

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

BARRE

Report Date: 1984

Associated Regional Report: Central 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.

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.



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth

Chair, Massachusetts Historical Commission

220 Morrissey Blvd.

Boston, MA 02125

www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

mhc@sec.state.ma.us / 617-727-8470

MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: 1984

COMMUNITY: Barre

I. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Barre lies on a plateau ranging in elevations from 800 to 1,100 feet above sea level, though some hills rise to more than 1,200 feet. The plateau is bounded on the east by the valley of Burnshirt Brook, on the south by the Ware River, and in the northwest by the East Branch of the Swift River. The Prince River and its tributary Pleasant Brook drain the central portion of the town, flowing nearly the entire length of Barre from north to south before joining the Ware River. Broad glacial terrace and outwash deposits up to one mile in width form the valley floor along much of the Ware River through the town, particularly where Canesto and Burnshirt brooks join with the Ware River at Barre Plains, where the Prince River joins the Ware. Only in the valley floor below South Barre are agriculturally rich bottom lands found; upstream, the excessively droughty Hinckley gravelly sandy loam is unimportant for agriculture but valuable as a source of sand and gravel for road and other building materials. Occasional brick clay beds were also found in the valley, particularly in South Barre. Elevations range from below 700 feet in the Ware River Valley as it enters New Braintree to greater than 1,000 feet in the upper Moose Brook Valley.

The town straddles two different soil belts, separated by the Ware River Valley. West of the river, stony Gloucester Series soils predominate, while east of the river Brookfield Series soils are more common. Both types, where cultivable, are among the most important soils for agriculture in the county. These soils both yield excellent crops of hay, grains, fruit, and vegetables; at their peak use, 70-80% of these soil type areas were under cultivation. Through much of the 19th and early 20th centuries Barre, together with neighboring Hardwick, Hubbardston, New Braintree, and Petersham, occupied the leading region in the county for dairying and cattle-raising.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Included in 12-mile-square, "Naquag" Indian purchase of 1686, incorporated as Rutland in 1714. Established as Rutland District from the northwest quarter of Rutland in 1753. Incorporated as town of Hutchinson, 1774. Name changed to Barre in 1776.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

A rural, upland town, Barre is located mainly north of the Ware River, along the Prince and Burnshirt river tributaries, on historic highland corridors west from Lancaster to the northwest Central Uplands and the Connecticut River Valley. Potential for native sites exists in the south along the Ware River corridor.

Early European settlement is attracted by grazing meadows in the area known as Rutland's "Northwest Quarter" before ca. 1720, and a central meetinghouse site is established in 1733. Prosperous, dispersed 18th and early 19th century agricultural settlement concentrates on cattle-raising and later on, dairy products. In the first half of the 19th century, meetinghouse center becomes a regional transportation focus, and develops into a flourishing commercial centers with industrial activity along the Prince River. Subsequent 19th century center development takes the form of Victorian highland summer resort accommodations. Textile manufacturing persists along the Ware River in the south from the early 19th to the mid 20th century. Early village concentration at Barre Plains, Dennyville (South Barre), and Smithville are sustained by late 19th century Ware River rail connections. Development from the Coldbrook Mineral Springs resort (Oakham) extends into town in the southeast. English capital develops a major new woolen manufacturing village at South Barre in the early 20th century. Subsequent Ware River water management as part of the Quabbin Aqueduct system, and later flood control projects remove most Ware River development above South Barre. Significant highland agricultural landscapes remain in use, many with notable 18th or early 19th century dwellings. Barre Center retains much of its 19th century village structure, with surviving temple front residences, resort hotel, and notable institutional buildings. At South Barre, in addition to early 19th century worker housing, the early 20th century woolen industry development survives nearly intact, with mills, worker and management housing, commercial buildings, and churches, and remains as an extremely significant example of an unusual late, rural industrial village.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes

Highlands north of upper Ware River corridor, with north-south Prince River and Burnshirt River tributaries. North-south highland trail conjectured parallel to Prince River (Old Furnace Road-abandoned road to Root Road-South Street-School Street-Farrington Road-Gilbert Road-Williamsville Street). Possible northeast branch (Williamsville Road) to Burnshirt River crossing. Conjectured western trail to upper Swift River tributary (West Street-Old Dana Road). Conjectured northern upland trail on Pleasant Street.

B. Settlement Pattern

Archaeological and documentary evidence for the area in the period is very scarce. Site are for the most part only rumored and cultural affiliation unknown. More confidence can be given to a site adjacent to the Ware River in the south, with other occupations likely on Prince and Burnshirt rivers. Occupation short-term by small family or task groups, within a presumed low-density population.

C. Subsistence Pattern

Small family and task groups visited the area seasonally for resource exploitation through hunting and fishing.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes

Contact period trails continue in use.

B. Settlement Pattern

The focus of both native and colonial settlement to the south, east, and west of this area left the town only secondarily influenced by events of the period.

C. Subsistence Pattern

A continuation of patterns established during the Contact period.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes

Northwest area of original Rutland Grant, with southeast-northwest road from Rutland through Barre Center to Petersham (Old Worcester Road-abandoned road to Walnut Hill Road-James Street-Pleasant Street). Northeast native trail improved as route to Hubbardston and Princeton (School Street-Farrington Road-Gilbert Road-Williamsville Road). Northern branch on Phillipston Road. Southern route to Hardwick on South Street-Root Road-abandoned road to Old Furnace Road. Other roads are laid out from outlying farmsteads to the meetinghouse center after ca. 1753.

B. Population

By 1748, the town had 30 families in residence; in 1765 the total population equalled 734, nearly doubling during the following decade to reach 1,329 to period's end.

The church was not gathered until four years after the incorporation as a district. Twelve years later the first minister was dismissed due to "bad temper," causing a brief separation within the parish, while some met with him in Petersham.

C. Settlement Pattern

The area now Barre was the northwest section of the large grant of Rutland (1686, 1713). The proprietors of that grant divided the northern section for settlement in 1733. Sixty-six lots of 50 acres each were laid out near the central meetinghouse location, with an additional 33 "great farms" of 500 acres. Some settlement had occurred by 1720.

D. Economic Base

Little information is available on the economy of agriculture practiced on dispersed farms. During the early years of settlement, saw and grist mills were successfully established, in 1742 on the Prince River by Jonas Clarke, and in an unknown location two years later by Samuel Willard. Pruitt's classification of the town as commercial is an anomaly, easily explained when the factors are examined individually: recent immigration resulted in low commercial development and community wealth, as well as moderate propertylessness, while the town's high corn yields brought high agricultural prosperity and moderate agricultural poverty. There were sawmills operating in the town by 1753.

E. Architecture

Residential: A few center and double chimney houses, both one and two stories, survive. All recorded single-story examples appear to be five-bay, center chimney types. Center and double chimney plans survive in two-story dwellings. The oldest surviving houses are said to date from 1753 and 1754, one being a two-story, center chimney plan and the others a two-story, double chimney plan.

Institutional: Meetinghouse completed in 1753. Schoolhouse in center ca. 1764.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes

By the 1790s an alternate, direct route from Barre Center to Petersham Center is established (Old State Road). The Barre Turnpike (laid out in 1823, opened in 1824) provides a direct link east to Princeton (Hubbardston Road). By 1830, a new county road is in use from Barre Center to Rutland (Summer Street). Otherwise, the colonial highways continue in use.

B. Population

The town's population grew steadily throughout this period, from 1,329 in 1776 to 2,503 in 1830. The largest increase took place during the final decade, when the figure grew by nearly 500.

The divisions and formations of religious societies in this town reflect typical period patterns for a good sized agricultural community. The familiar split between Unitarians and Trinitarians was exacerbated by accusations of immoral actions on the part of the First Parish minister during a school visit, resulting in the withdrawal of 22 objecting members to form the Evangelical Society in 1827. An earlier division within the First Parish helped to strengthen the newly formed (1811) Baptist Society, located in the eastern part of the town. The first group of Universalists met in Barre Plains shortly after 1820, and in 1823 the Methodists began holding services among the factory workers in South Barre.

The offending minister was acting as a member of the school committee, established by the legislature (1789) to perform functions formerly taken exclusively by the town's pastor, and instituted in Barre from 1798. A lodge of Masons, Mt. Zion, was established in 1800. In 1825 the town voted funds for an academy.

C. Settlement Pattern

The latter part of the period sees initial growth of the meetinghouse center as a regional transportation focus. The site of the notably large 1790 meetinghouse, and later brick (1828) Evangelical church, grows as a commercial/residential center, with some linear residential extensions on the roads radiating out (especially Pleasant, South, West, and James Streets). Textile manufacturing is initiated in the Ware River corridor to the south, with factories at Barre Plains (1805) and Smithville (1825). Elsewhere, dispersed agricultural settlement continues.

D. Economic Base

The economy of Barre was primarily agricultural until the early 19th century, when textile and gunpowder manufacturing were established along the Ware River. A high percentage of the town's land was unimproved or woodlot in 1784, 72.4%, while an additional 12.4% was classed as unimprovable. Although a moderate proportion was under tillage, 2.4%, comparatively small amounts were devoted to mowing and meadow, and to pasturage, 5.9% and 6.7% respectively.

Mixed agriculture consisting of dairying, livestock-raising, and grain cultivation predominated. Peter Whitney, in his 1793 History of Worcester County, wrote, "Here they have many and large dairies, and it is supposed that more butter and cheese is carried annually into market than from any other town of the same extent." In 1794, at least 11 sawmills, one fulling mill, five grist mills, several mechanics' shops indispensable to farming, and an oil mill were in operation. Flax was widely cultivated and the seeds marketed or pressed into linseed oil. Several brickyards were operated during the period, one in the northern portion of the Ware River Valley and a second in the south near Barre Plains.

The first important manufacturing development occurred at Barre Plains, where Seth Pratt erected a dam and dug a canal, begun in 1805. A sawmill and grist mill were erected, followed by two tanneries and a clothier's mill. Phineas Heywood, who operated the clothier's mill, added a cotton spinning machine in 1814 and a wood carding machine about 1816. In 1827 he erected a larger mill for the manufacture of woolen cloth.

In 1825 a brick cotton mill was built at Smithville upstream from Barre Plains on the Ware River. The large mill, operating as the Boston and Barre Mfg. Co. (its name suggests a Boston source for the investment capital), employed 37 men and boys and 90 women and girls in 1832, and more than 500,000 yards of shirting worth \$83,000 was produced. At White Valley, also on the Ware River, a scythe factory and powder mill were erected during the 1820s.

Palm-leaf hat making was also introduced during the 1820s. By 1832, five dealers employed hundreds of women and girls in Barre and in surrounding towns in the home manufacture of more than 230,000 hats. Several shops for splitting and whitening the leaf and pressing the hats were also present, as Barre became the distribution and marketing center for western areas of Worcester County. Other manufactories established by 1830 included a wagon and chaise shop which employed 25, a saddlery and harness shop, a fur and wool hat shop, and a cabinetmaker's shop. The value of goods produced in 1832 totalled nearly \$190,000.

Barre was also becoming an important trading center and a prominent thoroughfare for stage routes to Albany, Boston, Keene, New Hampshire, and Brattleboro, Vermont. Barre's merchants extended their trading spheres during this period into western Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. The expansion of straw and palm leaf distribution and finished hat marketing by merchant/shopkeepers in Barre also increased the regional commercial importance of the town, as credit relationships were often established between the merchants and home hatmakers.

E. Architecture

Residential: Significant building occurred, reflected in many surviving one- and two-story dwellings of various plans. Based on remaining buildings, the most common house form was the center chimney plan, generally five bays wide, although a few three- and four-bay examples are recorded, and heights of both one and two stories. One gambrel-roofed single-story house is recorded, as well as one brick, two-story unit. Two-story, five-bay, double chimney plans seem to have been the second most common house form. One brick example is recorded and a double chimney plan with a hip on hip roof survives. Two two-story, five-bay, end chimney plans, one with a hipped roof, and the two-story, five-bay, brick rear wall chimney house were noted. The Wood-Bacon-Nelson House on Hubbardston Road is an interesting 1 3/4-story, seven-bay dwelling with two interior chimneys, with one doorway having a deep entablature characteristic of many period buildings in Barre.

Institutional: Second meetinghouse (56 x 74 feet or 68 x 54 feet, depending on the source) was erected at the north end of the common between 1785-90. The building was said to display Doric and Ionic orders. An Evangelical Congregational church was built of brick in 1828 on the west side of the center village.

Ca. 1790, a new center school (29 x 32 feet) and several district schoolhouses were constructed.

Industrial: The Holbrook & Wadsworth brick woolen mill was erected in South Barre in 1830. A brick cotton mill was constructed in 1825 at Smithville (now White Valley). The Heald Machine Shop was built in 1830.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes

In 1871 the Ware River Railroad opens service along the Ware River corridor through Barre Plains, then up the Burnshirt River corridor through Williamsville in Hubbardston. In 1887, the Central Massachusetts Railroad opens service through town from Coldbrook Springs in the southeast through the Ware River corridor.

B. Population

The early years of this period began a long trend of fluctuation and decline that continued through the century. Overall, population figures barely changed, from 2,503 in 1830 to 2,572 in 1870. At two points, however, the total was substantially higher, 2,976 in 1850 and 2,973 in 1860. Manufacturing employment in the town expanded, attracting some immigrants to the town, bringing the percentage of foreign-born within the town to just under 11 percent. As in most area towns, the Irish dominated during this period, followed by small numbers of English and Canadians. The Methodists became stronger, meeting in both the center and the south. The Universalists flourished during the early years, and met in the center before selling their building to the Methodists in 1851. With increasing Irish population, masses were celebrated from Worcester, and a school was purchased for St. Joseph's in 1856. A normal school was training teachers in the town between 1838-41, and a school for the education of the feeble-minded in 1848. In 1852 the town began to fund a high school and abolished districts in 1869. In 1857 the town formed one of the state's first public libraries. A poor farm was established in 1844.

C. Settlement Pattern

Significant growth in the central village continues into the early part of the period, with additional development at the nearby Prince River industrial focus, and at several points along the Ware River industrial corridor to the south. An entirely new institutional cluster develops around the common, including the Baptist Church (1832), town hall (1838), Universalist church (1840), Methodist church after 1851), Second Evangelical church (1848), and Third Congregational church (1849). A Catholic church locates here in 1856. To the northeast on Broad Street is located (1848) a private asylum. Commercial blocks are situated on the east side of the common, and several hotels are located in this central area. Early period temple front residences are located around the common and residential growth expands outward. By period's end, the central village extends north on Broad and Pleasant Streets beyond High Street; west on West Street beyond Newton Street; south on South and James Streets beyond Kendall Street; southeast on Summer Street; and east on Mechanic Street toward the Heald Village foundry (1830) and on School Street toward Mill Village.

To the south, development along the Ware River corridor continues, with small-scale textile manufacturing at Barre Plains, Dennyville, and Smithville, and a secondary, powder keg manufacturing focus at Barre Falls. The Baptist church relocates to the southeast near the border with Coldbrook (Oakham) in 1843.

D. Economic Base

Barre's prosperity continued through the period, as manufacturing and agricultural production increased considerably. The population of the town reached its 19th century peak during the 1850s and 1860s, before both population and manufacturing production began to decline through the latter part of the 19th century. By 1865, manufacturing output was valued at over one million dollars. The town also achieved a level of civic maturation during the 1850s and 1860s with the establishment of a newspaper, the Barre Gazette, two hotels, and several banks. In 1869 the Barre Village Improvement Society was organized, and by 1870 a private Institution for Feeble Minded Youth was established. The town contained several attorneys, physicians, a dentist, insurance agent, and daguerrotype artist.

A rapid expansion of Barre's manufacturing sector occurred during the early 1830s, but it was temporarily staffed and set back by the depression that lasted from 1837 to 1842. Prior to the panic of 1837, more than \$360,000 worth of goods were produced annually in Barre's shops and factories; in 1845, with the slow return of prosperity, the value of goods produced was only \$252,000. The growth of the early 1830s occurred in nearly all of Barre's manufacturing industries. A second woolen mill was erected at Dennyville on the Ware River during the mid 1830s, and by 1837 the cotton mill and two woolen mills on the Ware River employed more than 140 men, women, and children, and produced cloth worth \$161,000. Boot and shoemaking had been set up in a shop employing eight men and two women, and four additional carriage shops were established. Edge tool manufacturing grew from one scythe shop to three; an axe manufactory was also in operation. About 1830 a foundry and machine shop were established east of the center on the Prince River by Stephen Heald, and engaged in the production of agricultural tools and woodworking machinery. Perhaps the greatest expansion occurred in the manufacture of palm-leaf hats and straw bonnets. In 1837, 607,000 hats and bonnets, valued at \$167,000, were manufactured by women and girls in their homes. Thousands of women in Barre and the surrounding towns were supplied by several large dealers/shopkeepers in Barre, who later purchased the finished hats from the makers and marketed them, largely to the South for use by slaves.

The palm-leaf hat industry also endured the greatest damage from the financial panic in 1837, as several of the merchant/dealers became financially pressed and unable to meet their obligations. Production fell off from 607,000 hats in 1837 to 92,000 hats in 1845. The setback was only temporary, however; by 1855 production was back up to \$70,000 worth of hats, and by 1865 the preparation of palm leaves, manufactures, and finishing of hats,

and manufacture of palm-leaf mattresses became the town's leading industry, carried on in seven shops. About 1850 the manufacture of Shaker bonnets was added, and in 1865 more than 600,500 hats and bonnets worth over \$206,000 were made.

The panic of 1837 and subsequent depression closed the woolen mill at Dennyville, and in 1844 it was purchased by Edward Denny, after whom the village was named. Denny successfully changed production from broadcloths to flannels, which allowed him to operate the factory profitably until 1867, when he leased the mill to others.

The manufacture of boots and shoes expanded during the late 1840s and into the 1850s. During its peak in the mid 1850s, more than 30 men and women produced up to 21,000 pairs of boots and shoes worth more than \$26,000.

Wood and metal working also increased during the period. By 1865, 1.1 million feet of boards were cut annually in eleven sawmills, and large quantities of lathe, clapboard, and shingles were prepared. Woodworking shops included several cabinet makers; powder keg manufacturers; box makers for boots, shoes, and hats; a sash, door, and blind mill; and a cask manufactory. The manufacture of agricultural tools became an important industry and reflected the importance of agriculture in the town's economic life and the progressive, commercial nature of the town's agricultural practices. The Heald foundry produced scythes, a hay tedder--the first machine ever constructed for turning hay in the field--as well as hollow ware and castings. A second manufacturer, S. R. Nye, manufactured a horse hay rake during the late 1860s.

The expansion of water-powered manufacturing that occurred along the Prince River during the 1840s and 1850s necessitated the construction of a reservoir in the northern portion of town in 1853. The dam gave way in 1868 and the water swept away most of the manufactories along the banks of the Prince River, at a loss of over \$200,000. Both the Nye and Heald shops were destroyed; both were eventually rebuilt. Other metal working included the manufacture of plows, tin ware, copper pumps, and textile machinery.

The Civil War demand for gunpowder increased production at the American Powder Co. on the Ware River by a factor of ten to more than 525,000 lbs. per year. However, at the conclusion of the war the works were closed.

The agricultural sector of Barre's economy was greatly expanded during the antebellum period, as woodland was reduced to less than 15% of the total town area and pasture and cultivated land was increased. Agricultural employment exceeded that in manufacturing by a four to one margin through the entire period. Dairying and livestock-raising were the major activities, though more than 1,000 acres of land were cultivated with corn, small grains, potatoes, and other vegetables through the 1860s. This acreage declined somewhat after the 1850s, but was still high compared to

other towns. More than 5,000 acres were devoted to raising English and meadow hay. Cheese and butter dominated the production of the dairy, as more than 1,500 milk cows were kept on Barre's farms, which led the state in hay and dairy production in 1865. Between 1846 and 1850, the town's farmers reportedly brought more than 2.7 million lbs. of cheese for sale at one store in town. In 1864 several cheese factories were established. Beef, pork, and veal were also important products. More than 600,000 lbs. of meat were slaughtered and marketed annually.

The progressiveness of Barre's farmers and the importance of agriculture in the town's economy were indicated by the publication in Barre of the Farmer's Gazette as early as 1834, the manufacture of early horse-drawn hay mowing equipment, and the central role played by Barre in the Worcester County West Agricultural Society, organized in 1851. Barre was the location of the annual fair and cattle show for the area which included Hardwick, Hubbardston, Oakham, New Braintree, Athol, Petersham, Dana, and Phillipston.

E. Architecture

Residential: Center and double chimney, one-story dwellings continue to be built during the first portion of the period. Two-story, five-bay, double chimney houses also remain popular. The ubiquitous gable end, side-passage plan of both one and two stories is the single most popular house form for the first half of the period. A decline in building single-family houses seems to occur from 1860 onward. The same dwelling types are popular, but survive in much smaller numbers. Four houses in the center, all built between 1835 and 1840, are attributed to Elias Carter. Three two-story, five-bay brick houses and one brick two-story, five bay, rear wall chimney plan survive in South Barre from the early development of the Holbrook and Wadsworth mill. Some two-story, six-bay, double chimney duplexes of ca. 1860 remain in South Barre as well.

Institutional: The third meetinghouse, a Gothic Revival structure (?) was built slightly north of the 1790 building between 1848-49. The 1785-90 structure was sold for use as shops and offices and eventually burned in 1862. A Unitarian church, on the northeast side of the common, was standing by 1839. The two-story, gable end church with a tower and spire is no longer standing. The Evangelical congregational society put up a new (second) meetinghouse in 1849. The gable end Greek Revival structure has Ionic columns; the steeple dates from 1915. E. Lamb of Princeton constructed the 1840 Universalist church, a gable end Greek Revival building with Doric columns that was sold to the Methodist congregation in 1850. A Baptist church was erected in 1832-33 and subsequently replaced ten years later with a new structure west of the village near Coldbrook (?). The building was later moved to Oakham as a Methodist church. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic congregation purchased a brick building at the south end of the common in 1858 and converted it to use as a church.

The town hall was also built by E. Lamb of Princeton in 1838, and resembled the Universalist church, being a gable end, Greek Revival design with a three-bay facade, pilasters, Doric columns, and a cupola. The Institution for Feeble Minded Youths opened in 1848 in a dwelling at Pleasant and High in the center. The school moved to Broad and Union Streets in 1853 (another residence converted). By 1870, a definite complex of buildings is indicated on the atlas. These buildings no longer exist.

Commercial: The Massasoit Hotel opened ca. 1830 as a temperance house and was subsequently enlarged. The Barre Hotel was in operation by 1830 at the southern end of the common. Two commercial structures date from this period: the 1838 Jenkins-Mechanics Block, a two-story, six-bay, gable end structure, and the Smith Block, a three-story, brick structure erected in 1862 as a bank on the site of the 1785 meetinghouse.

Industrial: The Holbrook and Wadsworth mill in South Barre burned in 1857 and was replaced with a four-story structure measuring 82 x 44 feet. The Heald Machine Shop burned and was replaced in 1850.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes

The early 19th century roads continue in use. A new stage road to Petersham Center (West Street) is in use by period's end. A road is established in the Prince River industrial corridor from Dennyville (South Barre) north through Heald Village to Mill Village (South Barre Road-Valley Road).

B. Population

Population totals continue to fluctuate through most of the period, from a high of 2,572 in 1870 to a low of 2,059 in 1900, with a brief recovery in 1890 and 1895. Thereafter, however, the town expands greatly with the formation of the wool manufacturing community in South Barre, to 3,476 in 1915. The composition of population reflects this with a doubling of manufacturing employment between 1905 and 1915. At the same time, the proportion of foreign-born in the town expanded to 18% in 1895, 29% in 1905, and 37% in 1915. Within this group, the ethnic groups shifted, with increasing numbers of Italians, English, Russians, and Poles.

As South Barre expanded, churches were formed to serve the community. Christ Church Episcopal was formed in the period.

C. Settlement Pattern

Residential infill and the intensification of commercial and institutional activities occur in the Center Village, while industrial development continues along the Ware River with a major 20th century textile village at South Barre.

Institutional additions in Barre Center include the Woods Memorial Library (1886), St. Joseph's Catholic church (1896), and High School (1900). Commercial additions are made on the west side of the common, including the brick bank (1894) and Hotel Barre (1889). Residential additions include the Gaston Mansion (1912) off the common, and Victorian additions west on Newton Street, south on James Street and the east side of South Street, and southeast along Summer Street toward the Barre Shoe Company (1896-1903). Industrial activity continues to the east at Ryder Village and Heald Village on the Prince River.

To the south, some growth occurs at Barre Plains with the location there of Ware River and Central Massachusetts Railroad stations. Development includes a sash and blind factory, school, hotel, and new residential construction toward the west. Textile manufacturing continues at Smithville. The Dennyville/Crossleyville mill burns in 1894, but major development occurs at the site with the location of South Barre facilities of the Willey woolen manufacturers after 1903. Construction of an entirely new village includes several mills, three worker duplex and tenant row clusters, managerial residences to the east on New Braintree Road, hotels, stores, a clubhouse, and an Episcopal church (1909).

D. Economic Base

Barre's manufacturing industries suffered a net decline during the last quarter of the 19th century, falling to an output of less than \$200,000 by the 1890s. The depression of the early 1880s temporarily closed the textile mills in the southern part of the town along the Ware River; the woolen mill at Dennyville burned in 1883 while under the ownership of James E. Crossley. Only the cotton mill at Smithville continued into the 1890s.

The manufacture of palm-leaf, straw, and other hats continued through the 1890s, though the production process changed considerably. During the 1850s several shops for slitting palm leaves and pressing and finishing hats were set up, but it was not until the early 1890s that the manufacture of the hats in a factory, rather than in the homes, was established. The Rogers and Osgood Co. employed up to 40 women to operate sewing machines, making hats from braid bought in the marketplace rather than from a network of individual braiders. Although braiding of straw and palm leaves was still done by hand in the home, intermediaries gathered and sold the goods to the factories. Hat finishing was also carried out in the factory, and the annual output of the Rogers and Osgood Co. reached 200,000 dozen hats. As a result, hat making was the principal industry in Barre during the mid 1880s.

The Heald foundry and Nye hayrake manufactory, damaged by the 1868 freshet, were rebuilt and returned to the production of agricultural implements and woodworking machinery. Charles Allen and C. M. Lufkin, who rebuilt the Nye works, introduced an

improved hay rake, while the Heald foundry manufactured an improved hay tedder and other machinery.

Prosperity returned after the depression of the mid 1880s, only to be interrupted again during the mid 1890s by another downward swing in the economic cycle. In 1891 a sash and blind mill and a piano case factory were built in Barre Plains, the latter by a Boston piano manufacturer, and the Crossley Mfg. Co. built a new brick mill at South Barre (Dennyville). The same year a new company was organized to manufacture cotton-back plush in the Smithville mill. Fires in 1892 and 1893 destroyed the Rogers and Osgood Co. hat manufactory and the new Crossley Mill; the hat factory was rebuilt, but the depression in the textile industry during the mid 1890s delayed the planned reconstruction of the Crossley mill indefinitely.

The manufacture of shoes, discontinued in 1876 when Barre's only factory could no longer compete with the larger establishments of the Brookfields, was removed in 1896 when the John M. Noyes Shoe Co. of Lynn accepted the town's offer to establish a factory in Barre in return for various concessions. The company failed the next year but was started up again as the Barre Shoe Co., and grew to more than 150 employees by the end of the decade.

The greatest stumbling block to the renewed prosperity of the town was the establishment of the Barre Wool Combing Co. in South Barre. In 1900, Sir Francis Willey, an English worsted manufacturer with headquarters at Bradford, England and branches in London and Boston, purchased the depressed village and mill privilege from the Crossley Mfg. Co. and erected a 300-foot long mill for the manufacture of worsted tops. The site was chosen after an extensive search because of the purity of the Ware River, well adapted to the washing and cleansing of wool. By the start of World War I, Willey had also established the Norway Worsted Co. and Francis Willey & Co., Inc. in South Barre, which manufactured worsted yarns and worsted tops. Willey improved the village with the erection of new housing, a park, clubhouse, and hotel facilities.

The completion of the Ware River Railroad in the early 1870s and the Massachusetts Central Railroad in the 1880s greatly stimulated the production and sales of whole milk and butter by Barre's farmers. Between 1875 and 1885, nearly a ten-fold increase in the amount of whole milk marketed occurred, and by 1895, Barre was the second largest milk producer in the county. By 1905, nearly one million gallons were sold annually. Large quantities of ice were required for preservation of the milk and by 1885, 18 ice houses produced over 400 tons of ice annually. Livestock-raising remained very important through the period; in 1875, Barre led the county in beef, with nearly 300,000 lbs. slaughtered and marketed that year. The increased dairying and continued importance of livestock required large expanses of hay and pasture land. In 1885, 5,000 acres of mowing land and 12,000 acres of permanent pasture existed; only 5,000 acres were in woodland. Unlike the trend in most towns during the late 19th and early 20th centuries,

agricultural land and the number of farms increased in Barre. Mixed agriculture farms rose from 193 to 229 between 1895 and 1905, though their size and actual acreage decreased by one-fifth to 14,100 acres. Dairy farms also increased from 26 to 37, and their total acreage rose by a factor of 2.5.

Poultry became more important as the 19th century progressed. By 1875, 129,000 lbs. of dressed meat were marketed, the second highest figure in Worcester County. Though it declined in standing relative to other towns in the county by the early 20th century, it was still an important and growing activity.

E. Architecture

Residential: Little major development. Gable end dwellings are the common single-family building type. An increase in building begins at the end of the century in South Barre in the form of multi-family/worker housing for the South Barre mills. Two-story, four-bay, double chimney, gabled and hipped roof units survive.

Institutional: After a fire destroyed St. Joseph's church, the congregation erects a gable end Queen Anne building with shingled walls. Christ Church, Episcopal, an attractive Craftsman/Gothic structure in South Barre, was built in 1909. The 1900 high school is a two-story, nine-bay, brick Georgian Revival building. The 1883 District #4 Schoolhouse now functions as a community building.

The 1886 library is a modest, two-story brick and sandstone trimmed Italianate structure.

Commercial: The Naquag Hotel, a converted 18th century house, burned in 1896. The present Hotel Barre, a three-story frame corner building with a four-story tower and three-story porches, was erected in 1889.

A two-and-a-half-story frame commercial building replaced the Naquag Hotel in 1897. The Barre Savings Bank (1894) is a one-story, brick, Romanesque building.

Industrial: Rebuilding of South Barre mills in 1903 after fire of late 19th century.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes

By the mid 1920s main roads are improved as automobile highways. A major regional highway (Route 122) is established from northwest Worcester County, Athol, and Vermont through Barre Center to Worcester (West Street-Summer Street). A southwest highway to Ware (Route 32) branches from Route 122 south of Barre Center (South Barre Road-Loring Road-Old Furnace Road). By the late 1920s, Route 32 is rerouted through South Barre and Barre Plains (South Barre Road-New Braintree Road-Old Furnace Road). The road south from Barre Plains (New Braintree Road) is improved as Route

67. By the mid 1930s the old Barre Turnpike east of Princeton is improved as part of Route 62.

B. Population

The total population of the town remained remarkably stable during this period, varying by barely 200 from the lowest total figure, 3,329 in 1925, to the highest total, 3,528 in 1940. Within the town, as immigration slowed the proportion of foreign-born in the town dropped from 37.5% in 1915 to 20.3% in 1940. At the same time, 1,025 of the citizens or 20.7% of the town's population, were classified as rural.

In spite of population stability, changes were reflected in the formation of St. Thomas a Becket Catholic church in 1923.

C. Settlement Pattern

Little development occurs at Barre Center, although some residential development takes place on High Street. Manufacturing facilities at Ryder Village are expanded. At South Barre, a Catholic Church is built in 1917, and a new mill is added in 1929. Industrial and residential development on the Ware River above South Barre is removed as part of the M.D.C. water management program, and a Quabbin Aqueduct intake facility (1931) is built off Summer Street.

D. Economic Base

Barre experienced relative stability in the 1920s and 1930s, with virtually no loss in the population which was gained during the rapid growth of the first two decades of the 20th century. A general shrinking of the manufacturing base did occur, but the eight manufactories that remained in 1922 employed 685 workers and produced goods valued at \$2.5 million. The principal industries during the period included the Charles G. Allen Co., which employed up to 200 hands in the manufacture of agricultural implements, ball-bearing drill machines, and gray iron castings; the White Valley Mills, which produced cotton denims; the T. E. Rich Co. at Barre Plains, which manufactured sash and blinds with 35 employees; and the three Willey worsted manufacturing companies, which employed up to 650 operatives.

The textile mills began to experience labor problems during the 1930s. Labor-management conflict was heightened by divisions among the employees resulting from rival union organizing efforts and conflicts between the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Barre continued to be an agricultural leader in the county and state throughout the period. Although the number of farms fell by one-half from 1905 to 1935, 62% of the town's land was still in agricultural use, as smaller farms were consolidated. The average farm size in 1935 was 138 acres, one of the largest in the county. The number of cows milked in Barre increased 21% between

1924 and 1934, from 1,048 to 1,263, the largest number of any Worcester County town. Poultry-raising also remained an important activity.

E. Architecture

Residential: Little significant development. A 1923 two-story, five-bay, "Federal Period" dwelling is recorded. Multi-family housing, two-story gambrel-roofed units, continued to be built in South Barre.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

A large inventory adequately documents most of the town; however, more study should be given to the southern mill villages.

XII. SOURCES