

# Historic and Archaeological Resources

## Outstanding Questions/Comments:

- Are there any known Historic properties in disrepair? Condition issues? (emailed FHS 1/23/24)
- This chapter may need to be updated pending changes to Design Review District boundaries and the Color Overlay District.

## Highlights

- MHPC has identified 57 historic archaeological sites in Freeport.
- There are 5 National Register of Historic Places listings in Freeport:
  - Pettingill House and Farm, Mass Landing vicinity
  - Captain Greenfield Pote House, Wolfe's Neck Road
  - Harraseeket Historic District (comprised of 3 villages with 31 18th and 19th century significant structures and sites)
  - Freeport Main Street Historic District (nine sites)
  - E.B. Mallett Office Building, Mill Street
- Freeport has two designated Design Review Districts. Within those districts, all buildings are divided into three classifications:
  - Class A - Buildings existing in 1930 in Design Review District 1 and 1950 in Design Review District 2 which have major architectural, historical and/or neighborhood significance;
  - Class B - All buildings existing in 1930 in Design Review District 1 and 1950 in Design Review District 2 which have major architectural, historical and/or neighborhood significance.
  - Class C - Buildings not classified A or B
- The Freeport Village Overlay District provides design standards to ensure that buildings reflect the overall vision for Freeport Village. Design standards apply to lots within the Design Review District that are also within the Village Overlay District.
- Freeport is not a Certified Local Government (CLG). Becoming a CLG through the Maine Historic Preservation Commission would allow Freeport access to more resources and funding for the protection of historic resources.

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# Community History and Patterns of Settlement

Beginning around 11,000 BCE, the Wabanaki people inhabited the area now known as Freeport. The coastal location and natural resources provided good hunting and fishing, fertile land, and water access. At the time of European contact around 1600, the area was part of the Wabanaki Confederacy, inhabited by the Eastern Abenaki and the semi-autonomous Aucocisco band.

Early settlement attempts by European colonizers were characterized by conflict with the Wabanaki, who viewed land deeds as temporary permission to use the land, while the Europeans used deeds to grant themselves exclusive rights. Over time, a series of wars and European-introduced diseases decimated the indigenous population and drove most surviving Wabanaki northward.

Following the end of the French and Indian Wars, English settlers began moving into the area. Freeport was originally part of North Yarmouth in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, an area chartered in 1680 that spanned from modern-day Cumberland up through Harpswell. Freeport was set off from North Yarmouth and incorporated in 1789. The town was likely named for the ice-free nature of its port.

Through the 18th century, the town of Freeport developed as a series of villages. Mast Landing, Porter's Landing, and South Freeport grew along the peninsulas of Casco Bay and the Harraseeket River, where timber from nearby forests supported a thriving shipbuilding industry. Porter's Landing also served as the town's port. The inland farming village of Freeport Corner (today's Freeport village) developed around a crossroads for trade.

By the mid-19th century, the wooden shipbuilding industry was starting to decline, but the arrival of the railroad turned Freeport Corner into a thriving commercial center. Shoe manufacturing was central to Freeport's growth. The first shoe manufacturing company opened in Freeport around 1881. A few years later, Edmund Buxton Mallet, Jr., a young businessman who had recently received a large inheritance, invested in the town. Mallet, Jr. built a larger shoe factory, as well as a sawmill, a grist mill, and a brickyard, along with housing for workers. Mallet's investments spurred a transformation in Freeport's economy from maritime to manufacturing.

In 1912, Leon Leonwood Bean, dissatisfied with his options for hunting footwear, invented his own type of boot and began to manufacture it in Freeport's shoe factories and sell it via mail order catalog. The nascent company's image was bolstered by Maine's growing reputation as a destination for outdoor recreation. By the 1930s, L.L. Bean had grown into a major business with its manufacturing and a popular walk-in retail store in Freeport village, as well as a highly-regarded mail order catalog.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, summer tourism was growing in Maine. In Freeport, summer cottages were developed on Bustins Island, Harraseeket Park, Cushing Briggs, Wolfe's Neck, and Flying Point<sup>1</sup>. In 1902, the electric trolley line from Yarmouth to Brunswick opened, connecting Freeport to those towns as well as providing access to a connecting line that went to

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<sup>1</sup> The Freeport Bicentennial Commemorative Journal, 1989, p. 24.

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Portland<sup>2</sup>. The trolley supported the tourism industry in Freeport. Casco Castle, a large, fashionable summer hotel was constructed in South Freeport, with a trolley connection.<sup>3</sup>

Freeport continued as a hub of shoe manufacturing, robust to the impacts of the Great Depression, and spurred on by production needs during World War II. South Freeport's wooden shipyards experienced a brief revival during World War I and World War II, but following the end of World War II, the industry ceased for good<sup>4</sup>. By the 1950s, L.L. Bean was a household name throughout the country, and its Freeport retail store was a destination, staying open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

During this time, the trolley and passenger railroad were supplanted by automobile travel. Freeport Village's Main Street became part of US Route One, making it a popular stopping point for tourists driving through coastal Maine. The construction of Interstate 295 in the late 1950s and early 1960s bisected Freeport, impacting travel and development in town. Housing development quickened in the decades from 1960-1990. This residential growth in Freeport became decentralized; new homes were built in rural areas of Freeport, away from the historic villages.

In the 1960s, Freeport's shoe industry began to decline as manufacturing trends shifted in the United States. By 1972, fifteen Freeport shoe factories had closed. The last shoe factory in the Mallet building closed in 1980, and the building was demolished shortly after<sup>5</sup> (E.B. Mallet's office building on Mill Street is a remaining landmark of Freeport's manufacturing past and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.)

As industry declined in Freeport, retail boomed. In 1975, there were 35 retail stores in Freeport Village. By 1989, there were 190<sup>6</sup>. New businesses were predominately shopping outlets, continuing Freeport's tourist draw. Some residents expressed concern about drawing only this type of retail to downtown Freeport, and plans for McDonald's to demolish a historic home on Main Street in the early 1980s drew attention to the need to preserve historic Freeport village. Freeport's design standards were later developed to help protect historic resources as the town continued to grow.

Freeport maintains much of its historic patterns of development around the traditional villages today. The villages of Mast Landing, Porters Landing, and South Freeport contain a range of intact early- to mid-19th century architecture and village patterns, including large houses for prominent families and smaller, vernacular style homes for shipyard workers. In Freeport Village, a series of fires and the arrival of Route One and I-295 in the 20th century have altered the built environment, but the village crossroads and several significant historic structures remain. Beyond Freeport's villages, much of the town's rural and agricultural characteristics remain, even as suburban-style development has proliferated.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mainememory.net/record/59801>

<sup>3</sup> Casco Castle burned down in 1914. The resort's stone tower remains today and is located on private property.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.25.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.freeporthistoricalsociety.org/freeport-history/>

<sup>6</sup> The Freeport Bicentennial Commemorative Journal, 1989, p. 54.

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## Prehistoric Sites

According to 2023 data from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), there are 42 known prehistoric archaeological sites in Freeport, 34 of which may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. One is a very ancient (c. 11,000 years old) encampment near the Desert of Maine. The majority of these sites are coastal shell middens along the shoreline. These coastal sites may be at risk from erosion and sea level rise.

The following archaeological site map, produced by MHPC in 2009, is still valid.

[\*\*INSERT: PREHISTORIC SITES MAP, (Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 2009)\*\*]

## Historic Archaeological Sites

MHPC has identified 57 historic archaeological sites in Freeport.

Site Name	Site Number	Site Type	Periods of Significance	National Register Status	Location
William Royall Homestead #1	ME 161-001	settlement	1636- ca. 1646	undetermined	Location Unknown
Pettengill Farm	ME 161-002	farmstead	ca. 1800- 1900	undetermined	Location Known
Thomas Redding Homestead	ME 161-003	domestic	1660s	undetermined	Location Unknown
Thomas Shepherd Homestead	ME 161-004	farmstead	1660s	undetermined	Location Unknown
Richard Drummer Homestead	ME 161-005	farmstead	1660s	undetermined	Location Unknown
Edward Budd Plantation	ME 161-006	farmstead	1678-?	undetermined	Location Unknown
Porter Landing Industrial	ME 161-007	industrial complex		undetermined	Location Known
Bartol Garrison	ME 161-008	garrison house	early 18th century	undetermined	Location Known
Little River Industrial	ME 161-009	brickyard and mill		undetermined	Location Known
Early House	ME 161-010	farmstead		undetermined	Location Known
Brickyard Cove Brickyard	ME 161-011	brickyard		undetermined	Location Known

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Flying Point Saltworks	ME 161-012	industrial, saltworks	c. 1790	undetermined	Location Known
House	ME 161-013	domestic	Late 19th - early 20th centuries	undetermined	Location Known
Talbot Farm #1	ME 161-014	farmstead	ca. 1740	undetermined	Location Known
Talbot Farm #2	ME 161-015	farmstead	1750-1850	undetermined	Location Known
Submit and Daniel Mitchell	ME 161-016	farmstead	ca. 1793 to ca. 1830	undetermined	Location Known
Mallett Office Bldg.	ME 161-017	quarry office	Late 19th/early 20th centuries	undetermined	Location Known
Aldrich (?) Nathaniel House	ME 161-018	farmstead	1763-1840	undetermined	Location Known
Thomas Means homestead	ME 161-019	farmstead	1750-1835	undetermined	Location Known
Arnold House	ME 161-020	farmstead	1745-1790	undetermined	Location Known
House	ME 161-021	farmstead	19th century	undetermined	Location Known
House	ME 161-022	farmstead	19th century	undetermined	Location Known
House	ME 161-023	domestic	19th century	undetermined	Location Known
Barn	ME 161-024	farmstead	19th century	undetermined	Location Known
Brickyard	ME 161-025	brickyard	19th century	undetermined	Location Known
Hunting Camp	ME 161-026	camp, sporting	20th century	undetermined	Location Known
House	ME 161-027	farmstead	17th or early 18th century	undetermined	Location Known
Tidal Mill?	ME 161-028	dam, tidal mill	18th Century?	undetermined	Location Known
Findlay?	ME 161-029	domestic	18th century?	undetermined	Location Known
Smith	ME 161-030	farmstead	18th and 19th Century well (no artifacts)	undetermined	Location Known
Barnabas Soule	ME 161-031	farmstead	18th century	undetermined	Location Known
Brewer (II)	ME 161-032	farmstead		undetermined	Location Known
Mast Landing Farm	ME 161-033	farmstead	19th Century	undetermined	Location Known

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Mast Landing Mill	ME 161-034	mill, sawmill and gristmill and fulling	1795-1857	undetermined	Location Known
Smith (II)	ME 161-035	farmstead	19th Century	undetermined	Location Known
Brewer (I)	ME 161-036	farmstead	possibly mid-18th century to late 19th century, with 20th century artifacts overlying.	undetermined	Location Known
Mitchell	ME 161-037	farmstead	Late 18th century? and 19th century.	undetermined	Location Known
Mast Landing Brickyard	ME 161-038	brickyard		undetermined	Location Known
Joshua Waite	ME 161-039	domestic		undetermined	Location Known
Rodick Heir	ME 161-040	farmstead	c. 1850- c. 1900	undetermined	Location Known
Rodick Heir Farm 1	ME 161-041	farmstead	1850 - 1900	undetermined	Location Known
Harrington House	ME 161-042	domestic	1830-20th c.	undetermined	Location Known
Isaac Allen Jr.	ME 161-043	farmstead	1st quarter 19th c. (1826-1888)?	undetermined	Location Known
Abraham Grant I/II	ME 161-044	farmstead	1760-1800+	undetermined	Location Known
Burnett Bridge Farm	ME 161-045	farmstead	19th century	undetermined	Location Known
Ripple	ME 161-046	wreck, schooner	Jul-10	undetermined	Location Unknown
Polly	ME 161-047	wreck, schooner	1798	undetermined	Location Known
Success	ME 161-048	wreck, schooner	1796	undetermined	Location Known
Charles Ward	ME 161-049	domestic	1857	undetermined	Location Known
T. Wilson	ME 161-050	domestic	Mid 19th C.	undetermined	Location Known
Victory	ME 161-051	wreck, gas screw	1931-1949	undetermined	Location Known
BC-2596	ME 161-052	wreck, scow	13-Nov-57	undetermined	Location Known
Abbot Lawrence	ME 161-053	wreck, schooner	1877	undetermined	Location Known
Casco Castle	ME 161-054	hotel	Built 1906, burned 1914, 100 foot	undetermined	Location Known

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			stone tower remains		
Mitchell Landing	ME 161-055	wharf	19th century?	ineligible	Location Known
Mann Cemetery	ME 161-056	cemetery	1770 or earlier to 1873	undetermined	Location Known
Barnabas Carver Farm	ME 161-057	farmstead	early 19th-early 20th	undetermined	Location Known

(Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 2022)

To date, no professional town-wide surveys for historic archaeological sites have been conducted in Freeport. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission suggests future archaeological surveys should identify potentially significant resources associated with the town’s agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American settlements in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Historic Structures

There are 5 National Register of Historic Places listings in Freeport:

- ❖ Pettengill House and Farm, Mast Landing vicinity
- ❖ Captain Greenfield Pote House, Wolf Neck Road
- ❖ Harraseeket Historic District (comprised of 3 villages with 31 18th and 19th century significant structures & sites)
- ❖ Freeport Main Street Historic District (9 sites)
- ❖ E. B. Mallett Office Building, Mill Street

[\*INSERT MAP OF NRHP LISTINGS AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS\*]

Historic building surveys were conducted in Freeport in 1973-74, 1980, and 1997. The town also maintains a survey of buildings in the Design Review Overlay District in which each structure is classified according to its historic significance.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission suggests a town-wide survey of Freeport’s above-ground historic resources needs to be conducted in order to identify other properties that may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

[\*INSERT MAP OF SURVEYED BUILDINGS (IF AVAILABLE)\*]



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### Historic Preservation

Freeport has several local ordinances that work to protect historic and archaeological resources.

#### Subdivision

Freeport's subdivision ordinance requires that a subdivision will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites, significant wildlife habitat (Subdivision Ordinance, Article 11, Section 11.8.A.) Proposed subdivisions that include sites of prehistoric, historic, or archaeological importance must include appropriate measures to protect those resources, minimize impacts, and be compatible in design with historic structures (Subdivision Ordinance, Article 11, Sections 8.1.B.8, 11.8.B.2.b, and 11.8.C.2.)

#### Design Review

Freeport has two designated Design Review Districts. Within those districts, all buildings are divided into three classifications:

- Class A - Buildings existing in 1930 in Design Review District 1 and 1950 in Design District 2 which have major architectural, historical and/or neighborhood significance;
- Class B - All buildings existing in 1930 in Design Review District 1 and 1950 in Design District 2 which have architectural, historical and/or neighborhood significance;
- Class C - Buildings not classified A or B

A Design Certificate is required for any demolition, moving, or change in exterior appearance of buildings classified as A or B, as well as for different types of new construction and other material changes depending on building classification. Additionally, a four-month notice period is required before the demolition of a Class A or B structure, which has resulted in a few buildings being saved by relocation. The Freeport Project Review Board is the reviewing authority for Design Review Certificates.

#### Freeport Village Overlay District

The Freeport Village Overlay District provides (FVOD) design standards to ensure that buildings reflect the overall vision for Freeport Village. Design standards apply to lots within the Design Review District that are also within the Village Overlay District. Design standards cover setbacks, architecture, landscaping, lighting. In some cases, site design standards such as street trees, roads, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and trails also apply. There are areas where this district overlaps with the Design Review Districts, and both sets of standards would apply.

These standards do not apply to lots within the Village Commercial I Zone, which is the commercial core of the Freeport Village retail area. The FVOD was created to regulate mixed-use and/or residential development in the areas abutting Freeport's village core.

#### Freeport Historical Society

The Freeport Historical Society (FHS) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Freeport, Maine. Established in 1969, the Society's mission is to collect and preserve; research and exhibit; and teach and advocate the history of Freeport, Maine. The FHS collections are humanities collections which interpret the history and



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culture of Freeport. The date span of our humanities collection, with the exception of the archeological materials—some of which are much earlier, is ca. 1750 to the present, with bulk dates of 1860s to the present. The predominant theme of its humanities collections is Freeport's history, from pre-Revolutionary settlement to the present. The FHS archival collections consist of 262 major collections of which 88 have finding aids or are at least partially processed.<sup>7</sup>

The Freeport Historical Society is also an approved Alternative Repository for the Storage of Non-Confidential Local Government Records for the Town of Freeport (1998) through Maine State Archives. The FHS is the only organization in town which collects and cares for humanities materials relating to the history of Freeport. Through the FHS collections and professional research services, Freeport residents and/or researchers have several resources available to them. This includes but is not limited to:

- Collection 045 (Historic House Surveys). This collection includes comprehensive information on individual historic houses including deed work, 19<sup>th</sup> century map locations, and photographs. Original surveys took place in 1973-1974. Where the Town of Freeport consulted and/or worked with the FHS on updating information through the 1990s-2010s for the Harraseeket Historic District of Main Street Historic District, individual building files may have been updated.
- Research Room and Library with over 300 books on Freeport history, Maine and regional history, genealogies, Freeport town reports, Freeport authors and publications, directories, use copies of vital records (including access to United States Federal Census 1790-1950, United States Agricultural and Industry Census 1850-1880 and various years of the Maine Yearbook and Annual Register of Maine), and researching resources.
- Additionally, the FHS has individual reference collections of photographs (including buildings sorted by tax id) in Collection 100, newspapers clippings (Collection 125) and newspaper collections (various collections), Freeport High School yearbooks (Collection 046), obituary clippings 1870s-present (Collection 074), tax records (1800-1960s, some years missing), cemetery lists, and historic maps.

## Threats to Historic Resources

Freeport is a coastal community, and historic and archaeological resources may be at risk due to increased storms, flooding, and sea level rise, including prehistoric and historic sites along the coast, as well as coastal areas of the Harraseeket Historic District and the Pettengill Farm historic site.

Freeport has not completed a full-town historic archaeology or historic building survey. These sites and structures must be identified and evaluated before the town can develop strategies to preserve them. Comprehensive surveying will also identify additional properties eligible for the National Register.

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<sup>7</sup> Information provided by email from Audrey J. Wolfe, FHS Collections Manager, on 12/22/23.

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Freeport's Design Review Ordinance provides local review and protection for historic buildings within Design Review Districts; however, Freeport is not a Certified Local Government (CLG). Becoming a CLG through the Maine Historic Preservation Commission would allow Freeport access to more resources and funding for the protection of historic resources. The preservation of historic buildings outside of the Design Review Districts is dependent on the individual will of property owners and their desire to protect historic significance.

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