

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Hillsdale Road not for publication

city, town Richmond vicinity of congressional district #2-Rep. Edward Beard

state Rhode Island code _____ county Washington code 009

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Open Space.

4. Owner of Property

name Rhode Island Hospital Trust National Bank, trustees for the estate
of Theakston DeCoppet.

street & number 1 Hospital Trust Plaza

city, town Providence vicinity of _____ state Rhode Island

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richmond Town Hall

street & number Town House Road

city, town Richmond state Rhode Island

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title "Broadbrush Archeological Survey, Exeter, R.I." has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

city, town Providence state Rhode Island

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District takes its name from that part of the town of Richmond, Rhode Island in which it is located. A center for various kinds of milling from the last decade of the eighteenth century to the first decade of this century, Hillsdale produced textiles here in the western part of Richmond during the period 1830 to 1870. Presently, the mill village exists as a series of archeological sites: industrial, commercial, and domestic, strung out along Hillsdale Road and set in 68 acres of second-growth, hardwood forest. A small portion of a large, privately owned, wooded tract, the various components of the mill village have been preserved from subsequent reuse or development and feature a high degree of archeological integrity.

Previous Research and Recent History

Knowledge of the abandoned mill village at Hillsdale was brought to the attention of the State Historic Preservation Office by Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management; and a program of documentary research and archeological testing occurred there in July, 1979, supported by the trustees of the property, Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company.

Twenty-seven hundred acres comprise the estate of which the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District is a part. The land was brought together from many small parcels during the early years of the twentieth century by Theakston DeCoppet, a former New Yorker who took up residence in Richmond in 1916 after retiring from the New York Stock Exchange. Active in local affairs, he served as president of the Richmond Town Council for eight years and was known statewide for his philanthropy and conservation efforts. On the west side of Hillsdale Road, opposite the lower mill pond, he erected a beautifully, yet simply furnished house (#6) that today serves as the home of the caretaker. Just to the south stands a second house, a mid-nineteenth century farmhouse (#4), formerly occupied by the resident overseer/farmer.

Informants claim the present house was built around a late eighteenth century dwelling owned by an early gristmill operator¹

DeCoppet's will, probated in 1937, noted that the property, "shall be administered as a forest reservation and sanctuary for the scientific care, study and preservation of all desirable plant and animal life within its limits until the General Assembly enacts legislation to hold the Hillsdale

(See Continuation Sheet #1).

¹Will of William Potter, Probate of Will, 1774, Vol. 2, pg. 216. Richmond Town Hall, Richmond, Rhode Island.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

1

Item number 7

Page 2

property in perpetuity for the conservation of its natural resources."² At some time in the future, the Department of Environmental Management will acquire the entire property.

Although the District already enjoys a unique level of preservation as part of a larger estate, several threats to its continued preservation exist. During 1978, the caretaker of the estate demolished several sections of a mill's stone wall because its instability threatened the safety of the public. More significantly, proposed interstate highway I-895 may pose a much more disruptive threat should it be built.

Relation of Sites to Environment.

The land along Hillsdale Road was well suited for the establishment of water-powered mills in the nineteenth century. Just east of the road and along it for a distance of 3,400 feet runs the Beaver River, a narrow stream with water sufficient to have allowed the Hillsdale mill to operate the year-round in 1850.³ The Beaver also powered mills in a Richmond village north of Hillsdale known as Tug Hollow. The Beaver gradually dropped more than one hundred feet between Tug Hollow and formed a good head of water.

Although a finger of glacial outwash extends up into the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District, the area soils are generally till, an unstratified mix of sand, clay, silt and gravel. Much of the mill district, like the majority of the estate itself is classified as forested land. The DeCoppet house and associated structures are excluded from this classification and are termed, instead, clustered residential land. It is probable that during the period of industrial activity, much of the district was cleared of the oaks, maples, and beeches which now stand on the land.

Structural Remains Inventory

Following is a list of structural features (within the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District) numbered to correspond with the district map figure 2. All building foundations and structures are constructed of cut stone unless otherwise noted.

(See Continuation Sheet #2).

²Will of Theakston DeCoppet. Probate of Will, 1937. Richmond Town Hall, Richmond, Rhode Island.

³United States Census. 1850. Richmond, Washington County, Rhode Island, Schedule of Manufactures.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 7

Page 3

West side of Hillsdale Road, from south to north (see figure 2)

1. Cider mill foundation, probably early 20th century.
2. Cider mill dam, probably early 20th century.
3. Shed, 20th century.
4. House, Victorian, 19th century with 18th century core.
5. Workers quarters, probably 20th century.
6. DeCoppet house, shingle style, probably early 20th century.
7. Garage, 20th century.
8. Privy, 19th century.
9. Store and dance hall foundation, 19th century.
10. House foundation, 19th century.
11. Privy, 19th century.
12. Well, 19th century.
13. Headrace, earth and stone, 19th century.
14. Former Hillsdale Road, 19th century.
15. Upper dam, 19th century.
16. House foundation, 19th century.
17. Privy, 19th century.
18. Cold cellar foundation, 19th century.
19. Terrace, cobble and earth, 19th century.
20. Barn foundation.

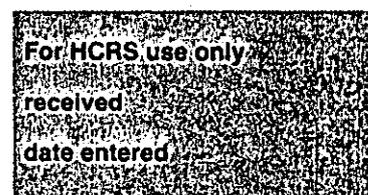
East side of Hillsdale Road, from south to north

21. Barn, 20th century.
22. Shed, 20th century.
23. Wheelpit and tailrace, probably 19th century.
24. Gristmill, 18th century shingle mill in 19th century.
25. Ice house, probably 19th century.
26. Dam, 18th-20th century.
27. Foundation, 19th century.
28. House foundation, 19th century.
29. Tailrace, 19th century.
30. New Mill, 19th century.
31. Headrace, stone and earth, 19th century.
32. House cellar, no foundation stones, outlines visible, 19th century.
33. Dam, earth and stone, 19th century.
34. House foundation, 19th century.
35. Tailraces, (2), early 19th century.
36. Old Mill, early 19th century.
37. Chimney base, 19th century (Dye House).
38. Retaining wall, early 19th century.
39. Stone piers, early 19th century.
40. Privy, 19th century.
41. House foundation, 19th century.

(See Continuation Sheet #3).

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

3

Item number

7

Page 4

- 42. Stone enclosure, 19th century
- 43. Retaining wall, 19th century
- 44. Barn foundation, 19th century
- 45. House foundation, 19th century

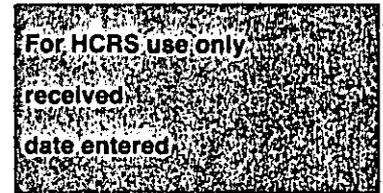
Archeological Evidence

Limited archeological testing was carried out at the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District in order to determine the level of disturbance below grade and to evaluate the quantity and diversity of cultural materials present. Not every structure was tested; rather, excavations took place at each site type on the property: mill building, workers' housing, owner's housing, mill store. In all, eleven test pits measuring fifty by fifty centimeters were excavated to depths ranging from forty to fifty centimeters, where sterile soils were met.

Soils from all test pits proved to be undisturbed and the artifacts recovered from most units were found to be fairly uniform. Materials from the house sites and store, exclusively nineteenth century in origin and domestic or structural in nature, included hardwhite ware and pearlware, curved and flat glass as well as machine-cut nails. A different assemblage resulted from tests at the older mill building where nineteenth-century industrial materials (washers, bolts, iron fragments) were mixed with structural remains such as machine-cut nails and bricks.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

4

Item number 8

Page 2

Archeological Significance

The Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District represents a rural industrial community spanning several stages of industrial development. In the course of the 19th century, the community passed from the agriculturally-oriented activity of grist-and saw milling to the mechanized, competitive manufacture of textiles. The intact archeological remains of mills and related buildings, water-power systems, dwellings, and outbuildings contain information on the physical, social, and economic changes to the community as a result of industrial growth and decline.

Contained within the DeCoppet Estate, yet outside the boundaries of the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District are the remains of numerous rural farmsteads which operated during the occupation of the mill village and are presumably in a similar state of preservation. These sites were not examined at this time due to their indirect relation to the district. Archeological investigations of both the farmsteads and mill village sites could yield information on the comparative economic status of agricultural and industrial labor in a rural township and, also, indicate the existence of economic relationships between the mill village and outlying farms.

In the large, urban mills of nineteenth-century New England sizable differences in economic and social status existed between labor and management. In rural milling centers where the owner was often a local resident who employed a small number of fellow residents, there may have been more cultural similarities than differences between owner and workers. As the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District includes house sites of both mill workers and a mill owner, excavation at these locations would unearth a material culture indicative of cultural heterogeneity or homogeneity at Hillsdale.

These are a sampling of questions applicable to research at the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District. A program of archeological investigation within the district would certainly result in new topics for study.

Interpretive Significance

As a portion of privately held conservation land, all of which may be owned and managed one day by Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management, the proposed Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District possesses considerable interpretive potential. Hillsdale's initial mill ground corn and its last, pressed cider. Between the times of these mills, a textile industry grew and declined in contrast to the agricultural community around it. In viewing a large collection of archeological sites set within a forest sanctuary, visitors could learn about the coming of nineteenth-century industries to a rural, farming town.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

5

Item number

9

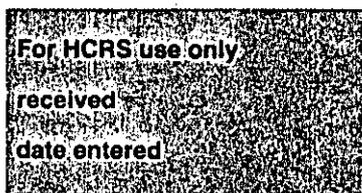
Page

2

Cole, J.R., History of Washington and Kent Counties, R.I.,
(New York: 1889), p. 725.
Land Evidence Records (unpublished), Richmond Town Clerk's Office,
Richmond, R.I.
Probate Records (unpublished), Richmond Town Clerk's Office,
Richmond, R.I.
United States Census. 1850 and 1870. Washington County, R.I.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

6

Item number 10

Page 2

and standing structures that all related to the milling activities. The boundary was drawn to leave approximately 100 feet of space on all sides of a site or structure and the Beaver River and follows natural boundaries and arbitrary lines.

At a point 150 feet southeast of the confluence of Beaver River and Cider Mill Brook the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District boundary begins, proceeding northeast 300 feet, then north-northeast 400 feet, then east 300 feet, then north-northeast 550 feet, then northwest 300 feet, then north-northeast 125 feet, then northeast 250 feet, then north-northeast 750 feet, then north 150 feet where it meets Hillsdale Road, crosses it, and runs along it 1050 feet, then west 1000 feet, then south-southwest 300 feet, then west 300 feet, then south-southwest 500 feet, then southeast 250 feet, then south 250 feet, then south-southeast 75 feet, then southeast 450 feet, then south 200 feet, then west 250 feet, then south-southwest 450 feet, then east 200 feet, then south 200 feet then west 300 feet, then south-southwest 900 feet, then south 300 feet, then southeast 575 feet across Beaver River to point of origin.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
— prehistoric	— archeology-prehistoric	— community planning	— landscape architecture	— religion		
— 1400-1499	X archeology-historic	— conservation	— law	— science		
— 1500-1599	— agriculture	— economics	— literature	— sculpture		
— 1600-1699	— architecture	— education	— military	X social/		
X 1700-1799	— art	X engineering	— music	— humanitarian		
X 1800-1899	X commerce	— exploration/settlement	— philosophy	— theater		
— 1900-	— communications	X industry	— politics/government	— transportation		
		— invention		— other (specify)		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Chronology

The significance of the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District is its typicality: Hillsdale presents a case study in rural nineteenth-century industrial development in Rhode Island. Water-powered industry had begun here at least by the first decade of the nineteenth century when a stone mill (figure 2, #24) ground grain on Beaver River south of the later textile mills (#30-36).⁴ By 1833, a woolen mill had been erected (#36) and at the end of the decade a dye house (#37), barn (#44), and three dwelling (#10, 41, 45) existed with the factory.⁵ Once in that ten year period the factory complex had been leased by its local owners to Providence manufacturers and on another occasion it was mortgaged to a different Providence group.⁶

In 1850 when the Federal government collected information on the textile manufacturers at Hillsdale, Whitman Kenyon and Sons' business was somewhat larger than most other such businesses in Washington County: forty-nine thousand dollars were invested in the production of Negro cloth, a rough woolen material shipped to the south; nine men and six women were employed to run the sixteen looms that turned out two hundred thousand yards of cloth a year, valued at more than thirty thousand dollars.⁸

At some point between 1839 and 1868 a second stone mill (#30) was constructed south of the first mill. In 1870 Horatio Kenyon's mill employed more workers (seventeen) on a greater number of looms (twenty-eight) to turn out more Negro cloth (three hundred and twenty-five thousand yards) which was, ironically worth less than it had been twenty years before.⁹ Losing ground to the larger, more integrated and efficient mills elsewhere in southern New England, business waned at Hillsdale in the decade 1870 to 1880.¹⁰

(See Continuation Sheet #4).

⁴Land Evidence Records, Richmond, R.I. Books Page 38.

⁵Land Evidence Records, Richmond, R.I. Book 7, pp. 734-6

⁶Land Evidence Records, Richmond, R.I. Book 7, pp. 478- Book 7, pp. 724-6

⁷United States Census, 1850 Washington County, R.I.

⁸Ibid

⁹Land Evidence Records, Richmond, R.I. Book 10, page 543

¹⁰Hillsdale Mills not listed in United States Census, 1880 Washington County, R.I.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Adams, Virginia "Broadbrush Archeological Survey, Exeter, R.I."
RIHPC Providence, 1978.

Chase, David W., "Survey of R.I. Textile Mills," Masters Thesis,
Brown University, 1969.

(See continuation sheet #5).

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 68 (approx.)

Quadrangle name Hope Valley

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	9	2	7	9	9	6	0	4	6	0	0	5	3	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

1	9	2	7	9	6	8	0	4	5	9	9	3	9	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

1	9	2	7	9	4	1	0	4	5	9	9	4	9	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

1	9	2	7	9	4	6	0	4	6	0	0	5	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District was drawn to include all archeological sites, their associated features, (see continuation sheet #6)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen Cole, Archeological consultant
Commission

organization Rhode Island Historical Preservation date March 1980

street & number 150 Benefit Street telephone 401-277-2678

city or town Providence state Rhode Island

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Frederick Williamson

title _____ date July 10 1980

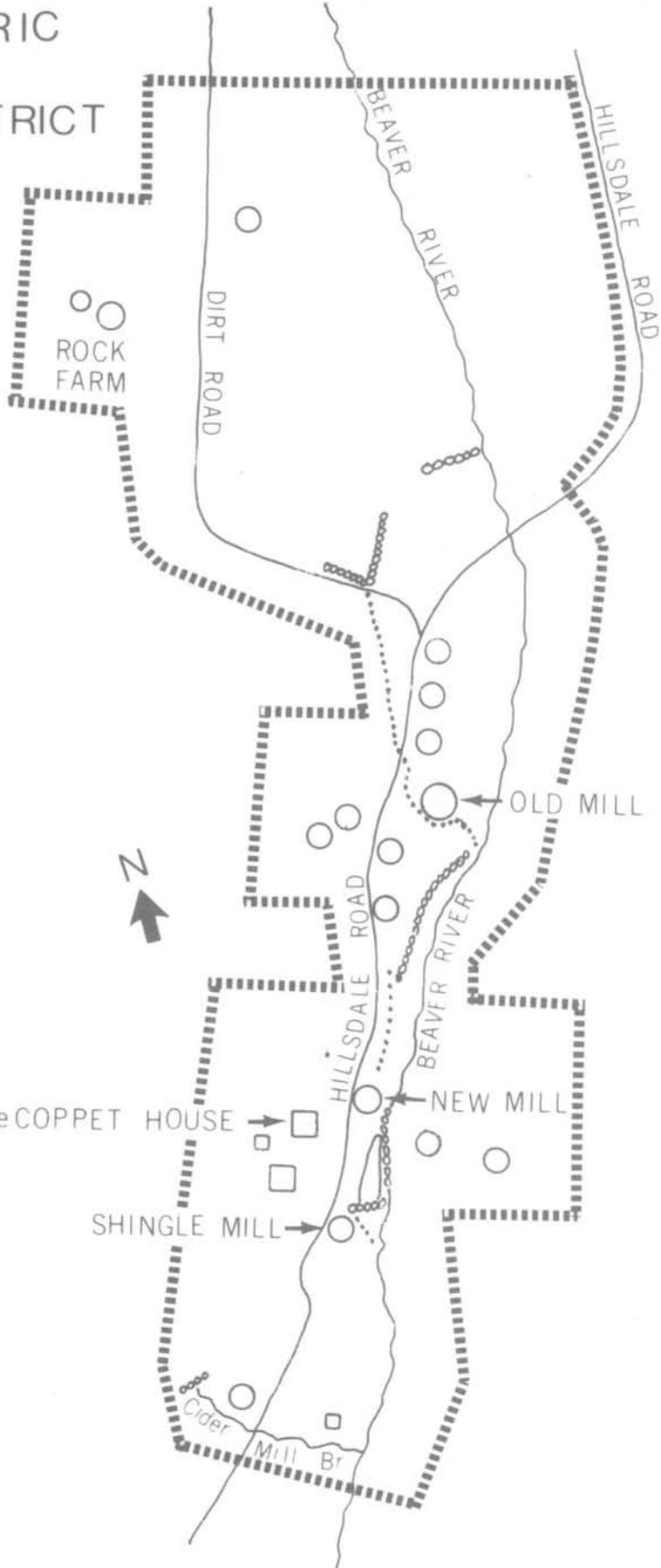
For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date _____

Keeper of the National Register
Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration _____

HILLSDALE HISTORIC and ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT

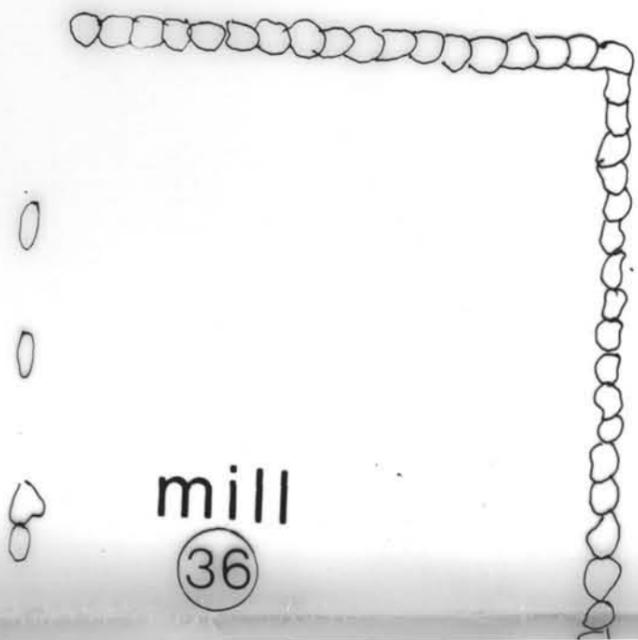
RICHMOND, R.I.



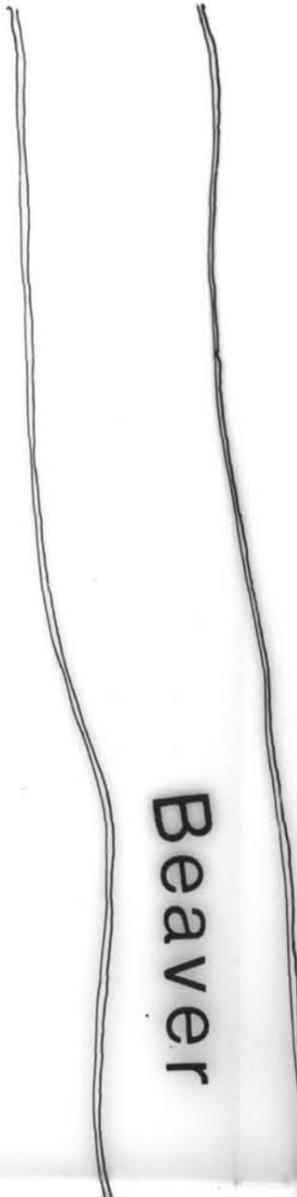
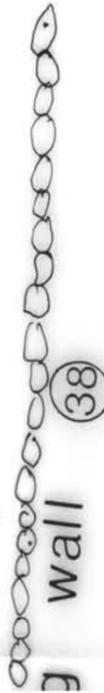
- STANDING STRUCTURE
- FOUNDATION
- DAM
- RACE



OLD MILL
HILLSDALE HISTORIC and
ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT
Richmond, R.I.



ace



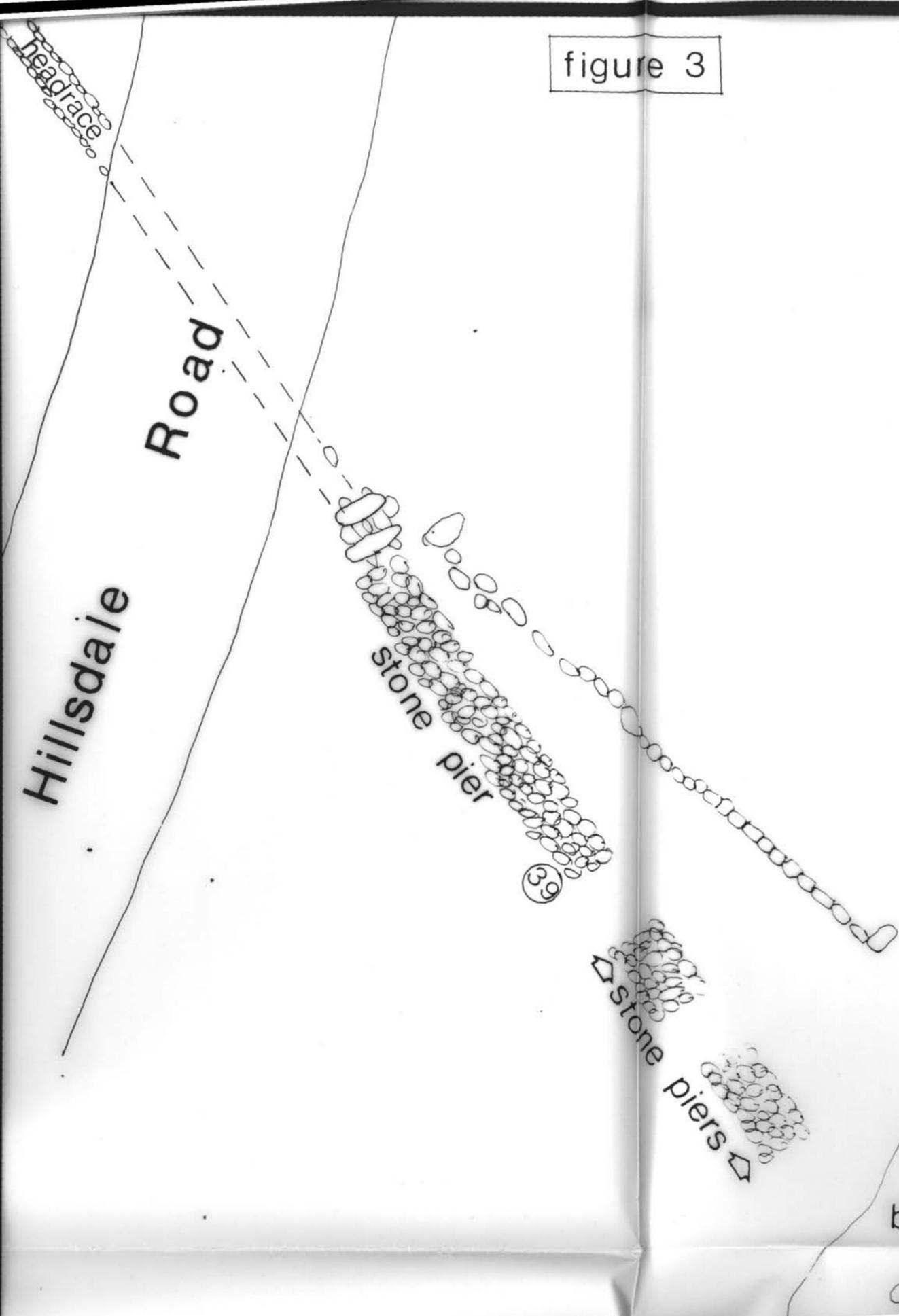
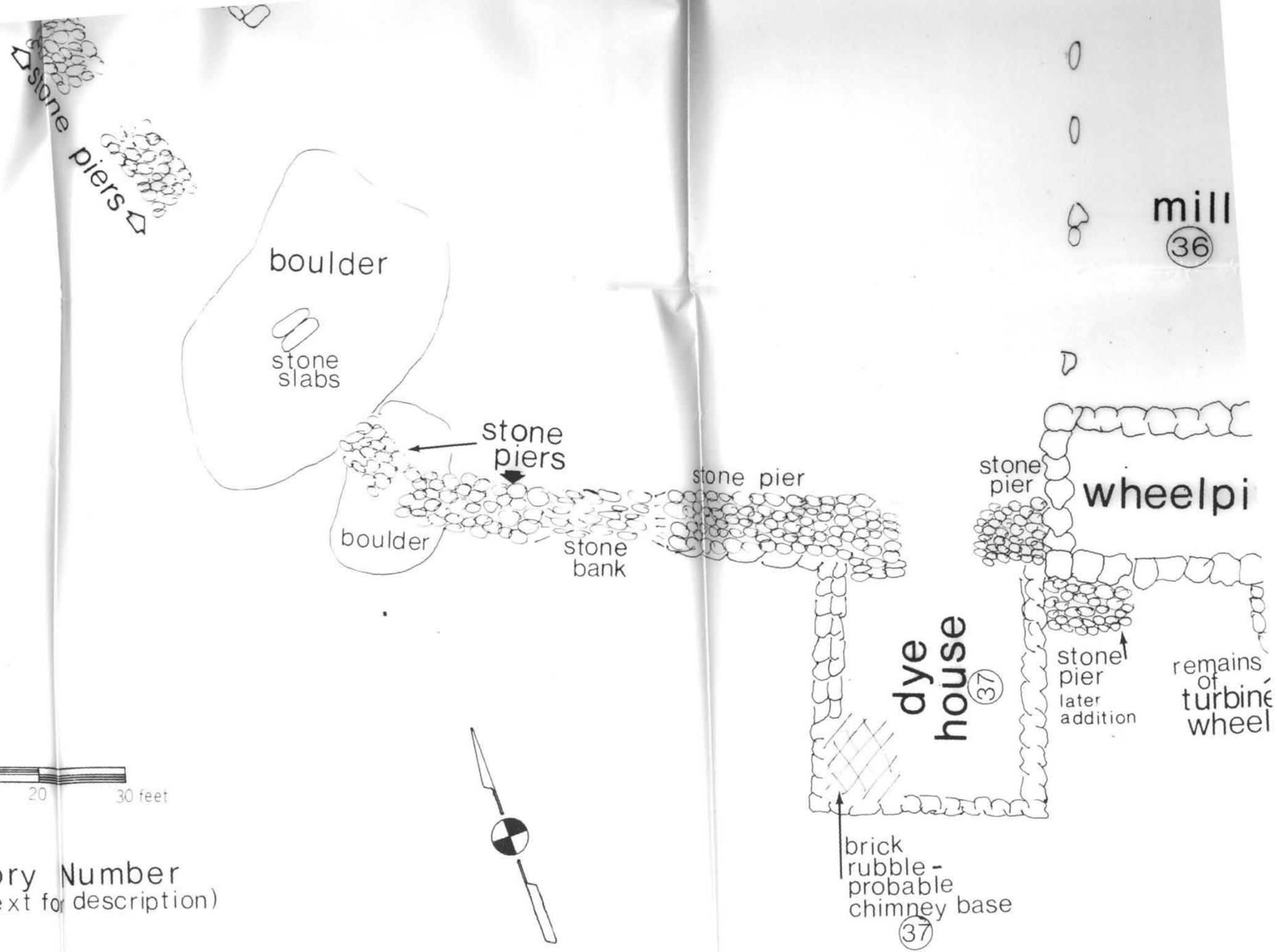


figure 3

OLD M
HILLSDALE HIST
ARCHEOLOGICAL
Richmond, R.I.

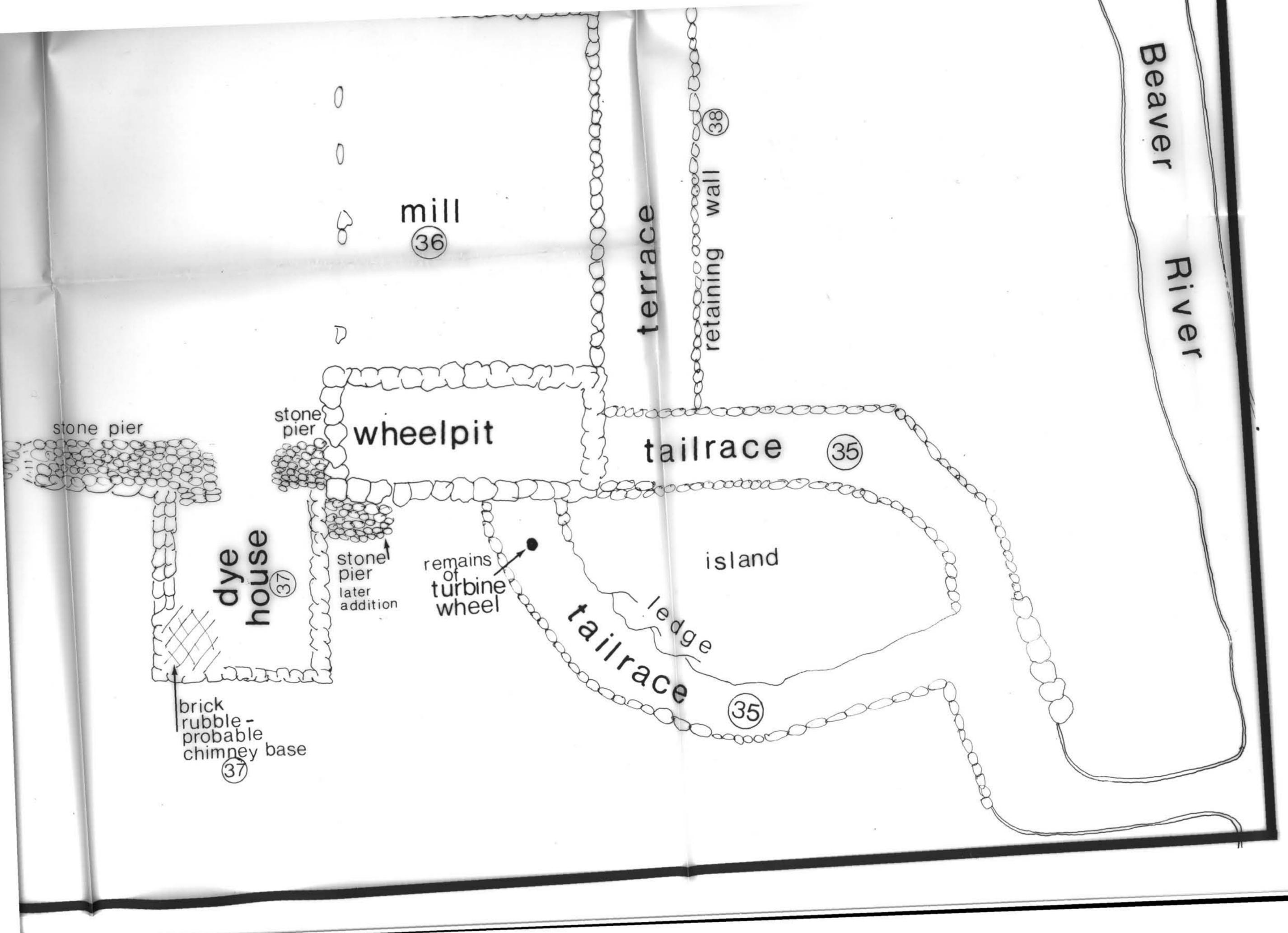
0
0
0



③④ Inventory Number
 (see text for description)

Stachis
 Cole
 Metadson

Beaver River



mill
36

terrace

retaining wall
38

wheelpit

tailrace
35

dye house
37

island

remains of turbine wheel

tailrace
35

ledge

stone pier
later addition

brick rubble - probable chimney base
37

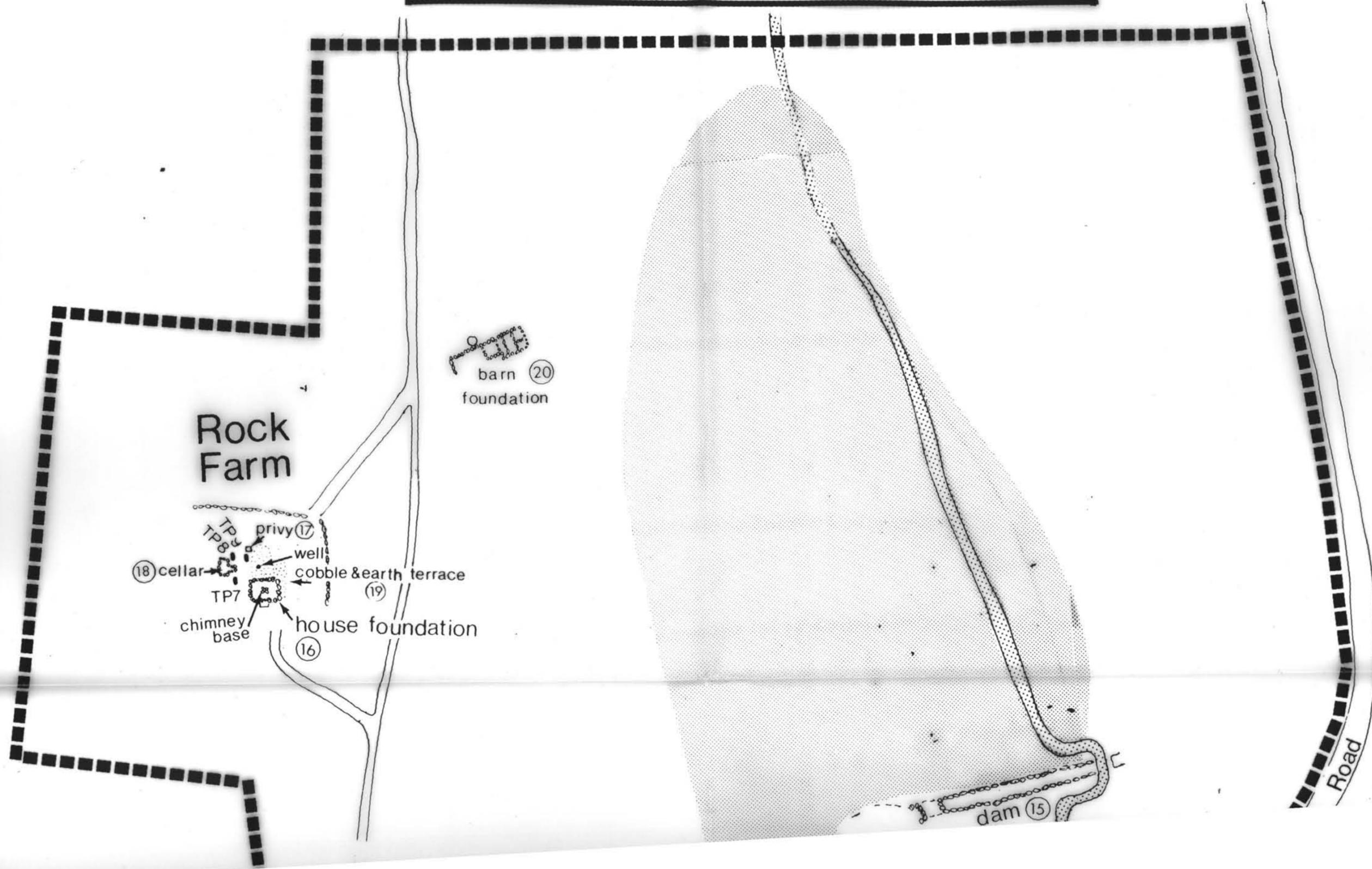
stone pier

stone pier

figure 2

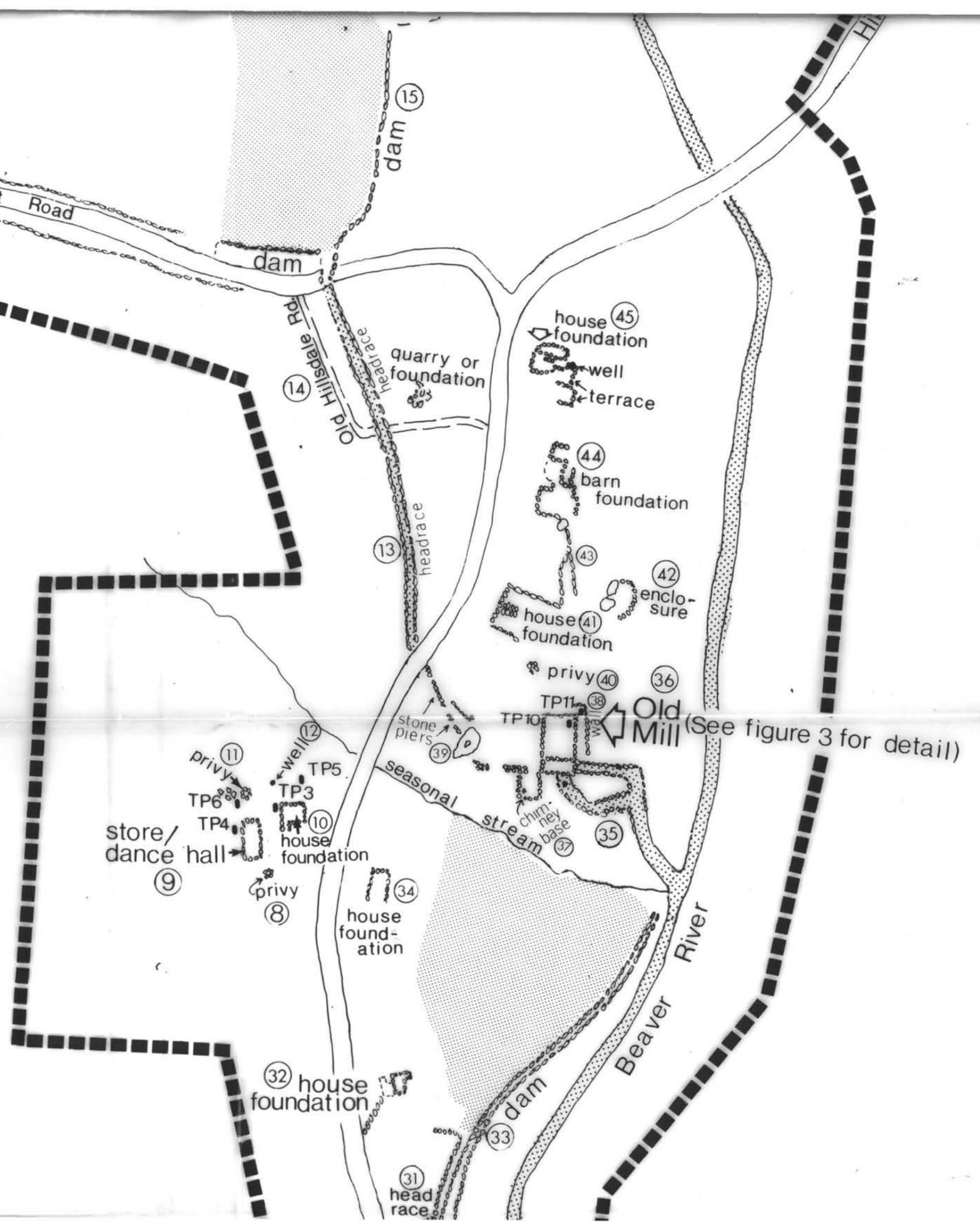
HILLSDALE HISTORIC and ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT

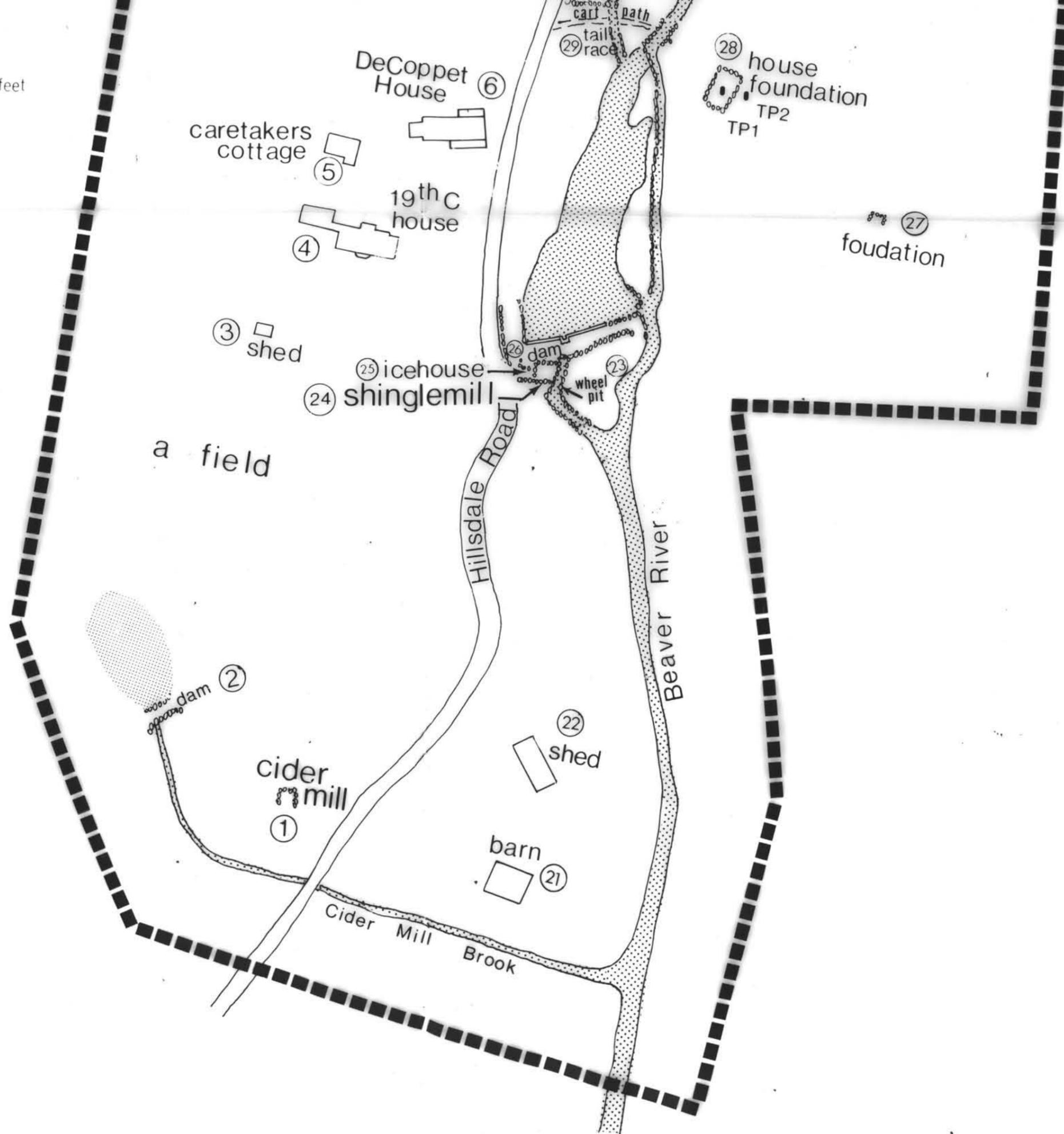
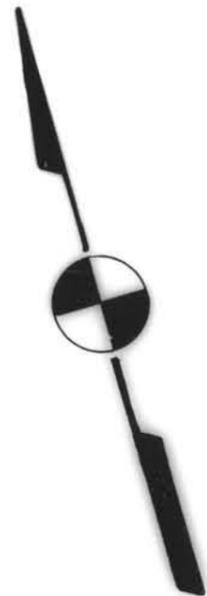
Richmond, R.I.



LEGEND

- Test Pit - size not to scale
- ▬ Standing Structure
- ▬ Foundation/Wall/Dam/Privy
- ▬ Present River or Pond
- ▬ Former Pond
- ▬ District Boundary
- ③ Inventory Number (see text for description)





M. Stachiw
S. Cole
J. Gustafson

Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District
Richmond, Rhode Island

Photographer: Myron Stachiw
Date: August 1979

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Old Mill. Stone supports for flume.
(figure 2, #39)

Photo #1.



Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District
Richmond, Rhode Island

Photographer: Myron Stachiw
Date: August 1979

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

DeCoppet House. View southwest.
(figure 2, #6)

Photo #2.



Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District
Richmond, Rhode Island

Photographer: Myron Stachiw
Date: August 1979

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Eighteenth/nineteenth century farm house.
View west. (figure 2, #4)

Photo #3.



Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District
Richmond, Rhode Island

Photographer: Myron Stachiw
Date: August 1979

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Shingle Mill dam. View east.
(figure 2, #26)

Photo #4.



Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District
Richmond, Rhode Island

Photographer: Myron Stachiw
Date: August 1979

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Rock farm. House ofundation. View north.
(figure 2, #16)

Photo #5.



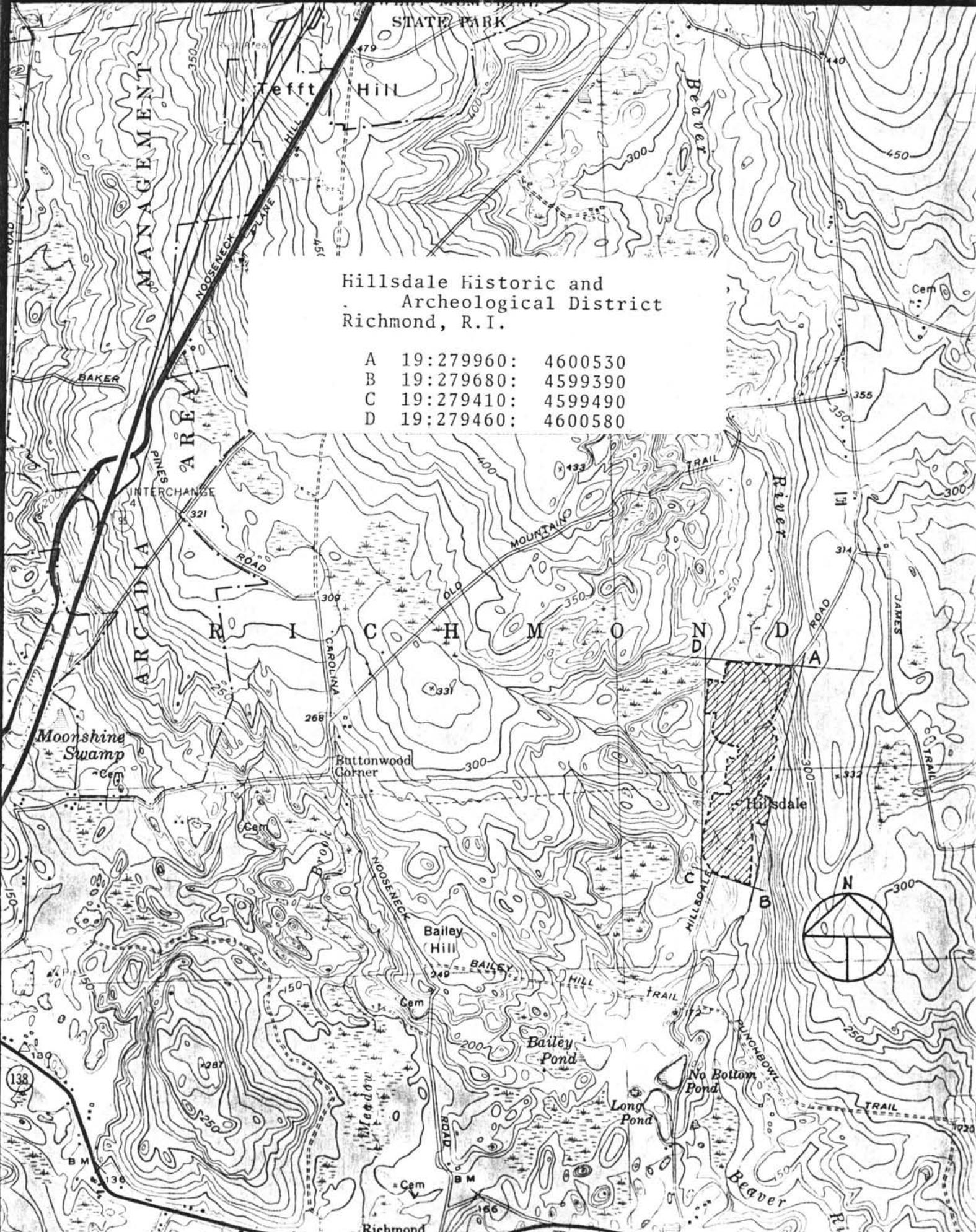
Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District
Richmond, Rhode Island

Photographer: Myron Stachiw
Date: August 1979

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Foundation of store/dance hall.
(figure 2, #9)

Photo #6



Hillsdale Historic and
Archeological District
Richmond, R.I.

A	19:279960:	4600530
B	19:279680:	4599390
C	19:279410:	4599490
D	19:279460:	4600580

Hillsdale H&A District - Richmond

The copy negative
of the ²₁ graphics
is filed in the
archaeology lab in
drawer marked
"graphics"

