

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Commerce Street Historic District

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 10-34, 38, 52, 58, odd #s 59-105, 109-125, 140-142 Commerce St, 7-9 Fisk Ave

City or town: Clinton State: CT County: Middlesex

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| _____ Signature of certifying official/Title: | _____ Date |
| _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government | |

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: _____ **Date** _____

Title : _____ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** _____

4. 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 _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
-

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

59

13

buildings

sites

structures

objects

59

13

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, secondary structure

RELIGION: religious facility, church-related residence

AGRICULTURE: processing

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, secondary structure

RELIGION: religious facility, church-related residence

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL: Georgian

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE: granite, WOOD: weatherboard, shingle, CONCRETE, ASPHALT, BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Commerce Street Historic District is a linear, nearly 22-acre neighborhood of predominantly single-family, wood-frame houses in Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut that is associated with the town's role in 19th-century regional maritime history. A handful of commercial, industrial, and religious properties are mixed in with the residences, serving as a reminder of the neighborhood's pre-zoning roots. The district extends from the town's commercial area on Main Street (US Route 1), along the west side of the Indian River, which is a navigable waterway that empties into Clinton Harbor on Long Island Sound. It is an intact representation of the impact of maritime activities on the town's development and encompasses a total of 72 resources, consisting of 59 contributing and 13 non-contributing buildings (excluding 5 properties or portions of properties without buildings).¹ Contributing properties date from ca. 1800 through ca. 1930. Well-preserved, modest domestic examples of the Cape Cod, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival styles are represented. Limited construction dating outside of the

¹ These numbers are based on a conservative dating of outbuildings, which were dated using Sanborn maps and the 1934 Fairchild aerial photograph of the district.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

period of significance has occurred within the district. The district retains its architectural integrity and remains a cohesive neighborhood illustrative of the growth patterns in the community.

Setting

The district is located in the southern portion of Clinton, a town of nearly 18 square miles located near the center point of Connecticut's coastline (Figure 1). The town is served by Tri-Town commuter bus and Shore Line East rail services, as well as Interstate 95. The district is linear, following Commerce Street on the west bank of the Indian River from Long Island Sound to just south of Main Street/Route 1, traditionally the town's commercial center. It includes Commerce Street from the waterfront to the rear of those properties facing Main Street (Figure 2). At the south end of the district is Clinton Harbor, fed by the Indian, Hammock, and Hamonasset Rivers. The proximity of the harbor, the Indian River (navigable to just north of the northern end of the district), and four marinas within or adjacent to the district contribute to the area's coastal character.

The district is relatively flat, with open land dotted with trees. Wetlands are located to the south and east, along the coastline and the river. With a few exceptions, buildings sit close to the road. Sidewalks are present along the east side of Commerce Street from Main Street/Route 1 to just south of 18 Commerce Street and on the west side of the road south to Shell Road. The properties are predominantly residential, except for a few commercial properties, and the Methodist Church at the north end of Commerce Street.

Properties in the area vary widely in size, with some along the east side of Commerce Street running from the road all the way to the Indian River. On the west side of Commerce Street, the lots are more uniform in size, roughly splitting the block bounded by Commerce Street, Grove Street, Leffingwell Road, and Shell Road in half. Because this block is trapezoidal, the lots become somewhat shallower from the wider end of the block to the narrower one (i.e., from north to south). Lot sizes in the district range from 0.12 acres (67 Commerce Street) to 2.08 acres (Fisk Avenue.). Most are between 0.2 and 0.6 acres.

Subdivisions on Indian, Mohawk, and Iroquois Drives, which are on the east side of the southern end of Commerce Street, were laid out in the late 1950s and almost completely developed by 1970. These developments are outside of the district and occupy six acres acquired by English settlers from the Hammonasset people in 1663.²

Architectural Character

The district is a heterogenous neighborhood with a mix of historic 19th- and early 20th-century houses interspersed with commercial properties and a church. With the exception of the church, the buildings are of similar scale and materials, one or two stories tall, and the majority are wood-framed. Most have asphalt-clad, moderately pitched gable roofs and many have stone, brick, or concrete foundations visible several feet above grade. Buildings are clad in a variety of materials, with wood siding, wood shingles, and synthetic clapboards being the most common materials. As

² *History of Middlesex County*, pp.417-418.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

the period of significance spans more than a century, several historically popular styles are present, representing the periods of growth in the district's life.

Properties included within the district are listed in the table below. Buildings are categorized as Contributing (noted as C in the table) if they support the reasons the district is historically significant and qualifies for National Register listing. Buildings categorized as Non-Contributing (noted as NC in the table) are within the district boundaries, but do not add to the district's historical significance. All of the Non-Contributing buildings listed below were either constructed after the time period during which the district gained significance or have been substantially altered.³ The district also includes 28 outbuildings, predominantly garages along with several sheds, barns, and a boathouse.

The earliest buildings in the district are four Cape Cod houses. 118 Commerce Street (Capt. A.C. Pelton, ca. 1800, Photograph 1) and 61 Commerce Street (S. Buell House, ca. 1823), embody the general characteristics for a Cape Cod house: a one-story, five-bay, side-gable building with central entry and chimney. 61 Commerce Street retains this massing and its presence on the street. Alterations include the addition of a full-width front porch, siding, and changes to the front windows. Similarly, 7-9 Fisk Avenue (ca. 1840) has the general form of this type with limited elements from specific periods. 59 Commerce Street (H.L. Dart House, ca. 1800) is a five-bay, side-gable building with a symmetrical façade (Photograph 3). It is, in many ways, a Cape-type building with a Greek Revival door surround.

A total of 13 Greek Revival buildings on Commerce Street are located in the district. These include numbers 10 (Photograph 2, 1863), 11 (1846); 18 (1849); 22 (1840); 24 (1860), 28 (1846), 32 (ca.1860); 81 (A.L. Bushnell House, 1840), 91 (1850), 97 (1840) 101 (A.J. Hurd House, 1860), 110 (1870), and 122 (H. Bacon House, 1850). Each building is three bays wide, has a low-pitched front gable roof with a decorative window in the gable, and a side hall plan. The level of elaboration on the buildings varies. The most elaborate ones have corner pilasters, frieze boards, elaborate door surrounds, large ground floor windows, and multi-light, horizontal windows in gables (Photograph 4). Simpler buildings have a few or only a single one of these elements. Six of the houses also combine Greek Revival elements with Italianate features. The most elaborate of these is 101 Commerce Street, which has four fluted columns with Corinthian capitals (inspired by the Tower of the Winds in Athens) supporting a full-width front porch on a nearly cubic building with a deeply overhanging, low-pitched hipped roof (Photograph 5). Elsewhere the Italianate influence is predominantly visible in the use of round-headed gable windows or deeply overhanging roofs (Photograph 6).

Queen Anne-style houses are the second most common in the district, with eight examples: 21 Commerce Street (1866); 34 Commerce Street (1920), 71 Commerce Street (J. Pelton house, 1870); 73 Commerce Street (1880); 77 Commerce Street (1900); 85 Commerce Street (1924); 105 Commerce Street (1912); and 119 Commerce Street (1900). Like many of the examples of Greek Revival-style, these building are often simplified versions of the high-style examples of Queen

³ The Fairchild aerial photo of the area and Sanborn maps were used to help date buildings, especially the outbuildings.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

Name of Property

Anne-style buildings. 21 Commerce Street has many of the features of the style, with a cross-gable roof, one- and two-story bay windows, and an elaborate portico (Photograph 7). Similarly, 105 Commerce Street has a cross-gable roof, wrap-around porch, two-story bay windows, square tower, and imbricated shingles (Photograph 8). The other examples have fewer features; some of them include full-width or wrap-around porches, often with chamfered posts.

The district also includes three simple Colonial Revival-style houses: 27 Commerce (Photograph 9, 1923); 67 Commerce (1930); and 89 Commerce (1929). Both 27 Commerce Street and 89 Commerce Street are one-story Dutch Colonial Revival houses with side-gable, dormered gambrel roofs. 67 Commerce Street is a one-story side-gable roofed building with peaked-roof dormers; it appears to be modeled on a Cape-type house.

113 Commerce Street (Photograph 10, 1910) is the district's lone Bungalow/Craftsman house. It has a recessed, full-width porch under a low-pitched roof with a nearly full-width shed dormer.

The district includes 28 outbuildings: garages, sheds, barns, and a boathouse. These buildings reflect their utilitarian nature, with very few decorative elements. Outbuildings constructed during the period of significance were determined to contribute to the district.

The largest building in the district is the Clinton United Methodist Church (Photograph 11, 1855). While impressive, the building is eclectic in character, with elements of the Greek Revival, Italianate, and Colonial Revival styles. The current steeple is a replacement for the original, which was removed from the building in 1888 due to safety concerns.⁴

Four commercial or formerly commercial buildings are located within the district: 15 Commerce Street (Photograph 12, ca. 1840), 52 Commerce Street (ca. 1880), 58 Commerce Street (1900), and 142 Commerce Street (Lobster Landing, by 1920). All four are vernacular buildings with pitched roofs. 15 Commerce Street is identified in the 1874 Beers atlas as the location of Asa Bushnell's cabinet shop. It later appears in the Sanborn maps as a furniture repair shop, an undertaker's shop, and an office (Figure 1). By 1924 it was depicted as a dwelling. 52 and 58 Commerce Street are currently small boat marinas as well as offices/residences. 58 Commerce Street is depicted in the 1924 and 1941 Sanborn maps as having a workshop at the rear of the property. 52 Commerce Street appears to have become a marina in more recent years, a boathouse that was shown in the 1924 and 1941 Sanborn maps remains in place on the property. 142 Commerce Street is built on pilings over the water (Photograph 13). It is visible in a historic photo from ca. 1920 (Figure 2). It is in the general location of the oyster houses and dock shown in the 1859 and 1874 maps and provides a tangible connection to the extractive industries practiced by many of the district's residents.

⁴ Adler, 31.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

Commerce Street Historic District Data Sheet

| Map No. | Map/Block/Lot (Parcel ID) | Street No. | Street Name | Year Built | Name | Description | C/NC | Photo No. |
|---------|---------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------|-----------|
| 1. | 45/34/5 (2622) | 11 | Commerce | 1846 | | Greek Revival | C | |
| 2. | 45/34/5A (2623) | | | n/a | | Vacant land | n/a | |
| 3. | 56/63/10 (3555) | 10 | Commerce | 1855 | | Greek Revival Parsonage | C | 2, 11 |
| 4. | | | | 1863 | | Church | C | |
| 5. | 45/34/6 (2624) | 15 | Commerce | Ca. 1840 | | Vernacular/Commercial | C | 12 |
| 6. | 56/63/11 (3556) | 18 | Commerce | 1848 | | Greek Revival | C | 14 |
| 7. | 45/34/8 (2626) | 21 | Commerce | 1866 | Capt. E.A. Dibble | Queen Anne | C | 7 |
| 8. | 56/63/13 (3559) | 22 | Commerce | 1840 | | Greek Revival | C | 14 |
| | | | | Early 20 th century | | Garage | NC | |
| 9. | 56/63/13-2 (130640) | 22R | Commerce | n/a | | (Front of lot included in boundary) | n/a | |
| 10. | 56/63/14 (3561) | 24 | Commerce | 1860 | | Greek Revival | C | 4 |
| 11. | 45/34/9 (2627) | 27 | Commerce | 1923 | | Vernacular/Colonial Revival | C | 9 |
| | | | | Early 20 th century | | Garage | C | |
| 12. | 56/63/15 (3562) | 28 | Commerce | 1846 | | Greek Revival/Italianate | C | |
| | | | | Late 20 th century | | Garage | NC | |
| 13. | 45/34/10-1 (130741) | 31 | Commerce | 2020 | | Vernacular/Ranch | NC | |
| | | | | 2020 | | Garage | NC | |
| 14. | 45/34/10 (2587) | 33 | Commerce | 1880 | William Buell | Vernacular | C | |
| 15. | 56/63/16 (3563) | 32 | Commerce | Ca. 1860 | Capt. William Vail | Greek Revival/Italianate | C | |
| | | | | Early 20 th century | | Garage | C | |
| 16. | 56/63/17 | 34 | Commerce | 1860 | | Queen Anne | C | |

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

| Map No. | Map/Block/Lot (Parcel ID) | Street No. | Street Name | Year Built | Name | Description | C/NC | Photo No. |
|---------|---------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------|-----------|
| | (3564) | | | Early 20 th century | | Garage | C | |
| 17. | 56/63/18 (3566) | 38 | Commerce | 1870 | | Italianate (modernized) | C | |
| | | | | Post-1934 | | Garage | NC | |
| 18. | 56/63/19 (3567) | | | n/a | | Vacant land | n/a | |
| 19. | 56/63/20/MO4 0700 (3571) | 52 | Commerce | 1850 | | Vernacular | C | |
| | | | | By 1924 | | Boathouse | C | |
| | | | | Early 20 th century | | Shed | C | |
| 20. | 56/63/21 (3573) | 58 | Commerce | 1900 | | Vernacular | C | |
| | | | | By 1924 | | Shed | C | |
| | | | | By 1924 | | Shed | C | |
| | | | | By 1924 | | Shed | C | |
| | | | | Late 20 th century | | Shed | NC | |
| 21. | 45/35/9 (2672) | 59 | Commerce | 1800 | H.L. Dart | Cape | C | 3 |
| | | | | Early 20 th century | | Garage | C | |
| 22. | 45/35/10 (2629) | 61 | Commerce | 1823 | S. Buell | Vernacular/Cape | C | |
| 23. | 45/35/11 | 63 | Commerce | n/a | | (Front of lot included in boundary) | n/a | |
| 24. | 45/35/12 (2631) | 65 | Commerce | 1955 | | Vernacular/Cape | NC | |
| 25. | 45/35/13 (2632) | 67 | Commerce | 1930 | | Colonial Revival | C | |
| 26. | 45/35/14 (2633) | 71 | Commerce | 1870 | J. Pelton | Queen Anne | C | |
| | | | | By 1924 | | Garage | C | |
| 27. | 45/35/15 (2634) | 73 | Commerce | 1880 | | Vernacular/Queen Anne | C | |
| | | | | By 1924 | | Garage/Carriage barn | C | |
| 28. | 45/35/16 (2635) | 77 | Commerce | 1900 | | Vernacular/Queen Anne | C | |
| | | | | Late 20 th century | | Garage | NC | |
| 29. | 45/35/17 (2636) | 81 | Commerce | c.1840 | A.L. Bushnell | Greek Revival | C | |
| | | | | By 1924 | | Garage | C | |
| 30. | 45/35/18 (2637) | 85 | Commerce | 1924 | | Vernacular/Queen Anne | C | |

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

| Map No. | Map/Block/Lot (Parcel ID) | Street No. | Street Name | Year Built | Name | Description | C/NC | Photo No. |
|---------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------|-----------|
| | | | | 1924 | | Garage | C | |
| 31. | 45/35/19 (2638) | 89 | Commerce | 1929 | | Colonial Revival | C | |
| 32. | 45/35/20 (2640) | 91 | Commerce | 1850 | | Italianate | C | 6 |
| | | | | By 1924 | | Garage | C | |
| 33. | 45/35/21 (2641) | 97 | Commerce | 1840 | | Greek Revival | C | |
| | | | | Early 20 th century | | Barn | C | |
| | | | | Early 20 th century | | Garage | C | |
| 34. | 45/35/22 (2642) | 101 | Commerce | 1860 | A.J. Hurd | Greek Revival/ Italianate | C | 5 |
| | | | | 1912 | | Queen Anne | C | 8 |
| 35. | 45/35/23 (2643) | 105 | Commerce | Early 20 th Century | | Barn (perhaps moved and expanded) | C | |
| 36. | 45/35/24 (2644) | 109 | Commerce | 1910 | | Vernacular/ Cape | C | |
| 37. | 56/63/71 (3625) | 110 | Commerce | 1875 | | Vernacular/ Italianate | C | |
| 38. | 45/35/25 (2645) | 113 | Commerce | 1910 | | Craftsman | C | 10 |
| | | | | Early 20 th Century | | Garage | C | |
| 39. | 57/ 64/ 72/ M038770/ (3706) | 114 | Commerce | ca. 1860 | | Vernacular/ Italianate porch | C | |
| 40. | 57/64/73 (3717) | 118 | Commerce | 1800 | Capt. A.C. Pelton | Cape | C | 1 |
| | | | | Early 20 th Century | | Garage | C | |
| | | | | 1900 | | Vernacular/ Queen Anne | C | |
| 41. | 45/35/26 (2646) | 119 | Commerce | Early 20 th Century | | Garage | C | |
| | | | | 1850 | H. Bacon | Greek Revival/ Italianate | C | |
| 42. | 57/64/74 No PID | 122 | Commerce | Early 20 th Century | | Garage | C | |
| 43. | 46/36/2/K030 780/ (2780) | 123 | Commerce | 1984 | | Contemporary | NC | |
| 44. | 46/ 36/ 2/ R049320/ (2781) | 125 | Commerce | 1984 | | Contemporary | NC | |

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

| Map No. | Map/Block/Lot (Parcel ID) | Street No. | Street Name | Year Built | Name | Description | C/NC | Photo No. |
|---------|---------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--|------|-----------|
| 45. | 46/36/4 (2784) | | | n/a | | Vacant land | n/a | |
| 46. | 46A/64/83A (2808) | 142 | Commerce | By 1920 | Lobster Landing | Vernacular – seafood shack | C | 13 |
| | | | | Mid-20 th century | | Vernacular – wood-framed building w/seasonal tents | NC | |
| 47. | 57/64/75 (3719) | 7-9 | Fiske | Ca.1840 | | Cape Cod House | C | |
| | | | | Mid-20 th century | | Vernacular | NC | |
| | | | | Mid-20 th century | | Garage | NC | |

Integrity

The district remains a relatively uninterrupted historic streetscape at the edge of the Indian River and the Clinton Harbor. None of the buildings have been relocated and each retains its historic relationship with the street, so the district has maintained its setting and location. Growth has generally been additive, with new buildings filling the interstices among already existing properties, preserving the feeling of the district. Construction within the district after the period of significance has been limited. The development to the east of Commerce Street, with Indian Drive, Mohawk Drive, and Iroquois Drive, has been excluded from the district because of its concentration of later houses. The intact historic architecture and spatial layout demonstrate its growth as a 19th-century neighborhood. Properties, including houses and outbuildings, commercial properties, and an ecclesiastical complex, from several architectural eras are identifiable through the retention of their original design, volume, and ornament. Most buildings retain the majority of their historic materials. Although replacement siding and windows are not uncommon, the buildings retain their design and evidence of the workmanship involved in their construction.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MARITIME HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

ca. 1800-1930

Significant Dates

ca. 1814 -- road created

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

None known

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Commerce Street Historic District meets National Register Criteria A and C at the local level in the categories of Maritime History and Architecture. Under Criterion A, this compact neighborhood illustrates the town's development as a hub for maritime industries: shipbuilding, shipping, and extractive industries. These are represented by the 19th-century houses of regional ship captains, sailors, fishermen, oystermen, and lobstermen. Under Criterion C, the district is significant for its collection of historic buildings designed in a variety of popular architectural styles, many of which are modest in scale and stylistic expression in comparison to nearby examples. The period of significance extends from ca. 1800, the date of the construction of the earliest house in the district, to 1930, the year that the last 19th-century maritime worker appeared in the federal census.⁵

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Maritime History

The district is locally significant in the category of Maritime History because of its association with shipbuilding, shipping, and extractive industries. The waters of Long Island Sound and the Indian River have long been important in Killingworth (the town from which Clinton seceded in 1838). As noted by Stevens in his book on maritime Clinton:

It was inevitable, that with excellent fishing grounds, tidewater rivers and harbors together with nearby unlimited timber growth of oak, pine, chestnut, and spruce that the southern section of Killingworth was destined to become a ship-building town and producer of merchant mariners.⁶

Around 1814, Commerce Street was laid out as Wharf Lane to provide “better access to the shipyards” and presumably to the wharf itself.⁷ The improved access to the water made the road an attractive location for those in maritime industries. From 1840 to 1930, fifty individuals were identified who lived on Commerce Street and worked in a maritime industry.

The period of significance for the district parallels the height of maritime industries in eastern coastal Connecticut. It begins at the height of sail-powered trade, transit, and extractive industries,

⁵ Some of the ideas in this section were explored in the 2011 *Historic Resource Survey of Clinton* (Sexton, 2011).

⁶ Stevens, 7.

⁷ The road was known as Wharf Lane or variations on it until the middle of the 1850s. Two land transfers, one from John D. Leffingwell to William Vail (CLR v. 3, p. 300 August 25, 1854) and a second from William Vail to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Clinton (CLR v.4, p. 53 July 23, 1855), provide some evidence about when the name change took place. The first transfer refers to the property as being located on Wharf Road, while the second refers to the same property as being located on Commerce Street, suggesting that the name change may have taken place in the interval between the two exchanges. For the sake of clarity, the road will be referred to as Commerce Street throughout this document.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

covers the growth and dominance of steam-power, and demonstrates the shrinking of maritime dominance as trains, trucks, and cars rose to prominence in transportation through the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.⁸ The people who lived on Commerce Street contributed to these industries, with residents working on boats used for the transport of passengers and goods (including brownstone from the Connecticut River Valley), shipbuilding, and shell- and fin-fishing.

As early as 1680, the town owned two sloops likely engaged in coastal trading. The first shipbuilder identified in Colonial Killingworth is Robert Carter, who emigrated from Bristol, England in 1700. His shipyard was located on both sides of Route 1.⁹ Beyond that, little is known about the early history of boatbuilding in Clinton. It is known that by the time Clinton separated from Killingworth there were three shipyards on the Indian River. The Hull Shipyard was located on the west bank of the river in the general vicinity of 52 Commerce Street (likely in the district), the Carter Shipyard was located on both sides of what is now Main Street on the east bank of the river, and the third shipyard was located on the east bank of the river closer to its confluence with the harbor.¹⁰ Starting in 1786 more than 200 ships were recorded as being built before the *Mary C. Elliott*, which was launched in 1869 and was the last one built in Clinton.¹¹

Killingworth, and the area around its harbor, also played an important role during the War of 1812. The town was an important center for shipbuilding and shipping on Long Island Sound during the early years of the 19th-century. Victor Mays describes Killingworth at the beginning of the war as follows:

The town economy centered on shipbuilding. Prior to 1812, its shipyards had launched some eighty-two vessels. Five more were constructed in the year the war began. While most Killingworth ships were built for owners in other ports up and down the Atlantic coast, some were locally owned and sailed in both coastal and West Indian Trade.¹²

The town's deep involvement in coastal trade, as well as its shallow harbor (which offered some protection from the large English gunboats enforcing a blockade in Long Island Sound), led to Killingworth and its coastal waters being a target for coastal assaults. Between July 8, 1813, when militia and artillery fired on an armed British launch rowing toward a grounded schooner bound for New York, and July 9, 1814, when Killingworth's militia defended another New York-bound merchant vessel from the British, the town had been "a repeated target" of the enemy.¹³

The federal census Records for 1840, the first year that Clinton was recorded separately from Killingworth (and the first year that the federal census included information about maritime occupations) clearly demonstrates the occupational divisions that were present in Clinton. 268 men were listed with some type of occupation. Of these, 163 (61%) men listed their occupation as farmer or farm laborer, 71 (26%) described themselves as working in manufacturing, and 34 (13%)

⁸ Herzan, "Eastern Coastal Slope" (1997), p. 28.

⁹ Stevens, 7.

¹⁰ Mays, 6 and Stevens, 8.

¹¹ Stevens, 40.

¹² Mays, 5.

¹³ Mays, 8,14, 15.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

were employed in work on the water. In contrast, the ten households that can be identified as likely located on Commerce Street, based on subsequent maps and censuses, included 21 occupants with identified occupations. Of these, six (29%) were employed on the water. In a town dominated by agriculture, Commerce Street was a center for maritime workers.¹⁴

The 1850 census shows a similar concentration of maritime workers along Commerce Street. In this enumeration, sixteen households can be identified as likely located on Commerce Street. Nine of these households (60%) included 20 individuals who are identified as being employed in a maritime industry. This is 69% of the 29 residents who were included in the census with an occupation.¹⁵

The 1859 Walling map of Middlesex County (Figure 3) included inset maps of major towns in the county that provided the names of property owners and the locations of their houses. On Commerce Street, one can see residences from that of John L. Hull at the north end to four houses owned by Pelton family members, the house of Austin Cobb, and the wharf, an oyster house, and a store house at the south end. In all, the 19 houses along the street included 33 working residents, of whom 19 were employed in maritime industries. The map identifies W[illiam] A. Vail (living at 32 Commerce Street)¹⁶, S[amuel] Buell (61 Commerce Street), J[ames] Pelton (71 Commerce Street), A[lfred] Pelton (114 Commerce Street), and W[illiam] N. Pelton (118 Commerce Street) with the title *Capt.*¹⁷ William Vail captained a series of sloops 1817-1859 then commanded two Connecticut River Line steamboats from 1859-1866 before returning to a schooner (1866-1872) and finally ending his career at the helm of a steamboat.¹⁸ The census lists Samuel Buell as a farmer but he had commanded sailing ships from as early as 1824 through at least 1852.¹⁹ James Pelton [Jr.] began his career captaining sailing vessels in 1833 and worked through the 1850s.²⁰ Alfred Pelton captained two of the Portland Brownstoners (which delivered Portland brownstone for construction along the east coast) from 1870-1877; he was previously the master of a schooner from 1854-1860.²¹ William Pelton captained several schooners from 1852-1864. The 1860 federal census adds to this list by identifying other residents who earn their living in some way from the water. Both Washington Buell (33 Commerce Street) and Hiram Dart (59 Commerce Street) worked in shipbuilding. Dart was a block maker and Buell was a caulker. Washington Buell's son, Mortimer, was a mariner. Family connections were not uncommon; Captain Samuel Buell's three sons, Charles, John, and George K., were all mariners. Captain Alfred Pelton's two sons, Alfred and Richard, were also listed as mariners. As was James A. Pelton, the son of Capt. James Pelton. Two sons of cabinetmaker Asa L. Bushnell (81 Commerce), William and Edward, were both listed as mariners. The extractive industries were also represented: Major Andrew Hurd (101 Commerce Street) was listed as an oyster dealer.²² An oyster house was located at the foot of the street. It

¹⁴ Federal Census, 1840.

¹⁵ Federal Census, 1850.

¹⁶ Where the probable location of a residence on a historic map has been identified it will be identified after the first mention of the owner's name in this section.

¹⁷ Walling map.

¹⁸ Stevens, 14, 15, 31.

¹⁹ Stevens, 33, 37, 39, 40.

²⁰ Stevens, 37, 38.

²¹ Stevens, 12, 40.

²² Federal Census, 1860.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

was likely either a culling house, “where oysters were sorted by size and and [prepared to be shipped] in their shells, by the barrel to markets” or a shucking house, where oysters were opened “upon delivery by the oyster boats...[and then] packed in iced wooden kegs for deliver to various markets”.²³ While naturally occurring oysters had been collected in the area since before European settlement, cultivation of oysters in the area did not begin until 1853. The oysters were “sent to Norwich, New London, New York and up the Hudson.”²⁴ Thomas Guilgan [sic] was an oysterman. Guilgan’s location in the census suggests that he may have been living near the oyster house at the foot of the road. Philander Pelton (7-9 Fisk Avenue) was a fisherman.²⁵

As in the 1860 census, the 1870 federal census can be linked with a map to provide a more nuanced understanding of the residents of Commerce Street. Like the 1859 Walling map, the 1874 Beers atlas reveals how closely the residents along Commerce Street were tied to the water for employment (Figure 4). E.A. Dibbell, (21 Commerce Street), W[illia]m Buell, [John P.] Anderson (he owned the property on which 24 Commerce is located but Alfred Davis is shown living in the building), H[iram] L. Dart, S[amuel] Buell, J[ames] Pelton, and A[lfred] C. Pelton are identified in the atlas as Capt. Dibbell was a steamboat captain in Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River during the 1870s and 1880s. John P. Anderson was captain of two brownstoners in the 1870s. The careers of James Pelton and Alfred Pelton are described above. Also as noted above, Samuel Buell worked at times as a captain but also farmed his land. Although Buell is identified as a Captain on the map, the census shows no occupation for him.²⁶ William Vail, previously identified as a captain in the 1859 map was not identified in that way in the 1874 atlas.²⁷ The census documented 16 maritime workers in addition to the seven captains identified in the atlas. Edwin Bradley [28 Commerce Street] worked as a steamboat pilot. John Beckwith and his three sons, Oliver, Martin, and George, are all listed as seamen. So too are James Clark and Captain Alfred Pelton’s son, Alfred. William Bushnell and Halsey Buell were also identified as seamen. Washington Buell was identified as a fisherman, while his son Mortimer was called a boatman. Henry Hull was listed as the owner of a fish market, while Henry Bacon and Andrew Herd were both identified as oyster dealers. Edgar Buell was identified as a boat repairer. Nuance is also added to the information from this census by the inclusion of information about the females in the household beyond their names and ages. The majority of women, if they lived with their own families, were shown as keeping house, at school if they are younger, or at home if they are beyond school age but not in charge of the household. William B. Pierce, who lived at 7-9 Fisk Avenue, employed Anna Kilkenny as a domestic servant but no other woman living in the district is shown as employed. In 1870, of the 33 male workers living along Commerce Street, 23 (70%) were involved in maritime industries. None of the households with a worker in a maritime industry also had a woman working outside the house.²⁸ (This would continue to be the case until 1930, with one exception in 1920 when Christine Merrill, the mother of maritime worker Charles A. Merrill, also worked outside the house.)

²³ Thomas Oyster House.

²⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1889.

²⁵ Federal Census, 1860.

²⁶ Further information about William Buell, Hiram Dart, was not located.

²⁷ Beers atlas.

²⁸ Federal Census 1870.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

The 1880 census identified 28 houses with 32 male workers. Eleven (34%) of these workers were involved in maritime industries, a dramatic decrease from the 1870 census. Five men were seamen, three men were fishermen, two were oyster dealers, and one was a blockmaker. John P. Anderson and Edwin Dibbell were the only two seamen who appear to continue to work as captains. The only female residents of the street with a listed occupation was Mary Buckingham, the 23 year-old daughter of commercial traveler John A. Buckingham, who worked as a seamstress.²⁹

The decrease in maritime workers in the 1880 census pointed to the beginning of the end for Commerce Street as a maritime community. The decline was gradual. Nearly 30 years after the introduction of the railroad in 1852 and 12 years after the last commercial vessel was made in a Clinton shipyard, the 1881 birds-eye view of the town still prominently featured a steamship (Figure 5). That same year the Connecticut Secretary of Agriculture emphasized the value of the port for shipping foodstuffs to New York, even though the railroad provided a faster alternative.³⁰

By 1895 most of the commercial traffic on Clinton's waters had ceased. Ellen Brainerd Peck, writing in *Connecticut Quarterly*, described the change:

Clinton is so quiet now, in respect to traffic by water, that it requires some imagination to picture it as a busy little shipping-port and to think of it as the locality of several prosperous ship-yards. This, however, is said to have been the case, in the last century and the early part of this. Nearly all the young men in those days who did till the land in the sailor phrase "followed the water." How changed the scene today when nearly all the boats that enter the harbor are pleasure yachts; for the railroad has quite taken the place of the water roads.³¹

Clinton, at least for travel and freight, turned its back on Long Island Sound for the first time in more than three centuries. Nevertheless, remnants of the 19th-century maritime community remained.

In 1900 the street included 29 households with 39 male workers identified. Of the 39 workers, 9 (23%) were employed in maritime industries. No captains or seamen were identified. Hosmer Tryon appears to have operated a small boatyard; his household included himself, his son William, Clarence Stevens and Thomas Smith, all of whom were identified as boat builders. Eugene Lewis and Edgar Watrous worked as fishermen. Charles Redfield was an oysterman, while Andrew J. Hurd was an oyster dealer. Frank Watrous was a salesman at the fish market. The women in the district who were shown with occupations were doing domestic work: Emma Merwin worked as a housekeeper for 87 year-old Asa Bushnell and Jeanette Richardson was a housekeeper, although she resided in her own house (which she owned). Mariette Gates and Grace Evans were servants in Elisha Redfield's house. Edith Major was a servant in Mark Blaisdell's house and Grace Dudley was a servant in Susan Parker's house. Emily Kelsey worked as a dressmaker.³²

The 1910 census shows the further decline of the street as a residence for maritime workers. Alfred Pelton continued to work as "captain at sea," Herbert Buell was identified as a "retired sea captain,"

²⁹ Federal Census 1880.

³⁰ Connecticut Board of Agriculture, 282.

³¹ Peck, 235-6.

³² Federal Census 1900.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

and Edgar Watrous was working as a lobsterman. Only a few women were listed with occupations in this census: Alice Cross worked as a maid to Mary Dibell while Emma Merwin worked as a maid for William Bushnell. Elizabeth Bacon was listed as a music teacher.³³

The following census, in 1920, showed Edgar Watrous as a seafood dealer and Charles A. Merrill as a marine engineer on a private yacht. The women living on the street had begun to be employed at a greater variety of jobs: Helen B. Spencer was listed as a violin teacher. Francis Robinson was a bookkeeper at the gas company. Elinor Debussy was a practical nurse for a private family while Christine Buell cared for Helen Konold as a trained nurse. Katherine Buell was a cook for an unspecified private family; she was the head of household for her three sons and one daughter (all under 15). Mary Bushnell worked as a public-school teacher, while Emma Merwin worked as a housekeeper. Ada Griswold worked as a saleswoman in a dry goods store. Christine Merrill (mother of Charles Merrill, marine engineer) worked as a retail merchant selling art goods.³⁴

The 1930 census was the last to include one of the street's 19th-century residents working in a maritime industry. Edgar Watrous's listing as a lobsterman marked the end of an era for Commerce Street. While subsequent censuses included an occasional fisherman or lobsterman, no one was working who could remember the heyday of Commerce Street as a location of a community who turned to the water for their livelihoods.³⁵

As noted in the High Street Historic District nomination (National Register, 2020, NPS Reference No. 100005404), Clinton's maritime endeavors were at a different scale than those of other, more prosperous communities between New Haven and the Rhode Island state line.³⁶ The seamen of Stonington went in search of seals for pelts and whales for oil and bones. The natural products were relatively scarce and in high demand, so the men who could bring them back to Connecticut were able to amass substantial fortunes.³⁷ These fortunes are reflected in the large and luxurious houses they financed.³⁸ Similarly, Old Lyme's residents participated in lucrative international trade. As early as 1650, Old Lyme's residents were involved in trade with the West Indies, sending farm products like corn and livestock along with wood harvested from the abundant local forest in exchange for sugar, molasses, rum, and slaves.³⁹ The houses of these merchants announce their financial success with their fine details and large size. In contrast, those involved in the maritime trades in Clinton kept closer to home. They engaged in coastal trading, including the transport of brownstone from Portland to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and other ports along the eastern seaboard. They provided those cities with farm goods and the bounty of the sea, to the point that "Clinton Oysters" were advertised in papers throughout the region and nearly 12,000 bushels of oysters were collected per year in the early 1880s.⁴⁰ They also captained many of the steamboats that plied the waters of Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River. None of these undertakings

³³ Federal Census 1910.

³⁴ Federal Census 1920

³⁵ Federal Census 1930.

³⁶ "High Street" Sec. 8, 18

³⁷ Stackpole, 75.

³⁸ Cunningham (1994), "Captain Nathaniel B. Palmer House," 9.

³⁹ River and Sound, 05 (Winter, 2009),

⁴⁰ History of Middlesex, 233.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

provided the great riches of whaling or the West Indies trade to the men of Clinton. Unlike for the watermen of Stonington, Old Lyme, and other eastern Connecticut ports the maritime trades did not make Clinton's residents rich. Nevertheless, work on the water provided livelihoods for many of the residents of Commerce Street for more than 100 years.

Criterion C: Architecture

The district meets Criterion C in the category of architecture for its collection of 19th- and early 20th-century domestic architecture representative of the town's development and regional maritime economy. The buildings are modest expressions of their styles in comparison to nearby maritime-based communities. The building types and styles, based on their massing and exterior features and finishes, are common throughout New England. Commerce Street is characterized by buildings with modest scale and limited ornament, which is "representative of the typical historical development pattern in slower-paced communities located on the Connecticut coast between New Haven and Old Saybrook."⁴¹ This pattern of development continues in the High Street Historic District, which is sited immediately north of but separated from Commerce Street by the railroad and the town's historic commercial strip. The stone foundations of many of the buildings in the High Street Historic District appear related to the regional maritime shipping of quarried products, which employed many of that district's residents.

In comparison to other coastal communities that participated in 19th-century maritime industries, Clinton's housing stock, including along Commerce Street, is understated. The small Whale Oil Row Historic District in New London includes only four buildings, three of which were owned by individuals who had made their fortunes in whaling. All built by Charles Beebe for developer Ezra Chappel in 1839, these Greek Revival houses have a higher level of exterior features than any of the houses along Commerce Street.⁴² Likewise, the Prospect Street Historic District, also in New London, was also initially home to those associated with whaling. The district has a similar period of significance, 1807-1905, to Commerce Street. The majority of the buildings were constructed during the period 1838-1856, a time frame that coincides with the height of whaling in New London, and so the bulk of the buildings are in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. As with Whale Oil Row, the houses in the Prospect Street Historic District have more elaborate decorative elements than can be found on Commerce Street.⁴³

The 19th-century architecture in the district is characterized by a reliance on the volumes and arrangements typical of the period, with minimal reliance on high-style decorative elements. Even with its relatively understated buildings the district clearly represents a 19th and early-20th-century neighborhood that grew gradually over time, with different eras of buildings reflecting the initial growth of the street and the later infill representing the later development pattern.

Starting at the north end of Commerce Street, the Methodist parsonage and 11 Commerce Street are a pair of gable-front, side-hall houses that represent one of the most popular of the mid-19th-

⁴¹ High Street," Sec. 8, 18

⁴² Constance Luster, "Whale Oil Row," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1970.

⁴³ Paul Loether, "Prospect Street Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1986.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

century building types in Connecticut. The church is trimmed with Greek Revival decorative elements (some now obscured by vinyl siding). The next seven buildings on the east side of the road, all of which are gable-front buildings with side-hall plans and decorative windows in the gable, reinforce the 19th-century character of the neighborhood (Photograph 14). Though some of these buildings have been modified by expansion, re-siding, and remodeling, their repeated volumes provide a consistent character.

Across the street, the former Asa Bushnell cabinet shop and the E.A. Dibbell house (15 and 21 Commerce Street, respectively) introduce variety to the landscape. The Dibbell house is one of the higher-style buildings in the district, combining elements of the Italianate and Queen Anne styles in a substantial building with a strong street presence. 27 Commerce Street is one of the last buildings added to the street during the period of significance. It is a small, understated Colonial Revival-style building that maintains the scale of the streetscape. Directly south of 27 Commerce Street is 31 Commerce Street, a non-contributing ranch house built in 2020. Further south is a vernacular building with a telescoping volume at 33 Commerce Street.

59 Commerce Street is the first Cape Cod house in the district. Like its neighbor to the south, 61 Commerce, both are recognizable as products of the Greek Revival-style due to their trabeated door surrounds with sidelights. 65 Commerce Street is a non-contributing modern Cape, while 67 Commerce Street is a small Colonial Revival house. Its volume fits the streetscape well, blending in with the small Capes elsewhere in the district. The building type is also seen elsewhere in Clinton; the Clinton Village Historic District has a number of similar houses, especially along Liberty Street and Waterside Lane.⁴⁴ Cape Cod houses were one of the building types that was frequently used throughout the state.⁴⁵

71 Commerce Street is the first of a row of gable-front Queen Anne and Greek Revival-style houses with the consistent size, scale and setbacks that characterize the district. (The small Colonial Revival house at 81 Commerce Street is unobtrusive in this group.) The Hurd house at 101 Commerce Street provides a minor interruption in the gable-front buildings but it retains a similar volume and arrangement of windows and doors. 105 Commerce Street is the last in this group of gable-front buildings. After this point, the district returns to the variety seen further north on the street: 109 Commerce Street is a 20th century Cape-type house, while 110 Commerce Street is a vernacular building with a deeply overhanging roof reminiscent of the Italianate style. 113 Commerce Street has the low-pitched, side-gable roof with full-width dormer that makes it the district's only Craftsman-style house, while 114 Commerce Street is a three-story side-gable building with a full-width front porch with scroll-sawn brackets. 119 and 122 Commerce Street are both gable-front buildings with Queen Anne and Italianate-style details, respectively. 7-9 Fisk Avenue, located to the east of Commerce Street and formerly connected to it by a driveway, is a mid-19th century, side-gable vernacular building. It is consistent with the other buildings in the district in terms of its age, volume, and massing. This mix of 19th and early 20th-century buildings is common throughout much of Connecticut, reflecting additive growth through several different

⁴⁴ Clouette and Cronin, p. 7-3 – 7-8 and 8-1 -8-2.

⁴⁵ The *Eastern Coastal Slope: Historical and Architectural Overview and Management Guide* notes that “the one-and-a-half-story Cape Cod, or Cape was commonly found along Long Island Sound by the mid-eighteenth century.” Herzan, p. 25.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

stylistic periods. The Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne-style buildings, along with the later Colonial Revival houses, tell the story of the town's growth in a way that is reflected in many other coastal Connecticut towns.⁴⁶ Within Clinton, it is similar to the mix of buildings found in the High Street Historic District.⁴⁷

123 and 125 Commerce Street are non-contributing modern buildings, while 142 Commerce Street has a vernacular building from the early 20th century that connects the neighborhood to the waters of Long Island Sound. Taken together, the majority of the resources in the district are a distinguishable entity that embody the distinctive characteristics of a 19th- and early 20th century neighborhood that grew over time, housing many of the maritime workers of Clinton.

⁴⁶ Herzan, 39-41, 70-73.

⁴⁷ Bryant, p. 7-1 – 7-12, 8-21 – 8-22.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Adler, Peggy. *Images of America: Clinton*. Arcadia Publishing, 2019.

Aerial Survey of Connecticut. Fairchild Aerial Survey, Inc. for the State Planning Board. 1934. Photograph 03106. On-line resource accessed November, 2022-July, 2023 at <https://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4005coll10>.

Beers, F. W. "Town of Clinton," *County Atlas of Middlesex, Connecticut*. New York: F. W. Beers & Co, 1874.

Bryant, Tod. "High Street Historic District." National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2020. On file, State Historic Preservation Office.

Buell, William H. "Town of Clinton." *The History of Middlesex County 1635-1885*. New York: J. H. Beers & Co., 1884.

Clinton Land Records (CLR). Vols. 3 and 4. 1854-1855. Clinton Town Hall, Town Clerk's Vault.

Clouette, Bruce and Maura Cronin. "Clinton Village Historic District." National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1994. On file, State Historic Preservation Office.

Connecticut Board of Agriculture. Annual report of the secretary of the Connecticut Board of Agriculture. Volume 14 (1880-1881).

Cunningham, Jan. "Captain Nathaniel B. Palmer House," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1994. On file, State Historic Preservation Office.

Dwight, Timothy. *Travels in New-England and New-York*. 4 vols. New Haven, 1822.

Herzan, John. *Historic Preservation in Connecticut*. Volume V. "Eastern Coastal Slope: Historical and Architectural Overview and Management Guide." Hartford, Connecticut State Historical Commission, 1997. On-line resource, located at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Historic-Preservation/03_Technical_Assistance_Research/Research/HPCT-V_EasternCoastalSlope.pdf accessed July 2023.

History of Middlesex County Connecticut: With Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men. New York: J. H. Beers, 1884.

Loether, Paul. "Prospect Street Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1986. On file, State Historic Preservation Office.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

Luster, Constance. "Whale Oil Row," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1970.
On file, State Historic Preservation Office.

Mays, Victor. *The Events in Killingworth Harbor, 1813-1814*. Clinton, CT: Clinton Historical Society, 2009.

Peck, Ellen Brainerd. "Clinton, Once Killingworth," *Connecticut Quarterly*, July, August, September, 1895, (vol. 1, no. 3), p. 235-6.

Sanborn Map Publishing Company. Fire Insurance maps, Clinton, Connecticut. New York, 1884, 1895, 1901, 1908, 1921, 1921-1941.

Sexton, James. *Town of Clinton Historic Resource Survey*. 2011. On file, State Historic Preservation Office.

Stackpole, Edouard. *The Voyage of the The Huron and the Huntress: The American Sealers and the Discovery of the Continent of Antarctica*. Mystic, CT: The Marine Historical Association, Inc., 1955.

Stevens, Thomas. *Old Sailing Days in Clinton*. Deep River: Deep River Savings Bank, 1963.

Sanborn Map Publishing Company. Fire Insurance maps, Clinton, Connecticut. New York, 1884, 1895, 1901, 1908, 1921, 1921-1941.

"Thomas Oyster House." On-line resource, located at <https://www.mysticseaport.org/explore/village/oyster-house/> and accessed January 2023.

United States Bureau of the Census, *Sixth Census of the United States, 1840. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut*. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

Fifteenth Census of the United States 1930. Town of Clinton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. On-line resource accessed during November 2022-July 2023 at Ancestry.com.

“View of Clinton,” Connecticut. Boston: O.H. Bailey & Co., 1881.

Walling, “H.F. Map of Middlesex County, Connecticut.” New York: 1859.

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 # _____

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Clinton Historic District Commission

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 21.9 acres

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41.277916 | Longitude: -72.528062 |
| 2. Latitude: 41.277916 | Longitude: -72.526425 |
| 3. Latitude: 41.274552 | Longitude: -72.525404 |
| 4. Latitude: 41.274816 | Longitude: -72.527554 |
| 5. Latitude: 41.271740 | Longitude: -72.527898 |
| 6. Latitude: 41.269306 | Longitude: -72.527833 |
| 7. Latitude: 41.268826 | Longitude: -72.529453 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The district runs along Commerce Street from Long Island Sound to the rear of the properties on Main Street. The boundaries are illustrated on the district map (Figures 1 and 2).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the district include 19th- and early 20th-century houses, as well as three commercial buildings and a church, all located along a street that housed many workers in maritime industries during that period. The boundaries were drawn to encompass this visually cohesive neighborhood, which has a consistent streetscape and development pattern. The area to the north of the district along Main Street is commercial in character, while the area to the west along Leffingwell Road includes a number of mid-20th century buildings and lacks the connection to the maritime industries that characterizes so many of the houses along Commerce Street. The historic architectural integrity of the neighborhood to the west is also more varied than along Commerce Street. Mid-20th-century subdivisions to the east are excluded.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: James Sexton
organization: PAST, Inc.
street & number: 569 Middle Turnpike/P.O. Box 543
city or town: Storrs state: CT zip code: 06268
e-mail: jsexton@ahs-inc.biz
telephone: 914-527-6416
date: July, 2023

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer,

Commerce Street Historic District

Middlesex, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Commerce Street Historic District

City or Vicinity: Clinton

County: Middlesex

State: Connecticut

Photographer: James Sexton

Date Photographed: November, 2023

Photograph 1 of 14. Looking east at 118 Commerce Street (ca. 1800).

Photograph 2 of 14. Looking east at 10 Commerce Street (ca. 1800), at the left edge of the photograph.

Photograph 3 of 14. Looking west at 59 Commerce Street (ca. 1800).

Photograph 4 of 14. Looking east at 24 Commerce Street (ca. 1860).

Photograph 5 of 14. Looking west at 101 Commerce Street (ca. 1860).

Photograph 6 of 14. Looking west at 91 Commerce Street (1850).

Photograph 7 of 14. Looking west at 21 Commerce Street (ca. 1860).

Photograph 8 of 14. Looking west at 105 Commerce Street (ca. 1912).

Photograph 9 of 14. Looking west at 27 Commerce Street (ca. 1923).

Photograph 10 of 14. Looking west at 113 Commerce Street (ca. 1910).

Photograph 11 of 14. Looking east at 10 Commerce Street (1855), the Clinton United Methodist Church.

Photograph 12 of 14. Looking west at 15 Commerce Street (ca. 1840).

Photograph 13 of 14. Looking east at 142 Commerce Street (ca. 1920).

Photograph 14 of 14. Looking south at the buildings along the east side of Commerce Street with 18 and 22 Commerce Street most clearly visible.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

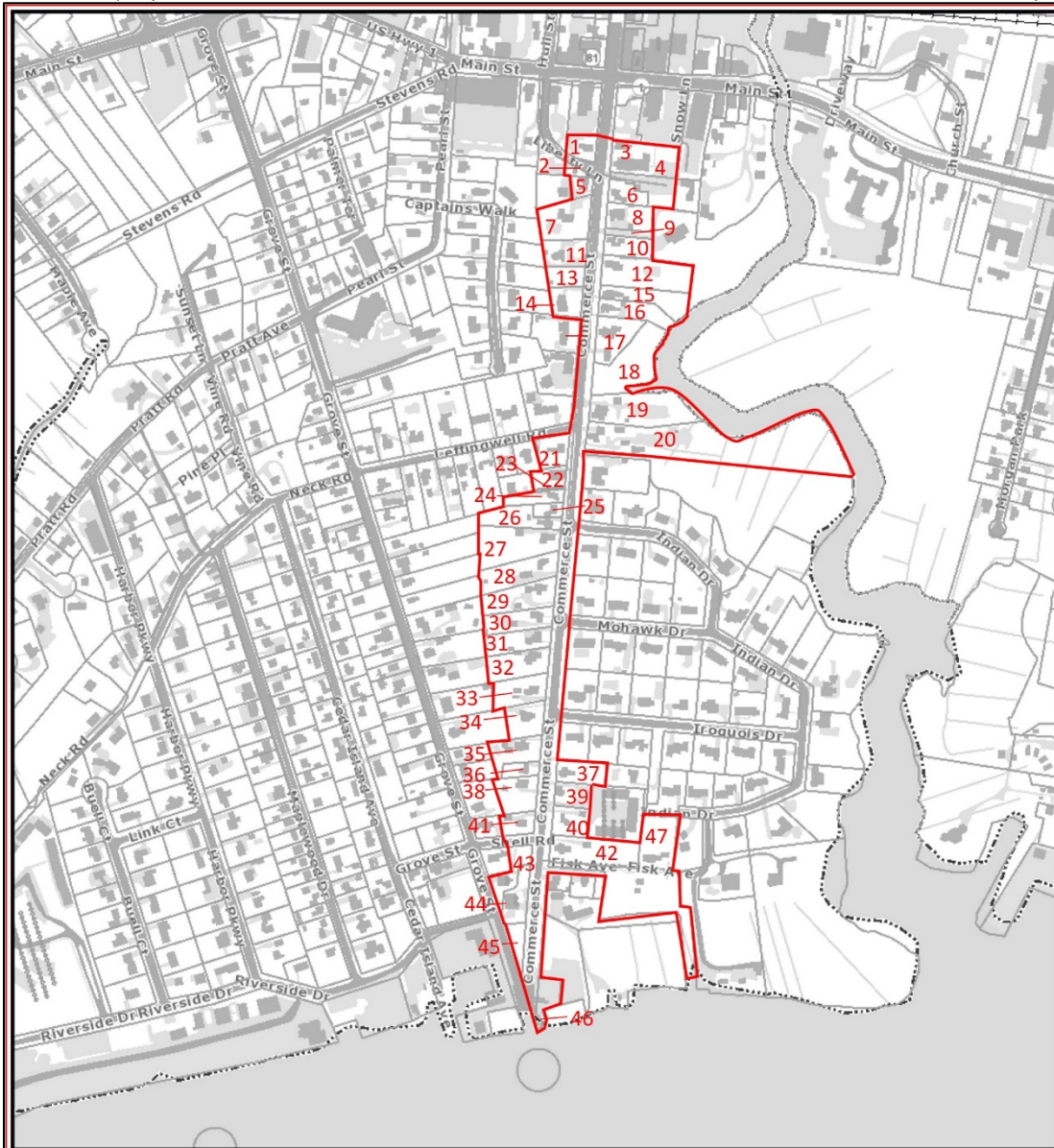
GRAPHICS



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the Commerce Street Historic District; district outline is approximated (Google Earth map).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Commerce Street NRHD

3/17/2023 11:16:14 AM

Scale: 1"=500'

Scale is approximate

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only.
It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory
interpretation, or parcel-level analyses.



Figure 2. Detail Map of Commerce Street Historic District with property numbers.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

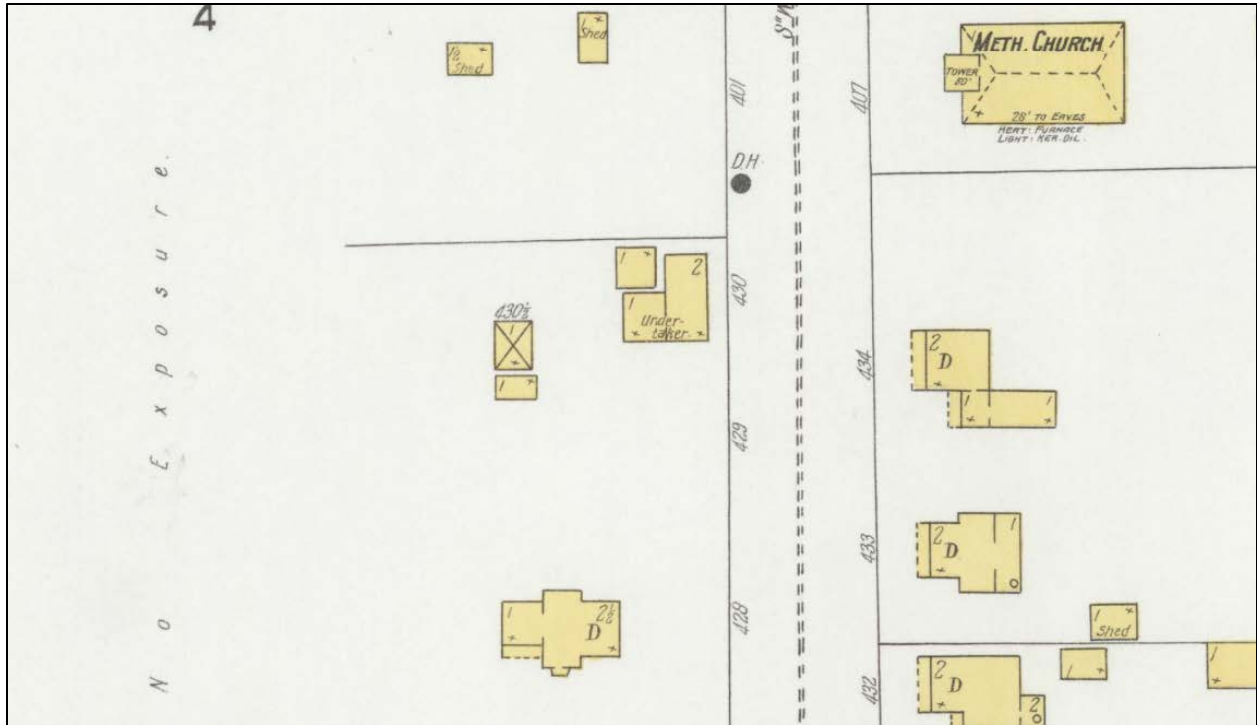


Figure 3. A detail of the 1901 Sanborn map identifies 15 Commerce Street as an undertaker's.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Figure 4. A photograph of 142 Commerce Street in the 1920s (Adler, Clinton).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

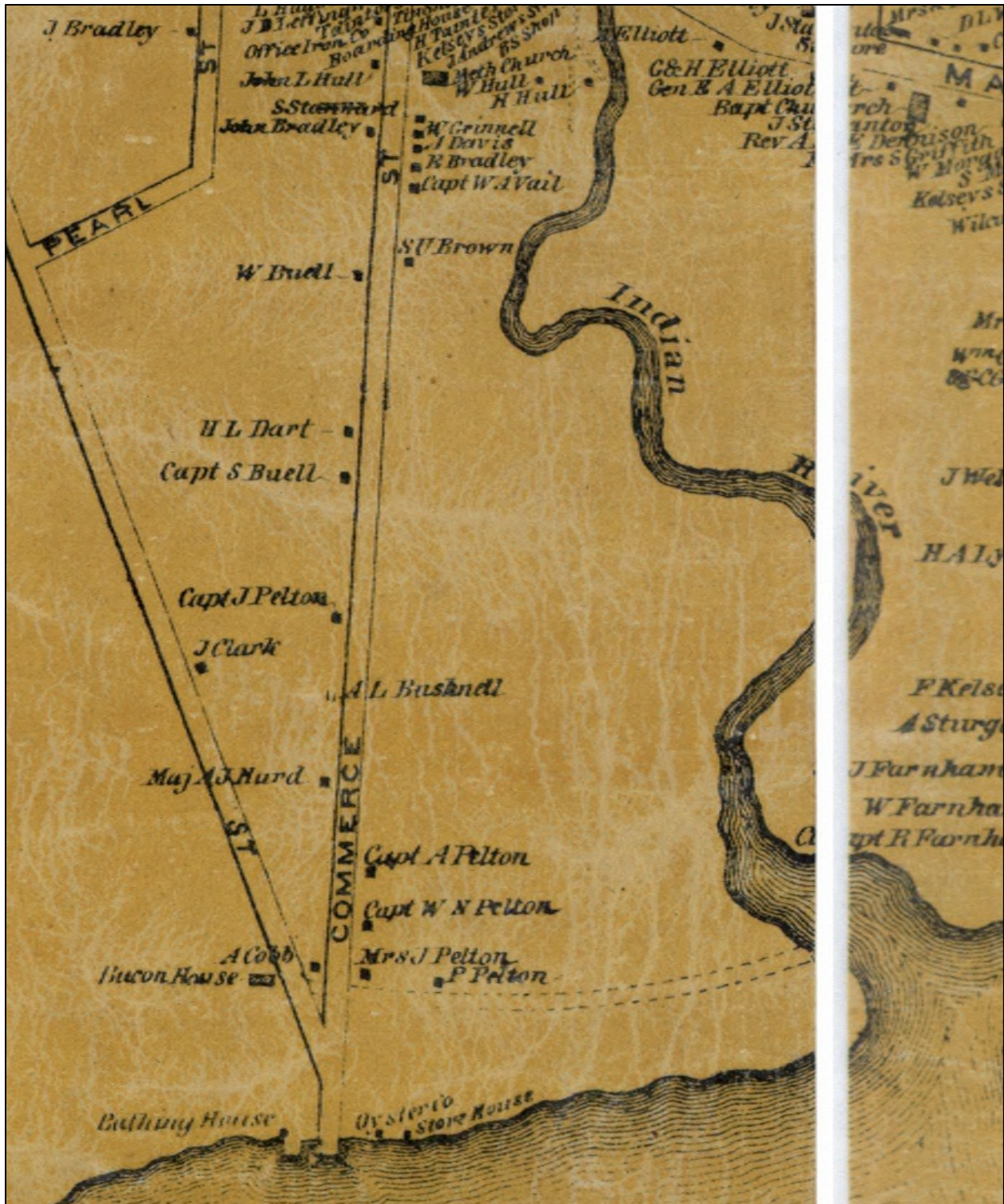


Figure 5. Detail of the 1859 Walling Map of Middlesex County.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State

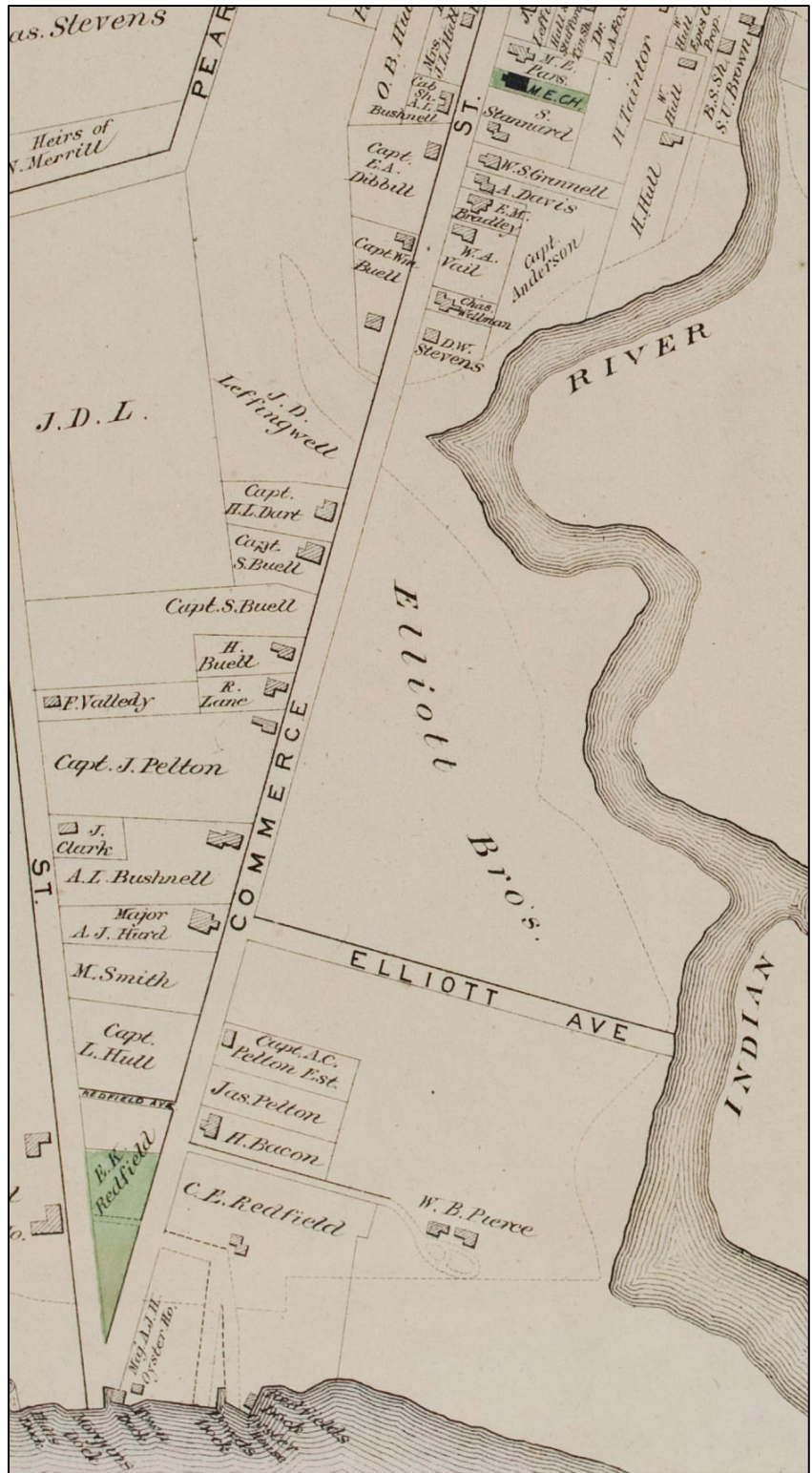


Figure 6. Detail of the 1874 Beers Atlas of Middlesex County page for Clinton.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

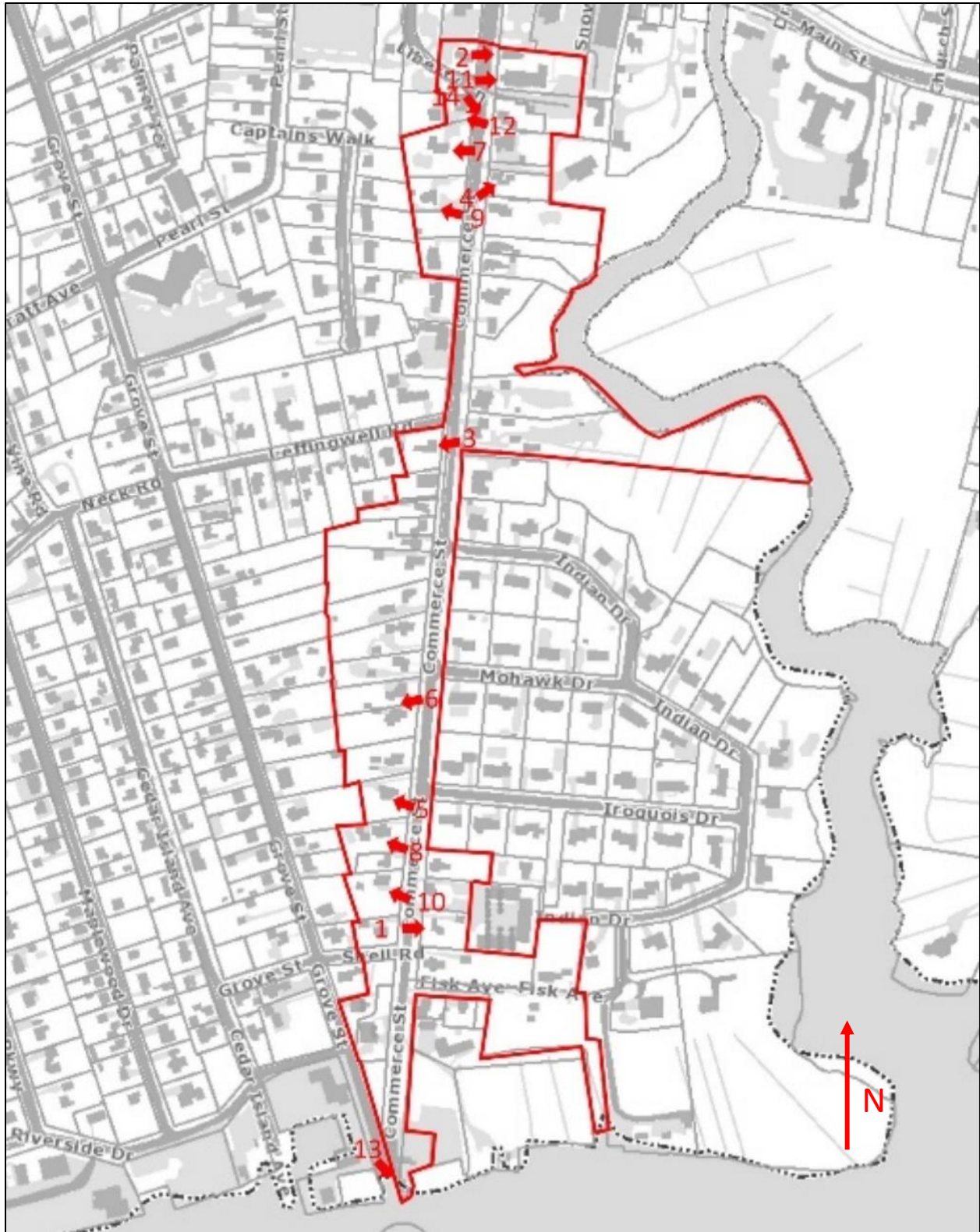
Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Figure 7. Detail of the 1881 Bailey view of Clinton.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Photography key showing photograph number and view direction.

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Photograph 1 of 14. Looking east at 118 Commerce Street (ca. 1800).



Photograph 2 of 14. Looking east at 10 Commerce Street (ca. 1800).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Photograph 3 of 14. Looking west at 59 Commerce Street (ca. 1800).



Photograph 4 of 14. Looking east at 24 Commerce Street (ca. 1860).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Photograph 5 of 14. Looking west at 101 Commerce Street (ca. 1860).



Photograph 6 of 14. Looking west at 91 Commerce Street (1850).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Photograph 7 of 14. Looking west at 21 Commerce Street (ca. 1860).



Photograph 8 of 14. Looking west at 105 Commerce Street (ca. 1912).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Photograph 9 of 14. Looking west at 27 Commerce Street (ca. 1923).



Photograph 10 of 14. Looking west at 113 Commerce Street (ca. 1910).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Photograph 11 of 14. Looking east at 10 Commerce Street (1855), the Clinton United Methodist Church.



Photograph 12 of 14. Looking west at 15 Commerce Street (ca. 1840).

Commerce Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, Connecticut
County and State



Photograph 13 of 14. Looking east at 142 Commerce Street (ca. 1920).



Photograph 14 of 14. Looking south at the buildings along the east side of Commerce Street with 18 and 22 Commerce Street most clearly visible.