

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	OAK.1041
Historic Name:	Graves Machine and Tool Company
Common Name:	Wormley, Ambler B. Texaco Gas Station
Address:	13 Uncas Ave
City/Town:	Oak Bluffs
Village/Neighborhood:	Copeland;
Local No:	11-153;
Year Constructed:	C 1914
Architectural Style(s):	No style;
Use(s):	Gas Station or Service Station; Machine Shop;
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce; Ethnic Heritage; Transportation;
Area(s):	OAK.C, OAK.AB
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (04/08/2003);
Building Materials:	Roof: Asphalt Shingle; Wall: Concrete Cinderblock; Wood Clapboard; Wood Shingle;
Demolished	No



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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 B - BUILDING

Assessors's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

11-155 EDG AB 1041

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town Oak Bluffs
 Place (neighborhood or village) Copeland

Photograph



13 Uncas Avenue

Name Graves Machine Shop
 Present Machine shop, gas station, and sport shop
 Original Gas station
 Construction pre 1914
 Sanborn map 1914
 Form Vernacular
 Architect/Builder
 Material:

natural features. Show all buildings between inventoried building and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.

Wall/Trim Wood shingle, clapboard, concrete block

Roof Rolled asphalt

Outbuilding/Secondary Structures

Major Alterations (with dates)
 Extensive. Dates unknown. Concrete ell added.
 Steel entry doors

Condition Poor

Moved? Date

Acreage Less than 1 acre

Setting Commercial

See attached.

RECEIVED

SEP 30 1999

MASS. HIST. COMM

Recorded by Thomas Arcuti, Timothy Binzen, Robert C. Hayden, & Jan Whitaker

Organization Martha's Vineyard Commission & Massachusetts Historical Commission

Date (month/year) August 1999

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

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

A former Texaco gas station, this property has grown from a probably original, steeply gabled structure into a rambling, L-shaped set of one-story buildings, some with flat roofs. A concrete block structure has been added to the original building and both have been fronted with a flat, wood-shingled signboard type facade which once bore the name of the gas station and has a garage-door entrance, along with a doorway and two windows, one boarded up. Behind these buildings is a clapboard structure with a shallow gable, with a garage door front which may have once housed a car repair garage. Extending perpendicularly from these buildings is a low, flat-roofed structure covered with wood shingles. It has a door and numerous picture windows. Two modern Texaco gas pumps with lights still remain on the lot. The buildings appear to be in a poor state of repair.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

In 1981, Robert and Shirley Graves moved their tool and die manufacturing business from Springfield, Massachusetts, to Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard. In 1984, the operation was moved to Oak Bluffs, using a former two-pump gasoline station with five attached garages. (This was once the site of a gas station operated by Ambler Wormley [see form #1039].) The Graves Machine and Tool Company has manufactured machine replacement parts for clients on the mainland, including Duracell Battery, Polaroid, General Electric, Raytheon, Gillette Co., and Boston's Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

This structure is part of a historically significant, and under-reported African-American community in Oak Bluffs. As such, the structure may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing structure in a multiple property nomination, under the historic context "African-American occupation in Oak Bluffs (1860-1950)."

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

Hayden, Robert C.

1999 *Research and Historic Narrative: African-American Historic Sites, Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts*. Submitted to the Martha's Vineyard Commission by RCH Associates, Boston.

Sanborn Map Company

1914 Oak Bluffs, Dukes County, Massachusetts. Sanborn Map Company, New York.

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

OAK.1041

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)

Form No.

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INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MA 02125

Community Property
Oak Bluffs 13 Uncas Avenue

Area(s) Form No. 1041
Copeland

Oak Bluffs Survey Update Project
T. Arcuti, T. Binzen, R. Hayden, J. Whitaker

Summer 1999

Historic Name: Graves Machine Shop

Acreage: less than 1 acre

Roll/Frame: 2/11-14

SKETCH MAP



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Oak Bluffs
GRAVES MACHINE SHOP

Form No. 1041

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

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

by Mitchell Mulholland

African-Americans have been an important ethnic group in Oak Bluffs since at least the eighteenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century twenty of the town's inhabitants were identified as "Negroes", presumably of African descent. Since the occupation of the Island by the English, African-Americans have emigrated as slaves, as mariners aboard whaling and commercial vessels, as participants in the religious tourism movement of the late nineteenth century, and as summer residents. Today there are three distinct African-American neighborhoods in Oak Bluffs whose residents over three centuries have made significant contributions to the community and to the nation as workers, politicians, artists, and literary figures. Many of today's residents of the neighborhoods are descendants of these early African-Americans.

The neighborhoods and their interesting history could easily form a National Register Historic District under the context of *African-American Residence in Oak Bluffs, 1700-1950*. It is recommended that the three neighborhoods be researched under a future grant that focusses on the occupation and contributions of the African American population. The houses researched for the 1999-2000 Survey Update Project would be eligible as contributing structures in the district.

Graves Machine Shop contributes to the African-American history of Oak Bluffs.

OAK.1041

African-American Heritage Sites

Town of Oak Bluffs
Martha's Vineyard, MA

Site: GRAVES MACHINE AND TOOL CO.
Address Uncas Avenue

In the spring of 1981, Robert and Shirley Graves moved their mainland business in Springfield, Massachusetts to Martha's Vineyard. His business is not a typical Island business. Robert Graves has been a tool and die maker for some 47 years. Today his precision tool and die making business on Uncas Avenue in Oak Bluffs is thriving—making machine replacement parts for mainland clients such as Duracell Battery, Polaroid, General Electric, Raytheon, Gillette Co., and Boston's Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. Graves' move to Martha's Vineyard came when he learned that the machine shop division of Machine and Marine in Vineyard Haven was for sale. He purchased it in 1981. In 1984 he moved his operation to Oak Bluffs where he purchased a two-pump gasoline station, with its five attached garages and mechanical bay and converted the building into Graves Machine and Tool Co. He employed as many as six machinists in the 1980s and was assisted in a booming business by his wife and sons. Graves was the principal supplier of parts for Polaroid's film-making machines. Most of Graves' accounts have been and still are with national corporations. His on-Island work has been with contractors doing iron and steel work; and there has been some specialized work on luxury boats and yachts in the Island's harbors. Robert Graves has developed a unique business on one of America's foremost vacation and tourist islands.