

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 675971

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	APR 25 1979
DATE ENTERED	JUL 27 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Middletown Upper Houses

AND/OR COMMON Upper Houses River Port

**2 LOCATION**

Between River Road and Main Street including Pleasant Street, Wall Street, School Street, and River Road from Wall Street to approximately 800 feet south of South Street.

CITY, TOWN

Cromwell

--- VICINITY OF

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

003

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

**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 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 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 type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME See continuation sheet

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

--- VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, 1651-1851: Middletown Land Records 1851-present: Cromwell Land Records  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Municipal Building Cromwell Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

DeKoven Drive

West Street

CITY, TOWN

Middletown, Conn.

STATE

Cromwell, Conn.

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE State Register of Historic Places

DATE

1979

--- FEDERAL  STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut State Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

---

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

The Upper Houses River Port National Register District is a small, relatively isolated, residential area located on the banks of the Connecticut River in the southeastern section of Cromwell. The district consists of five streets which formed the nucleus of 18th century Cromwell, or Upper Houses of Middletown, and contains a concentration of buildings dating from the 18th and early 19th centuries. The area is bounded on the east by the Connecticut River, on the north and south by marshland, and on the west by Main Street (Route 9A).

The district is residential in character. Houses from the 18th and early-19th centuries predominate; late-19th century and 20th century buildings are integrated into the community. There are 72 houses in the district; nearly half pre-date 1810. The distribution is as follows:

Center-Chimney Colonial (1700-1800)	14
Federal (1790-1810)	14
Greek Revival or Italianate (1820-1870)	7
Victorian (1870-1900)	15
Early 20th century (1900-1940)	7
1940 to Present	15

Three barns, a brick smokehouse, garages and sheds, one large commercial building, and the remains of a brownstone loading dock are also included in the district.

The Upper Houses River Port District is located on the relatively flat flood plain of the Connecticut River. Houses are primarily of 2 or 2½ stories, frame, and modest in scale. They are sited on medium sized lots, with consistent setbacks from the streets, creating a relatively uniform scale throughout the district. There are no sidewalks, and plantings and landscaping tends to be informal.

The Upper Houses River Port District consists of five streets. River Road (following closely by the Connecticut River) and Pleasant Street run north and south. Wall, School, and South Streets cross on an east-west axis, with Wall and South Streets joining to Main Street on the west. This group of streets formed the center of 18th century Cromwell (settled ca. 1651). A typical New England centralized agricultural village, Upper Houses entered a period of mercantile prosperity in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. During this period, the district was the center of town, and included stores and artisans' shops on the banks of the river. The residences of merchants, sea captains, craftsmen, and farmers constructed during this prosperous era constitute a significant number of buildings surviving today. A brownstone loading dock is located on the river just north of Wall Street; at least one group of docks and warehouses were sited on the river bank at the foot of South Street.

Buildings dating between 1750 and 1810 are visually dominant in the area. The most common type of structure is the center-chimney framed house of two stories. Many display a single or double overhang. They vary in size: a number of houses on the north side of Wall Street are quite small (average 26'x30'); others such as 16 South Street and 45 River Road are large (about 30'x36'). The second most common type is that commonly called a "half house," displaying a

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UPPER HOUSES RIVER PORT NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT  
Cromwell, Connecticut

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Names and addresses of property owners.

C - Critical to the character of the historic district.

Pleasant Street

1	Louis and June M. Caso	Post 1940	NC
3	Timothy M. and George E. Nightingale	Italianate, ca. 1860	C
4	Jessie Mae McFarlane	Bungalow, Early 20th C (pre-1940)	C
5	Harold P. and Luella S. Huntley	Victorian Cottage, ca. 1890	C
6	Judson V. and Rose V. Staples, Nicholas Merigliano	Center-Chimney Colonial, 1787	C
9	John A. Skibbs	Federal, 1803	C
12	Leonard Estra	Ranch, Post 1940	NC
14	Robert B. Davidson	Mid-19th C, plain, gable-to-street	C
15	Lucy, Alfred and Concetta Luistro	Center-Chimney Colonial, ca. 1745	C
16	Lorenzo S. and Shirley L. Johnson	Former Shed, ca. 1830	C
17	Rosario and Scholastica Liseo	Colonial, ca. 1760	C
18	Reginald and Deborah Francis	Ranch, Post 1940	NC
19	Clifford C. and Mary Parker	Early 20th C (Prairie style influence)	C
20	Margaret G. and Claude M. Adams	Colonial Revival, ca. 1940	NC
21A	Alta F. and Robert Beers	Cape, Post 1940	NC
21	William J. Beers	Center-Chimney Colonial, ca. 1790 Barn, ca. 1800	C C
22	Arlene I. and Arthur D. Schreier	Center-Chimney Colonial, ca. 1802	C
23	John R. Kardys	Queen Anne, ca. 1890	C
24	George and Rose Collura	Greek-Italianate, ca. 1860	C
25	Harry N. and Gail A. Snow	Center-Chimney Colonial, 1790	C
26	Stephen Balkun	Cape, Post 1940	NC
28	Giuseppina (Josephina) and Vincent DiMauro	Italianate, ca. 1860	C

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River Road

31	Lauren P. and Ardelle R. Edwardson	No building	C
33	Angelo and Peter R. Cubeta Maple Avenue, Higganum, Conn.	Victorian Cottage, ca. 1880	C
-	Angelo and Peter R. Cubeta Maple Avenue, Higganum, Conn.	Lot 3B, Block 60 No building	C
-	Gerard and Ellen M. Groeper	Lot 3A, Block 65 No building	C
-	Gerard and Ellen M. Groeper	Lot 15, Block 60 No building	C
36	Vernon A. Frazer	Post World War II	NC
37	Mary A. Groeper	Federal, 1803	C
-	Mary A. Groeper	Lot 4, Block 65 No building	C
38	John Schreier	Post 1940	NC
39	Randall D. and Shirley V. Stevens	Federal, 1830	C
-	Randall D. and Shirley V. Stevens	Lot 5, Block 65 No building	C
40	Edward C. Doherty	Post 1940	NC
41	Lauren P. and Ardelle R. Edwardson	Federal, 1830	C
42	Mark Weaver	ca. 1865	C
44	Mildred W. and Glenn S. Lessor	Post 1940	NC
44A	Mildred W. and Glenn S. Lessor	Post 1940	NC
45	Leona W. Syc, Executrix of estate	Center-Chimney Colonial, ca. 1800	C
-	Consolidated Rail Corporation 1818 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pa.	Lot 8, Block 60 No building	C
49	Lorraine and Richard Schultz	Colonial, 1784	C
51	Linda M. and Brian Fisk	Colonial-Revival, Post 1940	NC
57	Alexander Balkun	Federal, ca. 1800	C
59	Harold Messer (Benjamin Messer, life use)	Cottage, ca. 1870 (?)	C
61	Connecticut Hardware Supply Company	Commercial Building, Post 1940	NC

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River Road

- |       |   |                                 |    |
|-------|---|---------------------------------|----|
| -     | Connecticut Hardware Supply Company                                 | Lot 11, Block 65<br>No building | C  |
| 65-67 | Margaret C. and Claude Adams<br>20 Pleasant Street, Cromwell, Conn. | No building                     | C  |
| -     | Margaret C. and Claude Adams<br>20 Pleasant Street, Cromwell, Conn. | Lot 12, Block 65<br>No building | C  |
| -     | Town of Cromwell  | Lot 13, Block 65<br>No building | C  |
| 69    | Marilyn E. and Daniel H. Lord                                       | Post 1940                       | NC |

School Street

- |    |                                     |                        |    |
|----|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----|
| 1  | George W. and Gladys M. Parker      | Ranch Early 20th C     | NC |
| 5  | Steve and Minnie Nevedomsky         | Bell Schoolhouse, 1808 | C  |
| 6  | Anthony S. Lapila and Walter Dunhan | Federal, ca. 1808      | C  |
| 10 | Kathleen C. and Peter M. Cooper     | Federal, ca. 1806      | C  |

South Street

- |    |   |  |    |
|----|---|--|----|
| 2  | Maria and Herman Rosenberg  | Center-Chimney Colonial, 1760                                | C  |
| 3  | Ruth E. Lessor  | Federal, ca. 1790  | C  |
| 4  | Dorothy Flickinger  | Victorian Cottage, ca. 1880                                  | C  |
| 6  | Kenneth R. Lawrence   | Victorian Cottage, ca. 1880                                  | C  |
| 7  | Haddam Quarter Realty, Inc. (Soobitsky)<br>Haddam Quarter Road, Haddam, Conn. | Center-Chimney Colonial, 1750                                | C  |
| 8  | Haddam Quarter Realty, Inc. (Soobitsky)<br>Haddam Quarter Road, Haddam, Conn. | Federal, 1810  | C  |
| 9  | Haddam Quarter Realty, Inc. (Soobitsky)<br>Haddam Quarter Road, Haddam, Conn. | Late 19th-Early 20th C frame house;<br>Deteriorate condition | NC |
| -  | Salvatore Mazzotta, Inc.  | Lot 6A, Block 60<br>No building                              | C  |
| 16 | Caso's Greenhouses, Inc.  | Colonial, ca. 1800 (?)                                       | C  |
| 19 | Martha R. McArthur  | Probably Late 19th C   | C  |
| 21 | Eleanor R. Stewart and Martha R.<br>McArthur                                  | Probably Late 18th C   | C  |

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Wall Street

1	Karen L. Bonk	Store, ca. 1880 (contemporary alterations)	NC
2	Christina M. Umba 330 Main Street, Cromwell, Conn.	Victorian Cottage, after 1874	C
3	Mary Pirruccio	Plain 3-bay, gable-to-street, ca. 1850	C
4	Clara Marie and Vincent Lombardo	Plain Victorian Cottage, ca. 1875	C
5	Mary and Salvatore D'Alfonso	Plain gable-to-street, early 20th C	C
6	Clara Marie and Vincent Lombardo	Plain Victorian gable-to-street, ca. 1875	C
7	Rose J. Dagle	Greek Revival, ca. 1850	C
8	Rita and George MacKiewicz, Jr.	Small Colonial Revival, ca. 1940	NC
9	Amelia L. and Phillip M. Morotta	Second Empire (maybe former Greek Revival)	C
10	Vincenza (Jennie) Petruzzello	Queen Anne, 1893 Barn, ca. 1820 Smokehouse	C C C
11	Helen F. Simidowicz	Federal, ca. 1800	C
12	Phillip C. and Anna Ollari	Victorian, ca. 1880	C
14	Marilyn E. Lord	Victorian, ca. 1880	C
15	Harriet L. and John Parker	Bungalow, Early 20th C	C
17	Steve and Alexander Balkun	Federal, ca. 1800	C
21	Olga Balkun	Federal, ca. 1800	C
23	Anne Catherine Carlson	Colonial-Federal, ca. 1800	C
25	Ernest L. Gilman	Federal, ca. 1800	C
27	Mildred W. and Glenn S. Lessor	Colonial, 1810 (altered) Barn, ca. 1800	C C

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three-bay facade with a side hall, the ridge of the roof parallel to the street, and an off-center chimney.

The architectural quality of buildings from this period (1756-1810) varies throughout the district. Although most are now covered with later siding, many display decorative features typical of the era. Modillioned or denticulated cornices and molded window caps are common. A number of doorways are of special interest, including the two doorways with fanlights on the Captain Ralph Hubbard House at 8 South Street, and the matching doorways on the Federal style houses at 6 and 10 School Street. Smoothly dressed brownstone ashlar laid without mortar is common for foundations, especially on facades.

Buildings dating from 1750 to 1810 set the general tone and character of the district. Throughout the area are small concentrations of buildings which are particularly evocative of the sense and appearance of 18th century Upper Houses. These include, for example, four houses closely sited on the north side of Wall Street (#s 17, 21, 23, and 25), and four houses lined on the west side of River Road with a vista across the river to the east (#s 37, 39, 41, and 45). The two matching Federal houses on the north side of School Street (#s 6 and 10) and Bell Schoolhouse on the south side, were the first and only buildings constructed on the street. The scale and siting of these early streetscapes make a significant contribution to the historic character of the district.

By the 1820s, river trade declined, and although Upper Houses remained important in the life of the town, residential development in mid-19th century Cromwell (so named after achieving independence from Middletown in 1851) occurred primarily on Main Street to the north. The Upper Houses River Port District contains few houses of this period in the Greek Revival or Italianate styles. During this time, commercial development also began to center on Main Street just northwest of the boundaries of the district, in what is now the center of town.

Between 1870 and 1900 some residential development occurred in the area, stimulated by quarrying and industrial activities in the town. Scattered throughout the Upper Houses River Port area are modest frame houses of very plain design, Victorian cottages of L-shaped form with cross-gable roofs and side porches, and a few larger houses of the Queen Anne style. Residential development continued sporadically in the 20th century, and consisted primarily of small frame houses either Colonial Revival in spirit or the post-World War II ranch type.

Presently, the district contains a mixture of buildings; those of the earliest period are dominant. These early buildings set the general character of the district, and the setting and street layout maintain a traditional feeling. In

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general, later structures maintain the scale and siting of earlier buildings, and do not detract from the historic area as a whole.

Many of the buildings in the Upper Houses River Port District have suffered from neglect and unsympathetic alterations in recent years. Asphalt or asbestos shingles and aluminum siding have been applied to most of the pre-1900 structures. Most of the alterations, however, are of a reversible character, and the trend of recent activity in the district has been toward restoration of the historic character of individual buildings. The major non-conforming intrusion in the district is the Connecticut Hardware Supply Company, a large two-story concrete building on River Road.

The district as a whole has a quiet residential character and a pedestrian scale. It is visually and functionally isolated from the rest of the town. Traffic and commercial activity is concentrated on Main Street (Route 9A) to the west. Wetlands and marsh on the south and north contribute to the secluded, slightly pastoral sense. The dominant natural feature, and a critical visual element of the district, is the Connecticut River which affords a splendid vista of the gradually rising hills of Portland to the east.



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Buildings and sites contributing to the character of the district:

1. 3 Pleasant Street: Merrill House, ca. 1860, Italianate, 2 stories, clapboarded, bracketed cornice, decorative veranda removed.
2. 4 Pleasant Street: Bungalow, early 20th century, 1 story, hipped roof, aluminum siding, columned porch.
3. 5 Pleasant Street: ca. 1890, Victorian Cottage, cross-gable roof, side porch, 2 stories, asphalt shingled.
4. 6 Pleasant Street: John Williams House (also Captain Oliver Smith House), 1787, Center-Chimney Colonial, 2 stories, double overhang, aluminum siding.
5. 9 Pleasant Street: Captain John Smith House, 1803, Federal, center hall, 2½ stories, composition shingled, now 2-family.
6. 14 Pleasant Street: Captain Edward Jones House, mid-19th century Early Victorian, 3-bay, gable-to-street, 2½ stories, composition shingled, bracketed porch and doorway.
7. 15 Pleasant Street: Nathaniel Chauncey House, ca. 1745, Center-Chimney Colonial, 2½ stories, asphalt shingled, gambrel roof in front, saltbox rear.
8. 16 Pleasant Street: Burdick House, ca. 1830, Federal, 1½ stories, asphalt shingled. Moved from River Road, said to have door from 1717 Joseph Smith House (demolished ca. 1970).
9. 17 Pleasant Street: Daniel Stocking House, ca. 1760, Colonial, 2½ stories, asphalt shingled, now 2-family.
10. 19 Pleasant Street: Early 20th century, Prairie Style influence, 2 stories, hipped roof, shingle siding.
11. 21 Pleasant Street: ca. 1790, Center-Chimney Colonial, 2 stories, composition shingled.
- 11A. 21 Pleasant Street: Barn, probably early 19th century, 1 story, lean-to addition.
12. 22 Pleasant Street: Captain James Ranney House, 1802, Center-Chimney Colonial, 2 stories, double overhang, asphalt shingled, Victorian doorway.

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13. 23 Pleasant Street: ca. 1890, Queen Anne, 2½ stories, asphalt shingled, multiple family.
14. 24 Pleasant Street: Baptist Parsonage, ca. 1860, Greek-Italianate, 2 stories, overhanging eaves, asphalt shingled.
15. 25 Pleasant Street: Jabez Stocking House, 1790, Center-Chimney Colonial, 2 stories, composition shingled, fanlight in gable, Victorian porch, interior paneling, stairway.
16. 28 Pleasant Street: ca. 1860, Italianate, 2 stories, overhanging eaves, aluminum siding.
17. River Road, Lot 15, Block 60: Narrow lot at southern end of district, west side of River Road, next to 33 River Road.
18. 33 River Road: ca. 1880, Victorian Cottage, 1½ stories, gable-to-street, clapboarded, abandoned.
19. 37 River Road: Captain Russell McKee House, 1830, Federal, 2 stories, brick, brownstone lintels on first floor windows of facade, modillioned cornice, 2-story ell.
20. 39, 39A River Road: Captain Daniel (?) Edwards House, ca. 1830, Federal, 2 stories, clapboarded and shingled, extensive remodeling, 2 family.
21. 41 River Road: Captain Abel (?) Edwards House, ca. 1830, Federal, 2 stories, gable on hip roof, asphalt shingled, 2 family.
22. 42 River Road: ca. 1865, Federal-Greek Revival doorway probably added to plain, frame house, 2 stories, clapboarded.
23. 45, 45A River Road: Captain Giles Savage House, ca. 1800, Center-Chimney Colonial, 2½ stories, double house, double overhang, clapboarded, Victorian porch.
24. 49 River Road: Joseph Tooker House, 1784, Colonial, 2 stories, hipped roof, modillioned cornice, Greek Revival doorway, asphalt shingled.
25. 57 River Road: ca. 1800, Federal, 3-bay, ridge of roof to street, 2½ stories, modillioned cornice, composition shingled, 2-story ell.
26. 59 River Road: ca. 1870 (?), Cottage, 1½ stories, gable-to-street, composition shingled.

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27. River Road, Lot 11, Block 65: Largest open lot on east side of River Road, approximately 760 feet long. Owned by Connecticut Hardware Supply Co. which uses a small portion of it for parking area, otherwise park-like.
28. River Road, Lot 12, Block 65: Open lot on east side of River Road, approximately 450 feet long, scenic, park-like.
29. River Road, Lot 13, Block 65: Open lot on east side of River Road, approximately 360 feet long. Site of historic Stone Quarry Dock at foot of Wall Street. These three adjoining lots make up approximately 1570 feet of unspoiled river frontage.
30. 5 School Street: Bell Schoolhouse, 1808, plain 2-story frame building with gable end to street, composition shingled, remodelled as residence.
31. 6 School Street: 1808, Federal, 3-bay, ridge of roof to street, 2½ stories, composition shingled, 2½ story ell. Fine interior stairway, exceptional doorway with fanlight and pediment, similar to #10 School Street.
32. 10 School Street: Wells-Sage House, ca. 1806, Federal, 3-bay, ridge of roof to street, aluminum siding (now being restored). Exceptional doorway with fanlight and pediment. Similar to #6 School Street.
33. 2 South Street: Jonathan Frary-Josiah Savage House, 1760, Center-Chimney Colonial, 2½ stories (large), double overhang, clapboarded, Greek Revival doorway.
34. 3 South Street: Captain Henry Stocking House, ca. 1790, Federal, 3-bay, ridge of roof to street, 2 stories (small), composition shingled.
35. 4 South Street: ca. 1880, Victorian Cottage, 2 stories, cross-gable roof, side porch, composition shingled.
36. 6 South Street: ca. 1880, Victorian Cottage, 2 stories, cross-gable roof, side porch, composition shingled.
37. 7 South Street: ca. 1750, Center-Chimney Colonial, 2½ stories, double house, double overhang, clapboarded.
38. 8 South Street: Captain Ralph Hubbard House, 1810, Federal, 2 stories, clapboarded, double hipped roof, denticulated cornice, fanlight in each doorway. Also has entrance facade on Pleasant Street, older ell on east side.
39. South Street, Lot 6A, Block 60: Open space on south side between 7 South Street and 19 South Street.

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40. 16 South Street: ca. 1800 (?), Colonial, 2½ stories (large), clapboarded, overhang on gable end, later addition on front.
41. 19 South Street: Probably late 19th century, plain, gable faces to street, 2½ stories, composition shingled, poor condition.
42. 21 South Street: Abijah Savage House, probably late 18th century, 2½ stories (large), stuccoed, addition on front.
43. 2 Wall Street: Late 19th century (after 1874), 1½ story frame cottage, gable-to-street, aluminum siding.
44. 3 Wall Street: White-Ranney House, ca. 1850, 3-bay, gable-to-street, no pediment, 2½ stories, aluminum siding.
45. 4 Wall Street: ca. 1875, Plain Victorian Cottage, 1½ stories, gable-to-street, aluminum siding. Moved to site.
46. 5 Wall Street: Early 20th century, plain, gable-to-street, 2 stories, aluminum siding, porch on front, contributes to scale of street.
47. 6 Wall Street: ca. 1875, Plain Victorian, gable-to-street, 2½ stories, aluminum siding. Moved to site.
48. 7 Wall Street: ca. 1850, Greek Revival, 3-bay, pedimented gable, 2½ stories, asphalt shingled, prominent doorway.
49. 9 Wall Street: 2 story frame house with mansard roof, may have been Greek Revival altered during Second Empire period, extensive recent alterations including aluminum and brick siding, removal of earlier doorway, contributes to scale of street.
50. 10 Wall Street: Millard Austin House, 1893, Queen Anne, 3 stories, composition shingled, verandah with arches and wooden lattice work.
- 50A. 10 Wall Street: Barn, ca. 1820 (?), Vertical boarding, 2 stories, fair condition. Possibly moved.
- 50B. 10 Wall Street: Smokehouse, date unknown, brick, original hardware.
51. 11 Wall Street: Botelle-Binks House, ca. 1800, Federal, 3-bay, ridge of roof to street, 2 stories, aluminum siding, Victorian door.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

UPPER HOUSES RIVER PORT, NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT  
Cromwell, Connecticut

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- 
52. 12 Wall Street: ca. 1880, Victorian, 2½ stories, clapboarded & shingled.
53. 14 Wall Street: ca. 1880, Victorian, 1½ stories, clapboarded.
54. 15 Wall Street: Bungalow, 1½ stories, shingle siding, bracketed eaves.
55. 17 Wall Street: William Stickney House, ca. 1800, Federal 2 stories, hipped roof, denticulated cornice, composition shingled, ballroom second floor.
56. 21 Wall Street: White-Kelsey House, ca. 1800, Federal, 2½ stories, asphalt shingled, denticulated cornice.
57. 23 Wall Street: ca. 1800, Colonial-Federal, 3-bay, ridge of roof to street, 2 Stories, composition shingled, early wing on east side with flared gambrel roof may be earlier.
58. 25 Wall Street: Bailey-Hubbard House, ca. 1800, Federal, Center-Chimney, 2 stories (small), composition shingled, Victorian porch.
59. 27 Wall Street: Webber House, ca. 1810, probably originally 1½ story with gable roof, extensively remodelled, new gambrel roof.
- 59A. 27 Wall Street: Barn, ca. 1800 (?), 2 stories (large), vertical boarding, flared gambrel roof, poor condition.

# 6 SIGNIFICANCE

100-100000-1000

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

SPECIFIC DATES \_\_\_\_\_ BUILDER/ARCHITECT \_\_\_\_\_

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Upper Houses River Port National Register District in Cromwell, Connecticut is a significant and distinguishable entity which illustrates the earliest periods of development in the Connecticut River Valley: the settlement of the valley through centralized villages primarily engaged in agriculture; and the commercial activity connected with sea trade which transformed these early communities into mercantile towns. The area contains a significant collection of 18th and early 19th century buildings. Although exhibiting some residential development from the late-19th and 20th centuries, the siting, scale, street placement and setting of the area are representative of the primary period of significance. The Upper Houses River Port District continues to maintain its integrity as a unit because of the isolating effect of those features which also enhance its setting: the Connecticut River to the east, meadows to north and south, and Main Street to the west.

The streets which formed the nucleus of 17th and 18th century Cromwell comprise the Upper Houses River Port National Register District. Mattabeseck (a tract of land 16 miles by 9 miles square encompassing the present towns of Middletown, Cromwell, Middlefield, Portland and East Hampton) was first settled in 1650 or 1651 at places north and south of the "riverett" or Little River. These early settlements later became the towns of Cromwell and Middletown. Pleasant Street, in "Upper Middletown" or "Upper Houses," was laid out on slightly elevated ground on the fertile flood plain of the Connecticut River. It was just above the meadows and the Little River which separated the "Upper Houses" from the "Lower Houses," and became the backbone of a nucleated agricultural village typical of the period. Home lots were granted on either side of the street, and outlying lands were distributed as surveyed and needed. South Street and River Road south of South Street were laid soon after, and together with Pleasant Street and upper Main Street formed part of the highway which ran from lower to upper Middletown and continued to Wethersfield. By 1670 there were eleven proprietors and their families residing north of the Little River. By 1703 the population at Upper Houses had reached approximately 250, and was granted permission to form a separate parish, the North or Second Ecclesiastical Society of Middletown.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Upper Houses, like many other Connecticut River towns, began to participate in the mercantile activity which transformed its social and economic life. The West Indies and coasting trade brought prosperity and economic development to the village. By mid-eighteenth century there was at least one ship-building yard in Upper Houses, and a wharf and warehouse constructed by the Stocking family. By the 1770s there were at least three shipyards, and a number of wharves and warehouses were located on the river, near

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Adams, Charles Collard, Middletown Upper Houses (New York: The Grafton Press, 1908)  
History of Middlesex County, Connecticut (New York: J.B. Beers Co., 1884)  
 "Upper Houses," Colonial Dames Series, 1925, Connecticut State Library  
 Collections of Cromwell Historical Society and Mrs. Charles Ashley, Cromwell, Conn.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 70

QUADRANGLE NAME Middletown

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 69,65,7,0 4,60,70,3,0

B 1,8 69,69,4,0 4,60,69,4,0

C 1,8 69,66,8,0 4,60,62,3,0

D 1,8 69,66,2,0 4,60,62,6,0

E 1,8 69,66,9,0 4,60,64,9,0

F 1,8 69,64,4,0 4,60,65,6,0

G 1,8 69,64,5,0 4,60,66,3,0

H 1,8 69,65,8,0 4,60,66,0,0

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Upper Houses River Port National Register District is shown as a broken line on the accompanying map entitled: "UPPER HOUSES RIVER PORT NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT, Cromwell, Connecticut," Dated 3/10/78

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Barbara Ann Cleary, Consultant

ORGANIZATION Greater Middletown Preservation Trust DATE January 2, 1979

STREET & NUMBER 27 Washington Street TELEPHONE (203) 346-1646

CITY OR TOWN Middletown STATE Connecticut 06457

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE X 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 Director, Connecticut Historical Commission DATE March 22, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST: DATE 7-27-79  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 7/25/79  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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UPPER HOUSES RIVER PORT NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT  
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the ends of Wall and South Streets.

By the beginning of the 19th century, the Upper Houses river port area had become a thriving, albeit small-scale, seaport. It was the center of Upper Middletown, and teemed with commercial enterprises and activity on the riverbanks. New streets had been developed from the original 17th century nucleated settlement. Wall Street (Freestone Avenue) had been laid probably early in the eighteenth century. By 1795 River Road was extended from South Street to Wall Street and further north, providing greater access to the wharves and warehouses there. School Street was laid out in 1803. Original homelots were divided and new residences built for merchants, sea captains, craftsmen and farmers.

Dr. Dwight, in his Travels Through New England, described Upper Houses in 1796:

"The Village which bears this name and contains a considerable part of the inhabitants, is a thrifty settlement on the southern declivity of a beautiful hill... The houses, about 80 in number, are generally well built, and the whole place wears an air of sprightliness and prosperity. An advantageous trade was carried on by the inhabitants, particularly with the West Indies. From the summit of this hill the prospect of the scenery is eminently delightful." (Vol. 1, P. 224)

After 1820 sea trade in Upper Houses declined, and small scale manufacturing and brownstone quarrying (begun in 1852) achieved economic importance. Some shipbuilding continued; in the 1820s the Connecticut River Steamboat Company was organized by three distinguished residents of Upper Houses, including William C. Redfield (1789-1857), scientist, naval engineer, and founder of the American Society of Science. This company financed the building in a local shipyard of the Experiment, the second steamboat registered at the Hartford custom house. In 1824, LaFayette disembarked at Upper Houses from the Oliver Ellsworth, the third passenger steamboat on the river, built by Redfield for a Hartford company in New York. Brownstone was shipped from the stone dock, and the Meriden and Cromwell Railroad had a waterside depot across River Road from the present Connecticut Hardware Supply Company, with a turntable at the foot of South Street.

In general, however, the critical and intimate connection with river and sea trade was lost after the 1820s. The natural boundaries of the river and meadows to north and south prohibited expansion in those directions. When the Hartford Turnpike began to operate in 1803-04, it was laid to the west of the old highway (Pleasant Street) on what is now Main Street. Later residential development in Upper Houses



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in the 19th century concentrated on the northern part of Main Street, and commercial development was centered at the northwest section of the river port village, at what is now the present center of Cromwell. During this period some residential construction continued in the river port area of Upper Houses (incorporated as Cromwell in 1851). After the Civil War the most active building period was associated with the success of quarrying operations, commercial greenhouses, and small manufacturing nearby. A significant number of structures built between 1870 and 1900 survive. Twentieth century development has been gradual, with no major intrusions into the character of the area.

The Upper Houses River Port National Register District includes the streets which comprised the town center of Upper Houses until the early 19th century: School, Pleasant, South, Wall Streets and River Road. The justification for these boundaries are visual as well as historical. The area is isolated by meadows to north and south and has "its back to" Main Street on the west. The river boundary on the east includes the sites of wharves and shipyards which may be of archeological importance.

The Upper Houses River Port District is a distinctive and cohesive unit, in part because of its isolating boundaries, and in part because it was largely bypassed by later development. It is an important example of a Connecticut River town in its early phases of development. The large number of buildings dating from 1750 to 1810, on the original streets of the village center, determine the historic character of the area. These buildings include large center-chimney Colonial structures and Federal period buildings with delicate detail. Buildings of this era comprise nearly one-half of all structures in the district. There are a number of important streetscapes which retain a virtually original historic appearance. Throughout the district early buildings are dominant, and set a rhythm of scale of buildings to street and open space consistent with the appearance of the area during its period of mercantile prosperity. The structures dating from later periods in general do not detract from, and in many cases contribute to, the general feeling in the area. The most significant visual intrusion in the district is the Connecticut Valley Hardware Supply Company, a two-story commercial building on River Road. Its effect is somewhat mitigated by its placement facing the river, and by trees surrounding the building on three sides.

The Upper Houses River Port District is a rare example of the early periods of settlement and development in the Connecticut River Valley, and is of great significance in the history of the Town of Cromwell. The survival of large numbers of early buildings, the continued use and isolation of an early street pattern, the maintenance of a traditional scale, the setting with expanses of meadows, and the intimate connection with the river make the Upper Houses River Port National Register District a significant representative of earlier patterns of architectural, economic and social history.

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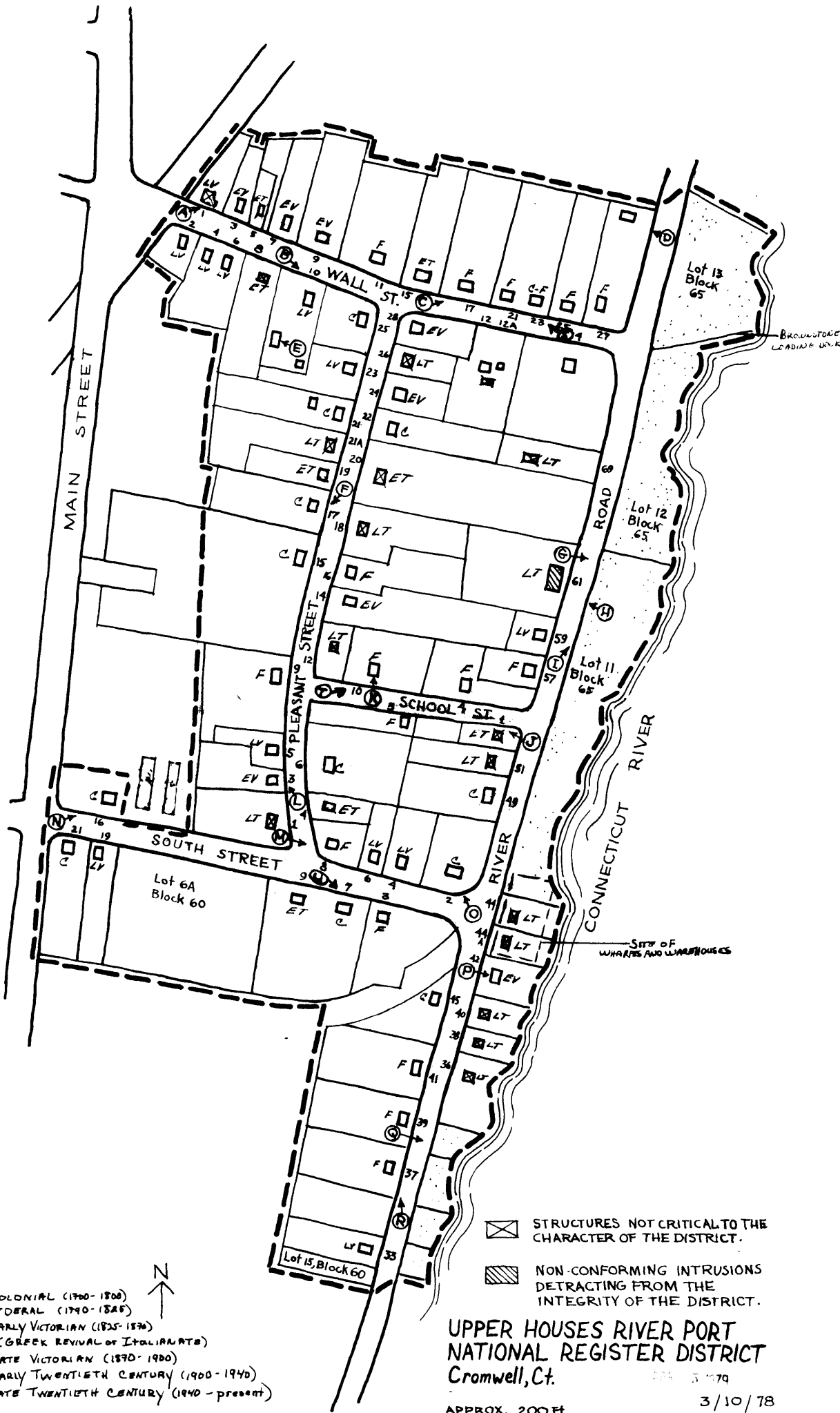
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UTM REFERENCES

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
I:18	696630	4606920
J:18	696510	4606980



- C - COLONIAL (1700-1800)
- F - FEDERAL (1790-1840)
- EV - EARLY VICTORIAN (1825-1870)  
(GREEK REVIVAL or ITALIANATE)
- LV - LATE VICTORIAN (1870-1900)
- ET - EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1940)
- LT - LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1940-present)

- STRUCTURES NOT CRITICAL TO THE CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT.
- NON-CONFORMING INTRUSIONS DETRACTING FROM THE INTEGRITY OF THE DISTRICT.

**UPPER HOUSES RIVER PORT  
NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT  
Cromwell, Ct.**

APPROX. 200 FT.

3/10/78