

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

LANCASTER

Report Date: 1984

Associated Regional Report: Central Massachusetts

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

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

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

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

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MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: 1984

COMMUNITY: Lancaster

I. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Lancaster forms the valley of the Nashua River and its two branches which flow together in the south end of the town. To the west in Leominster and Sterling, and to the east in Harvard, Berlin, and Bolton, the ground rises in hills to more than 600 feet above sea level, while Lancaster's highest point, Ballard Hill, is only at 465 feet. The broad valley floor lies even lower at 250 and 300 feet above sea level. Broad intervalles line the rivers, often flooded during spring high water.

During the retreat of the last glacier, the Nashua Valley and much of Lancaster lay under glacial Lake Nashua, a broad shallow lake that extended from a terminal moraine in Shirley to Boylston. As a result, the topography of the town consists of glacial till deposited in sand and gravel terraces and delta plains up to 100 feet thick. Fine laminated clay beds, deposited during the lake stage, account for the several brickyards in Lancaster and along the river valley.

The soils are almost all agriculturally important, especially along the rich bottom lands and intervalles and on the large flat terrace west of the north branch of the Nashua River. Much of the bedrock underlying Lancaster is an argillaceous slate, lending a greyish-blue tint to the soil on Ballard and Whittemore hills. Near Cranberry Pond, north of Whittemore Hill, slate was quarried during the 18th and 19th centuries for roofing and gravestones.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Nashaway settlement established as West Towne (then Prescott, and finally Lancaster), 1653. Boundary lines set, 1672. Additional lands granted, 1713. Part included in new town of Harvard, 1732. Part established as Bolton, 1738. Part established as Leominster, 1740. Parts annexed to Shrewsbury 1762, 1781. Part of Shrewsbury annexed, 1762. Part established as Sterling 1781. Part annexed to Berlin, 1791. Part annexed to Sterling, 1837. Part established as Clinton, 1850. Bounds with Leominster established, 1906, with Sterling in 1908.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

A suburban community and institutional center, with large area in military reservation, at the convergence point of historic corridors from the north, west and south. Located on the broad intervalle at the confluence of the Nashua River and its North Branch, with possible native plantation site, and other sites likely at several ponds and river falls. A major nucleus of 17th and 18th century European settlement of the eastern Central

Uplands, with trading post established by ca. 1642 on south slope of George Hill, and agricultural settlement by ca. 1650. An isolated interior settlement, subject to devastating late 17th century native attacks, death from raid as late as 1710. Large, populous, and prosperous 18th century agricultural town, with successive hiving off of peripheral areas as independent towns. Three early 19th century commercial villages serve regional hinterland as well as heavy through-traffic of market commodities to Boston. Federal period civic focus established in Central Village. Late 19th century development of South Lancaster as Seventh-Day Adventist regional center. A wealthy 19th century community, with several large, high income estates, as well as a number of regionally important philanthropic/educational institutions. Post-1940 expansion of Fort Devens involves destruction of all structures in town's northeastern third. Recent I-190 development may stimulate further suburban growth.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes

Primary ford or wading place over Nashua is on the south branch in South Lancaster near Sterling Road. Mill-Sterling-Deershorn-Chace Hill Streets pass by George Hill to Waushacum Pond settlement located in Sterling. Hilltop Road to the uplands in the West. Parallel alternates probable at Main Street, and Union, running east-west, and passing by ponds.

B. Settlement Pattern

The wading place, and confluence of Nashua branches, was site of repeated or long-term camp of Nashaway group, while surrounded areas exploited from this base.

C. Subsistence Pattern

This area the site of activities associated with more permanent camps, gathering larger groups due to the presence of anadromous fish runs in the Nashua, or to its floodplains for horticulture.

D. Observations

Early contact with this group makes it one of best known in Nipmuck region.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes

Augmentation of native routes with roads by houselots on Neck and west of the confluence, and to sawmill to the south in Clinton. Frequently used route southeast to Sudbury, and northeast to Concord probably followed.

B. Settlement Pattern

Visits by traders, possibly 2-3 settled. Second organizers interested in both the Indian trade and potential iron deposits, included scientifically minded as well as some who had petitioned to extend the franchise to non-Puritan church members. Nine families by 1652, and 20 by 1653, when granted township. Few were church member freemen, so required to turn to other towns for settlers; 30 families by 1656; ruled by a committee of outsiders until 1672. Estimated 50 families, in five garrisons at outbreak of King Philip's War; of ca. 350, 8 killed in 1675, 50-55 in 1676, as well as many and well known captives. Settlers from Dorchester, Hingham and miscellaneous eastern towns. Accused of belief in communal property. Some natives enjoyed the gospel, while others preferred resistance to the colonials and joined in King Philip's War.

C. Settlement Pattern

Nashaways number 15-16 families totalling ca. 200 individuals, reduced in numbers by smallpox (1633) and Mohawk Wars (1660s). Leader Sholan, friendly to colonial government and interested in trade, sells ca. 1643 an area 10 miles north to south, and 8 miles east to west to Thomas King, a Watertown trader. Trucking house constructed on George Hill. Settlement delayed by difficulty crossing Sudbury River. Incorporation and land division in 1653, when bounds first described: Nashua River crossing to be the center, and location of houselots; extent reckoned by cardinal directions from there. Two groups of houselots, one mile apart: those east of the Nashua branches, on the neck, 40 rods wide and 80 rods long, those to the west toward George Hill, 20 rods wide and 160 rods long. Meetinghouse, burying ground, and house of Rev. Rowlandson located between the two. Later, divisions of surrounding upland, meadow, and pasture based on men's estates and therefore unequal. Settlement initially to be limited to 35 families.

D. Economic Base

Initial plans for dependence on trade and industry temporarily displaced by agriculture. Establishment of a modified open village plan: equal-sized houselots clustered together centrally to prevent "scattering too far, and partly out of respect to men of mean estate" (Marvin, p. 49), and they covenanted to work together in harmony. But, outlying lands were given out in proportion to estate, and common fencing required only for conveniently contiguous lots. During this period, frontier warfare pressures held the system in place.

E. Architecture

Residential: Initial settlement ca. 1743, but most structures demolished 1676 during King Philip's War. Trading post (trucking house) on east slope of George Hill is first recorded structure (1643).

Institutional: First meetinghouse erected in 1657-58.

Industrial: Prescott's grist (1654) and saw (1659) mills in southern portion of town (now Clinton).

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes

Change and elaboration to accommodate both increase and shift in population. Primary routes being east-west, common past third meetinghouse to Bolton Road following Deershorn south to divide as Grace or Redstone Roads in Sterling; also, Deershorn joined from west by Mill Street. North-south primary follows Main St. west to North Main, with alternate north to Lunenberg Road. Route along northern section following near Old Union Road. Additional roads in center along Neck Road. Bridge locations and sequence inconclusive but by century's end, long bridges located on Bolton Road across Nashua south branch, on Main Street across north branch, at Ponakin; at the confluence of north and south, and possibly across Nashua just to north.

B. Population

Rapid growth after resettlement: by 1681, 17-18 families; by 1689, 50 families (275 total people); by 1704, 76 families (425 total); by 1711, 83 families (458 total); by 1751, 355 polls (ca. 1,500); by 1771, 595 polls.

Renewing of covenant in 1708 showed 33 male church members, additional halfway members not counted; no notice of enthusiasm during the Great Awakening and minister (1708-48) opposed; but association of 24 young men formed in 1748 may be a reaction; next minister makes shift to Unitarianism (1748-95); some parish resistance to shift to new psalm singing.

Support of Glorious Revolution in 1689; heavy contribution to war efforts.

C. Settlement Pattern

In 1679, resettlement begins, initially in the area of the original houselots. With continued raids through 1710, settlers begin to settle on their second division lands to the east of the Nashua. The site of the third meetinghouse moved to that side of the river, between Old Common and Still Streets, in 1704. The garrison locations for that year reflect the shift: one located in Clinton, one in Sterling, seven in Lancaster, one in Bolton, and two in Harvard, both of these latter far to the east of the river. This shift culminates in the hiving off of the town's eastern quarters: Harvard in 1732 and Bolton in 1738.

Later, population growth occurred to the west. An additional allotment of land came with a purchase of a 4x10-mile section

adjacent from Nashaway George Tahanto in 1701, confirmed in 1713. (See Sterling Reconnaissance Survey Report.) The town more resistant after the formation of Leominster, to allow the independence of Choxett, second parish, formed 1744. With this division, first parish's fourth meetinghouse shifted back to the west from the east edge of the town. From that point, population in second parish greatest, until by 1770s both nearly equal in numbers.

D. Economic Base

Most populous, commercial, developed town in the county by 1734. A variety of economic activities: with Sterling, 61 shops in 1771, including hats at South Lancaster, potash shop in southwest, a tannery on George Hill, slate quarry and cast hollowware in the northeast, accounting for only a small proportion of the artisans. Seventeen mills the same year, including those located at four ponds in the southwest; on the Nashua south branch near the Clinton border; at Ponakin's Mills; further north on the Nashua at its convergence with Spectacle Brook and below McGovern Brook; and on Spectacle above Shoefelt Road. Still prosperous agriculturally, with large herds of cattle and sheep, as well as production of grains and cider, 60% farmers.

With prosperity, however, came increased stratification and larger numbers of poor citizens. As early as 1726-27, when proprietor's records separated from town's, evidence that land grants were decreasing and common-owning proprietors were a smaller proportion of population. In 1763, vote to establish workhouse system for caring for poor, replacing earlier binding out; in 1785 and 1786 a second attempt fails. By 1771, one third of the taxpayers are landless, and 65 individuals are slaves.

E. Architecture

Residential: Predominant house form is the two-story, five-bay center chimney type; one example altered in the Federal period to a full three stories with hipped roof and end chimneys. A significant number of one-story, center chimney houses survive, the greatest number being three bays in width. Few double chimney houses appear to have been built during the period. In 1692, eight garrison houses were recorded, serving an estimated population of 425; by 1751, the population had reached approximately 660.

Institutional: Second meetinghouse is erected ca. 1685; burned by Indians in 1704, rebuilt east of original site in 1705 on what later became known as "Old Common" (now Five Corners, site of State Industrial School for Girls); 1705 meetinghouse demolished in 1742 and fourth building erected in town center near present meetinghouse (fabric of 1705 structure used in constructing schoolhouses for town). School sessions were held, apparently in private homes, ca. 1726, and by 1757 schoolhouses were being erected throughout town. In 1772, an act was passed authorizing construction of district schoolhouses.

Commercial: Nothing recorded except for the 1643 trading post on George Hill; other taverns and stores likely by latter half of the period.

Industrial: Two sawmills are recorded in 1705 (likely to be Prescott's) with two additional mills erected 1713-14, one at Ponakin; cider mills in operation by 1726; slate quarry being worked near Pond Hill, possibly by end of period.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes

The colonial road system remains in use, with significant additions, as the Lancaster villages remain the focus of an extensive feeder network from the south, west, and north. In the Four Ponds area in the southwest, three highways from Boylston, Wauschacum Pond, and Sterling Center converge, and then follow Deershorn Road to South Lancaster, passing on to the Bolton road east to Boston. Two main highways from the north and west county converge at North Village (North Main Street from Leominster, and Lunenberg Road). The route then proceeds south, through Center Village on Main Street, then directly east, connecting to Main Street in Bolton and on to Boston. After 1806 a more direct route east is established from North Village on the Lancaster-Bolton Turnpike (Seven Bridge Road). After 1805 the Union Turnpike is established as an east-west corridor across the northern part of town, with eastern terminus in Harvard. Maintenance of river crossings remains problematic, with periodic flooding, channel changes, and bridge destruction. Notable floods in 1787, 1818. Ten bridges in place in 1793.

B. Population

Population is 2,746 in 1776. Drops to 1,460 in 1790 after separation of Sterling in 1781. Population then increases steadily to 2,014 in 1830. Decade of greatest growth in 1810-1820 (+168). Whitney (1793) calls Lancaster the "oldest, most populous, and wealthiest town" in the county, one that has "attracted people of education and fortune." Little local support for Shays' Rebellion. One organized local church through the period, although Baptists, Quakers, and Swedenborgians are present. Many families in the northern part of town join Shaker community, with family formed in 1781-82, connected to Mother Ann Lee's colonies in Shirley and Harvard. New, brick Congregational meetinghouse built, 1816. Latin grammar school and Library Association formed, 1790. Social library formed, 1800, reading room established in 1821. Academy established, 1815. Worcester County Freemasons Lodge formed in 1778. One hundred sixty-six members in 1793. Washington Benevolent Society formed in 1812.

C. Settlement Pattern

Whitney (1793) notes: "A number of gentlemen have built elegant seats here; and there are a considerable number of stores and

shops in the town. And, as there are large roads, and much travel through the place, of course much business is done here in the way of trade." Three distinct villages (North, Center, South) emerge during the period, around several crossing points of the Nashua River and its North Branch. North Village develops along North Main Street between the North Branch bridge and Shirley road. Stimulus to growth is given by the opening of a direct route east (Lancaster-Bolton Turnpike, now Seven Bridges Road) in 1806. The Center Village (meetinghouse center) becomes firmly established as the civic focus with construction of the fifth meetinghouse (1816), second town house (1821), and Academy Building in one cluster. South Village develops along Main Street between Bolton Road and Mill Street. Outside the villages, dispersed farming continues. A small Shaker Village develops in north after 1780.

D. Economic Base

At the end of the 18th century, Lancaster's economy, like that of nearly all inland towns, was agriculturally based, supplemented by forest- and several iron-related industries. Two gristmills, 4 sawmills and one fulling mill satisfied local needs while involvement in the larger economy was provided by the growing of flax and sale of seed, two potash and one pearl ash works, a slate quarry which supplied roofing slates to Boston, a brickyard, a furnace for casting hollowware, a triphammer, and a water powered nail manufactory.

In 1792 a group of investors from outside Lancaster talked of a plan to build a canal through Lancaster and Worcester from the seaboard to the Connecticut River, but the ambitious project never went further. The plan was revived in 1826 and promoted in Lancaster; a survey was even made of a proposed route, crossing the town at South Lancaster. When sufficient capital could not be raised, the plan was finally dropped.

Through the first decades of the 19th century, a number of small-scale manufacturing concerns were established, largely on the shop level. In 1820 a cotton card manufacturer provided employment to three men, two girls and 100 children, who worked at setting card wires in leather cloth, probably working in their own homes. Lancaster also supported two clothiers and dyers, three hatters, two cabinetmakers, three shoemakers, a machinist, a tanner, a bookbinder, a wheelwright, and a harness maker. By 1832, 17 combmaking shops, a tenoning machine manufacturer, a pumpmaker and tool maker, and Carter, Andrews & Co., a printing, map-printing, wood-, copper-, and steel-engraving and bookbinding establishment, employing 100, were added, the latter at Lancaster Center.

Textile manufacturing had been established only in the southern portion of the town (now Clinton) in 1810 by the Lancaster Cotton Mfg. Co. and in 1820 by James Potts. No other mills were established in the area which today comprises Lancaster for another 20 years.

Lancaster was an important commercial town during this period, supplying many of the surrounding towns with manufactured and imported goods. By the late 18th century, more than 60 stores and shops were operating within Lancaster's bounds.

E. Architecture

Residential: By far, predominant house form is the two-story, five-bay, double chimney type, with four known double-pile plans, two of which are brick. A few two- and three-bay examples are recorded. The two-story, center chimney house remains popular with the majority still being five bays wide and a lesser number of three- and four-bay wide houses. Three two-story, five-bay end chimney houses survive: two have brick end walls and one is known to be double-pile. Lesser numbers of one-story center chimney and even fewer double chimney houses are recorded. A ca. 1800 two-story, seven-bay structure survives (possibly a tavern?). The gable end, center-passage plan appears during the period.

Institutional: Fifth, and final, meetinghouse is constructed in town center in 1816 from designs by Charles Bulfinch. The brick structure retains the traditional meetinghouse form, but is distinguished by the brick arched portico and well proportioned cupola (see National Register form and Pierson). Grammar school is organized in 1788 and building erected 1790 on "Old Common"; the Lancaster Academy is begun ca. 1815 and a two-story, three-bay brick side-passage building is erected for the Academy in the Center in 1825. Civic and religious affairs are physically separated in 1816 when the fourth meetinghouse (1743) is converted to use as a town house; in 1823, the building is demolished and parts are used in the construction of a new town hall. Two taverns are known to have been operating by 1795, one being the Lancaster Inn (1786). Ca. 1825, a two-story, three-bay gable end store is erected in the center.

Industrial: Majority of industrial activity occurs in southern portion of town (Clinton) which by end of the period is known as Factory Village. A dam and mill are at South Lancaster (1805) and a fulling mill, clothiers works, and wool carding establishment are in operation. In 1809, Prescott's mill is sold to Poignard and Plant who develop a cotton factory by 1812, and by 1815 a second such factory is in operation. Carter and Andrews printing business flourishes in the center from ca. 1825-40 in a two-story, five-bay double-pile structure off Main Street.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes

The early 19th century road network remains in use. Flooding in 1851 again destroys local bridges. Local stage and trucking interests attempt to block establishment of rail service. As a result, Boston-Fitchburg line bypasses town. Worcester-Nashua service begins across southeast part of town in 1849. Boston, Clinton, and Fitchburg line in southwest corner, 1866.

B. Population

Limited population growth evident in figures 1830-1850, due to loss of part of town to Sterling (1837) and Clinton (1850). 1850 population, 1,688. Irregular growth to 1,870 (1845), with peak of 1,932 in 1860. Foreign-born population 11% in 1865. Some diversification of religious denominations. Universalist Society forms, 1837, meetinghouse constructed in South Lancaster, 1838. Evangelical Congregational Church forms in 1839, meetinghouse built 1841. Swedenborgian meetings after ca. 1830. Seventh-Day Adventists organize 1856. Active local temperance movement 1830-40s. Lancaster Society for Suppression of Intemperance formed 1833. Lancaster Charitable Fund established 1851. Freedman's Aid Society formed 1860s. State Reform School for Girls established in 1855, becomes State Industrial School for Girls, 1860. A model facility, based on the cottage system of organization. Agricultural Library formed 1849, Library Club 1851, Public Library 1862. Memorial Hall Library built 1867-68.

C. Settlement Pattern

Growth continues, particularly in Center and South Villages, and continues after rail connections are established in 1849. Barber (1839) notes 75 houses in Center Village. By the early 1840s, there are three hotels in North Village, one major hotel in Center, and a small hotel in South Village. North Village does not expand after the 1840s, but Center and South Villages continue growth, primarily east toward the railroad depots. Civic building continues in the Center, with Evangelical Congregational Church (1841), brick town house (1848) and library (1868). High style residences constructed north of civic center on Main Street and on Neck Road. Universalist meetinghouse located in South Village (1838). Here, high income residences are built on Main Street, while industrial activities develop on Mill Street. State Industrial School for Girls locates on Old Common (1852), with residential cottages, administrative office, and chapel.

D. Economic Base

Lancaster's location at the intersection and convergence of roads from many surrounding towns provided impetus for the growth of North Village. Up to 40 wagons per day, which traveled to and from Boston, and 32 stages per week passed through the village and led to the rise and concentration of wheelwrights, blacksmiths, harness makers, cart-, wagon- and sleighmakers, and small manufacturers of watches, guns, hats, and combs during the 1830s and 1840s.

With the incorporation of Clinton in 1850, most of the best water power sites in the town were lost, leaving only several sites adaptable to small-scale manufacturing.

A small cotton mill was established in South Lancaster in 1844. By 1855 it contained 1,600 spindles and employed 38 in the production of 468,000 yards of cloth valued at \$37,440. A fire

the next year destroyed the factory and it was not until 1861 that a second, larger factory was built on the Nashua River at Ponakin Mills. In 1865, 40 employees produced 500,000 yards of brown sheetings valued at \$163,375. This comprised nearly 60% of the town's total manufactured goods.

The greatest growth experienced in the manufacturing sector occurred during the 1840s and 1850s, when the town's output increased nearly five-fold. Boot and shoe manufacturing employed 40 in the production of 33,000 pairs of boots and shoes. More than 600 women produced palm-leaf hats and mattresses valued at \$22,000 in 1850, up from 100 women just five years earlier. A tinsmith, an agricultural implement manufacturer, baker, pianoforte key manufacturer, soap works, and pocket book manufacturer were among the new additions. The latter produced 2,200 dozen wallets and pocketbooks valued at \$37,000 in 1865 in a small factory in Lancaster Center. Two brickyards near North Village continued to operate until the late 1860s, when one was closed. In 1855 they produced more than 1.5 million bricks. Two banks were also established in Lancaster during this period: the Lancaster Bank, organized in 1836, and the Lancaster Savings Bank, chartered in 1845.

An increasingly important industry was harvesting and processing Lancaster's forest products. In 1855 alone, nearly one million board feet of lumber were cut in Lancaster's three sawmills, and 22,680 cords of wood were cut and sold, probably supplying the building boom in Clinton and its firewood needs, as well as those of the railroad, which first passed through the town in 1849. These products comprised nearly one third of the town's total manufacturing output in 1855.

Despite the growth of small-scale manufacturing, the absence of large business enterprise and a dynamic economic situation led one local historian writing in 1870 to suggest a very conservative nature to the agriculturally-oriented residents of the town. Citing the lack of a desire for improvement, he lamented the necessity of emigration for the town's young men in search of opportunities. Undoubtedly the dynamic economies of neighboring Clinton, West Boylston, and Fitchburg suppressed the commercial ambitions of Lancaster's residents. The continued conflicts between Lancaster's farmers and Clinton's manufacturers leading up to that town's separation and incorporation in 1850 illustrate the continued antagonism between those two sections of the economy.

Lancaster's agricultural production more than doubled in value during this period, with the greatest increase occurring in dairying and the growing of hay and fodder. The town greatly benefited from the tremendous growth of its daughter town Clinton and the railroad connection to Boston, both markets for its vegetables, eggs and poultry, hay and fodder, milk, beef, pork, and veal.

E. Architecture

Residential: The creation of Clinton from the southern portion of Lancaster in 1850 meant not only a sizeable loss of land and population, but the loss of Lancaster's industrial base as well.

There is little evidence of any pretentious or elaborate popular residential architecture resulting from a significant increase in wealth during the mid century. Typically, the most common house form is one-and-one-half to two-story gable end side-passage plan, generally three bays in width. Examples are found with Greek Revival and Italianate details from the late 1840s through the end of the period. Of note are the two-story, five-bay, single-pile, double chimney house with Greek Revival details constructed entirely in flushboard (South Lancaster) and the two-story, three-bay, side-passage Ionic temple front, 1830 (Lancaster Center). One Gothic Revival detailed building survives as do several two-story asymmetrical Italianate inspired dwellings and some side-passage plans with mansard roofs. Traditional house forms, particularly the double and end chimney and the side-passage, are retained throughout the 19th century.

Institutional: Significant religious activity throughout the period: followers of the Swedenborgian doctrine meetings (1830); Universalist society organized (1838); Evangelical Congregational society formed (1839) and build a meetinghouse (1841), Universalists erect meetinghouse (1848) which is sold to the state (1858) when Industrial School for Girls is founded; Seventh-Day Adventists organize (1864). In the field of education, the town assumes support of the schools, abolishes the old district system, and erects new buildings introducing the graded system; Lancaster Industrial School for Girls is formed in 1854: well preserved campus incorporates three late 18th century frame houses and one gable end Greek Revival dwelling, while the majority of its buildings are modest brick institutional structures dating from 1850-1870 with period frame barns, sheds, etc., and a few turn-of-the-century and one 1935 brick Colonial Revival buildings. The town library was erected in 1868 as a war memorial. The classically inspired brick building with a raised central pedimented pavillion was designed by Harris & Ryder. A new town hall was erected in 1848, designed by John Hoadley who was the architect for much of the industrial development in Clinton.

Commercial: Banks were established in 1836 and 1845; the 1836 brick structure was remodeled in 1883 into a Second Empire fire station. The Worcester and Nashua Railroad came to Lancaster in 1849, and the depot and freight warehouse survive from that period. One store is recorded in the center in 1851.

Industrial: The 1844 cotton factory at South Lancaster is recorded as burning in 1856 and rebuilt. No significant industrial development post-1850 when Factory Village of Clinton becomes a separate town.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes

The 19th century road and rail network remains in use. After 1870 iron bridges are constructed across the Nashua (significant examples remain, though not in use, at Ponakin Mills and on Bolton Road). In 1893 the Clinton Street Railway Company opens service through Lancaster to Leominster, essentially along Main Street through North, Central and South Villages.

B. Population

Growth over the period (+740) from 1870 (1,845) to 1915 (2,585). Population stable around 2,000, 1875-1885; at 2,200, 1885-1895; at 2,400, 1900-1910. Greatest growth 1895-1900 (+298). 189 Irish, 117 Canadians, 36 English, in 1875. 184 Irish, 103 French Canadians, 57 English Canadians, 41 English, in 1885. 144 Irish, 110 French Canadians, 49 English, 39 Nova Scotians, 38 English Canadians, 35 Scots, 27 Swedes, various other groups present, 1905. Swedenborgian church organized in 1875, as New Jerusalem Church of Lancaster. Chapel built in 1880s. Seventh-Day Adventist build chapel 1875, church in 1878. South Lancaster becomes headquarters of the New England Regional Conference. The church's Atlantic Union College founded in 1882. Catholic church built in 1873. New Academy is built, 1879.

C. Settlement Pattern

Most settlement expansion occurs in the South Village, with concentration of Seventh-Day Adventist institutions and residences. In the Center Village civic construction continues, with Catholic church (1873), New Academy Building (1879), Center School (1904), new town hall (1908). Swedenborgian chapel built on Neck Road (1880s). Residential infilling occurs on the west side of Main Street opposite the civic cluster. High income estate built north of civic center on Main Street. Seventh-Day Adventist chapel (1875) and church (1878) built in South Village, which becomes New England Conference headquarters, with 20 church families living within sight of the meetinghouse by 1880. Atlantic Union College established in 1882. Most development in South Lancaster occurs west of Main Street in the Prospect/Maple Street area, with single- and multi-family homes located around the Seventh-Day institutional focus. As in the center, high-income residences are built at the outer edge of the village. Some streetcar suburb development on North Main Street near Leominster line.

D. Economic Base

By the end of the 19th century, most of Lancaster's manufacturing establishments and shops had ceased operation and disappeared. The value of goods produced dropped from a high of \$280,000 in 1865 to \$118,000 in 1885 and even less thirty years later. A short-lived shoe shank factory on the North Branch of the Nashua

River lasted only 15 years before burning in 1883. The cotton mill at Ponakin Mills, despite several years of inactivity, survived into the early 20th century, operating as the Lancaster Mfg. Co. and producing cotton yarn.

In Lancaster Center and North Village, the numerous small carpenter shops, machine shops, shoe shops, pocketbook manufactory, and brickyards had disappeared by 1898. In Lancaster Center, Atlantic Union College dominated the northern part of the village. In the northeast end of the town along the Harvard Road and Nashua River, a new brickworks and fullers' earth pit were opened up in the 1890s, and in the 1870s the Lancaster Slate co. reopened the quarry abandoned in the 1820s.

Between 1870 and 1875, iron bridges replaced the ten wooden bridges spanning the Nashua River and its branches. Two of these still survive and are protected by National Register listing or eligibility: Ponakin Bridge, a single span Post truss built in 1871, and the nearby Asherton Bridge. These two bridges are the only known surviving examples of this type of truss bridge in the country.

The agricultural sector of the economy became dominant during the latter part of the 19th and early 20th century, providing goods valued at nearly \$200,000 in 1905. Dairying, poultry, and vegetable growing accounted for nearly 50% of this amount. In 1885, over 300,000 gallons of milk were supplied to the Clinton and Boston markets.

E. Architecture

Residential: No major development evident during the period, although some impressive individual structures. Standard Queen Anne and Colonial Revival influenced dwellings located primarily in or near the center and South Lancaster. Two early 20th century (ca. 1900-1910) half-timbered Jacobean houses; a 1902 remodeling by Ogden Codmen, transforming an 1846 dwelling into a Colonial Revival house; 1909 reworking of an 1894 structure into a reproduction of the Pierce-Nichols House in Salem; 1910 reproduction of an 18th century, two-story, five-bay center chimney house. Massive brick Queen Anne/Romanesque gatehouse at Hawthorn Hill (access to main house not possible).

Institutional: Roman Catholic chapel built in 1873; Seventh-Day Adventist church (1878); Swedenborgian Church (1881, fieldstone Craftsman). In 1873 the Lancaster Academy closed and the building was demolished in 1879 to make way for a new grammar school; high school established in town hall (1873); Seventh-Day Adventists erected two-story Queen Anne academy in South Lancaster in 1884 which was the beginning of the present Atlantic Union College; two-story brick school erected (1904) by Herbert Hale of Boston. Two-story Queen Anne/Colonial Revival fire station (1888). New town hall (1908): two-story brick Georgian Revival by A. W. Longfellow of Boston.

Commercial: Lancaster Inn burns in 1906; hotel recorded in North Village in 1870; typical grocery, dry goods, etc. establishments but few buildings recorded; 1913 gambrel-roofed store built by Henry Forbes Bigelow, Boston, to replace store that burned; 1913 brick, stone, concrete one-story parapet building.

Industrial: No significant development. Early in period: cotton mill at Ponakin; brickyards; American Shoe Shank Factory; Thread, Twine, and Kerosene Wick Factory. Major industry lost to Clinton.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD

A. Transportation Routes

By the 1920s the streetcar line is abandoned and roads are improved for automobile use, and concrete bridges are constructed. North Main Street from North Village to Leominster is paved by 1926, and Main Street south to Clinton by 1929. By the mid 1930s, North Main-Seven Bridges Road becomes Route 117, and the old Union Turnpike becomes part of Route 111 (Leominster-Harvard-Concord). By 1939, Shirley Road is paved to the north.

B. Population

Irregular growth from 1915 (2,585) to 1940 (2,963). Period of greatest growth is 1935-1940 (+375). Perkins School for special needs established in the 1920s. Camp Devens military encampment established in Harvard and Ayer, with territory in northwest Lancaster in 1917. One hundred German World War I prisoners of war at War Prison Camp. Camp inactive after war, but in 1937 declared a permanent installation, Fort Devens.

C. Settlement Pattern

Recreational cottage development around Fort Pond and Spectacle Pond. Early auto suburb development on High Street near Clinton line. Perkins School established on Johnson estate north of Center Village. Continued expansion of Atlantic Union college facilities, South Lancaster. Fort Devens occupies northeast section of town.

D. Economic Base

Lancaster's manufacturing base continued to shrink, with the only major manufactory in operation at the Ponakin Mills site. In 1922 the cotton factory was taken over by Ponakin Mills Company, which continued in the production of cotton yarns through the end of the period. Additional information and statistics on Lancaster's minor manufacturing concerns is lacking.

Agriculture continued to be the dominant activity of the town's occupants. Apple orchards, dairies, poultry, and vegetable farms prevailed.

E. Architecture

Residential: Little new construction apparent. One 1929 Dutch Colonial recorded.

Institutional: Only significant development occurs in Center and South Lancaster: 1924 purchase by Perkins School for the mentally retarded of a 1910 Jacobean residence in the town center for use as school; development of Atlantic Union College which now dominates the landscape of South Lancaster and consists of "Colonial revival" style structures.

Commercial: No significant development

Industrial: No apparent growth during period.