

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

NORTHFIELD

Report Date: 1982

Associated Regional Report: Connecticut Valley

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

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

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

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

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MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: 1982

COMMUNITY: NORTHFIELD

I. TOPOGRAPHY

Northfield is one of the northernmost towns in the Connecticut River Valley study unit. The town's northern boundary abuts the southern border of New Hampshire. Northfield's 34.2 square miles is the 7th largest total for Franklin County towns. Local terrain consists of floodplain and glacial lake bottom which dominates the central portion of town and rugged uplands that extend east and west from the lowlands. This portion of the Connecticut River floodplain is some of the richest agricultural land in the Middle Connecticut River Valley. Originally, the floodplain and lake bottom were covered by prehistoric Lake Hitchcock. The lake covered the Valley from central Connecticut to southern Vermont. The uplands that gradually rise from Northfield's lowlands range in elevation from 500 feet to slightly over 1400 feet. The greatest elevations occur in Northfield's eastern uplands. The highest peak is Crag Mountain (1503 feet) situated near the town's southern border. Other prominent points include First Bald Mountain (1276 feet) immediately west of Crag Mountain, Beers Mountain (995 feet) northeast of Crag Mountain, Upper Bald Hills (1345 feet) north of First Bald Hills and Great Hemlock (1255 feet) and Notch Mountain (1319 feet), both located in northeastern Northfield on opposite sides of Hill Brook. The Connecticut River bisects Northfield extending the length of the town. The Connecticut is fed by a number of minor tributaries that flow from the western and eastern uplands. Most notable are Mill Brook, Millers Brook and Four Mile Brook. The town's only fresh-water bodies are several mill ponds.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Originally granted as Squakeag plantation in 1671 on east side of Connecticut River with west side grant in 1673 at Nallahumcomgon (Nantanis). Settlement abandoned during King Philip's War and re-established in 1685 with additional lands granted south to Fourmile Brook at Deerfield (Gill) line. Settlement again abandoned in 1689 during King William's War and resettled in 1714, incorporated as town of Northfield. Original grant lands north of Province line ceded to New Hampshire in 1740 (Hinsale-Winchester N.H. and Vernon VT) defining northern boundary at Massachusetts state line. Western boundary defined by Fall Town (Bernardston) in 1735, southern boundary at Ervings Grant (Erving) in 1752 and eastern boundary with Roxbury Canada (Warwick) in 1761. Mount Hermon district annexed to Gill in 1795 and Hacks Grant south of Northfield Farms annexed to Erving in 1860..

III. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Historic rural suburban town on secondary corridor between Greenfield and Vermont. Located in Connecticut River valley between central

highlands with important native sites reported on Beers Plain, Pauchaug and Bennett Meadow, including later remnant survival around Bush Mountain. Settled before King Philip's War as Plantation period street village and abandoned until early 18th century with original burying ground intact at Center Cemetery. Agricultural prosperity during Colonial period in Connecticut Valley meadows with some mid-18th century houses preserved along Main Street near Millers Brook. Continued expansion of farming economy through Federal period with regional turnpike connections, including surviving taverns near Gill Station and stylish brick houses on North Main Street. Limited industrial potential during mid-19th century around railroad junction of West Northfield with Greek Revival farm houses on Moose Plain and upland cottages intact along Gulf Road.

Significant institutional complex established during late 19th century at Northfield School with well preserved Victorian and Classical Revival brick buildings in original campus setting, including surrounding Queen Anne suburban houses at East Northfield and rare highway arch truss bridge across Connecticut River. Gradual commercial development of Main Street around civic focus of Georgian Revival school with Early Modern gas stations and wooden commercial blocks. Present development most evident along Route 10 axis from Bernardston (Interstate 91) with gradual erosion of historic fabric of Main Street by Route 63 traffic corridor. Southern district suffers from economic stagnation of Millers Falls (Erving) with serious threat to remaining tavern sites at Gill Station, although lowland farming continues as active economy in Connecticut valley.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes:

Primary regional corridor along Connecticut River from Green Mountain (Vermont) to Turners Falls with main north-south trail following east bank as Meadow-Beers Plain Road (Route 63) to Squakeag (Northfield). Trail route north of Pauchaug Meadow (Hinsdale, N.H.) apparently followed axis of Northfield Main Street with secondary branch east as Winchester Road to Louisiana Mountain connecting routes east over central highlands to Paquanoge (Athol) probably followed Maple Street-Wendell Road south around Beers Mountain to Millers River (Erving) and School Street east above Mill River to Warwick. Primary trail from Fall River (Bernardston) and Picomeagon (Greenfield) likely followed axis of Route 10 to Natanis (Bennett Meadow) on west side of Connecticut River with crossing point conjectured to Great Meadow and Squakeag (Millers River). Parallel trail south from Vernon (Vermont) to Moose Plain probably followed from West Northfield with Connecticut crossing conjectured to Pauchaug Meadow and connecting route likely south along axis of Mount Hermon Road around Mallery Brook to Natanis (Bennett Meadow).

B. Settlement Patterns:

There were no clearly identified native Contact period sites. However, the presence of a large number of undated native sites and a rich

resource base strongly suggests extensive native settlement. Period settlement probably concentrated on the lowlands adjacent to the Connecticut River. Lowland sites most likely congregated on Pauchaug Meadow; Great Meadow, particularly in the general vicinity of the confluence of the Connecticut River and Mill Brook; Beers Plain; Little Meadow; the general vicinity of the falls at Four Mile Brook (near its confluence with the Connecticut); Moose plain; the plateau immediately southwest of Second Moose Plain and Bennett's Meadow. Smaller period sites probably were established on the gentle hills east of Main Street and between Millers Brook and Louisiana Brook.

C. Subsistence Base:

The alluvial floodplain provided native occupants with excellent horticultural land. Native planting fields were probably established on Little Meadow, Great Meadow, Pauchaug Meadow and Bennett Meadow. The Connecticut River was an excellent source of fish such as shad and salmon. Traditionally, the focal points of local native fishing were reputedly located at the falls on Four Mile and Millers Rivers near their confluences with the Connecticut. Additional period fishing probably took place at the mouths of Pauchaug Brook and Mill Brook and on Kidds Island. Native hunting likely occurred primarily on lowlands such as Pine Meadow, Beers Plain, Second Moose Plain and the plateau immediately southwest of Second Moose Plain. Additional hunting probably was undertaken in and adjacent to "Great Swamp" (originally located immediately east of the southern half of Main Street) and Northfield's western marshlands.

D. Observations:

Northfield was probably the site of a large horticultural village. This village was part of the Connecticut River valley study unit northernmost settlement focal point that appears to have extended north along the Valley into Vermont/New Hampshire up to the junction of the Connecticut and Ashuelot Rivers. Northfield's native occupants were probably associated with the Pocumtucks who dominated the Middle Connecticut River Valley during the 17th century. The town's lowlands continue to have excellent potential for extant archaeological evidence of native period settlement. Pauchaug Meadow, Great Meadow, Beers Plain, Moose Plain and Bennett Meadow should be considered especially sensitive archaeologically. However, riverine erosion and development of these lowland areas seriously threaten these resources. The Connecticut River banks should be monitored periodically for eroding sites.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Establishment of Squakeag plantation (1671) located Town Street in Northfield Center (Route 63) between Squenatock (Millers River) and Cowassack (Mill River) with Connecticut River crossing to Deerfield likely at Great Meadow (Route 10). Primary north-south route on east side to Swampfield (Sunderland) remained as Beers Plain Road (Route 63) to Fourmile Brook.

B. Population:

There were no specific figures for the area's native population. By the end of the Plantation period, Northfield's native population had dwindled to a fraction of its large late Contact period/early Plantation period figure. The native community appeared to have suffered considerable losses during the early 17th century epidemics that struck the Connecticut River Valley and the Pocumtuck/Mohawk warfare of the late 1650's and 1660's.

The colonial settlement numbered 16 families in c.1675. The majority of the community's settlers were former Northampton residents. Others had moved from Hadley and Hatfield.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Native settlement patterns were probably basically similar to those suggested for the Contact period. By this period, Northfield was the site of two native villages. "Squenatock" was situated on the eastern side of the Connecticut River. The "lower village" occupied most of Beers Plain while the "upper village" was north of Millers Brook Falls and roughly encompassed the southern third of Main Street (Temple and Sheldon 1875:38). The village of "Natanis" was located on the western side of the Connecticut River on the bluffs overlooking Bennett Meadow. This area and the meadow below were the site of a number of undated burials, "granaries" (probably food cache pits) and miscellaneous artifacts (Ibid:37).

The Colonial period settlement was planned and linear. Actual settlement was preceded by the laying out of 20 houselots (only 16 were occupied) on the southernmost portion of Main Street in 1672. This area was selected because it was relatively clear and the land had been broken up and cultivated by its former native occupants. Settlement occurred the following year. The houses were said to be no more than small clapboarded huts with thatch roofs. A crude "meetinghouse" was situated in the center of the settlement. A wooden pallisade surrounded the whole community.

D. Economic Base:

The native population probably maintained their traditional subsistence patterns. The onset of Colonial settlement in the Middle Connecticut River Valley and Northfield, in particular, likely encouraged local meeting involvement in Anglo/Indian trade.

The colonial community had a strong agricultural foundation. Northfield's lowlands provided excellent land for English crop and livestock production. Each settler was provided with land for crop production and livestock grazing. By 1675, Pauchaug Meadow and Great Meadow had been divided and were under cultivation. "Great Swamp" was established as commonland. Local crops included corn, wheat, and flax. Settlers owned relatively large numbers of livestock and cattle and sheep. Northfield lacked industrial facilities until early in the Colonial period.

E. Observations:

The colonial town of Northfield was the northernmost settlement in the Middle Connecticut River Valley during this period. Development of a larger, more diversified settlement was hampered by its location on Massachusetts' northern frontier. Northfield's absence of industrial facilities probably forced the community to rely on the more southerly river settlements such as Hadley, Hatfield and Northampton for processing local produce (grain, timber, etc.). Considerable archaeological evidence of native period settlement should survive on Northfield's lowlands. The likelihood of extent archaeological evidence of the colonial settlement occurring at its Main Street location is doubtful. Much of it has probably been destroyed in the course of the area's relatively extensive development. However, Northfield's original "town street" (Main Street) still survives along with one of the largest number of period place names within the study unit. The latter include "Great Meadow", "Little Meadow" and "Moose Plain".

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes:

Reestablishment of settlement after King Philip's War (1685) confirmed Northfield Main Street as primary north-south axis along east side (Route 63). West side connections established with Connecticut River ferry as north crossing (1686) from Pauchaug Brook to Moose Plain (Sylvester, 1879, II, 656) with south crossing presumed from Great Meadow to Bennett Meadow (Route 10). Settlement again abandoned and reestablished after Queen Anne's War (1714) with Main Street (Route 63) as primary north-south axis. Secondary east-west highways over highlands to Roxbury Canada (Warwick) improved as School Street to Mill Brook (now abandoned trail) and from Maple Street to Millers Brook over Stratton Mountain (also abandoned roadway), with connecting route from Beers Plain following South Mountain Road to Ervings Grant (Erving). Improvement of west side axis with Mount Hermon Road from Fallstown (Bernardston) to Moose Plain (Vernon, Vermont) and Route 10 to Bennett Meadow ferry.

B. Population:

There were no specific figures for the native population. During King Philip's War, Northfield along with Gill/Montague, Greenfield and Deerfield was the site of the vast majority of the native forces (and their families) who attacked the colonial settlements in the Middle Connecticut River Valley. Northfield had a small native population as late as the early 19th century. Northfield's colonial population varied considerably, particularly during the late 17th and early 18th century. The fluctuation was largely due to local residents fear of native attacks. In c.1683, the community consisted of approximately 40 families. This figure had dropped to only 14 families in c.1690. Shortly after the settlement's second resettlement (c.1718), the colonial population was comprised of between 26

and 30 families (Barber 1839:265, Temple and Sheldon 1875:146). Not until the second half of the 18th century were there signs of substantial growth. In 1765, Northfield consisted of 60 houses, 60 families and 415 individuals. The last figure included 6 blacks. The colonial population had increased to 580 individuals in 1776. Northfield continued to draw settlers from lower Valley towns such as Northampton, Hadley, Hatfield in addition to Roxbury, Dorchester and Connecticut.

C. Settlement Patterns:

The Northfield area was virtually devoid of native occupants just prior to King Philip's War. Temple and Sheldon suggested the Squakkeags may have abandoned Northfield for "Paquayag" (Athol) or "Wenimisset" (New Braintree) (1875:55). As mentioned earlier, Northfield was the site of a major encampment of hostile forces (reputedly Squahkeags, Pocumtucks, Norwotucks, Agawams and others) established in the winter of 1676 and occupied through the summer of that year. The settlement was claimed to be situated in two locations: "King Philip's Hill" - the terrace immediately north of Bennett Meadow and "Nawalet's upper village" - possible the northern portion of Northfield's eastern lowlands (Temple and Sheldon 1875:55). This village broke up with the collapse of the native war effort late in 1676. During the last decade of the 17th century and the early 18th century, small bands of Scatigooks (Albany area) and Squahkeags set up camps in a number of locations including along Millers Brook. Later native sites were established in Northfield's eastern uplands. "Jack" lived on "Jack's Hill" near Jack's Brook. "Old Keyup" built a home on a hill adjacent to Keyup Brook. A pre-1775 native site was situated in "Stratton Hollow west of the cemetery" (probably near Stratton Mountain).

The colonial settlement of Northfield was abandoned and destroyed during King Philip's War. A colonial relief force attempting to aid the community was ambushed on the northern periphery of Beers Plain. Post-1675 settlement continued to focus on Main Street throughout most of the Colonial period. Initial resettlement took place in c.1682. New house lots were established on Main Street roughly between the street's junction with Mill Brook and Maple Street. Once again, a defensive pallisade was built around the settlement. Abandonment and destruction occurred for the second time in 1690. Reoccupation did not take place until c.1713. By c.1723 the settlement had expanded slightly from its original layout and extended on Main Street a short distance north of its junction with Mill Brook and south to the street's intersection with Miller's Brook. The town's first formal meetinghouse was built in c.1718 on Main Street. A second meetinghouse was built in c.1762. Between this date and c.1780, Northfield's Main Street settlement node was protected a several defensive structures and a garrison of between 10 and 60 provincial soldiers. Settlement outside of the Main Street area was initiated with the division of Second Moose Plain and land in the general vicinity of Four Mile Brook between c.1716 and 1723. However, serious settlement in these two areas and elsewhere post-dated c.1760. By the end of the period, settlement had expanded from the Main Street node south along Bells Plain

Road/Route 63/Meadow Road and north along Route 63. Additional contemporary names were established on the town's western lowlands along Mt. Hermon Station Road.

D. Economic Base:

Native occupants pursued traditional subsistence patterns (e.g., hunting, fishing) along with employment as colonial laborers. Native women sold baskets, mats, etc. to colonial settlers. Northfield's colonial economy underwent considerable development during this period. Crop and livestock production continued as the economic mainstay. Apple production first began in the 1680's or 1690's. C.1723 witnessed the first cider production. The potato was introduced as a local crop in c.1754. Local industrial development was varied. Mill operations focused on Mill Brook and Miller's Brook. The town's first mill (grist) was constructed in c.1685 by John Clary, Jr. on Mill Brook slightly west of its junction with Main Street. In c.1717, John Belding built a sawmill on Mill Brook slightly below the grist mill. This was followed by a c.1775 "clothiers shop" that was situated on this brook between the grist and saw mills. The first mill built on Millers Brook appears to have been a sawmill erected in c.1686 in the vicinity of Millers Brook Falls. In c.1730, Zachariah Field built mills on Millers Brook near the previously-mentioned sawmill. The only documented mill established on Four Mile Brook was a c.1742 sawmill located at the Falls. Brick production was initiated in c.1718 when Eliezur Wright or his son Azariah began such an operation at the southern end of Main Street. Lt. Johnathan Hunt opened a malthouse between 1721 and 1723. A potash house was established by Seth Field and others in c.1765 near "Nehemiah Wright's houselot" (Temple and Sheldon 1875:318).

E. Architecture:

Approximately a half dozen houses of the period survive in Northfield. Of these, all but one are center chimney plan, two-story structures. The Pomeroy House (ca.1765) is the only extant center hall plan structure known for the period; it incorporated double interior chimneys, a hip roof and entrance surround with pediment. Other early houses are the Belding House (1763), with an added lean-to and later Greek Revival entrance surround, the Hunt House (1765), greatly enlarged through the 19th century addition of a third story, and the Evans House (1759). Also of note is the five bay by seven bay Alexander House on lower Main Street (Route 63) which is dated 1774 and features a half hip roof, generally the mark of a tavern. The Stratton Tavern (ca.1763) also has a half hip roof. Most of the extant Colonial houses are located along Route 63. Cottages, which were probably more numerous than houses in the early years of the period, apparently do not survive at all.

Institutional: While construction of a meetinghouse was voted on several times in the 1670s and '80s, the first meetinghouse known

to have been built in the town was the 45' x 30' x 18' meetinghouse of 1718. A much smaller meetinghouse, with dimensions of 16' x 12' was voted on in 1716, but not built. In 1763, the first meetinghouse was replaced with a structure not completed until 1767. Schoolhouses were built in 1736, 1748 and 1764.

Commercial: At least two taverns, the Stratton (ca.1763) and Alexander (ca.1774) Taverns, operated in the period. Both still stand and both incorporate the half hip roof form typical of period taverns.

E. Observations:

Northfield had one of the latest surviving native communities within the Connecticut River Valley study unit. Research should be undertaken to clarify the extent of the post-1675 native population, tribal origins and economic activities. Even Temple and Sheldon in their well documented History of Northfield provide only a fragmentary picture of the late 17th and 18th century native occupants of Northfield.

The colonial settlement of Northfield along with Deerfield were the primary military centers for colonial forces fighting in the Middle Connecticut River Valley during the Indian Wars of the 18th century. The settlement had the most diversified economies of the present Franklin County towns during the Colonial period. The greatest probability for surviving archaeological evidence of Colonial period settlement should occur south of the village of Northfield on Beers Plain Road/ Route 63/ Meadow Road and in western Northfield on Mt. Hebron Station Road.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes:

Continued improvement of regional connections to Northfield Center with east-west corridor across highlands constructed as Fifth Massachusetts Turnpike (1799) as Warwick Avenue along Minot Brook (now abandoned) and realignment of north-south axis from Northfield Farms to Miller's Falls as Route 63 from Meadow Road. Continued improvement of Connecticut River crossings with bridge constructed between Great and Bennett Meadow at Route 10 (1811) and ferry service established from Mill Brook to Moose Plain with local connections to West Northfield on Caldwell Road and Satans Kingdom, and local ferries to Gill from Northfield Farms and Pine Meadow. Secondary regional connections expanded to Erving from Northfield Center as The Gulf Road and south along Jacks Brook and east across Great Swamp as Orange Road.

B. Population:

Between 1790 and 1830, Northfield's population grew by 102%, the largest growth rate of any town in the county for those years but for Heath. For Northfield, the decade of the greatest rise was 1810-20, when the town grew on average by over 36 persons per year. By 1830 the town's population stood at 1,757.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Civic focus remained at Northfield Center along Main Street with development of secondary focus north of Mill River at Winchester Road junction to Vermont bridge. Agriculture maintained as primary activity along Connecticut River meadows with formation of village hamlets at Northfield Farms on Fourmile Brook and West Northfield on Moose Plain.

D. Economic Base:

Predominantly prosperous agricultural and river-trade economy, with five grist mills in operation by 1830. Earliest distillery, 1791, by Samuel Brewer of Boston, followed by two more c.1811 and later. Distilleries closed soon after 1830. Corn and rye the principal grains grown, though both broom corn (1813) and hops (1818) introduced, the latter predominantly on the western side of the river.

E. Architecture:

Residential: At least three dozen houses and a considerably smaller number of cottages of the Federal period remain in Northfield. Houses include a preponderance of center hall plan examples, either with double interior or end chimneys, a few rearwall chimney houses were also noted. For cottages, the center chimney plan predominates. Northfield is notable for the variety and high quality of its Federal architecture, which includes several substantial and stylish houses. As early as the 1780s, center hall plan houses with well-developed Federal details, such as the Pomeroy Smith House (1783), were being built in the town. Large, double pile plan houses, their size a reflection of the town's prosperity, were built in some numbers. Double pile plan houses include the Dickinson (ca.1785), Nevers (1811; Calvin Stearns), Blake, White (1784; Rice Brothers, Sunderland, builders) and Pomeroy Smith Houses. Another house of note is the Stearns-Field House (1828), an early Greek Revival templefront structure with elaborate detailing including an elliptical patera in the gable and entrance surround with semielliptical fanlight and three-quarter sidelights. The earliest works of Calvin Stearns, a member of Northfield's prolific and talented family of builders, also date from the Federal period and include Calvin's own house (1807), the Nevers House and the Stearns-Field House. Period houses were observed on Route 63, Winchester, Beers Plain and Meadow Roads.

Institutional: No institutional buildings of the period are known to survive. A considerable amount of activity did, however, occur in the period. In 1799, the First Parish became Unitarian. Churches formed in the period included the shortlived (1828-1830) Second Unitarian, Second Congregational (1825; meetinghouse 1829), Methodist (organized 1810) and Baptist (1829) societies. In 1829, the Northfield Academy of Useful Knowledge was incorporated and in 1813, a private social library was established.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes:

Significant improvement of north-south corridor with regional railroad connections to Vermont. Primary route along east side from Millers Falls constructed as New London and Northern (Vermont Central) with depots at Northfield Farms, Gill Station and Northfield Center and bridge across Connecticut River (1849) to West Northfield. Primary route along west side constructed as Connecticut Valley (1847) with junction at West Northfield to Vernon Vermont.

B. Population:

In the Early Industrial period, but for a brief rise in the mid '50s, Northfield's population remained relatively stagnant, with the number of residents remaining in the 1700's. In 1855, 6% of the population had been born in Ireland. Much of the Irish community probably arrived with the construction of the railroads in the late 1840s.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Northfield Main Street continued as local civic and commercial center with secondary focus on North Main Street above Mill Brook. Regional railroad connections (1847-50) created depot villages at Gill Station on east side and West Northfield junction on Vernon (Vermont) border. Tobacco farming introduced as commercial agriculture on Connecticut River lowlands with limited upland dairy farms around Brush Mountain Road.

D. Economic Base:

Opening of the two railroad lines gave agricultural products a new market. Hops, tobacco, and broom corn all excelled. In 1855, Northfield grew 275 acres of broom corn, second only to Deerfield's 283 acres, though its broom production, valued at \$27,000 that year, represented three-quarters of the county production of brooms. Northfield hops were valued at \$6225, more than twice the value of all other hop crops in the county. Northfield also produced 50,000 bushels of charcoal, third in the county after Erving and Leverett productions.

On the Warwick Road, a small pail factory operated in the 1860s -- an industry more typical of the towns to the east, Warwick, Orange, and Erving.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Major new residential construction occurred in the town during the period. The focus of activity continued to be contained along Main Street at the town center but additional development took place at Northfield farms and at West Northfield, along lower Main Street and Mount Herman Road, respectively. For two-story houses, which form the majority of the period structures

at the town center, use of the sidehall was nearly universal and can be seen as an indication of the town's architectural maturity. In outlying sections, cottages were more common and for these, sidehall and center hall plans were used with equal frequency. Of note in the town was the continuing importance of the Stearns family of builders. The Stearns family was responsible for a number of the period's most distinctive and stylish houses, among them the temple-front Lane (ca. 1845, Calvin Stearns), Wright (1847), and Stearns (1837) and Belding-Glover (1840) Houses, the Callender House (1846, George Stearns) and the Hall (ca. 1846) House. The Hall House, incorporating Gothic and Greek Revival elements including attached outbuildings linked by a lancet-arched arcade, is probably the finest house of the period and one of the most ingenious and well-preserved Gothic/Greek Revival cottages in the state. In general, the Greek Revival style predominated in the town and an unusually large number of temple front Greek Revival houses and cottages survive. Notable Italianate houses include one with board and batten siding near Gill Station and a cluster of sidehall plan cottages at Northfield Farms.

Institutional: It is surprising to note that only one institutional building of the period is recorded in local histories. That building, the Unitarian Church, was built in 1833 by William Pomeroy and burned in 1871. It is likely that district schoolhouses were constructed and some probably still stand, converted to residential or other uses. One structure, which may have been constructed originally as a school, was noted in the field. That is a one-story Greek Revival building with double entrances, located on Route 63 and currently in use as the Community Church. The first Catholics in town were Irish railroad workers who arrived after 1846.

Commercial: Only one commercial building of the period is known to survive. That is the Webster Block (1848), a two-story, six bay wide frame Italianate structure altered with the addition of a flat roof ca. 1900.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes:

Primary regional corridors remained as Connecticut valley railroad routes with east side Vermont Central to Northfield Center and west side Boston and Maine to Mount Hermon from West Northfield junction, including rebuilding of Connecticut bridge (1911; still in place). Continued operation of Connecticut River ferries from Gill to Northfield Farms and Gill Station, and replacement of major spans with steel truss bridges (1903) at south (Route 10) and north crossing (Schnell; original still intact). Expansion of local street system around Northfield School (1879) including Highland and Birnam Avenue from East Northfield to Northfield Center. No trolley routes constructed through area.

B. Population:

After 1870 Northfield's population began to decline. Not until 1885, presumably related to the founding of Moody's schools, did the population begin to climb, which it did steadily with only one break until 1905. In that year, Northfield had a population of 2,017 -- some 17% above the figure 35 years earlier. Unaccountably, between 1905 and 1910, Northfield suddenly lost nearly a fifth of its population, and finished out the period with 1,782 residents. Northfield's 1905 population included Poles as well as Irish and English-born immigrants.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Civic and commercial activities remained focused along Northfield Main Street with primary center at School - Depot Street crossing. Significant development of North Main Street as affluent residential district with location of Northfield School (1879) along Louisiana Brook and suburban housing area along Winchester Avenue in East Northfield. West Northfield continued to expand as railroad junction from Vernon (Vermont) with depot village at Mount Hermon Station (Gill). Agriculture remained as primary activity along Connecticut lowlands with local village at Northfield Farms.

D. Economic Base:

The railroads which brought new markets in the Early Industrial period, brought competitive western crops to town in the Late Industrial period. Canning and pickle factories which operated for a time encouraged the production of sweet corn and cucumbers, and the Northfield Cooperative Creamery took the dairy farmers' cream, but by and large, agricultural production declined in importance as Northfield took on a new national reputation, brought by Dwight L. Moody.

By the close of the nineteenth, the world's wonder century, Northfield had come to have a double character. It was now a school town, with the two schools of Moody's founding and fostering well-developed institutions, a religious center for radiating the gospel to the world's far corners, but yet the old New England town, quiet, orderly, self-reliant, moderately prosperous, cautiously progressive, and consciously beautiful. (Parsons, 407)

Befitting the new modern spirit of the town, two new bridges were built on either side of the century, across the Connecticut. The Bennett Meadow Bridge (1898) was followed five years later by Francis Robert Schell's gift to the town, the Schell Bridge, nearly identical in design. Both were designed by an engineer responsible for many of the large Connecticut Valley bridges of the period, Edward S. Shaw. A year after the Schell Bridge, the railroad, too, built a new bridge.

E. Architecture:

Residential: In the Late Industrial period, residential development continued to expand steadily but at a somewhat slower rate than for the earlier period. New development occurred in the area just south of the Northfield - Mount Hermon School with infill development along Main Street at Northfield Center and Northfield Farms and more limited new construction along Mount Hermon Road. The majority of the houses and cottages of the period employ the sidehall plan and exhibit Queen Anne styling. In general, the two-story houses tend to concentrate at the town center with cottages located in outlying areas. A series of large towered Queen Anne and Colonial Revival houses with quality detailing were built along Highland Avenue south of Northfield-Mount Herman. Other large and well detailed Stick Style, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and Craftsman houses were built along Main Street. The majority of the remaining residences of the period are simpler Queen Anne or Colonial Revival structures of frame construction with one-story porches. Also of note are the cluster of post-1901 Queen Anne and Craftsman summer cottages above Winchester Road (Rustic Ridge).

Institutional: Major private and public institutional construction took place in the period. The foundation in 1879 and later rapid growth of the Northfield Seminary accounts for much of that growth but important municipal and religious buildings were built as well. The earliest buildings built at Northfield-Mount Herman are a series of brick Queen Anne and Victorian Gothic structures of the 1880s including East Hall (1880), Talcott Library (1888) Weston (1887), Holton (1885) and Marquand (1884) Halls; the earliest (1879) is Revell Hall. The next major building campaign occurred after 1900, although a few buildings of the 1890s should be noted, including Colonial Revival Moody House (1890), the Renaissance Revival Auditorium (1894), Skinner Gym (1895) and the chalet-like Stick Style Bookstore (1898). Notable 20th century buildings include the English Gothic Revival Russell Sage Chapel (1909), and two Renaissance Revival buildings, the Music Hall (1909) and Kenarden Hall (1913), both beautifully detailed. Other institutional buildings, located at the town center, are the Romanesque Revival First Parish Church of 1871, built to replace the 1833 church which burned, the Stick Style Saint Patrick's Church (1886, Page and Walker) and the Dickinson Memorial Library (1897, Henry Marshall Francis, Fitchburg). The library, a granite Richardsonian Romanesque structure, is the most monumental municipal building in town. Also of note are the brick Colonial Revival Northfield Historical Society (1903), the Italianate Grange (ca.1875), frame Colonial Revival Field Memorial Library (1898) at Northfield Farms and Dickinson Hall (1890), a Stick Style/Queen Anne building on Mount Hermon Road, possibly built as a school.

Commercial: Several two-story frame commercial blocks were built along Main Street at Northfield Center during the period, among them, the Robbins Store (ca.1910), Buffum Store (ca.1910) and Webster's Store (1903). All feature the gable front center entrance plan typical of period stores.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes:

Connecticut River railroads still remained as primary north-south corridors from Vermont to Greenfield and Millers Falls. Improvement of local highway system as auto roads with north-south axis designated as Route 63 through Northfield Center and east-west connector from Bernardston to New Hampshire as Route 10 connecting at West Northfield over Schnell Bridge to Route 30 (Vernon, VT).

B. Population:

From 1920 onward, Northfield's population grew moderately. By 1940, with the resident count at 1,975, the town had a modest 10.8% growth rate for the period, fourth highest for the county, and much of it probably associated with the schools.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Continued expansion of East Northfield as affluent residential district around Northfield School along Highland-Birnam Avenue. Local civic activities remained along Northfield Main Street at School Street junction with gradual development of highway commercial services from Route 63 within residential area. West Northfield maintained as adjunct to Vernon (Vermont) railroad junction with development of gravel industry along Mount Hermon Road. Commercial farming continued as primary activity in Connecticut lowlands with secondary hamlets at Northfield Farms and Gill Station.

D. Economic Base:

Agricultural production continued along the broad terraces of the fertile valley.... No new industries identified.

E. Architecture:

Residential construction dropped off considerably in the Early Modern period. Nonetheless, a fair number of bungalow and Craftsman cottages and houses were built across the town, both as infill housing at the town center and in more isolated locations. Well-detailed houses of the 1920s, with hip or gable roofs, were noted on Main, Highland and Winchester Roads. Limited institutional construction took place in the period. At Northfield Mount Hermon School, the Merrill-Kemp dormitory, a very large brick Colonial Revival building, was constructed in 1937.

Municipal buildings include the Georgian Revival Town Hall (1927) and hip roofed brick Colonial Revival Center School (ca. 1930). Commercial buildings along Main Street include Spencer's (1919) and Morgan's (1921) Garages.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

General: Inventory forms have been recorded for most architecturally significant properties in the town. Areas documented are Northfield Center, Northfield-Mount Hermon School and Northfield Farms. While the survey covers areas of primary activity, the inventory forms themselves are unreliable and sometimes incomplete. The most serious problem is with forms for the Northfield-Mount Hermon school which are complete for building date and donor but which fail to record the architects responsible for the designs. Given the fact that many of the buildings are of considerable architectural importance and probably by nationally-noted architects, this oversight represents a major shortcoming. Construction dates for many buildings, particularly those of the early 18th and late 19th-century, are inconsistent with stylistic evidence and should not be relied upon.

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