

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000398

Date Listed: 4/20/88

South Street Historic District
Property Name

Cumberland
County

ME
State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrus

Signature of the Keeper

4/20/88

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The area of significance for community development is justified in the statement of significance and indicated by criterion A; however, it was not indicated as an applicable area of significance. Community development was entered as an applicable area of significance.

This information was confirmed with Kirk Mohny, National Register Coordinator, MESHPO, by telephone on the date of listing.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

MAR 10 1988

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name South Street Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number South St. between Green and Morrill

N/A not for publication

city, town Gorham

N/A vicinity

state Maine

code ME

county Cumberland

code 005

zip code 04038

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>19</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>19</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Eric S. Johnson S.H.P.O.
Signature of certifying official
Maine Historic Preservation Commission

3/4/88
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Patrick Andrews

4/20/88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single DwellingEducation/Library

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single DwellingEducation/Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

FederalGreek RevivalGothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granitewalls Wood/WeatherboardStone/Graniteroof Asphaltother Wooden entrance porches

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The South Street Historic district is a narrow nearly rectangular area of approximately nine (9) acres, and is composed of twenty buildings, the majority of which are of frame construction and residential in character. Facing each other from opposite sides of South Street, these buildings embody a picture of architectural cohesiveness that clearly illustrates the development of a late eighteenth and early nineteenth century neighborhood.

With only a few exceptions, the components of the district are wooden frame structures constructed between about 1790 and about 1840. Despite this fifty-year period there is a remarkable consistency in the overall form of the buildings. For example, the facades are overwhelmingly symmetrical in their composition although they vary between five-bay Federal period dwellings and three-bay structures with Gothic Revival detailing. With but one exception, the c. 1870 Wentworth-Corthell House (13), these houses have centrally located entrances frequently sheltered by narrow porches or vestibules. Furthermore, the majority have gable roofs, clapboard siding and interior chimneys. In a handful of examples, such as the Harding-Emery House (18), ells extend to barns.

The rhythm of the district is achieved not only through the shared use of materials and scale where two-story houses dominate, but also in lot sizes and setbacks. In most cases the houses are centrally situated near the front of their long, narrow lots and equidistant from the street. The repetition of this siting pattern from house to house and from one side of South Street to the other establishes an important physical aspect of the streetscape. This relationship of building to building is also conveyed, albeit in a less standard way, through the use of plant materials. Landscaping features range from tall deciduous trees that frame the houses themselves to a variety of evergreens including low foundation plantings to cedars and pines.

The unique physical characteristics that contribute to the significance of this district help to define its boundary. Beyond the northwest corner is an early town cemetery that adjoins the rear of the commercial district. This lies opposite from a twentieth century brick building surrounded by open lots. Located beyond both the east and west boundary are residential areas of mixed architectural integrity that date primarily from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and, therefore, vary widely in their overall scale and

See continuation sheet

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

composition. The southern boundary is established by the existence of modest late nineteenth and twentieth century dwellings that do not maintain the important physical attributes found in the district.

There are nineteen (19) contributing and one (1) noncontributing resources in the historic district. They are indicated in the following inventory list by the use of a capital C for contributing buildings and a capital NC for the noncontributing building.

INVENTORY LIST

1. Rev. William Warren House, c. 1820, 1870s remodeling - C
55 South Street

The Warren House is a large two-story with attic, five-bay Federal period frame dwelling sheathed in aluminum siding. Its prominent features include a six-panel door bordered by narrow sidelights and an elliptical louvered fan, six-over-six double-hung sash windows, a central chimney, and broad eaves supported by paired Italianate brackets. A one-story ell extends from the northwest corner of the house where it abuts a modern two-car garage.

The early history of this house is not positively known. According to the 1871 Cumberland County Atlas, the house was occupied by Rev. William Warren. He may be responsible for the Italianate style additions to the house that include the paired brackets and wide eaves. Among the subsequent occupants was George Hutcherson.

2. James Smith House, c. 1810 - C
59 South Street

This expansive two-story five-bay frame dwelling is covered by a low hip roof and has a long two-story ell. The symmetrically composed facade of the Federal period house features a centrally located entrance with sidelights and an elliptical louvered fan. The existing two-over-two windows on the first story and one over ones on the second story are replacements of the originals. Weatherboards cover the entire building and a single chimney punctuates the roof. A detached hip roofed garage is an early twentieth century addition to the property.

According to local tradition the house was built for James Smith, although he apparently did not occupy it for many years. About 1815 and for

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

sometime thereafter it was the residence of Gardner M. Parker. Between 1835 and 1873 the property changed hands no less than seven times.

3. House, 1970s - NC
61 South Street

Built in the 1970s, this noncontributing frame house is two stories in height and has a one-story garage wing. It is sheathed entirely in wood shingles.

4. Reuben Nason House, c. 1794 - C
65 South Street

The Nason house is among the largest and most impressive dwellings in the historic district. The tall two-story with attic frame building has a five-bay facade focussed on the handsome entryway. The latter is comprised of a pediment and pilasters framing a broad six-panel door surmounted by a narrow transom. Six-over-six double-hung sash windows complete the fenestration pattern. Additional features of the double-pile house include a pair of interior end chimneys and a telescoping ell. The entire building rests on a granite foundation and is sheathed in weatherboards.

Local tradition holds that the house was built by local carpenter Isaac Gilkey. In 1794 this one acre lot was acquired by Oliver Hunt, and it is presumed that he built this existing house soon after. During the first decade of the nineteenth century the house is believed to have been the residence of Reuben Nason, the first principal of Gorham Academy. Nason apparently lived here until 1810 when he removed to Freeport. He returned to Gorham in 1815, but it is not clear whether he again occupied this house. In 1871 J. Cressey was in residence.

5. Baxter House, c. 1798 (N.R., 6/27/79) - C
69 South Street

The Baxter House is a two-and-a-half-story five-bay frame dwelling sheathed in weatherboards. Its symmetrically composed facade features a central entrance containing short sidelights and an elliptical louvered fan, large six-over-six double-hung sash windows with hood moldings, and a pair of pedimented dormers. The single-pile house also has a pair of interior rear chimneys and a two-story ell.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Tradition maintains that the Baxter House was built by local carpenter Isaac Gilkey, making it one of three buildings attributed to Gilkey that stand in the district. Gilkey did in fact purchase the lot on which the house stands in 1797 and then sold it with the buildings thereon in 1799, strongly suggesting that he built it. Dr. Elihu Baxter acquired the property in 1812 and occupied it for about twenty years. In 1907 it was moved from its original site (on which the present Baxter Memorial Library now sits) by James P. Baxter, the son of Elihu Baxter. The following year he presented it to the Town of Gorham for use as a museum, a function which it continues to fulfill.

6. Baxter Memorial Library, 1907-08 - C
71 South Street
Otis E. Moulton, Architect

The Baxter Memorial Library is a one-and-a-half-story granite building covered by a gambrel roof. Its three-bay facade is dominated by a portico whose four Ionic columns support a highly ornamented pediment. Dormers flank this portico and rest above large multi-part windows. The portico itself shelters a wide doorway and five windows. Rectangular pedimented bay windows are attached to both gambrel ends and a one-story ell containing the stacks extends to the rear. The granite walls are decorated with brownstone quoins.

The construction of this library was the culmination of a long effort to establish a public facility of this kind in Gorham. In 1883 the first public library was organized in town, although social or subscription libraries had been in use long before. The present building was provided to the town by James P. Baxter, the son of Dr. Elihu Baxter whose house stands nearby. Baxter presented the library to Gorham in memory of his father and to serve as "a suitable place for the town to acquire knowledge".

7. James McLellan House, c. 1803 - C
77 South Street

Thought to have been built in 1803 for James McLellan, this two-story five-bay frame dwelling is sheathed in weatherboards and has a two-story ell. The traditional single-pile building features a modest entryway comprised of a central door framed by pilasters and an entablature, and replacement two-over-two double-hung sash windows. A single chimney punctuates the gable roof.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

McLellan acquired the lot on which this house stands on November 29, 1802. When Joseph Hunt purchased the adjoining lot to the south in December, 1803, the deed clearly noted that McLellan was living here, strongly suggesting the house's date of construction.

8. Joseph Hunt House, c. 1804 - C
79 South Street

The Hunt house is a one-story with attic, five-bay cape sheathed in weatherboards. According to local tradition it was built for Joseph Hunt, a hatter by trade, shortly after he acquired the property on which it stands in December, 1803. The house features a central entrance with sidelights and an elliptical louvered fan, turn-of-the-century two-over-two windows and an interior chimney. A one-story ell with a recent shed addition to the south side extends to the rear. An early twentieth century garage also occupies the property.

9. S. A. Whittier House, c. 1840s-50s - C
102 South Street

The Whittier house is Gorham's most important example of the Gothic Revival style. Although tradition holds that it was constructed about 1870 for Daniel Whittier its detailing would suggest that a date in the 1840s or 1850s is more appropriate. This handsome two-story with attic frame building remains largely intact.

Its three-bay facade features a narrow entrance porch that is flanked by narrow paired double-hung sash positioned below deep hoods. Both the porch and the hoods have ornamental sawn details. The porch is framed by a steeply pitched gable articulated with a pendant and vergeboard. The similarly detailed gable ends contain multiple six-over-six windows and a bay window on the south side. There are two interior chimneys in the front block and a two-story ell. Both sections are sheathed in weatherboards. A modern detached garage is located behind the house.

10. I. W. Parkhurst House, c. 1860 - C
96 South Street

The Parkhurst house is a one-and-a-half-story five-bay frame dwelling

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 6

sheathed in weatherboards. It is named for its occupant in 1871, I. W. Parkhurst; the early history of the building is not as yet determined. Prominent features of the house include a bracketed hood sheltering the central door, a steeply pitched gable above the entrance, a side porch and a long ell that abuts the barn. The windows in the front block contain replacement one-over-one double-hung sash. Two interior end chimneys punctuate the roof. The ell projects through two stages before it meets the large perpendicularly located barn.

11. Kellogg Family House, c. 1800 - C
90 South Street

Thought to have been constructed about 1800, this two-story single-pile frame dwelling has a five-bay facade and a two-story ell. It is sheathed entirely in weatherboards. Tradition holds that it was built for a member of the McLellan family and later occupied by Elijah Kellogg. Kellogg is credited with an 1805 remodeling of unknown proportions. It may be that the present form is largely the result of that undertaking. The house was still occupied by the Kellogg family as late as 1871.

Extant features of the house include a pedimented entrance vestibule (a later nineteenth century addition), nine-over-six double-hung windows and a pair of interior rear chimneys.

12. Cressey-Kendall House, c. 1800-20 - C
86 South Street

The Cressey-Kendall House is a one-and-a-half-story five-bay cape sheathed in weatherboards. It appears to have been constructed during the first two decades of the twentieth century, but its early history is not as yet positively known. In 1871 the house was occupied by a member of the Curtis family. More recently it has been the home of the Cressey and Kendall families.

Features of the house include a central entrance framed by a narrow transom and sidelights; the latter may be additions. Six-over-six double-hung sash windows flank the door. An existing brick flue in the center of the house may be a replacement of an earlier chimney. The bay window on the south gable end is a later nineteenth century addition. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 7

two-story ell extends to a barn.

13. Wentworth-Corthell House, c. 1870 - C
82 South Street

The Wentworth-Corthell House is a two-and-a-half-story frame dwelling whose nearly square shape is capped by a mansard roof. It is believed to have been built for T. N. Wentworth whose name appears with the house on the 1871 county atlas. Among the subsequent occupants was W. J. Corthell, the first principal of the state normal school in Gorham.

Each of the four elevations is two bays in width and contains two-over-two double-hung sash windows surmounted by shallow triangular hoods and/or rectangular bay windows. The north side contains a shed roofed entrance vestibule that abuts a second story bay window. A two-stage ell projects from the east side, one section of which is two stories in height and the other one-story. The roof is punctuated by gabled dormers and the cornice features brackets. Weatherboards cover the entire frame.

14. Gilkey-Rand House, c. 1796 - C
76 South Street

Built perhaps about 1796 when this lot was acquired by Isaac Gilkey, the Gilkey-Rand House is a two-story with attic five-bay frame dwelling sheathed in weatherboards. It features a pedimented entrance vestibule, interior rear chimneys and a two-story ell. Local tradition holds that it was built and initially occupied by Isaac Gilkey, a local carpenter/builder of some repute. One of its most notable subsequent owners was Rev. Asa Rand who acquired the property in 1810 and lived here until the early 1820s.

The early date of the house is suggested in part by the prominent molded hoods above the six-over-six double-hung sash windows as well as by the narrow weatherboards. The vestibule, which is an atypical feature on houses of the period, appears to be an early feature perhaps an original one.

15. Nellie McCann House, 1917 - C
72 South Street

Built in 1917 upon the site of an earlier dwelling, the Nellie McCann House is a two-story Colonial Revival style building sheathed in wide weatherboards. Its features include an entrance porch, exterior end chimneys

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 8

and a narrow shed roofed addition that wraps around the north gable end. The facade is composed of a central entrance and widely separated sidelights sheltered by the porch. Four thin posts support the gabled roof whose tympanum contains an elliptical arch. A pair of large eight-over-eight windows flank the entrance and four six-over-six sash are arrayed across the second story. A detached garage stands to the southeast of the house.

16. Cobb-Freeman House, c. 1800-1825, 1850s remodeling - C
70 South Street

The Cobb-Freeman House is a two-story three-bay frame dwelling that bears Gothic Revival style detailing. Tradition holds that when it was constructed for David Cobb during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the building was a one-and-a-half-story cape. It was subsequently altered to its present appearance, perhaps in the 1850s, by W. B. Freeman.

The facade is composed of a central entrance framed by narrow sidelights and sheltered by a porch. Sawn decorative woodwork links the two posts that support the porch roof and its low parapet wall. Paired one-over-one windows flank the entrance. Similar second story window units are located on either side of a center door that is surmounted by a triangular hood and framed by a steeply pitched gable. Additional features include broad eaves, a pair of interior chimneys and a two-story ell. A similarly detailed barn/garage stands to the southeast of the house.

17. Whitney-Elder House, c. 1800 - C
66 South Street

This substantial two-story with attic five-bay frame house is two rooms deep and has a two-story ell. It is thought to have been built, probably about 1800, for a member of the Whitney family. In 1871 it was occupied by S. Elder.

The symmetrically composed facade contains a central door bordered by sidelights and a louvered elliptical fanlight. Framing this entrance are four six-over-six windows on the first story and five on the second. Both gable ends are punctuated by eight symmetrically placed windows. A central chimney rises through the roof ridge. The denticulated cornice, wide corner boards and broad eaves are Greek Revival style alterations. The ell extends to a barn.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 9

18. Harding-Emery House, c. 1820 - C
60 South Street

Built about 1820, the Harding-Emery House is a two-story with attic, five-bay frame dwelling sheathed in weatherboards. It has a twentieth century entrance porch, interior end chimneys and a large two-story ell. Tradition holds that the house was built for Charles Harding. For many years during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was occupied by members of the Emery family.

The symmetrically composed facade contains a central entrance with sidelights sheltered by the gabled porch. Two thin posts support the porch roof. Four six-over-six double-hung sash windows are located on the first story and five are equally spaced across the upper story. A narrow cornice carries across the front of the building.

19. John Farnham House, c. 1820-30 - C
58 South Street

The Farnham House is a one-and-a-half-story five-bay cape constructed of brick. Among its notable features are a flat roofed entrance vestibule, center chimney and a one-story ell. The dwelling is believed to have been erected, probably in the 1820s, for John Farnham. It was subsequently occupied by Francis Ridlon.

The facade of the house is composed of the centrally located vestibule, which appears to be a Greek Revival period addition (and obscures a Federal fanlight), flanked by two-over-two double-hung sash windows. A pair of shed roofed dormers with small paired windows are symmetrically positioned on the roof. Each gable end contains five windows.

20. Harding House, c. 1830-40 - C
54 South Street

Constructed perhaps in the 1830s, and remodeled sometime during mid century, the Harding House is a two-story with attic frame dwelling that is five bays in width. It has an Italianate style entrance porch, interior end chimneys and a two-story ell. Thought to have been built for a member of the Harding family, the house was later occupied by Joseph Ridlon, a successful

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 10

Gorham merchant.

The symmetrically composed facade of the house consists of a central entrance with narrow sidelights shielded by the porch. Six-over-six double-hung windows flank the porch and five similar windows are positioned in the second story. The roof has broad overhanging eaves. Projecting from the northeast corner of the rear elevation is a two-story ell. A modern garage also occupies the property.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Education

Period of Significance

c.1790-1917
1908-1938

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gilkey, Isaac
Moulton, Otis E.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The South Street Historic district embraces a little altered group of buildings whose dates of construction clearly illustrate the pattern and character of Gorham's late eighteenth and early nineteenth century residential development. In addition, the existence in the district of the town's 1907-08 library represents the crowning achievement in a decades old effort to obtain for Gorham an educational facility of this kind. The district is being nominated under National Register criterion A for its association with Gorham's early growth and under criterion C for its architectural significance.

Initial settlement of the town of Gorham is believed to have begun in 1736 with the arrival of John Phinney from Barnstable, Massachusetts. Enough other families had arrived by the early 1740s to have created the need for a meeting house, and a simple building was erected in 1743./1 However, renewed native Indian hostilities commencing in 1745 stymied further settlement at this time and for a period of some ten to fifteen years thereafter. By the late 1750s renewed immigration to Gorham had slowly begun and in the early 1760s attempts were being made to gain incorporation. This was finally accomplished on October 30, 1764. Five years later a new meeting house was built to replace the original structure which was destroyed in 1745.

Like so many other Maine communities, Gorham's population expanded rapidly after the Revolution. It has been estimated that in 1780 there were 1,146 inhabitants of the town, a more than twenty-five percent increase from five years before./2 Ten years later the figure had nearly doubled to 2,244 persons. The increased settlement during the last decades of the eighteenth century was accompanied by an expansion of services and the founding of other institutions. Gorham's first physician, Dr. Stephen Smith, established his practice in 1770; the Free Will Baptist Society was organized in 1781; a fulling mill was built about 1788; a schoolhouse was constructed in 1796; and the post office was established in 1797. During the early 1790s two tanneries were operating one of which, the Hunt and Clark tan yard, was located within the boundary of the district./3

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

McLellan, Hugh D. History of Gorham, Maine. Compiled and edited by his daughter Katherine B. Lewis. Portland: Smith and Sale, 1903.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 9

UTM References

A

1	9
---	---

3	8	3	6	2	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	8	3	6	9	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	9
---	---

3	8	3	9	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	8	3	6	6	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	9
---	---

3	8	3	8	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	8	3	7	0	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D

1	9
---	---

3	8	3	7	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	8	3	6	5	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See Attached Map

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The unique physical characteristics that contribute to the significance of this district help to define its boundary. Beyond the northwest corner is an early town cemetery that adjoins the rear of the commercial district. This lies opposite from a twentieth century brick building surrounded by open lots. Located beyond both the east and west boundary are residential areas of mixed architectural integrity that date primarily from the last

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian
organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date January 1988
street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132
city or town Augusta state Maine zip code 04333

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

The town itself was organized along a grid pattern that had been surveyed as early as 1751, with principal avenues labeled King Street, Queen Street, Hamblin street, Gorham Street, Phinney Street, and Pain Street. The present South Street is the main north-south axis. Its junction with east-west Main Street became the focus of the commercial district. The residential area on South Street was historically separated from the commercial center by way of a cemetery and school lot.

Much of the residential construction during this period appears to have been widely scattered on small farms that adjoined the village center. A number of the large Federal period houses that occupied these farms survive, although most of them have been altered. One exception is the Reuben Nason House (4), located in the historic district. This substantial frame dwelling is an important survivor from the turn of the eighteenth century and one that illustrates this stage of Gorham's development.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a continued expansion of both the number and type of business in the town as well as the founding of new educational and religious institutions. Among the small scale manufacturing enterprises established in the period was a clock works operated by Samuel Edwards and founded about 1808; an organ shop founded about 1825 by Samuel's brother Calvin Edwards and a carpet manufacturing business that commenced operation in the 1830s under the guidance of David H. McKenney. In 1849 Gorham had eight general merchants, two carpet plants and one each of a boot and shoe manufacturer, a chair maker, an edge tool shop, and a powder making facility./4 The continued future health of the local economy was substantially enhanced by the completion to Gorham in 1850 of the York and Cumberland Railroad./5 By 1850 the town's population stood at 3,086 persons, a modest gain of approximately 500 since the turn of the century.

An important symbol of Gorham's early nineteenth century growth is the Academy Building (N.R. 1/18/73), an impressive Federal period educational facility completed in 1805. Its construction, let alone its remarkable survival, testifies not only to improved economic conditions, but also to the growing interest on behalf of the citizenry in providing a better opportunity for their children's education. (A separate Female Seminary was established in 1834.) Divergent religious interests organized a Methodist Church in 1804 and built a meeting house in 1812; a temperance society was also formed in 1812; and the town's services were expanded in 1805 with the construction of a cattle pound, and in 1812 through the purchase of a fire engine./6

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 3

The majority of the buildings in the historic district illustrate the vigor of Gorham's early nineteenth century development. From the modest turn of the century cape known as the Cressey-Kendall House (12) to the much more substantial and architecturally prominent James Smith House (2), these dwellings demonstrate the relative prosperity and social prominence of their occupants. For example, Gorham Academy's first principal, Reuben Nason, resided in the striking 1790s Federal period house (4) that bears his name and befits his status relative to the significance of the newly founded academy. On the other hand, Joseph Hunt, a hatter by trade, chose to erect a typical Maine cape (8) soon after his acquisition of the property on which the house stands.

With economic resources and the energy of its youth removed to the Union armies, little of consequence took place in Gorham during the first half of the 1860s. By 1870, however, Gorham's population stood at 3,351 persons, its highest recorded nineteenth century mark. Subsequent declines mirrored a general statewide trend of out migration. Nevertheless, Gorham continued to be a locally important commercial center. The 1871 edition of the Maine State Year-Book listed eight merchants, three lawyers, the Gorham Savings Bank, and the same small manufactories that appeared in the 1849 directory./7 An additional boost to the local educational facilities came in 1878 when the state legislature agreed to establish a normal school./8 A further commitment to education was demonstrated in 1883 with the organization of a free public library./9

By the turn of the century Gorham's directory of businesses had increased from what it had shown thirty years earlier, and it also reflected a greater variety of specialized enterprises typical of the period. The six general merchants were joined by an apothecary, a meat market, a grocery store, and milk dealer, among others./10 In 1901 a branch of the Westbrook, Windham and Naples electric railroad was built to Gorham thereby providing another means of ready access to neighboring communities.

The town's late nineteenth and early twentieth century history is illustrated by a trio of buildings in the historic district. The oldest among them is the Wentworth-Corthell House (13) a modest frame dwelling covered by a hip roof. Apparently built about 1870 for T. N. Wentworth, it was subsequently occupied by W. J. Corthell, the first principal of the normal school. In 1907-08 James P. Baxter donated funds for the construction of a new public library building (6) in honor of his family. This handsome masonry

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

building, designed by Otis E. Moulton, continues to emphasize the importance which Gorham has placed on its educational facilities. The final historic addition to the district came in 1917 when a Colonial Revival style house (15) was constructed for Nellie McCann on the site of an earlier dwelling. It in many ways characterizes early twentieth century residential construction in the village.

Despite Gorham's considerable growth in the latter part of the twentieth century, the South Street Historic District continues to convey the character and much of the ambiance of its early nineteenth century history.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Endnotes

- /1. Historians have speculated that this was probably a simple log structure not very different from the log dwellings that were typical of the settlement period. Hugh D. McLellan, History of Gorham, Maine, compiled and edited by his daughter Katherine B. Lewis (Portland: Smith and Sale, 1903), p. 170, hereinafter cited as McLellan, History of Gorham.
- /2. McLellan, History of Gorham, p. 339.
- /3. McLellan, History of Gorham, p. 360.
- /4. The New England Mercantile Union Directory (New York: Pratt and Company, 1849), pp. 45, 48, 54, 56, 63, 66, 67.
- /5. The below grade path of this railroad nearly bisects the district. An overpass formerly bridged the gap, but this has long been replaced and the tracks themselves removed. The line was constructed through the Hunt and Clark tan yard. McLellan, History of Gorham, p. 360.
- /6. The cattle pound was discontinued in 1840. McLellan, History of Gorham, pp. 304-05.
- /7. Maine State Year-Book and Legislative Manual for the Year 1871 (Portland: Hoyt, Fogg and Breed, 1871), p. 178.
- /8. The 1878 recitation building - Corthell Hall - at the normal school was designed by Francis H. Fassett, Maine's premier mid to late nineteenth century architect. It survives as part of the Gorham Campus Historic District (N.R. 5/5/78), which is located to the northwest of the commercial area. National Register nomination for the Gorham Campus Historic District, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine, 1978.
- /9. A "village" library was maintained in the home of Nathaniel Gould as early as 1814. In 1834 a social and circulating library was organized. McLellan, History of Gorham, p. 321.
- /10. Maine Register, State Year-Book and Legislative Manual (Portland: Grenville M. Donham, 1900), p. 345.

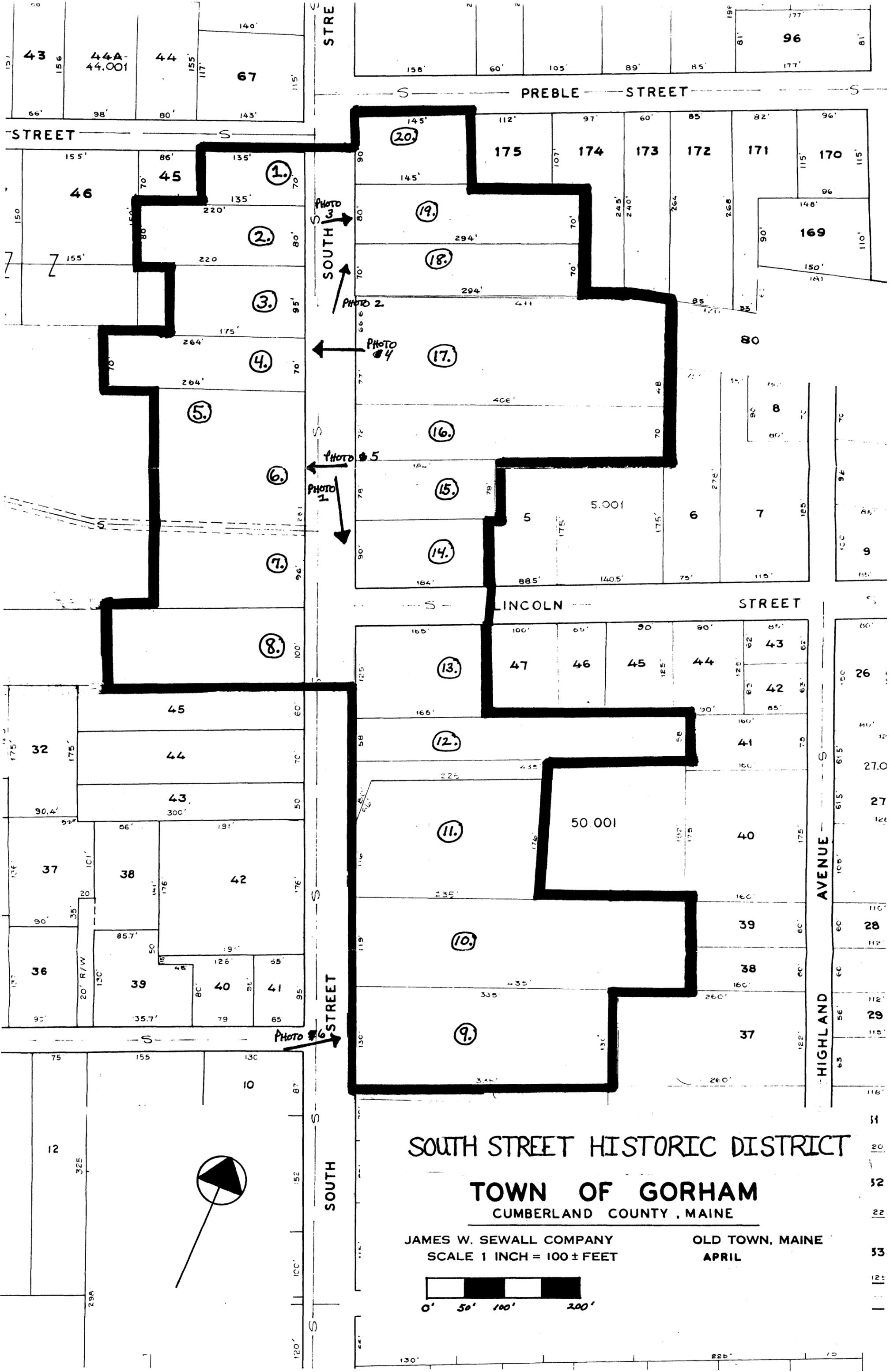
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (cont.)

quarter of the nineteenth century and, therefore, vary widely in their overall scale and composition. The southern boundary is established by the existence of modest late nineteenth and twentieth century dwellings that do not maintain the important physical attributes found in the district.



SOUTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

TOWN OF GORHAM

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, MAINE

JAMES W. SEWALL COMPANY
SCALE 1 INCH = 100 ± FEET

OLD TOWN, MAINE
APRIL



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100