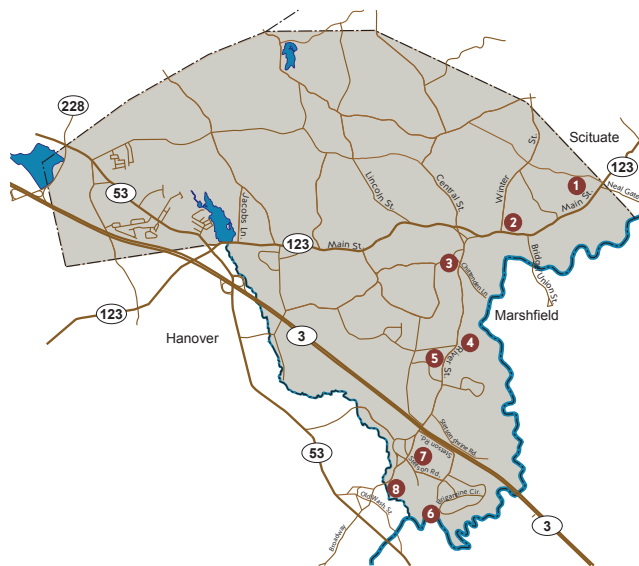


**803 MAIN STREET** The Block House Shipyard was started by the James and Tilden families. William James, the son of John James whose house is down Block House Lane, built this house on Main Street around 1746. William and his wife, Mary Randall, had four children including William Jr. (who succeeded his father at the shipyard) and Josiah (who was later the benefactor of the James Library in Norwell Center). One of the many ships built by William James at the Block House Yard was the *Malabar*, which was 355 tons with two decks, three masts, and 102 feet long and 28 feet wide.

**104 RIVER STREET** Job Randall is believed to be the first shipwright to build at the Chittenden Yard, which was located at the end of Chittenden Lane today. It is not known precisely when Job Randall built this house, but experts who have examined the interior believe it has origins to about 1680 when we know the Randall's first child, Mary, was born. Job Randall's descendants lived in the house for almost 100 years and then it became the property of George Torrey—another shipbuilder at the Chittenden Yard. The Torrey family had a store on the property (see the photo on the cover of this brochure) with a hall overhead where the young people of the mid-1800s held dances. The store was also a trunk factory and, it is noted, 15-25 men were regularly employed there. The store/hall/factory was torn down in the 1920s. The most famous ship built at the Chittenden Yard was the *Helen M. Foster*, the last large ship to be launched from a North River shipyard (in 1871).

**303 RIVER STREET** The Wanton Shipyard—located at what is today the end of Wanton Shipyard Lane—was begun by Edward Wanton as early as 1670. But the most famous family to build at the Wanton Yard was the Delano family. Benjamin Delano married his neighbor Mary Brooks in 1769 and began building this home, which was completed the following summer. Eventually the house was passed on to their youngest daughter, Sarah, who married Samuel Foster (whose family built ships on the north side of the Wanton Yard). The Fosters lived in this house until 1868.



**370 RIVER STREET** Benjamin Delano (303 River Street) had a son, William, who was also a successful shipbuilder. William Delano joined his father at the Wanton Yard around 1799 and four years later married Sarah Hart of Boston and began working on this home for his new bride. During his shipbuilding career, William built the two largest vessels to leave the North River:

the *Mount Vernon* (which was 464 tons) and the *Lady Madison* (which was 450 tons). Unfortunately, William Delano died in 1815; Sarah Hart Delano continued to live in this home with her seven children. In those days it was the custom for a shipbuilder to have a store, supplying the men who worked for them with provisions that couldn't be raised on their farms. Mrs. Delano continued to operate the store after her husband died, and her Boston relatives were engaged in the China trade so they supplied her with luxuries to sell: silks, porcelain, and ivory. When Madam Delano (as she was called) died in 1861, the three Delano sisters lived in the home until the last sister died in 1894. At that time, an auction was held and the contents of the house were sold—furniture, mirrors, china, and bolts of silk were all auctioned off, and the house was bequeathed to Alonzo Tolman, who had worked there.

**56 BRIGANTINE CIRCLE** Nathaniel Church was the earliest shipbuilder at the Fox Hill Shipyard. It is believed that Nathaniel or his son (also Nathaniel) built this home, known as "The Shipwright's Cottage." Many Church family men worked at the Fox Hill Yard over the years, where more than 56 vessels were built between 1690 and 1869. In 1833, the whaleship *Hilo* was built at the yard—at 390 tons it was the largest ship built there, and it was said to have cost \$1,000 to get out of the river.

(continued on the back side)

*To South Shore historians, the North River's shipbuilding history can seem second nature. But many residents don't know much about the river's past and may not be aware that the North River was one of the shipbuilding capitals of the East Coast.*

*To some, the only easily-recognizable link to the North River shipyards is the antique homes where the shipbuilders lived.*

**27 CROSS STREET** Capt. James Briggs was the first of his family to build at the Briggs Shipyard at Hobart's Landing (located in today's Scituate). The original section of this house (built around 1712 by a Robert Thompson) is probably only a small part of the large colonial you see today. James Briggs bought the house around 1745 when he married Hannah Barker. The plans for the ship *Columbia* (built in 1773) were purported to have been drawn up in this house. The *Columbia*, built at the Briggs Shipyard, was the first American ship to circumnavigate the globe, and on a later voyage in the Pacific it discovered the mouth of the Oregon River, which would be named in the ship's honor: the Columbia River. The house was eventually passed on to James' grandson, Cushing Otis Briggs, who built the large addition to the south side of the house, making the original 1½ story structure into an ell. Note the house's orientation toward the North River, not Cross Street.

**53 STETSON ROAD** The Fox Hill Shipyard had a number of successful shipbuilding firms headquartered at that site over the years—one of which was named "Copeland, Ford & Pratt." Major Elias W. Pratt was one of the owners of the firm, and he lived in this home built by his first wife's parents, William and Elizabeth Briggs. The Briggs built what is (today) probably the ell of this home, circa 1754. We believe Major Pratt and his wife built the larger front section around 1815. While Major Pratt was successful in business, he was not successful in love. His first two wives died leaving him with eight children, the youngest of whom was only six. He married again, however, and lived until age 81.

**691 RIVER STREET** The Barstow's Two Oaks Shipyard in Hanover was begun by cousins Capt. Robert Eels and Thomas Barstow around 1760. Barstow married Sarah Studley around 1750, and it is believed they built this home around that time. The most exceptional and noteworthy room in the house may be upstairs in the ell—the barrel-ceilinged Counting Room of the Barstow Yard. From that vantage point, generations of Barstow men could look up from their desk and see their vessels being built on the river below. The most famous ship built at Barstow's Two Oaks was the *Grand Turk*—built in 1781 for Salem merchant Elias Hasket Derby. It was outfitted for 28 guns and 120 men and was used as a privateer during the Revolutionary War.



## A DRIVING TOUR *of* HISTORIC HOMES *associated with* THE NORTH RIVER SHIPYARDS



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