

#29- A true sea captain's home, this handsome Greek Revival was built in 1837 for Capt. John Appleman, who skippered the "Neptune" and the "Hero". Particularly interesting details are the dentil molding in the pediment and cornice trim and the beautifully paneled entrance door. The 1938 Hurricane destroyed a high pediment supported by columns at the front of the house. In the late 1950's and 1960's this house was owned by Capt. Edward L. Beach, commander of the nuclear submarine, "USS Triton", on its historic underwater circumnavigation of the globe. He authored "Submarine!", "Run Silent, Run Deep" and "Around the World Submerged". Capt. Beach added a bomb shelter (he did know something about nuclear weapons, after all), but failed to have it properly sealed, rendering it functionally useless.



#31- Thomas Eldredge, born across the street at #2 Eldridge Street along with his brothers, George and Elam, purchased this land from his father, George in 1842. Thomas was a prominent Mystic captain for more than 45 years and was known as "the Commodore of the Mallory Line" according to his obituary. He sold

this house when he retired from the sea and moved to New York, but maintained a summer home in Mystic on Prospect Hill. The home's distinctive Mansard roof replaced one destroyed by fire which had had a widow's walk (prior to 1879). This roof is unusual because it's on the second floor, not the attic - there is no attic. Mansard roofs were all the rage in New England for 20 years after the Civil War and it's a pretty good guess that any older home in the region with such a roof was built in that period.



#2 Eldridge- Across the street from Thomas, lived George and Hannah Eldredge (although the street name is correct in Groton town records, it is misspelled on the street sign). Hannah was

given this house and considerable land by her father John Burrows. The house was probably built in the early 1790's. Eldredge commanded the smack,\* "Union" from 1806-1812 and later served as inspector of the port of Mystic. Prior to his death in 1850 he arranged the transfer of the house to Elam his oldest son and it remained in the Eldredge family until 1969.

\*A small fishing vessel.

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CAN YOU SPOT THESE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS?



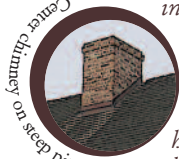
COLONIAL architecture originated with the American Colonies and was common through the 18<sup>th</sup> century although the symmetrical design continues to be popular today. The Colonial Cape Cod house was modeled after British country cottages, easily weathering New England winters with its compact 1 1/2 story height, and large, steep roof. Colonial style often also

The pediment often included a half-round window known as a **fanlight**, and **dentil trim** - a repeating tooth-shaped pattern along the edge.



Fanlight in a pediment

ITALIANATE architecture - dating from about 1840 to 1890 - is the most recent style represented on the street. It is distinctive for a very shallow-pitched roof with fanciful brackets under the eaves. The cornice, or trim just under the roof, is exaggerated & elaborate, sometimes inset with



Center chimney on steep pitch roof

includes a centered entrance and a **center chimney** at the core of the home with multiple fireplaces.

GREEK REVIVAL homes - the most common on Gravel Street - were popular from about 1820 to 1860. The style incorporates elements of classical Greek design - notably **columns**, and/or **pilasters**- flat, stylized columns, topped by a **pediment** - a triangular shape accentuating the shallow roof pitch.



Bracketed cornice along eaves

small windows. The primary windows of the Italianate home are tall and narrow.



Plaster and Dentil Trim

Due to various tastes & styles through the ages, many different architectural styles may be visible in individual houses.

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# a Mystic Riverside Walking Adventure



## A Self-guided History of Gravel Street, Mystic, Connecticut

Welcome to a leisurely perspective of historic downtown Mystic at your own pace ~ using this map as your guide.

Originally called Shore Road, Gravel Street was owned by the adjacent property owners until the 1850's when it was renamed in deference to the loads of gravel brought in to stabilize the roadbed. Often referred to as "Captain's Row", the area has long been home to captains and others who made their living from the sea.



## South to North Along Gravel Street



**#3-** The “Case Bottle House,” is so-called because its shape resembles the old cases in which bottles of liquor were shipped. Built between 1809 and 1815 by John Wolfe as a one-family house, it had undergone many additions and alterations through the years until its restoration in 1951. While now a commercial property, it retains the look of the square-shaped original home.

**#5-** Since 1914 this has been home to the First Church of Christ Scientist. It was built by Capt. George Wolfe sometime between 1815 and 1827 when it was sold to his brother-in-law, Capt. William Kemp. Kemp commanded a number of sloops and schooners until his death in 1840. The building remained in the Kemp family until purchased by the church.



**#7-** Recently repurposed into two luxury condos, this building had been the meeting place of the Charity and Relief Masonic Corporation. It was built in 1911-12 on land donated by Allen Avery, a prominent businessman and Mason whose West Main Street building housed a furniture business and advertised coffins and mortuary services.



**#9-** Capt. George Wolfe built this typical Cape Cod dwelling in 1818 for his bride. Much the same now, as then, it boasts a huge central chimney that contains three fireplaces. The largest, or kitchen, fireplace contains the traditional oven. The west wing is a much later addition. There is purported to be a resident ghost, but she is old and means no harm and gives no trouble.



**#11-** This old Cape Cod was built around 1812 by Capt. Avery Brown, who commanded the sloop *Minerva* and was Bo’ sun on “*Hero*”. A 47-foot sloop, the “*Hero*” was built in 1800 at the Packer Shipyard in Mystic and became famous in the War of 1812. In 1820, she was the vessel in which Nathaniel Palmer of Stonington, CT discovered Antarctica while on a sealing voyage.

**#13-** Built about 1836, this house by tradition is known as a “spite house,” deliberately constructed into the street in order to block the neighbor’s view. Basically a Cape Cod, it has two central chimneys and Greek Revival accents. Originally owned by John Fellows (who must have been the spiteful one), it was later the residence of two Captains Eldredge, both of whom went to sea in various capacities. George Eldredge Jr. (son of George--#2 Eldridge Street and the brother of Thomas--#31 Gravel Street and Elam also #2 Eldridge Street) was the first captain of the Shoreline Ferry connecting Groton and New London, a job later held by his son George H. A circa 1900 photo shows the house with a two-level porch, since removed.



**#15-** This was a Greek Revival built in 1835 by a cabinetmaker, Daniel D. Edgcomb, who made coffins in his basement shop. Its Italian Villa style additions were made by Captain Gurdon Gates who purchased the house in 1847. Gates distinguished himself by making a record run around the Horn in the famous clipper ship, “*Twilight*”, in 1866. The oldest of four brothers, he taught George, Nathan and Isaac to sail and all went on to become Mystic captains.

**#17-** Henry Holdredge built this house in 1835. However, it is probable that the prominent architectural features- the bracketed bay windows, the pointed gable and the finialed canopy over the door- were added later. The characteristics of the Gothic Revival- scrollwork, finials, crockets and pointed arches- were easily applied to an existing building. Look closely at the doorway, though, and you will see the original Greek Revival pilasters and cornice of 1835.



**#19.** The “newest” house on Gravel Street (it replaced one built in 1844), was constructed in the Italian Villa style in 1861 by Capt. John A. Williams. The previous year he had made a record run New York to San Francisco in 89 days, 4 hours in the clipper ship “*Andrew Jackson*”, beating the famous “*Flying Cloud*” designed by Donald McKay. The *Jackson* was built in Mystic at the Irons and Grinnell Shipyard.



**#21-** This is an elegant Greek Revival featuring a gable pediment, corner pilasters and cornice trim beneath the roof. The porch with columns, cornices and scroll-trimmed railings was added at the turn of the century and was recently renovated. Built in 1840 by Elisha Denison, this house became a sea captain’s house when acquired by Martin Smith in 1854. Smith commanded the ships “*Niagara*”, “*Simoon*” and “*Selma*”.

**#23-** Another traditional Greek Revival, this house was presumably built in 1837 by its owner John Gallup, who was a carpenter and builder; though it is not clear that it is his work. Over time, additions, including Italianate features such as bay windows and porches, changed the facade of this house. In the 1970’s the house was restored to its original appearance.



**#2 Clift St.-** Col. Amos Clift, a prominent local builder, built this house in 1837 for his brother, Capt. Waterman Clift. This lot, and others from here to the top of the hill of the street that bears the family name, were developed by Amos and his mother, Thankful Denison Clift. Waterman Clift commanded the “*Atlantic*”, “*Plume*” and “*Coasting Trader*” and was later a harbor pilot in Apalachicola, Florida. A typical Greek Revival featuring cornices and pilasters in the two-story main house, it has an east wing added in the 1920’s. A beautifully carved front door features four panels separated by an oval.

**#27-** This house is sideways to the street, perhaps for the convenience of customers of its owner, Daniel R. Williams, who had a seine fishing net business in the basement. At the time that it was built, in 1834, there were no other houses for some way south of it, assuring an unobstructed view down the river. An outbuilding in the rear was a station on the Underground Railroad. Its basement, 10 ft. deep, with cupboards and benches, hid the runaway slaves. Matilda Appleman Williams held weekly séances in the front parlor. Note the handsome front door with leaded sidelights.

