

from Valley News Now July 25, 2014

Ivoryton Village Named to National Register of Historic Places

ESSEX— The Village of Ivoryton has been placed on the National Parks Service National Register of Historic Places in recognition of the number of historic structures in the village and its role as a “well preserved company town” from the Industrial era of New England.

The town’s planning commission played a key role in the village’s nomination and inclusion on the National Register, which includes hundreds of historic sites and structures in all parts of the United States. The commission established a subcommittee more than three years ago that surveyed and documented nearly 100 historic structures in the three villages of Essex, Centerbrook and Ivoryton with assistance from the State Office of Historic Preservation. The effort was aided by the work of the late former Town Historian Donald Malcarne, who wrote several books about the town’s historic in its historic structures.



Gather today. The building is practically unchanged from a century ago when it served as the location of the Rose Brother’s Store (photo by Jody Dole)

With more than 200 identified “contributing” structures, the National Register highlights an area roughly bounded by Main St., North Main St., Oak St., Blake St., Summit St. and Comstock Avenue. These streets include many structures tied to the village’s two

major industries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, ivory import and manufacturers Comstock, Cheney & Co. and Pratt, Read & Co, many of the houses in the area were home to immigrants from Germany, Poland, Italy and Sweden that worked in the two ivory processing factories.

Between 1860 and the late 1930s, Ivoryton was a self-sufficient industrial center that was home for more than 600 workers. Both the Ivoryton Library and Ivoryton Playhouse buildings date back to this era.

The addition of Ivoryton village to the National Register represents a tribute to its continuing historic character and contributions to the Industrial Era in New England, but the honorary designation carries no regulatory burden and imposes no obligations on private property owners.

There are no restrictions on the use, transfer or disposition of private property, though the designation could open the possibility of funding assistance for restoration of identified historic structures.