



SHEAFE WAREHOUSE

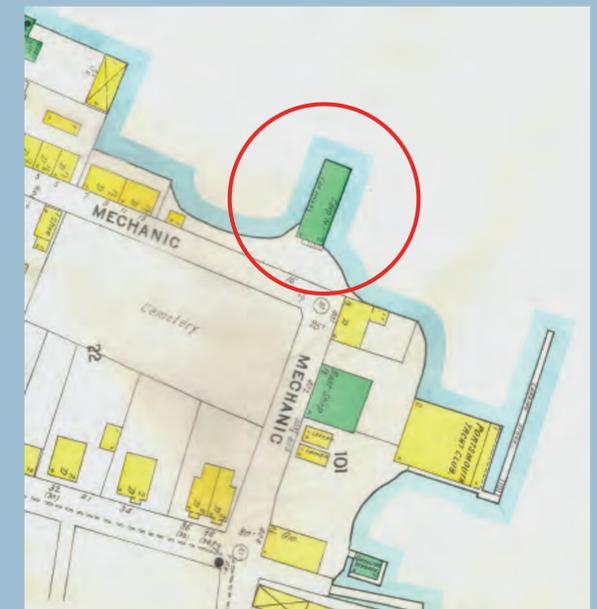
SHEAFE WAREHOUSE IS ONE OF AMERICA'S BEST-PRESERVED EXAMPLES of early eighteenth-century waterfront architecture. It was originally built on interlocked tree trunks known as "cobwork" barely above the level of high tide.

An overhanging second story allowed cargo to be lifted from the decks of gundalows and other small craft. The Revolutionary War ship *Ranger*, built by Colonel James Hackett and commanded by John Paul Jones, is said to have been outfitted at the Sheafe Warehouse.

SURVIVAL IN A NEW ERA

As Portsmouth's active waterfront declined in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Sheafe Warehouse was relegated to humble status. From 1850 until 1900, Joshua Stackpole used the structure as a carpenter shop and maintained it in only moderately good repair. In subsequent decades, Charles H. Stewart, proprietor of a nearby house of ill fame and an early antique dealer, used the building for storage. He sold it to the founders of Prescott Park in the 1930s, after which the structure was moved to its present location within the park and restored.

The Great Bay: A Visual History, 1970, Exhibition catalogue, Scudder Gallery, Paul Creative Arts Center, University of New Hampshire. Courtesy of Richard Candee.



1904 MAP

After the Warehouse was sold to the founders of Prescott Park, it was moved approximately 400 feet from its original location. This map from 1904 shows its original location, only feet away from the Point of Graves cemetery, which survives today. This map shows how the waterway extended further inland beyond present day Marcy Street before it was filled by the City in 1899.

Sanborn Map of Portsmouth, N.H., Sanborn Map Company, New York. Courtesy of the Portsmouth Athenæum.



ARTISTIC SUBJECT

Sheafe Warehouse was the subject of nineteenth century antiquarian photographs and romantic paintings like this Sarah Haven Foster watercolor (*above*) and painting by Russell Cheney (*right*). Today it is noted for its ancient and well-preserved frame. The second floor is braced by wooden "knees" similar to those traditionally used in ship construction and often cut from the roots and trunks of the native tamarack trees.

Above: Warehouse of Jacob Sheafe 1740, Mechanic Street, Watercolor, Sarah Haven Foster Collection. Courtesy of the Portsmouth Public Library.

Right: "Sheafe Warehouse from Point O'Graves," Painting by Russell Cheney, 1930s. Private collection.



ORIGINAL LOCATION (right)

Note that in this 1813 map, the Sheafe Warehouse is in the same location as in the 1904 map (*above*). In this map the portion of Mechanic Street nearest the Burying Ground is called Gravesend Street.

Map of the Compact Part of the Town of Portsmouth in the State of New Hampshire, 1813, J. G. Hales, cartographer. Courtesy of the Portsmouth Athenæum.



Funding for this historic marker was provided by the City of Portsmouth, 2009.

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