

Old Lyme Village Walking Tour

In 1665 a group of colonists from the west side of the Connecticut River separated from the Saybrook colony in what became known as the “Loving Parting.” In 1855 this new colony, called Lyme, was divided to create the current towns of Lyme and Old Lyme.

This walking tour is a publication of the Old Lyme Historical Society. The Society was founded in 2005 to collect, preserve, and interpret the rich history of Old Lyme, Connecticut, and its environs for the benefit of residents and visitors. For more information visit our website: www.oldlymehistorical.org. Please consider becoming a member.

The Society acknowledges the Florence Griswold Museum and Julie Lyman for their assistance in preparing this tour, and Jessica Bender for her research and sketches.

The ¾-mile tour can be completed in about one hour. We recommend starting at the First Congregational Church.

Old Lyme Historical Society, Inc.
PO Box 352, Old Lyme, CT 06371
860 434 0684
www.oldlymehistorical.org



© 2013

1. First Congregational Church of Old Lyme (Fifth Meeting House) 2 Ferry Road Federal

The church was rebuilt in 1910 after it burned in 1907. The original building, constructed in 1817, was designed by Samuel Belcher, who also designed the Florence Griswold House and the John Sill House (Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts). Ernest Greene, the architect credited with the reconstruction, also designed the town library. The church displays characteristics of the Federal style, including paired Ionic columns and entrance fanlights.



2. Ludington House, c 1893 2 Lyme Street Colonial Revival

In 1893 New York architect Henry R. Marshall designed this house for the Ludington family. Formal yet modest, the architectural style was inspired by the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, which re-awakened Americans to their colonial past.



3. Marvin House, c 1820 1 McCurdy Road Federal

This house replaced an earlier family house, owned by Reinold Marvin. One of Old Lyme's first settlers, he was among those who drew up the “Loving Parting” between Saybrook and Lyme in 1665.

4. Town Green (South Green)

In front of the Marvin House

During the 18th and 19th centuries this was Old Lyme's center of commerce. Here the town staged its version of the Boston Tea Party and mustered troops for the Revolutionary War. For a few years at the turn of the 20th century, a trolley operated along Ferry Road and Lyme Street. The trolley continued along the Boston Post Road to New London.



5. McCurdy House, c 1700

1 Lyme Street Gothic Revival

John McCurdy, a wealthy merchant, bought the house in 1754 from Amos Tinker. The McCurdys entertained George Washington here in 1776 and the Marquis de Lafayette in 1778 and 1825. During the late 19th century it was owned by Charles Johnson McCurdy, Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court and the State's Lieutenant Governor. His daughter was noted philanthropist Evelyn McCurdy Salisbury.

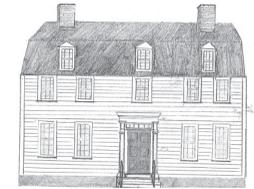


6. Stephen Peck House, c 1830

6 Lyme Street Colonial

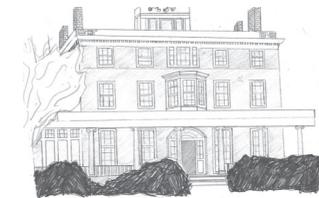
This house contains a hidden stairway leading to two separate attic rooms. Listed on Connecticut's Freedom Trail, it was likely a stop on the Underground Railroad. In the mid-19th century the “Corner Store” stood on the southeast corner. Legend has it that in 1840 a stock of cannon balls, intended for use against the

British in the War of 1812, was found in the store's cellar. The store was a recruiting office and news center during the Civil War, and sold merchandise through the 1940s.



7. Captain Samuel Mather House, c 1790 5 Lyme Street Colonial

Built for wealthy merchant Samuel Mather, a West Indies trader, this house is a gambrel-roofed colonial. Notice the paneled door with transom light above, clapboarding that graduates in width from the bottom to the top molding, gabled dormers, and paired chimneys. The house was deeded to the First Congregational Church as a parsonage in 1883. It still serves that function.



8. Richard Sill Griswold House, c 1842 9 Lyme Street Greek Revival

Informally known as “Boxwood,” this house was built for Richard Sill Griswold, a prominent member of the shipping firm known as “The No Loss and Great Gain Griswolds.” In 1890 Mrs. Griswold established a girls' school here, and in 1904 it became a hotel, the Boxwood Manor Inn, where art colony artists and students stayed. In the 1960s Dr. Matthew Griswold and his children bought Boxwood, which they restored and turned into apartments. A later owner converted it to condominiums.

9. Masonic Lodge Hall, c 1922
20 Lyme Street

Since at least 1922 the Masonic Hall has stood on the site of the former Lyme Academy, the town's first high school, which was destroyed by fire in 1885. In 1922 a portion of Old Lyme's first Town Hall was moved to the site, where it became the second floor atop a new ground floor. During the 20th century the building housed a post office and the offices of a local newspaper. It is now a private home.

10. Baptist Church, c 1843
22 Lyme Street *Colonial*

Built by the Baptist Society in 1843, this structure remained a Baptist church until 1925, when it was sold and became an Episcopal church. In 1937 it was again sold, and remained a Catholic church until 2005. It is now a private residence.

11. Beckwith-Noyes House, c 1740
32 Lyme Street *Colonial*

This house once stood on the site of the Florence Griswold Museum. It was moved onto sleigh runners and drawn by oxen to its present location in the winter of 1816.

12. Captain Daniel Chadwick House, c 1830
31 Lyme Street *Greek Revival*

A packet boat captain, Daniel Chadwick was often referred to as the "Admiral of the Packet Boat Fleet." He worked for the Black X line, the same company that employed Florence Griswold's father. A unique feature of this house is the captain's walk concealed by the balustrade at the roofline.

13. Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library, c 1898;
additions 1995
2 Library Lane *Colonial Revival*

The town's public library was built as a memorial to Phoebe Griffin Noyes by her son-in-law Charles H. Ludington, who lived at 2 Lyme Street (see sketch #2). From 1902 until

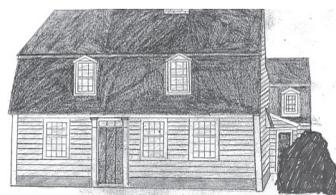
1921, when the Lyme Art Association Gallery was built, it was the site of the Lyme Art Colony's annual summer exhibitions. The library still retains a lovely collection of paintings.

14. Memorial Town Hall, c 1921;
additions 2008

52 Lyme Street *Colonial Revival*
The Town Hall was built as a war memorial to the town's soldiers and sailors. Inside, bronze plaques list those who served in combat from the Civil War through Vietnam. The tower, added in 1941, was an observation post for civil defense airplane spotters. For a time the town's offices were in the front of the building and a movie theater operated in the back.

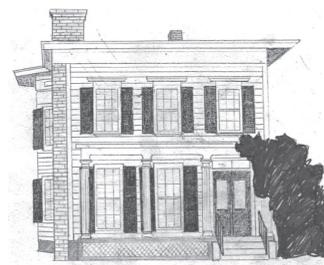
15. Center School, c 1934

49 Lyme Street *Colonial Revival*
Center School, originally called "The Old Lyme School," was dedicated on May 30, 1935, by Wilbur L. Cross, Governor of Connecticut. The school first consisted of an auditorium, library, offices, a manual training unit, and 11 classrooms. Construction of the school, a WPA project using granite from a local quarry and employing local residents, cost the town \$100,000.



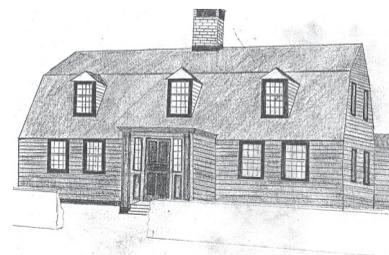
16. Justin Smith House, c 1700-1725
54 Lyme Street *Dutch Colonial*

This small colonial house was owned by members of the Smith family for more than 150 years. In the 1920s and 1930s Matilda Browne, of the Lyme Art Colony, lived here with her sisters.



17. Bacon -Ebert House, c 1848
76 Lyme Street *Italianate*

Built for sea captain Amos Bacon, this house was occupied by Charles Ebert and his wife, Mary Roberts Ebert, from 1919 to 1959. The Eberts were Impressionist painters who were members of the Lyme Art Colony. They are buried in Duck River Cemetery. The elegant front portico, prominent eaves, fireplaces, wide cornices, and flat roof exemplify the Italianate style popular in America in the 1840s. The sketch does not reflect later additions.



18. Deming-Avery House, c 1726
78 Lyme Street *Dutch Colonial*

This 18th century house exemplifies the early Colonial style, with its simple yet symmetrical façade. The gambrel roof uses shorter timbers while increasing headroom, and the central chimney provides warmth to all parts of the house. A Royalist embroidery sampler was found when the fireplace in the north front room was being repaired. Lyme Art Colony artist George Bogert once occupied the house.



19. Bartlett House, c 1844
75 Lyme Street *Gothic Cottage*

This house design was achieved through the collaboration of 19th century architects Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing, creator of the country house or "cottage," which incorporated Gothic features. The style was popular: its long windows provided exposure to the natural landscape, while its porches stimulated outdoor activity.



20. John Sill House, c 1817
84 Lyme Street *Federal*

Now part of the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, this house was designed by Samuel Belcher in 1817 for newlywed John Sill, a "customs runner." The house has a smuggler's closet hidden in an upstairs cupboard, where Captain Sill was said to hide smuggled silks, satins, and laces. In 1820 Sill was arrested and held in New Haven. Legend has it that he, a devoted husband, would steal away at night to meet Abbey, his wife. Riding 36 miles to Old Saybrook, he would be greeted by his cousin, who would row him across the river to a private landing where Abbey would be waiting. After a goodnight kiss from Abbey, a different horse would take him back to New Haven before dawn.