

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

DIGHTON

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 REPORT

Date: September, 1981

Community: Dighton

I. TOPOGRAPHY

Terrain is composed of some rolling hills interspersed with swamp land. Richmond hill supposedly the highest point in the county. Soils are gravelly. Drainage is via the Segreganset River in the north, Cole River in the west and the Muddy Cove Brook in the southeast.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Dighton was established as a town on May 30, 1712 (o.s.) from part of Taunton. Part included in the new town of Berkley 1735. Bounds established in 1745. Assonet neck ceded to Berkley 1799. Part established as Wellington 1814, Dighton and Wellington rejoined 1828. Part ceded to Somerset 1854.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Dighton is a pastoral community in Bristol County. One of the most striking features of the landscape is the surviving Colonial road grid. Late 18th early 19th century shipbuilding along Taunton River coupled with the wharves along the river made Dighton a break of bulk point for river traffic. During this period the only other contributor to the town's economic base was a subsistence level agricultural base. There was an abortive silk industry in the town between 1830 and 1857 at Hunter's Hill. The greatest boost to the town's economy was provided by the cotton mills in North Dighton and the close ties that that village had with Taunton. Nurserys were first introduced in the 1840's and a major boost to the agricultural base was the introduction of strawberry cultivation in the 1860's. The bulk of residential clustering during the late 19th and early 20th centuries occurred at North Dighton, spurred by the construction of housing by the Mt. Hope Finishing Co. One of the most constant reminders of first period settlement in the town is the numerous stone walls both in areas of active cultivation and in second growth timber. Dighton has experienced some suburbanization which has not seriously endangered the cohesiveness of the landscape as yet.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes:

A native trail followed the present route of Elm Street and Somerset Avenue. It probably extended north into present Taunton connecting with the Bay Path. The route's utilization during the Contact Period is evidenced by its proximity to several potential Contact Period sites, excellent agricultural land and the Taunton River. An additional river route may have forked off of the above path and followed Pleasant and

the lower portion of County Street. An interior route possibly extended off Elm Street to the northwest roughly following the Segreganset River. The Taunton River provided the Pocasset (Dighton) natives with a major water route to present Taunton and the Narragansett Bay.

B. Settlement Patterns:

A probably extensive native Contact Period settlement was situated between Cedar Swamp and Main Street. At the time of initial white settlement (early 1670's?), this area was a vast tract of abandoned native agricultural land (Hurd, 1883: 215). Abandonment probably occurred during and shortly after the devastating epidemics of the early 17th century. The site was well located because of its proximity to extensive agricultural land and water sources. There were several potential period sites including a large village site (Boat's Site) with a Woodland component located on the western bank of the Taunton River east of the junction of Main and Pleasant Streets and a small Woodland camp site on a knoll (Sweet's) overlooking the Taunton River. Three unidentified native sites were situated at the junction of Elm and County Streets and the mouth of the Segreganset River. Four additional unidentified native sites, two of which were probably part of the Boat's site, were scattered along the western side of the Taunton River south of Main Street. Additional native sites may have been established on Hunters and Richmond Hills because of their excellent vantage point and presence of water sources.

C. Subsistence Patterns:

Fishing and shellfish collecting would have been extremely productive along the Three Mile and Taunton Rivers. Close proximity to Narragansett Bay likely encouraged the Pocassets to journey to the Bay in pursuit of the area's extensive marine resources. Hunting was probably undertaken in the Dighton area's woodlands and marshlands. The best agricultural land was located along the Taunton River and the mouth of the Segreganset River and the site of the probably Contact Period village south of Cedar Swamp. It is quite likely the area natives engaged in European-Indian trade when considering the proximity of Narragansett Bay, an area of known pre-1620 European-Indian contact (i.e., Verrazano, 1524).

D. Observations:

The Dighton area probably was the site of a large native Contact Period population when considering the town's varied resource base and the archaeological and historical evidence. The majority of the native settlement was likely concentrated along the Three Mile and Taunton Rivers, particularly the southern half of the latter river and the settlement area between Cedar Swamp and Main Street. A considerable portion of this site is relatively undisturbed having escaped graving and recent residential development. Historic sources identify the local natives as the Pocassets, a subdivision of the Pokanokets (Wampanoags) centered in Sowams (Bristol, Rhode Island). As of the early 17th century, they were said to occupy present Tiverton (Rhode Island), Somerset, Swansea, part of Rehoboth and Dighton (Hurd 1883: 215).

V. FIRST SETTLEMENT PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Description of the area's pre-1675 transportation network is poorly researched. The virtual absence of pre-war colonial development suggests the low probability of a substantial formalized overland transportation system. The existing native trails were probably adapted to white use and provided access to area's inland and riverine resources, present Taunton and Swansea. The Taunton River may have been utilized as a major water route to Bridgewater, Taunton and Narragansett Bay.

B. Population:

No figures were provided for a native or white population.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Existing written sources suggest the Pocassets were decimated by the previously mentioned epidemics which left a large portion of the Dighton area unoccupied. However, native utilization of the Cedar Swamp/Main Street settlement area appears to have continued well into the 17th century. King Philip is claimed to have traditionally met with the Pocassets in the vicinity of the Dighton Council Oak (still stands) located midway between the Cedar Swamp and Main Street.

At least one source stated there was limited colonial settlement prior to 1675 (Hurd 1883: 216). Location of these settlers is unclear. One potential area could have been the land between the County Agricultural High School and the Town cemetery, the reputed sites of Dighton's first post-war settlers.

D. Economic Base:

The native population probably maintained their traditional subsistence rounds. The increased white presence in Dighton, Taunton, Raynham, Middleborough, Lakeville area and the establishment of an English trading post on Stonehouse Point (Somerset) encouraged development of Anglo-Indian trade.

The colonial settlers probably devoted the majority of their efforts to subsistence farming possibly on the abandoned native planting grounds adjacent to the Cedar Swamp and agricultural land bounding the Taunton River. Subsistence fishing was probably undertaken in the Taunton River and its tributaries. There is no evidence of pre-war industries operating in the Dighton area.

E. Observations:

Both the native and white communities of this period are poorly understood. The colonial settlement was situated on the frontier fringe of Taunton and was closely tied to Taunton as a result of its military vulnerability and absence of commercial, industrial and religious/civic facilities.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes:

Continued minimal documentation of the town's transportation system. By the late 17th century, Elm Street and Somerset Avenue probably functioned as a primary transportation route providing access to Taunton and Swansea. Lincoln Avenue was probably laid out at the turn of the 17th century in response to the establishment of homes and industry in North Dighton. Development of Dighton's waterfront in the early 18th century probably encouraged the construction of County and Pleasant Streets. The grid of roads extending west from Elm Street likely was established between the last decade of the 17th century and the mid-18th century in the course of Dighton's western settlement. The grid layout may be based on the original tracts laid out and distributed in the 1690's.

B. Population:

There are no native post-war population figures. By 1712, the white community had grown sufficiently to permit incorporation. Slightly more than fifty years later, Dighton's population numbered 1174 residents. This figure increased 21% to 1420 residents in 1776. (These two figures include the residents of Assonet Neck (Berkley) which remained part of Dighton until 1799).

C. Settlement Patterns:

No evidence of a surviving native community although it is possible post-war survivors were assimilated into the colonial settlement. Reputedly, the Dighton area was abandoned by the settlers in favor of Taunton shortly before the outbreak of King Philip's War. War damage to the white settlement is unclear. The first post-1675 white settlers, Jared Talbot and George Gooding, arrived in 1678 and 1680, respectively. Talbot established a home near the junction of Pleasant Street and Chace Avenue while Gooding settled on the present site of the County Agricultural School. Both sites were adjacent to excellent agricultural land and the Taunton River, a good transportation route and location for water based activities. Subsequent settlement in the last decade of the 17th century and the early 18th century concentrated in this area. By the first decade of the 18th century, a primary settlement node had developed around the community's first meetinghouse (c.1708-10) located on the site of the Town Cemetery. Additional settlement occurred north and south of this node along Elm Street. Several contemporary homes were erected in North Dighton in the vicinity of Spring Street and Lincoln Avenue and near the Briggs Road and the Segreganset River intersection, two areas endowed with the rudiments necessary for industry: potential mill streams and bog iron bearing marshland. Later 18th century settlement continued to focus along Elm Street and the waterfront. Additional early-late 18th century homes were erected in North Dighton. There was increased settlement west of Elm Street in the early-late 18th century with several homes clustering in the vicinity of the Hathaway Cemetery (junction of Center and Briggs Street, the Buck Plain meetinghouse (c.1767, southern third of Pine Street, Hunters Hill and the Baptist meetinghouse (c.1779, near junction of Cedar Street and the Dighton/ Rehoboth line). Location of the town's second meetinghouse on Pine Street was undertaken to accomodate the town's western expansion. However, the

site of a third meetinghouse was selected in c.1700 (building not completed until 179) a short distance north of the Main and Elm Street intersection by the more heavily populated eastern and southern portions of Dighton due to their dissatisfaction with the siting of the Buck Plain meetinghouse.

D. Economic Base:

Agriculture remained an important part of Dighton's economy with increased emphasis on commercial production. The turn of the 17th century and early 18th century witnessed the development of the mill, iron and shipbuilding industries as important economic operations. The town's commercial/industrial development was concentrated in three areas. The earliest and most heavily developed area was situated on the western bank of the Taunton River between the mouth of the Segreganset River and the Old Town Landing. Thomas Coram and John Hathaway backed by London merchants established a shipyard at the foot of Main Street in c.1693 (N.A. 1912: 4). By the mid-18th century, Ebenezer Stetson and John Reed operated shipyards in the vicinity of Doram's shipyard and Muddy Cove, respectively. As of the early 18th century, Dighton served as the commercial distribution point for southern and central New England since it was physically impossible for the standard merchant vessels to sail up the Taunton River past Dighton. Shipping arrived with goods from the West Indies, South America and Europe while local vessels shipped out with Dighton goods (e.g., fish, lumber, grain, barrel staves and hoops). During this period, Ebenezer Stetson operated a general store/shipping business situated near the junction of Main and Pleasant Streets. The second commercial/industrial area was situated in North Dighton. Peter Walker erected an iron forge in c.1700 on the Three Mile River immediately above the junction of Lincoln Avenue and Spring Street. At a similar date, Nicholas Stephens built a sawmill on this river several hundred feet south of the junction of School Street and Lincoln Avenue. Joseph Stephens operated a grist and sawmill, cider mill and press and blacksmith shop on Stephen's Island between c.1755 and 1777. By the mid-18th century, David Perry had established a tavern near Nicholas Steven's sawmill. The third commercial/industrial node was situated on the Segreganset River between Williams and Middle Streets. Matthew Briggs constructed a forge and gristmill at the river's intersection with Briggs Street in c.1700. Josiah Talbot established a gristmill at the river's junction with Williams Street in c.1740 (operated until 1834). In the mid-18th century, a sawmill and fulling mill were built on the river slightly east of Talbot's gristmill and below Brigg's forge, respectively.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Dighton retains many houses of the early 18th century, most of these center-chimney houses with two-room, center-entered plans. Projecting enclosed Georgian porches with pediments are a common feature on the 18th-century houses of the town, although it seems likely that most were added to existing houses at the mid-century rather than having

been incorporated within the original construction of the town's earliest houses. The high proportion of two-story houses with full five-bay, symmetrical Georgian facades indicates the town's 18th-century prosperity. In addition to the high number of Colonial period houses surviving, many stand in well-preserved agricultural settings along the town's intact system of Colonial rangeways: there is no clustering of houses around a Colonial town center. There are a few center chimney cottages of the period in the town, but, in general, the ratio of cottages to houses is far below the regional average, cottages being by far the most prevalent 18th-century house type elsewhere in the county.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse was built on Elm Street in 1708; in 1767, that meetinghouse burned and the second meetinghouse (55' x 45' x 24') was constructed a mile west at Buck Plain, on the site of the present Brick Church (Center Street). Dighton is unusual in that schoolhouses were constructed there during the 18th century; most towns in the region held migratory schools, paying for a schoolmaster who would circulate around the town teaching in private homes. In 1751, three schoolhouses were built, two of them 16' square and the third slightly larger at 20' square. At the end of the period, a second Congregational society (c.1775) and a Baptist congregation (1772) were organized in the town. The second Congregational Society began a meetinghouse on Elm Street at Main Street (Dighton Four Corners) at that time.

F. Observations:

Dighton established one of the more balanced economies of the communities examined within the southeastern Massachusetts study unit as reflected in the early-mid 18th century development of a strong agricultural, industrial and marine activities base. Through its growth as a shipping center, Dighton developed diverse (e.g., Narragansett Bay, New York, Boston, West Indies, South America) commercial ties. It is highly probable that considerable portions of the town's two industrial nodes (North Dighton and Segreganset River) and waterfront survive archaeologically due to the minimal amount of development in these areas. An additional surviving vestige of this period is the late 17th century/early 18th century transportation grid.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes:

Some improvement of existing colonial roads. Taunton-Providence Turnpike 1826 (Winthrop Street). Taunton River remains important route, South Dighton becomes port of entry 1789. Berkley-Dighton Bridge built 1806.

B. Population

Population increased 1776 to 1790 then declined 1790 to 1800; stable from 1800 to 1820 then slight increase in 1830.

C. Settlement:

Major focus of settlement remains Taunton and Three Mile River area. Religious and civic focus remains at Four Corners. Residential settlement at South Dighton (ship building). While there are scattered hamlets most settlement consists of farmsteads.

D. Economic Base:

Dighton's active shipbuilding business (mostly coasting sloops) along the Taunton River was continued in the Federal Period, with yards established near the town landing as well as just north of the present Berkley-Dighton bridge. By 1789 commercial and shipbuilding interests had increased to such an extent that Dighton was made a customs port in that year. Dighton maintained a maritime edge over Taunton immediately upriver probably until the latter half of the period. (Dighton had assumed prominence in the 18th century as a distributing point for central and southern New England largely because the Taunton River could not be navigated by sloops above Dighton.)

In 1794 Dighton had five grist mills and two sawmills. Twenty years later the town was in the boom years of textile expansion, as three cotton mills (two on the Three-Mile River and one on the Segregan-set) came into operation as a result of the Embargo and wartime restraints. At one of these mills, the Bristol Cotton Manufacturing Co. factory (later the Mount Hope mill), chemical bleaching is said to have been introduced by British bleachers captured from a British merchant vessel during the War of 1812. James DeWolf was captain of the "Flying Yankee," which seized the British ship, presumably related to Levi and William DeWolf, incorporators of the Bristol Cotton Mfg. Co. in 1812. James DeWolf himself became a major shareholder of the Mount Hope Mfg. Co. when it was incorporated in 1822 (and named after DeWolf's Bristol, Rhode Island estate).

The war against England, however, must not have been all that popular, for we note that in the middle of it, in 1814, the northern half of the town was incorporated as the town of Wellington (named after the Iron Duke), dividing the town at Wellington and Brook Streets. The new town of Wellington included virtually all the mills and available waterpower, as well as the meeting house (a source of constant controversy, it would prove).

After twenty years of independence the residents of both towns petitioned to be reunited. Although proponents for reunification and subsequent historians have claimed the move was the unanimous plea of both towns, a petition protesting the act (signed by 20 names including clock-maker Joseph Gooding and numerous members of the Briggs and Baylies families) now in the State Archives, argued persuasively for retention of the town of Wellington. After noting the spuriousness of the arguments for reunification, the petition went on:

We have no doubt of your honorable body to destroy as well as create, but we cannot forbear to remark, what the history of past ages will confirm, that even the ruthless hand of the conqueror has spared (at least)

the name of the little incorporations of towns.

If the petitioners with their estates wish to be set of [off?] to Dighton, your remonstrants have no objection; but having done all that is required of towns by repairing highways and bridges, supporting schools, paupers, and paying taxes, they are not conscious of having done anything by which they have forfeited their incorporate rights & are very unwilling to relinquish them, and humbly trust that the honor, justice & wisdom of your honourable body will permit their name and place to continue among the incorporated towns of the commonwealth, and as in duty bound will ever pray, . . .

Joseph Gooding, apprenticed to a Hanover clockmaker in the 1780s, had set up a shop in Dighton at Upper Four Corners with his brothers, making brass and tall case clocks. After the reunification act passed, Gooding moved to Fall River, not returning for twelve years.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Dighton has comparatively few fully-developed Federal houses: only two or three hip-roofed, end-chimney houses were observed in the town, two of these on Pleasant Street along the Taunton River. Only one hip-roofed rearwall chimney house (with a blind elliptical Federal entrance surround) is known, also on Pleasant Street. Elsewhere in the town, houses with conservative center chimney or double chimney plans prevail. The predominance of Georgian center or double chimney plans suggests that most of Dighton's Federal period houses were built early in the period and/or that traditional plans remained popular through the turn of the century. Most houses employ gable roofs rather than the more common Federal roof type, the shallow hip; however, a few houses with hip roofs are known. Cottages became more common in the period with center-chimney plans prevailing. At least a few gambrel-roofed center-chimney cottages are known, most of these probably dating from the early years of the period. Later, gable roofs became the standard roof form.

Institutional: The second Congregational society's meetinghouse was completed in 1797: a two-and-a-half story structure with an entrance on the long side and a projecting square end tower, the meetinghouse combines the traditional Colonial meetinghouse plan with several elements of Federal detailing, such as an elliptical entrance surround at the main (long side) entrance. Other churches of the period include the Brick church (1826), the third meetinghouse of the First Parish, a well-detailed story-and-a-half brick church with Gothic Revival lancet windows and a shallowly-projecting full Doric portico with reeded columns; the portico is an unusually early example of the Greek Revival in the region. The Baptist society also built its first meetinghouse in 1780, moving north to its present location on Wellington Street in 1796; the two-story, gable-roofed building (now West Dighton Congregational Church) now standing

is the 1796 Baptist meetinghouse, although later remodelling has given the church a transitional Greek Revival/Italianate appearance. This is the earliest known Baptist meetinghouse in the country. In 1830, a meetinghouse (not extant) was built for the Methodist Episcopal church at North Dighton. When the Brick church was constructed, the second (1767) meetinghouse on Pine Street was lowered by one story and became the town's first Town House. This structure may still stand, in residential use, as a hip-roofed, one-story house with three facade bays (the typical Federal town house form) known on Pine Street in the vicinity of the Town House shown on the 1831 map. In addition to this unique potential survivor, at least one Federal period school, one story in height with three bays and an off-center side entrance, is known to survive on Pleasant Street at Dighton center with another building of similar appearance, which may also have been a school, observed on Main Street near Milk Street.

Industrial: At least two cotton mills were built in the Federal period, one at North Dighton on Spring Street in 1810 and another on Williams Street in 1812; although neither still stands, the North Dighton mill had the standard Federal mill form with three stories under a gable roof with a square cupola at the gable end.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes:

Railroad opened in the town. Custom house moved to Fall River 1834.

B. Population: Sharp drop in population 1830 to 1840; losses recouped by 1855. Slight growth to end of period. Foreign born population 158 in 1855, majority Irish.

C. Settlement:

Focus of new residential and industrial development at North Dighton during this period even though this is not extensive. Elsewhere in town settlement remains linear along existing roads.

D. Economic Base:

Textile manufacturing remained an important industry throughout the period. For a brief time in the early '30's, town flirted with the silk industry, introduced during the Multicaulus mania by a Mansfield, Connecticut woman, Sarah Hart. Two cotton mills on the Three-mile River were later supplemented by William Cobb's short lived 1862 woolen mill. In 1865 Cobb's mill was producing \$240,000 worth of cassimeres, making it much the largest industry in town at that date.

Iron operations, represented in the early part of the period by the Dighton Mfg. Co.'s furnace on Three-Mile River (site of Peter Walker's 18th-century iron works), by the 1850's were represented by the tack and brad shop of Nathaniel Leonard on the Segreganset. Cobb had been one of the incorporators of the Dighton & Somerset Railroad in 1863, and when the line opened in 1866, he built along the tracks the Dighton Rolling Mill, another short-lived venture, blown down in a gale in 1869.

The town's major new industry of the period was the inauguration in 1850 of Caleb and Lorenzo Lincoln's paper mill at North Dighton. Five years later, producing 450 tons of paper valued at \$40,500, it was the town's largest industry, and remained a major employer into the 20th century.

E. Architecture:

Residential: The transition to the Greek Revival style was apparently slow in Dighton: of the Greek Revival houses known, most contain elements of either the earlier Federal or later Italianate styles. The predominant house type of the period is the cottage: at the beginning of the period, most cottages are traditional end or center chimney plan structures with center entrances and five-bay facades but by the end of the period, the sidehall plan was universal. A few well-developed Greek Revival cottages are known, with well-detailed end-chimney plan Greek Revival cottages standing on Center and on Williams Streets. More utilitarian center chimney Federal/Greek Revival and end chimney Greek Revival/Italianate cottages were built at North Dighton, Dighton center and on Williams Street near the cotton mill. Story-and-a-half sidehall plan Greek Revival cottages are also known at those locations as are a few broad-gable, one-room deep Greek Revival cottages. A number of sidehall plan Greek Revival/Italianate houses and cottages were built after 1850; many of these incorporate two or three roundhead windows in the gable and many have a distinctive one-story veranda with jigsaw panels in openwork porch piers. Of the very few two-story houses built in the period, most are located on Pleasant Street along the river at Dighton center. These include at least two 18th-century houses updated in the period; one has an Italianate one-story veranda and bracketted overhanging eaves while the other had a late Greek Revival monumental portico (with Italianate piers rather than columns) appended to the facade. The presence of a unique brick, three-quarter plan Federal/Greek Revival cottage with a round-arched recessed entrance should be noted, on Center Street. A stone cottage (the only one in town) is said to have been built on Hunters Hill in 1838; it was not observed, but may still stand.

Institutional: Several churches were built in the period, including a Christian Baptist church at Dighton center (1845, demolished), a Methodist Episcopal at North Dighton (1830, demolished), and a Universalist (c.1843, later Dighton Academy, then Methodist church) at Dighton center. Of these, the Universalist church was probably the most stylish, having been a temple-front one-story Greek Revival. When it became the Dighton Academy, it was raised to two stories and the portico was removed. A Greek Revival/Italianate town house was built in 1869; a story-and-a-half Greek Revival/Italianate building with a center entrance, it

is now the Dighton Rock Grange. Only one school of the period is known to survive, a story-and-a-half Italianate school located on Elm Street at Segregansett.

Commercial: The only commercial structure of the period known to survive is the Pitts Store and Post Office on Williams Street, a story-and-a-half Greek Revival/Italianate building on Williams Street.

Industrial: In 1850, the Lincoln paper mill was established at North Dighton; the factory consisted of a series of one and two-story brick buildings of utilitarian construction.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes:

Some improvement of existing roads.

B. Population:

Population stable with slight fluctuations to 1900 then growth to the end of the period. Foreign born population 211 in 1885 with balanced ethnic mix grows to 681 in 1915 with a Portugese majority. St. Peters Catholic Church in the south 1901 for the Portugese population. St. Josephs Catholic Church in North Dighton for Mt. Hope Operatives.

C. Settlement:

What residential and industrial development that occurs, did so at North Dighton. Some infill along existing roads. Bungalow development at North Dighton.

D. Economic Base:

In the last quarter of the 19th century, Dighton's commercial interests became increasingly agricultural. The raising of strawberries, begun about 1860, was immensely profitable for a number of years, until the increased availability of the fruit from other localities drove prices down.

For a brief period the Albion Lead works of Taunton located at the site of Cobb's woollen mill, convenient to the river and Muddy Cove, up which raw material was transported. Successor firms, culminating in Arnold, Hoffman & Co. in 1892, have all manufactured water or oil colors.

The major event of the period was the coming of the Mount Hope Finishing Company to North Dighton in 1901. With British expertise, the company was an early producer of mercerized cottons. Heavily capitalized by New Bedford textile interests, the company in succeeding decades built a model community (175 houses), operated a farm and dairy, and introduced water and street-lighting services to the village.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Despite a marked decrease in the number of houses constructed, a few Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and Craftsman houses were built in Dighton during the Late Industrial period. Most of these are located along Pleasant Street at Dighton center, with secondary clusters of houses at Segregansett and at North Dighton. Along outlying roads to the west, smaller, more traditional sidehall-plan transitional Italianate/Queen Anne cottages and houses were built in small numbers. Two or three fully-developed Queen Anne houses with complex cross-gabled plans, towers, patterned shingle detailing and porches are known on Pleasant Street with most Queen Anne houses retaining the simple rectilinear configurations of the earlier Italianate style. Only one cottage with a mansard roof was observed. Somewhat more common are Craftsman-detailed houses and cottages of the turn of the century. A group of three well-detailed shingled Craftsman/Colonial Revival houses was observed on Center Street at Segregansett with other well-detailed Craftsman cottages at North Dighton.

Institutional: Most of the institutional buildings of the period are churches; the finest of these is Smith Memorial Hall (Unitarian, 1889), a fine example of the Shingle Style consisting of a hip-roofed main block with double entrances flanking a projecting rounded bay. Other churches are the Methodist Episcopal church (1893) on Main Street, a story-and-a-half Queen Anne building with an offset square tower and Saint Peter's church (1901) on County Street, a Gothic Revival chapel with a projecting entrance porch. The first building for Saint Joseph's church at North Dighton was built in 1913, but was replaced in 1932. A hip-roofed Colonial Revival school (South School) was built in 1905, but is not thought to survive. In 1911, a one-story, hip-roofed Craftsman Style Public Library with rubblestone walls and stucco panels was built at Dighton Center; the Library was the gift of Andrew Carnegie.

Commercial: The only commercial building known to have been built in the period is the Dighton Market (c.1900), a two-story utilitarian structure with a low gable roof, center entrance and projecting entrance hood running the length of the building.

Industrial: The largest industrial complex built in the period was the Mount Hope Finishing Company, established in 1901 at North Dighton. If the two-story reinforced concrete, pier-and-spandrel factory they constructed was built in 1901, it is a remarkably early example of reinforced concrete construction; the building was more likely constructed sometime after 1901. Also built at North Dighton were a number of company houses for workers.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes:

Somerset and County Streets became Route 138, Winthrop Route 144.

B. Population

Population stable 1915 to 1930, then slight decline to end of period. Foreign born population 653 in 1930.

C. Settlement:

Some infill along existing roads.

D. Economic Base:

Little observable change in industrial activity. A 1913 directory noted 16 market gardeners as well as the existence of several dairy farms. Only four market garden operations were indicated twelve years later.

E. Architecture:

With the exception of a few important institutional buildings, built in the late 1930's, very little construction took place at Dighton during the Early Modern period. A few simple Colonial Revival/Craftsman cottages were probably built along Elm/County Street but no residential structures of note were observed. The institutional buildings built in the period are the High School/Town Hall (1935), a two-story, brick Georgian Revival building on Elm Street at Segregansett, the Bristol County Agricultural High School (1938), a two-story brick Georgian Revival building on Center Street at Segregansett and Saint Joseph's church (1932), a one-and-a-half story brick Georgian Revival building at North Dighton.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Much of Dighton's survey lacks historical information while many of the inventory forms with historical data contain questionable dates and information, most of which seems to have been taken from the 1912 bicentennial history; in particular, the number of houses with dates of 1700 seems unreasonably high and these dates should not be accepted as true without further research. Otherwise, most of the town's resources are inventoried, with the exception of industrial structures and some early 20th-century houses at Segregansett on Center Street. Particular note should be made of the very well-preserved quality of the agricultural landscape of the town with surviving rangeways and many well-preserved groupings of outbuildings. Also notable are Dighton's many surviving late 18th-century meetinghouses and possible surviving town house with 1767 meetinghouse fragments.

Industrial: Dighton's survey included her principal 18th and early 19th-century industries--the Matthew Briggs Forge (itself part of a complex probably NR eligible) and the Gooding clock shop. Dighton's two major present-day industries--the former Arnold, Hoffman & Co. and the Mount Hope Finishing Co. were omitted. The latter was responsible for much of the early 20th-century growth of North Dighton. Also omitted was the Berkley-Dighton Bridge, possibly

the state's oldest swing span, and in a rural setting on the Taunton River that has changed very little since the bridge's construction in 1896.

XII. SOURCES

Dighton, Mass., 250th Anniversary, Town of Dighton, Massachusetts, 1712-1962 (Taunton, 1962).

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Shove, George A., "Dighton," in D. H. Hurd, ed., History of Bristol County, Massachusetts (Phila., 1883), pp.214-267.

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