

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## MONTAGUE

Report Date: 1982

Associated Regional Report: Connecticut Valley

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

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

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

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

The activity that is the subject of the MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20240.



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# MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: 1982

COMMUNITY: MONTAGUE

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## I. TOPOGRAPHY

Montague is situated in the Connecticut River Valley. The western portion of the town consists primarily of floodplain and glacial lake bottom. Elevations rarely reach over 300 feet. Prehistorically, these lowlands were covered by Lake Hitchcock, a glacial lake that inundated the Connecticut River Valley from central Connecticut north to southern Vermont. Montague Plain is a remnant of Hitchcock's lake bottom. This plain is broken by two adjoining kettle holes, Lake Pleasant and Green Pond. Scattered about these lowlands are several moderate hills. Most notable are Wills Hill (566 feet) and Taylor Hill (532 feet) located in northern and southern Montague, respectively. A complex of uplands gradually rise from the western lowlands and dominate eastern Montague. Elevations increase from an average height of 600 feet on the western periphery of the uplands to 1050 feet near the Montague/Wendell line. Prominent points include Dry Hill (1382 feet), Chestnut Hill (1152 feet), Country Hill (1124 feet), and Harvey Hill (806 feet). The Connecticut River demarcates the town's western and northern boundary along with Miller's River, a tributary of the Connecticut. Two large waterfalls are located on these two rivers. Both the Connecticut and Miller's Rivers are fed by a series of minor waterways that flow north and west from Montague's western uplands. Local soils range from the fertile alluvium of the Connecticut River floodplain to a gravelly, sandy loam on Montague Plain.

## II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Originally included as part of Hadley grant to Swampfield (Sunderland) in 1673 extending north to Saw Mill River with Connecticut River as western boundary to Deerfield. Included as part of Swampfield district from Hadley in 1714 with Hunting Hills division to Saw Mill River during 1716-18. Established as Montague district of Sunderland in 1753 defining southern boundary and eastern line with Shutesbury (Wendell) in 1761. Northern district to Miller's River and Turners Falls included as part of Two Mile Addition in 1770 from unincorporated province lands with Connecticut River as northwest boundary with Greenfield (Gill). Northeast section along Lyons Brook annexed to Wendell in 1803 and Turners Falls established as unincorporated village by 1960.

## III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Complex rural industrial center on secondary axis between Greenfield and Amherst. Located in Connecticut River Valley at edge of central uplands with important native fishing site at Turners Falls and reported settlement along Connecticut lowlands with site potential at Lake Pleasant and Pine Hill. Settled from Sunderland during early

18th century around Taylor Hill with original millsite intact on Sawmill River as later structure. Some Colonial houses remain along Federal Street postroad with notable examples of Connecticut Valley doorways preserved in Montague meeting house center and gambrel cottages on Taylor and Chestnut Hill. Sawmill valley remained as focus of farming through Federal period with brick houses in town center and upland cottages along Goddard Brook. Remnants of early Connecticut canal village survive at Montague City with stylish period houses now as Main Street tenements. Town center remained as civic focus through mid-19th century with Greek Revival churches around common green and suburban Italiante houses, while Connecticut lowlands expanded with tobacco production including period barns on Meadow and Ferry Road.

Significant industrial development after Civil War with regional railroad connections at Millers Falls including Gothic cottages at Lake Pleasant. Planned development of Turners Falls as factory city during Late Industrial period with original brick paper mills intact along power canals including period bridges. Primary business district aligned on Avenue A with Holyoke style brick tenements and landmark Catholic churches, including Queene Anne suburban district on High Street. Parallel development at Millers Falls at smaller scale with Victorian highland houses and woodframe business district around local rail junction with period bridges. Urban expansion continued at Turners Falls through early 20th century with civic focus formed at Seventh Avenue south around Beaux Arts library and suburban expansion to Riverside Drive with unique Craftsman houses. Early Modern fringe belt developed on Turnpike Road with ethnic cemeteries and original hangar at Turners Falls airport.

Present development most obvious from Greenfield in Montague City along Main Street with gradual erosion of historic canal village. Both Turners Falls and Millers Falls retain industrial character although suffer from commercial district decay, with similar decline evident at Lake Pleasant cottage district despite recent renovation efforts. Montague Center maintains authentic village scale to Sawmill River, although suburban expansion from Amherst threatens original farmland on Taylor Hill and along Route 47 corridor to Sunderland.

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

##### A. Transportation Routes:

Intermediate corridor along Connecticut Valley floodplain with regional access to Turners Falls. Primary route from Kunckwadchu (Mt. Toby) to Peskeompskut (Turners Falls) is reported as north-south trail following Taylor Hill Road to Sawmill River fordway with alternate loop around Taylor Hill as Sunderland-Old Stage Road (Pressey, 1910, p.57). Route from Sawmill River fordway north to Falls apparently followed Montague Road to Ferry Road with probable crossing of Connecticut River at The Narrows to Riverside (Gill). Alternate route is suspected north across Montague Plain from Old

Northfield Road with likely crossing of Millers River from East Mineral Hill Road. Alternate north-south trail is reported along Sawmill River valley from Harvey Hill as Chestnut Hill Road to Federal Street (Route 63) with connections around Lake Pleasant likely to Montague Plain and Mineral Hill fordway (ibid. p.81). East-west trails through highlands possible as Chestnut Hill Road to Catamount Swamp (Montague State Forest) with secondary links possible to Pine Hill along Hannegan and Goddard Brook.

#### B. Settlement Patterns:

There were no clearly documented native Contact period sites. However, the presence of two excellent fishing locations and a number of undated, Woodland and possible period sites suggests native settlement was extensive. Period occupation probably concentrated at Turner's and Miller's Falls, and the adjoining floodplain terrace, the southern portion of the Connecticut River floodplain, Montague plain, particularly in the vicinity of Lake Pleasant, and the lowlands which is the present village of Montague. Historically, Turner's Falls is reputed to have been the site of the native village of "Peskeomskut" (Pressey 1910:52). Large quantities of undated and Woodland period artifacts have been recovered from Turner's Falls and the banks of the Connecticut River. Montague plain has been the site of extensive finds of undated native material. Several undated native burials were unearthed north of Lake Pleasant. A Middle Woodland period hunting/gathering site was situated at the southeastern base of Wills Hill. Additional evidence of Woodland period occupation occurred south of the village of Montague in the vicinity of the western base of Harvey Hill and north of Sawmill River.

#### C. Subsistence Patterns:

Native planting fields probably were established primarily on the town's western and northern floodplains, particularly between the mouth of Cranberry Brook and the Boston and Main Railroad crossing over the Connecticut River, the vicinity of Turner's Falls and the plains west of West Mineral Hill. Turner's Falls, and to a lesser degree Miller's Falls, were regionally important native fishing sites. In the 17th century, large numbers of natives congregated at these locations during the annual spring spawning runs of the salmon and shad. Traditionally, Montague was an excellent site for wild game such as bear, deer, moose, and wolves (Barber 1839:263).

#### D. Observations:

Montague was probably the site of one of the largest native period settlements situated in the northern portion of the Connecticut River Valley study unit. The town's proximity to the major native settlement of Pocumtuck (Deerfield) suggests native association with the Pocumtucks. In contrast, one secondary source suggested Montague fell within the territory of both the Pocumtucks and the Norwottucks centered in Northampton and Hadley. The town should

have excellent potential of archaeological evidence of period occupation. Period sites most likely survive on the Connecticut River Floodplain, the general vicinity of Turners and Millers Falls, Montague Plain, Lake Pleasant / Green Pond and the lowlands flanked by Taylor and Harvey Hills. The banks of the Connecticut River should be monitored periodically for eroding period sites.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Native trails remained as regional routeways, with improvement of Taylor Hill path to Sawmill River from Swampfield (Sunderland) with connections across Montague Plain likely as Old Northfield Road to Millers River fordway at Mineral Hill.

B. Population:

Montague probably maintained a large native period population. The area lacked a colonial population until the 18th century.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Native settlement patterns appeared to remain essentially the same as those described in the Contact period section throughout most of this period. However, the Mohawk attack of Pocumtuck territory in c.1664 appears to have resulted in the destruction of a number of Pocumtuck villages including those of Peskesmskut (Turner's Falls) and Carroheagan (Montague City) (Pressey 1910:57). A pitched battle between Pocumtuck and Mohawk forces reputedly took place on "Pine Hill" probably in the general vicinity of Miller's Falls.

D. Economic Base:

Native subsistence patterns were probably similar to those of the preceding period. Trade was undoubtedly established with English settlement established in the study unit, particularly Deerfield, Hatfield, Northampton and Hadley. The colonial residents of Sunderland may have done some hunting and fishing in Montague.

E. Observations:

The Mohawk attack on Pocumtuck territory probably resulted in a serious depopulation of the native community situated in Montague. It is unlikely the native community ever recovered from this attack.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes:

Settlement of Hunting Hills division (1716) from Sunderland defined secondary highway system around Taylor Hill to Sawmill River,

including likely locations of Meadow Road, North Taylor Hill and East Taylor Hill Road. Establishment of meetinghouse at Montague center (1753) focused regional highway system with bridge across Sawmill River (1756). Primary north-south highway improved as Federal Street (Route 63) to Lake Pleasant with connections across Montague Plain to East Mineral Hill Road and improvement of Miller's River fordway with bridge (1774). Secondary east-west route through highlands improved as Dry Hill Road along Goddard Brook with connections to Sawmill River bridge as Swamp Road with alternate route along Miller's River as Day Hill Road. Primary route to Turners Falls remained as Montague Road along edge of Connecticut meadows with likely loop along river bluff as Greenfield Road. Ferry service to Deerfield established from Ferry Road (by 1766).

#### B. Population:

During King Philip's War, Montague was inhabited by a large native population. After the collapse of the native war effort in 1676, the area's native population decreased considerably.

In 1765, the colonial settlement of Montague consisted of 49 houses, 64 families and 392 individuals. By 1776, the town had undergone an increase to 575 individuals. Most of the colonial settlement's residents were former inhabitants of Sunderland and Deerfield. Smaller numbers emigrated from Hadley and Greenfield.

#### C. Settlement Patterns:

Montague along with Deerfield, Gill and Northfield were the primary locations of encampments of Pocumtuck and allied forces during King Philip's War. Locally, a major site was established at Turner's Falls. Its northern counterpart was situated on the opposite side of the Connecticut River in Riverside (Gill). These two villages were broken up by the end of King Philip's War. Some native occupation of these lowlands and the wooded uplands continued throughout the later Indian Wars of the late 17th and 18th centuries.

Temporary colonial camps may have been established by relief forces travelling up to Northfield in September, 1675. Period Colonial settlement occurred in several locations. The initial date of settlement is somewhat unclear. Secondary sources suggest it took place between c.1709 and 1716. One source claimed the first homes were those of lumbermen cutting timber for Benjamin Munn's c.1716 sawmill. These structures were located near the mill in the vicinity of Sawmill Brook's junction with the Central Vermont Railroad. By the 1730's, settlement was focusing in southwestern Montague along Federal Street, Taylor Hill Road and the Connecticut River Floodplain immediately west of Taylor Hill. A settlement node had developed in the vicinity of the present village of Montague by the 1750's and 1760's. Construction of the town's first meetinghouse (Congregational) was begun in c.1753 in the center of Montague Village on Leverett Street. The settlement's first schoolhouse (c.1757) and pound (c.1766) were also located in this same general location. Roughly contemporary settlement had begun to expand east and north along Dry Hill Road and

the northern portion of Mineral Road in the general vicinity of Millers Falls, respectively. By the end of the period, secondary settlement nodes had developed at these two locations. At least two small fortified complexes were established in the early 1750's to protect local residents from native attack.

#### D. Economic Base:

Natives continued to fish at Turner's Falls in the late 17th century and probably well into 18th century. Native hunting occurred throughout Montague's eastern uplands until at least the mid-18th century.

The primary occupations of the town's colonial occupants were crop and livestock production and lumbering. Local crops were sent down the Connecticut River to Hartford in exchange for manufactured goods during the summer while they were sent east to Boston in return for foreign products during the winter. Montague timber was shipped to Northampton on at least one occasion (Pressey 1910:147). Local industrial development was modest. The town's first mill was the previously-mentioned c.1716 sawmill built by Benjamin Munn and others on Sawmill River. A short time later a gristmill was erected not far from the sawmill. Montague residents and travellers were served by at least three tavern/inns during the Colonial period. The first tavern appears to be Gunn's Tavern established in c.1726 south of Montague Village on Sunderland Road not far from its junction with North Leverett Road. Root's Tavern situated on the southern periphery of the village of Montague was in operation prior to c.1753. In 1773, Eliphalet Allis was licensed to sell liquor.

#### E. Architecture:

Residential: Approximately a dozen houses and cottages of the period survive in Montague. That number is somewhat greater than is typical of Franklin County towns and reflects more closely the number of 18th-century houses surviving in the lower valley towns. Houses and cottages appear to survive in approximately equal numbers; for both, the center chimney plan predominated. Only one double interior chimney, center hall plan house was observed. Among the houses inventoried in the town are several dated to the 18th century but exhibiting characteristics of much later styles (e.g., the Greek Revival Clapp Homestead, 1754). If the dates have any veracity, then substantial modifications and additions were being made to Montague's Colonial houses in the mid-19th century. In addition to these houses of much later appearance, there are several Colonial houses in Montague dated to the 1720s and 1730s, the period of earliest settlement. Stylistic considerations suggest, however, that most of the town's 18th-century houses date from the 1750s through 1770s. Features such as regularly spaced five bay fronts with center entrances and two room depth suggest the later Colonial period. At least one house (on Highland Avenue) incorporates an integral lean-to.

Institutional: The town's first meetinghouse, for which the dimensions are unknown, was built in 1752 and demolished in 1834. In

1767, a Baptist Society was formed in conjunction with Baptists in Leverett. Although little is known about the town's meetinghouse, description of the first schoolhouse, built in 1757, indicate that the 16' x 18' was constructed of "hewed or sawed logs" (Sylvester 1879:629) rather than framed. Portions of the town's second schoolhouse, an 18' x 17' structure built in 1766, are said to survive in the barn of the Stick Style Cobb House.

Commercial: Probably the finest Colonial structure still standing in the town is the Root Tavern at Montague Center, dated 1739. A center chimney structure three bays wide by two deep, the tavern is notable for its two-story one-bay-wide side ell and for its broken scroll pediment entrance surround, a 1930s restoration. In addition to the Root Tavern, as many as three other taverns operated in the town in the period.

#### F. Observations:

Montague was one of the northernmost colonial settlements in the Connecticut River Valley study unit during this period. Research should determine why this community in such an exposed position emerged from the Indian Wars of the 18th century relatively unscathed. The town was one of the poorer river towns within the study unit. Montague's Baptist population was part of a sub-regional concentration of Baptists situated in this town, Leverett and possibly Sunderland. Those areas with the greatest likelihood of extant archaeological evidence of period settlement include the southernmost portion of the Connecticut River Floodplain, Taylor Hill, the lowlands between Taylor and Harvey Hills, Dry Hill Road and West and East Mineral Hill.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes:

Significant improvement of Connecticut River transport corridor with Upper Locks and Canal (1792-98) from Turners Falls to Montague City, including portions of original canal bed intact along Popular-Sherman Avenue. Related improvement of east-west axis from Montague City with Fifth Massachusetts Turnpike (1799) to Millers Falls (Turnpike Road) and opening of Connecticut River bridge to Greenfield (1802) from Main Street. Local north-south axis improved along Federal Street (Route 63) from Montague Center to Millers Falls with secondary connections across Montague Plain.

#### B. Population:

Montague's population rose from 575 in 1776 to 1152 in 1830, an overall rise for the period of 100%. Perhaps as a result of the opening of the canal, in 1800 the population momentarily peaked at 1,222 -- possibly associated with the temporary location here of construction workers.



C. Settlement Pattern:

Civic focus remained at Montague Center with primary farming district on Taylor Hill to Connecticut River meadows. Adjacent economic activities centered on Saw Mill River with postroad corridor and tavern along Federal Street (Route 63). Attempted development of Connecticut River port activities with planned settlement at Montague City (1794) by German-Dutch interests around Upper Locks and Canal to Turners Falls, failed within the decade (Holland, II, 1855, p.397; Sylvester, 1879, II, p.627).

D. Economic Base:

Predominantly agricultural base, with at least eight sawmills established by 1790. Substantial lumber traffic both originating in Montague and transported around the Falls via the "Great Carrying Place" across Montague Plain. Route through Grouts Corners (Millers Falls) became import cattle road to Boston.

Proprietors of Locks and Canals on Connecticut River formed 1790 to build canals around South Hadley and Turners Falls. Substantial investment made by Dutch capitalists, who in enthusiasm for the project, planned a manufacturing and commercial city at the outlet of the canal at Montague City. The Dutch apparently envisioned a great commercial city, fixed at the head of deep-water navigation -- "another Tyre or Bagdad," as Edward Pressey wrote in 1910.

I understand [that the plan for Montague City] was something magnificent in dimensions; we can imagine it with great stone piers along the river from Bardwell's landing to Greenfield bridge for handling wares from every part of the world. We may imagine the promontories jutting out from the high plain adorned with beautiful facades of colleges and spires of cathedrals, and the meadows, to Indian Dam, threaded with streets and swarming with men, and miles of factories up the serpentine banks of the river. Here we can picture men coming to great commercial houses for their annual contracts of goods, from the northern valleys, from the Green Mountains, the White Mountains, and the Berkshires.... (Pressey, p.234)

The canal was completed in 1800 by the Proprietors of the Upper Locks and Canals on Connecticut River, but commercial prosperity eluded Montague City. Much of the expected trade was captured by Cheapside across the river.

The canal was designed by Benjamin Prescott of Northampton (later Superintendent of the Springfield Armory). In length it was 2-1/2 miles, 14 feet in width, with 75 feet of lockage accomplished by ten locks. A second dam and lock downstream from the confluence of the Connecticut and Miller Rivers raised the water in order that the boats could navigate the French King rapids.

### E. Architecture:

**Residential:** At least two dozen houses and cottages of the Federal period survive in the town. Many of these are located at Montague Center with the remainder scattered along outlying roads in rural settings. A wide range of houses, from substantial, stylish houses of brick to simple frame cottages, is present for the period. Of special note is the introduction and use of local brick, which became widespread in the Early Industrial period. In general, double interior chimney center hall plans predominated for two-story houses while the traditional center chimney plan remained common for cottages. The most substantial houses date around 1800 and include an end chimney, five by three bay brick house of c.1805 and a double chimney house with Palladian window of c.1800. Also of note is an 1821 brick cottage with end chimneys. Period structures were noted on Montague, Greenfield, Taylor Hill and Meadow Roads and Federal Street.

**Institutional:** There was little institutional growth until after 1800. In 1791, the town's Baptist Society became incorporated with Leverett's. A small group of Episcopalians organized in 1816, but never achieved sufficient numbers to warrant construction of a church. At the very end of the period, in 1828, a Unitarian society was organized. Seven schoolhouses stood in the town at the end of the period, including the only known extant Federal institutional structure, the Federal Street School (1821). The building, originally two stories with a side entered plan and dimensions of four bays by two bays, is notable for the high quality of its masonry with brick laid in a diapered pattern.

**Industrial:** The Dyke Mill (ca.1815), a two-and-a-half story shingled structure, is the only industrial building inventoried for the period. In its present configuration, the mill probably reflects later builds related to its uses as a chair factory and planing mill.

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

### A. Transportation Routes:

Abandonment of Upper Locks canal to Montague City (1845) and significant improvement of regional corridors with mainline railroad locations to Millers Falls. Primary east-west route constructed as Fitchburg (Boston and Maine) along south bank of Miller's River gorge (1848) to Millers Falls with extension to Greenfield as Massachusetts and Vermont (1851) with route looping south to Sawmill River and Montague depot along Hannegan Brook and Lake Pleasant including bridge across Connecticut River to East Deerfield. North-south railroad from Amherst to Millers Falls constructed as New London and Northern (1855) along edge of highland front with Montague depot at Sawmill River. Development of Turners Falls by Fitchburg Railroad required branch line from

Greenfield across Connecticut River to Montague City and Turners Falls (1868), now abandoned along power canal.

B. Population:

In the Early Industrial period, Montague showed an overall growth rate of 93%, third highest in the county. Over half of this rise, however, was the result of the sudden explosion of Turners Falls in the period 1865-70, though the town also made substantial gains in the 1840s.

In 1855, of the 56 immigrants, 38 were born in Ireland.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Montague center remained as civic focus with expansion of residential district to railroad depot (1851) on Saw Mill River. Agriculture maintained as primary activity along Connecticut River lowlands to Taylor Hill with introduction of tobacco grown commercially. Significant development of railroad junction and economic focus at Miller Falls with mainline connections (1848-55) focused along Main Street expanded to Bridge Street with opening of Erving paper mills (1868). Important economic expansion at Turners Falls with planned development of urban center by Alvin Crocker of Fitchburg Railroad (1866-70) along axis of Avenue A to industrial factory district formed along Canal Street with suburban residential district on High Street above business center (Sylvester, 1879, II. p.627; Lockwood, 1926, II, p.756).

D. Economic Base:

Predominantly agricultural economy until the close of the Civil War when both Millers Falls and Turners Falls established as major manufacturing centers.

John Alvah Crocker, paper and railroad magnate of Fitchburg, was responsible for the development of Turners Falls and the Fitchburg Railroad. But the main line of the road, as completed in 1848, ran west only as far as Grouts Corners (Millers Falls), before turning north toward Vermont. According to Crocker's plan, Pressey wrote, Grouts Corner -- not Turners Falls -- would have been the center of great manufacturing community, including Northfield Farms, Factory Village (Greenfield), Montague City, Montague Center, and Farley (in Wendell and Erving). But Crocker was distracted from his scheme by Greenfield men who foisted on Crocker the Troy & Greenfield Railroad and the Hoosac Tunnel. Wrote Pressey in 1910 in true partisan spirit:

Here is something more than a tempest in a teapot. We see here the collision of two opposing visions of tremendous consequences to the whole of New England whichever way it was decided. We know that Greenfield won, defeated Montague (at least for a hundred years), used up and broke Colonel

Crocker's splendid energies, and diverted his vision upon Hoosac Tunnel and western trade.  
(p.237)

Crocker's plans were only postponed. In 1856 the last canal boat passed over the old canal. In 1865 Crocker bought up all the stock in the old canal company, changed its name to the Turners Falls Company, and in 1867, with his brother William as engineer, constructed a new dam. Turners Falls, Crocker imagined, should not only rival Lowell, Holyoke, and other great manufacturing centers, but surpass them. The company laid out a model village and bent all their efforts to attracting industry to sites along the power canal.

Grouts Corner remained a small underutilized village until the hardware factory of Gunn and Amidon burned in Greenfield in 1868. In company with Henry Pratt, the Millers River Mfg. Company was incorporated and the new firm built a large complex on the Erving side of the river, in what is now Millers Falls. To this event was due the growth of Millers Falls in Montague and Erving.

Even before the establishment of Turners Falls and Millers Falls, however, Montague had developed a range of manufacturing industries. Silas Lamson, whose appearance in Cummington has already been noted prior to the establishment of Lamson & Goodnow in Shelburne Falls, was also in Montague, making scythe snathes in 1837, for a short time before moving to Shelburne Falls. By 1855 Montague's sawmills led the county in the number of board feet (2,547,500 feet) cut. The largest of these, producing 1 million feet, was that of D. W. Goss at Montague City. They also made piano cases -- a trade shared with Washburne and Stone of Erving. Other woodworking factories in Montague included chair and rake factories, and a planing mill. The existing Dike mill was built in 1854 to manufacture furniture. In 1842 Amos Rugg came from Rindge, New York to manufacture hay rakes; he invented the "improved or double bent handle rake," a popular item. The town was also in 1855 the leading producer of palm-leaf hats in the county (\$11,225 worth). A decade later, its sole remaining tannery was the second largest in the county after one in Conway.

#### E. Architecture:

Residential: The Early Industrial was represented by great expansion, especially in the northern half of town as Montague City and Turners and Millers Falls developed. Almost all of that development occurred after 1850. Steadier and more modest growth took place at Montague Center over much of the period. In general, residential construction at Montague City, Montague Center and Millers Falls is characterized by sidehall plan frame Greek Revival and Italianate cottages while multiple family housing of brick, including rowhouses and double houses, is typical of Turners Falls. The most stylish and substantial houses of the period are located at Montague Center and at Turners Falls. The earliest houses of the period are probably those at Montague Center and Montague City. Sidehall plan cottages with transitional Federal/Greek Revival detailing were observed in both

locations. Of special note are a group of sidehall Greek Revival cottages at Montague City, distinguished by their high quality detailing, including fretwork entrance surrounds. Approximately a half-dozen examples, possibly the work of a single builder, were noted. Other outstanding houses of the period include the temple front Ward House (1847), the Root House (ca.1860), an asymmetrical plan Italianate house with deep overhanging eaves and the intact row of 1856 sidehall plan Greek Revival workers' housing on Union Street at Turners Falls. Other well detailed brick single family houses in the Italianate and Second Empire styles were built at Turners Falls during the 1860s along with a notable concentration of vernacular-Greek Revival and Italianate brick workers housing. The generalized and widespread use of brick during the Early Industrial period is an exceptional feature of the town's architecture.

**Institutional:** The most outstanding collection of period institutional buildings is located at Montague Center. These include the First Congregational Church (1834, Henry and Zebina Taylor, builders) and the Town Hall (1858), which stand opposite each other at the center, as well as The Grange (1835; originally Unitarian church?), Masonic Hall (1855), and Main Street School (1855). Of these the finest is probably the Congregational Church, a two-story brick gabled Greek Revival structure with a recessed portico with pediment and three stage belfry with octagonal sections and a dome. The church's brick construction, recessed portico and domed belfry set it apart from the smaller, frame Greek Revival meetinghouse with steeples that characterize much of Franklin County. The Town Hall, two stories with triple entrances and brick construction, is one of the most substantial public halls in the county. The Grange (since 1887), probably built by the Unitarians, is a notable example of the regionally rare Greek Revival/Gothic Revival mode, with triple lancet windows across the facade. Also atypical for its two-story height is the 1837 Main Street School; as originally built, it was probably a two-story, gable front structure with double entrances, but in later use, long wings perpendicular to the center gabled section were added.

**Commerical:** The best preserved commercial buildings of the period stand at Montague Center. These include the 1838 Community Store and a Greek Revival store of ca. 1860, both two-story, center entrance gable front frame structures. If any commercial buildings of the period survive at Turners Falls, they have been altered since and were not noted.

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

### A. Transportation Routes:

Continued improvement of connections to Turners Falls with Connecticut River suspension bridges to Greenfield (1873) and Riverside (1878) at Gill, New York, New Haven and Hartford branch railroad from East Deerfield (1881) with original truss bridge still intact as oldest

surviving span across Connecticut River. Expansion of local transit service from Greenfield with electric trolley route to Turners Falls (1895) along Montague City Road to Avenue A. Later extension of system included interurban line across Montague Plains to Lake Pleasant with branch route to Montague depot and Miller Falls along Pond Road, including portions of original roadbed still intact as power transmission lines.

#### B. Population:

In the Late Industrial period, Montague's population had the highest growth rate, 256.3%, of any town in the county, though most of this growth occurred in the boom period of Turners Falls, 1870-90, when the town grew on average by over 200 persons a year. In the early '90s, the town witnessed a sudden halt to this growth, and though the town recovered some of this growth rate in 1900-05 and 1910-15, the town's major period of growth had passed. By 1915, with the population at 7,925, Montague was the second largest town in the county, after Greenfield.

In the Late Industrial period Montague developed a large foreign-born population. In 1880, 31.9% of the town population was of foreign birth, the largest immigrant ratio in the county. Of the new immigrants, the largest number were from Canada (40%) and Ireland (28.6%), but the town's German cutlery community (18%) represented the county's largest number of residents from that country. By 1915 Poles and Austrians were also important immigrant groups. The former, 38% of the population, was much the largest number of natives of Poland in the county.

#### C. Settlement Pattern:

Continued expansion of Turners Falls as primary urban center with brick business district formation along Avenue A and Holyoke style tenement district along cross axis of Fifth Street from power canals to base of highland plateau. Suburban expansion developed along trolley routes (1895) to affluent residential area around Crocker Avenue and Montague Road with formation of civic center south of business district at Seventh Street and Avenue A. Secondary expansion from Turners Falls developed along Montague City Road to Greenfield bridge. Parallel growth occurred at Miller Falls at more modest scale with business district along Main Street and suburban areas on highlands at South Prospect and Grand Avenue. Development of rural recreational focus at Lake Pleasant by Fitchburg Railroad (1870) as Spiritualist camp meeting ground with summer cottages. Montague Center remained as local civic focus around town common with primary agriculture on Connecticut River lowlands.

#### D. Economic Base:

Earliest and chief among the new industries at Turners Falls was the cutlery of the John Russell Manufacturing Company, which relocated from Greenfield with a dramatic expansion in 1868-70. Despite a reorganization of the company, by 1880 it still only

employed half of the plant's designed capacity. Those 600 cutlery employees made up almost half the total manufacturing work force of Montague that year. Three paper companies -- Montague Paper (1871), Keith Paper (1874), and Turners Falls Paper (1879) employed another 485 workers. All three were part of an interlocking directorate including directors of the Turners Falls Company itself. For the paper mills, the Turners Falls Company purchased the water and water-rights of Falls River (the Greenfield-Gill boundary). The Turner Falls Company also attracted one cotton manufacturer, Joseph Griswold, who added to his cotton mills in Colrain with a third mill in Turners Falls (1879). Clark & Chapman ran a successful machine shop producing a popular line of water turbines.

In 1875 the total value of manufactured products in Montague, led by the value of cutlery and paper, was \$1,364,736 -- the highest total of any in the county. The town's population rose accordingly and as industry attracted employees from Gill and Greenfield, suspension bridges (1873 and 1878) were built linking these towns with Turners Falls. In 1872 the Fitchburg, mirroring the Connecticut River Railroad in Bernardston two years earlier, built a resort stop at Lake Pleasant.

Leander Bartlett had been engaged with his brother Eugene in making fishing rods in Pelham. In 1883 the partnership was dissolved and Leander returned to his home in Montague City. There he interested Charles Hazelton and B. N. Farren (Farren was president of both the Turners Falls and Montague paper companies, and both Farren and Hazelton were directors of the T. F. Company) in forming the Montague City Rod Company in 1885. In 1889 the company absorbed the earlier Pelham concern.

While Turners Falls grew, Montague Center lost several industries to Greenfield in this period. Emil Weissbrod began manufacturing wallets (a South Deerfield specialty) about 1870 in Montague, moving to Greenfield in 1887. Amos Rugg, after a fire destroyed his Montague Center plant in 1889, moved to Greenfield that year. The same fire which destroyed Rugg's factory also burned half of one side of the village street, and Montague Center, Pressey wrote, "never recovered from the blow" (p.210).

In the 1890s Turners Falls continued to expand with a new paper mill (Marshall Paper, later Esleeck), shoe factory (G. F. Littlefield), and leatherette manufacturer (Shawmut Mfg. Co.).

The Turners Falls Company was not slow to pick up on the hydro-electric potential of the canal, and in 1904 the firm extended the original canal 1,000 feet to a hydro-electric plant on the shore of the Connecticut. Soon after the canal was extended, Cabot interests in Boston became associated with the Crockers in the Company, and in 1914-15 a new dam was constructed, and the canal was widened from 50 feet to 130 feet, extending it two miles along the Connecticut River to a natural power site. Completion of the new Cabot Station in 1915 (?) gave the company the largest hydro-electric production in the valley.

In the meantime, the Turners Falls Company had consolidated in 1914 with a major distributor of its power, the Amherst Power Company as the Turners Falls Power and Electric Company. The McLane Silk Company, formed by the former superintendent of the William Skinner plant in Holyoke, built a plant in 1914 along the new canal.

#### E. Architecture:

**Residential:** The Late Industrial period was one of great expansion in Montague, with rapid growth occurring at Turners Falls. More modest growth took place at Montague Center and Millers Falls. At Turners Falls, distinct neighborhoods of multiple-family workers and single-family white collar housing were clearly defined by the end of the period. Workers' housing was concentrated on the floodplain at the northern edge of the village while expensive single family houses were located above the village to the south, along Crocker Avenue. A great many houses of all types were constructed of local brick. For workers' housing, two-and-a-half and three-story brick tenements were built in some numbers. Most incorporate flat roofs and very simple Panel Brick styling. Frame tenement rows and double houses with simple Queen Anne styling were also common. Areas built up with workers' housing include J, 7th and Canal Streets. To the south, along Montague and Millers Falls Roads, large numbers of sidehall palm late Italianate, Second Empire and Queen Anne houses were built along with a significant number of brick Queen Anne houses and a few Stick Style houses. The largest and most stylish houses of the period were located in the vicinity of Crocker Avenue and enjoyed long vistas across the river to Greenfield. A small number of towered Queen Anne, Shingle Style, Colonial Revival and Craftsman houses were built in the High Street area; some were undoubtedly architect designed. Frame construction predominated in Millers Falls and Montague Center where significant expansion also occurred. At Millers Falls, modest two and two-and-a-half story Stick Style, Queen Anne and Colonial Revival houses were built along Federal Street and Millers Falls Road. Montague Center exhibited an elite residential character quite in contrast to the industrial villages of Turners and Millers Falls. Large asymmetrical plan Queen Anne houses as well as well detailed or hip gambrel roofed Colonial Revival houses were built along Leverett Road. There was relatively little construction, aside from a few modest cottages, along the town's outlying rural roads.

**Institutional:** Rapid industrial growth at Turners Falls was accompanied by substantial institutional expansion. A number of new institutions, most of them churches, were founded around 1870. These include the English Methodist (1869), German Methodist (1871) and Saint Mary's Roman Catholic (1872) churches and the town's first high school (1870) at Turners Falls and a Congregational Society (1870) at Millers Falls. By 1879, Baptist, German Lutheran and English Congregational Societies (the last two had no churches) also operated at Turners Falls, a library association had been founded (1876) and there were 18 public schools in the town. More than a half dozen churches of the period stand at Turner Falls. Of



these, the largest and most elaborate are the Gothic Revival Saint Anne's (1885) and Romanesque Revival/Victorian Gothic Saint Mary's (1888), both of brick. Early churches include the Gothic/Romanesque Revival First Baptist of 1872, designed by Tristan Richer of Clinton, Maine, and Grace Methodist (1874), a brick Gothic Revival structure. Other churches are the Stick Style First Congregational Church (1881), the shingled Queen Anne English Methodist Church (ca. 1890) and the simple frame Gothic Revival German Lutheran Church (ca. 1885), after 1937, the B'rith Abraham synagogue and now a residence. At Millers Falls is the frame Stick Style/Gothic Revival Saint John's Roman Catholic church (ca. 1890). In addition to the churches, several schools and at least one fire station (ca. 1900) of the period still stand. Among the schools are the G Street School (ca. 1900), a hip-roofed brick square plan building, Victorian Gothic Saint Anne's School, Panel Brick Central Street School and Colonial Revival High School (ca. 1910) on Crocker Avenue. The only other major institutional building of the period is the Carnegie Library (1903-05), a one-and-a-half story yellow brick Beaux Arts Classical building, the architect of which is unknown.

Commercial: Almost all of the commercial buildings of the period stand at Turners Falls. These include an intact grouping of more than a dozen three-story flat-roofed Panel Brick commercial blocks of the 1880s along both sides of Avenue A. Many of the buildings retain well-preserved original storefronts and almost all exhibit very similar detailing such as corbelled cornices. Most are six or seven bays wide and up to ten bays deep. Of these only a few are of individual note; these are the Victorian Gothic Opera House Block, the Daniel Webster House hotel (1888) and the Crocker Bank (1882, now Greenfield Savings). Alvan Crocker, developer of Turners Falls, owned two banks at the Falls, the Crocker National (1872) and Crocker Institution for Savings (1873). Other commercial buildings of the period at Millers Falls are the Colonial Revival Millers Falls Inn (1897), Panel Brick Ross Block (1878), Powers Block (ca. 1885) and a frame building of ca. 1915.

Industrial: Major industrial complexes were built at Turners Falls in the period. These include the Griswold Cotton Mill (ca. 1879), Esleeck Paper Company (ca. 1900) and Keith Paper Company (ca. 1890). These include a number of two, three and four story brick buildings with both low gable or flat roofs.

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

### A. Transportation Routes:

Gradual abandonment of electric trolley lines with interurban route to Lake Pleasant and Miller Falls (1923) and local service from Greenfield to Turners Falls (1934). Connecticut River Flood (1936) washed out Greenfield suspension, Montague City bridge and branch railroad. Improvement of local highways as regional autoroutes including secondary north-south axis as Route 63 from Amherst to Millers Falls along Federal Street and east-west axis as former

Route 2A from Greenfield to Athol through Turners Falls as Montague City and Millers Falls Road. Improvement of Mohawk Trail as Route 2 (Gill) required connecting link to Turners Falls with monumental Art Deco bridge across Connecticut River (1931), still intact. Turners Falls airport located along Millers Falls Road above Deep Hole with original hangar still in use (1934).

B. Population:

Although Montague made some gains in the 1920s, for the rest of the period, the town lost residents. In 1940, the population stood at 7,582 -- second largest town in the county after Greenfield.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Limited expansion of Turners Falls urban center maintained as suburban growth with affluent district defined along Riverside Drive above Connecticut and formation of fringe belt of ethnic cemeteries along Turnpike Road. Commercial activities located along Montague City Road from Greenfield to Turner Falls with institutional-hospital complexes. Little development evident at Millers Falls with modest suburban expansion along West Main Street. Montague center remained as local civic focus with farming as primary activity on Connecticut lowlands.

D. Economic Base:

Turners Falls and Montague essentially reached the peak of their industrial development in the pre-World War I period, and but for several new industrial plants along the lower end of the canal in Turners Falls, relatively little new industrial development has been identified.

E. Architecture:

Residential: A fair amount of residential construction took place at Turners Falls during the period with resort development at Lake Pleasant also occurring. Large two-and-a-half story hip or gable roofed bungaloid Craftsman houses were built in the highland area. Simpler four-square plan Colonial Revival houses with pyramidal hip roof were also built at Turners Falls along with a fair number of bungalow-like cottages. Of particular note are bungalows along Road toward Montague City. At Lake Pleasant, one and one-and-a-half story summer cottages, some quite well detailed were built through the 1920s. Many have been well maintained and are in year-round use.

Institutional: Several important churches were built at Turners Falls in the 1920s along with three or four schools constructed across the town. The churches include Saint Andrew's Episcopal (1921), a one-story stucco Craftsman structure, and Our Lady of Czechowska Polish Catholic church (1928), a very fine brick and granite Gothic Revival structure the architect for which is unknown. Schools of the period

include Colonial Revival High School additions (ca. 1925) and the Highland School, a one-story brick Colonial Revival building.

Commercial: Commercial buildings of the 1920s consist primarily of one and two-story concrete block garages and filling stations, of which three or four examples were noted at Turners Falls. Also dating from the period is the two-story brick Georgian Revival Pioneer Savings Bank on Avenue A.

## XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Inventory forms have been submitted for Montague Center, Millers Falls and Turners Falls areas. Of these, the only forms completed satisfactorily, in terms of architectural and historical information, are those for Montague Center. All forms completed by the Franklin County Arts Council lack sufficient, and in some cases, any, historical information; missing from nearly all forms for Turners and Millers Falls are data on original use, date of construction and original owner. In general, buildings surveyed in Turners and Millers Falls were either institutional or commercial with very few residential and almost no industrial buildings recorded. Forms completed for Montague Center need corroboration on construction dates for houses listed as 18th century and appearing to be 19th century in origin. Several areas which have no documentation include Montague City and Lake Pleasant; both retain significant collections of 19th and 20th-century (respectively) residential architecture. Area forms documenting developmental history of Turners Falls neighborhoods should be completed. Of particular note in the town is the use of brick; other notable features include the excellent state of preservation of the historic town center at Montague and of the late 19th-century industrial center at Turners Falls. While Montague Center is stable and, to some degree, gentrified, Turners Falls is endangered by loss of its economic base and many commercial and institutional buildings are underutilized or abandoned.

## XII. SOURCES

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