

May 30, 2022

To: Council President Shand, Cllr Wright, Cllr. Donahue, Cllr. Khan, Cllr Zeid, Cllr Lane, Cllr McCauley, Cllr Preston, Cllr Cameron, Cllr Wallace, Cllr Vogel

RE: Coffin St Extension

From: Jane Snow, 9 Coffin St

I write regarding Mr. Cavalieri's letter re: Coffin St Extension. I agree with many of the statements Mr. Cavalieri made and intimately understand his frustration with city documents being changed without going thru the proper process, the difficulty in finding out who owns the land and why the street no longer appears on the maps. I also agree, that with the upcoming sale of the property the city needs to resolve this as soon as possible.

Growing up the section from Merrimac St to Lower Jefferson St was called Coffin's Court. It was a gravel lane and was used by vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclers. After recently reading all about the Coffin's boat yards, as I tried to resolve my own issues with upper Coffin Street, I went for a walk and was surprised to see it was blocked off by debris and trees had been planted obstructing the path. A familiar frustrating experience.

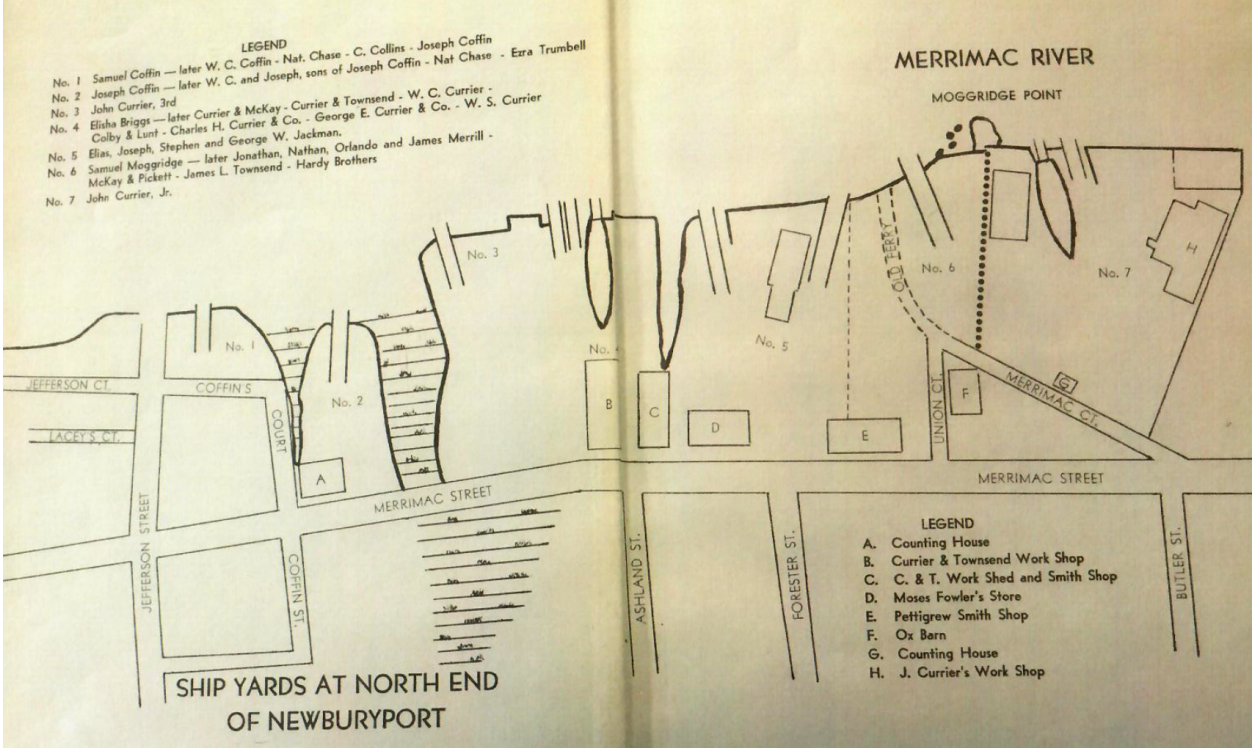


<https://mimap.mvpc.org/map/index.html?viewer=newburyport> from this map it even looks like that from Merrimac St to the water may be an ancient way. If Bill Harris has taught all of us anything it is the importance of keeping ways to water open to all.

This area is part of Newburyport's Historic Shipbuilding District. It should be acknowledged as the downtown historic district is. Its history should not be allowed to just disappear.

Joseph Coffin owned almost all the land from 31 Jefferson St to the River and over as far as Chase Shawmet. From Jefferson St to Merrimac Ct there were 7 shipyards. Two were on the

land currently owned by Mr. Hadly. One was owned by Samuel Coffin (relative to Joseph Coffin), the other by Joseph Coffin who resided in current day 29 Jefferson St. 24 Jefferson St was originally owned by Amos Coffin Jr., a shipbuilder who owned 1/3 of the shipyard located at the bottom of Ashland St along with his uncles Stephen and Lemmel Coffin. The house was later owned by John H.P. McQuillan, who was also a ship builder. His firm Doyle and McQuillan planked the three-mast schooner "Maggie Andrews" for George Currier in 1889 at his shipyard.



Maritime History of the Merrimac- Shipbuilding by Robert Cheney

My purpose in sharing all this is that I feel because of the Historic Significance of the area that this should be addressed by the city as soon as possible. Abutters and residents need to know who owns the land, who has a right to use it and how it can be used. This would apply to the river side of the property as well. The questions need to be answered and the proper process followed. Meeting in executive session (for upper Coffin St) and then stating the notes of that meeting will "never" be made public is questionable.

Deeds alone may not provide the full story. It may require additional searching of records. A possible source for assistance may be the Newburyport Preservation Trust. Barb Bailey recently published an article in the Daily News about her research of 340 Merrimac St. She discovered the house was John Currier Jr's shipyard office.

Link: https://www.newburyportnews.com/news/nbpt-3mph-currier-shipyard-office-moved-to-merrimac-st/article_6eb7eba0-99ac-11ec-97b1-23313cc5f7fa.html

The trust has also researched several of the ship builders' homes in the area – 24 & 26 Jefferson St. Their work is very detailed, incredibly done and sources noted. I believe if they were asked to research 1 Jefferson St the city would get far more information than thru a title search.

Please address and resolve the questions that have been raised.

