

# Brewster

## From

### Bridge to Bridge

In 1788, the Town of Southeast, located in eastern Putnam County, was incorporated by the State of New York. The Village of Brewster, incorporated in 1894, lies within the Town of Southeast. The original 134 acre farmland on which the village lies was purchased by Walter and James Brewster in 1848 for \$8,000 from Gilbert Bailey.

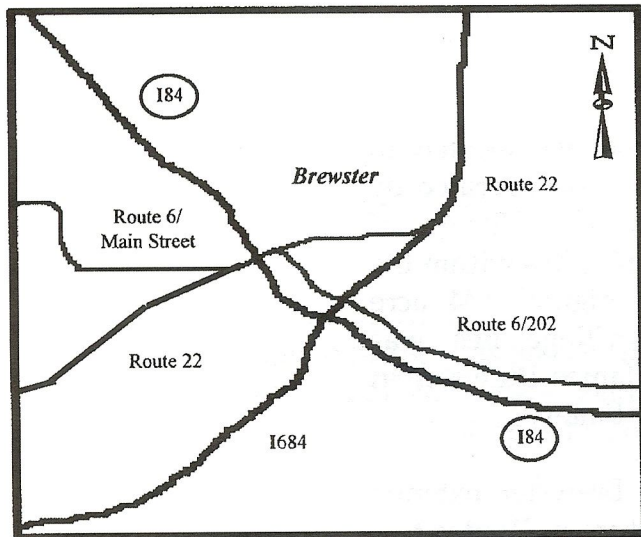
This map of Main Street, Brewster extends from the bridge at the juncture of Routes 6 & 22 - the old Milk Factory Bridge - at the east end of Main Street, to the bridge crossing the railroad tracks at the western end of Main Street going towards the Town of Carmel.

## Main Street, Brewster

Main Street was laid out in 1849 by Walter Brewster, local builder and speculator, who built passenger and freight train depots so that the Harlem Line Railroad would stop at his "station." Brewster constructed over 50 buildings, churches, and stores in the new village mapping out a new avenue for stages to Danbury, CT.

The railroad helped foster two local industries: iron mining and the dairy industry. While the area prospered in the latter part of the nineteenth century, its economic and physical landscape would change dramatically by the turn of the twentieth century with the construction of the Croton Reservoir System.

Main Street, Brewster still maintains much of its early twentieth century character with three prominent buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, an active railroad station, library and its turn of the century architecture.



## Harlem Line Railroad Station

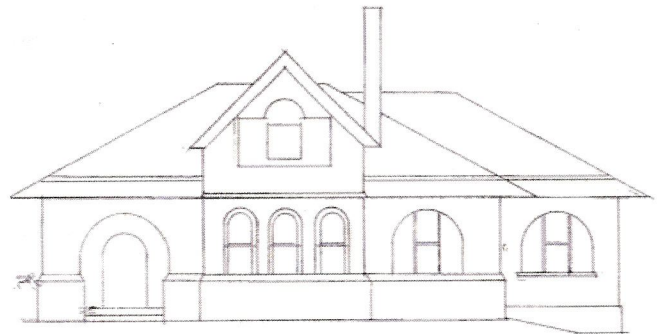
The original wooden passenger station built by Walter Brewster in 1849 was rebuilt in 1931. The new Tudor Style building was designed by Oscar H. Merritt, architect for the New York Central Railroad. From the early 1870s until the late 1960s, the New York Central Railroad operated on this line providing essential freight and passenger service to New York City with small branch lines to Carmel and Mahopac. The line was electrified to White Plains in 1912, but not until 1984 did eclectic service become available to Brewster and Southeast. Today, the Harlem Line is owned and operated by Metro North Railroad.



**Tonetta Brook** runs under the railroad station, crossing Railroad Avenue and continues down to the East Branch of the Croton River. At one time, it provided power for a mill and factory on Railroad Avenue.

## Southeast Town Hall

This Romanesque building was constructed in 1886 for the First National Bank of Brewster, which was organized by John Gail Borden and Frank Wells. Its construction was supervised by Walter Brewster. Massive granite and Philadelphia red brick walls support the building's large arched windows. A wrought iron ridge crowns its gabled slate roof. Although the original marble and elaborate brass teller windows are gone from the interior, the wainscoted walls and coffered ceiling still give the building an aura of Victorian elegance. In the mid-1950s additional office space was constructed on the west side of the building. From 1965 - 2009, the building served as the Town Hall for Southeast; although the Town Hall was relocated to the current location on Route 22, the building's department and other offices remain in the space. One Main Street was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.





### Brewster Fire House

Organized in 1870 by a group of local merchants, the Brewster Volunteer Fire Department provides modern fire defense and ambulance service for nearly 20,000 people. The original fire house, built on North Main Street across from the Baptist Church in 1880, was replaced with this modern structure in 1941.

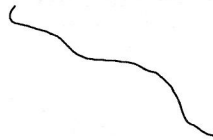


*Carmel*

### Bridge from / to Carmel

This entranceway into the Village of Brewster from Carmel Avenue was once a covered bridge. One could watch the trains pass by underneath and hear the echoes of horse hooves trotting across its planks.

*Marvin's  
Mountain*



*North Main Street*

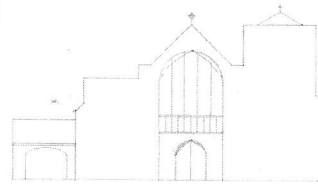
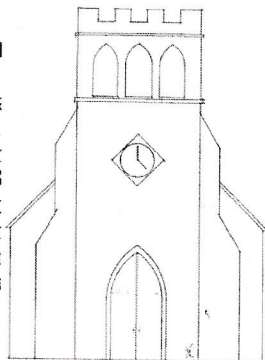
### Iron Mining in Brewster

On the hill behind present day Main Street, an iron-ore deposit existed. A miner's bunk room was located in the sub-basement of the Southeast House. Mined periodically from 1848 to the early 1880s, the Brewster Mine was connected by tunnel to a mine at Marvin's Mountain across the railroad tracks. The mineral rights to the land on which Aaron B. Marvin constructed his house were owned by the Brewster Iron Mining Company. Marvin sued for damages when blasting and excavations for the iron shook his residence, but was overruled in a critical New York State Court of Appeals decision in 1874 which stated that mineral rights entail "the full right and power to sink shafts and to carry on all the operations of mining in the usual manner."



### St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (Prospect Street)

This 1901 granite building replaced a smaller wooden building built originally in 1881. The church construction was funded by Seth B Howes, owner of Morningthorpe and echoes that building's English derivation. The Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.



### St. Lawrence O'Toole Roman Catholic Church (Prospect Street)

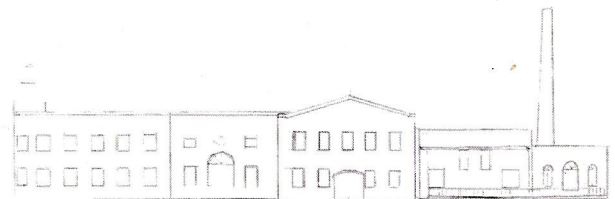
In 1871, the church was a simple wood frame building; the present stone building replaced it in 1912.

### Garden Street School

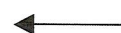
(located on the hill above the Walter Brewster House)  
Dedicated in 1925, the Garden Street School replaced the old Union Free School which burned down in a disastrous fire in 1923. Until 1959, this school housed all Brewster students from Kindergarten through High School. As new schools were built on Route 312 and Foggintown Road to accommodate the Town's growing population, Garden Street became an elementary school. It closed its doors after the 2011-2012 school year.

### Borden Milk Factory

In 1864, Gail Borden constructed a milk condensery at the juncture of Routes 6 & 22. The New York Milk Condensery was the largest and the most advanced milk factory at that time. A model of cleanliness and efficiency, it was Borden's first commercially successful plant. Demand for condensed milk was high due to the Civil War and over 200 dairy farmers supplies 20,000 gallons of milk each day. Following development of the Croton Reservoir System, which flooded much of the area's viable farmland early in the twentieth century, production at this plant ceased. part of the main building and a small outbuilding behind today's Norm's Restaurant are all the remain of what was once an important Brewster industry.



*Route 22*



*Route 6 - Main Street*

### Milk Factory Bridge

Crossing the East Branch of the Croton River at the present juncture of Routes 6 & 22, this was a popular fishing spot for many years. Farmers crossed this bridge in their daily journey to and from the Borden Milk Factory.

**Park Street**

**Main Street - South side**

**Oak Street**

Baptist Church



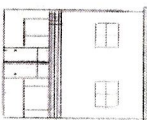
**4 Park Street**

Lobdell Cottage c.1890  
 Located up the block from the Lobdell House, this cottage is a charming example of 19th century Carpenter Gothic style.

**Lobdell House**

South of Main Street on Park Street stands the Lobdell House. Constructed in 1876, it is an intact example of Second Empire style: square plan, slate covered mansard roof with molded cornice, plain frieze, and arched double entrance doors with glass upper panels and transom. A modern single story wing was added around 1940. Alexander Lobdell Sr. owned the Lobdell Dry Goods Store on Main Street. He served as the Brewster postmaster from 1863 until 1887. He was appointed to that post by President Lincoln. Lobdell was also a founding member of the Putnam County Savings Bank.

**Hoyt Street**



**15 Park Street**

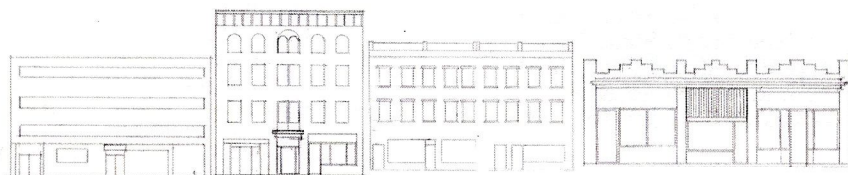
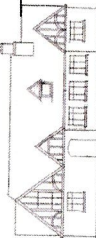
former Masonic Hall c. 1865  
 Originally built for the President of the Croton River National Bank, the porch

of this Victorian building was reconstructed thanks to the availability of old photographs. Its interior boasts carved oak staircases and window surrounds. Notice the curved stone lintels and sills on the tower.



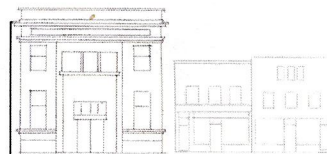
10  
14

Railroad Station



50 Southeast House 56 62 64 66 70

Progress Street



72 74 78

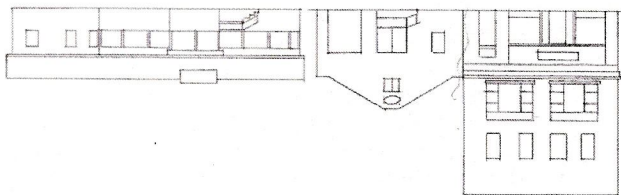


Town Hall

**Main Street**

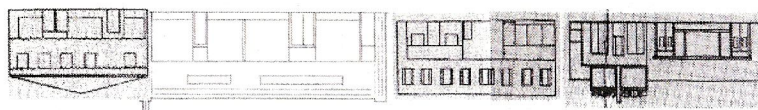
Bob's Diner

31 35



Park Street

43 45 47 55 57 61 Cameo 65



Masonic Hall Lobdell House

**Main Street - South side**

**65 Main Street**

The first post office in Brewster was located in the Lobdell general store. In 1945, it moved to a modern streamlined facility at 65 Main Street. Soon after, the post office was relocated to even larger quarters opposite the train station. In 1994, a new post office was built near Mt. Ebo Corporate Park on Route 22.

**Old Town Hall**

67 Main Street

Built in 1896, 67 Main Street was designed by the New York City firm of Child and De Goll, Architects. It was the fourth town hall; three previous buildings, located behind today's Bob's Diner, succumbed to fires in 1880, 1882, and 1893. For over 75 years, this Town Hall building served as the seat of Town Government, until 1865, when town offices were moved to the First National Bank of Brewster building at One Main Street. Traveling shows and movies played in the auditorium, which also was the scene for early High School graduations. Today, the Southeast Museum occupies the lower level. This floor was originally designed to serve as a courtroom as well as dancing space. pressed metal ceilings and sidewalls were added in 1910. In 1979, the building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Brewster Library**

72 Main Street

The first free library in Brewster was started by Edith Diehl, renowned American bookbinder, on Park street in 1896. In 1901, the Library moved to a building on Progress Street. The present Federal style building was constructed in 1931. A ramp was added in 1993 to meet ADA requirements.

**Parsonage (First Methodist Church)**

81 Main Street

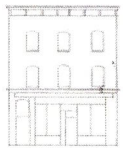
his building is located on the land initially bought by the church trustees in 1863 and has served as the church parsonage. Enlarged in the 1890s, its decorated vergeboards and fish scale shingled gable ends are now covered with vinyl siding.

**First Methodist Church**

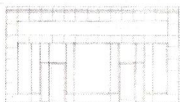
This Colonial style church was the first church to be built in the Village of Brewster. Constructed in 1864 at a cost of \$16,000, the church was financed largely by Daniel Drew, the notorious financier. In 1883, the church was renovated and the original windows were replaced with eight memorial stained glass windows.

**85 Main Steet**

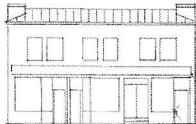
One of the few remaining buildings of the more than 50 constructed by Walter Brewster, it was for many years the home and offices of Dr. Alexander Vanderberg. Note the stone hitching post, which references the time when horse drawn carriages were the mode of local transportation.



82 84



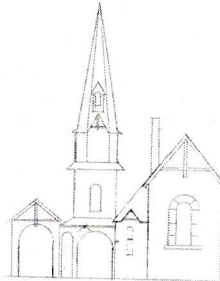
86 88



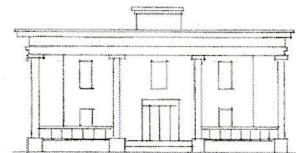
92 94 96



98 100



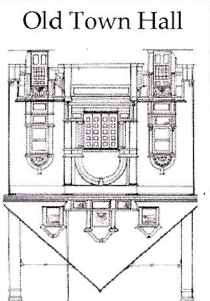
Presbyterian Church



Walter Brewster House

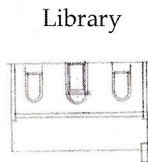
**Main Street**

*Scale of buildings and street layout is approximate*

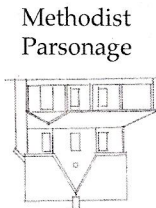


Old Town Hall

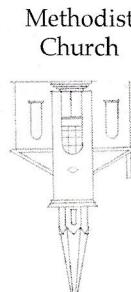
*Southeast Honor Roll*



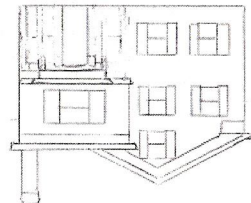
Library



Methodist Parsonage



Methodist Church



85

↑  
Route 22  
↓

## Oak Street

Initially, this road was the primary thoroughfare in the Village until Walter Brewster laid out Main Street, which was known as Brewster Avenue in the 1860s. One can still see the original stone steps leading up to where the Bailey house stood on the north side of Oak Street, directly east of the intersection of Prospect Street. The house was originally built in 1787 by Peleg Bailey. It was destroyed in the mid-1980s.

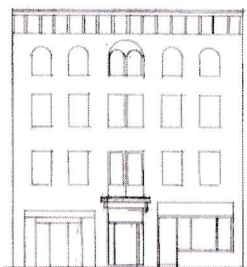
### *Main Street - North Side*

## First Baptist Church

Constructed in 1871 at a cost of \$15,000, this church is cruciform in plan with a tall tapering tower. Carpenter Gothic feature, pointed arch windows and decorated vergeboards add character to this board and batten building. John Borden was an active founding member of the First Baptist Church.

## 14 Main Street

The Lobdell General Store stood at this corner across from the train station for many years. One could purchase any household item at this typical general store.



## Brewster House (Hotel)

This once-local hotel, not quite as prominent as the Southeast House, was located diagonally across from One Main Street. In May of 1933, its elegant porch, the last example of this unique element of Brewster's Main Street architecture, was removed.

## Brewster Town Hall - 50 Main Street

At the turn of the century, this block contained a row of red brick buildings with stores on the ground floors and apartments above. The current building was constructed after a disastrous fire in 1962 destroyed much of the original structure. From the mid 1860s to the mid 1950s, the Diehl family owned and operated a bakery and ice-cream parlor on this spot. The original owner, Phillip Diehl also had a store in Mount Kisco and supplied baked goods to restaurants on the Harlem Line from Kensico to Hillside. Diehl served on the Southeast Town Board and was a founding member of the Brewster Fire Department. The Brewster Hardware Store moved to this location in 1962.

## 56-62 Main Street

Built in 1891, this three story red brick structure probably housed railroad workers, laborers, cooks and waitresses who lived above the ground floor stores. The integrity of the building's original architectural details have been covered up by additions of an aluminum cornice and aluminum and stucco siding, yet, the building still retains its early twentieth century character. Note the rough-cut stone lintels and sills.

## Comstock Building - 72 Main Street

This fine example of neo-classical architecture was built in 1911 by the Putnam County Savings Bank, the County's first Savings Bank. Decorative moldings and architrave moldings add distinction to the building's cast concrete cornice. The windows on the side facade have pedimented lintel details.

## 74-78 Main Street

Hidden behind the red brick facade are the original gable and mansard roofs of these Main Street buildings.

## 84 Main Street

A fine example of commercial expansion on Main Street at the end of the nineteenth century, note the glass block transom light above the entrance door. The public library was once located here.

## 92-96 Main Street

Built in the early twentieth, 92-96 Main Street once had terra cotta barrel tiled roofing which, with its projecting eaves, was the only building exhibiting an influence of Mission style architecture on Main Street.

## 98-100 Main Street

Rising above two modern storefronts is the original Heddingville Methodist Church, which had been moved from its original site on Routes 6 & 22 near Allview Avenue. In the later part of the nineteenth century the building was home to the Halls Carriage Factory. Later, it would become the first auto component tool shop in town. Note the manner in which the tall church windows were modified to more domestic proportions.

## Brewster Presbyterian Church

110 Main Street

Built on land donated by Walter Brewster, the Brewster Presbyterian Church was dedicated on June 15, 1886. Constructed in Gothic Revival style, the charming porte-cochere, patterned slate roof and handsome stained glass window on the Main Street facade contribute to the grace of this stately building. Now white, the structure was originally painted dark grey, emulating stone construction.

## Walter Brewster House

This fine example of Greek Revival architecture was constructed around 1850, though built by Walter Brewster who studied architecture for one year at Yale, it is very likely that the design came from a builder's guide, a common practice of the era. Those approaching or leaving the Village of Brewster would pass by the stately temple-like building perched above Main Street. John Borden lived in the house for a short time. Converted to apartments early in the twentieth century, the building next became the home of the Knights of Columbus and served as a school while the Brewster Middle School was being built. It stood vacant for several years until purchased and restored by the Landmarks Preservation Society of Southeast in 1977. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

## Tilly Foster Mine

(Route 6, between Brewster and Carmel)

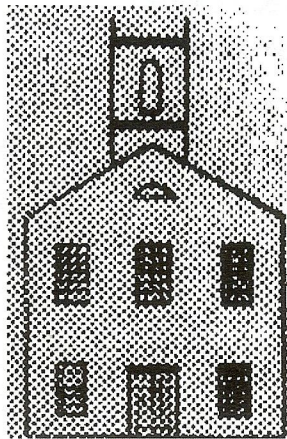
First mined in 1853 by the Harvey Iron and Steel Company, the mine boomed under the auspices of the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company of Scranton, Pennsylvania who acquired the mine in 1879. At its height of production, the mine employed hundreds of workers extracting 7,000 tons per month. By 1890, the owners converted the mine to an open pit. However, in 1895, a major collapse occurred and the mine was closed. The mine is known worldwide for its unique variety and expanse of rocks and minerals, which are included in the collections of major museums. part of the Trainer Collection from Tilly Foster, on loan from the New York state Museum in Albany, is on view at the Southeast Museum.

## Sodom Dam

By the early 19th century, New York City was desperate for a source of fresh clean water. Polluted water was causing many cholera outbreaks. In addition, the water supply was insufficient to help battle the many fires that ravaged New York City. In 1865, the Croton Aqueduct Board was empowered to acquire land in Putnam and Westchester Counties needed for the construction of storage reservoirs. Completed in 1878, the Middle Branch Reservoir was the first reservoir for the Croton System constructed in Southeast. In 1891, Sodom Dam was built, creating the East Branch Reservoir and ultimately the Diverting Reservoir was built below the Village of Brewster. Much of the area's available farmland was flooded and homes were moved for the reservoir construction. Southeast lost its agriculturally based industries, but gained a beautiful landscape.

## Old Southeast Church

Located off Route 22, the Old Southeast Church was constructed in 1794 and is the oldest place of worship in Putnam County. Long abandoned, the church was restored and is owned by the Landmarks Preservation Society. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, today it serves as an ecumenical and education center. The Old Southeast Cemetery is located on Route 22, just south of Route 312. It contains the oldest marked grave in Putnam county, that of Abigail Moss Kent, wife of the church's first pastor. She died in 1751.



## Morningthorpe

(Turk Hill Road)

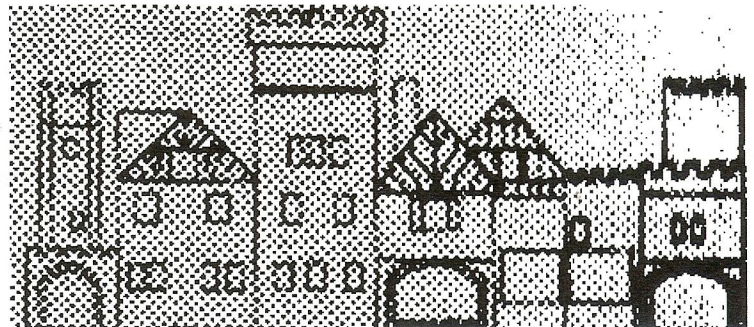
This property was originally owned by Benjamin Mead and was purchased by local circus entrepreneur Seth B. Howes in 1893. Over the next ten years, with guidance from the New York City architectural firm of Rossiter and Wright, Howes built an elaborate home. He changed it from a more modest Romanesque residence to a grand Tudor mansion, adding rooms and erecting several stone towers including a central tower 16' square by 64' tall. A golden elephant ten feet high originally guarded the entranceway. Chicago cabinetmakers constructed the elaborately carved mantels, staircases and ceilings. The building was completely renovated and restored to its original grandeur by residents of the Delancey Street Foundation, who found the original plans for the property when the building was purchased by the Foundation in 1980.

## Doansburg Schoolhouse

Dating to the early 19th century, this one room schoolhouse functioned as a school into the 1940s. It is the last un-altered one-room schoolhouse in Putnam County and shares the Old Southeast Church site. The building is owned by the Landmarks Preservation Society of Southeast.

## Milltown Cemetery

Located on Milltown Road approximately one mile east of Route 22, Milltown Cemetery contains the mausoleum of local circus entrepreneur Seth B. Howes. The grand monument is surrounded by a circus ring. Walter Brewster is also buried at Milltown Cemetery.



**Other Points of Interest:**

Benedicts Farm  
Bog Brook Dam  
Dag Hammerskojld House  
Drewclift Cemetery  
Edith Diehl House  
Enoch Crosby House  
Leonard Clift Farm  
Pardee House  
Ryder Farm  
Southeast Center  
Stonehenge  
Triangle House  
Waring House  
Wells Casino  
Yale Gallagher House

Bridge to Bridge has been updated and reprinted by the Town of Southeast Historic Sites Commission on the occasion of Putnam County's Bicentennial celebration.

**Credit to the original map contributors, including:**

Eleanor Fitchen  
Hudson Valley On-Line  
Kevin T. Kennedy  
James I. Nixon III, AIA  
Southeast Museum  
Landmarks Preservation Society of Southeast