

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

GRAFTON

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.

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MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: 1984

COMMUNITY: Grafton

I. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Grafton lies within the northeastern limits of the Blackstone River drainage basin, with a small area in the northeast corner of the town draining into the Assabet River, which has its source in Grafton. The Blackstone River flows through several manufacturing villages in the southwest corner of the town, while the Quinsigamond River, which drains from Lake Quinsigamond in neighboring Shrewsbury, flows from north to south through the town before joining the Blackstone at Fisherville. Along the eastern edge of the town, Miscoe Brook and several small tributaries flow south into Silver Lake, a large mill pond. The waters flowing out of the pond are named West River, which joins the Blackstone in Uxbridge. These rivers provided many valuable water power sites utilized by 19th century manufacturers.

The surface of Grafton is hilly and uneven, rising from the rich river valleys in four major hills to elevations exceeding 600 feet above sea level. The town's soils consist largely of Gloucester series fine sandy loam and stony fine sandy loam, found on the hilltops and hill slopes. These soils, which vary only in their stone content, are important agricultural soils. They were mostly used for mowing, orchards, or permanent pasture, depending on the quantity of stone present. The narrow Quinsigamond and Blackstone valleys contain rich terrace and kame deposits of Merrimac gravelly sandy loam and Hinckley gravelly loam, which are well suited to crop and hay cultivation. Paxton loam, an agriculturally important soil, occurs near Grafton Center on the top of three drumlins and Keith Hill. Several granite and gneiss outcrops in the southeast corner of the town were quarried for building stone.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Christian Indian plantation, Hassanamisco, established in 1654. Town of Grafton established in 1735. Part of Sutton annexed, 1737. Parts of Sutton and Shrewsbury annexed, 1742. Gore land annexed, 1823. Part of Shrewsbury annexed, 1826. Part of Sutton annexed, 1842. Bounds with Shrewsbury, Worcester, and Westborough established, 1907.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

An upland residential, industrial and agricultural community in the Blackstone River Basin, on the north-south tributary corridors of the Quinsigamond River and Miscoe Brook, and on an historic

east-west route from Massachusetts Bay to the Connecticut River Valley. Site of a 17th century praying Indian village, Hassanamisco. European settlement, ca. 1720, with meetinghouse site established by 1728. Dispersed 18th century agricultural settlement, probably first in the northeast uplands and the Miscoe Brook interval. Early 19th century development of meetinghouse center into large, prosperous, crossroads village. Industrial growth of water power sites at New England Village (1826) in the northwest, and Saundersville-Fisherville-Farnumsville (1827) in the southwest (Blackstone Valley) is further stimulated by canal and railroad development. Continued 19th century expansion of textile industry, with boot and shoe production and important secondary activity. Major Late Industrial textile manufacturing development at Fisherville, yet textile industry declines in early 20th century. Postwar changes include new industrial focus in northwest (Wyman-Gordon), accompanied by suburban growth, and high income residential occupation of the Colonial and Federal period of upland farmsteads and Grafton Center townhouses.

Functional 18th/19th century agricultural landscapes remain, however, most notably on Estabrook Road and Potter Hill, but these are coming under increasing development pressures. New England Village, Saundersville, Fisherville, and Farnumsville retain most of the components of their 19th century industrial growth. Grafton Center may be the best preserved and most substantial 19th century residential/institutional village in the study unit.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes

Interior highlands with central north-south Quinsigamond River-Blackstone River corridor, and secondary eastern north-south West River corridor. East-west trail south of Lake Quinsigamond probably Westborough Road-Creeper Hill Road. North-south trail through Quinsigamond/Blackstone Valley probably Worcester Road-Providence Road-Main Street, with west branch on south side of Blackstone River (Ferry Street-Main Street). Southeast trail to Upton/Mendon along Miscoe Brook corridor: South Street-Old Upton Road-Leland Street. Northeast route to Westborough possibly up Miscoe Brook corridor (Sibley Street-Meadow Brook Road-Adams Road) with alternate upland route North Street-Old Westborough Road.

B. Settlement Pattern

Sites reported on terraces adjacent to the town's waterways, including a Woodland "village" in the north on Bummet Brook above North Grafton. To the south, near the confluence of the Quinsigamond and Blackstone rivers, another group of sites is reported, of unknown cultural affiliation. It is not clear

whether the praying town of Hassanamesit was located near a base camp of the Contact period Nipmuck.

C. Subsistence Pattern

It is not known whether a base camp was located in this area. Small task and family camps can be expected, exploiting seasonally the area's resources: hunting in the hills during the winter, travelling to the steatite quarries to the north, fishing in the ponds, brooks and rivers.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes

Contact period trails continue in use.

B. Settlement Pattern

Native population in praying town by end of the period equals 12 families and a total population of 60. Thirty baptized individuals attended services at the church, many from the area outside the grant. A single white man, Elijah Corlet, who was to serve as schoolmaster, received grants of land in 1659 and 1668. Many natives removed to Natick and Boston during King Philip's War. Two "battles" in that war said to have been fought here, on Pigeon Hill.

C. Settlement Pattern

Native population visited early by missionary Elliot, who forms the colony's third praying town here in 1654. Actual gathering delayed until 1671 when the second native Christian church was formed, and an English building constructed, possibly on Keith Hill. A school was also constructed for the education of converts, as well as housing, although the latter was not utilized by the natives. Most of the population, including the converts, continued to live as they had before, rather than in a nucleated and permanent community designed by the missionaries. The town did, however, become the focus for missionary activities throughout southern Worcester County and northeast Connecticut.

D. Economic Base

White period observers note that this praying town was particularly well endowed with meadow and farm lands, and that the primary occupation was animal husbandry, particularly cattle and swine.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes

With European settlement, trails are improved as roads and highways, and after 1735, a radial network develops from the meetinghouse center to dispersed upland farms and surrounding communities. Local upland connectors include: Lordvale Avenue, Brigham Hill Road, Estabrook Road, Fay Mountain Road, Soap Hill Road. Roads to surrounding communities include: Worcester Road, North Street-Old Westborough Road, South Street-Old Upton Road-Leland Road, and Pleasant Street (to Sutton).

B. Population

Although the native population diminished with the dispersal that followed King Philip's War, this town continued to have numbers far greater than other Worcester County towns. In 1725, native Americans numbered 32. By 1728, nine colonials and their families had purchased land within the four-mile grant. It is not known how many of the 40 proprietors actually came to live on their lands here. Eighty of the total population of ca. 750 died in the French and Indian War.

Both colonials and native Americans were to be served by meetinghouse and school, for the latter at no expense. Grafton's church, gathered by 19 members in 1731, was served by pro-Revival, Edwardsian ministers, but still fraught with difficulties. Their first minister proved too extreme on the tenets of the Great Awakening, even to the members of the Mendon Association, who criticized him. At his dismissal in 1747, a Yale educated man replaced him, but by 1771 had developed his own disagreements with the church and left soon thereafter.

Several Baptists lived in the town, meeting together by 1758, with 28 members by 1775. Settlers to Grafton came from many eastern towns, including Sudbury, Concord, Wenham, Stowe, and Marlboro.

C. Settlement Pattern

Fewer native Americans due to dispersal after King Philip's War. The four-mile tract was reserved for natives when adjacent Sutton was laid out in 1704. When settlement began there after Indian wars in 1714, colonials began purchasing within this grant. By 1728, the General Court permitted Hassanamisco to be sold and settled by colonials. Lots were divided among 40 proprietors, the first division consisting of 40 acres each of upland and meadow. These provided the basis for dispersed farmsteads. A committee was appointed to locate the town center, but as it was felt to be inconvenient, too low, the choice was made of a hill to the west called Assawossachasuck. A lot of four acres would be the site of

the burying ground, training field, and the schoolhouse, as well as the meetinghouse.

E. Architecture

Residential: The large number of surviving traditional house forms (center and double chimney plans) with no datable stylistic features makes it difficult to assess the Colonial period dwellings. The most common type appears to be the one- and two-story center chimney plan. These remain in significant numbers in Grafton, with the earliest (Willard House) dating from 1718. The double chimney plans are more likely to be late Colonial or early Federal period. The Willard House, recorded as having been built in 1718, was originally a one-story, three-bay "half house." Ca. 1760 additions rendered it a two-story, four-bay, center chimney "three-quarter" house which has been thoroughly restored and is now operated in conjunction with the 1766 clock shop as a museum. A gambrel-roofed, one-story, four-bay center chimney house was observed on Route 140 north of Grafton Village.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse was erected in 1730 and measured 50 x 40 feet with 22 feet between joists (Pierce). A schoolhouse, erected in 1731, measured 21 x 16 feet with seven feet between joists (Pierce). By 1754, five school districts had been established (no record of structures).

Commercial: A store operated by Jeremiah Barstow in 1733-34 is documented (non-existent).

Industrial: The one-story, one-room gabled clock shop, now adjoining the Willard House, dates from 1766.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes

Grafton Center becomes an important focus of two important regional routes: the northwest-southeast post road from Worcester to Providence (Worcester Street-Oak Street-South Street-Old Upton Road-Leland Road), and the southwest-northeast route from Connecticut to Boston (Main Street-Pleasant Street-South Street-North Street-Old Westborough Road). In addition, an important east-west route to Worcester, south of Lake Quinsigamond, follows Westborough Road-Creeper Hill Road. In the southeast, the Blackstone Canal opens service in 1828.

B. Population

Population growth within the town was initially slow and steady, from 861 in 1776 to 1,154 in 1820. The next decade brought rapid, substantial growth, reaching 1,889 in 1830.

Although the First Parish Society continued an uneventful life during this period, the Baptist Society faltered. In the late 1770s, few members and no preacher existed in the town; later their adoption of the doctrine of Universal Salvation in 1788 led to their removal from the Warren Association. Finally, renewed interest brought 60 individuals together to form a new and long-lived society.

Like several towns in the area, the town was sympathetic to the complaints of Shays men and voted to obtain their pardon, but reported no direct participation in the rebellion.

C. Settlement Pattern

Continued prosperous, dispersed agricultural settlement with a number of linear concentrations. Early 19th century growth of meetinghouse center as commercial-residential focus. Beginnings of textile manufacturing at New England Village (North Grafton) and Saundersville. Baptist meetinghouse (by 1800) located on Pleasant Street near Quinsigamond River, southwest of the center. Linear farmhouse clusters include: those on Pleasant Street southwest of Hudson Avenue; George Hill Road and Leland Street, on the west side of George Hill east of Silver Lake; and Sibley Street on the north side of Tower Hill.

The meetinghouse center, transport focus takes on commercial functions in the early 19th century with the Grafton House (ca. 1804) hotel, and an 1806 commercial block. Residential development appears to accelerate after ca. 1810 with most growth after ca. 1820. Residential corridors develop on North and South Streets, and to a lesser extent, in the area west of the center. In the northwest, at New England Village (later North Grafton), the first textile mill is established at the upper falls of the Quinsigamond River in 1826. A small, late 18th century nucleation may have already existed at the Shrewsbury Road-Worcester Street junction south of the river. In the southwest, two textile mills are built on the Blackstone in 1827 (area later Farnumsville) and 1829 (later Saundersville).

D. Economic Base

Like most inland Massachusetts towns, Grafton's economy was based on agriculture through the 18th and early 19th centuries. Grafton's land was particularly well suited to agriculture, with only 3.5% unimprovable. Still, over half went unimproved or woodlot, nearly 20% was used for pasture, 15.2% for mowing and meadowland, with tillage high at 6.6% of the total acreage.

Particular attention to animal husbandry led to the development of a leather tanning and currying trade by the early 19th century, and subsequently to the manufacture of boots and shoes. By the

end of the period (1832), Grafton contained two tanneries and currying establishments which employed 25 men and processed \$70,000 worth of leather; 19 boot and shoe shops employed 188 men and 63 women in the production of 170,000 pairs of brogans, a cheap shoe made primarily for the Southern market and slave wear, worth more than \$140,000. Agricultural tools were produced by two scythe manufactories during the 1820s and early 1830s. In 1832, 400 dozen scythes, sold throughout New England, were manufactured.

Factory-organized manufacturing in Grafton was begun in 1826 when a stone mill and tenements were erected at the upper privilege in New England Village for the manufacture of linear twines and bagging. This site, dammed in 1824 to supply water to the Blackstone Canal, held great manufacturing potential as the Quinsigamond River fell more than 50 feet over a short distance. The next year (1827) a stone mill for the manufacture of satinets was erected at what became Farnumsville by Peter Farnum and Sons. The mill burned in 1830 and was immediately replaced by a four-story brick mill in which production of satinets and broadcloth continued. A third mill, for the manufacture of cotton goods, was built in 1829 at Saundersville by David Wilkinson of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. In 1830 a mill was erected in Centerville (west of Grafton Center on the Quinsigamond River) and another at the lower privilege in New England Village in 1831. By 1832, four cotton mills and one woolen mill were operating in Grafton and employed 68 men, 43 boys, and 106 women in the production of 80,000 yards of satinets and broadcloth and over one million yards of cotton shirting, sheeting, and print cloth, all valued at \$216,000. Nearly one third of the town's population, which had increased 64% between 1820 and 1830, were employed in manufacturing at the end of the period, the products of which totaled more than \$435,000 in value.

E. Architecture

Residential: Federal period domestic dwellings appear to continue in the pattern of the traditional center chimney form. More datable two-story houses survive from this period, and double chimney, end chimney, and rearwall chimney plans occur in significant numbers. Two brick houses were noted: the Ethan Allen House, an 1834-36 two-story, four-bay gable end, center entry house, and a two-story, five-bay rearwall chimney house with stone lintels and a row of Flemish bond every ninth course.

Institutional: A Baptist meetinghouse was constructed in 1801 and subsequently replaced in 1830 with the present two-story, three-bay, gable end building with a projecting pediment supported by four Doric columns and topped by a two-staged tower.

Commercial: In 1805, Samuel Wood built the Grafton Inn, a three-story, five-bay, hipped roof cubic block with two chimneys in each brick end wall. The inn has a three-bay projecting

pavillion with a pediment containing a lunette. The details at the eaves--dentils, mutules, and rope molding--has been compared to the work of Charles Bulfinch and Asher Benjamin. The porch, double entry, and second floor doorway are Italianate additions.

The Green Store was built about 1806 by Jonathan Wheeler in Grafton Village.

Industrial: In 1826, the Holbrook and Dexter Mill was built in North Grafton. Peter Farnum built the four-story stone mill (74 x 36 feet) in Farnumsville in 1827.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes

The early 19th century road system continues in use. Service on the Boston and Worcester Railroad (later Boston and Albany) opens through the north part of town, with a station at New England Village in 1831. The Providence and Worcester Railroad provides service through the Blackstone corridor in the southwest in 1847. Canal operations are abandoned in 1848.

B. Population

Population growth fluctuates, but overall a large increase from 1,889 in 1830 to 4,594 in 1870. Growth with immigration and manufacturing increase begun in 1820 continued with a doubling from 1830 to 1845, from 1,889 to 3,904. By 1855, Irish immigrants dominated the foreign population within the town, followed by large numbers of Canadians, English, and Scots; these groups totaled just under one quarter of the population by the end of the period. The remaining portion of the native population intermarried with blacks, and mulattos numbered 24 in 1860. This congregation's division between Evangelical and Unitarian preaching in 1832, when the church and a minority of the parish withdrew, and the remainder of the parish adopted a Unitarian creed. A second Congregational parish was organized in Saundersville in 1860 with 16 members; a second Baptist society had been organized in North Grafton, also serving Shrewsbury and Boylston, with 43 members in 1836. Two years later, a Free Will Baptist society was organized with 13 members, reorganized in 1862. A Methodist Society was organized in North Grafton in 1842, reorganized in 1866; a second was added in the center in 1858. That same year a Roman Catholic mission served out of Worcester and by 1869, a parish was formed with Millbury and Upton.

Gentile organization flourished during the early years of the period, including a Grenadier Company (1827-34), Light Infantry and Slocumb Guards; a Lyceum (1846), Masons (1852), Agricultural Library (1857) and Farmers Club (1860), and a Free Library (1866). Evangelical organizations, including the Women's

Charitable Society/Sewing Circle, appear to have been less numerous, though revivals were frequent.

The town spent many years in discussion of the institution of a high school. The first discussion began in 1839 and during the following decade many votes were overturned. Opponents expressed explicit concern over control of their children by "teachers made to order" and "crotchets of that central power," the School Board. A High School Association was formed in 1850, and received grudging and irregular financial support from the town.

The town purchased a poor farm in 1834, replaced it in 1848. Differential reporting practices make use difficult to evaluate, but by the end of the period, vagrants and tramps were increasing. Among occupational designations among men, shifts within the period were predictable. Agricultural pursuits grew somewhat with population, from 118 in 1820 to 268 in 1840, then leveling out to 214 in 1875. Manufacturing expanded greatly, from 85 in 1820 to 701 in 1840, then also leveling out to 768 in 1875.

C. Settlement Pattern

Continued growth of Grafton Center as institutional-residential-commercial focus, with concurrent development of industrial nucleations at New England Village on the Quinsigamond River, and Saundersville, Fisherville, and Farnumsville on the Blackstone. Grafton Center continues as an institutional focus, with the addition of the Baptist church (1830) to the south side of the center, and the removal of the first Congregational meetinghouse, and construction of Unitarian (1832) and Evangelical Congregational (1833) churches. A Catholic chapel (1848), and later church (1851), are built to the west of the Center. The open square is landscaped into an elliptical park in 1843-44. In 1862, a fire destroyed the Unitarian Church, the Warren Block, and several adjacent buildings. A new Unitarian Church is built in 1863, and a new brick, Second Empire block (1862-63) is leased as the town hall in 1864. A bank is built in 1840, and High School north of the center ca. 1850. Linear residential construction continues on the radial axes: North Street, South Street, Worcester Road, Oak Street, and Millbury Street. Industrial development also takes place in the Center area, with a boot factory on the west side of the square, scattered boot and shoe shops, and a mill to the northwest, on the south side of Ripple Lake.

Development in New England Village (North Grafton) is stimulated by the location of the Boston and Worcester Railroad (1831), and by continued traffic along the highway corridors. Industrial activity expands to the lower falls of the Quinsigamond River, and is also scattered in the form of smaller shops and mills. The industrial focus remains the north side of the river, east and west of Shrewsbury Street, with worker housing (cottages, tenement

rows, boarding houses) north of the mills, particularly on Factory and Second Streets. A small institutional focus develops northeast of the Factory Street/Shrewsbury Street intersection, with a Baptist Church (1836), Methodist Episcopal Church (1842), and school. The commercial focus also develops around the Factory/Shrewsbury Street intersection. By 1870, residential development extends both north and south of the river. In the south, a cluster is established at the Worcester Street/Shrewsbury Street junction, with a focus at the Quinsigamond House Hotel, and a linear extension south on Worcester Street. North of the river, the residential focus is the Shrewsbury/East/Waterville Street junction, with some high income residences on the west side of Shrewsbury Street. Residential development also takes place west of Shrewsbury Street on High Street. Residences also locate north along Shrewsbury Street toward the railroad station, and on Waterville Street.

In the southwest, on the Blackstone, further mill construction takes place in Saundersville in the late 1830s and ca. 1850, and a village of about 50 houses develops, with a variety of worker residences, and a proprietor's residence on Main Street. Further south, the Fisherville Mills are constructed in 1832, and some worker tenements are built along Main Street west of the mill, and on Ferry Street. Below Fisherville, the Farnumsville Mills are rebuilt after an 1830 fire, and expanded in 1845. Worker cottages and tenements are built along Providence Street north of Ferry Street and west along Main Street. Free Will Baptist Church built at the Main Street/Providence Street intersection in 1862. A small secondary cluster develops around the railway station to the west on Ferry Street.

D. Economic Base

The rapid growth in Grafton's industries continued through the early 1830s, stimulated by the completion of the Blackstone Canal in 1828 (three locks were in Grafton) and the Boston and Worcester Railroad through New England Village in 1833. On the Blackstone Canal alone, 951 tons of agricultural and manufactured goods were shipped from Grafton and 4,806 tons of goods were carried to Grafton between 1831 and 1835. In the year before the 1837 Panic, from which the town took more than a decade to recover, the total value of goods manufactured in Grafton was more than one million dollars, led by a tremendous expansion in the boot and shoe industry. By 1837 the town led Worcester County and ranked third in the state in the manufacture of boots and shoes, with 906 men and 486 women employed in the production of nearly 700,000 pairs worth more than \$640,000. Shops and small factories were located in all the villages and in the Center.

The textile industry also expanded with the erection of a four-story brick mill at Fisherville in 1832 and a new stone mill

in Saundersville in 1835. By 1837, 168 men and 301 women produced 70,000 yards of woolen cloth and more than two million yards of cotton cloth, all worth nearly \$400,000. Stimulated by the textile and boot and shoe industries, the town's population grew 55% between 1830 and 1840, despite the depression at the end of the decade. By 1845, the date of the next state census of manufactures, employment and the value of goods manufactured still totaled only one half of the 1837 pre-Panic figures. Boot and shoe making was particularly hard-hit by the depression, with employment falling by nearly two thirds and production by more than half. The industry improved during the 1850s as Grafton again became important as a tanning and currying center. By 1865, six shops, clustered on North Street in the town center, prepared hides worth \$192,000. During the mid 1850s, production of boots and cheap brogans returned to the 1837 figure of nearly 700,000 pairs annually, worth more than \$500,000. Several shops produced boot and shoemakers' tools to supply local manufacturers.

The textile industry also rebounded to pre-Panic levels during the 1850s. In 1855, seven cotton mills produced 6.5 million yards of cloth worth nearly \$400,000 and employed 500 men and women. By 1865, eight mills employed 445 operatives and produced \$1.5 million worth of cotton goods. Improvements in machinery, process, and product during the 1850s and early 1860s cut employment in the textile and shoe industries in 1865 by nearly one half while the value of goods produced nearly doubled over the 1855 amount.

Several new minor industries were located in Grafton in the decades prior to the Civil War. Wood screw manufacturing, a tinsmith, an agricultural tool maker, boot and shoe box manufacturers, saddle and harness shops, a carriage and railroad car shop, and several clothing manufactories operated during the period. Most employed under ten workers. A brickyard was in operation during the 1830s and 1840s, and supplied brick for many of the mills erected in the town during these decades.

Three banks were incorporated during the 1850s and 1860s: the Grafton Bank in 1854, the First National Bank in 1863, and the Savings Bank in 1860. The town's first newspaper, The Sheaf, began publication in 1856.

Agricultural practices in Grafton began to change towards the end of the pre-Civil War period, as the mixed husbandry practiced since the 18th century became more focused on dairying and cattle raising. The major change occurred in the increase in acreage devoted to hay and pasturage and a decrease in the cultivation of potatoes and grains such as corn, rye, oats, and barley. Horses replaced oxen as the most important work animals and their numbers changed accordingly. As a result, more of the lighter horse-drawn machinery such as cultivators, hay rakes, and mowing machines came into use. The products of the dairy gained importance and changed

with the opening of the railroads through Grafton. By 1865 whole milk sales rose to 128,000 gallons, while cheese production, which totalled 24,860 lbs in 1845, virtually ended by 1865. Many farms continued to make butter through the period, but it never reached the amounts made before 1845. Fruit cultivation became more widespread, as many farmers planted orchards of apple, pear, and peach trees.

E. Architecture

Residential: Development seems to have peaked during the Early Industrial period. Dwellings reflect all the traditional house forms and the popular gable end plans as well. Single-story, center and double chimney and a few end and rearwall chimney Greek Revival houses were observed. Two-story, double chimney plans were popular, particularly in the Greek mode in Grafton Village. A significant number of two-story, rearwall chimney Greek Revival detailed houses were noted throughout the town. One- and two-story side-passage plans retained their visual popularity throughout the period, displaying Greek and Italianate details. One Gothic Revival example was also observed. Two-story, five-bay, center entry, gable end dwellings were observed in significant numbers, three with temple fronts in the villages of Grafton and North Grafton. Three two-story, center entry Second Empire dwellings were noted. The Esek Saunders House in Saundersville stands out as an example of the popular Italianate house form, being a two-and-one-half-story, three-bay cube with a projecting central pavillion containing a rounded arch door and windows; attic windows in the deep cornice; and brackets, quoins, and a central monitor.

An important stock of worker housing survives in the mill villages of North Grafton, Farnumsville, Fisherville, and Saundersville. One-and-one-half and two-story, five- and six-bay double chimney units are found in all the villages. A boarding house was erected in North Grafton ca. 1830(?). A two-story, six-bay, gable end duplex remains in Kitterville. Two-story, side-passage, Italianate duplexes exist in Farnumsville along with the standard double chimney rows. Harding Street in Farnumsville contains well preserved rows of third-quarter 19th century four-plexes and a Colonial Revival school at the end of the street. Nearby is a three-story boardinghouse. Fisherville retains an entire neighborhood of Greek and Italianate period double chimney rows. A two-story, three-bay brick dwelling with Flemish bond every ninth row on Ferry Street appears today as a Colonial Revival reworking of a second quarter 19th century house, likely dating to the early years of the mill and purported to be the mill owner's residence.

Institutional: In 1832, the Unitarian church (70 x 49 feet) was built on the site of the original meetinghouse. The contract with the builders specifies that the new building is to resemble the

"new Baptist meetinghouse" (1830) and is to have four Greek Doric columns supporting a pediment with an elliptical blind, three doors on the gable end, pilasters at the corners, and a fourteen-foot square bell tower (see Pierce for detailed description of Unitarian church, pp.199-200).

The Evangelical Congregational church was built the following year and closely resembled the Unitarian church (Pierce, p.200).

The Unitarian church burned in 1862 and was replaced in 1863 with a one-and-a-half-story, three-bay, gable end structure on a rusticated foundation with a pedimented center entry and paired pilasters, quoins, and a clock tower.

The Second Baptist, a Greek Revival gable end structure with a projecting vestibule and pilasters, was built in 1836 in North Grafton. In 1847, the Methodist church in North Grafton was erected also in the Greek style with pilasters, but with a board and batten rear wall still visible.

The 1731 schoolhouse in Grafton Village was moved in 1832. A high school was built in 1850. An Italianate one-story school survives in Farnumsville.

Three Greek Revival firehouses were built in 1852: in the Center, North Grafton and Farnumsville (the latter was noted in the field).

Commercial: The one-story, temple front store on the common, which became a bank in the late 19th century and remains so today, was built about 1840. Ca. 1850, a two-story, gable end store was built in Grafton Village. Shortly thereafter, a two-and-one-half story combination store and residence with a mansard roof was built facing the common. The two-and-a-half-story Second Empire commercial building on the north side of the common with pilasters dividing the bays was erected late in the period. The "Warren Block" (date?) burned in 1862 and was replaced with a brick structure by 1879.

Industrial: The 1833 pistol shop of Ethan Allen adjacent to the brick dwelling is a two-story, gable end center entry barn-like structure. A one-story, gabled, fieldstone mill with clerestory monitor was built at North Grafton in the early part of the period (now Washington Emery).

Saunders built a three-story, gabled stone mill with a side tower. The Pratt mill (1844) at Centerville burned in 1861 and was rebuilt in 1862 as a brick structure (82 x 44 feet) with segmental arched windows, a side tower, and cupola.

In Fisherville, a four-story, brick mill (84 x 44 feet) was built in 1831-32 and received a 44 x 25-foot addition in 1860; the three-story frame mill was enlarged to 100 x 55 feet.

The 1827 mill at Farnumsville burned in 1830 and a four-story brick structure (84 x 36 feet) was built in its place. This burned in 1842 and was replaced with a four-story brick mill (42 x 100 feet).

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes

The Grafton Railroad, with junction with the Boston and Albany line in North Grafton, opens service to Grafton Center in 1874, and to Upton in 1889. By ca. 1900, the town is served by electric streetcar lines through Grafton Center and along the Blackstone Valley. In the north, the line enters Grafton from Millbury along a new roadbed south of the Boston and Albany, then turns south through North Grafton on Shrewsbury Street-Worcester Road, through Grafton Center, and then southeast on the Grafton and Upton Railroad line. Along the Blackstone corridor, the street railway enters town on Main Street, turns north to run parallel to the Providence and Worcester track, returns to Main Street to cross the river at Fisherville, then continues south on Providence Road.

B. Population

Population growth was slow and irregular, but increased overall during the period from 4,594 in 1870 to 6,250 in 1915. The lowest figure was in 1880 with 4,030, the largest growth between 1905 and 1910. French Canadians outnumbered the Irish immigrants in 1875, and constituted a second and greater wave. The foreign population reached its highest percentage, 33.15%, in 1895. English and Scots immigrants remained important, with the addition of Poles at the end of the period. The increasing numbers of Catholics were served by the addition of churches in North Grafton and Fisherville.

Early in the period, with depression, the number of tramps handled at the almshouse and newly instituted lock-up (1876) went over 500 annually. In contrast to most industrial towns, the number of males engaged in agriculture actually increased during this period, from 214 in 1875 to 344 in 1905 and 366 in 1915. Manufacturing employment increased from 1905 to 1915 after many years of stasis, but still averaged 50% of the total.

C. Settlement Pattern

Industrial related growth continues at North Grafton, Fisherville, and Farnumsville. Some residential development continues to take place at Grafton Center, with infilling in the established areas, and some peripheral growth on Chestnut Hill Avenue in the northeast and on the west side of the Worcester Street.

Industrial expansion at New England Village occurs both at the Quinsigamond River complexes and along the Boston and Albany rail corridor, stimulated in part after 1874 by the Grafton Railroad junction. Worker housing is added to the Factory Street/Second Street area, notably the four-unit tenement rows on Second Street. New institutions are located north of the earlier cluster, with the Protestant Episcopal Church on Shrewsbury Street north of Waterville Street and the Catholic Church on Waterville Street opposite the Pine Grove Cemetery. Residential infilling occurs on the southern extension of Worcester Street, including a new mill agent's residence on the west side. There is infilling on Shrewsbury Street to the Waterville Street junction, and development of the area around the Waterville/East Street triangle, including Harrison Avenue, Prospect Street, and Leland Street. House construction also occurs on the north end of Waterville Street. Residential development occurs along the Boston and Albany railroad/industrial corridor, south of the tracks on Oak Street, north on Elm Street, Nelson Street, Creeper Road, and Shrewsbury Street to the town line.

In the Blackstone Valley, growth occurs at the Fisherville and Farnumsville industrial villages. In Fisherville, mill expansions take place in the 1880s and 1910s, and a major cluster of worker duplex rows is developed along with a number of boardinghouses, all southwest of the mill and east of Ferry Street. Linear residential expansion develops west along Main Street and Union Congregational (1895) and Catholic churches are located at the Main Street/Ferry Street intersection. At Farnumsville mill, additions are made in 1876, and probably ca. 1908, and some residential development occurs on the north side of Cross Street between Main Street and Providence Street.

Worcester State Asylum has facilities in the northeast corner of town (Asylum at the Grafton colony) after 1877. The Grafton facility separates from Worcester State Hospital in 1912, becoming Grafton State Hospital in 1915.

D. Economic Base

In the decades following the Civil War, the progress of Grafton's economy was mixed. The textile industry suffered several losses of mills through fire and financial embarrassment during the late 1860s and 1870s, as production fell off nearly 70%, but rebounded in the 1880s, only to be slowed again by the industry-wide depression of the mid-1890s. The leather industry, however, expanded greatly during the 1870s and 1880s; in 1880 boot and shoemaking and leather processing accounted for 70% of the \$1.2 million total of manufactured goods. By the turn of the century, only two boot and shoe factories remained: the Forbush and Brown Boot Factory in Grafton Center and the J. S. Nelson and Son Shoe Manufactory in New England Village, both of which had sales offices in Boston. Leather tanning and currying had been

discontinued several years earlier, and materials for the boot and shoe factories came from other towns.

In 1868, the manufacture of emery and abrasives was begun in New England Village and in 1879 two former textile mills at the lower privilege were purchased from the Grafton Mills Co. by the Washington Emery Co., later the Washington Abrasive Co. The textile industry suffered another loss when the Farnumsville mill was financially embarrassed in 1873 and sold at auction. The mill returned to operation in 1875 after the construction of an addition that doubled its length and the quantity of looms it contained. Improvements made during the late 1870s at Pratt's mill in Centerville and at Saundersville stimulated the renewed prosperity of the textile industry during the 1880s. In 1879 the enlarged Saundersville mill employed 200 operatives, two-thirds of whom were Irish and French-Canadian, and the prosperous village of 600 consisted of 50 company-built dwellings, a gristmill, a blacksmith shop and three forges, wheelwright shop, a store, a company-owned farm from which much of the fresh produce for the village was obtained, a boardinghouse, library, and Congregational Church. By 1885 the value of textile goods produced in the town's mills exceeded \$800,000, more than twice the 1875 amount.

The town gained ten new manufacturing firms during the decade, among them several building concerns, clothing shops, a linen mill at the New England Village upper privilege, a carriage and wagon shop, and several shoe tool and metalworking shops.

The number of firms involved in manufacturing contracted considerably during the last decade of the 19th century and opening decade of the 20th, despite the steadily increasing value of manufactured goods. Improved machinery and products and the loss of most small shops concentrated employment and production in the large factories. By 1905, 13 establishments produced \$1.9 million worth of goods, led by textiles and shoes. The First World War gave a tremendous boost to the textile industry as government uniform contracts brought renewed prosperity.

Grafton's agriculture remained a strong component of the local economy through the period, suffering little loss of farmland between 1865 and 1905. A number of changes did occur, however: whole milk production increased to more than 750,000 gallons by 1905, making Grafton the sixth largest milk producer in the county; acreage devoted to hay by 1905 totaled nearly 4,000 acres, compared with 2,400 acres in 1885; the acreage of permanent pasture and cropland declined between 1885 and 1905, while woodland increased; by 1905, 230 acres were devoted to market gardening; and the number of farms increased by nearly 100 between 1865 and 1905, while the average farm size fell considerably. Orcharding and poultry-raising became important activities by the early 20th century; Grafton ranked 11th in the quantity of eggs sold in 1905. Several ice houses were established during the

1860s, and by 1875 they produced 150 tons of ice annually, used in butter making and to preserve milk as it was transported to urban markets. The Bonny Brook dairy farm, containing herds of Dutch Belted and Jersey cows, sold milk in Worcester in glass jars during the late 1890s and early 20th century.

E. Architecture

Residential: Traditional center chimney plan houses continue to be built until the end of the 19th century. Asymmetrical, popular Queen Anne houses are found in the villages as are some shingled Victorian Gothic/Queen Anne dwellings and some rather sophisticated "shingle style" houses. Gable end houses with eclectic detailing remain popular until the end of the century. Four Square houses appear to be very popular throughout the town. Two-story Colonial Revival dwellings are located in Grafton Village. Several T-plans were also observed.

Traditional forms of double chimney multi-family workers' housing continued to be built in the mill villages, particularly Farnumsville and Fisherville where these and late 19th century boardinghouses and a few "double deckers" survive. Row housing of the traditional type is well preserved along the common in North Grafton.

Institutional: A gothic Congregational church was built in Fisherville in 1895. St. James (Roman Catholic?) Church was built in Fisherville about the same time in a similar Gothic mode.

At least five two-story, hipped and gable roof Colonial Revival school buildings had been erected in the various villages by 1898. The Grafton Water Company building, a one-story brick structure on Millbury Street, dates from this period.

Commercial: Reference in Pierce to three hotels in Grafton (including Grafton Inn) by 1879.

Industrial: In 1872, L. W. Dodge Currying Co. built a two-and-a-half story, frame mansard roofed mill with parallel pilasters (84 x 40 feet) which was expanded in 1877 by a 40 x 30-foot addition.

Farnumsville mill added 100 feet to its four-story building in 1874, totally 200 x 42 feet with a 30 x 50-foot two-story ell, a two-story frame building with a pulley mounted near the eaves on the long side.

In 1881 and 1910, the Fisherville mill constructed a large, four-story brick structure with segmental arched openings.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes

By the 1920s, the electric streetcar network is abandoned, and local roads are improved as automobile highways. Important highways include Route 122 (Worcester Street-Providence Road-Main Street) from Worcester to Providence, joined by Route 122A (Main Street from Millbury) in Farnumsville. Later highway improvements include Route 140 from Shrewsbury and points north through Grafton Center to Milford (Shrewsbury Street-Worcester Street-Upton Street), and Route 30 from North Grafton to Westborough (Westborough Road).

B. Population

Population growth is slow and steady, with only one five-year figure indicating reduction, 1935-40; from 6,250 in 1915, the total figure grew to 7,457 in 1940. A large number, 12.4%, is still characterized as rural in 1940. A small number, 46, of blacks within the town may reflect a native, intermarrying population remnant, within an overwhelmingly white county. No other detailed information is available for towns under 10,000 in 1940.

C. Settlement Pattern

Greatest period change occurs in the Fisherville/Farnumsville area. In Grafton Center, some high income residential development occurs in the area between Oak and Worcester Streets, and a library building (1927) is added to the institutional focus. Little change takes place in North Grafton, with some residential and commercial infilling. Between North Grafton and the Center, cottage development occurs on the north side of Lake Ripple.

In Fisherville, construction of worker duplex rows continues in the area southwest of the mill, as does linear growth west on Main street. In Farnumsville, residential growth occurs on the south side of Cross Street, along the river south of Main Street, and east of the mill.

In the northeast, construction of dormitories, a power plant, and other facilities takes place at Grafton State Hospital.

D. Economic Base

Grafton's mixed manufacturing base of cotton and linen cloth and thread, emery and abrasives, and boots and shoes, stimulated by wartime prosperity, was able to sustain high levels of production until the Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s. In 1922, 1,500 men and women were employed in the manufacture of \$5.6 million worth of goods. Only the Farnumsville mills were forced

to close in 1929, but the mills and village were purchased by the Vanadium Wire Co., Inc., a new corporation formed by men from Millbury for the manufacture of wire strings for musical instruments and wire for automobile accessories. The new firm soon employed 250 operatives. Most other firms managed to continue operations, though at times at reduced hours.

Grafton's agricultural production changed little. Dairying, orchards, poultry, and market gardening were the major activities of the town's farms. Some farmland was abandoned to forest, as the more marginal lands were taken out of cultivation.

E. Architecture

Residential: Development declines. One-story Craftsman detailed bungaloid houses are found primarily near the villages. Of note is the 1935 one-story, four-bay, center chimney colonial reproduction by architect Royal Barry Willson on Pleasant Street north of Saundersville.

Institutional: The Grafton Public Library is a one-story, five-bay Georgian Revival brick structure (1927-28) with parapet, gable end walls, rounded arch windows, and a pedimented entry.

The police station on Route 140 is a two-story, symmetrical, brick Colonial Revival building.

The Grafton State Hospital comprises a group of ca. 1920 Craftsman/Bungaloid style buildings and some Colonial Revival structures.

The Polish National Home in Farnumsville is a ca. 1920 one-story, broad gabled structure.