

Hidden Thames Street Quest

A historic quest to find the hidden history of Thames Street.

Note: This quest takes approximately 60 minutes. It is an easy walking loop of about 1 mile. Answer questions about each location while you follow the trail. The answers can be read on signs at each location. Put the letters of the correct answers in the blank spaces of the answer code at the end of the guide. Together they will tell you how to complete your quest.

Note: In some instances there may be no street number on the building. Although the number will appear on GPS, there is an alternate description here to help you find the building.

Stop 1. 301 Thames Street Thames River Heritage Park Water Taxi Landing

This landing is part of Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park. On September 6, 1781, British forces led by Benedict Arnold attacked both Groton and New London. The local militia of the Continental Army led by William Ledyard were overcome by the British and a massacre ensued. Prisoners of War were taken from this spot to be held on British ships as prisoners. You can learn all about the Battle by visiting Fort Griswold and the Monument.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 10 in the answer code.
Find the circular marker. How many prisoners were taken from this spot?
c. 14 d. 38 e. 6 f. 81

Go up to the sidewalk and turn left, heading north on Thames Street.

Stop 2. 269 Thames Street

In 1920, Frederick Bacon moved his fledgling Bacon Banjo Company from Vermont to Groton where his company flourished. Here he and the man who became his partner, David Day, built some of the world's finest banjos until the 1938 hurricane severely damaged the building. Although the factory closed, Bacon Banjos are still highly prized collectibles today.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 4 in the answer code.
When was the building which housed the Bacon Banjo Factory originally built?
k. 1823 l. 1920 m. 1938 n. 1781

Stop 3. 241 Thames Street

This building was built for Ernest Coe and Henry Bailey in the 1890's. Coe and Bailey served as the general store for Groton Bank from 1892 until 1908. The upstairs of the building was once the home of Groton Bank's first YMCA and was used for another purpose.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 14 on the answer sheet.

What was the upper part of the building used for?
p. saloon q. printer r. hotel s. laundry

Stop 4. 223 Thames Street

Paul's Pasta began serving delicious pasta here in 1988 but the building was almost 150 years old when Paul moved in. It was best known as the storefront of Edgecomb and Poppe which specialized in men's clothing. The store was a mainstay of the neighborhood for many years.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 2 in the answer code.

When is Paul's Pasta closed?
l. Tuesday m. Wednesday n. It isn't o. Monday

Stop 5. Corner of Thames and School Streets

Look down toward the river. For many years this served as one of Groton's ferry landings. In the early 1900s, someone standing in this spot could look around the intersection and find a pharmacy, a grocery, plumbers and tinsmiths, and numerous other stores which greeted ferry passengers as they arrived in Groton

There is no clue for this stop.

Stop 6. 169 Thames Street

Puffin's Restaurant was once the home of Groton Hardware. It is also located next to one of the landings for ferries that brought passengers from New London to Groton. Until 1889, ferries were used to carry passengers and even railroad cars across the river. There have been other locations for ferries across the river. Another was at Thames and School Street.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 6 in the answer code.

What color is the Early American Naval uniform on the puffin?
q. red r. blue s. green t. white

Stop 7. 137 Thames Street (Large shingled house undergoing renovation)

Parke Avery was a lieutenant in the Continental Army. On September 6, 1781, he and his 17 year-old son Thomas answered the call to arms and rushed to defend Fort Griswold in the Battle of Groton Heights. Thomas died in the battle and Parke was severely wounded. This house was built during his recovery and was more likely to have looked like the green house on the left when it was built. By 1870 the house was owned by the Fergusons who added a second story to the house and operated a small shipyard behind the house, building yachts and small vessels until the 1920s.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 11 in the answer code.

When was this home built?.

c. 1776 d. 1792 e. 1781 f. 1889

Stop 8. 121 Thames Street

This is a good spot to view the bridges. In 1889, the first railroad bridge was built over the river. In 1919, a newer railroad bridge was built and the old railroad bridge became the first road bridge over the Thames River. In 1941, one span of the present bridge was built and later named the Gold Star Bridge in honor of those who were killed in the wars overseas. The second span was completed in 1973.

There is no clue for this stop. Continue along Thames Street passing the intersection with Broad until you come to a sharp bend in the road.

Stop 9. Intersection of Bridge and Thames Street

This Memorial is dedicated to the submarines and submariners lost during World War II. It is one of two United States Submarine Veterans of World War II national memorials. The Wall of Honor lists the name of every submariner lost during World War II. The site also has stones for each of the lost boats, a torpedo which would have been used on a submarine, and the conning tower of the USS Flasher (SS-249). The Flasher was built here in Groton and served in the Pacific during WWII. It sank 21 Japanese vessels. Their combined weight of 100,000 tons was the most sunk by any submarine during WWII.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 8 in the answer code.

How many submarines were lost during WWII?

s. 52 t. 48 u. 22 v. 14

Return south on Thames Street on the opposite side of the road.

Stop 10. 90 Thames Street

This house was originally built by Major Noyes Barber and his wife Catherine in 1810. Major Barber was a major of the Connecticut militia when the War of 1812 came to Groton. In 1813 Captain Stephen Decatur and his ships were blockaded in the Thames River by the British. Groton residents, fearful of an attack similar to the Battle of Groton Heights, fled inland. Major Barber and his militia armed Fort Griswold for a year and a half. Captain Decatur himself was said to have been entertained in Major Barber's home.

There is no clue for this stop.

Stop 11. 108 Thames Street

(Large white house on the southeast corner of Broad and Thames)

The builder of this home was a doctor who attended the wounded after the Battle of Groton Heights. He built this home after his own home was destroyed during the 1781 attack on Groton. Within a few years Anna Warner Bailey and her husband Elijah Bailey

lived in this home which was also a tavern and a post office. Anna Warner Bailey first came into history when she was one of the first women into Fort Griswold after the attack. She found her uncle who was mortally wounded and granted his dying wish by returning home to gather his wife and children so he could see them one more time. Later in the War of 1812 when many townspeople had fled fearing another attack, Anna Warner Bailey stayed. When soldiers came looking for cotton wadding for the Fort's cannons, "Mother Bailey" famously stepped out of her petticoat so that it could be used to defeat the British. News of her patriotic act traveled far and wide. Three presidents visited her in this home. Sadly she died in this home when, at the age of 92, her clothing was ignited by a spark from the fireplace. Her legend has lived on over the centuries.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 5 in the answer code.

Who built the Mother Bailey house?

p. Elijah Bailey q. Major Barber r. Andrew Jackson s. Amos Prentice

Stop 12. 154 Thames Street (Avery-Copp Museum)

The Avery-Copp House and the yellow house immediately to its left were built by Captain Rufus Avery who fought in the Battle of Groton Heights. The house was passed through the Avery family to the Ramsdells and then the Copps. When Betsy and Belton Copp died in 1930, their son Joe Copp preserved the house making it a family time capsule. The house and its occupants, including the servants, have a fascinating history which can be learned by visiting the Museum.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 12 in the answer code.

The Avery-Copp House is a museum of what type of history?

f. Military g. Whaling h. Groton i. Folklore

Stop 13. 190 Thames Street

The Leeds family was Groton's first family of shipbuilders. Captain John Leeds arrived from England in the 1600s. In 1680, long before Groton was incorporated in 1705 he was building small sailing vessels a hundred yards upriver from here, next to the ferry landing. In the 1720s, James Sterling and John Jeffery obtained a 12-year lease on the old Leeds shipyard. In 1725 they launched what was perhaps colonial America's largest vessel, and followed that with several other transatlantic trading vessels. Jonathan Leeds, a descendent of John Leeds, built a small house on this site. It was incorporated into this Greek Revival-style house in the 1830s.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 13 in the answer code.

When did Jonathan Leeds build his house here?

d. 1680 e. 1793 f. 1705 g. 1830

Proceed south along Thames Street to the next corner. Take a left onto School Street.

Stop 14. 40 School Street

This building is the home of the first and founding chapter of the United States Submarine Veterans, Incorporated. The organization was founded in 1964 to perpetuate the memory of those submariners who gave their lives for their country and to provide companionship for all submarine veterans. The building's history shows it has always

been a place for people to gather. In 1895 the Groton Bank lodge of the Ancient Order of United Workmen built this as their Union Hall. It was later the home of the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks. Later still it was a playhouse for live theater productions and in 1915 was the Delphi Movie Theater. The Groton Base of the USSVI raffled a gold Cadillac to raise the money to purchase this building in 1966.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 15 in the answer code.

The base is named after the person who started the organization. Who is that person?
e. "Joe" Negri f. Don School g. Tom Denison h. Alex Ramsdell

Return to Thames Street. Turn left, walk one block and turn left onto Pleasant Street.

Stop 15. 18 Pleasant Street (Brick building on the left)

This building was once the home of the Pioneer Hose Company, a predecessor to Groton City's first volunteer fire company, the Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company, which was started in 1900. They reorganized as the Pioneer Hose Company in 1916 and moved into this building in 1917. In 1965, the fire department moved to its new headquarters on Thames Street.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 9 in the answer code.

What is the number of the IAM Lodge which now uses the building?
f. 12 g. 1917 h. 18 i. 1871

Return to Thames Street. Turn left and walk to the corner of Latham Street.

Stop 16. 242 Thames Street

This 1920's apartment building was converted to the local home of the Fleet Reserve Association in 1954. The FRA has existed since 1924 to monitor legislation affecting enlisted ranks and their families. Today it advocates for crews and their families in discussions with Congress and the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs. The torpedo to the right of the building is a Mark 14 torpedo which was a standard submarine weapon during World War II.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 7 in the answer code.

What is the number of the local branch of the Fleet Reserve?
e. 20 f. 27 g. 16 h. 12

Stop 17. 2 Latham Street (Parking Lot)

This was once the site of the Ebenezer Avery House. Built around 1760, the house was the home of Elizabeth and Ebenezer Avery during the Battle of Groton Heights. After the battle, as the British prepared to board their ships with their prisoners, a cart filled with injured patriots got away from the soldiers, racing down the hill and crashing into a tree. The house was spared from being burned as many of the houses on Thames Street were when Ebenezer Avery offered himself as a hostage in place of the wounded. Thirty-five men were left on the floor of the house which instantly became a makeshift hospital. Dr. Amos Prentice treated their wounds, and for more than 100 years their blood stains could be seen on the floorboards. The Ebenezer House is now located at 57 Fort Street and is open to visitors seasonally.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 3 in the answer code.

When was the Ebenezer Avery House moved to its present location?

m. 1781 n. 1866 o. 1971 p. 1945

Stop 18. 16 Fort Street (Corner of Fort St and Thames Street)

This building is today what it was built to be – a house of worship. The chapel was originally built in 1875 by Groton congregants of the Saint James Episcopal Church in New London. Its first service was held on Christmas Day in 1875. In 1881, it was consecrated and named after Bishop Samuel Seabury who in 1785 became the first Bishop of the American Church. Bishop Seabury was born in the section of Groton that is now Ledyard. In 1967 the congregation outgrew the building and moved to North Street. The current occupants purchased this building as its mosque in 2001.

Put the letter of the correct answer in space 1 in the answer code.

Who occupies this historic building today?

a. Bishop Seabury b. Islamic Center c. YMCA d. A nursery school

Cross the street and return to 301 Thames Street, the water taxi landing.

Congratulations! You have completed the quest and have gathered the answer to find the secret location.

Find the item at the landing that was constructed by students of the Grasso Tech Carpentry Shop.

Answer code:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Congratulations on completing the Thames Street Quest! We hope you had fun & find time to complete the three other Quests located in New London and Groton.

Free Harbor Cruise Ticket Raffle: upload a selfie at the final location to Facebook or Instagram and tag @ThamesRiverHeritagePark or email to caseyhb@thamesriverheritagepark.org to be entered into a random monthly prize drawing for a TRHP Harbor Cruise tickets. Finish all 4 TRHP Quest and send 4 photos from each location to increase your chances of winning.