MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

ROWLEY

Report Date: 1985

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: September 1985 Community: Rowley

I. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

A lowlying coastal community rising to an undulating terrain in its interior, seventh century Rowley Plantation was bounded by parent communities Ipswich and Newbury on the north and south, and expanded inland to include all of present day Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland and parts of Middleton and Haverhill. By 1838 it had assumed its present form.

Few native sites are known within the town, but settlement activity may have occurred in estuary zones near the mouths of the Mill and Rowley Rivers. Early European travel through the area followed (a possible native trail) along the coast connecting Ipswich with the Merrimack. At Rowley's incorporation in 1639, the road became the Bay Road and the focus (c. 1649) of the town's first permanent European settlement. A traditional nuclear village with communal open-field agriculture was established and (unusual among Massachusetts towns) survived until the mid-eighteenth century. Four parishes were formed by the late seventeenth century. Settlement was more dense in the First (Rowley Village) Parish than in the Byfield (1702), Linebrook (1746) and Georgetown (1729) Parishes, but dispersed agricultural settlement remained pervasive throughout the eighteenth century.

The seventeenth century dominance of agriculture and husbandry, with some home production of textiles, was supplanted in the eighteenth century by the rise of manufactories, particularly textiles and now, shoes. The First Parish meetinghouse center developed into a thriving commercial village in the Federal period. Residential density of Rowley Center at this time increased and is seen today in extraordinary streetscapes of Colonial and Federal period survivals. The Newburyport Turnpike built in the first decade of the nineteenth century, slashed north/south through central Rowley, between multiple industrial sites on the Mill River to the west and the commercial and residential focus at Rowley Center to the east.

A major change occurred in 1840 with the extension of the Boston and Maine Railroad from Ipswich to Portsmouth. Manufactories flourished (particularly those producing shoes). Residential construction took the form of infill among existing structures or of small hamlets at major roadway intersections. With the Civil War came a decline of manufacturing and an increase in agricultural production. Although Rowley's population continued to climb during the Late Industrial period, the town's era of prosperity had passed. Turn of the century Rowley claimed few manufactories, construction was nearly at a standstill, and those dwellings erected were modest and small. In the late nineteenth century, agricultural production experienced a steady decline while the shoe industry recovered from its Civil War nadir. By the Early Modern decades only 2 factories survived within the

town, but population growth continued as Rowley evolved from an agricultural/manufacturing town into its present status as a residential exurb for neighboring metropolitan areas.

The historic integrity of Rowley remains extraordinarily intact, the town center and outlying areas having been spared extensive commercial or residential development. New dwellings remain single-family and scattered among existing structures beyond the town center. Unusual among Massachusetts towns for its early and enduring residential nucleation, Rowley remains an unusually intact example of an early nineteenth century meetinghouse village. It has experienced little alteration in the past one hundred years.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Incorporated in 1639 from parts of Ipswich and Newbury, Rowley's original grant extended from its parent communities on the north and south to the ocean on the east and to the Merrimac River on the west, thereby including all or parts of present day Boxford, Georgetown, Middleton, Groveland, and Bradford (southern Haverhill). Rowley's only major acquisition of new territory came in 1649, when one fifth of Plum Island was granted to the town. Two of its seventeenth century villages, Rowley-on-the-Merrimac (Groveland and Bradford) and Rowley Village (New Boxford, Groveland and Middleton) were the first to claim independence from Rowley, being incorporated as separate districts in 1675 and 1685, respectively. A century of stability prevailed until 1785, when Rowley annexed a small tract of land, immediately south and east of Rowley Center (a seventeenth century village) from Ipswich. Thereafter Rowley's final (and perhaps most significant) accession occurred to 1838 when Georgetown won incorporation as an independent district. Hence was left the present territory of Rowley.

III. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Rowley is located in the east central portion of Essex County, Massachusetts. Physiograpically, the town lies within the New England seaboard lowland, a relatively smooth coastal strip of land with some hills usually below the 400 and 500 foot contours. In Rowley, land surfaces generally slope easterly to the coast. In the western portion of town, elevations average 100 feet or less with several hills exceeding 200 feet. East of Route 1A, elevations rarely exceed the 20 to 30 foot contour.

Bedrock deposits in the Rowley area are mainly composed of Salem gabbro diorites (diorite and gabbro diorite) and Newburyport quartz diorite. Some areas of Dedham grano-diorite deposits are also present. East of the Route 1A area, soils are characterized by coastal deposits of the Ipswich-Westbrook-Udipsamments association. These soils range from nearly level poorly drained mucky soils to sloping, excessively drained sandy soils formed in wind blown sand (Fuller and Hotz 1981). In the western portion of town, soils are mainly composed of the Hinckley-Windsor-Merrimac, Paxton-Woodbridge-Montawk and Canton-Carlton-Sutton associations.

These soils were formed in glacial till and outwash deposits. Deposits in these areas range from nearly level and steep excessively drained to moderately drained soils.

Major drainage in Rowley is through the Mill River in the north and the Rowley River in the south. Both rivers drain easterly into the Plum Island Sound. Plum Island Sound may at one time have been part of the Merrimack River. The sound is separated from the ocean by Plum Island, a barrier beach bordered to the north by the present mouth of the Merrimack River and to the south by Ipswich Bay which may have been the mouth of the Merrimac River at some early period in the past (17th century?). Few ponds exist in Rowley.

The original forest growth in Rowley and in Essex County in general consisted of a mixed growth of white pine, oak, chestnut, poplar, maple, birch and some other hardwoods and conifers. However, second growth patterns characterize most of the town today, including second growth oak and chestnut in uplands and scrub oak and pitch pine in areas of droughtly and sandy soils. Some birch, cedar, juniper and white pine are also present.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes

Native American transportation routes in the Rowley area likely emphasized water travel along the Mill River and Rowley River as well as Plum Island Sound. Conjectured trails were also probably present along rivers and streams and particularly those leading to the coast and major rivers noted above. A major north-south coastal route may also have existed in the Central Street area which skirts coastal wetlands and may have enabled fording places on coastal rivers.

B. Population

Rowley was probably inhabited by members of the Pawtucket group which extended from the Saugus/Salem area north to the York area of Maine. Locally this group is commonly referred to as the Agawam Indians. Gookin (1792) lists ca. 3,000 men as belonging to this group prior to the 1617-1619 epidemics, as many as 12,000 natives in the region. This figure is probably exaggerated and, the Native American population in the Rowley area probably never numbered more than a few hundred individuals. Following the epidemics, fewer than 50 to 100 natives likely remained in the Rowley area.

C. Settlement Pattern

Few Woodland and no Contact Period sites are known for the Rowley area. However, environmental variables and later 17th century documentary sources indicate sites of this period should be present. For example, the mouth of the Mill and Rowley Rivers on the Plum Island Sound may have been good site locations as well as other areas along the coast. In addition to habitats and village

type sites, special purpose sites such as fishing sites, shell middens and burials were also probably present. These sites may have been located on the coast or along the periphery of interior wetlands such as ponds, swamps and streams.

D. Subsistence Pattern

Native Americans in the Rowley area subsisted on a variety of seasonally determined activities, including hunting, fishing, the collecting of wild plants and shell fish, and horticulture. Hunting was a major activity focusing on larger mammals such as deer, smaller fur bearers and sea mammals such as seals and drift whales, and may have included upland game birds and ducks. Eastern Rowley and the Plum Island Sound area would have been particularly important for water fowl hunting. Interior ponds, streams and rivers afforded a variety of freshwater fish. Larger coastal rivers such as the Mill and Rowley Rivers also contained seasonal runs of smelt, alewives and possibly shad, salmon and sea-run trout. A variety of marine species of fish would have been available in the Plum Island Sound and in the Atlantic Ocean. Several species of terrestrial as well as fresh and salt water plants in the Rowley area provided a valuable food resource. The Plum Island Sound area, a regionally important shellfish bed, presently contains several species of shellfish which may have been available during the Contact period and midden sites verify this expectation. Domesticated plants such as corn, beans, pumpkins, squash and tobacco were important. The location of native fields are currently unknown, however, they were likely located along the Plum Island Sound or near riverine areas.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD

A. Transportation Routes

Indian trails likely continued in use in the Rowley area throughout most of the Plantation period. Water travel probably remained the fastest and at times the most convenient mode of transportation between settlements in the Rowley area and other settlements to the north near the Merrimack River and to the south in the Ipswich/Gloucester/Salem area. Water travel was frequently made by dug-out canoes but also by shallop.

European land transportation in the Rowley area actually began before settlement. As early as 1634-35, a road or pathway is mentioned connecting the Ipswich area with the Merrimack River. This road was often referred to as the "Ould Road" to Newbury and was actually nothing more than a narrow foot path (Jewett 1948:13). In 1639, shortly after the incorporation of Rowley, the General Court ordered a road laid out from Boston to Newbury. This road was eight rods in width and was known as the Bay Road. In Rowley the road was actually laid out in 1640 along the course of Central Street (Holme Street). Sometime between 1661 and 1662 a bridge was constructed (Thorlow's Bridge) across the Parker River in Newbury shifting this route more easterly at the Newbury /Rowley town line. Sometime around 1650 an additional road to Newbury was established in the Route 1A/Main Street area. This

road branched easterly from Rowley Commons. Travel along this road was restricted since only ferry travel was available. A bridge was built crossing this river in Newbury in 1758 increasing the use of this road.

As Rowley was settled pathways and cartways were developed leading to outlying fields and farms throughout the town. The main roadways were in eastern Rowley in the vicinity of the easterly house lots. These roads extended northerly and easterly from the training field, burial ground and meetinghouse site. They included: Bradford Street, Holme Street, Wethersfield Street and possibly Narrow Lane, High Way and Kiln Lane. These routes were probably laid out by 1650-1660 and in most instances have changed little to today.

B. Population

Rowley was first settled in 1639 by about 60 families which may represent as many as 300 people (60 x 5). At least 20 of these families had accompanied Mr. Ezekiel Rodgers to the area from Yorkshire, England. The remaining 40 families found Rodgers and his group in Salem prior to settlement. These families were also immigrants from England. These figures changed little over the next few years. In 1643, 59 men are listed with the register of house lots. Each of the early settlers worshipped according to Puritan beliefs. Rowley's population increased considerably over the next 35 years and that by 1675 nearly 100 families resided in Rowley and Rowley Village (Boxford) (Gage 1840:153).

C. Settlement Pattern

Little is known regarding the Native American settlement patterns in Rowley during this period, and natives may not have resided in the town at all by this time. The early settlers were not pressured by local natives and Indian land titles for the Rowley area were not officially transferred to the colonials until long after settlement.

Colonial settlers did not officially settle the Rowley area until 1639 when the town was incorporated as a township. Prior to that date several farms were laid out through the area, probably by Ipswich residents. In 1639, the Reverend Ezekiel Rodgers and his company purchased these farms for 800 pounds and created Rodgers Plantation, incorporated as the town of Rowley in 1639. The original grant for Rowley was from Ipswich on the south to Newbury on the north and from the ocean on the east to the Merrimack River on the west.

Rowley's initial settlement (c. 1649-50) was established with house-lots in the center of town and traditional open-field system worked communally. House lot size was determined by the size of the contribution each settler made for the purchase of the initial grant. The larger the contribution, the larger the house lot. Those who did not make a contribution received a house of 1 1/2 acre. Most lots ranged from 1 1/2 to 2 acres in size with lots 3 and 4 acres or more also present. Many house lots were arranged

along Bradford, Wethersfield, and Holme Streets. These streets ran along Town Brook and more or less circled the trained field, burial ground and meetinghouse. Rights to common lands called gates and the number of gates held was determined by the size of the house lot. Gates could later be bought and sold. The more gates held, the greater the access to common lands. The location of one's house-lot dictated the location and amount of land one had in the nearby fields.

Status was attached to settlers on the basis of which street their house lot was located. Wethersfield Street and the nearby highway to Newbury contained the wealthiest residents and largest land grant in the town. Elsewhere, those who had houselots on Bradford Street received land holding on the western side of town on the Bradford Street Plain, Batchelder Plain, Marshfield and smaller holding on the Pollipod and Rye fields. Grants in the Northeast Field were usually accompanied by parcels in the Great Plains and the Marsh and Rye fields. Most men who had houselots of 1 1/2 acres usually had their major land holding in the Bradford Street of Northeast Field of 4 1/2 or 8 acres. Marshland divisions were smaller. Most settlers held between 7 and 10 discontinuous pieces of land proportional among the fields. During that period, only 2% of 95 grants exceeded 100 acres. Although the Rowley patent was quite large, only 2,196 acres had been granted. The top 10% of Rowley's population controlled 44.5% of this land.

D. Economic Base

As Colonial settlers established themselves in the Rowley area, hunting and gathering wild foods were also important to their subsistence. However, the combined use of agriculture and husbandry were clearly the most important aspects in the economic lives of Rowley's early settlers. Indian corn, wheat and barley were the most important food crops grown as well as rye when possible. Fruit and vegetables were also grown but grains were the most important food produce. Shortly after settlement, the production of vegetable fibers from hemp and flax were also important products on Rowley farms. Salt marsh hay was extensively exploited from the marshes surrounding the Plum Island Sound. Husbandry was also an important activity in Rowley. Cattle (65.3%), horses (23.6%), sheep (4.3%) and swine (6.9%) (Allen 1982:27) were the most important animals on most farms. The fattening of cattle and raising of horses may have been a local specialty in the Rowley area. Oxen and fowl were also present.

The manufacture of cloth and rugs were important in Rowley immediately following settlement. Many of the town's first settlers were weavers from the Yorkshire area of England. Individuals at first pursued both farming and textile manufacturing them increasingly pursued textile manufactures alone. Most weaving was done in the home of in time in small shops. Cloth and rugs were made from cotton and sheep wool . Linen made from flax and a courser fabric from hemp were used in the manufacture of table cloths, sheets, napkins and other products. Most of these products were made for local consumption

and for export. By ca. 1660, Rowley was better known for the agricultural related activity of clothmaking than for grain growing. The first American fulling mill was built and operated on the Mill River in Rowley by 1643. A saw mill (1640) and grist mill (1643) were also built at the same location. A malt-kiln was built by Deacon Mishill as early as 1645. Several tanneries were also established shortly after settlement.

Shipbuilding and fishing may have been pursued in the Plum Island Sound area shortly after settlement. Shipwrights were among the early settlers of Rowley, but little data is available.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes

Native trails likely had been upgraded to horsepaths or cartways by this time. The Bay Road continued as the major inter-regional travel route upgraded from a muddy sod-worn surface to a more prepared surface with a turnpike house erected by 1720. All Plantation Period roadways in the Rowley settlement continued in use. As interior settlement developed, additional roads were also laid out: Central Street, Haverhill Street, and Daniels Road. By 1761 a stage serviced Rowley, linking Portsmouth and Boston by 1774. Stages ran twice weekly between Boston and Newburyport.

B. Population

By 1680, 104 families are listed in Rowley (Gage 1840:153). This figure rose to as many as 136 families by 1691, the number listed on the tax list. Thus, as many as 680 individuals may have resided in Rowley early in the Colonial period. From 1690 to 1765 Rowley's population more than doubled; in 1765, 1477 individuals were listed in the town. By 1776, this figure increased by 13.61% to 1678 individuals.

In 1765, no Native Americans are listed in Rowley, but 22 "negroes" were present comprising 1.49% of Rowley's overall population. Ethnically, virtually all of Rowley's population was still of English decent descended from the towns first settlers and emigration from other Essex County towns (E.G. Newbury, Salem). Most of the town's resident still continued the Puritan/Congregationalist worship of their forefathers. Some Anabaptists may also have been present after the 40's, however, their numbers or place of worship remains unknown.

C. Settlement Pattern

Land patterns which developed in Rowley during the Plantation period continued throughout most of the Colonial period. The common field system was still in place and residents exhibited a general hesitancy to consolidate land holdings. Thus, most residents still owned several small (6 acres or so) parcels of land. Most larger land holding were in the western portion of town where Bradford split off in 1675, Boxford in 1685, and Georgetown. Settlement density was the greatest in the Rowley

First Parish. Otherwise, settlement was more or less dispersed throughout much of the town.

After Rowley Village (Boxford) had split off from Rowley in 1685, settlement continued in all other portions of town. By the 18th century, Rowley residents, sometimes in conjunction with the resident of neighboring towns, grouped themselves into 4 parishes. The First Parish remained the locus of the town's initial settlement. The original town meetinghouse and training field remained in this area. The "Old Parish", as it was sometimes called, was bounded in the north by Newbury, easterly by the Atlantic Ocean (including Plum Island), southerly by Ipswich and westerly by Byfield and Linebrook parishes.

Settlement was also growing in New Rowley or Second Parish (Georgetown), set off from the First Parish in 1731. A portion of western Rowley also joined with the residents of Newbury to form the Byfield Parish. This parish was located in the northwestern portion of Rowley where a meetinghouse was built near the junction of Jackman and Warren Street in 1702. The fourth parish containing part of Rowley was partially in the southwestern portion town but mostly in Ipswich. This parish was know as Linebrook and was set off in 1746. This precinct or parish was bounded in the south by Howlett's Brook and Ipswich River, on the east by Gravelly Bull and Batchelder's Brooks, and to the west by Strait Brook.

D. Economic Base

While most aspects of agricultural and husbandry production continued to be important throughout the Colonial period, manufacturers and shipbuilding were now the most important economic activities in the town. Textile manufacturers were still common but were now supplemented by boot and shoe manufacturers, started by Abraham Jewett in ca. 1703. At least one grist mill, saw mill and fulling mill continued production in the later Glen Mills area along the Mill River. By 1800, nine tanneries are listed in Rowley, most of which were probably in production by 1775.
The Stewart family carried out shipbuilding activities at "the warehouse landing" as early as 1680. They sold the business to Edward Saunders in ca. 1710, and his descendents continued shipbuilding activities into the 19th century.

E. Architecture

Residential: Surviving Colonial period houses are almost exclusively large, 2 1/2 story center chimney houses of five bays in width and gable roof. In a small number of instances rear lean-tos result in a saltbox side elevation; some were originally constructed with these but later expansion changed them, as at the Platts-Bradstreet house. Far more common are the houses which were constructed with symmetrical gables, an exceptional number of which survive here. Lateral "jogs" are common additions to these house types. Isolated examples of 3 and 4 bay variations also survive. Most to these have three primary first floor rooms. Later in the period a small number of double-interior chimney

houses were constructed which share all other elements of exterior form but employ a center passage plan, and four primary first floor rooms.

Institutional: Little information is currently available on the town's early meetinghouses; three houses of worship were constructed during the period, in 1639, in 1697, and in 1749.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes

Rowley's transportation network was unusually complete by the Post-Revolutionary decades, most of the town's principal roads having been laid out during the seventeenth century. Major changes in the period were first, the construction of the Newburyport turnpike (between 1800 - 1810) and second, the arrival of public transportation in the town.

B. Population

Rowley's population grew from 1678 individuals in 1776 to 2044 individuals in 1830 with an overall growth rate of 21.8% Population growth was the lowest (5.6%) from 1776 to 1790. From 1790 to 1800 population actually dropped by 12.3%. Rowley's population growth was relatively stable from 1800 to 1820 (approximately 8%). Most population growth (12%) occurred from 1820 to 1830.

A small select school was run by the town's minister after 1782, while the common school system included four district schools. The town purchased a poor farm in 1819. Beginning in about 1816, Baptists began meeting in this area as 2nd Rowley, the first then located in the West Parish (Georgetown). The First Parish remained Orthodox.

C. Settlement Pattern

In Federal period Rowley there were haying activities in the east, industrial sites in the west (along Mill River) and a meetinghouse center and focus of settlement in between, at the junction of the two principal Colonial period routes between Ipswich and Rowley. Although the meetinghouse center developed during the period into a thriving commercial/residential village, dispersed agricultural settlement continued to characterize the town.

Extant structures suggest prosperity in Rowley. 55% of the surviving (inventoried) houses in the town center claim their origins in the period. A post office (1804), the First Baptist Church (1830) and a newly fenced and formalized cemetery (1790-1810) joined the meetinghouse on Main Street (between the Common and Hammond Street) to form a nascent civic/commercial corridor. Up to that time residential construction had been most pronounced in the immediate area north of the Common and Main, in Rowley Center. Concomitant, however, with the construction of the Newburyport Turnpike (between 1800 and 1810) residential

expansion proceeded westward, drawn toward the new thoroughfare along Haverhill, Wethersfield, and Central Streets.

By 1830, several small industrial sites (principally grain and saw mills) were located along the Mill River and many shoe shops, scattered among individual homestead. All such activities, however, failed to attract any clustering of settlement in their vicinities, the tendency toward agriculturally dispersed settlement remaining pervasive throughout the period.

D. Economic Base

The economic activities of Rowley changed very little after the Revolution. As during the Colonial period, the population of this primarily agricultural community continued to manufacture boots and shoes throughout the Federal period and beyond. In 1791, there were 17 shops, many of which were probably small shoe shops, as well as two tanning shops which supplied leather. By 1800 the number of tanneries had increased to nine.

The fulling mill was operational until 1820 when a Nathaniel Dummer Sr. purchased the mill at the Glen Mills site and converted it to wool carding factory. With the conversion to wool carding in 1820, N.N Dummer provided a considerably more efficient pre-weaving prices, but left weavers to full their cloth either at home or at a mill in a neighboring town. Dummer also established a grain and snuff mill on the Glen Mill site. His was only one of five grist mills along the rivers, streams and ponds of Rowley in 1830. In the same year there were also two sawmills, one of which was operated by the Dodge family throughout the 19th century. 5 blacksmiths were employed producing goods worth $2,800.

The agricultural town held 2577 acres of woodland, 990 acres (or 6.7% of total acreage) of cultivated soil, and 986 acres unimproved. The 6231 acres of pasturage, 1091 acres of English mowing hay, 1644 acres of salt-marsh hay and 1084 acres of fresh meadow hay were used to feed 1089 steer and cows, 314 oxen, 355 swine and 191 horses. A slaughterhouse was present for killing and dressing the mature non-dairy livestock. In addition 770 barrels of cider were derived from an unspecified number of apple trees in the same year. Despite bordering the ocean, Rowleyians did not engage heavily in navigational or fishing activities.

Poverty became a visible and troubling issue to Rowleyians in the generation after the Revolution. From 1776 to 1800 the cost of supporting the poor, averaging $262 per year, jumping from $448 to $170 between 1800-1818. In 1822 the towns people established a town farm near Byfield Parish, where the poor worked the land for their keep.

E. Architecture

Residential: New houses in the town continued to be constructed with the center chimney form and in increasing numbers with the double interior form. In addition to these latter, large houses, new house types provided alternatives to those with more modest

needs. Rear-wall chimney houses were quite popular in the early years of the century. These houses were also generally 2 1/2 stories in height and five bays in width, but were single pile or L-shaped in plan, providing 2 or 3 major rooms. A small number of 1 1/2 story, center chimney, five bay houses were also constructed. Fashionable hip roofs were rare, known from only 3 examples, all five bays and with double interior chimneys, 2 of 2 1/2 stories and 1 of 3.

Institutional: No new churches were constructed, and no information is currently available on the district schools.

Industrial: Several saw and grist mills were built between 1775 and 1830. Of these, one wooden shed from a sawmill still stands, though in very poor condition. This mill building is behind the still running 20th century Herrick sawmill on the upper pond of the Mill River.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes

Although Early nineteenth century roads continued in use, the town's transportation network was pared down to essential during the period, several streets (especially dead-end lanes and those leading into the marshlands) having fallen into disrepair and disuse. Rowley's major advance came with the extension of the eastern line of the Boston and Maine railroad from Ipswich to Newburyport and Portsmouth in 1840. The line ran due north/south, across Rowley's easternmost marshy littoral.

B. Population

Rowley's population was 2044 in 1830, and its moderate growth rate continued until 1837 bringing the figure to 2444. The next year however, with the hiring off of Georgetown to the west, the total fell by half. Between 1840 and 1870, the town's population remained quite stable, reaching a low of 1075 in 1850, and a high of 1278 just ten years later, ending the period at 1157. The foreign-born population in the town was quite small, accounting for 3.6% of the total in 1855, 36 of the 44 from Ireland. Ten years later the proportion fell slightly to 3.2%, included a handful of Canadians, English and Scots and still numbered only 38 individuals.

The town maintained its district system through 1869, and operated a high school for short periods. No new religions or secular societies are known to have been formed during this period of population decline. The town sent 132 men to fight the Civil War.

C. Settlement Pattern

Civic, commercial and residential activities remained joined in Early Industrial Rowley. Main Street continued as the town's primary corridor of activities. Having attracted, by 1870, a

hotel, several stores and a factory prosperity appears to continue. The meetinghouse is rebuilt (1842), a town hall constructed - notably on Central rather than Main Street (1847) and the Common and public squares improved by the planting of ornamental trees (1839).

With the construction of the railroad in 1840, manufacturing activities surpass agriculture in profitability and quickly began to multiply within the town. By 1870, immediately behind (north and west) of the symbolic focus on Main Street, and interspersed throughout Rowley Center's principal residential district were several varieties of small shops (especially for shoes) and factories. Residential expansion slows during the period, but takes several forms: one, as infill among earlier Colonial and Federal structures in and near Rowley Center; two, as crossroads clusters at Rooty Plain, Leighton's Corner and Glen Mills, proximate to the increasing Industrial activity along the Mill River; and three, as small turnpike hamlets, at Dodge and Kent Corners.

D. Economic Base

In the period from 1830 to 1870 there was very little change in the economic activity of Rowley. Shoes continued to be the primary non-agricultural product, as well as the major source of employment. From 1832 to 1837 shoe manufacturing virtually exploded in Rowley, growing from 202 men and women producing 108,925 pairs in 1832 to 710 men and women and 332,850 pairs in 1837. Boot and shoe product value experienced a growth rate of 252%. The number of tanneries also increased to 16 in 1837. In 1839 these shops imported 600 cords of bark to tan hides worth $43,400. Leather was also used by harness and chaise-makers. The figures for 1855, 323 men and women producing 164,800 pairs of boots and shoes worth $195,600, suggests significant decline. However, the drop is probably best explained by the incorporation of Georgetown from part of Rowley in 1838. By 1865 the rise of large house factory towns resulted in significant decline for this industry in Rowley. The number of men and women employed in shoe making fell to a mere 76, and they produced only 26,860 pairs worth $51,176.

In 1865 one sawmill remained (probably Dodge's) which cut 100,000 feet of lumber, and one gristmill (probably Dummer's) ground 9,600 bushels of grain, while an adjoining flour mill further processed 6,000 bushels (Dummer gave up on wool carding in 1856). Besides these millers there was one blacksmith and twelve men employed part-time (4 months per year) cutting 847 cords of firewood for market.

With the loss of jobs in shoe production Rowleyians turned to more extensive farming. Agricultural product value increased from $53,403, in 1855 by almost 300% to $133,607 in 1865. Of 10,085 acres distributed among 132 farms, 10,017 acres was improved, 50 acres (448 bushels) of rye, 768 acres (657 tons) of english mowing hay, 265 acres (231 tons) of swale hay, 1891 acres (231 tons) salt hay, 171 acres (4,668 bushels) of Indian corn, 33 acres (335

bushels) barley, 7 acres (105 bushels) of oats, 128 acres (11,484 bushels) of potatoes, and 18 acres (216 bushels) of beans. Pasture land fed livestock which once butchered, yielded 166,445 lbs. of dressed beef, 19,210 lbs. of veal, 61,106 lbs. of pork, 14,045 lbs of mutton. The remaining land was utilized growing 11,568 apple trees, 756 pear trees and the wood products. Fifteen people in Rowley worked six months and caught 7,304 bushels of shellfish, mostly clams.

E. Architecture

Residential: Some builders retained traditional forms throughout this period, particularly for large homes. Two and one-half story, five bay, center entry houses with paired chimneys were constructed with Greek Revival (c17) and Italianate (c5) ornamental trim. Double houses (c3) were six bays in width with a pair of entries in the center, 2 1/2 stories in height; one example had recessed entries and roundheaded windows. One and one-half story houses of five bays with center entries remained popular; these commonly employed extended studd height for the attic area, and may be single pile in the main block. The most frequently constructed houses, however, were the new gable front forms. Three bays in width with side entries, double pile in depth, examples are known of 1 1/2 stories, but 2 1/2 stories was more common. Particularly among the larger examples, Italianate ornament was used. Two examples are known of two stories, 3 bay side entry houses with mansard roofs.

Institutional: The area's Baptists built their first meetinghouse in 1830; gable front in form, the house is a single story with paried entries; fan and sidelights are repeated on the entries and the windows are round headed; the square tower is topped by a square belfry with ogee roof. The First Parish built their fourth meetinghouse in 1842; also gable front in form, its facade is broken by a recessed entry screened by Ionic columns in antis; the square tower is topped by a belfry with pinnacles and a small spire. In 1847 the town built a combination town hall and school house. It is gable front 2 1/2 stories in form, with a 3 bay, center entry facade with simple Greek detailing.

Industrial: Several shoe shops and small factories were built during this period. The only extant structure a frame two-story building, originally built as one-story structure was occupied from 1850 to 1920 (?) by Foster Shoe Factory, renovated extensively around 1978 to an office building. The Daniels Wagon Factory, ca. 1868, a large one-story frame building with pitched roof, still exists on Daniels St.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes

Beyond efforts to maintain the existing street network, there appears to have been little change in Rowley during the period. The major throughfares continued to be Haverhill and Main Streets (spanning east to west), and the Newburyport Turnpike, cutting a

north-south path linking Rowley with communities from Boston to Newburyport.

B. Population

At the beginning of the Late Industrial Period Rowley's total population was 1157. By 1915, it had grown to 1481, an increase of 28%. Foreign-born population, meanwhile, increased from 3.4% to 12% of the total population from 1875-1915. Of 67 foreign-born persons in 1885, 10 were English, 22 Irish and 19 Nova Scotians, 76% of all foreign-born inhabitants. Despite the steady increase in percentage of foreign born, the major groups in 1915 are still Canadian, English & Irish.

In addition to Congregationalists, Universalists organized a church in Rowley, though never calling a regular pastor. There were also Baptists in the town as late as 1890. Farmers organized a grange of the Patrons of Husbandry.

C. Settlement Pattern

Construction was nearly at a standstill. As in earlier decades, residential construction continued to scatter along the town's principal arteries: particularly in northern and western Rowley, the areas most spatially divorced from the activities of Rowley Center, and along Haverhill St., connecting the town center with Georgetown. Dwellings which claim their origins during the period, with the exception of isolated Victorian structures lining the town common, are comparably modest and small - the far more common solution now to update an old house than to construct a new one. Some improvements in Rowley Center do occur: the old town hall was remodelled in 1880, razed and replaced with the Center School in 1905.

D. Economic Base

The shoe industry continued to be the mainstay of the economy, recovering from the Civil War era slump. In 1875, eight firms (including two heel factories) produced $133,500 worth of goods, two and a half times the 1865 figure, and 88% of the total manufacturing product. The number of Rowleyians employed in manufacturing expanded during the period, the vast majority finding work in the Todd, Prime, Henderson, Kimball and Foster shoe factories. Other industrial employment opportunities in Rowely were limited to work at the Glen Mills Cereal Company and the small Daniels carriage factory. Between 1875 and 1905 the value of all manufactured goods grew considerably, jumping from $178,100 to $410, 938, a growth rate of 131%.

Agricultural production declined steadily during this period. The number of farms fell from 132 in 1865 to 43 in 1905, and product value fell from $133,607 to $45,788 over the same period. Meanwhile the number of people employed in agriculture declined from 201 in 1875 to 142 in 1915. The number engaged in navigation and the fisheries increased, though by no means enough to offset the decline in farm employment. In 1905, 32 people harvested 20,917 bushels of clams worth $10,988.

Another source of employment in the Late Industrial period was commerce. The number of people involved in trade and transport grew from 37 in 1875 to 100 in 1915. By 1915 another 35 people were employed in government and professional work.

E. Architecture

Residential: 2 1/2 story, gable front houses remain popular treated with ornamental shingles and porches of the Queen Ann style. Smaller houses in the style were 1 1/2 stories in height and L plan in form with entry into a porch located at the intersection of the L. Larger examples were 2 1/2 story T plans, while high style examples consisted of large hip, gable or pyramidal blocks, with multiple projecting bays, porches, and one towered example.

Institutional: In 1902 the town built a new town hall; it is a 2 1/2 story hip block with a center entry and large banks of windows above, Beaux Arts in detailing with a cupola and clock. Two years later the large Central School was constructed; also a 2 1/2 story hip block, with a projecting pedimented entry bay on the shortside. The library is classical in design, a single story hip block with a large projecting similarly hipped frontispiece with entry into the center of its 5 bays.

Commercial: A small number of 2 1/2 story, gable front, center entry stores survive.

Industrial: The Shultz heel factory, c. 1870, a one-story frame building about the width of a ten-footer and three times the length, with a pitched roof, still stands at the southern end of Hammond Street.

The Glen Mills Cereal Company built a grain elevator ca. 1870-1890, which burned in 1914, also destroying the Federal period grist mill.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1955)

A. Transportation Routes

The Boston and Maine railroad operates a commuter line between Rowley and Boston (a 50 minute trip), and three companies provide bus service within the town.

B. Population

Rowley's population reaches a high of 1481 in 1915. After falling 19% to 1249 within the next 5 years, Rowley's population then began a period of uninterrupted growth. By the end of the period 2007 people lived within the town's limits. Rowley's foreign-born population was 12% in 1915, the majority Canadians. By 1940, a last decade in which statistics are available, the percentage of Rowley's foreign-born had fallen to 9%. The population appears to have been largely homogenous and conservative. 81% of voters went Republican in the 1852 presidential election.

C. Settlement Pattern

With the construction of Interstate 95 in nearby Georgetown, at mid-century, Boston's commuter sphere suddenly expanded to include Rowley. Consistent with earlier patterns new homes were erected singly, as infill among older buildings along the major transportation arteries. As of 1955, Rowley still lacked even a high school of its own.

D. Economic Base

The shoe industry experienced significant decline early in the 20th century. By 1922 only two firms (and the only manufacturing operations in town) were still in business. The Foster Shoe Factory employed 75 people and the Shultz heel shop (which supplied heels to Foster) employed a few more.

The Glen Mills site, dormant from 1914 to 1940, was/is occupied by the Jewell Mill, a water-powered (employs a 12 foot Fitz water wheel, ca 1920, and the extensively renovated headrace and penstock) mill employed in stone polishing. The Dodge sawmill site on Mill River was/is occupied by a running sawmill. The Herrick family used water power from 1910-1975. As manufacturing declined wholesale and retail trade and the service sector became the primary sources of employment. In 1955 50% (49 people) worked in 20 wholesale and retail establishments and 18.4% (18 people) worked in the service industry. Two small manufacturing firms employed less than 15 people.

E. Architecture

Residential: New housing of this period consists of exceptionally small homes. Many are nearly 2 story, single pile, 3 bay, center entry homes, and a significant cluster is located on School St. Examples of more "stylish" building are extremely rare, including a log cabin, pyramidal, Dutch Colonial.

Institutional: The Boys Club camp dates to 1869 but its buildings appear to be Early Modern and consists of a frame cluster of a 1 1/2 story, porched cabin, a 1 1/2 story gable front cabin, a 2 1/2 story L plan house with porch, and a garage.

Commercial: The Agawam diner survives on route Rt. 1 at Kent Corner.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Rowley's inventory focuses most heavily on Colonial and Federal period residential architecture, but includes most significant institutional buildings.

XII. FINDING AID:

First Baptist Church	inventory form #25
Congregation Church	form #20
Grange Hall (former town house and school)	#18,
Center School	form # Central Street
Town Hall	#27
Library	

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