

62 Bradford Village Historic District

Goshen Road, Bradford, Vermont



While bricks and mortar, wood and nails are the typical materials in any New England historic district, it's the people and stories that truly color the character of a town. Bradford Village is no exception.

The influence of several prominent 19th century men can be observed throughout the Bradford Village Historic District. By far the most internationally-influential man was James Wilson, creator of America's first artificial globe in 1799. As a self-taught map maker, Wilson established the Globe factory in 1813, producing terrestrial and celestial copper engraved globes.

Asa Low was the dominant figure in Bradford's industrial development. Low was responsible for building two grist mills, brick mill store, paper mill, and two brick kilns, among his other diverse pursuits. Both the brick grist mill and the brick mill store, constructed in 1847 and 1835, respectively, survive today as a tribute to his entrepreneurship and the past of Bradford Village.

Lambert Packard was a prominent Vermont architect who heavily influenced the architectural character of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, with the support of the affluent Fairbanks family. In Bradford, Packard designed the Bank Block for the Bradford Savings Bank and the Woods Library. The Woods Library building, completed in 1895, was designed in Packard's adaption of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Another Vermont architect, though not as well documented as Packard, to influence the area was George Gurnsey of Montpelier, Vermont. Gurnsey was responsible for designing the Woods School Building also known as the Bradford Academy.

A number of architectural styles are represented throughout the Historic District including Greek Revival, Richardsonian Romanesque, High Victorian Italianate, Second Empire, Federal, and Queen Anne. Greek Revival buildings dominate Main and North Main Streets, as the village's period of prosperity correlated with the popularity of the Greek Revival style. Some of the older buildings in the Historic District can be found along South Main Street above the falls of the Waits River; including the Sawyer House, a Federal style house with a pedimented gable and veranda dating to 1826, the similarly designed Harry Stevens House built in 1855, a 5-bay, clapboarded "I-house," the Craft House, with a portico built in 1785, and the adjacent Gamsby House built in 1807 featuring a brick first story and clapboarded second and attic stories that were later additions.

The Bradford Village Historic District geographically encompasses the Village's business district, the area around the falls of the Waits River where much of the early industries in the village were

located, and adjacent residential areas to the north and west. The railroad depot in Bradford, a former Boston & Maine Railroad depot, marks the northern boundary of the Historic District. The streets found within the Historic Village include South Main Street above the falls of the Waits River, Bradford's 19th century commercial Main Street, the residential North Main Street, in addition to Depot, Pleasant, High and Mills Streets, Wrights Avenue and Goshen Road. Most of the buildings in the Historic District can be found along Main Street. The Bradford Village Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

Sources:

"Bradford Village Historic District in Bradford." *Bradford Village Historic District*. Historic Places. Web. Accessed 3 May 2013. <http://www.historicplaces.net/historicplace/ul281238/bradford-village-historic-district/bradford-vermont/>

"Bradford Village Historic District." *Vermont Heritage Network: Historical Architecture*. The University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program. Web. Accessed 3 May 2013. <http://www.uvm.edu/~vhnet/histarch/hahd27.html>

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