

16. Historical and Archaeological Resources

Introduction

From the earliest times, until the advent of the automobile, settlement in Brewer centered on the Penobscot River. This section provides a brief overview of the major places and structures that have been the backdrop to important events in the lives of those who have lived and toiled along Brewer's waterfront.

Archaeological Sites

There are two types of archaeological sites (Native American, before European arrival), and historic archaeological sites (mostly European-American, after written historic records, about 1600 A.D.). Prehistoric sites include campsites or village locations, rock quarries and workshops (for making stone tools), and petroglyphs or rock carvings.

Prehistoric archaeological sites. Native Americans have lived, camped, hunted and fished along the river at numerous sites and there are many tales of the Penobscots' and Abenakis' exploits in the area. Documented evidence of their settlements, however, is sparse. Most commonly, prehistoric archaeological sites are located within 50 meters of canoe-navigable water, on relatively well-drained, level land. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) has identified and mapped the general location of six sites in Brewer. Four are located along the Penobscot River, one is located on Eaton Stream in North Brewer, and one is located away from the river in South Brewer.

Historic archaeological sites. Historic archaeological sites may include cellar holes from houses, foundations for farm buildings, mills, wharves and boat yards, as well as near-shore shipwrecks. MHPC has identified 10 historic archaeological sites, as shown in the table below.

Historic Archaeological Sites in Brewer			
MHPC #	Site	Description	Time Period
ME 054-001	"Rosa Mueller"	American wreck, schooner	July 29, 1090
ME 054-002	Holyoke House well	Anglo-American well, undergr. rr	Late 1820's?
ME 054-003	Brewer's Mill	Anglo-American mill, saw mill	1770-early 20 th c.
ME 054-004	Phinney	Unidentified wreck, vessel	Rev. War
ME 054-005	Felts Brook Barn Complex	American farmstead	19 th century
ME 054-006	Brewer Steam Brick Co.	American brickyard, after	1859-1890
ME 054-007	"Ignazio"	American wreck, unidentified	August, 1869
ME 054-008	Aldrich's saw mill	English mill, saw mill ca.	1823 to 1840-50s
ME 054-009	Rider's brick yard	English brickyard, ca.	1858-1859
ME 054-0010	Brewer Cove Shipwreck	American wreck, unidentified	Poss. Rev. War

Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

The remains of one of the American vessels destroyed in the 1779 Penobscot Expedition has been discovered by Kustom Steel Boatyard's owner, Brent Phinney, and the site is listed on U.S. Navy mapping as the "Phinney site." The site is midway between the present "Schooners Restaurant on the Brewer side and the Harbor Master on the Bangor side.

Historic Structures

According to information from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, there are two structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Penobscot Salmon Club and Pool, off North Main Street, on the river and
- Daniel Sargent House, at 613 South Main Street.

Based on survey data, the MHPC has identified three additional properties that may also be eligible for listing in the national register:

- House, 508 South Main Street
- House, 596 South Main Street
- Brewer Armory, 133 Elm Street

Brewer Register of Historic Places (updated through March, 2013)

The Brewer Register of Historic Places is a program to increase awareness of Brewer's history by developing a registry that recognizes houses over 100 years old, residences of historic figures and important historic city sites. The program is a partnership between the City of Brewer and the Brewer Historical Society (a 501 c3 corporation that is not a City entity). This register is open to all Brewer property owners and is a non-regulatory recognition of the value of Brewer's past history.

The City of Brewer, through the City Council's Historic Resources Advisory Board (created by the City Council in 2008 to work with the Brewer Historical Society), provides a clearinghouse for historic place recognition. The Brewer Historical Society maintains the documentation of the registry.

The program is promoted to the citizens of Brewer as a way to become actively involved in the City's history by displaying a sign on the outside of a qualified property that depicts the homeowner's naming of the house, the date the property was built, a replica of the historic Brewer seal and the Brewer Historical Society designation at the bottom. The owner pays a nominal fee for the sign.

Properties include:

1. 350 North Main Street (birthplace and childhood home of Civil War hero General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain); early American Cape Cod house, 1 story, built in 1818 and rebuilt using dormers in 1900 into a Gothic Cottage style house.
2. 5 East Summer Street (Fiddlehead Inn); Victorian, 2.5 story house with Queen Anne features, built around 1885
3. 173 Wilson Street (Fannie Hardy Eckstorm house); Classic Revival, mid 19th Century, 1.5 story with many original details still present
4. 199 Wilson Street (Brewer Historical Society Clewley Museum); Classical Revival, built around 1880

5. 60 Parker Street (home and original business premises of Old Footman Dairy); Victorian-Queen Anne, 2.5 story with attached carriage house, built around 1880
6. 57 Parker Street (parsonage of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Brewer from 1873-1922); Early American style, 1.5 story, Cape Cod with door window, built pre-Civil War
7. 7 Howard Street; Federal Revival style, 2.5 story, built around 1870
8. 34 Brimmer Street; Queen Anne, 2.5 story, built in 1907
9. 80 Chamberlain Street (homestead of Joshua L. Chamberlain, Jr.; Classical Revival, 2.5 story, door window lights, fine wooden corners, early turned molding at roof; built around 1835
10. Oak Hill Cemetery; started in 1825
11. North Brewer Cemetery; acquired in 1840
12. Chamberlain Freedom Park; built in 1997
13. 105 Union Street; Classical Revival, 2 story, built around 1870
14. 484 Day Road; New England Farmhouse, homestead started about 1860

Educational Resources

Brewer has made a significant commitment to providing educational resources highlighting its historical cultural heritage. These include several parks which have oral and/or cultural significance including Chamberlain Freedom Park, Indian Trails Park, the Rocks Park (pocket park on the river near the I 395 exit) and the proposed Brewer Historic Waterfront Trail with its conceptual educational stations on the history of the river. Other educational resources include the City's website, the Brewer Historical Society website, and historical displays contained at the Library and the new Community School.

Other Historic Information

The special significance of the river and the resources along its banks is well illustrated in "A Pictorial History of Brewer, Maine," published in 1976. Yet, today there is little to show of this proud history, and none of the old shipyards, brickyards, ice houses, or mill sites can be readily identified. A few notes from that History make the point:

- Between 1849 and 1919, 163 barques, brigs, schooner, sloops and ships were built in shipyards like Barbour's, Charles Cooper & Co., Joseph Oakes & Son, Dunning, and others.

- In 1870, Brewer's 18 brickyards employed 126 "hands" and made over 11.25 million bricks; the brickyards flourished because of the excellent brick clays found near good wharfage on the riverfront. The brick industry thrived from before 1850 until about 1919.
- In 1883, the "Mining and Industrial Journal" reported that there were four very large mills, running on steam, on the waterfront. They noted the existence of a planing and box mill, house finishing mills, brush manufacturers, a molding mill and the Dirigo Steam Mill which manufactured long lumber, clapboards, shingles, lathes, pickets and fish flakings. (As early as 1836, the "Niles Register" reported 200 sawmills within a few miles of Bangor manufacturing 1,500,000 feet of boards daily!).
- Between 1879 and the turn of the century, some 13 ice companies operated huge ice houses on the Penobscot in Brewer. Up to half a million tons were harvested on the Penobscot annually and, at the height of the trade a cargo of 2,000 tons was not infrequent.
- In 1889, the Eastern Manufacturing Company (later Eastern Fine and now Cianbro) was organized for the purpose of building a pulp mill at Sargent Point. Constructed on the site of a number of sawmills, Eastern Manufacturing expanded steadily for the next 30 years under F.W. Ayer's and John Sullivan's leadership.

Analysis

1. **Evidence of historic patterns of settlement.** Many of the older, smaller lots (many still have the older homes) are located in South Brewer which serviced the mill. North Brewer has the old "river lots", long narrow parcels running up from the river.
2. **Protective measures currently existing for historic and archaeological resources and their effectiveness.** The City of Brewer and the Historical Society have established a partnership to administer the Brewer Register of Historic Places, but participation is strictly voluntary.
3. **Site plan and/or subdivision requirements.** The Land Use Code requires applicants for major projects to contact State agencies for their input on state-identified historic or archaeological sites.
4. **State of repair of significant historic resources and whether the community can provide preservation incentives.** Properties on the National Register of Historic Places are generally in good condition. The Brewer Register of Historic Places provides an incentive to preserve properties on a voluntary basis by appealing to landowners' sense of civic pride in the historic importance of their properties.