

THE MENDON-NANTUCKET CONNECTION: 1708-1737.

by

Elizabeth A. Little of Nantucket and Margaret Morrison of Mendon.

The Archaeology Committee

Nantucket Historical Association, Nantucket, MA 02554.

April 1986





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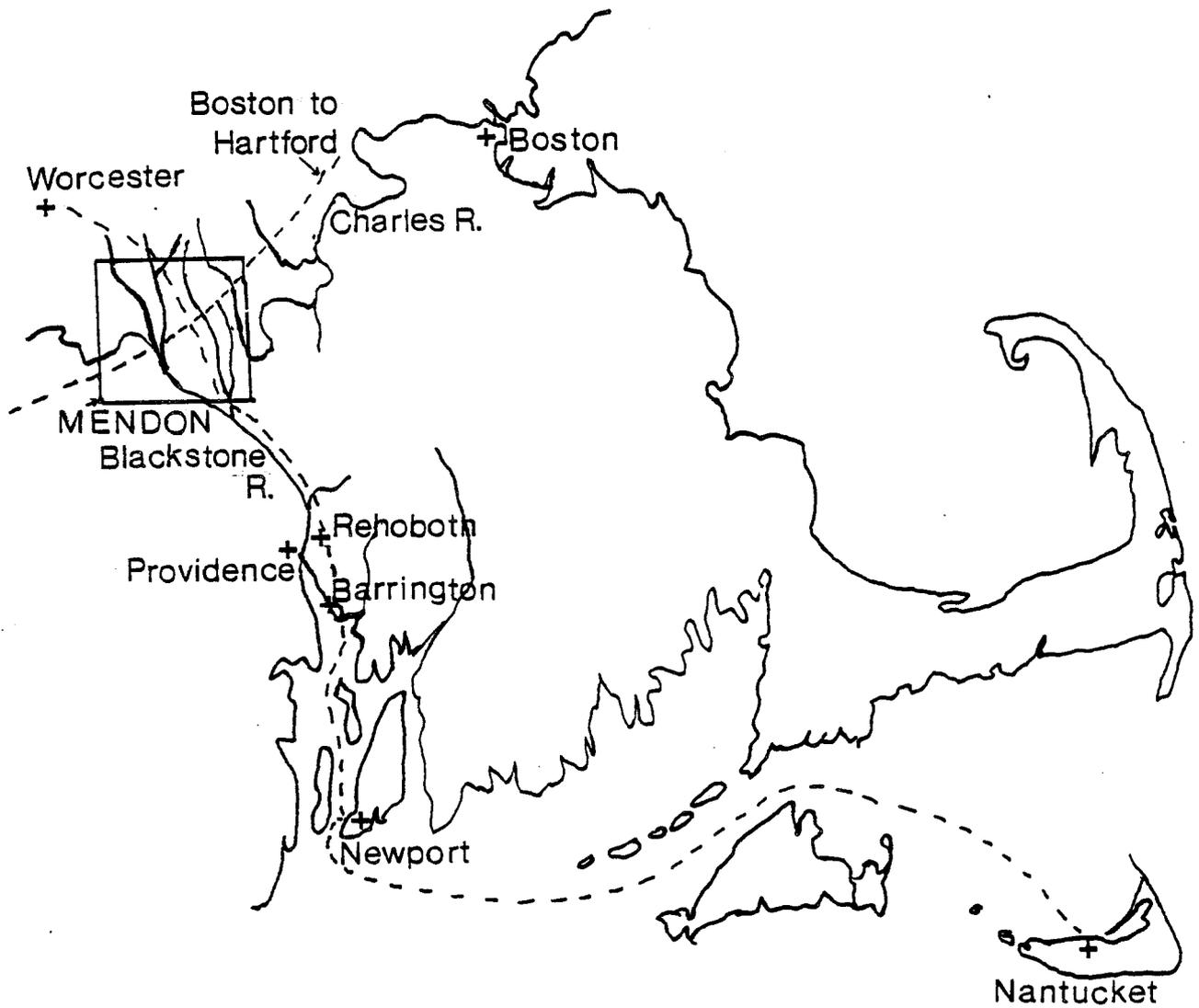


Figure 1. Map of southeastern Massachusetts showing the relation between Nantucket, Boston, Providence, and Mendon, and the close connection by sea between Nantucket and Mendon up the Blackstone River from Newport and Barrington.



## THE MENDON-NANTUCKET CONNECTION: 1708-1737.

### INTRODUCTION.

In the search for documentary data for the history of the 1686-1986 Jethro Coffin House at Nantucket, the first two deeds for the property which were discovered by Helen Chase recorded the sale of the house by Jethro Coffin, yeoman, in 1708, and his removal from the island to Mendon, Suffolk County, Massachusetts. Since few of us on Nantucket were certain of the location of Mendon, I pursued the question, where is Mendon and why did Jethro Coffin move there? On my first trip to Mendon (Figure 1; Figure 2), I was fortunate to meet Mrs. Margaret Morrison in her home (Figure 3), which she supposed was Jethro Coffin's Mendon homestead (Figure 4). She has been an enthusiastic co-researcher in the project since its beginning (Figure 5).

Jethro Coffin's father was Peter Coffin, gentleman of Exeter (NH), a wealthy timber and sawmill owner. Peter Coffin's father, Tristram Coffin, was in turn one of the wealthiest proprietors of the Island of Nantucket. By tradition, John Gardner of Nantucket, Mary Gardner's father, had provided land and Peter Coffin had provided house timbers and boards from his New Hampshire sawmill for Jethro and Mary Coffin's house on Sunset Hill, Nantucket. While they lived here, from about 1686 (date of marriage and purchase of land not known exactly) until 1708, their six surviving children were born. In 1708 Jethro was 45 years old and Mary was 38 (Starbuck 1924).

The Nantucket whaling industry commenced between 1690 to 1692, and by 1708 was growing vigorously. With a fleet of whaleboats (28 in the peak year 1726) pursuing right whales from shore stations, Nantucketers about 1712-1718 began to fit out sloops carrying two whaleboats each which could take the



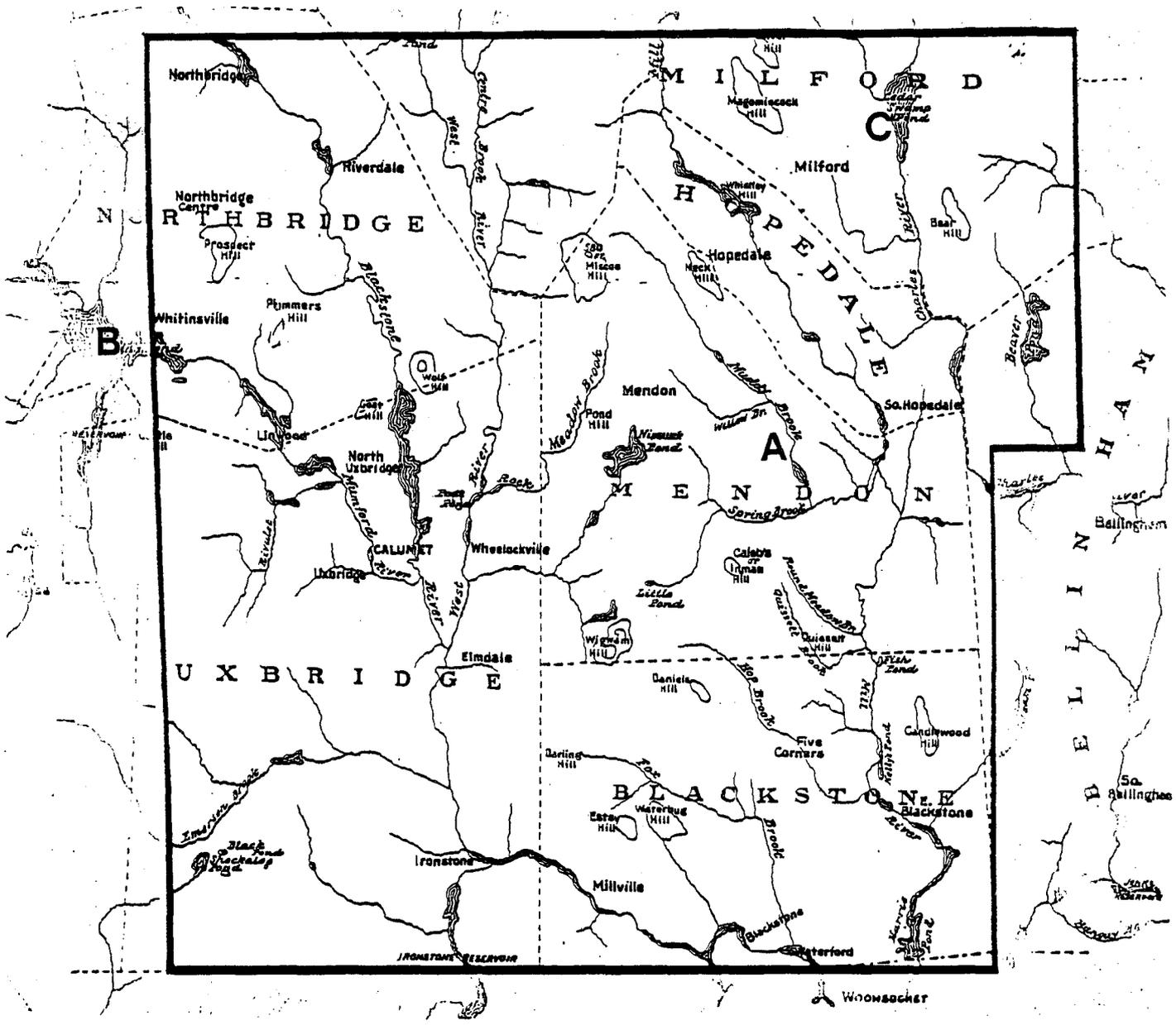
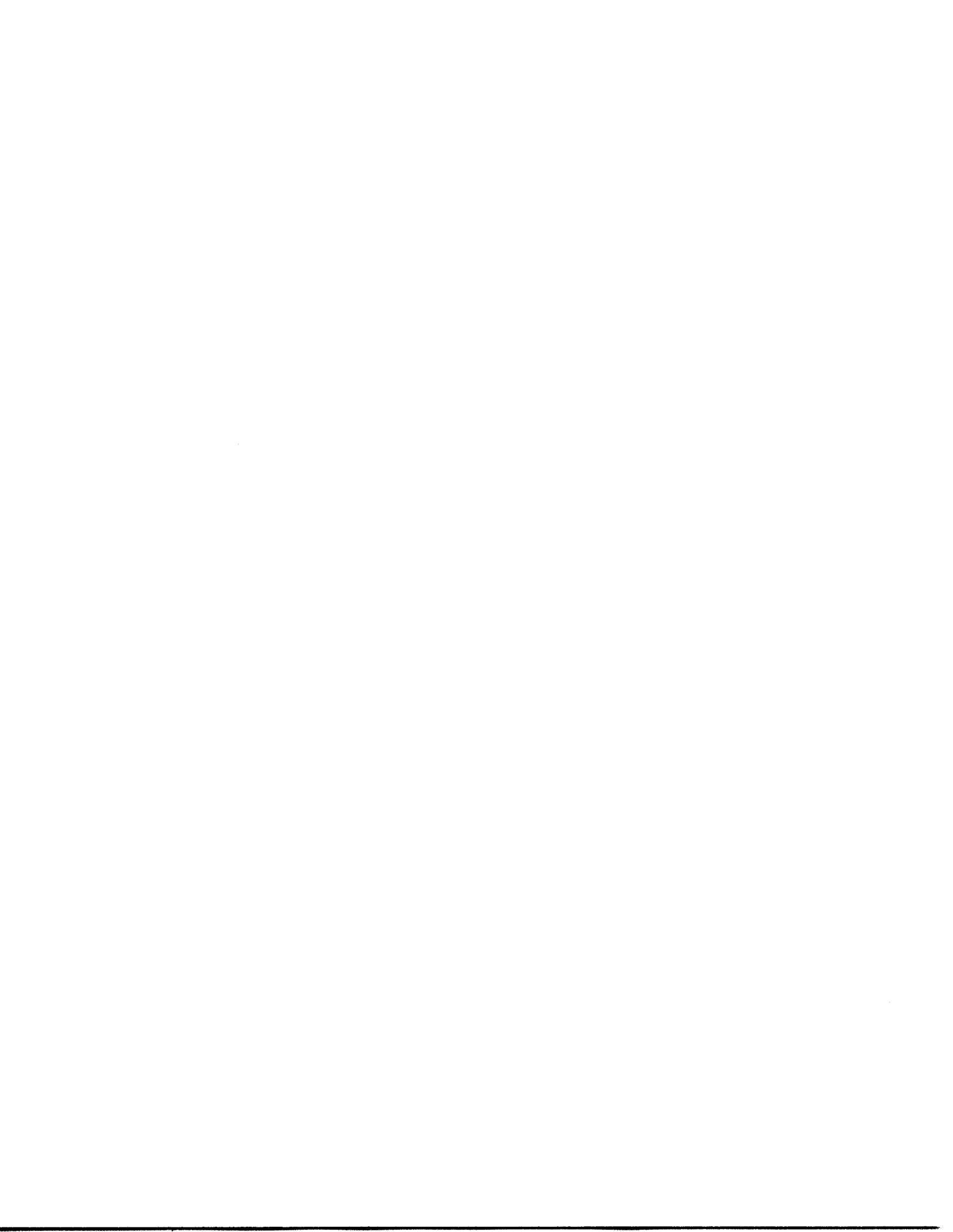


Figure 2. Original Mendon boundary (heavy black outline from 1723 Plan of Mendon (Samuel Thaxter 1723)), overlaid on map of modern towns (Metcalf 1880; reproduced by Hackett (1967)). 'A' indicates site of Jethro Coffin House and Homestead; 'B' indicates site of Jethro Coffin's 240 acre grant; and 'C' indicates possible site of Jethro Coffin's, John Gardner's and Robert Evens' shares in 'Cedar Swamp' and 'North Cedar Swamp'.



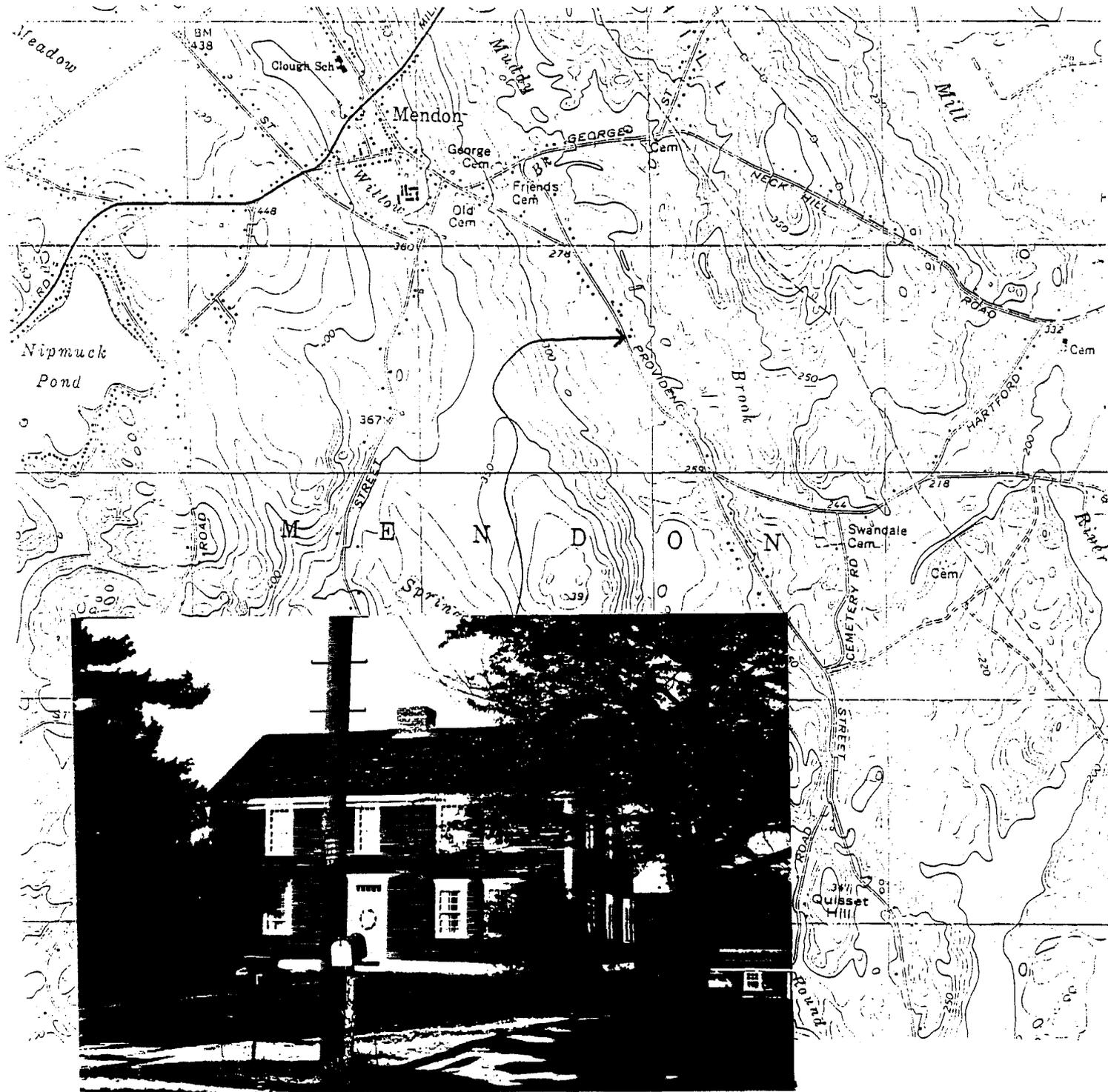


Figure 3. Photograph of Mrs. Francis Morrison's house, 48 Providence Road, Mendon, MA 01756, in 1985, looking east from Providence Road. Location of the house shown by arrow to site on topographic map (Blackstone Quadrangle, 1969, USGS 7.5' topographic map).



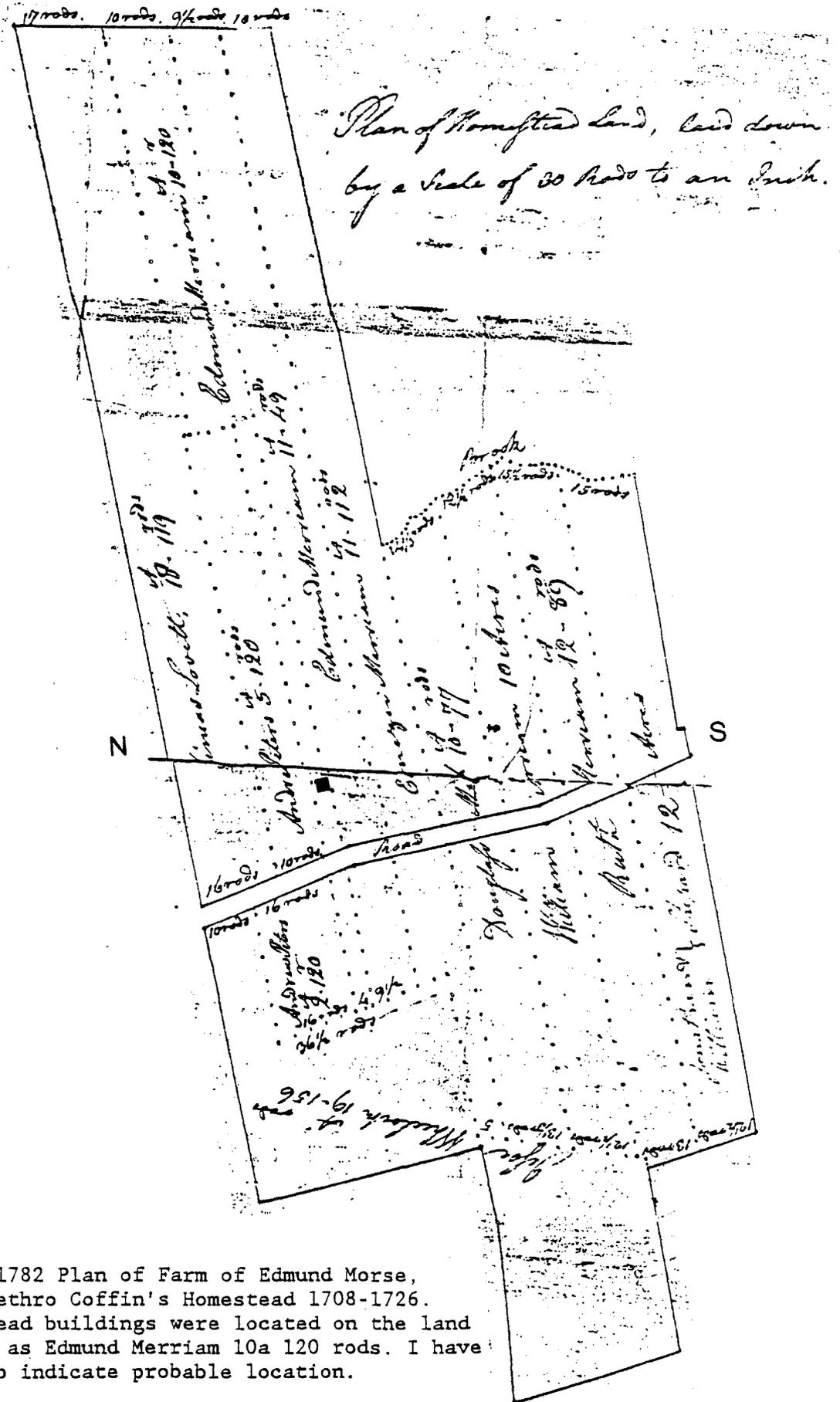


Figure 4. 1782 Plan of Farm of Edmund Morse, that was Jethro Coffin's Homestead 1708-1726. The homestead buildings were located on the land shown here as Edmund Merriam 10a 120 rods. I have added ■ to indicate probable location.





Figure 5a. Meeting at the Nantucket Historical Association's Jethro Coffin House ("The Oldest House on Nantucket") August 26, 1985. Left to Right: J. Clinton Andrews, Victoria Hawkins, both of the NHA, and Rita (Mrs. Arthur) Paddock, Margaret (Mrs. Francis) Morrison (owner of Jethro Coffin House in Mendon), and her son, Arthur Paddock.

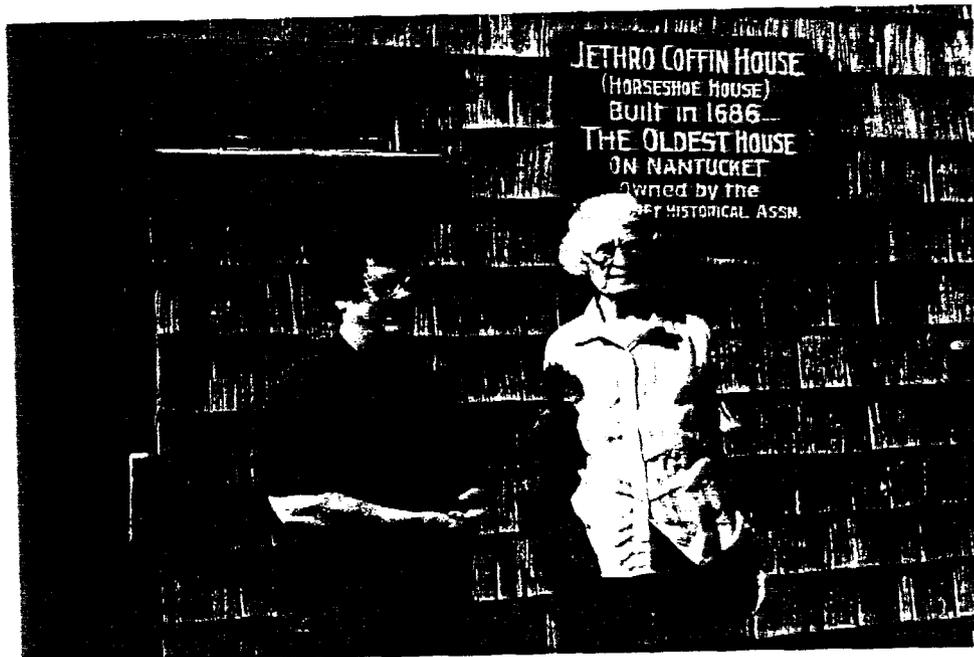


Figure 5b. Rita Paddock and Margaret Morrison, August 26, 1985, outside door of "The Oldest House" at Nantucket.



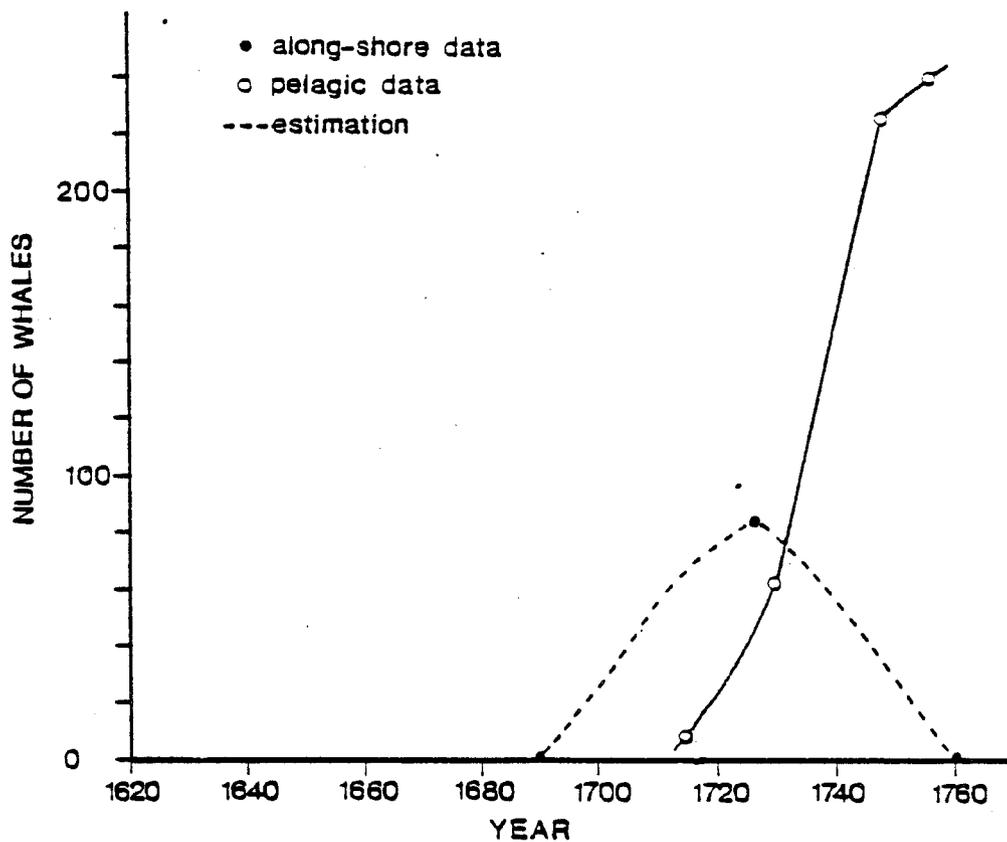


Figure 6. Number of whales caught annually (calculated from number of barrels at 50 barrels a whale) by Nantucket whalers from along-shore stations and subsequently from sloops which could stay at sea (pelagic whaling) for days or even weeks (Little 1981b:15). The data points are connected by lines, but the actual catch must have varied from year to year.



chase off shore to "ye deep" (Macy 1792). Between 1700 and 1737, the Nantucket whaling industry was in a period of rapid expansion (Figure 6) which would culminate in world leadership. Why would Jethro Coffin leave the island at a time of economic growth?

#### NANTUCKET AND MENDON AS CORE AND PERIPHERY.

We propose that Mendon could provide resources required for the whaling industry. Although it is difficult today to think of Nantucket as a core town with peripheral suppliers (Paynter 1982; Lewis 1985), in 1782 Nantucket Island had more than 200 sailing vessels and 2000 seamen (Crèvecoeur 1971). In 1807 Nantucketers owned more than 15,808 tons of shipping, and there were on the island 19 candle factories (total annual output: 10,000 pounds), ten rope walks (annual output: 20 tons), a twine factory, and shops making casks and whaleboats (Freeman 1807). By 1832 Nantucket had a shipyard, five boat shops, 17 oil factories, 19 candle factories, ten rope walks, 22 cooper (barrel) shops, one brass foundry, three tanneries, ten blacksmith shops, about four spar shops, two bakeries, two block factories, four sail lofts, three rigging lofts, two candle box factories, clothing stores, food provisioners, ship chandlers, brick yards, a rum distillery, four banks, and 7,500 inhabitants (Jones 1981).

Among the important resources required for the whaling industry were timber, iron, and water power. Supplies available at Nantucket of the pine and oak required for ship building and the cedar boards used for the very lightweight American whaleboats, were depleted quickly (Little 1981a). Although bog iron extraction was attempted at Nantucket (Freeman 1807:24), the local iron ore and especially the fuel for iron working were severely



limited. Nantucket by 1700 may have relied entirely on off-island sources of iron for the anchors, bolts, nails, roves (washers for lapstrake board fastenings), spikes, steering irons, blubber forks, knives, canhooks, gaffs, ladles, spades, tackle hooks, try kettles, whale hooks, and whale slices, boat hashes, hatchets, harpoons, lances, and tow irons used in the early along-shore whaling industry for capturing, towing, cutting in, and trying out the whales (Little 1981b:39,46, 48).

The records in Mendon show that a number of Nantucketers and their families accompanied Jethro Coffin to Mendon. Emigration of Nantucketers in a group in 1708 is early but not otherwise surprising or unique. From their sandy island, Nantucketers had a history of placing colonies at convenient places around the globe. These colonies were established (often by invitation) to obtain raw materials, base operations close to whaling grounds, avoid state or national import or export duties on whale oil, escape blockades (from both belligerents) during wars, escape high population densities of the island, etc. Here are some documented examples:

Barrington, Nova Scotia 1761-1762;  
Prince Edward Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence 1763 (proposed);  
New Garden (Guilford) North Carolina 1771-1774;  
New Bedford, MA < 1775;  
Kennebeck River  
London, England 1775;  
Hudson (Dutchess County) N.Y. 1783;  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia 1785;  
Dunkirk, France 1787-1812;  
Milford Haven, Wales 1792

(Carroll 1976; Crèvecoeur 1971; Macy 1933; Stackpole 1972a, 1972b, 1972c, 1958; Taylor 1974).

Because of the potential contribution of the raw materials and water power of Mendon to the story of the early whaling industry at Nantucket, I here attempt to collect all the data from the Court Houses of Suffolk County and Worcester County (to which Mendon belonged after 1731) which concerns



Nantucketers in Mendon. From this base, I make a case for the Mendon colony of Nantucketers harvesting Atlantic White Cedar (Chamaecyparis thyoides) from swamps, gathering and processing bog iron from swamps and possibly iron ore from hills for whale craft (as the tools of the business were called), and possibly extracting other resources for the requirements of the whaling industry at Nantucket.

DATA FROM DEEDS AND WILLS ABOUT THE COFFIN, GARDNER AND EVENS MENDON LANDS.

Families (Appendix C; Table 1) and Farms (Appendix A,B,D & E).

On Sept. 21, 1708, Jethro Coffin of Nantucket, yeoman, sold his house in Nantucket and with his wife Mary and six children moved to Mendon, where on Nov. 20, 1708 he purchased the house and farm of Josiah Thayer west of Muddy Brook. He became a selectman in 1720 (Metcalf 1880:187) and died in 1726, calling himself a blacksmith in his will. Such data provide a clue to his Mendon activities. With the help of Margaret Morrison a title search (Little 1986) has established that Mrs. Morrison's present west-facing house at 48 Providence Road, Mendon (Fig.3) is either an addition which Jethro Coffin reserved the right to build in 1722-1726 or at least stands on the homestead of Jethro Coffin of 1708-1726 (Fig. 4). The documentary record can give no stronger evidence than this because destruction by fire, decay, or as a by-product of improvements and subsequent rebuilding or house-moving are hardly ever documented by deeds. Archaeological or architectural study will be required to confirm or disprove the building history suggested here.

Other Nantucketers besides Jethro Coffin and his family left documentary traces in Mendon (underlined names in Table 1). The year of Jethro Coffin's death, 1726, saw a "Great Sickness" (Metcalf 1880:202) in Mendon which may



TABLE 1. FAMILY RELATIONS FOR COFFINS, GARDNERS, AND EVANS IN MENDON.

(Preliminary study limited to secondary sources: NEHG Register 24 (1870); Starbuck 1924; Vital Records of Mendon, Nantucket, Salem; Gardner 1958:84).

Jethro Coffin 1663(NH)-1726(Mendon), s. Peter (s. Tristram & Dionis) & Abigail (d. Edward Starbuck & Catharine), m. Mary Gardner 1670-1767, of Salem/Nantucket/Mendon/Nantucket.  
 Children (all born at Nantucket):  
 • Margaret, b.1689, m.1 John Wilson, Barrington (BCD 16:13)  
   m.2 1719 at Mendon Samuel Terry, Barrington (Bristol Co.)/Mendon.  
     Ch. Josiah b. 1730 at Mendon  
       Peter b. 1732 at Mendon  
 • Priscilla, 1691-1772, m. John Gardner III (see below).  
 • John, b.1694, m. Lydia Gardner, dau Richard & Mary. Children: 8  
 • Josiah 1698-1780, m. 1720 Elizabeth Coffin (d. 1774)  
   Ch. Mary b. 1725, m. J.Gardner IV (see below), plus 14 more.  
 • Abigail 1701-1782, m.1 in Mendon 1720 Nathaniel Woodbury of Barrington, (R.I.)  
   m.2 Eliakim Swain (d. 1750).  
 • Robert 1704-1757, m.1 Parnell Coffin (d. 1727 Nantucket)  
   m.2 1728 Susanna Coffin (d. 1795)  
   Ch. Joanna b. Nantucket, 1729, d. 1760; Susanna b. Nantucket 1731; Catharine b. Nantucket 1733), plus 7 more.  
 Robert Coffin, brother of Jethro, b 1667 NH?, m. Johannah (widow of Henry Dyer), who d. Mendon 1726.

Thomas Gardner of Salem

• John Gardner I (1625(England)-1706(Nantucket)), m. 1654 Priscilla Grafton  
 • John Gardner II (1654)(Salem/Boston) m. Susanna Greene  
 • John Gardner III (1681?-1759) Mendon farm 1712-1729/Nantucket 1729-.  
   m. Priscilla Coffin (d. of Jethro and Mary).  
   ch. Mary b. Mendon 1709  
       Suzana b. Mendon 1712  
       Elizabeth b. Mendon 1716  
       John Gardner IV (Sheriff) (b.Mendon) 1722-1812,  
         m.1745 Mary, dau of Josiah Coffin (see above) & Elizabeth  
         ch. John V b. 1772, d. 1812  
 • Jeremiah Gardner, m. Sarah Coffin  
   ch: George b.1714 Newport RI;  
       Daniel b. 1715 Nantucket  
       John, Ruth, etc.  
 • Mary Gardner b. 1670 Salem, m.Jethro Coffin (See Jethro Coffin).  
 • Richard Gardner b 1631, m. Sarah Shattuck, Salem/ Nantucket  
   Richard Gardner 1653-1728, Salem/Nantucket, m. Mary Austin  
   ch. Lydia (d. 1788) m. John Coffin (see above) son of Jethro Coffin  
   Richard m. Leah Folger, d. 1725

Robert Evans (Evens), children born at Nantucket (WF):  
   Anna 1699,  
   Edmond 1701, m. Ruth Wood in Mendon, inherited and sold  
   father's land at Mendon (SCD 39:262) to Robert Coffin.  
   ch: Mary b. 1722 Mendon.



account for Jethro's death and also for the death in Mendon of Johanna, the wife of Jethro Coffin's brother Robert.

John Gardner of Mendon also purchased a farm in Mendon on the Charles River in 1712. Because John Gardner and Priscilla Coffin (daughter of Jethro Coffin) marry and have four children in Mendon between 1709 and 1722, I deduce that this John Gardner (III) is the son of John Gardner (II), eldest son of John Gardner (I) of Nantucket (Table 1). That is, the John Gardner (III) of Mendon was the nephew as well as son-in-law of Mary Gardner Coffin.

Robert Evens (Evans), who was having children as well as mending whaleboats at Nantucket in 1699-1702 (Little 1981b:40), appeared as a carpenter in Mendon in 1709 (Metcalf 1880:158) and purchased a farm near Jethro Coffin's on Muddy Brook in 1711.

Richard Gardner was listed with John Gardner as an owner of Mendon land in 1730 near the North Cedar Swamp (P.R.:462). Although I have not tackled the question of which Richard Gardner this might be (Table 1), I have little doubt but that he was a Nantucketer.

#### Cedar Swamp (Appendix E).

The Nantucketers, Robert Evens and John Gardner (and Richard Gardner), were discovered in Mendon as co-owners with Jethro Coffin of a substantial amount of the North Cedar Swamp on the Charles River. Upland towns around the headwaters of the Charles, Blackstone, Mumford, and Mill Rivers had much "Cedar Swamp" (Mendon had 900 acres in 1712 (Metcalf 1880:162)). Because of ecological changes (Cronon 1983:112,113) caused in part by damming of the outlets of the erstwhile swamps, I can only speculate where on the Charles River the North Cedar Swamp was located. Milford's Cedar Swamp Pond (Figure 2), which still (1986) has some Atlantic White Cedar (Figure 7), is a possible location for the Cedar Swamp of the Nantucketers of Mendon.



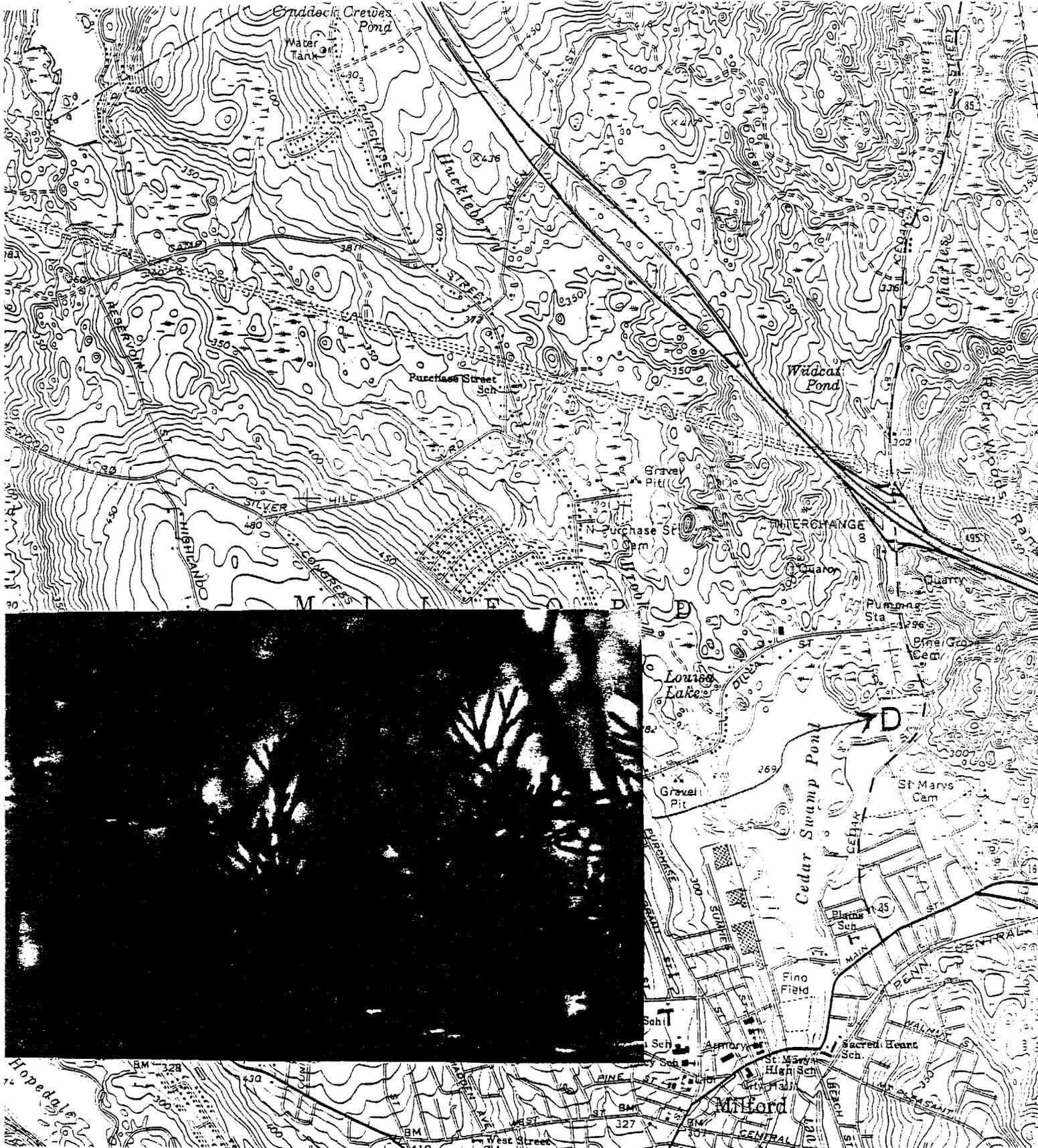


Figure 7. Topographical Map of Milford (1968 USGS Milford Quadrangle, 7.5" Series) showing Charles River (right side of map) flowing south through Milford. "Cedar Swamp Pond", which has a stand of dead and young *Chamaecyparis thyoides* (Atlantic White Cedar) at 'D' (inset photo 2/13/86), may be the Mendon cedar swamp owned in part by Coffin, Gardner, and Evans.



Boat timber was being imported to Nantucket by 1703 and cedar boards are listed at Nantucket by 1713 (Little 1981b). White, not Red, Cedar was used to build the light American whaleboats (Little 1981b:37) because of the very low density of the wood (20 pounds a cubic foot compared to 30 and 44 pounds a cubic foot for red cedar and white oak respectively). Atlantic White Cedar (Chamaecyparis thyoides) is a Mid-Atlantic coastal tree preferring a swampy or boggy habitat with a range mostly south of Boston, while Northern White Cedar (Arborvitae, Thuja occidentalis) has an upland range mostly north of Boston. The Mendon Cedar Swamps provide welcome evidence for a species of cedar, Atlantic White Cedar, used by early Nantucket whalers after they depleted the supply at Nantucket.

The 240 acre Coffin Grant: Sawmill and Iron Works (Appendix F & H).

The chronology of this grant is as follows: in 1668 Peter Coffin of Exeter, NH, gentleman, sent King George of England a present of a shipload of masts on behalf of a committee of the Massachusetts General Court. Coffin was compensated in 1672 by the Court with a grant of 200 acres of upland and 40 acres of Meadow "where he can finde it not yet layd out" (Appendix H). In 1708 A Nantucket blacksmith listed in his account book: "2.7.4 of New England iron" (Little 1981:46) [An unique entry]. In the same year, Jethro Coffin moved from Nantucket to Mendon, which may be only a coincidence. In 1711 Peter Coffin deeded his grant to his son Jethro Coffin of Mendon, who petitioned the General Court in 1713 for the grant to be laid out in Nipmug Country and recorded a plot of the 240 acres (Figure 8).

The plot shows land on Mumford's River just west of Mendon's west boundary, south of 'The French Road', where three tributaries feed into a 'Lesser Branch of Mumford's River'. From an inspection of topographic maps, we find that the plot fits the geography at a single place centered on



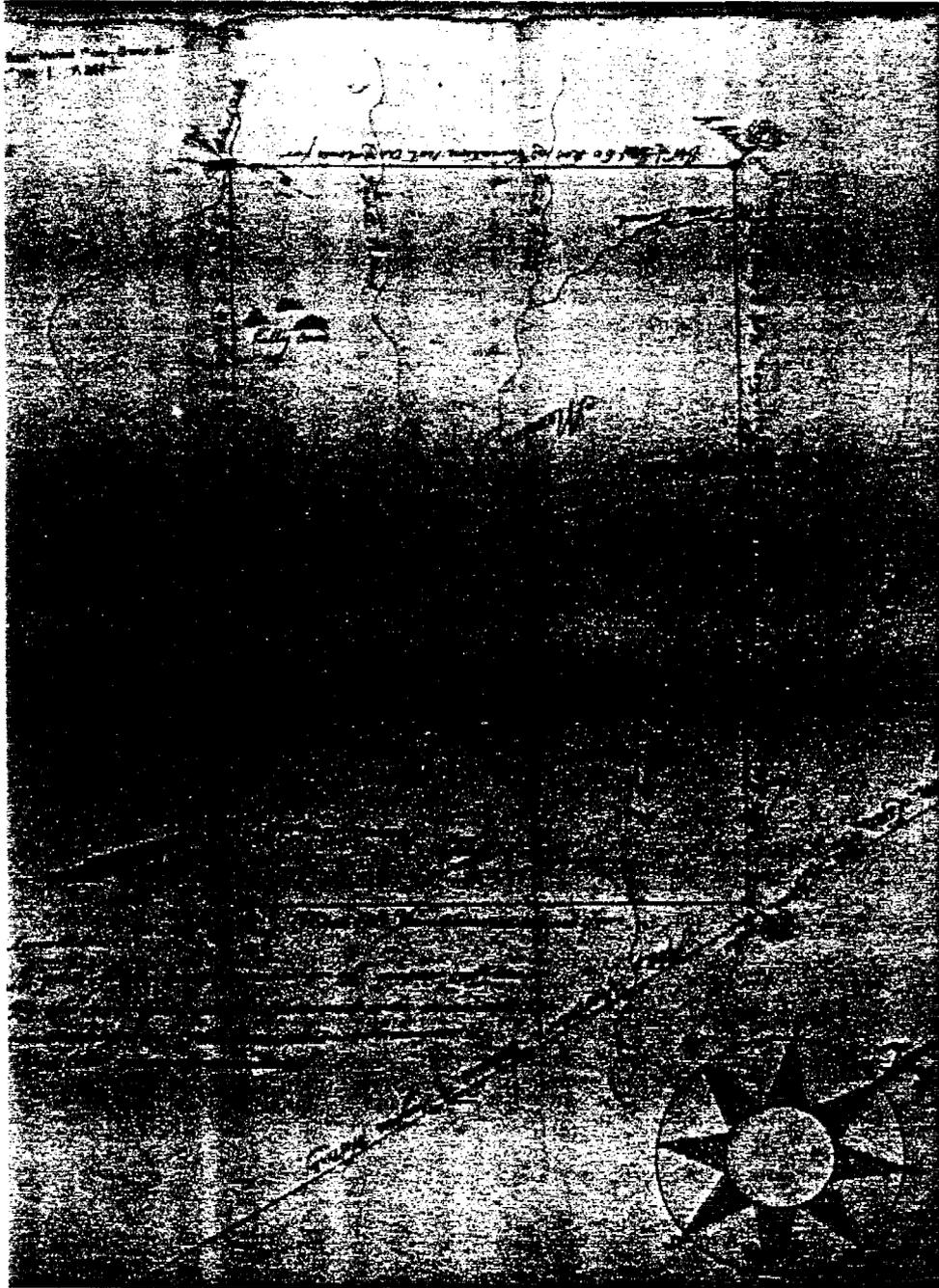


Figure 8. Plot of 240 acres granted to M<sup>r</sup> Peter Coffin in 1672 and laid out to Jethro Coffin in 1713 on the west side of Mendon, by Thomas White, surveyor (Coffin 1713:12; see also Appendix H).



Mendon Line

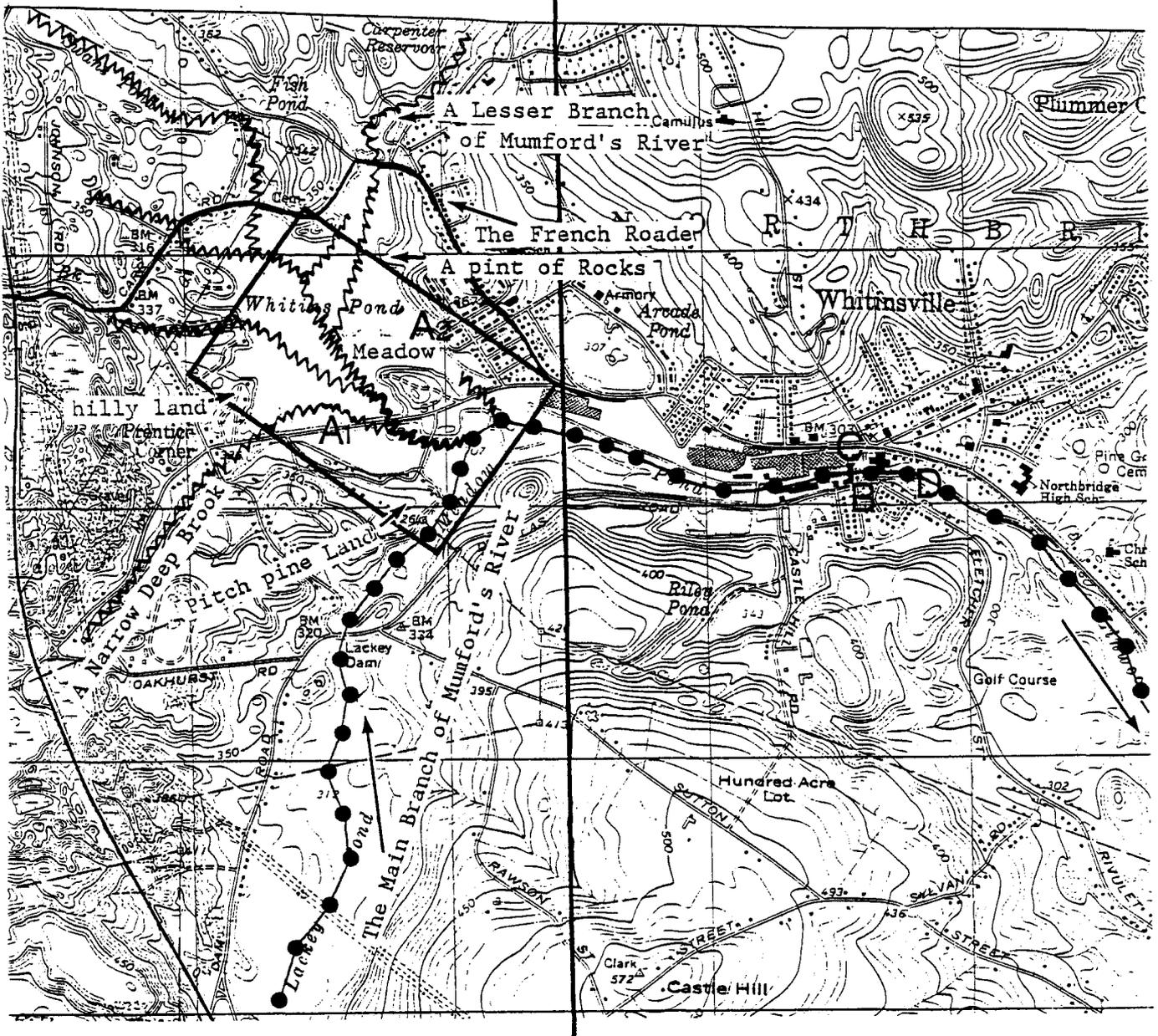


Figure 9. Portion of topographic map of Whitinsville (USGS Uxbridge Quadrangle 1969) showing Jethro Coffin's 240 acre 1713 land grant in Whitin's Pond (compare features of Figure 8), and modern mills and dam location on the Mumford River. A1 and A2 are camera locations for Figs. 10a & b; C indicates modern dam (black oblong), with three large mill buildings upstream, and one large mill building downstream; B indicates site of Brick Mill (Fig. 11a); and D (Fig. 11b) shows downstream site of remains of old dam and possible mill. The main Mumford River is indicated by large connected dots; smaller branches are shown by zigzag lines. Vertical line is ancient Mendon west boundary line.



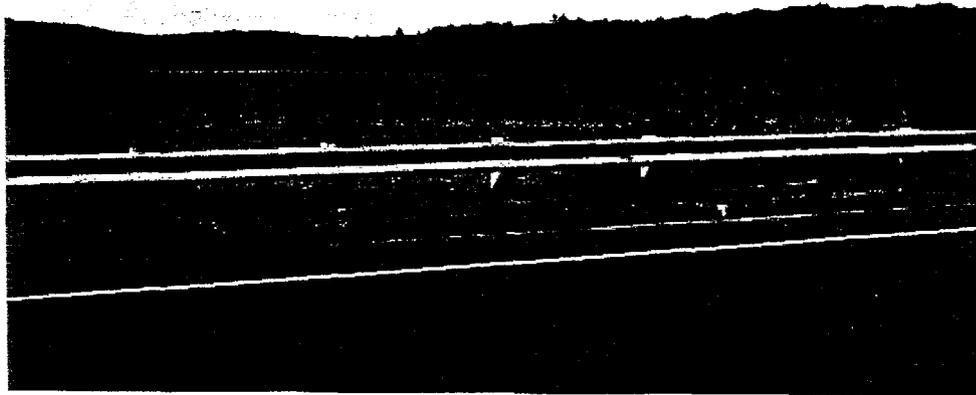


Figure 10a. Photograph October 2, 1985 looking north from A1 across Whitin's Pond.

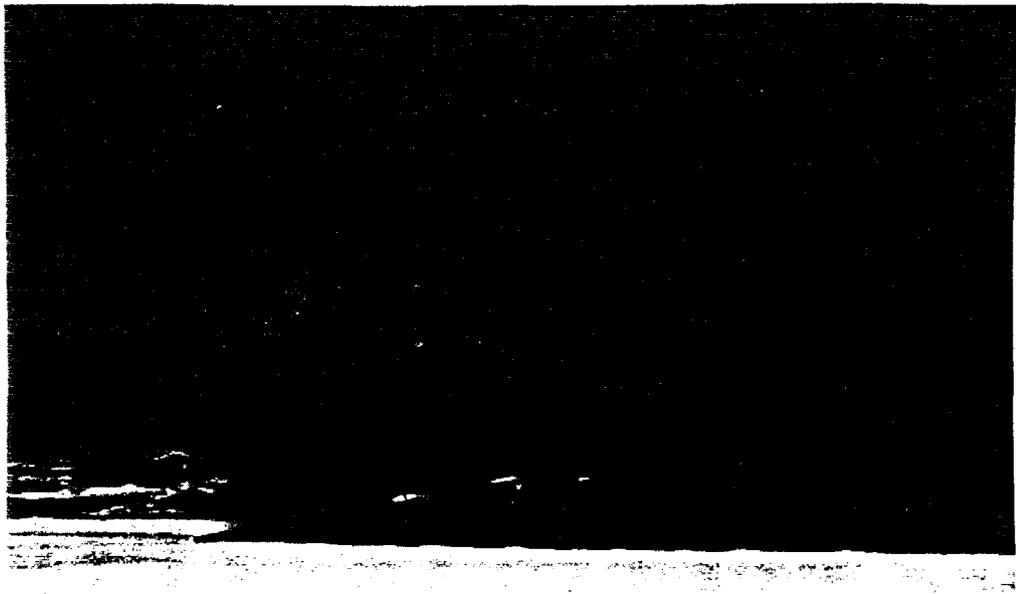


Figure 10b. Photograph February 13, 1986 from A2, looking northwest at "The Pint of Rocks".

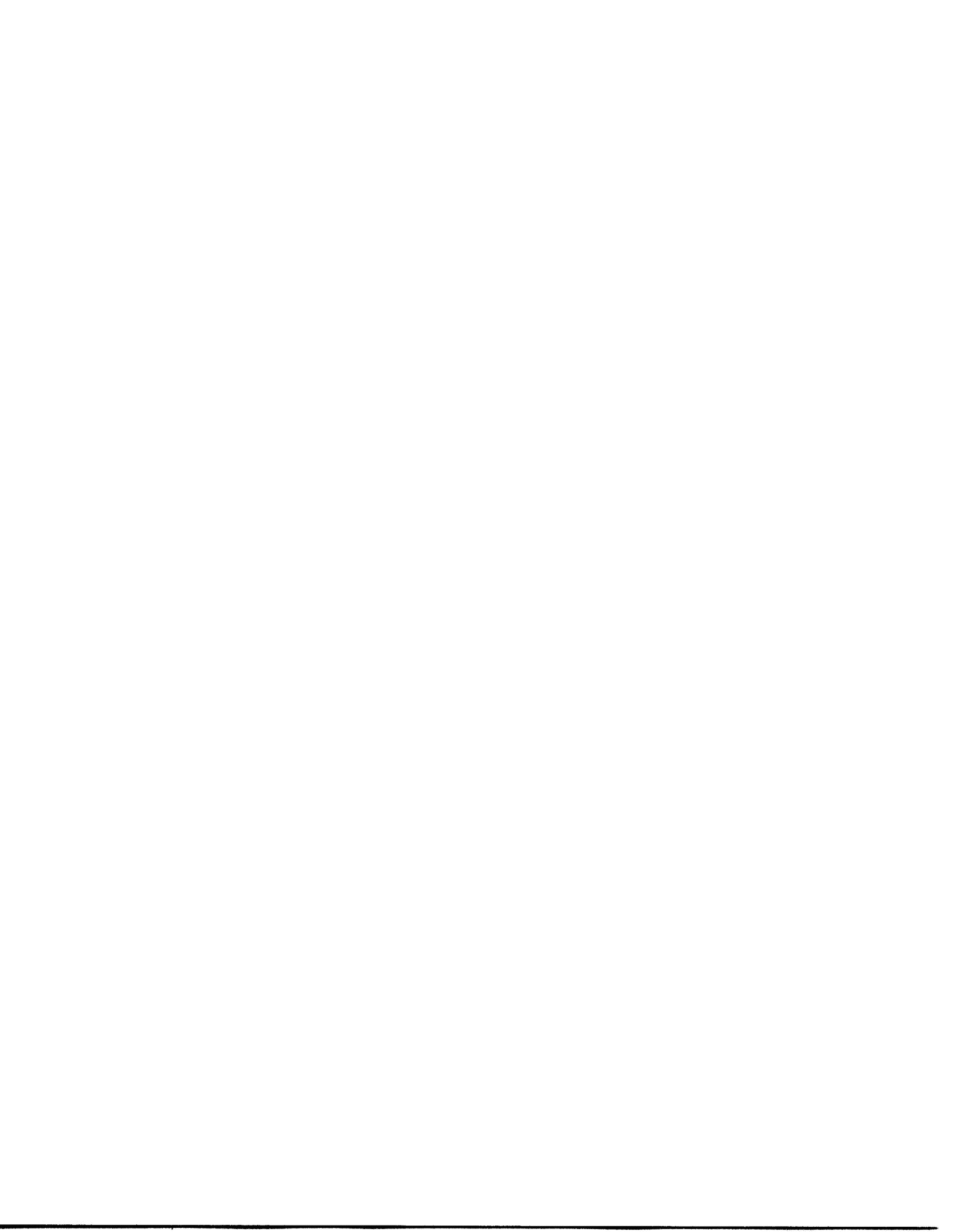




Figure 11a. View of the present dam and Brick Mill in Mumford River at Whitinsville, October 2, 1985, looking south.



Figure 11b. View looking upstream (west) of, foreground, ruins of an old dam (D), and, background, left, the Brick Mill (B), with present dam (C) and mills beyond bridge (See Fig. 9). Mumford River at Whitinsville, 2/13/86.



today's Whittin's Pond (Figure 9). For Mendon's boundary, see Fig. 2; the 'meadow' of 1713 is today Whittin's Pond (Fig. 10a), created by a dam downstream at C (Fig. 9); 'The French Road' (North Main St.) led to a Huguenot settlement at Oxford (Whitney 1793:83); 'A Narrow Deep Brook' matches the topography; 'A pint of Rocks' (Fig. 10b) and the 'hilly land', with kettle holes and kames, have been confirmed by a field check. According to the records Jethro Coffin after two years deeded the farm to his sons John and Josiah, who sold the land in 1726 to their brother-in-law, Samuel Terry of Barrington, clerk. If this meadow land had any cedar or other standing crop such as meadow hay, it must have been harvested by 1726.

Samuel Terry (not Samuel Torrey who was related to Angel Torrey (SCD 23:117; WCD 4:54)) was hired by the town of Barrington as a minister in 1718 until 1726, when the town, at the instigation of the Baptists, refused to pay him (Bicknell 1898:202,204,247,254,255). Note that Jethro Coffin's other son-in-law, Nathaniel Woodbury, also came from Barrington. Barrington is a seaport with shipbuilding traditions on the east side of Narragansett Bay near the mouth of the Blackstone (Fig. 1). Further down the peninsula is Newport which has major shipbuilding and trade traditions.

The Reverend Samuel Terry in 1726 and 1727 purchased 4 and 1/2 acres at the Falls on Mumford's River and 120 acres with housing between the Falls and Mendon's west boundary. Thus he owned the site for a dam and the land which would become a pond after the building of a dam. By 1727 he had built a sawmill at The Falls, and by 1728 an iron works (forge) at or just downstream from the site of today's Brick Mill (Figure 11a or 11b) (Appendix F; Marvin 1879:141; Hurd 1889:425-442; MHC 1984:338-339). A 1712 sawmill on Mumford River (Metcalf 1880:162) is as yet without a documented location or owner.



### The End of the Nantucket Colony at Mendon.

The high rate of intermarriage either within the Nantucket colony at Mendon or with Nantucketers (Table 1; Starbuck 1924) indicates that the Mendon colony ties to Nantucket remained close. Perhaps because of these strong island ties, after the death of Jethro Coffin in 1726 the Nantucket colony in Mendon collapsed and most of the Coffin/Gardner family returned immediately to Nantucket, where Jethro Coffin's heirs still owned a share in the proprietary (NCD 2:75). The last of the Coffin clan in Mendon, the Reverend Samuel Terry, developed the sawmill and iron forge on the Mumford by 1728 before moving his family to Connecticut by 1737. The Nantucket Coffins, Gardners, and Evens left little imprint in Mendon Vital Records.

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.

We have collected details of the activities of Jethro Coffin and other Nantucketers in Mendon 1708-1737, and established their connection with iron working and Atlantic White Cedar. Although Jethro Coffin's venture in Mendon was short-lived, he had laid the foundation for 250 years of mills at the Falls in Mumford's River. His transition from yeoman (1708) to blacksmith (1726) reflects the specialization associated with industrialization. By 1737 Nantucketers were expanding their deep sea whaling in the North Atlantic (Starbuck 1924), and Coffin's son Josiah and son-in-law John Gardner each called himself 'mariner of Sherbourn' on the deed of sale of his Mendon land. Being masters of whale ships may have been more to the liking of these Coffins and Gardners from Nantucket, as well as considerably more profitable, than digging bog iron ore in Mendon swamps. With a fast growing as well as increasingly well-known market for resources at Nantucket, entrepreneurs could obtain cedar and iron and other raw materials from a number of places on the east coast for delivery to Nantucket. In fact, in 1768 there were at



Nantucket "no Vessels wholly employed as Coasters, Nor Indeed is there much Occasion; All the other Colonies being very ready, for the Sake of their Dollars and Oil, to carry thither and sell very cheap every kind of produce they stand in need of." (Harrison and Hallowell 1925:428). In Mendon we have discovered a small but significant part of the beginning of a worldwide industry.

Although at present we lack evidence for the freighting of cedar and iron between Nantucket and Mendon, account books of shipping merchants on Nantucket or Newport or Barrington (where Jethro Coffin acquired two sons-in-law) might provide data which could prove the Mendon-Nantucket economic connection here inferred. There are in addition many questions which remain about the Mendon - Nantucket connection. Were there similar Nantucket colonies elsewhere along the coast at the same time? What part did Quakerism, established on Nantucket about the time Jethro Coffin moved to Mendon, play in the Mendon move? Was the early sawmill on the Mumford River connected in any way with Jethro Coffin? What sawmill provided the wide vertical wall boards in Mrs. Morrison's attic? Where did Jethro Coffin die? What ever became of the Reverend Samuel Terry? Did he build more iron works?

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APPENDIX A. Deed for house from Jethro Coffin of Nantucket to Nathaniel Paddack of Nantucket, 1708 (NCD 3:6) transcribed by H. W. Chase, 1985.

To all Christian People To Whom these presents Shall Come  
Jethro Coffin of the Island of Nantucket in the province of the  
Massachusetts Bay in New England yeoman Sendeth Greeting  
Know ye that I the Said Jethro Coffin for and in the Consideration  
of the Sum of Ninety five pounds Currant money in New England to  
me in hand paid or sufficient Security given for the payment  
thereof before the ensealing and delivery of these presents  
by Nathaniell Paddack of the aforesaid Island of Nantucket weaver  
have given granted bargained Sold Alienated Ratified and Confirmed  
and do by these presents fully Clearly and absolutely give Grant  
bargain sell alien rattifie and Confirm unto the Sd Nathaniell  
Paddack his heirs and assigns for ever all that my now dwelling  
house Situate and being on the Island of Nantucket aforesd and  
one acre and a half of land more or less adjoining to Sd house  
and bounded as follows the first bound begins at the land of  
Eleazer Folger Sen<sup>r</sup> and runs on a west Course Just to the northward  
of the Garden fence till it Comes one rod to the westward of Sd  
house from thence South to the path on the bank thence along by  
the path as far Eastward as to the land of the Sd Eleazer Folger  
thence along by sd land to the first bound together with the barn  
and all other the out houses Shops wells Easments Garden fences  
and all other priveledges and appurtenances whatsoever belonging  
or appertaining to the Sd house and land or to any part or parcell  
thereof To have and to hold the Sd house and land as above bounded  
with all and singular other the premisses by these presents meant  
mentioned or Intended to be hereby bargained and sold and every  
part and parcel thereof unto him the sd Nathaniell Paddack his  
heirs and assigns for ever to his and their only use benefit and  
behoof for ever and I Jethro Coffin do for my Self my heirs  
Executors Administraters and every of them Covenant and promise  
to and with the Sd Nathaniell Paddack his heirs and assigns  
to warrantize and defend Sd house and land and all other the  
premisses herein bargained and Sold against all persons whatsoever  
Claiming any lawfull Right title or Interest of in or to the Sd  
house and land or to any of the premisses herein Mentioned or  
Intended to be bargained and Sold or to any part thereof  
In witness whereof I the said Jethro Coffin have hereunto Set my  
hand and Seall the twenty first day of September in the Seventh  
year of the Reign of Anne of Great Brittain &c: Queen and in the  
year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eight

Sealed and delivered  
in the presence of

[signed] Jethro Coffin  
[Signed] Mary Coffin [Seal]

[Signed] Nathanel Gardner  
[Signed] Eleazer Folger Jun<sup>r</sup>

Recorded by me  
[Signed] Eleazer Folger Reg<sup>r</sup>

The above named Jethro Coffin  
and Mary his wife appeared before me  
on the day of the date hereof and  
acknowledged the above written  
Instrument to be their act and deed

Sep 21: 1708

[Signed] William Gayer  
Justice of ye peace



APPENDIX B. Receipt for payment in full from Jethro Coffin of Nantucket to Nathaniel Paddack of Nantucket, 1714 (NCD 3:46) transcribed by H.W. Chase, 1985.

Know all men by these presents that I Jethro Coffin of Mendon in the County of Suffolk in the province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England yeoman have Received of Nathaniell Paddack of the Island of Nantucket in the province afores<sup>d</sup> weaver Severall sums of Money at divers times in and Since the year 1708 amounting in the whole to one hundred and Seventeen pounds five Shillings and Sixpence and is in full of all bills bonds debts dues and demands whatsoever which I the S<sup>d</sup> Jethro Coffin have or Claim to have against the S<sup>d</sup> Nathaniell paddack from the beginning of the world to the day of the date of these presents In witness whereof I the S<sup>d</sup> Jethro Coffin have hereunto put my hand and Seal this Seventeenth day of June in the year 1714

[Signed] Jethro Coffin [Seal]

Sealed and delivered  
in the presence of us

[Signed] Stephen Coffin Jr

[Signed] John Arthur



APPENDIX C. JETHRO COFFIN'S WILL from Suffolk County Probate Court Docket  
Book 25:29-31, Boston.

In the Name of God Amen, the twenty ninth day of  
July in the year of our Lord Annoq, Dom: 1726. I Jethro Coffin  
of Mendon in the County of Suffolk, and Province of the  
Massachusetts Bay in New England Blacksmith being sick  
and weak but of a Sound and perfect mind and memory  
thanks be given unto God, therefore calling to mind the mortality  
of my Body and knowing that it is appointed for all men  
once to dye and after death the Judgement Do make & ordain  
this my last will and Testament that is to say, Principally  
and First of all I give and recommend my Soul into the hands  
of God that gave it and my Body I recommend to the Earth  
to be buried in decent Christian Burial nothing doubting  
but at the General Resurrection I shall receive the same again  
by the mighty power of God. And as touching such worldly  
Estate wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me in this life,  
after my just Debts & Funeral Expences are paid & discharged  
I give demise & dispose of the Same in the following manner  
and form Impr: To Mary my welbeloved wife I Give  
(during her Natural life) the whole of the Issues & profits  
all and Singular of my Real Estate undisposed of wheresoever  
the same shall or may be found; And that the whole of my  
Personal Estate shall be and remain with my said wife  
to be at her dispose forever, And that after the decease of her  
my said Wife I give demise and dispose of the whole of my  
Said Real Estate unto and amongst my Six Children  
Namely John Coffin, Josiah Coffin, & Robert Coffin, Margaret  
Terry & Priscilla Gardner and Abigail Woodberry to them  
their heirs and assigns forever to be by them in equal distribution  
possessed & enjoyed as a Sure perfect & absolute Estate of  
Inheritance in Fee Simple Excepting three acres of Land  
Scituate lying and being in Mendon aforesaid, which I  
did of late purchase of Woodland Thompson be the same  
more or less as it is abutted & bounded or reputed to be  
bounded, which said three acres of Land more or less I do  
hereby give unto my said Daughter Abigail Woodberry her  
heirs & assigns forever over and above her part & proportion  
in the Dividend and Distribution of my Real Estate after the  
decease of my said wife as afore Specified. And Lastly I  
Do hereby Constitute make & ordain Mary, my welbeloved  
Wife, and my beloved Son John Coffin aforenamed to be my  
Sole Executors of this my last will and Testament And I Do  
hereby utterly disallow Revoke & Disannul all and every other  
former Testaments, Wills, Legacies & Bequests, and Executors  
by me in any ways before named Ratifying & Confirming  
this and no other to be my last will & Testament In Testimony  
whereof I the said Jethro Coffin have here set to my hand and  
Seal the day & year as within written Jethro Coffin & a Seal  
Signed Sealed published Pronounced & Declared by the said  
Jethro Coffin as his last will & Testament In the presence of us  
the Subscribers John Brown, Daniel Darling his + Mark,  
Ebenezer Brown E B the mark of-

John Boydell Regr, Samuel Sewall J Probt



APPENDIX D. Deeds and Wills for Jethro Coffin's Homestead House in Mendon.

1693 (SCD 23:162,163) John, Samuel, and Mary Gurney of Bridgewater, with the consent of their mother (Ruth Bayley) to Ephraim Thayer of Braintry for 40 pounds a 20a lot in Mendon bounded east with Muddy Brook and partly on a highway on the west.

1692 (SCD 19:356) Ephraim Thayer and Sarah of Braintree for 31 pounds to Josiah Thayer of Mendon a 20a homestead and doubling lott lying together in Mendon, bounded E by Muddy Brook, W partly by a highway. [This does not give unequivocal evidence for a dwelling house, but historians mention primitive first dwellings in Worcester County (Massachusetts Historical Commission 1985:202), and many houses in Mendon were destroyed in Phillip's War, 1675.]

Nov. 20, 1708 (SCD 30:187,188) Josiah Thayre of Mendon for 136 pounds deeded to Jethro Coffin of Nantucket, "sundry tracts of lands meadows and swamps" in Mendon: "40 acres ...I now dwell upon formerly the home and doubling Lott of John Gurney", bounded E by Muddy brook, W and NW by homelot of S. Hayward, partly W by a four rod highway by J. Stevens to the S Meadow, S by F. Thayer, N by P. Holbrook, with the Dwelling house and barn, and 30 acres in Round Meadow, 20 acres in West Woods, and 30 acres.

Jan 29, 1721/2 (SCD 39:261) Jethro Coffin gave to his son Robert Coffin, one half of his "homestead house and land" in Mendon. The other half Jethro reserved for himself and his wife for their natural lives, after which it would go to his son Robert as a gift. Jethro specifically reserved for himself and his wife the west end of the house after he built an addition thereto.

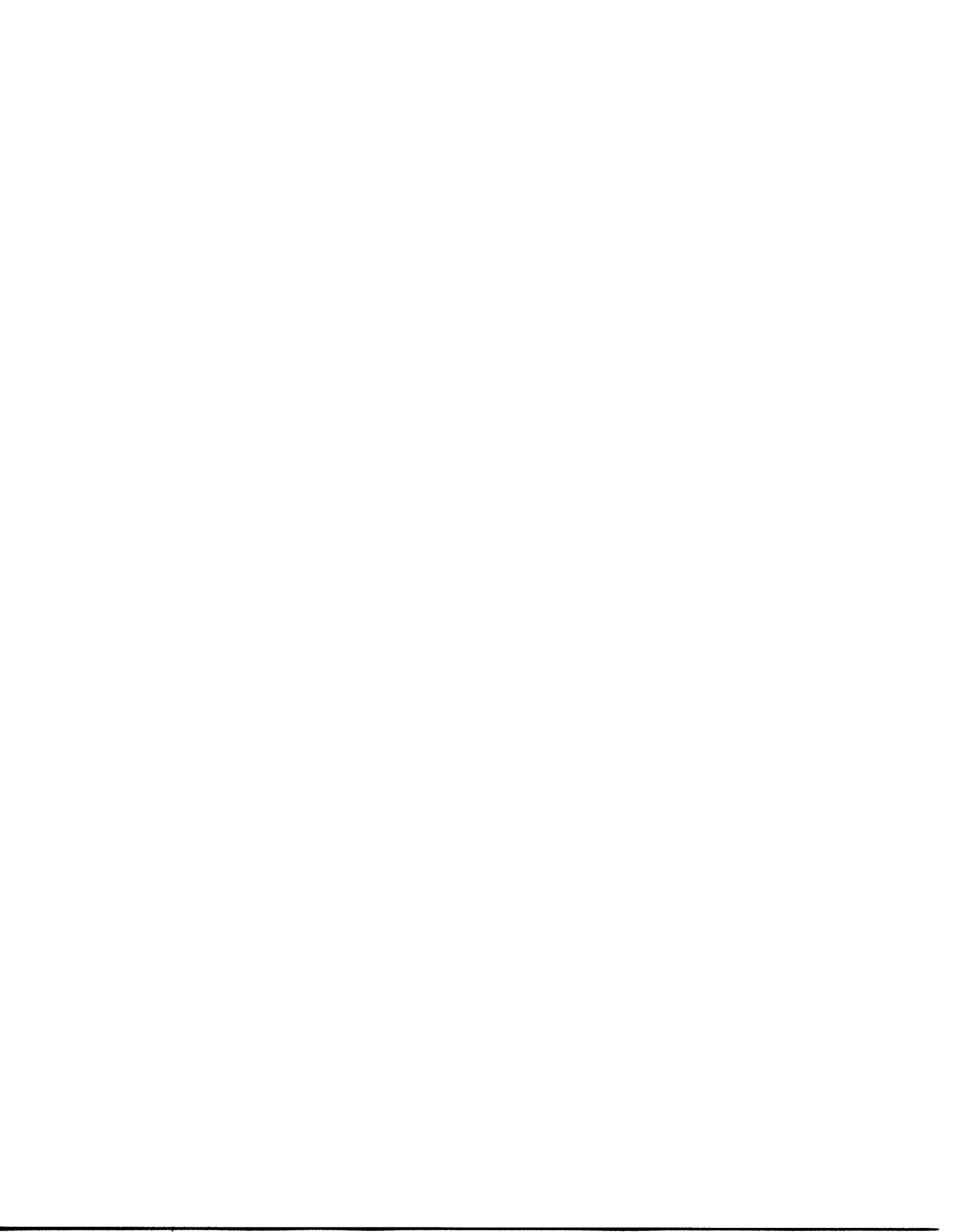
July 29, 1726 (SCP 25:29,30,31, #5289) Jethro Coffin, blacksmith, of Mendon wrote his will leaving half his estate to his wife Mary, and then to his children, John, Josiah, Robert, Margaret Terry, Priscilla Gardner, and Abigail Woodbury. This will was probated August 10, 1726.

1736 (WCD 8:152) Robert Coffin of Nantucket sold to his sister, Margaret Terry, wife of Samuel Terry, of Union, County of Windham, Connecticut, for 500 pounds, all lands in Mendon and Uxbridge Jethro Coffin deeded to Robert Coffin, including his house and homestead with 100 a in Mendon.

1737 (WCD 8:488) Samuel Terry & Margaret of Union CT sold to Edmund Morse, joyner, for 580 pounds, the house and homestead with 80 acres that was Jethro Coffin's in Mendon.

1780 (WCP Series A #41820) Edmund Morse devised the homestead with all the buildings on 125 acres of land (Figure 2) to his heirs.

[For owners and documentation between 1780 and Mrs. Margaret Morrison in 1986, see abstracts and facsimiles of deeds and wills in Title Search for Jethro Coffin House in Mendon, Massachusetts by Elizabeth A. Little, 1986].



APPENDIX E. Abstracts of Deeds for John Gardner's, Robert Even's, and some of Jethro Coffin's Land in Mendon.

1711 (SCD 29:7) Robert Evens purchased a farm in Mendon from John Rockwood, on both sides Muddy Brook, with land on the Charles R. and the Great River, witnessed by J. Coffin. His son Edmund sold it to Robert Coffin (SCD 39:262).

1712 (SCD 27:31) John Gardner purchased a 119a farm in Mendon from James Lovet for 100 pounds, on both sides of Second Bridge (Charles) River, with all trees, wood, underwood, housing, fences, orchards, stones, minerals, runs of water, or watercourses, grass, herbage, feedings, etc.

May 8, 1713 (SCD 30:189,190)(reg. 1716). Grindal Rawson, clerk, sold for 5 pounds to Jethro Coffin, Robert Evens, and John Gardner all of Mendon, 5 and a half acres of Cedar Swamp lying in and being a part of Cedar Swamp commonly called the North Cedar Swamp, being (my) whole share of Cedar Swamp in the Three hundred Acres of Cedar Swamp granted by the Proprietors of Mendon to be divided amongst the Interested Proprietors of Mendon according to their stated proportions or common rights....

1718 (P.R.:475) 43a+5 & 1/2a in Cedar Swamp for Robert Evens, John Gardner and Jethro Coffin.

1729-1738 (WCD 3:116; 9:23; 34:277) John Gardner, Mariner, of Sherborn, Nantucket, sold his farm, now 231a to William Robinson of Newtown, Middlesex, husbandman.

1730 (P.R.:462) John Garner and Richard Gardner 30 acres near North Cedar Swamp (on Charles River).



APPENDIX F. Documentation for Jethro Coffin's 240 Acre Grant in the Nipmug Country.

1672 Peter Coffin of Exeter NH was compensated by the General Court of the Bay Colony for a shipload of masts sent to King George of England in 1668, by a grant of 200 acres of upland and 40 acres of meadow "where he can finde it not yet layd out..." (Coffin 1713:13; Appendix H).

November 6 1711 (SCD 30:189) Peter Coffin, Gentleman of Exeter, deeded "to my Welbeloved Son", Jethro Coffin of Mendon, 200 Acres of upland and Forty Acres of meadow granted to me by the General Court of Boston to lay out have hold and Enjoy the sd Grant with all ye priviledges &c.....

May 1713, Jethro Coffin petitioned the General Assembly of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay to confirm a lay out of 240 acres west of the Mendon line, with a plat attached; confirmed (Coffin 1713:12,13; Appendix H; Fig. 8).

May 14, 1715 (SCD 29:180) Jethro Coffin deeded to John and Josiah Coffin of Mendon, land on Tuckernuck and a farm of 240 acres on the south side of the Oxford Road near the Mendon line in "the Nipmug Country" (refers to a plat). [French Huguenot settlement at Oxford, hence the "French/Oxford Road" (Whitney 1793:83).]

March 8, 1725/6 (SCD 39:197,198), John Coffin, esq., and Josiah Coffin, mariner, both of Sherbourn, County of Nantucket, for 280 pounds, deeded to Samuel Terry, clerk, (husband of Margaret, Jethro Coffin's daughter (Appendix H)) of Barrington, Bristol County, Massachusetts, "A Certain Farm or Tract of land", containing 240 acres, which was given us by our father Jethro Coffin of Mendon, Lying in the Nipmugg Country in Sutton [1985 Northbridge], on the south side of Oxford Road near Mendon line, including trees, orchards, stones, fences, houses, minerals, grass, herbage, feedings, and runs of water or water courses.

March 4, 1726/7. (SCD 43:26). Samuel Terry, clerk of Barrington, for 8 pounds from John Browne of Northfield, Hampshire County, yeoman, 4 and 1/2 acres in Mendon, both sides of Mumford's River at a place called the Falls, south of Oxford Road, west of Angell Torrey's land.

March 24, 1727 (SCD 43:26). Samuel Terry, clerk of Barrington, from George Woodward, husbandman of Mendon, for 200 pounds, 120a both sides Mumford's River, housing, orcharding, fencing, timber, wood, underwood, with all the runs, water courses, mines, and minerals, bounded west on Mendon line, north on Angel Torrey's heirs, a town road through it.

June 29, 1727 (SCD 42:238). Samuel Terry clerk of Uxbridge (set-off from Mendon), borrowed 66 pounds from Ebenezer Reed of Uxbridge, by a mortgage on his 500a Sutton rights belonging to a sawmill, and 4&1/2a adjoining the sawmill on Mumford's River at a place called the falls, to pay a debt of 66 pounds to Daniel Matheson of Providence. Paid off 9 January 1728.

1728 (P.R.:217,218) Samuel Terry receives from town, in Jethro Coffins' right, 20a S side of Mumford R. near his sawmill, and 2a in Jonathan Thayer's right adjoining his land near the sawmill. Also 28a of Coffins' S of Terry's house and bounded west on Mendon line, and 3 a near the ironworks.



10 January, 1728 (SCD 43:147). Samuel Terry, clerk, of Uxbridge, and Margaret, his wife, to Hugh Hall, Esqr., of Boston for 700 pounds, 370a in Sutton (240a was Jethro Coffin's; 130a laid out to S. Terry in Sutton, adjoining my other land which was J. Coffin's); my house & homelots (120a) on the west line of Uxbridge, formerly G. Woodward's. Also a Sawmill with the Ironworks & thirty acres of land adjoining thereto in Uxbridge in a place in Mumfords River called the Falls, with all the buildings fences, trees, woods, etc. His wife, Margaret Terry's quitclaim.

1732 (WCD 10:242) Samuel Terry to Thomas Sanford, all my land in Uxbridge, including 4 and 1/2 acres at the Falls where I built a sawmill and a forge. Measurements given with respect to the river, dams, mills, bridges given. Hall mentioned with some land.



APPENDIX G. MISCELLANEOUS MENDON, WORCESTER AND SUFFOLK GRANTS, DEEDS, WILLS.

MENDON:

- 1708 William Hayward deeded 30 acres of Round Meadow to J.Coffin (J.C.) (1708 SCD 30:188).  
1711 Peter Holbrook deeded to J.C. for 10 pounds, 6 acres east of J.C.'s land and east of Muddy Brook (SCD 30:201).  
  
1713 (P.R.:163) 50 acres for J.C.  
1718 (P.R.:462) 10a, for J.C. (usually inflated by wasteland when laid out).  
1718 (P.R.:476) 1a for J.C.  
1718 (P.R.474) 57a on West Hill, adj.Keith: 37a granted and 20 a "badland"; 26a E of Muddy Brook; 10a; 1723 3a Wigwam Hill; all dividend land for J.C.  
  
1727(reg) Jethro Coffin,. blacksmith, deeded to Wm Hayward 1 acre in Mendon (SCD 41:261) (registered after Jethro's death, probably written earlier).  
1727 (reg) Robert Coffin of Sherbourne, Nantucket, to J. Penniman of Mendon, for 28 pounds, 2 acres of round meadow (SCD 41:214).  
1732 (WCD 4:43) J.C. (estate, executors: Mary and John Coffin) to George Patterson, blacksmith, 57a near Keith and West River.  
  
1732 (P.R.:217,218) (probably J.C.'s estate) to Samuel Terry, 16a & 28a.  
1735 (P.R.:652) to Moses Read, 6a near Wachusesek Hill.  
  
1738 (WCD 11:36) Samuel and Margaret Terry small piece of J.C.'s to French.  
1739 (WCD 10:514) Samuel and Margaret Terry of [Wostershire?] in Dutchess County, New York, to John Wilson, Doctor, of Sherborn, Middlesex County, 110 acres in Mendon called "Phillips Back", all J.C. land including 30 acres of Thayer.  
  
1750 John Coffin, blacksmith of Martha's Vineyard, a quitclaim to John Draper (SCD 79:161).

WILLS AT SUFFOLK (SCP) & WORCESTER (WCP) COUNTY COURTHOUSES:

- John Gardner 1749 will #9277  
SCP 42:390-392, 1745 will, proved 1749, mariner, wife Sarah of Boston, two sisters in Glasgow, Scotland.  
SCP 43:18: rich inventory  
SCP 49:521: administration, daughters Elizabeth & Margaret  
  
John Gardner 1752 will #9922  
SCP 45: 662, will 1751, gentleman of Boston, wife Grace, brother Joseph, sister Sarah.  
SCP 47: 203. 11 page inventory dry goods (including snuff and a fishing rod) Lots of yard goods. A merchant's goods.  
  
Peter Coffin 1717 #3831  
SCP 20:387, mariner of Boston, wife Anne (m2 J. Cushing). rich inventory.  
  
Samuel Torrey, 1748, SCP #9087 (41:426). Currier of Boston, w. Abigail, son Samuel, d. Abigail, dau. Persis.  
Samuel Torry, gentleman of Mendon WCP (A)#59553, 1753 (wife:Mary, dau.Abigail & Juda); WCP (A)#59554, 1769 (widow:Sarah), inventory & land division plot.

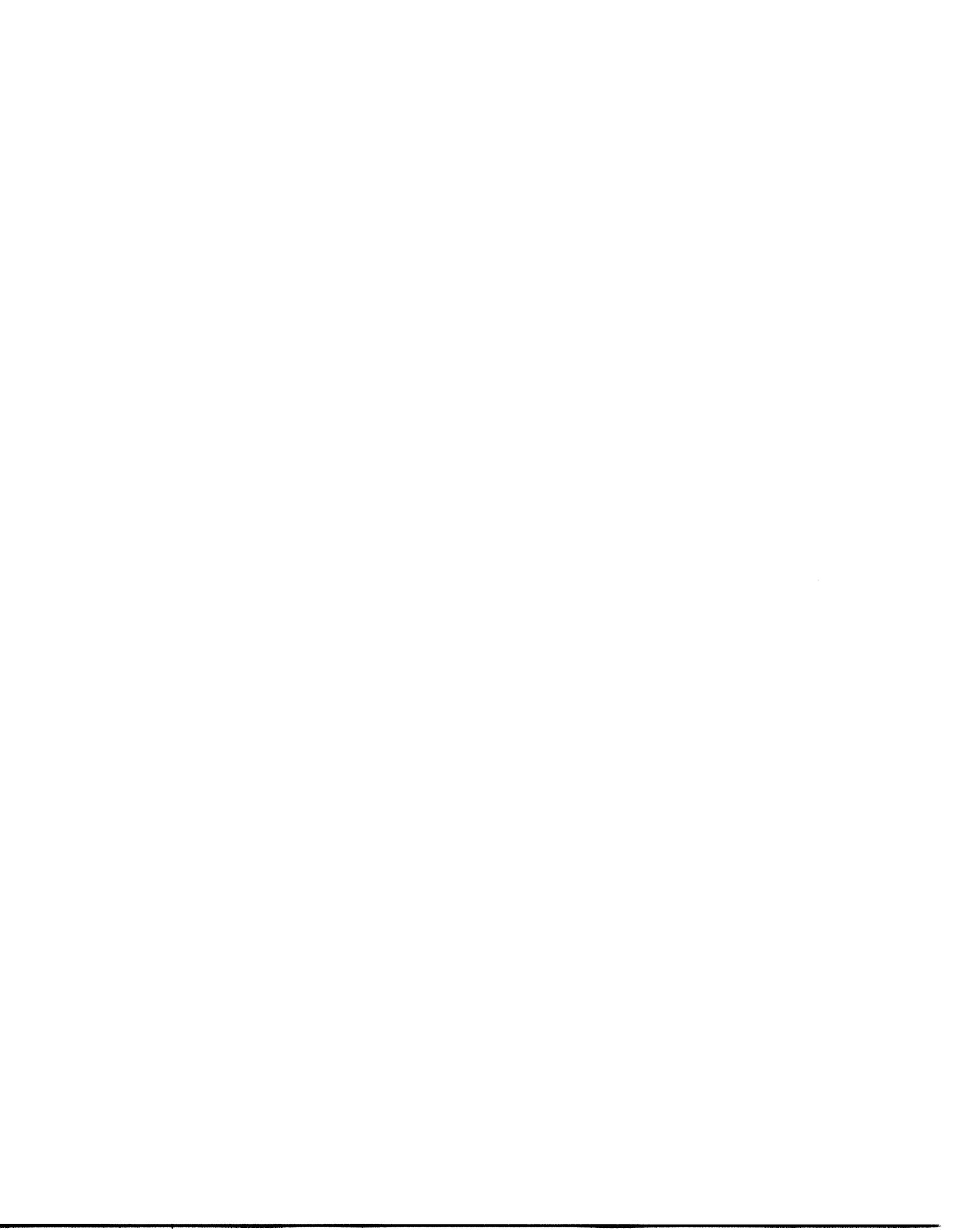






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