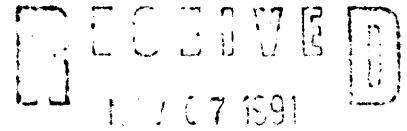


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 East Main Street Historic District other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Rt. 1 Between Black Rd & Navy St. city, town Searsport state Maine code ME county Waldo code 027 zip code 04974

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 3

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. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 11/4/91 Maine Historic Preservation Commission 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. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:) Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single DwellingLandscape/Garden

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VacantDomestic/Hotel**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

ItalianateSecond Empire

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granitewalls Wood/WeatherboardWood/Shingleroof Asphaltother Entance PorchesBay windows, Barns

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The East Main Street Historic District is composed of a handful of substantial dwellings which occupy spacious lots, one of which touches the shore of Penobscot Bay. This irregular rectangular area, which is bisected by US Route 1, encompasses some 20 acres of property, upon which are five (5) contributing resources. Three of these (1, 3, 5) are individually listed in the National Register. There are no non-contributing buildings in the district.

Standing within their large, wooded lots, the buildings in this district offer a stark contrast to their neighbors, a fact which reinforces the perception of this as a distinct "enclave". To the west along Route 1 lies an older, more densely developed residential area comprised of numerous Greek Revival capes and later Italianate dwellings. Beyond this is the remarkably well preserved brick commercial district (Searsport Historic District, NR 7/27/79). On the border to the east are a number of Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate houses which are scattered amidst more recent commercial enterprises. The characteristics which further set the district apart include an abundance of mature deciduous and evergreen trees, lot sizes which vary from one to five-plus acres, and setbacks that range between 75 feet and 150 feet. Elevations in the district vary from 50 to 80 feet west to east and 80 to 0 feet north to south (shore of Penobscot Bay). Artificially designed landscape elements in the district are most evident at the Jonathan C. Nickels House (2) where a number of tiers (now overgrown) exist in front of the facade. A twentieth century wooden, split rail fence defines the boundary of this property whose buildings are reached through a straight gravel drive flanked by a pastoral-like yard to the west and an area to the east which appears to have been a formal garden.

Architecturally, the district contains a high percentage of Searsport's most significant late nineteenth century buildings. All are of frame construction with attached barns. Three of them exhibit Italianate style characteristics, but in markedly different configurations. The cubical John P. Nichols House (5) features a square main block that is covered by a hip roof itself surmounted by a cupola. The Jonathan C. Nickels (2) and Albert V. Nickels (4) houses feature gable roofs, although the former has a side gable arrangement and the latter's faces forward. Bracketed cornices are found in each example as well as a variety of porches, although only the one

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on the Albert V. Nickels House (4) has original detail. The handsome, wrap-around feature includes paired chamfered posts linked by ornate scroll sawn spandrels.

In contrast to these three buildings, the McGilvery houses (1, 3) are Second Empire in design, both sporting bell-shaped mansard roofs. The two-and-a-half-story buildings feature dormers, porches, two-story ells, and bay windows. The most distinguished of the two is the William McGilvery House (4), whose overall design and detailing - including flush sheathed walls on the main block - strongly suggest the work of an accomplished architect.

Inventory List

1. **Capt. John W. McGilvery House - C**
1874-75
N.R. 12/29/83

This Second Empire style residence is a three-story structure with a concave mansard roof. It is constructed of wood with weatherboard siding and has corbelled brick chimneys. The main section of the house is L-shaped with a veranda extending across the northeast side of the ell. A one-story wing on the northeast end joins the house to a two-story carriage house which also has a mansard roof. In addition to the mansard roof, both the house and the carriage barn are ornamented with pedimented dormers and a denticulated cornice with paired brackets. The windows and doors have molded architrave trim, except for the main entrance which is enframed by pilasters supporting an entablature. Flanking the entrance on the southeast facade is a two-story bay window with panelled woodwork and a denticulated cornice. The veranda on the ell features chamfered posts supported on panelled pedestals.

Capt. John Willard McGilvery was one of five sons of Robert and Elizabeth McGilvery, all of whom became sea captains. Born in 1829, he went to sea as a boy and held his first command at the age of 22. From 1855 to 1860 he temporarily left the sea for a short, but evidently very successful, business career in Portland, Maine. Returning to Searsport with a wife, he took up his nautical career once again. From then until only four years before his death in 1904, he held a series of important commands including the famous "Oneida". He never lost a ship and in a time when the treatment of crews was generally not of the best, McGilvery was said to have always a superfluity of hands wanting to sign on with him. His popularity in Searsport was no less and a large public funeral was held at his death. McGilvery's success at his vocation is attested to by this substantial house that he built beginning in 1874. Construction of the house was reported in the August 13, 1874, edition of the Republican Journal (Belfast), but it may not have been completed until late the following year. Local tax records show that the homestead with a house and barn jumped in value from \$850 in

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1875 to \$4,000 in 1876.

2. Capt. Jonathan C. Nickels House - C
By 1859, c. 1861, c. 1880

Like its neighbor (1) to the west, the Nickels house is set deeply back from Route 1 on the most heavily wooded and landscaped property in the district. In fact, its facade is invisible from the road. The gable roofed two-and-a-half-story wooden frame dwelling is principally Italianate in its massing and details, although it also features Stick Style and Colonial Revival elements. The latter is evident in a two-story, five-bay pedimented addition made to the facade of the house as well as in a trio of porches. The facade sheathing pattern includes weatherboards, bands of scalloped shingles, and a stuccoed tympanum. Italianate elements include the bracketed eaves, and bay windows whereas Stick Style ornamentation is found in the gable peaks. A long two-story ell projects to the rear of the house where a short one-story connector links it to the spacious carriage barn. This two-and-a-half-story, three bay building has a central gable with a Gothic Revival style bargeboard. Its construction was reported in the "Searsport Locals" column of the May 21, 1885, edition of the Republican Journal (Belfast). Historic photographs of the property reveal that by the mid-1880s the facade had been altered through the addition of a pair of two-and-a-half-story bays flanking the entry, as well as a center dormer. These were subsequently incorporated into the present pedimented projection and their sheathing pattern retained. Of further significance is the presence of a terrace below the facade which historic photographs show was part of a landscaped yard.

Jonathan Clifford Nickels (1827-1889) was the son of David Nickels, whose farm constituted the property on which the subject district developed. Both his uncle John P. Nichols and brother Albert Vinal Nickels built houses (4, 5) on neighboring parcels. Like them, he also had a prosperous seafaring career; one which, according to the 1870 U. S. Census, enabled him to have a net worth of \$25,000 in both personal and real estate. He was twice married, first to Sarah Ann Pendleton (another Searsport family with strong ties to the sea) and secondly to Henrietta K. Thompson. Nickels inherited the property on which the house stands in 1859 upon the division of his father's estate. The description noted that this parcel "contains the buildings;" presumably the homestead whose presence near the road is shown on an 1859 map with the name "Mrs. Nichols." In 1860 J. C. Nickels was taxed for the first time on nine acres of property containing one house valued at \$1,300 and two barns assessed at \$160. Two years later, the house was valued at \$1,700 suggesting that some type of improvement had been carried out. By 1875 Nickels had moved his house to its present terraced site, well back from the road. A contemporary stereo view of the neighboring McGilvery house (3) shows the Nickels house in the background with a conventional five bay facade

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and bracketed cornices. Further changes were apparently made between 1878-81 when the assessed value clumbed from \$950 to \$1,700. The facade alterations were probably made at this time.

3. **Capt. William McGilvery House - C**
c. 1860, 1873
N.R. 12/29/83

The McGilvery house is counted among the most architecturally important Second Empire style buildings in central and eastern Maine. Its two-and-a-half-story three-bay main block is covered by a bell-cast mansard roof that is sheathed in slate and highly ornamented. The center bay of the roof is distinguished by a bell-shaped gable that frames bulls-eye and round-arched windows. Additional distinctive features include the rusticated flush-board sheathing with quoins, a handsome porch that spans the first story of the facade, and bracketed eaves. A one-and-a-half-story ell extends to a barn. A stereoptican view of the property, probably made shortly after the house was remodeled in 1873, shows the formal and naturalistic landscaped grounds as well as an iron fence across the front terminating at granite posts. Also evident is the paint scheme of the house which used alternating colors applied to the flush boards, as well as a substantially larger barn with hipped roof and cupola.

The house was the home of entrepreneur and former State legislator William McGilvery (1814-1876), one of the leading ship builders and ship owners on the Penobscot River whose holdings extended upriver as far as a major shipyard in Brewer, opposite Bangor. Of the once numerous shipyards in Searsport, the McGilvery works was the longest-lived and produced many of the finest ships. In addition to his local holdings, which included interest in an insurance company and a marine railway, McGilvery is reported to have had a shipyard in South Carolina. He was by far Searsport's wealthiest individual, a fact underscored by the 1870 census figures that valued his personal estate at \$110,000 and his real estate at \$263,000. Like his brother John W. McGilvery (1) and the other persons who built in the district, McGilvery's career began as a mariner and progressed to his own captaincy. He married Harriet Hichborn, the daughter of Nathan G. Hichborn of nearby Stockton Springs, a prominent ship builder in his own right (his extant house was listed in the Register on 4/7/88). McGilvery is thought to have accidentally shot himself, although other contemporary reports of his death suggest that he may have committed suicide. In the 1859 division of the estate of David Nickels, McGilvery was granted the parcel on which the house sits as guardian for Elizabeth B. Nickels. Between 1860 and 1861 tax records show that McGilvery was first assessed for a house and barn valued at \$4,000. In 1864, a gardener's house assessed at \$250 also appears in the list, implying that the extensive landscaped grounds shown on an 1875 map were probably being developed. The original configuration of McGilvery's

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house is unknown since it was remodeled in 1873. As reported in the Republican Journal (Belfast) on September 18, 1873, McGilvery was adding "a story to his house, which will be finished with a French roof." Tax records document this change through the \$1,500 increase in value of the house between 1873 and 1874. Unfortunately, the architect of the remodeling is yet to be identified.

**4. Capt. Albert V. Nickels House - C
1874-75**

This large, rambling two-and-a-half-story frame dwelling is principally Italianate in character, and exhibits a variety of sawn ornamentation. It is sheathed in weatherboards. Its two-bay gabled facade features decorative window caps and bargeboard, bracketed eaves, and an ornate porch that extends well beyond the east side where it meets a recessed two-story wing. Additional features of note include the two-story bay window and sun porch on the west side, a two-story rear ell and a large connected former barn that was converted to a garage and ballroom about 1920. This alteration was probably accompanied by the addition of the sun porch and the extension of the front porch to its present wraparound configuration.

Albert Vinal Nickels (1838-1902) was the brother of Jonathan C. Nickels (2) and the nephew of John P. Nichols (5). In keeping with the maritime heritage of his family, Nickels spent his career on the sea. He captained the Bark SARAH A. NICKELS 1859-1862 (?); the Ship ODESSA 1863-1866, the ship S. F. HERSEY 1867-1870; the Ship WILLIAM MCGILVERY 1870-1881; the Ship IROQUOIS 1881-1891; the Ship H. H. MCGILVERY; and the Bark J. C. NICKELS. Nickels married Elizabeth McGilvery, the daughter of William and Harriet (Hichborn) McGilvery, whose house (3) is located nearby. The family's nautical life is dramatized by the fact that three of their eight children were born at sea. Tax records show that upon completion in 1875, Nickels' homestead comprising six and one-half acres, one house, and one barn were valued at \$5,500.

**5. John P. Nichols House - C
1865
N.R. 1/4/83**

The Nichols house is an Italianate style two-story, three-bay frame dwelling sheathed in weatherboards. Its cubical form is covered by a shallow hip roof crowned by a cupola. Additional features include a replacement Colonial Revival style entry porch, bracketed eaves, denticulated cornice, and a two-story ell. This ell extends to a former barn which repeats the shape of the main block. It has been converted to domestic use in the building's function as an inn. A small one-story wing projects from the west

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side of the ell. Like a number of its neighbors, this house is said to have historically been set amidst extensively landscaped grounds.

The house was commissioned by Capt. John P. Nichols (1818-1883), who resided here until his death. Nichols was one of the most financially successful of Searsport's multitudinous sea captains, a fact demonstrated by his \$19,000 estate as valued in the 1870 census. He first went to sea when eleven years old, and was captain of his own ship at the age of twenty-one. The Nichols' were perhaps the largest of Searsport's sea-going families, boasting twenty-seven ships' masters in the nineteenth century. The house is also interesting as the home of Commodore (later Vice Admiral) Carleton F. Bryant (1892-____). As a Rear Admiral with the Atlantic Fleet, Bryant was Commander, Gunfire Support, during the Allied invasion of Normandy (June, 1944), and Commander, Center Support Group, Western Naval Task Force, in the invasion of Southern France (August, 1944).

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
Industry
Landscape Architecture
Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

c.1860-1941

Significant Dates

c. 1860
c. 1870

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

McGilvery, William

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

Searsport's East Main Street Historic District embraces a handful of substantial dwellings built in the 1860s and 1870s. Three of these are already individually listed in the National Register. This architecturally striking enclave was home to a group of highly successful mariners and a prominent shipbuilder. Taken as a group, these buildings represent the pinnacle of achievement reached by Searsport's sea-faring population in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. For these reasons the district is eligible for nomination to the Register under criteria A, B, and C in the areas of Architecture, Industry, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning and Development.

1800-1860

The Town of Searsport was evidently settled in the late eighteenth century when the geographical area was included within the boundary of Prospect. A number of extant Federal period houses and a considerable group of Greek Revival style dwellings suggest the pace of development in the early nineteenth century. To further underscore this process, the town was separately incorporated on February 13, 1845. Five years later the U. S. Census recorded 2,208 residents in the town. An analysis of this figure reveals that of the approximately 387 households enumerated, 92 or nearly 24% of the heads of those households gave their occupation as "Sailor." Another 87 persons were similarly listed, most of whom were the sons of non-mariners whose residence was given as that of their parents. This illustrates the already well established nautical career pattern which was such a significant aspect of Searsport's nineteenth century history. In fact, this was noted by the authors of A History and Description of New England (1859) who described the inhabitants as "...largely interested in shipbuilding and navigation." While farming was carried on in the inland areas, Searsport village had developed as a local trading center augmented by an active shipbuilding industry. By 1855 there were, among other things, seventeen

9. Major Bibliographical References

Liggitt Map of Searsport Village, 1875. Penobscot Marine Museum, Searsport.

National Registor of Historic Places nomination forms for the Capt. John W. McGilvery House, and the Capt. John P. Nichols House. Copies on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta. Also, the William McGilvery House.

Nichols, Charles J. James Nichols (Nickels) of Searsport and his Descendants. Portland, Maine: Privately Printed. 1944.

"Searsport on Penobscot Bay." Industrial Journal (Bangor). December, 1909.

Seventh (1850), Eighth (1860), Ninth (1870), Tenth (1880) Census of the United States. Waldo County, Maine. Population and Industrial Schedules. Microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy. Maine State Archives, Augusta.

Town of Searsport tax Records. Penobscot Marine Museum.

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
- Univerality
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of property Approximately 20

UTM References

A 1 9 | 5 0 6 8 4 0 | 4 9 2 2 8 1 0
 Zone Easting Northing

C 1 9 | 5 0 6 7 2 0 | 4 9 2 2 1 5 0

B 1 9 | 5 0 6 9 5 0 | 4 9 2 2 1 6 0
 Zone Easting Northing

D 1 9 | 5 0 6 6 0 0 | 4 9 2 2 8 0 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

SEE MAP

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The district boundary is drawn to embrace the small enclave of imposing dwellings built in the 1860's and 1870's by some of Searsport's wealthiest and most prominent residents. Earlier nineteenth century houses which lie to the east and west of the district represent different periods of development and are generally less intact or are separated from each other by intrusive commercial activity. The shore of Penobscot bay is the historic boundary to the south, whereas undeveloped property lies to the north.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohne, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date 10/1991

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132

city or town Augusta state Maine zip code 04333-0065

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country stores in town, seven blacksmiths, thirteen carpenters, an iron dealer and founder, three lumber dealers, two marble workers, and eight sawmills. Specific marine-related business included five calkers and gravers, two sail makers, and five ship builders.

There are a number of extant buildings that reflect the prosperity of mid-nineteenth century Searsport. Chief among these is the remarkably well preserved group of brick commercial blocks that constitute the Searsport Historic District (N.R. 7/27/79). Of the twelve historic commercial buildings in this assemblage, the earliest dates to 1834 while six others were erected between 1840 and 1853. Outside of the district, the town built a brick hall in 1845.

1860-1900

Up to about 1860, development in the district appears to have been limited to the single homestead and farm of David (1799-1851) and Catherine H. (Clifford) Nickels (1800-1858). Their former residence is shown on an 1859 wall map of Waldo County, although little is known about its precise configuration. Upon the death of Catherine Nickels, the estate was divided among their nine children, including five sons all of whom were ship masters. Jonathan C. Nickels (2) was awarded the homestead lot and nine surrounding acres. He subsequently either moved the house back to its present deeply-recessed site or built anew while landscaping the property between the house and road.

Shortly after Nickels established his residence, William McGilvery (3) built upon an adjoining parcel which had been granted to him as the guardian of Elizabeth, David Nickels' youngest child. Tax records show that McGilvery must have put up a substantial dwelling, for it was assessed at \$4,000 in 1862. William McGilvery was without question Searsport's wealthiest citizen. Owner of the town's largest shipyard as well as others in Brewer and South Carolina, his combined personal and real estate holdings were valued at \$373,000 in the 1870 U. S. Census. The Nickels and McGilvery houses were joined in 1865 by a third dwelling (5), erected for John P. Nichols, a brother nineteen years the junior of David Nickels. (The variation in the use of "ho" and "ke" in the spelling of their names, while unexplained is, nonetheless, historic. David Nickels' children used the "ke".) Like his nephew Jonathan C. Nickels, John P. Nichols led a successful career at sea where he had risen to captain his own vessel at age twenty-one.

The decade of the 1870s witnessed not only a series of new additions and remodelings in the district, but also the height of Searsport's nineteenth century prosperity. In the late summer of 1873 William McGilvery undertook the remodeling of his house into the striking Second Empire style house that exists today. Unfortunately, despite a reference to the project in the local

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newspaper the architect responsible for the design is unknown. The following year McGilvery's brother, John W. McGilvery, set about the construction of a two-and-a-half story Second Empire house (1) on a lot he acquired in June of 1874 from Jonathan C. Nickels.

At about the same time, Albert V. Nickels commenced the building of a house (4) on the six-and-a-half acre field which he inherited in the 1859 division of his parents' estate. In keeping with the nautical tradition of the district's earlier residents, both John W. McGilvery and Albert V. Nickels were successful ships' captains, careers which both men continued to pursue after building here. Finally, toward the close of the decade, Jonathan C. Nickels made significant alterations to his dwelling; changes which were further elaborated upon early in this century.

Historic photographs of the houses in the district, an 1875 map, and a mid-twentieth century recollection, reveal that a notable feature of at least four of the properties were their landscaped grounds. The residences of William and John McGilvery, Jonathan C. Nickels, and John P. Nichols were each set upon lots that were shaped, more or less, by landscaping efforts. The extent of this work ranged from John McGilvery's central tree-lined drive that led to a lozenge-shaped cul-de-sac, to the very elaborate system of fence-lined paths and drives that surrounded the William McGilvery House. William McGilvery's tax assessment in 1864 notes the presence of a separate "gardener's house", suggesting that the property was at that time in the process of being landscaped or that the features were well in place. Although this was probably the most elaborately developed plan, the neighboring Jonathan C. Nickels House also featured significant landscaping. Here, the deep lot rose to a double terrace upon which the house rested. The following recollection of the property appeared in the July 17, 1947, edition of the Republican Journal (Belfast):

...The beauty of the grounds surrounding this place was outstanding. The long walk leading to the front door was bordered with flowers. The carriage drive was bordered with trees. And over the closely clipped lawn a peacock strolled in and out of the shrubbery.

The nature of the development in the district in this period clearly reflects the level of prosperity achieved by its residents. The five heads of the households as enumerated in the 1870 census were still active in their careers of Mariner (4) and Ship Builder (1). Within the next decade, however, both John P. Nichols and Jonathan C. Nickels settled into an economically comfortable retirement. On the other hand, tragedy struck the neighborhood when William McGilvery was killed, as reported in the Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, "by the accidental discharge of a revolver" (another contemporary account implies that he committed suicide). Described as "one

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of the most prominent citizens and leading businessmen of Eastern Maine," McGilvery left an estate which included part ownership in fifty vessels.

Throughout the 1870s and into the early 1880s, Searsport appears to have sustained its mid-nineteenth century level of economic and industrial activity. Although the population in 1870 fell dramatically from its record 1860 high, by 1880 it had recovered somewhat. Additionally, property valuations continued to rise before they began a rapid decline at the close of the century. Through the mid-1880s shipbuilding seems to have retained its leading role in the economy. For example, in 1870 the McGilvery yard employed fifty persons with a payroll of \$15,000 annually, and in 1880 there were still three active shipyards. However, by 1890 only one remained. Nautical careers were still a significant part of Searsport's heritage. In fact, an article in the December, 1909, edition of the Industrial Journal (Bangor) noted that "In 1885 one-tenth of the American full-rigged ships afloat were in command of Searsport Captains...." Another contemporary comment is especially compelling and bears repeating in its entirety:

The social tourist will often be surprised to find the farmer with whom he stops to chat, indulging in reminiscences of far-off regions, of hurricanes in the western tropics, and of cyclones off the Asiatic coast, and other strange and thrilling experiences of port and sea. Such incidents bring out the fact that among the independent yeomen of the town are many whose early years were spent upon the sea, and some who acquired handsome properties in maritime pursuits. Often their houses will be found adorned with natural and manufactured articles of strange beauty from many climes; while about the grounds, as well as buildings, is the neatness born of the pride of the seaman in the trim appearance of his ship. (Gazetter of Maine, 1882)

1900-PRESENT

At the opening of the new century, Searsport must have been a changed place from a generation earlier. The Annual Register of Maine for 1901 shows that while there were a broad range of mercantile establishments and a variety of small-scale manufactories, the shipyards had closed. Furthermore, the town's population had fallen to 1,349 persons, a decline of over 40% from two decades before. By the close of the decade, however, activity had rebounded somewhat as a result of the Pike Brothers spool factory and the establishment of the American Agricultural Chemical Company (1905), and the Hubbard Fertilizer Company (1909). The latter two plants were erected adjacent to the shipping facility of the Penobscot Coal and Wharf Company, a vast coal pocket erected in 1905 at the terminus of a Bangor and Aroostook Railroad spur. The deep water shipping port established here was accompanied

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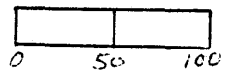
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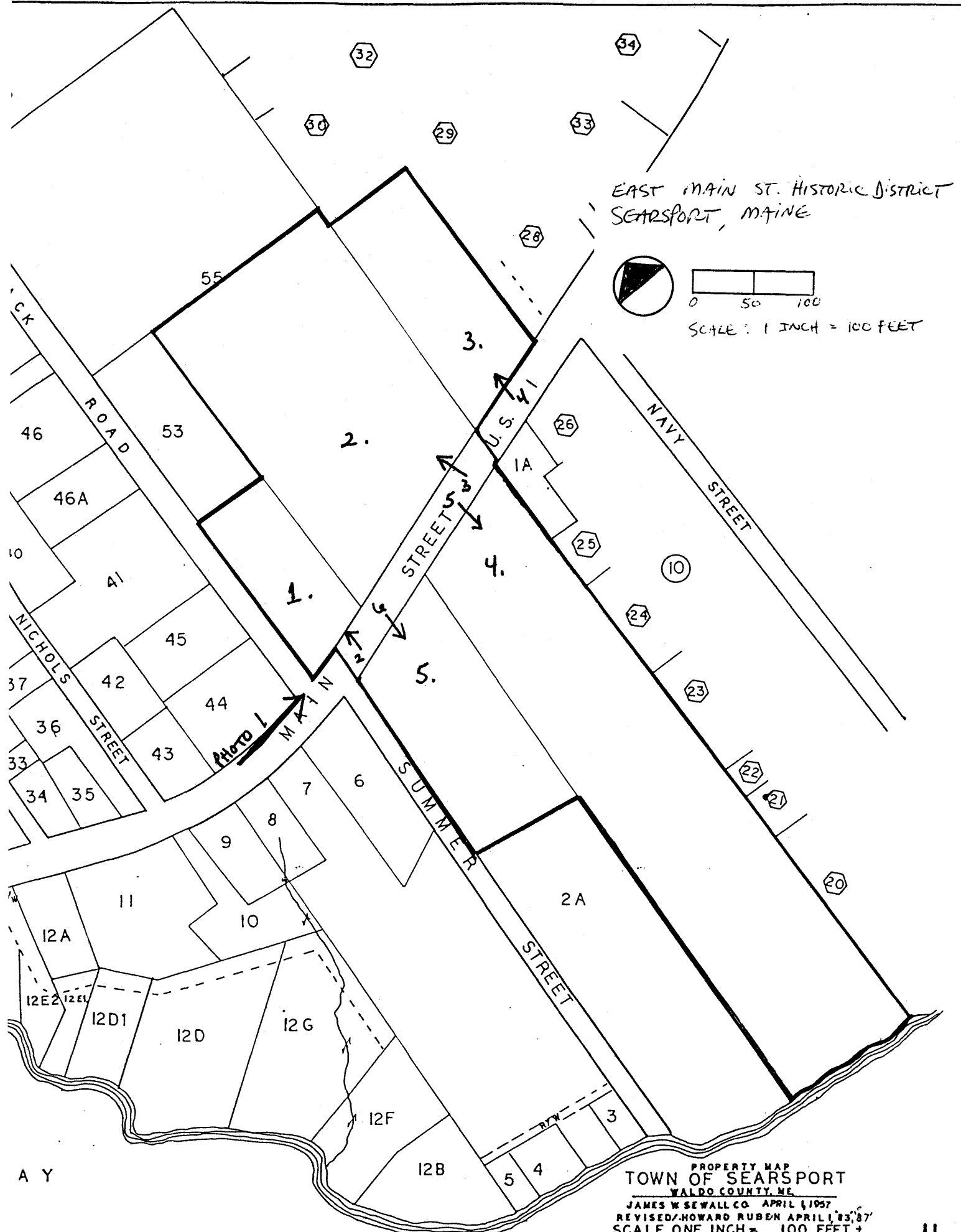
by an ambitious plan to develop a summer park and resort at Bar Point and Sears Island, respectively, Although the park boomed in the years prior to World War I, it closed in 1927. Sears Island meanwhile never achieved the ambitious plan envisioned for it. Today, an oil tank farm has replaced the coal facilities thereby maintaining some level of marine-related shipping activity in Searsport. In addition, the town's population has risen nearly to the point of its recorded 1860 level.

The twentieth century has witnessed a number of significant changes in the district. Colonial Revival style alterations were made to the facade and porches of the Jonathan C. Nickels House and to the porch of the John P. Nichols House. In addition, an enlargement of the front porch, construction of a sun porch, and alterations to the barn were made on the Albert V. Nickels House about 1920. Finally, much of the designed landscape has been lost, particularly at the William McGilvery House where no evident trace remains of the fencing and path system. Aside from these physical changes, the use of the buildings has shifted somewhat. Four of the five houses (the fifth is presently unoccupied and for sale) now function as owner-occupied bed and breakfast inns. However, in at least one case, that of the William McGilvery House, this is an historic pattern of use. A newspaper article from about 1936 (the precise date and newspaper in which it appeared are not identified) describes the opening of the house as a "summer hotel" by McGilvery's granddaughter. Nonetheless, both the extant buildings and their physical context stand in tribute to a remarkable period in the town's history. In turn, one sees in them a microcosm of the impact of maritime-related pursuits to Maine's nineteenth century development.

EAST MAIN ST. HISTORIC DISTRICT
SEARSPORT, MAINE



SCALE: 1 INCH = 100 FEET



PROPERTY MAP
TOWN OF SEARSPORT
WALDO COUNTY, ME

JAMES W SEWALL CO. APRIL 1, 1957
REVISED/HOWARD RUBEN APRIL 1, '83, '87
SCALE ONE INCH = 100 FEET ±