

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

ATTLEBORO

Report Date: 1981

Associated Regional Report: Southeast Massachusetts

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.

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MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

Date: October 1981

Community: Attleboro

I. TOPOGRAPHY

The town has moderate topographic relief with swamp lands to the east. Drainage is via the Bungay and Tenmile rivers in the central portion of town, the Sevenmile River in the west and Chartley Brook in the east. The town has an extensive system of mill ponds, particularly on the Bungay and Tenmile rivers. Soils are generally sandy to gravelly.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Attleboro was established as a town from the Rehoboth North Purchase on October 19, 1694 (o.s.). Annexed the Mile and a Half of land from Rehoboth in 1710. Part annexed to Wrentham during boundary adjustment in 1830. Part established as the town of North Attleborough in 1887. Incorporated as a city and changed name from Attleborough to Attleboro on June 17, 1914.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Attleboro is an industrial community in Bristol County. Originally encompassing North Attleborough and Cumberland, Rhode Island, as well as the present city, Attleboro has had a long industrial as well as agricultural history. Several recorded Contact period native sites. First Settlement period possible, although no clear indication of European settlement prior to King Philip's War. Colonial period settlement primarily agricultural. The original town center was located on South Street now in North Attleborough. With the turn of the 19th century the focus of settlement began an eastward movement to the more effective water power sites on the Bungay River. While the southern and western portion of the town remained primarily in agriculture (with a small industrial site at Orr's Pond), the principle industrial development occurred along South Main Street at Hebronville, Dodgeville and Mechanicsville, creating a convoluted corridor of development. The early development of East Attleborough (now Attleboro) was due to its location on the Bay Road as well as the Boston and Providence Railroad so that, conceivably, by the mid 19th century Attleboro served as a freight transfer point as well as a manufacturing center. By the mid 19th century, well defined factory villages had developed at Dodgeville and Hebronville, while a more extensive jewelry manufacturing base had developed at Attleboro, with explosive residential and industrial growth. A well defined central business district also developed during the late 19th century. World War I marked the beginning of a period of considerably slowed development in the city, the only deviation being the development of South Attleboro as a suburb of Pawtucket. Although Attleboro's growth has slowed, the downtown has remained relatively viable and the industrial base appears to be relatively stable.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500 - 1620)

A. Transportation Routes:

Attleborough was the locus of an extensive network of local and regional trails. A series of potential native trails radiated out of the present downtown center of Attleboro (focal of native sites). These trails included one extending to the north and south into North Attleborough and Seekonk, respectively, and following North and South Main Streets. A second prospective trail followed Emory and Park Streets, ultimately connecting with the Tremont Street trail (Rehoboth) via Oak Hill Avenue. Pleasant and Lindsey Streets were probably utilized as access routes to native settlements and/or resources in Norton and North Attleborough, respectively. Several conjectured trails were situated in southeastern Attleborough, including routes following Slater Street and Oak Hill Avenue. Suspected trails extending along Tiffany Street/Woodlawn Avenue and Newport Avenue skirted around the uplands of northwestern Attleborough. The latter provided access (via Mt. Hope Street) to outcrops of red felsite situated along the northern half of Mt. Hope Street (North Attleborough). The Tenmile River is believed to have been part of a major native water route between the Narragansett and Massachusetts Bays (MHC 1980: 21).

B. Settlement Patterns:

There were no reported native Contact Period sites. However, thirteen sites with Early-Late Woodland period components were recorded in the Attleborough area. The majority of these and several unidentified sites were clustered about the center of the area's trail network and the adjacent Tenmile River. All but one of the remaining sites with Woodland period components and a number of unidentified native sites were situated south of the above locus of sites along the Tenmile River extending from Dodgeville Pond to the river's junction with the Attleborough/Seekonk line. Further west, one native site with a Mid-Late Woodland component and several unidentified sites were congregated along the Sevenmile River immediately north of its junction with County Street. Additional Contact period occupation may have taken place along the Sevenmile River north of the previously mentioned Sevenmile River settlement locus, Walnut Grove and Ides Hills, two prominent upland features in western Attleborough and an extensive tract of agricultural land in northeastern Attleborough.

C. Subsistence Patterns:

Native fishing probably focused on the Tenmile River and to a lesser degree the Bungay and Sevenmile rivers. Additional fishing and shellfish harvesting was likely undertaken in the resource-rich Narragansett Bay drainage system. The Attleborough area's best agricultural land was probably situated adjacent to the Tenmile River. Additional potential native planting grounds were located between the Attleborough/Cumberland (Rhode Island) line and Tiffany Street and between Lindsey Street and Attleborough's eastern town line. The native population undoubtedly exploited the extensive sources of red felsite located throughout Attleborough and North Attleborough. Access to the Narragansett Bay region via the Blackstone and Seekonk rivers and the extensive trail network would have encouraged the establishment of trade contacts with 16th century and early 17th century European explorers and fishermen frequenting the Bay region.

D. Observations:

The existing archaeological, environmental and transportation data strongly suggest the Attleborough area was the site of considerable native Contact period activity. Settlement appears to have been heaviest along the Tenmile River in and adjacent to the present limits of downtown Attleboro. Unfortunately, 20th century development in this area has virtually obliterated all evidence of native occupation. However, a large collection of native artifacts collected from the Tenmile River area prior to its development is housed in the Bronson Museum. Native settlement in Attleborough may have been an extension of a suspected core settlement area located at the mouth of the Tenmile River (East Providence, Rhode Island)(MHC 1980: 23). Regionally, the native population probably fell under the control of the Pokanokets (Wampanoags) centered in Mt. Hope, Rhode Island. The likelihood of extant Contact period sites is greatest in northeastern Attleboro east of Lindsey Street and an area bounded by the Sevenmile River (west), Newport Avenue (north), Tiffany (east) and South and Read Streets (south).

V. FIRST SETTLEMENT PERIOD (1620 - 1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Minimal description of the colonial transportation system. Native trails were utilized as colonial overland routes. Several trails functioned as regional thoroughfares between Narragansett Bay and Boston. John Winthrop, when travelling from Providence to Boston in 1644, used native trails extending along the Tenmile River (MHC 1980: 21). One of these routes was probably the "Bay Path" (South and North Main Streets).

B. Population:

There were no figures for the native or white populations. One source claims that by 1661 there was virtually no native population in Old Attleborough (Cumberland, Rhode Island; Attleborough, North Attleborough) referring only to a small native village near the northern boundary of "Attleborough Gore" (Cumberland) (Hurd 1883: 556). It is unclear if there were any pre-war settlers in Attleborough.

C. Settlement Patterns:

There is no documentation of any native settlement locations. The existing secondary sources fail to substantiate if Attleborough underwent pre-1675 English settlement. One source stated the first English homes were established in southern and western Attleborough (Hurd 1883: 514) while a second claimed initial English settlement occurred in North Attleborough in c. 1670 (Daggett 1894: 89). However, it is possible homes were built along the Tenmile River as early as the late 1650s and 1660s when tracts of meadowland in this vicinity were first distributed.

D. Economic Base:

Considerable farming was probably undertaken in Attleborough. Crop production likely focused along the Tenmile and Sevenmile rivers and on the large agricultural tracts in southwestern and northeastern Attleborough.

The late 1650s and 1660s witnessed the laying out of the previously mentioned grazing lands. The area's woodlands were a valuable commodity. A 1666 Rehoboth statute prohibited the cutting of timber in Old Attleborough before the woodlands were laid out (Hurd 1883: 512). Subsistence fishing and hunting were likely undertaken in the Tenmile River and its tributaries and the area's woodlands. There was no evidence of pre-war industrial development.

E. Observations:

The limited data suggest little remained of the pre-1620 native community. Future research should be devoted to clarifying the extent of pre-war English settlement in Attleborough.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675 - 1775)

A. Transportation Routes:

Improvement and expansion of the existing colonial road network. Cumberland and Newport Avenues were probably laid out in the late 17th century in response to the development of the primary settlement node centered at the junction of Old Post Road and Mount Hope Street. Mendon Road was probably established in c. 1684 as a major route to Dedham (Hurd 1883: 520). By the early 18th century, a series of roads radiated out of present downtown Attleboro as a result of its development as a primary settlement node. These new routes likely included West, Pleasant and Emory/Park Streets.

B. Population:

Figures for Old Attleborough's population at the time of incorporation (1694) range from a low of 90 residents (Hutt 1924: II. 626) to a high of 180 residents (Hurd 1883: 553). By c. 1717, the population had increased to 500 occupants (Daggett 1894: 313). The town had undergone over a threefold increase (1,739) by 1765. Further growth took place between 1765 and 1776 with the population jumping to 2,200 residents. The first post-war settlers moved from eastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod settlements including Beverly, Dedham, Dorchester, Salem, Sudbury, Taunton and Martha's Vineyard.

C. Settlement Patterns:

None of the available sources made reference to a post-1675 native community. It is also unclear whether an English settlement existed in present Attleboro at the outbreak of Anglo-Indian fighting and the extent of damage to English property (real or personal) during the conflict. North Attleborough was attacked on at least one occasion by native forces (Hurd 1883: 524). The first post-war settlement probably occurred in the late 17th century adjacent to Newport Avenue between the Newell cemetery (c. 1715) and the present Attleboro /North Attleborough town lines as part of a primary settlement node centered at the junction of Mount Hope Street and Old Post Road (North Attleborough). The latter location was the site of Old Attleborough's first meetinghouse (erected 1710-14). Late 17th century and early 18th century homes were erected in present downtown Attleboro near the Tenmile River. The presence of good agricultural land and water power likely encouraged settlement

of this area. Additional late 17th century and early 18th century settlement took place in the vicinity of Briggs Corner, Wilmarth and Slater Streets where a mixture of marshland and agricultural land prevailed. Several homes were constructed within present South Attleborough by the early 18th century. A reputed toll house dating to c. 1732 is located at the junction of Robinson Avenue and Mendon Road. Town growth culminated in the division of Old Attleborough into two precincts in 1743, the West precinct (1st) and the East precinct. The latter precinct's meetinghouse was erected on the site of the Kirk Burial Yard (immediately southeast of the intersection of Bank and Dean Streets) in c. 1743, which by then was the center of a primary settlement node. Probable mid and late 18th century settlement occurred adjacent to South Main Street between Dodgeville Pond and the road's junction with the Attleborough line, probably in response to the area's good mill potential (Tenmile River).

D. Economic Base:

Attleborough's post-war economy was poorly documented. Agriculture retained its position as the primary economic pursuit of the town's residents. The first reference to the existence of local industrial facilities was to a pre-1742 grist and saw mill complex situated in "Mechanicsville" probably on Mechanics Pond (Daggett 1894: 338). This operation was succeeded by an iron forge. By c. 1759, the iron production complex included an air furnace and boring mill (Ibid.: 340). Iron production continued until c. 1809 (Hutt 1924: II, 694). A pre-1775 mill was constructed on the Tenmile River at the river's junction with Read Street. An additional mill site located on the junction of Newport Avenue and the outlet to Luther Reservoir may pre-date 1775.

E. Architecture:

Residential: At least three center-chimney houses dating from the Colonial period are known to stand in Attleboro with some dozen center-chimney cottages also surviving. The earliest of these is apparently the Titus Farm on Slater Street, a two-story half house with an end gable overhang, dated to 1718. Nineteenth century photographs indicate that the earliest recorded structures in town (dating from the 1690s) were generally of less than a full five bays width, like the Titus House. Several other houses in Attleboro exhibit end gable overhangs like the Titus House as well. Of the city's Colonial cottages, at least a few have gambrel roofs instead of the standard gable form. In addition, at least two houses with double chimneys are known; one house, with double interior chimneys, dated to 1740, stands on North Avenue, and the other, with end wall chimneys, is located on South Avenue. The second house appears to date from the early 18th century; if so, the house would be a very early example of the end-chimney plan.

Institutional: The earliest meetinghouse in Attleboro was located in what is now North Attleborough. The East Parish, established in 1743, is the earliest church within the confines of present-day Attleboro. In 1743, a meetinghouse, 45' x 35' with one tier of galleries, was begun; the meetinghouse was not completed until some time later, c. 1748. Also built in the period and still standing is a conical-roofed brick Powderhouse (1768).

F. Observations:

The limited data suggest that until the early 18th century, present North Attleborough existed as the focal point of English settlement in Old Attleborough. During this period, Attleborough consisted of several dispersed settlements and lacked civic/religious and industrial facilities. By the early 18th century, there was evidence of a gradual developmental shift south towards Attleborough. Extensive 20th century development in downtown Attleboro and South Attleborough has destroyed virtually all of the post-war settlement that developed in these areas. Vestiges of period settlement may survive in the vicinity of the lightly developed northern portion of Newport Avenue and Wilmarth and Slater Streets.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775 - 1830)

A. Transportation Routes:

Boston Post Road--Newport Avenue at beginning of period. Washington Street as Boston-Providence Turnpike by end of period. Improvement of existing colonial roads.

B. Population:

After stable population from 1775-1790, steady growth to end of period.

C. Settlement:

Late 18th century civic/religious node at East Attleborough. By first decade of 19th century, mill towns at Hebronville and Dodgeville. Linear residential settlement patterns, particularly at Attleborough Village, along Newport Avenue, at Briggs Corner and at South Attleborough.

D. Economic Base:

Probably by the beginnings of the Federal period, tanning had already been begun by Isaac Draper in the Attleborough City area (Newport and May Streets). This business developed virtually independent of other industries, by the 1870s reaching an annual product of \$70,000. For the first few decades of the period, a forge remained in operation on Mechanic Street, followed in the 19th century's first decade by nail factories at Deantown (Clifton Street area) and the Farmers (West Street).

However, these activities were rapidly eclipsed in importance by the introduction of cotton spinning mills, as investors from Pawtucket and Providence, spurred by the import restrictions imposed by the Embargo and the War of 1812, sought out potential mill privileges and other local investors. Between 1809 and 1813 five major cotton mills were built along the Tenmile River (including one on its tributary, the Sevenmile) within the present bounds of Attleboro. (Hereafter, the spelling of "Attleborough" and "Attleboro" will indicate whether the old town or present city limits is intended.) Of these five, the largest and earliest was that built at Dodgeville by Eben Tyler, Nehemiah Dodge, and others, known as the Attleborough Manufacturing Co. By 1820 it had a capacity

of over 1,300 spindles, representing over 1/3 that of the entire town. By 1832 the five mills together showed a product value of over \$150,000, and cotton textile manufacture dominated the industries of Attleboro, with a work force of nearly 300 men and women. (By contrast, the three mills in what is now North Attleborough reported less than half this amount.)

In the 1832 statistics, 500 women are noted producing \$60,000 worth of straw braid and bonnets, but it is unclear in what section of Old Attleborough this cottage industry was taking place.

In the Federal period, there was no evidence of the button and jewelry business which at that time was developing in North Attleborough.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Many more houses and cottages survive from the Federal period than do from the Colonial. These include some thirty-five houses and an equal number of cottages. Of these, twin and double interior chimney houses outnumber the more conservative center-chimney houses by almost two to one. Most of the cottages surviving in the town are, however, traditional center-chimney examples. Most Federal houses in Attleboro are simply detailed with pedimented entrance surrounds supported on pilasters and incorporating semicircular fanlights. Only a few more elaborately detailed houses are known; these include one hip roofed center-chimney Federal house of c. 1830 with a monitor at the peak and a Palladian window over the entrance standing on Maple Street and another double interior chimney hip roofed house of c. 1795 standing on North Main Street.

Institutional: In 1825, a second meetinghouse was constructed for the East Parish at a cost of \$6,000; its dimensions are not known. Other churches located in Attleborough were the South Baptist church, founded in 1789 and extinct by 1832 (their meetinghouse was demolished c. 1810), and the Hebronville church, founded in 1827. At least four schools were built in Attleborough during the period. All of these appear to have been one-story structures of three bays with a side entrance on the long side; several have survived, including the District 12 (1810), District 13 (1816) and District 11 (1810) schools.

Commercial: Attleboro is unusual in that it retains two large Federal taverns: the Balcolm Tavern (1786) and Newell's Tavern are both long (six bays and eight bays) buildings with three chimneys (both center and end). Of the two, the Balcolm Tavern on Pleasant Street is better preserved, the Newell Tavern now being used as a nursing home.

Industrial: Several of Attleborough's factories were established in the Federal period, including the Knight Cotton Mill at Hebronville (1810) and the Atherton Cotton Mill (1812), but neither of these survives.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830 - 1870)

A. Transportation Routes:

Improvement of existing roads. Boston and Providence Railroad approximately 1835.

B. Population:

Steady growth throughout the period. Population increases 111% from 1830-70. Foreign-born population comprises 17% of total in 1855 (71% Irish).

C. Settlement:

Expansion of settlement at East Attleborough, along South Main Street two blocks in depth, also between Bank and North Main Streets (Mechanicsville?). Expansion of worker housing at Dodgeville and Hebronville. Other residential expansion consisted of infill along existing roads.

D. Economic Base:

Economic growth of town continued to be dominated by the manufacture of textiles through the 1850s. Though employment figures for textile mills (in both Attleboros) remained relatively constant--averaging around 300 men and women between 1837 and 1865--the product value increased from \$230,000 in 1837 to \$646,500 in 1865, most of this amount being represented by the Attleboro mills. Textile finishing was introduced in the town in 1868 when Robert Wolfenden, a Huddersfield immigrant, introduced British expertise in setting up his Attleborough Dye Works on the Tenmile River.

The movement of the jewelry business to Attleboro began in the early 1850s as part of a tremendous expansion of the business that took place in the late 1840s and '50s from North Attleborough. It has not been possible to ascertain the cause of this expansion, but between 1845, when eleven North Attleborough shops employed 102 hands producing \$85,000 worth and a decade later when 24 shops in both Attleboros employed 724 hands producing over ten times that amount (\$946,200), the business took hold in the Attleboros and nearby towns with an astonishing rapidity. It appears that at the time this movement began, many of the key developments in the industry (such as rolled gold-plated stock, and rolled plated curb chains), had already evolved in North Attleborough.

Among the first jewelry manufacturers to move to Attleboro was Charles E. Hayward, who started Thompson, Hayward and Co. at the Mechanics (Mechanics Street) in 1851. In later years, as Hayward & Briggs, the firm gained a prominent reputation, and, wrote Sheffield (p.372), trained a generation in the art of jewelry making. In the 1860s, many firms in both Attleboro and North Attleborough received boosts by U.S. Army orders for large quantities of gold, silver, and rolled plate Army badges and other emblems.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Comparatively few substantial houses are known to have been built in Attleborough in the Early Industrial period. Many of the most ambitiously designed houses constructed in the period stand in North Attleborough, which was incorporated as a separate city in 1867. Most of the Greek Revival and Italianate houses built in Attleborough are traditional in plan with double interior chimneys and center halls. By the end of the period, however, suburban middle class and workers' housing of several types was being constructed at the town center. Simply finished sidehall two-story

Italianate houses with gable roofs and polygonal bays were built in the 1860s along the side streets at the town center and at South Attleborough; Italianate double houses and cottages, both single-family and double, were built as working class housing east of Main Street at the town center. Large numbers of end chimney sidehall plan double houses and cottages with traditional Greek Revival/Italianate detailing were also built at the two major industrial villages of the town, Dodgeville and Hebronville. Along rural roads, conservative double chimney center entrance Greek Revival/Italianate cottages, often with kneewall framing, were built in some numbers. The more ambitiously detailed of these cottages incorporate small one-light windows in the frieze.

Institutional: The earliest surviving institutional building of the period is the Attleborough Academy (1842), notable as the only temple-front Greek Revival building in the town. The other early surviving institutional buildings in the town are also schools; these include the District 17 school (1846), a one-story building on Lindsey Street with a side entrance on the long side in the manner of Federal schoolhouses and the District 16 school (c. 1860), a simple Italianate building with a center entrance. No other institutional buildings of the period are known to survive. Two Catholic missions were established in the period, at Attleborough Center and at Dodgeville, as were a Methodist church (Davis Methodist, 1865) and the town's first high school (1867).

Commercial: The Attleborough Bank, chartered in 1836, occupied a temple-front Greek Revival building at the town center until 1858 when the bank moved to North Attleborough. While other buildings were probably constructed at the town center for commercial purposes, no period commercial buildings were observed. A one-story Greek Revival store with a center entrance is known to survive at Dodgeville.

Industrial: The present structure of the Atherton Mill was constructed in 1866; it is a four-story brick building with utilitarian Romanesque Revival detailing and a mansard roof.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870 - 1915)

A. Transportation Routes:

Interstate Street Railway along Old Post Road (Newport Avenue) to Washington Street to Pawtucket returning via Seekonk to Hebronville, possible connection with Attleborough, North Attleborough and Wrentham Street Railway at Dodgeville in 1891. Attleborough, North Attleborough and Wrentham Street Railway along South Main Street from Dodgeville through residential section of East Attleborough to North Main Street to West Street to North Street and thus to North Attleborough. Attleborough Branch Railroad connected East and North Attleborough in 1871. No new road construction.

B. Population:

During the 15 years 1870-1885, population increased by 95%. Sharp decline in 1890 due to incorporation of North Attleborough. Loss in population regained by 1905, steady growth to the end of the period. By 1885 the foreign-born population reached 24% of the total; while the Irish remained in the majority, an influx of French Canadians was noted. Foreign-

born population in 1915:26% of total, shift from Irish to French Canadian majority. St. Stephan's Catholic Church at Dodgeville 1877. African Methodist Episcopal Church built 1876 on Leroy Street between Benefit and Bicknell in East Attleborough.

C. Settlement:

Expansion of settlement at East Attleborough bound by Mechanics Street/Dennis Street/Olive; also east from South Main and in the area bounded by North Main/Holden/Park. Hebron Camp Meeting Ground established by American Millennial Association of Providence, had 60 cottages by 1893. Over 100 worker tenements at Dodgeville by 1886. Considerable infill of residential structures along trolley lines during end of period.

D. Economic Base:

But for the mills at Dodgeville and Hebronville (since 1854 owned by the Rhode Island textile company of B.B. & R. Knight), primary textile production declined in importance. Finishing operations increased, however, and Wolfenden's expanded dye works was followed by James Orr's Bleachery and Dye House in Attleborough City.

Until 1895 it is not possible to separate the jewelry statistics of North Attleborough and Attleboro. However, a large number of firms were begun in Attleboro in the 1870s and '80s, while others moved into town from North Attleborough. Thus it is probably during the late 1870s or early '80s that Attleboro jewelry production overtook that of North Attleborough. By 1895 the value of Attleboro goods (probably 75 percent "metal and metallic goods") was nearly 1½ times that of North Attleborough.

One of the factors in this growth may have been the construction of the Attleborough & Taunton Railroad (1869) by the Taunton Branch Railroad Co., though it was followed soon after by a branch to the Falls and North Attleborough by a company organized by jewelry manufacturers from the northern section. By 1875 the Attleboros had a combined manufactured product value of \$3.4 million, ranking fourth in the county after Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton.

In the first decades of the 20th century occurred another expansive period in factory construction, coinciding with civic improvements--among them the 1906-07 elimination of grade crossings in the town center. Attleboro also took an important lead in concrete construction, with the erection in 1905 of a reinforced concrete standpipe, built by the pioneer firm in concrete construction, the Aberthaw Construction Co. of Boston. (The only earlier concrete standpipes of any size were said to be at Hull, Massachusetts and Milford, Ohio; and the Attleboro standpipe was larger than either.) The standpipe was followed a year later (1906) by the 3-story reinforced concrete frame factory for Tappan Brothers, also built by Aberthaw, making it probably one of the earliest known buildings of this type of construction in the state.

Independent and virtually isolated from the rest of town was the southwest corner, where the valley of the Blackstone River swung briefly through Attleboro. Geographically and financially allied with Pawtucket, the two mill complexes built here, Attleboro's largest employers, were much more

typical of the heavy industrial base of Pawtucket than the smaller jewelry factories. The earliest was the American Machine Co. (1894), which by 1930 employed over 1,000 hands in the manufacture of cotton machinery. The Crown Manufacturing Co. followed in 1910 with a large mill for the production of cotton yarns.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Most of the houses standing in Attleboro were built in the Late Industrial period. These include a number of elaborate Second Empire and Queen Anne houses on County Road near Capron Park, as well as on North Main and Park Streets. More modest suburban Queen Anne houses were built in neighborhoods west of County Road and at South Attleborough with large numbers of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival two-family houses and three-deckers built east of the town center and at the intersection of County Road and Thatcher Street. Cottages are more unusual with most examples being simple hip-roofed Craftsman bungalows located in scattered locations along rural roads.

Institutional: Most of the institutional buildings standing in Attleboro also date from the Late Industrial period. These include most of the city's schools and several churches and municipal buildings. Among these are the Second Congregational church (c. 1880), a brick High Victorian Gothic church with an offset tower, Hebronville Methodist (c. 1890), a two-story frame Queen Anne church with offset tower, the Attleborough Public Library (1907, McLean and Wright), a Beaux Arts building of yellow brick with a projecting porch with pediment, designed by a Boston firm which was also responsible for several library commissions in the area, the Sturdy Hospital, a yellow brick neoclassical building (c. 1910) on Park Street and at least one unusual Mannerist Beaux-Arts school (Bliss School, 1908, architect unknown), also on Park Street. LaSalette Seminary, a three-story stone Gothic Revival mansion on Park Street, was also built in the period; it originally functioned as a sanatorium. Capron Park was established in 1901.

Commercial: Most of the buildings at the town center were constructed in the period. Almost all of these are substantial three and four story masonry structures with Renaissance and Georgian Revival designs of the turn of the century predominating; also standing at the town center are several Panel Brick commercial buildings of the 1880s and '90s. Other commercial buildings of the period include smaller one-story frame corner stores built in residential areas outlying the central business district. One of the most elaborate commercial buildings of the period is the Briggs Hotel (c. 1880) on South Main Street, a four-story building with a mansard roof, end turrets and a center four-and-a-half story pavillion.

Industrial: The Hebronville Mill, a four-story brick structure with a mansard roof, was built during the period; portions of its waterpower system are still intact. The Attleborough National Guard Armory, a three-story crenellated stone structure, was built c. 1910. Other industrial structures of the period include a simple brick Queen Anne pumping station on South Street and utilitarian masonry factories.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915 - 1940)

A. Transportation Routes:

Washington Street designated Route 1 in 1930s. Otherwise no new road construction.

B. Population:

Population growth slowed considerably during this period. Foreign-born population drops to 22% of total in 1930.

C. Settlement:

Residential expansion at East Attleborough during this period slowed somewhat by the 1930s Depression, continuation of infill along existing roads at East Attleborough since original platting of residential lots in the late Industrial period shows very low densities.

D. Economic Base:

In the early 20th century, Attleboro's economy expanded dramatically: in 1895 the total value of goods made and work done amounted to \$4.2 million; twenty-five years later it was over eight times that amount, or \$35.3 million. Of this amount in 1920, the jewelry industry accounted for 63 percent, probably about what it had been 25 years earlier. Within the state, Attleboro led all other communities in jewelry production, claiming about 61 percent of the state total, North Attleborough claiming another 20 percent.

Many of the largest firms were those of recent vintage. Chief among these was L. G. Balfour (1916), which by the 1930s had become one of the largest emblem makers in the country. In 1930, as today, it was the largest jewelry manufacturer, employing 400 hands (about 15% of the local jewelry workers), followed by the R. F. Simmons Co., with 250 employees.

(By contrast with these figures, it is interesting to compare the two Blackstone Valley plants in 1930. H. & B. American Machine Co. employed over 1,000 workers, nearly 20 percent of the city's entire work force; and its neighbor, Crown Manufacturing, another 16 percent).

Related industries included tool production. Frank Mossberg's original products in 1909 had been bicycle wrenches and other patented tools. By 1930, Apco-Mossberg was said to be the leading wrench manufacturer in the world. Another toolmaker, Larson Tool & Stamping (1920), developed the basic perforated metal tubes used in the textile industry.

Wolfenden's dye plant by 1930 was said to be the largest in the world devoted exclusively to dyeing (Stone, p.249), while D. E. Makepeace (1900+) was claimed the largest institution in the U.S. devoted to the manufacture of jewelers' materials (Stone, v.4, p.202).

After 1920 the jewelry industry and the city's recorded growth (as represented by product value) appear to have stagnated. Jewelry production had declined to \$18.5 million by 1929, reaching a low of \$7.3 million in 1932. By 1940, however, jewelry production, like the total for the city,

had regained its 1920 peak-year level. Though there were 15 fewer jewelry firms in 1940, jewelry production amounted to \$22.3 million.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Modest Colonial Revival and Dutch Colonial houses were built at South Attleborough and at Attleboro during the period along with simply detailed Colonial Revival and Craftsman cottages and two-family houses for workers.

Institutional: Comparatively few institutional buildings are known for the period, but several schools were constructed, including the neoclassical high school (1918).

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Attleboro's existing inventory includes most of the town's Colonial and Federal period residences, its two major 19th century industrial villages, and a number of important institutional buildings. Elaborate late 19th century houses along County Road are not inventoried, nor are late 19th and early 20th century institutional and industrial buildings. In addition to the well-preserved industrial villages at Dodgeville and Hebronville, late 18th through 19th century rural and agricultural landscape is well-preserved along Oak Hill Avenue in the eastern half of town.

Industrial: Attleboro's survey identified three industrial structures. The Reconnaissance Survey identified 35 other structures, including 18 jewelry or jewelry-related factories. Special attention should be given to these plants, with a close examination of the relative significance of each in terms of the development of the industry.

The survey noted the Dodgeville and Hebronville mills; both are worthy of National Register designation, though the former may date from a "reconstruction" in 1854 and later, rather than from a Federal period date. Attention should also be given to the Mechanics and Crown Manufacturing mills, to the American Machine Co. plant (including Queen Anne details), and to the 1906 reinforced concrete factory on Union Street. An early freight station south of Mill Street should also be studied.

XII. SOURCES

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