



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

July 13, 2015

Timothy Boland  
President, Polly Hill Arboretum  
P.O. Box 561  
West Tisbury, MA 02575

Dear Mr. Boland:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the Polly Hill Arboretum Historic District, West Tisbury, Massachusetts, has been accepted by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on June 15, 2015. A certificate recognizing the designation of this district in the National Register is enclosed.

For your information, an explanation of the National Register of Historic Places is also enclosed. If you have any questions or wish further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

We share with you a sense of pride that this historic property has been listed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William Francis Galvin".

William Francis Galvin  
Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Chairman, Massachusetts Historical Commission

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brona Simon".

Brona Simon  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

cc: Anne Fisher, West Tisbury Historical Commission  
Chair, West Tisbury Board of Selectmen  
Virginia Adams, Laura Kline, PAL, consultants  
Virginia Jones, West Tisbury Planning Board  
Karin Stanley, Jean Margot Smith, Polly Hill Arboretum

enclosure

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Barnard's Inn Farm and Samuel Washington Adams House

Other names/site number: Polly Hill Arboretum Historic District (preferred)

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 795-833 State Road

City or town: West Tisbury State: Massachusetts County: Dukes

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

<p><u>Brona Simon</u></p>	<p><u>April 24, 2015</u></p>
<p>Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Brona Simon, SHPO</u> Date</p>	
<p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>Title :</p>	<p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>13</u>	<u>7</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE/horticultural facility

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural field

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE/horticultural facility

RECREATION/CULTURE/outdoor recreation

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL/Postmedieval English/New England Colonial

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: wood, fieldstone

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Polly Hill Arboretum Historic District at 795–833 State Road, West Tisbury, on the island of Martha's Vineyard, in Dukes County, Massachusetts, comprises two properties known historically as the Barnard's Inn Farm and the Samuel Washington Adams House. The 72-acre district is located 1.2 miles from the town of West Tisbury on the western side of the island, and contains thirteen contributing and seven noncontributing resources. The contributing resources include the ca. 1750 Barnard Luce House and the 1844 Samuel Washington Adams House (also referred to as the Littlefield House), both sited close to the west side of State Road. Agricultural outbuildings associated with the Luce farmstead and dating from ca. 1750 to ca. 1860 are clustered to the north and west of the Luce House amid open rectilinear fields delineated by historic stone walls and some split-rail fencing. Polly Hill's 20<sup>th</sup>-century ornamental plantings of trees and flowering shrubs are interspersed throughout the property, primarily along the edges of the fields. An informal system of paths, both organically created and intentionally laid out, connects the buildings and landscape features. The western portion of the district consists of 40 acres of native woodland. Additions to the property since 1997, when the Polly Hill Arboretum became a public organization, include a Visitor Center and Restrooms/Utility Building near the north end, and several horticultural facilities and a maintenance building directly west of the Adams House. The Polly Hill Arboretum Historic District retains integrity, and its present appearance clearly conveys the property's evolution across 300 years of island history, from colonial farm to summer retreat to arboretum.



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## Narrative Description

### Setting

The **Polly Hill Arboretum (WTI.H)** occupies 72 acres in West Tisbury on the west side of State Road, approximately 1.2 miles north of West Tisbury Village. The property abuts multiple parcels of publicly and privately owned conservation land, including the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society grounds to the south. Its pastoral setting is characterized by rural farmland with open meadows and woodlands.

### Contributing Resources

**1. Barnard Luce House, ca. 1750, enlarged ca. 1820–1850 (WTI.216, contributing building, photos 1 and 2).** The Barnard Luce House is a 1½ -story full Cape Cod house with a rear kitchen ell, and two smaller one-story additions perpendicular to the main block of the house. It faces east onto State Road and is set close to the road on a fieldstone and granite foundation. The house is fully clad in weathered wood shingles with white trim. It lacks a central chimney in the main block, but a chimney at the rear of the kitchen ell extends to the height of the main block. The central wood door has a four-light transom, and the symmetrically placed pairs of windows are 9/6, single-hung wood sash. The north gable end is fenestrated with three 9/6, double-hung wood sash on the first story, and a pair of four-light wood sash flanking a 6/6, single-hung wood window. The ell is lit by two 9/6, single-hung wood sash, spaced evenly just under the eaves line. The westernmost addition has an aluminum door set in a wood frame with an attached wood storm door.

The exact construction dates of the house are unknown. However, analysis of the existing historical documentation, in conjunction with physical inspection of the building's structural form, massing, and architectural style, indicate likely dates of ca. 1750 for the north end of the main block and ca. 1820–1850 for the south portion of the main block. It appears that the house was built as a typical mid 18<sup>th</sup>-century half- or three-quarter Cape and expanded to a full Cape in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The ell may also have been added when the house was enlarged. The building functioned as a year-round residence through 1926, when Polly Hill's parents, the Butchers, acquired the property as a summer home. The Butcher family lived in the house during the summers until 1934, when they converted a former barn on the property to their summer house. The Luce House (also referred to as The Homestead) accommodated guests of the Butchers, and later the Hills, until the Polly Hill Arboretum, Inc. converted it to offices in 1998.

**2. Cowbarn Residence, ca. 1860–1870, altered 1933–1934 (WTI.217, contributing building, photos 6 and 7).** The Cowbarn Residence, situated northwest of the Luce House, is a two-story, six-bay-by-three-bay, side-gable building with a granite foundation, and faces east. The walls and roof are clad in weathered wood shingles with white trim, and chimneys are located in the north gable end, and at the south end of the west roof slope. A covered entry porch at the north end of the facade is supported by four columns. Fenestration on the facade consists of five sets of symmetrically placed windows: 6/6, wood-sash windows on the first story, and 3/3, double-hung

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sash windows on the second story. At the rear of the house, an arbor runs along the north half, and a covered entry porch is located at the south end. The irregular first-floor fenestration consists of four 6/6, wood-sash windows, and a set of ten-light casement windows.

The Butcher family converted the building, originally constructed ca. 1860–1870 as a barn, into a summer residence in 1933–1934, and Polly Hill used it as her summer home through 2004. The Arboretum renovated the interior of the building in 2008 to create a member's library space and visiting speaker's apartment, and installed modern climate controls to protect the Arboretum's horticultural library.

**3. Gym, ca. 1870, altered 1930s (WTL.218, contributing building, photo 3).** The Gym is a 20-foot-by-28-foot, north-facing, 1½-story, end-gable building located due west from the Luce House. It has an off-center wide sliding door and attached open-front lean-to along the west side. The main block is clad in weathered wood shingles with a wood-shingle roof; the lean-to is clad in irregularly sized plank lumber and has asphalt shingles on the roof. The main block is lit by two 9/6 wood sash and a three-light casement window in the peak of the gable, and a skylight in the east slope of the roof.

The exact date of construction for this building is unknown, but it was likely built as a barn ca. 1870. The Butcher family reconfigured the building into a rainy-day play area known as the Gym in the 1930s, adding rungs, a trapeze, and climbing structures. Later, they converted the upper half-story to summer sleeping quarters. The Arboretum used the Gym as a maintenance building until 2009; the building is currently not in use.

**4. Potting Shed, ca. 1870 (WTL.229, contributing building, photo 4).** The Potting Shed is a twelve-foot-by-twelve-foot, one-story, gable-roofed building that sits perpendicular to the south end of the Gym lean-to. It has a 3/3, double-hung window in the gable peak, and is clad in weathered wood shingles with white-painted trim.

**5. Far Barn, ca. 1750, altered ca. 1860 (WTL.219, contributing building, photo 8).** Situated northwest of the Luce House, the Far Barn is in the center of the western edge of the North Field. The 29-foot-by-26-foot, single-story, end-gable barn has a fieldstone foundation. The walls are pierced by center and side openings, a 15/25-light sash window illuminating the hayloft in each gable peak, and a pair of 15/25 windows in the north side. The entire building is clad in wood shingles, and the entrances are filled by paired, vertical-plank hinged doors. A shallow-grade ramp leads to the entrance on the south side of the building, and a wide run of five steps leads to the east entrance. A smaller door in the west elevation has a fieldstone step. The south end of the building dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as indicated by the use of scribe-rule construction in the frame. The north end was built using square-rule construction, which may indicate an addition between ca. 1860 and ca. 1920. The Polly Hill Arboretum, Inc. uses the barn for educational programming and events.

**6. Slaughterhouse, ca. 1860–1920 (WTL.231, contributing building, photo 9).** The Slaughterhouse is a small, sixteen-foot-by-fifteen-foot, one-story, end-gable building adjacent to the southwest corner of the Far Barn. A short walkway from the Far Barn ramp leads to the

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entrance centered in the east elevation, which contains a hinged vertical-plank door. Six-over-six, single-hung wood-sash windows and a smaller louvered opening in the south gable peak illuminate and ventilate the building.

**7. Samuel Washington Adams House, 1844 (WTL.221, contributing building, photo 5).** The Samuel Washington Adams House is an east-facing, 1½-story, three-quarter Cape house located south of the Luce House. The building has a one-story kitchen wing on the north side and a perpendicular ell off the rear of the kitchen. Chimneys are extant in the south gable end just east of the ridge line and in the center of the wing's ridgeline. The walls of the building are covered with wood shingles with white-painted trim, and the roof is clad in asphalt shingles. The building is fenestrated with 6/6 sash windows. The Arboretum acquired the house in 2002, and renovated it in 2013 for staff housing.

**8. Fireplace, 1940 (WTL.906, contributing structure, photo 10).** The Fireplace, located near the northwest corner of the Far Barn, is constructed of round stones and large granite lintels and tapers up from the base to a narrower chimney shape. It has three recessed spaces: two above the granite lintel, possibly used as shelving or storage, and the firebox beneath with a cast-iron pot hook and andirons. A projecting stone and cast-iron oven, with grates on the top to the left of the firebox, was likely used for cooking. The oven door has a cast-iron plate that reads "Barnards Inn Farm 1940." Lichen and vines cover the stones.

**9. Polly Hill Landscape, ca. 1860–1964 (WTL.907, contributing site, photos 12 and 13).** The Polly Hill Landscape is comprised of: cultivated gardens near the buildings in the eastern portion of the district; open meadows and fields to the north, west, and south; and woods beyond the edges of the fields on the north and west. Native woodlands of mature oaks, beech, and hickory forest cover approximately two thirds of the property. The topography varies moderately from a level elevation of 60 feet in the area of the fields and buildings to an elevation of 140 to 150 feet at the west end of the district. The rectilinear field configuration likely dates to the mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century agricultural occupation of the site by the Littlefield family, although the Luce family would have maintained fields as pasturage or open space as well. The fields have been maintained as open fields since at least 1926, the time of the Butcher family's acquisition of the property. Designed horticultural spaces within the landscape include the Dogwood Allée (described below, #13), a locust bower, a native beech grove, and conifer rows.

**10. Circulation System, ca. 1860–1964 (WTL.923, contributing structure, photo 15).** The Circulation System consists of curving earth pathways and dirt tracks/roads from multiple periods of occupation that provide access between the agricultural spaces and various buildings and structures on the property.

**11. System of Stone Walls, ca. 1860 and ca. 1960 (WTL.908, contributing structure, photos 7, 11, 12, and 14).** The System of Stone Walls divides the site into distinct spatial areas. Walls dating from ca. 1860 enclose the North and West fields and form smaller spaces within the core of the former Barnard's Inn Farm property. The ca. 1960 wall, running northwest from State Road to the Visitor Center, may have been built along the alignment of an earlier wall. All the walls are constructed of granite rocks of varying sizes stacked atop one another in a single row,



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with no mortar holding them together. Light visible through the crevices creates an open, airy effect. Breaks in the walls at various points facilitate access to and from the fields.

**12. Split-Rail Fence, early 20<sup>th</sup> century (WTL.924, contributing structure, photo 16).** A split-rail wood fence encloses the southwest corner of the North Field, running from State Road to the Far Barn. Although its construction date is unknown, the fence is shown in photographs from the 1930s. Rails have been replaced in-kind as needed.

**13. Dogwood Allée, 1964 (WTL.910, contributing site, photo 11).** Polly Hill planted the Dogwood Allée formed by nine pairs of Kousa dogwood (*cornus kousa*) trees aligned north to south near the southeast corner of the former Barnard's Inn Farm property. The allée extends approximately 284 feet, beginning near the Gym and extending into a former orchard site enclosed by stone walls. It creates a long vista that ends at the stone wall marking the former property boundary.

#### Noncontributing Resources

**14. Littlefield Maintenance Building, 2009 (WTL.223, noncontributing building, photo 20).** The Littlefield Maintenance Building, located northwest of the Samuel Washington Adams House, is a two-story, end-gable building with three garage bays. The facade (east) elevation has a covered entry porch, shielding a four-light door and a 2/2 wood-sash window. There are two 2/2 wood-sash windows in the second story above the porch. The south side of the building has a one-story lean-to and a shed-roof dormer lit with four 2/2 windows. The building is clad in wood shingles, and the roof has green asphalt shingles. Constructed in 2009, it replaced the Gym as the Arboretum's maintenance facility.

**15. Visitor Center, 1998 (WTL.220, noncontributing building, photo 23).** The Visitor Center is located adjacent to the public parking area at the north end of the district. Designed by Thompson & Rose Architects, and constructed in 1998, the building is used as a visitor contact and site orientation space. The north-facing, shed-roof building has a flagstone foundation and is clad in wood shingles and horizontal planking. It is heavily fenestrated, featuring three sets of six casement windows in the north elevation, as well as a band of eighteen casement windows that wraps around the corner of the north and west elevations. The south elevation has a band of clerestory casement windows and sets of three casement windows flanking the entrance door.

**16. Restrooms/Utility Building, 1998 (WTL.230, noncontributing building, photo 22).** A trellis topped with native locust links the south side of the Visitor Center to the Restrooms/Utility Building located just to the southwest. The one-story building has a shed roof with a deep overhang, supported by wood columns that protect entrances in the eaves and end walls. It houses visitor restrooms and utility space for the Arboretum. The roof and walls are sheathed in wood shingles, and the south wall features four sets of banded casement windows.

**17. Garage/Shadehouse, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, altered 2006–2007 (WTL.222, noncontributing building, photo 18).** The building consists of an end-gable garage with a one-story hyphen connecting the west, side elevation to a large metal-framed shadehouse. The garage was likely

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built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the hyphen and shadehouse were both added in 2006–2007. The garage is clad in wood shingles, with green asphalt shingles on the roof. A set of wood double doors is centered in the north gable end, and the building is lit by 2/2 wood-sash windows. It is currently used as an office and potting area. An exterior door is located under the eaves on the north side of the hyphen. The attached shadehouse is a large Quonset hut-type building clad in polyshade cloth.

**18. Greenhouse, 2006–2007 (WTL925, noncontributing structure, photo 19).** The Greenhouse is a single-unit, Quonset hut-type building clad in double-walled polyethylene. It is located parallel to the south side of the shadehouse and is used for horticultural purposes.

**19. Playpen Garden, ca. 1973 (WTL909, noncontributing site, photo 21).** The Playpen Garden, or “Polly’s Play Pen,” is a 35-foot-by-268-foot enclosure surrounded by a ten-foot-high wire fence. Polly Hill created the garden ca. 1973 as a place to cultivate plants and keep them safe from being eaten by deer and rabbits. An historic stone wall is adjacent to the south side of the garden, and a row of conifers shields the north side from the wind. The garden is now a mixture of old and new, with plants grown by Polly herself and in-kind plantings placed by Arboretum staff. The Playpen Garden is considered noncontributing due to its age; once the site reaches 50 years old, its status can be reevaluated.

**20. Nursery, 2014 (WTL922, noncontributing structure, photo 17).** A modern reconstruction of Polly Hill’s nursery, the structure consists of a fence constructed of stripped wood posts and stringers and chicken wire surrounding a rectangular garden space. The nursery is used primarily as exhibit space by the Polly Hill Arboretum.

### Archaeological Description

While no Native American sites are known on the Polly Hill Arboretum property, sites may be present. Seven ancient Native sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile), most located on terraces near Mill Brook and other tributary streams and wetlands. During an intensive archaeological survey for a new museum on neighboring property, one ancient site (19-DK-243) was located. That site, which included a single projectile point find, was not considered significant, and no further work was recommended.

There are no Native artifact collections from the Polly Hill Arboretum area. In 2007, a ten-acre parcel directly adjacent to the Polly Hill Arboretum and owned by the Martha’s Vineyard Museum was tested by the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. No ancient or historic cultural material was recovered during this survey except for one Late Archaic projectile point with no associated cultural material or features. Since that survey, the museum changed its plans to build at the property and the land was sold, part to the Martha’s Vineyard Agricultural Society and part to the Polly Hill Arboretum. The new acquisition of land (two acres) by the Arboretum is included in the present nomination.

Environmental characteristics of the Polly Hill Arboretum represent some locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native sites.

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The arboretum contains several areas where well-drained, level to moderately sloping landforms are present; however, most of these areas are located well over 1,000 feet from the nearest wetlands, and important locational criterion that reduces the overall ancient site sensitivity for this location. Potential Native American sites located on the Polly Hill Arboretum property are likely small sites with limited activity and low artifact diversity that are not usually of National Register significance.

Given the above information, the size of the nominated property (72 acres), the presence of a known site immediately outside the arboretum's southwestern property boundary, our knowledge of ancient Native American settlement on Martha's Vineyard, and limited historic land use of the property, a moderate to high potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources at the Polly Hill Arboretum.

There is also a high potential for locating historic archaeological resources on the Polly Hill Arboretum property. Based on the proximity of known historic sites mentioned in the literature, 17<sup>th</sup>-century archaeological resources may exist, but they have yet to be identified. The property was first settled ca. 1670 by Henry Luce. Structural evidence of the original Luce farmstead residence may survive, as well as similar evidence of barns and outbuildings, and archaeological evidence of occupational-related features (trash pits, privies, wells). Structural evidence of barns and outbuildings, and evidence of occupational-related features may also survive that are related to the extant Luce House (ca. 1750) and the extant Samuel Washington Adams House (1844) located to the south of the Luce House. Several of the contributing buildings located in the district date within the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century period of significance of the district. The buildings, structures, landscape features, and potential historic archaeological sites of the district reflect the history and evolution of the property across more than 300 years of island history, from colonial farm to summer retreat to arboretum.

Systematic excavations have not yet been conducted at the Polly Hill Arboretum. Only during renovations and during the building of the Visitor Center, Greenhouse, and Littlefield Maintenance Building has any excavation occurred. In the renovation of the Far Barn, it was discovered that a significant well was located near the structure and beneath the floor, a feature of a cut-stone "walkway" for undetermined use. There is a small collection of historic artifacts from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as ceramic fragments and glass, retrieved from existing buildings, foundations, etc. There is no known privy or refuse site on the property, and there have been no discoveries of such sites during the plantings of arboretum specimens.

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**HISTORIC DISTRICT DATA SHEET**

Map #	Resource Name	MHC No.	Est. Date	National Register Status	Resource Type	Photo #
1	Barnard Luce House	WTI.216	ca. 1750; enlarged ca. 1820-1850; altered 1998	C	B	1, 2
2	Cowbarn Residence	WTI.217	ca. 1860-1870; altered 1934, 2008	C	B	6, 7
3	Gym	WTI.218	ca. 1870; altered 1930s	C	B	3
4	Potting Shed	WTI.229	ca. 1870	C	B	4
5	Far Barn	WTI.219	ca. 1750; enlarged ca. 1860; altered 1930s	C	B	8
6	Slaughterhouse	WTI.231	ca. 1860-1920	C	B	9
7	Samuel Washington Adams House	WTI.221	1844; renovated 2013	C	B	5
8	Fireplace	WTI.906	1940	C	St	10
9	Polly Hill Landscape	WTI.907	ca. 1860-1964	C	Si	12, 13
10	Circulation System	WTI.923	ca. 1860-1964	C	St	15
11	System of Stone Walls	WTI.908	ca. 1860; ca. 1960	C	St	7, 11, 12, 14
12	Split Rail Fence	WTI.924	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> century	C	St	16
13	Dogwood Allée	WTI.910	1964	C	Si	11
14	Littlefield Maintenance Building	WTI.223	2009	NC	B	20
15	Visitor Center	WTI.220	1998	NC	B	23
16	Restrooms/Utility Building	WTI.230	1998	NC	B	22
17	Garage/Shadehouse	WTI.222	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> century/ 2006-2007	NC	B	18
18	Greenhouse	WTI.925	2006-2007	NC	St	19
19	Playpen Garden	WTI.909	1973	NC	Si	21
20	Nursery	WTI.922	2014	NC	St	17

**National Register Status Key:**

C: Contributing NC: Noncontributing

**Resource Type Key:**

B: Building Si: Site St: Structure O: Object

<b>Totals</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>N/C</b>
Buildings	7	4
Sites	2	1
Structures	4	2

13 7



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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

CONSERVATION

**Period of Significance**

ca.1750-1965

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1750: Construction of earliest portion of Barnard Luce House

ca. 1860-ca. 1920: Sheep farming on property

1926: Polly Hill's mother, Margaret Keen Butcher, acquires property as a summer residence

1958: Polly Hill begins horticultural development of property

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Polly Hill Arboretum Historic District is significant at the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Agriculture, Conservation, and Architecture for its association with the 300-year history of Martha's Vineyard, first as a colonial farmstead, then as a sheep farm, and finally as a summer residence. The district's period of significance extends from ca. 1750, the construction date for the Barnard Luce House and the Far Barn (the earliest extant resources on the property), through 1965, the National Register 50-year age criteria cutoff date.

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First settled as a colonial homestead ca. 1670, the property was used for sheep farming during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The extant buildings and landscape features within the Polly Hill Arboretum Historic District reflect the agricultural use of the property from its initial settlement through ca. 1920, and its subsequent evolution as a summer residence and, eventually, an arboretum.

Margaret and Howard Butcher, Jr., Polly Hill's parents, purchased a portion of the property in 1926 for use as a summer residence. After Polly inherited the property in 1957, she began developing an extensive arboretum within the former agricultural landscape. Over the years, renovations and alterations have been confined primarily to the interiors, preserving the appearance of the exteriors or, in the case of the Adams House, returning it to its historic appearance. The 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings on the property remain in their original locations and retain substantial original material. They continue to convey their original design and function in their form, massing, and architectural characteristics. The Polly Hill Arboretum retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

#### **Criterion A – Agriculture**

Located on the western side of Martha's Vineyard, West Tisbury (originally part of Tisbury) was first settled in the mid 1600s after Thomas Mayhew, an Englishman residing in Watertown, Massachusetts, purchased the patent rights to the island in 1642. During the colonial period, agriculture and animal husbandry formed the primary economic base for this part of the island. Residents also engaged in fishing and commercial works such as weaving (Herbster and Doucette 2008:24).

Henry Luce, one of the original "proprietors" of this portion of what would become West Tisbury, first settled the property now occupied by the Polly Hill Arboretum ca. 1670. Luce acquired a parcel of land prior to February 1, 1671, consisting of 40 acres along the Mill Brook, situated 40 rods north of Scotchman's Bridge Road (now Scotchman's Lane). Town records indicate that Luce occupied the property by ca. 1674; an active member of the community, he served as surveyor of highways in 1675 and selectman in 1687. Luce and his wife, Remember, had ten children by the time he died in 1687/9.<sup>1</sup> The location of the original Luce house on the property is unknown. Henry and Remember's son Israel appears to have inherited the estate, and the property remained in the Luce family for almost 200 years. Although some historians postulate that the oldest (north) portion of the existing **Barnard Luce House** was built ca. 1670

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<sup>1</sup> The last recorded mention of Henry Luce in town records is in 1687. His exact date of death is unknown, but his wife, Remember, is referred to as a widow in 1689 (Banks 1911:55).

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(when Henry Luce first acquired the land), physical evidence indicates that it dates to ca. 1750.<sup>2</sup> The south portion of the **Far Barn** (Figure 4) also appears to have been constructed ca. 1750 (Banks 1911 Vol. I:55; Deeds 1:186 and 2:38; Hawkes 2009:4; Herbster and Doucette 2008:29; Scott 1985 Vol. II:113; Stanley 2001; *Tisbury Town Records* 1903 Vol. I:5).

Barnard (sometimes spelled Bernard) Luce (1778–1856), Henry Luce’s great-great-grandson, acquired the property in 1817.<sup>3</sup> Barnard, who married Mary Wood in 1841, likely was responsible for the ca. 1820–1850 expansion of the existing house from a half- or three-quarter Cape to a full Cape, and the addition of the rear ell. The 1850 agricultural census for Tisbury indicates that Luce engaged in sheep farming, owning a flock of 60 sheep, as well as various other farm animals including two cows, two working oxen, and a pig. His neighbor to the south, Washington Adams, also operated a sheep farm, with a flock of 75 sheep. Sheep farming on Martha’s Vineyard declined significantly between the colonial period and 1850, with the island’s sheep population decreasing from more than 20,000 sheep before 1778 to 5,568 in 1850. However, it remained a lucrative business in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century because of a demand for the particular woven wool cloth called “Vineyard Satinet,” produced from local sheep. The *Vineyard Gazette* advertised satinet cloth from the Old Mill on Edgartown Road in West Tisbury (now occupied by the Martha’s Vineyard Garden Club) as late as 1873 (ancestry.com 2010:391; <http://history.vineyard.net/deathpag.htm>; Littlefield 1967; Riggs 1985).

Town records from the 1830s show that Barnard Luce continued the family tradition of civic engagement, serving at various times as surveyor of highways, fence viewer, field driver, and school committee member. Selectmen occasionally met at his house, due to its proximity to the village center. “Barnard’s Inn” was also a popular stopping point for travelers along the road to Chilmark and Aquinnah (Gay Head). Given its inland location, West Tisbury did not host many taverns or inns during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Instead, responsible citizens were often licensed to provide room and board for those passing through town (Banks 1911:Vol. II, 100; *Tisbury Local History* 1971:18–20; *Tisbury Town Records* 1903:483, 488, 541).

Barnard’s widow, Mary, sold the property out of the Luce family in 1860. Between 1860 and 1870, the property changed ownership three times before Joseph Dias sold it to Benjamin Bartlett Smith (1839–1915) and Albert Littlefield (1832–1907). Smith and Littlefield both came to Martha’s Vineyard from Maine after several years in California, where they had been partners in the lumber business. They continued to operate a sheep farm on the former Luce property through at least the late 1890s.<sup>4</sup> Between 1870 and 1888, the men purchased more than 400 acres of adjacent land, expanding their farming operations significantly. Many of the existing outbuildings and landscape features on the Polly Hill Arboretum property likely date to the Smith/Littlefield occupation, including the ca. 1860 components of the **System of Stone Walls**

<sup>2</sup> A typescript written by Peg Littlefield in 1967 notes that the earliest mention of “the old house” was July 1728, by Experience Luce. A handwritten note on the typescript indicates that the first “house” was the one room on the northeast corner of the “present conglomerate” (Littlefield 1967). It is not clear if these notes refer to the current Barnard Luce House or an earlier building on the property, but the north portion of the current house could date to 1728.

<sup>3</sup> Multiple property acquisitions are recorded for Barnard Luce in the Land Records for the period between 1800 and 1858. Peg Littlefield states that Barnard purchased the Polly Hill property from his brother David on April 28, 1817.

<sup>4</sup> Both men are listed as farmers in the 1897 *Tisbury Resident and Business Directory*.



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and **Circulation System**, the ca. 1860–1920 **Slaughterhouse**, the 1860–1870 **Cowbarn Residence** (Figure 3), the ca. 1870 **Gym**, and the ca. 1870 **Potting Shed**. Smith and Littlefield also likely expanded the Far Barn to the north ca. 1860 (Bradley et al. 2007:232; Deeds 39:359 [Luce to Mayhew], 40:131 [Mayhew to Dias and Howes], 41:98 [Howes to Dias], 45:24 [Dias to Smith and Littlefield]; Herbster and Doucette 2008:25, 27; Kahler; Scott 1985 Vol. II:113).

Albert Littlefield married Benjamin Bartlett Smith's sister Henrietta (1850–1920) in 1878, and the couple resided in the Barnard Luce House. Benjamin never married and may have lived in the **Samuel Washington Adams House**, constructed in 1844 on the adjacent property to the south that Smith and Littlefield acquired sometime between 1870 and 1888.<sup>5</sup> Samuel Washington Adams (1840–1911), the son of Barnard Luce's neighbor Washington Adams, lived in the house in 1870 with his wife Lenora, their two children, and Samuel's mother, Cassandra.<sup>6</sup> Henrietta Littlefield inherited the entire Smith/Littlefield parcel, including the 40 acres originally settled by Henry Luce, following the death of her husband in 1907 and that of her brother in 1915. After her death in 1920, the estate went to Henrietta and Albert's three children, all born in the Barnard Luce House: Effie E. Littlefield (1880–1966), Edson Forrest Littlefield (1883–1959), and Mindwell A. Littlefield (1887–1979) (ancestry.com 2011; ancestry.com 2013:285, 321; Kahler).

By the end of the Smith/Littlefield tenure, farming on Martha's Vineyard had declined substantially as a whole and imports of wool from abroad and from the west had put sheep farmers on the island out of business. In the early 1900s, milk began replacing wool as farmers' cash crop, stimulated by growing summer resort business. The Vineyard chapter of the Grange, a fraternal organization of farmers, was established in 1905 and met at the Agricultural Hall in West Tisbury. The Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society (MVAS), established in 1858, built the hall in 1859. In 1993, the MVAS sold the hall to the Town of West Tisbury and purchased 21 acres of conservation land adjacent to the Polly Hill Arboretum property on the south, where it reconstructed a post-and-beam barn to serve as the new Agricultural Hall. Through its annual livestock show and fair, as well as other events, the MVAS promotes agriculture, horticulture, land conservation, youth activities, and mechanical and domestic arts. Today, West Tisbury remains the center of the island's agricultural industry. The extant buildings and landscape features within the Polly Hill Arboretum district represent the continuous agricultural use of the property from its initial settlement ca. 1670 through ca. 1920 and an important part of West Tisbury's history (Railton 2006).

<sup>5</sup> The 1900 census indicates that Benjamin was part of Albert and Henrietta's household (ancestry.com 2004). Benjamin's great-great-niece Lia Kahler did not know if he lived in the "Homestead" or the "little house next door" (Kahler).

<sup>6</sup> Samuel W. Adams is listed as a farmer in the 1880 federal census for Tisbury, and lived in North Tisbury at the time of his death in 1911 (ancestry.com 2013:141).

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### Criterion A – Conservation

In 1926, Polly Hill's parents, Margaret and Howard Butcher, purchased 40 acres in West Tisbury from the heirs of Albert and Henrietta Littlefield (E. Forrest, Effie E., and Mindwell A. Littlefield). The property included the Barnard Luce House, the Gym, Potting Shed, Far Barn, Slaughterhouse, and Cowbarn Residence. The Butchers used the Barnard Luce House as their summer residence until 1934, when they converted the Cowbarn Residence into their summer house. They continued to use the Luce House as accommodations for family and guests (Scott 1985:Vol. II, 113).

Howard Butcher Jr. (1876–1969) and Margaret Keen Butcher (1878–1957) lived in the affluent community of Lower Merion on Philadelphia's Main Line. Howard was a prominent banker and stockbroker who founded his own brokerage firm in 1910. In 1923, his son Howard III (Polly Hill's brother) joined the firm, which eventually became Butcher & Singer and developed into the largest investment house in Pennsylvania. Margaret Keen Butcher came from a noted Philadelphia family. Her father, William Williams Keen (1837–1932), graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1862 and became the first brain surgeon in the United States. He served as President of the Philadelphia School of Anatomy from 1875 to 1889 and invented several new procedures in brain surgery, and performed the first successful removal of a brain tumor. The Butchers had six children between 1901 and 1918 (ancestry.com 2002; Narvaez 1991).

The Butchers purchased the former Luce property at the end of a period of great change on Martha's Vineyard, as the island shifted toward its modern identity as a summer resort. Seasonal tourism began on the Vineyard in the 1830s with Methodist camp meetings at Oak Bluffs and expanded to other communities through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the completion of the Cape Cod Canal in 1914, the island's harbors hosted more yachts and small boats and the popularity of sailing contributed to summer tourism. By the 1920s, many summer residents purchased large properties and formed golf and yacht clubs, bringing the island closer to its current reputation. Resort development occurred primarily in the coastal towns, such as Oak Bluffs and Edgartown, but some resort communities formed in West Tisbury, particularly near Lambert's Cove in the northern part of town (Herbster and Doucette 2008:29; Hough 1936:35, 270; MHC 1984:13).

Margaret Butcher renamed her summer home the Barnard's Inn Farm, in honor of Barnard Luce and the inn he ran on the property. She and her husband made few changes to the property aside from interior renovations to some buildings, most notably converting the Cowbarn to their family residence (Figures 1–3). As Polly Hill later noted, an unspoken code existed on the island that "the land should stay the way it is" (Ockenga 1998:53). The Butchers altered the Far Barn (Figure 4) for use as a summer social space, creating a sleeping loft in the building for their children. Theatrical performances were held there as benefits for the West Tisbury Congregational Church, and the noted African American composer Henry Burleigh played the piano there. They installed rings and a trapeze in the Gym in the 1930s to create a rainy-day play area for the family. Margaret had the **Fireplace** built in 1940 for use while entertaining friends and visitors.

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Polly Hill (born Mary Louisa Butcher) took over maintenance of the property (Figure 5) in 1958, following her mother's death in 1957, and continued to spend her summers living in the Cowbarn Residence. She and her husband, Julian, lived most of the year in Wilmington, Delaware, near the headquarters of DuPont where Julian worked as an organic chemist. Polly gardened at her home and during World War II at a nearby victory garden. After the war, she studied botany and horticulture at the University of Delaware and the newly created educational facilities at Longwood Gardens, a public garden on the former Pierre du Pont estate in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Polly began turning the old Luce farmstead on Martha's Vineyard into a botanical laboratory, experimenting with horticultural plantings grown from seeds during the summer. She worked with Japanese seeds and plants, evergreen and deciduous shrubs, and native species of plants and trees, testing varieties to see which could survive and thrive in the harsh New England climate, and keeping meticulous records of what lived and died. Her records account for every seed she grew from 1957 onward. While studying at Longwood Gardens, she was on a committee that developed standards for record-keeping in botanic gardens throughout the country. Hill was one of the first private gardeners in the country to computerize her records. Articles published in numerous horticultural journals detailed her approach to garden maintenance, and her experiences developing her arboretum (Higgins 2007; Ockenga 1998:54,60).

Hill eschewed the use of a greenhouse or cold frames and instead had a nephew construct a nursery on the southern edge of the property, just west of the Dogwood Allée.<sup>7</sup> Believing that the residents of Martha's Vineyard needed sturdy trees to act as windbreaks, she planted a pine grove of 85 trees along the northern border of her property; this grove died off after twelve years but it ignited a local interest in conifer cultivation. The plantings at the edge of the West Field are evidence of this new interest, with species including incense cedar (*calocedrus decurrens*), Nordmann fir (*abies nordmannianan*), and spruce (*picea orientalis*), as well as more unusual trees, such as the monkey puzzle tree (*araucaria araucana*). Polly rebuilt or recreated the north stone wall ca. 1960 using historic stones, and she created openings in other stone walls to provide access to gardens and fields. In 1964, she planted the **Dogwood Allée**. The Playpen Garden (Figure 6), begun in 1973 near the southern edge of the property, contains her signature North Tisbury azaleas, many grown from Japanese seeds. She created numerous gardens and test beds throughout the property, always respecting the site's agricultural past by placing beds near stone walls and keeping the fields open, while incorporating her own vision (Figure 7). As Hill described it, "The landscape design of Barnard's Inn Farm was bequeathed to us by generations of farmer-owners," and her management of the property consisted of "trying not to spoil the character of the old farm in its inherited landscape" (Hill 1977; Ockenga 1998:54,60).

In 1997, Dr. David H. Smith, a medical researcher and philanthropist specializing in conservation, worked with Polly Hill to reorganize the property as the nonprofit Polly Hill Arboretum, with professional staff and research and education efforts. The arboretum opened to the public in 1998, using the Luce House as administrative offices and adding compatibly designed visitor facilities at the north end of the property. The organization acquired the adjacent

<sup>7</sup> The Arboretum rebuilt the Nursery on its original site as an exhibit; most of the horticultural development now occurs in the recently constructed Greenhouse and Shadehouse on the former Adams property and in the nursery area behind the two structures.



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property to the south, including the Samuel Washington Adams House, in 2002 to accommodate staff housing and maintenance and horticultural activities. Hill continued to use the Cowbarn Residence as her summer house until about 2004. She died at her home in Delaware in 2007, at the age of 100. The Polly Hill Arboretum continues to honor her work and preserve a unique piece of the rural landscape of Martha's Vineyard (Higgins 2007).

### Criterion C – Architecture

Many of the buildings and structures within the district are representative examples of early New England agricultural and residential architecture, including the Barnard Luce House, Samuel Washington Adams House, Far Barn, Gym, and Potting Shed, as well as the System of Stone Walls that demarcate various fields, meadows, and other open spaces. The spatial organization of the site dates to at least 1860, and the district as a whole reflects nearly 300 years of occupation. Many of the buildings retain their early appearance on the exterior, despite interior renovations that reflect the property's transition from agricultural use to a summer residence, and then an arboretum. The exterior appearance of the Cowbarn Residence dates to 1934, when the Butcher family extensively renovated the utilitarian farm building to become their summer house. The building retains integrity as a summer residence adapted from an agricultural building during the district's period of significance.

The farm buildings on the site, constructed by local craftsmen, typify the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century vernacular architectural style found throughout Martha's Vineyard and much of New England. The Barnard Luce House, likely constructed ca. 1750 as a half or three-quarter Cape and expanded ca. 1820–1850 to a full Cape, is a well-preserved example of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Cape Cod house form. Although its exact construction dates are unknown, the building's footprint, scale, and extant architectural features, such as a side-gable roof and regular fenestration pattern, are characteristic of houses built in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Early versions of this type of building typically had a central chimney, but no physical evidence exists to suggest the former presence of one in this house. Extensive renovations have altered the historic fabric on the interior, but many earlier aspects remain intact. During the most recent renovations made in 1998 to convert the building to Arboretum offices, the architects noted the presence of such features as chalk marks by earlier builders; marks of hammers, saws, and trowels; hand-worked wood; salvaged structural members; hand-split lath; and wide pine floorboards with deep wear patterns around the large knots. The south room on the upper story contains curved structural ceiling timbers, a feature found often in the upstairs bedrooms of houses built on Martha's Vineyard during the late 1700s. In addition, the plaster has been removed from the walls of the upper rooms to expose the sawn and hand-split lath (Thompson & Rose Architects 1997).

The Samuel Washington Adams House, built in 1844, is a good example of a mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century three-quarter Cape with kitchen wing and rear ell. The most recent renovations to this building, undertaken in 2013 for the Arboretum, removed some incompatible 20<sup>th</sup>-century alterations, such as a shed-roof front porch. The rehabilitated building retains such characteristic features as a steeply pitched side-gable roof, shingle siding, regular fenestration, and lack of architectural



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trim. In comparison to the Barnard Luce House, the Adams House facade has more space under the eaves above the windows, reflecting its later construction date.

The dates of construction for the Gym and Potting Shed behind the Barnard Luce House are unknown, but the buildings appear to date to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and may have been built ca. 1870 by Albert Littlefield and Benjamin Smith. Both exhibit characteristic features of vernacular 19<sup>th</sup>-century agricultural outbuildings. The Gym is a typical end-gable barn constructed of a post-and-beam frame with widely spaced, shallow joists and rafters. A cold cellar with a semi-dressed granite foundation wall and brick floor is located under the middle third of the building, and a shed-roof lean-to is attached to the west side. Twentieth-century alterations to the interior have not affected the building's exterior appearance, although the Gym does show some signs of structural deterioration. The adjacent Potting Shed is a typical small, vernacular storage building, presumably constructed about the same time as the Gym. The Arboretum has indicated that it has plans to demolish the Gym and Potting Shed in the near future, as the buildings are no longer in use (King 1997).

The Far Barn and Slaughterhouse are both representative examples of agricultural outbuildings typically found on 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmsteads on the Vineyard. The Far Barn exhibits two types of framing: scribe-rule construction, typically not used after ca. 1800, in the two southernmost bays; and the later square-rule construction in the northern bay. Likely constructed initially ca. 1750 for the Luce family, the barn was expanded sometime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably ca. 1860 when the property changed hands. The roof framing appears to be constructed entirely of sawn members, suggesting that the purlins were replaced when the building was enlarged ca. 1860 or later. The adjacent Slaughterhouse likely dates to the Smith/Littlefield sheep-farming period between ca. 1860 and ca. 1920. The Far Barn likely housed the sheep herds present on the property throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Few intact sheep barns from this period are found on Martha's Vineyard, because many were converted to dairy barns following the decline of sheep husbandry in New England. In this case, later alterations to the Far Barn by the Butcher family removed any evidence of prior use for sheep, such as low pens or a plastered wool storage room, from the interior. The presence of a hayloft on the upper level, converted to a sleeping loft by the Butchers, does indicate that the barn housed livestock of some kind. The proximity of the Slaughterhouse, which retains some iron hooks used to hang meat on the interior, and the distance of both buildings from the main house also suggest the likelihood of their use for livestock purposes. Slaughterhouses were typically located as far from dwellinghouses as possible to avoid having the smells associated with the slaughter processes enter the living spaces (Visser 1997:158, 165).

The system of stone walls likely built ca. 1860 by Benjamin Smith and Albert Littlefield is also characteristic of the agricultural nature of the property. Ubiquitous to New England agricultural landscapes, the stone walls were generally constructed with stones cleared from fields used for pastures and growing crops. Used frequently to corral animals, they required little rebuilding and were not subject to rot. Polly Hill built the north stone wall ca. 1960, possibly along the alignment of an earlier wall that had fallen into disrepair or been removed, using stones that had fallen from other walls or were found in a pile of unused rocks on the property. In the 1920s, Albert Littlefield's heirs apparently sold the stones from a wall that ran along the east edge of the

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North Field; this wall was never rebuilt. The extant stone walls on the property give a sense of the property's agricultural use and spatial organization and are integral to understanding the site's history (Lapping 2011:131; Ockenga 1998:59).

### **Post Period of Significance**

Four unobtrusive noncontributing buildings added in support of the Arboretum's activities at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century were constructed near the edges of the district, away from the historic resources, with the goal of preserving the historical character of the farmstead. The planned removal of two altered ca. 1870 buildings, the Gym and Potting Shed, will not compromise the district's overall integrity. The overall landscape has strong integrity as an agricultural farmstead, with minimal changes to the spatial arrangement of the fields and woodlands despite the changes in land use. The ornamental plantings and horticultural areas added by Polly Hill after 1957 have respected the property's historic character and appearance and preserved its colonial agricultural associations.

Although the property was not formally open to the public, Polly invited various horticultural organizations to hold meetings on the site and encouraged visitors ranging from experts in the field to the general public. She always intended to expand the property's reach to a wider audience and took steps toward this goal in the 1970s and 1980s. Since 1997, the nonprofit corporation Polly Hill Arboretum, Inc. has managed the site as a public arboretum.

### **Archaeological Significance**

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement and subsistence in West Tisbury are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Most known ancient sites in the town are located in coastal areas and along the Mill Brook drainage. While numerous sites have been located in these areas, most are poorly documented, with little information beyond locational characteristics. Ancient sites in this area may contain information that helps explain how environmental changes influenced population change and the nature of settlement through time. Information may be present at sites that indicate the effects of sea-level rise on patterns of settlement and subsistence, especially at sites from earlier periods. Ancient sites in the area may also contribute information related to patterns of lithic procurement and production, possibly indicating the importance of local raw materials and trade in the manufacture of specific tool types and changes in technology over time. Native sites in the West Tisbury locale, especially sites from later periods, may also contain information that helps to explain how the four historic sachemships, recognized during the historic period on Martha's Vineyard, evolved. This information might demonstrate unique characteristics associated with each sachemship and socio/political group located at Chappaquiddick, Nunnepaug (Edgartown), Takemmy (West Tisbury/Chilmark), and Aquinnah, or Gay Head. These characteristics could be represented in ceramic types, lithics, or site types, and distributions.

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Known and potential historic archaeological resources described above may contribute important information that can help reconstruct the historic land use of more than 300 years of occupancy of a property as it evolved from a First Period colonial farmstead to a public garden and arboretum. Additional documentary research, combined with archaeological survey and testing, may locate evidence of the ca. 1670 Luce farmstead known to exist on the property, for which no evidence is currently known. Any information related to 17<sup>th</sup>-century settlement of the Luce farm would be of great value to the colonial history of Martha's Vineyard and Massachusetts.

Little information survives for the early history of the Luce House, first settled ca. 1750. Detailed analysis of the contents of occupational-related features located in the vicinity of extant buildings may contain important information related to the evolution of the property, the relationship between sheep herding and agriculture, and the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the farm and its residents. Although some historians postulate that the oldest (north) portion of the Luce House was built ca. 1670, physical evidence indicates that it dates to ca. 1750. Archaeological testing of the house and surrounding area may contribute additional physical evidence that established one date or the other as the original construction date for the house.

Little information survives from the use of the Luce House as an inn in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological testing of the area surrounding the homestead may identify structural evidence associated with renovations to the house for its use as an inn. Detailed analysis of the contents of occupational-related features may also contribute important information related to the relationship of agricultural production to the operation of the inn, activities conducted at the inn, and the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the individuals who lived and worked at the inn, and those who stayed at the inn.

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[http://com.castleton.edu/Early\\_Houses\\_Marthas\\_Vineyard/](http://com.castleton.edu/Early_Houses_Marthas_Vineyard/).

*The First Resident and Business Directory of Nantucket, Edgartown, Cottage City, Vineyard Haven, Tisbury, West Tisbury and Chilmark Containing Street and Social Directories, County and Town Officers*, South Braintree, MA: J & E. T. Kyte Directory Company, 1897.

Thompson & Rose Architects. *Homestead Renovation Report*. Cambridge, MA, 1997. On file, Polly Hill Arboretum.

*Tisbury Local History*. Tisbury Tercentenary Committee, Martha's Vineyard Printing Company, 1971.

*Tisbury Town Records*. Boston, MA: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1903.

Visser, Thomas Durant. *Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** WTLH

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 72

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41.39956 | Longitude: -70.68444 |
| 2. Latitude: 41.39606 | Longitude: -70.68288 |
| 3. Latitude: 41.39538 | Longitude: -70.67974 |
| 4. Latitude: 41.39337 | Longitude: -70.67994 |

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- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 5. Latitude: 41.39310 | Longitude: -70.67787 |
| 6. Latitude: 41.39433 | Longitude: -70.67780 |
| 7. Latitude: 41.39857 | Longitude: -70.67668 |
| 8. Latitude: 41.40037 | Longitude: -70.68394 |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Polly Hill Arboretum Historic District consists of 72 acres across three parcels (West Tisbury Assessors Map 25 Lots 2 and 3 and Map 22 Lot 3) located at 795–833 State Road, West Tisbury, Martha’s Vineyard, in Dukes County, Massachusetts. The property is bounded by State Road on the east, and by conservation lands owned by the Martha’s Vineyard Agricultural Society on the south. The southern edge of the property begins at State Road, then runs 100 feet to the southwest, then turns roughly west and runs another 498 feet. The boundary then turns to the north and runs 692 feet, then 843 feet to the west-northwest, then 1,324 feet to the northwest, turns and runs 322 feet northeast, then 2,120 feet southeast until it returns to State Road.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary conforms to the property owned by the Polly Hill Arboretum, Inc. and includes resources historically associated with the property’s use as a farmstead and, later, an arboretum by members of the Luce and Adams, Smith/Littlefield, and Butcher/Hill families from the mid 17th century to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Laura Kline, Architectural Historian and Gretchen Pineo, Asst. Architectural Historian, PAL, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization: Massachusetts Historical Commission

street & number: 220 Morrissey Boulevard

city or town: Boston state: MA zip code: 02125

e-mail: betsy.friedberg@sec.state.ma.us

telephone: (617) 727-8470

date: April 2015

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Historic Images

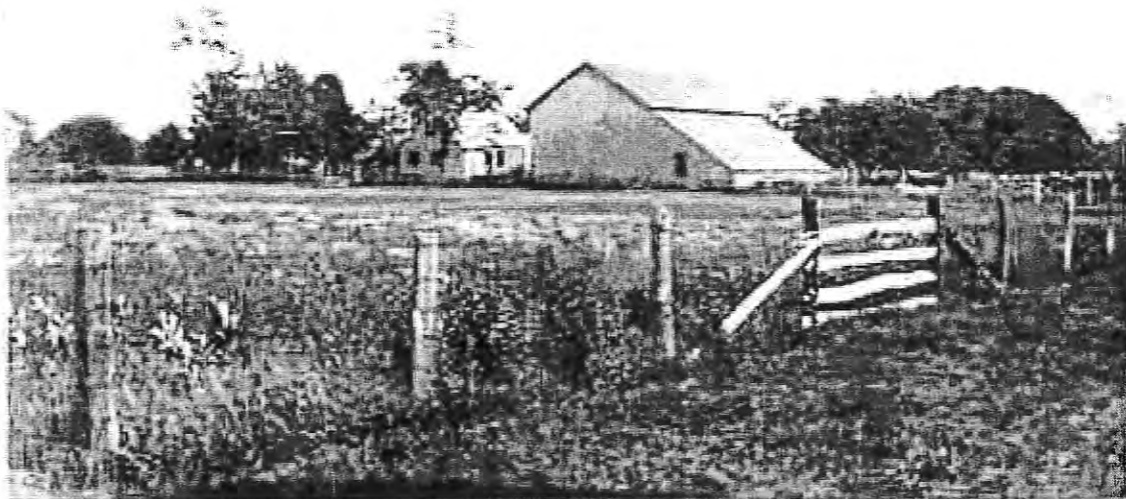


**Figure 1** Cowbarn, 1920s, east elevation prior to conversion to residence (photo courtesy Polly Hill Arboretum).

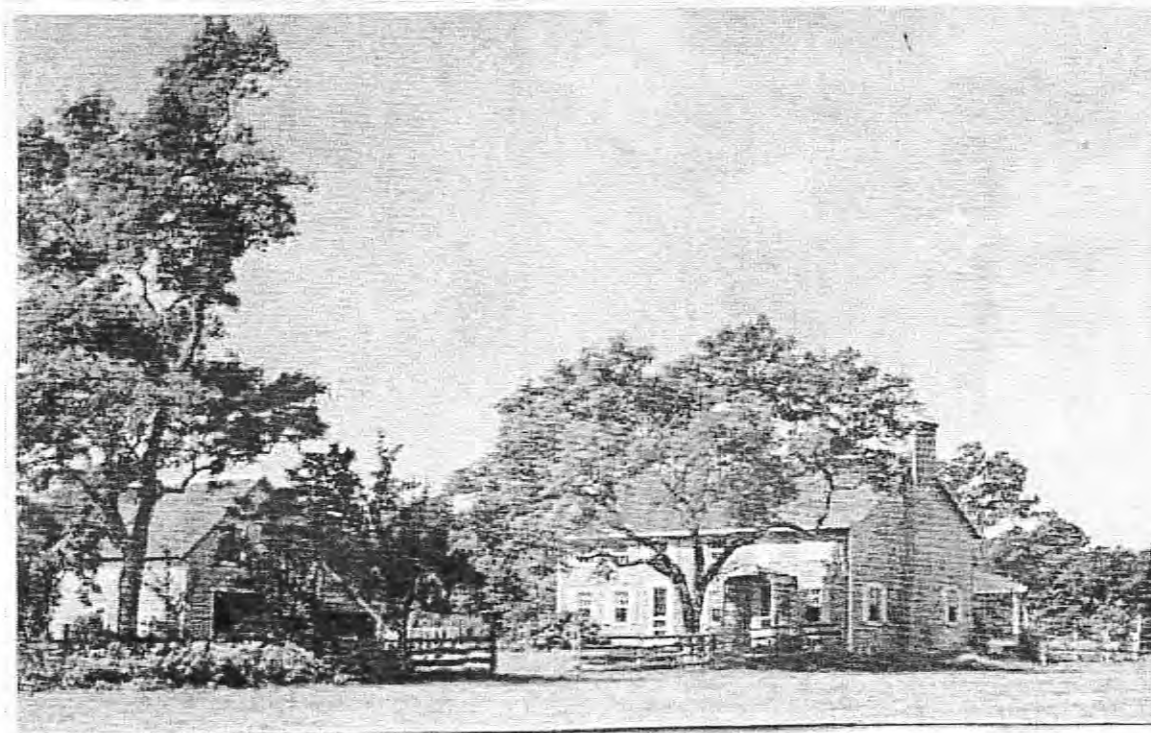


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**Figure 2** Cowbarn, 1933, west elevation prior to conversion to residence (photo courtesy Polly Hill Arboretum).



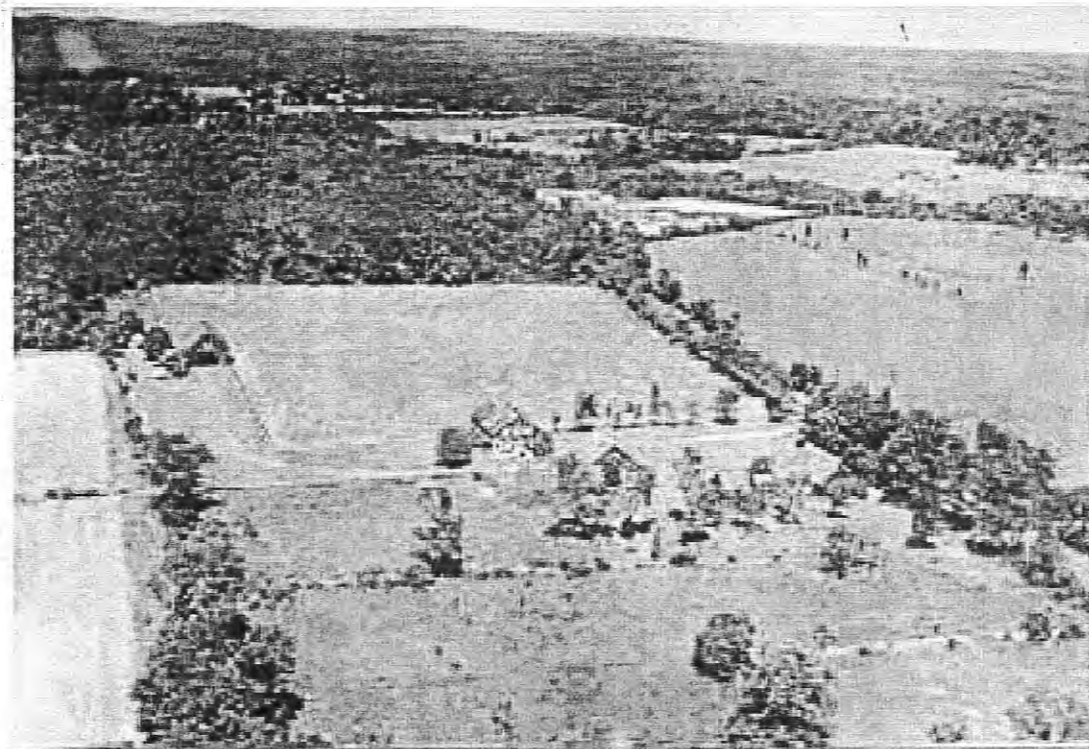
**Figure 3** Cowbarn Residence and Gym, ca. 1938 (photo courtesy Polly Hill Arboretum).

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**Figure 4** Far Barn, Slaughterhouse, and Split Rail Fence, 1930s (photo courtesy Polly Hill Arboretum).



**Figure 5** Barnard's Inn Farm, looking north, 1941 (photo courtesy Polly Hill Arboretum).

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Figure 6 Playpen Garden, 1973 (photo courtesy Polly Hill Arboretum).

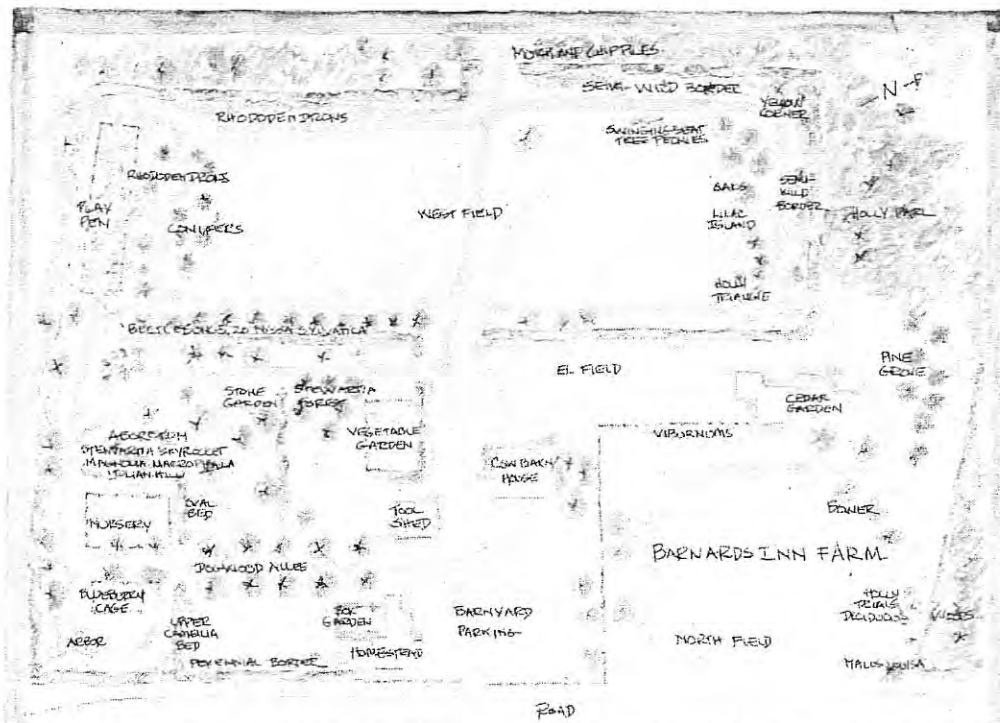


Figure 7 Sketch of Polly Hill Arboretum, 1998 (from Starr Ockenga, *Earth On Her Hands: The American Woman in Her Garden*, New York: Clarkson Potter, 1998, p. 60).

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Polly Hill Arboretum

City or Vicinity: West Tisbury

County: Dukes

State: MA

Photographer: Laura Kline, PAL

Date Photographed: June 15, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 23 Barnard Luce House, looking southwest
- 2 of 23 Barnard Luce House, looking southeast
- 3 of 23 Gym, looking west
- 4 of 23 Potting Shed, looking south
- 5 of 23 Samuel Washington Adams House, looking northwest
- 6 of 23 Cowbarn Residence, looking west
- 7 of 23 Cowbarn Residence, looking northeast
- 8 of 23 Far Barn, looking northwest
- 9 of 23 Slaughterhouse, looking northwest
- 10 of 23 Fireplace, looking northeast



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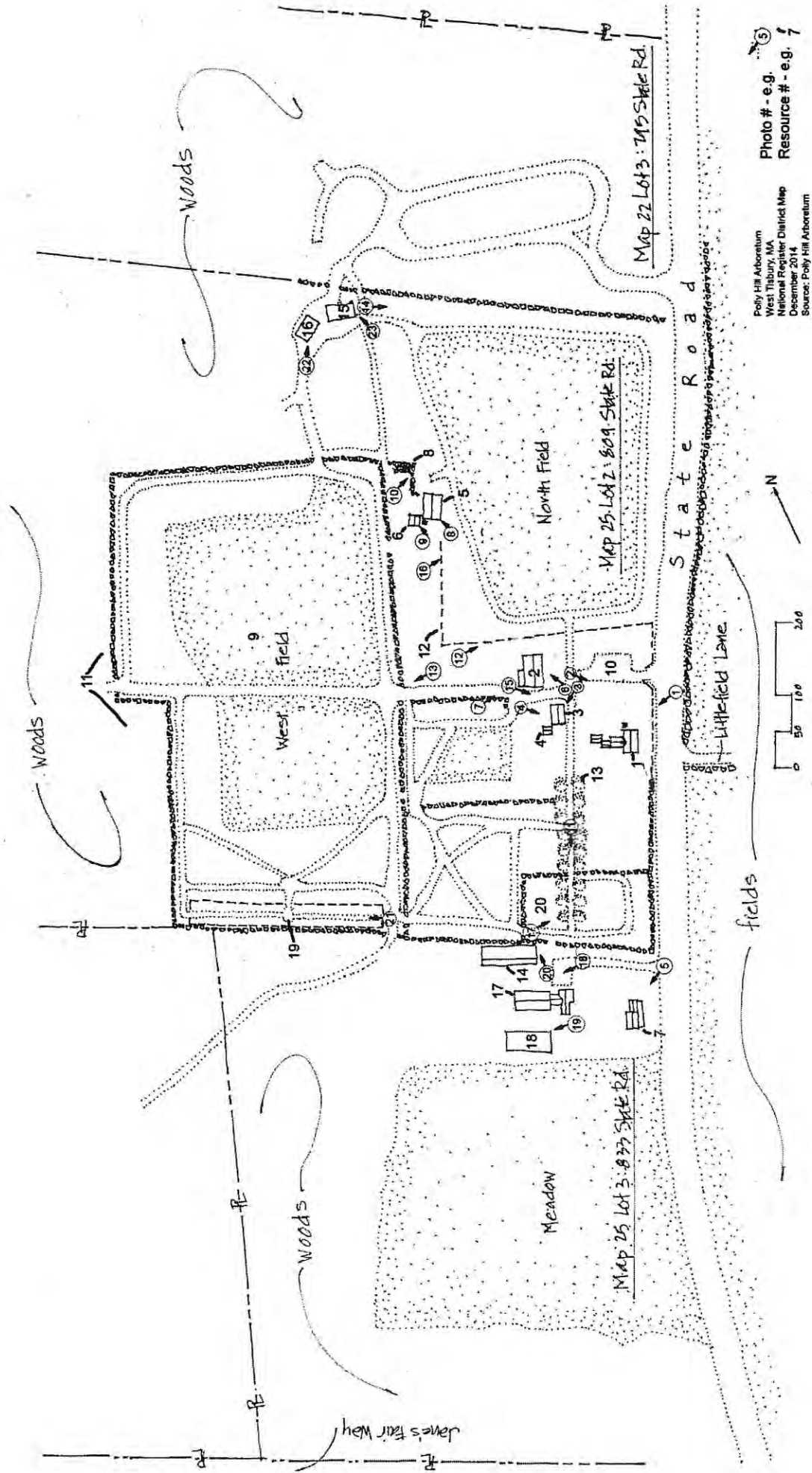
Name of Property

- 11 of 23 Dogwood Allée, looking southwest
- 12 of 23 Polly Hill Landscape, looking southwest
- 13 of 23 Polly Hill Landscape, looking northeast
- 14 of 23 North Stone Wall, looking southeast
- 15 of 23 Circulation system in front of Gym, looking south
- 16 of 23 Split Rail Fence, looking east
- 17 of 23 Nursery, looking southwest
- 18 of 23 Garage/Shadehouse, looking southwest
- 19 of 23 Greenhouse, looking southwest
- 20 of 23 Littlefield Maintenance Building, looking northwest
- 21 of 23 Playpen Garden, looking southwest
- 22 of 23 Restrooms/Utility Building, looking southwest
- 23 of 23 Visitor Center, looking southeast

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





Poly Hill Arboretum  
 West Taubury, MA  
 National Register District Map  
 December 2014  
 Source: Poly Hill Arboretum

Photo # - e.g. 5  
 Resource # - e.g. 7



**Polly Hill Arboretum  
West Tisbury, MA**

1 Inch = 500 Feet  
November 17, 2014

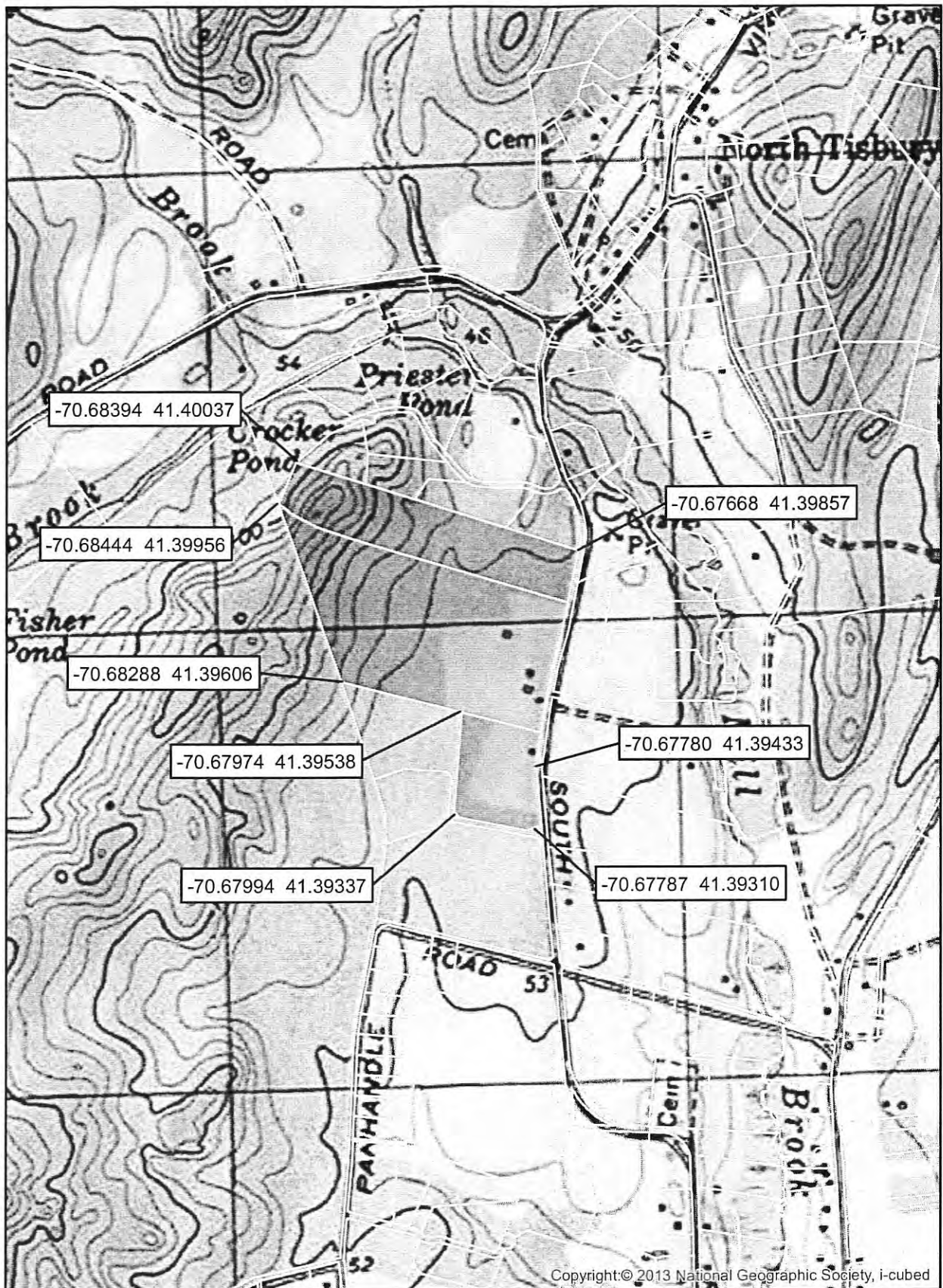
Data shown on this map is provided for planning and informational purposes only. The municipality and CAI Technologies are not responsible for any use for other purposes or misuse or misrepresentation of this map.



[www.cai-tech.com](http://www.cai-tech.com)







Polly Hill Arboretum District Boundary Map  
 West Tisbury, MA  
 December 2014