

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

EASTHAMPTON

Report Date: 1982

Associated Regional Report: Connecticut Valley

Reconnaissance Survey Town Reports, produced for MHC's Statewide Reconnaissance Survey between 1979 and 1987, introduce the historical development of each of the Commonwealth's municipalities. Each report begins with an historic overview, a description of topography, and political boundaries. For the purposes of the survey, the historic period has been subdivided into seven periods: Contact (1500–1620), Plantation (1620–1675), Colonial (1675–1775), Federal (1775–1830), Early Industrial (1830–1870), Late Industrial (1870–1915), and Early Modern (1915–1940/55). Each report concludes with survey observations that evaluate the town's existing historic properties inventory and highlight significant historic buildings, settlement patterns, and present threats to these resources. A bibliography lists key secondary resources.

Town reports are designed for use together with a series of town maps that demarcate settlement patterns, transportation corridors and industrial sites for each historic period. These maps are in the form of color-coded, polyester overlays to the USGS topographic base map for each town on file and available for consultation at MHC. For further information on the organization and preparation of town reports, readers should contact MHC.

Users should keep in mind that these reports are now two decades or more old. The information they contain, including assessments of existing knowledge, planning recommendations, understanding of local development, and bibliographic references all date to the time they were written. In some cases, information on certain topics was not completed. No attempt has been made to update this information.

Electronic text was not available for digital capture, and as a result most of the reports have been scanned as PDF files. While all have been processed with optical character recognition, there will inevitably be some character recognition errors.

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MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: August, 1982

COMMUNITY: Easthampton

I. Topography

Easthampton falls on the western periphery of the Mt. Tom Range which extends along the town's eastern border. Elevations generally range between 550 and 650 feet above sea level. West of this range, local terrain can be characterized as a relatively level plain. This area is a portion of the original bed of Lake Hadley, a glacial lake that extended north of the Holyoke Range. Several waterways cut through the plain, the largest of which is the Manhan River, the site of Easthampton's two earliest industrial operations. Large-scale industrial development in the 19th century resulted in the diversion of portions of the Manhan and the creation of three sizeable mill ponds. The Manhan and its tributaries flow into the Connecticut River, a part of which extends along the town's northeastern boundary. The only freshwater bodies are man-made mill ponds.

II. Political Boundaries

Easthampton was originally included within the Northampton grant in 1653, and its boundary extended southward to Springfield (Holyoke) by 1685. The northern section was settled as the Pascomuck grant from Northampton in 1699 and the southern section was include within the Southampton precinct in 1753. It was established as an independent district of Easthampton from Northampton and Southampton in 1785, and was incorporated as a town in 1809. The northern boundary defined along the Northampton line with the Connecticut River Oxbow as the original boundary with Hadley (now Northampton). The eastern boundary was defined along the crest of Mt. Tom with Northampton and the western boundary adjusted with annex from Southampton during 1841-1850 along the Manhan River and North Branch.

III. Historic Overview

An industrial suburban center on the primary corridor between Holyoke and Northampton, Easthampton is located along the lower Manhan River at the base of Mt. Tom with direct access to the Connecticut River. It includes a reported fortified native site on Fort Hill near Oxbow.

There was an early mill site for Northampton at Manhan Falls before King Philip's War and there was an early 18th century native attack at the Pascomuck settlement. Farming extended along the Manhan valley (Route 10) during the Colonial Period, with some mid-18th century houses of early plan remaining within the town center and along North Branch valley. A meetinghouse was established after the Revolution at Southampton Center; agricultural expansion continued along the valley lowlands through the early 19th century. Some Federal houses remain along the Route 10 axis and Greek Revival farmsteads along East Street at the base of Mt. Tom.

Rapid industrial development occurred during the mid-19th century with location of national button and elastic webbing factories around Manhan Falls at Southampton Center. Original Early Industrial Period fabric remains nearly intact around Nashawannuck mills at Cottage Street with related workers'

housing east along Everett Street. Formation of an affluent suburban neighborhood south from the town center along Main and Park Streets extended to Williston Academy with well preserved Greek Revival and Italianate houses. The town center expanded as the civic focus during the Civil War prosperity with brick school, business blocks, and a landmark towered Moorish Revival town hall of early design.

Economic expansion continued through the Late Industrial Period with the development of a railroad corridor along the Manhan River to Ferry Street; surviving structures include period factory complexes around Lower Millpond and Rubber Thread Pond with a Victorian depot. An extensive housing district developed along the Everett Street axis with a mixture of company tenements and wooden three-deckers, although some Holyoke style brick apartments are evident along the Cottage Street commercial district, and this area includes a period theatre. The status neighborhood remained along the Park Street axis anchored by a notable Romanesque Library and an array of elaborate Queen Anne and Colonial Revival houses.

Suburban expansion was maintained along trolley lines through the early 20th century, with period Revival churches on Holyoke Road and market farms of East Street to Mt. Tom.

Present development is evident as rapid commercial expansion along the Route 10 corridor to Northampton and extensive suburban growth along Loudville Road and Strong Street to Southampton. The town center retains complete historic industrial fabric with some preservation effort around Depot Square, although secondary commercial streets are suffering from economic decay. The farming landscape along East Street has been nearly eroded by tract development of Route 141 corridor from Holyoke, while remaining agriculture is active at Manhan meadows around Oxbow.

IV. Contact Period (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes

There was a regional corridor from the Connecticut River south to Woronoco (Westfield) along the Manhan River valley. A primary north-south trail apparently followed from Nonotuck (Northampton) as Florence-Northampton Road to the Manhan fordway (Route 10) with an original loop as Lyman-Ballard Streets. From the fordway a main trail is reported south as Main-South-Strong Streets to County Road (Czelusnaik, Easthampton, 1975, p.228), with a likely route south to Pomeroy Meadows as Route 10. A secondary north-south trail appears probably along the base of Mount Tom from Pascomuck as East Street to Hendrick Road, with connecting branches across the pine plain to Manhan fordway as Strong Street and Brock Road through Nontuck park. Other connectors to the Manhan fordway originally followed along Everett-Clark Streets across Brickyard Brook (now replaced by a street grid). Trails to Manhan North Branch from Manhan fordway appear likely along West Street and possibly as Loudville Road.

B. Settlement Patterns

There were no reported Contact Period sites in Easthampton. However, the town's varied resource base and the presence of 34 undated native sites strongly suggest there was native occupation during this period. Native sites were probably established on the lowlands west of Mount Tom, the location of

most of the undated native sites. Likely focal points of native settlement would have been the confluence of the Manhan and Connecticut Rivers and the Manhan River Falls adjacent to the River's junction with Route 10. Both of these locations were primary fishing sites.

C. Subsistence Patterns

Native horticulture likely was undertaken throughout the town's western lowlands. Fishing probably focused on the Connecticut and Manhan rivers at the two locations mentioned above. Historically, the Easthampton plains were the site of native hunts of the large herds of deer (Lyman 1866:20). Additional hunting likely occurred on Mount Tom.

D. Observations

Although not endowed with as rich a resource base as Northampton, the Easthampton area probably had a moderate native population, particularly during the annual spring fish runs. Locally, Easthampton appears to have come under the control of the Norwottucks, centered in Northampton and Hadley. Regionally, they probably were loosely affiliated with the Pocumtucks of western Massachusetts. The greatest possibility of surviving evidence of native period sites should occur on the lowlands between the village of Easthampton and Mount Tom, and along the Connecticut and Manhan Rivers. Vestiges of native fishing encampments may still survive at Manhan River Falls.

V. Plantation Period (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes

The primary north-south path from Northampton to Westfield along the Manhan River was improved as the Route 10 axis following Florence Road-Northampton-Main-South-Strong Streets to Country Road. An alternate route to Springfield around Mount Tom followed from the Northampton meadows to the Manhan River bridge (1668) at Fort Road, continuing south as River Street to Pascomuck. A cartway bridge was evidently constructed across the Manhan River at Southampton Center with a mill site (1674; Holland, 1855:II, p. 194).

B. Population

None of the available sources provide figures of the area's native population. However, the native community was large enough to petition the political authorities of Old Northampton in 1664 for permission to establish a pallisaded village in Easthampton.

It is reputed by one source that there was one colonial resident inhabiting Easthampton prior to 1675.

C. Settlement Patterns

Native settlement patterns probably remained essentially the same as those suggested for the Contact Period. The ca. 1664 native pallisaded village is claimed to have been situated on a small bluff overlooking the Manhan River slightly southwest of its junction with Route 10.

The sole colonial house was said to have been established by John Webb in ca. 1665 in "Nashawannuck" (western half of northern Easthampton) near the home (1879) of Henry Clapp (Sylvester 1897:II, 263).

D. Economic Base

The natives appeared to have maintained their traditional subsistence rounds. There was probably trade with the Connecticut River's colonial settlements such as Northampton, Hadley, South Hadley, Chicopee, and Springfield.

As part of Old Northampton, Easthampton was probably utilized by Northampton residents for grazing and timberland.

E. Observations

Research should determine the extent of native period settlement in Easthampton. Existing secondary sources provide minimal information. Particular emphasis should be placed on clarifying the site of the ca. 1664 fortified village, since Northampton histories locate the settlement complex in Northampton.

VI. Colonial Period (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes

There was continued improvement of connecting highways along the Manhan River valley from Northampton with a focus at the Easthampton mill site (Route 10) and the Connecticut River Highway to Springfield along River Road (Route 5).

B. It is unclear if Easthampton had a permanent Colonial Period native population. There were no figures for the community's colonial population.

The majority of the settlement's first inhabitants were former Northampton residents.

C. Settlement Patterns

The first extensive colonial settlements of Easthampton did not take place until ca. 1700, when five families settled in "Pascommuck," probably on the lowlands bordered by the Manhan River, Broad Brook and Mount Tom. This fortified settlement was destroyed and 19 or 20 of its inhabitants were killed when attacked by native forces in 1704. The town remained free of additional native attacks for the remainder of the period, excluding the scalping of a Northampton resident in 1724.

The next phase of settlement did not take place until between 1725 and 1730 with Joseph Bartlett's establishment of a home within the present village of Easthampton on Main Street. At approximately the same date, several homes were erected in the general vicinity of the northern portion of Route 10. Initial settlement on the southern portion of Main Street occurred in the 1740s or early 1750. 1774 marked the first settlement of southeastern Easthampton with the construction of a home by Israel Hendrick on the east side of Broad Brook. Easthampton lacked a meetinghouse until 1785. Residents attended the Southampton and Northampton meetinghouses for religious services.

D. Economic Base

Agriculture was the primary focus of local residents, with emphasis on wheat and flax production. The most productive cropland was probably situated

adjacent to the Connecticut River and west on the lowlands bordering the Manhan River. There was only limited industrial development during the Colonial Period. Two mills were established well before the town's first settlement by Northampton residents. David Wilton, Medah Pomeroy, and Joseph Taylor began operation of a sawmill probably shortly after 1674 on the Manhan River, slightly east of its intersection with Route 10. This mill was followed by a second grist mill built by Samuel Bartlett between 1686 and 1705 on the Manhan River adjacent to Manhan Falls. A sawmill was established by Captain Lemuel Lyman and Luther Clark between 1770 and 1775 in the general vicinity of the northern end of the present Lower Millpond. Some area residents probably worked in the Lead Mine complex that flourished in southeastern Southamton on the town's border with Easthampton in the 1770s.

E. Architecture

Residential: Comparatively few 18th century houses have survived in Easthampton; only four are identified in the local inventory, and most of the other early houses observed in the field appeared to date from the Federal Period. Most of the Colonial houses are of the center chimney plan, but one center hall, double chimney houses is known as well. The center hall house was probably one of the most stylish houses in town when built; a three-story gambrel roofed structure with dormers, it is currently an apartment building. Only one other house retains as much of its original form: the center chimney at 179 Pleasant Street. With a three-bay wide facade, integral lean-to and end gable overhang, the house exhibits features which were probably once as common in Easthampton as they were in the surrounding region. Also known to survive is a gambrel roofed cottage and the center chimney Parsons House (1769).

F. Observations

Easthampton was closely tied to Southamton and Northampton largely because of the settlement's limited economic base and lack of religious/civic facilities. The town's contact with the adjoining community of Holyoke was hindered by Mount Tom, which extended along Easthampton's eastern border. Future research should clarify period colonial settlement patterns. Existing secondary sources only provide limited data. Development within the present village of Easthampton has likely destroyed a large portion of archaeological remains of period settlement. However, the original site of the ca. 1700 Pascommuck settlement and settlement associated with the Southamton Lead Mine complex in northeastern and northwestern Easthampton respectively, probably survive archaeologically, due to the light development in these areas.

VII. Federal Period (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes

Formation of Easthampton town center (1785) created a radial highway pattern from the meetinghouses common, including Park, Cottage, and Pleasant Streets. There was attempted construction of a New Haven and Northampton Canal along the Manhan River valley in 1826-29.

B. Population

Between 1790 (pop. 457) and 1830 (pop. 745), Easthampton's population rose 63%, about average for the county as a whole. Most of this growth, however,

was in the earliest decade, 1790-1800, with the rate trailing off by 1830.

C. Settlement Patterns

The civic center formed around the Easthampton meetinghouse (1785) at the Manhan River mill site along College Highway (Route 10). Agriculture remained the primary activity along Manhan River meadows from Connecticut Oxbow to Easthampton.

D. Economic Base

The town remained entirely agricultural during the Federal Period, with continuation of the 17th century saw and grist mills at Easthampton village. Of all the towns in the county in 1790, Easthampton had the smallest population.

In the succeeding period, Samuel Williston would establish the town's prosperity by the moving of his button works from Williamsburg "to the town of his residence," but as early as 1832 (and probably in the late 1820s) Williston was putting out work to women from Hatfield to Gransby, West Springfield to Peru.

E. Architecture

Residential: While less than a half dozen houses of the period are recorded in the local inventory (these are primarily the most stylish and substantial), the actual number of Federal houses surviving in the town is much greater. These reflect a substantial increase in economic base and population over the Colonial Period. Those inventoried include the Lyman House (ca. 1830) and the Uriel Clark House (ca. 1800), both center hall plan structures with projecting entrance porches. The Clark House is one of the earliest brick houses in the town. The majority of the surviving Federal houses, however are simple center chimney farmhouses which retain the traditional five-bay facade with center entrances. Examples were noted on Loudville Road, Clapp, East, West, and Northampton Streets. Perhaps as many as a dozen period farmhouses were observed.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse, about which no details are known, was built in 1785. In 1797, four school districts were established, but only three schoolhouses were indicated on the 1830 map.

VIII. Early Industrial Period (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes

There was continued improvement of Manhan River corridor to Easthampton center with the completion of the Hampshire and Hampden Canal (1835) along West-Northampton Streets. Portions of the canal bed apparently remain in place near O'Neil Street (WPA 1937, p.572). There was failure of the canal (1847) and replacement by the Westfield and Northampton railroad (1856) constructed through Easthampton Center along the Main-Pleasant Streets axis (in part abandoned). Rapid development of the Easthampton industrial complex created a local street grid from the Manhan mills, including radial plates on Holyoke, Clark, Ferry and Everett Streets from the Cottage Street bridge. The connecting highway across Mount Tom included Route 141 to Holyoke and Route 5 across the Connecticut Oxbow from Northampton.

B. Population

Easthampton in the Early Industrial Period experienced a population growth of 385.9%, the highest of any town in the county, nearly twice the next highest town (Northampton), and eight times the county average. The town experienced a substantial 87% rise in 1840-1850, probably connected with the Seminary and the button works, but most of its growth occurred in the years 1855-1870. By 1870 the population stood at 3,620. A large proportion of this new growth was due to a large immigrant influx. As early as 1855, the town had a 17.8% foreign-born population, fourth highest in the county. By 1880, this would grow to 27.9%. In 1855, though the majority were Irish (76%), 13% were Germans, a figure that would grow substantially in later decades as increasing numbers came to work as elastic web weavers.

C. Settlement Patterns

Rapid expansion of industrial activity occurred with the establishment of the Nashawannuck Company (1848) and the opening of Northampton railroad connections (1856) around Southampton Center. Formation of an industrial corridor along the railroad corridor from Rubber Thread Pond to Lower Mill Pond on the Manhan River occurred, with an extensive worker's district from the Cottage Street mill dam east on Clark and Everett Streets to Brickyard Brook. A suburban status neighborhood formed south of the town center along Park and Main Street to the focus of Williston Academy (1841). A commercial business district developed around the town common with multi-storied brick blocks along the Main Street axis. Agriculture expanded with the introduction of commercial tobacco along the Manhan River valley from Connecticut Oxbow to the base of Mount Tom.

D. Economic Base

Easthampton's prosperity commenced in the 1840s and 50s, largely due to the efforts of Samuel Williston and his associates. Between 1840 and 1850, Easthampton's prosperity (as measured by property valuation) had multiplied nearly four times; in the same period, its population rose 87%. The establishment of Williston Seminary in 1841 was followed in 1847 by the movement of his extensive button manufactory from Williamsburg, where previously he had been associated with the Haydens, who built Williston's machinery, invented for the purpose in the 1830s. With Horation G. Knight, Williston established Williston, Knight and Company, building a factory where Union Street crossed Broad Brook. Next to the button factory, Williston built a suspender factory the following year, the Nashawannuck Manufacturing Company. It was the Nashawannuck's need for elastic webbing that was addressed by many of Easthampton's later rubber-related industries.

Until 1859 the Nashawannuck relied on outside suppliers for yarn and elastic webbing. In that year, Williston began construction of a large cotton yarn mill to supply the Nashawannuck (the Williston Mills), and, more significantly, of what was reputedly the first elastic web mill in the U.S. at Glendale in the western part of town. Not until 1861, however, when English web weavers were induced to come to Easthampton where the works apparently put on a sound footing. (The weavers were primarily from Leicester and included William and Thomas Martin, who in late years would establish the importance of elastic web manufacture in Chelsea.) As the Glendale industry grew, weavers of other nationalities, including a large number of Germans, came to

Easthampton, and in 1863 the company moved to a location adjoining the Nashawannuck, reincorporating as the Glendale Elastic Fabric Company. Until 1864, the company imported all its rubber thread, but in that year several Glendale directors, incorporated as the Easthampton Rubber Thread Company in 1863, constructed the first U.S. rubber thread factory [?].

All manufacturers did well on Civil War government contracts. By 1865, 755 men and women were working in the cotton, button, or elastic web mills. Of these, the largest employer was the Nashawannuck Manufacturing Company, with an employee roster of 470 men and women, while the Williston Mills (which in 1865 had built a second mill 400 yards upstream) employed another 175, and the button works, 115.

Easthampton's prosperity attracted other manufacturers, merchants, and farmers. A brickyard was opened in 1864; the Valley Machine Company, 1868; King and Forsyth silks operated the old plant at Glendale. In 1871 the Mount Tom and Easthampton Railroad, incorporated by Williston director Seth Warner and other, linked the New Haven and Northampton with Connecticut River railroads, running alongside the Williston mills.

E. Architecture

Residential: Great expansion took place after 1840 at the town center as Easthampton's button and suspender industries were established and grew. Discrete and well defined neighborhoods of elite and middle class had developed, as had worker's housing, by the end of the period. The most stylish and substantial houses were built along Park and Main Streets with workers' housing located adjacent to factories on Love field, Pleasant, and Ferry Streets. A variety of plans were employed but the preferred houses from of the period appeared to be the end- or double-chimney, center entrance Italianate house with three-by-three bay square plan and low hip roof. This choice would seem to have been influenced by the Italianate architecture of William F. Pratt, a Northampton practitioner who designed a number of hip roofed, square plan Italianate houses there. At least one house in town, a flushboard facade square Italianate on Main Street, whose entrance surround features an entablature supported on heavy console brackets with acorn pendants, may in fact be a Pratt design. Pratt did design a house for Mrs. Swift of Easthampton (Hunt: 1977, 94) and the Main Street house may be that building.

In addition to the square plan Italianate houses, a number of substantial sidehall plan transitional Greek Revival to Italianate houses were built as well. Many include frieze windows with cast iron grillwork, acanthus-carved porch posts and entrance surrounds with Greek Key fretwork. Also built were end and double chimney Greek Revival houses in brick, such as the Scott House (1861), the Shoals House (1867, Juio Pomeroy, builder) and the First Parish Parsonage (1853-55). For more modest, single-family housing, the sidehall plan houses with Greek Revival/Italianate detailing predominated. Such housing was built on side streets adjacent to Main, Park, and Holyoke Streets. Of special note is a stuccoed Italianate house on Holyoke Street with geometric detail imprinted in the stucco. Workers' housing has survived well in the town and consists primarily of frame double houses and cottages with interior chimneys and sidehall plans. Examples are concentrated along Ferry and Pleasant Streets. Outside the town center, center and double chimney plan houses and cottages predominated but by the end of the period, the sidehall plan had been adopted for farmhouses as well. At least one second Empire houses (Sawyer House, 1867) is known.

Institutional: Several important institutional buildings were built at the town center in this period. The finest of these is the Ruskinian Gothic Town Hall (1869, Charles E. Parker, Boston), a three-and-a-half story brick structure with a tall balconied campanile, arcaded entrance porch and polychromed voussoirs. Other buildings included the brick Italianate Memorial Hall (originally the High School, 1864), and the Congregational Church (1852). The Church, a brick Romanesque Revival structure with a projecting square entrance tower with spire (present spire, 1862), was built over a period of three years as successive fires in 1854 and 1855 hampered efforts to complete the building. The Church complex includes a Chapel (1879) and a Parsonage (1853-55).

The above-mentioned buildings are the only institutional buildings known extant. Other significant institutional activity which occurred in the period included the founding of the Williston Academy (1841), the establishment of a high school (1864) and the organization of a Methodist church (1863). The Williston Academy constructed its first building in 1841; that was replaced in 1856. A gymnasium was built in 1863, with a four-story dormitory of brick completed in 1866. The only surviving building of the period associated with the Williston Seminary is the Samuel Williston House (ca. 1840). Three town halls were built in the period--in 1833, 1842, and 1868 (present). In addition, the First Congregational Church commissioned William Pratt to design a new church (80 x 60 feet) in 1836-37 (burned 1929).

Commercial: Easthampton is fortunate to retain an intact row of brick commercial buildings of the period. The row, located on Main Street, consists of four three-story Romanesque Revival or Victorian Italianate buildings, including the Preston (1849), Lambie (1866), Pomeroy (1868), and Masonic (1861) Blocks.

Industrial: The most important extant industrial complex is the Williston Mill (1859), a three-story gable roofed brick building with a square stair tower with an open octagonal cupola. Also surviving is the Williston and Knight Button Company office (ca. 1859), a sidehall brick building with Italianate details, including an overhanging eave with exposed rafters.

IX. Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes

There was continued improvement of connections to Easthampton Center with the Easthampton Branch railroad from Mount Tom mainline (1871) along East-Ferry Streets. Later expansion of suburban street railway system occurred from Northampton with its primary route along Pleasant-Main Streets, including private way across Nashawannuck meadows (intact), and an alternate line from Holyoke along East-Clark-Cottage Streets to the town center by 1904. Local street grid continued to expand with connecting links to Northampton on Oliver Street and Holyoke on Plain Street.

B. Population

Easthampton for the Late Industrial Period repeated its record as the fastest growing town in the county, with a rate of 171.9%, well above its nearest competitor, Ware (119.4%) and the county average (56.5%). Most of this growth occurred after 1895 and may well be associated with the arrival of the West Boylston Mills in 1900. By 1915, Easthampton's population stood at 9,845.

Easthampton had one of the largest immigrant populations in the county throughout the period, averaging seven points above the county average in 1880 and 1905. In 1880, in addition to natives of Ireland (49%) and Canada (17%), Easthampton had the largest German-born population in the county (14.7%). In 1905, the German-born population was about the same, although the list of the foreign-born was then topped by French Canadians (27.1%, possibly associated with the cotton mills) and Irish (16.4%), followed by smaller numbers from Poland, Austria, and England.

C. Settlement Patterns

Easthampton Center continued to expand as the urban industrial focus. The railroad corridor was maintained as the primary manufacturing belt from the Nashawannuck fabric mills to Lower Millpond. The worker's district expanded from the Cottage Street dam to East Street along the base of Mount Tom with increasing density as two- and three-family housing. An affluent residential area was maintained along Park and Main Streets from the town center to Williston Academy. Commercial and civic focus remained around the town common with secondary activity along the Cottage Street trolley line to the civic focus at Clark Street-Holyoke Road. Farming continued to be the primary activity along the Manhan meadows and on East street from Oxbow to the base of Mount Tom.

D. Economic Base

The Late Industrial Period represented the maturing of most of the existing mills. The town became a major center of the elastic fabric industry, of which the most extensive representative was the Glendale Elastic Fabrics Company. The combined product of manufactures in Easthampton was valued at \$1.8 million in 1875, giving the town a rank of third in the county after Northampton and Ware. In 1886, George S. Colton, a former foreman in the Glendale Elastic Fabrics plant, erected his own elastic web plant; by 1915 his own sales amounted to \$320,000.

The period also saw at least one major casualty: the Williston Mill was empty by 1900, although the reason for this is unclear. Into its place in 1900 moved the West Boylston Manufacturing Company, a major Worcester County cotton factory displaced by the MDC construction of the Wachusett Reservoir. The King Silk Mills, built on Mechanic Street probably in the 1890s, were taken over by the National Felt Company in 1905. A bleaching and dyeing firm, the Hampton Company, was established five years later.

E. Architecture

Residential: The boom in residential construction, which began in the 1840s, continued well into the Late Industrial Period. Areas around the town center filled in with single-family housing, while settlement expanded southeast along Holyoke Road. By the end of the period, the town center had acquired much of the densely-settled character it retains today.

Substantial Second Empire, Stick Style, Queen Anne, and Craftsman houses were built along Main and Park Streets. The sidehall plan remained the basic unit of planning through the end of the period, but by the 1890s, most large houses were being built with towers, ells, and projecting gabled bays as an embellishment to the sidehall plan. Most Queen Anne and Craftsman houses in

Easthampton incorporate pyramidal hip roof and offset front gables. Simple sidehall plan one- and two-story Queen Anne houses were built in some numbers in the neighborhoods adjacent to Holyoke Street.

After the turn of the century, square plan, pyramidal, hip roof Colonial Revival houses became the most common modest single-family house type. Duplex and fourplex tenement rowhouses remained the standard multiple-family workers' houses type. Numerous brick and frame gable roof double houses with small entry porches and shed dormers were built along Everett, Parsons, and Pleasant Street. Of note is a U-shaped complex of well detailed brick and frame Queen Anne/Craftsman double houses (ca. 1910) built around a park on Pleasant Street; the quality of the housing and their landscaped surroundings suggest that the houses were built for upper level workers. Also of note is a four-story stucco and frame Craftsman apartment block (ca. 1910) on Main Street at the town center.

Institutional: Important institutional construction occurred southeast of the town center in the neighborhoods which developed along Holyoke Street. This consisted of one church (Sacred Heart) and several elementary schools, among them the Maple Street and Parsons Street schools. Sacred Heart Church (ca. 1910) is a gable roofed one-and-a-half story structure with Craftsman detailing. Both schools were built at the end of the period; both are utilitarian brick structures, two stories in height with flat roofs and raised basements. Other institutional construction included the building of the Notre Dame Church and School on Pleasant Street, St. Philip's Episcopal Church and School on Pleasant Street, St. Phillips Episcopal Church on Main Street, and the Public Library. Notre Dame Church (ca. 1905) combines Tuscan, Renaissance Revival, and Gothic elements, while St. Philip's (1901-02) is a well detailed one-story shingle and brownstone Craftsman structure. The Public Library is probably the finest building of the period. Built in 1881 to the designs of the Boston architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns, the Library is a two-story brownstone Queen Anne structure with an octagonal center lantern, tile roof, and half-timbered gables.

Commercial: Commercial construction expanded along Holyoke Road (Route 141) with two- and three-story red and buff brick commercial blocks built along both sides of Holyoke Road from the town center south to Clark Street. Most of these appear to have been built between 1895 and 1915 with Queen Anne, Renaissance Revival and Colonial Revival designs predominating. Also built in the period was the hip roofed depot (ca. 1885) off Holyoke Street.

Industrial: The largest industrial complex built in the period was the Nashawannuck Company Mill (ca. 1880), a complex of four three-story brick buildings of utilitarian design with corbelled cornices.

X. Early Modern Period (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes

Abandonment of trolley routes from Northampton and Holyoke occurred by 1935 as well as improvement of the Manhan River corridor to Westfield, with Route 10 as auto highway through Easthampton Center and Route 5 along the Connecticut River to Holyoke with the original bridge intact (1934) at Oxbow.

B. Population

After a strong period of growth in the World War I years, Easthampton's expansion rate rapidly declined. After 1925, the number of residents actually declined for the rest of the period. The town's overall growth rate, 4.7% placed it 7th among the 23 towns in the county, and close to the county's 4.1% average. In 1935 Easthampton, following Northampton, was the second largest town in the county.

C. Settlement Patterns

Residential expansion continued from Easthampton Center south along Holyoke Road (Route 141) and Main Street (Route 10) as modest suburban development. Secondary commercial expansion emerged along College Highway (Route 10) to Northampton with a primary business and civic focus around the town common. The status residential district remained around Williston Academy with a multiple-family neighborhood along the industrial railroad corridor from Cottage Street center. Tobacco farming was maintained as the primary activity on fertile Manhan meadows with outlying market gardens along East Street and West Street plains.

D. Economic Base

All of Easthampton's major manufacturers did well on World War contracts. In the early 20th century, the West Boylston Mills expanded dramatically, and for most of the period, despite the company's construction of an Alabama mill in 1927, remained the largest employer in town, with an employee roster of 1700 men and women.

The general constriction of business in the early 1920s probably forced the elastic companies to re-evaluate their position. In 1927, the major firms (Glendale Elastic Fabrics, George S. Colton Elastic Web, and Easthampton Rubber Thread Company) merged with the Lowell and Littleton units of Convant, Houghton and Company to form the United Elastic Corporation. Together the three Easthampton units of the new firm employed approximately 1000 persons.

No other major new industries were identified.

E. Architecture

Residential: Residential construction in the Early Modern Period was limited to outlying areas of built-up neighborhoods and to infill construction. Period houses--most of them one- and two-story, gable roof, Colonial Revival cottages--were built along Hendrick, East, Lovefield, Lyman, West, Glendale, and Park Streets. A few larger brick and frame Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman houses were built on Park and Main Streets. One of the most outstanding of these is a hip roofed Craftsman house on Main Street with eyebrow dormers, deep eaves, and exposed rafters.

Institutional: A fair amount of civic and private institutional construction occurred in the period. Among the buildings erected were a buff brick Georgian Revival high school (ca. 1925) on Park Street, a Neoclassical post office (ca. 1925) on Holyoke Street, and several brick Georgian Revival buildings (ca. 1935) at the Williston Academy.

Commercial: Continued commercial construction occurred along Holyoke Road with one- and two-story brick and concrete buildings built through the 1920s. Among these were the Majestic Theatre (ca. 1920), the brick Neoclassical Easthampton National Bank, and the Easthampton Savings Bank. Strip development began to take place on Route 10 north of the town center with at least one drive-through gas station with a bungalow-type gable roof and flared posts, built near West Street.

XI. Survey Observations

General: Easthampton's inventory focuses on buildings at the town center. Outstanding Colonial and Federal Period houses outside the town center are included as are the most significant institutional, commercial and industrial structures. Historical information on inventory forms is often lacking. Further survey work should record all remaining Federal Period structures and should document outstanding mid-19th to early 20th century residences as well as institutional, commercial, and industrial buildings. Area forms should be completed for neighborhoods of middle class and workers' housing, with particular attention paid to adoption of the double house for multiple-family use. Well preserved agricultural landscapes survive in the Fort Hill/Clapp Road area. Also of note, are the commercial district on Main and Pleasant Streets, and workers' housing on Ferry and Pleasant Streets.

Industrial: Easthampton's survey has identified three of its key industrial buildings--the Williston and Knight button factory, the Williston Mills (MHC #23) and the Nashawannuck Manufacturing Company (MHC #1), although there appears to be some confusion over the names of the latter two. There is virtually no evaluation of significance, however. The town is unusual in that representative elements from all of the town's major Early Industrial and Late Industrial Period industries survive. In addition to the above, these include the West Boylston Manufacturing Company (the ca. 1900 expansion of the Williston Mills), and Valley Machine Company, Williston and Knight's new plant, the Glendale Elastic Fabrics Company, and, probably the most intact architecturally, the Easthampton Rubber Thread Company. Many of these plants were key, not only to the development of Easthampton, but to the elastic fabric business generally.

XII. Sources Cited

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