

PAWTUXET

THE WALKING TOUR OF HISTORIC PAWTUXET VILLAGE



CITY OF WARWICK

FAIR ST

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WTUXET

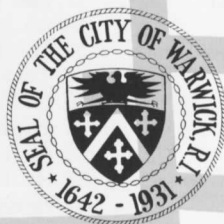
THE WALKING TOUR OF HISTORIC PAWTUXET VILLAGE

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ROAD

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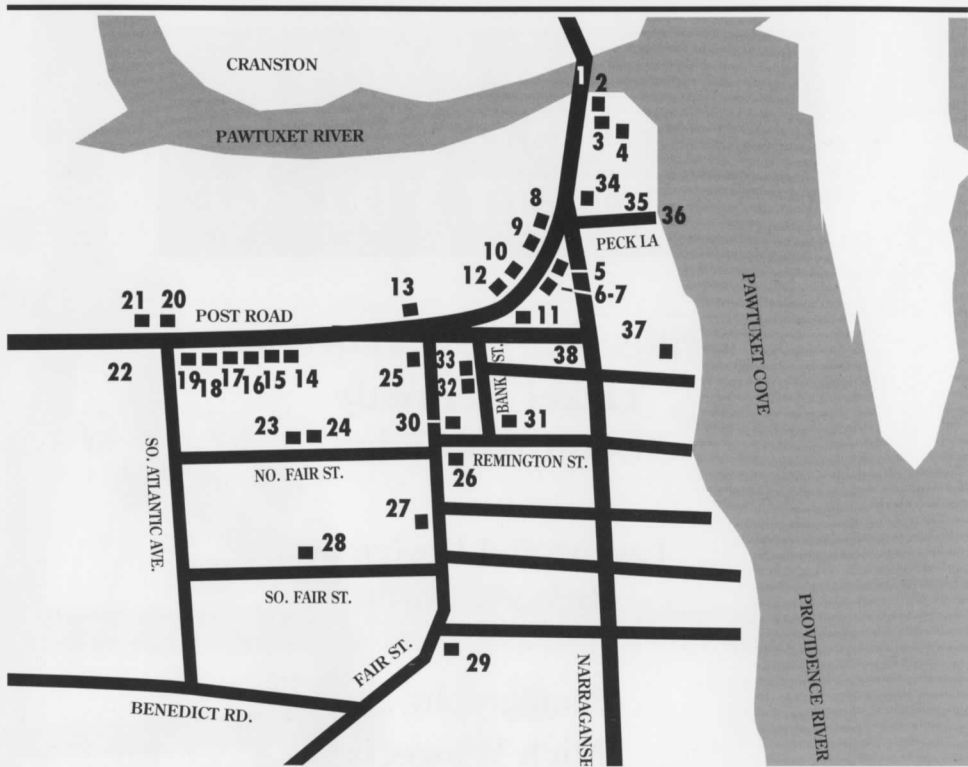
SO. FAIR ST.

BANK ST.

REMINGTON ST.

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1. **Pawtuxet Bridge** (ca. 1711-1932)
2. **Kearsage House** (ca. 1775), 2-4 Post Rd.
3. **Smith House** (ca. 1775), 6-8 Post Rd.
4. (ca. 18th century), 10 Post Rd.
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Introduction

The historic Village of Pawtuxet is unique in many ways. First, it is the oldest village in New England and is one of the very few villages that span two communities – the Cities of Warwick and Cranston. Founded in 1638, it is the site of the 1772 burning of the H.M.S. Gaspee – the first armed conflict of the American Revolution.

Pawtuxet is an Indian name for Little Falls. It derived its name from the Pawtuxet tribe of Indians named the Sononoce, a part of the Narragansett nation. They lived on the banks of the Pawtuxet River and used Pawtuxet Neck as their feasting ground. Pawtuxet Cove, also called Fiddlers Rest, meaning the resting place of ships, was a good harbor. The water was deep and Pawtuxet Neck made good protection for vessels. In 1636 Roger Williams received his grant of land from the Indians. There is a marker at the Cranston end of Pawtuxet Bridge.

The Village is a seaport hamlet which grew up around a cove and falls where there was water power for mills and a sheltered harbor for vessels. During its settlement days there were grist mills and when the 18th century arrived, Pawtuxet men were engaged in the Triangular Trade, privateering and the coastal trade.

Pawtuxet also boasts of having been a refuge to supporters of Thomas Wilson Dorr during the Dorr War and Rebellion, having supported President Abraham Lincoln's campaign against slavery, and serving as host to the original Siamese twins – Chan and Eng.

At the beginning of the 19th century, textile manufacturing began with the mills of William and Christopher Rhodes. The last mill fire was in 1875, ending the textile era. Streetcar lines were introduced to Pawtuxet from Providence in the 1870's. This improved access to the City of Providence and spurred the village's growth as a suburban neighborhood.

Today's Pawtuxet Village is a much different place. Nestled between bustling communities and commercial areas, some of Rhode Island's most prominent historical sites can be found. Whether walking along historic Post Road or strolling through Pawtuxet Park, visitors will easily feel the Village's sense of pride.

Beginning at the bridge over Pawtuxet Falls, visitors can follow the walks of life of centuries of residents. Decades of service have been given to protect, preserve, and defend this community. The annual Gaspee Days events are an extension of this pride. First held in 1965, this month long celebration culminates yearly in June with a parade down the tree-lined Narragansett Parkway. And, of course, our own Pawtuxet Rangers still protect and defend the village from invaders.

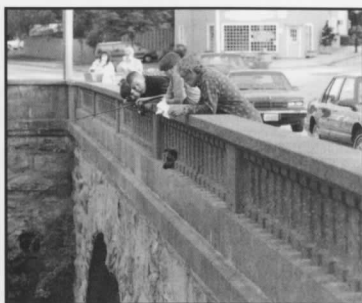
Now that you're familiar with the history of the land, you're ready to go. Start at the Pawtuxet Bridge and follow the map in this book. What you'll see are some of the most historic houses and sites in New England. So, put on some comfortable walking shoes, use this book as your guide, let your imagination loose and prepare to step into Pawtuxet Village's colorful past.

1

Pawtuxet Bridge

(ca. 1711-1932), Post Road

The first small wooden bridge was built around 1711 and was located close to the falls where its abutments got the full force of the river as well as the tide in Pawtuxet Cove. It frequently required repairs and was carried away in the spring floods of 1771 and 1784. In 1810 a new stone bridge was built and in 1884 a twin arch span was erected. In March 1886 the river overflowed its banks and the force and volume of the water that poured over the dam filled the arches, built of stone, and moved the Warwick end slightly on its abutments. The bridge was widened in 1932 with reinforced concrete construction faced with stone masonry. Currently, this is the eighth bridge on this site, and repairs are the joint responsibility of Warwick and Cranston.





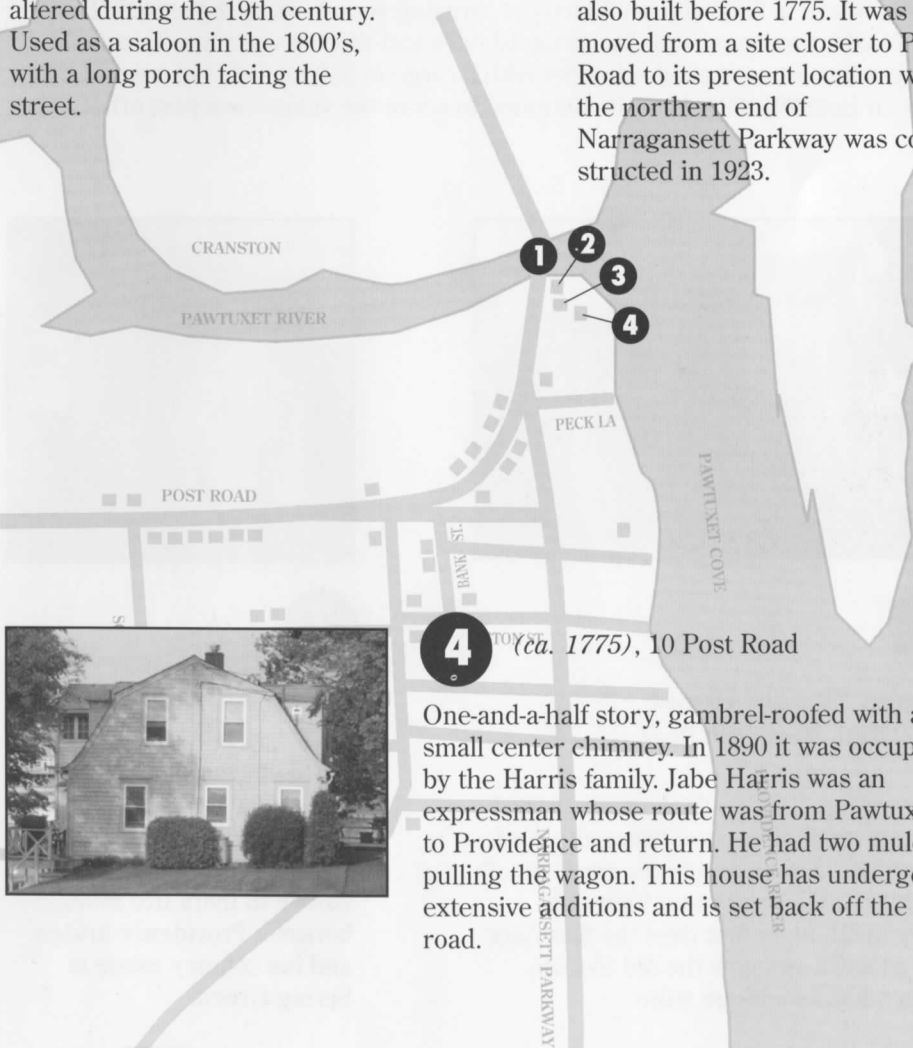
2 **Kearsage House**
(ca. 1775), 2-4 Post Road

Two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed, built before 1775 and altered during the 19th century. Used as a saloon in the 1800's, with a long porch facing the street.



3 **Smith House**
(ca. 1775), 6-8 Post Road

Two-and-a-half story, central chimney, gable-roofed dwelling, also built before 1775. It was moved from a site closer to Post Road to its present location when the northern end of Narragansett Parkway was constructed in 1923.



4 **Harris House**
(ca. 1775), 10 Post Road

One-and-a-half story, gambrel-roofed with a small center chimney. In 1890 it was occupied by the Harris family. Jabe Harris was an expressman whose route was from Pawtuxet to Providence and return. He had two mules pulling the wagon. This house has undergone extensive additions and is set back off the road.

5

Old Post Office and Port of Entry

(ca. 1760), 18 Post Road



Two-and-a-half story, gambrel-roofed with 20th century additions and alterations. When Narragansett Parkway was constructed the northeast corner was truncated and a flat roofed commercial addition was added. The original part served as a custom house, where in 1805 at least 30 freight-carrying vessels were registered. The first resident surveyor was Zachariah Rhodes and the last was Capt. George H. Pettis, when a two-masted schooner with a cargo of 250 tons of coal entered the cove on June 29, 1898. Later it continued to serve the village as a post office.



6

Nelson Slocum House

(ca. 1760), 30-32 Post Road

Two-and-a-half story, flank-gable, turned from its original location facing the road. It now sits with its end to the road. An ell has been added and has a Victorian entry hood. In its first days the first floor was a tavern and now the old Slocum Tavern has an antique store.



7

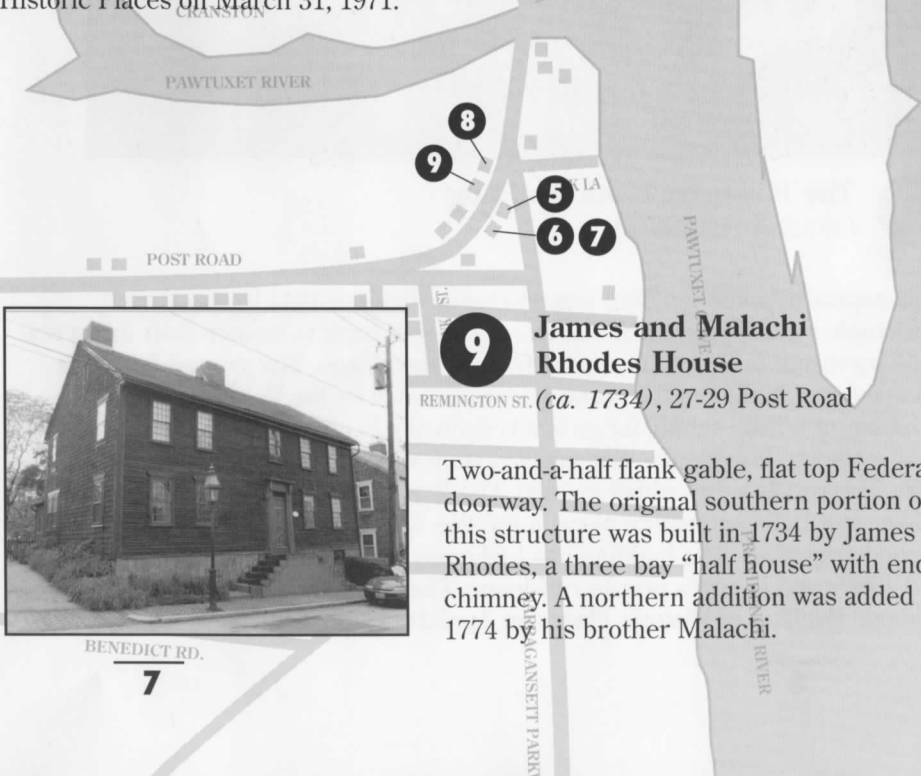
Pawtuxet Milestone

Stands facing Post Road at the end of the Slocum House. This granite marker was placed by merchant John Brown to mark five miles between Providence bridge and his country estate at Spring Green.

8**Christopher Rhodes House***(1800), 25 Post Road*

A typical two-story center chimney Federal house with a beautiful fanlight doorway. Christopher Rhodes received his title of Brigadier General of the Fourth Brigade of Rhode Island Militia in May 1809. He married

Besty Allen of South Kingstown and they had three daughters and two sons. Christopher was a prominent member of the family that established Pawtuxet Bank, and later served as a member of the General Assembly and as a prison inspector. In this house the three daughters were married. Eliza married John R. Bartlett, an American author and artist born in Providence. In 1855 he became Secretary of the State of Rhode Island serving until 1872. He authored many valuable historical records, his best known being "History of the Destruction of the Gaspee." Christopher's daughter Sarah married Henry B. Anthony of Coventry. In 1840 he became editor of the Providence Journal, living in the Rhodes house. He was elected Governor of Rhode Island in 1849 and 1850 and United States Senator from 1859 until his death in 1884. The third daughter married Joshua Mauran of Providence. The Rhodes house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on March 31, 1971.



BENEDICT RD.

7**9****James and Malachi Rhodes House***(ca. 1734), 27-29 Post Road*

Two-and-a-half flank gable, flat top Federal doorway. The original southern portion of this structure was built in 1734 by James Rhodes, a three bay "half house" with end chimney. A northern addition was added in 1774 by his brother Malachi.



10

Sylvester and Mary Rhodes House

(ca. 1770), 37 Post Road

Center chimney, two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed dwelling with flat Federal doorway. Built by James Rhodes on land left to him by his father Malachi Rhodes. James deeded the house to his son Sylvester, who married Mary Aborn.



11

The Pawtuxet Bank Building

(1814), 40 Post Road

This mansard-roofed building was erected in October 1814 by brothers Christopher and William Rhodes, as a chartered bank to finance their infant textile empire and to serve the coastal trade of the village. The ground floor was occupied as a bank and the second floor was used by the Pawtuxet Union Academy, a private school for girls. It remained a bank until 1845 when the business moved to Providence. For many years it was the home of Dr. George W. Carr. The veranda was added in 1866. The Bank Cafe was established by James Tinker as a hotel and eating place in the late 1870's. He introduced the Rhode Island jonnycakes. The building has had many owners and closed its doors in the mid 1990's and is now a private residence. The structure was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 24, 1973.

12

Captain Thomas Remington House

(1740), 47-49 Post Road

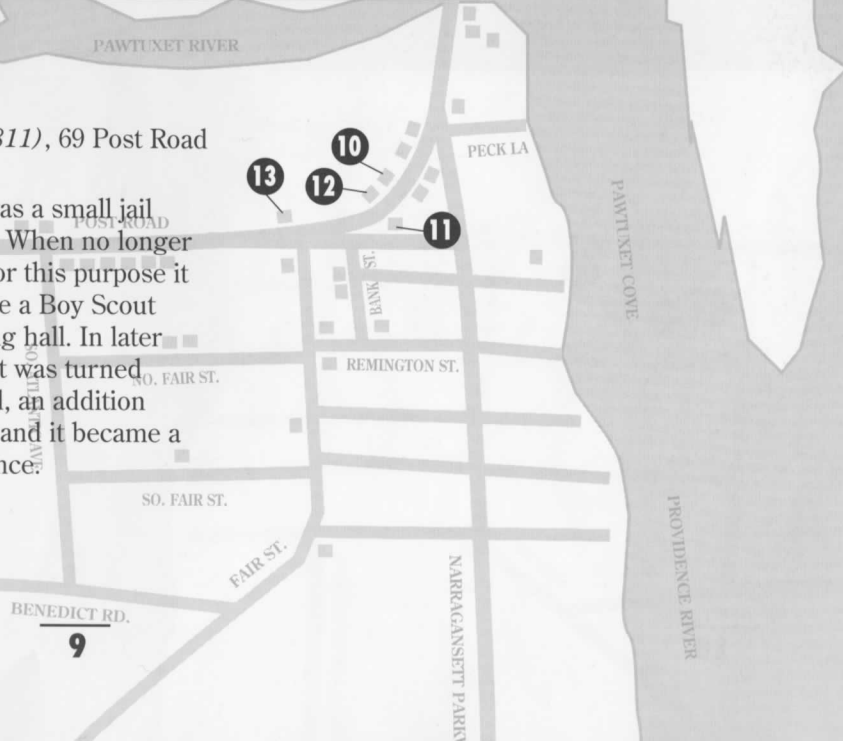
A two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed dwelling with paired interior chimneys and a fanlight doorway of the Federal period. It has been told that the Captain was in the slave trade and quartered his slaves in a small building behind his house and held slave auctions in a barn.



13

(ca. 1811), 69 Post Road

This was a small jail house. When no longer used for this purpose it became a Boy Scout meeting hall. In later years it was turned around, an addition added and it became a residence.



9

14

**John and Jeremia
Randall House**

(1785), 90 Post Road

A one-and-a-half story,
gable-roofed, modest
cottage.



15

Wightman House

(ca. 1760), 94 Post Road

A two-and-a-half story, gam-
brel-roofed dwelling with
Victorian door hood and
bay windows added in the
19th century.





16 (ca. 1740), 100 Post Road

Two-and-a-half story, flank gable, center chimney. Owned by the Sherman family from at least the mid 19th century.



17 George Sheldon House
(1790), 110 Post Road

Two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed, small interior chimney and a Federal entrance. Two story east ell.

**18****The Carder Tavern**
(1740), 118 Post Road

Two-and-a-half story, flank gable, clapboard and shingle, central hall plan. Used as the main inn or tavern in the 18th century for travelers on Post Road. One story about this old stagecoach stop is that following General Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga on October 17, 1777, part of his British army, escorted by the Pawtuxet Rangers, marched through Pawtuxet on their way to homeward bound ships at Boston. They halted at this old tavern for half an hour, allowing the Pawtuxet men a chance to see their families before continuing their march through Providence to Boston. It is also said that Chan and Eng, the original Siamese twins, stopped here overnight during their New England tour in 1829.

19**Captain John Carr House**
(ca. 1760), 126 Post Road

This house had its Victorian door hood added in the 19th century. The Captain had his dwelling built with a rounded ell to remind him of his cabin aboard ship. It was squared off in later years.



20

H. L. Johnson House

(ca. 1860), 131 Post Road

Greek Revival/early Victorian. One-and-a-half story gable-roofed dwelling with porch. Henry Johnson built this for his residence. He had a blacksmith shop near the Pawtuxet bridge. It operated into the 20th century.



21

William Rhodes House

(ca. 1798), 141 Post Road

Two-and-a-half story clapboard, central entrance with four end chimneys and a front door with fanlight. Fine example of the Federalist period. Approximately fifty years after the house was built, an addition was added. It has been said that Col. Rhodes used it as slave quarters. Set back from the road, this is the first house one sees when entering the actual historic district.



Greene Cemetery

Post Road

Located on the boundary of the historic district. Within this cemetery lies the remains of numerous colonial citizens and memorials to seafaring villagers who lost their lives at sea. Special note should be paid to the graves of William Sheldon, Dorothy Iselin Paschal, and L. Hazard Knowles.



23**The Stillhouse**

(1720-1800),
37 North Fair Street

A very unique dwelling that has always been known as the Stillhouse. It was built in three sections. The front is dated as 1720, the middle is the old stillhouse built by

Ephraim Bowen circa 1800 on the shore of his estate. Around 1850 it was moved to this location and added to the old house. At a later period an ell, that is believed to have been a blacksmith shop on the abutting property, was added.

**24****Captain Crandall House**

(1638), 31 North Fair Street

One-and-a-half story, gambrel-roofed, unique cottage. This was once a one room residence with a summer beam, and was moved from Prudence Island to Pawtuxet on a barge.



25**Fisher House**

(ca. 1720-1804),
15 Fair Street

Two story, gable-roofed. The two lower front rooms were originally a store. In 1804 it became a dwelling and a second floor was added. The ell, dated 1715-20, was a small dwelling brought from another location and added to the front structure.

**26****Eleanor F.
Rhodes House**

(ca. 1850),
42 Fair Street

A handsome, one-and-a-half story, gable-roofed Greek Revival, set end to street. This is Warwick's finest surviving Greek Revival structure. It was owned in 1855 by J. W. Arnold. Possibly built by William C. Rhodes, a local housewright who constructed several other Greek Revival dwellings in the village.



27

Fair House

(ca. 1820-1848),
69 Fair Street

Two-and-a-half story, pedimented end gable. Greek Revival exhibition hall with Italianate remodeling. Sits on land that was the old fairgrounds. The Rhode Island Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry, with James Rhodes the President, held its fairs here yearly in the early 1800's. These fairs were forerunners of county fairs and were held here for 20 years. The exhibition hall was remodeled into a beautiful residence.



28

(ca. 1830), 25-27 South Fair Street

Octagon-shaped house, the only one in Pawtuxet. This two-story building with alterations, was constructed during the octagon house craze of the 1830's. One corner was built out, giving the house the shape of an irregular heptagon. Subsequent alterations have obliterated the original architectural character of the dwelling.



29**Col. Ephraim Bowen House***(1799), 130 Fair Street*

Two-and-a-half story shingle, large and ornate. Built for Col. Ephraim Bowen, the grounds extended to the shoreline. Bowen died in 1840 at the age of 83, the last surviving member of the 64 men

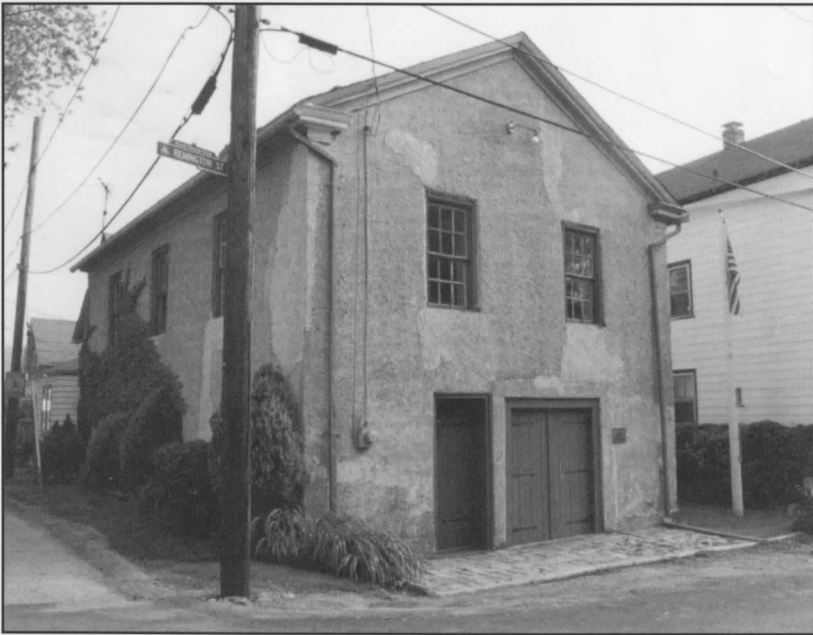
that banded together to row from Providence to Namquit Point (now Gaspee Point) to burn the H.M.S. Gaspee in 1772.

**30**

*(1797),
71 Remington Street*

Side gabled, early cape set low into the ground with a pitched roof. Altered over the years, this could have been used as a meeting place by the Pawtuxet Baptist Church.





31 **Pawtuxet Armory**
(1843), Remington Street

This building on the corner of Bank and Remington, was erected in 1843 by the state as an Armory for the Pawtuxet Artillery after the Dorr War Rebellion. It was a gift to the Pawtuxet Artillery for remaining loyal to the Law & Order Party. In 1853 the lower rooms were used by the District of Pawtuxet to keep their fire apparatus. Armory Hall was also the second Temple of Harmony Lodge where meetings were held for fifty years. After going to a private resident, the Pawtuxet Rangers again acquired the building, restored it and have paid off its mortgage.



32
(ca. 1725-1770), 27 Bank Street

Colonial house with a plain entrance and several rear additions. Two small interior brick chimneys are in place of the massive original chimney.



33 (ca. 1775), 17-23 Bank Street

Double structure, two-and-a-half story, flank gable, massive chimney. Two story wings were added to the south and rear. Constructed by a sea captain, possibly by Andrew Barton. A sea captain lived in each end. The dwelling could have housed workers for the local mill industry in the village.



34 Gaspee Lounge
(ca. 1898), Peck Street

On the corner of Narragansett Parkway and Peck Street stands a two-and-a-half story, mansard-roofed building that stood on Post Road until the Parkway was constructed. Now the Gaspee Lounge, the first floor was always used for commercial businesses, with apartments above.



35

Peck Lane

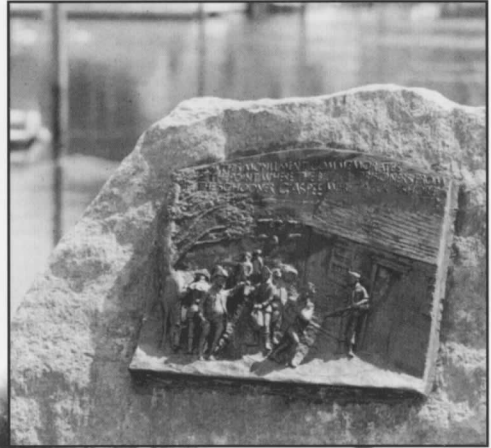
Peck Lane was originally laid out in 1734. At the foot of this narrow street, tradition says the captured crewmen from the *Gaspee* were brought ashore on the night of June 10, 1772 and marched to a nearby farmhouse where they spent the night in the cellar. (The house was demolished in 1962). Benjamin Smith had a shipyard at the shoreline. Here Pawtuxet ships large and small to be manned by Pawtuxet men were built for the West Indies and southern coastal trade from the early 1700's until 1850. There was no room here for cordage to be made for the rigging of the vessels. The rope walk was from the back of the Carr property and ran 600 feet down South Atlantic Avenue.

36

Monument to the *Gaspee*

(1996), At the foot of Peck Lane

Unveiled by Mayor Lincoln Chafee and Councilman Scott Avedisian in 1996, this monument commemorates the colonists that brought the *Gaspee* crew and prisoners ashore.



Pawtuxet Park and the Aspray Boathouse

Now the headquarters of the Gaspee Day Committee, Pawtuxet Park and the Aspray Boathouse are at the very heart of the community. With the trademark white gazebo and the walkways, Pawtuxet Park has become a summer favorite for people throughout the area. There are often band concerts and other activities in the Park. The Park was acquired by the City of Warwick through the efforts of former Mayors Eugene McCaffrey and Joseph Walsh. The Aspray Boathouse is the center of Gaspee Days events. Still retaining the name of Dick Aspray, the building serves as a community center and meeting hall. During the administration of Mayors Francis X. Flaherty and Lincoln Chafee, the Boathouse was deeded to the Gaspee Days Committee. The interior of the Boathouse houses a number of Gaspee inspired memorabilia.



Pawtuxet Land Trust “Gateway Parcel”

(1991), Corner of Post Road and Narragansett Parkway

Founded in 1991, the Pawtuxet Land Trust bought this “gateway parcel” to prevent the development of an office building on the site. The Land Trust, a volunteer entity, raised the necessary funds to pay off the mortgage within a year. The parcel serves as a green belt through the heart of the village.

