

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## BRIDGEWATER

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.

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](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)  
[mhc@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:mhc@sec.state.ma.us) / 617-727-8470

## MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

Date: July, 1981

Community: Bridgewater

### I. TOPOGRAPHY

Bridgewater is an inland town located on the northern margin of the Narragansett Basin. Sprague's Hill is a glacial ridge, there is moderate topographic relief in the eastern portion of the town. Lake Nippenicket in the western portion of the town is its largest body of water, the western portion also has an extensive system of swamps. Soils in the west are generally muck, in the east and south silt and clay with some loess deposits on upland areas. Drainage is provided by the Town River in the north fed by South Brook and by the Taunton River in the east and along the eastern and southern boundary. The Taunton River which rises from the Town River is fed (east to west) by Beaver Brook, Spring Brook, Sawmill Brook and Snows Brook.

### II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Bridgewater was established as a town on June 3, 1656 (o.s.). The town as it is today was incorporated as the South Parish of Bridgewater in 1716 as the Meetinghouse was located in what is now West Bridgewater. The town received various grants of land during the 17th century. Part included in Abington, 1712. Parts of Stoughton annexed, 1770 and 1798. North Precinct established as North Bridgewater (Brockton), 1821; West Precinct established as West Bridgewater in 1822; East Precinct established as East Bridgewater, 1823. Part annexed to Halifax, 1824. The South Parish was the first to push for incorporation as a town (1819) but in fact was never incorporated.

### III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Bridgewater is an historic industrial town north of the Narragansett Basin. There was a major Contact period native settlement at Titicut with native occupation continuing there through the First Period. Little European settlement prior to the Colonial Period. Colonial European settlement underwent expansion with center growing at Bridgewater common. Economic base largely agricultural during the colonial period. Late 18th century industrial nodes at Titicut, Pratt Town, Town Center and Stanley. Economic base industrial and agricultural. Population almost doubled between 1746 and 1830. Early-mid 19th century specialized industrial areas developed with cotton gin factories in the triangle formed by Spring, Broad and Pearl Streets and shoe factories along Broad Street. The first Swedenborgian Church in the country dedicated in 1834. Institutional activities entered economic base in mid-19th century with founding of Bridgewater State Normal School in 1840, State Almshouse in 1854 and State Workhouse (M.C.I. Bridgewater) in 1866. Residential clustering at two specific nodes during mid and late

19th century, Stanley and Bridgewater Center. Western portion of town remained agricultural. Constant expansion of M.C.I. Bridgewater during late 19th and early 20th century. Residential expansion at center limited to Park Avenue area during late 19th and early 20th centuries. Brickyards limited to area north of Pratt Town. Economic base remained relatively stable to end of study period.

#### IV. CONTACT PERIOD

##### A. Transportation Routes:

Regional corridor of north/south routes between Massaqua-tuckett (Satucket River) and Titicut (Taunton River) with secondary east/west routes from Pembroke Pond to Lake Nippenickett. No trails documented in town histories. Primary north/south route to Titicut ford appears to follow Main-South Streets through Bridgewater center with alternate route surviving as possible trail remnant along Snows Brook. Other probable trail routes to Taunton River appear as portions of Summer-Contant Streets through South Bridgewater (Bridgewater Correctional). Primary east/west route from Nuncketet Pond (Lake Nippenicket) apparently follows axis of Pleasant Street (Route 104) with connecting north/south links as North Street and Pine-Vernon Streets to Titicut ford. Primary north/south route from Robbins Pond (E. Bridgewater) follows East Street from Pembroke Ponds with possible connections from Taunton River fordways as Cherry-Walnut-Plymouth Streets and Auburn-Laurel Streets from Childs Bridge, although precise locations around Town River remain unclear.

##### B. Settlement Patterns:

A major Contact and/or Historic Period native settlement complex (Titicut) was located adjacent to Beach Street. Twenty-six Contact/Historic Period burials were discovered within this area. This settlement area is quite likely associated with a contemporary native settlement complex situated on the southern side of the Taunton River in North Middleborough (see Middleborough report). Several unidentified native sites clustered about the Titicut complex may also date to the Contact Period. Additional unidentified native sites were situated on the Taunton (above Woodward Bridge) and Town Rivers and near Lake Nippenicket.

##### C. Subsistence Patterns:

Seasonal fishing, hunting, collecting and horticulture. The Titicut site complex was ideally located. Large stocks of freshwater fish were available in the Taunton River and the streams which fed into the river. A native fish weir (Contact/Historic) was constructed in the vicinity of Pratt's Bridge (MAS 1969: X,4). The extensive wood and marsh lands were an excellent habitat for wild game. Crop production was carried out on the land surrounding the Titicut village. European-Indian trade was probably undertaken as suggested by the trade goods accompanying several of the native graves.

##### D. Observations:

The environmentally diverse Bridgewater area was capable of supporting a moderate-large native population. The majority of the population appeared to be concentrated in the southern portion of present Bridgewater

along the Taunton River. The Titicut village complex was part of a major regional (southeastern Massachusetts) population center situated in western Middleborough and southern Bridgewater. The Titicut natives were probably regionally affiliated with the Pokanokets (Wampanoags) centered in Mt. Hope (Bristol), Rhode Island.

## V. FIRST SETTLEMENT PERIOD (1620-1675)

### A. Transportation Routes:

Native trails improved as regional highways with primary north/south path from Titicut ford (Taunton River) to Bridgewater as South-Main Streets. Primary east/west path appears to follow Walnut-Plymouth-Birch-Pleasant Streets (Route 104) to Lake Nippenicket.

### B. Population:

No figures available for native or white population. It is doubtful the white settlement numbered any more than ten dwelling houses (1675 figure for East Bridgewater) during this period. The majority of the early settlers were probably Duxbury residents.

### C. Settlement Patterns:

Concentration of native settlement in the Titicut village complex. Possibly smaller native sites scattered along the Taunton River and its tributaries. Limited white settlement not occurring until c.1665. Homes established in the vicinity of Main Street, South Street and Pleasant Street down to Scotland. The community lacked a meetinghouse. Residents travelled to the meetinghouse in present West Bridgewater for town meetings and religious services.

### D. Economic Base:

Minimal changes in the native subsistence patterns largely due to the small white community. Increased Anglo-Indian trade with the appearance of a permanent white population. Agriculture was the foundation of the white settlement's economy. The area's extensive timber and marsh lands were probably harvested for lumber, pine pitch and tar. Establishment of commercial and industrial operations was probably discouraged by the community's limited size and vulnerability to native attacks.

### E. Observations:

Maintenance of a sizeable native community. The white settlement existed as little more than a hamlet within Old Bridgewater. The majority of the pre-war development within Old Bridgewater occurred in present East and West Bridgewater.

## VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

### A. Transportation Routes:

Formation of South Bridgewater parish center created radial highway network from meetinghouse by early 18th century with Main, Summer, South and Plymouth Streets as primary highways. Connecting roads to West Meeting House (Stanley) and Robbins Pond (E. Bridgewater) appears as High Street

around Spragues Hill with cross links over Town River as Hayward, Mill and Plain Streets. Other local roads of the period include Forest and Cross Streets over Snows Brook and Winter-Water Streets around Carver Pond.

B. Population:

No figures for the native population. The First Church of the South Parish (Bridgewater) when established in 1717 had 50+ members. By 1764, the South Parish was the most populous of the four Old Bridgewater parishes. At this date, the South Parish consisted of 162 houses, 173 families and 1056 residents. Including the Titicut Parish (included the southwestern portion of present Bridgewater and a small portion of Middleborough), these figures were 203 houses, 221 families and 1318 residents.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Little data available on native settlement area(s). Titicut probably remained the primary native settlement. The white community underwent large scale post-war growth. Settlement was encouraged by the termination of Anglo-Indian hostilities and the area's extensive freshwater streams and rivers, agricultural land and wood and marsh lands. Some late 17th century settlement on High and Pleasant Streets. By the early 18th century a primary settlement node had been established in the vicinity of Bridgewater State College. The First Church of the South Parish (incorporated in 1716) was erected near the corner of Plymouth and Summer Streets in c.1717. A number of Scottish natives settled in Scotland in the early 18th century. Additional early-mid 18th century settlement occurred in proximity of the Trinity, Vernon Street, Keith (South Street) and Jennings Hill cemeteries. There was some mid-late 18th century settlement in the vicinity of the Great Woods graveyard (Titicut Street). Community growth resulted in the expansion of the parish church/meetinghouse between 1741 and 1747 and the erection of a new structure on the same site in c.1760. In 1748, an episcopal church was built near the "Iron Works" (N.A. 1899:22). John Shaw established in 1740 a preparatory school (Shaw House) for those considering college or the ministry. Local religious controversy over the New Lights contributed to the establishment of the Titicut Parish (see Population section) in 1743. These residents worshipped in the Titicut church in North Middleborough.

D. Economic Base:

No data on native economy. By the early-mid 18th century many of the remaining natives had probably adopted a relatively sedentary life-style largely due to the expansion of the white settlement. Some sought work with white employers while others derived income from the sale of basketry, trinkets, animal furs, etc., to the settlers.

Development of the white economy was poorly detailed. Agriculture served as the base of the parish economy. Large quantities of timber, pine pitch and tar were probably harvested from the area's extensive woodlands. The only industrial operation reported in the parish during

this period was a small iron works established in c.1707 on the site of the "Iron Works". This operation did not flourish until after the Revolution (N.S. 1899:21). The iron production facility was provided with raw iron from local ponds and bogs. A number of mill operations present on the Town River (near Stanley and the Paper Mill Village) and in the vicinity of Titicut in c.1795 (Old Bridgewater map) may pre-date 1775.

#### E. Architecture:

Residential: In 1883, Bridgewater retained at least 50 houses over 100 years old; at least half that number and possibly even more are surviving in the town at present. These include an unusual number of two-story houses for the region and many cottages as well. While most houses and cottages of the period have central chimneys and the standard five-bay, center-entered facade, a number of period residences exhibit unusual features. Enclosed pedimented or hip-roofed porches, rare for the period in the region, are comparatively common and a good number seem to date from the period, to judge by their fenestration. These include several cottages and houses on South Street, a cottage on Crescent Street, houses on Auburn and High Street as well as at the town center. Many period buildings have been added to over the years with houses of original end-chimney, half-house construction later modified; the potential for survival of late First Period residences seems particularly likely in the town. One gambrel-roofed central chimney cottage is known, on South Street, along with one double hip-roofed double-pile Georgian house, on Plymouth Street. (The presence of a double hip-roof house in the town indicates considerable pretention and sophistication; the house is unfortunately greatly altered.) In general, however, the standard gable roof prevails. Examples of unusual plan types include a very early (to judge by the massiveness of the chimneys) double interior chimney, center hall house (c.1740?) on Auburn Street and a double house on Pleasant Street (originally of end-chimney half-house plan with five-bay central-chimney house added). Unusual surviving details include a heavily molded entablature of early Georgian character (c.1730) on a house on High Street. Three-quarter plan and half-house plan residences of the Colonial period were not noted.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse was founded in 1716 as the Second Precinct of the first Parish in what is now West Bridgewater; the first meetinghouse (43' x 38' x 18') had east and west entrances and a south tower. A second meetinghouse was built in 1759; although quite a bit larger (64' x 50'), it had no belfry. One of the earliest Episcopal parishes in the region was established in Bridgewater in 1748 on Main Street north of the town center. Although a school was established in the meetinghouse as early as 1696, it is doubtful that any school buildings were constructed in the town during the period.

Commercial: One tavern is known to have operated at the town center, in the Washburn House (1717).

F. Observations:

Both the native and white communities' developmental histories are inadequately dealt with by secondary sources. It is suspected the South Parish had a well-developed economy based on agriculture and milling, as is evidenced in the community's size, its industrial potential and the existing civic, educational and religious facilities.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes:

Improvement of north/south corridor as New Bedford turnpike (1807) from Boston through Bridgewater center (Route 18) with crossing of Taunton River at Sawmill Brook. Other local roads of the period include Oak Street and portions of Plymouth Street around Town River.

B. Population:

Steady growth from 1776 to 1800, slight drop in 1810. Drastic drop in population in 1830 due to incorporation of East, West, and North Bridgewater in 1820's. Trinitarian Congregational Church in Scotland, 1821. Society of the New Jerusalem organized in 1821 (Swedenborgian).

C. Settlement:

Residential settlement clustered around colonial industrial nodes in Titicut (Snow's Brook near Sturtevant Bridge) at South Brook and Summer Street, at Pratt Town and at the Town River at what is now Stanley. Farming settlement at Scotland and South Bridgewater. Scattered farms along colonial roads and federal turnpike.

D. Economic Base:

Iron industry initiated in the Colonial period continued to dominate Bridgewater economy. Two furnaces (Amos Keith and Jeremiah Keith--latter location unknown) in operation at Titicut at least through Revolution. Amos Keith furnace responsible for casting solid cannon under direction of De Maresquelles in 1779. Boring was done at Hugh Orr's shop in East Bridgewater. Though local historians claim this as the first example of this method of cannon manufacture in U.S., a conflicting claim is put forward by Sharon historians for the earlier presence of De Maresquelles at Stoughtonham Furnace.

By 1785 Isaac and Nathan Lazell had erected a slitting mill (called by successive writers the "second slitting mill to be built in the country since the Revolution") probably at the Oak Street location on the Town River. Lazell's firm, enlarged in succeeding decades by the addition of an anchor forge and steam engine manufactory upstream at High Street, by the end of the period had incorporated as the Bridgewater Iron Works, with an annual product worth over \$92,000.

By 1818, the large number of mill seats and iron works in Old Bridgewater (primarily in what is now East Bridgewater and Bridgewater) had attracted numerous mill wrights and mechanics. "Perhaps no other town furnishes so many . . ." wrote one observer that year. He went on: "Since

the manufacture of cut nails [by machine] commenced, the making of wrought nails has very much declined, but many tons are still manufactured there annually."

One of these mechanics was Eleazer Carver, who, sometime probably in the first decade of the 19th century, traveled through the South as an itinerant builder and, eventually, repairer of cotton gins. Returning to Bridgewater soon after the war, he set up a cotton gin factory on the outlet of Carver's Pond, and by the late 1820s his Bridgewater Cotton Gin Mfg. Co. had developed a gin which was "the leading machine throughout the South" (Crane). By 1832 the firm was sending 80 machines (worth \$16,000) annually to the Southern states.

Manufacturing at Paper Mill Village site, begun by 1792 with grist and fulling mills, by 1823 had turned to paper manufacture--the first such mill in the county, and, with Pardon Tabor's 1824 mill on the Weweantic in Wareham, the only identified instances of its manufacture in the county. Through successive ownerships the site remained in paper (and later leatherboard) production for over a century.

Until the enactment of the Embargo, three separate shipyards were located on the Taunton River, the largest of which was operated by a Kingston builder, Deacon Holmes. (At least two of these yards may have been on the Middleborough side of the river.)

#### E. Architecture:

Residential: The number of ambitiously-detailed houses constructed in the town rose in the Federal period with substantial hip-roofed end-chimney two-story houses with elaborately detailed frontispieces with elliptical and semicircular fanlights, built in some numbers across the town. Concentrations of such houses stand on Main and South Streets at the town center and on Main, Wall and High Streets in Stanley with isolated examples scattered across the town. While hip-roofed, end-chimney houses were built in some numbers outside the town center, most of those standing in outlying areas are more simply detailed, with narrow segmental-arched entrance surrounds without sidelights being the most common entrance treatment. Cottages with central or end interior chimneys were built in almost equal numbers, most being of the standard center-entered, five-bay facade plan. Comparatively few half or three-quarter plan cottages are known, but the double cottage, introduced as workers' housing in the Federal period, was built in some numbers at Stanley, Paper Mill Village and, to a limited extent, at the town center. At least a few twin rear-wall chimney houses are known along with at least one center-chimney hip-roofed Federal house, at Scotland. Houses and cottages of two-room's depth prevail with no residences of a single-room's depth noted. Brick was used only occasionally, with only one example noted, on Main Street at Stanley.

Institutional: The 1759 meetinghouse was enlarged in 1810. In 1821, a Trinitarian church was established at Scotland and in 1823 a meetinghouse was constructed; this still stands, a well-preserved if somewhat retardataire



story-and-a-half structure with round-headed windows, shallow projecting pedimented porch and square belfry tower with with open ogival cupola. In 1824, the Swedenborgian church (the first in New England, it is claimed) was established. The Bridgewater Academy was founded in 1799; in 1821, it suffered a fire and was rebuilt in 1822. Accounts imply that Solomon K. Eaton was the architect for this work, but Eaton, born in , cannot have been responsible for the 1822 construction of the hip-roofed, two-and-a-half story building and was probably the architect for the later Italianate alterations of 1868. A town house was probably also in existence in the Federal period, but it is not recorded in local histories. The number of school districts in operation in the period is not known, but it is likely that some half dozen existed by that time, with permanent school buildings. One of these may survive in residential use; the structures probably followed the norm of the period with a story-and-a-half building oriented with ridge parallel to the front and a single offset entrance to one side.

Commercial: By the Federal period, the area of Central Square had developed as the commercial center of the town with several stores built around the turn of the century and at least one hotel in operation by 1827. While none of these buildings is known to survive intact, portions of one or more of them may still stand.

Industrial: Of the 3 forges, 2 slitting mills, 2 anchor shops, 4 triphammers, 3 nail factories and 1 air furnace known to exist in the town in 1818 (prior to the division of East and West Bridgewaters), no period structures are known to survive; some aspects of the Bridgewater Iron company works may date from the Federal period.

#### VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830- 1870)

##### A. Transportation Routes:

Continued improvement of north/south axis from Boston with Fall River-Middleborough railroad through Bridgewater center to South Bridgewater (1846) and Old Colony branch from Abington (1846) with junction at Stanley (now abandoned) (Hurd, 1884, p.772). Local roads of the period include Flagg and Titicut Streets to Correctional Institution at South Bridgewater.

##### B. Population:

Steady growth to 1865, then a drop in 1870. Foreign born population in 1855 was 583; of this total, 507 were Irish. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish organized 1853.

##### C. Settlement:

Residential and industrial development at the railroad between Broad and Plymouth Streets. Civic and commercial center at Central Square with fashionable residential district on periphery of square. Early Irish settlement at Stanley by 1850's.

##### D. Economic Base:

Period witnessed the phenomenal growth of the Bridgewater Iron Works, stimulated by the arrival of the Old Colony Railroad in 1846 and by the

able management of Nahum Stetson, an entrepreneur with widespread previous experience in cotton mills (Marshfield, East Bridgewater, Kingston, Hanson) and blast furnaces and anchor works (Kingston and Hanson). At the outbreak of the Civil War, the Bridgewater Iron Works was said to be one of only four large forges in the U.S. (Crane, p.822). The unprecedented war demands for heavy machinery and forgings, including the wrought-iron work for John Ericsson's Monitor, led the company to expand, with branch works in Taunton, Fall River, Providence, and Boston, making a total of seven plants. The firm was "the most extensive of any in the state," wrote the Plymouth County Directory in 1867.

The railroad brought other industries to the town center, including the Eagle and Southern cotton gin factories, off-shoots of Carver's earlier concern, though by 1848 the inventor had transferred his allegiance to an East Bridgewater firm. An iron foundry initially established by Henry Perkins (related to Bridgewater Iron's Jacob Perkins?) in connection with the Eagle Cotton Gin plant, by 1854 had set up its own plant on the opposite side of the tracks to build a reputation in piano frames, tack machines, and other quality castings.

Although the straw braid and bonnet manufacture had been initiated in the Federal period as a home industry, the value of straw products declined after 1832, when \$20,000 worth of straw goods were recorded. More successful were products of the small shoe shops, worth \$125,700 in 1855, employing 90 men and women. In the face of other manufacturing industries, however, this craft too appears to have sharply declined, until the arrival of the large shoe factories in the 1890s.

Manufacture of brick probably began in this period using the rich clay soils along the Town River. By 1865 two yards employed 35 men, producing nearly \$20,000 worth of bricks annually. Farms numbered 205 in that year, and there were three sawmills.

#### E. Architecture:

Residential: Well-detailed and substantial houses continued to be built in the period, but only a few two-story Greek Revival houses are known, with a greater number of Italianate villas and houses (especially at the town center) than elsewhere in the region; as industrial prosperity continued unabated, it seems likely that local tastes remained conservative, favoring the traditional five-bay "Federal" house, until after the mid-century when renewed industrial growth and the arrival of the railroad stimulated construction in the Italianate style. The town center is distinguished by a large number of Italianate houses of some pretention; such a collection of mid-century houses is unequalled in the county. While few houses with towers are known, many employ the picturesque asymmetrical massing of cross gables and offset pavillions. Shallow pitched roofs with wide, bracketted eaves, flush board siding and round-arched windows with incised, molded lintels are common features on houses of the mid-century. Italianate double houses, often with a center facade gable, were also built in some numbers, particularly in Main Street north of the town center. The area around the State College and west of the

center on Birch Street developed as a modest but stylish suburb with more ambitious houses sprinkled in. Story-and-a-half and kneewall cottages were built in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles, with many houses incorporating facade gables, porticos and verandas. While sidehall plans predominate, L-plan and T-plan houses are also known. Particularly notable are a flush-boarded Gothic Revival house with intact detailing on Main Street and a well-preserved center-entered, five-bay facade Greek Revival cottage with an unusually fine Ionic portico and a "monitor" shed dormer across the facade off Summer Street. Outlying areas of the town show a similar pattern of fewer Greek Revival houses and more houses in the Italianate style, although for cottage architecture the Greek Revival style remained current through the 1840s and a number of very substantial Greek Revival cottages were built. End and double interior chimney cottages with five-bay, center-entered facades (sometimes oriented gable end to the street) were built in almost equal numbers with the smaller sidehall cottage; recessed sidehall verandas and L-plan wraparound verandas were used on a number of the more substantial examples, as was a distinctive local embellishment, the hip or gable roofed portico supported on freestanding columns. Substantial Greek Revival cottages stand in some numbers along South Street, on Crescent Street and on Elm Street, with more modest sidehall cottages at Paper Mill Village, at Scotland, and at Stanley. By the end of the period, kneewall framing was almost universal in cottage architecture, although comparatively few Italianate cottages were built.

Institutional: Several important institutions were established in the period, including the State Normal School (1840) and the Bridgewater Work House (1853). The Trinitarian church moved to Central Square in 1862 and built a Romanesque Revival structure (Solomon K. Eaton, architect, Ambrose Keith, builder), two-and-a-half stories tall with projecting porch surmounted by a broached spire. Also built in the period was the Swedenborgian church (1871), an unusually well-preserved Gothic Revival frame structure with a low sloping gable roof, offset tower and polychrome slate roof. Another rare survivor is the Greek Revival Town Hall of 1843, a two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed frame structure with a pedimented end-gable and pilastered facade with Egyptian Revival pilaster capitals. The Congregational church was replaced in 1845 by a two-and-a-half story gable-roofed Greek Revival building with an Ionic portico in antis and elaborate three-stage belfry with double Ionic colonnaded drums supporting a tapered spire. Several schools of the period are known to survive, including a center-entered story-and-a-half transitional Greek Revival/Italianate school (c.1850) on Flagg Street and a collapsed center-entrance Greek Revival school (c.1840) on Vernon Street.

Commercial: At least a few of the commercial blocks at Central Square probably date from the end of the period, including a three-story brick Greek Revival/Italianate gable-roofed block with a center entrance (c.1850, raised c.1890?) and several two- and three-story gable-roofed frame blocks of the 1860s with bracketted cornices and center entrances.

A. Transportation Routes:

Extension of suburban trolley lines from Brockton and Taunton to Bridgewater center by early 20th century. Streetcar routes include locations on Broad and Main Streets from East and West Bridgewater with routes on South Street to Middleborough and Pleasant Street to Scotland and Lak Nippenickett.

B. Population:

Some fluctuation, 1870-1880, the continuous growth to end of period. Foreign born population 804 in 1885, Irish remains dominant group. In 1915 the foreign born population 3275. Although the Irish still dominate, there is a greater ethnic mix with Canadians, Italians, Lithuanians, English and Poles.

C. Settlement:

Continued industrial, institutional and residential growth at Center, residential development south along Summer Street.

Scattered residential growth along major roads.

D. Economic Base:

By 1875 the Bridgewater Iron Works, with an annual product worth \$900,000, had become the largest iron concern in New England, covering 75 acres (Stone, p.1191). The diversity, however, which characterized other aspects of Bridgewater's economy before the war, had declined. Brickyards and sawmills numbered one each, and the product of the Hollingsworth mill, then producing only manila paper, was less than a decade previous. By the 1880 the Southern Cotton Gin works had closed, though the Perkins Foundry was still doing a strong business.

The introduction of a municipal water system about 1888, coupled with the construction of substantial new stone bridges over the Town and Matfield Rivers represented substantial local investment that must in part have encouraged the establishment of new industries. By the 1890 a series of new firms began building factories in town, primarily along the tracks on Spring and Hale Streets. Among the earliest was the Shawmut Lead Co., followed by tack and shoe factories. Among the largest of the latter was the W. H. McElwain shoe factory on Perkins Street. McElwain was followed by the L. Q. White Shoe Co., moving from Brockton in 1909, and a new iron products firm, the Independent Nail and Packing Co., in 1915.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Substantial Queen Anne and Colonial Revival houses were built in the town center, especially surrounding the State College, but in outlying areas, the sidehall cottage with kneewall framing remained the predominant form; also common were small story-and-a-half houses with an attic incorporated beneath a gable roof. There is often little change to be discerned in the transition between the Italianate and the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival. Porches with turned posts, patterned shingles in the gable, dormers and occasional hip or jerkin head roofs identify the later style, while bracket door hoods, polygonal bays and a simpler roofline denote the late Italianate structures. Good numbers of these modest suburban houses were constructed along South,

Crescent, Summer, Auburn and Plymouth Streets in the 1870s, '80's and '90's. In addition to these single-family houses, multiple-family dwellings, very rare in the county, were also built. These consist primarily of two-family Queen Anne or Colonial Revival houses with sidehall plans and hip or gable roofs (examples found on Plymouth and Birch Streets) with at least a few flat-roofed triple-deckers in the Queen Anne style built as well. After the turn of the century, very simple hip-roofed story-and-a-half Craftsman cottages with hip dormers and raised cobblestone or rubble basements were built as infill housing in areas of modest suburban construction (Crescent and South Streets, Summer and Flagg Streets) and in individual examples along almost all roads of the town. More substantial cottages and a few bungalows of some sophistication were also built with examples on lower Vernon Street at Pratt's Bridge, on High Street at Broad, and at the town center. Most of these are hip-roofed structures with exposed framing, kneewall porches with flared piers, and careful masonry detail. Another more substantial housetype popular in the period was the two-story, hip-roofed, four-square plan Colonial Revival house; simply detailed and massed, it was a common option to the sidehall plan story-and-a-half plus attic house plan after 1900. South and east of the State College, stylish and well-detailed large single-family houses of some pretention, a few of them probably architect-designed, were built around the turn of the century and to the end of the period; these include elaborate Colonial Revival, Craftsman and Tudor Revival houses with overscaled classical or medieval detailing.

Institutional: In addition to the many three- and four-story brick Renaissance and Georgian Revival buildings constructed at the State College and the four-story brick Romanesque buildings at the Prison, other institutional buildings of the period include Trinity Church (1883, Stephen C. Earle, Worcester), a one-and-a-half story frame Gothic Revival building with an offset belfry tower, the Public Library (1881, Rotch and Tilden, Boston), and one-and-a-half story brick Romanesque Revival building with a hip roof and arched gabled entrance, and the Catholic church (c.1880), a brick Romanesque Revival building with offset tower, roundarched windows and corbelled cornice. A brick hip-roofed Colonial Revival/Craftsman school stands on Birch Street.

Commerical: Among the commercial blocks built at Central Square are several three- and four-story frame Queen Anne blocks of the 1890's (with well-preserved storefronts) as well as several simpler frame Queen Anne stores at corner locations in Scotland and Paper Mill Village.

Industrial: Industrial buildings of the period include a range of one- and two-story brick blocks of utilitarian design constructed along the railroad tracks around the turn of the century as well as two well-preserved two-story gable-roofed frame structures with gabled clerestories at Paper Mill Village, several frame structures at Stanley, a brick pumping station (1913) at Paper Mill Village and an early Old Colony railroad station (c.1890) of stone with a hip roof.

## X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

### A. Transportation Routes:

Abandonment of trolley routes to Bridgewater center and improvement of local highways as regional auto roads. Primary north/south highway as Route 18 (New Bedford turnpike) through town center with connection from Brockton as Route 28 (Main Street). Secondary east/west highway to Taunton as Route 104 (Pleasant Street). Period concrete bridge (c.1915) survives intact at Titicut over Taunton River.

### B. Population:

Population fluctuations during this period with high of 9468 in 1925 following low of 8438 in 1920, population at end of period 8982. Foreign born population 2340 in 1930. Post World War II fluctuations with steady and continuous growth after 1955.

### C. Settlement:

Residential development occurred as infill between existing nodes and along existing roads.

### D. Economic Base:

The closing of the former Eagle Cotton Gin plant about 1915 was accompanied about the same time by the closing of the McElwain shoe plant because of labor difficulties. Out of the McElwain strike developed a new shoe factory begun by McElwain workers, who formed the Bridgewater Workers Cooperative Association. But other labor difficulties continued to affect the town's dominant industry. The L. Q. White Shoe Co. with an employee list numbering 2000 hands, was the town's largest employer in 1930. Three years later it too was forced to close. For a number of years the vacant buildings were used to raise chickens.

Unlike other former iron towns in the county, Bridgewater retained--even to the present--active descendents of its 19th-century iron activity. By 1930 the Perkins Foundry was said to be the largest manufacturer of tack and nail machines in the U.S. (Stone, p.1197); the Bridgewater Iron Works plant was by then a branch of the New Britain, Connecticut-based Stanley Co., a tool manufacturer; and the more recent Independent Nail and Packing Co., was then developing the first threaded nails.

In 1933, the George O. Jenkins Co., which had begun manufacturing leatherboard in the old paper mill in 1896, expanded its employment and capacity with the construction of a second plant on High Street, opposite the old Bridgewater Iron Works plant. The firm, employing 100 hands in 1930, was said to have been the largest manufacturer of leatherboard in the United States (Stone, p.1197).

### E. Architecture:

Residential: It seems likely that simple, one-story hip-roofed cottages continued to be built into the 1920s along with a very few multiple-family dwellings, but little construction appears to have occurred in the period. A few more substantial Tudor Revival or Dutch Colonial houses were built in scattered locations across the town and at the town center.

Institutional:

Only one institutional structure of the 1920s is known; this is a handsomely crafted two-story brick school on Main Street with patterned herringbone panels and Flemish bonding (McElwain School). Several large Georgian Revival structures at the State College may date from the '20's.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Bridgewater has not been surveyed: completion of a town-wide survey should be of high priority as development pressure, particularly in the Scotland area, is intensifying. The town as it stands contains nearly intact resources (often architecture as well as landscape) at Scotland (Federal), South Street (Colonial through Early Industrial), Stanley (Early to Late Industrial) and especially at the town center which retains a wide variety of structures of considerable sophistication from a range of time periods. In its breadth and variety of resources, the town appears to be unmatched in the county. Documentation should focus on establishing building dates for several unusual structures, which appear to be very early; these are the central chimney cottage at Crescent and South Streets, the double interior chimney house on Auburn Street and the double house on Route 104/Pleasant Street.

Industrial: Bridgewater's survey includes only one structure--the Bridgewater Iron Works, a firm whose national importance and long history merit National Register recognition. Similar recognition should also be given to its 18th-century counterpart, the Titicut Furnace, whose undisturbed site on the Taunton River holds rich potential. The town also retains two shoe factories; one of the first NY, NH & Hartford Railroad stations built after the line was acquired from the Old Colony Railroad; and the Perkins Iron Foundry, another 19th-century iron works still in operation. Of Bridgewater's three stone-arch bridges built in the 1880s only the Oak Street bridge remains unaltered. Its 44-foot span may make it the longest in the county, and the structure should be considered as part of a county-wide thematic bridge nomination.

Developmental Pressures: Town center remains well-preserved although commercial development at Route 18 and 28 junction has affected historic fabric on periphery of Bridgewater town center, with localized pressure from expansion of Bridgewater State College. Suburban development continues throughout the area, especially around Route 24 (Boston-Fall River expressway) junction with Route 104, although bypass has preserved Scotland district.

XII. SOURCES

"A Description of Bridgewater, 1818," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections 2 Ser., 7 (1818), pp.137-176.

[Allen, Rev. Charles A., ed.,] The Bridgewater Book, Illustrated (Boston, 1899). [Attribution in Bridgewater Public Library copy.]

- Bridgewater, Mass., Old Bridgewater Tercentenary Committee, Old Bridgewater Tercentenary 1656-1956 (Brockton, 1956).
- Crane, Joshua E., "History of Bridgewater," in D. H. Hurd's History of Plymouth County, Massachusetts (Phila., 1884), pp.773-832.
- Doherty, Katherine M., ed., History Highlights; Bridgewater, Mass., A Commemorative Journal (Taunton, 1976).
- Kingman, Bradford, "History of Ancient Bridgewater," in D. H. Hurd's History of Plymouth County, Massachusetts (Phila., 1884), pp.539-543.
- Mitchell, Nathum, History of the Early Settlement of Bridgewater in Plymouth County (Boston, 1840; Bridgewater, 1897).
- Weston, Thomas, History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts (Boston, 1906), p.407. [Titicut Furnace and Col. De Maresquelles.]