

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

WEST BRIDGEWATER

Report Date: 1981

Associated Regional Report: Southeast Massachusetts

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

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

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

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

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.



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Chair, Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc
mhc@sec.state.ma.us / 617-727-8470

MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: JULY 1981

COMMUNITY: WEST BRIDGEWATER

I Topography

West Bridgewater is an inland town north of Narragansett Basin. Drainage is via the Hockomock River and Coweaset Brook to the west, Black Betty and West Meadow Brooks and Town River in the central portion, and the Salisbury Plain River in the northeast. The western portion of the town is relatively level with moderate topographic relief in the central and eastern portion of the town. Some swamp land along Town River and Salisbury Plain River. Soils are generally sandy to gravelly, with some silt and muck along the rivers.

II Political Boundaries

West Bridgewater was incorporated as a town on February 16, 1822. It was the second of the Bridgewaters to incorporate, however, it was the area of first settlement in the original town. Part of the town ceded to Brockton in 1894.

III Historic Overview

West Bridgewater is an historic pastoral community south of Brockton. Possible Contact period native sites. First period European settlement at Town River, economic base primarily agricultural. Area around town river served as religious and civic center for the town. Little industrial development prior to Colonial period. Ames Triphammer shop during late Colonial major industrial activity. Late 18th century concentration of settlement at Bennetts Corner near town mills. Twofold economic base divided between the mills and agriculture. Early-mid 19th century development remained concentrated at Bennett's corner although some development at Cocheset, Matfield and Westdale, the latter two maintained strong ties to East Bridgewater. Late 19th century decline of industrial base marked return to original agricultural base. Settlement remained dispersed until end of Early Modern period. Post

World War II industrial expansion along Manley Street.

IV CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes:

Regional focus of routes around Town River with primary connections east/west from Pembroke Ponds. No trails documented in literature. Probable east/west route over Town River appears to follow Ash St. to South St. ford (Bennett's corners) to Prospect-Center Sts (Route 106). Connecting routes from Satucket River (East Bridgewater) apparently follow Union-East Sts to Matfield and west to Town River ford as Matfield-Copeland-Main Sts (Route 28). Other possible trails from Town River ford to Hockomock River may include portions of South, Elm, and Forest Sts. Trail routes to Coweaset Brook appear as portions of West and Spring Sts with original cement possibly intact at Walnut St.

B. Settlement Patterns:

There were no reported native contact period sites. However, there was a site with a Woodland component and four unidentified native sites. All five of these sites were situated on lowlands adjacent to freshwater streams or rivers. The Woodland component and two unidentified sites were located near the Town River, while the remaining two unidentified sites were adjacent to the Coweaset Brook and the Hockomock River. The Hockomock River site appeared to be a large village. Additional contact period sites may occur along the Town River south of Bennett's corner, due to the presence of potential planting grounds, abundant sources of fish and a navigable transportation route.

C. Economic Base:

Seasonal fishing, hunting, collecting, and horticulture. The majority of present West Bridgewater is composed of lowlands and gentle hills, land

conducive to horticulture. Numerous streams and the Town River provided extensive stocks of freshwater fish. Wild game and timber was available throughout the extensive marsh and woodlands.

D. Observations:

West Bridgewater appeared to have a moderate native population during the contact period. Locally, the majority of native settlement occurred in the western half of Middleborough and the southwestern portion of Bridgewater (Taunton River). These areas, particularly Middleborough, were blessed with several major freshwater sources (i.e., Assawampsett Pond complex, Tispaquin Pond and the Nemasket and Taunton River, resources that the West Bridgewater area lacked. The West Bridgewater area natives were probably locally affiliated with the Titicut settlement situated in the southwestern portion of Bridgewater. Regionally, the natives were tied to the Pokanokets (Wampanoags) centered in Mt. Hope (Bristol), Rhode Island.

FIRST SETTLEMENT PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Formation of Bridgewater as a town center by mid-17th century created radial highway network from regional native trails. Period roads to meeting house include Ash and South Sts to Middleborough, Matfield, and Copeland Sts to Weymouth and Hingham, and Prospect-Center and West Sts to Wrentham. Bounds of original town grid (1660) apparently survive as Main, Howard, and South Sts.

B. Population:

There were no population figures available for the native population. Those for the white community are limited. At the outbreak of King Philip's War this portion of "Old Bridgewater" had 64 white males 19yrs+. The majority of the settlers moved from Duxbury with a smaller number from Salem.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Limited documentation made it difficult to assess native settlement patterns, since the white community was confined primarily to the Town River. Present West Bridgewater was the first settled portion of "Old Bridgewater" (Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater). White settlement was encouraged with the Plymouth Colony Court's granting land "about Satucket" (Old Bridgewater) to Duxbury in 1645 as compensation for property lost as a result of the incorporation of Marshfield. Deacon Samuel Edson is reputed to be the first white settler establishing a home in ca. 1649 on the south side of the Town River just above the Howard Bridge (N.A. 1899:7). Additional settlers followed Edson, erecting scattered homes along the Town River below the Junction of Main and East Center Sts. and east toward the present West and East Bridgewater line. The first meetinghouse was erected ca. 1661 and appears to have been located either on South Elm or Howard Sts. (N.A. 1899: 9, Old Bridgewater Tercentenary Committee 1956: N.P.). A second structure replaced this meetinghouse in ca. 1671 and was situated near the monument on Central Square (Old Bridgewater Tercentenary Committee 1956: N.P.). These facilities served the religious and civic needs of Old Bridgewater throughout this period. Shortly before the outbreak of King Philip's War, a wooden stockade was built on the south side of the Town River adjacent to Forest St.

D. Economic Base:

Native population probably maintained their traditional seasonal rounds due to the limited white settlement in Old Bridgewater. However, the presence of a permanent white population would have encouraged Anglo-Indian trade. Agriculture was the foundation of the white community's economy. The area's woodlands were probably harvested for timber, tar,

and pine pitch. The community's desire for a readily available grist mill (closest mill until 1662 was in Taunton) resulted in the erection of a grist mill by Samuel Edson in ca. 1662 (near his home?). Additional industrial development was probably discouraged by the community's vulnerability to Indian attack. John Howard established a tavern in ca. 1670 on the corner of River and Howard Sts. (operated until 1812).

E. Observations:

This portion of Old Bridgewater functioned as the civic and religious center of the larger community. However, the area's limited population, commercial development, and its military vulnerability probably resulted in the West Bridgewater settlers reliance on outlying, more highly developed communities (e.g., Duxbury, Plymouth, Taunton) for military support and commercial/industrial facilities. Future research should be devoted to clarifying the community's development during the First Settlement Period. Existing secondary sources do not deal with it adequately. The history of the native population is especially weak.

VI COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes:

Highway system remained focused upon Bridgewater meetinghouse. Primary east/west axis improved as Center-Prospect Sts (Route 106) with north/south axis on Ash-Main-Copeland Sts (Route 28). Local roads of the period include Crescent, North and Spring Sts around West Meadow Brook, Walnut and Manley Sts at Manley's Corner, and Lincoln, Scotland, and Elm Sts near Hockomock River.

B. Population:

No native population figures while those for the white population continue to be limited. Termination of Anglo-Indian hostilities in 1676 encouraged considerable white settlement in Old Bridgewater. By 1764,

the West Parish of Old Bridgewater (West Bridgewater) consisted of 121 families, 880 residents and 106 houses (N.A. 1899: 10). By this date, the West Parish was the least populous of the Bridgewater parishes.

There was a decrease in growth of Old Bridgewater's population between 1740 and 1764 due to the migration of a number of residents to western Massachusetts and Maine who sought better agricultural land.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Despite the destruction of a large number of settler homes and livestock during King Philip's War, Old Bridgewater was not abandoned during the fighting. Many settlers sought refuge in the stockade situated near Forest St. The postwar period witnessed infill of the original center of present West Bridgewater in the early 18c. Reverend Daniel Perkins settled ca. 1740 on Bryant St. , while John Ames erected a home in Bennet's Corner in ca. 1743. Additional settlement occurred away from the settlement's original center along South, Ash, South Elm, Union, and Copeland Sts. in the late 17th century and 18th century. Considerable population growth throughout Old Bridgewater resulted in the division of the larger community into several parishes in the early 18th century. In 1716, Old Bridgewater was separated into the North (now Brockton, East and West Bridgewater) and South (Bridgewater) Parishes. Five years later, the North Parish was divided into the West (Brockton, West Bridgewater) and the East (East Bridgewater) Parishes. A final division took place in 1738 when present Brockton was established as the North Parish. Throughout these changes, West Bridgewater remained the site of Old Bridgewater's town meetings. A new meetinghouse was built on the site of the second in the 1730s, most likely to accommodate the town's expanding population.

D. Economic Base:

The growing white community undoubtedly had a major impact on native

subsistence rounds. Expansion of the white settlement away from the original center would have inhibited native fishing, hunting, and collection rounds. As a result, the native population would increasingly be forced to adopt a sedentary lifestyle. Many probably turned to the white community for employment. Increased native dependence of Anglo-Indian trade for subsistence items. White community's economic development poorly documented. Agriculture persisted as the settlement's primary economic pursuit. There was probably a continuation of timber, tar, and pine pitch production. Minimal evidence of industrial expansion. A triphammer shop established by John Ames in ca. 1774 on the Town River south of Bennett's Corner was the only reported industrial facility established during this period. However, it is conceivable that other industrial operations were located in West Bridgewater because of the numerous streams and rivers.

E. Architecture

Residential: Comparatively few houses of the period are known to survive. Only one house of the late First period (1675-1725) is known, the Keith Parsonage on River Street, a three-quarter plan two-story house with an integral lean-to, said to date from ca. 1662-1664. The pre-King Philip's War date of the house is somewhat suspicious (although local legend says it was spared through the Reverend Keith's work in support of local natives), and, if corroborated, would be of great significance as an unusually early surviving structure. The only other house with documentation to the period is the Ames house of 1743, notable for its very early double house plan; a two-and-a-half story structure with double interior chimneys and a five-bay, centered facade on the gable end, the house is also an early example of the use of double chimneys. Very few other two-story houses of the period are known in the town, and it is probable that few were

constructed; of those surviving, none stands in unaltered condition and none are ambitiously detailed. One center-chimney house probably of the period stands on Elm Street at Brooks Place and another on South Street at the town center. Far more numerous are center-chimney cottages, most of the standard double-celled, five-bay, center-entered plan. Of the many cottages standing in town, it is likely that a number can be dated to the Colonial period. At least one gambrel-roofed cottage is known on Matfield Street with a later two-story, hip-roofed Federal house added, but most cottages exhibit the standard gable roof. Concentrations of center-chimney cottages stand at Arch and River Streets, on South Street, on Scotland and Prospect Streets with others likely on Crescent and Ash Steets.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse was constructed in 1660 and replaced in 1674 with a small meetinghouse, 40'x26'x14'. In 1739, the third meetinghouse (50'x38'x22') was constructed, to which a spire was added in 1764. No schools are known to have been built in the period, classes being held in houses across the town with a circuit schoolmaster.

F. Observations:

West Bridgewater's importance as the center of Old Bridgewater was diminished in the 18th century with the demographic and commercial development of the remaining portions of Old Bridgewater. This change was particularly evident in the establishment of parishes in the early 18th century. However, it is difficult to adequately assess West Bridgewater's commercial/industrial development during the late 17th century and 18th century because of the lack of secondary sources dealing with the subject.

VII Federal Period (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes:

Road system remained from 18th century with focus upon town center. Local improvements of the period appear as Maple-Pleasant Sts over Hockamock River and East St from Matfield to Bridgewater.

B. Population:

Population figures are not available prior to 1820. 1820 population, 1055; 1830, 1042.

C. Settlement:

Main residential - industrial settlement at Bennett's Corner, some farming settlement at Cochesett. Scattered farms along major roads. Some residential farming settlement at Matfield.

D. Economic Base:

Mill site at Bennett's Corner on Town River the site of "Town" grist, saw, and fulling mills by 1794. Probably here or adjacent to Ames house, opposite, John Ames operated blacksmith shop ca. 1774-1803, when Ames' son Oliver removed to Easton. John Ames is believed to have initiated shovel manufacture here, but though saw, grist, and fulling mills are mapped at this site in 1794, there is no evidence of a shovel "factory" requiring water power. There were no other mills identified within the limits of West Bridgewater at this time.

About 1829, Forbes, Reed & Co. built a nail factory immediately upstream of the "canal bridge." By 1832, with a product worth \$4,000 and employing seven hands, the company was the largest manufacturer in the town. The first furnace, probably built in the 1820s on Salisbury Plain Brook at Belmont Street, was marked "Keith's Furnace" in 1831.

E. Architecture:

Residential: A wider range and greater number of houses of the Federal period survive than do from the Colonial period. Most of these are two-story farmhouses standing outside the town center with a few houses and double houses at the town center. Center and double interior chimney cottages are found across the town in some numbers. The first use of brick occurs in the Federal period with at least one brick end-wall Federal house known on South Elm Street. Other Federal houses with hip roofs and

end interior chimneys are known on East Center, South, Pleasant, East, and Matfield Streets. In a reversal of the usual pattern, the more ambitiously detailed houses are located away from the town center, while those Federal period houses standing at the center include a double house and houses of less than the full double-celled, five-bay facade plan. Detailing for both houses and cottages is very simple, usually consisting of sidelights only in the door surround with no transom or fanlight; porches and porticoes are also very rare.

Institutional: The present meetinghouse at the town center was constructed in 1801; it is a two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed structure with a shallow, projecting pedimented portico, Palladian window, and square belfry tower with octagonal belfry and spire. The 1739 meetinghouse became the Town House in 1802 and was demolished in 1823. Also built in the period was a Baptist meetinghouse in 1785.

VIII EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD

A. Transportation Routes:

Improvement of north/south axis with mainline of Fall River railroad (1847) from Boston/across Salisbury Plain River and Town River to Bridgewater. Local roads of the period include Elm-North Sts and realignment of north/south Main St. (Route 28) from Bridgewater to North Bridgewater (Brockton).

B. Population:

Population growth from 1830 to 1860, then stable to end of period. Foreign born population 272 in 1855 (257 Irish).

C. Settlement:

Some expansion at Bennett's Corner (West Bridgewater Center) however, major portion of community farming and residential settlement consists primarily of farmsteads scattered throughout the town.

D. Economic Base:

In the 1830s, two more furnaces for casting hollowware were erected - both possibly at the Town Mills site at Bennett's Corner. One was built by D. Forbes (possibly an extension of the nail factory); the other was probably built by the Ames shovel works in Easton to allow the company to partly manufacture their product here, with finishing done in Easton. Cast-iron ploughs, in addition to shovels, spades, forks, and hoes, were manufactured here.

The town's major industry in this period, however, was the home manufacture of boots and shoes. Between 1837 and 1845 the annual value of this product tripled. By 1855, 300 men and women (in ratio of 2:1) were employed, producing \$178,460 worth.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Comparatively few cottages or houses in the Greek Revival style were constructed in the town, with most period residences probably built after 1850. A few broad-gabled Greek Revival, usually three-bay wide by a single room deep, were built. The predominant house form of the period is the sidehall, story-and-a-half gable-roofed cottage, substantial numbers of which were constructed across the town. Most exhibit transitional Greek Revival/Italianate styling with sidelights, door hoods and partial gable return, rather than the full pedimented gable of the Greek Revival. The prevalence of the form and its use throughout the period indicate the town's conservatism and modest economic base during the period. Two-story houses, although unusual, are not unknown, surviving examples being modest sidehall-plan structures with very simple detailing; later examples incorporate polygonal bays and verandas. Traditional center-entered, five-bay facade, double interior chimney plan houses with overhanging eaves at the gable end were built into the 1860s in outlying sections of town.

Institutional: At least two churches were built in the period, one of which, the Methodist church (1841) at Cochesett, survives; it is a two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed structure with a modest belfry with distinctive ogival-arched openings and an ogival cupola. The other sect founded in this period were the Swedenborgians, who built a church in 1847. Although several schools were undoubtedly constructed in the period, none are known to survive. It is likely that these were the traditional double-entrance gable-roofed story-and-a-half structures, probably built in a transitional Greek Revival/Italianate style, like many of the cottages of the period. Some may survive in altered form as dwellings.

Commercial: A few commercial blocks, modest center-entered, three-bay facade, story-and-a-half, gable-roofed, Greek Revival/Italianate buildings were constructed at Cochesett and at Bennett's Corner during the period; only one survives in almost unaltered condition, at Cochesett.

IX LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes:

Expansion of railroad network with east/west line through West Bridgewater center to Easton (ca. 1885) from Matfield junction (partially abandoned). Continued improvement of north/south axis from Brockton by 1890s with street railway lines through town center on Elm-North-Center-Main Sts, and loop from East Bridgewater through Matfield.

B. Population:

Population decreased to 1885, increased in 1890, decreased between 1890 and 1900, then increased to end of period. Foreign born population 308 in 1885, majority Irish, increased to 558 in 1915 with Portuguese dominant.

C. Settlement:

Settlement patterns remain virtually the same as during the previous

period. Some infill along existing roads, but little additional clustering of structures.

D. Economic Base:

Boot and shoe production continued to expand after the War. In 1875, the last year for which census figures are available, two factories produced \$235,000 worth of boots and shoes, while four other shops added another \$81,000 in shoes alone. The Ames Foundry activity continued at Bennett's Corner, producing \$45,00 worth of shovel plates in 1875, while a new steam foundry operated by James O. Alger at Scotland and S. Elm streets produced steam boiler castings, stoves, and iron fencing. (Relationship of James O. Alger to Cyrus Alger 1782-1856, founder of the South Boston Iron Works, who was born here?)

Agriculture, however, appears to have been the principal business. In 1865, there were 145 farms, and the strawberry was extensively cultivated. According to one gazetteer in 1874, Herman Copeland sent 9,000 boxes of strawberries to market in 1873. Two years later, a fertilizer manufacturer by the name of Ward (location unknown), was producing \$18,000 worth.

The paucity of sources make the town's development in the last quarter century unclear. Probably, however, the shoe factories and shops had disappeared by 1900, faced with competition from the larger shoe towns nearby. It is also unlikely that the small-scale iron activities survived long after 1900.

E. Architecture:

Residential: A number of modest cottages were built during the period, particularly after the arrival of the railroad in the mid-1880s, and especially with the arrival of the street railway in the 1890s. Most roads were developed with story-and-a-half hip-roofed cottages with sidehall plans, rafted dormers and kneewall porches in the Craftsman manner;

alternate forms include Colonial Revival style cottages with gable or gambrel roofs as well as a few bungalows with exposed joinery in the manner of Green and Greene. The predominant form of the early years of the period, and one which continued to be constructed into the 1890s, was the sidehall-plan, story-and-a-half, gable-roofed Queen Anne cottage with patterned shingle detailing, verandas with turned and sawn trim, chamfered corners and gabled dormers. In form, the cottage is traditional and little change can be discerned from the plan-type and massing of the mid-century sidehall cottage; in fact, transitional Italianate/Queen Anne cottages survive in some numbers. At least a few very well-detailed Queen Anne/Colonial Revival cottages are known with only one house of greater pretention, a large hip-roofed Colonial Revival house on Route 106, recently destroyed in a fire. For more substantial two-story construction, there seem to have been very few options: almost all two-story houses built in the period are modest Colonial Revival houses with steep hip roofs, kneewall porches and four-square plans. Large numbers of these were constructed along the streetcar routes across the town.

Institutional: The most imposing institution of the period (and perhaps all periods) was the Howard Institute (1883), a three-and-a-half story brick High Victorian Gothic school with a mansard roof, central pavilion with broached spire, polychromatic voussoirs, corbelled cornice and steep gable dormers; it no longer stands. Other structures include the two-and-a-half story Stick Style Methodist Church (ca. 1870) and a one-and-a-half story Stick Style Baptist Church with an offset tower with open belfry and hip-roofed spire; neither of these is thought to survive. The Town Hall (1894) is a conservative late Italianate/Queen Anne structure

two-and-a-half stories tall with a gable roof. A single brick Colonial Revival school (ca. 1910) is known on Center Street, but other period schools do not seem to have survived.

Commercial: Modest commercial structures were built at Elm Square, Bennett's Corner, and Matfield. These include an unusual, four-square plan, low hip-roofed late Italianate block at Elm Square, an early 20th century Queen Anne grocery store at Matfield, and a number of simple gable-roofed frame commercial blocks at Bennett's Corner.

X EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes:

Abandonment of trolley routes from Brockton by 1920s and improvement of local highways as regional auto routes through the town center. Primary north/south axis from Brockton as Route 28 (Main St) and secondary east/west axis as Center St (Route 106) with Art Deco concrete bridge (1936) at West Meadow Brook.

B. Population:

Continuous population growth to 1935, then slight decline between 1935 and 1940. Post World War II population growth continuous but not dramatic. St. Ann's Catholic Church established 1928.

C. Settlement:

Settlement pattern remains static.

D. Economic Base:

"The town is predominantly agricultural," wrote the WPA Guide in 1937, "growing potatoes and the smaller garden crops, and specializing in dairying and poultry-raising." In 1936 the town dedicated a new War Memorial Park on the site of the Town Mills. Designed by Evelyn C. Johnson, the park used many of the surviving features from the 19th century industrial activity.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Very few houses were built in the Early Modern period, although at least a few of the modest cottages and bungalows of the Late Industrial may have been built after 1915. Modest Dutch Colonial and Craftsman houses and cottages are located on Copeland Street and on Prospect Street.

Institutional: No structures are known to have been built in this period.

Commercial: A few one-story commercial blocks, including one with glass block detailing and subdued Moderne styling, were built on Route 28 at Matfield.

XI SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Almost no survey has been completed in West Bridgewater; only the earliest houses connected with figures important in ecclesiastical or economic development are surveyed. While the town is characterized by a generally modest economic base and diffused settlement, perhaps as many as two dozen structures, primarily residential and institutional, and dating from the Colonial through Early Industrial periods, should be documented more thoroughly while isolated examples of later architectural styles should be noted. Good surviving period landscapes at Arch and River Streets (Colonial/Federal), Belmont and Matfield Streets (Early Industrial), River and Forest Streets (Colonial), South Elm Street (Federal), and Matfield (Late Industrial). Also notable are well-preserved 19th century farmsteads on East Street and in the southern half of the town.

Industrial: Relatively little of the town's 19th century industrial activity survives. Most of it has been identified, at least in a broad sense, in the town's War Memorial Park. However, an excellent opportunity exists here to further interpret the town's industrial development. Further study might well indicate that the site remained sufficiently intact to merit a National Register nomination.

Until the 1960s the town had an unusual number of fine stone-arch bridges. Many of these have since been replaced. Two that have not been are the celebrated "three-arch bridge" and a 30-foot arch span on Belmont Street, both of which should be considered eligible for National Register status. Three stone-slab bridges also exist: the Skimmilk bridge, Elm Street bridge, and the Canal bridge. The mill structure at 171 Crescent should also be further studied.

Developmental Pressures: Intensive industrial park expansion along Route 24 (Boston expressway) from Route 106 interchange along Manley St seriously affecting remaining agriculture in area. Related commercial activity extended along Route 106 axis at Pleasant Hill-Cochesett threatening remaining historic fabric around Route 24 junction. Similar activity at Route 28 and 106 junction has eroded integrity of West Bridgewater center, although historic meeting house site survives as isolated district. Suburban expansion from Boston is evident along Route 28 axis and Elm St, with Matfield village surviving as intact district.

XII SOURCES

"A Description of Bridgewater, 1818", Massachusetts Historical Society
Collections 2 Ser., 7 (1818), pp. 137-176.

(Allen, Rev. Charles A., ed.,) The Bridgewater Book, Illustrated
(Boston, 1899). (Attribution in Bridgewater Public Library copy.)

Bridgewater, Mass., Old Bridgewater Tercentenary Committee, Old Bridgewater
Tercentenary 1656-1956 (Brockton, 1956).

Hurd, Duane H., ed., "History of West Bridgewater", in D.H. Hurd's
History of Plymouth County, Massachusetts (Phila., 1884), pp. 888-937.

Kingman, Bradford, "History of Ancient Bridgewater", in D.H. Hurd's
History of Plymouth County, Massachusetts (Phila., 1884), pp. 539-543.

Mitchell, Nathum, History of the Early Settlement of Bridgewater in
Plymouth County (Boston, 1840; Bridgewater, 1897).