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**Grafton Village Historic District
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

Statement of Significance

The Grafton Village Historic District is significant for its distinctive characteristics as one of the most well-preserved rural villages in Vermont. The historic district is a densely-settled collection of intact historic resources, which represents the development of Grafton's principal residential and commercial village. The historic resources depict the architecture and landscape of an intact nineteenth-century Vermont village with the loss of few historic resources and the intrusion of even fewer modern resources. Eighty-eight of the ninety-four (94%) primary resources in the village contribute to its significance, and eighty-two of these eighty-eight historic resources date to the 1870s or earlier. Most of the non-contributing primary resources date to the 1960s and are of classical designs that suit the nineteenth-century appearance of the village, and there is only one house that dates to the period of significance that has lost its historic status due to alterations. The period of significance of the historic district is 1795-1959, which begins with the estimated construction date of the oldest surviving building, and ends fifty years ago, the most recent year allowed under National Register guidelines. This period of significance is also suitable as the last historic building to be constructed in the village dates to 1957. The historic district meets National Register Criterion A for its representation of a pattern of town development and National Criterion C as an excellent example of an early and intact rural Vermont village. Compared to other historic villages of its size in Vermont, Grafton village's architecture and streetscapes are exceptionally well-preserved, giving the historic district statewide significance.

The historic district holds significance in Vermont's historic context of historic Architecture and Patterns of Community Development, and to a smaller extent, Vermont's Industry and Commerce, Education, and Culture and Government. The village's development began just before the turn of the nineteenth century, and several late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century structures survive. The village grew slowly from the 1790s to the 1830s, and since the 1830s, Grafton village has been the town's principal residential and commercial center. The largest period of growth occurred from the 1830s to the 1870s due to the expanding industrial and commercial enterprises, and most of the historic resources built during this time period survive intact. There are also scattered late nineteenth century and early twentieth century resources that contribute to the significance of the historic district. Grafton village was an important crossroads that connected Bellows Falls and Saxtons River to the east to points west, and the town of Townshend to the town of Chester.

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The rich history of the village also includes its economic downtown starting in the late nineteenth century due primarily to the loss of industrial and agricultural enterprises, and the rise of local tourism in the early twentieth century, which was common in many rural Vermont villages. This early tourism ultimately continued throughout the century and remains strong in Grafton to this day. The current vitality and intact state of the village are a result of tourism, preservation-minded residents, many of which whose families have resided in Grafton for several generations, and the activities and dedication of the Grafton Historical Society and the Windham Foundation.

The significance of the historic district also lies in its collection of classical architectural styles such as the Federal, Greek Revival styles, and of the later Victorian-era Italianate style, and for its intact streetscapes and undeveloped surrounding rural area. Also, very few of the historic resources have been resided with synthetic materials such as vinyl or have had vinyl replacement windows installed. Particularly significant resources include the village's centerpieces: the Grafton Hotel (#22), the John Barrett House (#47) and the John Barrett Store/Town Hall (#23). Others include the Congregational Church (#11) and Baptist Church (#18), the Barrett-Palmer Store (#28), the John Butterfield House (#47), Milldean (#29), the Alexander Davis House (#30), the three "Wilson houses" (#75, 76 and 78), the Grafton Post Office (#34), the Grange (#56), the Leonard Blacksmith Shop (#63), the Village Cemetery (#2), and the Kidder Bridge (#79).

Grafton received its first charter in 1754 and was originally named Thomlinson after two of the original grantees, John Thomlinson Jr., and John Thomlinson, Esq. It was the last town chartered by Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire prior to the outbreak of the French & Indian War. As in all other Windham County towns, the conditions of the original Thomlinson charter were not fulfilled, and a new charter was granted in 1763. The first settler, a Mr. Slack, arrived in 1768. He resided in Howeville, one of Grafton's first hamlets, which is now long since abandoned. Three other families arrived about this time, the Hinkleys, Hills, and Waltons, who settled near the Hinckley Brook west of Grafton village. All of these families left after a few years.

According to Hamilton Child's 1884 *Gazetteer*, Grafton's first permanent settlers arrived in 1779 and were Asa Fisher of Hopkinton, Massachusetts, Aaron Putnam, James Guild and William Parkhurst of Winchendon, Connecticut, and Thomas Kinney of Marrowfield, Connecticut. Town records were first kept in 1782 and the first town meeting was held in 1783. The first burial took place in 1780 at the town's first cemetery on Middletown hill. The first birth was recorded in 1783 and the first marriage in 1784. Most of the eighteenth century residents of

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Grafton were farmers. The 1791 census, the first census recorded in Vermont, documents the population of Grafton as 561 people.

Grafton's first village was called Middletown, due to its location; as in many of Vermont's early towns, this first village was settled near the center of the township, and atop a hill. This village was located about one mile northwest of Grafton village on Middletown Road. Most of its above-ground historic resources have vanished over time, leaving scattered historic farmsteads and the town's first cemetery. Two early hamlets in town were Howeville, which was located west of Grafton village, also atop a hill, and has no remaining above-ground historic resources, and Houghtonville, which survives and is located about three miles northwest of Grafton village. Other early settlers lived on farmsteads scattered throughout the hills. There are numerous archaeological sites such as the cellar holes of residences, barns, schoolhouses and industrial resources scattered throughout the town.

Middletown contained Grafton's first meeting house, tavern, parsonage, cemetery, store, and school, which was actually in a barn. However, the first two framed houses in Grafton were not located in Middletown, Howeville or Houghtonville. According to local histories, one is the 1782 James Rhoades house on Townshend Road, which reportedly remains standing (outside of the historic district), and the other is the 1787 house built for Job Gleason in the northern part of the town, which is no longer standing.

In 1791, the town's name was changed to Grafton, when many residents decided that the town should be named after their own hometown in Massachusetts or Connecticut, and the name was offered at auction to the highest bidder. Joseph Axtell was the winning bidder, and he reportedly paid "five dollars and a jug of rum" to name the town Grafton after his hometown in Massachusetts.

It is likely that there was no building or road development in what is now Grafton village until the 1790s. Judging by local records, the first Grafton resident (as opposed to the original town proprietors, who never stepped foot in Grafton) to own the land in what is now Grafton village was Moses Cole. He acquired the 120 acre Lot 7 in the 4th range of the original Grafton survey in 1780 while living in Grafton. Lot 6 in the 4th range, which also includes land within the village, was also acquired by Cole, in 1793. It is unlikely that any development took place during his ownership.

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In 1794, after moving to the neighboring town of Rockingham, Cole sold most of what is now Grafton village, a ninety-eight acre parcel, to Enos Lovell, who appears to have built the first home in the village about 1795 (#22). This was a brick Federal-style Georgian-plan home at what is now the southwest corner of Main Street and Townshend Road. The bricks may have come from a brickyard near the intersection of Middletown Road and Houghtonville Road.

Lovell was also from Rockingham and both he and Cole must have realized the value of this undeveloped land that contained both the south and north branches of the Saxtons River. As in many other Vermont towns in the late eighteenth century, entrepreneurs took advantage of the waterways to power mills such as sawmills and grist mills. Starting in the late 1790s, six dams were constructed along the Saxtons River to provide waterpower for new mills. Three of the dams and mill sites were in Grafton village and within the historic district. The only visible remains of these industrial sites is a retaining wall on the north bank of the river just north of the Main Street Bridge (#36).

In 1798, the first dam in the village was constructed on the south branch of the Saxtons River just west of what is now the Kidder Bridge (#79). A short flume led east from the dam and rejoined the south branch just west of its confluence with the north branch of the river. Adjacent to the flume, a sawmill and gristmill were constructed just west of Kidder Hill Road. They were probably built for William Wier, and then shortly thereafter sold to David Cottrell.

A year or two after the Kidder Hill Road dam was constructed, a second dam was constructed on the north branch of the Saxtons River, behind what is now Property #8 on Houghtonville Road. A long flume started at this dam, ran parallel to the south bank of the river, and reentered the river behind what is now Property #30 on Main Street, near Chester Road. This dam was built on Enos Lovell's land and the flume served William Wier's second mill site, a wool fulling mill located at the east end of the flume.

A canal, which was dug no later than 1804, began within the village at an unknown point along the north branch of the river, and ran south to the south branch, crossing between properties #32 and 33 on Main Street and continuing south behind the properties on the west side of Kidder Hill Road. It remained in use until about the 1840s, and is still slightly discernible as a depression in the ground.

A grist mill was probably constructed in 1790 by Dr. Amos Fisher at the north end of Mechanicsville, the hamlet just east of Grafton village. It is certain that William Wier built a

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dam just east of the confluence of the south and north branches of the Saxtons River in 1807 (just east of the historic district), and that a long flume led east to the west end of Mechanicsville. At the east end of this flume, judging by local records, Wier appears to have built his third mill site, which included a sawmill and a gristmill.

By the end of the eighteenth century, there was a road from Middletown to what is now Grafton village, which is probably the current Route 121/Houghtonville Road. Kidder Hill Road dates to no later than 1795, as its bridge is mentioned in a deed of that year. There would also have been at least a trail where Main Street is now located, and it is very likely that there was a trail leading to Saxtons River Village and Bellows Falls Village, both in the town of Rockingham. Kidder Hill Road has also been called Water Street, Quarry Road, and Ledge Road. Its current name comes from the Kidder family that lived on the road. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, the south end of Chester Road, or perhaps the entire length of it, was also in existence.

The commerce created by the mills, as well as the existence of new roads, which connected Grafton to the Connecticut River and the Connecticut River Road (now Vermont Route 5), resulted in the appearance of Grafton village's first tavern and store, which were open around the turn of the nineteenth century. The first tavern was opened in 1801 in the home of Enos Lovell (#22), who as mentioned above, owned most or all of the land in Grafton village and historic district. Judging by local records, the first store appears to have stood on Main Street across from the foot of Kidder Hill Road. It was operated by Leverett Tuttle, who built the original section (possibly now the ell) of the house across the street (#33) and also owned a house on Kidder Hill Road (#75).

Kidder Hill Road, not Main Street, had the first "neighborhood" of houses in the village, which may have all been constructed by the first decade of the nineteenth century. They were owned by the local mill owners, such as David Cottrell, James Dickey, and Joseph Whitcomb (#75, 76, and 77). David Bancroft, who may have been a tanner at the time, built a house on Kidder Hill Road about 1810. (This house burned down in the 1920s.) It is possible that early on, William Wier lived on Kidder Hill Road as well.

In addition to grist, saw, and woolen mills, by the first decade of the nineteenth century there was also a tannery in the village, which was one of the first structures built at the bottom of Chester Road. It was operated by Bartholomew Fuller, who also built the first house on this section of the road, which stood in the location of #83A. About this time, Don Lovell, Enos Lovell's son, built a home next to his father's, which may now be the ell to a later house (#47). Don owned

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the sawmill near the Kidder Bridge for a short time, and acquired William Wier's fulling mill. About 1810, a workshop of unknown use was built on Chester Road. Shortly thereafter, it was converted to a residence (#83). In 1811, the village's first physician, Dr. John Butterfield, acquired Leverett Tuttle's house on Main Street and enlarged it, possibly into a Cape Cod type house. Across the street, the village's first school may have been built as early as 1810 (#35).

By 1814, the trail from Bellows Falls Village to Grafton village had been improved to the point that it was considered a true road. The road continued north from Grafton village along what is now Route 121, through Houghtonville, and onto the towns of Windham and Londonderry. Grafton then became an important trading area, and the existing collection of buildings continued to grow into a true village with a Main Street.

Within a few years of becoming an important crossroads, Grafton village gained a church, a second store, a cemetery, and at least four additional dwellings. The Baptist Church was constructed in 1814 (#18), eleven years after the first local Baptist society was organized. The new store (#23) was built in 1816 for Captain John Barrett, who had previously been a partner in Middletown's principal store with Nathan Wheeler. Barrett recognized the potential profitability of opening a store in the burgeoning village, while his partner did not. Barrett turned out to be correct, and also built what is now one of the principal landmarks in the center of the village as his home (#47), probably adding the extant main block onto Don Lovell's house. At this time, Barrett owned all of the land on the south side of Main Street east of Townshend Road, except for the Butterfield House property (#33), as well as most of the area that later became Pleasant Street and School Street. He was one of Grafton's most successful businessmen.

Other new homes included one that was built about 1815 on Main Street west of the church (#15), possibly for Don Lovell, although as mentioned above, he already owned another house nearby. About 1816, a house was constructed east of the Baptist church for Henry Chase, which in 1824 became the village's first parsonage (#20). Also about this time, a house was added to the neighborhood on Kidder Hill Road (#78).

The early growth of Grafton village contributed to the town's peak population of 1,482 in 1820, which is approximately 225% higher than Grafton's population in 2000. The population of the entire town then gradually dropped each decade after 1820 while the population of the village grew, as evidenced by the numerous dwellings that were constructed from the 1820s to the 1870s. The population outside of the village was reduced, as Middletown, Howeville, and outlying farmsteads were abandoned.

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By the 1820s, another important road was created, connecting Main Street to the town to the south, Townshend. This is now Townshend Road, and was originally called South Street. Stagecoach service connecting Bellows Falls to Chester and points west reportedly ran through the village as early as the 1820s. During this decade, several dwellings were added to the village, the tavern was doubled in size, a store was built that was attached to the tavern, the town gained its first blacksmith shop, if it had not done so previously, and a soapstone quarry at the south end of Grafton began to be commercially mined.

The addition to the tavern (#22) and the attached store (#9) were both constructed for Hyman Burgess, who had acquired the tavern in 1823. At this time, Burgess owned most or all of the land within the historic district west of the tavern. He also had two houses built west of the store, probably during the 1820s (#17 and 19).

About 1826, a house was built for Lucius Alexander on Main Street (#30). Alexander was part owner of the woolen mill on the north branch of the Saxtons River near Main Street, and his house was built in front of the mill facing Main Street. Alexander had acquired the mill, along with John Woolley, in 1816, which was during the advent of Vermont's sheep boom. Alexander became sole owner of the mill in 1829.

The earliest known blacksmith shop in Grafton village was that of Joseph Christy (#75), and was in operation no later than 1823. It probably stood on the west side of Kidder Hill Road, where the Pleasant Street intersection is now located. About a mile south of the village on Kidder Hill Road, the soapstone quarry opened for commercial mining before 1823, the year that Zadock Thompson wrote about the quarry in his book *A Gazetteer of the State of Vermont*. He commented on the immense size of the quarry, and how the stone was transported one mile to a mill (in an unidentified location) and then sawn into sinks, stoves, mantles, water pipes (which he called "aqueducts"), and smaller household items. It is likely this mill was in Cambridgeport, a hamlet that straddles the Grafton/Rockingham town line, because this is the known location of the soapstone mill in the mid nineteenth century.

Thompson also reported in 1823 that Grafton contained three grist mills, five sawmills, two carding machines, two fulling mills, two tanneries, and two stores. Out of these, one grist mill and one sawmill were in the historic district, adjacent to each other on Kidder Hill Road, one fulling mill and carding machine were part of Alexander and Woolley's mill site, one tannery was at the bottom of Chester Road, and one store was on Main Street.

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By the 1830s, residents of Grafton began to recognize that what is now Grafton village, then called the “lower village,” the “south village” and the “east village,” was becoming the new center of town. It was common in Vermont during the early nineteenth century for hilltop village centers to become isolated in favor of the newer villages developed near the best sites for water power. Other Windham County towns that experienced this included Brattleboro, Newfane, Wilmington, Dover, and Rockingham.

Many residents of Middletown objected to the “move downhill,” but resistance was futile. The change was symbolized first by the 1816 construction of John Barrett’s store and then by the 1834 construction of Grafton’s second Congregational Church, which replaced the 1792 church in Middletown, and was partially funded by no other than John Barrett. As Nathan Wheeler had refused to acknowledge Grafton village’s potential as the new center of town, the Middletown Congregationalists did not want to give up worshipping in their meeting house on the hill, but they too lost that battle. Also, in 1837, the village gained a second schoolhouse (#12), as the village had two school districts at the time. The village may have had two school districts due to the fact that the town was divided into school districts before Grafton village was settled. In 1841, the location of the Grafton post office was moved from Middletown into John Barrett’s store, which benefited the village and was yet another victory for Mr. Barrett.

However, the battle over the location of town meetings lasted for quite some time. Even after it was clear that Grafton village was the community center, with the majority of the town’s businesses and a rapidly growing residential area, about every other town meeting was held at the “center meeting house” in Middletown. The other half of the town meetings were held in the Grafton village schoolhouses. From 1847 to 1857, the townspeople voted again and again to consider building a “town house” in Grafton village, next to the Baptist Church, but this idea never came to fruition. Finally, in 1857, the Barrett store was sold to the Town and it became the town hall (#23). In 1858, the Middletown meeting house was disassembled or moved to another location by Cutler Blodgett, who lived on Chester Road. It is possible that he used the materials from the old structure to build another house on Chester Road (#85), or possibly to build a cider mill (which stood in an unknown location on the west side of Chester Road).

Once Grafton village had been established as the principal village in town, Hyman Burgess and John Barrett subdivided their properties, and during the 1830s, Main Street between the Congregational Church and Chester Road became lined with at least twenty-three buildings, including two churches, at least three stores, one tavern, two schoolhouses, one law office, one cabinet shop, a cloth shop, a boardinghouse for the woolen mill workers, and twelve dwellings

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(#15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 29, 30, 31, 33, 38, and 47). There was also the existing woolen mill behind the buildings on Main Street. Townshend Road at this point had three houses (#48, 50 and 58), and Chester Road had two (#83 and the Bartholomew Fuller house, the latter of which is no longer standing).

The three stores included the Barrett general store (#23), the Burgess store, which reportedly sold hay and grain (#9), and a store built by Henry Holmes about 1838, which stood between #28 and 31 and may have originally been a tinware shop. The first store in the village had very likely disappeared by the 1820s. In its place was a cloth shop associated with the woolen mill. This shop was later moved to Chester Road and converted to a house (#84).

In the 1830s, the schoolhouse at the east end of Main Street was replaced or enlarged (#35). Grafton's first lawyer, David Putnam, worked out of a tiny c. 1834 building on the Barrett house property (#47A). This building became the most-moved building in Grafton's history. It reportedly stood in six locations over the years, starting in the location of Cricketers (#47B). It was also attached to the rear ell of the house, stood near the intersection of the road, was moved to the road to Cambridgeport, then back to the village, where it stood on Pleasant Street, and has been in its current location, close to its original location, since about 1971.

In 1831, Lucius Alexander rebuilt the village woolen mill with his new business partner, Peter Dean. About this time, a home was built for Dean (#29) and named Milldean. It was identical to and adjacent to Alexander's home. In 1839, their mill burned down, and was rebuilt by Peter Dean and his new business partners, including Samuel S. Bailey (#81). The woolen business was booming in Vermont at this time, with sheep outnumbering the human population in Vermont many times over. In 1840, there were over 10,000 sheep in Grafton, compared to the human population of 1,439. In either the 1830s or 1840s, a boardinghouse was constructed for the woolen factory employees just west of Milldean. Another successful industry during the 1830s was Lyman French's carriage factory. In 1833, French acquired the Kidder Hill Road mill site and the adjacent house (#79) and established a carriage factory at the mill. His sons Lyman, Jr., George and Dexter later joined him in the business.

Other 1830s buildings on Main Street include carpenter Jonathan Sherwin's house (#24), which is the only building in the village to remain in the same family for its entire history, his cabinet shop, which may be the current Grafton Historical Society building (#26), and the first dwelling constructed for Henry Holmes (#31). Henry Holmes was the son of Given Holmes, an early settler of Grafton. Henry Holmes was first a blacksmith, then a tinware merchant, then a churn

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manufacturer, and was also a developer of sorts. He was responsible for the construction of six homes within the village, and he probably lived in most of them for at least a short time.

By the 1840s, Henry Holmes owned all of the undeveloped land on the south side of what is now Route 121 East within the village. As mentioned above, Holmes also built the village's fourth store, adjacent to the first house he had built, but for a short time he also sold wares out of the first home he constructed. The only house on the south side of Route 121 East within the village that was not constructed for Henry Holmes was the c. 1838 Hadley house, the first house built on Route 121 East within the village (#38).

Grafton village continued to grow during the 1840s. Thirteen new dwellings were constructed during this decade, filling in the empty lots on Main Street and spreading the village to the west past the end of Main Street and north along Chester Road to the northern boundary of the historic district. Henry Holmes had two additional houses constructed during this time, one on Main Street (#32) and the first house he had built on Route 121 East (#45). Rev. Moses Bradford of the Congregational Church moved into a new home overlooking the village about 1843 (#3). Cutler Blodgett, whose father was born in Grafton in the late eighteenth century, built a house on Chester Road (#94) and operated a cider mill somewhere nearby. The area south and east of Main Street (except for Kidder Hill Road) remained undeveloped at this point, and was probably used as farmland by the Barrett family.

The opening of railroad service through Bellows Falls in 1848 helped support Grafton's industries and village development. All of the original mill sites remained in operation with their original uses throughout the 1840s including the original blacksmith shop, and in 1846 Pratt Lincoln opened a shoe and boot factory on Chester Road, which is probably the same building as #82. As a result of the influential local temperance society, Thomas Davis opened Grafton village's second tavern in 1840 in the enlarged and updated former home of Lucius Alexander (#30). Unlike the other tavern, this was a temperance tavern, and was short-lived as Davis is listed as a farmer in the 1850 census.

John Barrett's nephew George Barrett worked for him in his store, and in 1849, George Barrett opened his own store across the street and built himself a home next door (#27 and 28). This store was part of the New England Protective Union, which was a cooperative movement established in 1847 in which rural goods were provided to city markets in exchange for goods for local stores. Vermont had two hundred union stores, but by the end of Civil War this type of store had disappeared. The George Barrett store then became a typical general/dry goods store,

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and has remained in operation as such since then. It is now the longest-running retail establishment in the village. Professionals practicing in the village during the 1840s include attorney David Putnam, who practiced until 1848 (#47B), and Dr. Benjamin H. Bridgman (#16), who practiced until 1859.

Ten new dwellings were constructed in the village during the 1850s. The first map to show the village and its buildings is the 1856 McClellan map. It shows that all of the buildings now standing on Main Street had been constructed (two of these were later enlarged). Route 121 was almost fully developed, and four houses stood on Townshend Road. In 1852, Lyman French died, and his sons Lyman, George, and Dexter took over his carriage factory. Lyman, Jr., lived across the street from his parents (#77), George lived on Main Street (#31) and Dexter acquired his parents' house (#79).

Non-residential construction also continued during the 1850s. In 1854, the woolen mill was enlarged and updated with new machinery. By this time, production changed from the fulling of wool to the weaving of woolen cloth. The driveway to the mill ran between the original mill owners' homes (#29 and 30), and there was also a scale for weighing wool in between the homes. By the 1850s, possibly earlier, a harness shop stood on the west side of Chester Road just north of #84. It may have been operated by Lucius Edson, who is listed in the Grafton business directory as a harness maker until 1863. The shop was removed by the time the 1869 Beers map of the village was printed.

Fabius Bancroft was Grafton village's first postmaster (#76), and served this duty from 1841 to 1857. In 1855, he had a separate post office building constructed on Main Street (#34), but left his position two years later. The post office is an intact and rare example of a rural Vermont one-room post office, as most historic post offices around the state also share a building with a general store, town hall, or courthouse. From 1871-1940, three members of the Hall family served as postmaster; first Nathan Hall, then his wife Elizabeth, and then their daughter Fannie. The seventy years of postmaster service by one family may be a national record.

In 1858, one year after John Barrett's former store had been converted to the Town Hall, the Grafton Library Society was formed and established a library in the basement of the town hall. In 1859, the 1814 Baptist Church was replaced with a new building, on the same site. In 1860, a parsonage (#5) was constructed for the Congregational Church just west of the church and remained a parsonage until 1927. On the local agricultural front, the Grafton Farmers' Club was organized in 1860 and was reportedly the first of its kind in Vermont.

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The soapstone industry grew as the century progressed. By the 1840s, the soapstone quarry was owned by Benjamin Smith of the nearby village of Saxtons River, who operated the quarry with his sons Charles and Benjamin, Jr. In 1850, Benjamin Smith's daughter Jane married John L. Butterfield, Jr. (#33), the son of Dr. Butterfield, one of the village's first residents. Butterfield became a partner in the business with Charles Smith, and the business was renamed Butterfield & Smith. The soapstone was transported down the hill into Cambridgeport and finished as marketable products. At this point, these products included stoves, hearths, sinks, griddles, inkwells, mantels, lintels and sills, pipes, and foot warmers. By the 1860s, soapstone was Grafton's largest industry, and ultimately its most lucrative. Butterfield & Smith were reportedly the most successful producers of soapstone in Vermont and one of the two most successful in the United States. Smith died in 1885, and Butterfield carried on the business until his death in 1892. Butterfield's success enabled him to enlarge and update his home in the late 1860s, and it is now an important landmark of the village.

During the 1860s, Francis Daniels (#3) was responsible for the construction of an underground aqueduct (1-1/2" pipes, presumably of soapstone) that served a large section of the village. The pipes ran from the Hinckley Brook near his house along both sides of Main Street to the corner of Chester Road, and also ran down both sides of Townshend Street to the south end of the historic district. The village continued to expand during this period, and on Townshend Road, the lots that remained undeveloped in the 1850s were mostly developed by the 1860s as documented on the 1869 Beers map. While the population of Grafton gradually decreased from 1820 on, Grafton village grew as the residents of rural Grafton moved into the village.

In the 1860s, Pleasant Street was created on the Barrett family property (#47), and most of the land in this area, as well as some undeveloped land on the east side of Townshend Road, was acquired by Parker Chapman and subdivided into lots. Within the historic district, almost every extant primary building on Main Street, Route 121, Kidder Hill Road, Hinckley Brook Road, Middletown Road, and Chester Road appears on the 1869 Beers map, dating the majority of the extant village structures to pre-1870. At this point, Pleasant Street (first called New Street, and then called School Street until today's School Street was created) was about halfway developed, and Townshend Road was almost fully developed. The map shows Houghtonville Road as West Street, Townshend Road as South Street, Chester Road as North Street, Pleasant Street as School Street, and Kidder Hill Road as Water Street.

Parker Chapman (1830-1877) was responsible for the construction of at least thirteen buildings in Grafton village between 1856 and the mid 1870s (mostly built after he returned from serving

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in the Civil War), the most built by any other developer in the village (#51, 54, 59, 60, 66, 68, 70, 71, 72, and 73). Twelve of these were houses and one was a store. He also had two houses constructed which are no longer standing; one that stood on what is now property #43, which was probably the first house he had built, and one that stood on what is now #68. Chapman lived in at least a few of these buildings, such as #43, the only house he built on Route 121 East (which burned down in the 1920s), #68, and #51, which he may have been living in at his early death in 1877. Chapman's store was constructed in the early 1860s on Main Street next to the Main Street bridge, on what is now property #37. Chapman operated a grocery store on the first story and may have lived on the second story. After his death, the store building was converted to a tenement.

Although tradition states that Chapman was a contractor, it is more likely that he was a developer that hired carpenters to undertake the construction. In the 1860 and 1870 census records, which were years that houses built on his lots were constructed, Chapman is listed as a farmer and merchant, respectively. He is also not listed in the local business directory as a carpenter, while many other village residents are.

In 1862, the Hyman Burgess store, which was attached to the local hotel (#22), was moved to Houghtonville Road and converted to a house (#9). During the 1860s, the post office was temporarily relocated back into the town hall, and Bancroft's post office building became a store. About 1863, before he became postmaster, Nathan Hall established a books and stationery store in this building (#34). It was later run by his wife Elizabeth and daughter Fannie, both postmasters, and then by later postmasters Amy Davis and Roy Jarvis, finally closing in 1958.

During the Civil War, one in three Grafton men enlisted in the army, which was reportedly a higher ratio than in any other town in Vermont. Despite the loss of about twenty-two local men during the war, Grafton village continued to prosper in the 1860s. Although there was a downturn in the woolen industry due to competition with imports, the Grafton woolen mills remained active creating cloth for Civil War uniforms. In 1863, Peter Dean reorganized his woolen mill as the Grafton Manufacturing Company. Upon his retirement in 1867, he sold the business to Sabin & Fairbrother of Saxtons River. Within a couple of years, Fairbrother sold his share in the business to Elisha E. Sabin, Jr., and Sabin and his family moved into the woolen mill's boardinghouse. At its peak, Sabin's mill annually manufactured 75,000 yards of "cassimeres, doeskins, and kerseymeres."

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In the early 1860s, Henry Holmes established a churn factory on Chester Road (#82), where he manufactured the patented Fyler Churn. He then had a distinguished house built for himself on Route 121 East (#42), which was the fifth house he had constructed in the village. After Holmes's death in the 1870s, his son Sidney took over, and the business remained in operation until Sidney's death in 1897. The factory was then converted to a house.

In 1865, the local tavern (#22), which had been a successful operation over the years, was sold to brothers Francis (1817-1888) and Harlan (1838-1905) Phelps. They were grandsons of Keziah Gibson, who was born in Grafton in 1762, and Elijah Phelps, who moved to Grafton in 1788, and sons of local blacksmith Joseph Phelps. Francis had already been operating the tavern's livery stable since no later than 1860, and Harlan had recently returned from California, where he had been a successful gold miner. Harlan's gold rush fortune financed the expansion of the tavern into the extant three-story edifice. Both men lived in the tavern with their families, and named it the Grafton Hotel.

The years that the hotel was owned by the Phelps brothers is considered the most colorful period in the hotel's history. Ulysses S. Grant came to the hotel in 1867 while campaigning for president, Rudyard Kipling visited in 1892, and Justin S. Morrill, Vermont's representative in Washington for 43 years and the author of the Land Grant Education Act of 1858, also stayed at the hotel. Other guests included Daniel Webster, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Besides serving travelers and as a community meeting place, the hotel also served traveling entertainers, traveling salesmen/peddlers, and as a boardinghouse for "journeymen mechanics" including blacksmiths, painters, harnessmakers and woodworkers. Later in the century, Grafton's first vacationers, as well as artists and writers, also summered at the hotel. The hotel also served as a stagecoach stop until 1937, with a daily stage to Bellows Falls, Chester and Townshend, and the livery remained open until about 1920. The Phelps brothers were also Express Agents until 1880, and auctioneers until 1888. The hotel remained under the Phelps family ownership until 1903.

After the two school districts in the village were consolidated in the 1860s, a new schoolhouse was constructed in 1867 at the end of a long driveway that led south from Pleasant Street. (Soon after, School Street was laid out, and this driveway became the north-south leg of the street.) This large two-story high-style Greek Revival structure reflected the population increase in and economic success of the village. The brick schoolhouse (#12) became a residence, and the other schoolhouse (#35) became a tin shop. At the latter, the Masonic Keystone Lodge #95 used the upper floor as a meeting room from 1871 until its disbandment in 1901.

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In 1867, the Grafton Cornet Band was established by Solomon F. Merrill of Keene, New Hampshire, a well-known musician at the time. It is the oldest continuously operating cornet band in Vermont. The band's first meetings took place at the Grafton Hotel (#22). The owner of the hotel, Francis Phelps, was the band's first drum major, and the first band leader was Richard Clark (#59). The band performed on a bandstand located at the corner of Main Street and Townshend Road, in front of the hotel. There were three bandstands over the years, the first one dating to about 1870, and the last, 1920. In the 1920s, the bandstand was removed to allow for the widening of the roadways at the corner. Since 1922 (except for the years 1932-1936), the cornet band has used the second floor of Schoolhouse No. 2 (#35) as its practice space.

Also in 1867, George N. French expanded his late father's French Carriage Company by building a factory on the north side of Pleasant Street (now property #69). The Kidder Hill Road factory remained in operation and was run by his brothers Dexter and Lyman, Jr. George French also had a new home built for himself next to the Pleasant Street factory, in what was originally the backyard of his Main Street home (#31). His son George D. joined the business in 1877, and the business was renamed George N. French & Son. The Frenches moved to Bellows Falls in 1889, moving the house with them, and the carriage factory was operated by Samuel Leonard (#65) until 1910. The factory was removed at an unknown time, and was reportedly moved out of town.

The 1869 Beers map shows two blacksmith shops in the village. One was behind the French buildings on Pleasant Street, and the other was on Kidder Hill Road in the location of #74. Both were constructed in the early 1860s, although it is possible that the Pleasant Street shop was moved to this location from Kidder Hill Road to make way for the construction of Pleasant Street. The latter shop was operated from about 1865 to 1872 by blacksmith Helon M. Carpenter, who lived across the street (#75). This shop burned down in 1878, when it was operated by Samuel A. Brown.

In 1869, a freshet destroyed the bridge on Kidder Hill Road, and it was replaced circa 1870 with the extant covered bridge (#79). This is the only remaining covered bridge in Grafton and the only covered bridge left out of the thirteen that once spanned the Saxtons River between Grafton and Bellows Falls. It is also the shortest covered bridge and the only example of queen post bridge construction in Windham County, and one of only a few bridges in Vermont to have a skewed alignment. It does not appear that the freshet destroyed any buildings in the village, although it did wash out most of the roads and reportedly destroyed the Main Street bridge as well.

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Although the building boom was over, the village continued to grow in the 1870s, and several new businesses were established. In 1872, Samuel Goodridge started a fishing rod manufactory in the basement of the town hall (#23), and remained in business for the next twenty years. In 1874, the Grafton Library Society conveyed its assets to the Town, and Goodridge was also the town librarian from 1882 to 1892. At this point, the library had been moved up to the west half of the first story of the building.

In 1872, Samuel Leonard had a new house and detached shop built on one of the only remaining lots on Pleasant Street (#65). Until his death in 1918, Leonard was a jeweler, silversmith, watch and clockmaker and repairer and was considered a “mechanical genius.” He was also a wheelwright from about 1891 to 1910, taking over the French carriage shop down the street. After Leonard’s death, his son Harlan operated the jewelry shop until the early 1920s.

In 1874, Charles Phelps, brother of Francis and Harlan of the Grafton Hotel, acquired a house on Main Street (#16). He lived in the house and opened a dry goods/general merchandise store there called L & C Phelps. The “L” stood for his brother Leverett, who lived on Townshend Road (now property #52) and was a tailor, also selling clothes out of the store. Charles Phelps died in the 1890s, and after a few more owners, the store closed in 1909.

About 1875, a blacksmith shop was constructed on School Street for Jonathan D. Leonard (#66), who was a blacksmith in Grafton until 1880. Later blacksmiths at this shop were Jerome Adams (#68), Delmer D. Kent (#62), and Harry Farnsworth (#64). The blacksmith shop on Pleasant Street was probably removed in the early 1880s.

In 1874, the Grafton Farmers’ Club was officially established as the Grafton Grange No. 117 of the Patrons of Husbandry, and in 1876, a grange building was constructed on land owned by Franklin Woolley (#15) directly behind his house and facing Main Street. The building had a grain store on the first floor and meeting space on the second floor. The G.A.R., I.L. Clarke Post #87 and the Women’s Relief Corps also met there. Later, the grange building’s next-door neighbor Lucy J.C. Daniels (#12) was concerned about the building catching on fire and harming her house, so she funded its move, which took place in 1941. (There is an interesting photo of the building as it is squeezed in between the Congregational Church and its chapel on its way to its new location.) The building is now on Townshend Road (#56) and remains the Grafton Grange. Since 1989, it has also been the home of the Nature Museum at Grafton. In addition to the grange building, Grafton’s agricultural history is still reflected in the numerous barns

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scattered around the village, particularly on Route 121 East, Townshend Road, and Pleasant Street, many of which are used as garages but otherwise remain intact.

Judging by local records, the Congregational Church chapel was probably constructed in the 1870s (#11A), as well as six new dwellings, which are located on Townshend Road, School Street, Pleasant Street, and Chester Road (#51, 59, 60, 65, 68, 91). At least four of these houses were built for Parker Chapman, who lived for a couple of years at #68, and then probably lived at #51 with his wife Sarah until his death in 1877. Another one of these houses has been the subject of local lore, the Rice house on Chester Road (#91). Tradition states that the house was built during or just before the Civil War, and then sold to Minerva and Alonzo Rice, with Alonzo then dying in the war. While Minerva did live in the house later, deed records indicate that this was an empty lot until 1871, and the 1870 census lists Minerva Rice living in Wilmington, Vermont. Local lore also states that the house was built by a man who intended to live in it with his bride-to-be. This could have been Marshall Lamphear, who lived with his parents in the house to the north (#93) and then bought the empty lot in 1871. The story goes that when his fiancé saw that there was no place in the house for her organ, she broke off the engagement. In 1877, when Lamphear sold the house to Minerva Rice, he moved back in with his parents, so perhaps this is true.

During the 1870s, the village lost one important business, the woolen mill. By the 1870s, the woolen industry had declined due to competition from the West. The mill's owner, Elisha Sabin, Jr., sought local property tax relief and was denied. About 1878, he moved his machinery to Gageville village in the nearby town of Westminster, and about 1879 he moved the boardinghouse to Saxtons River, where it became a retail building. The mill itself was probably removed in 1879.

The 1870s also marked the end of the building boom in the village, and only two or three structures were added to the historic district in the last two decades of the century. As there were very few empty lots in the village by this time, two of these buildings were constructed in the location of a previously standing building. About 1895, a blacksmith shop was constructed on Kidder Hill Road to replace the one that had burned down (#74), and in 1899, a house was constructed on Pleasant Street in the former location of George French's house (#69). Everett Clark operated a livery stable at his homestead on Townshend Road from 1888 to 1903, although the building may have been built earlier as a barn (#54). In 1972, this structure was moved to School Street (#63A).

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There were also some changes to Grafton's economy in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1882, the French family's woodworking shop on Kidder Hill Road was converted to Alvah Marsh's and John Leland's black ash chair splint factory named Marsh & Leland. Marsh and his family and his brother-in-law Leland and his family lived together up the street (#75). This factory closed in 1888, and was probably the last use for this structure, which was removed at an unknown time. In the 1880s, the only industrial concerns in the village were the Holmes churn factory, the French carriage shop on Pleasant Street, Goodridge's fishing rod manufactory, and the blacksmith shop on School Street. The two mill sites in Mechanicsville and the soapstone business, however, remained active, providing additional employment to village residents.

In 1882, one year before his death, George Barrett retired from his long-time run as a store proprietor (#28), and the store was taken over by W.E.L. Walker, who also ran an undertaking establishment on the second story. He operated the store until 1915, when it was taken over by Francis and Agnes Palmer, who operated the store until 1949. In 1948, Francis Palmer wrote a book about the history of Grafton.

The general store/drugstore to the east, which from the 1860s to the 1880s was operated by William Wyman and J.O. Eaton, was acquired by Watson S. Eaton in 1890. Eaton operated the store until 1916, and from 1916 to 1918 it was operated by F.G. Redfield as a drugstore. It probably permanently closed in 1918, and in 1934, it was torn down. The Phelps store at the west end of Main Street (#16) was taken over by Francis Palmer in 1906, who operated it until 1915, when he moved the business into the store mentioned above. The Phelps-Palmer store was then converted to its original residential use.

Hamilton Child's 1884 gazetteer notes that at the time, Grafton village had "two churches, three stores, a hotel, chair-splint factory, carriage shop, blacksmith shop, etc., and about eighty dwellings. The Green Mountain telegraph and Boston & Northern telephone lines each have offices here." These latter businesses were probably located in the adjacent Main Street stores (#28 and the building that formerly stood just to the east).

During the 1890s, there were more changes to Grafton's commerce. In 1893, Samuel Goodridge stopped producing fishing rods. From 1891 to 1897, the Grafton Cheese Company ran a factory in Parker Chapman's former store, which had been used as a tenement after his death in 1877 (#37). At this time, the second story reportedly had a spring dance floor, and was also used as a roller skating rink. There was also an adjacent shed that was rented to farmers who sold milk to

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the “Boston Market.” The building burned down in 1912. Another industry to close in 1897 was the Holmes churn factory (#82). The building was then converted to a residence. As mentioned earlier, Grafton also gained a new blacksmith shop in the 1890s, which was operated by Joseph McGreen until 1906 (#74).

Grafton’s only known major fire occurred in 1899, when three mid nineteenth century houses burned down near the bottom of Chester Road. A bucket brigade, including guests at the Grafton Hotel, helped prevent the fire from spreading to other buildings nearby. The houses were not rebuilt, but in 1905, David Hakey moved a house from Howeville onto one of the lots.

The population of Grafton continued to decrease from one census year to the next. At the turn of the twentieth century, the population of Grafton was 804, compared to the highest number the town has ever had, 1,482 in 1820. Only two houses were constructed in the village between 1899 and 1947, both during the first decade of the century. One is a “landlocked” house off School Street (#62), built for blacksmith Delmer Kent behind his shop (#63) about 1906. The other was built about 1909 on an empty lot north of the Baptist Church on Houghtonville Road (#8).

In 1910, Grafton’s long run in the successful soapstone and carriage-making industries came to an end. In 1893, the Butterfield & Smith soapstone manufactory had been taken over by Williams & Hicks, and in 1895, the name was changed to Williams & Company. This company could not survive due a lack of demand for soapstone products. The local business directory lists 1910 as the last year that the carriage factory on Pleasant Street was in operation. Also, one of the blacksmith shops closed by 1910 (#74).

After 1910, there was only one industrial concern remaining in the village, the blacksmith shop on School Street. Other remaining businesses were limited to three stores, the hotel, a jeweler, and an automobile garage. The stores were the Palmer general store (#28), the W.S. Eaton general store/drugstore to its east, and Fannie Hall’s books and stationery store at the post office (#34). The Grafton Hotel was sold out of the Phelps family in 1903, but remained a popular inn, and the only inn in Grafton village for travelers and visitors. It was renamed the Grafton Tavern. Samuel Leonard continued his jewelry/watchmaking business into the early twentieth century (#65A). The two woodworking mills in Mechanicsville continued to operate, providing employment to village residents. Also, there were many farmers still living in the village, mostly with separate agricultural lands outside of the village. Commercial agricultural products at this point included dairy, apples, and maple syrup. A large dairy barn was built in the village (now

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#39), and its appearance in a photo suggests a construction date of the early twentieth century. It was built for Frank V. Wilbur, who bought the house on this corner in 1912 (#80), and operated a milk route in Grafton. This barn was removed in the 1960s.

The logging industry in Grafton during the first half of the twentieth century helped the town survive the loss of industry. As in all of Vermont, Grafton's forests were almost laid bare during the era of the sheep-raising and wool production. By the early twentieth century, much of the woodlands had grown back, and both the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor and the Stevens Paper Company of Westfield, Massachusetts, began logging Grafton's new forests. (The marble company used the wood for producing crates.) One newspaper article from 1927 notes that the Vermont Marble Company had planted 50,000 trees in Grafton. Frank Jones (#80 and 85) and Norman Lake (#31) were Grafton natives who worked as loggers. The two woodworking mills in Mechanicsville also continued their operations during the first half of the twentieth century.

The largest drop in population in Grafton occurred between 1910 and 1920, when the population changed from 729 to 476. This was partly due to World War I, when residents left to fight in the war and then chose to live in other areas where better jobs were available, Grafton's rural residents' abandonment of farmsteads, and residents moving to areas with more economic opportunities, such as large cities. Although the drop in population suggests that many houses in the village were abandoned, the 1920 census shows that not one house was unoccupied. This is due to the abandonment of farmsteads in favor of village living.

During the 1910s, the town could no longer support a full-time resident minister for either of the two churches on Main Street. In 1920, the churches united and established the Federated Church of Grafton. The federation hired ministers alternately from each denomination, and the Congregational church is used during the summer and the heated Baptist Church during the winter. In 1972, the name of the federation was changed to The Grafton Church, and is affiliated with both the United Church of Christ and the American Baptist Church.

Also, many houses were acquired as the village's first vacation homes, a trend that was occurring all over Vermont, and in other rural areas of New England. William F. Robinson points out in his book *Mountain New England* that "New England's tourism ultimately proved the salvation for much of the hill country. By the twentieth century it was the only reason why many areas had not reverted to unpopulated wilderness." Robinson specifically uses Grafton village as an example of a community saved by tourism. Grafton's proximity to the Bellows Falls railroad station allowed this to happen. Historically, visitors could take the train from New York or

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Boston to Bellows Falls, and be transported to Grafton via stagecoach. The construction of Route 91 in the 1960s, a twenty minute drive from Grafton, made Grafton even more accessible.

The first vacation home in the village was the Barrett House (#47), although it had not been acquired as a vacation home. John Barrett, the grandson of original owner John Barrett, was born in Grafton and moved away for his professional pursuits, but returned to Grafton for vacations his entire life. Barrett (1866-1938) was one of the most famous residents of Grafton. He was the United States Minister to Siam, a war correspondent with Admiral Dewey during the Spanish-American War, a Minister to Argentina, Panama and Columbia, and founder of the Pan American Union, serving as its first Director. He was also considered responsible for the good relations between the United States and Latin America during his tenure as Minister, and helped secure the support of many countries from that region during World War I.

The first person to buy a home in the village specifically for vacation use was George Grafton Wilson of Cambridge, Massachusetts, who in 1903 acquired the Dexter French house on Kidder Hill Road (#78), after it had been in the French family for seventy years. Wilson's wife Elizabeth ("Lily") was a descendant of Fabius Bancroft, who had lived across the street (#76). The subject house was renamed Green Hollow and was occupied as a primary residence by members of the family from the 1930s to the 1950s, but has been a vacation home for the family since then. Wilson and his wife Elizabeth later acquired two other homes on Kidder Hill Road as vacation homes for their children and grandchildren (#75 and 76). All three homes remained in the family until recently, and Green Hollow is still owned by Wilsons.

Another descendant of a nineteenth century resident of Grafton was the second person to acquire a home in the village for use as a vacation home. In 1907, Charles Daniels and his wife Gertrude acquired a house (#4) near the Daniels family homestead (#3) where Charles had grown up. They lived in Chicago and vacationed in Grafton. The house remained in the family until 2004. From 1978 to 1990 it was occupied full-time by the Danielses' great-niece Harriet Gelfan, who co-founded the *Grafton News*.

The Danielses must have been intrigued by Charles's sister Lucy J.D. Daniels (1858-1949, a.k.a. Aunt Lou), who was one of Grafton's most colorful figures. She grew up in the Daniels family homestead (#3) and lived in Grafton for most of her life. As an adult, she owned three houses in the village (#9, 12 and 48); she occupied the first two at the same time and later acquired the third as a guest house. She was an active participant in the women's suffrage movement, and painted "A Square Deal – Voices for Vermont Women" in large letters on the side of one of her

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houses (#9). She attended a demonstration in Washington D.C., and was arrested for her participation in three demonstrations. In 1911, Daniels refused to pay her property taxes because Grafton's representative to the State Legislature voted against the Women's Suffrage Bill. Both of her homes were vandalized with graffiti during this time. Daniels also donated a large sum of money to help finance the acquisition of the town library (#33), and was responsible for moving the Grange building to its current site (#56).

During the 1910s, about six more houses were acquired for use as vacation homes (8, 10, 15, 32, 45, and 62), and during the 1920s, about four more houses became vacation homes (#5, 13, 19, and 76). One of these was the Congregational Parsonage (#5), which after sixty-seven years of serving this purpose was sold to Paul and Edith Piel of Piel's Beer. The house remains a vacation home for their son.

The influx of summer visitors helped create a new type of business in Grafton. During the 1920s and 1930s, three "tea rooms" opened in Grafton. Tea rooms were established in the northeastern United States in the early twentieth century and were operated by women, often out of their own homes. The number of tea rooms increased in the 1920s as the result of Prohibition, the onset of independence for women, and the availability of the automobile. Tea rooms served lunch and of course tea service in the afternoon. The tea rooms in the village included the Little Green Tea House run by Mrs. Nellie Stowell, probably out of her house (#26) and Mrs. Maude Tuttle's tea room, possibly located in her house or in her outbuilding (#65 and 65A). The Rainbow Tea Garden, operated by Hazel Treadwell, may have also been located in the village (#72). The influx of summer visitors also resulted in three new inns in Grafton, although none of them were within the village. They were probably located in existing houses, including the house just north of the historic district on Middletown Road.

Perhaps as a reaction to Grafton's declining population and economy, which must have caused community-wide distress, in 1919, the Grafton Memorial and Improvement Association was formed. Its purpose was to memorialize World War I soldiers and improve Grafton for its residents. The organization, which was renamed the Grafton Improvement Association in 1926, created a recreation area on the former farmland behind the buildings on the south side of Main Street west of Townshend Street. The Women's Community Club of Grafton was organized in 1918 and was first called the Ladies Knitting Club. It raised money and knit garments in support of World War I soldiers. In 1938, the name was changed to the Women's Community Club of Grafton. After the war was over, the club focused on raising money for local services and providing financial assistance to college students.

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Another boost to the community was the creation of a public park. In 1923, Mrs. Gertrude Daniels (#4) turned a seventy-acre parcel of former farmland east of the Congregational Parsonage into parkland (#6). Local residents were hired to plant shrubs, cut trails, and build seats along the trails. The park was then opened to the public, and Daniels donated the parcel to the town in 1949. Since then, it has been known as the Village Park.

A new type of business appeared in Grafton village during the 1920s. The two blacksmith shops (#63 and 74) were converted to automobile repair garages, reflecting the dawn of the automobile age in Grafton. The first garage was opened by Harlan S. Leonard in 1923 in the former blacksmith shop on Kidder Hill Road (#74). Blacksmith Henry Farnsworth started using part of his blacksmith shop on School Street as a garage in 1926, and probably ceased his smithy operation in 1931 (#63). Gas pumps in the village were installed in front of the F.A. Palmer Cash Store (#28) at an unknown time, and provided gasoline from the Standard Oil Company. About 1940, George Jones moved a shed onto his property on Route 121 East (#38) and converted it to a filling station and automobile repair garage. In 1950, this garage was replaced with a typical mid twentieth century Moderne style station, which was removed in 1965.

Three public services were initiated during the 1920s. The first telephone line was installed in the village about 1920, ran from Saxtons River, through Grafton village, and onto Windham, and was owned privately by a resident of Saxtons River. The Grafton Light and Power Company was incorporated in 1922 in order to bring electricity to Grafton from the Fall Mountain Electric Company in Bellows Falls. By the late 1920s, about eighty homes in Grafton had electricity.

Grafton's first fire department, the Grafton Fire Company, was organized in 1924, and its first fire chief was Harry A. Farnsworth (#64). That year, the Harlan Leonard Garage on Kidder Hill Road (#74) was purchased by the Town to serve as the fire house. The Grafton Firemen's Association was organized in 1934, and its first chief was Earl E. Wright. The location of the fire house moved from Kidder Hill Road to the former Schoolhouse No. 2 in 1939 (#35). In 1956, the Grafton Fire Company disbanded, and all assets were given to the Grafton Firemen's Association Inc. The location of the fire department was moved out of the village in 1990.

The summer visitors, the logging industry, the two mills in Mechanicsville, the remaining agricultural productions, and the sale of animal pelts helped Grafton survive the Depression. The Grafton Tavern was able to remain open due to the numerous summer visitors that stayed there. During the 1930s, about seven more houses became vacation homes (#41, 43, 59, 75, 77, 92, and 94), and during the 1940s, about two more houses became vacation homes (#24 and 25). Not a

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single new primary structure was built during that time period with one exception, the Main Street Bridge (#37).

Village residents engaged in agricultural concerns during the 1930s included Charles Cambridge (#24), who is listed in the local business directory as having a milk route from 1924 to 1932, M.E. Jones, who acquired Frank Wilbur's house and dairy barn (#80) and is listed in the local business directory as having a milk route from 1930 to 1932 and a grain store from 1938 to 1943, and Fred O. Merrifield (#58), who had a large farmstead at the south end of the historic district. This farm maintained a substantial dairy operation until the 1960s, when it was sold by farmer Edgar McWilliam to the Windham Foundation, which has continued using the farm for agricultural purposes. As was the case at the beginning of the century, other commercial agricultural productions that helped families through the Depression included apples, honey, and maple syrup.

However, agricultural activities in Grafton, as well as much of Vermont, experienced a gradual decline throughout the twentieth century. This decline was due to two factors: the economics of maintaining a small-scale farm and the availability of the automobile. The small dairy farms could not compete with the larger, technologically-advanced farms developing around the state and country. From 1900 to 1930, the number of farms in Vermont decreased by one third, and the percentage of acreage of land used for farming in Vermont decreased by one third. The automobile enabled people to live in one place and work in another (such as Bellows Falls Village), and many farmers' children entered into other professions.

To add to the problems of the Depression, in 1936, the 1867 village schoolhouse burned down. It was replaced with a smaller schoolhouse that reflected the decrease in population since the much larger previous schoolhouse had been constructed. In 1937, one of the mills in Mechanicsville burned down and was not replaced. In addition to the loss the school and the mill, Grafton's population decrease, the Depression, and the reduction in farming, another blow to the village was the damage caused by the 1938 hurricane, which affected all of New England. In Grafton, all the roads were washed out and the Main Street bridge was destroyed. Near the bridge, the post office (#34) and the former Schoolhouse No. 2 (#35) were moved off their foundations. The bridge was replaced with the extant bridge (#36), and the two buildings were moved back into place on new foundations. The hurricane probably did not destroy any buildings in the village.

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Stagecoach service to and from Grafton ended in 1937, and in 1938, Earl Wright started Grafton's first and only local taxi service (#44). He provided this service until 1958. Wright was also Grafton's first real estate agent, a business he also started in 1938. Judging by the local directory, he was Grafton's only real estate agent until he retired in 1960. He was also responsible for the construction of Grafton village's most architecturally significant twentieth-century home, a 1952 high-style Colonial Revival house on Chester Road (#88).

Despite the newcomers, in 1940, the population of Grafton dropped to its lowest in history, 393 persons. However, at the time, there was a great demand for an expanded library facility, as the town library was still located in the town hall. Lucy J.C. Daniels offered to fund the construction or purchase of a separate library building. There was much debate over where to locate the new library and whether or not it should be in an existing building or a new building. Three years after Daniels's death, in 1952, the library trustees chose the Butterfield House (#33), and the Daniels estate donated almost \$70,000 toward the purchase and renovation of the building and the relocation of the library. The interior of the house was renovated, and the library opened to the public in July 1955. In 1959, a War Memorial plaque was installed on the lawn by the Grafton Improvement Association. The building remains Grafton's local library.

Another improvement to the village during this time was the construction of a new store. The 1947 "Home Store" was built on Pleasant Street by Charles and Mary Elrick, and also served as their home (#66). It replaced a nineteenth century house that had burned in 1946, the year that the first Home Store had opened. This was the first new primary building constructed in the village in almost forty years, and marked the beginning of a new, but minor phase of home construction in Grafton village, when five homes were constructed from 1947 to 1964 (#52, 66, 86, 87, and 88). Two of these homes replaced nineteenth-century homes (#52 and 56), and the others were built on former farmland on the east side of Chester Road.

From the 1920s to the present, people from out of state made Grafton their permanent residence, often after vacationing in Grafton. From the 1920s to the 1940s, at least six homes were acquired or changed from vacation homes to permanent residences by out-of-staters such as George G. and Elizabeth Wilson of Massachusetts (#78), Phebe Frost of New York City (#32), George and Marjorie Williamson of Brooklyn (#42), Ralph and Ariana Paterson of Massachusetts (#68), Clara Allard of Connecticut (#69), and Dorothy Lausser of New York (#83). By 1950, the population of Grafton had risen to 422 persons. The Grafton Zoning Commission noted that during the 1940s, new residents had moved to Grafton and made "substantial capital investments in repairing old houses and building new ones."

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Grafton continued to be an important vacation spot during this time. Francis Palmer commented in his 1954 book on Grafton history that:

A short history of Grafton would not be complete without mention of its summer people. The first arrival dates back many years while others are new comers [sic]. Many have purchased homes in town, remodeling the houses, and keeping them up in a way good to see. Some have become permanent residents. Friendly, interested in Grafton, its welfare and upkeep, they are a great help to the town. We are sorry to see them go away in the autumn and glad when they begin to come back in the spring.

Despite Grafton's popularity with summer visitors, it remained unspoiled, and community pride was evident in a Grafton Zoning Commission document of 1960. The document noted that:

Everyone will probably agree that the comparatively remote location of Grafton is largely responsible for the preservation of its orderliness and beauty which every resident and visitor is proud of, whether they so express themselves or not. It is one of the very few towns in Vermont that has been so fortunate. As the *Hartford Times* [CT] wrote in an editorial published in September 1950, "Every town has its past but few retain the atmosphere of an earlier day as Grafton does. It is an embodiment of what you expect an old New England village to be."

In 1954, this community pride was also expressed in the large celebration of the town's 200th birthday. The three-day event included entertainment and exhibits related to the town's history, a parade, an antique show, an art exhibit, a play, games, a picnic, a pilgrimage to the site of Middletown village, and fireworks. For the event, the Yankee Male Chorus performed for the first time in New England, and the Congregational Church was restored. Despite this display of community spirit, and the repopulation with some new residents, Grafton remained in an economic slump and many houses fell into a state of deterioration. The Grafton Tavern had not been modernized with plumbing and heating, and was only open during the summer months.

Another event of community pride during these uncertain times for Grafton was the establishment of the Grafton Historical Society in 1962 by Samuel and Helen B. Pettengill (#1). By 1963, there were 175 members. Samuel Pettengill was president until his death in 1974. Helen Pettengill was the secretary and museum director from 1962 to 1988, and wrote a book about the history Grafton. Artifacts were first exhibited in the library (#33), and a museum opened in the old post office in 1963 (#34). The collection accumulated over the years until the

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historical society outgrew the other buildings and moved into its present headquarters on Main Street (#26). Today, the historical society has a large collection that is accessible to the public, rotating exhibits, educational programs, and has published books and articles.

Grafton's economic situation improved with the arrival of cousins Mathew Hall and Dean Mathey, wealthy businessmen from New Jersey. Mat Hall (1907-1974) began to visit Grafton with his family in the 1930s, and in 1941 bought an old farmhouse on Townshend Road as a summer home. In 1957, he purchased the blacksmith shop on School Street in order to preserve it, and in 1959, he and his wife Elizabeth acquired the village's first fire station on Kidder Hill Road (#74), which was in a state of deterioration. The Halls undertook a comprehensive renovation of the building, and in 1962, opened an antiques store there called the Village Pump.

Mat Hall's aunt, Pauline Fiske, visited him in Grafton. She became quite fond of the area, and provided \$5,000 for the restoration of the Congregational Church for the 1954 anniversary celebration. She died in 1959, and in her will she left the bulk of her large estate as a foundation in trust to Mat Hall and Dean Mathey. Mathey (1890-1972) had vacationed in Grafton during his childhood summers, and was a successful investment banker and professional tennis player, defeating Bill Tilden at Wimbledon in 1923. From 1964 to 1966, he owned a home in the historic district on Route 121 East (#43).

Mathey's Bunbury Company, which was a charitable organization, absorbed Fiske's trust, and in 1963, the company began buying properties in Grafton village for the purpose of restoring historic buildings and improving the village, and essentially brought the village back to life. Properties acquired this year included an empty lot on Pleasant Street, which became the site of the Old Tavern's tennis courts, another empty lot on Pleasant Street, which became the site of the Grafton Village Nursery (#67), a third empty lot on the corner of Pleasant Street and School Street, which became a community vegetable garden and is now a public park, and the Palmer Store, which was renovated and renamed the Grafton Village Store (#28). This general store remains open to this day and is a popular gathering place.

In 1963, Mathey and Hall created the Windham Foundation to succeed the Grafton interest of the Bunbury Company, with Hall as President. Then, the mission of the Windham Foundation was, "to restore buildings and economic vitality in the village of Grafton; to provide financial support for education and private charities; and to develop projects that will benefit the general welfare of Vermont and Vermonters."

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Between 1964 and 1996 (mostly between 1964 and 1976), the Windham Foundation acquired and renovated twenty-six buildings in the village, mostly houses (#8, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 31, 32, 35, 38, 47, 48, 51, 54, 57, 58, 62, 63A, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 72, 80, 85, and one house on Chester Road that has since been demolished) most of which were in a state of deterioration. One of these structures, a former livery stable, was moved from Townshend Road to School Street (#63A). Another house became the offices of the Windham Foundation (#58). Today, thirteen houses are rented out as single family homes or are annexes to the Old Tavern (#8, 20, 21, 26, 31, 47, 51, 57, 65, 66, 69, 72, and 80), one former house is the Windham Foundation's gift shop, information center and café (#48), one house is an art gallery (#54), and the former fire house is a gift shop and the home of the Grafton Cornet Band (#35). Local contractors such as Fred Prouty (#72), Ed Willard (#60) and Frank Jones (#85) were employed in the renovations.

In 1964, Dean Mathey acquired the Barrett House (#47), and his son David lived in the house and operated a store called Cricketers in the rear ell. The property was conveyed to the Windham Foundation in 1972, and since then has been an annex to the Old Tavern at Grafton across the street (#22). The 1967 garage built behind the house was converted to Cricketers in 1972 and is now also an annex to the Old Tavern.

The Windham Foundation was also responsible for the construction of three new buildings about 1965: the Grafton Village Garage (#39), which since 1965 has been the only filling station and automobile repair shop in the village, a furniture repair shop in the location of the former garage across the street (#38A), and a gift shop on Pleasant Street (#67). The arrival of Mat Hall and the Windham Foundation also indirectly resulted in the construction of two new homes on Chester Road; one was built for Mat Hall's sister Pauline Dickison and her husband Frank, who was a founding board member of the Windham Foundation (#87), and the other was built for John and Hildreth Wriston after they sold the Grafton Tavern to the Windham Foundation (#86). One nineteenth century house, Wee Housie, was acquired in 1970 by Elizabeth Hall's sister Marie Rudd, after it had been owned for one year by the Windham Foundation. The sale included a condition that the premises would be maintained to comply with local ordinances and preserve the character of the community. This is the only Windham Foundation property with such an easement. In 1995, the former caretakers of Dean Mathey's estate in Princeton, the Middletons, acquired a house on Kidder Hill Road and named it Pretty Brook, the name of Mathey's estate (#77).

Thirteen buildings were renovated or constructed (including the comprehensive renovation of the Grafton Tavern) based on the designs of architects and brothers William and Geoffrey Platt of

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New York City. They were the sons of Charles A. Platt, who was the architect of Colonial Williamsburg. All three Platts also worked on designs for Deerfield Academy in Deerfield village, Massachusetts, also known as Historic Deerfield. The brothers were hired as a result of Dean Mathey's vision for Grafton village, which followed the Colonial Revival principles of Colonial Williamsburg and Historic Deerfield. These principles were a response "to a perceived national erosion by displaying symbols that evoked the nation's founding." Colonial Revival "restoration" at the time resulted in the removal of any non-classical features and building additions that appeared to be historic. (An earlier example of these former preservation principles is the 1940s removal of the town hall's late nineteenth-century Queen Anne tower.) The Windham Foundation also constructed "tulip" gateposts (with cone-shaped tops) at many of their properties in the village, which are similar to those at Colonial Williamsburg. Another architect of the Windham Foundation was Lyman C. Douglas of New Jersey. He designed the interior of the Grafton Village Store, and the renovation of the Barrett house rear ell (#47).

Later additions to historic buildings by the Windham Foundation followed today's historic preservation guidelines, which suggest that an addition to a historic building should be compatible with its appearance but designed in a manner so that it is clearly new. The 1976 addition to the Windham Foundation's offices (#58) and the 1998 café addition to the Windham Foundation's gift shop and information center (#48) are clearly "new" but are compatible with their historic main blocks.

The Windham Foundation also buried the utility lines in the village to enhance its historic appearance, installed new streetlights and fire hydrants, and established six new businesses: The Old Tavern at Grafton, the Grafton Village Nursery, the Grafton Village Cheese Company, which is located south of the village, the Grafton Village Store, the Grafton Village Garage (#39), and the store at the old fire house (#35). The Old Tavern at Grafton was acquired in 1965 and was formerly the Grafton Tavern (#22). It is one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Hotels of America. Mrs. Helen Pettengill, mentioned above as one of the founders of the Grafton Historical Society, must have approved of the Windham Foundation's activities, as she wrote in her 1975 book about the history of Grafton:

The most important facet of the Windham Foundation's activities has been its respect for Grafton's past and its effort to do nothing that would destroy its old time charm or give the village the appearance of a restoration. Grafton remains in appearance as it did in its days of affluence, and the money brought into town by its visitors and new residents has

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benefited every one in the village. Houses are painted, fences are kept in repair, and anyone who wants work can find it for the asking.

Because of the Windham Foundation, Grafton village regained its vitality, is now one of the best preserved villages in Vermont, and is a popular vacation spot. Since the Windham Foundation's intensive preservation activities in the 1960s and 1970s, all of the buildings have remained occupied. The population of Grafton increased from 426 in 1960 to 649 in 2000, an over 150% increase. This resulted in the replacement of the 1936 elementary school with a much larger school in 1988.

Although the Grafton Village Historic District does not appear to have lost many historic resources, there are some residences and industrial buildings that have been lost over the years. Interestingly, unlike in other Vermont towns, most of these buildings were not removed in recent times, but instead either burned down, were moved to other towns, or were industrial buildings removed due to discontinued usage.

Only one factory in the historic district survives, the churn factory, which was converted to a dwelling in the early twentieth century (#82). All of the other factories, such as the French woodworking/carriage factories on Kidder Hill Road and Pleasant Street, were removed by the early twentieth century. The French carriage factory on Pleasant Street was reportedly moved out of the village. As mentioned previously, the village's largest factory, the woolen mill, was removed about 1879. The boardinghouse associated with this mill was removed about the same time, and was moved to nearby Saxtons River Village, where it remains standing on Main Street, albeit drastically remodeled.

At least eight houses dating to the mid nineteenth century have been lost. Two or three houses on the west side of the bottom of Chester Road burned down in 1899, and a house across the street disappeared by the mid twentieth century. This latter house dated to about 1805 and was the home of one of Grafton's first industrialists, Bartholomew Fuller, who operated a tanyard near the house. One of the resulting empty lots on the west side of Chester Road became the location of the Hakey House, which was moved to this site from Howeville about 1905. The Windham Foundation acquired this house, and then had it dismantled about 1990 due to the fact that the site did not support water and sewer services.

Two houses on Route 121 East, one house on Pleasant Street, and one house on Townshend Road all disappeared by 1930. The first three are now empty lots, and the fourth was replaced by

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a house about 1951 (#52). The houses on Route 121 East dated to the 1850s. One was occupied from 1858 to 1906 by Elizabeth Hall and her daughter Fannie (#30 and 34), and the other was probably the first house in the village built for Parker Chapman. The house on Townshend Road was built about 1841 and was occupied by tailor and clothing merchant Leverett Phelps (#16) and his descendants from 1849 until it was demolished about 1950.

Parker Chapman's store, which later became the Grafton Cheese Company factory, burned down in 1912. The empty lot was acquired by George Grafton Wilson (#78), who later donated the land to the Town as a public park (#37). The store that once stood east of the Barrett-Palmer store (#28) was torn down in 1934. The historic district's only automobile garage/filling station built specifically for this use, and which was the only modern building in the village, was replaced in 1965 (#38A).

A history of Grafton would be incomplete without the mention of the long-term ownership of several of its historic homes. One house that has been owned by the same family since it was constructed about 1835 is the Cambridge-Sherwin House (#24). The current owner is the great-great-granddaughter of carpenter Jonathan Sherwin, who built and occupied the house. The Bradford-Daniels House (#3) has been in the same family since 1860 with the exception of the years 1952-1966; the current owner is the great-great-granddaughter of Francis Daniels, Sr., who acquired the house in 1860.

Houses owned by the same family for over one hundred years include the Barrett House, which was owned by four generations of the Barrett family from 1807 to 1947 (#47). The Butterfield House was owned by four generations of the Butterfield-Duncan family from 1811 to 1952 (#33). Robin Lawn was owned by the Dwinnell family from its construction about 1846 to 1949 (#1). The Rice House (#91) was owned by at least four generations of the Rice family from 1877 to 1991. The Holmes-Dresser-Davis House was owned by three generations of the Davis family from 1872 to 1972 (#40). The Phelps-Daniels House was owned by members of the Daniels family for almost one hundred years, from 1907 to 2004 (#4). Also, the Baptist Church owned its parsonage on Main Street from 1845 to 1999 (#18), and the Grafton Grange building has served this organization since its construction in 1876.

Houses owned by the same family for over seventy-five years include the Burgess House (#19), which was owned by this family from its construction about 1821 until 1908. Milldean was owned by the Dean-Clarke family from its construction about 1831 until 1910 (#29). The Bailey House was owned by this family from its construction about 1846 until the early 1920s (#81).

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The Bathric House was owned by three generations of this family from its construction about 1852 to about the 1940s. The Howard-Eddy House (#92) was owned by this family from before 1855 to 1939. The Holmes-Walker-Frost house was owned by three generations of the Walker-Frost family from 1871 to 1958 (#32). Since 1929, the Holmes-Walker-Williamson House has been owned by the Williamson-Caddell family (#42). There are also several houses that were owned by the same family for over fifty years.

Several long-time vacation homes have also been owned by one family, including the three homes on Kidder Hill Road owned by members of the extended Wilson family. One has been in the family for over one hundred years, starting in 1903 (#78), one was in the family from 1926 to 2004 (#76), and the third was in the family from 1930 to 2003 (#75). The former Congregational Parsonage has been a vacation home for the Piel family since 1927 (#5). The Holmes-Walker-Schemm House has been a vacation home for the Walker-Schemm family since 1935 (#45). The Barrett-Wilbur house has been a vacation home for the Plummer-Goodfellow family since 1940 (#25). Today, at least eight homes in the village are used as vacation homes, not including the homes now owned and rented out by the Windham Foundation.

In addition to depicting Grafton village's rich history, the Grafton Village Historic District's significance also lies in its intact palette of architectural styles and types, historic buildings that date from about 1795 to 1957, and its preserved historic streetscapes. Although the majority of historic buildings in the village are limited to the Federal, Greek Revival or Italianate styles, there is a wide variety of different types of each style, there is a mix of wood framed and brick structures, and very few buildings are alike in appearance. Also, the overall uniformity helps define the village as one that was intensively developed within a span of fifty years and with few building losses and replacements.

The center of Grafton village, which is the T-intersection of Main Street and Townshend Road, has three architectural landmarks, one at each corner and one opposite the intersection; all three are excellent examples of Grafton Village Historic District's earliest architectural style, the Federal style, and were built by two of the village's first important businessmen, Enos Lovell and John Barrett. These buildings are the original section of the Grafton Hotel (#22), the John Barrett Store (#23), and the John Barrett House (#47). These and the other Federal style buildings in the village, such as the Cape Cod type houses, help define the historic district's beginnings as a true village.

The Greek Revival buildings in the village depict the historic district's beginnings as the

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principal village of Grafton. The most outstanding example of the Greek Revival style in the village is the 1834 Congregational Church (#11), with its monumental portico and four-level steeple. The church is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and its National Register nomination calls it “among the finest and most nearly unaltered examples of early nineteenth century vernacular religious architecture in Vermont.” Grafton village’s other church, the 1859 Baptist Church (#18), is also a fine example of the Greek Revival style. The Grafton Hotel in its current form is another good example of the Greek Revival style, with a full-façade wrap-around two-story recessed portico. A Federal style building updated in the Greek Revival style with a two-story full-façade recessed portico is the Alexander-Davis House (#30), which also has an arched recessed balcony in the pedimented gable.

As in all Vermont towns, transitional Greek Revival-Italianate houses were commonly built during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, despite the fact that the former is a classical style and the latter is a Victorian style. This resulted in gable-front homes common to the Greek Revival style ornamented with Italianate details such as cornice brackets. The two-story full-façade recessed porticos also appear on some of the most significant transitional Greek Revival-Italianate houses in the historic district and reflect the success of two of the village’s most successful businessmen, John Butterfield, Jr., and Henry Holmes (#33 and 63).

The Grafton Village Historic District retains intact examples of several historic resource types typically found in Vermont villages of its size, including a town hall, two schoolhouses, one post office, one hotel, one general store, one industrial building, two churches, one church chapel, three parsonages, one grange hall, one fire house, one library, one law office, one cemetery, two parks, one covered bridge, one early concrete bridge, several horse and carriage barns, and of course, numerous single-family residences lining all the streets. There are also several good examples of continuous architecture, which help depict Grafton village’s agricultural history.

Due to its rich history and intact historic resources, the Grafton Village Historic District is considered one of Vermont’s most historically significant small villages. Its architecture and landscape are visual reminders of a vibrant rural nineteenth century community that is now cared for by residents, an active historical society, and the Windham Foundation, which all clearly hold the preservation of the village as a high priority. The Grafton Historical Society, with the help of residents’ donations, funded 100% of the cost of this National Register nomination.