

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

WINCHENDON

Report Date: 1984

Associated Regional Report: Central Massachusetts

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

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

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

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

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MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

Date: 1984

Community: Winchendon

I. TOPOGRAPHY

Winchendon is situated in northern Worcester County bordering New Hampshire on the north. Unlike Royalston to the west and Ashburnham to the east, Winchendon's surface is less hilly and its elevation changes less severe. Although several hills rise to 1200 feet above sea level in the east, the general elevation of the town is about 800-1000 feet a.s.l.

The major feature of the town is the Miller's River, which has its source in Lake Monomonac situated in the northeast corner of the town. The river courses through the town in a southwesterly direction for approximately 14 miles. Priest Brook joins the Miller's River from the north and the Otter River joins it from the south in the southwesterly corner of the town. Broad level terraces of Merrimac loamy coarse sand are found along the river valleys, and large areas of Charlton loam and fine sandy loam occur in a broad belt running north to south through the central portion of the town. Those soils, in contrast to the excessively drained and gravelly Merrimac soils, are very valuable agricultural lands and yield fine crops of hay, grains, and vegetables.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

The "six-mile-square," veterans' plantation of Ipswich Canada was granted in 1735 and established as the town of Winchendon in 1764. The "Royalston Leg," a narrow strip of land left along the New Hampshire border by the Province Line of 1740, was annexed by Winchendon in 1780. The southeast corner of town was included in the new town of Gardner in 1785. Border adjustments with Gardner were made in 1787, 1794, and 1851.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Winchendon is an industrial and residential highland community on the upper Millers River, on an historic northwest corridor to New Hampshire and Vermont. Native sites are possible at Monomonac Lake and Lake Dennison. Permanent European settlement was established by ca. 1752, together with the hilltop meetinghouse site. Dispersed upland agricultural settlement continues through the 18th and early 19th centuries, with a significant local shingle industry. Turnpike traffic leads to early 19th-century village growth north of the meetinghouse center along the Millers River corridor. Textile manufacturing develops in the early 19th century along the North Branch Millers River at the Spring Village (Winchendon Springs) in the northeast and later at Glen Allen Mills. The woodworking industry is established at Waterville. Rail connections and the development of the woodworking machine tool industry stimulates the continued 19th-century growth of

Winchendon Village as a secondary regional focus, with a commercial district and distinctive worker and high-income residential neighborhoods. Smaller industrial centers also persist through the 19th century. Significant development of the toy industry and later refrigerator manufacturing sustain Winchendon Village in the late 19th and early 20th century. Modern construction of the Birch Hill flood control area and the resulting expansion of Lake Dennison has removed or obscured low-lying agricultural and industrial settlement in the west, and has provided a recreational focus for suburban development. Some dispersed highland agricultural landscapes remain in use. Winchendon Center retains much of its early 19th-century scale. The industrial villages at Winchendon Springs, Glen Allen Mills, and Waterville all retain both their residential structure and their late 19th-century mills. Winchendon Village retains a variety of representative residential architecture, a number of civic landmarks, and several notable industrial complexes, although the central commercial area remains only partially intact.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes

Highland tributary area on upper Millers River corridor. East-west trail inferred along contour lines in northeast, north of Lake Jones to North Branch Millers River crossing at mineral springs, then along contours generally following Elmwood Road and extending south to Millers River falls. Inferred route then extends on Front, School, and West Streets to Millers River crossing at Bullardville, then on North Royalston Road. Southern branch in east inferred as North Ashburnham Road to Gardner Road south toward Crystal Lake (Gardner). Conjectured trail south on Glen Allen Street to Millers River crossing, then Hall Street connecting to Baldwinsville Road-Otter River Road.

B. Settlement Pattern

Like so many other northern Worcester County towns, no archaeological sites are reported for the town. Its location in the Millers River valley brings it into the sphere of influence shared by northeastern county, and affiliated with the WEstern Abernaki Squakeags as opposed to the Nipmucks of the south. Occupation sites can be expected near the meadows adjacent to the Millers River, Monomonac, Whitney, and Stoddard ponds, and North Branch.

C. Subsistence Pattern

This area was visited seasonally for hunting and fishing by small family and task bands from the village base camp to the west.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes

Established trails continue in use.

B. Settlement Pattern

A continuation of patterns established during the Contact period, with some reduction following the Squakeag removal to the north.

C. Subsistence Pattern

A continuation of patterns established during the Contact period.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes

East-west native trail is improved as part of Earlington or Northfield Road (ca. 1730), but is replaced by ca. 1760 by east-west route from Dorchester Canada (Ashburnham) through meetinghouse center to Royalshire (Royalston) on Teel Road-Hale Street-River Street. The southwest trail is improved as a road to Templeton Center. A northwest branch of the main east-west route passes the Millers River falls area to New Hampshire (Ash Street-Front Street-School Street). A direct route southeast to Westminster is established from the meetinghouse center (Old County Road).

B. Population

The proprietors of the town were veterans, and their descendants, of the expedition from Ipswich, Mass., 60 in number. Ten acted on their own behalf, fifteen in the right of their fathers, twelve of their uncles, eleven of their brothers. The remainder of husbands, wife's father, grandfather, or other individuals. As in most towns, however, few of these actually settled in the town. Settlement was slowed by frontier warfare, but after a bounty was offered to settlers, ten came to the town in 1752. By the time of incorporation, in 1763, the total had increased to 30 families. In 1776 the total population equalled 519. The town gathered its church in 1762.

C. Settlement Pattern

The area now Winchendon was granted to veterans from a 1690 expedition to Canada resident in Ipswich. Two years later the proprietors made the first division of land, into 100-acre lots, in two groups: in the south in three tiers of 36, adjacent to the north in two tiers of ten, one of eight, and a third of five; this large block was located in the town center, but slightly to the east. Initially, a five-acre lot just south of the division of the groups was to be the site of the meetinghouse, burying and training ground, and erected a frame there, but shortly moved it to the hill to the west.

D. Economic Base

Late incorporation limits the information available on the town. Like other north county towns, however, we can predict poor agrarian town status like its neighboring towns in the Pruitt Classification for 1771. This indicates low commercial development, community wealth, agrarian prosperity, corn production, and propertylessness, but moderate to high agrarian poverty. Very soon after settlement, grist and saw mills were established, the former on the Millers River by Bartholemew Pearson in 1759, the latter three years earlier on a tributary near Bullardville.

E. Architecture

Residential: Very few apparent survivals. Richard Day House (1752) is a two-story, five-bay, center chimney structure with a pyramidal roof. Some evidence of single-story, center chimney plans.

Institutional: Reported attempts at construction of meetinghouse ca. 1751. First meetinghouse actually built in 1762 (35x45 feet) at south end of common.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes

Colonial highways continue in use. The Worcester-Fitzwilliam Turnpike is chartered in 1805 to run from the New Hampshire line at Royalston to Worcester. Construction lags, however, and only the segment south to Baldwin's Mills (Baldwinsville) is built (ca. 1815). Locally, the pike passes through the west part of town as New Boston Road. By 1830, a new lowland route connects from Ashburnham to the North Village along the Millers River corridor (Spring Street), and a new direct road (West Street-Harris Road) extends northwest from the North Village to New Hampshire.

B. Population

The town's population grew rapidly during this period, from 519 in 1776 to 1,463 in 1830, nearly tripling. The greatest period of expansion came early, adding over 400 in the first fourteen years. The orthodox Congregational church came into conflict with their minister over familiar problems of payment, temperament, and his Arminian tendencies; he was dismissed in 1799. The church remained orthodox, rescinding the Half-Way Covenant in 1801, and experienced a large revival in 1822 when they added 84 members.

From 1783, Baptists met in the town, forming a church in New Boston in 1798. At least one Quaker in the town was exempted from taxation. Methodist preaching by Lorenzo Dow began in 1796, a church was formed by twelve in 1800, and seven years later the group built the county's first Methodist church; in 1824 they

began a Sabbath school. After two reports blamed the town's poverty on intemperance, a poorfarm-workhouse was purchased. A library operated in the center early in the century, and in the village from 1810-25.

C. Settlement Pattern

Dispersed agricultural settlement continues, and early 19th-century industrial development occurs along the Millers River. By the end of the period, the North Village has surpassed the meetinghouse center as the main settlement focus.

The second meetinghouse is built at Winchendon Center in 1792, and by the early 19th century a small village of less than a dozen buildings has developed at this crossroads area. A Methodist Church is built in the northwest on Tallow Hill in 1807, and a Baptist church is constructed at New Boston in the southwest in 1820. Textile manufacturing is initiated on the Millers River North Branch at Winchendon Springs in 1816, with a factory added in 1826. Woodenware manufacturing begins at Waterville in 1825. After 1820, a transport focus develops along Front Street north of the Millers River for traffic through town from the northwest, and by 1830, more than a dozen houses are located at the North Village.

D. Economic Base

Winchendon's proportion of unimproved land and woodlot, 90.9%, was the county's highest in 1784; an additional 5.2% was classified as unimprovable. The small amount of remaining worked land included .9% under tillage, 2.8% meadow and mowing, and 4.8% in pasturage.

Throughout the late 18th and early 19th century, Winchendon's economy was largely based on agriculture and the extractive industries that resulted from settlement and land-clearing: lumber, potash, and wooden goods. During the late 18th century the town acquired a reputation as "shingletown" for the large quantity of shingels produced. In 1793 two or three potash works, six sawmills, two gristmills and a clothier's works were recorded in the town. By 1830, 16 sawmills, five gristmills, two woolen mills, and four tanneries were scattered across the town in the villages of Waterville, Bullardville, New Boston, Harrisville, and in the "The Village" (now the commercial and administrative center of the town).

As Winchendon's woodlands were gradually cleared, the number of acres of tillage land doubled between 1791 and 1831 from 381 to 770 acres, and meadow and pasture land increased fourfold during this same period. A common practice among the farmers was to take in cattle and horses for pasturing and feeding on Winchendon's hay and pastureland prior to driving them to market. The town also had a market for its hay and feed for herds of cattle, sheep, and swine as they passed through the town during market drives from the north and west.

Water-powered textile manufacturing was begun about 1818 when spinning machinery was put into a small mill on the Miller's

River. The yarn was put out for homeweaving until 1825 when a new factory replaced the burned 1818 mill and power looms were added by owner Amasa Whitney to weave woolen cloth. In 1837 this became the Winchendon Mfg. Co. In 1826 a second woolen factory was set up by Sylvanus Holbrook, an owner and operator of several woolen mills in the Blackstone Valley, at Spring Village on the Miller's River. The manufacture of woolen goods was replaced by cotton manufacturing in 1831 at the latter site. Just west of the center on the Miller's River a dam and tannery were erected about 1817 by Issac Morse, continuing growth through the period.

By the end of the period the most important industry in Winchendon was woodworking. This included the manufacture of bobbins for the textile mills (begun by E. & W. Murdock near the tannery), clothespins, and pails, tubs, and woodenware (at Waterville by William Robbins in the 1820s, at Harrisville, and at Bullardville, begun c. 1827).

E. Architecture

Residential: Center chimney houses of both one and two stories occur along with significant numbers of rear wall chimney houses, frequently with hipped roofs. Smaller numbers of two-story, double chimney houses survive. One particularly well preserved example has a dentilled cornice and pedimented door with fanlight and pilasters. Another, gable-on-hip, double chimney house is recorded. Marvin (1868) states that in 1820 there were only 20 two-story houses. He further states that most houses of the time were unpainted and that of the few that were, most were either red or yellow. White was thought to be pretentious.

Institutional: Second meetinghouse was built in 1792 at the north end of the common and measured 50 x 60 feet with 10 x 14-foot porches at each end, an entry centered in the five-bay, 60-foot facade, and quoins. A tower and bell were added in 1815. A Methodist meetinghouse (not extant) was built in 1807 near Tallow Hill on Bosworth Road and measured 28 x 36 feet. In 1820, a Baptist meetinghouse (not extant) was built in the southwest at New Boston.

A brick schoolhouse was built in the center ca. 1786 (20 x 20 feet). Five or six other frame schoolhouses were built about the same time (18 x 18 feet). By 1801, there were eight district schoolhouses. One apparently early, single-story, gable-end, center entry structure remains at Winchendon Springs as a residence.

Commercial: Reference to hotel in Winchendon Village, 1800-25.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes

The southeast-northwest Cheshire Railroad opens service from Ashburnham Depot to Keene, New Hampshire along the Millers River corridor in 1848, with a station at the North Village. The

Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad (1847) passes through the southwest corner of town on the Otter River-Millers River corridor to the South Royalston station.

B. Population

The town's population continued to grow at an accelerated rate throughout this period, from 1,463 in 1830 to 3,398 in 1870, more than doubling. The town experienced a brief setback in 1860 when the figure dropped by 123 before resuming its expansion. As in all towns that developed a manufacturing component in its economy, immigrants came to the town in significant numbers. During this period this predominantly Irish group accounted for 12% of the population. As the new population concentrated in the manufacturing village, religious institutions moved there, including the Methodists in 1832, Baptists in 1848, a second Congregational society in 1843, and a Unitarian group in 1851. The majority of the town responded to this change through nativist Know-Nothing politics, and with the proliferation of several temperance groups, including the Band of Hope, Washingtonians, total abstinence, and Good Templars. Other voluntary associations formed during the period include Odd Fellows (1847) and Masons (1866). An Academy, with its own boarding house, operated in the town from 1843 to 1853 when it was willed to the town for use as a high school. Votes to abolish the district system met resistance in 1866, but a year later arguments that the town should regain its ancient control won over. Prior to town takeover, the district schools were used for Sabbath meetings and held small libraries. A Family Library was formed in 1835, a Scientific and Library Association in 1851, added the Agricultural Library in 1865, and was turned over to the town in 1867.

C. Settlement Patterns

Significant industrial development occurs along the Millers River corridor, especially after the 1840s railroad connections. The most significant growth occurs at Winchendon Village (North Village) as a result of both its location as a major railroad junction, and of the growth of the woodworking machinery industry. The Village becomes the town's civic and commercial focus, as Winchendon Center declines in importance. Textile manufacturing expands at Winchendon Springs, as does the woodenware industry at Waterville. Dispersed, small-scale wood industries continued, most notably at Harrisville in the northwest, Sibley's Mills near the Royalston border, and at Bullardville, where a blanket mill is also built during the period.

The (North) Village expands, mainly northeast from Front Street along the Central Street axis to beyond the depot area, as the number of houses in the area increases from about 20 in 1843 to an estimated 250 in 1868. Industrial development extends along a series of power sites from the area south of River and Front Streets in the southwest to the area east of Elm and Summer Streets in the east. This eastern area, near the rail corridor, a

manufacturing complex develops that includes the Whitney Machine Shops and an 1853 cotton mill. A separate industrial focus develops at the northwest village fringe along the rail corridor.

Early in the period, the Front Street area develops into the town's civic focus, with a Methodist church (1833) and Academy (1843) at the School/Front intersection, and the North Congregational Church (1843-4) to the east at the Front/Spring intersection. The Town Hall (1851) is located toward the east end of Front between Pleasant and Central. Subsequent church construction extends northeast along the Central Street axis, with the Baptist Church (1848-9) north of the depot, the Unitarian church (1866) at Summer Street, and the Catholic Church at Locus Street. Commercial development also concentrates on Central Street, with one focus at the depot area, and the other at the town hall (Front/Central extending to Summer Street).

Residential development extends in several directions. New housing is built on Front Street west of School Street and on Oak Street to the north. A new residential area is established north of Front Street along Pleasant and Spruce extending to the railroad corridor. To the east of Central Street, a worker residential district develops on Beach, Chestnut, Walnut, and Summer Streets. Residential growth extends northeast of the rail corridor, primarily on Central, Juniper, Maple, and Elm Streets. South of the river, High Street begins to develop as a high-income corridor. A row of side entry residences is built along Prospect Street. To the southeast, the Irish immigrant population appears concentrated in the Spring/Ash/Emerald Street area.

At Waterville/Hydeville to the southwest, the expansion of wood industries along the Millers River is concentrated in the Murdock Wooden Ware complex around the River Street/Main Street intersection on both sides of the river. Worker housing extends southwest on Main Street, and west on River Street. A secondary concentration develops to the north on Brown Street.

In the northeast, the mills at Winchendon Springs (Springville) are rebuilt and expanded in 1855 after a fire. A worker duplex cluster is built north of the mills, and mixed linear residential development occurs along Glen Allen Road.

D. Economic Base

During the middle decades of the 19th century, Winchendon experienced tremendous growth as a result of several factors: connection by railroad to an expanded source of new materials and markets (1847-48 Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad, 1848 Cheshire Railroad); the invention, continued development, and production of machinery for the manufacture of wooden tubs, Pauls, barrels, and ware; and continued growth in the textile industry. During this time the population more than doubled, experiencing its greatest growth during the 1840s when growth approached 50% for the decade. The village on the Miller's River grew from a small

cluster of 16 houses, tannery, hotel, woolen mill and sleigh shop to a large village of more than 250 dwellings, 1500 people (half the town's population), three mill dams which powered a number of manufacturing establishments, 2 banks, the town hall, and 25 stores and shops. Growth also occurred at Springville, Waterville, Nydeville, and Bullardville, supported largely by the erection or enlargement of woodworking establishments during the 1840s and early 1850s.

Perhaps the most important development in Winchendon's woodenware industry was the invention and production of the cylinder or barrel saw by Deacon Reuben Hyde during the early 1830s, which allowed mechanized shaping and forming of wooden pails, tubs, barrels, and other ware. The manufacture of woodenware already the leading industry in Winchendon, became a town specialty after these developments, and the town became the leading producer of woodenware in the Commonwealth. By 1875 nearly 1/2 million dollars worth of woodenware was produced in the town annually. Several large manufacturers important in the development and extension of the industry during this period included: Elisha and Ephraim Murdock, who erected large manufactories along the Miller's River northeast of the center in 1827 and at Waterville; William Beaman and Orlando Mason, c. 1843, also at Waterville; Harrison Aldrick and Co. at Harrisville; Whitman & Parks, Charles Bullard, Levi Parks, and Edward Loud at Bullardville.

Winchendon's rapid rise as a center of woodenware manufacturing was furthered by the fact that it also became a machine-making center. Although textile machinery was initially produced in the town's machine shops, it was the manufacture of wood-working machinery that made the town's reputation and dominated the machine-making industry into the 20th century, supplying the town's and region's manufacturers with a variety of quality woodworking machinery. The first machine shop in Winchendon was set up by William Murdock in 1831 near the Morse tannery between Waterville and the Center village. It was there that the earliest woodenware machines were built. In 1846, Baxter D. Shitney, a former employee of Murdock and textile machine builder, erected his machine shop near the railroad dam in the Center. After a flood in 1852 which washed away every bridge and dam on the Miller's River in Winchendon, Whitney rebuilt his shop and expanded his works to include a foundry, woodenware shop, brick cotton factory, a carriage shop, and blacksmith shops. Among the more than 22 patents granted to Whitney during this period are included patents on machines for making clothespins, pail and tubs, for cutting pail ears, and for chairs and woodenware. In 1857 he patented a smoothing machine and in 1860 a gauge planer. Among his more important developments was a rotary-head cylinder planer, and invention that contributed more than any other device to the advancement of all woodworking processes. In 1849, the Goodspeed Machine Co. was begun as Robinson and Goodspeed, located in the center west of B.D. Whitney, also manufacturing woodworking machinery.

Growth also occurred in the textile industry. A new brick mill for cotton manufacturing was built by B.D. Whitney in 1853-54 in the center and operated by Nelson D. White and Co., which also operated the Nelson Mill in Springville after 1843. A new brick mill was erected there in 1854, and enlarged in 1859. Just upstream from Waterville, the Winchendon Mfg. Co. established in 1837, continued in successful operation as a woolen mill until 1859, when the mill burned. In 1855 these mills produced over 1.6 million yards of cotton sheetings and drillings and more than 200,000 yards of woolen satinetts and kentucky jeans, employing more than 200 men and women. Among the towns farming the northern region, only the mills in Fitchburg and Templeton exceeded the value of goods produced in Winchendon in 1855. By contrast, the manufacture of wooden goods and machinery employed nearly 400 persons in Winchendon in 1855, and the value of those goods was higher than those produced in any other town or city in the region by a factor of at least 2.5.

The economic growth of the town during the 1840s, 50s and 60s, was accompanied by the growth of several financial institutions. The Winchendon Savings Bank was founded in 1854, with many of the leading businessmen in the community as its officers. In 1864 the Winchendon National Bank was organized by a similar group of prominent businessmen and community leaders.

Winchendon's agricultural production remained large by the cultivation of mixed grains, hay, and cattleraising. The amount of cleared land and most intensive level of cultivation probably peaked during the 1860s or 1870s; dairying began to gain importance towards the end of the period and agricultural practices were beginning to change. However, through most of the period, dairying remained a minor activity, unlike the town in the central and southern portion of the region where it gained dominance by the 1840s or 50s. Raising of livestock continued through the period with large quantities of beef slaughtered annually.

E. Architecture:

Residential: The predominant house form for the period is the gable-end with either a side passage or center entry. Most of these seem to occur in the Greek Revival period. Some early period worker housing exists east and northeast of Winchendon Village at Winchendon Springs and south along Glen Allen Road. Representative of these are double chimney duplexes and some one-story, seven-bay, end chimney duplexes with the doors at the ends of the facade rather than centered. The gable-end, side-passage plan remains the major house type for the latter half of the period, although the numbers seem to decrease. Both side-passage and symmetrical, center entry Second Empire houses occur. Small numbers of asymmetrical, Italianate and Second Empire style houses are found as well.

Institutional: The third meetinghouse (1852) in the center was built from materials in the 1792 building. The third building, a gable-end structure with a recessed entry and four Doric columns

in antis, is said to have been built on a smaller scale than its predecessor because the congregation had lost so many members to the North Congregational Church. The Ninth Congregational Church was built ca. 1843 in Winchendon Village. Additions and alterations in 1855, 1867, and particularly between 1902-5 have transformed what was probably a gable-end, Greek Revival building into a Neoclassical design. A Methodist meetinghouse was built in the Village in 1833. The Baptist church (1848) in the Village is a gable-end structure with a recessed entry, pilasters, and a square clock tower and belfry. In 1867, the 45 x 95-foot granite Gothic Revival Unitarian church was built in the Village.

The town hall (1851?) is a two-story, five-bay brick Italianate style building with a mansard roof.

The Academy building, a two-story, three-bay, arched center entry structure (30 x 40 feet), was built in 1843, acquired by the town for its high school⁹¹ in 1853, and served for a period after 1867 as an elementary school. The brick Romanesque high school was built in 1867.

Commercial: The hotel of Isaac Morse was built ca. 1843 and later became known as the American House. Ca. 1850, the Monadnock House, later the Tremont House, was constructed. Both were located in the Village.

Industrial: The Whitney Cotton Mill, a two-story, brick, gabled Greek Revival structure, was built in 1854. The spire was added in 1890. Earlier mill buildings were the Murdock tub and pail factory, which burned and was rebuilt in 1840, and a frame factory at Winchendon Springs which burned in 1854 and was replaced with a two-story brick structure in 1855.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes

Winchendon Village becomes a major railroad center as new lines extend north, southwest, and southeast in the 1870s. The Ware River Railroad is completed to Winchendon Village after 1871. The Boston, Barre, and Gardner Railroad connects from Worcester to Winchendon in 1874. The Monadnock Railroad extends north in 1872.

B. Population

The town's population continued to grow at a slightly slower rate throughout this period, from 3,398 in 1870 to 5,908 in 1915. A slight dip was experienced in 1910 when the total fell by ca. 250, but recovered. Even as the population grew, the proportion of foreign-born grew larger, from 17.4% in 1875 to 22.9% in 1915. By 1885 the French Canadians outnumbered the Irish and continued to expand to outnumber them by a factor of four in 1905. By 1915 large numbers of Italians came to the town, but equalled only one-third the French Canadians. The English and Swedes came in

small numbers, followed later by Poles. The dominance of manufacturing employment grew over agriculture, from a ratio among men's occupations of two to one in 1875 to nearly ten to one in 1905; by 1915 it accounted for 60% of all male employment. In addition, large numbers of women were similarly employed, in a ratio of ca. four to one compared to males, and by 1915 half of the women working outside the home were so employed. As the number of Catholics in the town increased, masses were celebrated and a church building constructed before 1879, later giving way to the large Immaculate Heart of Mary at period's end. In 1888 the Emmanuel church was formed for Episcopalians. By 1893 Christian Scientists met together, organizing in 1901. The number of voluntary associations in the town multiplied with the formation of ethnic clubs such as Hibernians (1881), Artisans Canadians-Francais (1901), St. Jean Baptists (1905), and Knights of Columbus (1909); the Grange (1891), United Workmen (1887), relief associations, and others. The Women's Club sponsored district nursing, and the town formed a Board of Trade in 1909.

C. Settlement Pattern

Industrial expansion continues at the main 19th-century centers, particularly Winchendon Village, where new industries are attracted to the northwest rail corridor area, and commercial and residential development continues.

In the northeast, a new textile factory is built in 1886 on the Millers River North Branch. The Glen Allen Mills are located south of Winchendon Springs, and new worker housing is constructed along Glen Allen Road. Some additions are made to manufacturing facilities at Hydeville, and at Waterville a new woodenware factory is built after an 1895 fire, expanded along the River Street corridor. A mill is added to the west, north of River Street, and the Ware River Railroad Station is located to the east to Depot Street/Laurel Street. Worker housing is added around the Main Street/Hale Street intersection. At Bullardville, and pail manufacturing factory south of Bullardville Pond is rebuilt after an 1890 fire.

At Winchendon Village the Whitney Machine Shops expand, but new manufacturing facilities concentrate to the northwest along the Monadnock Railroad corridor, including Converse Toy (1883), Mason and Parker Toys (1912), and Alaska Freezer (1902), along Lincoln Avenue, with a worker duplex cluster. Commercial development continues on Front Street and along Central Street. South of the river, development of the Irish residential neighborhood south of the Fitchburg Railroad continues, especially on Cross Street. North of the river, residential expansion occurs along Front and West Streets, and in the Monument Park area between Spruce and School Streets, north of Oak Street to Mill and Pearl Streets. A new Catholic church (1907) is built at the Spruce/Grove intersection. Residential expansion continues north of the church in the Mechanic Street/Maynard Street area. North of the tracks residential growth extends on Central Street and east on Maple,

with infill south of Maple Street on Linden Street. A new residential area is laid out north of Maple and east of Central Street (Highland, Woodlawn, Cedar Streets).

D. Economic Base

The last three decades of the 19th century and opening decades of the 20th century saw continued expansion of Winchendon's economic base and steady growth in the value of the Town's manufacturing and agricultural output, despite several recessions in the mid 1870s, 80s and 90s. The leading industries remained woodworking, textiles, and machine-making.

During the 1870s, the manufacture of wooden toys was begun by Converse and Mason at Waterville followed by other firms, and by the early 20th century Winchendon was known as "The Toy Town of the World", taking world leadership in the production of toys from war-demonstrated Germany in the 1920s. New woodworking concerns were begun at Bullardville (1878, Wm. Brown and Sons, woodenware), and expanded to a new plant in 1898, and reed furniture was manufactured after 1892 at Waterville by MH Parks and Co.

The machine-making industry also remained strong as the BD Whitney and Goodspeed Machine Companies continued to produce high high-grade woodworking machines. The Whitney shop was a pioneer in the field of direct motor-driven woodworking machinery, building the first single planer operated by direct motor drive in 1911. Textile manufacturing was enhanced with the construction of the large, 3 story, brick Glenallen Mill in 1886 (an architecturally significant structure, still standing, though in need of immediate care). Located downstream from the Springville Mills, it was erected by N.D. White, who continued to operate both mills until the early 20th century producing colored cotton goods.

Significant growth also occurred at the tannery along the Miller's River east of Waterville. The operation was purchased by Nelson and River, a large tanning concern in Shrewsbury, in 1850. They expanded the facilities and operated the tannery until taken over by C.O. Green and Co., also of Shrewsbury, another major tanning company. Agricultural production continued a gradual shift away from cultivation of grains to an emphasis on dairying. The volume of milk produced doubled nearly every decade, and by 1895 dairy products accounted for nearly 40% of total agricultural production, for the first time exceeding the value of hay produced. By 1905 Winchendon's farmers led most of the surrounding towns in the value of their dairy production. The growing village and steadily increasing population also stimulated market gardening and orcharding.

E. Architecture

Residential: Primary building type is the gable-end house with a variety of period details: late Italianate, Eastlake, Stick, and Queen Anne. Two-story apartment buildings ("double-deckers") were noted.

Institutional: New Methodist church erected (1876) on Front Street. The brick, Gothic, Immaculate Heart of Mary church was completed in 1907.

The brick Romanesque Murdock School was built in 1887. A Colonial Revival, frame school stands on Glen Allen Road south of Winchendon Springs.

The two-story, brick Colonial Revival library dates from the early 20th century.

Commercial: In 1906, the American House was a three-and-a-half-story, five-bay, mansard roofed building with multiple porches. The I. M. Murdock Building (54 x 75.5 feet) was built on Front Street in 1875. The two-story, mansard-roofed Winchendon National Bank building was constructed in the early 1870s.

Industrial: Two three-story brick mill buildings were built at Winchendon Springs in 1886. The brick mill on Whitney Pond was built ca. 1898.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes

By the mid 1920s, the Route 12 corridor northwest from Fitchburg is improved as part of a major regional north-south auto highway (Spring Street-Front Street-School Street). A new Route 32 (later Route 202) corridor is established from Baldwinsville north through Waterville, Winchendon Village, and Winchendon Springs to Ridge, New Hampshire (Main Street-River-Front-Central-Maple Street-Rindge Road). By the mid 1930s Gardner Road in the southeast is improved as the Route 64 (later Route 140) connector north to Route 12.

B. Population

Although slowed, the town's population continued to grow, from 5,908 in 1915 to 6,575 in 1940. The foreign-born population dropped, however, to 13.4%. Manufacturing employment dropped slightly, with operative and craft employments combined accounting for 59%. Most significant was the effect of the Depression, with total males in the work force dropping by ca. 300, while 126 were engaged in emergency employment and 178 were unemployed. Female employment as operatives remained constant.

C. Settlement Pattern

Little significant development occurs outside of Winchendon Village, and New Boston is removed, and Bullardville is partially destroyed, both as a result of the Brick Hill Dam project. In the Village, residential infill continues in the Monument Park area, and peripheral additions are made to the north and west (Mason Street area).

D. Economic Base

The years between World War I and World War II were difficult for Winchendon. Though they opened with nearly a decade of sustained growth, the recession of mid 1920s impacted the town's industries. The depression of the 1930s was particularly harsh on Winchendon, as both the converse toy manufacturing and the N.D. White textile manufacturing company were shut down. By 1940 the workforce and wage rates had again attained the 1929 pre-Depression levels, but the value of manufactured goods still lagged behind. Nearly all the pre-Depression industries continued though not all the firms were the same. Textiles accounted for 30% of the value of manufactures, machine-making for 23%, and furniture, toys, and woodenware remained the principal industries, accounting for nearly 45% of the value of manufactured goods and 51% of the workforce.

Little information regarding agricultural developments are available. Undoubtedly the trend toward removing marginal lands from cultivation and pasturage continued, and the number of large active farms declined.

E. Architecture

Residential: Colonial Revival, Bungalows, and Four Square plan houses appear to be the popular period house forms.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Inventory appears to be sporadic. Several major public buildings are not included. Surveyed sites are listed on U.S.G.S.

XII. SOURCES