

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## MAYNARD

Report Date: 1980

**Reconnaissance Survey Town Reports**, produced for MHC's Statewide Reconnaissance Survey between 1979 and 1987, introduce the historical development of each of the Commonwealth's municipalities. Each report begins with an historic overview, a description of topography, and political boundaries. For the purposes of the survey, the historic period has been subdivided into seven periods: Contact (1500–1620), Plantation (1620–1675), Colonial (1675–1775), Federal (1775–1830), Early Industrial (1830–1870), Late Industrial (1870–1915), and Early Modern (1915–1940/55). Each report concludes with survey observations that evaluate the town's existing historic properties inventory and highlight significant historic buildings, settlement patterns, and present threats to these resources. A bibliography lists key secondary resources.

Town reports are designed for use together with a series of town maps that demarcate settlement patterns, transportation corridors and industrial sites for each historic period. These maps are in the form of color-coded, polyester overlays to the USGS topographic base map for each town on file and available for consultation at MHC. For further information on the organization and preparation of town reports, readers should contact MHC.

Users should keep in mind that these reports are now two decades or more old. The information they contain, including assessments of existing knowledge, planning recommendations, understanding of local development, and bibliographic references all date to the time they were written. In some cases, information on certain topics was not completed. No attempt has been made to update this information.

Electronic text was not available for digital capture, and as a result most of the reports have been scanned as PDF files. While all have been processed with optical character recognition, there will inevitably be some character recognition errors.

The activity that is the subject of the MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20240.



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## MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: January, 1980

COMMUNITY: Maynard

### I. TOPOGRAPHY

Located on hilly upland plateau on either side of Assabet River. Rugged terrain with rocky soil. All drainage into Assabet which bisects town. Considerable areas of bog and swamp in northern and southern sections. Area wise, a very small town.

### II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Incorporated as Town of Maynard, 1871--created from sections of Stow (incorporated, 1683) and Sudbury. Section from Sudbury was part of Two-Mile grant, 1649. Original boundary remains on north (Concord/Sudbury line, 1639). Part of West Precinct of Sudbury, 1721.

### III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Intact Victorian industrial town with well-preserved brick mill complex and outlying Federal farm houses. Assabet River site a barrier to development during 17th and 18th centuries with fringe settlement along interior. Large scale capital investment with railroad link to Boston provides impetus for development in mid-19th century with continued growth through early 20th century. Natick Labs area preserved Colonial road and houses sites of 18th century.

### IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

#### A. Transportation Routes:

Trail system follows southwest/northeast axis of Assabet River to Concord, with conjectured locations on east side as Old Marlborough Road and west side Summer-Concord Streets around Summer Hill (native site). Possible branch Summer Road.

#### B. Settlement Pattern:

No sites reported. Sites are likely, however, on well drained terraces and knolls overlooking Assabet, especially at falls and confluence points. Town history reported some site information (Hudson, 1891, p. 66).

#### C. Subsistence Pattern:

Primarily fishing in Assabet. Several locations where weirs were probably constructed.

#### D. Observations:

Apparently limited native occupation during period, despite fishing potential. Reasons why not well understood. Any period sites are probably related to Nipmuck (inland, fresh water people) rather than coastal tribes.

V. FIRST SETTLEMENT PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Native trails continue along Assabet. South-East side apparently divided in lots for Sudbury New Grant in 1649, no surviving evidence (Bigelow map 1707).

B. Population:

Very limited, probably a dozen families from Sudbury and Stow.

C. Settlement:

Scattered farms close to river and in areas with tillable soil. No central settlement.

D. Economic Base:

Subsistence level farming.

E. Observations:

A rugged and hostile frontier environment with little to attract settlement.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes:

Highways retained from 17th century. New Lancaster Road from Sudbury in early 18th century past Vost-Puffer Ponds with bridge across Assabet (Stow) 1715.

B. Population:

Area totally depopulated during King Philip's War. Gradually resettled afterward. Population remained fairly small throughout period.

C. Settlement:

Scattered farms, no village center. Essentially an outlying area of Sudbury, West Precinct.

D. Economic Base:

Agriculture and some lumbering. Two undated mills (grist and saw) on Taylor Brook. Old Rice Tavern (Old Marlboro and New Lancaster Roads).

E. Architecture

Residential:

Likely that only 10-20 houses built within present town limits; most houses of period are of central and twin (interior) chimney types, all exam-

ples are two-stories high, no evidence of Cape Cod cottages ever having been built. Very small amount of high-style (pattern book) late Georgian trim associated with structures of c. 1765-75, although decorative trim is likely to have been added c. 1780-1800.

Institutional:

One-room school house built in Stow section (1766), another built in Sudbury Section of town (1779).

Commercial:

No known structures.

Industrial:

No known structures.

F. Observations:

Little development during period. Town was a 19th century creation, see Sudbury for information on trends in this period.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes:

Northeast/southwest axis along Assabet shifted to east/west crossing as mill sites are developed. Great Road from Concord (1816) with river bridge and Waltham Street--at mill site by early 19th century. Secondary north/south highway from Concord-Sudbury past mill as Parker-Powder Mill Streets.

B. Population:

Probable small growth of population after c. 1815-20; no religious congregations within modern town limits.

C. Settlement Location:

Very small cluster of buildings at junction Powder Mill Road, Parker Street and Waltham Street on southside of river.

D. Economic Base:

First mill built on Assabet River itself, late 18th century, combination of grist, saw, and cider mill. Paper mill built 1820 (adjacent Summer Street bridge), survived most of 19th century. Agricultural economy dominant.

E. Architecture

Residential:

Very little building; continued use of vernacular types from preceding period; no high-style present, although some decorative details (both late Georgian and Federal) applied to several houses.

Institutional:

One-story brick school house built by Stow (c. 1800-20) on site of 1766 school house; no other buildings.

Commercial:

No known buildings except possible tavern.

Industrial:

One wood-frame paper mill built 1820, destroyed late 19th century.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes:

Road system intact from early 19th century. Branch railroad from <sup>Acton</sup>~~Ayer~~ (1849) to Assabet mills with extension southwest to Marlborough.

B. Population:

Gradual increase of population throughout period with rapid increases 1860-1870; foreign-born population by 1855 made up primarily of Irish immigrants; Congregational Society formed 1852, Methodist Episcopal Society, 1867; Catholic parish, 1866.

C. Settlement Location:

Cottage district along Summer, Acton and Glendale Streets and side streets in their vicinity; commercial, residential and industrial development along Main Street; cottage and workers' housing districts along Sudbury Street and Main Street west of Sudbury Street.

D. Economic Base:

Village of Assabet formed around woolen mills built by Amory Maynard and William Knight in 1846. The factory initially produced carpets and carpet yarn. Knight had erected carpet mills in Saxonville, and the taking of the water rights by the city for water supply forced both Maynard and Knight to relocate. Nathaniel Wyeth, a founder of New England ice industry, built 40,000-ton brick ice house on mill pond about the same time.

E. Architecture

Residential:

Range of types present; side-hall and center-entrance 1-1/2 story cottages built throughout period, extremely simple trim of contemporary styles; workers' housing consisting of double cottages and row houses (wood-frame) built after 1862; small number of boarding houses, no apparent standard type; moderate number of two-story side-hall houses with Italianate trim; no evidence that any high-style was built; Greek Revival style details appear to have remained in use until c. 1860.

Institutional:

Two (?) wood-frame two-story school houses built; two churches built, one late Greek Revival (1853) and one Gothic (1866).

Commercial:

Wood-frame hotels (after 1867), two public halls (1857, late 1860s) and commercial blocks built, primarily Italianate or Second Empire styles.

Industrial:

Additions to 1820 Paper Mill, construction of wood-frame woolen mills (1847) and ice house (c. 1850)--all demolished; only major complex built by Assabet Manufacturing Company, after 1862, consisting of late Greek Revival/Italianate style brick mill and storage buildings, architecturally related to plan and appearance of Lowell mill yards.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes:

Road and railroads intact from mid-19th century. Street railway link through town center from Concord-Marlborough along Main Street in early 1900s with branch to South Acton. Street railway and power house and carbarn (MHC Survey) survive, now modified.

B. Population:

Rapid growth 1875-1885 and after 1900; large and varied immigrant population; Irish formed largest foreign-born group before 1900, after 1900 Finnish, Polish and Russian populations became largest foreign-born groups; many new religious congregations: Episcopal (1894), Finnish Lutheran (c. 1910), Finnish Congregational (after c. 1903), Polish Roman Catholic (after 1905) and Jewish (c. 1901-03).

C. Settlement Location:

Expansion onto subdivisions north of Concord Street and south of Assabet River on subdivisions in the vicinity of Thompson, Parker and Waltham Streets; widespread development of housing by American Woolen Company (Grant, Cleveland, Harrison, etc., Streets--1901-02) and by private developers.

D. Economic Base:

Woolen mills increased substantially in size, and called by one writer, "the largest strictly woolen mill in the country" (Hudson, 1891). Lack of reinvestment capital at close of century led to absorption by giant American Woolen Company, undertaking considerable expansion in the 1900-1918 period. Farming was major occupation of outlying area with considerable growth of market gardening and dairies.

E. Architecture

Residential:

Nearly no high-style built, estates of Maynard Family (1870s) in hill south of Assabet Mills and Assabet River, demolished; small district of ambitious houses (mixed contemporary styles) along Summer Street; widespread side-hall houses (astylistic and simple Queen Anne); architect-designed Colonial Revival style cottages make up most of workers' housing built after 1902 (160 units in 1902); bungalows built in vicinity of Waltham Street.

Institutional:

Wood-frame school houses ceased being built after 1902 and were gradually replaced by six two-story, brick school houses, architect-designed, with simple classical details and standard 6, 8, etc., room plans; one fire house built (1891); five new churches built, 1 remodelled and 2 located in structures adapted from other uses, all new buildings were wood-frame, mainly late Gothic Styles, although at least one bore influence of traditional Finnish design.

Commercial:

Wood-frame blocks built in rows along Main and Mason Streets, mainly Queen Anne and Classical Revival styles with simple decoration; small number of brick blocks and theatres built after c. 1900; five commercial saunas built in scattered locations by Finnish immigrants, 1903-1919.

Industrial:

Single mill complex (Assabet Mills) extant after 1905; major enlargement with mill construction and reinforced concrete buildings, 1901-1918; whole complex contained twelve major mill buildings by c. 1915-18.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes:

Railroad and street railway abandoned by 1920s. Auto highway routes in 1930s located east/west as Route 117 (Great Road) and north/south as Route 27 (Parker-Brown Streets).

B. Population:

Population remained steadily in 7,000 range throughout period; large immigrant population present although little, if any, new immigration after c. 1915-1918.

C. Settlement Location:

Little expansion of settled area until small suburban growth of c. 1960-1975.

D. Economic Base:

Major local depression following World War I (1919), employment recovered to only 33% of total work force by June 1920, gradual but not full recovery thereafter. Dairying supplemented woollens for most of the early modern period, but with appropriation of large portion of town for Natick Labs, many farms discontinued. (One dairy survives, now boarded up and surrounded by recent housing development on Summerhill Road.)

E. Architecture

Residential:

Little new buildings; cottage/bungalows form largest portion of what was built during period.

Institutional:

Brick high school built 1918 (elements of Classical Revival); first town hall in building remodelled for that purpose, 1934; 1 new church built (1917), 1 church and 1 synagogue built in existing structures (1920s) designs varied according to restrictions of existing structures and ethnic architectural traditions of congregations (particularly the Russian Orthodox Church).

Commercial:

Several two-story brick blocks including one theatre built c. 1915-1925; otherwise little new building.

Industrial:

No new construction.

XI. SOURCES

Maynard Historical Committee, A History of Maynard, Massachusetts, 1871-1971, (1971).

Gutteridge, W. H. , A Brief History of Maynard, Massachusetts, (1921).

Hudson, A. S., Annals of Sudbury, Wayland and Maynard, (1891).

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