



# Historic Homes & Inns of Essex

*An 11-stop self-guided audio and architectural walking tour*

|                                             |                                                    |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>45-60 minutes</b><br>At a leisurely pace | <b>About 1 mile</b><br>Beginning at the ferry dock | <b>11 stops</b><br>Audio, architecture and history |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|

**Visitor courtesy:** Many stops are private residences. View properties only from public roads and sidewalks. Do not enter yards, driveways, porches, or buildings. Use headphones or keep audio low and remain alert to traffic.

# Route at a Glance

| Stop | Property                     | Map location                                           |
|------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 00   | Welcome to Essex             | 1 Main Street, Essex, NY 12936                         |
| 01   | Greystone                    | 2765 Essex Road, Essex, NY 12936                       |
| 02   | Rosslyn                      | 2783 Essex Road, Essex, NY 12936                       |
| 03   | The Dower House              | 2803 Essex Road, Essex, NY 12936                       |
| 04   | Hickory Hill                 | 23 Elm Street, Essex, NY 12936                         |
| 05   | Noble-Clemons House          | 26 Elm Street, Essex, NY 12936                         |
| 06   | Cyrus Stafford House         | 2736 NY Route 22, Essex, NY 12936                      |
| 07   | Dr. Samuel Shumway House     | 3 Church Street, Essex, NY 12936                       |
| 08   | John Gould House             | 2286 Lakeshore Road, Essex, NY 12936                   |
| 09   | Historic Inns of Essex       | 2313 Main Street and 2297 Main Street, Essex, NY 12936 |
| 10   | Thank You for Visiting Essex | 1 Main Street, Essex, NY 12936                         |

**Using the digital tour:** Open the website on your phone, select a stop, play the audio, and use the Google Maps button for directions. The site remembers your progress and can be added to your home screen.

**Printable guide:** This guide is designed as a companion to the audio experience. It includes each actual tour photograph, architectural highlights, a memorable fact, and walking directions.

# Welcome to Essex

Essex—Charlotte Ferry Dock



|                                                       |                      |                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>MAP LOCATION</b><br>1 Main Street, Essex, NY 12936 | <b>AUDIO</b><br>2:39 | <b>WALK</b><br>Begin here |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|

|                      |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>ARCHITECTURE</b>  | Lake Champlain waterfront        |
| <b>LOOK FOR</b>      | Historic village gateway         |
| <b>HISTORIC NOTE</b> | Merchant Row and church steeples |

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Before railroads connected the Northeast, Lake Champlain was one of America’s busiest transportation corridors. During the early 1800s, ships carried timber, limestone, iron, livestock, and passengers between Canada, Vermont, and New York, making Essex one of the lake’s most important ports.

**Walking direction:** Begin at the ferry landing and face west toward Main Street and Merchant Row.

# Greystone

Built 1853–1856 | Late Greek Revival



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                  |               |                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 2765 Essex Road, Essex, NY 12936                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                  | AUDIO<br>2:18 | WALK<br>About 1 minute |
| ARCHITECTURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Locally quarried limestone       |               |                        |
| LOOK FOR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Five-bay symmetry                |               |                        |
| HISTORIC NOTE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Ionic columns and broad pediment |               |                        |
| <div>DID YOU KNOW?<br/>Greystone was built using locally quarried Essex limestone, prized for its strength and distinctive blue-gray color. Skilled local masons shaped every block by hand, creating a home that has stood beautifully for more than 170 years.</div> |                                  |               |                        |

**Walking direction:** Continue north along Merchant Row to Rosslyn.



# Rosslyn

Built 1826–1828 | Georgian • Federal • Greek Revival



|                                                  |                                       |               |                         |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| MAP LOCATION<br>2783 Essex Road, Essex, NY 12936 |                                       | AUDIO<br>1:37 | WALK<br>About 2 minutes |
| ARCHITECTURE                                     | Balanced five-bay façade              |               |                         |
| LOOK FOR                                         | Doric cornice                         |               |                         |
| HISTORIC NOTE                                    | Asher Benjamin pattern-book influence |               |                         |

DID YOU KNOW?

Rosslyn’s architectural details were inspired by the pattern books of Asher Benjamin, America’s first widely influential architect. His published designs helped builders in villages like Essex create homes that reflected the same fashionable styles found in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

**Walking direction:** Continue north along Merchant Row to the Dower House.

# The Dower House

Standing Before 1793 | Georgian



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                   |               |                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| MAP LOCATION<br>2803 Essex Road, Essex, NY 12936                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                   | AUDIO<br>1:58 | WALK<br>About 5 minutes uphill |
| ARCHITECTURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Oldest documented Essex residence |               |                                |
| LOOK FOR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Gambrel roof                      |               |                                |
| HISTORIC NOTE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Balanced Georgian façade          |               |                                |
| <div>DID YOU KNOW?<br/>The Dower House is the oldest documented home in Essex and was already standing before 1793. Its distinctive gambrel roof was practical as well as attractive, creating a spacious second floor without requiring taller exterior walls.</div> |                                   |               |                                |

**Walking direction:** Turn west and walk uphill toward Elm and Church Streets to Hickory Hill.

# Hickory Hill

Built 1822 | Federal



Hickory Hill in Essex, NY (Photo: [virtualDavis](#))

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                       |               |                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| MAP LOCATION<br>23 Elm Street, Essex, NY 12936                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                       | AUDIO<br>2:22 | WALK<br>About 3 minutes |
| ARCHITECTURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Elliptical fanlight                                   |               |                         |
| LOOK FOR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Palladian window                                      |               |                         |
| HISTORIC NOTE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Federal residence with later Greek Revival law office |               |                         |
| <div>DID YOU KNOW?</div> <p>The elegant Palladian window was inspired by the sixteenth-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio. During the early nineteenth century, homes featuring this distinctive window were considered among the most fashionable and sophisticated in America.</p> |                                                       |               |                         |

**Walking direction:** Continue south along Elm Street toward School Street and the Noble-Clemons House.



# Noble-Clemons House

Circa 1850 | Italianate



Noble Clemons House (Image credit: [AARCH](#))

|                                                                                     |                           |               |                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 26 Elm Street, Essex, NY 12936                                                      |                           | AUDIO<br>2:01 | WALK<br>About 4 minutes |
| West side of Elm Street, near the corner where Elm Street approaches School Street. |                           |               |                         |
| ARCHITECTURE                                                                        | Low-pitched roof          |               |                         |
| LOOK FOR                                                                            | Broad bracketed eaves     |               |                         |
| HISTORIC NOTE                                                                       | Rooftop cupola or lantern |               |                         |

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Italianate homes became popular throughout America after picturesque Italian villas were featured in architectural books and magazines. Their decorative brackets, tall windows, and rooftop cupolas quickly became symbols of elegance and modern design.

**Walking direction:** Continue toward the brick residence at 2736 NY Route 22.



# Cyrus Stafford House

Built 1847 | Greek Revival



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                       |               |                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| MAP LOCATION<br>2736 NY Route 22, Essex, NY 12936                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                       | AUDIO<br>1:51 | WALK<br>About 4 minutes |
| ARCHITECTURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Red brick and local limestone         |               |                         |
| LOOK FOR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Corner pilasters and full entablature |               |                         |
| HISTORIC NOTE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Minard Lafever-inspired entrance      |               |                         |
| <div>DID YOU KNOW?<br/>Architect Minard Lafever’s pattern books became bestsellers during the nineteenth century, helping skilled craftsmen throughout America build elegant homes—even in small villages like Essex—without ever meeting the architect himself.</div> |                                       |               |                         |

**Walking direction:** Continue to the corner of Elm and Church Streets for the Dr. Samuel Shumway House.

# Dr. Samuel Shumway House

Circa 1832 | Federal with Greek Revival Influences



|                                  |                            |               |                         |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 3 Church Street, Essex, NY 12936 |                            | AUDIO<br>1:57 | WALK<br>About 8 minutes |
| ARCHITECTURE                     | Locally quarried limestone |               |                         |
| LOOK FOR                         | Stone arch and fanlight    |               |                         |
| HISTORIC NOTE                    | Prominent corner setting   |               |                         |

**DID YOU KNOW?**

During the nineteenth century, physicians often made house calls on horseback or by carriage, carrying medical instruments and medicines with them. A country doctor’s office frequently operated directly from his home, making residences like this an important center of community life.

**Walking direction:** Continue south of the village center along Lakeshore Road to the John Gould House.

# John Gould House

Circa 1833 | Federal with Greek Revival Influences



|                                                      |               |                         |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| MAP LOCATION<br>2286 Lakeshore Road, Essex, NY 12936 | AUDIO<br>2:26 | WALK<br>About 7 minutes |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|

|               |                             |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| ARCHITECTURE  | Cut gray limestone          |
| LOOK FOR      | Five-bay façade             |
| HISTORIC NOTE | Palmer-Havens garden legacy |

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
The Palmer-Havens Gardens surrounding the John Gould House became one of the Champlain Valley’s best-known private gardens during the late nineteenth century. Visitors came specifically to admire the carefully designed landscape and views of Lake Champlain.

**Walking direction:** Continue to Main Street for the Former Wright’s Inn and the Essex Inn.



# Historic Inns of Essex

Former Wright’s Inn & The Essex Inn



|                                                                               |                                                |                      |                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>MAP LOCATION</b><br>2313 Main Street and 2297 Main Street, Essex, NY 12936 |                                                | <b>AUDIO</b><br>2:05 | <b>WALK</b><br>About 3 minutes |
| <b>ARCHITECTURE</b>                                                           | Former Wright’s Inn, now Essex Town Hall       |                      |                                |
| <b>LOOK FOR</b>                                                               | Historic Essex Inn                             |                      |                                |
| <b>HISTORIC NOTE</b>                                                          | Stagecoach, ferry, dining, and lodging history |                      |                                |

### DID YOU KNOW?

During the nineteenth century, an inn was much more than a hotel. It often served as a restaurant, meeting hall, post office, business office, and community gathering place. Many important local decisions and friendships began around the dining tables of inns like these.

**Walking direction:** Return toward the Essex–Charlotte Ferry Dock for the closing stop.



# Thank You for Visiting Essex

Closing Narration

Essex in 500 Words

(from the office of the Town Historians)



### 1776 in Essex

It seems appropriate to reissue this first edition of *Essex in 500 Words* as we celebrate our nation's 250<sup>th</sup>. As it happened, in 1776, a certain person of note landed in Essex on April 25<sup>th</sup> on his way to Montreal for a meeting with some Canadian diplomats concerning the troubles with King George III of England. Benjamin Franklin was that person of note. He and a delegation were on a mission to convince the Canadians to either join the cause or stay neutral. The war had not been going too well and the colonists needed help.

Ben Franklin, Charles Carroll, and Samuel Chase left New York City on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and sailed their way up the Hudson, over to Lake George and then on to Lake Champlain. According to Carroll's journal, the weather was terrible for most of the trip. Some of the lake was still frozen, and on the day in question, the northerly breeze forced Franklin's party to put ashore in a village that was to become Essex. Apparently, they had a meal at an establishment referred to as McCaully's. . . . in Carroll's own words:

*"We breakfasted in a small cove at a little distance to the southward of the Split Rock. . . . When we had got four or five miles from the Rock, the wind headed us, and blew a fresh gale, which occasioned a considerable swell on the lake, the wind being northeast, and having a reach of twenty miles. We were constrained to put in at one McCaully's, where we dined on cold provisions."*

For Mr. Franklin's part, at the age of 70, this was not an easy trip. As he said in a letter during the expedition:

*"I am here on my way to Canada, detained by the present state of the lakes, in which the unthawed ice obstructs navigation. . . . I began to apprehend that I have undertaken a fatigue that at my time of life may prove too much for me, so I sit down to write to a few friends by way of farewell."*

When the party set sail again later that same day they only got as far as Willbobo Point where they went ashore again and camped out, as Carroll put it, "in a tent made of bushes."

Fortunately, for all of us, he and his compatriots were hardy souls and they survived the trip in good health. Franklin's mission was, unfortunately, not a great success. The Canadians were not persuaded to join the rebel cause and Franklin's party returned home with nothing to show for all the effort. However, on a lighter note, Mr. Franklin did make a purchase while in Canada that was later to become a well-known part of his wardrobe, and, I'm sure the beaver fur cap kept him warmer on his way home!

*Returning to present day, due to the good work of our own Russ Shapiro, we will now have a commemorative sign in town recognizing Ben Franklin's visit. . . . Essex's part toward the goal of independence.*

June 2026

|                                                |               |                       |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| MAP LOCATION<br>1 Main Street, Essex, NY 12936 | AUDIO<br>2:03 | WALK<br>Tour complete |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|

|               |                                                     |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| ARCHITECTURE  | A living historic village                           |
| LOOK FOR      | Local shops, cafés, galleries, library, and theater |
| HISTORIC NOTE | Preservation carried forward by each generation     |

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Nearly the entire Village of Essex is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, protecting one of the finest collections of early nineteenth-century architecture in the United States.

**Walking direction:** Spend more time exploring the village or return to the ferry dock.