

PH 365335

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 27 1976
DATE ENTERED NOV 23 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME



HISTORIC

China Village Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

China

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st Hon David Emery

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

Kennebec

CODE

011

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kennebec County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

State Street

CITY, TOWN

Augusta,

STATE

Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE &
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The China Village Historic District is comprised of a cohesive, homogenous grouping of 19th and 20th century architecture. Though founded just prior to the Revolution (1774), no buildings of the Colonial or immediate Post-Colonial periods survive. The village's era of blossoming in the Federal Period is, however, well represented (i.e. 9, Fletcher-Maine House) as are the ensuing periods of prosperity: Greek Revival (i.e. 38, Alfred Marshall House), Italianate (i.e. 13, Andrew-Fletcher House), Queen Anne (i.e. 11, Mead House), Colonial Revival (i.e. 41, Banks House), and Bungalow (i.e. 3, John Rowe House). Of the 47 homes and buildings within the district, 13 are Federal, 15 are Greek Revival, 1 is Italianate, 2 are Queen Anne, 6 are Colonial Revival, 1 is Bungalow, 3 are Ranch, 1 is a barn, 3 are contemporary, and 2 are of indeterminate style due to extensive remodeling. In this span of nearly two centuries of styles, the predominant characteristic has been a simple forthright interpretation of the current architectural mode. The structures are well-designed vernacular examples of their period, with no pretensions.

The scale, proportions, materials, color and design quality of the structures are in harmony throughout the China Village Historic District. The following figures delineate the similar scale of the 47 homes and buildings in the area:

3	1 story flat roof
6	1 story gable roof
20	1½ story gable roof
1	1½ story gambrel roof
11	2 story gable roof
2	2 story hipped roof
3	2½ story gable roof

Most of the structures exhibit a traditional concern for symmetrical design and proportion. Of the 47 homes and buildings, 3 are of brick construction, 1 is of cement-block fabric, and 43 are frame. Of the frame ones, 37 are clapboarded, 4 are shingled (1 partly clapboarded), 1 is sided in corrugated aluminum and 1 lacks siding which will soon be replaced. White is the predominant color.

The China Village Historic District 47 homes and buildings stand in close proximity to one another, principally near Route 202 at the head of China Lake. The settlement pattern can be considered a ribbon development.

Of the 47 structures in the district, 40 are residential and 1 is commercial, while 1 is a church (47), 1 is in public use (46), 2 are fraternal (4,12). and 1 is a library (9). The Post Office (5) is the only Federal-owned building in the district.

Most houses and buildings are presently being used for their original purpose, the sole exception being the Fletcher-Maine House, which has functioned since 1938 as the Albert Church Brown Memorial Library. The tight-knit residential 19th century village has thus been preserved.

(see continuation sheet)

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The area that became the town of China was first surveyed in 1773-1774 by John "Black" Jones and Abraham Burrill and the first settlers arrived in the summer of 1774. At first known as Jones Plantation, it was incorporated in 1796 as Harlem. In 1818 the northern part of Harlem and some adjoining land from Fairfax (now Albion) and Winslow were incorporated as China; in 1822 the rest of Harlem was annexed. The land on which China Village now stands was in the 18th century part of Albion; in 1816 the northern boundary of Harlem was moved to about the middle of the present village, and after 1818 the whole village was within China. For some years after that it was called "the village at the head of the pond" and it is uncertain when the present name first came into use.

Regardless of town lines, the farmlands around the head of the lake and the brooks falling into it were soon made productive. George McLaughlin and Benjamin Dow had a primitive grist mill, probably in Wiggin or Board's Brook just north of the Brown farm, by 1784. Japheth C. Washburn opened the first of his several general stores not long after he moved to town around 1804. By the time China was incorporated in 1818, the village had another grist mill and a sawmill, Mr. Washburn's potash works, a second general store, and Mr. Washburn's tavern. There was regular weekly mail delivery, although the post office was probably not established until 1818.

In the 1820's and 1830's China Village had a sudden spurt of growth which established it, for the nineteenth century and indeed well into the automobile age, as a trading, manufacturing, and cultural center for the surrounding countryside. A large number of enterprising men lived in the village in the late 1820's and 1830's, including the second and third generations of Bracketts, Washburns and Wiggins (these three families owned most of the village and land north and east of it in the first decades of the 19th century); Alfred Marshall, John Brackett's son-in-law and China's only representative to the United States Congress; Dr. Alexander Hatch and his son John Hatch; Dr. Daniel Stevens; Freeman Shaw; Benjamin Libby; Reuben Hamlin; William Hunnewell; Robert Fletcher (in 1821 colonel in the Third Regiment of the Maine militia); Thomas B. Lincoln; Dr. James H. Brainerd and his son Fredus O. Brainerd; and others.

The opening of China Academy in 1823 may have contributed to a building boom in the late 1820's and 1830's as accommodations for teachers and students were needed. At the same time, various industrial enterprises were started, providing employment opportunities and increased circulation of goods and money. By 1827 the main road from Portland to Bangor ran through China Village and at (see continuation sheets)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kingsbury, Henry, D., History of Kennebec County, pp. 1139-1171, 1892

Grow, Marcy, M. China Village Historic District Typewritten manuscript

Van Strien Marion T., and Grow, Mary M., Bicentennial History of China Maine, 1976

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 65 - 8² 60 acres

UTM REFERENCES

920							
A	19	458820	4925475	B	19	459220	4924900
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	19	458450	4924425	D	19	458100	4924625

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the northwest corner of the Taylor-Riggs House (1) lot on Rte. 137 the district boundary runs southerly following the rear property lines on the west side of Main St., and Neck Road to the north property line of the Brown Farm (20). The boundary then runs west, south and east along the Brown Farm property lines, crosses Neck Road and runs along its east side to the southern property line of the Bubar House (21). (see continuation sheet)

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: Frank A. Beard, Historian
 Stephen Kaplen, Graduate Assistant

ORGANIZATION: Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE: October, 1976

STREET & NUMBER: 31 Western Avenue TELEPHONE: 207-289-2133

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: *Carle B. Shedd Leworthy* DATE: October 22, 1976

TITLE: *State Historic Preservation Officer*

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<i>Robert B. Rettig</i>	DATE 11/23/77
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <i>Charles H. Murray</i>	DATE 11-21-77
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

MAY 18 1977

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Names and addresses of property owners in the China Village Historic District keyed to inventory list.

INVENTORY #

NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNER

- 1 ✓ Katherine (Mrs. Ray) Riggs, China Me. 04926
- 2 ✓ John Sylvester, China, Me. 04926
- 3 ✓ Thomas B. James, China, me. 04926
- 4 ✓ China Grange, China, Me. 04926
- 5 ✓ William and Eleanor Foster, China, Me. 04926
- 6 ✓ William and Eleanor Foster, China, Me. 04926
- 7 ✓ Gilbert and Marguerite Sylvain, China, Me. 04926
- 8 ✓ Miss Margaret Clifford 7 Berwick Lane, Dearborn,
Michigan 48120
- 9 ✓ China Library Association, China, Me. 04926
- 10 ✓ Harold Doe, Sr., China, Maine 04926
- 11 ✓ Peter and Barbara Mead, China, Me. 04926
- 12 ✓ Central Lodge, Ancient Free & Accepted Masons,
China, Me. 04926
- 13 ✓ Robert and Judith Fletcher, China, Me. 04926
- 14 ✓ James and Virginia Allen, China, Me. 04926
- 15 ✓ William and Margaret Darlow, China, Me. 04926
- 16 ✓ Mrs. Ethel Lamson, China, Me. 04926
- 17 ✓ Harland Young, China, Me. 04926
- 18 ✓ Michael and Nancy Atkins, China, Me. 04926
- 19 ✓ C.J. Stenholm, 1818 Underwood Ave., Wauwatosa,
Wisconsin 53213
- 20 ✓ Mrs. Euleta Brown, China, Me. 04926
- 21 ✓ Virginia (Mrs. Benjamin) Bubar, China, Me. 04926
- 22 ✓ John Wentworth, China, Me. 04926
- 23 ✓ Sydney Brown, Jr., China, Me. 04926
- 24 ✓ Carl Brown, China, Me. 04926
- 25 ✓ Stanley Young, China, Me. 04926
- 26 ✓ Blaine Bailey, China, Me. 04926
- 27 ✓ Elmer and Dorothy Bentley, China, Me. 04926
- 28 ✓ Miss Louise Tracey, China, Me. 04926
- 29 ✓ Donald Farnsworth, China, Me. 04926
- 30 ✓ Stephen Hale, 3 Gilbreth Street, Fairfield, Maine 04926
- 31 ✓ Albert Adams, China, Maine 04926
- 32 ✓ Dennis & Nelson Harding, China, Me. 04926
- 33 ✓ Nelson and Marian Bailey, China, Me. 04926
- 34 ✓ Dennis Harding, China, Me. 04926
- 35 ✓ Letha and Gerald Wilson, China, Me., 04926
- 36 ✓ Pauline (Mrs. William) Grow, China, Me. 04926

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- 37 Edwin, Jr., and Susan Kenney, China, Me. 04926
- 38 Mrs. Eva Stevens, China, Me. 04926
- 39 Paul and Rebecca Comeau, China, Me. 04926
- 40 William and Johnna Diehl, China, Me. 04926
- 41 Sylvia (Mrs. Joseph) Banks, China, Me. 04926
- 42 China Baptist Church, China, Me. 04926
- 43 Roy Coombs, China, Me. 04926
- 44 G. Cecil Goddard, China, Me. 04926
- 45 Donald Farnsworth, China, Me. 04926
- 46 China Village Volunteer Fire Department, China,
Maine, 04926
- 47 China Baptist Church, China, Me. 04926

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Most of the China Village Historic District's homes and buildings are in good to excellent condition; most have consistently been well maintained. There are no serious intrusions, with the possible exception of Nos. 2, 25, and 46. Of the 47 structures located in the district, 12 were constructed within the last fifty years. The three Ranch style homes are unobtrusive and most of the recent buildings are in the Colonial Revival style (i.e.33).

The China Village Historic District represents the rural community in Maine which flowered in the years following Statehood (1820). The villagescape, as viewed today, although containing a small proportion of recent elements, retains the fabric and flavor of Maine's 19th-century era of prosperity. China Village can be grateful to its relative remoteness for its survival as a preserved district and to its founders two centuries ago for its beautiful natural setting.

(See continuation sheet)

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Inventory of Structures Located Within the China Village Historic District

Map Number

- 1 Taylor-Riggs House, 1829
Federal, 2 stories, brick with wood and stone trim
- 2 China General Store, 1961
Contemporary, 1 story, concrete with wooden trim NC
- 3 John Rowe House, 1927
Bungalow, 2 stories, frame with shingled exterior
- 4 Silver Lake Grange Hall, 1908
Fred S. Wallace, Builder
2 stories, frame with shingled exterior
- 5 China Village Post Office, 1960
Karl Wilson and William Foster, Builders
Colonial Revival, 1 story, frame with
clapboarded exterior NC
- 6 Dr. Daniel Stevens House, c.1810-11
Federal, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior,
Greek Revival Doorway
- 7 Sylvain House, c1845
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior,
20th century enclosed front porch
- 8 Burrill-Washburn House, c.1827-29, early 20th century remodelling
Federal, 2½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior; enclosed
front porch, second story and attic added in early 20th century.
- 9 Fletcher-Main House, c.1827
Federal, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior, fine
period doorway and fence. The house has served as the Albert
Church Brown Memorial Library since 1938
- 10 Doe House, by 1834
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior,
fine period porch

(see continuation sheet)

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- 11 Mead House, c.1899; moved to site, c.1970
Queen Anne, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded first story
and shingled half story
- 12 Alfred Marshall-Benjamin Libby Block, later known as Masonic Hall, c.1825
Federal, 2 stories, brick with wood and stone
- 13 Andrew-Fletcher House, c.1875-1896
Italianate, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 14 Farnsworth House, by 1809
Federal, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 15 Darlow House, c.1870-74
Late Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 16 Lamson House, by 1825, mid-19th century remodelling
Federal and Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 17 Harland Young House, c.1960
Ranch, 1 story, frame with wooden siding
- 18 Atkins House, by 1834
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior,
20th century enclosed front porch
- 19 Stenholm House, c.1824-1834
Federal, 1½ stories, brick with wood and stone trim, fine period doorway
- 20 Brown Farm, early 19th century
Federal, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 21 Bubar House, by 1839
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 22 John Wentworth House, c.1950
Ranch, 1 story, frame with wooden siding
- 23 Sydney Brown, Jr., House, c.1950
Ranch, 1 story, frame with wooden siding
- 24 Carl Brown House, c.1834
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with shingled exterior
- 25 Stanley Young Trailer, mid-20th century
1 story, aluminum frame with aluminum siding
(See continuation sheet)

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- 26 Blaine Bailey House, 1926-27
Colonial Revival, 2½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 27 Bentley House, c1950
Colonial Revival, 1½ stories, frame with wooden siding
- 28 Tracey House, by 1842
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior,
late 19th century first story porch
- 29 Farnsworth Boat Shop, by 1836
Greek Revival, 2½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 30 Woodsum Building, by 1839
Greek Revival, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 31 John Brackett House, later known as the Hotel, by 1827
Federal, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior, fine
period doorway, mid-19th century first story front porch
- 32 Hotel Barn, 19th century
2½ stories, frame with clapboarded and shingled exterior
- 33 Bailey House, c1940
Colonial Revival, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 34 Harding House, by 1866, moved to site in 1920's, extensively
remodelled c.1970, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 35 Gerald Wilson House, 1971
Colonial Revival, 1½ stories, frame with shingled exterior
- 36 Dr. Alexander Hatch House, by 1837
Federal, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 37 Abisha Benson House, c.1818
Federal, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 38 Alfred Marshall House, c.1836
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior,
fine period porch with fluted Ionic columns
- 39 Comeau House, c.1836-1840
(See continuation sheet)

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- 39 cont.
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 40 Woodsum House, c.1838-1840
Greek Revival, 2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior,
Italianate window trim, Colonial Revival first story front
porch
- 41 Banks House, 1941
Colonial Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior *NC*
- 42 Baptist Parsonage, 1837
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 43 Coombs House, c1838
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded trim
- 44 Goddard House, by 1837, moved to site in 1956, extensively
remodelled 1956-58
2 stories, frame with clapboarded exterior
- 45 Farnsworth House, by 1837, moved to site in 1911
Greek Revival, 1½ stories, frame with clapboarded exterior,
early 20th century Colonial Revival portico
- 46 China Village Volunteer Fire Department, by 1955, remodelled in 1975
1 story, frame with wooden siding
- 47 China Baptist Church, 1835, remodelled in 1900
Federal, 1 story with tower, frame with clapboarded exterior,
1900 portico and stained glass windows

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least one stage line had a scheduled stop here. Direct rail service did not reach the village until 1895, when a narrow-gauge track from Wiscasset to Albion was completed, and the Wiscasset, Waterville, and Farmington railroad (known as the Little Wiggler, and sometimes as the Weak, Weary and Feeble) was not important until the twentieth century (1901-1933). But by the 1850's, a traveler could get off a train at either Augusta or Waterville and take a stagecoach to China Village.

The business district, as shown on village maps made in 1856 and 1879, centered on the intersection of the Neck Road, Water Street and Main Street. On the west side of this T-shaped intersection was a two-story brick building (now the Masonic hall) housing stores and shops, with a row of frame commercial buildings north of it and Japheth Washburn's old three-story store just to the south. On the southeast side of the intersection was a frame store building (now the old Legion Hall building) and another row of shops ran south behind it out the Neck Road. To the east, down Water Street, were two small buildings usually occupied by blacksmiths or shoemakers. On the third, northeast, side of the intersection was the hotel (now the Adams house), with accommodations for travelers, meeting rooms for local organizations, banquet facilities, and an enormous barn.

Farmers coming to China Village in the 19th century usually had a choice of general stores at which to trade. The north end of the ground floor of the brick store building was a general store (sometimes the post office as well) and from the 1830's to the 1870's there was a store in the building next south of it. A third store was operated by a succession of men north of the brick building and other merchants and traders established themselves at times in other buildings. Shoemakers and blacksmiths flourished through the century. The village also boasted, at various times, cabinet-makers, chair-makers, builders, hatters, tailors, and a carriage shop. On the lake shore (just east of the present Coombs house), the China Steam Mill began grinding corn in 1835 and in 1842 a tannery was added. The mill burned before 1856. About that time, a large sawmill was started on the northeast shore of the lake. A brickyard operated on Wiggin Brook from the 1830's (or perhaps from the 1820's) until 1865. In 1874 a cheese factory opened on the other side of the brook and ran until 1886.

The village offered more than trade to local residents. China Academy educated their sons and daughters from 1823 to 1887. The bells of the Methodist church on Main Street (1843-1927) and the Baptist church by the lake (1822-present) called them to worship. A local newspaper, the China Orb, was published by Japheth C. Washburn from 1833 to 1836. China Village even had its own bank, the China Bank, from 1853 to 1855, although its appeal was limited, only \$300 in deposits being received from local residents. (see continuation sheet)

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For the organization-minded, there were the Masons (organized in 1823, reorganized in 1849 after a twenty-year hiatus, and still active); at least one temperance organization; the G.A.R., organized in June 1884; the Grange, started between 1892 and 1902; Eastern Star, organized in 1900; and a variety of shorterlived organizations.

The original Baptist church building housed the second Baptist church organized in China which was founded in May 1801 and added to the Bowdoinham Baptist Association in 1802 as the Freetown church (the south Albion-north China area was then called Freetown). In 1814, a house of worship was built on a knoll at the north-east corner of the lake, in what was then Fairfax. With the 1818 incorporation of China, the Freetown church became the First Baptist Church of China. In 1822 the church building was moved across the end of the lake to the present church site. Around 1833, the congregation decided to sell the old church, but they could find no buyer. In 1835, therefore, they either remodeled it entirely, or tore it down for the lumber for a new building. The 1822 church apparently had two different floors, judging from references to the "lower floor" and the "ground floor" in records of sales of pews. The 1835 church had a single floor with a high choir gallery across the front, above the two entrance doors, and wooden box pews with doors on them. The ten-foot-high pulpit towered above the congregation. The building was heated by two stoves, one on each side of the entrance, and light for evening services was provided by oil lamps on a table in front of the pulpit. In the following years, the pulpit was lowered several times. The pew doors were removed in the 1860's for the convenience of women in hoop skirts. In 1900 there was an extensive remodeling in preparation for the 100th anniversary celebration in 1901. The old windows were replaced by the present ones, a single entrance door was substituted for the two earlier ones and the choir gallery was replaced by a vestibule.

The China Baptist Church had 284 members in 1839. Some left to join new churches elsewhere, and apparently there were fewer than 100 members at the time of the great 1835 revival, for the hundred new members admitted then more than doubled the membership. By 1837 and 1838 there were about 300 members. The importance of the China Baptist Church in the 1820's and again in the 1840's is indicated by its role in regional and state church affairs; the Lincoln Baptist Association met in China in 1822 and 1828, and in 1844 the state convention was held in China. Apparently, however, the membership again declined after the 1840's. There was an increase in 1869, when the Albion church with 24 members was received as a branch of the China church.

(see continuation sheet)

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China Village today, although many of the commercial and industrial structures are gone, retains the atmosphere and air of self-sufficiency of a 19th century prosperous rural community. It transmits a feeling of unity and permanence typical of the region and period.

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Dr. Alexander Hatch, his son John, and Dr. Daniel Stevens were prominent physicians in the community between 1830 and 1850. Freeman Shaw and Reuben Hamlin both owned and operated large scale agricultural enterprises. Benjamin Libby and William Hunnewell were prominent lawyers with countrywide practices. Thomas B. Lincoln was a local merchant. Dr. James H. Brainerd, although a physician, became deeply involved in business, particularly the early railroads in the state and was followed by his son Fredus in these activities.

China Academy was located on the site now occupied by the Gerald Wilson House (35). The China Bank was located on the east side of Main Street between Canton and Water Streets but the exact site is not known.

None of the commercial buildings associated with Japheth Washburn are extant although several houses in the village belonged at one time or another to members of his family.

None of the commercial or industrial sites have any significant archaeological value.

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Running east along this line, the boundary turns north along the rear property lines on the east side of Neck Road and south side of Canton Street to the shore of China Lake. The boundary follows the lake shore northerly crossing Water Street at the bridge and continues along the west border of the marsh north of the bridge. At the western extremity of the marsh the boundary runs westerly to the rear property line of the Gerald Wilson House (35), thence northerly along the rear property lines on the east side of Maine Street to the south side of Rt. 201 which it follows westerly, crossing Maine Street to the south side of Rt. 137 and thence to the point of beginning.



Sketch of the proposed
China Village Historic District

OCT 27 1976

MMG 2/76

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1951
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