

PH 367397

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED FEB 4 1977  
DATE ENTERED AUG 26 1977

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Orford Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Orford Street and the Ridge

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Orford Street (Rt. 10) from the south corner of Rt. 25A northerly to Archertown Rd. and easterly past the cemetery.  NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Orford VICINITY OF Second CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE New Hampshire CODE 33 COUNTY Grafton CODE 009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Town

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Grafton County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Woodsville

STATE

New Hampshire 03785

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey - The Wheeler House, No. 5318

DATE

1959

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress

10 First Street, SE

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20540/11

# 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
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

(Numbers in brackets refer to sketch map.)

The District extends for half a mile on both sides of Orford Street (Route 10) beginning on the south with a 1½ story brick dwelling built in 1829 /#1/ (formerly a schoolhouse, with the cupola bell tower now removed) on the southeast corner of the intersection of Route 25A and Route 10, and continuing northerly to Archertown Road which curves around the East Common and cemetery, included in the Historic District. There are 38 buildings exclusive of barns and other outbuildings in the District, which extends about 1/10th of a mile easterly from Orford Street and about 11 rods westerly toward the Connecticut River. On the easterly side, a terrace parallels the street at approximately 20 rods east of it. Centuries ago, this terrace formed a part of the river bed. The river receded leaving the height of land now known as the Ridge to become the site of seven fine houses /# 6-12/ built in a row over a period of years from 1773 to 1839 by professional and business men of Orford. Professor Hugh Morrison, architectural authority and retired professor of architecture at Dartmouth College has said of the houses: "As a row and counting the setting, this is the finest group of Federal-style houses in the United States."<sup>1</sup>

On the south end of the Ridge is an 1851 brick Academy building with square bell tower /#4/, now the Orford High School, and an 1852 clapboarded boarding house for students /#3/, now a private dwelling. In front of the boarding house is a Victorian house built in 1882 /#2/. On the Ridge north of the Academy is a 1½ story house built in 1824 /#5/. To the north, at the foot of the Ridge and fronting on the East Common, are a 1½ story house built in 1800 /#13/ and a small modern dwelling /#14/ built on the site of a 1799 house where Orford's native-born artist, Henry Cheever Pratt, lived as a young boy.

The East Common, approximately 6 acres in extent, starts at the north boundary of the northernmost Ridge house and extends along Route 10 to Archertown Road. The earliest portion of the East Common with its easterly extension which is the oldest part of the cemetery was deeded to the town by Israel Morey in 1773 "for the purpose and use of a Meeting House, Burying Ground, and Training Field."<sup>2</sup> The East Common was extended southerly in 1798 by a deed from Joseph Pratt, a retired sea captain from Salem, Massachusetts, who captained the ship "Grand Turk" during the Revolutionary War. Captain Pratt's deed to the town stipulates that the land is "to be used as a parade or Common and for no other use whatever."<sup>3</sup> The southernmost portion of the East Common was deeded in 1796 by William Simpson, a retired sea captain from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. His deed states that the land is "for the sole purpose and only use of a training field or Common and that no building of any kind is to be erected on the same piece of land."<sup>4</sup>

An unusual and admired feature of the District is the Orford Mall, publicized as early as the mid 1800's in the Boston Evening Traveller. A letter to the editor recommended a visit to Orford, "the most charming country village" the writer had ever seen, and said "...look at that mall, ...level as a house floor - straight as a line, and skipted with trees on both sides. Is there a parallel to this in the whole country?"<sup>5</sup>

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

The Mall extends along the entire east side of Orford Street from 25A to Archertown Road. The two rows of trees on either side of the walk were planted about 1800 by John Mann and Samuel Morey, owners at that time of the Mall property. Later the rows of trees were continued northe<sup>6</sup>ly along the town land bordering the East Common, where the Mall is owned by the town. The portion in front of the Academy building is owned by the Orford School District, and the remainder of the Mall adjoins privately owned property and belongs to the owners of those properties.

On the west side of Orford Street at the southern end of the District is a 1½ story brick dwelling built about 1847 by Thomas Mann /#38 T, a grandson of Orford's first settler, John Mann. North of this is John Mann's home /#37 T. The present ell adjoining the front is the earliest part, built in 1788 to replace the log house Mr. Mann constructed when he arrived in Orford from Hebron, Connecticut, in 1765 with his bride. The large square front portion of the house was added in 1809 for his second wife. In 1849, the third floor of the house was fitted out as a meeting place for the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. A letter written at that time by a granddaughter of John Mann says, "the odd fellows have got their hall finished. It is very nice indeed - the ladies sewing circle met there Tuesday and made their carpet and curtains. Little did Grandpa know what his garret would be turned into." A porch has been built onto the north side of the house and an ell extension added at right angles to the earliest part of the house. The present owners have shingled over the clapboards of the two ells and have removed the paint from the clapboards of the front part of the house, treating them with linseed oil for a natural wood effect which matches the shingles of the ells.

North of the Mann house are two small frame houses set close together. On the first lot, a doctor's office was built in 1828. The following year a new owner built the present house /#36 T and converted the office to a shop. Today the shop is gone and only the house remains. Next to it, a store was built in 1824 by a grandson of John Mann. The store became a shoemaker's shop whose proprietor built the present house /#35 T on the property in 1844. When he sold the place four years later, he reserved the right to remove the shop. (Its present location, if it still exists, is unknown.) The house has been enlarged by an addition to the front which reputedly was a dwelling built in 1883 behind the Academy building and moved to its present site about 1903. A Victorian embellishment in the form of a square tower juts out from one side of the house. An early barn behind the house is an excellent example of a hewn beam frame and saltbox construction.

The next house on the north is a 19th century barn /#34 T converted recently to a dwelling. The earliest house on the property was built in 1771 and replaced in 1807 by the home of an Orford doctor. The house burned in 1862 leaving the barn, which was probably built during the doctor's occupancy of the property.

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ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

2

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Like many houses in the District, the next house /#33 T was built at different periods. The present ell was built in 1797 by a hatter whose shop stood in the yard south of the house. Later the premises were occupied by a tailor, a storekeeper, and in 1807, by a cabinetmaker named Robert Choate. In 1862 the shop was destroyed by the same fire that burned the doctor's house south of it. The hatter's old house escaped the fire and was enlarged in about 1868. The gable end of the Victorian addition faces the road. A smaller gable has been built into the roof of the original 1½ story structure, the interior of which has recently been renovated.

Beyond this, a handsome Greek Revival brick house /#32 T and a similar but less pretentious building /#31 T beside it were built by Orford's first lawyer, Abiathar Britton, who came to town in 1799. The brick house he built in 1831 replaced a frame house on the site which burned in 1830. Tradition says that a child of Britton died in the fire and consequently he made his brick house as safe as possible by placing doors in all four outside walls. The front doorway, with side lights and a transom light above it, is sheltered by a pillared porch surmounted by decorative ironwork. The porch of the south side door has a projecting wooden arched roof. There are four chimneys, two on each side. In the gable end facing the road is a window with an arched wooden blind above the glass. In the front hallway, a hanging stairway curves gracefully to the second floor.

The similar brick building north of Britton's home was built by him in 1835 to replace his old frame office. It is somewhat narrower than his home and has no embellishments. Sold in 1854 by Britton's heirs, it became the parsonage of the Orford Congregational Church, as it is today.

The little Orford Social Library /#30 T beyond the parsonage was built in 1840 as a milliner's shop and was purchased in 1902 for the library building. The first Social Library in Orford was incorporated June 16, 1797.<sup>8</sup> The present one was incorporated in 1900. The 1½ story building with gable end facing the street and roof extending over the two levels of the front porch contains historical material as well as current books.

The store on the south corner of Bridge Street /#29 T has been in existence since 1804, when the earliest portion was built by Daniel Wheeler. The building was completed in 1807 by Daniel's brother, John B. Wheeler, who built the southernmost of the seven Ridge houses. The exterior of the long, 2-story structure with hipped roof and a porch on two sides has remained unchanged to this day. The second floor interior has been converted to living quarters for the present owner, who carries on the storekeeping tradition of over a century and a half in the same building.

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7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The store on the north corner of Bridge Street /#28/ is a 20th-century structure built around the nucleus of a small post office building which was originally a children's playhouse of the 1890's. The little building served as a post office until 1925, after which the store enlargement was built. The first building on the site was a Tavern Stand built in 1802 by Solomon Mann, a son of John Mann. A picture of the Tavern Stand when known as the Orford Hotel in the 1870's shows a wide building with gable end facing Orford Street. There is a three-tiered porch supported by posts and protected at the two upper stories by wooden rails with nicely-turned spindles. The gable over-hang covers the top tier of the porch.<sup>9</sup> The building was destroyed by fire in 1875.

Beyond the hotel site is a building begun in 1804 /#27/ as a law office by Orford's second lawyer, Jeduthan Wilcox. This building is now the ell of the present house, which Mr. Wilcox built in 1807 for the wife he married that year. It has a fanlight doorway, and the gable end faces the street. In 1824, Wilcox sold the property to the Orford Congregational Church for use as a parsonage; it was sold in 1833 to the incumbent minister, the Rev. Daniel Campbell. Beside the Jeduthan Wilcox house on the north was a store built in 1802. One of the tenants, a wheelwright, lived in a house /#26/ which he built in 1818 north of the store. In 1834, Mr. Campbell added this property to the Jeduthan Wilcox place. He removed the store and in 1838 he enlarged the wheelwright's house by a 2½ story addition to the front. At one time the building was used as a chapel for the Orford Congregational Church. More recently a porch has been added across the front.

The next house /#25/ is on a lot adjoining the southerly end of the West Common. It was built in 1918 on the site of a house built in 1799 which was the home of Sarah Mann Rogers (daughter of John Mann) until her death in 1863. A picture shows it to have been a large square house of Colonial style with pedimented front doorway, hipped roof, and twelve-over-twelve paned windows.<sup>10</sup> Sarah Mann moved to the house in 1806 when she married Dr. William F. Rogers. She died at the age of 86, a widow for 46 years, a wife for one. The old building was torn down to make way for the present house. At the back of the house is a small modern building formerly used as a post office, now an insurance office.

A store building built by Nathan Webster in 1798 on a site fronting on the West Common was bought by Dr. Rogers and operated as a store in partnership with John Doubleday. The building ceased to exist shortly after 1885. Today the site is occupied by a garage /#24/ whose owner lives with his family in the house /#23/ north of it, also fronting on the West Common. The house was built in 1854 and improved in 1859. A dormer window cuts into the front roof and an attached barn which stood at right angles to the house has been removed. The house stands on the site of the first law office in town, built in 1799 by Abiathar Britton. In front and slightly north of the small office building was Orford's first Academy, built on the West Common in 1796. It was destroyed about 1850 by a fire.

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7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

A third building fronting on the West Common is a modern house /#22 7 standing on the site of a beaver hat factory built in 1799 by William Howard who, 26 years later, built the northernmost house on the Ridge. His original shop grew into a cluster of buildings, including a dwelling house. He retired from the business in 1838 and his son, Henry, took over management of the hat factory until it burned in 1852.

The Orford Congregational Church /#21 7 is Gothic in style with an arched window over the double front door and arched side windows. A frieze ornaments the balustraded clock tower and the recessed eaves of the facade. It was designed by M.S. Wood, in 1850. His drawings of the exterior, signed and dated, are in the possession of the Church. The building was completed in 1854 and a small portion of it stands on the site of an earlier meetinghouse built in 1797 on the West Common. Whereas the present church faces east toward Orford Street, the old meetinghouse faced south<sup>11</sup> and had a steeple "of cupola form," 47 square box pews on the floor and 18 in the gallery. The church bell was transferred to the present church where it was in use until 1862 when it cracked from being rung too vigorously on a Fourth of July eve.<sup>12</sup> In 1850 the old meetinghouse was moved to a lot at the north end of Orford Street where it was put up on blocks. It remained there until about 1870 when it was floated by river to Norwich, Vermont, and used as an Episcopal Church until it burned sometime after 1915.

The brick post office /#20 7 north of the church was built in 1962. When plans were being made for this building, a problem arose as to the ownership of a portion of the West Common on which it was to stand. Belatedly, the town voted to have the East and West Commons surveyed and granite markers erected on them stating the extent of the Commons, the restrictions for their use, the dates they were granted and by whom.<sup>13</sup> One granite monument stands on the West Common and two stand on the East Common.

The two-story ell of the present Elm House /#19 7 with a shed at right angles to it having three arched openings was built in 1798 by Samuel Morey. He rented it to a tenant who operated it as a public house for entertainment. From 1810 until 1833 the property was the home of Orford's minister, the Rev. Mr. Sylvester Dana. Dana sold his Orford home in 1841, after his retirement to Concord, New Hampshire, and in 1849 the new owner added the present Greek Revival front with columns supporting a gabled pediment. In 1875, after the old Tavern Stand (Orford Hotel) burned, the house was fitted out as a hotel and became known as the Elm House. Today its exterior has remained unchanged, but the interior has been divided into apartments.

North of the Elm House is a new building /#18 7 (c. 1955) housing the offices of the Equity Publishing Corporation. In 1800 a store was built just north of this site.

The next northerly lot was the homestead site of Israel Morey who came to Orford from Hebron, Connecticut, in the winter of 1766, travelling by ox sled and using the frozen Connecticut River as a roadway from Charlestown to Orford. With him were his wife and

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CONTINUATION SHEET 5 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

three sons. He operated Orford's first store and blacksmith shop on his homestead lot, and built the first mills on the nearby brook. His home was Orford's first tavern and town meeting place. It stood until shortly before 1865. Its fate is not known, nor is that of Orford's first meetinghouse and schoolhouse, a small barn given by Israel Morey to the town in 1770. During the Revolution, the building became a guardhouse for scouts patrolling the river for enemies from Canada. It stood behind the present brick building #17 which was built in 1840 as a Universalist Church, causing dissension among Orford residents. The Universalist Church was active for twenty-five years, after which services became irregular and finally ceased. In 1878 the building was bought by a group of residents who remodelled it into "Union Hall," a place for public entertainment. In 1904 Union Hall was sold to become the Masonic Hall as it is today. The exterior of the building remains as built with its two front doors, its domed cupola, and windows topped by lancet-arched blinds.

The next house #16, a 2½ story gabled structure, was built in 1851 by a harness-maker whose shop, now gone, stood just south of his home. Today a workshop is located behind the dwelling. The last house in the District #15, west of Orford Street is a 1½ story home built in 1850. On this lot, where the ground slopes gently to the river, Israel Morey in 1775 established a ferry service which transported passengers until the first bridge was built in 1802 on the site of the present Samuel Morey Memorial Bridge.

Of the 38 buildings in the District, exclusive of barns and other outbuildings, only seven are 20th century structures. All are in excellent condition. Eight are constructed of brick made at the Orford Brickyard, which was started about 1770. The new post office is of modern brick. The two northernmost Ridge houses were the first brick buildings in town. Today, one is painted white; the other is yellow. All the other buildings are frame structures painted white, except for the John Mann house, now natural-wood colored. A few of the buildings might be considered intrusions--the store on the north corner of Bridge Street, the insurance office (originally a post office), the garage fronting on the West Common, the Equity Publishing office, and also, the small workshop behind the house north of the Masonic Hall. However, since the District has been a mixture of commercial and residential buildings from the beginning of its history, these present day business structures, which are not unsightly, are, in effect, additions rather than intrusions.

The buildings are concentrated along a half-mile section of Orford Street which has always been the center of the town's business and residential district. During the height of its prosperity there were four general stores in the District, a milliner's shop, shoemakers' shops, a hotel, a hat factory, two churches, two schools, a private Academy, and, on the east side of the street, the seven architecturally impressive

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CONTINUATION SHEET 6 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 6

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Ridge houses unequalled in the beauty of their setting. On the west side of the street, the building facades are lined up closer to the street than on the east side, and being more numerous, the buildings are set closer together. There are 24 on the west side and 14 on the east side of the street. The East and West Commons at the north end of the street and the Mall extending the entire length of the District on the east side of the street, provide carefully-tended open spaces of green lawns and a tree-lined walk of unique distinction.

1. Hodgson, Alice Doan. THANKS TO THE PAST, Orford, N.H.: Historical Fact Publication, 1965. Quoted from dust jacket.
2. Silver, Lewis Mann, M.D. Orford, N.H. Historical Reminiscent, 1927, Manuscript at Orford Social Library.
3. Grafton County Land Deed Office, Book 29, Page 396, Woodsville, N.H.
4. Ibid, Book 22, Page 228.
5. Mann, Joel, Orford Centennial Celebration, 1865. Address, p. 24.
6. Ibid, Page 23.
7. Silver, Lewis Mann, M.D. Orford N.H. Historical Reminiscent, 1927, Manuscript at Orford Social Library.
8. N.H. Town Papers 1690-1800. Vol. XIII. Concord: Published by authority of Legislature. Isaac W. Hammond, Editor.
9. Hodgson, Alice Doan. THANKS TO THE PAST, Orford, N.H.: Historical Fact Publications, 1965. Page 125.
10. Ibid, Page 160.
11. Ibid, Illustration of painting, Page VII.
12. Conant, William R. Historical Record, pp. 33 & 38. REPORT OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SETTLEMENT OF ORFORD, N.H. 1915.
13. Hodgson, Alice Doan. RECORD OF ORFORD, N.H., TOWN OWNED LANDS, 1974. Deposited with the Orford Conservation Commission & at the Selectmen's Office.



# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1773, earliest part of Samuel Wheeler house attributed to  
 Moray house, 1st 2-story house in Orford Asher Benjamin.  
 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
 One of the most significant features of the Orford Street Historical District is its row of seven Ridge houses. A state historical marker honoring them reads as follows:

### THE RIDGE

Orford's seven Ridge houses were built over a period of time from 1773 to 1839 by professional and business men of the town. The Bulfinch-style house of John B. Wheeler, built 1814-1816, was designed by a Boston architect, probably Asher Benjamin, an associate at that time of Charles Bulfinch. Other Ridge houses also display the influence of Asher Benjamin.

As has already been stated under item #7, the row of Ridge houses has been cited as "...the finest group of Federal-style houses in the United States." (see footnotes No. 1, Item #7.)

The significance of the District is emphasized by the setting of the seven houses, well back from the road on the eminence of the Ridge, and by the tree-shaded Mall extending along the street the entire half mile of the District with buildings on both sides of the street. The beauty of Orford Street has merited and continues to merit the praise and admiration of visitors. Washington Irving, after a visit to Orford, wrote: "In all my travels in this country and Europe, I have seen no village more beautiful. It is a charming place. Nature has done her utmost here."<sup>1</sup> Elihu Burritt, the Learned Blacksmith, while travelling one time by train, became ill and left the train in Fairlee, Vermont. He crossed the river to Orford, intending to stay for only a brief visit, but "he became charmed with the place and extended his stay."<sup>2</sup>

Authors and musicians have received inspiration from the peaceful beauty of the place. William Taylor Adams (Oliver Optic) wrote some of his children's books in Orford.<sup>3</sup> More recently, Charles Jackson, after the success of his book THE LOST WEEKEND, bought the northernmost Ridge house and lived there with his family until selling it in 1954. George W. Chadwick "heard here the music of nature,"<sup>4</sup> which may have inspired him to compose one of his symphonies. A significant musical event of the 1890's was a visit by the members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra to the owner of the yellow brick house on the Ridge (second from the northern end). Her talented guests "nightly charmed the music lovers assembled on the lawn about the house."<sup>5</sup>

Among the renowned visitors to Orford were Presidents Taft and Wilson for brief stays, and Daniel Webster for a longer visit.<sup>6</sup> In October of 1840 Webster came to Orford campaigning for the presidential election of William Henry Harrison. On the West Common near the meetinghouse, a platform was erected from which Webster made one of his memorable addresses. He was not feeling well and remained in Orford for two nights as a guest at

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Benjamin, Asher, letter to Rev. Sylvester Dana, copy in possession of Mrs. John H. Hodgson, Orford, N.H.  
 Blossom, Deborah, "Orford's Seven Stately Ridge Houses," New Hampshire Profiles, Vol. IX, No. 6, June, 1960, pp. 36-41. (Dates on Morey house incorrect.)  
 (Continued on Continuation sheets, pages 20 and 21.)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 43 1/5 acres  
 UTM REFERENCES

DA <sup>858</sup> [1,8] [7,3,0] [8,0,0] + [4,8] [6,5] [6,5,0] + AR [1,8] [7,3,1] [1,0,0] + [4,8] [6,5] [5,0,0] +  
 B [1,8] [7,3,0] [2,5,0] + [4,8] [6,4] [5,5,0] + CD [1,8] [7,3,0] [0,0,0] + [4,8] [6,4] [8,0,0] +  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Historic District extends for half a mile on both sides of Orford Street (Rt. 10) beginning on the south side with a 1½ story brick dwelling on the southeast corner of the intersection of Rt. 25A and Rt. 10 and continuing northward to Archertown Road around the East Common and past the Cemetery, included in the District, which extends easterly about 1/10th of a mile from Orford Street and about 11 rods westerly toward the Connecticut River.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE NA	CODE NA	COUNTY NA	CODE NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Alice Doan Hodgson, Orford Town Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1-603-353-4815

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Orford

New Hampshire 03777

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

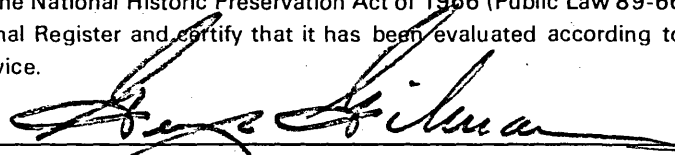
NATIONAL XX

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



TITLE Commissioner, NH Department of Resources & Economic Development

JAN 27 1977

NH State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8/26/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8-23-77

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

the yellow brick house on the Ridge, then the home of Edward Bissell. Webster, in a letter to his wife, praised Mr. and Mrs. Bissell as the kindest people in the world, saying they gave him every attention. He concluded his letter: "Yours truly, Dan'l Webster, in bed."

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

ARCHITECTURE - THE RIDGE HOUSES

(Numbers in brackets refer to sketch map.)

The Samuel Morey house /# 9/ (now Hodgson) in the middle of the row of seven Ridge houses, was begun in 1773 by Orford's first minister, Obadiah Noble. It was the first 2-story house in Orford and the first and only house on the Ridge for 33 years. Its roof formed a gable at the front but was originally constructed as a hipped roof at the rear, as evidence by existing attic beams. Mr. Noble's house consisted of a large keeping room flanked by a smaller room; an enclosed stairway led to the second floor where there were two rooms with attic space above. In 1799 Orford's inventor, Samuel Morey, bought Mr. Noble's house and all the Ridge property occupied by the present Ridge houses. His 1½ story addition with its 45 foot ridge pole shows a double thickness of wall where it was attached to the rear of Noble's house. Two arched openings adorn the outside of Morey's addition which now provides a kitchen, a woodshed, and workshop on the ground floor, a bedroom and attic above.

In 1804 Morey added the hip-roofed front of the present house to Noble's old home. He had sold some patent rights to one of his steam engines for a considerable sum and was able to build a handsome addition consisting of two large rooms divided by a front hall, behind which was a small bedroom. Upstairs are two large bedrooms, and a hall chamber over the downstairs hall. The facade of Morey's house is distinguished for its Palladian window with arched sidelights, an artistic variation on the usual Palladian window with its flat-headed sidelights. Below the window, arched sidelights and a fanlight doorway are flanked by pilasters supporting a larger arch embellished with dentil molding. Two end chimneys supply fireplaces to the four large rooms.

Early in the 1900's, unfortunate changes were made in the Morey house: the large rooms were partitioned, a bay window and a front porch were added. In 1913 the property was purchased by Dr. Frank Carleton Doan in whose family it still remains. The house has been restored to its original state. The porch is gone. Extraneous partitions have been removed. Plaster, lath and wallpaper have been torn off to uncover the original wainscoted walls. Twelve-paned window sashes have been replaced where needed. Chimneys and fireplaces have been rebuilt with old brick - old wide floor boards have replaced hardwood floors.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

When the restoration was finished in 1961, a ninety-year-old granddaughter of a former owner of the Morey house who remembered it in the days of her childhood came to see its resurrection. She declared it to be true to her memory of it, except for the "little dark bedroom" which had necessarily been converted to a bathroom.

The Wilcox house /# 8 7 was begun in 1805-1806 by Israel Morey on Ridge land owned by his son, Samuel Morey, and located just south of Samuel's house. It was not completed as it stands today until 1832 when Leonard Wilcox built the 1-story front of the present house for his second wife, Mary Mann, a granddaughter of Orford's first settler, John Mann.

Israel Morey built a 1½-story frame house with a keeping room and small adjoining room, now incorporated into one large room as a kitchen. An attached shed extends beyond the living quarters, with attic space under the eaves. In 1819, after the death of his parents, Samuel Morey built a 2-story addition onto the front gable end of the house as a wedding present for his daughter, Almira, who married Leonard Wilcox, a lawyer and son of Jeduthan Wilcox. The interior of the addition consists of a stair hall leading to a bedroom on the second floor, and a downstairs room with fireplace and open cupboard with a concave shell-shaped top. Almira was able to visit her parents home well protected from inclement weather by a covered footbridge which her father built at second floor level between her house and his ell. It was placed high enough for his ox team to pass beneath it with a load of hay. The barn behind the Wilcox house was built at an early date by Samuel Morey. The property came into Leonard Wilcox's possession in 1838 when Morey, having moved to Fairlee, Vermont, sold his Orford homestead to Wilcox.

Almira Morey Wilcox died in 1830, leaving four young children. Leonard soon began enlarging his home for a second wife. The low front, completed in 1832, has a hipped roof.

The pilastered arch over the doorway has a dentil molding, which is also used under the modillion brackets beneath the cornice. The interior of the front addition has a central living room, and two small bedrooms with fireplaces set into the inner partitions. The Wilcox house is now owned by decendants of Leonard Wilcox and his second wife, Mary Mann Wilcox.

The Wheeler house /# 6 7 was built on the southernmost lot of Ridge land, bought from Samuel Morey by John B. Wheeler, merchant, in 1814. Wheeler's Bulfinch-style house, completed and assessed in 1816 at \$1,000, is the only one of the Ridge houses reputed to have been designed by a professional architect. Tradition in the Wheeler family states that it was designed "by a Boston architect." No architectural plans can be found and for many years it was thought that the Boston architect must have been Charles Bulfinch. Recent research has disclosed that it was more probably Asher Benjamin. In 1800, Sylvester Dana (later Orford's minister) became acquainted with Asher Benjamin when they

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

were both residing in Windsor, Vermont. The next year Dana was ordained as the Congregational minister in Orford where he apparently planned to build a home. He received a letter from Asher Benjamin dated Sept. 4, 1801 or 1807 (the year cannot be definitely determined from the writing), enclosing a 2-story house plan with 1 story part on the back and recommending "the Covering of the outside to be 1½ inch plank & about 9 or 10 inches wide to have them matched without any mouldings except those under the eaves which is verry much in the preasant taste." The spelling is Mr. Benjamin's and the letter was in the hands of J.B. Friend, Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, in 1966.

Despite Mr. Dana's request of Asher Benjamin for architectural plans, he never built a house in Orford. However, it is possible that when John B. Wheeler contemplated building his Ridge house in 1814, Sylvester Dana suggested Asher Benjamin, then an associate of Charles Bulfinch in Boston.

The low-pitched hipped roof of the front of Mr. Wheeler's Federal-style house is surrounded by a balustrade of alternate panel and urn-turned spindle design, subtly placed with the spindle sections above the windows and the panels above the wall sections of the facade. The front is finished in matched board sheathing, "verry much in the preasant taste." The ground floor windows are set in arched recesses. The elliptical fanlight over the front door and the two sidelights are designed in a traceried pattern of glass set in lead bars with applied rosettes of cast lead at the junctures. An entrance porch is surmounted by a diamond-patterned iron railing. The mutules, or flat blocks, projecting under the cornice appear to be honeycombed with round, black holes. In Asher Benjamin's AMERICAN BUILDER'S COMPANION, 1806, he notes on page 13, "The plancere of the mutule is represented with holes bored in it, instead of bells, which will save half the labour of making them; and, at a distance of fifteen or twenty feet, look as well, if not better." Under the mutules is a decorative molding, extending across the front and around the sides. The clapboarding on the side walls is graduated in width from narrow to wider under the eaves.

The inner wall of the south front room has a mantel, columned and reeded, with egg molding under the shelf; the fireplace is faced with soapstone and has a soapstone hearth. The dado is decorated with dentil molding. The front stairway ascends to a gentle curve at the upper level. The interior of the house has remained essentially as originally constructed. The ell extends to the back in two roof levels, the rearmost section having three arched openings. There is a small brick smokehouse in the back yard, as well as a carriage barn, hen house, and a large barn, well constructed of immense hewn beams.

The Wheeler house is listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey (see Item 6). It is now owned by collateral descendants of John B. Wheeler.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

The Rogers house /# 7 / (now Lane) was built by John Rogers, lawyer, between 1817 and 1821. On the same day in 1814 when Mr. Wheeler bought Ridge property from Samuel Morey, Rogers purchased a lot from Morey adjoining northerly on Mr. Wheeler's land. At that time Rogers was a tenant in Israel Morey's small house (now Wilcox). In 1815 he had constructed only a barn on his property. By 1819 he had completed the present ell of his house, a two-story structure having a large keeping room and small bed chamber with corresponding rooms above. It was attached to a 1½ story shed. In 1915 this portion of the house was drastically changed. The 2-story part was widened by the addition of a sun parlor on the south. The 1½ story portion of the ell was torn down, and a large 2-story section was built onto the original keeping room to supply an additional sitting room, a new kitchen, pantries, laundry room, four bedrooms, two baths, and servants' quarters. A new doorway on the south side of the house matches the original front door. A screened porch was added to the north side of the old keeping room, now a dining room with a Georgian mantel and fireplace replacing the old bake oven and original fireplace.

Rogers completed the front of his house in 1821. He copied the facade of Wheeler's house, using matched board sheathing, arched window recesses and an entrance porch topped with a diamond-patterned iron railing. The hipped roof is reputed to have originally had a balustrade which is now gone. The tracery of the leaded and rosetted sidelights and fanlight of the doorway is a different pattern from Mr. Wheeler's and the molding under the honeycombed mutules beneath the cornice is an attached tassel molding. Only one room deep at the front, Rogers' house has end chimneys instead of the inside wall chimneys of Wheeler's house. The interior of the Rogers house has a stairway divided to give access to the two front bedrooms. Another distinctive feature of the Rogers house is the handsome soapstone mantel in the south living room. It is supported by attached columns topped with urns under the mantel shelf. It remained the original dark-grained color, simulating marble, until 1967 when a new owner painted it to match the woodwork of the room.

When the house was altered in 1915, the front was left as built, except for the installation of hardwood floors and hall panelling. A two-car garage with arched doorways and an apartment above was built behind the house. A greenhouse, icehouse, and octagonal gazebo on the hill at the far end of the property were also built then.

The Hinkley house /#11 / (now Beale) was built by Dyar T. Hinkley, merchant, on land bought from Samuel Morey in 1822; the third Ridge lot to be sold by Morey. It was assessed as a finished house in 1824 at a valuation of \$550. The front of the house and a small portion of the ell are brick, now painted yellow, with natural stone lintels over the windows. The frame portion of the ell with arched woodshed openings has been finished off with additional bedrooms on the second floor. End chimneys rise above the hipped roof of the front, which has architectural details similar to those of the Wheeler house. There is egg molding under the "honeycomb" mutules beneath the cornice. The

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

traceries pattern of the leaded panes in the fanlight over the door and the sidelights is identical to Mr. Wheeler's, as is the design of the iron railing over the entrance porch. The interior has an arched doorway and a circular stairway ascending from the front hall. Asher Benjamin's book, THE AMERICAN BUILDER'S COMPANION, 1806, gives detailed plans and drawings for a circular stairway. Orford's joiner, Jesse Avery, is known to have journeyed to Boston, possibly to consult with Mr. Benjamin, and he may have made use of Benjamin's handbooks in his work. The walls of the two front bedrooms are decorated with scenic murals attributed to Rufus Porter and professionally restored.

The Federal-style Howard house /#12 7 (now Vanderbilt-Dillon) was built by William Howard, manufacturer of beaver hats, on land bought from Samuel Morey in 1825 adjoining northerly on Mr. Hinckley's lot. Howard's spacious house took four years to build and was assessed as finished in 1829. The front part and a small portion of the ell are brick, painted white in 1915 when a new owner, Judge William Dana, purchased it from Mr. Howard's heirs and repaired its neglected condition. Judge Dana replaced the entrance porch and railing, added open porches on each side of the house and remodelled the interior. He papered his dining room with an antique reproduction of Zuber's American scenic wallpaper which remains in good condition today. The front hallway has an arched doorway leading to a back room and a circular stairway similar to Mr. Hinckley's. There are end chimneys, two on each side of the house; a balustrade around the hipped roof of the front is similar in design to Mr. Wheeler's with alternating wood panels and spindles. There is egg molding under the "honeycomb" mutules beneath the cornice. The frame portion of the ell has an arched opening and has been finished off with a modern kitchen and upstairs bedrooms.

The Willard house /#10 7 (now Fifield) was built by Stedman Willard, merchant, on land bought from Samuel Morey in 1838 adjoining northerly on Morey's house property. Increases in Willard's real estate assessments in 1840 and 1841 indicate the completion of his house, several small barns (now gone), the present large barn, and a store at the foot of his land adjacent to Orford Street (burned in 1905). Mr. Willard's house, later than the other Ridge houses, is a simplified Greek Revival style and follows the fashion of the 1830's by having a rectangular transom window over the sidelighted front door instead of a fanlight, and its gable end facing the street. Originally, the door was sheltered by a small porch topped by an iron railing; this was replaced by a wide, pillared front porch after 1905 when the house was sold. The railing was relocated at the upper window in the front gable. Another porch has been added to the north side of the house. A bay window topped by an iron railing on the south side probably replaced a porticoed door.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

The front of the house has four chimneys, two on each side. The 2-story part of the original ell has a covered porch with three arched openings on the south side between the front of the house and a projecting 1½-story attached woodshed. In 1963 the shed was remodelled into a 2-story structure with living rooms on the ground floor and bedrooms and bathrooms above.

The rooms in the front part of Mr. Willard's house are high ceilinged and spacious. The stairway ascends to a gentle curve at the upper level, resembling the design of Mr. Wheeler's stairway and perhaps copied from it. Mr. Willard, who came to Orford in 1813 as a boy, found a job as clerk in Mr. Wheeler's store and married his daughter, Meriel, in 1824. She died in 1837 and Willard built his Ridge house for the second wife he married a year later, which reputedly led to hard feelings between Willard and Wheeler. It is said that Willard was determined to build a house bigger and better than Mr. Wheeler's. In any case, he achieved an impressively big house, demonstrating his prosperity as a merchant in his own right.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

ART

Henry Cheever Pratt, born in Orford in 1803, was a boy of 15 living on Orford Street when Samuel F. B. Morse discovered him and undertook his training as an artist. A fine oil painting attributed to Pratt hangs in the Wheeler house on the Ridge and depicts Orford Street c. 1832 from the cliff across the river in Fairlee. Today Pratt's paintings of the American West which were the result of his appointment as the official artist for the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey, 1851-53, are his principal claim to fame, although the portraits by which he earned his living, and his paintings of the White Mountains are skillfully done.

COMMERCE

At the height of the town's prosperity, there were four general stores in the Historic District. Three were owned and operated by owners of Ridge houses: Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Hinckley (whose partner was Edward Bissell, the subsequent owner of Hinckley's Ridge house), and Mr. Stedman Willard. After Hinckley's death, his store was bought by William Howard, Jr., son of the owner of the Howard Ridge house. The fourth store, located in the present brick parsonage, was operated by the firm of Tillotson & Cushman, the proprietor being Hartwell Cushman who lived in the Rogers Ridge house next to Mr. Wheeler's home. Town assessment records show that all the store owners had stock in trade valued at several thousand dollars. Their prosperity was increased beyond the profits of their store sales by investments made in mortgages.



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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Foreclosures were frequent. They acquired land and farms as well as interest on their money. This partly answers the question constantly asked by visitors to Orford: Where did the money come from to build the Ridge houses? Three were built by store owners. Two were built by successful lawyers (the Rogers house and the front of the Wilcox house). Mr. Rogers' law practice was mainly concerned with the settlement of debts. Another Ridge house was built by a prosperous beaver hat manufacturer, William Howard. The front and rear of the middle house on the Ridge was built by Orford's inventor, Samuel Morey, who earned his living from mills and lumbering.

CONSERVATION

The Orford Conservation Commission is undertaking a project to plant young maple trees along Orford's  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile Mall extending the entire length of the Historic District on the east side of Orford Street. Two rows of trees were originally planted on either side of the Mall by John Mann and Samuel Morey in about 1800. Later the rows were continued where the Mall adjoins the East Common. The trees grew tall and arched out over the Mall, providing a shaded walk admired by all who see it and cherished by Orford residents. Owners of the Mall, whose property adjoins it, have tended it carefully throughout the years and are cooperating with the Conservation Commission in granting permission for new trees to be planted where old ones have died and been removed.

It is hoped that another project to conserve and beautify the Mall will be possible in time. Over the years, the dirt walk has been allowed to grow to grass. A brick walk has recently been laid in place of the dirt walk on the Morey (Hodgson) property and, if funds can be raised, the brick walk could be extended the entire length of the Mall.

Conservation of the Mall was begun at an early date with the enactment of a law prohibiting riding or driving on the Mall. Three of the four iron signs stating the prohibition are still in place today. Granite posts were set up at intervals on either side of the walk and others barred the way in the middle of the walk. Most of them have disappeared, but the enactment against riding or driving on the Mall continues to be enforced.

The East and West Commons are kept mowed and trimmed by the town. Three granite markers, as previously stated (Item #7), are placed on the Commons to ensure preservation of their history and the restrictions for their use.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

EDUCATION

John B. Wheeler, builder of the southernmost Ridge house, was instrumental in saving Dartmouth College from becoming a state university. While attending the graduation of his son, John, at Dartmouth in 1816, he became interested in the controversy between the state and the college trustees. As a result, he gave the college \$1,000 which secured the services of Daniel Webster who represented the college trustees in the Dartmouth College case. It was tried in the U.S. Supreme Court and, with the help of Webster's eloquence, was decided in favor of Dartmouth College by John Marshall's celebrated decision establishing the inviolability of contracts and decreeing that the College Charter from George the Third was a contract and that a state could pass no laws impairing a contract. Dartmouth's Wheeler Hall, named in John B. Wheeler's honor, commemorates his generous aid in winning the Dartmouth College Case. His son, Dr. John Wheeler, was president of the University of Vermont from 1833-1848.

Richardson Hall at Dartmouth College is named for another Orford man, James B. Richardson, a lawyer who owned the Abiathar Britton brick house on Orford Street in the Historic District. Judge Richardson was graduated from Dartmouth College in 1857, was appointed to the Bench of the Superior Court of Massachusetts in 1892, and was for many years a trustee of Dartmouth College.

The Historic District was the site of Orford's first schoolhouse (1770), and two later schoolhouses (1785 & 1829, the latter being the only one of the three remaining, and now converted to a dwelling). Orford's first Academy building (built 1796, burned about 1850) stood on the West Common. Unsuccessful as an Academy, it became a grade school where students as young as seven or eight wrestled with problems of Colburn's Mental Arithmetic. A second Academy building (1851) is now the Orford High School. In 1898 the building was sold to the town and fitted out for a grammar school. It became the Orford High School in 1926. It stands on the southern end of the Ridge in the Historic District.

ENGINEERING

Samuel Morey, whose house is the middle one of Orford's seven Ridge houses in the Historic District, was a self-taught engineer. A pamphlet published in Albany, N.Y., in 1819 and written by William Alexander Duer, Esq., entitled "A Reply to Mr. Colden's Vindication of the Steam-Boat Monopoly," contains a footnote, p. 55, referring to Morey and stating: "This gentleman has obtained much celebrity as a Civil Engineer, by his planning and execution of the canals, locks, inclined planes, etc. at Bellows Falls, on the Connecticut River." The Bellows Falls Canal was one of the first commercial canals to be built in this country.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

It was opened for business in 1802. Samuel Morey also constructed a canal and locks in Fairlee, Vermont, to float his logs down river from his lumbering operations on the slopes around Fairlee Pond, now called Lake Morey in his honor.

In 1826, Morey was consulted about a plan to build a canal from the Connecticut River across the state to the Pemigewasset or upper Merrimack River by way of Oliverian and Baker's Rivers. He advised against the canal, predicting that the use of canals would soon be replaced by carriages on railroads. The canal was never built.

INDUSTRY

Industries represented in the Historic District include an early goldsmith, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, a wheelwright, a harnessmaker, and two hatters, one of whom was William Howard whose prosperity enabled him to build the northernmost Ridge house.

INVENTION

The Smithsonian Institution at Washington, D.C., has on exhibit a model of Samuel Morey's gas engine, the first internal combustion engine ever constructed. Morey lived on Orford's Ridge in the Historic District and conducted his experiments in a workshop behind his house, now the site of a barn built by Stedman Willard about 1840. Morey patented his gas, or vapour, engine in 1826, more than half a century before the first commercially successful automobile was produced by Charles E. Duryea in 1891-1892. Morey's engine operated on the same principle as today's automobiles. His carburetor, which he appropriately called his preparing box, mixed his vaporized fuel with air and prepared it for ignition. Morey himself foresaw the value of his invention, though he could not convince others of its worth. The engine, he stated, could advantageously draw carriages on good roads and railways and give much wanted direction and velocity to balloons. In his words, "The discovery will, in good measure, greatly change the commercial and personal intercourse of the Country...if it should be thought most prudent to continue their intercourse on the earth's surface, yet I think there will be little use of horses for that purpose."<sup>10</sup>

In 1817, Morey patented his American Water Burner, a device for making and burning water gas. Thus his house on the Ridge was heated and lighted by water gas half a century before this gas was successfully employed in America in 1875 for heating and illuminating purposes. Morey foretold the use of central heating by suggesting that heat from his gas stoves might be led by pipes or furnaces wherever wanted.<sup>11</sup>

Morey patented twenty inventions over a period of forty years. Although the internal combustion engine was his most extraordinary achievement, he is better known for

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

the first paddle wheel steamboat. In 1793 Morey was the first to demonstrate the use of a paddle wheel to propel a steamboat which he operated on the Connecticut River at Orford. In 1797 he built a steamboat at Bordentown, New Jersey, using two side paddle wheels, a method of propulsion that proved to be the answer to successful steamboat navigation. Morey exhibited this boat at Philadelphia. Chancellor Livingston of New York had been a passenger on a stern paddle wheel steamboat Morey built and operated on the Hudson River at New York in 1796 and had known of Morey's subsequent side paddle wheel steamboat. However, when Fulton, backed by Livingston, built his steamboat in 1807, he patented the side paddle wheels as his own invention. In 1811, having been told that the application of two wheels to a steamboat was Morey's invention, Fulton took out another patent. Morey, in his patent of 1795 for a steam engine whose force could be communicated "either by a crank, or chain and wheels to propel boats," neglected to protect his steam powered paddle wheels adequately.

MILITARY

Israel Morey, whose homestead was at the north end of the Historic District and who later built the earliest part of the Wilcox Ridge house, was Colonel of the 12th N.H. Regiment of Foot, also paymaster and mustermaster of the Regiment during the Revolutionary War.<sup>12</sup> His recruits mustered and trained on Orford's East Common and marched from there to fight in Canada and at Ticonderoga. He was one of three colonels commanding the N.H. Militia at Saratoga Creek where Burgoyne surrendered on October 7, 1777.

Morey is buried in the cemetery of the Historic District where there is also a monument honoring Capt. Jeremiah Post who died August 26, 1777, of wounds received at the battle of Bennington. The inscription on the monument reads:

Brave Capt. Post who once  
did die, For to Defend  
our Liberty.

POLITICS

Israel Morey, a resident of the Historic District, was several times a representative to the Provincial Congress of the Colony of N.H. at Exeter during the Revolutionary War years. He helped such men as Meshech Weare and Matthew Thornton frame the first civil constitution for N.H. He was appointed Judge of Probate, Associate Justice of the Court of Common Pleas,<sup>13</sup> and Justice of the Peace<sup>14</sup> for Grafton County. He served Orford in the capacity of selectman and assessor. His home on the north end of the Historic District was the scene of early town meetings at which he was moderator.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Jeduthan Wilcox, a resident of the Historic District, was a member of the U.S. Congress from N.H. from 1813-1817. His son, Leonard Wilcox, owner of a Ridge house, was elected in June, 1842, by the New Hampshire Legislature to serve out the unexpired term of Franklin Pierce as U.S. Senator.

RELIGION

Orford's first meetinghouse of 1770, now gone, was at the north end of this Historic District on Israel Morey's homestead land. The second church building (1797) was on the West Common and was moved when the present church was built in 1854. The earliest ministers were Presbyterian until 1801 when Rev. Sylvester Dana became Orford's first Congregational minister.

A Universalist Church was established in 1840 and was active for about 25 years. The brick church building is now the Masonic Hall at the north end of the Historic District.

SCIENCE

Samuel Morey, owner of a Ridge house in the Historic District, wrote articles about his inventions and discoveries which were published by Prof. Benjamin Silliman of Yale University in his American Journal of Science and Arts and in The Journal of the Franklin Institute, as follows:

"On Heat and Light." American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 11, pp. 118-129, 1820.

"Bubbles Blown in Melted Rosin." American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 11, p. 179, 1820.

"On Artificial Mineral Waters, with Some Remarks on Artificial Light." American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 111, p. 94, 1821.

"On Fetid Crystallized Limestone." American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 111, p. 324, 1821.

"An Account of a new Explosive Engine, Generating a Power that May be substituted for that of the Steam Engine." American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. XI, pp. 104-108, 1826.  
Journal of the Franklin Institute, Vol. 11, p. 115, 1826.

Other articles on Morey's inventions written by John Sullivan were published in Silliman's Journal as follows:

"On the Revolving Steam-Engine, Recently Invented by SAMUEL MOREY, and Patented to him on the 14th July, 1815, with four Engravings." Vol. IV, pp. 157-165, 1820.

"MR. SULLIVAN on the Revolving Engine, in Reply to MR. DOOLITTLE." Vol. IV, 1820.

"On a new Means of Producing Heat and Light, with an Engraving." Vol. I, pp. 91-94, 1819.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

TRANSPORTATION

The Tavern Stand (Orford Hotel) on the north corner of Bridge & Orford Streets in the Historic District was a stage stop in the early days. In 1845 a meeting was held there to determine which side of the Connecticut River would be the site for a proposed railroad. Fortunately, for the preservation of Orford's rural beauty, the decision was made in favor of Vermont. Two years later, the railroad was opened through Fairlee as far as Bradford, Vermont, and the charm of Orford Street remained untouched for all to admire today.

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1. Conant, William R. Historical Record, p. 68, REPORT OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SETTLEMENT OF ORFORD, N.H., 1915.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Ibid.
  7. Hodgson, Alice Doan. THANKS TO THE PAST, Orford, N.H.: Historical Fact Publications, 1965. p. 69.
  8. Ibid. p. 80.
  9. New Hampshire Profiles, June, 1960. "Orford's Seven Stately Ridge Houses." p. 38, illustration.
  10. Hodgson, Alice Doan. SAMUEL MOREY, INVENTOR EXTRAORDINARY, Orford, N.H.: Historical Fact Publications. Quoted from Morey manuscript at Baker Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., entitled, "Papers prepared for publication but not sent."
  11. Morey, Samuel. "On Heat and Light," American Journal of Science and Arts, published by Prof. Benjamin Silliman of Yale University, 1820, Vol. 11, pp. 118-129.
  12. N.H. State Papers, Concord, N.H., 1874. Compiled & Edited by Nathaniel Bouton, D.D. Vol. VIII, 1776-1783, p. 47.

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8. Footnotes to SIGNIFICANCE (Continued):
13. N.H. State Papers, Concord, N.H., 1874. Compiled & Edited by Nathaniel Bouton, D.D. Vol. VIII, 1776-1783, p. 13.
14. Ibid, p. 19.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

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- "On Artificial Mineral Waters, with some remarks on Artificial light," American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 111, p. 94, 1821.
- "On Fetid Crystallized Limestone," American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 111, p. 324, 1821.
- "An Account of a new explosive engine, generating a power that may be substituted for that of the steam engine," American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. XI, p. 104, 1826., and Journal of the Franklin Institute, Vol. \*\*, p. 115, 1826, Philadelphia, Pa. Unpublished letters, patents and notes at Baker Library Archives, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
- Letter to William A. Duer, October 31, 1818, published in Appendix of REPLY TO MR. COLDEN'S VINDICATION OF THE STEAM-BOAT MONOPOLY, p. XVI. Albany, N.Y.: E. & E. Hosford, 1819.
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IDENTIFICATION OF SKETCH MAP NUMBERS

All buildings are on Orford Street and the Ridge  
(Out buildings are not indicated on map)

Present type of District is residential, commercial, public and private.

- 1 - Brick school, 1829, 1½ story, now dwelling. Photo #1. Earlier schoolhouse, 1785, stood on opposite corner of Rts. 25A & 10, replaced by dwelling which burned after 1965.
- 2 - Victorian 2 story gabled and clapboarded dwelling, 1882, known as the Orford Inn. Log cabin c. 1920 stands south of the house.
- 3 - Academy boarding house, 1854, 2½ story, clapboarded, now a dwelling. Photo #2.
- 4 - Brick Academy building, 1851, 3 story, now High School. Frame addition at rear 1937. Photo #3.
- 5 - Clapboarded 1½ story dwelling, Cape Cod type, built 1824 by Dr. Alanson Stark.
- 6 - Wheeler Ridge house, 1814-1816, Federal-style, board sheathed front, clapboarded sides and ell, 2 story & 1½ story ell. Original out buildings: Large barn, carriage barn, henhouse (now kennel), and brick smokehouse. Photo #3.
- 7 - Rogers (Lane) Ridge house, 1817-1822, Federal-style, board sheathed front, clapboarded sides and ell. Reconstruction of 2 story ell, 1915. Outbuildings, 1915: garage, icehouse, greenhouse, gazebo. Photo #4.
- 8 - Wilcox Ridge house, 1805-1832, Federal-style, clapboarded, 1 story front, 2 story and 1½ story ell. Outbuildings: large barn built before 1819, chaise house 1838 or earlier, henhouse now converted to guest house. Photo #4.
- 9 - Morey (Hodgson) Ridge house, 1773-1805, Georgian-style, clapboarded, 2 story front with Palladian window, 2 story & 1½ story ell. Photo #5. Barn reconstructed - old frame and 3 arched doorways.
- 10- Willard (Fifield) Ridge house, simplified Greek Revival. 1838-1840, clapboarded 2½ story front, porch added after 1905, 2 story ell, partly reconstructed 1963. Photo #5. Original large barn at back.
- 11- Hinckley (Beale) Ridge house, 1822-1824, Federal-style, yellow painted brick front, 2 story brick and clapboarded ell. Photo # 6.
- 12- Howard (Vanderbilt-Dillon) Ridge house, 1825-1829, Federal-style, white painted brick front, 2 story brick and clapboarded ell. Photo # 7.
- 13- Clapboarded 1½ story dwelling built 1800 by Jesse Avery, joiner. Renovated 1915.
- 14- 20th century, white asbestos shingle 1½ story dwelling on site of 1799 house, home in 1819 of Orford's native born artist, Henry Cheever Pratt. On the Ridge behind the house stood a gabled stone cottage, 1846, similar to designs of architect, Andrew Jackson Downing, burned 1896.
- 15- Clapboarded 1½ story farmhouse, 1850, Cape Cod type.
- 16- Clapboarded 2 story dwelling, built 1851 by Horace H. Conant, harness maker, whose shop stood south of the house. New workshop now behind house.

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SKETCH MAP NUMBERS (Continued)

- 17- Brick Universalist church, 1840, now Masonic Hall. Photo #10. Stands on homestead lot of Israel Morey. First meetinghouse and schoolhouse occupied a building, 1770, behind present brick structure.
- 18- Equity Publishing Corp. office building, c. 1955, clapboarded 1 story. A store building, 1800, standing north of the office building was gone by 1841.
- 19- Clapboarded Elm House, Greek Revival front, 1849, ell and woodshed with arched openings, 1798. Photo #11.
- 20- Brick 1 story post office building, 1962.
- 21- Orford Congregational church, 1854, Gothic-style, white clapboard, originally gray. Photo #12. Small portion of front stands on West Common, site of original meetinghouse, 1797.
- 22- 20th century clapboarded dwelling on site of William Howard's Hat Factory buildings, 1799, burned c. 1852.
- 23- 2 story gabled, clapboarded dwelling, 1854-1859, on site of Abiathar Britton's first law office, 1799. Northeast of house and standing on the West Common was the first Academy building, 1796, burned 1850.
- 24- 20th century cement block and clapboard garage on site of store building, 1798, operated by Dr. William Rogers and John Doubleday.
- 25- Clapboarded 2 story dwelling, 1918, on site of Georgian-style frame house, 1799, home of Mrs. William Rogers until 1863. Torn down to make way for present house. Behind the house is a small insurance office, c. 1940, formerly a post office.
- 26- Clapboarded dwelling, 1818-1838. Earliest part was home of a wheelwright. 2½ story front added 1838 by Orford's minister, Rev. Daniel Campbell. Once used as a chapel for the Congregational Church. Old barn behind house.
- 27- Clapboarded dwelling, 1804-1808. Ell, the earliest part, built by Jeduthan Wilcox as a law office; 2½ story front added later for his new wife. One room now occupied by Orford Beauty Shoppe. Photo #13. North of house was a store, 1802, which was removed about 1834.
- 28- Elm Corner Store, c. 1925, built around earlier building, originally children's playhouse of 1890's which served as post office till 1925. A 3½ story Tavern Stand (Orford Hotel) occupied the site from 1802 until it burned in 1875.
- 29- Wheeler Store (now C.H. Clifford) 1804-1807, 2 story clapboard. Photo #14.
- 30- Milliner's Shop (now Orford Social Library), 1840, 1½ story clapboard, Photo #15.
- 31- Greek Revival brick building (now parsonage), 1835, with white painted wood gable ends, built by Abiathar Britton, Orford's first lawyer, for law office and store. Photo #15.
- 32- Greek Revival brick 1½ story dwelling built 1831 by Abiathar Britton on site of earlier frame house that burned. Similar to his office building next door, but larger and having embellishments such as porticoed doorways. Photo #16. Old barn on property.

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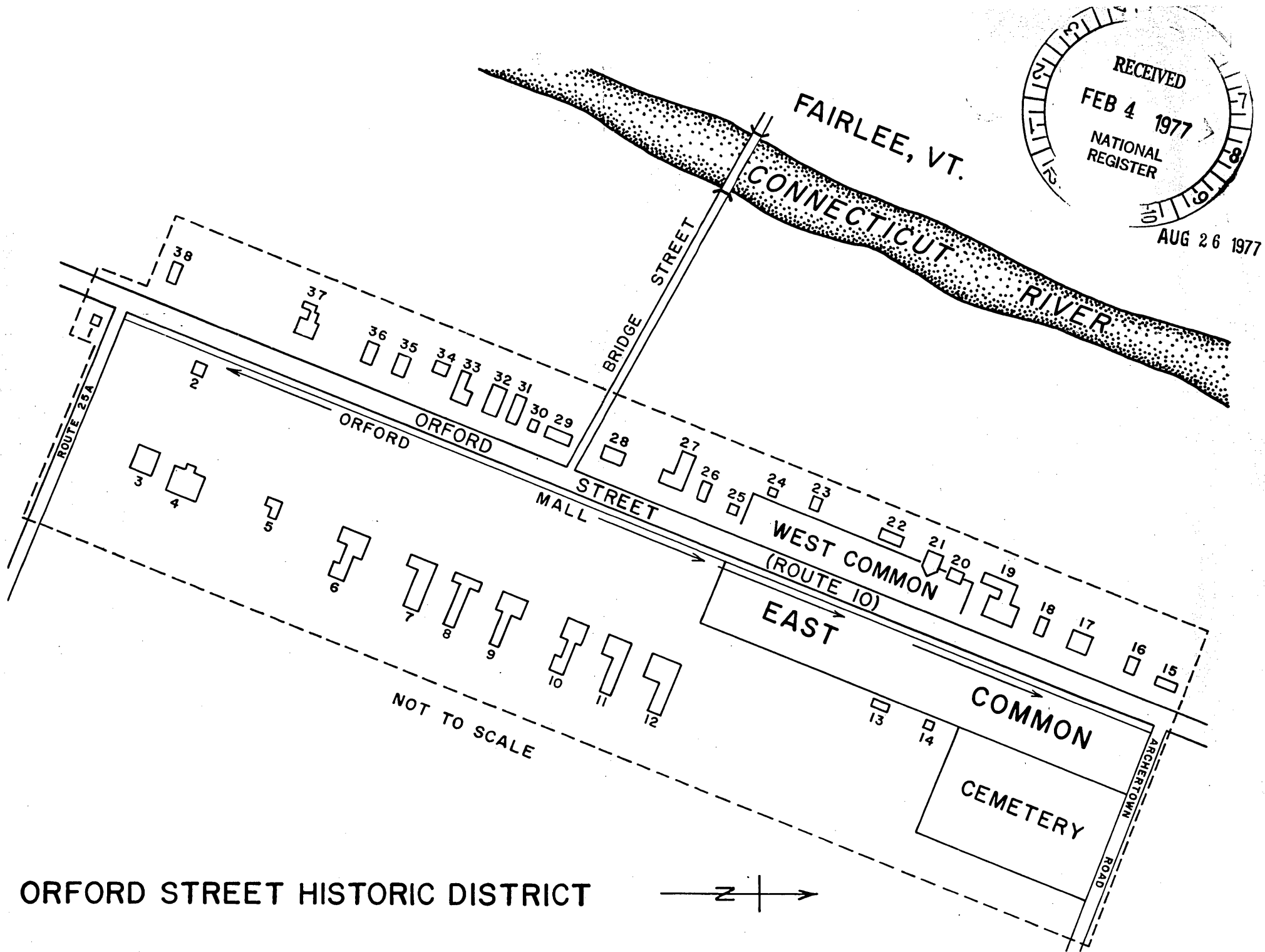
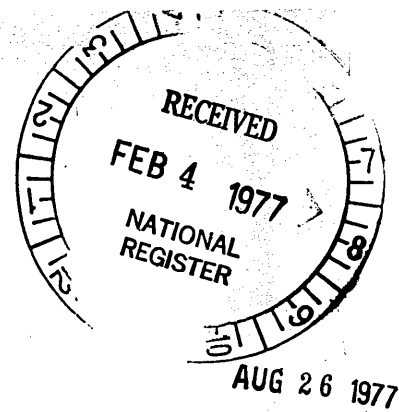
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SKETCH MAP NUMBERS (Continued)

- 33- Clapboarded dwelling, 1797-1868. Earliest part built by Elisha Williams, hatter, now forms an ell and part of the front to which a dormer has been added. Later portion was added to the north side of the old house. Hatter's shop, 1797, south of the house, converted to store and improved 1818, burned 1862.
- 34- Red clapboard barn converted to dwelling in 1960's. House on property built 1807 by Dr. Eliphalet Kimball on site of earlier house, 1771. Kimball house burned 1862.
- 35- Clapboard 1½ story house, 1844, with 1883 portion moved from another site and added to front about 1903. Store building, 1828, later shoemaker's shop, on property was removed about 1848. 19th century barn, salt box construction, behind house.
- 36- Clapboarded 1½ story dwelling, 1829. Dr. Alanson Stark's office, 1828, stood south of house and later served as shoemaker's shop until 1860's. Removed before 1892.
- 37- John Mann house (now Karol), 1788-1809, clapboarded front and shingled ells, natural oiled wood. Ell extending back from large square front of 1809 is earliest part, with dormer added in 1900's. Ell extension at right angles was originally shed barn, now converted to bedrooms. Photo #17. A large barn once standing south of ell has been removed. Smaller 19th century, red clapboard barn, now Karol's photography shop, stands south of house.
- 38- Brick 1½ story dwelling built c. 1847 by Thomas Mann, grandson of Orford's first settler, John Mann. Photo #18.



ORFORD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT