

**5. Charles H. Gifford House (1875)**

**7 Lafayette Street**

Marine artist Charles H. Gifford (1839 - 1904) built this shingle-style house in 1875. Gifford was a "Luminist" painter, having studied with the renowned Fairhaven native William Bradford and the Dutch painter Albert Van Beest. He sold his first painting in 1865 for \$10. In the 1870s, Gifford displayed his work in his studio in New York City.

In about 1895, he added the large tower to the waterfront side of his Fairhaven home and officially opened it as his painting studio in 1897. Of the Poverty Point area, Gifford once wrote, "There is no other place on the New England coast that would give me the material for study such as sunsets, moonlights, storms. . ."

Several of Charles H. Gifford's works are owned by the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the New Bedford Free Public Library, the New Bedford Art Museum, and a number of private collections.

**6. Elnathan Eldredge Store/Edgewater**

**(c. 1768, enlarged 1880s)**

**2 Oxford St.**

The lower, easternmost part of this structure was built c. 1768 by Elnathan Eldredge, whose purchase of six acres of William Wood's farm in 1760 began the village settlement of Oxford. It was the site of Eldredge's store, dealing in West Indies goods. A wharf once extended into the harbor from this property.

The home was greatly expanded in the 1870s, and since then has been known as "Edgewater."

From 1983 until 2006 this was Edgewater Bed and Breakfast. It is now a private home.

**7. Allen House (prior to 1790)**

**10 Oxford Street**

This is a typical one and a half story, center chimney Cape Cod style house that dates to before 1790. It was once the home of Bartlett Allen, one of four generations of Allen family boat builders at Poverty Point between the Revolutionary War and 1915—Eleazer Allen, Bartlett Allen, James Allen and James Allen Jr.

In 1843, Manjiro Nakahama was tutored here by Miss Jane Allen after his rescue by Capt. William Whitfield.

**8. Eben Akin House (c. 1765)**

**14 Oxford St.**

This house was built c. 1765 by mariner James Sellers and was purchased in the early 1800s by Bartholomew Akin, who was the town assessor in 1813 and in 1818. Eben Akin inherited the house. Akin was a teacher, store keeper, town clerk and treasurer (1842-1855 and 1875-1877) as well as being appointed post master in 1887.

Young Manjiro Nakahama boarded for a brief time with the Akins while attending the Oxford Village School on North Street in 1843.

Fairhaven painter Lemuel D. Eldred once had an art studio in a building that was located behind the Akin house.

**9. Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship House (c. 1830)**

**11 Cherry Street**

This house and the one next door to the north (13 Cherry St.) were owned by the Whitfield family.

In 1841 Captain William H. Whitfield rescued a young Japanese fisherman from an island in the Pacific. Coming to Fairhaven aboard the whaleship *John Howland*, Manjiro Nakahama is said to have been the first Japanese person to live in America. Manjiro spent his first night in Fairhaven at the captain's home, 11 Cherry Street, which is now owned by the Town of Fairhaven and operated as a museum by the Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship Society.



**Capt. Whitfield**

Because Capt. Whitfield was a widower at the time of this voyage, his young Japanese guest was lodged with the Akins on Oxford Street until Whitfield's remarriage.

After ten years in America, Manjiro returned to Japan where he became influential during the "opening of Japan" to American trade. Manjiro is still a folk hero in Japan and the story of his time in Fairhaven is well known.



**Manjiro**

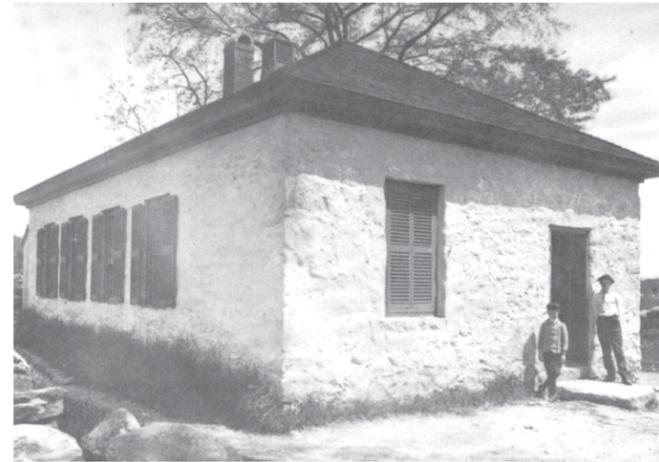
On February 14, 1886, Captain Whitfield died at his Cherry Street home. His son Marcellas P. Whitfield, a carpenter, continued to live here, followed by Marcellas' son Joseph. The Whitfield family's ownership of the property ended in 1951.



**Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship House  
11 Cherry Street**

In 1987, the town had the great honor of welcoming Japan's Emperor Akihito—then the crown prince—and his wife when they visited this house to honor the memory Captain Whitfield.

In 2007 the house was purchased by a group of prominent Japanese people, led by Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara, who presented the house to the Town of Fairhaven. The museum, operated by the Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship Society, was dedicated on May 7, 2009. It is open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from June to September and by appointment other times.



**10. Oxford Village or "Point" School (1828)**

**40 North Street, corner of Castle Avenue**

This stone structure, built in 1828, was the first public school-house in town. School was held here until severe overcrowding resulted in the building of Oxford School on Main Street in 1896. During 1843, Manjiro Nakahama attended classes here, learning to speak English, which after his return to Japan, gave him great prominence as trade opened up his homeland to the West.

The building is still owned by the town. It is open Saturday afternoons in June, July and August. Goup visits may be arranged through the Fairhaven Office of Tourism.

**11. Bennett Mansion (c. 1815)**

**199 Main Street**

This three-story, hipped roof, Federal style mansion, once called the "most pretentious dwelling in the village" was built either by Robert Bennett or his son Capt. Thomas Bennett, who sailed as captain of the *New York* of the Liverpool line of packet ships and who owned much property in Oxford Village. Much of the family fortune was lost during an economic depression around the time of the War of 1812, but later Thomas Bennett Jr. established the Wamsutta Mills in New Bedford during the mid-1800s and became known as the "Father of the New Bedford Textile Industry."

At one time, this property was owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, but its upkeep was higher than the group's budget allowed, so it was sold to a real estate holding company. It now houses several apartments.

**12. Franklin Bates/Eben Pierce House (c. 1815)**

**193 Main Street**

This Federal style home was built about 1815 for Franklin Bates, brother of Joseph Bates. It was later the home of retired sea captain Ebenezer Pierce, who gave his old sloop *Spray* to Captain Joshua Slocum. Neighbor Alice Charry once wrote that Slocum roomed upstairs over the kitchen in this house during some of his stay in Fairhaven.

Fairhaven, Massachusetts  
Walking at  
Poverty Point



**Town of Fairhaven, MA  
Office of Tourism & Visitors Center**

Fairhaven Academy Building  
141 Main Street, Fairhaven, MA 02719  
Telephone 508-979-4085  
Email: FairhavenTours@aol.com  
http://FairhavenTours.blogspot.com

Director of Tourism, Christopher J. Richard

# Exploring the historical “Poverty Point” area



**HISTORY ABOUNDS** on the narrow streets in the Poverty Point area of Fairhaven. Originally known as Oxford Village, this land made up the earliest community settlement in town during colonial times. John Cooke, who arrived in Plymouth on the *Mayflower* at the age of fourteen, moved to the vicinity about 1662, building a home and a garrison a short distance to the north of the Oxford area. Shipbuilding started on the Acushnet River as early as 1710 and by the time of the Revolutionary War, Oxford Village was a bustling center of waterfront commerce.

After the first Fairhaven-New Bedford bridge was built in the 1790s, cutting Oxford Village off from the open sea, most commercial interests (and the associated wealth) moved south of the bridge to the growing Fair-Haven Village. It was at about this time we find the earliest reference to the nickname “Poverty Point,” which survives to this day.

In the 1820s to 1840s Poverty Point became a more residential neighborhood. It was the home of sea captains, such as William H. Whitfield, who rescued Manjiro Nakahama in 1841, and Eben Pierce, who gave his friend Joshua Slocum the *Spray* in 1891. Artists such as Lemuel D. Eldred and Charles H. Gifford lived and worked here and in a home hidden just off Main Street, Seventh Day Adventist founder Joseph Bates, Jr., grew up.

With more than a dozen houses dating to the 1700s, and most of the rest built in the early 1800s, Poverty Point is an interesting neighborhood to explore on foot or by bicycle.

Following are descriptions of some of the things you’ll see as you stroll the area. *Most are private homes and are generally not open to the public. Separate brochures available for subjects marked with an asterisk (\*).*

## 1. Joseph Bates\* Boyhood Home (c. 1742) & Thomas Taber Ruins (c. 1680) 191 Main Street

The front part of this house was built about 1742 by William Wood, who had purchased the entire Oxford area from Philip Taber a year or two earlier. The house was purchased in 1793 by Joseph Bates, Sr. a prominent businessman who helped found the New Bedford (later Fairhaven) Academy in 1798.

Bates’ son, Joseph Jr., grew up here before going to sea at the age of fifteen. After retiring as a sea captain, Bates began the local temperance movement and was one of the builders of the Washington Street Meeting house. He became a follower of William Miller who was predicting the Second Advent of Christ. Following the “Great Disappointment” when the predicted event did not occur, Bates wrote a treatise proposing that in order for the Biblical prophecies to come to pass, the Sabbath should be celebrated on Saturdays, the seventh day of the week. Thus Bates founded of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which was established in 1863.



Joseph Bates Jr.

The house, visited by thousands of Seventh Day Adventists over the years, was purchased in 2006 by the Adventist Heritage Ministry, which is undertaking a resotoration. It is open to the public during the spring, summer and early fall.

Next to the Bates house stand the remains of the Tho-

mas Taber house, c. 1680, built after the King Philip War by the former son-in-law of pilgrim John Cooke. The stone wall was part of a huge fireplace and chimney that made up the entire south wall of the house.



Thomas Taber chimney in the late 1800s.

## 2. Capt. Joshua Slocum\* Memorial Cooke Memorial Park, Pilgrim Avenue

This boulder marks the place near which Captain Joshua Slocum painstakingly rebuilt an antiquated oyster boat, *Spray*. The small vessel (36 feet, 9 inches) had been given to Slocum by Poverty Point resident Capt. Eben Pierce. Slocum began his rebuilding of the *Spray* in 1891 and launched his vessel on June 21, 1892.

In April of 1895, with his *Spray* completely overhauled, Slocum set sail from Boston on a three year voyage around the globe. When he landed at Newport, RI in June of 1898, Slocum became the first man to have sailed around the world alone. On July 3 of that year, he sailed the *Spray* back to her birthplace in Fairhaven.



Joshua Slocum

Slocum’s book *Sailing Alone Around the World*, first published in 1900, is still in print and has been translated into many languages.

## 3. John Cooke Memorial Cooke Memorial Park, Pilgrim Avenue

John Cooke arrived in America at the age of 14 in the year 1620 with his father Francis aboard the *Mayflower*. In 1652



Cooke was among the 36 Plymouth colonists who purchased Dartmouth Township from Wampanoag leader Massasoit and his son Wamsutta. Cooke was the only one of the origi-

nal Pilgrims to actually move to the town, building a home and a garrison near Howland Road.

A Baptist preacher, Cooke represented the area at Plymouth Court for six years and performed a number of legal duties, making him an important figure of his day. He was one of the town’s Selectmen in 1675 when Massasoit’s son King Philip attacked and burned much of old Dartmouth.

Cooke had five daughters whose families – Hathaway, Taber, West and Wilcox – were among the most prominent in the region. At the time of Cooke’s death in 1695, he was the last surviving male passenger of the *Mayflower*.

Taber family tradition once said Cooke was buried here. While this park was referred to as a burial ground in the 1760s, more evidence suggests Cooke may have been buried on Hathaway property in what is now Acushnet.

## 4. Coggeshall Memorial House (1908) 6 Cherry Street

The large Colonial Revival house was built in 1908 by John and Martha (Jenney) Coggeshall on land originally owned by Benjamin Jenney, Martha’s uncle. Upon Martha’s death in 1916, the home was willed to the Fairhaven Colonial Club for use as a meeting place and to house the club’s collection of antiques and paintings by local artists.

The Colonial Club holds occasional open houses , including an annual tea party on the town’s anniversary, February 22.

