

Long Cove Road South



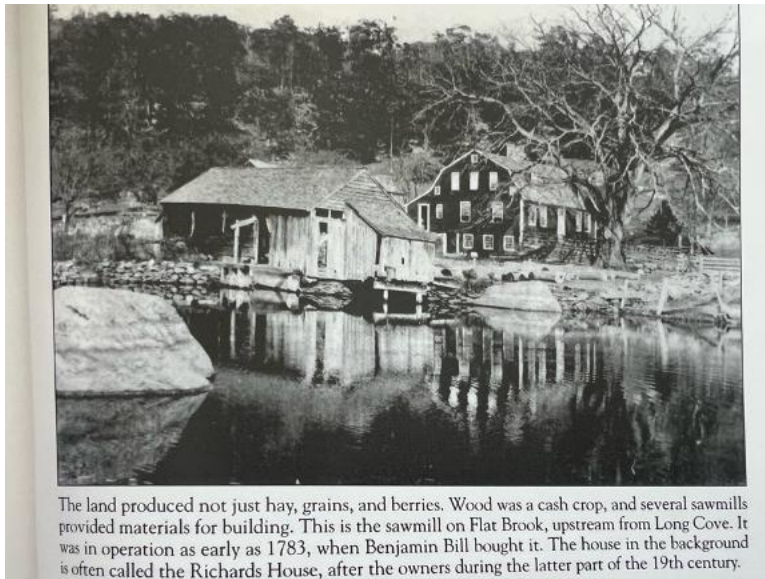
At the corner of Long Cove Road and Route 12 is the Ledyard District #1 Schoolhouse, which went out of use in 1949 when the schools were consolidated. It was first re-purposed as a dwelling and now is a commercial property with several businesses attached to it.



At 1040 Long Cove Road stands the Perkins-Bill House, one of the best-preserved representative examples of the Cape Cod style in Ledyard. It derives much of its significance from its historical association with the Battle of Groton Heights, which took place on September 6, 1781, during the British invasion of New London and Groton. At least 28 local men lost their lives defending

Fort Griswold and many more were wounded and/or taken prisoner. Of the dozen homes in Ledyard associated with this event, the Perkins-Bill House is especially notable for its direct connection with three of the fort's defenders, Solomon Perkins, his son, Solomon, Jr., and Benjamin Bill, Jr. The house is on the National Register of Historic Houses.

The Perkins-Bill House has many characteristic Cape features, such as small windows in the eaves of the end elevations. Its conventional colonial floor plan is arranged around a center chimney, but like most local Capes, the stairs are located at the rear of the house. It originally was built with a small rear ell. These small unheated rooms had an original purpose which is not generally understood. In a few known cases they served as milk rooms, well rooms, or woodsheds.



The land produced not just hay, grains, and berries. Wood was a cash crop, and several sawmills provided materials for building. This is the sawmill on Flat Brook, upstream from Long Cove. It was in operation as early as 1783, when Benjamin Bill bought it. The house in the background is often called the Richards House, after the owners during the latter part of the 19th century.

In this photo probably from the early 1940s, the Perkins-Bill house can be seen with the sawmill in the foreground. The mill is now gone, and in 1949 a house was built on the site across Long Cove Rd from the Perkins-Bill house. Its address is 1037 Long Cove Road. Although much younger than the Perkins-Bill house, it has similar Colonial features and a gambrel-roofed barn.



“Pinelock” and “Juniper” houses off Meadow Road are discussed in a separate document. These date from the 1890s, but were built on the site of much older houses.



This house at 1058 Long Cove Rd was built by the Stoddard family; it is dated 1850. The building is bungalow style, with:

1. One-story massing with a broad front façade
2. Hip roof (all sides slope down instead of front-facing gables)
3. Raised foundation/basement
4. Minimal ornamentation and practical proportions



This house sits on a rise at 1076 Long Cove Road, with an expansive front lawn and majestic ledge of glacial rock for a backdrop. This house was built in 1930, in American Craftsman style, with a broad front porch and natural stone columns and stairway. Craftsman homes were intended to blend naturally with their surroundings, and this house is a great example.



At 1083 Long Cove Road is this 1929 Craftsman style house. Key features pointing to Craftsman style are:

- Low-pitched gabled roof with wide overhangs
- Exposed rafter tails / brackets under the eaves
- A large, welcoming covered front porch
- Tapered porch columns sitting on chunky stone bases
- Use of natural materials, especially the river-stone chimney and porch supports
- Emphasis on horizontal lines and blending into the landscape



This 1869 Folk Victorian cottage at 1080 Long Cove Road was built in 1869 by a Bailey family member.

Key features of a Folk Victorian are:

- Front-facing steep gable — the triangular roof facing the street is typical of late 19th/early 20th century folk houses.
- Full-width front porch — very common in Folk Victorian homes.
- Decorative porch brackets/spandrels — the ornate trim adds the “Victorian” influence.
- Simple rectangular massing — unlike high-style Victorian homes, this one is modest and practical.
- 1½-story form — another hallmark of many rural and small-town American homes from roughly 1880–1915.

These dwellings along Long Cove Road represent a diversity of styles that evolved over time, starting in the mid-1700s. Houses were built in keeping with the architectural abilities and homeowner needs of the era in which they were constructed; they demonstrate how those changed over two and a half centuries. How fortunate that Gales Ferry homeowners have respected the lineage and history of these houses. Because of them, we can all take a drive down Long Cove Road and see this variety and continuity of dwellings right in our own community.

Sources:

Ledyard and Gales Ferry, Images of America, by Kit Foster 2004

<https://gis.vgsi.com/ledyardct>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perkins-Bill_House

Various internet searches