

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR N. USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Calvin Coolidge Homestead District

AND/OR COMMON

Calvin Coolidge Homestead District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

west and north of Vermont 100A

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Plymouth (Plymouth Notch) VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

at large

STATE

Vermont

CODE
050

COUNTY

Windsor

CODE

027

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY - principal

NAME

State of Vermont, Division of Historic Sites

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Building

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

VICINITY OF

STATE

Vermont

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Vermont Route 100 (no street number)

CITY, TOWN

Plymouth

STATE

Vermont

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE

1967-68

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division of Historic Sites

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input 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 Calvin Coolidge Homestead District, essentially the village center of Plymouth, Vermont, is located in a bowl-shaped valley defined by the slopes of East Mountain on the east, Soltudus Mountain and Mount Tom on the south and southwest, and Wood Peak on the north (all part of the Green Mountain chain). The buildings in the village (known locally as Plymouth Notch) stand along two intersecting roads branching west and north from Vermont Route 100A and are surrounded by woods and open fields. Of these fifteen buildings only three are of modern date; these are the Museum/Visitor's Center operated by the Vermont Division of Historic Sites and two residences occupied by the owners of one of the village farms. The remaining buildings range in date from early to late 19th century and all are historically related to the site. Brief descriptions of major buildings follow (numbers correspond to those on the accompanying sketch map):

1. Old Coolidge Farmhouse. This two-story frame and clapboard house with center chimney of brick was built about 1800 by President Coolidge's grandfather; the oldest building in the district, the house retains its barn and related outbuildings.
2. Farmer's Museum. Built as the barn of the Wilder House, this rectangular wooden structure is notable for its size and the quality of its construction. Hand-hewn beams were shaped where they were cut, pre-arranged at the site, and assembled in a one-day barn raising. The main floor, entered from the front (west) housed wagons and implements; the stable area, entered from the rear, was located on the lower level.
3. Wilder House. Built about 1830, this house consists of a rectangular main block and an ell, each two stories, frame and clapboard, with gabled roof. Fenestration is irregular and exterior decoration is minimal.
4. Coolidge Homestead. This 1½-story frame and clapboard house (with gabled roof broken by shed dormers) and attached woodshed and barn (eastern end) was purchased by President Coolidge's father in 1876. The elder Coolidge added the porch and a 2-story bay window on the front (south) of the house. The dining room is furnished exactly as it was when Coolidge took the oath of office as President there on August 3, 1924; the remainder of the house is furnished essentially as it was during the Coolidge family residence. Bedrooms on the second floor are not open to the public.
5. Coolidge Cheese Factory. This 2½-story rectangular (2 bays by 7 bays) building of frame and clapboard was constructed in 1890. Closed during the 1930's, the factory was renovated and reopened in the early 1970's.
6. Schoolhouse. The present building, a one-room, 1½-story frame and clapboard structure, was constructed in 1890 to replace the earlier stone schoolhouse from which Calvin Coolidge graduated in 1885. Stones from the first building, taken from a local surface quarry, were used for the foundation of the second.
7. Azro Johnson House. Built about 1840, the Johnson farmhouse is an example of native stone snecked walling (constructed of squared stones of different sizes, not laid in regular courses) typical of this area of Vermont. Both the house and related farmland contribute to the historic setting of the Homestead District.
8. Union Christian Church. This frame and clapboard building with 2-stage tower was erected in 1840. The exterior of the church has simple Greek Revival detailing; the pine sheathing and carpenter gothic detailing of the interior date from 1890.

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9. Coolidge Store and Birthplace. Built before 1835, this typical country store consists of a 2-story main block with a 1½-story storage ell on the southern side, each of frame and clapboard with gabled roof. The Birthplace, a 1½-story frame and clapboard cottage with 1-story ell attached, was constructed at the rear (west) of the store about 1840. The 5-room house had been modernized but was restored in 1971; present furnishings include many pieces used by the Coolidge family during their 8-year residence here.

10. Brown House. This 2-story frame and clapboard house with gabled roof was built in 1868; the house and related outbuildings are still the center of an active farm.

11. Aldrich House. The Aldrich property is a good example of the "continuous architecture" frequently constructed in rural areas of New England. The house itself is a 1½-story gable-roofed cottage of the Cape Cod type: attached in series at the rear (east) are 5 gable-roofed wooden barns and sheds.

12. Museum/Visitor's Center. Erected by the Vermont Division of Historic Sites in the early 1970's, this 2-story stone building with 1-story wooden ell contains a museum, reception room, gift shop, and staff offices. The snecked walling of the exterior is constructed of stone taken from a local surface quarry; the roof is Vermont slate. Both the building and the adjacent parking lot are set at a lower elevation than the core area of the village and screened from it by mature shrubs.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT*	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

*Political and Military Affairs after 1865

SPECIFIC DATES, 1872-1887; 1923

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although Calvin Coolidge, thirtieth President of the United States, spent most of his adult life outside of Vermont, he remained a Vermonter in spirit and character and returned regularly for vacations at his home town of Plymouth. The Calvin Coolidge Homestead District at Plymouth Notch, the village center of Plymouth, contains some 15 buildings which Coolidge knew intimately as a youth and an adult. Here are Coolidge's birthplace, his boyhood home (where he later took the presidential oath of office), the church which he attended, the homes of relatives and family friends, and his father's store with the hall which served as the President's office during the summer of 1924. With the exception of the birthplace (modernized and now restored to its original appearance), none of the major buildings has been substantially altered and the village as a whole preserves the atmosphere of the 19th century rural Vermont that Coolidge loved.

Since 1956 the Vermont Division of Historic Sites has acquired seven buildings at Plymouth Notch (nearly all are scheduled for eventual acquisition) and now maintains them as a memorial to Calvin Coolidge. The majority of the remaining buildings are owned by John Coolidge, son of the President, and are also being carefully maintained. With the exception of private residences, the buildings in the Calvin Coolidge Homestead District are open to the public from 9 to 6 daily, Memorial Day through mid-October.

Historical Background

John Calvin Coolidge was born at Plymouth, Vermont on July 4, 1872. After attending the local grammar school and the Black River Academy at nearby Ludlow (1887-90), Coolidge entered Amherst College, graduating cum laude in 1895. He then studied law and opened a practice at Northampton, Massachusetts in 1897. Following the example of his father, who held a number of elective offices in Plymouth, Coolidge entered local politics. Elected as a member of the Northampton City Council in 1898, Coolidge subsequently enjoyed a steady rise in the Massachusetts Republican Party. Mayor of Northampton in 1910-11 and state senator in 1911-15, he won the lieutenant-governorship in 1915 and the governorship in 1918.

Governor Coolidge came to national attention through his actions in the Boston police strike of 1919. When the suspension of law enforcement resulted in a day and two nights of rioting, Coolidge ordered the entire state guard to Boston to restore order and demonstrate the principle that there was "no right to strike against public safety by anybody, anywhere, anytime." Impressed by his firmness and precise leadership, the Republican national convention of 1920 selected Coolidge as running-mate for Warren G. Harding. The Harding-Coolidge ticket won the election by a comfortable majority.

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Vice-president Coolidge was vacationing with his family at Plymouth when he received word of President Harding's death. Col. John Coolidge, a notary public, administered the presidential oath of office to his son in the family dining room at 2:47 a.m. on August 3, 1923. (Years later, when asked how he knew he could administer the oath, the elder Coolidge replied, "I didn't know that I couldn't.") Coolidge was rapidly accepted by the country as a symbol of calm, practical, commonsense leadership and in 1924 was elected to the presidency in his own right. His administration was characterized by a domestic policy emphasizing government efficiency and economy and non-interference by government in business and industry, and by a foreign policy aimed at furthering peace and disarmament without political or military entanglements.

On his retirement from the White House in March, 1929, Coolidge returned to Northampton, where he wrote his autobiography and prepared occasional pieces for newspapers and magazines. He died at his Northampton home on January 5, 1933.

A summary of the buildings in the Coolidge Homestead District follows (numbers correspond to those on the accompanying sketch map):

1. Old Coolidge Farmhouse. Built about 1800 by President Coolidge's grandfather and birthplace of his father, this is the oldest extant building in the district. Coolidge's ancestors were among the earliest settlers in the Plymouth area as they had also been in Massachusetts.
2. Farmer's Museum. Built as the barn of the Wilder House, the structure is one of the original Plymouth farm buildings. It now houses an exhibition of 19th century farm tools and machinery collected in the Plymouth area.
3. Wilder House. Built about 1830, this building served as an inn (the Lakin Hotel operated by Ebenezer Lakin) and was later the home of President Coolidge's mother Victoria Josephine Moore; Coolidge's parents were married here in 1868. The house is now owned by the Vermont Division of Historic Sites and serves as a hospitality center and restaurant.
4. Coolidge Homestead. Calvin Coolidge moved to this house, purchased by his father in 1876, at the age of 4 and lived here continuously until 1887 when he began to attend the Black River Academy at Ludlow, Vermont. He returned to the Homestead for frequent vacations as an adult. The house remained in the Coolidge family until 1956 when it was given to the State of Vermont. Furnishings are original and arranged essentially as they were when Coolidge took the presidential oath of office here on August 3, 1923.
5. Coolidge Cheese Factory. The cheese factory was built in 1890 by Col. John Coolidge, James S. Brown, and two other local farmers so that they would have a convenient market for the increasing amount of milk produced by their farms; the plant continued to operate until the 1930's. The original cheese-making equipment is now on display in the Farmer's Museum. The factory was renovated in the early 1970's and now produces cheese according to the original formula.

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6. Schoolhouse. The one-room stone schoolhouse where Calvin Coolidge graduated from the eighth grade in 1885 was replaced by this wooden building in 1890. Stones from the first schoolhouse, taken from a local surface quarry, were used for the foundation of the second.

7. Azro Johnson House. The notable architectural feature of this stone farmhouse, built about 1840, is its snecked walling, frequently used in this area of Vermont. The house and related land dominate the view west from the center of the district.

8. Union Christian Church. This wooden building with simple Greek Revival detailing was erected in 1840 as a town meeting house and formally dedicated as a Congregational Church in 1842. The carpenter gothic interior dates from the 1890 renovation of the building. President Coolidge attended services here when in Plymouth. In 1942 the building became a union church; services are still held here on Sundays during July and August.

9. Coolidge Store and Birthplace. Col. John Coolidge was already operating the general store in Plymouth at the time of his marriage in 1868, though he did not purchase the building until later. Col. Coolidge retained ownership of the store until World War I but Franklin C. Moore, President Coolidge's uncle, ran the business after 1877. The hall above the store was regularly used for public meetings and dances, and during the summer of 1924 served as the President's office. The building is now open to the public as a museum store.

Calvin Coolidge was born in the downstairs bedroom of the small house at the rear of the store in July 4, 1872. Four years later the Coolidge family moved to the Homestead across the street. Unlike the majority of the buildings in the district, the Birthplace had been modernized but was restored to its original appearance in 1971; much of the original furniture had been retained by the Coolidge family and was returned to the house at that time.

10. Brown House. Under the ownership of James S. Brown, this house was the center of one of the outstanding farms in the Plymouth area. The Brown family, like the Coolidges, were among the original settlers at Plymouth, and James Brown was as prominent in local affairs as Col. Coolidge. Mrs. Brown attended the birth of Calvin Coolidge.

11. Aldrich House. This Cape Cod style cottage was the home of Carrie A. Brown, who became the second wife of Col. John Coolidge in 1891; much admired as a teacher, she also served for many years as Plymouth's post-mistress. After her marriage the house was occupied by Mr. Aldrich, who came to Plymouth to operate the new cheese factory.

All of these buildings are maintained in excellent condition and the village as a whole retains the character of 19th century rural Vermont. Seven buildings are currently owned by the Vermont Division of Historic Sites (nearly all are scheduled for eventual acquisition); of the remaining number, the majority are owned by John Coolidge, son of the President. With the exception of private residences, the buildings in the district are open to the public from 9 to 6 daily, Memorial Day through mid-October.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Coolidge, Calvin. The Autobiography of Calvin Coolidge (New York, 1929).
 Dana, John Cotton. Vermont, explained by a typical Vermont Village, which is to say, Plymouth (Woodstock, Vermont, 1925).
 Fuess, Claude M. Calvin Coolidge (Boston, 1940).
 McCoy, Donald R. Calvin Coolidge, The Quiet President (New York, 1967).
 Quint, Howard and Robert Ferrell. The Talkative President: The Off-the-Record Press Conferences of Calvin Coolidge (Amherst, Ma., 1964).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 130 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	6,8,4	4,0,0	4,8	2,3	1,7,0	B	1,8	6,8,4	1,9,0	4,8	2,2	2,9,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
C	1,8	6,8,3	4,7,0	4,8	2,2	4,1,0	D	1,8	6,8,3	3,3,0	4,8	2,3	1,6,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the National Historic Landmark designation for the Calvin Coolidge Homestead District (shown in red on the accompanying sketch map and in black on the accompanying U.S.G.S. map) are defined as follows: Beginning at a point northeast of the village of Plymouth Notch, said point marking the intersection of Pinney Hollow Brook and the western curbline of Vermont Route 100A; thence southerly and westerly along said curbline to its intersection with the western line of an unimproved road, (cont'd)

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 Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by S. Sydney Bradford, Historian, September, 1965

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE 7/25/75

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE 202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN Washington

STATE District of Columbia

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 National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE N/A National Historic Landmark

TITLE

DATE

Landmark June 23, 1965
 Designated: date
 Boundary Certified: [Signature]
 date Nov. 23, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
 LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
 LANDMARKS)

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leading north from Route 100A; thence, northwesterly in a direct line to a point, said point marking the fork of the road leading northwest from Plymouth Notch toward Grass Pond; thence easterly in a direct line to the point of beginning.

Note: 1) though included in these boundaries for convenience in definition, the Museum/Visitor's Center and adjacent parking lot do not contribute to the national significance of the Landmark; 2) the Calvin Coolidge Homestead District is located within the boundaries of the larger Plymouth Historic District as listed on the National Register of Historic Places.