

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## MILFORD

Report Date: 1983

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: 1983

COMMUNITY: Milford

### I. TOPOGRAPHY

Milford's topography is formed by two parrallel river valleys and moderate, fairly even highlands. The larger river is the Charles, which flows north to south through the full length of the town, passing through the town center. Approximately 1.5 miles west, partially forming the western boundary of Milford with Upton and Hopedale, is the Mill River, a major tributary of the Blackstone River.

The Charles falls 125 feet as it passes through the town and provided two mill seats, one at Wildcat Pond used for sawing in the mid 19th century and one at the center, harnessed for saw and gristmilling and by cotton and woolen mills through the 19th century. The Mill River contains five mill seats before it flows wholly through Hopedale; of these, four have been occupied by grist and sawmills and a woolen mill. In addition to the rivers, several small brooks flow into the Charles River before it enters Bellingham.

The central highland between the two rivers is formed by a gently rounded hill which rises 200 feet above the river valleys. On this relatively flat-topped hill and in the river valleys lie the best agricultural land in the town.

In the north and northeast areas of town the surface rises to 500 feet above sea level in several rocky, broken hills known as Rocky Woods. It is in this area that most of Milford's granite quarries are located, some of them still active.

The granite and gneiss-derived soils range from fine loams on silver Hill and in the river valleys to stony, gravelly soil on the slopes of hills. Most of the land is cultivable, yielding good crops of hay, corn, oats, vegetables, and fruit. On addition to the several hills and river valleys, glacially-formed features include a moraine and wash gravels near Mendon and South Milford and outwash gravels and fine stratified sands in the Charles River valley.

### II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Originally included as part of Quinshepaug Plantation (1667) and Mendon North Purchase (1691). Incorporated as a town from Mendon in 1780. Bounds with Holliston and Hopkinton established, with parts of these towns annexed and part of Milford annexed to Hopkinton in 1835. Bounds with Holliston established, 1859. Part established as Hopedale, 1886. Bounds with Upton and Hopkinton established 1907. Bounds with Hopkinton and Upton established, 1962.

### III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

A suburban-industrial hill town and commercial center situated in the upper Charles River watershed on an historic corridor from the coastal plain to the Southern Central Uplands. Possible native sites west of Cedar Swamp Pond. First European settlement from Mendon ca. 1700, attracted to Charles River intervalle lands and south facing slope of Magomiscock (Silver) Hill. Dispersed 18th century agricultural settlement, with meetinghouse sited with establishment of Mill River precinct, 1741. Small scale early 19th century industrial activity (primarily boot and shoe manufacturing), but major commercial/industrial expansion follows establishment of Boston and Albany Branch railroad terminus in the late 1840s. Expanded boot and shoe industry attracts large influx of Irish immigrants. Granite quarrying becomes important industry, and several local examples of granite construction remain. Multi-story commercial, brick downtown blocks develop, along with district worker and middle/high income residential districts. Large late 19th/early 20th century influx of Italian immigrants. Widespread modern suburban development on Silver Hill, and commercial strip growth on Route 140. Likely continued expansion of more recent large-scale commercial/industrial development around Medway Street/ I-495 interchange.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes

Upper Charles River Valley with highlands between Charles and Mill rivers. Principal trail corridor northeast to southwest interior with conjectured extension of documented Holliston Trail south of Rocky Hill, with ford south of Cedar Swamp Pond. Trail then swings south on western slope of Charles River Valley (East Main-South Main Streets). Inferred branch north to North Pond along Hickberry Brook tributary (Purchase Street-Camp Street).

#### B. Settlement Pattern

No sites reported for the town. However, well watered by Charles and Mill rivers as well as several ponds. The shores and terraces adjacent to these bodies can be expected to yield sites connected with seasonal use by small bands. Less frequent use of hills adjacent.

#### C. Subsistence Base

Seasonal exploitation of resources in hunting and fishing and agriculture..

#### D. Observations

The large number of sites located during the surveying of Route 146 indicates that the density in this inland area is higher than predicted by the literature.

## V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

### A. Transportation Routes

Contact period trails remain in use, with documented Sherborn Road (1670).

### B. Settlement Pattern

Reduced seasonal use by native population due to formation of praying towns and presence of colonials. No evidence of permanent colonial settlement in this eastern section of the parent town of Mendon's eight-mile-square grant. Frequent passing through, however, to grist mill in Hopedale to the southwest.

### C. Subsistence Pattern

Continuation of exploitation types from Contact period with reductions as stated above. Probable colonial use as outlying holdings, particularly pasturage.

## VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

### A. Transportation Routes

Plantation period routes improved. After establishment of meetinghouse site (1741), roads established to North Purchase uplands (Congress, Purchase and Highland Streets). along Mill (West Street) and Charles (Cedar Street) rivers. Direct road established to Mendon Center.

### B. Population

Twenty-six sign covenant at church formation in 1741. Few figures before incorporation in 1780, then ca. 750. In 1740s some Separatists located in the north, 18 men and women sign petition criticizing the church in New Light terms. However, minister Frost joins New Divinity thinkers in Mendon Association of 1751. Eight Baptists exempted from taxation, attending adjacent Bellingham to the east, in 1741.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Resettlement by colonials of Mendon after King Philip's War by 1680. North Purchase in 1692 adds three miles to Mendon territory, including north portion of present Milford. By 1720s, population moving into area east of Mill River to dispersed farmsteads. With formation of Uxbridge (1727) from Mendon's west balance upset and agitate on for meetinghouse location to accomodate better the east begins. Four years of disagreement, followed by dissatisfaction with Mendon minister results in church formation and final status as precinct in 1741. Meetinghouse located near town geographic center at crossroads. Schoolhouse by 1750, but part-time teaching by 1722. Burying ground also located here.

#### D. Economic Base

Primarily agricultural, depending heavily on pasturage and hay and mowing lands. Earliest mills located in Hopedale to the south, later on Charles River near the Center.

#### E. Architecture

Residential: The central chimney plan is the only apparent house form surviving from the Colonial period. An interior double chimney example dates from 1767, but documentation exists for its alteration from center to double chimneys. With but one exception, all dwellings are five bays in width; the only two-story, four-bay (three-quarter) house is dated 1722. Distribution of one-and two-story units is roughly equal, with almost all the single story examples incorporating a lean-to; whether integral or added is indiscernible.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse was constructed between 1741 and 1743 and measured 40 feet by 35 feet.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes

Colonial highways continue in use.

#### B. Population

Steady population growth during the period, from 794 in 1784 to 1,360 in 1830. Reflected in increasing number of school districts before consolidation.

Direct participation in Shay's Rebellion not noted, but town petitions for amnesty to insurgents. Agitation against vendue system of poor relief begins in 1806, and poor farm substituted in 1825. Second Parish Mendon as First Milford continues in a Calvinist theological position, while sectarians grow in number and societies. In 1781, a Universalist Society is formed, emphasizing universal redemption and man's ability to choose good. Itinerant Methodist preaching, beginning in New England for the first time during this period found converts here, sharing Arminian views but stressing the importance of individual conversion and work toward perfection.

Voluntary associations emerge early, but are restricted to the community's elite including Masons (1797), an Artillary Company (1803), Lafayette Guard Light Infantry in its image (1826) and a Horse Thief Detecting Society.

#### C. Settlement Pattern

Dispersed agricultural settlement continues. Meetinghouse repaired and enlarged, 1792. New meetinghouse built in 1818 at Main Street/Congress Street intersection. Brick town/meetinghouse built in 1821. Academy established, 1830. Later development has

obscured settlement pattern in meetinghouse center, but linear concentrations are conjectured on the South Main/Main Street corridor, with possible northern extensions on Congress and/or Purchase Streets.

#### D. Economic Base

Little of the town's acreage under cultivation: 44% unimproved or left as woodland, followed by 28% in pasturage, 16% in mowing and meadowlands. 9% viewed as unimprovable and 3% under village. Manufacturing increases through period, accounting for 101, compared to agriculture's 217, of the town's household head occupations in 1820.

Milford's economy in the late 18th century and early 19th century east largely agricultural, supported by a range of artisans such as carpenters, tanners, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and clothiers. In 1793 there were four gristmills, three sawmills, one clothier's works and fulling mill, and one triphammer. The town was also served by two traders of European and India goods. The farmers raised all kinds of grain for domestic use and market crops of butter, cheese, pork, and beef.

Toward the end of the 18th century, Arial Bragg began production of boots and shoes in a shop in the northeast end of town, and area later called Braggville. Bragg was among the first in the area to employ journeymen, and he periodically travelled to Boston and Providence to sell their products wholesale. Shoemaking spread to other small shops in the town and there appeared curriers and tanners to prepare the leather. By 1832, 8,500 hides were prepared annually and 25,000 pairs of boots and 35,000 pairs of brogans, the latter sold mostly to Southern slaveholders, were manufactured in the town by 100 men, 20 boys, and 20 women, and were valued at \$85,000.

Other industries launched during the early 19th century included chaise and carriage manufacturing in 1810, cotton-plush hat making, and two cotton and woolen mills, one begun in South Milford about 1810 and the other in the Center in the 1820s. In 1832 a manufacturing census recorded a satinet manufactory with 28 employees and production of 80,000 yards of cloth, and two yarn factories which produced cotton warp for the satinet and wool yarn for hosiery valued at \$15,000. These small mills lasted but a short time. Weakened by the depression in the textile industry in 1829 and by subsequent fires, the mills closed by the late 1830s.

Other manufactures listed in the 1832 McLane Report include per knives and razors, shuttles, ploughs, furniture, and wagons. In addition, straw braid and bonnet manufacturing was carried on by 500 women who produced \$60,000 worth of goods. Much of the straw was supplied by a merchant in South Milford who acted as a distributor of straw to hundreds of women within a five-mile radius of his store and wholesaler of their finished products.

## E. Architecture

**Residential:** Little residential development seems to have occurred during the Federal period. One three-bay and two five-bay single story center chimney dwellings survive and only one two-story, five-bay example remains. Two rear wall chimney, two-story houses are extant, along with a double-pile end chimney structure and one double interior chimney plan. The most significant dwelling is a two-story, five-bay, double-pile center passage plan with a pyramidal roof, located in the northwest section of town on Silver Hill Road.

**Institutional:** The original meetinghouse of ca. 1743 was demolished and replaced with the present structure designed by noted regional architect Elias Carter in 1819 (building was raised to accommodate a full basement, enlarged by 30 feet, and moved back on its lot in 1867-1868). In its original form, the meetinghouse consisted of one story, with three-bay, gable end vestibule containing two entrances. Semi-circular fanlights surmount the three bays and above these is a Palladian window. A square tower with a two-staged belfrey and spire completes the building. The following year, 1820, the Universalists erected a brick meetinghouse with a sixty foot spire. A Methodist meetinghouse, measuring 30 feet x 34 feet, was constructed in 1815 (burned in 1860). The town was divided into six school districts, and between 1780 and 1791 schoolhouses were erected, most of which apparently required major repairs by 1795 (none extant). The Milford Academy began in 1821 closed in 1841.

**Commercial:** One inn is recorded as being in operation by 1781. In addition, reference is made to a row of shops on the common in 1830 (Marvin).

**Industrial:** The shoe and boot industry was established during the period and by 1810-1815, 14 foot x 16 foot boot shops were in existence (Marvin). By 1830, the town had one cotton mill in operation.

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

### A. Transportation Routes

Federal period roads continue in use. Barber (1839) describes them as of poor quality. Medway Street built 1835, Central and Depot Streets, 1850. Framingham-Milford Branch, Boston & Albany Railroad opens, 1848. Milford and Woonsocket Branch, Airline Railroad (with \$50,000 in Milford owned stock) opens in 1868.

### B. Population

Population growth during this period is greatest during town's history, growing from 1,360 in 1830 to 9,890 in 1870. During the first two decades, the population increased 3 and one half times, reflecting migration to increasing manufacturing employment; while agricultural employment remained stable, manufacturing occupations quadrupled between 1820 and 1840. Irish immigration

during the next decade, to these positions, brought their proportion of population to 34.5% in 1855. Between 1850 and 1860, the population continued its dramatic growth before leveling for the remainder of the century.

Denominational multiplication continued, accompanied by a proliferation of reform movement organizations. The Congregational and Universalist societies continued, the latter under the extraordinary Adin Ballou who provided leadership and promoted the values of temperance, anti-slavery and non-resistance and formed a Christian Socialist community in Hopedale (see Hopedale Town Reconnaissance Survey Report). Although the Methodist Protestants emphasizing lay participation in church governance, died out in the north, a Methodist Episcopalian society in 1853, as did the Episcopalians in 1864. The town's growing Irish population formed St. Mary's parish in 1847.

The Masons suffered during the Anti-Masonic movement of the 1830s, and voluntary associations advocating temperance and middle-class values flourished, particularly during the 1860s, at the expense of the genteel. A lyceum was established in 1853, followed by a library in 1858.

The high school, and a grad school system, were in operation by 1850, followed by an abolition of the school districts, and with them local community control, in 1853. A series of ministerial and select schools, as well as an academy, were short-lived.

Numbers accommodated at the Poor Farm remain consistent: 30 within 50 outside the institution.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Significant expansion of center after 1845, particularly after rail terminus established. By period's end, a linear central commercial district has developed, ringed on the north by a mixed institutional/residential zone, and the open space of the town park (1863). To the north and west are middle and high income residential areas. To the south of the commercial district, the Charles River/railway industrial corridor develops, with a zone of mixed shops/worker residences between Main Street and the railroad. The area west of the river is predominantly Irish worker residences.

A bipolar institutional focus develops on Main Street, after the town house (1854) is constructed far to the east of the 1819 meeting house. By 1870, the half dozen churches are scattered north of Main Street with Unitarians on Pearl Street (1850), Methodists on Exchange (1849), Baptists on Pine (1861) and the largest edifice the granite St. Mary's Catholic Church on Granite Street (1870). A high school (1850) and library (1858) are also added to the institutional zone.

In 1870, the built up area extends as far north as the town park, except on Purchase Street, where the high-income corridor extends as far as Fountain Street, and linear development continues north



to North Milford. To the west, residential development stops at High Street, with a linear extension on West Street. Southward, building extends on South Main, although generally not beyond Fruit Street. On the east side, the Main Street corridor extends slightly beyond the Agricultural Fairgrounds, with residential construction beginning to take east of the railroad.

Outside the Center, secondary development occurs at North Milford and along the East Main Street quarries.

#### D. Economic Base

The period between 1830 and the end of the Civil War was one of tremendous growth in Milford's economic and demographic development. The town's population increased from 1,360 in 1830 to over 9,000 in 1865. An early homogenous, native Yankee population was equalled and then outnumbered by the fecund Irish immigrants and their offspring. Capital invested in manufacturing rose from under \$100,000 to nearly \$1,000,000 during this period, while the value of manufactured goods increased from \$260,000 in 1830 to nearly \$4,000,000 in 1865.

This growth was due largely to an expansion and transformation of boot and shoe manufacturing and the establishment and expansion of its related industries of tanning and currying, heel-making, the manufacture of shoe pegs, boot and shoe boxes, lasts, boot trees, clinching screws, shoe machinery and tools, and cement. Most of these establishments were located on or near Central Street, where several shoe factories still operate. By 1870, about 20 boot shoe factories were in operation, including factories rated among the largest in the nation. In 1865, 1,119,299 pairs of boots and 111,190 pairs of shoes were produced in Milford shops and factories.

A significant factor in the expansion of Milford's boot and shoe industry and in the introduction of new manufacturing enterprises was the construction of the railroad through Milford. The Framingham and Milford Branch of the Boston & Albany Railroad was opened in July 1848, and linked Milford by rail to the major urban centers of the Northeast. During the period between 1845 and 1855 state censuses Milford's population; action tripled and the value of manufactures increased from more than \$400,000 to nearly \$2,000,000 and the number of persons employed in manufacturing rose from under 1,000 to more than 3,500. Within the boot and shoe industry, the number of employees, the quantity of boots and shoes made and their value increased nearly five fold during the same period.

The rapid expansion in the boot and shoe industry was based on a major transformation in the organization and process of production. From the small shop containing several master workmen and hired journeymen which prevailed until the 1830s, the industry moved to increasing centralization and specialization of tasks, resulting in large, intergrated factories by the Civil War. The introduction of the stitching machine in the 1850s and the McKay machine for sewing the bottom on boots and shoes in the late 1860s

marked and acceleration of the mechanization of the manufacturing process which also included machinery for crimping, pegging, (1833-1857), rolling (1845), lasting and stretching. By 1856, the manufacture of shoe machinery was being carried out in Milford.

Dissatisfaction with the introduction of machinery, steadily deteriorating work conditions and wages, and the fear of replacement by unskilled workers, often immigrants, led to the establishment in 1867 of a local chapter of the Knights of St. Crispin, an organization of skilled boot and shoe workers. This national union, which eventually boasted 50,000 members, was originally organized by a former Milford shoemaker who had moved to Milwaukee. Though it attracted large numbers of boot and shoe workers and had some success in enforcing the closed shop through strikes, it could not stop the movement toward mechanization and the lowering of skill levels and wages within the production process, and it disappeared completely by 1878.

The success of this process is shown in the production figures within the boot and shoe industry between 1855 and 1865. In 1855, 3,400 employees produced 1,042,944 pairs of boots and 5,048 pairs of shoes, valued at \$1,787,315; in 1865, only 2,187 employees produced 1,119,229 pairs of boots and 111,190 pairs of shoes, valued at \$3,291,304. Nearly 200,000 more boots and shoes were produced by 1,200 less employees, with the value of goods produced nearly twice as great.

With the rapid growth in population and industry, Milford's central village developed into an urban center. The building trades expanded greatly as housing needs were met with a large number of new building. In 1855, more than 2.5 million board feet of lumber and 3,000 cords of firewood were cut from the town's woodlands to supply this expansion. New establishments serving a more urbanized population also appeared. By 1865, a gas works, brewery, bakery, coal yards, coffin maker, and architect and draftsman and three daguerrotype artists operated in Milford. A second rail line, the Milford and Woonsocket Railroad, which connected with the Airline Railroad in Bellingham, was opened in 1868. A third line, the Hopkinton Railroad, was completed in 1872 and ran between Ashland and Milford. Three banks were chartered between 1851 and 1872; the Milford Savings Bank in 1851, the Milford National Bank in 1865, and the Home National Bank in 1872. These banks were largely organized by the wealthy boot and shoe manufacturers, some of whom were also instrumental in bringing the railroads through Milford.

Several new industries appeared during this period. In the early 1860s the manufacture of straw hats and bonnets moved from a cottage industry to factory production. By 1865, \$260,000 worth of hats and bonnets were manufactured by 400 women and 35 men in B.H. Spaulding's four-story factory. Establishments for the manufacture of clothing increased from four to fourteen in 1875 and produced \$75,000 worth of goods by 36 employees.

During the 1840s and 1850s, granite quarrying was begun by the Boston & Albany Railroad near Braggville and by local landowners

for building materials, but it was not until the 1860s that the industry was developed and a quarry commercially worked by an Irish Catholic church parish. By 1875, 75 stone cutters and laborers were employed at the two Boston & Albany Railroad quarries, with production valued at over \$75,000.

In Hopedale, a community on the Mill River in the western portion of town, the manufacture of cotton and woolen machinery had been overtaken by George and Ebenezer Draper in 1856. Originally begun as a fraternal community of Christian Socialists, the community dissolved 15 years later with the withdrawal of the Drapers, its chief benefactors and stockholders, and was eventually reduced to a religious society within the village which was wholly owned by the Drapers and their company. The Drapers' manufacturing establishments expanded to include the Hopedale Furnace Co., Dutcher Temple Co., the Hopedale Machine Co. shops and foundry, and company housing with annual sales of nearly \$500,000 by 1885. In 1886, Hopedale was incorporated as a separate town out of lands formerly a part of Milford.

Milford's agriculture expanded nearly as rapidly as its population and manufacturing industries. In 1845, production totaled less than \$50,000; by 1875, it exceeded \$150,000. Greatest growth occurred in the dairy and market gardening, as mild sales, unrecorded in 1845, greatly exceeded the sales of butter and cheese in 1855 and totaled nearly \$8,000 in 1865 with 32,723 gallons sold. While total acreage of grains (corn, rye, oats, barley) declined by nearly 50% between 1855 and 1865, the average devoted to vegetables and market gardening showed an increase of nearly 50 acres. Beef, pork and veal sales also increased greatly, totaling more than 120,000 lbs. in 1865.

#### E. Architecture

Residential: The major house form in the outlying regions of the town was the one-and two-story side-passage plan, detailed primarily in either the Greek or Italianate styles. The town center, however, displays the full range of the period's popular designs, especially in the more prosperous residential section immediately north of the commercial district. The side-passage remains by far the most popular theme, but in addition, well preserved examples of two-story, three-bay, center entrance Italianate and Second Empire houses are frequent, as are a few Gothic Revival dwellings. Of note is an 1854 two-story, three-bay center entrance Italianate house situated on a spacious lot. The building displays brackets, single and triple windows with hood molds, gabled pediments, a round window, and one-story porches on both the principal and side facades. Some six-bay, gabled duplexes are also located in this area. Immediately south of Main Street in the industrial section of the town center the houses display less stylistic variety, being mostly simple side-passage plans and gabled duplexes. To the southwest, a few one-story mansard roofed dwellings are interspersed among the numerous gabled duplexes. On West Main Street, there is an 1850 two-story Greek Revival temple-front dwelling now serving as the Christian Science Church.

**Institutional:** A second Methodist society constructed a church in the town center in 1849. This building is a Greek Revival three-bay gable end structure center entrance, paralleled pilasters, and a square tower (the building, the second Universalist Church, was completed ca. 1850, was enlarged in 1864). In 1861, a 1 and 1/2 -story gable end Baptist Church was built; the pedimented vestibule has been altered and the spire is of recent construction. The ca. 1848 structure for St. Mary of the Assumption church was replaced with the present two-story, granite Gothic edifice, measuring 165' x 72', with a three-story square tower. The first town hall was erected in the early years of the period and was a brick two-story five-bay gable end building with a short square tower and a belfry. The present town hall (listed in the National Register) was built between 1853 and 1858 by Boston architect Thomas W. Silloway (1828-1910), who is noted for the numerous churches he built throughout New England. Unique because it is the only major public building in town that is not constructed of the famous Milford pink granite, the town hall is a frame Italianate two-story, three-bay gable end design. The ground story is restricted while the principle level is sheathed in clapboards. Pilasters divide the bays on the second floor which contain windows with segmented and pedimented hoods. A Palladian window is located in the gabled facade, and a deepfrieze adorned with pateras encompasses the building. The square clock tower displays Baroque scrolled moldings. In 1900, the rear wings were added and the original brick town hall (located to the rear of the present building) was demolished. A 19th century description of the town hall states that the building was painted and sanded unsuccessful imitation of yellowish friestone (see National Register file).

A one-story, three-bay brick school with jack arched openings, a pyramidal roof and center chimney (31' x 24' ) was constructed in 1832 at a cost of \$524 (extant). The Purchase Street school, north of the town center appears to date from the 1860s. In 1850, a high school building was constructed. On East Main at the junction of 495 there is a long two-story, five-bay abandoned structure which is indicated as a school on the 1870 Beers Atlas of Worcester Co.

**Commercial:** A long, two-story commercial block with rounded and segmented windows and a bracketed cornice was constructed.

A one-story coursed granite building is situated on Dilla Street north of the center. This building is adjacent to a quarry and may be associated with that industry. On Main Street ca. 1863, a 1 and 1/2 -story gable end building with a three-bay hipped roof block added to its main facade appears to be a mid-19th century commercial structure. Probably constructed late in the period, the Milford depot is a coursed granite building trimmed in brownstone and capped by a kicked hip roof. Two hotels, the Mansion House and the Quinshepaug House, were operating on Main Street by 1870.

**Industrial:** A few blocks south of the main business district near the railroad tracks is a four-story frame factory with a side

tower (now the Archer Rubber Co.). Also in this area is a two-story, three-bay coursed granite gable end warehouse.

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

### A. Transportation Routes:

Two additional rail lines are opened to Milford the Hopkinton Railroad from Ashland (1872), and an electric line, the Upton-Grafton, connecting to the Boston and Albany in the North Grafton (operating by 1896). By the early 1900s an electric streetcar system radiates from Milford to surrounding communities, with lines west to Hopedale, Uxbridge and Grafton (West Main Street), south to Attleboro and Woonsocket (South Main Street), north to Hopkinton (Cedar street), and east to Holliston (East Main Street).

### B. Settlement Location:

Continued infilling and building takes place in the built-up area of Milford Center, while only slight peripheral extension occurs. By 1879 there are 18 "blocks" in the commercial area, and by period end another half dozen multi-story, brick structures are built, primarily on Main Street. Some institutional construction takes place, with Protestant Episcopal Church (1871), Universalist Church (1898), remodelling of the Congregational Church (1877), and Memorial Hall (1884), all within the institutional zone north of Main Street. Milford Hospital established 1903, near the Hopedale border. Middle and high income residential development pushes to the north and west of town park, with a high income extension on Congress Street. Little expansion occurs to the west and south, though single and multifamily infilling takes place, particularly toward land adjacent to the rail corridor in the south. A significant residential development in the west in the Prospect Heights area, an innovative Draper Company worker suburb, constructed 1903-1913 on the northeast side of Prospect Street near Water Street. Housing consists of brick multifamily (4-6 unit) tenents in a cul-del-sac arrangement, a departure form the wooden duplex construction previously favored in Hopedale. After the 1870s granite quarry development takes place along the Hopkinton rail corridor.

### C. Population:

Population remains relatively stable through the end of the 19th century, with some decline in 1880s, plus the loss of Hopedale (1886). Population increase greatest between 1895 and 1905, growing from 8959 to 12,105, with slower growth during final decade to 13,684.

The first hall of this period marked the greatest influence of the Irish Population. The construction of the large, new St. Mary's church in 1870, followed by the founding of the Hibernian Society in 1887 attest to their strong identity within the community, and by 1890 they controlled the municipal government.

The second half of this period was dominated by a wave of migration that matched that during the 1840s. Italian migration began ca. 1895, and by 1905, they made up 33% of the population. Conflict between the newcomers and the Yankee and Irish residents was evident in the unsuccessful strike at this time, when the Italian workers were opposed by Irish and Yankee alignment with factory owners (O'Donnel 1941).

Economic fluctuations reflected in the large increase in inmates at the Poor Asylum, with well over 100 in 1873, 1877, 1878 and 1879, plus large numbers of tramps through the town. Figures not available for later periods. Some Swedish immigration, like Italian to stonecutting.

#### D. Economic Base

Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries Milford's economic base continued to expand despite contraction in its principal industries. The overall result was an initial decline in the value of manufactured goods from nearly 84 million in 1875 to slightly over 82 million in 1885. However, the introduction of new businesses in the 1890s led to renewed growth by the early 20th century. Population increased from a post-1860 low of 8,780 in 1890 to 13,684 in 1915. Total employment also increased during this period, particularly in the manufacturing sector with nearly a 30% increase. The number of persons involved in agriculture, however, fell during this same period by 22%, from 259 in 1875 to 201 in 1915. Agricultural production followed the population trends, decreasing from a 19th century high of \$151,000 in 1875 to \$75,000 in 1895 before once again expanding in the early 20th century to a high of more than \$200,000.

Milford's largest industry continued to be boot and shoe making and accessories despite a decline in sales during the 1870s and 1880s from the 1865 high of nearly \$3.3 million. In 1875, 21 establishments produced nearly \$2.7 million worth of goods; by 1885 the value declined by more than half to \$1.08 million with only 17 firms in operation. Despite periods of dull trade and increasing labor-management conflict in the 1890s, a number of new boot and shoe firms were attracted to Milford and several new factories were erected. After 1900 however, with changes in fashion away from high boots, the principal product of Milford's factories, local footwear production declined; by 1922 only two firms, Huckins and Temple and the Milford Shoe Company remained in operation.

In the six decades following the Civil War, continued mechanization further centralized the production process. The pegging and stitching machines eliminated nearly all of the small shops that did specialized handwork by the 1890s. Improvements in machinery during the 1870s and 1880s seriously threatened the low-capitalized firms which had been successfully adapted to initial mechanization. The Goodyear Welt Machine, introduced between 1871 and 1875, did the work of both the pegging and stitching machines in an improved manner and quickly replaced them. Edge trimmers came in about 1877 and the lasting machine

was introduced about 1883. As a result many smaller firms closed or were absorbed into larger companies. Among the accessory manufacturers a similar trend occurred. Mechanization eliminated the need for hand tool and their production. Since many of the improvements in footwear machinery and the production process were controlled by manufacturers outside of Milford, most of Milford's manufacturers of boot and shoe making accessories went out of businesses were removed. For example, the United Shoe Machine Company of Beverly, Massachusetts, purchased and removed from the Milford the sewing needle manufactory of Lilley and Co., which had operated in Milford since 1886.

Changes in fashion and markets also affected the industry. As a large part of Milford's productions was in high boots and boots supplied to the miners of Colorado, Utah, California, and New Mexico, the decline and collapse of silver and other mining during the late 19th and 20th centuries seriously injured Milford's major industry. The passing of the boot in turn eliminated the demand for boot trees and treeing accessories, as well as for boot boxes, both large businesses in Milford. Many factories attempted to compensate for the loss by introducing the manufacture of ladies', boys', and athletic shoes.

Despite these setbacks, the Milford Businessman's Association, formed in the late 1880s and early 1890s to attract new businesses, was successful in bringing several new firms to Milford. Clapp, Huckins and Temple, a shoe manufacturing firm, relocated to Milford from Ashland in 1891 after a new four story, 256 x 40 foot factory was built for them by the town at the corner Depot and Charles Streets. This building still stands; as late as 1950 it was occupied by the Derman Shoe Company. The Association also succeeded in attracting the Franklin Iron Foundry to Milford in 1893. Furnaces and buildings were erected on the west shore of Cedar Swamp Pond and in 1903 the firm was incorporated as the Milford Iron Co. and specialized in iron castings.

Other new industries introduced during the 1890s included textiles and rubber goods. In 1896 the manufacture of elastic fabric was undertaken by William Lapwoth and Son at their Depot St. factory, later expanded to include woollens. A knitting factory was established in 1898 and in 1899 the Magid-Hope Silk Co. was incorporated with a capital of \$300,000. This firm purchased and occupied the Colburn, Fuller and Co. facility on Pond Street, today used by the Milford Shoe Co. In 1902 the Union Rubber Co. commenced production of raincoats and rubbers. By the early 1920s two firms, Archer Rubber and Alhambra Rubber Co. carried on the manufacture of rubber goods.

Another industry which greatly expanded during this period was granite quarrying. By the early 1920s, 16 quarries were in operation, most of them opened between 1885 and 1915. Both pink and gray granite were quarried and widely used for gravestones, monuments, architectural trim, and building. Among the more well-known building in which Milford granite was used are both the old and new sections of the Boston Public Library, the basement of the National Museum in Washington, D.C. the approaches to the

Lincoln Memorial and the Freer Art Collection Building of the Smithsonian Institute, also in Washington, D.C., the Wilmington, N.C.-U.S. Customs House, the Amherst College Library, Union Station in Baltimore, and many other notable buildings. The quarries were all located to the north and northeast of the town center in the rough hills aptly named Rocky Woods. Nearly all lie within one mile of a rail line or siding, along which cutting sheds and loading facilities were located.

During this period a large number of Italian immigrants came to Milford to work the quarries as skilled stonecutters and in the factories. They were very active in union organizing and activities and a number of strikes were called against the quarry operators; several local sources identify this as the reason for the closing of many of the quarries by the mid-1920s. Italian union members were also active in the factories. About 1910, in the town's one serious strike threat, Italian laborers walked out but were not joined by the Irish and Yankee laborers, resulting in much inter-ethnic tension and a failed strike.

Milford's agriculture largely followed the trends of the town's economic health and population size. Like manufacturing and the population, agricultural production declined between 1875 and 1895 before rebounding. By 1905 production was nearly triple that of 1895. Dairying, vegetable gardening, and poultry-raising showed the greatest increase during this period. Despite the decrease in the number of cows, milk production continued to increase dramatically as better breeds of cattle and improved management were introduced. Between 1865 and 1875 milk production nearly tripled; from 1875 to 1885 it nearly doubled to 184,000 gallons per year, valued at \$28,000. By 1905 dairy products made up 34% of total agricultural production, valued at \$71,000. Similar growth occurred in market gardening as the value of vegetables increased from under 10% of the total in 1875 to 20% of the total in 1905, valued at \$43,563. Poultry-raising increased between 1875 and 1905 nearly five-fold to a total of almost \$28,000 or 13% of total agricultural production. Fruit raising was only of minor importance in Milford, accounting for less than 6% of total production in 1905.

#### E. Architecture:

Milford sustained significant residential development during the Late Industrial period. Bungalows and Four Square plans are scattered throughout the northern half of the town as well as on the fringes of later residential development within the town center. Four substantial Queen Anne houses were observed as was an 1881 two-story, center-passage T-plan. Turn of the century gabled single and multi-family dwellings are interspersed throughout the center, particularly along East Main Street. As with the previous period, a wide range of popular late 19th and early 20th century styles are to be found in the neighborhoods about the town center, principally to the north and northeast. Shingled, Gothic, and Queen Anne versions of the standard side-passage plan are the most frequent house type, while full-blown Queen Anne houses with turrets and fish-scale shingles



also occur. The side-passage plan adopted Colonial Revival motifs: these and classically detailed Four Square houses are principally located on the northeast side of the town center. Side-passage, Four Square, and the traditional gabled duplexes are also popular. Northwest of the center proper is a Tudor Revival apartment complex consisting of rows of two-story attached brick units with half-timbered gables and porch pediments and segmented arched windows. A few three-deckers are to be found in the center as well. A row of detached duplexes on Prospect Street north of Main Street appear to be part of the Prospect Heights development, laid out by William H. Manning for the Draper Company between 1903-1913 as worker housing for the Hopedale Company.

**Institutional:** In 1871, the Episcopal congregation erected a frame Gothic building with a square side tower. The steeple was added in 1880 and the building now has a shed-roofed vestibule (original?) and is clad in vinyl siding. The Universalist church was built in 1898 of granite in the Gothic Revival style; the gabled building with a side entrance tower and spire was designed by Robert Allen Cook. The Swedish Congregational church was constructed in 1912 and is a 1 and 1/2-story shingled, gable end building with a square side tower. The Beth Shalom synagogue, a brick, stepped gabled end structure with a center entrance, was built in 1913.

The granite Sisters of Notre Dame School was erected in 1890. In 1895, two elementary schools were completed; the Central Elementary School, a two-story, hipped roof granite block with central gabled pavillion, and the Spruce Street School, a two-story, hipped roof, brick Colonial Revival rectangular structure with granite trim.

Several municipal buildings were constructed during the Late Industrial period. In 1884, Fred Swasey, major architect for the Draper Co. of Hopedale, designed the Richardsonian Memorial Hall for Milford out of local granite. The pumping station near the corner of Dilla Street and Route 85 is a one-story, hipped roof brick structure with a corbelled cornice and pilaster strips. Adjacent to it are two small, round vertical board buildings on brick foundations with conical slate roofs. The fire station was built in 1895 and is a two-story brick Colonial Revival design with a Palladian window and a hipped roof with flared eaves. The 1911 granite Post Office building is a standard functional Colonial Revival design by James Knox Taylor, architect for the federal government and responsible for many similarly designed post offices across the country. The Armory was built in 1912 and is a two-story rusticated granite "castle" with a crenellated roof line and symmetrical facade with a center entrance flanked by cylindrical towers. The Salvation Army Citadel, a two-story, asymmetrical, crenellated structure with a circular corner bay and pointed arch entrance, was completed in 1906.

**Commercial:** Commercial development flourished in the town center during the Late Industrial period and is reflected today in the two-and three-story brick blocks along Main Street. Ca. 1875, a two-story, three-bay bracketted Italianate block was erected which now has a modern third story addition. The Music Hall, built in

1881, is a three story, seven-bay Victorian Gothic structure with tall, pointed arch bays, corbelled cornice, and banks of black brick. The former Hotel Willan is a 3 and 1/2 -story mansard roofed structure of patterned brick-work displaying rounded segmented, and flat arched window openings and pedimented dormers in the slate roof. The Gillon Block (1888), considered the town's most outstanding commercial structure, is a four-story block of pannelled and patterned brick work with a corbelled cornice and an onion dome centered above the central granite arched entry. The building is attributed to Rinaldo V. Carey, local builder, and is apparently his only known work. Two meeting rooms on one of the upper floors retain elaborate stencilling (possibly executed by local craftsmen). Another important Main Street building is the four-story granite Thom Block of 1891, distinguished by the piers composed of various colors of polished granite blocks which divide the storefront bays. The Claflin Block (1909) and the Thayer Block (1912) were identical two-story brick Colonial Revival buildings displaying jack arched openings with keystones and rusticated piers. The Thayer Block has been altered by the addition of a Belmont green marble storefront. A one-story Colonial Revival period storefront (1906) stands on East Main. Two one-story granite buildings in the heart of the business section date from ca. 1920.

Industrial: A two-story brick structure with segmented arched windows is located south of Main Street in the town center.

#### F. Observations:

A fairly large number of Milford's industrial sites from this period remain in various stages of survival. Along Central Street, North Bow Street, and Depot Street a number of old shoe factories and shops remain, some of them vacant, others adapted to new uses. These need to be further identified and if possible recorded and/or preserved.

Much evidence survives from the quarrying activities. In addition to the quarries themselves, several intact archaeological complexes of cutting sheds and other structures remain. Particularly well preserved are the Ross Granite Company complex along Haven Street and the former Milford Pink Granite Co./Dodds Brothers. complex along East Main Street. All the quarry sites should be systematically identified and evaluated in the near future, particularly since some of the sites are threatened with development.

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

##### A. Transportation Routes:

The street railways are abandoned in the 1920s, and Milford becomes the focus of an improved regional road network. Principal highways include the road from Grafton/Worcester (West Street, Prospect Street, Cape Road-Route 140), the road from Uxbridge to

Boston (West Main, East Main-Route 126. later Route 16), the road from Hopkinton (Cedar Street-Route 85) and the road to West Medway and Millis (Medway Street-Route 109).

#### B. Settlement Location:

Continued peripheral residential growth and infilling takes place. In the center some church construction takes place, with Swedish Congregational Church (1912), Beth Shalom Synagogue (1913), and large Sacred Heart Church (1927, with Italian congregation and located east of Charles River). Governmental buildings include armory (1912) and post office (1914-granite). In the northern residential area, an early linear automobile suburb develops on Purchase Street north of Dilla Street. Speculative housing construction continues north of East Main in the former Trotting Park area, and single family housing is developed on the North Slope (Carroll Street, East Walnut Street areas) and along the western base of Bear Hill (East Street-Haywood Street).

#### C. Population:

Growth in population during this period was slow, from 13,684 in 1915 to 15,388 in 1940. The Italian population continued to grow, and by the end of the period this ethnic group accounted for 51% of the population, the largest in the country. Yankee and Irish groups each accounted for 20% of the population, while French Canadians, Poles, Portugues, Americans and Jews made up 10%. Second Catholic parish, Italian, built chapel (1927), and greatly expanded with growth (1947).

#### D. Economic Base:

Milford's prosperity continued through the 1920s before suffering a setback during the Depression. In 1922 the newly formed Chamber of Commerce boasted 47 prosperous industries with an output of nearly \$11 million, twelfth in Worcester County. It was serviced by 2 steam railroads, 3 electric street railways and four banks. In 1915, 140 merchants and traders, the third highest in the county after Worcester and Fitchburg, were located in Milford. By 1922, 286 retail stores were in operation making Milford a major shopping center for about 35,000 people in the 12 surrounding towns.

The coming of the Depression closed a number of Milford's businesses. The Milford Iron Foundry, which employed 300 and was rated as one of the largest iron foundries in New England in 1928 folded during the early 1930s as business was drastically reduced. The shoe industry also suffered as several factories closed. However, the shoe industry recovered as at least 4 firms had resumed operation by 1940.

Most quarries ceased operation or continued only sporadically after the 1920s. Around 1920 a machine for cutting granite was developed and was utilized by the surviving quarries. A manufactory for the machinery was also established.

Other industries which continued through the period were the manufacture of bone cutters by F.W. Mann Co., straw, felt, and wool hats by Milford Wool Hat Co. and the Kartiganer Co. on North Bow Street, now occupied by the Milford Shoe Co., the manufacture of waterproof cloth and coats by Arched Rubber Co., tool manufacturing, and the building of truck bodies.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Milford appears to have sustained steady development during the 1920s and 1930s. More recently (1960s+), the landscape of the northwest section of town had been altered by housing developments. Bungalows from the late teens and twenties are found on the northern edges of the residential section of the center as well as scattered along Purchase Street. 1930s and 1940s one-story, three-bay, "boxey" housing clusters are also found north of the center along Purchase Street and along Route 140 above South Milford.

However, little significant development seems to have occurred in other areas. The two-story brick Byzantine-influenced Sacred Heart Church (Italian Catholic) was erected in 1947. The Stacey School, a three-story granite block, was erected in 1916.