

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 30 1983

date entered JUL 28 1983

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Oxbow Historic District

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number Vermont Route 5 N/A not for publication

city, town Newbury N/A vicinity of congressional district

state VT code 50 county Orange code 017

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes checkboxes for district, building(s), structure, site, object, public/private, occupied/unoccupied, work in progress, accessible, agriculture, commercial, educational, entertainment, government, industrial, military, museum, park, private residence, religious, scientific, transportation, other.

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership (See continuation sheet 4-1)

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Town Clerk

street & number N/A

city, town Newbury state Vermont

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title VT Historic Sites and Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Oxbow Historic District is an excellent example of a small late 18th to 19th century agricultural settlement, with examples of Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival style structures. Aligning a ridge along Vermont Route 5, the buildings are complemented by a context of sweeping valley views and rich farmland.

The Oxbow Historic District, located in Newbury, Vt., is considered by many to be one of the most scenic locations in New England. The buildings which comprise this small district are situated on a ridge and align Vt. Rte. 5, originally known as the river road. To the east is a broad, low plain of rich farmland which is nearly encircled by a wide arc in the Connecticut River that has always been referred to as the Great Oxbow.

The houses and farm structures in the Oxbow Historic District reflect an almost idyllic combination of architectural sophistication and agricultural prosperity. Several properties remain working farms and the numerous, large barns attest to the long-standing, agriculturally-based economy of Newbury as well as to the fertility of the Oxbow. The dwellings are fine interpretations of the Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles and, within the confines of these styles, vary from high-style attempts to vernacular forms. Included amongst these buildings is the oldest house in Newbury, the Johnson-Bailey House (#4), a large Georgian-style structure begun in 1775. One of the most-photographed farms in Vermont is the Placey Farm (#7) which contains a vernacular "I" house and several outbuildings, of which the most prominent is an enormous dairy barn. Because the residents of this district have always recognized the inherent natural and man-made beauty of the Oxbow, they have maintained their properties with exceptional care and pride.

The individual buildings of the Oxbow Historic District are described as follows:

1. Doe-Dickie House, c.1775, c.1824. The 1½-story, woodframe, clapboard ell attached to the Doe-Dickie House is considered one of the three earliest structures in Newbury and was probably built around 1775. It has splayed wooden lintels over 12/8 sash, smaller "kneewall" windows which light the upper story, and a box cornice. Between the clapboard ell and the main block of the house is another ell, built of brick yet having the same proportions as the wooden section.

The front section, built c.1824, is a sophisticated, 2½-story, 5 x 4 bay, brick (11-course American bond) Federal structure exhibiting a Federal style. Four, large, interior-end chimneys anchor the gable roof, and a molded cornice, which returns at the gable ends, encircles the roof. Granite details include splayed window lintels and doorway keystones. The central entrance has a broad, elliptical fan with radiating ribs and ½-length sidelights flanking the door. The same type of wooden fan, only semi-circular, is repeated in the side entrances of the south elevation of the main house and brick ell.

The supporting farm buildings of this property are located on both sides of Vermont Route 5.

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The property owners in the Oxbow Historic District are as follows (numbers refer to map):

All addresses are Newbury, Vermont 05051.

1. Mr. Logan Dickie, Jr.
2. Mr. Logan Dickie, Jr.
3. Mrs. Francis Keyes
4. Mr. Elmer Bailey
5. Estate of John Keyes
6. Mr. Elmer Bailey
7. Mr. and Mrs. David Placey

ONE
EXP. 12-31-71

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1A. Cow barn: Large 2½-story, sheet metal gable roof with 2 ventilators, clapboards and vertical board siding, transom over gable-end entrance, 3 lean-to sheds attached to north end.

1B. Barn, c.1880. 2½-story, gable roof, clapboard siding, 2 round metal ventilators on the ridge.

1C. Cow barn: Large, 1½-story, post and beam frame, gable roof, 2 round metal ventilators, clapboard siding, modern picture windows, small milkroom attached on east end, 2 Harvestore silos.

1D. Corn Crib: Small, 1-story, gable roof, vented vertical siding. Attached to the cow barn by a long gabled passageway.

1E. Tractor Garage: 2-story, post and beam frame, saltbox roof, clapboard and asbestos tarpaper siding, 7 open tractor bays.

2. Johnson-Dickie House, "Oxbow House", 1800. Georgian, 2½-stories, gable roof, clapboard siding, 5 x 5 bays. Large interior chimneys anchor each side of the roof. Pedimented entrances on the east and south sides have pilasters and rectangular transoms; the large paneled door on the south side is a single leaf while the east entrance has a double leaf. Plain cornerboards support an entablature which continues across the east elevation to form a full pediment. The windows of the main block have louvered shutters, 12/12 sash, and cornices on the 1st floor. The windows in the gable peak also have louvered shutters but smaller 8/8 sash and pointed, Gothic Revival-style arched frames. Since the roof is known to have been raised at some point, these arches suggest that the raising was done sometime between 1835 and 1865.

Attached to the rear is a gabled 2-story wing with consistent details except for a large multi-paned picture window, and a smaller, 1½-story garage.

The interior of this house displays many original features as well as sympathetic additions. Many of the original fireplace mantels are intact and much of the original panelling and hardware have been retained, while joined by modern mouldings. The most noteworthy feature is the large ballroom in the 2nd floor. Although it has been partitioned at one end to allow for a small bedroom, some of the benches aligning the walls remain and the coved ceiling is especially impressive. The ballroom was also served by two fireplaces.

2A. Barn, c.1870. Large, gable-roof structure with vertical board siding; entrance at south gable end has two sliding doors and a transom with 34 lights, 17 on each row.

3. Keyes House, 1806. Federal, 2½-story, 5 x 1 bay "I" house, gable roof with two interior chimneys, clapboard siding. The central entrance has a transom and is flanked by crude pilasters; a gabled, pedimented porch, supported by large "rolling pin" posts, is a later addition, probably c.1910. The windows have 12/12 sash and those on the 1st floor have molded cornices. Plain cornerboards support a plain frieze and molded cornice which return at the gable ends.

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A 2½-story ell links the main block to a Colonial Revival addition in the rear. This 2-story section has a gambrel roof and shingle siding. Fenestration is varied throughout this addition, and a 1-story wraparound porch provides a sheltered, panoramic view of the valley below.

3A. Garage: 1-story, steeply-pitched hip roof, 2 vehicle bays, shingle siding.

3B. Garage: 1-story, hip roof, 3 vehicle bays, 1 of which has a wide, braced arch, clapboard siding.

4. Johnson-Bailey House, 1775. Considered one of the three oldest structures in Newbury, the Johnson-Bailey House is also a very rare example of the Georgian style in Vermont. Its massive hipped roof has a large central chimney and rests upon a 2-story, 5 x 3 bay block which is distinguished by a modillioned cornice and 2 pedimented entrances. The structure is now sheathed in aluminum siding; originally the structure was clapboarded with corner quoins. The south entrance on the 5-bay facade is flush to the wall whereas the west entrance facing Vt. Rte. 5 is a protruding 1-story, enclosed, gabled portico. If this portico is original, it ranks as an extremely rare feature in Vermont and joins a handful of others in Thetford which have been previously assumed to be the only such examples in the state. Each entrance of the Johnson-Bailey House has fluted pilasters supporting a pulvinated frieze and modillioned pediment. While these details are evocative of sophisticated, high-style design, it is an item for debate whether the pilaster capitals are actually the absent plinths turned upside-down; the proportions and moldings of the capitals seem inconsistent. The 1st floor window cornices have a concave shape and are nearly identical to those window cornices found on another structure, the Bayley-Cobb House (#7) located in the Bayley Historic District (also being nominated to the National Register). Window sash is now 1/1.

Attached to the north side is a 1-story, enclosed porch. A flat-roof garage with multiple bays has been added to the east side. The small, shed-roof ventilating dormer on the west side replaced two earlier, narrow, gable-roofed dormers.

4A. Barn: Large, L-shaped dairy barn with board and batten siding, sheet-metal gable and gambrel roofs. c.1920

5. Johnson-Keyes House, c.1833-1834. Federal, 2½-story, 5 x 4 bay, gable roof, brick house with 11-course American bond. The cornice is enlivened by a saw-tooth molding; cornice returns at the gable ends. Some of the original 12/12 and 12/8 sash remains; the 1st floor facade and north side windows have 6/6 sash. The upper windows have louvered shutters while those on the 1st floor have board and batten shutters. Splayed granite lintels highlight the windows and a granite keystone is used in the elliptical arch of the central entrance. Instead of being glazed, the fan is louvered. The entrance on the north side is now hidden by an enclosed, gabled portico sheathed with aluminum siding.

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Known for years as the Old Brick Store, this house was built by David Johnson (1778-1865) who ran a successful mercantile business from this house.

5A. Garage: Modern, 1-story, gable roof, aluminum siding. 2 bays. Non-contributing.

6. Melendy House, c.1870. Vernacular, 1½-story, clapboard, 3-bay gable front with sidehall entrance plan. Eaves overhang, no cornice returns. The entrance has 2/3-length sidelights and a transom. The entrance porch is supported by turned posts on a built-up rail. The side elevations have irregularly-placed bays and gable dormers. A modern, flat roof, 1-bay garage is attached to the rear of the house.

6A. Storage Structure: Modern, pre-fabricated metal structure, 1-story, low gable roof. Non-contributing.

7. Placey Farm, 1777,1795. Front section: 2-story, woodframe, gable roof, 5 x 1 bay Federal "I" house. Although aluminum siding has replaced the clapboards, cornice returns remain intact. Central entrance has transom and sidelights. The enclosed porch was built c.1946 and replaced an earlier late 19th century 1-bay porch which had turned posts, and scrolled brackets and valances. Windows have 6/6 sash. The original central chimney has been removed.

Rear ell: 2-story, woodframe, gable roof, aluminum siding. The ell is the earlier section and dates 1777. The front portion was built in 1795 and, being an "I" house plan, is similar to the Keyes House, #3, which was built 6 years later.

7A. Tractor Shed: long, 1-story, gable roof, clapboard siding, 6 tractor bays, 5 of which are open.

7B. Dairy Barn: rebuilt 1930. Enormous 3-story dairy barn with drive-in entry, sheet-metal gable roof with two ventilators, clapboard siding, pilasters, plain frieze, cornice returns, attached milk room, shed, and 2 large silos in rear.

7C. Modern barn, c.1970. Large 1-story, sheet-metal gable roof, metal siding. Non-contributing.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Oxbow Historic District is an excellent example of a small agricultural settlement containing well-preserved examples of Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival style residences complemented by numerous barns and agricultural out-buildings. The site of the earliest settlement in Newbury, a town rich in historic structures, the Oxbow Historic District is important in local history and in the greater context of the development of the State in that it was the northernmost outpost in the Connecticut River valley in the Third quarter of the 18th century.

The Oxbow Historic District marks the location of the earliest settlement in Newbury, Vermont and, at that time, the northernmost outpost on the Connecticut River (see Newbury Village Historic District and Bayley Historic District nominations). In 1763, a group of men led by General Jacob Bayley and Colonel Thomas Johnson received a charter from New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth granting them the rights to this land. Long favored by the Indians because of the fertile soil and abundance of fish, the Oxbow area was rapidly settled by the white men, and the success of their venture prompted others to soon follow.

Because Gen. Bayley and Col. Johnson hold such an important place in the history of Newbury, the Oxbow Historic District has always had a special local significance because it was here that the first homes of these men were built and, of which, Thomas Johnson's still stands (4).

The historical associations are magnified when one analyzes the architecture of this district. Few places in Vermont contain such a cluster of homes which exhibit a variety of styles and quality of design. As mentioned earlier, the Johnson-Bailey House (4), begun in 1775, in one of the grandest structures in Newbury and is important for several reasons. It is considered the earliest extant structure in Newbury and illustrates the high caliber of design and craftsmanship that could be obtained during Vermont's early years. Also, because Vermont was being settled while the Georgian style was in eclipse, very few examples of this style exist in the state and the Johnson-Bailey House represents a laudable translation executed in a wilderness setting. In addition, the enclosed entrance portico on the west side is a feature rarely seen in Vermont. If the portico is original, it qualifies as an interesting, significant oddity that is known to exist only in two other early Vermont river towns, Thetford and Norwich. Finally, the enormous size and steep pitch of the hip roof on this house is noteworthy, not only for its stylistic evocation of the Georgian style but for surviving throughout the years intact. During the years of the Federal style, in particular, houses were often built with hip roofs yet many were subsequently altered to gable roofs because the latter proved more capable of shedding ice and snow, thereby preventing ice dams at the ridges, a destructive occurrence not readily resolved until cheap metal flashing was manufactured later in the 19th century. Perhaps the steep pitch of the Johnson-Bailey roof helped avoid this problem and thereby prevented the roof from being altered. The

9. Major Bibliographical References

- 1) Beers, F. W. Atlas Of Orange County, Vermont. F. W. Beers & Co., N.Y., 1877.
- 2) Dwight, Timothy. Travels in New England and New York. Edited by Barbara Miller Solomon, Cambridge: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 4 Volumes, 1969, Vol. II.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 40 acres

Quadrangle name Newbury

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8
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7	3	6	4	9	0
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4	8	8	6	6	0	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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7	3	6	5	6	0
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4	8	8	6	0	2	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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7	3	6	2	2	0
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4	8	8	5	9	8	0
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D

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7	3	6	1	8	0
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4	8	8	6	7	0	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the Oxbow Historic District begins at Pt. A, the intersection of the south bank of the Connecticut River and a northerly extension of a line which

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margaret DeLaittre

organization Preservation Consultant

date July 1982 Revised 5/83

street & number 271 Elm Street

telephone (802) 229-0435

city or town Montpelier

state Vermont

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature (Deputy) *Eric J. [Signature]*

title Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

date 6/21/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

RECEIVED IN THE
NATIONAL REGISTER

date 7/28/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Johnson-Dickie House is also a Georgian style design and, like the Johnson-Bailey House, has two facades, one of which is oriented towards the road and the other facing south; both facades have central entrances that vie for attention. Although the Johnson-Dickie House has a gable roof, its proportions are massive and formidable because of its 5 x 5 bays and the broad, 2½-story, gabled facade which fronts the road. The details are equally bold and the entrances' pediments are mimicked on a larger scale in the pedimented gables. Whereas the Johnson-Bailey roof is anchored by one, large central chimney, the Johnson-Dickie roof has two, tall interior chimneys, one on each side of the ridge.

Also of interest are the district's two "I" houses, the Placey House (7) and the Keyes House (3). Stylistically, the Placey House appears more vernacular although some of its detail has been obscured by the enclosed front porch. The Keyes House appears more formal, partly due to its cosmetic treatment, but also because its details are simple yet refined. Particularly fine are the molded cornices of its windows and the pilasters and transom surrounding the entrance. A Colonial Revival entrance porch blends harmoniously with the facade and noteworthy for its "rolling pin" posts.

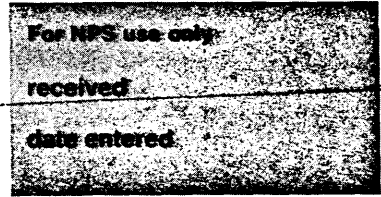
The Johnson-Keyes House (5) is a skillful rendition of the Federal style. Built of brick, the structure's details are highlighted by wood or stone. Splayed granite lintels cap each window and a granite keystone surmounts the entrance's elliptical arch. A wooden cornice returns at the gable ends and the facade displays a frieze which has a sawtooth molding. A louvered fan joins the entrance with the elliptical arch above, and the 1st floor windows retain board and batten shutters. For many years during the mid-nineteenth century, this house served as a store for it was here that the owner, David Johnson, conducted his mercantile business.

The Oxbow's other brick structure is the Doe-Dickie House (1), an excellent Federal style design attached to an older, 2-story wooden ell. Like the Johnson-Keyes House (5), the Doe-Dickie House has a 2-story, 5-bay facade (though more elongated) and windows capped by splayed granite lintels. Attention is focused on the central entrance by means of a broad elliptical arch and sidelights flanking the door. What makes the Doe-Dickie property especially appealing is the collection of farm outbuildings surrounding the house, maintained with the same respect as that which is given the house.

One of the most significant features of the district is the manner in which the past and present are combined. Because the Oxbow has been a residential/agricultural area, it has been subjected to fewer pressures than, for example, a residential/commercial area. However, modernization has been achieved by merely placing newer, less compatible structures out of sight. By following such a simple procedure, the residents of the Oxbow Historic District have preserved the outstanding quality of this area while successfully incorporating changes.

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- 3) Town of Newbury, Vermont. History of Newbury, Vermont, 1900 to 1977. Bradford, Vermont: Fox Publishing Corporation, 1978.
- 4) Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey, Town of Newbury, 1978.
- 5) Wall, H. F. Atlas of Orange County, 1858, N.Y.
- 6) Wells, Frederic P. History of Newbury, Vermont, 1704-1902. St. Johnsbury: The Caledonian County, 1902, reprinted 1975.

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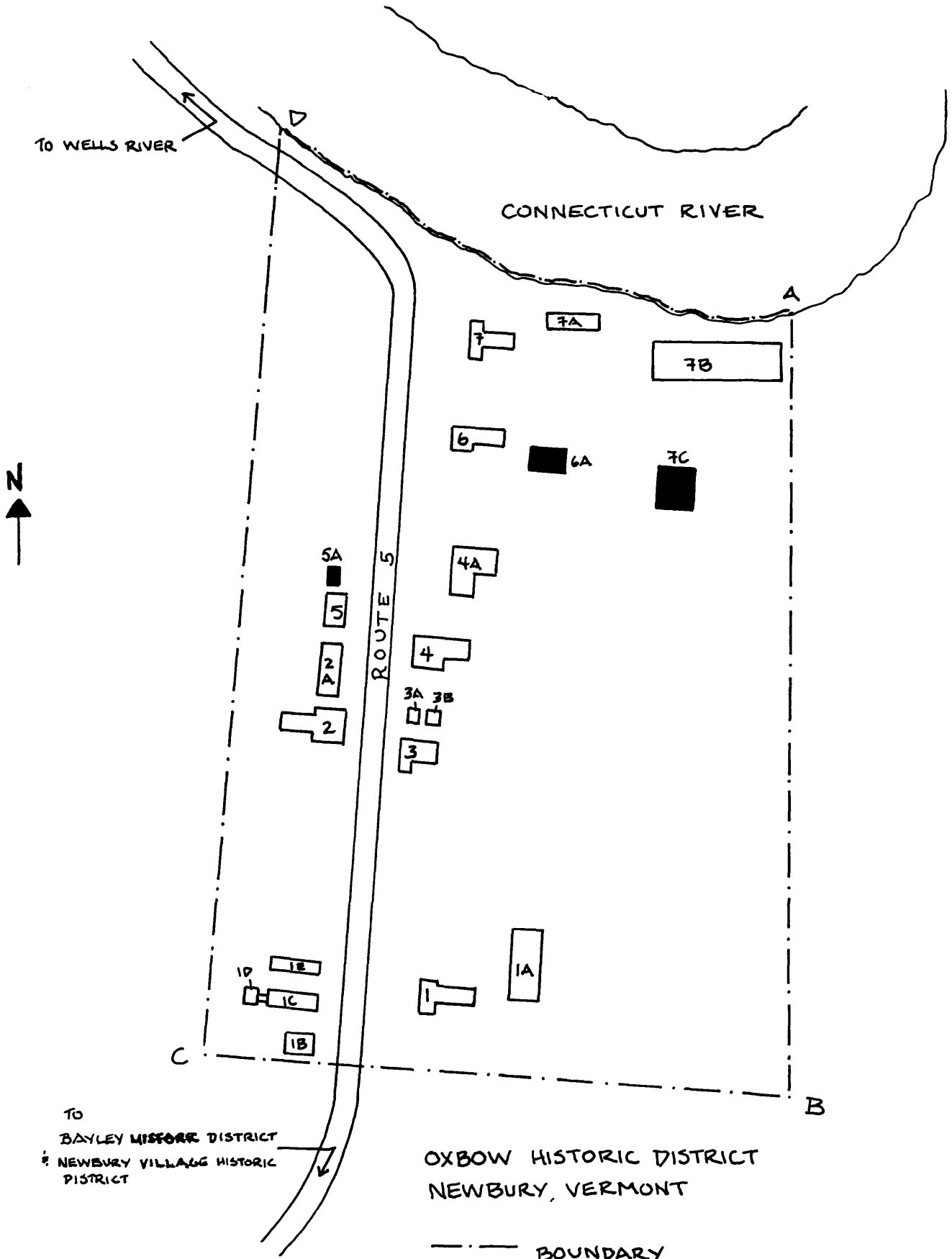
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runs parallel to and 20' east of the east wall of the Placey dairy barn (#7B). The boundary thence proceeds in a southerly direction along said extension and line running approximately 2000' until it meets Pt. B at the intersection with an easterly extension of a line which runs parallel to and 20' south of the south wall of the old Doe-Dickie barn (#1B). From Pt. B, the boundary thence proceeds in a westerly direction along said extension, crossing Vt. Rte. 5, and continuing along said line and a westerly extension of said line to Point C located approximately 300 feet west of the western edge of the right-of-way of Vermont Route 5. From Point C, the boundary thence proceeds in a northerly direction running parallel to and approximately 300' west of the westerly edge of right-of-way of Vermont Rte. 5, running behind properties 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 2, 2A, 5, 5A, and continuing along a northerly extension of said line across Vermont Rte. 5 and on to Pt. D, a point located on the south bank of the Connecticut River. From Pt. D, the boundary thence proceeds in an easterly direction along said bank until it meets Pt. A, the point of beginning.

The boundary of the Oxbow Historic District encompasses the land immediately associated with those structures in the district. The Connecticut River creates a natural boundary at the northern end, the "Meadows" or valley land east of the district creates another boundary as does a topographic incline at the southern end of the district. The western boundary includes the rear lots for the properties located on that side of Vermont Rte. 5.



OXBOW HISTORIC DISTRICT
NEWBURY, VERMONT

- BOUNDARY
- NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

NOT DRAWN TO SCALE