use(s):	Abandoned or Vacant; Other Engineering; Park; Quarry; Residential District
Significance:	Agriculture; Archaeology, Historic; Community Planning; Engineering; Exploration Settlement; Industry; Landscape Architecture; Recreation; Science
Area(s):	GLO.AA: Dogtown
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	



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

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FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad **GLO. AA / RCP. N** Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

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	Rockport <i>GW</i>	GLO AA <i>RCP. N</i>	954 969
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Town Gloucester, Rockport

Place (neighborhood or village)

Name of Area Dogtown

Present Use Open space, water supply

Construction Dates or Period First occupied ca. 1650s

Overall Condition Fair/Good

Major Intrusions and Alterations

Encroachment on the edges

Acreage Approximately 1,600 acres

Recorded by Shary Page Berg
Gretchen G. Schuler

Organization Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
Essex National Heritage Commission
Heritage Landscape Inventory

Date (month/year) March 2007

Photograph

(3" x 3" or 3- 1/2" x 5", black and white only)
Label photos on black with town and addresses for all buildings shown. Record film roll and negative numbers here on the form. Staple 1-2 photos to left side of form over this space. Attach additional photos to continuation sheets.

roll	negative(s)

Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Circle and number properties for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Attach a continuation sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.

See attached maps

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AD	

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form*

AREA FORM

Dogtown is a large, complex area with diverse cultural and natural resources. This Area Form, which was initiated as part of the Essex County Heritage Landscape Inventory, addresses this important regional landscape, which was identified as a priority heritage landscape by community participants in both Gloucester and Rockport. Two key assumptions were made in the preparation of the form. The first is that this is a cultural landscape approach that focuses on land use patterns and aboveground resources rather than archaeological resources. The second is that a primary purpose is to provide an overview that can serve as a resource for the communities and for future scholars who may wish to undertake a more thorough and systematic study of Dogtown, particularly its archaeological resources. As Dogtown consists of rough terrain and is largely forested, cultural resources are difficult to identify and evaluate in the field. A professional archaeological survey of the area is needed to verify the locations and determine the condition of the 40 house sites, three mill sites and other resources associated with the Commons Settlement and to determine an appropriate National Register boundary.

Conceptually the cultural resources of Dogtown can be viewed as three concentric circles. The inner circle includes the remains of the Colonial period Commons Settlement, an area of roughly 100 acres that is a significant archaeological resource, which has never been the subject of a thorough professional investigation. The middle circle, which includes the Commons Settlement as well as the surrounding area, is the roughly 1,600-acre publicly-owned part of Dogtown that is the subject of this Area Form. This boundary was selected because of the concentration of historic resources, as well as its public ownership (which allows easy access) and the fact that it is a clearly defined area. The outer circle, for which the boundaries are not well defined, encompasses an additional 1,400 acres of undeveloped primarily private land in the central part of Cape Ann that is vulnerable to change. Thus the total area that could be considered Dogtown today is approximately 3,000 acres, of which only 1,600 acres is addressed in this Area Form. While the resources outside the public land are not included here due to the difficulty of defining the boundaries of such a large area and gaining access, they reflect many of the same historical themes and types of resources as the publicly-owned land.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION *Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.*

Overview

In its broadest sense, Dogtown refers to the area in the center of Cape Ann east of the Annisquam River that is undeveloped and uninhabited, which encompasses nearly 3,000 acres. However, as described above, this Area Form is limited to the contiguous area owned by municipalities as shown by the black dashed line on Map 1. While this is the area with the greatest concentration of historic resources, including the Commons Settlement, traditional land use patterns such as grazing, woodlots and granite quarrying occurred both inside and outside this boundary.

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A11

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Dogtown is a rocky, undeveloped area located in both Gloucester and Rockport. It has a long and diverse land use history, which is evident in the landscape. Key historic features include remnants of the Commons Settlement (stone walls, roads and cellar holes are the primary visible features), a system of roads and trails, common pasture land, former woodlots, two 20th century reservoirs and a collection of carved boulders. Dogtown is also noteworthy for its unusual geologic and ecological features.

Boundary Description

The southwestern corner of the 1,600-acre public section of Dogtown is located along Route 128 just south of the Babson Reservoir Dam between the two traffic circles (see Map 2). Continuing east from there, the southern edge of Dogtown is formed by Route 128, Old Rockport Road and Route 127. (Note: some municipal land extends to the south of Route 127 in Rockport but it is not considered part of Dogtown.) In Rockport near the old gravel pit (#13 on Map 2) the boundary continues north, running parallel to and slightly west of Granite Street, encompassing Rockport's town forest and Poole's Hill. North of Poole's Hill the boundary continues northwest a short distance to the Gloucester/Rockport border where it continues north to Woodbury Hill which forms the northernmost tip of Dogtown. The boundary then runs southwesterly, along the western edge of Goose Cove Reservoir and continues along Cherry Street before heading slightly southeasterly to rejoin Route 128 about halfway between the two traffic circles. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of Dogtown's publicly-owned land is in Gloucester and $\frac{1}{4}$ is in Rockport.

Natural Features

The natural features and varied topography of Dogtown are intimately linked with the land use history of the area. Streams were used to power the first mills, the native forest provided so much lumber that it was exported to other communities, the level central area was used for pasture; granite quarrying became an important Cape Ann industry and the large boulders of the terminal moraine provided a canvas for inscriptions.

Cape Ann was formed by a moraine left by the glaciers during the Pleistocene era. The entire area is underlain by granite. In the northern part of the cape the granite is close to the surface with frequent outcrops. The central part of Dogtown is more level with a surface of shallow rocky soil, while the southern part of Dogtown is strewn with a jumble of giant boulders, which were part of the southern end of the glacier and are considered an excellent example of a terminal moraine. Some of the natural features have taken on cultural significance. Noteworthy examples are three large erratics known as: Peter's Pulpit (located at the turn in Dogtown Road); Whale's Jaw (a boulder that once resembled a whale's mouth opening to the sky but lost its bottom jaw in 1989 and now looks less like a whale's jaw); and Uncle Andrew's Rock (a large glacial erratic near the Babson Boulder Trail). All are important physical landmarks and way-finding features within Dogtown. The rock formation known as Raccoon Ledges is another natural landmark. The Babson boulders, a series of naturally occurring rocks, have also taken on cultural significance due to the inscriptions that were carved on them.

The major stream in Dogtown is Cape Pond Brook (also known as Alewife Brook and Wine Brook), which runs along the southern edge of Dogtown. It was used to power 17th century mills and was dammed in the 1930s to create a reservoir to provide drinking water for Gloucester. There are also several large swamps, notably Granny Day's Swamp (near the intersection of Dogtown Road and Wharf Road) and Briar Swamp (just west of Poole's Hill in Rockport), as well as many smaller swamps.

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The vegetation of Dogtown is unusually diverse, reportedly consisting of 5,000 varieties of plants. The 1985 *Dogtown Management Plan* reports that there are five major habitat types: grassland or former pasture, which is fairly rare; heathland or former pasture with woody plants, which is more common; wetlands, which exist in clearly defined areas; second growth forest, which is fairly common; and mature forest, which is relatively rare.

Cultural Resources***Transportation***

Many of the roads in the Dogtown area date to the 17th and 18th century. Roads outside the public land have been modified and realigned over time as they have been integrated into the evolving community, but the roads within the publicly owned part of Dogtown retain a high level of integrity. The imprecision of historic maps makes it difficult to understand exactly what changes have occurred without a detailed analysis based on more sophisticated mapping techniques. However, Dogtown Road and Commons Road, two roads that are central to the history of the Commons Settlement remain largely intact.

Dogtown Road, which was established by 1741 and was one of the two main streets through Dogtown, extends east from Cherry Street. At its western end is a small parking lot; cars are prohibited beyond that point. The first few hundred yards of road surface are graveled and this section leads to the former Gloucester municipal compost recycling area. Beyond that there is a second gate and as the road proceeds east it becomes narrower and dirt surfaced. The total length of Dogtown Road is roughly one mile from Cherry Street to Dogtown Square at the intersection with **Wharf Road** (a 20th century trail). Stone walls define the edges in some areas, particularly along the north side of the road, and the adjacent land is largely second growth forest. Approximately 20 Colonial-era house sites have been mapped along Dogtown Road (see discussion below regarding the Commons Settlement).

The other major road associated with the Commons Settlement is **Commons Road**, which runs north of Dogtown Road and roughly parallel. It also was in existence by 1741. It originally extended east from Holly Street nearly to Peter's Pulpit, but the western section has been obliterated by modern development and by Goose Cove Reservoir, which was constructed in the 1960s. The section that remains between the reservoir and Wharf Road is approximately ¾ mile long and is entirely dirt surfaced with many large boulders as part of the road base. Stone walls define the edges of much of the road and the surrounding area is largely forested.

Another early road that appears on the 1741 map follows the route of **Old Rockport Road**, which forms part of the southern boundary of Dogtown. It runs south of and roughly parallel to Cape Pond Brook and the Babson Reservoir and extends from the industrial park near Blackburn Circle east just over a mile to Route 127 (Main Street) in Rockport. It is dirt surfaced and is presently used as a hiking trail. The **Reservoir Service Road**, which encircles Goose Cove Reservoir, was built in the 1960s but may incorporate sections of early roads.

The **MBTA Railroad Tracks** (formerly Boston and Maine RR) were built through the southern part of Dogtown in the 1861 and remain in active use. Since Dogtown is now closed to vehicles, the Cherry Street entrance to the **Dogtown Trail System** (as shown on Map 2) is the primary means of access to Dogtown. Some of the trails follow the alignment of old roads and cart paths while others were constructed more recently.

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Commons Settlement

The primary resources associated with the Colonial Commons Settlement are located along Dogtown and Commons Roads. These include house sites, stone walls that define individual properties, and other features associated with the settlement. These features were first documented by Charles Mann in the 1890s; were identified by numbered boulders in the 1930s (by Roger Babson); and the best extant map was drawn by Charles Odum in 1971 and updated in 1989 (Map 3).

The roughly 100-acre area (where the highest concentration of historic resources associated with the Commons Settlement is located) is bounded by Cherry Street (north of Reynard Street) and Goose Cove Reservoir on the west; just north of Commons Road on the north; Peter's Pulpit on the east; and a few hundred feet south of Dogtown Road on the south. Beyond this core area, western portions of the former settlement along the west side of Cherry Street, Reynard Street, Washington Street and Gee Avenue are privately owned and have been largely obliterated by modern development. Construction of the Goose Cove Reservoir also resulted in some loss of historic resources.

The earliest settlement in the Commons area occurred along Cape Pond Brook, where several mills were established by the 1640s. Three of these mill sites are located in the municipally-owned part of Dogtown and are identified on Odum's 1971 map (Map 3): **first mill** (ca. 1635) located east of Babson Reservoir; **Alewife Mill** (no date given) slightly to the east of the first mill and **second mill** (ca. 1644) west of Babson Reservoir. The current condition of these mill sites is unknown.

The core of the Commons Settlement is represented by approximately 40 documented house sites concentrated along Dogtown and Commons Roads. (Other house sites from the period were located west of Cherry Street and Goose Cove Reservoir outside this Area Form and have been largely destroyed.) Several cellar holes have been studied by early or avocational archaeologists but none has been the subject of thorough investigation that meets current archaeological standards. All houses were removed in the early 19th century so that remnants of stone foundations, root cellars, stone enclosures for animals and larger enclosures for gardens or small pastures are the only evidence of the 18th century village. Odum's map also indicates other features along Dogtown Road such as the piggery, a spring, an orchard and the town pasture (a holding area for livestock that needed to be close to the settlement). The **system of stone walls** shown on the Odum map is particularly helpful in understanding the Colonial land ownership pattern, which persisted until the City of Gloucester acquired much of Dogtown by eminent domain in the late 20th century to preserve the open space and protect the watershed land.

The **Commons Pasture**, an area of several square miles was located entirely in Gloucester roughly north of Commons Road, west of Whale's Jaw, south of Dennison Street and east of Goose Cove (map 5 indicates the general area that was set aside as pasture land). It was initially wooded when the settlement was established but had been cleared by the early 18th century and was managed as communal grazing land during the 18th and early 19th century. The exact boundaries of the pasture are unknown and there are few stone walls or other features within the area, which was largely abandoned by the mid-19th century. Most of the former pasture is now second growth forest interspersed with areas of swamp and a few 20th century trails. It is all public land.

North and east of the pasture were the **Woodlots**, which were divided into 136 long narrow lots established in the 18th century. Unlike the pasture, these were individually owned. Remnants of this land ownership pattern are still visible on some modern maps. The woodlots were located in both Gloucester and Rockport and extended northeast all the way to

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Halibut Point at the northeastern tip of Cape Ann. Nineteenth century maps show illustrative trees but do not delineate the boundaries of the woodlots.

Quarries

The rocky surface of Cape Ann was an important granite quarrying area from the mid-19th century through the early 20th century. The larger quarries are generally in the northern part of Cape Ann close to the coast where it was easier to transfer the granite to ships for transport and are still in private ownership. Many of these large quarries are outside the boundaries encompassed by this Area Form although they are within the greater Dogtown area. Smaller quarries known as "motions" that were operated by one or two men are undoubtedly located on public land although only one **small quarry** (near Babson Reservoir) is identified on the Odum map (Map 3). Larger quarries are clearly visible on aerial photos and historian Barbara Erkkila includes a schematic map of them in the preface to her book on the Cape Ann granite industry.

Water Supply

A primary function of Dogtown today is as a watershed area. **Babson Reservoir**, created in the early 1930s, is located at the southern edge of Dogtown. The reservoir is about 27 acres and the dam is an earthen embankment. Much of the area upstream from the reservoir was donated to the city of Gloucester in the 1930s by Roger Babson and remains protected municipal watershed land. **Goose Cove Reservoir**, located at the western edge of Dogtown, was built in the 1960s. It is larger than Babson Reservoir and has four concrete dams and a perimeter service road.

Briar Swamp forms the headwaters of Mill Brook, which flows out of its eastern tip, continues southeast to Loop Pond and then northeast out of Loop Pond to Front Beach. Rockport's Mill Brook wellfield, a series of shallow wells along the edge of Mill Brook just downstream from Loop Pond is fed by groundwater from Briar Swamp and the upper Mill Brook watershed. The **Briar Swamp dam** was built in the 1930s by the WPA at the southern point of Briar Swamp to keep the acidic swamp tannins out of the Babson water supply.

Babson Boulders

One of the most distinctive features of Dogtown is a series of 28 boulders carved with inscriptions known as the **Babson boulders**, which are located in the southern part of Dogtown extending roughly from the Babson Reservoir north to Dogtown Road. Some consist of one word, such as: Loyalty, Save, Truth, Courage, while others contain prescriptive phrases such as: Help Mother, Get a Job and Be on Time. These were carved during the depression by unemployed Finnish quarry workers who were hired by Roger Babson. A map and list of these, with GPS coordinates, can be found at http://thedacrons.com/eric/dogtown/boulders/Babson_Boulder_Trail_Map.pdf.

Two separate inscribed boulders along Dogtown Road, known as the **Merry Boulders**, record the fate of James Merry who was killed by a bull in 1892 while attempting to hone his bullfighting skills.

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Related Resources Beyond the Boundaries of this Area Form

The primary focus of this Area Form is on the core resources associated with the Commons Settlement and early Dogtown land use patterns. While the boundaries for this form were defined by publicly owned land, there are other historic resources in the vicinity but beyond these boundaries that warrant future investigation. Most of those listed below were identified as priority heritage landscapes during the Heritage Landscape Inventory. These are described counter-clockwise, beginning at the southern end of Dogtown.

Babson Museum – The Babson Museum on Route 127 in Rockport includes a stone building originally built in 1658 and operated as a cooperage by James Babson. The area also includes the foundations of other early structures. It is currently operated as a historical museum that is open seasonally.

Nugent Stretch – Nugent Stretch is a section of Main Street (Route 127) in Rockport, which forms part of the eastern boundary of Dogtown. It is the principal gateway to the community and is valued because of the rural character of the road and the adjacent woods. While the road itself is not part of Dogtown, the woodland along its northern edge is part of Dogtown. Nugent Stretch was identified by Rockport residents as a priority heritage landscape.

Southern Woods – The Southern Woods is a largely undeveloped area located south of Route 127 in the south central part of Rockport between the Cape Pond Watershed and the Rockport Golf Club. It is valued as open space contiguous to other undeveloped natural areas including Dogtown and is important for its water resources and as wetlands and open space. There are few roads leading to the rocky area but as development pressures increase throughout the community, previously unbuildable areas become more desirable. It was identified as a priority heritage landscape by residents of Rockport.

Johnson's Quarry – This is a large quarry that has only recently ceased operations. While it is still privately owned, the town of Rockport is concerned about its future and identified it as a priority heritage landscape because of its value as an access point to Dogtown, as open space, for watershed protection and as a potential raw water source. Many other quarries around the perimeter of Dogtown are also valued by the communities and vulnerable to change.

Norton Memorial Forest – A key property that is contiguous with the municipal part of Dogtown on its northern side in Gloucester is the Norton Memorial Forest, a 121-acre forest preserve off Revere Street. The Norton Memorial Forest is managed by the New England Forestry Foundation and the network of trails is open for public use.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE *Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.*

Documentation

Dogtown has been a subject of intense interest since the 19th century, with many variations on the story presented over time. There are multiple maps of the area, each with slightly different information. The map from which the earliest information is derived is a 1741 survey by Josiah Bachelder (Map 4) that locates the home of each of the residents at that time. The first major narrative about the area was by Charles Mann, whose 1896 *In the Heart of Cape Ann: Or the Story*

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of Dogtown is based largely on oral tradition and local legends. In the 1930s Roger Babson located the cellar holes of the early residents of Dogtown and carved numbers identifying each one onto adjacent boulders, thus linking the residents with a specific physical location. He presented his findings in various formats over the years, including *Dogtown: Gloucester's Deserted Village*. More recently, the Dogtown Steering Committee, appointed by the mayor of Gloucester in 1985, studied the natural and cultural history of the area and prepared management recommendations recorded in its report *Developing a Management Plan for Dogtown*. These four sources are the key documents pertaining to the history of Dogtown and it is from them that most other maps and publications are derived. Thomas Dresser's 1995 *Dogtown, A Village Lost in Time* is also very useful. Another important reference is Britta Karlberg's 2000 *Dogtown Cape Ann, Massachusetts, A Guide to Sources*, which provides a comprehensive list of sources relevant to Dogtown including songs, poems, paintings and maps, as well as published sources.

Early History

Prior to European settlement, Cape Ann was inhabited by members of the Pawtucket group, who traveled along the rivers and coastline, and may also have established inland trails. While Dogtown could have been used as an occasional hunting ground, it is unlikely to have been a primary Native American habitation site during the pre-historic period.

Samuel de Champlain visited Cape Ann in 1605 and again in 1606 when he sailed into Gloucester Harbor which he named Le Beauport. In 1614 Captain John Smith named the area Tragabigzanda, the name of a Greek maiden who had been kind to him while he was held captive by Turks. The three islands he dubbed The Turk's Heads, in memory of his triumph over three Turkish gladiators during his imprisonment. Upon Smith's return to England, King Charles renamed the cape after his mother, Anne of Denmark. The Three Turk's Heads came to be known by their individual names: Straitsmouth, Thacher's and Milk Islands. English sailors established a seasonal fishing camp at Gloucester in 1623. By 1642 the settlement was large enough to be granted a charter as a town. It was named for Gloucester in western England. The first parish was located near present day Grant Circle on Route 128 (near the southwestern corner of Dogtown). Although the soil was rocky, there was plenty of room for grazing. Cape Pond Brook (which flows through the southern part of Dogtown) powered Gloucester's early mills by the 1640s. These included Ellery's lumber mill, as well as a gristmill and fulling mill nearby.

The first land grant in the Dogtown area was made to James Babson in 1658 for 32 acres. Babson was a farmer who built a small stone cooperage (now part of the Babson Museum on Route 127). He obtained hoops from the Ellery Mill and his barrels were used to hold dried fish which was shipped from Gloucester Harbor. Lumbering was another early industry. The central part of Cape Ann was heavily wooded and wood was shipped in large amounts from Gloucester Harbor during the 18th century. As trees were harvested the land was opened up for grazing; hence the Commons Pasture.

In 1719 there was a general land distribution for all males in Gloucester (which at that time also included Rockport). Three years later land in the northern part of Cape Ann was divided into 136 woodlots for lumbering and cow rights for pasture land. The pasture was located just north of Commons Road and was managed communally rather than assigning individual lots. The common pasture land was immediately to the north of the Commons Settlement, with the woodlots, which were long, narrow strips, extending north and east of that. It was probably proximity to the pasture that prompted some residents to move from the original settlement to the Commons area slightly to the northeast.

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As business and wealth moved to the Harbor, the inhabitants of the Harbor settlement demanded that a New Parish be established. This demand was granted in 1742 with the Harbor settlement becoming First Parish and the Old Town Parish becoming the 4th Parish. Josiah Bachelder's 1741 survey map of the First or Town Parish, which had been commissioned to determine if there was sufficient population to warrant a new parish, showed approximately 80 properties east of the Mill River in the northern part of the First Parish. Some of these were in the area that today is known as Dogtown; others were in what is now the Riverdale neighborhood. The survey recorded that 20% of Gloucester's population lived in the Commons Settlement and owned 10% of the town's property. At that time, which was the height of the Commons Settlement, there were about 40 families living in the area, which was centrally located and well served by the local road system. Most Commons residents in the mid-1700s were farmers, who took advantage of the grazing land for their cattle and sheep, although the rocky terrain and extensive swamps were not ideal. Many of the farmers also had secondary occupations such as blacksmiths or cobblers and several fought in the Revolutionary War.

Residents of the Commons Settlement typically had a small plot of land for their house lot, which was usually enclosed by a stone wall to keep stray animals out and domestic animals in and also included a small garden. Charles Mann, who wrote about Dogtown in 1896, describes the houses as typically one-story wooden buildings with a partial cellar (used for food storage), pitched roof and doorstep, and measuring approximately 15' by 35'. Oral history records that one house was two-story and another had a gambrel roof. Stone walls were built throughout the area but most notably along Commons Road, which still retains its walled-in character. They were used as boundary markers, as fences for cattle and as places to dispose of stones from the rocky landscape.

After the Revolutionary War, many residents left the Commons area to settle near Gloucester Harbor where there were more lucrative business opportunities. Those who were left in the Commons Settlement were typically less affluent. The area became a lawless place where many residents kept dogs to protect themselves (hence the name Dogtown). Mann was one of the first to record that the area also developed a reputation as the home of witches and others with dubious reputations. By 1814 only six of the original houses were left standing. By 1830 the last resident departed and in 1845 the last house in Dogtown (as the Commons Settlement came to be known) was torn down. By this time most of the land had been logged so lumbering was no longer a viable option. Gloucester Harbor was a thriving port where it was easier to make a living than on the rocky terrain of Dogtown. New coastal roads that bypassed Dogtown also contributed to the demise of the neighborhood. The village of Sandy Bay on the eastern shore of Cape Ann, which was originally the fifth parish of Gloucester, became the center of Rockport, established as an independent community in 1840. While the Commons Settlement and Commons Pasture were entirely in Gloucester, many of the Colonial woodlots were in the northern part of Rockport.

By the mid-19th century, maritime industries (fishing, shipping and related occupations) flourished in Cape Ann, as did granite quarrying, some of which occurred in the northern and eastern part of Dogtown. The area was also used for picnicking and berry picking and some cattle continued to graze there. The wildness of the landscape, which was still largely open pasture and scrub land as a result of earlier logging, also attracted curiosity seekers such as Henry David Thoreau who visited in 1858.

In the latter part of the 19th century there was strong interest in scientific investigation including the natural history of Cape Ann. Harvard professor Nathaniel Shaler wrote a geology of Cape Ann in 1888 that was one of the first documents to highlight the unique geological features of Dogtown. Scientific interest continued into the 20th century. In 1901 the Cape Ann Scientific and Literary Association sponsored a tour of Dogtown. The 1860s also brought changes in

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transportation with the 1861 extension of the Eastern Railroad through the southern part of Dogtown, known as Babson Pastures, separating Dogtown from Rockport's Southern Woods.

A popular Dogtown legend from 1892 was the story of James Merry. Merry was a Gloucester native, reportedly 6'7" tall and 250 pounds, who sailed to Spain and witnessed several bull fights. When he returned to Gloucester he frequently told stories about bull fighting at the local bar. His cronies challenged him to fight a bull so he bought a young bull calf and practiced for several months and staged a series of bull fights for his friends, which he initially won. As the bull grew larger, Merry had a harder time throwing him. Eventually, when no one else was around, the bull killed Merry. The event is inscribed on two boulders along Dogtown Road that read "First Attacked" and "Jas. Merry died September 18, 1892."

In 1896, Charles Mann wrote *In the Heart of Cape Ann*, the first major history of Dogtown. Mann was one of the first people to officially use the name Dogtown (which by this time had become the colloquial term for the Commons Settlement). His report is largely drawn from oral tradition. The book includes a crude map that is based on information from Bachelder's 1741 survey. It extends as far west as the Mill River (incorporating the area now known as Riverdale, which is no longer considered part of Dogtown) and as far south as Alewife Brook (area of present Babson Reservoir and railroad line). Mann's map does not extend into Rockport and extends only a short distance north of Commons Road.

In the 1920s and 30s, philanthropist Roger Babson, a descendant of early Cape Ann settlers who owned a large amount of land in the southern part of Dogtown, expanded on the work of documenting the Dogtown settlement. He gave an address to the Gloucester Rotary Club in 1927 and later wrote a guide to Dogtown. He also had numbers carved on boulders at each of the house lots so they could be clearly identified. He reported that there were at one time 60 houses and that he was able to identify the location of 40 of them.

Babson is also linked with several other important events in the 1930s. In 1932 he donated 1,150 acres in the southern part of Dogtown to the City of Gloucester for watershed protection land. The Babson Reservoir was created a year later by damming the Cape Pond (Alewife) Brook. During the Depression he hired unemployed Finnish quarry workers to carve inspirational mottos on boulders near the newly built reservoir. He wrote in his autobiography,

"Another thing I have been doing, which I hope will be carried on after my death, is the carving of mottoes on the boulders at Dogtown, Gloucester, Massachusetts. My family says that I am defacing the boulders and disgracing the family with these inscriptions, but the work gives me a lot of satisfaction, fresh air, exercise and sunshine. I am really trying to write a simple book with words carved in stone instead of printed on paper. Besides, when on Dogtown common, I revert to a boyhood which I once enjoyed when driving cows there many years ago." Roger Babson, "Actions and Reactions, 1935.

Babson's guidebook and the numbering of the cellar holes prompted additional interest in the history of the Dogtown settlement. In 1931 Maine native Marsden Hartley spent the spring and summer at Dogtown, writing a series of poems and making oil paintings of the area. In the 1940s Professor Frederick Norton of MIT dug up many artifacts from Dogtown and deposited them at the Sandy Bay Historical Society. Irving Sucholeiki's book "A Return to Dogtown: A look at the artifacts left behind by some of Cape Ann's early settlers" published in 1992 is also an important resource regarding past archaeological investigations.

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Additional changes to the area occurred in the 1950s with Route 128 extended through Blackburn Circle to Eastern Avenue, impacting the southern part of Dogtown. In 1960 Goose Cove Reservoir was created at the western edge of Dogtown, submerging several cellar holes along the Commons Road and forcing relocation of a section of roadway. Initially there was not a lot of protected watershed land associated with the reservoir, although some land to the northeast was acquired in 1963 and additional land in the 1980s.

Over the past 50 years there have been many proposals for Dogtown, including an airport, a radar installation, a historic theme park, a windmill farm and a new bypass road that would run through the southern part of Dogtown. Other than the land donated by Roger Babson in the 1930s, most of Dogtown remained in private ownership until the late 20th century, typically small parcels with complex ownership history that made management and land transfers difficult. In 1975 the 121-acre Norton Forest, located north of the Commons Pasture, was given to the New England Forestry Foundation by Professor and Mrs. Frederick H. Norton. This intensively managed land that consists mostly of pine plantings is a popular area for hiking. The buildings and open fields within the forest remain privately owned by the Norton family. (Note: the Norton Forest is part of greater Dogtown but is not included within the boundaries of this Area Form, which includes only publicly-owned land.)

In 1985, in response to growing concern about the future of Dogtown, the mayor of Gloucester appointed a Dogtown Advisory Committee to explore options for stopping future encroachment and preserving the natural and cultural resources of the area. As a result of the strong public interest, the core of Dogtown is now publicly owned, although land at the perimeter is still at risk. A Land Management Committee has worked to prohibit automobiles, provide better police protection, clear trails and provide a boardwalk at Briar Swamp. There is now a trail map and improved public awareness of the resources that Dogtown offers, as well as the fragile nature of the area. The Dogtown Management Plan initiated by the City of Gloucester lists two basic objectives: preservation of the important natural and cultural features that make Dogtown unique, and protection of the area as a clean, quiet place for traditional forms of passive recreation. The plan stressed the consensus to preserve distinctive features as they are and not to make Dogtown into a park "or other such manicured tract." It also recommended that new structures be kept to a minimum. In 1991, Irving Suchoeiki, an avocational archaeologist, did limited excavation at three cellar holes, those of Granny Day (pre-1740), Abraham Wharf (post 1740) and another unidentified one believed to be pre-1740. Most recently, in 2004 Gloucester and Rockport residents both identified Dogtown as a Priority Heritage Landscape as part of the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES *see continuation sheet*

Publications

Babson, Roger. *Gloucester's Deserted Village*. 1927.

Babson, Roger and Foster Saville. *Cape Ann, A Tourist Guide*. Gloucester: Cape Ann Bookshop, 1936.

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Erkkila, Barbara H. *Hammers on Stone, the History of Cape Ann Granite*. Woolwich, ME: TBW Books, 1980.

Fisher, Richard B. "The Dogtown Bull Fight." Typescript in Local History Room at Rockport Library, 1955.

Dresser, Thomas. *Dogtown, a Village Lost in Time*. Laconia, NH: Thorn Books, 1995, reprinted 2001.

Frontiero, Wendy and Candace Jenkins. "The Granite Industry in Gloucester, Massachusetts" typescript, 7/9/99. On file at Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Garland, Joseph E. *The Gloucester Guide*. Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1981.

Karlberg, Britta. "Dogtown: Cape Ann Mass: A Guide to Sources." Typescript at Sawyer Library, Gloucester, 2000.

Mann, Charles. *In the Heart of Cape Ann or the Story of Dogtown Common*. Gloucester: Proctor Brothers, 1896.

Sucholeiki, Irving. *A Return to Dogtown: A Look at the Artifacts left behind by Cape Ann's Early Settlers*. Booklet at Sawyer Library, Gloucester, 1992. (Describes partial excavation of three cellar holes in Dogtown.)

Maps

- 1741 Map by Josiah Bachelder dated 5/30/1741 showing roads and location of residences in the Riverdale/Dogtown area of Gloucester. Copy on file at Gloucester City Engineer's Office is a tracing of the original. Accompanying chart lists 78 residences, with names of occupants for most of them. (Map 4, copy attached)
- 1831 Map of Gloucester, Cape Ann. Original map was by John Mason. Copy on file at Gloucester City Engineer's Office is a tracing of the 1831 map, which was made in 1898. The tracing shows natural features and roads as they existed in 1831. The Dogtown area is listed as "Pasture Land." Commons Road and Dogtown Road are clearly delineated but not labeled. Another map on file at the City Engineer's Office entitled "Map of Gloucester, Cape Ann. Showing the location of the early settlers" is also based on Mason's 1831 map. It shows the location of only a few of the earliest homes in Cape Ann and is less useful than some of the other maps of the Dogtown area. Its delineation of roads appears to be a simplified version of the Mason map. (Map 5, copy attached)
- 1880s? Dogtown Draw (sic) by Isaac F. Day. Crude hand drawn map from late 19th century with notes about each of the house sites in Dogtown. Hard to read but contains detailed information about occupants not available elsewhere.
- 1884 Atlas of Gloucester and Rockport. Hopkins, G & M. & Co.
- 1894 Hand drawn map by Charles Mann (very general map that shows location of cellar holes).
- 1899 Atlas of Cape Ann. Stadly, Geo W. & Co. (shows some Dogtown parcels as well as location of quarries).
- 1917 Map of Riverdale or Town Parish Gloucester, Showing Houses, Mills, Roads, etc as they were in 1741. Drawn by Tristram Griffin. (This is yet another variation of the Bachelder map (which Griffin attributes to "Joshua"

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Bachelor). Like other versions of the 1741 survey it includes the Town Parish as well as Dogtown and contains some additional annotations not found on other maps.)

- 1936 Roger Babson map. Hand drawn, not accurate but shows numbered cellar holes.
- 1971 Map of Dogtown Common. Drawn in 1971 by City Engineer George Odum and updated in 1989 with information from Frank Glaister pertaining to the Babson Boulders. Detailed map of Dogtown area showing extant features such as roads, stone walls and water bodies as well as historic features such as mill sites and foundations with numbers keyed to Roger Babson's list. (Map 3, copy attached)
- 1996 Dogtown Common Trail Guide published by the Mayor's Dogtown Advisory Committee. Good overall map highlighting topography and trail system. Less detailed with regard to extant historic features than 1971 map. (Map 2, copy attached)
- 2006 Bickernicks, Eric. *Babson Boulder Trail Map* at http://thedacrons.com/eric/dogtown/boulders/Babson_Boulder_Trail_Map.pdf

DATA SHEET

MHC#	Name	Town	Date	Type
	Transportation			
954	Commons Road (unpaved trail)	Gloucester	By 1741	St
955	Dogtown Road (unpaved trail)	Gloucester	By 1741	St
956	Old Rockport Road (unpaved trail)	Gloucester/Rockport	By 1741	St
957	Wharf Road (unpaved trail)	Gloucester	19 th century	St
958	Reservoir Service Road	Gloucester	1960s	
959	MBTA Railroad Tracks (formerly Boston and Maine Railroad)	Gloucester/Rockport	1861	St
960	Dogtown Trail System	Gloucester/Rockport	20 th century	St
	Industrial Resources			
	First Mill (east of Babson Reservoir)	Gloucester	ca. 1635	HA
	Second Mill (west of Babson Reservoir)	Gloucester	ca. 1644	HA
	Alewife Mill (east of First Mill)	Gloucester	17 th century	HA
	Small Quarry (east end of Babson Reservoir)	Gloucester	19 th century	HA
	Commons Settlement - General			
961	System of Stone Walls	Gloucester/Rockport	18 th century	St
966	Commons Pasture	Gloucester	18 th century	Land
967	Woodlots	Gloucester/Rockport	18 th century	Land

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<i>MHC#</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>
	<i>Commons Settlement – House Sites as listed on Odum Map</i> <i>(This data has not been field checked.)</i>			
	Nathaniel Day (1)	Cherry Street	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Becky Rich (fortune teller) (2)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Molly Millett (3)	Cherry Street	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Emmons Family (4)	Cherry Street	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Lydia Mussey (5)	Cherry Street	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Smith Family (6)	Cherry Street	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Benjamin Stanwood later John and Henry Davis (7)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	William Pulcifier was Jeremiah Millett (8)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Joseph Clark, later John Clark (9)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Arthur Wharf (10)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Philip Priestly (11)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	William Wilson (12)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Joseph Winslow later Joseph Stevens (13)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Hannah Stevens (14)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	James and Francis Stanwood later Easter Carter (15)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	James Dermerit later Annie Carter (16)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Dorcas Foster (17)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Capt. Isaac Dade later Molly Jacobs (18)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Joseph Ingersol (19)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Widow Jane (Granny) Day (20)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Steven Robinson Jr. (21)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Joseph Riggs (22)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Col. Pearce (23)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Arthur Wharf maybe Abram Wharf (24)	Dogtown Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Peter Lurvey maybe Abram Wharf (25)	South of Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	The Wharf House (26)	Stanwood Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	The Castle (27)	Gee Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	The Bennett Farm (28)	Gee Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	William Hilton later John Morgan Stanwood (29)	Gee Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Joseph Hunter and Joshua Elwell (Cobbler Shop) (30)	Gee Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Jim White used by Widow Lydie Canaby (31)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Widow Anne Davis (32)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA

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<i>MHC#</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>
	Esther Wharf (33)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	James Wharf later Liz Tucker or Judy Rhines (34)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	James Wharf later Liz Tucker or Judy Rhines (35)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Whipple Family (36)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Wither Family (37)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	White Family (38)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Benjamin Allen (39)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	Unidentified House Site (40)	Commons Road	Late 18 th cent?	HA
	<i>Other Resources</i>			
<i>969</i>	<i>962/963</i> Babson Reservoir & Dam	Gloucester	1933	St
	<i>963</i> Goose Cove Reservoir & Four Dams	Gloucester	1960s	St
	<i>964</i> Babson Boulders – approx. 30	Gloucester	1930s	Object
	<i>965</i> Merry Boulders - Two	Gloucester	1930s?	Object
	Briar Swamp Dam (WPA)	Rockport	1930s	St

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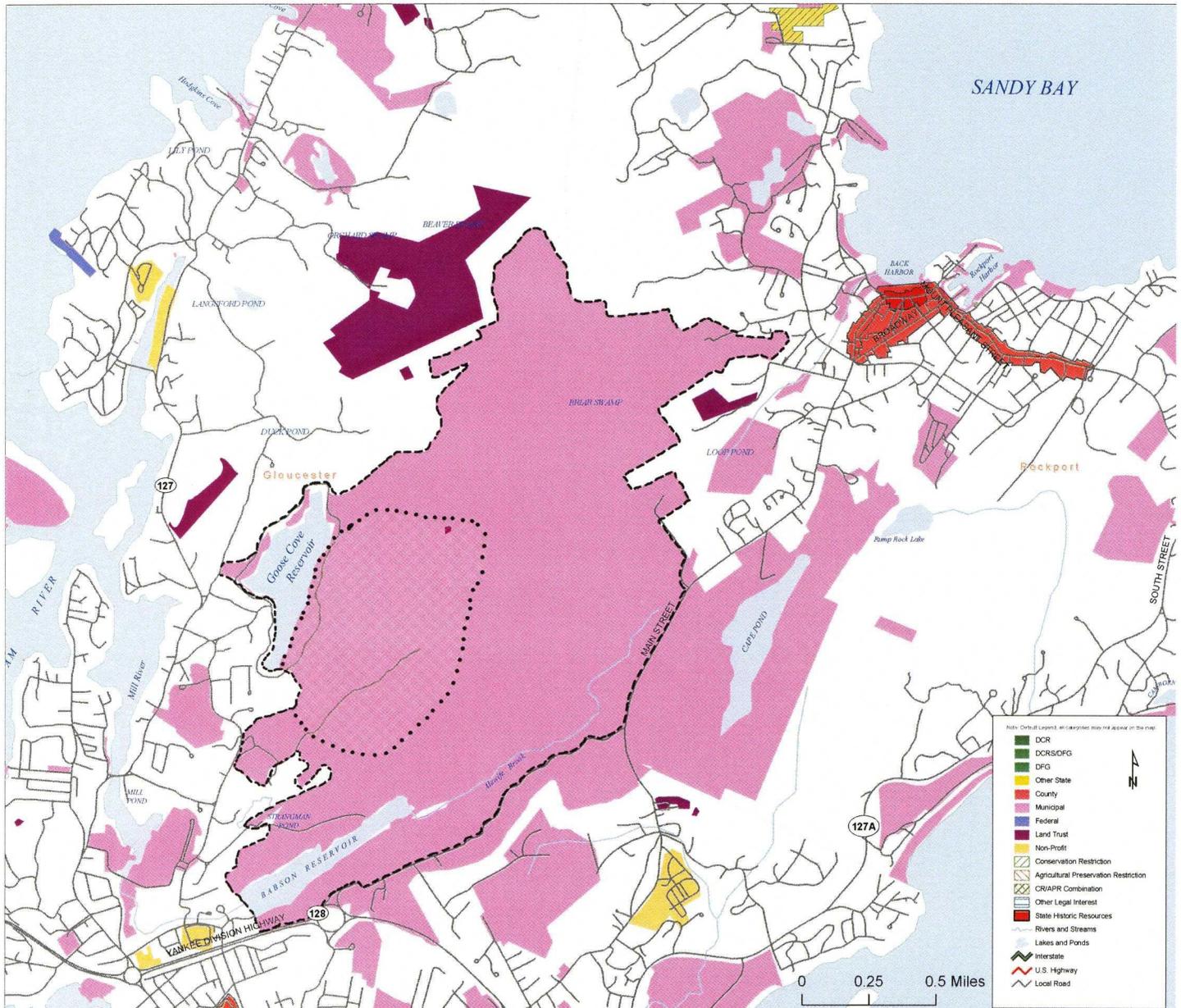
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Map 1 – Pink tone indicates publicly owned land. Area enclosed by black dashed line is the land encompassed by this Area Form. Area enclosed by black dotted line is the approximate area where the Commons Settlement was located. The large purple area to the north is the Norton Forest.

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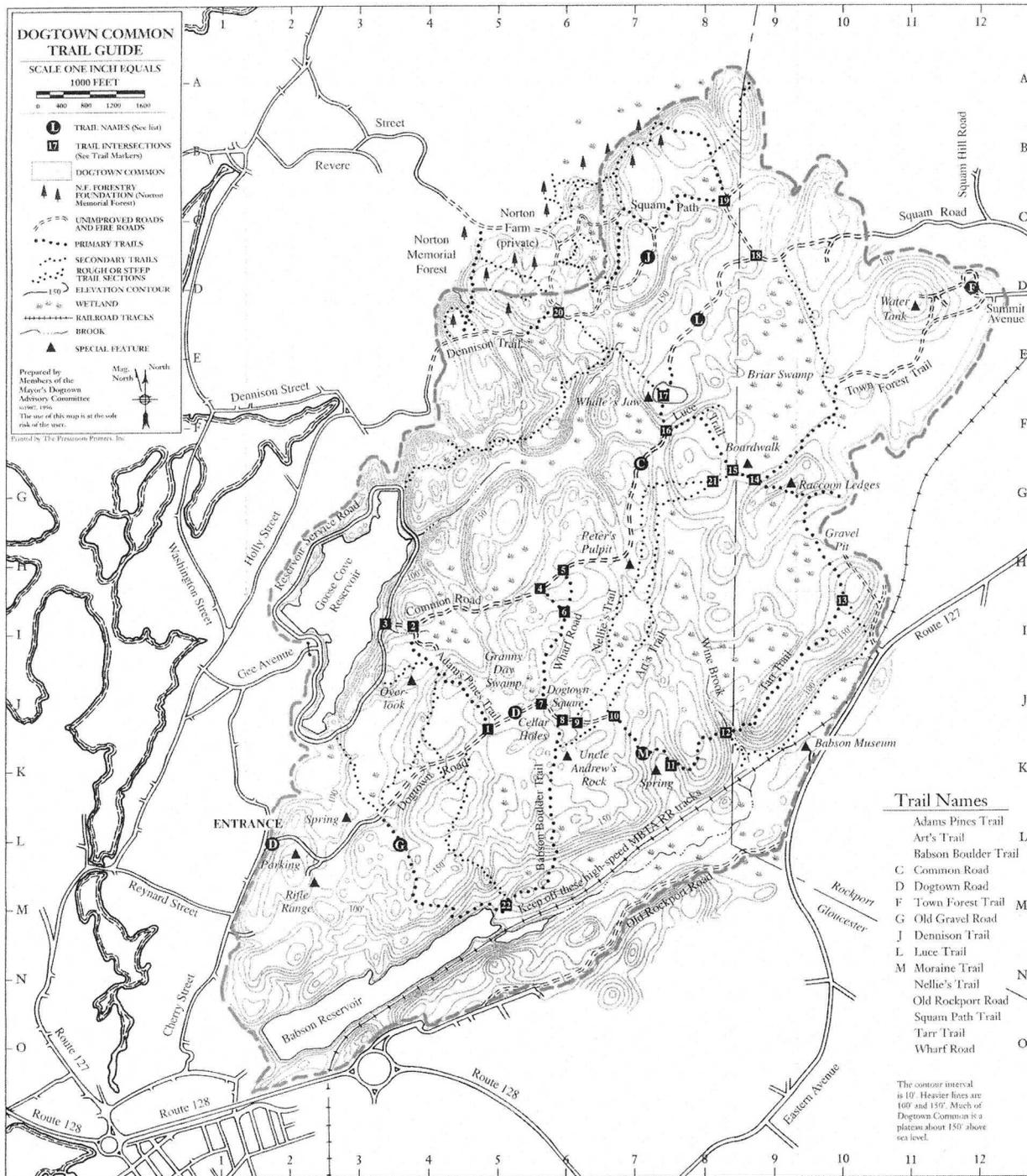
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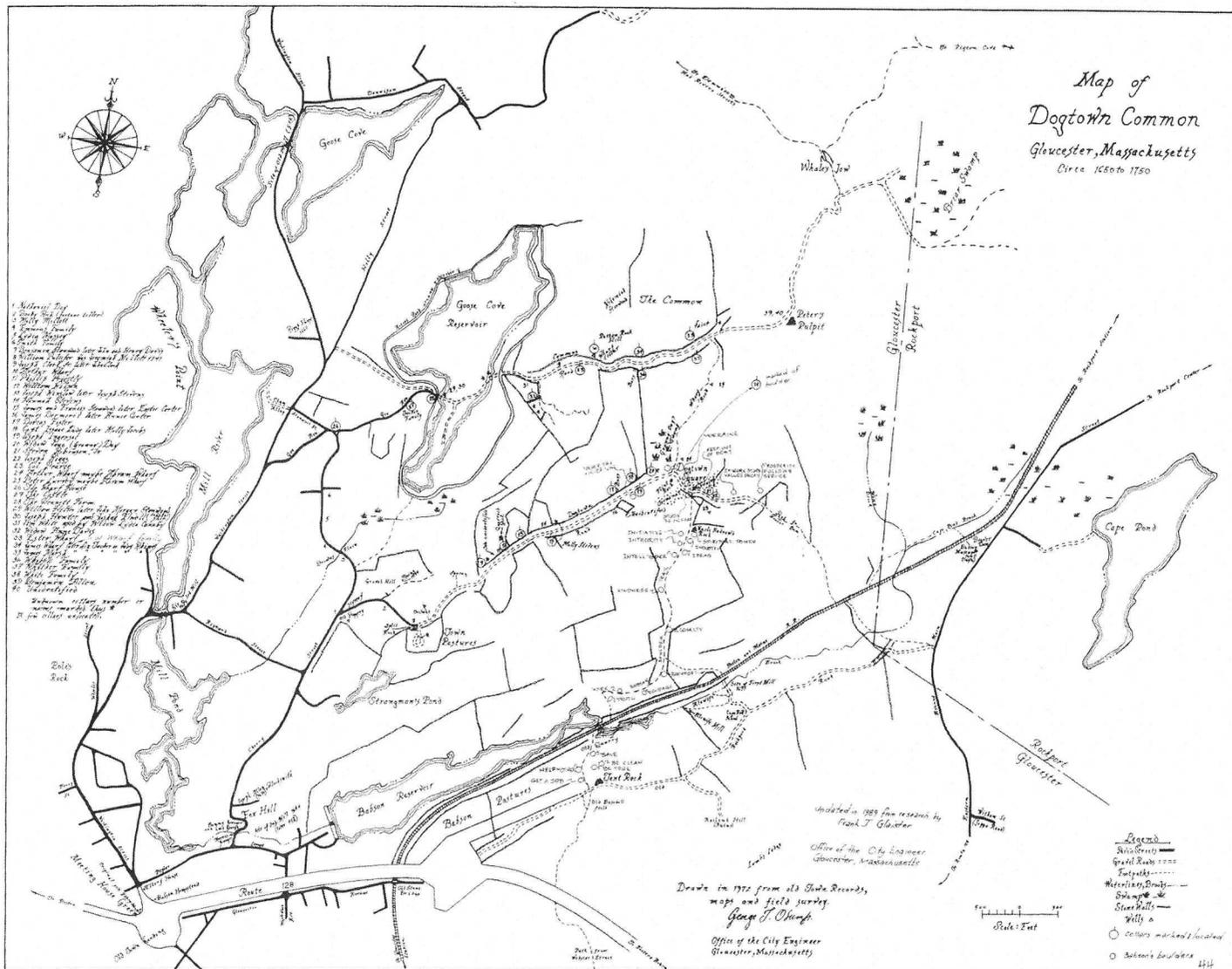
Map 2 - 1996 Dogtown Common Trail Map by Dogtown Advisory Committee.

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Town **GLoucester** Property Address **DOGtown**
ROCKPORT

Area(s) **AA** Form No. **954-969**

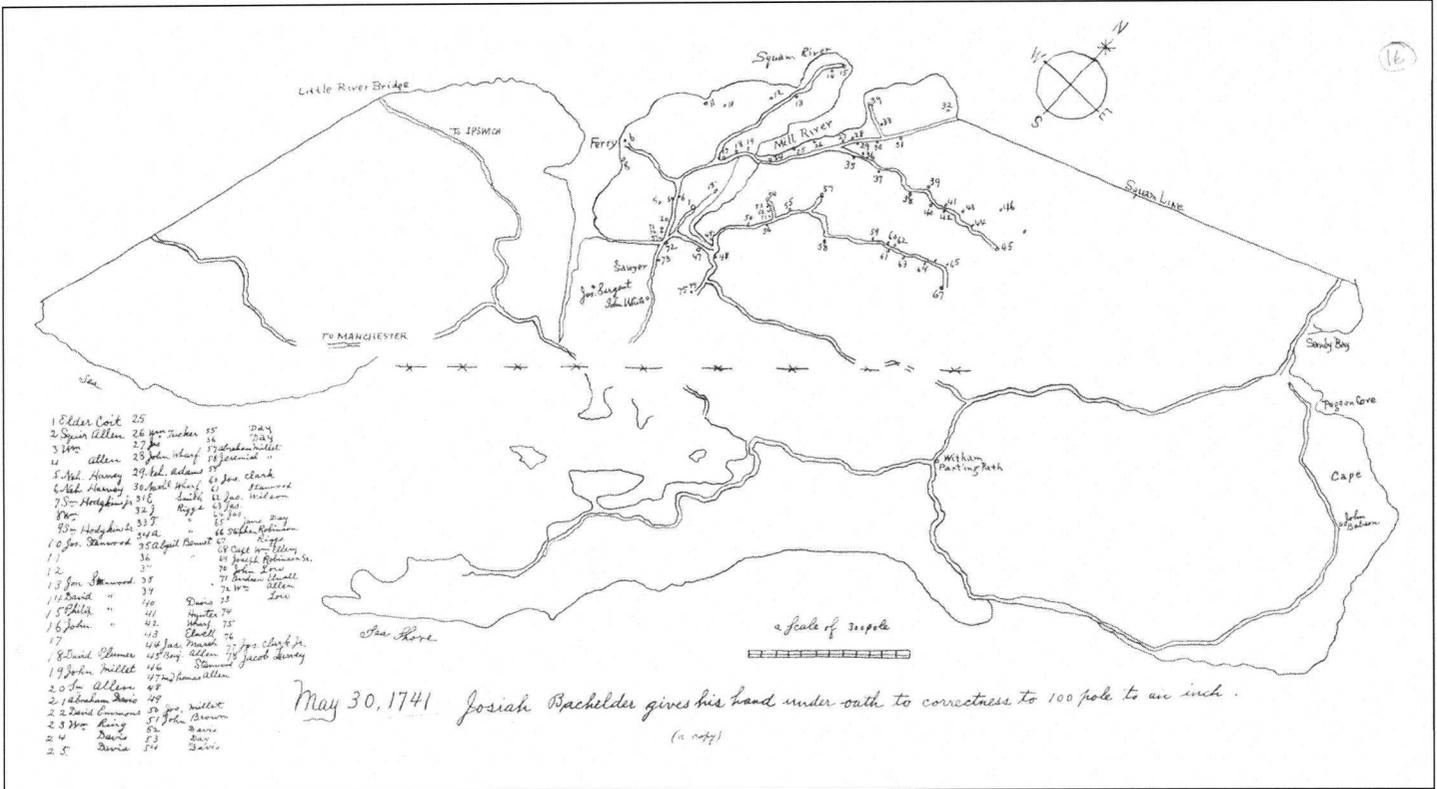


Map 3 – Map by George Odum was prepared in 1817 and updated in 1989. It is the most detailed map of extant features in the Commons settlement area. Original is at Gloucester City Engineer’s office.

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Map 4 - Copy of Josiah Bachelder's 1741 survey of the residents of the First or Town Parish. (tracing at Gloucester City Engineer's Office).

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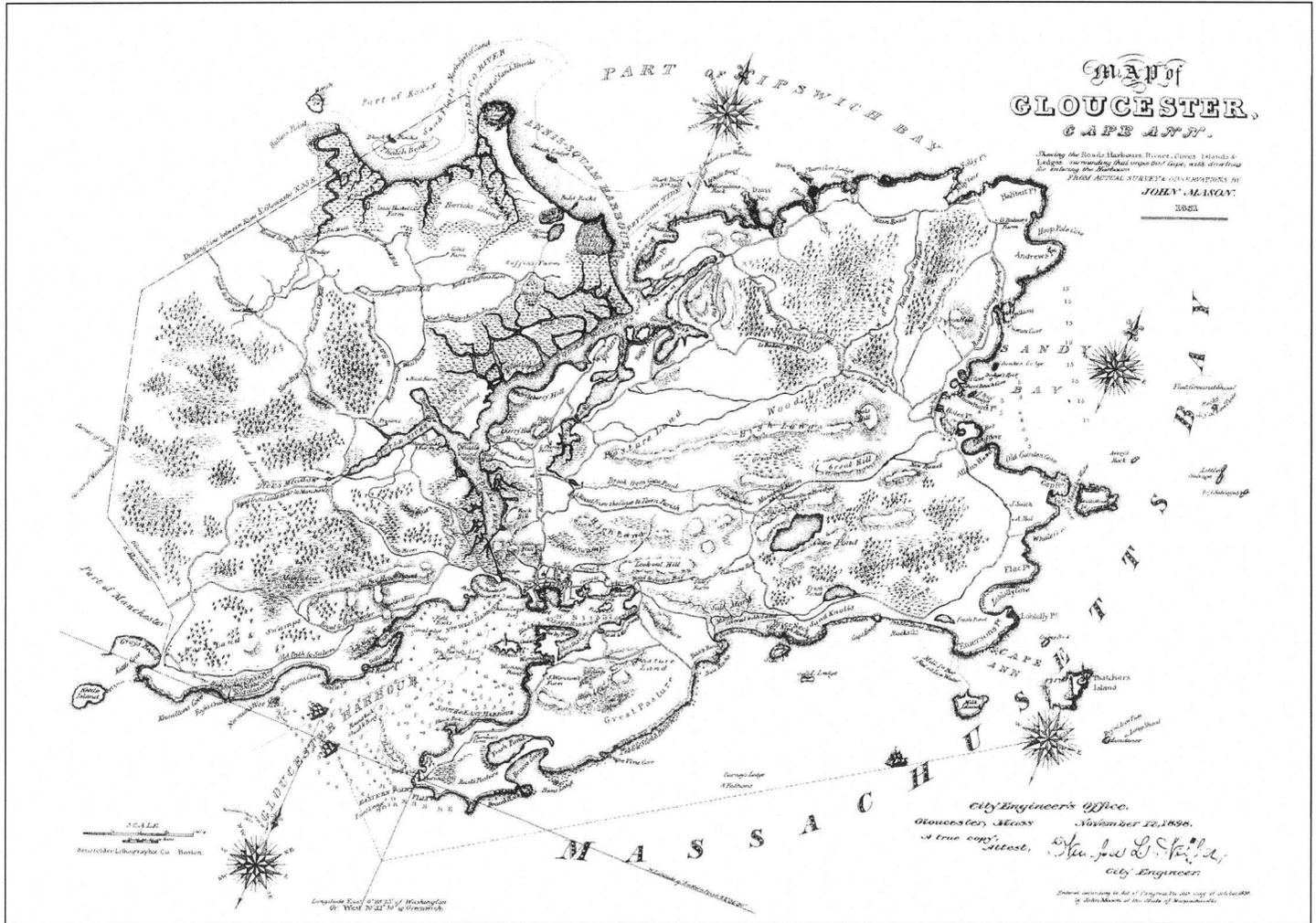
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Map 5 – Copy of James Mason’s 1831 Map of Gloucester. (from Gloucester City Engineer’s Office).

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
 Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance by Shary Page Berg and Gretchen G. Schuler
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The core area of the Dogtown Commons settlement (see map 3), an area of approximately 100 acres, has already been determined eligible for listing in the National Register by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC NR files) as a rare surviving site of a Colonial village with a high level of integrity. The determination was based on minimal information and while the archaeological resources associated with the Commons Settlement are clearly significant, additional work is required to further document archaeological resources and to determine the boundaries of any potential NR district. A comprehensive walkover and professional archaeological survey of the area are needed to determine the locations and condition of the 40 house sites, three mill sites and other resources associated with the Commons Settlement.

However, Dogtown is not limited to the Commons Settlement. Future National Register efforts should also document cultural resources associated with the larger Dogtown area encompassed by the Commons Settlement, Common Pasture, woodlots, municipal improvements, quarrying industry and Babson boulders. Collectively these features tell a remarkable story of land use from the Colonial Period until the present. This Area Form is an important step in that direction but additional work that is beyond the scope of this Area Form is needed, beginning with a clearer determination of the boundaries of the larger Dogtown area and accurate mapping of all known features.

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*Photo 1 – Dogtown Road,
looking east from west end.
(Most of Dogtown Road
is not in this good condition.)*



*Photo 2 – Babson Reservoir,
looking west from east end.*



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Photo 3 – Typical cellar hole, this one is #7, the home of Benjamin Stanwood on Dogtown Road.



Photo 4 – Stone walls still delineate landownership patterns throughout Dogtown. They are well-mapped on the 1971 Odum Map.



Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

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Photo 5 – Terminal moraine north of Babson Reservoir.



Photo 6 – Second growth forest near Wharf Road.



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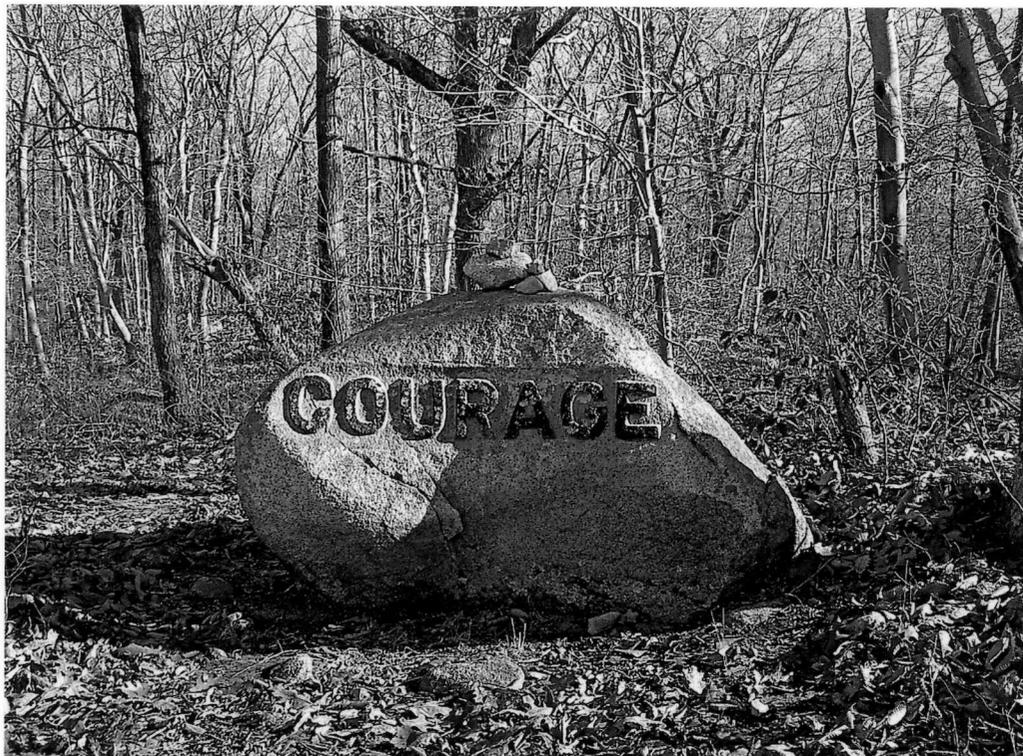
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*Photo 7 – Meadow area
 that is reverting to forest.
 The open land that
 characterized Dogtown
 in the 19th century has
 largely reverted to forest.*



*Photo 8 – Typical Babson
 Boulder. There are 28 of
 these scattered
 throughout the southern
 part of Dogtown.*



FORM A - AREA AND SITE SURVEY
 MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

SE Area AA AREA L
 GLO. AA / RCP. N PL

6. Please comment on the Historical or Architectural importance of this area:

Dogtown-- one of the few deserted villages in New England is an area of some 2000 acres in the center of Cape Ann. When settled by second generation of some of Gloucester's finest families it was by grant of the Commoners to open up woodlots, as lumbering was an important industry of that time. A thin, gravelly soil produced few farm products, but sheep and cattle flourished. When the Harbor settlement was developed the best families moved there and Dogtown homes became occupied by poor people and widows who could not keep homes in repair. Homes fell into cellar holes which can still be found usually with a well nearby. Stones carved with numbers help to determine former occupants. The area has been likened to the Grimpen Moor, a wasteland of Devonshire England, but with its wealth of wild life, animals and birds; red cedar and many other native trees and shrubs; wild flowers and rare orchids it is a naturalists dream.

- 1. Town Gloucester
- 2. Name of area or section Dogtown
- 3. General Date or Period 1646-1845
 Last Inhabitant 1830
- 4. Is the area uniform? Yes
 (There is much interest to "Save Dogtown")
 In style Yes
 In condition Yes
 In type of ownership Partly City of Gloucester Water Shed-Dogtown foundation
 In use (Explain) Few private owners

The Gloucester Conservation Commission is attempting to consolidate all owners and place this area in trust for the public forever.

- 5. Is area potentially threatened? By Vandals
 By Zoning No
 By Roads No
 By Developers Not if present plans materialize.
 By Deterioration Yes

7. Draw a general map of the area involved. Please indicate in red any known historic sites on which individual reports are contemplated on Form B. Indicate street boundaries of area and any route numbers. It is also the southernmost extent of the glaciers and the terminal moraine may be seen here at Dogtown Square.

Recorder Luce and Johnson October 2, 1970

For Gloucester Historical Commission
 (Name of Organization)

NOTE: Recorder should obtain written permission from Commission or sponsoring organization before using this form.

