

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## HAMILTON

Report Date: 1985

**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: 1985

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### I. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Situated within the rolling terrain of southeastern Essex County, Hamilton was and remains a quiet agricultural town. Few natives sites have been discovered, but the Ipswich and Miles River vicinities appear probable locales of early activity. First European travel through the town along the Bay Road (between Salem and Newbury), 1641. By 1675, area still with few permanent residents, there scattered especially in the southeastern town. Meetinghouse center established (1712) at Cutler Road and Bay Street, and the third church of Ipswich established 1714. Native American inhabitants in vicinity (on Wigwam Hill) until mid-century. In Federal period Hamilton agriculture predominated. Industrial activities clustered on the Ipswich River and shoe shops, by 1830 scattered throughout the town. Dispersed agricultural settlement persists until the early 19th century, with densities increasing along Bay/Main streets (Rt. 1A) and in the western town (along Asbury/Highland streets). With the opening of the Boston and Maine Railroad (1839), major realignment of settlement activities begins. Meetinghouse center continues as civic focus, but having been bypassed by the railroad, commercial activities are now drawn to the railroad juncture at South Hamilton. Establishment and popularity of the Methodist Camp Meetings (1859) prompts shifting of residential activity westward toward Asbury Grove. Drastic population increases in Late Industrial period, and concomitant physical changes within the town, Civic and commercial activities continue their push southward and residential construction, its move to the west along Eastern Railroad spur line. Suburban neighborhoods proliferate. For the first time, agriculture challenged by commercial and manufacturing activities and the latter increasing a total of 541% during the period.

Second period of rapid growth begins 1940. Construction of interstate 95 and Route 128 nearby sparks radial increase in suburb and tract development, particularly between South Hamilton and Asbury Grove. Railroad Avenue emerges as commercial corridor and Route 1A as undiversified mix of residential and commercial activities. Contemporary town with sparkling examples of 19th century meetinghouse center (Cutler) and 20th century auto-culture degradation (Route 1A).

### II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Originally founded as part of the 17th-century plantation of Ipswich, the area was initially set aside as Ipswich's Third Parish (Hamlet) in 1713. After attracting sufficient population and industries, it was

incorporated in 1792 as the independent town of Hamilton. Its boundaries have undergone little changes since that time.

### III. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Hamilton is located in the southeastern portion of Essex County, Massachusetts. Physiographically, the town lies within the New England Seaboard Lowland, a relatively smooth coastal strip of land with some hills usually below the 400 and 500-foot contours. Locally, Essex County contains more hilly country than other Seaboard Lowland areas. In Hamilton, land surfaces are irregular but generally slope easterly. Most elevations in the town average between 50 and 100 feet although several hills are present exceeding 150feet.

Bedrock deposits in the Hamilton area are exclusively igneous deposits dominated by Quincy granite. Limited distributions of Beverly syenite and quartz-syenite are also present. Soils in the Hamilton area represent a mixture of formation through glacial outwash, organic deposits, and recent alluvial deposits. The Merrimac-Hinckley-Urban land association is present throughout most of the town, particularly in central and eastern areas, east and west of the Boston and Main Railroad. These soils are found in deep, nearly level to steep deposits. They are generally excessively drained loamy and sandy soils formed in outwash deposits and urban development. Soils of the Paxton-Montauk-Urban land association characterize most upland hilly areas in the town, particularly along the western town boundary and in the east near Brown's Hill, Willow Hill and Sagamore Hill. These soils also occur in deep, nearly level to steep deposits. They are well drained/loamy soils formed in glacial till and areas of urban development. In the northeastern area of town, soils belonging to the Canton-Woodbridge-Freetown association are present. These soils occur in deep, nearly level to steep areas. They range from well drained to poorly drained loamy and mucky soils formed in glacial till and organic deposits. Major wetlands in the Hamilton area are characterized by Freetown-Fluvagurents association particularly in the vicinity of the Miles River and Wenham Swamp. These deposits occur in deep and nearly level areas. They are generally very poorly drained mucky soils formed in organic deposits and recent alluvium.

Major drainage in Hamilton is through the Ipswich River and several of its tributary streams. They include the Miles River, Black Brook, and Idlewild Brook. Several ponds and lakes are also present, located in the southeastern portion of town. They include Beck Pond, Round Pond, Gravelly Pond and Chebacco Lake. Several freshwater swamps are also found in these areas.

The original forest growth in Hamilton and in Essex County in general consisted of a mixed growth of white pine, oak, chestnut, poplar,

maple, birch and some other hardwoods and conifers. However, secondary growth patterns cover most of the town today. These patterns are characterized by second growth oak and chestnut in uplands to scrub oak and pitch pine in areas of droughty and sandy soils. Some birch, cedar, juniper and white pine are also present.

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

##### A. Transportation Routes

Native American transportation routes in the Hamilton area likely emphasized water travel along the Ipswich River, Miles River and possibly some streams and wetlands. Conjectured trails were also probably present along the rivers noted above and major wetlands. A major north/south trail may have also existed in the vicinity of Bay Street which later developed as a Colonial route. Essex Street may have also existed as a trail providing a route eastward to the Essex Bay area.

##### B. Population

Hamilton was inhabited by members of the Pawtucket group which extended from the Saugus/Salem area north to the York area of Maine. Locally, this group is commonly referred to as the Agawam Indians who may have been a sub-tribe of the Massachusetts under the leadership of the Penacooks. Gookin (1792) lists ca.3,000 men belonging to the Penacook group prior to the 1617-19 epidemics, while Mooney (1928:4) lists 2,000 men belonging to the Penacook group, as many as 12,000 natives, probably exaggerated. The Native American population in Hamilton may have numbered in the vicinity of 100 or more individuals during much of this period. Following the epidemics, fewer than 50 natives likely remained.

##### C. Settlement Pattern

Few Woodland and no Contact period sites are known for the Hamilton area. However, environmental variables and later 17th-century documentary sources indicate sites of this period should be present. For example, well drained areas along the Ipswich River, Miles River and the periphery of other major wetlands may have been good site locations. In addition to habitation and village-type sites, special purpose sites such as fishing sites, burials and quarries were also probably present.

#### D. Subsistence Pattern

Native Americans in the Hamilton area subsisted on a variety of seasonally determined activities including hunting, fishing, the collecting of wild plants and shellfish, and horticulture. Hunting was a major activity and focused on larger mammals such as deer and smaller fur bearers. Natives in the Hamilton area may have also traveled to the coast to exploit sea mammals such as seals and drift whales in the Plum Island Sound and Essex Bay. Upland game birds and ducks were also hunted, particularly in wetlands and meadows surrounding riverine areas. Seasonal runs of shad, smelt, alewives, salmon and trout may have also been available in the Ipswich River, Castle Neck River, Miles River and Black Brook. Several species of terrestrial as well as freshwater plants in the Hamilton area provided a valuable food resource.

Gathering may have also seasonally focused on shellfish on the coast in nearby Essex and Ipswich. Domesticated plants such as corn, beans, pumpkins, squash and tobacco were important. Native fields were likely located along the Ipswich River, Miles River or their tributaries and wetlands.

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

##### A. Transportation Routes

Indian trails likely continued in use in the Hamilton area throughout most of the Plantation period, Water travel may have also been present in the vicinity of the Ipswich and Miles Rivers. European land transportation in Hamilton probably began in the mid to late 1630s as Indian trails were upgraded to horsepaths and cartways leading to early farm-grants and grazing areas. By 1641 the Bay Road was established through the town, connecting the Hamlet with Salem to the south and Ipswich, Rowley and Newbury to the north. Several unnamed ways likely connected scattered farms with the Bay Road. East of the Miles River upgraded Indian trails and/or cartways likely existed in the Bridge Street, Sagamore Street Essex Street and Chebacco Road areas.

##### B. Population

Hamilton may have been settled as early as 1638 when initial grants were given in the Hamilton (Hamlet) area. However, who, how many, and where these people settled is unknown. By 1650 the European population in the Hamlet probably did not exceed 50 individuals. In 1675 this population may have increased to 100 to 150 individuals. Native Americans may have resided in Hamilton during this period. However, population numbers and whereabouts are unknown. Masconomet, Sagamore

of the Agawams, was buried on Sagamore Hill in ca.1658. Hamilton residents were ethnically of English decent and worshipped the Congregational faith. Hamlet residents worshipped and paid ministerial taxes in the First Parish of Ipswich throughout this period.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Little is known regarding the Native American settlement patterns in Hamilton during this period although natives probably resided in the town during this time. Early settlers settled the area with little if any pressure from Native Americans. Indian land titles for the Hamilton area were officially transferred to colonies when John Winthrop Jr. purchased the title to Agawam from Masconomet in 1638-1639. It is unknown who the first settlers of Hamilton were as well as when and where they settled. However, initial settlement probably took place shortly after 1638 when several large grants were made in the area. By 1675 one or two dozen dispersed farms were likely settled, the greatest concentration of which were probably in the southern or southeastern portion of town.

### D. Economic Base

As colonial settlers established themselves in the Hamilton area, hunting and gathering wild foods were important to their subsistence. However, the combined use of agriculture and husbandry were clearly the most important aspects in the economic lives of Hamilton's early settlers. Indian corn, wheat and barley were the most important food crops grown as well as rye when possible. Fruit and vegetables were also grown but grains were the most important food produce. Shortly after settlement, the production of vegetable fibers from hemp and flax were also important on Hamilton farms. Salt marsh hay was important as Hamilton farmers owned salt marshes in Ipswich and Essex. Husbandry was also an important activity in Hamilton. Cattle, horses, sheep and swine were the most important animals on farms. Oxen and fowl were also present. It is unlikely that grist or sawmills were present in Hamilton during this period. Some manufacturing was probably present but limited to the home production of textiles and possibly shoes.

## VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

### A. Transportation Routes

Native trails had been upgraded to horsepaths or cartways by this time. The Bay Road continued as the major inter-regional travel route, upgraded from a muddy sod-worn surface to a more prepared surface in the 17th century. All Plantation-period roadways continued in use.

Additional roadways also developed in the vicinity of Cutler Road, Asbury Street and Highland Street.

#### B. Population

Hamilton's population in 1675 may have been in the vicinity of 100 to 150 individuals. By 1712 the town's population may have doubled to 325 individuals as 65 males of the Hamlet petitioned the First Parish to be set-off at that date. The Third Church was formed in 1714. Prior to 1712, 45 families are reported attending services in Wenham. In 1773, 870 inhabitants are reported in the town. It is unlikely Native Americans lived in Hamilton by the end of this period. Black slaves may have been present.

#### C. Settlement Pattern

Land patterns that developed in Hamilton during the Plantation period continued through most of the Colonial period. The original inhabitants and landholders in the area continued to benefit from the division of common lands but new settlers were rarely given grants. Instead, new residents either purchased land or were given land through inheritance. Average land holdings were declining in acreage though some large holdings remained. By 1712 settlement in Hamilton had grown to a point that its inhabitants petitioned the First Parish of Ipswich to be set off. The petition was granted in 1713 when Hamilton then became Hamlet Parish or the Third Parish of Ipswich. Settlement was dispersed throughout much of the town except southern and southeastern areas which showed greater settlement density. In 1712 a meetinghouse was erected at the junction of Cutler Road and Bay Street near Cutler Pond. A second meetinghouse was rebuilt at the same site in 1762. In 1705 Hamlet Parish was granted a burial lot by the town of Ipswich which was exchanged in 1706 for part of the present burial ground across the road from the meetinghouse site. In 1730 the parish voted to build a schoolhouse near the meetinghouse site. Three Native American families, each with a wigwam, were reported on "Wigwam Hill" at the "Hamlet" as late as 1726.

#### D. Economic Base

Agriculture and husbandry continued to characterize Hamilton's economic base throughout the Colonial period. Corn continued to grow as the major crop with other grains whenever profitable. Manufactures were limited to home production of shoes and textiles. A tannery may have also been present.

## E. Architecture

Residential: The Hubbard Brown house is said to date to 1660; it is a 2-1/2-story, single-pile house with pillastered chimney, and later lean-to. Another saltbox was restored by Norman Isham in 1913. Far more common are 18th century, center-chimney houses of five bays, 2-1/2-stories, and symmetrical side gables; over a dozen survive. Isolated examples survive of three and five bays, as well as small numbers of 1-1/2 stories, one of which has a gambrel roof. An equally small number of houses were constructed with double interior chimneys and Georgian form.

Institutional: With establishment as Third Church Ipswich, a meetinghouse was constructed in 1712/1713; it measured 50 x 30 feet and 20-foot studs, a porch at the north end, as well as a tower and steeple at the south. A schoolhouse was constructed in the center in 1730, in the north in 1748, and in the west in 1757; nothing is known of their appearances.

## VII. FEDERAL PERIOD(1775-1830)

### A. Transportation Routes

Colonial period roads continued in use. Most, since 1811, had been widened and straightened. In 1814, Moulton's bridge was rebuilt.

### B. Population

Hamilton was not incorporated until after 1790. The town's population decreased from 749 individuals in 1800 to 748 individuals in 1830 at a rate of -0.1%. Population growth was the lowest (2.82%) from 1810-1820. From 1820-1830 population actually dropped by 6.73%. Most population growth (9.14%) occurred from 1800-1810. On the average, Hamilton contained about 1% of the overall population of Essex County from 1800-1830.

This small community remained homogenous through this period. Although the Universalists met here briefly after 1827, the Congregational Church remained the principle body. Four town families were characterized as "bleeders" (probably hemophilia). Social libraries were attempted but were inactive by period's end. The town had four district schools but no poor farm.



### C. Settlement Pattern

Not incorporated until 1792, Hamilton was a town predominantly agricultural in focus, of dispersed settlement and a stable population. Its civil and institutional focus remained at the meetinghouse center on Bay Street (Rt.1A) between Bridge and Cutler Streets. Although some alterations were made to the meetinghouse in 1801 and the town's first post office was established nearby in 1803, Hamilton saw few improvements during the period. Hamilton's schools catered to its widely dispersed population, each located on one of the town's two major north/south thoroughways, one on Highland/Asbury streets and the other two on Bay Street.

Industrial sites remained clustered on the Ipswich River at Highland Street. Agricultural activities were virtually ubiquitous throughout the town and small shoeshops were similarly scattered, nearly three dozen in number by 1830. Residential construction followed earlier patterns. Federal dwellings were not attracted to the meetinghouse center but joined those of the Colonial period along Bay and Main streets (Rt.1A) between Salem and Ipswich, along Asbury and Highland streets between the Ipswich River Mill sites and South Hamilton, and scattered in southeastern Hamilton toward Gloucester, along Bridge and Essex streets.

### D. Economic Base

Hamilton was primarily a farming town. In 1820, 74% of its inhabitants were employed in agriculture and 26% in small-scale manufacturing. The principal agricultural products were grain, fodder, fruit, vegetables and English and upland hay. Small-scale shoe manufacturing was done in numerous ten-footers. Small "Chebacco boats" were also made occasionally and hauled to the Essex ocean by cattle teams. During the heyday of Ipswich lace-making, women in Hamilton dressed lace for the Ipswich factories. A saw and gristmill was in operation by 1794.

### E. Architecture

Residential: Variety characterizes the house types that survive from this period. Center-chimney houses are built, including 2-1/2 and 1-1/2-story examples; three-bay, center-entry examples are known as well as a hip-roofed example. Multi-chimney examples increase in popularity; most popular among them are five-bay, center-entry examples with L-plans.

Institutional: No information is available on public buildings for this period.

Industrial: Small shoe shops dotted the landscape. A grist and sawmill was built at the privilege on the Ipswich River near Highland Street. A chairmaker shop (a wooden shed) ca.1793, still stands at 799 Bay Road; it is a one-story structure attached to the side of the house. Warner's Fulling Mill was erected on the Ipswich River off of Highland Street near the Ipswich town line.

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

### A. Transportation Routes

Perhaps a corollary of its continuing agricultural emphasis, Hamilton's road network was extremely sparse, comparably very few roads having been laid out through the central town, Bay Street (Route 1A) remained the town's primary route connecting Salem through Hamilton to Ipswich and Newburyport. Asbury/Highland streets provided an alternative north/south avenue, through the Ipswich River mill areas between Hamilton and Ipswich. The major improvement during the period was the opening of the eastern Division of the Boston and Maine Railroad in 1839; it connected Ipswich via Hamilton and Salem to Boston. By 1870, a spur line off the Eastern Railroad led from South Hamilton out to the Methodist Episcopal camp meeting grounds and an extension of the Essex line ran from Chebacco Road (the summer cottage area of Chebacco Lake) up Essex Street into Essex.

### B. Population

Hamilton exhibited little growth during this period. Between 1830 and 1870 its expansion equaled only 5.6%, from 748 to 790. The period high, however, was experienced in 1855 at 896, after which it declined once more. In 1855, the proportion of foreign-born equaled 5.6%, primarily Irish, as well as small numbers of English, Canadians, and Scots. The increase to 8.1% is accounted for by the addition of 10 Canadians and 5 English. The Lynn district of Methodists established the Asbury Camp Meeting in the southwest of town in 1859. By the end of the period 362 lots had been laid out and 123 cottages and been built for week-long meetings in August. At the same time pleasure parties began visiting the town, as well. Both national parties found adherents.

### C. Settlement Pattern

With the opening of the Boston and Maine Railroad in 1839, a major shifting of settlement activities began. Although the town's meetinghouse center at Cutler and Bay Street attracted its most substantial residential construction during the period and a new meetinghouse was erected there in 1843, it nevertheless had been bypassed by the railroad. South Hamilton, at the junction of the

Boston and Maine line with Bay Street (Rt.1A) began its efflorescence during the period and the meetinghouse center its relative decline. The town's civic focus remained in the meetinghouse vicinity, while commercial activities previously scattered along Route 1A (Bay and Main streets) began their moves outward to the South Hamilton (railroad) vicinity. With increasing population in the southern town came a new (third) schoolhouse on Bay Street, by period's end, just south of Bridge Street.

The principal corridor of residential activity remained Bay and Main streets (Rt. 1A). While dwellings were their densest in the meetinghouse vicinity (between Bridge and Cutler Street), secondary foci of construction were located in the South Hamilton (railroad) locale from Asbury Street south into Wenham and north on Bay and Main street (near a schoolhouse) toward Ipswich. Although south-eastern Hamilton had attracted scattered buildings since the Colonial era, for the first time (and likely an offshoot of railroad-related activities), settlement began to push northwest out of South Hamilton along Asbury Street. By 1871, 123 cottages had been constructed at the campmeeting grounds in Asbury Groves at Asbury and Highland streets.

#### D. Economic Base

Agriculture continued to dominate the town's economy. In 1831 there were 7592 acres of agricultural land. Pasture, woodland and unimproved land accounted for 74% of the acreage, while tillage (6%) and hays (20%) occupied the remainder. English, upland and freshmeadow hay were cultivated increasingly during the period, while the grain harvest held steady. Tillage land was also devoted to a small vegetable and large potato crop. A canker-worm infected the apple orchards early in the period, destroying much of the crop. Essex farmers had a larger than average livestock population early in the period. Sheep were the primary animal, followed by cows. By 1865 the livestock population had fallen by 48% and sheep had practically disappeared. Dairy farmers concentrated on production of butter and cheese. From 1840 to 1865 the number of men employed in agriculture dropped from 181 to 128 but the percentage of all occupations remained the same (70%) throughout.

Hamilton continued to be home to a small manufacturing population. Only 30% of all men were employed in this sector. In 1831 there were thirty-five small shoeshops. These employed the majority of manufacturing workers. In addition to a saw and gristmill and a tannery, there were two cabinetmakers, a blacksmith, two chairmakers, two wheelwrights, eight carpenters and a weaver. In 1834, however, the Manning Woolen Mills were erected by Ipswich's Dr. Manning. This waterpowered mill produced woven woolen goods throughout the period. During the Civil War under the management of the Willowdale Manufacturing Company, it made army-grade socks, making 55,000 pairs

worth \$135,000 in one year. In 1865 the firm employed twenty-five people (almost 50% of manufacturing employees) and manufactured woolen blankets. Hamilton men also occasionally engaged in the construction of small fishing schooners.

#### E. Architecture

Residential: Small numbers of traditional house types were built in the town. Large houses with double chimneys are known from both Greek Revival and Italianate examples but are few. Gable-front forms are adopted in large 2-1/2-story homes in these styles including three-bay examples with either side or center entry. Small numbers of 1-1/2-story, center houses survive with both L and double-pile plans. The Grove cottages are 1-1/2-story, three-bay center-entry forms, closely resembling those known from other camp examples; many have been expanded and winterized, and their presumed ornament removed.

Institutional: In 1843 the Congregational meetinghouse was remodeled; it was turned to present its gable end to the street, raised by 12 feet for a vestry; its facade includes a square tower with clock, belfry, pinnacles and spire, and entry screened in by antis Ionic columns.

Industrial: The Manning stone woolen factory was erected at the privilege on the Ipswich River near Winthrop Street in Willowdale. A one-story frame shoeshop with pitched roof and chimney built on Essex Street during the period, still stands at 581 Bay Road.

Transportation: The Willowdale Bridge (1844/1845) was a wood stringer bridge with stone piers, 21 feet wide and 50 feet long.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes

Existing roads continued in use and were upgraded. In Asbury Grove and South Hamilton, several sizable neighborhoods were laid out for residential development. In 1872 the Eastern Railroad was joined (at South Hamilton) by the Essex Branch Railroad, connecting Essex Center with Wenham. The Wenham depot was located immediately south of the intersection of the town railroad lines with Bay Street (Route 1A), at the Hamilton/Wenham Line, and still survives.

## B. Population

Hamilton's 1870 population of 790 was the second smallest of all the cities and towns in Essex County (only Nahant with 470 people was smaller). By 1915 the population had increased to 1879, a surprising 137.8% growth rate. The period 1890-1895 was the most significant in this jump as the population grew from 961 to 1356, a 41% increase. The real number and percentage of foreign-born also increased dramatically between 1885 and 1895. After increasing only slightly from 1865 to 1885, (from 65 to 80 immigrants or from 8.1% to 9.4% of the total population), the number of foreign-born grew to 288 (21.2% of total population), in 1895. By 1915, 464 immigrants constituted 24.7% of Hamilton's population. As the period advanced, Canadians replaced the Irish as the largest immigrant group. By 1915 Italians, Poles and Swedes had increased the town's ethnic diversity.

In 1870 the national campmeeting of the Methodists was held on the large lot owned by the Methodist Church. In 1883 the Hamilton Congregational Parish was reorganized as the First Congregational Parish was reorganized as the First Congregational Society. Episcopalians were organized as a mission in 1912. It is probable that Roman Catholic services were begun during this period.

## C. Settlement Pattern

Experiencing an era of unparalleled prosperity and population growth, Hamilton underwent a drastic physical transformation during the the period. Civic and commercial activities continued their shift southward, toward the intersection of Bay Street with the Eastern Railroad, and by 1872, also with the Eastern Branch Railroad. Residential construction responded to the favored popularity of the Methodist Episcopal Camp Meetings (at Highland and Asbury streets) and pushed northward en masse, an attempt to house the town's enormous influx of new residents. During the turn-of-the-century decades, several suburban-style neighborhoods were laid out on Asbury Street, both humbler cottages at Asbury Grove and more substantial dwellings in South Hamilton in an exceptionally dense, grid-like configuration. In 1898, confirming the growing predominance of the South Hamilton area, a new town hall was erected, not in the meetinghouse center but at the intersection of Bay Street and Asbury. Otherwise, residential building was attracted to the Ipswich River Mill sites and to the town's rural roads.

## D. Economic Base

The number of people employed in agriculture, manufacturing and commerce more than doubled between 1875 and 1915, expanding from 234 to 488. This represents a growth rate of 109%, a figure proportional

to the population growth rate for the same period. The number employed in agriculture increased 25%, in manufacturing 181% and in commerce 360%.

The growth in agricultural employment is reflected in the expansion of farm acreage. Between 1875 and 1885 this figure grew 24% to 8346 acres. Larger pasturage and haying acreage account for this growth. In 1885, 30% of the land was under cultivation (hay and tillage), 48% was devoted to pasture and other unimproved land, and 22% was woodland. These percentages were practically the same as the percentages for Essex County as a whole. Hamilton farmers turned increasingly to dairying. A 60% increase in the number of cows (1875-1885) and 230% increase in the value of the dairy product (1875-1895) indicate this shift. In 1895 dairy products represented 30% of the total agricultural product, followed by hay at 25%, poultry at 9%, vegetables at 8%, fruit at 7% and meat and animal products at 6%.

Growth in manufacturing employment is more difficult to explain. Not only did shoe manufacturing practically ceased, but the Willowdale Woolen Co. was completely destroyed by fire in 1884 and was not rebuilt. Quite possibly those working in manufacturing traveled to the hosiery mills in Ipswich as the total value of goods manufactured in Hamilton was only \$11,463 in 1905. A saw and gristmill continued in operation as did two blacksmiths, a carriagemaker and small drug manufacturer. Meanwhile the number employed in commercial establishments grew from 33 in 1875 to 152 in 1915. At the end of the period, equal percentage (31%) worked in commerce and manufacturing and the remaining 38% in agriculture.

#### E. Architecture

Residential: The rapid rise in the town's population can be seen in the concomitant expansion in the neighborhood of South Hamilton, an area with an exceptional survival of moderate-sized, middle class housing of the period. Earliest examples illustrate the persistence of the three-bay, gable-front form, in both 1-1/2 and 2-1/2 stories. Some elaborate Stick Style examples survive, of 2-1/2 stories in two forms, one with entry ell on the lateral wall, and others of full L plan, with ornamental shingles and spindlework. Smaller numbers survive of large gambrel dominated homes. The most popular form later in the period are small, 2-1/2-story, pyramidal, side-entry forms, somewhat smaller numbers survive of low, 1-1/2-story forms related to the bungalow. In the area near the Grove are examples related to the common campground cottage. Along Asbury Street, larger examples of 2-1/2 stories and more complex form, survive in Shingle and Colonial Revival styles. On the hills in the north of the town large estates date to this period. The largest are commonly composed of a rectangular central section with projecting bays or ells at each end;

style choices include stucco and tile-roofed Mediterranean, brick post-medieval manor, and Georgian revival.

Institutional: The present First Presbyterian Church dates to this period; gable front in form, the entry porch is pedimented, a tower is located along a lateral wall, and the ornament is Stick Style. Building continued at Asbury Grove. The chapel (1884) is gable front in form with covered entry, belfry, and ornamental shingles. The tabernacle (1895) is an open-air meeting place, with an octagonal roof with central clerestory area for illumination, and screened inside walls. Other large buildings may date to this period. Dormitories are 2-1/2 storied, gabled-roof structures, as is the dining room. A small brick structure, now a thriftshop, is gable front in form with center-entry and segmental arch-headed openings. The L.B. Bates Library is a single-story, pyramidal-roofed structure with porch and center entry. The town hall was constructed in 1898 from Colonial Revival designs by Pitman and Brown of Salem; it is a large hip-on-hip roofed block with pedimented frontispiece and hip-roofed lateral wings. An undated fire station (now the water department) is a three-bay, gable-front, frame structure with garage ells and rear tower. The Myopia Hunt Club began leasing a five-bay colonial house in 1882 and purchased it in 1891.

Industrial: Additional buildings were erected at the Willowdale Woolen Mills site; the whole complex was destroyed by fire in 1884.

Commercial: Growth in South Hamilton also brought larger numbers of shops and storehouses. The former are most often a single-story; the largest has multiple store fronts, is built of brick with corbelling and a flat roof; single unit examples include a brick and concrete flat roofed example, as well as gable-front examples of 1-1/2 and occasional 2-1/2 stories. A large warehouse of 2-1/2 stories survives with clipped gables and stick work.

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

### A. Transportation Routes

By passed by both Interstate 95 and State Route 128, Hamilton's major thoroughway remains Route 1A (Bay and Main streets) running north/south from Salem via Ipswich and Newburyport, Route 22 (Woodbury Street) and Asbury and Highland streets, linking Hamilton to Ipswich. Moulton's Bridge was rebuilt in stone in 1935.

## B. Population

After losing 13.1% of its population in the first five years of the period, (from 1879 in 1915 to 1631 in 1920), Hamilton's population fluctuated and gradually increased until by 1940, a period of pronounced growth began. Between 1940 and 1955 alone, the town's population increased 102%, giving it a period-wide growth rate of 119%. After peaking at 25.6% in 1905, the percentage of foreign-born in Hamilton (while still high) began a long-term decline, falling to 17.9% of the town's total by 1940. In 1915 the Canadians (142), Irish (107), English (53), Poles (46), Swedes (25), and Scottish (25) accounted for 85% of Hamilton's foreign-born population.

## C. Settlement Pattern

After its turn-of-the-century population blitz, Hamilton early into the period experienced little growth. It did, however, gain the Hamilton/Wenham Community House in 1921, the Soldier's Monument in 1923/1924 and the Union Street Junior High School in 1931. By 1940 growth recommenced at the frenzied pace of the earlier period, and residential construction again boomed. Early Modern low-slung dwellings were built along the outside fringes of the earlier suburban style neighborhoods in the South Hamilton locale, and pushed beyond Asbury Grove. Tract-style cottage developments sprang up off High Street south of Asbury Grove, at the intersection of Highland and Asbury streets, as well as along the town's major and invariable rural, throughways.

Railroad Avenue at Bay Street and Route 1A from the Wenham line to Asbury Street emerged as the town's principal commercial corridor while Rt.1A continued its evolution into nearly an uninterrupted strip of mixed residential and automobile-oriented businesses. Hamilton's countryside remains largely agricultural in orientation and horse farms have become a chief industry.

## D. Economic Base

Hamilton slowly became a very wealthy suburb. Many of its farms were converted into estates. In 1954 there were only two small manufacturing establishments. The largest employment category was government and self-employed people (47%), followed by construction (28%) and wholesale and retail trade (25%).

## E. Architecture

Residential: In South Hamilton moderate-sized suburban homes were built in small numbers, most commonly in the Dutch Colonial Style.



Some small low-roofed gable-front houses were added at the Grove. Post-war capes were added on the outskirts of South Hamilton.

Institutional: Christ Church of Hamilton and Wenham was built in 1926 from designs by Philip Norton Smith; it is a fieldstone church of nave plan with timber frame entry porch on the lateral wall, and buttresses; the corner tower and half-timbered tower ell may date to the same period; in 1954 an International Style open-plan Parish Hall was added. The undated St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church is a brick gable-front structure with triple-entry facade and Mediterranean ornamental corbelling; the adjacent Rectory is a brick, hip-roofed Georgian Revival residence. The brick Hamilton-Wenham Community House was built in the Colonial Revival style in the 1920s; its main gable-roofed block has a recessed entry, round-headed windows, cupola, and lateral ells. The high school of 1931 is a brick Colonial Revival structure with an H-plan of two, five, and two-bay configuration, with columns at the center entry and blind arcades at each end. The American Legion hall (n.d.) is a 2-1/2-story stucco structure with pyramidal roof and lateral wings.

Industrial: No known industrial buildings erected.

#### XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Hamilton's small inventory of 125 forms focuses on structures built prior to the mid-19th century. Its outstanding omission of South Hamilton as a whole, and North Hamilton estates is a high priority for survey.

With the arrival of Rt.128 immediately south of town in 1954, Hamilton's residential population continued its rapid increase. Particularly in the southeastern town, tract developments of affluent single-family dwellings (on large lots) proliferate. Zoning laws protect the old meetinghouse center but South Hamilton's commercial corridor (Railroad Ave and Southern Bay Street), as the whole of Route 1A, face continued degradation by commercial development.

#### XII. FINDER'S AID

Early Industrial residential area	Bay Street between Bridge & Cutler streets
Asbury Grove, 19th-century Methodist camp meeting	West of Highland St. and South of Asbury Street
Late 19th-century and early 20th-century suburb	South Hamilton, west of BaySt. and south of Asbury St.

#### XIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY [missing]