

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## DUDLEY

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.



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## MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: 1984

COMMUNITY: Dudley

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### I. TOPOGRAPHY

Dudley is drained by two major rivers and their tributaries: The Quinebaug River, which flows through a narrow, steep valley across the southwest corner of the town; and the French River, which forms the boundary between Dudley and Webster. A number of ponds and reservoirs created in the 19th century to provide ample water for Dudley's many water powered mills are located in the northeast quadrant of the town. Much of the town's surface consists of hills and stream valleys, the former rising to more than 800 feet above sea level in the northwest and to 700 feet above sea level over the rest of the town, descending to about 400 feet along the French River. The soils are of high agricultural quality, ranking among the best in the county: Sutton, Charlton, and Paxton loams, the latter occupying the tops of rounded drumlins. In the east along the French River, gravelly glacial till and terraces are found and a gneiss ridge extends northward along the west shore of the French River, containing several good quarries.

### II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Established as a town, from part of Oxford and certain lands, 1732. Part of Middlesex Gore annexed, 1794. Part included in new town of Southbridge, 1816. Part annexed to Southbridge, 1822. Part included in new town of Webster, 1832. Bounds with Southbridge established, 1907.

### III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Rural, upland, college town with valley industries, located between the French and Quinebaug River corridors. Documented native village site at Dudley Center Hill, and reputed village site in Quinebaug Valley near present Connecticut state line. Located between earlier European settlements at Oxford and Woodstock with local permanent European occupancy after ca. 1721, and meetinghouse site established by 1734. Dispersed 18th century agricultural settlement, with small early 19th century meetinghouse village where Universalist Nichols Academy locates in 1816. Textile manufacturing on French River after 1812. Significant industrial development above the French River corridor as part of Webster industrial focus is stimulated by 1849 rail connection, and residential, commercial, and institutional focus shifts to eastern part of the town. Late 19th century secondary industrial development takes place along Quinebaug River, stimulated by 1865 rail connection. Post-1880 expansion of Nichols Academy in Center Village. Continued intensive upland dairying, stimulated by West Dudley Cooperative Creamery (1887), and later co-ops, persists to present, with extensive agricultural landscapes. A number of 19th century mills survive, most notably the landmark granite Stevens Linen complex, and worker housing

clusters remain intact at Perryville, Quinebaug, Merino Village, and Chaseville. Expanded Nichols College now controls much of Dudley Center area. Continued suburban development from revived Webster industrial focus may soon infringe upon remaining industrial landscapes.

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

##### A. Transportation Routes

Upland area between French and Quinebaug Rivers. North-south trail from Oxford to Woodstock follows abandoned roadway in northeast to Dudley-Oxford Road. Northwest trail probably Dresser Hill Road. Trail from Quinebaug River to French River: River Road to West Dudley crossing-abandoned road-Durfee Road-abandoned road to Dudley Center-Tanyard Road-Airport Road-Main Street to French River crossing. Southeast branch to French River: Dudley Hill Road-Niger Road-Carpenter Road. Northwest branch possibly Albee Road-Dudley Southbridge Road.

##### B. Settlement Pattern

This area, located west of Lake Chaubunagungamaug, was exploited seasonally from the base camp there. Smaller family and task groups visited the town's uplands and rivers for short-term visits.

##### C. Subsistence Pattern

Seasonal visits based on resource availability, to uplands for winter hunting, and spring fishing in the French and Quinebaug rivers.

#### V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

##### A. Transportation Routes

Contact period trail network continues in use.

##### B. Settlement Pattern

Contact period patterns persist until the gathering of the praying town on Lake Chaubunagungamaug, which removed some population to a more settled pattern.

##### C. Subsistence Pattern

Contact period patterns continue until reduced with more settled pattern in the adjacent praying town.

#### VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

##### A. Transportation Routes

Trails are improved as regional highways and as roads from the meetinghouse center (1734) to outlying farms. Healy Road-Mill

Road opened from the Center to Quinebaug. Ramshorn Road-Daniel Road is opened north to Charlton.

#### B. Population

Few figures available for the town. In 1721, the proprietors numbered 13 males. Reported rapid growth during this period, until the total reached 748 in 1765, and 875 in 1776. Few controversies disrupted the moderate, orthodox Congregational society. The town's few Baptists (8) were located to the west, in the area that would become Webster. Some native population remained there also, with rights to seats in the meetinghouse reserved when land for the building purchased.

#### C. Settlement Pattern

After King Philip's War, the Nipmucks sold a large tract in 1681 to Stoughton and Dudley, including the present town of Dudley. Within this they reserved rights to five square miles of land, a portion of which covered the area from Dudley Hill east to Lake Chaubunagungamaug in Webster. Black James sold off this reservation to William and Paul Dudley and white settlement began in 1720. Dudley was the first town incorporated (1731) after the formation of Worcester County. The meetinghouse was located near the geographical center of the town as it then existed when the church was gathered a year later, on a four-acre parcel.

#### D. Economic Base

Little information, although primarily agricultural emphasizing pasturage.

#### E. Architecture

Residential: The earliest surviving houses date from the mid 18th century and are center chimney plans. One exception may be the 1726 Carter (?) House, which aside from being older than the other remaining period examples, may also have been a double chimney form.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse was erected ca. 1734. No description has been found.

### VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

#### A. Transportation Routes

The Colonial period roads continue in use. The Central Turnpike (Route 197 with new road west of Airport Road) is incorporated in 1826, completed in 1829, and bypasses the meetinghouse center.

#### B. Population

Dudley's population growth during this period was great, more than doubling from 875 in 1776 to 2,155 in 1830. In that same year,

the town had the largest number of foreign-born in the county, 147. The town's Congregational church experienced revivals toward the period's end. Baptists continued to attend in the section that would become Webster, joined in 1829 there by a Methodist society. Converts to Universalism attended the Oxford society from 1785 until their own was formed in 1829. Amasa Nichols founded an Academy for them in 1815, but it later became non-sectarian.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Continued dispersed agricultural settlement. Small institutional/residential cluster at meetinghouse center, with addition of Nichols Academy (ca. 1817). Early textile manufacturing development on French River, with Dudley Mfg. Co. (later Chaseville area) in 1816, Merino Wool Factory in 1812. Tufts Mfg. Co. established in north in 1824.

### D. Economic Base

Like its neighbor Douglas, Dudley was viewed early in the period as an area poorly suited to agriculture, 36.3% viewed as unimprovable. A smaller than average amount, 45.8%, remained in woodlot and unimproved, perhaps to compensate for that. Just under two percent of tillage, and 5.6% of pasture are very low figures; 10.2% acres in meadow and mowing is also slightly low. This reflects the inclusion in this period of Webster to the east, where soils were generally inferior to those of the west.

However, through the 18th and early 19th centuries, the economy of Dudley was indeed based on agriculture. The land yielded good crops of hay, grains, and vegetables, and supported large sheep and cattle herds. Butter, cheese, meat, wool, and hides were important animal products from Dudley's mixed husbandry farms. In 1794, four sawmills and four gristmills were located in the town, as well as several small blacksmithing and woodworking shops. By 1830, three gristmills, three sawmills, one shingle mill, and a tannery were in operation.

The first factory-organized manufacture of textiles in Dudley, which contained part of Webster until 1832, was established about 1810 on the Webster side of the French River at North Village as the Village Cotton, Woolen, and Linen Co. In 1812 Samuel Slater established a cotton mill near Lake Chaubunagungamaug, and in 1815 a woolen mill. By 1832, the Webster portion of Dudley contained three cotton mills, a woolen mill, and a bleaching and dyeing firm; of these, four mills were owned by Samuel Slater or Samuel Slater and Sons.

In Dudley, west of the French River, the first textile mill was established in 1812 at Merino Village as the Merino Wool Factory. It failed following the close of the War of 1812, when cheap, British-manufactured textile flooded the market. The company was reorganized with investments from several wealthy Boston capitalists. A woolen mill was built in 1816 in the northern portion of town by Aaron Tufts, one of the original Merino Factory

shareholders. A stone factory replaced the earlier frame mill in 1827 and in 1832, 40,000 yards of broadcloth were manufactured by 24 men, 6 boys, and 40 women and girls. In 1825, Joseph and Richard Perry and associates built a satinnet mill a short distance below the 1816 Dudley Cotton Mfg. Co. mill, but on the western shore of the French river. By 1832, 19 men and 12 women and girls produced 70,000 yards of satinets.

#### E. Architecture

**Residential:** The dominant house form appears to have been the single-story, center chimney dwelling. A few examples in granite are especially noteworthy. Double chimney houses also occur frequently, generally consisting of a double pile of rooms. Two-story examples display a hipped roof. One brick example was recorded. A few two-story, end chimney plans were noted. Of special interest is the two-story, five-bay, double chimney, hip-on-hip Whiting House which displays a monitor and a transom.

**Institutional:** A second meetinghouse was built in 1823 and consisted of a gable end structure with a spire. The first Methodist Episcopal church was constructed in 1829. The first structure erected by Amasa Nichols for the institution which became Nichols College was a two-story building with cupola, built in 1816 and destroyed by fire the same year. Nichols had rebuilt by 1819. A ca. 1825 schoolhouse for District #3 survives.

**Commercial:** The 1804 Black Tavern is a two-story, four-bay, center chimney plan with a wing.

**Industrial:** A stone mill located in the northern part of Dudley known as Ram's Horn (Ramshorn Road) was built in 1827 and operated until 1868.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes

The early 19th century roads continue in use. A short segment of the Norwich and Worcester Railroad (1840) passes through town on the west side of the French River, though the station is located in Webster. The Southbridge Branch, Boston, Hartford and Erie Railroad, is established through the southeast corner of town, and to a terminus at Quinebaug Station on the Quinebaug Corridor in the southwest in 1865. The line is completed to Southbridge in 1867.

#### B. Population

With the formation of Webster, the population here dropped, and continued to do so until 1850, when the figure reached 1,352. From that point, growth was steady, to 2,388 in 1870. The foreign-born population also expanded, from 22.4% in 1855 to 31% ten years later. Initially, the Irish predominated, but by 1854, the French Canadians numbered greatest among the foreign-born here as in the other towns on the border, along the Quinebaug and

French rivers. This growth is paralleled by the great increase in manufacturing employment from 164 in 1840 to 499 in 1875. As the population increased, the Methodists grew, and briefly formed a society in the town which disappeared in the 1860s. As the number of Catholics increased in the area, a parish was formed in 1853 in Webster.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Focus of growth at industrial villages on the French River corridor in the east, with some development at the Dudley Center institutional/residential focus. A Universalist church is built at Dudley Center in 1834, and the third Methodist church is located there in 1844. Some residential infill occurs. Barber (1839) notes 25 dwellings in the center village. Along the French River, three distinct villages emerge at Merino, Chaseville, and Perryville. The growth of the largest, Merino, is furthered by the construction of the H. H. Stevens Cotton Mill in 1846, and receives its major stimulus from the building of the large granite Stevens Mills complex from 1858-1868. By period's end, two distinct worker residential areas of single and multiple family houses have emerged: the area (named Jericho) north of the Stevens factory along the Oxford Street axis, including Green, West, Chestnut, and Oak Streets; and the area south of the mills, south of Main Street and east of Schofield Avenue. In addition, a smaller residential cluster develops further west at the Hill Street/Main Street intersection. South of Merino, at Chaseville, fire destroys the Dudley Mfg. Co. mill in 1855. In 1860, a stone mill is built and a small cluster of worker housing is constructed west of the mill, and on Hill Street. Further south, textile manufacturing is initiated at Perryville in the 1840s, with upper and lower mills by 1870, and a worker housing cluster of duplexes and cottages off Perryville Road.

### D. Economic Base

The dominance of textile manufacturing in the local economy continued as the number of mills increased to five by 1870. The development of Dudley was closely tied to that of Webster, which quickly overtook its parent town in population and value of goods produced. Because most commercial developments occurred in Webster, Dudley developed nothing above the village store. Outside of the manufacturing villages along the French River, at West Dudley, and Tufts Village, and the village of Dudley Center with Nichols Academy, the remainder of the town was extensively improved as cultivated or pasture land.

A number of changes occurred in the textile industry during the period. In 1832 a second mill was erected at Perryville for the manufacture of stocking yarn. It burned in 1857 but was rebuilt. At Chaseville, the 1816 Dudley Cotton Mfg. Co. mill, located on the Webster side of the French River, burned in 1855. The privilege was purchased in 1857 by John Chase of Burrillville, Rhode Island, who in 1860 erected a large stone mill on the Dudley side of the river for the manufacture of cassimeres. The Tufts mill in the northern part of town burned in 1868, and was never

rebuilt. In West Dudley, a mill for the manufacture of Kentucky jeans was erected in 1839 near the site of an earlier gristmill. A fire in 1850 destroyed the mills, and the site was not utilized until 1864 when grist and saw mills were built. The following year a paper mill was erected.

The most significant change during the period occurred in 1846 when Henry H. Stevens of North Andover, Massachusetts, purchased the former Dudley Woolen Mfg. Co. mills at Merino Village, idle since 1840. Stevens installed flax machinery and began the manufacture of linen coats and burlaps from American-grown flax. By 1855, the company manufactured one million yards of cloth worth one million dollars and employed more people than the three woolen mills combined. In that year major improvements to the dam and power system were undertaken, and between 1862 and 1865 a large five-story stone mill was erected. By 1865, production increased to two million yards annually, although its value declined to only \$300,000. One hundred men and 75 women were employed. The four woolen mills, bolstered by wartime government contracts, produced 600,000 yards of cassimeres and employed 156 men and 75 women.

Minor industries also present in Dudley during this period included leather and shoe making, lumber and woodworking, and the manufacture of firearms. A tannery and currier's shop operated near Dudley Center until the late 1860s or early 1870s, with most of the leather dyeing to the local boot and shoe makers and to a small saddle, harness, and trunk manufactory which operated from the 1840s to the 1870s. In 1837, 26 men and 18 women made 27,740 pairs of boots and shoes. Production declined during the 1840s and 1850s, but by 1865, 37,000 pairs were made by 30 men and 20 women. This contrasts sharply with the extensive shoe industry in Webster, which in 1865 employed 285 men and women in the production of nearly 300,000 pairs of shoes.

Dudley's lumber harvest was never large; by 1865, 230,000 feet of boards and up to 1,300 cords of firewood were cut for market annually. A small chair and cabinetmaker's shop and a shop where scythe snathes were made operated in the town during the 1830s and 1840s, but disappeared by the 1850s. During the mid 1850s a firearm manufactory produced 2,300 rifles and pistols annually and employed ten men. An iron foundry was established along the French River at Merino Village during the late 1860s by J. Golvin and in 1870 produced machinery and pipe castings.

The town's 140 or so farms remained engaged in mixed husbandry. Sheep and cattle-raising were important, although the number of sheep declined drastically after the 1840s. A number of farmers listed themselves as stock breeders in 1870. The products of the dairy included large quantities of butter and cheese, and after the 1840s increasing quantities of milk were sold. In 1845, 34,400 lbs. of butter, 33,990 lbs. of cheese, and 8,100 gallons of milk were marketed. By 1875, the figures were 28,000 lbs. of butter, 8,600 lbs. of cheese, and 111,740 gallons of milk. Hay and permanent pasture land increased through the period, while the amount of land devoted to corn and other grains decreased.



## E. Architecture

**Residential:** The one-story, center chimney plan appears to have remained the most popular house form for the early portion of the period. Again, several granite houses of this type were noted. One- and two-story double chimney dwellings also occur frequently. The center chimney continues to occur throughout the second half of the period, but appears to be overshadowed by the two-story, double chimney, double pile arrangement. Both one- and two-story, gable end, side-passage plans are in evidence throughout the entire period, abandoning Greek Revival detail for Italianate and Queen Anne trim in the latter decades.

Of special interest is the ca. 1850 residence built by Zephaniah Baker of Worcester north of Dudley Center. The twelve-sided dwelling reflects the increasing mid 19th century enthusiasm for octagonal buildings. Baker published The Cottage Builder's Manual in 1856 which described the multi-sided house form. Just to the north is an octagonal house, possibly designed by Baker as well.

A significant amount of worker housing survives from the Early Industrial period. Many two-story, double chimney duplexes and some rowhouses can be found in the eastern section of town where the Stevens mills are located.

**Institutional:** In 1834, the Union meetinghouse was constructed for the Methodist and Universalist congregations. The Universalists bought out the Methodists' share the following year. In 1844-1845 the Methodists erected their third church structure, on Dudley Hill.

The old center school of ca. 1840, a two-story, seven-bay structure, survives as does a contemporary, gable end schoolhouse.

**Commercial:** A two-story gabled structure dating from the mid 19th century which served as a tavern/hotel remains.

**Industrial:** The Stevens mill buildings were first constructed during the late 1850s. These early structures are built of coursed rubble granite with quoined effects at the corners. Later mills have an Italianate feeling. The 1859 wheel house has chiseled into one of its lintels: "All was others, All will be others." Between 1862 and 1865, the complex was expanded by the addition of a five-story granite mill measuring 207 x 70 feet with three wings measuring 83 x 70 feet, 80 x 24 feet, and 210 x 40 feet.

## IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

### A. Transportation Routes

The 19th century road and rail system continues in use.

### B. Population

Population growth throughout the period was steady, increasing from 2,388 in 1870 to 4,373 in 1915. Only one five-year period

yielded a loss, from 1880-1885. The French Canadians dominated the foreign population until 1905, when the Poles became the most numerous of the foreign population. Other important immigrant groups included Germans through the the period, and Russians later. Although church formation stopped, the populace was well served by adjacent Webster's many churches. Manufacturing continued to be the primary employment, expanding during the period to 905 from 499.

With the generous philanthropy of the Conant family, Nichols Academy flourished.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Industrial-related growth continues along the French River in the east, and is initiated on the Quinebaug River in the west. Institutional expansion occurs in the Center, where three brick buildings are built for Nichols College in 1885, and the Congregational church is replaced in 1891, after an 1890 fire. In Merino Village, mill enlargements occur in 1900, and a new mill is built in 1913. A library is built on Village Street in 1901. Residential infill occurs in the Oxford Street (Jericho) area, and in the Central/River Street area. Linear residential expansion is directed south on Schofield Avenue and west on Main Street. At Chaseville, mill additions are made in the 1870s and early 1880s. At Perryville, mill capacity is doubled in 1889. A proprietors' estate is built in 1875, and worker tenements are added during the period.

On the Quinebaug River at West Dudley, a paper mill is built in 1881, burns in 1885, and is rebuilt in 1886. The West Dudley Cooperative Creamery is established in 1887. Some housing is built west of the river. Further south on the Quinebaug River, near the Connecticut line, a new textile village is established at Quinebaug (or Dundee) in 1871-1872, with the Intervale Mills, worker cottage rows along River Road, and the proprietors' estate on the Connecticut line.

### D. Economic Base

Few changes occurred in the town's economic base during the late 19th and early 20th century. Textile manufacturing remained the major industry, providing most of the town's employment and more than 95% of the value of goods produced annually. The town's population increased steadily through the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By 1905, 1,047 persons, or nearly one of four inhabitants of the town, were employed in the eight manufacturing firms.

One new textile mill was established during the period; the Intervale Mill was erected in 1872 on the Quinebaug River by Eben S. Stevens, son of Henry H. Stevens. The mill was located just within the Dudley line above the village of Quinebaug in Thompson, Connecticut, and produced jute goods with about 100 employees. The other textile mills in Dudley fared well through the period, despite several years of reduced and sporadic operation during the

1890s. The Chaseville mill made additions to its plant in 1870, 1878, 1882, and 1899, when it was taken over by the American Woolen Co. At Perryville the yarn and cassimere mills also expanded their operation; the cassimere mill doubled its capacity in 1899. The Stevens Linen Co. in Merino Village made numerous improvements and additions through the period, and added new machinery in 1900. In 1913 a new mill was erected for hackling and carding, replacing the original 1812 mill.

At West Dudley, a new paper mill was built in 1880, but was destroyed by fire in 1885 and rebuilt the next year, continuing through the period. Metal working was carried on in several shops through the 1880s and included the furnace which produced castings, a manufactory of artisans' tools, and several machine shops and blacksmiths. A brickyard was operated near the Quinebaug River in southern Dudley from the late 1860s to the late 1890s, and a stone quarry was worked during the 1840s and 1890s, providing stone for many of the improvements in the town's textile mills during those periods.

Dudley's agricultural production became increasingly focused on dairying as the 19th century progressed. By 1905, 516,914 gallons of milk were sold as well as 37,840 lbs. of butter, the third highest figure in Worcester County. Increased butter production was stimulated by the establishment of the West Dudley Cooperative Creamery. By 1905, 31 dairy farms existed in the town and occupied one third of the town's farmland, double the amount occupied in 1895. More than 7,000 of 12,000 acres of farmland were used for mowing or permanent pasture.

#### E. Architecture

**Residential:** The traditional center and double chimney forms still occur, but are overshadowed by the gable end, side passage plan frequently enlarged by the addition of a substantial ell to two-story examples. Colonial Revival detailed dwellings occur somewhat less frequently.

Two-story, double chimney worker housing of two to six or seven units continued to be built throughout the end of the 19th century. A few three-deckers were noted.

**Institutional:** The 1823 Congregational church burns in 1890 and is replaced the following year by the Conant Memorial church, a brick Romanesque gable end mass with brownstone trim, designed by C. F. Wilcox of Providence, Rhode Island.

In 1885, the brick Nichols Academy Observatory and Library and the brick Queen Anne Conant Hall dormitory were erected. Other public school buildings were also erected during the last quarter of the 19th century: West Dudley School, ca. 1875; Second Horn School, ca. 1877; the Chaseville School, 1880; and the brick Queen Anne Dudley Hill School in 1890. In 1901, the brick Colonial Revival Dudley Public Library was erected, designed by Cutting, Carleton, and Cutting.

Commercial: A ca. 1875 frame Craftsman style depot survives from this period.

Industrial: Between 1900-1913, Stevens Mill enlarged its facility by the addition of several yellow brick wings to the existing 19th century complex.

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

### A. Transportation Routes

By the 1920s, local roads are improved as auto highways, with the main highway, the segment of the north-south Worcester-Norwich road along the French River corridor on Schofield Avenue-Perryville Road (Route 12). Other early, main routes are the old Central Pike from Webster through Quinebaug to North Woodstock, Connecticut (Route 97) with a 1916 concrete bridge over Tufts Branch; and a new River Road from Southbridge through Quinebaug to North Grosvenordale, Connecticut along the Quinebaug River corridor (Route 131). A later highway is Dresser Hill Road (Route 31) from Charlton Center to Dudley Center.

### B. Population

Little information is available for this town during this period. Population growth was small, with an overall increase only 5% added, from 4,373 in 1915 to 4,616 in 1940. A dip was experienced in 1920 when the total dropped to 3,701. The foreign-born population dropped dramatically with changing immigration legislation, from 34.7% to 18% by period's end. Manufacturing continued to be the primary town employer for both men and women working outside the home. Employment in white collar clerical positions more than doubled among males, more than tripled for females. The effects of the Depression can be seen in the number of males seeking work (179) and engaged in emergency employment (128).

### C. Settlement Pattern

The main growth center continues to be the Merino Village area, where a new Stevens Mill is built in 1928. Linear residential development continues on Main Street and Schofield Avenue; infill continues in the Oxford Street area, with a linear extension west on Pine Street. At Chaseville, residential development spreads up the hill between Main Street and Schofield Avenue south of Hill Street. The West Dudley paper mill is rebuilt in 1919. In Dudley Center, some Nichols College buildings are added. Cottage development occurs on the west side of Pierpoint Meadow Pond (Charlton Pond) and the south and west shores of Merino Pond.

### D. Economic Base

Textile manufacturing continued to be the major employer and producer of goods in Dudley through the period, although the Depression forced the closing of the Chaseville mill and Perry Woolen Co. in Perryville in 1929. The latter was reopened in 1931

by Lyman Tiffany of Webster as the Tiffany Webster Mills. The Stevens Linen Co. added a building to its weaving and finishing departments in 1927 and increased its production of towels, while the Intervale Mill and the West Dudley Paper Co. on the Quinebaug River continued through the period. A foundry and machine shop also survived the Depression and continued operations through the 1930s. Production in 1927 in the eight establishments totalled \$6.18 million, with 1,430 employees. The middle 1920s also registered the highest pre-World War II population in Dudley--4,594 inhabitants. During the Depression year of 1931, employment in the eight establishments fell to 954, while production dropped to \$3.78 million. By 1940, although there were nine manufacturing establishments and production increased to \$10.4 million, employment figures continued to decline to 780 wage earners.

The dominance of dairying in agricultural production continued through the period. Poultry farms, fruit orchards, and vegetable and market gardens were also important.

#### E. Architecture

Residential: Little apparent major development, but growth continues to be evidenced around industrial centers by the bungaloid and Four Square house types.

Institutional: A 1920 camp/retreat constructed for the Assumption Fathers is the only noted development.

### XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

### XII. SOURCES