

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

HATFIELD

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: SEPTEMBER 1982

COMMUNITY: HATFIELD

I. TOPOGRAPHY

Hatfield is situated in the Connecticut River Valley. The eastern portion of the town consists of floodplain and glacial lake bottom. The former delineates an earlier course of the Connecticut River and extends west from the present western bank of the Connecticut to a terrace that is the remains of a portion of glacial Lake Hitchcock. This prehistoric lake followed the course of the Connecticut River from central Connecticut as far north as Vermont where it joined with Lake Upham. Seated on the lake bed's western periphery and covering the remainder of Hatfield is a complex of small, rugged uplands. Elevations range from 250 feet on the uplands eastern periphery to slightly more than 700 feet at the Hatfield/Williamsburg line. The Connecticut River delineates the town's eastern boundary separating it from Hadley. Hatfield's uplands are drained by Running Gutter which flows into the Mill River. The latter waterway drains the eastern portion of town and flows into the Connecticut east of Canary Island. Hatfield's only bodies of freshwater consist of Great Pond, the vestiges of an early meander of the Connecticut, and a portion of the Mountain Street Reservoir situated in the town's northwestern corner. Local soils consist of the rich alluvium of the Connecticut floodplain and the gravelly loam of the uplands.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Originally part of Nonotuck grant for Northampton in 1653 including southwest section to Capawonk meadows (Mill River). Connecticut River meadowland granted as part of Hadley plantation in 1658 with Northampton boundary at Halfway Brook (Indian Fort), later defined in 1720. Described as Hadley West Side by 1660 with meetinghouse by 1668 and established as town of Hatfield in 1670. Western hill land purchased as Hatfield Addition in 1695 and established as Williamsburg in 1771. Northern district established as Whately in 1771 with boundary at present Franklin County line. Western boundary defined in 1845 with annex exchange from Williamsburg.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Historic agricultural river town on primary north-south corridor between Northampton and Greenfield. Located along west bank of Connecticut River with important native sites documented along Capawonk meadows near Mill River, including Contact period fortified site apparently intact at Halfway Brook on Northampton line (Elm Court). Early English settlement from Hadley by mid 17th century with surviving town plan as Hatfield Main Street and original burying ground with mill site along Prospect Street (Mill

River). Agriculture developed as primary economic activity along fertile Connecticut River meadowland during Plantation period with settlement of western uplands retarded by native attacks after King Philip's War, including reported pallisaded fortifications around town center.

Agriculture remained as primary activity through Colonial period with civic focus at Hatfield Center and burying ground at Mill River with period stones. Some well-preserved mid 18th century houses remain on village street, including authentic examples of Connecticut Valley doorways and fragments of original meetinghouse (now disassembled). Lowland farming continued through Federal period with gradual expansion of Hatfield Center as street village including several period houses and possible barns along Elm-Main Streets axis and period cottages along King Street axis in North Hatfield.

Introduction of commercial tobacco during mid 19th century fostered local prosperity with several notable examples of suburban Italianate and Mansard houses in Hatfield Center and well preserved set of cupoled Italianate houses at Bradstreet village. Regional railroad connections created depot villages at West and North Hatfield, including surviving freight shed and related Greek Revival housing with unusual high-peaked roof examples. Local industrial expansion at Mill River site with restored wooden factory and impressive Victorian brick mansion on Elm Street and brick academy at Hatfield Center. Expansion of tobacco farming continued on Connecticut lowland through late 19th century with many potential period barns along King and Prospect Streets. Development of auto highway corridor along Route 5-10 during Early Modern period with intact concrete garages at North Hatfield and Hatfield Center, and early motor court near West Hatfield.

Present development most evident along Interstate 91 from Northampton to West Hatfield with suburban industrial expansion along railroad corridor. Hatfield Center retains remarkable historic character with little obvious commercial intrusion, although several early period houses show signs of disrepair. Similar preservation is evident at Bradstreet Village with agriculture remaining as primary activity. However, future potential of tobacco farming poses serious threat to preservation of open landscape, while some erosion of historic fabric is already evident around Mill River factory site.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1630)

A. Transportation Routes:

Important regional corridor along Connecticut River Valley between western uplands. Primary north-south trail documented as Straits Road from Pocumtuck (Deerfield) around edge of Great Pond as former river meander (Temple, History of Whately, 1872, p. 120). From Great Pond main trail apparently followed south as Prospect Street to Capawonk fordway at Mill River and continued along river terrace as Elm Street to Nonotuck (Northampton). Connecting trails from highlands appear likely as King Street (North Hatfield) and possible

Dwight Street along Running Gutter to Horse Mountain and Beaver Brook (Williamsburg). It is also probable that branch trails connected with Mill River fordway to Connecticut River fishing sites (Hatfield Main Street).

B. Settlement Patterns:

Hatfield had no reported native period sites. However, there was probably extensive native settlement on the floodplain extending east from the foot of the Rocks to the Connecticut River, particularly the eastern portion roughly demarcated by Elm Street, Prospect Street, and North Street. These fertile lowlands would have been extremely attractive to natives because of their excellent agricultural potential. Focal points of native settlement in this area likely were the terrace overlooking the confluence of the Mill and Connecticut rivers and the portion of the alluvial floodplain extending from the present village of Hatfield to the town's southern boundary. Two undated native and a single Woodland period site were situated on and immediately below the terrace. Additional native settlement probably took place east of present Great Pond and in northeastern Hatfield as suggested by the presence of one Woodland and several undated native sites. Some period sites may have been established on the pine plains west of Straits Road and Prospect Street. Small short-term hunting camps were likely scattered about the rugged uplands of western Hatfield.

C. Subsistence Patterns:

Native horticulture focused on the eastern half of the floodplain, particularly east of Great Pond, east of Prospect Street and south of Elm Street. The Connecticut and Mill Rivers were rich sources of fish such as shad and salmon. Native fishing probably focused at the confluence of the Connecticut and Mill Rivers, the Mill River Falls located near the river's junction with Prospect Street and Great Pond. Hunting likely occurred primarily on the pine plains and the uplands west of Route 5/10.

D. Observations:

Hatfield's varied resource base would have been capable of supporting a large native population. The local settlement was part of the heavily settled Connecticut River Valley, the focal point of the study unit's native populace. The Hatfield area probably fell within the territory overseen by the Norwotucks, a native group centered in Northampton and Hadley. Regionally, they appeared to be loosely affiliated with the Pocumtucks, the dominant group of western Massachusetts. There is a good probability of extant archaeological evidence of native period settlement occurring throughout the floodplain, particularly the suspected focal point of native occupation in southeastern Hatfield. However, periodic flooding and the constant erosion of the western bank of the Connecticut River has undoubtedly destroyed considerable portions of period sites established on or near the river. The riverfront should be regularly monitored for eroding native sites.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Main north-south trail from Norotuck to Pocumtuck improved as Northampton-Deerfield path along Elm-Prospect-Straits Roads with fordway at Mill River. Formation of Hatfield town center (1661) established location of Main Street along river terrace with connecting highways from Mill River fordway as Chestnut, School and King Streets. Connecticut River ferry established to Hadley from South Street landing (by 1670?).

B. Population:

There were no figures for the area's native population. By the end of 1661, the first year of colonial settlement, there were approximately 17 colonial families settled in Hatfield. This figure had almost doubled to 30 families in 1670. Further substantial growth took place by 1675 with the community consisting of 50 families. Most of the Hatfield settlers were former Hartford and Wethersfield, Connecticut and Northampton residents.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Native settlement patterns probably remained similar to those suggested for the Contact period until late in the period. However, even with the initiation of colonial settlement in 1661, the local natives were able to utilize much of the Hatfield area. In the 1660 sale of local native land, the native occupants retained the right to erect wigwams on the commons, plant, hunt and fish.

Hatfield's colonial community was planned and nucleated. Initial settlement was preceded by the assignment of house lots of four or eight acres to individual proprietors. Period settlement was confined primarily to the lower portion of Main Street. The first homes were established in 1661 on the west side of Main Street at its junction with Maple Street and on the lower half of the section of the east side of Main Street between its junction with School Street and Maple Street. The settlement that followed extended north of these homes along both sides of Main Street slightly above the street's intersection with North Street. The town's first meeting-house was erected in c.1668 slightly south of the present Congregational church (approximately 500' south of Main and School Street junction). It is reputed the first burials were located east of the 1668 meetinghouse in the western bank of the Connecticut River (Sylvester 1879:I, 397). The burial ground situated at the junction of Elm and Prospect Streets probably was not laid out until the late 1670's.

D. Economic Base:

As mentioned above, local natives continued to undertake horticulture, fishing and hunting in the Hatfield area. The appearance of colonial

residents resulted in the establishment of Anglo-Indian trade.

Agriculture was the foundation of the colonial economy. Crop production consisted primarily of wheat, corn, oats and flax. Crop production and livestock grazing took place on individual home lots and the floodplain east of North/Prospect/Elm Streets. Local residents fished on the Connecticut River. The town underwent limited industrial development. Thomas Meekins built a grist mill in c.1661 on the north bank of the Mill River immediately east of its junction with Prospect Street. The mill, for several years, served the needs of both Hatfield and Hadley residents. This operation was followed by a sawmill also established by Meekins in c.1669 on the Mill River near the gristmill. The town had commercial ties with Boston and river towns south of Hatfield. Local products such as grain, wool, wool or flax yarn, cloth and pork were sent to these commercial centers in exchange for manufactured goods. These trade contacts included the Pynchons of Springfield. The first evidence of trade with natives involved Zachariah Field who was trading prior to 1664 (Sylvester 1879:I, 387).

E. Architecture:

Residential: Little is known about Hatfield's first houses, most of which were built along Main Street in the 1660s. It is possible, however, to conjecture that most were simpler than the parsonage built for the Reverend Hope Atherton in 1669. The surviving building description indicates that that house had dimensions of 40' x 20', was two storied and had a seven foot square porch, also probably of two stories. End gables were to be adorned with pyramids (pinnacles?) and cornices. With its two story, two room plan, porch and ornamentation, the Parsonage was typical of larger 17th century houses but probably represented the high style standard in the town.

Insitutional: The first meetinghouse was a small, simple structure, thirty feet square, built in 1668. The roof, which is described as being four sided and flat on top, probably took the form of a pyramidal hip with deck.

F. Observations:

Hatfield's colonial community had one of the earliest industrial complexes and some of the most productive agricultural land in the Connecticut River Valley study unit. However, the development of the settlement's agricultural base was probably hindered by the ownership of a substantial portion of local farmland by Hadley residents. Vestiges of Hatfield's colonial settlement may still survive in the moderately developed village of Hatfield. The site of the Meekins mill complex should be examined for any archaeological evidence since this operation was an important aspect of the economies of Hatfield and Hadley.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes:

Continued expansion of highway system from Hatfield Center with extension of Main Street around Great Pond to Broadstreet Road and local ferry service to North Hadley from King Street landing. Development of road system in western hill land with north-south highway from Whately along Mill River as Pantry Road (Route 5-10), and east-west connector across uplands as Rocks Road and Mountain Street.

B. Population:

Most, if not all, the area's native population abandoned Hatfield at the outbreak of King Philip's War in 1675. The remaining native populace consisted of no more than small hunting and fishing bands.

By 1678, the colonial settlement was estimated to consist of 300-350 residents. Hatfield had increased to 803 inhabitants in 1765 (included present Whately, Williamsburg). This figure dropped to 582 residents in 1776. The population decrease was largely due to the loss of present Whately which was incorporated in 1771.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Post-1675 native settlement was probably restricted to small, short-term hunting and fishing camps established in the town's western periphery. The colonial settlement underwent considerable expansion during the Colonial period despite the upheaval of the Indian Wars. Settlement continued to be confined to the eastern floodplain. Between the late 1670's and the beginning of the 18th century, new homes were established west and north of the primary settlement node. The late 1670's witnessed the erection of the first homes on Elm Street. By the late 1680's, a secondary settlement node had developed on Elm Street; it extended along the street from its junction with Prospect Street 1000' west. Expansion of the town's primary settlement node occurred in the late 1680's and 1690's with the construction of homes on the eastern half of School Street. The town's second (c.1701) and third (c.1750) meetinghouses were built within this node in the general vicinity of the c.1668 facility. The first settlement of northeastern Hatfield occurred in c.1700 with the establishment of homes in and around the village of Bradstreet. Later 18th century settlement of the Bradstreet area spilled over into present Whately.

The Indian wars of the late 17th and early 18th centuries had considerable impact on the community's period settlement patterns. A series of pallisades and fortifications were built around the town center and a number of individual homes between 1675 and 1703. The first pallisade was built in 1675 and enclosed the majority of the

primary settlement node. Its southern and northern bounds were slightly north of the Main Street/Maple Street intersection and immediately south of the Center School, respectively. The western and eastern lines paralleled Main Street and were approximately 200' west and east of the street. The pallisade was extended further north in 1678 and 1690 so that its northern bounds were approximately 500' north of School Street and roughly in line with the Main Street/North Street junction, respectively. In addition, several homes within the central village pallisade, on Elm Street and in northeastern Hatfield were fortified in 1690 and 1703. The community was particularly hard hit during the Anglo-Indian fighting that occurred between 1675 and 1677. Twenty-seven residents were killed and one-third of the settlement's homes were destroyed.

D. Economic Base:

The community's economy suffered considerably during the late 17th century. Large numbers of livestock were destroyed while crop production dropped dramatically. In addition, Hatfield incurred considerable war debts. However, by the first decade of 18th century the settlement's economy showed signs of recovering. Increased emphasis was placed on sheep and hog production. Local hogs were sold to river towns south of Hatfield. Turpentine was sent east to Boston for distillation. By the late 18th century, rye was sold as far south as Providence, Rhode Island. Hatfield underwent moderate industrial development. John Graves established a malthouse in c.1693 on Elm Street west of its junction with Prospect Street. John Fitch began operation of a linseed oil mill, reputedly the first in Massachusetts, in c.1735 on Running Gutter slightly north of its junction with Broad Brook. A pre-1736 cider mill was built adjacent to "Widow Hastings' home" (Sylvester 1879: I, 390).

E. Architecture:

Residential: Approximately a half-dozen colonial houses have survived in Hatfield. All of these are located at the town center, on Main Street, or on Elm Street. The majority of the houses known are two-story, center chimney structures with five bay facades, center entrances, and gable roofs. There is one double interior chimney, center hall plan house with a gambrel roof as well as a one gambrel roofed center chimney cottage. The earliest surviving house (Hubbard House, Elm and Prospect Streets) is dated 1700 but most of the houses extant appear to date from the 1760s. These would include the gambrel roofed Roswell Billings House mentioned above as well as a house on Main Street (MHC #24) which features a broken scroll pediment Connecticut Valley entrance surround, lintels with pediments and in integral leanto. The Main Street house is the most elaborately detailed house of the period surviving. The finest house built in the period undoubtedly was the Colonel Israel Williams House, constructed as early as 1732 and demolished in 1852. That house featured a gambrel roof, carved stone entrance surround

(possibly preserved in the Hatfield Parsonage) and rich interior treatments including flocked wallpaper and carved wainscotting. Still standing and also of note is the Daniel White Tavern on Elm Street, which exhibits a half hip roof and L-plan with five bay center entrance facades on both the front and side walls. The White Tavern is the only house known in the area to retain the half hip and L plan, which were commonly employed for commercial structures.

Institutional: The town's first meetinghouse was replaced in 1699 (completed 1701) by a larger structure with galleries on the interior and a belfry tower, which also served as a watch tower, on the exterior. Timbers of the second meetinghouse were used in the third meetinghouse, built in 1750. The 1750 structure, which had dimensions of 56' x 45', was sold ca. 1849. It was used as a barn until 1981, when it collapsed in a windstorm. Other institutional activity of the period included the purchase of a poor house in 1702/03, and the construction of at least two schools, a frame school in 1706 and a brick school at some point later in the century. An indication of Hatfield's status in the 18th century is gained from the fact that plans for the formation of a regional college for the Connecticut Valley, which were discussed in the early 1760s, cited Hatfield, Hadley or Northampton as possible locations for the school. Although a charter was applied for in 1762, the proposed "Queen's College" was never realized.

Commercial: While at least five taverns were known to have operated in Hatfield in the period, only one, the Daniel White Tavern on Elm Street, still stands.

F. Observations:

Hatfield was one of the most highly nucleated and fortified period settlements within the Connecticut River Valley study unit. In addition, the community suffered some of the heaviest economic and material losses in the study unit. There is a good probability that considerable archaeological evidence of the Hatfield (Main/North/School/Elm Streets) and Bradstreet Village settlement nodes still survive. The old burying ground situated at the junction of Elm and Prospect Streets contains one of the largest collections of early Colonial period burial markers in the Connecticut River Valley unit. However, the survival of a number of stones is in jeopardy due to severe weathering.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes:

Gradual adjustment of basic street system with opening of Connecticut River bridge to Hadley (1809), later abandoned (1820). Local cross connectors from Mill River included Bridge Street and extension of highways to Bradstreet Village.

B. Population:

Hatfield's population does not follow the pattern of the county, in which the number of residents rises throughout the period, particularly in the years 1790 to 1810; Hatfield's population actually declines between 1800 and 1810. For the period between 1790 and 1830, the growth rate of 17% was the lowest of any of the county river towns, well under the 60.7% county average, and much more typical of hill towns like Williamsburg, Middlefield or Chesterfield. Hadley, by contrast, showed a 90% rise in the same period. In 1830 Hatfield's population stood at 893.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Civic center maintained on Hatfield Main Street with local industrial center at Mill River bridge. Primary economic activity remained as agriculture on Connecticut River meadows to Bradstreet Village with upland farming on western hill land.

D. Economic Base:

The period from the close of the Revolution until the 1820s was a period of peace and prosperity for Hatfield, according to historian Wells. Hatfield investors built what was reputedly the first distillery in western Massachusetts in 1785 for local rye production; and large quantities of other grains, grasses, vegetables and fruits were produced, much of it, until the 1820s, probably included in West Indian trade. Pabst noted that the loss of the West Indian market in the 1820s caused a crisis in valley agriculture, though in the lowland towns like Hadley and Hatfield the export trade was soon replaced by a market in valley industrial towns for dairy and vegetable products. Throughout the period, Hatfield continued to be known for fine beef cattle, sent to Boston markets after summer grazing. As late as 1845, Hatfield was the only town in the county in which the number of neat cattle exceeded the town's population.

After the introduction of broom making in Hadley in the 1790s, Hatfield picked up the industry. The first broom corn in Hatfield was planted about 1816 by Simeon Simon, but although it was reputed to have been the town's principal cultivated crop presumably by the 1830s or '40s, there is no record of broom corn in the 1845 census report, when Hadley showed an annual yield of over 500,000 lbs. Though this must be an error on the part of the enumerators, much of Hatfield's supply of the broom corn may have come from Northampton (which showed an abnormally high yield in relation to its production of brooms), or Hadley.

Hatfield also picked up broom making from Hadley, though there are no figures available until 1837. In that year 20 persons were employed making brooms and brushes worth annually \$28,600, slightly less than one-third of the value reported by Hadley.

Despite the prosperity reported by local historians, Hatfield's population growth was one of the lowest in the county (see Sect. B, above) during this period, and any study of the period should make some attempt to reconcile these contradictory views.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Approximately a dozen Federal period houses survive in Hatfield. Most of these are located on Elm and Main Streets at the town center. While the majority of the houses retain the traditional center chimney, a few houses with double interior or end chimneys and center hall plans are known, as is at least one center hall plan house with twin rearwall chimneys. Of note is the variety of roof forms employed during the period. In addition to the standard gable and hip roofs, houses were observed with both gable on hip and double hip roof forms. Outstanding houses of the period include the Lieutenant David Billings House (c.1783) and a ca. 1820 brick house (MHC #7) both on Elm Street. The Billings House, a double interior chimney, center hall plan house, is the most ornate extant Federal house in town. It features a double hip roof with a low center gabled dormer with semielliptical fan; the projecting one story Gothic Revival porch probably dates c.1850. The brick house, with end chimneys, double pile plan and hip roof, is the only house of masonry construction known for the period.

Institutional: The only institutional construction known for the period was the construction of a brick school in 1783.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes:

Significant improvement of north-south axis with Connecticut River Railroad from Northampton to Greenfield (1846) including local depots at West and North Hatfield and connector to Bradstreet Village as Bradstreet Road. Connecticut River ferry service to Hadley apparently discontinued by Civil War.

B. Population:

In the Early Industrial period Hatfield had the fifth highest growth rate in the county (78.4%), substantially above the 46.7% county average, and, reversing the trend of the preceding period, more than double the rate of Hadley. The half decades of greatest growth were the years 1855-60 and 1865-70, possibly associated with the expansion of the tobacco crop.

In 1855 Hatfield had a 13.4% immigrant population, about average for the county, and about the same as Hadley. Of this number, 52% were Irish and another 38% Canadians. French Canadians were said to be excellent broom tyers and this substantial number, well above the 7.2% county average, may reflect this element in the broom industry.

By 1870, modest sidehall plan Italianate houses had been built at West and North Hatfield. Double interior chimney, center hall plans remained common through the period. At the town center and at Bradstreet, a few stylish houses with interior chimneys and center halls were built in the 1860s. These include the Sophia Smith House (c.1865; MHC #13), the Joseph Smith House (c.1861-1879; MHC #14) and an Italianate house on Main Street at Bradstreet. Both Smith Houses incorporate concave mansard roofs; the Sophia Smith House also features flush boarding and wide pilasters in the Regency/Greek Revival style. The Bradstreet house features a gable roof and pilasters with arched links. Of note are a group of interior chimney hip roofed Italianate houses at Bradstreet. All are symmetrical, square in plan with center entrances. All include square hip roofed belvederes. The most outstanding house of the period is a towered, asymmetrical plan Italianate villa on Main Street. The house has a low hip roof, one story veranda and three story tower. Ornament includes paired brackets, window hoods and cast iron frieze grilles. Outside the town center, modest Italianate cottages and one mansard roofed cottage were observed on Bridge, Chestnut and King Streets. One Italianate double house was noted on Prospect Street opposite the Pistol Factory. Also noted was a brick Italianate cottage at Prospect and Chestnut Streets; no other masonry buildings were observed.

Institutional: The only institutional structure of the period surviving is the building of the present Greek Revival meetinghouse in 1849. The building is a two story structure with a monumental Ionic portico supporting a gable end pediment. The spire consists of two concentric square bases and a steeple. Repairs were made in 1867 and again in 1898. The first Town Hall was built in 1857.

Industrial: The Shattuck Pistol Factory (ca.1850), a well preserved frame three story factory, six by approximately twelve bays, is the only industrial building known for the period. Tobacco barns probably first began to be built in the period but it is not known if any early examples survive.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes:

Continued improvement of north-south railroad corridor with New York, New Haven and Hartford (1890) paralleled to original Connecticut River mainline (now abandoned as I-91). Extension of interurban trolley system from Northampton with local streetcar service to West Hatfield and through line to Hatfield and Bradstreet on Elm-Main Streets (1903).

B. Population:

In a period when more than half the towns in Hampshire County reported declining populations, Hatfield recorded a 64.9% growth between 1870 and 1915, somewhat above the 56.6% county average, well

above Hadley's 15.8% growth, and, as in the preceding period, fifth highest growth rate in the county. Yet Hatfield's population declined until 1890, and virtually all of her growth occurred between 1895 and 1915. Between 1910 and 1915 alone the town grew by 644 persons -- an average of 128 persons per year and much the highest rate for any five-year period in the town's history.

Most of Hatfield's growth can be ascribed to her new immigrant population. Though in 1880 Hatfield's percentage of foreign-born (22.1%) was close to the county average, by 1905, with the largest period of growth still to come, Hatfield already had the second highest percentage of immigrants in the county (34.7%), after the industrial town, Ware. Of these, 67% claimed Austria or Poland as their native country. Ten years later Hatfield had the highest percentage of foreign-born residents in the county (39.6%). Of this number, over three-quarters were natives of Poland.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Hatfield Main Street maintained as civic center with development of factory village at Mill River pistol works. Secondary villages expanded at North Hatfield and West Hatfield railroad depots, and farm village at Bradstreet. Commercial tobacco expanded as primary economic activity from Connecticut River lowlands to Westbrook uplands (Whately).

D. Economic Base:

The reduction in the price of tobacco in the mid '70s and '80s affected the size of the tobacco harvests throughout the Valley. Despite some financial disasters among growers, however, Hatfield retained its lead and even erected a handsome brick tobacco warehouse (probably in the mid '70s) "which an innocent stranger might easily mistake for a public school building or the rooms of a Young Men's Christian Association." The harvest of broom corn was reintroduced, with brooms made up mostly by individuals, often by farmers from their own brush. But by 1905 tobacco had rebounded and its value that year (\$301,204) represented over half the county production. Hatfield was the leading tobacco producing town in the state. Large tobacco packing houses provided winter employment for the men who worked on farms in the summer.

Hatfield's second major crop in this period was onions. From 4% of the county production in 1885, Hatfield by 1905 had 54% of the county production and, with onions valued at \$116,230, was also the leading onion producing town in the state. In 1909 Oscar Belden & Sons built what was reputedly the first storehouse in New England specifically designed for onion storage (Wells, p.235), made of hollow concrete blocks with a 5-inch dead-air space between inner and outer walls. Both tobacco and onion raising were labor intensive, and their development at this time is at least partially credited to the influx of Poles from Austria and Russia in the late 1880s and after.

Hatfield's only manufacturing activity was introduced at the site of Meekins' 17th century saw and grist mills, where the Mill River, crossing a ridge of red sandstone, had originally formed a natural fall and pond. In 1874 Henry S. Porter organized the Crescent Pistol Company. Three years later Porter sold the business to Charles Shattuck, who moved his pistol manufacturing business up from Springfield. On the opposite side of the river Jonathan Porter (originally a partner of Henry Porter in the Crescent Pistol Company) built in 1886 a machine shop for the manufacture of engine lathes, employing at first about 10 persons.

E. Architecture:

Residential: A considerable amount of residential construction took place in the period, most of it outside the town center. Small settlements developed at West and North Hatfield in the early 20th century. In general, the residential architecture of the period is more modest than that of the Early Industrial period, with small houses and cottages predominating. Most of these are simple Queen Anne and Colonial Revival structures with three bay wide facades and either center or sidehall entrances. While most of the Queen Anne buildings employ the gable roof, after the turn of the century, alternate forms, such as the pyramidal hip or gambrel roof, became popular. Dormers and gables were used commonly for additional space. Late 19th and early 20th century houses were built along Elm, West, Dwight, Bridge, Bradstreet, King and Main Streets. Despite the preponderance of simple houses, a few houses of outstanding architectural character were built in the period at the town center. The most elaborate of these are two Second Empire houses built in the 1870s, the William Henry Dickinson House (c.1875) on Main Street and the Lowell House on Elm Street near Prospect. Both have asymmetrical towered plans with concave and convex mansard roofs, polygonal bays, quoins and window hoods. The Lowell House incorporates some Gothic Revival detailing such as carved bargeboards. There is very little multiple family housing in the town with the exception of a few two family houses and a three-story tenement on Prospect Street immediately adjacent to the pistol factory.

Institutional: Several important institutional buildings were constructed at the town center in the period. Probably the finest of these was the Smith Academy (1872), a three story brick Victorian Gothic school demolished probably c.1960. Surviving period buildings at the town center include the Dickinson Memorial Hall (1892-93), a two story brick Renaissance Revival building with a hip roof and the Queen Anne Church of Christ chapel (c.1910). Other buildings of the period are the West Hatfield Chapel (founded 1889), now a Lutheran church, and Saint Joseph's Church (founded 1892; date of church building unknown). A small brick Victorian Gothic building on Chestnut Street, now a fire station, may be a remnant of the Smith Academy complex.

Commercial: Surviving period commercial buildings include the gable roofed one story railroad depot and two and three story freight sheds at Bridge and Dwight Streets and a few modest one story stores at North Hatfield.

Industrial: The major industrial buildings of the period relate to Hatfield's agricultural industry: these are tobacco barns and onion warehouses. Most of the tobacco barns standing were probably built in the period. These are generally long, two story frame structures with narrow one story vertical louvers to be opened and closed during the curing of tobacco. Most barns are located close to the road; perhaps as many as 50 barns survive. Onion warehouses normally are long one story gable roofed structures probably of masonry construction with few windows and small eave level vents. Frame construction apparently was not used, perhaps because frame buildings admit too much moisture; thus, it is not surprising to note that in 1909, Belden and Sons built a 120' x 60', two-and-a-half-story warehouse of concrete blocks at Bradstreet.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes:

Abandonment of streetcar service (1924) and New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad (1930). Improvement of north-south corridor as auto highway Route 5-10 from Northampton to Greenfield paralleling railroad lines from West to North Hatfield.

B. Population:

Hatfield's population did not repeat the unusual growth rate of 1910-15. Between 1915 and 1925 the town continued to grow by a small amount, but after 1925 the number of residents steadily declined. By 1940 Hatfield's population stood at 2216, some 400 persons less than the figure in 1915.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Hatfield Center maintained as civic focus with development of commercial highway activity along Route 5 axis from Northampton to North Hatfield. Tobacco remained as primary activity on fertile lowland with local village at Bradstreet.

D. Economic Base:

No new industries identified. The old Shattuck pistol shop, after serving several years as an adjunct to the Porter Machine Shop, was equipped as a grist mill in 1932. On the opposite side of the river, the Porter & McLeod Tool Company continued to produce engine lathes, developing a reputation for speciality equipment.

In 1905 the value of tobacco was more than double that of onions. By 1937 the consolidation of tobacco companies, with the consequent control over the price of the raw product, caused many local farmers to turn to potato raising and other local crops. Onions was the major crop by that date, with tobacco a close second.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Comparatively little residential construction took place in the period. As it had been for the previous period, the majority of the houses built were located in the western part of town, at West and North Hatfield. Most of these are hip or gable roofed cottage with dormers. In addition to cottages, more substantial gambrel roofed Dutch Colonial houses were also built in the 1920s with examples noted on Main Street at Bradstreet, on Bridge and Main Streets at the town center and on West Street. Of note is a one-and-a-half story concrete block house on Elm Street.

Institutional: Two major institutional buildings were built at the town center in the period. These are the High School (c.1925; now Regional Library) and the Town Hall (c.1935). Both are two story brick buildings. The High School exhibits a standard early 20th century school plan with end wings perpendicular to a center block; it incorporates Jacobethan and Queen Anne details. The Town Hall is a well-detailed Georgian Revival structure, seven bays long, with a center entrance.

Commercial: A few commercial buildings were built at North and West Street (Route 10). These include a few gas stations of the 1920s and some other automobile related buildings, such as small restaurants and farm stands.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

General: Hatfield's inventory includes only the most prominent buildings at the town center; all of these are located on Main Street between Elm and Chestnut or at the extreme eastern end of Elm Street. The inventory was gathered from windshield survey by MHC staff in 1967 and includes no specific historic or architectural data. Overlooked are all outlying settlements and even a number of significant structures at the town center. Further survey work should include completion of Main and Elm Street inventory as well as documentation of the outlying villages of West and North Hatfield and Bradstreet. District potential exists at Bradstreet (intact Italianate farmhouses) and at the town center. Of note archaeologically is the potential for subsurface remains of freed slave village on Northampton Road (location unspecified, but probably vicinity of West Hatfield); local histories (Wright 1908:1) mention cabins standing in the early 20th century.

XII. SOURCES

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