



Christian Street Rural Historic District

Historic Tour No.6 in the Town of Hartford, Vermont

Agricultural open space defines the Christian Street Rural Historic District, a 198-acre hamlet in the northeast corner of Hartford, Vermont. Settlers in the 18th and 19th century created an agricultural community that set the tone as cleared land and farmsteads dotted a rural landscape.

Farmers raised agricultural products, dairy herds and in the 19th century, sheep after Merino sheep were imported from Portugal to William Jarvis' farm about 20 miles from Christian Street in Weathersfield. A surviving sign of sheep farming is the c. 1850 Side-Hill English barn of hand-hewn and sawn timbers, located across the street from the Chapman-Newton House (#6).

Farming was not their only pursuit. The earliest settlers, the Hazen family, came from Woodbury, Connecticut as land speculators. Thomas Hazen III accumulated more than 3,500 acres by the 1770s, and his family accounted for a dozen farmsteads in the Christian Street Rural Historic District and other parts of Hartford. He gave his son, Joshua, land in 1770 "for love and good will". Joshua was the first permanent settler in the Christian Street Rural Historic District, and a man of his times and his community. An officer in the Vermont militia during the Revolutionary War, he represented the Town in the state legislature, took part in establishing Vermont as a state in 1791, and served as a Town selectman and justice of the peace.

The Hazen legacy remains very much a part of Christian Street. Their farmhouse survives at 2727 Christian Street (#9) and is known as Brookside Farm. Moreover, it remains the only active farm in this historic district. Its future integrity is protected through a land conservation easement.

The Hazen connection extends through marriages and generations of family members who built early homes in the Christian Street District. One example is the Dutton-Sprague House (#2) at 2449 Christian Street, the only brick house in the district. The land was owned by Joshua Hazen, and Nathaniel Dutton married Hazen's cousin Sarah. The Hazens, Duttons, Newtons and Chapmans were related, and district farms (#3, #6, #9) were owned by these families for two centuries.

Christian Street's history is also connected to commerce. A clay pit for brick making once existed at the Dutton-Sprague House (#2) and served as the dwelling for the brickyard manager and workers. Another brickyard from the late 1800s was on the Dutton-Gillette House (#3) property. The bricks made there were used to build Dartmouth College. Another business, a blacksmith shop, was located at the Chapman-Newton House (#6), where the only remaining sign of its existence is the foundation.

Located at the south end of the district is an 18th century cemetery, probably the oldest in Hartford, with headstones of slate, marble and granite.

Perhaps as you travel through Christian Street, you may enjoy knowing that its name came from a jailed, inebriated man. He was angry that he had been arrested --for drunkenness, and claimed his incarceration was the result of area residents being too pious. From these few words, spoken in haste, came the name of a hamlet that shares its Vermont heritage as a National Register Historic District.

Christian Street Rural Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 5, 2003.

1. Christian Street Cemetery, c. 1778: Located at the south end of the historic district, this 1.8-acre parcel on the east side of Christian Street has a Revolutionary War connection. Silas Hazen (1754-1778), believed to be the first person buried in this 18th century cemetery, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. Christian Street Cemetery was originally a private family plot for the Hazens, a major land-owning family in Hartford. Of particular interest among the several hundred headstones is the front section where all historic markers are located. The earliest are made of slate, 19th-century stones are made of marble, while obelisks mark some late 19th century and early 20th century graves.

2. Dutton-Sprague House, 47 Brick House Lane, c. 1807, c. 1825, c. 1950: Located on a flat lot on the east side of Christian Street, this Cape Cod dwelling is the only brick house in this district. The property once had a clay pit used as a brickyard, and the brickyard manager and workers probably lived in the brick structure. The land was originally owned by Joshua Hazen and sold to Nathaniel Dutton (1747-1823). Dutton was married to Hazen's cousin, Sarah. And Dutton's eldest child, Clarissa (1770-1831), married Capt. Philip Sprague (1765-1856). The Duttons sold the site to the Spragues in 1822.



*Old homestead – note center window
taken from Dothan Church*

3. Dutton-Gillette House, 2458 Christian Street, c. 1850: Dartmouth College and Edward Gillette (1857-1929) benefited from a brick-making industry revived in the late 1870s. Gillette's brickyard supplied much of the brick used to build Dartmouth College from the late 1800s through the early 1900s. He had acquired this property from his father, Nathan Gillette, whose great-grandfather Ebenezer Gillette (1705-1776) was a charter proprietor of Hartford, Vermont. Nathan was a town selectman and deacon of the Second Congregational Church of Hartford. The 1 1/2-story, wood-frame Greek

Revival house on 1.5 acres is located on the west side of Christian Street, and the contemporary Dothan Brook School now sits on part of the Gillette farm land.

4. Buell House, 2492 Christian Street, c. 1828: Looking up at the Palladian windows on this house, you can almost visualize the former 18th century Dothan Church as the window over the entry is from the church. The church in the nearby Dothan hamlet closed in 1844 and was later razed. This Federal-style house on less than an acre was once on a plot of 90 acres. It reflects prevalent Vermont home styles of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Albert Buell (1807-1887) bought the house in 1835, operating a typical Vermont farm. By the 20th century, Laurence Nichols (1910-1974), president of the White River Paper Company, purchased the property as his residence.

5. Newton-Morse House, 2521 Christian Street, 1964: not an historic site.

6. Chapman-Newton House, 2546 Christian Street, c. 1780 and c. 1838: This property has been in the same family for 200 years, from the late 18th century through the late 20th century, as the Chapman/Newton families were related. Simon Chapman (1723-1792) was the first Chapman and probably built the original smaller Classic Cottage style house and nearby blacksmith shop. His son Erastus (1760-1821) and Andrew Newton (1781-1868) were cousins by marriage. In the mid-1830s, Andrew expanded the house. By the 1950s, Lettie Newton inherited the property from her father, James Newton.



Chapman-Newton House

The site is also a favorite of those who appreciate historic barns because it is one of two barns left in this district. The c. 1850 Side-Hill English 1 1/2-story barn has a timber frame of hand-hewn and sawn timbers. It is located on the east side of Christian Street, across from the farmhouse.

7. Edward Newton House, 2574 Christian Street, 1900: This property is steeped in Vermont history. Joshua Hazen (1745-1796) and his wife, Mercy (1748-1824), settled there in 1770 in a log cabin, and replaced it in 1775 with a Cape Cod style house which was reportedly used as a tavern. Joshua was an officer in the Vermont militia during the Revolutionary war, later represented the town in the state legislature, and was a delegate to the Vermont Constitution Convention in 1777. His service to his state and town continued, as he was both a selectman and a justice of the peace for many years. The 2 1/2 story wood-frame vernacular Italianate house on 1.5 acres on the west side of Christian Street remained in the Hazen family until sold in 1871 to Joseph Newton. Newton's son, Edward (1867-1945), operated a dairy, horse farm, and ice business on the property until the 1930s. In recent years, the dwelling became an apartment house. A wood-frame shed (c. 1940) and a wood-frame garage, (c. 1930) also are located on the property.

8. Hazen Farm Foreman's House, 2707 Christian Street, 1916: This two-story wood frame Craftsman-style bungalow is related historically to the Hazens, a prominent Hartford family. Henry Allen Hazen (1903-1963), the great-great-grandson of Thomas Hazen (1719-1782), lived in this house, which was built as a farm foreman's house on 3/4 of an acre on the east side of Christian Street.

9. Hazen House/Brookside Farm, 2727 Christian Street, c. 1775: This Federal style house is the oldest two-story house in the Christian Street district and best known for its historical connections to the Hazen family. Thomas Hazen III (1719-1782) came to the area as a land speculator in 1760s, purchasing fifteen parcels in Hartford in 1768. He received an additional 1,560 acres in Hartford after funding efforts to secure a re-grant from New York, because the state of New York declared New Hampshire grants (including Hartford's) void. He gave land to his oldest son, Joshua (1745-1796), who became the first Hazen to set up housekeeping in Hartford. But while Joshua was out of town, his father and brother, Asa (1749-1819) used the site Joshua had chosen for his house to build their own log cabin in 1775. The cabin was near the current house (later called Brookside Farm), and Joshua ended up building across the street. The 173-acre property had many outbuildings, was bounded by the Connecticut River, and traversed by Interstate 91 to the east. Remaining, are a c. 1870, wood-frame Farm Laborer House at 2651 Christian Street, and a c.

1930 wood-frame automobile garage. The Hazens ensured the property's future integrity through a conservation easement to the Upper Valley Land Trust.

10. Newton Barn, 16 Hemlock Ridge Drive, 1900: This barn was once part of the Edward Newton House property and used as a dairy barn. In 1989, the barn was converted into condominium units. The former seven-bay barn has a rectangular footprint parallel to the west side of Christian Street. Although modified through adaptive re-use, the barn retains its historic gable end openings and still reads as an agricultural building.

11. Boardinghouse, 51 Jericho Street, c. 1880, moved c. 1910: This 1 1/2 story wood-frame vernacular Italianate house on one acre is on the north side of Jericho Street. It was reportedly used as a boardinghouse for workers at Edward Gillette's (see #3) brickyard. The house was moved from there to its current location when the brickyard closed around 1910.

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Hartford is one of thirteen Certified Local Governments in Vermont, and therefore is eligible for these grant funds through the Hartford Historic Preservation Commission.

For more information, contact the Hartford Department of Planning and Development Services, 171 Bridge St., White River Junction, VT 05001 or (802) 295-3075.

All photos courtesy of Hartford Historical Society.

Christian Street Rural Historic District

Town of Hartford
Windsor County
Vermont
2008

- Contributing Resource
- Non-Contributing Resource
- Cemetery
- Historic District Boundary
- Historic Stone Wall
- Town Boundary
- Forest Area

