

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## LAKEVILLE

Report Date: 1981

Associated Regional Report: Southeast 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: July 1981

COMMUNITY: Lakeville

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## I. TOPOGRAPHY

Lakeville is in the coastal lowlands. Several large ponds in the town, Assawompset, Long and Great and Little Quittacus Ponds being the principle water bodies. Soils are generally sandy to gravelly. Drainage via the Newmasket and Cedar Swamp Rivers. Extensive topographic relief alternates with extensive swamp lands.

## II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Lakeville was incorporated from the West Precint of Middleborough on May 13, 1853.

## III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Lakeville is an inland rural town on the Plymouth-Bristol County boundary. The large ponds in the town served as important Contact and First Period native sites with seasonal occupation centered at Assawompset Pond. Little or no European settlement in the town during the Contact and First Periods although by the end of the Colonial period European settlement had heavily impacted the native seasonal rounds creating a fixed native community. Some late 18th and early 19th century industrial activity at North Lakeville (the Tack Factory Neighborhood) and at Upper Four Corners. Primary economic base was agricultural. New Bedford-Bridgewater turnpike brought some early 19th century residential development along its route. The development of Middleboro Four Corners drew industry away from Lakeville in the mid-19th century. With the exception of North Lakeville the primary economic activity during the 19th century remained agriculture. Camp Joe Hooker established during the Civil War. Lakeville T. B. Sanatorium established in 1910. There has been some post World War II development in the town, however, there is no discernable center to the town. The town hall was moved from the civic node (intersection of Routes 105 and 18) in the 1950s. At the present time the town is attempting to add an industrial base in anticipation of the completion of Route 495.

## IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

### A. Transportation Routes:

Regional focus of routes around Assawompset Pond area with connections to Nemasket (Middleborough) and coastal fishing areas. Primary north/south trail to Assawompset and Long Ponds appears to follow axis of Route 105 with presumed causeway over Pond Cemetery, narrows with branches conjectured to Bettys Neck-Indian Shore and Long Pond (Robbins maps). Primary trail to Assonset/Taunton River is presumed to follow axis of Rhode Island Rd. (Rt. 79), with parallel alternate as Taunton St. Radial trails from Assawompset Pond appear as - Street between Loon and Elders Pond with probable route south

From King Philips Lookout/around Schockly Hill to Highland Street with original portions intact around Great Cedar Swamp and western branch around Tinkham Hill as Hill-Pickens-Kingsman Streets Route around Great Cedar Swamp presumed as Howland Rd.

B. Settlement Patterns:

Contact and Historic Period native occupation on Betty's Neck. Several unidentified native sites possibly dating from the Contact and/or Historic Periods. Two located close to the shores of Great Quittacas Pond south of Betty's Neck. Three situated on or adjacent to the land separating Assawompset Pond from Long Pond. Six unidentified native sites were present only a short distance from the Rhode Island Road, a native trail later utilized by the early settlers as a transportation route.

C. Subsistence Base:

Seasonal fishing, hunting, collecting and horticulture. The Assawompset Pond complex and the several smaller ponds and streams were well stocked with freshwater fish. Hunting and collecting was possible in the extensive marshlands and woodlands. Potential planting grounds were available throughout the Lakeville area.

D. Observations:

Assawompset Pond (Lakeville) natives were part of a regional native population center concentrated around the Assawompset Pond complex and the Nemasket (Middleborough) and Taunton (Bridgewater and Middleborough) rivers. Affiliated with Pokanokets centered in Mt. Hope (Bristol), Rhode Island. Rural nature of present community suggests a good likelihood of surviving Contact/Historic Period native sites, particularly in the vicinity of Assawompset Pond (i.e., Betty's Neck).

V. FIRST SETTLEMENT PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Regional trails to Assawompset Pond improved as highways with main road between Middleborough and Rochester as Route 105 with western roads to Taunton River as Rhode Island and Taunton Streets.

B. Population:

Specific figures not available for native or white population. 1675 figures for Middleborough Christian native (Lakeville included) included 30 members of the Nemasket church, 30 members at the Titicut church and 35 members at the Assawompset church (Weston 1906: 18). Non-Christian natives provavly outnumbered Christian natives when considering limited success the movement had among the New England natives. Middleborough's white residents numbered 75 or more with virtually all of the settlers locating in present Middleborough.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Little apparent change in native settlement patterns until King Philip's War largely due to the almost complete lack of white settlement MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Lakeville

in present Lakeville. Local tradition identified King Philip's Lookout as the primary residence of Pamantaquash, "the Pond Sachem" (tributary to King Philip). Possible prewar white settlement on western bank of Nemasket River near junction of river and Fall Brook due to proximity to c. 1663 hamlet of Wapantucket (immediately east of Nemasket River).

#### D. Economic Base:

Native population maintained traditional seasonal rounds although with white influx in present Middleborough Anglo-Indian trade probably developed as an important component of the native economy. White settlers east of present Lakeville probably utilized to a limited degree Lakeville meadowlands and woodlands for livestock grazing and lumbering.

#### E. Observations:

No existing evidence to suggest white settlement in Lakeville. White presence was transitory (e.g., trade, resource, harvesting). White population focused in present Middleborough.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes:

Regional highways improved from 17th century with focus of routes to Middleborough as Routes 105, 79 and Taunton Street. Local access roads to upland between Elders Pond and Cedar Swamp include Pierce Ave., County Rd. and Pickens Streets, Field division highways of the period appear as Vaughn and Bridge Streets (Upper Four Corners) and School and Lang Streets over Myricks Hill (County Rd.).

#### B. Population:

Period lacks specific figures for the area's native and white populations. However, a contemporary account reported 20 houses and 80 native residents in the villages of Assawompset and Quittab in 1689 (Weston 1906: 18). The Assawompset/Quittab figures probably included the native population on both the Lakeville and Middleborough sides of the Assawompset Pond. By 1793, 8 native families consisting of 30-40 individuals inhabited Betty's Neck. White settlement of "Old Middleborough" had 3419 residents in 1765 and 4119 by 1776. Large number of the early settlers moved from Marshfield, Middleborough, Plymouth and Scituate. Some Scotch-Irish settlement in early 18th century as reward for military support of crown in Ireland.

#### C. Settlement Patterns:

Dislocation of native population as a result of King Philip's War and postwar white settlement. Destruction of native homes in Middleborough during the war probably included a number of those in Lakeville area. Betty's Neck utilized as the primary assembly point of native forces led by Tispaquin (successor of Pamantaquash) during King Philip's War (Hurd 1884: 302-303). Skirmish between forces of Benjamin Church and Tispaquin occurred in vicinity of Long

Pond River in 1676. Native postwar settlement concentrated on Betty's Neck. King Philip's War had no impact on the white community since white settlement postdated the war. First settlers probably appeared at the turn of the 18th century. James Leonard erected a forge on Taunton Street c. 1702. The George William's house on Precint Street and the James Sproat House at the junction of Crooked Lane and Stetson Street date to c.1705 and c.1711/12, respectively. Substantial increase in the community's settlement rate by late 1710s and 1720s probably attracted by the area's extensive fertile land. Early 18th century settlement adjacent to Bedford with a settlement node established in the vicinity of the Pond Cemetery. Additional early 18c settlement along the Rhode Island Road, County Road and Pierce Avenue. Probable mid-late 18c settlement in the proximity of Malborne Street. The community lacked meetinghouse/church depending on Old Middleborough for these facilities. A number of Baptists joined the Baptist church in Swansea.

#### D. Economic Base:

Expansion of white settlement severely inhibited native seasonal rounds. Majority of native land sold to white settlers by the late 17C, although in some of these transactions the natives retained hunting, fishing and collecting rights. Native lifestyle became increasingly sedentary. Some turn to white settlers for employment (e.g., laborer, servant, soldier). By the late 18C, the native community's primary source of income was the sale of native corn, grain, brooms and baskets.

The white community's economic base focused on agriculture. The area's widespread woodlands were probably harvested for building materials, industrial fuel, etc. Industry was extremely limited most likely because of the scarcity of water sources capable of powering mill industries. James Leonard established an iron forge immediately south of Taunton Street c. 1702. Bog iron removed from Assawompset and Long Ponds and a mine east of the Old Pond Meetinghouse supplied the Leonard Forge and furnaces of Middleborough and outlying towns with iron during the 2nd half of the 18th century (Weston 1906: 426). A branch off the Cedar Swamp River is the site of two possible pre-1775 mills (1795 Middleborough map).

#### E. ARCHITECTURE

Residential: Comparatively few Colonial houses are known in Lakeville although at least two houses dated to late First Period are recorded; of these both are center-chimney, five-bay-by-two-bay houses, one dated to c. 1705 (supposedly plank-framed) and the other dated 1717. Other two-story center-chimney houses are known at Wayside on Route 18 and on Pierce Road, both Colonial roads; while other center-chimney houses are known, their location on Federal period roads suggests that these are later structures despite Georgian entrance treatment. Although they are difficult to date, it seems likely that a good number of the center-chimney cottages standing in the town may date to the Colonial period. Most are gable-roofed structures although at least one gambrel-roofed cottage survives

with a newer Greek Revival cottage added (on Pierce Avenue and one bowed-roof cottage is known on Highland Road. Concentrations of period cottages stand on Route 105 at Staples and Upper Four Corners and on Pierce Road. Almost all houses and cottages of the period appear to have been built as relatively substantial five-bay, double-celled center-entry plan structures with only one three-quarter plan cottage (on Freetown Street) known. The end-gable overhang is known on at least one house (on Pierce Avenue). Houses of the period appear to have been only modestly detailed surviving as door surroundings are simple with pilasters carrying either a straight entablature or pediment while porches, either open or enclosed, are unknown.

Institutional: The earliest meetinghouse constructed in Lakeville appears to have been the Precinct meetinghouse of 1725. Throughout the 18th century, churches continued to be established in Lakeville with a Baptist church founded at Assawompset Neck in 1753 and a Separatist church at Beech Woods in 1751. None of these early buildings survive.

#### F. OBSERVATIONS:

The Assawompset Ponds were one of a small number of areas in southeastern Massachusetts maintaining a discrete native community. The white community's lack of civic, religious and adequate industrial facilities left the settlement highly dependent on Middleborough. Lakeville's continued limited development indicates there is a good probability of extant domestic archaeological sites from this period.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes:

Regional highways remain intact with improvement of north/south corridor as New Bedford Turnpike (Route 18) to Assawompset Pond (c. 1805).

#### B. Population:

Population figures not available prior to incorporation.

#### C. Settlement:

Principle concentration of settlement in North Lakeville and the Upper Four Corners (industrial), at the intersection of Rhode Island Road and Precinct Street (at the Taunton border) and in the south at Canedy's Corner. Construction of the New Bedford-Bridgewater turnpike in 1807 resulted in residential settlement along its route.

#### D. ECONOMIC BASE:

In the latter part of the 18th century, wrote Weston in 1906, abundant lake ore was discovered at the bottom of Lakeville/Middleborough ponds. Assawompset ore was found to be by far the best, and as much as 500 tons per year were taken from this one pond. Long Pond also furnished ore, chiefly to a furnace in East Freetown. The dredging and carting of lake ore to the local furnaces became a great source of income.

Other than the former Leonard forge, which seems to have ceased operation by the 1790s, Lakeville industry in the late 1790s consisted primarily of four grist mills and a sawmill. The small native population at Betty's Neck engaged in basket and broom-making.

In the enthusiasm for domestic manufactures stimulated by Jefferson's Embargo, a small cotton batting mill was begun about 1811, probably by Ephraim Ward. He evidently found tanning more profitable, for by the end of the period he and Barrows were operating a successful tannery, with an annual product (1832) worth \$4,000. Another industry, probably begun in the 1820s, was a tack or nail factory at the former Leonard forge site. By 1832 Osborn, Byrnes & Co. had six or eight nail machines. The factory remained in operation in the Osborn family for nearly a century.

#### E. ARCHITECTURE

Residential: The number of stylish houses built in the period increased with several hip-roofed, double interior chimney two-story houses built across the town; surviving examples stand on Route 18 and Rhode Island Road, on Route 105 at Staples and Sampson's Corners, on Highland Road and on Route 18 at Wayside. Most have five-bay, center entered facades with blind segmental transom incorporated within simple sidelit entrance surrounds. At least one transitional Federal/Greek Revival sidehall-plan three-bay facade house with a blind segmental light in the gable end is known at Pine Bluffs on Route 18. As was true for the Colonial period, cottages continued to be the standard house form with center-entered, double-celled center-chimney examples built in some numbers through the early 19th century; by the end of the period, double interior end-wall chimney cottages had become the preferred form. Enclosed projecting gable-roofed porches apparently were a popular feature of the period as many cottages survive on Highland Road, on County Road at Freetown Street and along Route 105 northeast of the town center.

Institutional: A second Baptist meetinghouse was founded in Lakeville in 1795 and a meetinghouse (which burned in 1870) built on Old Pond. The first Baptist church in the town built a new meetinghouse c. 1800 which was in use until 1843. A school was built at Assawompset Neck in 1796; a three-bay, end-gable structure with a side entrance on the facade, it was demolished in 1946.

Commercial: Several taverns operated in the town in the Federal period including the Jewett Hotel and the Sampson Tavern (1804), both hip-roofed Federal houses with double and interior chimneys.

### VIII. A. Transportation Routes:

Development of New Bedford, Taunton and Middleborough created railroad corridors across area with New Bedford and Taunton mainline over Great Cedar Swamp to Howlands (1840), Middleborough branch from Taunton (1848) along Taunton Street axis and mainline of Fall River Railroad from Middleborough (1847) along Route 79 axis (now abandoned) Weston, 1906, pp. 510-512.

### B. Population:

First census after incorporation shows 1855 population of 1188.

Population remains relatively stable to end of period. Foreign born population 65 in 1855.

C. Settlement:

Development of Middleborough Center drew industrial activity from Upper Four Corners and restricted development in that area. Straw hat factory on southern shore of Assowompset Pond moved to Middleborough in 1835 which restricted residential development in that area. Camp Joe Hooker established on the northern shore of Assowompset Pond during the Civil War, used as amilitary training camp.

D. Economic Base:

The growth of neighboring Middleborough Four Corners in theis period proved a strong lure to both Lakeville home industries -- straw braid and bonnets, and shoe manufacture. By 1835 Ebenezer Briggs, who had originated straw bonnet manufacture in the town about 1828 on Assawamsett Neck, had moved to the growing village. (The Middleborough business would later become, under different owners, the hugh Bay State Straw Works.) George Ward, a Lakeville shoemaker, opened the pioneer shoe shop at Middleborough Four Corners. Nevertheless, Lakeville retained a substantial home industry in shoe manufacture for much of this period. In 1855, 93 men and women were recorded producing \$50,000 worth of footwear, making it the town's largest industry. The figure appears to have declined after this date, probably as a result of the cessation of Southern trade during the war years. The town's second industry, with an employee list of eight men and a \$15,600. annual product value, was Osborn's nail factory.

In 1865 the state census noted 170 farms, and a large granite quarry off Pierce Avenue was being extensively worked.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Center-entered cottages remained the most common house type of the period although by the end of the period sidehall plans were well-established. For more ambitious construction, the double interior end-wall chimney form was used through the 1830s and '40s while after 1850, larger cottages incorporated kneewall framing and facade gables; double facade gables are unknown, the single, centrally-placed gable being the common form. Few pure Greek Revival style structures are known, most cottages exhibiting a transitional Greek Revival/Italianate sidehall form (no gable return, bracketted eaves) which suggests the town's conservatism and modest economic base. Two-story houses are almost unknown with several exceptions, in the southern T-plan and carved bargeboards (on Bedford Road), and a two-story Italianate house with triple-hung sash (on Highland Road), stand. Concentrations of mid-century cottages stand at Precinct, on Route 105 and on Route 18.

Institutional: Several churches were built in this period including the Precinct church (c. 1835) and the Christian Church at Mullen Hill (1841), both one-and-a-half story gable-roofed Greek Revival buildings with simple square belfries at the gable end. Also built was the first Town House (1853), a Greek Revival/Italianate,

story-and-a-half structure with double entrances like the schoolhouses of the day. At least one period school survives at Precinct, a tiny center-entered, two-bay-by-one-bay Greek Revival/Italianate building with the possibility of at least one other survival on Pierce Avenue (now a barn?). Twelve school districts existed in 1853.

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

##### A. Transportation Routes:

Rail and road system remains intact with extension of trolley routes from Middleborough and Taunton to Assawampset Pond and New Bedford. Street railway lines followed Route 105 to Long Pond Rd (Route 18) and Street to Lakeville Center.

##### B. Population:

Population begins to decline from 1159 in 1870 to 870 in 1895 then some growth with fluctuations to 1910 when growth is evident again to end of period. Foreign born population 48 in 1885 grows to 268 in 1915.

##### C. Settlement:

Acquisition of water rights to Assowampset Pond by city of Taunton aborts summer resort development on that pond. Street railway developed picnic grove on Long Pond exact location unknown. Drop in population during this period precludes new residential development.

##### D. ECONOMIC BASE:

Lakeville, wrote historian Ebenezer Pierce, was "formerly distinguished, as was Egypt, for its remarkable productiveness in grain." By the 1880s this cereal production was replaced by market gardening and the raising of strawberries for the Boston market. Like Middleborough, the town had substantial pine forests to feed the several box and shingle mills. One shoe factory was recorded built, about 1880, but its life appears to have been relatively short, and when it closed in 1900, it employed 35 operatives. O.M. Farmer operated a small basket factory near the Berkeley line for the last quarter century. (Was basket production related to the early 19th-century native craft on Betty's Neck?) Two brick yards appear also to have been in operation, though locations remain unclear.

In the last decades of the century, the taking of the lakes for the water supply of Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford sharply limited the growing summer cottage and recreational potential of lakeshore properties.

##### E. ARCHITECTURE:

Residential: Comparatively few dwellings were built in the period with the sidehall cottage being the most commonly employed form. Most cottages are conservative with patterned shingles, verandas and 2/2 sash often being the only distinguishing elements of the Queen Anne style on the basic, three-bay sidehall, gable-roofed cottage. Transitional Italianate/Queen Anne cottages appear to have been built into the

1880s in the town. Later, elements of the Colonial Revival were introduced with gambrel and hip roofs being the most common indicator of style change. By the end of the period, modest hip-roofed bungalows with shed dormers and exposed rafters in the Craftsman manner were being constructed in the town. Most period houses were built as infill along main roads such as Route 105, Route 18 and Precinct Street. Also in the period, a number of very small, one-story houses, often only one-room deep, with gable roofs, were built in scattered locations across the town with a number of examples.

Precinct: Two-story houses are unusual but examples are known with Colonial Revival houses of relative pretention built on Highland Road while more modest hip-roofed Colonial Revival houses with four-square plans were constructed at Staples Corner. Standing on Route 18 near Taunton Road is a center-chimney Federal cottage converted by a local architect c. 1905 with kicked eaves and casement sash in the Arts and Crafts manner.

Institutional: Several Colonial Revival schools were built at the end of the period including the Assawompset School (1912) and the Lakeville School (1915), both with hip roofs, shingled siding and pedimented projecting porches. Also built were the Grove Chapel (1875) on Bedford Street, a story-and-a-half late Italianate gable-roofed building with a hip-roofed square belfry and the Union Chapel (1876) at North Lakeville. In 1914, the Library at the town center, a granite Tudor Revival building with banded windows and a gabled porch (R.T.X. Jackson, Fall River, architect).

Industrial: In 1894, a two-and-a-half story Richardsonian Romanesque pumping station of brick with a hip roof, was built at Assawompset Pond; in 1959, this became the Town Hall.

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

### A. Transportation Routes:

Trolley lines abandoned to Assawompset Pond with improvement of regional roads as autohighways. Primary north/south routes as Route 105 from Middleborough and Route 18 to New Bedford. Main east/west corridors from Taunton improved as original Route 44 (Taunton St) and original Route 140 (County Rd).

### B. Population:

Some fluctuation 1915 to 1925, growth in 1930, decline in 1935, growth at end of period. Post World War II population growth has been slow but steady.

### C. Settlement

Limited residential settlement along established roads during this period.

D. Economic Base:

Town predominately agricultural in character, with no new industries noted. Vigers reported some open-pit mining of coal on Betty's Neck by a Taunton firm (date unspecified). The Osborn tack factory burned about 1920, ending the last major manufacturing in the town.

E. Architecture

Very little construction took place in the period with some modest bungalows and cottages probably built in the period along with at least one school at South Lakeville (one-story hip-roof Colonial Revival) and one school at Lakeville Center (brick, two-story, Georgian Revival). A very few summer cottages at Long Pond may date from the period.

## XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Survey covers only Colonial and Federal resources with exception of later anomalies. Future survey should include properties through the end of the 19th century. Particularly well-preserved Colonial/Federal period landscape with intact Colonial-Early Industrial period farmsteads and possible early school on Pierce Avenue. Potential district at Highland Road (center of elite construction c. 1840-1900).

Industrial: Lakeville's town survey includes her sole surviving industrial structure, the Taunton Water Works pumping station, now housing town offices. In 1956 there were still a number of small shoe shops, and several of these may still exist.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRESSURES:

Limited commercial activity around Assawompsett Pond on Route 105 axis and some expansion from Route 25 interchange at Middleborough. Minimal impact of Route 140 expressway to New Bedford, but continuing suburban pressure on available upland sites and around Assawompsett and Long Ponds.

## XII. SOURCES

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