

4. Historic Resources

Introduction

Seabrook was historically a rural community of small villages, agricultural areas, extensive salt marshes and a major beach area. The boundaries of the present town were not finally established until the 19th century—formed from the southern part of Hampton and the northern part of Salisbury, Massachusetts.

There were at least five historic village areas as shown on the attached **Map 10, Historic Resources**:

- Seabrook Village in the northern part of the town
- Seabrook Depot along Railroad Avenue
- Smithtown along the southern border
- Crowtown west of I-95 and
- South Seabrook also along the southern border in southeast Seabrook

There is also another historically distinct area in the center of town straddling Lafayette Road between Cains Brook and Railroad Avenue known as the Slough.

The early settlement of the town was generally along what is now Lafayette Road (US Route 1). The original town center known historically as Seabrook Village included churches, a cemetery, residences and businesses. Only a few of these structures remain including the Stone House, the former Dearborn Academy and the Parsonage also known as the Dr. Sewell Brown home. This village was once considered as an attractive location:

“one of the most picturesque and attractive between Newburyport and Portsmouth”
Clarkson Dearborn, *Seabrook Sketches*, Granite Monthly, 1883

Today this area is the site of the Seabrook Shopping Plaza and other commercial structures along the busy Route 1 commercial strip.

Seabrook Depot centered on Railroad Avenue and was the site of a railroad depot, a store, several shore factories, a school and a small residential neighborhood. There are no significant remaining structures in this area. Smithtown village was an important area in Seabrook history and was the major intersection for street car lines as well as Lafayette Road and Walton Avenue. The area contains a number of historic structures and resources including a church, two cemeteries, residences and commercial buildings. Its center has now been altered by changes to Route 1 that was reconfigured for a traffic circle. South Seabrook was a village of small residences and two major shoe factories that developed during the 1800's as a fishing center and later as a shoemaking area.

There are few if any historic resources that remain from the 17th century. One such resource is an existing landmark known as Bound Rock at the northern end of Seabrook Beach established in 1638. It marked the boundary between Seabrook and Hampton and was the origin of an east-west line known as the Shapleigh Line (established in 1657). The Captain Joshua Janvrin House is said to date to this period, but architecturally it seems to be from a later period. According to the NH DOT Historical Survey of Seabrook done in 1995, this structure appears to have characteristics of the Federal period with a two-story form that includes a hip roof and twin chimneys.

The following discussion of Seabrook's remaining historic buildings and structures is based primarily on personal communication and field observation with members of the Historical Society of Seabrook in particular Evelyn Fowler and Eric Small, as well as property records from the Town of Seabrook's assessor records and an Architectural Inventory conducted in 1995 for Lafayette Road and other portions of Seabrook by Lynn Munroe for the NHDOT. Almost all of the buildings described are from the 18th and

19th centuries. All of the documented historic resources are identified on attached **Map 10, Historic Resources**.

Historic Buildings

Joshua Janvrin House—HB 1

Located on Pine Street, the Janvrin house was constructed in about 1763 as a large center chimney 2 ½ story structure. The post and beam frame is supported by a granite block foundation. A large brick fireplace and chimney dominate the center of the house. A kitchen wing extends from the west side of the house and was probably added in about 1840. An attached barn was added later. It also has a large brick stove chimney on the ridge. The Janvrin family owned and occupied this house for many generations up into the 20th century. Based on an historic resources assessment performed by NH DOT in 1995 this house was determined to be National Register eligible.

Boyd School—HB 2

Built in 1875, this school is located at the corner of Walton Road and Washington Street. After being used by the American Legion for a number of years after the school closed, it was sold to the Historical Society of Seabrook in 1965.

Dearborn Academy—HB 3

Built in 1853, this large brick structure on Lafayette Road (Route 1) is 2 ½ stories is a 4 x 3 gable block with entrances on each façade. It contains several Italianate features including arch windows on the gable ends and a cupola centered on the ridge. **See Figure 4-1.**



Figure 4-1. Dearborn

Old Parsonage—HB 3A Academy

Further north on Lafayette Road is the old Parsonage, a two-story structure with a hip roof, twin fireplace chimneys, central hall and entry. An Italianate period door hood and one-story porch on the south elevation were added later.

Stone House—HB 4

This building was the ell of a larger stone house built in 1845 on Lafayette Road as the residence of Dr. John Dearborn and later served as a boarding house for students at the adjacent Dearborn Academy. The main block, a 3-story stone structure, was torn down in the late 20th century. **See Figure 4-2.**



Figure 4-2. Stone House

Gove Homestead—HB 5

One of the older existing structures in Seabrook, this home is located on New Zealand Road in western Seabrook. It is what is called a “double house” which was originally designed as a half house in approximately 1720 and added on to probably later in the 18th century. The “half-house” form was a popular building style during the 1700’s because it was more affordable than a larger house.

Collins House—HB 6

Located on Walton Road, this 2 ½ story structure has vinyl sided clapboards and a gable roof. Built in approximately 1900 this house has rear ell and shed/garage.

Noyes/Smith House—HB 7

Built prior to 1800 this two-story clapboard structure on Walton Road extends to a garage, barn and shed.

Greeley House—HB 8

Built in approximately 1850, this small 2-story colonial located on Walton Road has a gable roof with a center chimney and vinyl sided clapboards.

Beckman House—HB 9

Located on Farm Lane, this 2 ½ story house has a gable roof with a center chimney with vinyl-sided clapboards. It also has an enclosed side porch and ell off the front of the house.

Locke House—HB 10

Built in approximately 1740, this 2 1/2 story colonial is located on Pine Street. It is sheathed in clapboards and has a center chimney with an enclosed side porch.

Brown Memorial Library—HB 12

The Brown Memorial Library was built in 1893 and moved to the town's municipal complex adjoining the current library on Liberty Lane. **See Figure 4-3.** The shingled building measures 25' x 42' and includes a turret like bay-window, a porch and interior balcony. The interior includes a waiting room off the entrance, a very large reading room, a balcony and stacks separated by a low railing. Much of the interior is composed of dark wood paneling including the cathedral ceiling. This building is the first in Seabrook to be listed on the State Register of Historic Places.



Figure4-3. Brown Memorial Library

The library was built by David Pingree in memory of his cousin, Sewell Brown. Mr. Brown, a former resident of Seabrook, was living in Salem Massachusetts at the time of his death. He had heard of a group known as the Reading Room Circle that was originally inspired by a Mrs. C.P. Jackson and several other Seabrook women. It started in 1890 when Jackson inaugurated a public reading room in her home. Mr. Sewell donated \$100 toward a building fund and 175 volumes to this group prior to his death.

Tom Boyd Homestead—HB 13

Built in the 1850's, this 1 ½ story home located on Walton Road has a center chimney and center entrance with an attached ell/apartment that mimics the design of the main house. It also has a center chimney. Both structures are sheathed in clapboard siding.

Amos Felch Homestead—HB 14

This 2 ½ story house on Farm Lane was built in about 1800. It has an off-center chimney, pitched roof and a front entry offset to the left side of the house.

Colcord House—HB 15

Considered one of the most fashionable 19th century residences, the Dr. Colcord House on Walton Road is a 2 ½ story sidehall-style Italianate structure. It features a two-story bay window, a projecting side bay and windows with clipped corners in the gables.

Webster Brown House—HB 16

Built in approximately 1850, this 1 ½ story cape is located on Dearborn Avenue. It has a center chimney and center entry.

Thomas Fowler Homestead—HB 17

This large colonial located on Washington Street was built in approximately 1775. It has a gable roof with a center chimney and vinyl sided clapboards

Joe Perkins Farm—HB 18

This two-story sidehall structure on Walton Road has pitched roof with center chimney and side entrance. The front facade is dominated by eight double-sash windows.

Nathaniel Weare Homestead—HB19

This homestead on Fogg Lane was the residence of the Honorable Nathaniel Weare who was a prominent individual in early New Hampshire. He was a Representative of the people before the King of England, a representative in the colonial Assembly in 1695 and 1696, a member of the Council from 1692 to 1715 and Chief Justice of the Superior Court from 1694 to 1696. This house is a 2 ½ story structure is sheathed in clapboards and is characterized by a double door front entry.

Abraham Chase House—HB 20

Built in approximately 1832 on Lafayette Road, this house reflects a transition between the Federal and Greek revival periods. The house is notable for its ornate tall entry, consisting of ¾ sidelights and semi-elliptical fan framed by pilasters and entablature extending to the sills of the second-story. It currently houses Seacoast Furniture.

Robert Dow House—HB 21

Located on South Main Street, this 1800 structure is a 2-story Greek revival with a gable roof and chimney. Its front entry faces the side yard. It is sheathed in clapboards with one story corner pilasters.

Guy & Bernice Chase House—HB 22

Built in approximately 1780 this 2 story colonial is located on Walton Road. It has a center chimney and is sheathed on vinyl sided clapboards. There is an open side porch with a shed/garage to the rear.

Walton House—HB 23

This colonial house located on Walton Road was built in about 1790 with a gable roof and center chimney. It is sheathed in clapboards with a front entry that is left of center

Beckman House—HB 24

Built in approximately 1750, this 2-story colonial is located on Causeway Street. It has a gable roof and is sheathed in clapboards. There is also a 2-story barn with gambrel roof built recently at the rear of the house.

Brown House—HB 25

This 2 1/2 story colonial home is located on Walton Street and has a gable roof with chimney. It has vinyl sided clapboards with an enclosed front porch across the front of the house.

David Boyd House—HB 26

Located on Centennial Avenue this 2-story colonial house was built in approximately 1750. It has a gable roof with chimney and a center front entry that faces the side yard.

Washington Eaton House—HB 27

Built in approximately 1876 this 2-story New Englander on Walton Road has a gable roof with center chimney and a side ell. Sheathed in clapboards, there is a one-story open porch at the front entry.

Edwin Eaton House—HB 28

This 2-story colonial on Walton Road was built in approximately 1800. It has a gable roof and is sheathed in clapboards. There is an attached rear ell/garage.

Reverend Charles Coney House—HB 29

This 2-story colonial house was built in approximately 1775. It is sheathed in clapboards and has a side chimney with an adjacent garage/shed.

Sanborn School—HB 30

One of the few remaining historical structures on Lafayette Road, this 2 1/2 story clapboard structure was constructed in 1889. It is National Register Eligible as a “good example of one type of a 19th century local public school building and as a reflection of the town’s support of public education”. **See Figure4-4.**



Figure 4-4. Sanborn School

True Verdani House—HB 31

Built about 1700 this colonial home is located on True Road near the South Hampton border. It has a center chimney and is sheathed in clapboards.

Chase-Woodburn House—HB 32

This colonial home was built in approximately 1850 on Stard Road. It has a gable roof with two chimneys and has a vinyl clapboard exterior. The front facade is characterized by an ornate center entry door with four windows on the first floor and five on the second.

John Weare House—HB 33

Built in approximately 1850, this 2-story house Weare Road has a gable roof and center chimney that is accented by a shed dormer on the second story. The exterior is clapboard construction with a small ell at the rear that attaches to a 1 1/2 story barn/garage.

Fogg-Fellows House—HB 34

This 2-story home on Fogg's Corner was built in approximately 1850 and has a gable roof and center chimney. It is sheathed in vinyl side clapboards.

David Perkins House—HB 35

This modest 1 ½ story wood frame house on Farm Lane has a gable roof and center chimney. Built in approximately 1880, it has clapboard exterior siding.

Buswell House—HB 36

Built just prior to 1900 this 1 ½ story house on Railroad Avenue is unique to Seabrook in that it has mansard roof with several dormers. There is a small ell addition to one side and an adjacent garage.

John Gove House—HB 37

Built in approximately 1700 this 2-story colonial on New Zealand Road has a gable roof and center chimney. The exterior siding is vinyl. There is a small ell off the rear of the house.

Dow-Humes House—HB 38

Located on Rocks Road, this colonial was built in approximately 1780. Features included a gable roof and clapboard siding. Also contained on the property is a 1-story barn.

Brown-Felch House—HB 39

Built in approximately 1850, this 2-story colonial on Dearborn Avenue has a gable roof and side chimney. There is a 2-story ell extending off the right side on the rear. The exterior is sheathed in vinyl clapboard siding.

Jacob Dow House—HB 40

This modest 2-story home is located on Washington Street and was built approximately 1890. It is sided in wood shingles and contains an enclosed side porch and has a 1 ½ story barn garage just to the rear of the house.

Ellsworth Brown House—HB 41

Built in approximately 1850, this one story bungalow on Gove Road has a gable roof and is sided in vinyl clapboards.

Green House—HB 42

This 2-story colonial on Stard Road was built in approximately 1810. It is characterized by a gable roof, center chimney and a center entry with a large overhang supported by stone posts and columns.

Seabrook Beach

There were a number of beach cottages constructed during the late 19th and early 20th century. Many of these have not survived, are in disrepair or are not distinguished by architectural style or historical value. Of those that remain there is one example of an older cottage at



Figure 4-5. Beach Cottage

338 Atlantic Avenue that was constructed in approximately 1900. This 2-story duplex is a gambrel-style and is constructed of wood shingles with a front porch that extends the length of the building. **See Figure 4-5.**

Churches

Rand Memorial Church—CH1

The Congregational Society of South Seabrook was organized by Reverend William Rand. The first church was originally built in 1868. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1905 as a Queen Anne period building and finally completed in 1925. It consists of a gable front main block with a square corner tower topped by a pointed hip roof.

Trinity United Church (Smithtown Methodist Meeting House)—CH2

Constructed in 1836.

Old South Meeting House CH—4

Constructed in 1764 by the Presbyterian Society, the original building was part of Hampton Falls. **See Figure 4-6.** This 2 ½ story wooden structure reflects the Greek revival style in ornamentation (trim, full-length sidelights, pilasters and full entablature). Through the efforts of the Society, Seabrook was set off from Hampton Falls in 1768. The church was extensively remodeled in 1858 leaving it in its current appearance. The original structure was two stories with its gable roof oriented laterally to the road. This church was used by a place of worship for the following:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| • Presbyterian Society of Seabrook | 1764-1785 |
| • Congregational Society of Seabrook | 1799-1822 |
| • Baptist Society of Seabrook & Hampton Falls | 1828-1834 |
| • Evangelical Congregational Society of Seabrook | 1843-1836 |
| • First Baptist Society of Seabrook | 1859-1952 |
| • Federated Church of Seabrook | 1952-1967 |
- House**



Figure 4-6. South Meeting

Seabrook's first town meeting was held in this building on June 27, 1768. All other town meetings were held here until 1954 except for 1858. The bell in the steeple was first rung in 1861 when Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office for the Presidency. Based on an historic resources assessment performed by NH DOT in 1995 this meeting house was determined to be National Register eligible.

Advent Christian Church (Four Corners Church)—CH5

The Advent Christian Church was organized with about 40 members. The current church was built about 1869 on Farm Lane with simple gable front facade which includes paired entries.

Cemeteries & Graveyards

Wildwood Cemetery—C1

Hillside and Methodist Cemeteries—C2

Two adjacent cemeteries located on Lafayette Road.

Gove Graveyard—C3

This small family cemetery, located on Lafayette Road, is at the southern edge of the Edward Gove House property. It is a square plot close to the road. Granite fence posts, some of which have fallen, define the former fence line. Only a cast iron gate of that fence remains. There are four headstones which are graves of members of the David Gove family who lived north of the cemetery. Based on an historic resources assessment performed by NH DOT in 1995 this site was determined to be National Register eligible.

Janvrin Family Graveyard—C4

Located on Pine Street

Chevy Chase Graveyard—C5

Johnson Graveyard—C6

Wright's Island Graveyard—C7

Located off South Main Street and Route 286.

Elmwood Cemetery—C8

Located on Lafayette Road in north Seabrook. **See Figure 4-7.**



Figure 4-7. Elmwood Cemetery

Mills/Dams

Robbins Walton Mill Dam—M1

Located in the upper tidal portion of Tide Mill Creek

Hamel Dam & Mill Pond—M2

Located on Cains Brook off Walton Road

Weare's Mill/Dam—M3

Located on the border with Hampton Falls.

Folly Mill—M4

Site located on Folly Mill Road.

Docks

Farm Lane Dock—D1

Located at the eastern end of Farm Lane at the head of canal constructed from Tide Mill Creek. **See Figure 4-8.**



Figure4- 8. Farm Lane Dock

Southers Dock—D2

Located at the head of tidal creek and canal at the eastern end of South Main Street at Route 286.

Other docks include Rocks Road (D3), River Street Dock (D4) and Cross Beach Dock (D5).

Other Historic Features

Bound Rock

This rock marks the eastern boundary point between Hampton and Seabrook and was established in 1638. The Shapleigh Line starts at this bound and runs westward to Bachiler's Bound in the former Seabrook Village.

Common Island

The first piece of marshland due west of Bound Rock, Common Island is still held in common by the people of Seabrook. The thatch that grew on the island was auctioned off at every town meeting from 1780 to 1929. The proceeds were often sufficient to support the town schools.

Colonial Road

This road was the main highway on Seabrook Beach in colonial days. All the marshland to the east was kept as a common for the fishermen and all the marshland to the west was kept as a common for the farmers, for haying.

Shapleigh Line Marker

In 1657 the Shapleigh line was established running east-west through the present town of Seabrook temporarily establishing the boundary between Hampton and Salisbury, Massachusetts. This marker on Lafayette Road in the northern portion of Seabrook identifies that location of that line. Subsequently the boundary between New Hampshire and Massachusetts was established along the current southern boundary of Seabrook.

Granite Block Arch Culvert

This historic structure was constructed with the development of the railroad line and is located at the east end of Cains Mill Pond. **See Figure 4-9.** Based on the history of the Eastern Railroad extension from Newburyport to Portsmouth, it is likely that this culvert was built around 1840. The culvert arch is faced with drafted edge peen-hammered dressed granite blocks. The interior of the arch culvert is much rougher granite rubble construction. This historic granite arch culvert is a pointed gothic style arch and is faced with high quality granite stonework.



Figure 4-9. Arch Culvert

Summary and Observations

Of the remaining historic resources in Seabrook a number retain relatively high historic values. Several of the churches—Old South Meeting House, Rand Memorial Church and Methodist Meeting House—are very well preserved. Residences from all periods are relatively intact including early farmhouses. Few barns or other agricultural buildings are standing.

The greatest loss in historical value has occurred along the Lafayette Road/Route 1 corridor. Many structures have been lost and some of the remaining ones have been converted to commercial uses resulting in a loss of historical integrity. Few historic commercial buildings remain, victims of the commercial development related to increasing automobile traffic. As an early historic roadway, Route 1 retains little of its historic character. There is little sense of cohesiveness in the former village areas of Seabrook Village or Smithtown. While areas such as South Seabrook retain a somewhat greater feeling of cohesiveness, all have lost important historic buildings, leaving small areas of buildings that retain some degree of historical integrity. The greatest concentration of historic buildings is in the Walton Road area where it intersects with Centennial Road and Washington Road just east of the former Smithtown.

The town should commit to further efforts to protect and conserve remaining historical buildings and resources. The first step should be a thorough inventory of existing resources perhaps with assistance through the Certified Local Government Program of the NH Division of Historic Resources. Additional efforts might include:

- Undertake educational outreach efforts to building owners including encouraging historic preservation;
- Consider establishing a Heritage Commission to advise the Planning Board on other community groups relative to the value of the town's historical, archaeological and cultural resources;
- Encourage property owners to place their properties on the State and/or National Register of Historic Places;
- Consider establishing a National Register District in the Walton Road Area near the intersections with Washington Street and Centennial Avenue; and
- Establish a heritage trail that would include key historic markers and sites for both full-time and seasonal residents.

Action Plan

Vision Goal for Historic Resources

Preserve and protect out historic and natural resources and beach/estuarine environment in balance with recreational, economic, business and employment opportunities for its citizens.

Objective 1: Protect and preserve Seabrook's physical and structural historic and cultural resources.

Actions

HR1.1: Consider establishing a Heritage Commission under the provisions of RSA 674:44 that can advise the Planning Board or other community boards relative to the value of the town's heritage (historical, archaeological, and cultural) resources.

HR1.2: Prepare a comprehensive historic resources inventory—both written and photographic—of all historic sites and buildings in the Town of Seabrook that builds upon the organization and information of this Chapter. From this inventory, specific sites can be further studied for eligibility to be listed on either the State or National Historic Registers.

At present, Seabrook has an historic library and archive of its history and historical/cultural assets. Except for the documentation done for the NH DOT Historic Resources Assessment done for the Route 1 Corridor, much of this information is contained in various town histories or publications. It would be helpful to organize and update this information into a document of resources that describes, locates and maps each of the town's historic assets, such as by historic homes, churches, schools, cemeteries and mill sites.

HR 1.3: Develop a long term action plan to maintain and protect the town's historical resources.

HR 1.4: Encourage more property owners to place their properties on the National and or State Register of Historic Places.

HR 1.5: Consider establishing a National Register District in the Walton Road Area near the intersections with Washington Road and Centennial Avenue.

Objective 2: Preserve and enhance the scenic and historic quality of Seabrook's landscape.

Actions

HR2.1: Consider adopting town roads, or road segments, for inclusion in a scenic road inventory consistent with RSA 231.57. An example might be the road segment of Causeway Street that looks out over Mill Creek and the salt marsh.

HR 2.2: Work with other groups—public and private—to establish historic road and river programs that involve Seabrook and surrounding communities. Such programs might include specific designations such as Historic Byways or an American Heritage River, or involve tours and trips along such historic corridors.

HR 2.3: Manage the gateways into town, such as Route 107 and Route 1 north and south, to protect their historic character and also ensure that new development is consistent with this character.

- HR 2.4: Work with the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources and the Department of Transportation to place historical markers to heighten awareness of historic resources

Objective 3: Maintain historic educational programs that enhance citizen awareness of Seabrook's unique history and the numerous surviving artifacts of its history and culture.

Actions

- HR 3.1: Establish permanent heritage walking trail(s) in the former Smithtown area of Seabrook that would include a map and permanent interpretive markers for specific historic properties.
- HR 3.2: Encourage owners of historic homes and buildings to place plaques of uniform design on the buildings indicating date of known original construction.