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.

State or Federal agency/bureau or Trib In my opinion, the property meets Signature of commenting official:	
	oal Government
State or Federal agency/bureau or Trib	
State or Federal agency/hureau or Trib	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	
ABCD	
nationalstatewide Applicable National Register Criteria:	local
In my opinion, the property meets recommend that this property be considered s level(s) of significance:	does not meet the National Register Criteria. I ignificant at the following
I hereby certify that this nomination the documentation standards for registering properties and meets the procedural and profession.	roperties in the National Register of Historic
As the designated authority under the Nationa	al Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
2. Location Street & number: _351 Long Wharf Drive City or town: _New Haven	County: New Haven
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multi	ple property listing
<u>N/A</u>	
1 1 1 0	
Historic name: Long Wharf Pier Other names/site number: Name of related multiple property listing:	

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 Long Wharf Pier New Haven, Connecticut Name of Property County and State 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

Site

Structure

Object

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 Long Wharf Pier New Haven, Connecticut Name of Property County and State **Number of Resources within Property** (Do not include previously listed resources in the count) Contributing Noncontributing buildings sites ____1___ structures objects 2 Total Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____ 6. Function or Use **Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.) TRANSPORTATION/water-related **Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.) TRANSPORTATION/water-related

ong Wharf Pier	New Haven, Connecticut
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7. Description	
Architectural Classification	
(Enter categories from instructions.)	
N/A	
Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)	
Principal exterior materials of the property: <u>Granite</u> ,	Stone, Wood, Concrete, Metal

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

Long Wharf Pier, 351 Long Wharf Drive, is located on the western bank of New Haven Harbor on the Quinnipiac River in New Haven, New Haven County, Connecticut. It extends 930 feet (ft) southeast into the harbor from the southeast side of Long Wharf Drive. The pier is a 600-ft-long concrete slab deck resting on rip-rap construction that was built directly on top of a historic stone and earth-filled structure dating to 1810. The remains of the 1810 structure, visible at low tide, extend approximately 330 ft beyond the end of the modern wharf. The property encompasses 5.5 acres, consisting of the modern wharf structure, the remains of the 1810 structure, two non-contributing buildings constructed on the wharf, and an asphalt paved parking lot. The non-contributing buildings were constructed after the period of significance. A landscaped shoreline including a beach and tidal flats surrounds the wharf. Long Wharf Pier is currently used as the dock for the replica schooner *Amistad Freedom Schooner* and as a public dock. The property retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as New Haven's historic shipping wharf, and as a significant achievement of engineering in the city of New Haven by William Lanson (ca. 1781–1851), a prominent member of New Haven's African American community.

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Narrative Description

Long Wharf Pier occupies 5.5 acres on the western bank of the Quinnipiac River in the Long Wharf area of the City of New Haven. New Haven is the second largest city in Connecticut with a population of 138,915 people. It is centrally located along the south coast of the state at the mouth of the Quinnipiac River where it empties into Long Island Sound, which connects to the Atlantic Ocean. The wharf extends 930 ft southeast from Long Wharf Drive into New Haven Harbor. It abuts the Canal Dock Boathouse to the north, Long Wharf Park to the south, and Long Wharf Drive to the west. The structure is surrounded by the Quinnipiac River to the north, south, and east. The property is on the south side of Long Wharf Drive, a section of New Haven's waterfront with the landscaped Long Wharf Park along the shore and asphalt paved parking lots used by food trucks. Today, Long Wharf Pier functions as the berthing site for the *Amistad*, a full-scale replica of what historians believe the original *Amistad* looked like, which offers educational programming and tours. The ship is a central fixture on New Haven's waterfront that contributes to the feeling of the site.

Long Wharf Pier (1810, 1820, ca. 1963, contributing structure, Photographs 1–12) is a nineteenth-century structure with mid-twentieth century superstructure. It consists of a concrete slab and rip-rap superstructure that extends approximately 600 ft into New Haven Harbor, and sits atop a stone pier constructed in 1810 that extends about 930 feet total from the shoreline. The modern superstructure was constructed ca. 1963 by the City of New Haven as part of a large-scale urban development project to revitalize New Haven's waterfront. The wharf consists of an approximately 12-ft-wide concrete slab deck with a simple balustrade composed of steel posts and wooden plank railings resting on a stone/rip-rap foundation. Small, rectangular concrete piers—some of which form the foundations for lamp posts that light the wharf—extend from the northeast side of the modern wharf's foundation perpendicular to the wharf. Two secondary structures are attached to the northeast side of the wharf. The northern structure is a wood pier adjacent to the Amistad Freedom Schooner Ticketing Booth, which is on the northeast side of the wharf about halfway down the length of the wharf. A second wood pier resting on wood pilings is joined to the end of the wharf on its northeast side by a concrete slab and steel stringer deck. The floating concrete platforms are accessible by metal gangways at the north and south ends of

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, "Population Estimates July 1, 2022 (V2022)- New Haven, CT," *Quick Facts*. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/newhavencityconnecticut/PST045222; U.S. Census Bureau,

[&]quot;Population Estimates July 1, 2022 (V2022)- Bridgeport, CT," Quick Facts.

https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/bridgeportcityconnecticut/PST045223

² In 1839, 53 Africans were kidnapped and sold into slavery in Cuba. Their enslavers, Don Jose Ruiz and Don Pedro Montez loaded them on a Spanish cargo schooler called *Amistad* to transport them elsewhere on the island. However, a 25-year-old enslaved man named Sengbe Pieh broke free of his shackles and freed his fellow captives. They lead a revolt, killing most of the crew and forcing Ruiz and Montez to sail them back to Africa. At night, Ruiz and Montez attempted to sail back to Cuba, leading to a 63-day journey of zigzagging up the east coast before running aground near Montauk Point, Long Island. The *Amistad* was towed to New London, Connecticut and a trial was held, charging the enslaved Africans with piracy and murder. It was a was a highly politicized case resulting in the freedom of the enslaved Africans and their return to Africa.

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the pier. The extant structure is approximately four feet above mean high water (6.35 feet), and about 8–10 ft above the ground surface.

The superstructure of Long Wharf overlies the remains of its original structure built in 1810 by prominent businessman and community leader, William Lanson (ca. 1781–1851). The 1810 structure, a 1,500-ft extension of New Haven's ca. 1754 Union Wharf, was a dry-laid basalt block construction with an earth-filled interior. Portions of the original structure are extant underneath the existing rip-rap foundations for Long Wharf Pier as intact courses of stonework. These remains extend 200 ft southeast beyond the end of the modern wharf in a partially intact state before turning to the south for another 125 ft. At low tide, remains of the basalt block foundations of Lanson's structure are visible above the water line. An L-shaped, concrete platform has been constructed on a rip-rap foundation on the southerly extent of these remains, which likely correspond to a pier constructed in the 1770s, before William Lanson built the extension of Long Wharf. A modern tidal marker and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers survey mark are on this concrete platform. South of the concrete platform and amongst the displaced rubble in the foundation of Lanson's wharf, the remains of a large wood and earthen piling measuring 8 ft in diameter and other internal structural members of the wharf are visible. Additional remnants of wood pilings that once supported pier structures extending off of Long Wharf are visible along the southwest side of the wharf at low tide.

Two non-contributing buildings are on the wharf: a Welcome Center on the north side, near Long Wharf Drive, and the Amistad Freedom Schooner Ticketing Booth, which is centrally located on the pier. The Welcome Center (ca. 1963, non-contributing building, Photographs 13 and 14) is a three-bay-by-two-bay, one-and-one-half-story, side-gable, wood-frame building with a one-bay-by-one-bay, one-story, side-gable wing off the northwest (side) elevation. The building rests on a partially visible concrete foundation. The walls are clad in gray stucco, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The main block roof is pierced by a hipped cupola and is ornamented by replica Queen Anne-style brackets. The trim of the various openings is simple, consisting of four-light metal doors, two-over-two wood sash, and vertical-lift metal garage doors with multilight transoms.

The <u>Amistad Freedom Schooner Ticket Booth (2004–2006, non-contributing building.</u> <u>Photographs 15 and 16)</u> is a one-bay-by-two-bay, one-story, front-gable, astylistic building.³ The building rests on a partially visible wooden beam foundation that is affixed directly to the wood pier on which it rests. The walls are clad in saw-tooth pattern wood shingles. The medium-pitch front-gable roof overhangs the southwest side elevation, sheltering a ticket window. The main entrance is in the northmost bay on the façade (northwest) elevation. It consists of a simple metal door in a rectangular opening with a plain metal frame and wood surround. A six-over-six vinyl window is in the southmost bay of the façade. A sign centered above the two bays on the façade reads "Amistad Freedom Schooner." The sign is made of vinyl attached to a wood panel. When in port, the *Amistad* is berthed nearby.

³ Diane Scarponi, "IKEA Breaks Ground on Store in New Haven," Hartford Courant, September 5, 2003, 48.

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Statement of Integrity

Long Wharf Pier retains integrity of location, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association. The original setting of the wharf was altered with the influx of railroad and automotive travel, and further altered through the late 1940s and early 1950s as a large portion of New Haven's waterfront was filled in for the construction of the Connecticut Turnpike, now part of Interstate 95. Much of the original, northern structure was buried underneath the highway as land filling created the Long Wharf neighborhood of New Haven, but may remain partially intact under the deposits. Long Wharf Pier was further altered in ca. 1963 when the modern riprap and concrete structure was constructed directly on top of the remains of the 1810 structure, preserving the earlier structure in situ. Although the modern iteration of the pier has altered the visual appearance of Long Wharf Pier, the remains of the original 1810 structure are largely intact and visible beneath and extending beyond the modern structure. The stone foundation of the 1810 structure has been documented in previous studies, and displays he marks of early nineteenthcentury workmanship and construction methods, including quarry marks on the upper courses of the 1810 structure. Below the stone slabs are rubble masonry walls filled with earth and what is believed to be rubble ballast stones discharged by ships docking at the wharf. Additionally, remnants of wood fenders are extant along both sides of the wharf, which may have been part of the historic pier system. The property retains integrity of feeling as the remains that extend beneath and beyond the modern structure stand to remind visitors of a bygone time in New Haven's maritime history when the economy of the city depended on its trade connections to distant ports. The structure also retains integrity of association as a physical testament to the prominence of William Lanson as a businessman, engineer, and leader in the New Haven community in the early nineteenth century.

Long Wha			New Haven, Connecticut County and State
	atement of Significance		
		riteria for the criteria qualifying the prop	erty for National Register
х	A. Property is associated broad patterns of our l	I with events that have made a sig history.	gnificant contribution to the
х	B. Property is associated	l with the lives of persons signific	cant in our past.
х	construction or repres	e distinctive characteristics of a tysents the work of a master, or post cant and distinguishable entity when the control of t	sesses high artistic values,
	D. Property has yielded, history.	or is likely to yield, information	important in prehistory or
	a Considerations	nlv)	
(Mark	'x" in all the boxes that app		
	A. Owned by a religious	institution or used for religious p	burposes
	B. Removed from its orig	ginal location	
	C. A birthplace or grave		
	D. A cemetery		
	E. A reconstructed build	ling, object, or structure	
	F. A commemorative pro	operty	
	G. Less than 50 years old	d or achieving significance within	n the past 50 years

ne of Property	County and Stat
A wood of Cignificance	
Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)	
MARITIME HISTORY	
ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK	
ENGINEERING	
ENGINEERING	
	
	
	
Period of Significance	
1810–1890	
Significant Dates	
1810: William Lanson constructs 1,500-ft wharf extension	
1890: NY, NH, &H RR purchased Long Wharf	
Significant Person	
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)	
Lanson, William	
Cultural Affiliation	
<u>N/A</u>	
A al.:44/D:1.1	
Architect/Builder	
<u>Lanson, William</u>	

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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.)

Long Wharf Pier in New Haven, Connecticut, is eligible for listing in the National Register at the state level under Criteria A, B, and C. Under Criterion A, Long Wharf Pier is significant in the area of Maritime History for its association with the development of the New Haven waterfront and the importance of maritime trade to New Haven's economy during the nineteenth century. Under Criterion B, Long Wharf Pier is significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Black for its association with prominent Black businessman and community leader William Lanson, who built the remaining portion of Long Wharf Pier. Under Criterion C, the property is significant in the area of Engineering as a well-preserved, rare example of an early nineteenth-century stone wharf.

The period of significance begins in 1810 with William Lanson's completion of a 1,500-ft stone and earth-fill extension of a 1663 wharf on the same location, and ends in 1890 when the wharf was sold to the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad, and was officially no longer used for water-based transportation of goods or people.

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

Construction of Long Wharf Pier began in 1663, when Samuel Bache was granted land along the waterfront to build a wharf that extended far enough into the harbor to allow ocean-going vessels to unload their cargo without needing intermediary smaller ships. Prior to this, the port of New Haven struggled financially due to the difficulty in landing and launching trade goods from foreign and domestic ports, including Boston and Barbados. Two decades later, Thomas Trowbridge was granted permission to build an adjacent wharf; together, the two wharves became Union Wharf. After 1736, the wharves jointly became known colloquially as Long Wharf, despite being owned by the Union Wharf Company, and by 1745, the wharf was about 500 ft long. By the mid-eighteenth century, at least two buildings had been constructed on the wharf—an inn owned by wharf proprietor James Peck, and another that may have been used for offices of merchants, customs officials, and others, or as a warehouse.

Although trade in and out of New Haven was slow through the first half of the eighteenth century, by the 1760s it had expanded sufficiently that the Union Wharf Company had formally

⁴ New Haven Morning Journal-Courier, "Long Wharf's History," October 16, 1890, p.2; Thomas R. Trowbridge, "History of Long Wharf in New Haven," in *Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, Vol. 1*, (New Haven, CT: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1865), 89–90.

⁵ Bruce Clouette, *Report: Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey, Long Wharf Pier Structure, New Haven, Connecticut,* (report prepared for Parsons Brinckerhoff, Inc., 2008), 8.

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incorporated to manage operations on and improvements to the pier.⁶ By the early 1770s, the wharf needed to be extended again as a result of accumulating silt, known as "marsh mud," that formed the substrate for salt marshes.⁷ Instead of extending the wharf structure, however, the proprietors instead built an 80-sqft pier beginning at the edge of the channel; it was not connected to the Long Wharf structure at that time, nor was it for many years.⁸

By the eve of the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), Long Wharf was nearly 1,100 ft long, and constructed primarily of timber and earth with some stone fill. After the end of the war, the Union Wharf Company held lotteries to raise funds to expand the wharf into the harbor. In 1810, the wharf's proprietors planned a 1,500-ft expansion of the wharf into the harbor; by that point, the existing structure was already 1,980 ft long.⁹

Near the end of the American Revolution, the Union Wharf Company's finances for maintaining the wharf were unable to keep up with the needed repairs. From 1782–1786, community members collected wharf fees for free, rather than the company having to pay a wharfinger, or wharf keeper, who was responsible for assessing wharfage costs. ¹⁰ The income from the fees typically paid the wharfinger's wages as well as for any repairs or improvements. Concurrently, in 1784, the Connecticut General Assembly passed an act requiring that "no vessel shall in future be cleared out of the harbor of New Haven, by the naval officer, until he shall receive a certificate in writing from the wharfinger, that the customary wharfage is paid, or that none is due." However, the shipping economy of the town had been so depressed as a result of the war that the wharf income in 1785 was just £102.

CRITERION A – MARITIME HISTORY

Long Wharf Pier is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History for its association with the history and development of the New Haven waterfront on the Quinnipiac River beginning in the early nineteenth century and continuing through the late nineteenth century.

In 1790, a lottery was held by the Union Wharf Company in an effort to raise money to repair and extend the wharf, but just £98 was raised, and almost half of that was obligated to repairs. Despite efforts to convince the State of Connecticut to take over the wharf, among other efforts to remain solvent, in 1802, the wharf company was no longer able to maintain the structure, and the company folded in order to reorganize under a new charter, operating as the Contractors. The new company took out a lien on the wharf to enable the former company to pay off its debts. ¹² In

⁶ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 7.

⁷ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 8–9.

⁸ Trowbridge, History of Long Wharf, 90–91.

⁹ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 10.

¹⁰ Today, this job would be performed by a harbormaster.

¹¹ Quoted in Trowbridge, History of Long Wharf, 94.

¹² New Haven Morning Journal-Courier, "Long Wharf's History."

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1810, William Lanson (see **Criterion B**) was engaged to build a 1,500-ft extension of the wharf to facilitate access by ocean-going vessels.

It is unclear if any ships bearing incoming enslaved persons, other than the notorious *Amistad* in 1839, landed at New Haven. Regardless, trade with the West Indies was vital to the town, and the colony's, economy, firmly seating New Haven, and Connecticut, as an axis of the Transatlantic Trade. Trade goods included molasses and sugar from the Caribbean coming into New Haven and other Connecticut ports in exchange for foods like meat, onions, butter, peas, apples, and oats, rum, and building materials including barrels full of shingles and bricks. ¹³ In the early nineteenth century, the wharf handled a wide array of goods, including rum, gin, molasses, varieties of sugar, tobacco, coffee, cod, chocolate, tea, whale oil, pottery, and construction materials, among others. ¹⁴ Long Wharf was the primary wharf in New Haven and one of three deep water ports in Connecticut—the others were New London, which was the second largest whaling port in the world, and Bridgeport, which had a large shipbuilding and whaling industry. ¹⁵

In 1828, Noah Webster defined wharf in his dictionary by referring to Boston and New Haven's long wharves, positing that New Haven's Long Wharf was the longest in New England, extending three-quarters of a mile into the harbor (Figures 4–5). About the same time, Long Wharf was incorporated into the structure of Union Basin, which was an area east of the wharf where boats traveling on the Farmington Canal, also built in part by Lanson, could load and discharge passengers and cargo from as far north as Northampton, Massachusetts. However, the Farmington Canal was short-lived as the arrival of the railroad connecting New Haven to Hartford and New York City drastically changed the fortunes, and appearance, of the New Haven waterfront.

By the mid-1860s, tidal flats west of Long Wharf were infilled by the New York and New Haven Railroad to create space for railroad shops. A trestle that had been constructed to cross the harbor was replaced by tracks built on fill. As a result, the northernmost portion of the wharf was buried in fill to support the new rail infrastructure. Despite this change, Long Wharf remained an important maritime hub until the 1870s, by which time it had largely been eclipsed by wharves more conveniently sited to the rail lines. Long Wharf was primarily used for landing coal and lumber, and later built up with animal processing buildings, like the Sperry and Barnes pork packing plant. ¹⁸

¹³ Matthew Warshauer, "Connecticut's Sweet Tooth: The Sugar Trade and Slavery in the West Indies," *Connecticut Explored*, 2023, https://ctexplored.org/connecticuts-sweet-tooth-the-sugar-trade-and-slavery-in-the-west-indies/, accessed January 2024.

¹⁴ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 10.

¹⁵ New London Historical Society, "The Second Largest Whaling Port IN THE WORLD in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century," Accessed April 2024. https://www.nlchs.org/online-exhibits/whaling-out-of-new-london/; Samuel Orcutt, *A History of the Old Town of Stratford and the city of Bridgeport Connecticut*, (Fairfield, CT: Fairfield County Historical Society, 1886).

¹⁶ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 13.

¹⁷ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 13.

¹⁸ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 13–14.

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Sanborn fire insurance maps and others indicate the extent of Long Wharf's decline from being a prominent link in the supply chain to its relegation to unsavory activities by the end of the nineteenth century. The 1886 Sanborn map (Figure 6) shows the presence of two wharves to the north of Long Wharf—the Starin Dock and Sheffield Wharf. Starin Dock was occupied by John H. Starin's transportation line and wooden freight house, and Sheffield Wharf had rail lines, a New Haven and New York Railroad coal platform, and a small wood-frame office. In contrast, Long Wharf had wood-frame coal sheds, a wholesale butcher in a brick and wood building, and the expansive Sperry and Barnes plant, which was constructed primarily of brick and at least four stories tall. All these buildings were at the northern end of the wharf and may have been constructed there in an effort to remove them from proximity to offices and residences, and ease disposal of offal and waste directly into the harbor. Several smaller, mostly one- and two-story wood buildings, used for storing building materials and processing fish were scattered among the larger buildings on Long Wharf. ¹⁹

In 1890, the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad purchased Long Wharf from the Contractors in an effort to mitigate the danger of having the general public crossing an at-grade railroad track.²⁰ The 1893 Hurd map of the New Haven (Figure 7) waterfront illustrates the bypass of Long Wharf by the railroad—rail lines extended into the harbor along Canal Dock, immediately northeast of Long Wharf, and ran to the southwest along the waterfront.²¹

By the early twentieth century, only animal processing and storage buildings remained extant on Long Wharf. Any goods produced or stored, however, were transported by rail (Figure 8). The sale of the wharf in 1890 had signaled the end of the wharf's significance to the economy of New Haven, and changing transportation modalities, including the rise of the automobile and construction of highways, resulted in much of the north end of Long Wharf being obliterated by road-building activities. Despite this decline in function, the stone wharf, constructed by William Lanson, remains an intact and important remnant of New Haven's maritime history.

CRITERION B – ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK - WILLIAM LANSON,

Long Wharf Pier meets Criterion B in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Black as the most important, extant resource in New Haven associated with the life and career of notable Black New Haven resident, William Lanson (ca. 1781–1851).

Little is known definitively about William Lanson's early life. It is possible that he was born into enslavement about 1781, and emancipated himself in December 1799, when a newspaper ad ran

¹⁹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. *Insurance Maps of New Haven, Connecticut, Volume One*, (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1886).

²⁰ New Haven Morning Journal-Courier, "Stockholders' Meet," October 22, 1891, p. 4; Clouette, Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey, 14.

²¹ D.H. Hurd & Co., Town and City Atlas of the State of Connecticut, (Boston, MA: D.H. Hurd & Co., 1893).

7.5 percent of the total New Haven population.²⁴

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Name of Property in the Connecticut Journal looking for "a runaway servant named Lanson about 20 years old."²² He arrived in New Haven in 1803, as he notes in his Statement of Facts Addressed to the Public published in 1850, "I have been in this town [New Haven] for 47 years this spring." Lanson's arrival in New Haven was part of a larger influx of freeborn and emancipated Blacks from the American South and other areas at the turn of the nineteenth century. New Haven's Black population was 248 at the turn of the century, consisting of 166 free and 82 enslaved persons; by 1820, the Black population had nearly tripled to 624: 622 free and 2 enslaved, which comprised

On March 2, 1807, Lanson purchased land on the far edge of the area known as the New Township (today's Wooster Square neighborhood), on the west bank of the Mill River and north of New Haven Harbor (see Figure 4). The land at the time belonged to Mary Wooster and was used for plowing contests. By purchasing land, Lanson became a property owner, and was thus afforded the right to vote, if only temporarily.²⁵

In 1810, Lanson took up the job to connect both sections of Long Wharf Pier. The project had been abandoned by white contractors who deemed it too difficult. It is unclear where and when Lanson learned stonework, but he decided to "show what a black man was capable of doing." ²⁶ Lanson's efforts to extend Long Wharf to the deep channel at the edge of the harbor had a significant positive effect on New Haven's economy. The ability to easily land cargo increased trade between the city, Europe, the Caribbean, and the American South, which in turn increased manufacturing demand in the area. In 1811, the Reverend Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, lauded Lanson and his two brothers, Laban and Reuben, who had worked on the wharf with him, writing that the project was "honourable proof of the character which they sustain, both for capacity, and integrity, in the view of respectable men."²⁷

As a result of his business success, Lanson purchased additional properties, mortgaged by wealthy white merchants and prominent residents. A neighborhood of houses, grocery stores, and tenements, called New Guinea, sprang up on the edge of today's Wooster Square. 28 In 1810, Lanson was charged \$60 poll tax, but by 1813, he was taxed \$217, and was recorded as having two apprentices, four horses, a chaise, an unnamed number of houses, and various fine goods including a silver watch and wooden clock.²⁹ The following year, Lanson's upward trajectory

²² Katherine J. Harris, "William Lanson: Businessman, Contractor, and Activist," African American Connecticut Explored, Elizabeth J. Normen, Stacey K. Close, Katherine J. Harris, and Wm. Frank Mitchell, eds., (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 93.

²³ Harris, "William Lanson," 93.

²⁴ Hilary J. Moss, Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 25).

²⁵ Harris, "William Lanson," 96.

²⁶ Quoted in Peter Hinks, "This Beautiful and Rapidly Improving Section of Our City": Race, Labor, and Colonizationalists in Early Industrializing New Haven, 1800–1830, in Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas, 13(1), 2016, 69.

²⁷ Harris, "William Lanson," 94.

²⁸ Harris, "William Lanson," 94–96; Hinks, "This Beautiful and Rapidly Improving Section of Our City," 65.

²⁹ William L. Philie, Change and Tradition: New Haven, Connecticut, 1780–1830, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 182.

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was interrupted when the right to vote was revoked by the Connecticut General Assembly as race-based restrictions were enacted. Lanson and another Black landowner, Bias Stanley, petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly to reinstate their right to vote, or, barring that, to be relieved of paying taxes; neither request was granted.³⁰

By 1820, Black residents in New Haven, regardless of their financial status, were generally perceived by white residents as being "intemperate, impoverished, and prone to vice." Lanson was no longer predominantly working in construction, and instead had become the proprietor of a livery stable patronized by many of New Haven's wealthy white residents. Shortly thereafter, he worked to develop the New Guinea enclave for Black residents on the Mill River, near today's Wooster Square, likely a result of the growing tensions between white and Black residents. Lanson established a boarding house that housed Black workers and self-emancipated enslaved persons making their way north on the Underground Railroad. Lanson also owned several smaller dwellings that he rented to Black and white families. The neighborhood was viewed as a slum by white residents of New Haven; it became known as a home for low-income Black workers and was believed to be the locus of vice in New Haven. As New Haven expanded, New Guinea's residents were pushed out by developers who pressured Lanson to sell.

In October 1824, Lanson and other Black and white residents of New Haven formed the African United Ecclesiastical Society, which focused on religious and educational outreach and programming for the city's Black residents. The following year, he was elected the "Black Governor" of New Haven, and became known by New Haven residents as "King Lanson;" he served until 1830.³³ In 1826, the African United Ecclesiastical Society, in conjunction with white reformers Simeon Jocelyn and Rev. Leonard Bacon, established the African Improvement Society to improve the Black residents' prospects.³⁴ Concurrently, Lanson established a new Black enclave in New Township, and established a new boarding house, called the Liberian Hotel.³⁵

According to his son Isaiah, Lanson also constructed the East Haven bridge and the steamboat wharf adjacent to Long Wharf. His successes led to additional building contracts, including, later, for the Farmington Canal in the 1820s. Lanson typically hired free Black men to work on his construction projects, many of which were for leading abolitionists in the city, including James Hillhouse, who was the superintendent of the Farmington Canal project, which began in 1825. In 1827, Lanson was hired to build the canal basin, east of Long Wharf. It appears that he used similar materials and construction techniques, again using stone from Blue Mountain.³⁶

By the 1830s, Lanson was a frequent target of racial ire and violence in the city, possibly a result of the rebellion of enslaved Blacks led by Nat Turner in southern Virginia in 1831. The Liberian

³⁰ Harris, "William Lanson," 96.

³¹Philie, Change and Tradition, 182.

³² Philie, Change and Tradition, 182–183.

³³ Harris, "William Lanson," 97–98.

³⁴ Hinks, "This Beautiful and Rapidly Improving Section of Our City," 73.

³⁵ Hinks, "This Beautiful and Rapidly Improving Section of Our City," 85–86.

³⁶ Harris, "William Lanson," 97.

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Hotel was derided as a place of immoral entertainment and cheap whiskey. A raid in 1831 by a mob of angry residents resulted in white visitors to the establishment being "arrested." Lanson was arrested numerous times, and spent six months in jail; it seemed that the white authorities held Lanson personally responsible for any perceived wrong-doing by Black residents in New Haven. By 1843, injuries from a fall forced Lanson out of the construction business. Lanson's final years were marked by financial downturn as a result of fines levied by the City, legal fees, and national economic instability from 1837 through the 1840s. He died in a New Haven almshouse in 1851.

Efforts to malign Lanson's contributions to New Haven continued after his death, including an article written by New Haven tax collector Gardiner Morse in 1887 that derided Lanson for establishing a "settlement on the waterfront, at the foot of Greene Street, on the lot then occupied by a barn-like building, known as the old slaughter-house, which he converted into a house of resort and entertainment for guests of his kind, and surrounded it with, buildings and barracks for the accommodation of tenants of color of a low and unfortunate condition of life and character." Despite this, Lanson's influence on the city remains evident in the Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church congregation, the Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway, and Long Wharf Pier. "Mr. Lanson...was respected as a man of energy and skill, and was a useful citizen. Becoming involved in his latter days, he fell into bad repute, but even then was a man receiving considerable respect for his previous worth. He was capable of great things." "43

In September 2020, a statue of Lanson, sculpted by California artist Dana King, was unveiled in New Haven, along the Farmington Canal Trail, north of Long Wharf Pier. During the ceremony, New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker pardoned Lanson, acknowledging and apologizing for the harm done to Lanson and his family by the New Haven government.⁴⁴

CRITERION C - ENGINEERING

Long Wharf Pier is significant at the state level under Criterion C in the area of engineering as a well-preserved example of an early nineteenth century stone pier and wharf. Long Wharf Pier was initially constructed in 1663–1683 as an earth, wood, and stone wharf system that was expanded repeatedly in 1710, 1717, and 1731 in an effort to improve the loading and unloading

³⁷ Robert Austin Warner, *New Haven Negroes, a social history*, (New Haven, CT: Published for the Institute of Human Relations by Yale University Press, 1940), 28–29.

³⁸ Close, "William Lanson Shaped New Haven."

³⁹ William Lanson, *William Lanson's Book of Satisfaction: Addressed to the Public*, (New Haven, CT: Printed for the Author, 1848).

⁴⁰ Harris, "William Lanson," 99.

⁴¹ Quoted in Harris, "William Lanson," 99.

⁴² Harris, "William Lanson," 99. The extant Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church was built in 1968 and listed in the National Register in 2018. The Connecticut section of the Farmington Canal was listed in the National Register in 1985.

⁴³ Trowbridge, *History of Long Wharf*, 98.

⁴⁴ Simisola Fagbemi, "City unveils statue of William Lanson, Black engineer and activist," *Yale News*, September 28, 2020.

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of trade goods in New Haven Harbor. In 1748, Long Wharf was about 429 ft long and constructed of timber bulkheads filled with earth and stone. The bulkheads consisted of wooden piles driven into the harbor bottom that supported large wood rails that formed enclosures for the earth and stone. This was a common construction form for wharves at the time; other examples of this type have been identified in Norwich and Preston, Connecticut, both on the Thames River. It is likely these earlier eighteenth- and nineteenth-century iterations of the wharf are buried under portions of the existing wharf and the infill for I-95. Because the remains have not been confirmed/documented via archaeological testing, the pier is being evaluated under Criterion C. It is likely, however, that if confirmed, the remains could provide insight into eighteenth verses nineteenth century timber wharf construction.

In 1810, William Lanson began the expansion of Long Wharf at the behest of the Contractors. Lanson owned a rock quarry in East Haven where he and his crew quarried the stone (see Figure 5), consisting predominantly of reddish basalt from Blue Mountain, also called East Rock. 48 The stones were loaded onto specially-built scows—flat-bottomed boats—that were capable of hauling 25-ton stones, from a wharf designed by Lanson to accommodate the load of the stones. From East Haven, the stones for the Long Wharf extension were carried by scow and unloaded in New Haven where they were set in place and backed by fill. ⁴⁹ Specific details on how this was carried out have not been identified; this may partially be due to the general lack of documentation on the work of African Americans during the time period. Fill for the new wharf structure was composed predominantly of stone, gravel, and sand dredged from the harbor. Much of the harbor stone is believed to have been ballast discharged by trade ships, and thus could have come from Sicily, Ireland, the West Indies, Malta, and innumerable other foreign ports.⁵⁰ The wharf was protected from damage by docking ships by a system of wood fenders, a remnant of which may be visible on the northeast side in Photograph 6. The surface of the wharf was raised above the high tide line, likely represented by the ashlar-cut top courses of stones below the modern superstructure, as part of Lanson's work (Figures 9–12). The raised surface prevented the wharf flooding in the spring and allowed for warehouses and industrial and development along the wharf. The final dimensions of the portion of the wharf constructed by Lanson were "2010 feet in length, eight feet thick at bottom, six at top, and eight feet high." ⁵¹

At the time of its construction, Lanson's quarry-cut stone wharf was unusual in its construction. National Park Service historian Edwin Small's *Wharf Building of a Century and More Ago* (1941) notes that in the port of Salem, Massachusetts, which developed similarly to New Haven,

⁴⁵ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*,7–8.

⁴⁶ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, i.

⁴⁷ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 17.

⁴⁸ Ben Lambert, "How the history of New Haven's 'Black Governor' helps expand the city's story." New Haven, CT: *New Haven Register*, September 3, 2020. https://www.nhregister.com/news/article/How-the-history-of-New-Haven-s-Black-15540462.php

⁴⁹ Peter P. Hinks, "The Successes and Struggles of New Haven Entrepreneur William Lanson," 2021, https://connecticuthistory.org/successes-and-struggles-of-new-haven-entrepreneur-william-lanson/, accessed January 2024.

⁵⁰ Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 10.

⁵¹ Quoted in Stacey Close, "William Lanson Shaped New Haven," *Humanities*, Vol 42(1), 2021, https://www.neh.gov/article/william-lanson-shaped-new-haven, accessed January 2024.

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stone wharves were generally built of cobblestone or beach stones, rather than large, quarried stones. Further, the stone wharves were generally of cobb construction, rather than the ashlar stone walls of Long Wharf, and would have been built on a solid bedrock surface. The lack of a bedrock bottom and ongoing sedimentation from the Mill River made the construction of a sufficiently long wharf to reach deep waters difficult. Two other contractors before Lanson were unsuccessful in constructing the pier. Today, the only other partially extant masonry stone wharf in Connecticut is State Pier (Central Vermont Railroad Pier) (NRDIS 04001551) in New London. State Pier was built much later in 1876 and used steam-powered quarrying, transportation, and construction methods.⁵² In 2014, portions of the State Pier collapsed and in 2021 efforts began to cover the pier as part of a New London waterfront construction project.⁵³ Lanson's wharf, however, appears to be significantly longer than anything previously or concurrently constructed with stone and has maintained more integrity.⁵⁴ Importantly, Lanson's wharf was constructed at the edge of the deep waters of Long Island Sound in order to ease the transfer of cargo from ocean-going vessels.

Post-Period of Significance

In 1963, the New Haven Redevelopment Agency created a waterfront park at the north end of Long Wharf, and built a new wharf superstructure on the remains of the original Lanson portion of the wharf, preserving the stone structure in situ. The Welcome Center was likely constructed as part of this effort. The Lanson portion of the wharf remains visible at low tide, providing a visual record of early nineteenth-century stone wharf construction. Interior investigations into the wharf structure would be needed to fully understand how Lanson constructed the wharf and to confirm the fill materials, which are speculated to be ballast from around the world; no such investigations have been undertaken to date.

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⁵² Clouette, *Historical and Archaeological Assessment Survey*, 17.

⁵³ Greg Smith, "Historic New London pier to be documented as part of \$235 million construction project." New London, CT: *The Day*, August 13, 2021. https://www.theday.com/local-news/20210813/historical-new-london-pier-to-be-documented-as-part-of-235-million-construction-project.

⁵⁴ Edwin W. Small, *Wharf Building of a Century and More Ago*, (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1941), 4–7.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):	······································
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR of previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register	67) has been requested
designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	
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Long Wharf Pier	New Haven, Connecticu
Name of Property	County and State
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	
recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	-
Primary location of additional data:	
x State Historic Preservation Office	
Other State agency	
Federal agency	
Local government	
University	
x_ Other	
Name of repository: New Haven Library, New Haven Museum	
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property 5.5 acres	
Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates	
Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees) Datum if other than WGS84:	
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places) A. Latitude: 41.293695 Longitude: -72.916121	
A. Lantuuc. +1.473073 Lungnuc/2.710141	

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

The boundary of Long Wharf Pier National Register property encompasses the entire extant structure extending south into New Haven Harbor/Long Island Sound from New Haven Drive, conforming to the property parcel identified in City assessment records (2024) as 206-0023-00200. A line of convenience has been drawn to encompass the southernmost portion of the structure, which is not bounded by any assessor parcels.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was selected to encompass all of the extant Long Wharf Pier structure and visible remnants of the 1810s pier structure.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900

Combon No. 1024-0018

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Name of Property

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gretchen Pineo, Sr. Architectural Historian; Theodore Dattilo, Cultural Resources Specialist; Virginia H. Adams, Sr. Architectural Historian; Kathryn Whitehill and David Lewis, Associate Architectural Historians____ organization: __The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL)_street & number: _26 Main Street city or town: Pawtucket ____ state: _Rhode Island __ zip code: _02860 e-mail_vadams@palinc.com_ telephone: _(401) 728-8780 ____ date: _May 2024

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.)

Long Wharf Pier
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County and State

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, 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: Long Wharf Pier

City or Vicinity: New Haven

County: New Haven State: Connecticut

Photographer: Theodore Dattilo and David Lewis, PAL

Date Photographed: August 22 (Dattilo) and 30 (Lewis), 2023.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 16. Long Wharf Pier, looking south from Long Wharf Drive.
- 2 of 16. Long Wharf Pier, looking southwest from beach east of pier.
- 3 of 16. Long Wharf Pier, looking southeast from head of pier.
- 4 of 16. Long Wharf Pier, looking southeast toward 1810 masonry underneath modern riprap.
- 5 of 16. Long Wharf Pier, looking southewest toward 1810 masonry underneath modern riprap.
- 6 of 16. Long Wharf Pier, looking southwest toward wood structural remains on the side of the pier.
- 7 of 16. Long Wharf Pier wood pier and floating platforms, looking north.
- 8 of 16. Detail of 1810 masonry remains showing quarry marks, southeast of modern pier.
- 9 of 16. Masonry remains from 1810 extension of Long Wharf Pier, looking northwest.
- 10 of 16. Modern tidal marker constructed on top of Long Wharf Pier remnants, looking north.
- 11 of 16. Detail of wood structural remains within Long Wharf Pier footprint south of modern tidal marker, looking southwest.
- 12 of 16. Long Wharf Pier remnants, looking south.
- 13 of 16. Long Wharf Pier Welcome Center, looking east.
- 14 of 16. Long Wharf Pier Welcome Center, looking north.

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15 of 16. Long Wharf Pier looking northwest toward Amistad Freedom Schooner Ticket Booth (left) and *Amistad* (right).

16 of 16. Long Wharf Pier and Amistad Freedom Schooner Ticketing Booth, looking east.

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Figures



Figure 1. Long Wharf Pier Coordinate Map (Google Earth 2024).

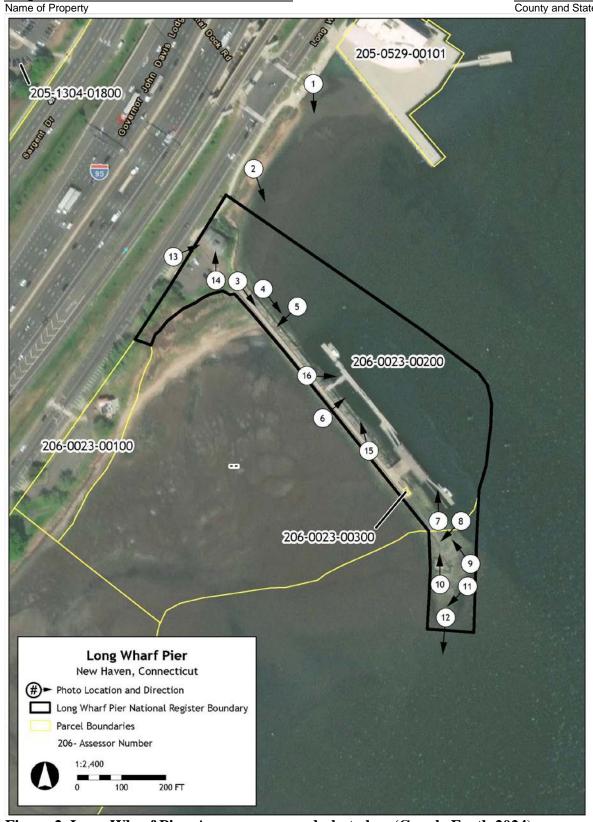


Figure 2. Long Wharf Pier, Assessor map and photo key (Google Earth 2024).

New Haven, Connecticut



Figure 3. Long Wharf Pier, Resource Map (Google Earth 2024).

New Haven, Connecticut

Name of Property

County and State

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H A R B O U R

Figure 4. 1824 Plan of New Haven showing Long Wharf Pier and development in east side of New Haven (A. Doolittle 1824).

Name of Property

Name of Property

County and State

Charles

Cha

Figure 5. 1856 map of New Haven, showing location of East Rock and Long Wharf (H& C.T. Smith 1856).

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Figure 6. 1886 map showing development around Long Wharf (Sanborn 1886).

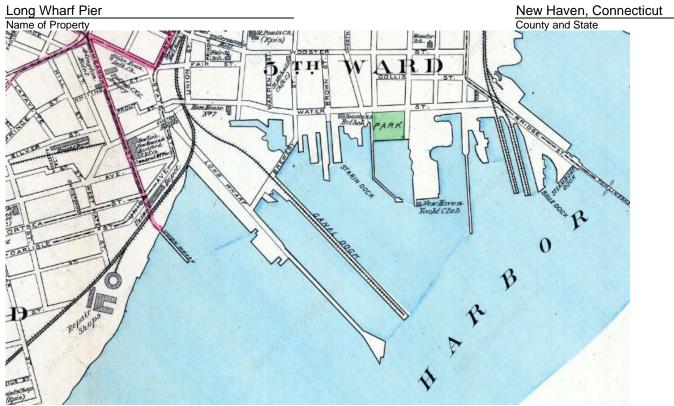


Figure 7. 1893 map of New Haven showing infill around Long Wharf (Hurd 1893)

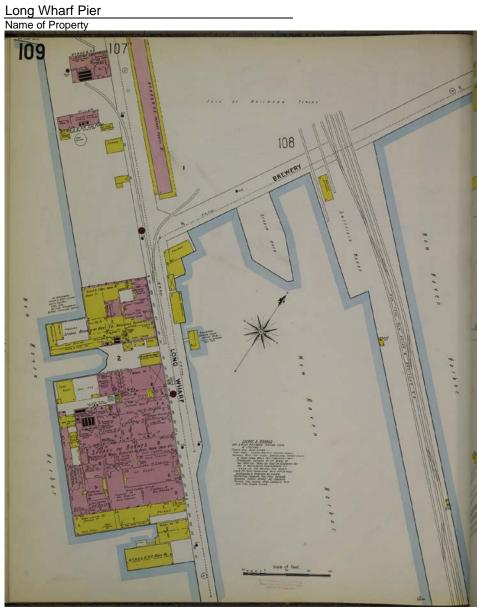


Figure 8. 1901 map of Long Wharf (Sanborn 1901)

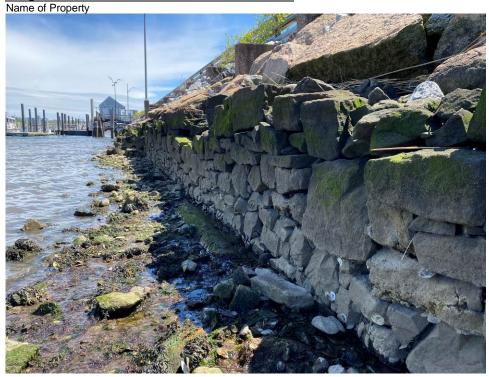


Figure 9. Long Wharf Pier structure, looking south (2021, New Haven Preservation Trust).



Figure 10. Long Wharf Pier structure, looking south (2021, New Haven Preservation Trust).



Figure 11. Long Wharf Pier structure, showing stone walls laid by Lanson (2021, New Haven Preservation Trust).



Figure 12. Detail of Long Wharf Pier structure, looking southwest (2021, New Haven Preservation Trust).

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



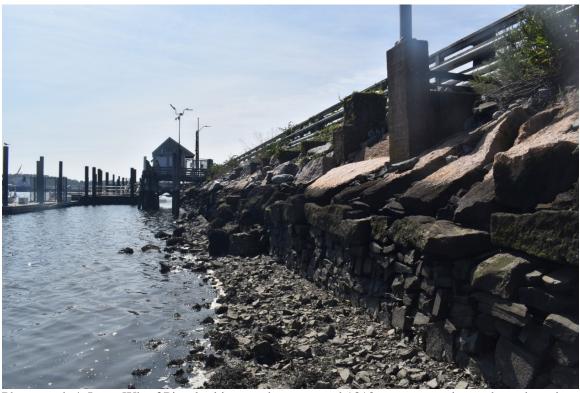
Photograph 1. Long Wharf Pier, looking south from Long Wharf Drive.



Photograph 2. Long Wharf Pier, looking southwest from beach east of pier.

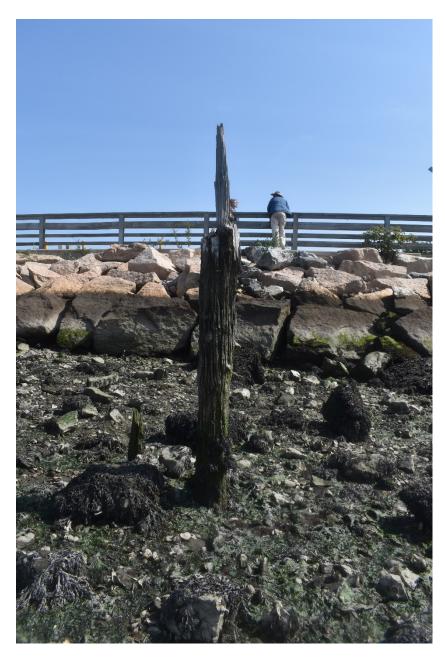


Photograph 3. Long Wharf Pier, looking southeast from head of the pier.



Photograph 4. Long Wharf Pier, looking southeast toward 1810 masonry underneath modern rip-rap.





Photograph 6. Long Wharf Pier, looking southwest toward wood structural remains on the side of the pier.



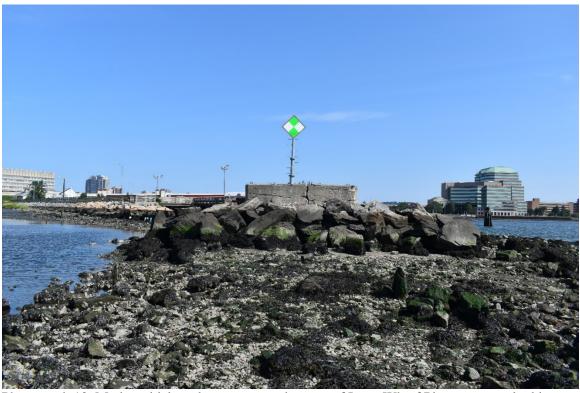
Photograph 7. Long Wharf Pier wood pier and floating platforms, looking north.



Photograph 8. Detail of 1810 masonry remains showing quarry marks, southeast of modern pier.



Photograph 9. Masonry remains from 1810 extension of Long Wharf Pier, looking northwest.



Photograph 10. Modern tidal marker constructed on top of Long Wharf Pier remnants, looking north.



Photograph 11. Detail of wood structural remains within Long Wharf Pier footprint south of modern tidal marker, looking southwest.



Photograph 12. Long Wharf Pier remnants, looking south.



Photograph 13. Long Wharf Pier Welcome Center, looking east.



Photograph 14. Long Wharf Pier Welcome Center, looking north.



Photograph 15. Long Wharf Pier looking northwest toward Amistad Freedom Schooner Ticket Booth (left) and *Amistad* (right).



Photograph 16. Long Wharf Pier and Amistad Freedom Schooner Ticket Booth, looking east.