**1 NAME**
East India Marine Hall; Peabody Academy of Science, Peabody Museum of Salem

**2 LOCATION**
**STREET & NUMBER** 161 Essex Street (East India Square)

**CITY, TOWN** Salem  
**STATE** Massachusetts  
**VICINITY OF** Massachusetts 01970

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRICT</td>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>X OCCUPIED</td>
<td>X MUSEUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUILDING(S)</td>
<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>UNOCCUPIED</td>
<td>COMMERCIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE</td>
<td>BOTH</td>
<td>WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>EDUCATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITE</td>
<td>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</td>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>RELIGIOUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECT</td>
<td>IN PROCESS</td>
<td>YES: RESTRICTED</td>
<td>GOVERNMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BEING CONSIDERED</td>
<td>YES: UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td>SCIENTIFIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>INDUSTRIAL</td>
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<td>MILITARY</td>
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<td>OTHER:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**NAME**
Board of Trustees, Peabody Museum of Salem

**STREET & NUMBER** 161 Essex Street, East India Square

**CITY, TOWN** Salem  
**STATE** Massachusetts  
**VICINITY OF** Massachusetts 01970

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.** Essex County Registry of Deeds

**STREET & NUMBER**

**CITY, TOWN** Salem, Massachusetts  
**STATE** Massachusetts  
**VICINITY OF** Massachusetts 01970

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE**

**DATE**

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

**CITY, TOWN** Salem  
**STATE** Massachusetts
East India Marine Hall, erected in 1824-25, stands on the south side of Essex Street (now Essex Mall in this block), just west of Liberty Street. The unidentified architect created a handsome and dignified composition, constructed in granite on the narrow front and brick on the long sides and rear. The two-story, gable-roofed building measures approximately 45 by 100 feet.

The seven-bay facade is relatively unaltered. A thin belt course divides the two floors. The post-and-lintel arrangement on the lower level contains multi-pane windows in the first, third, fifth, and seventh bays. Similar windows replace original doors in the remaining three bays. Slender pilasters separate the tall, round-arched windows that line the second floor. The name of the structure is cut in a granite panel just below the cornice. A glazed bull's-eye is set in the pedimented gable.

The interior of the structure has seen changes in both plan and detail. Originally a central corridor and stairhall divided the ground floor along its longitudinal axis. Businesses rented the spaces on either side. The names of the first occupants, the Asiatic Bank and the Oriental Insurance Company, were cut in the belt course and are still visible. The East India Marine Society's great hall occupied the entire second floor.

In 1867-69 the Peabody Academy of Science carried out an extensive remodeling of the structure. The first floor was converted to large front and rear exhibit rooms separated by a corridor and stairhall running across the building along the narrow axis. The doors on the facade were closed off and new formal entrances were created at either side. One-story additions contained corridors linking these to the central hall. The great room on the second floor retained its basic shape but lost much original architectural detail. Many of these elements were restored in 1943, but the altered plan was left intact.

Beginning in the late 19th century extensive additions were made to East India Marine Hall to house the steadily growing collections and provide administrative and curatorial offices. These units have almost completely obscured the old block on the east and south (rear). The eastern entrance corridor was demolished in the construction of the latest addition. Dedicated in 1976, it is a massive wing containing exhibit areas, education and audiovisual rooms, and a museum shop. (See accompanying floorplan).
The Peabody Museum of Salem, founded in 1799 by the East India Marine Society, is the oldest continuously-operated museum in the United States. East India Marine Hall, dedicated in 1825, was the first structure built specifically for the organization.

Twenty-two Salem shipmasters met on August 31, 1799, and agreed to form the East India Marine Society. Membership was limited to captains and supercargoes who had sailed around the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn. The society listed three aims in its articles of October 14, 1799. The first goal was to aid the families of deceased members; the second, to collect information pertaining to navigation; the third, to create a museum. Special efforts were to be made to collect objects from the southwestern Pacific relating to Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. On March 3, 1801, the organization was incorporated.

The society immediately became a vigorous one. During its first 12 years the group held annual celebrations which featured colorful parades through the streets of Salem and formal dinners. On the more serious side, the organization undertook to formalize the collection of navigational information by issuing blank forms for ships' journals; the first of these appear in 1801. On January 4, 1804, Nathaniel Bowditch became the society's Inspector of Journals; he held that office for 16 years and produced 12 volumes of journals, which included the histories of more than 100 voyages. The society's museum collections grew steadily in the early years. A catalogue prepared in 1821 listed 2,269 artifacts. Ten years later the collection had grown to 4,299 items. The society also supported scientific expeditions, among them the Wilkes Expedition.

The society moved several times before erecting its own building. It originally occupied space at the corner of Essex and Washing Streets, but the rapid accession of objects forced it to move to a bank building on Essex Street in 1804. Twenty years later the society built the East India Marine Hall and formally dedicated it on October 14, 1825, with the help of President John Quincy Adams and other prominent men.

The decades following the completion of the new building cut short the early promise of the Salem East India Marine Society. Salem's commerce had so declined by 1850 that the decreasing number of members began to consider selling museum items in order to raise necessary funds. At this juncture, George Peabody, a wealthy expatriate, saved the situation. Through his
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Junior League of Boston, Inc. Along the Coast of Essex County (Boston, 1970)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately one acre

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the national historic landmark designation for the Peabody Museum of Salem is coterminous with the exterior line of the foundation of the museum complex, including the original building and additions. The latter units are made part of the designation because of their value as symbols of the museum's continuous operation and growth.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

DATE

For NPS use only

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

DATE

ATTEN:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
generosity in 1867, a trust fund of $140,000 enabled a body that became known as the Peabody Academy of Science (changed to the present name in 1915) to purchase the society's collections and hall. At about the same time, the new organization bought the ethnological and natural history collections of Salem's Essex Institute.

The Peabody Museum has carried on the educational purpose of the East India Marine Society. The permanent collections are divided into three areas: maritime history, including paintings, figureheads, navigating instruments, and China Trade items; ethnology of non-European peoples, with special emphasis on the Pacific and Far East; and natural history, including important specimens from all over the world and a comprehensive collection from Essex County, Massachusetts. The museum's research library contains 100,000 printed volumes; manuscript collections of log books, shipping accounts, and journals; as well as ships' plans, maps, and charts. In addition the museum preserves about one million photographs and negatives, some dating back to 1860.
Peabody Museum of Salem

Changing Exhibitions

China Trade

stairs

Fishing Industry

Natural History of Essex County

Coastal Trade

Whaling

Wharf Diorama

Admissions

* special needs aids

first floor

Museum Hours
mon.-sat. 10-5
sun.-holidays 1-5

Telephone information 745 - 9500
offices 745 - 1876

Essex St. Mall

Museum Shop

Liberty St
Reconstruction of an 1816 yacht cabin

balcony level Asia
Japan

balcony level Pacific
Polynesia

East India Marine Hall

Steamships

Navigation Instruments

second floor

☆ Changing Exhibitions