

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

WILLIAMSBURG

Report Date: 1982

Associated Regional Report: Connecticut Valley

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

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

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

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

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



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: 1982

COMMUNITY: Williamsburg

I. TOPOGRAPHY

Williamsburg is one of the northernmost towns in Hampshire County. Its northern border abuts the southern boundary of Franklin County. Local terrain consists primarily of moderate to rugged uplands. Elevations gradually increase from 600 - 800 feet in southeastern Williamsburg to heights well over 1200 feet on the town's western periphery. The highest point is Battlecock Hill (1492 feet) situated in southwestern Williamsburg. Other prominent elevations include Bascom Hill (1242 feet) located south of Battlecock Hill, Walnut Hill (1425 feet) in northeastern Williamsburg and the twin peaks of Davis Hill (846 feet) and Shingle Hill (767 feet) situated north of the village of Haydenville. These uplands are bisected by the Mill River Valley which runs through them on a northeast-southeast axis. The Mill River flows through the valley eventually draining into the Connecticut River in Northampton. This river is fed by a number of local marshy lowlands of the southeastern portion of town. The only substantial freshwater body is the Mountain Road Reservoir, a portion of which is situated on the Williamsburg/Hatfield line.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Originally granted as Hatfield Addition in 1695 defining western boundary (Chesterfield-Goshen), northern boundary (Conway), eastern boundary (Whately) and southern line with Northampton (Westhampton). Hatfield division lots surveyed in 1752, incorporated as Williamsburg district in 1771 and established as town in 1775. Eastern section (Haydenville-Beaver Brook) adjusted with annex exchange from Hatfield in 1845.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Industrial hill town on primary east-west corridor between Northampton and Pittsfield. Located in western uplands with access to Connecticut valley along Mill River, including potential native fishing sites at Haydenville and Williamsburg. Settlement from Hatfield and Northampton during Colonial period along Mill River valley with some mid-18th century houses around original town center on Village Hill above Williamsburg, and authentic gambrel cottages on Hyde Hill Road. Limited agricultural potential after Revolution with surviving Federal farmsteads in Beaver Brook valley, Unquommonk Brook and on Nash Hill, including notable set along Conway Road.

Significant development of industrial sites along Mill River during early 19th century from upland farms. Commercial and civic center relocated from Village Hill to Williamsburg Center with early town house and brick tavern intact along Main Street (Route 9). Haydenville developed as important mill village with landmark set of porticoed

Greek Revival owners' houses opposite original factory site and related workers' housing along Mill River. Farming maintained in fertile valleys of Beaver Brook with period Greek Revival examples along South Street. Continued expansion of Mill River settlement despite destruction from 1874 Flood with notable Victorian brick factory at Haydenville and Neo-Classic library and church at Williamsburg in late 19th century suburban setting. Mill River valley developed as important auto highway corridor to Berkshires during Early Modern period with some original garages at Williamsburg Station. At present commercial expansion is evident along Route 9 corridor from Northampton between Haydenville and Williamsburg, while town centers have undergone some revitalization from tourist traffic. Outlying areas retain historic landscape character, especially on upland hill sites, although there is evidence of gradual suburban expansion on vista roads.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes:

Important east-west corridor of routeways through western uplands from Connecticut Valley with primary location along Mill River axis. Major trail route from Nonotuck (Northampton) to Housatonic Valley apparently followed axis of Route 9 from Haydenville to Unquomunk Brook with probably fordway across Mill River at Williamsburg Center. From Williamsburg main trail is reported over Village Hill Road and apparently continued west as Old Goshen Road around upper Mill River (Deming, 1946, p.71). Connecting trails to Mill River valley appear likely along Beaver Brook from Capawonk (Hatfield) as Mountain Street, from Pocumtuck (Deerfield) and Whately as Nash Street - Depot Road along upper Wright Brook over Nash Hill, and along Brier Hill Road from upper Deerfield River (Conway) to Village Hill. It is also logical that a secondary trail followed Unquomunk Brook along South Street to Northampton West Farms and upper Manhan River.

B. Settlement Patterns:

There were no reported native sites. The area's rugged terrain suggests native period settlement was limited. Native period sites would have most likely consisted of small to moderate sized encampments established in the intervalles adjacent to Unquomunk Brook and the village of Williamsburg and the northern portion of Beaver Brook. Small hunting and fishing camps were probably scattered throughout the town's uplands.

C. Subsistence Patterns:

The only areas suitable for native horticulture are the previously-mentioned intervalles. Williamsburg was likely a primary native hunting area because of its large wild game population which included deer, bear, wolves, catamounts, beaver and wild turkey. Native fishing probably occurred on local waterways, particularly the Mill River in the vicinity of the village of Williamsburg and Unquomunk Brook.

D. Observations:

The Williamsburg area was probably utilized primarily as a hunting and fishing area for the natives inhabiting the more heavily populated Connecticut River Valley, particularly the Norotucks situated in present Hatfield and Northampton. The greatest probability of extant period sites would be in the Williamsburg Village and Beaver Brook intervals.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes:

Native trails maintained as regional routes with probable path to western Berkshires along Mill River valley (Route 9) over Village Hill from Northampton.

B. Population:

The local native population was most likely restricted to small hunting and fishing bands.

The Williamsburg area lacked a colonial population until the mid-1730's.

C. Settlement Patterns:

Three native settlement patterns probably remained basically the same as those suggested for the Contact period.

D. Economic Base:

There was probably little change in native subsistence rounds. Colonial residents of Connecticut River towns such as Hatfield and Northampton may have hunted and fished in the Williamsburg area.

E. Observations:

Williamsburg remained a fringe area for the natives and recently arrived colonial settlers of the Connecticut River valley settlement core.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes:

Primary east-west route remained along Mill River valley (Route 9) with settlement of Hatfield Addition (after 1735). Extension of Northampton-Pittsfield road over Walnut Hill, apparently as Hyde Hill Road (1750), with Old Goshen Road improved as military highway during Revolution (Sylvester, 1879, I, p.405). Expansion of secondary highway network from Village Hill focus and Haydenville apparently included O'Neil-Adams Road as east-west connector to Hatfield and Ashfield Road along Bradford Brook to Conway.

B. Population:

It is unclear what the area's native population was.

The colonial settlement did not undergo serious growth until the 1760's. By 1776, the community consisted of 534 individuals. Williamsburg's colonial population was comprised primarily of former residents of Hatfield, Northampton and Martha's Vineyard. Smaller numbers moved from southeastern and eastern Massachusetts (Plymouth, Rehoboth, Middleboro, Bridgewater, Boston) and Connecticut (New Haven, Simsbury, Haddam).

C. Settlement Patterns:

The first colonial settlement took place in c.1735 when John Miller built a home northwest of Haydenville at the eastern foot of Miller Hill. In c.1752, Samuel Fairfield established the second colonial home in Williamsburg, near the residence of John Miller. The first serious settlement of Williamsburg did not commence until the early 1760's. By the end of the period, a small settlement node had developed on and adjacent to Village Hill particularly in the general vicinity of Searsville Four Corners (slightly above village of Searsville). Peripheral settlement occurred in Northwestern Williamsburg, northeast of Walcott Hill and Nash Hill. The town's first meetinghouse was not erected until c.1779.

D. Economic Base:

Local colonial residents concentrated on agriculture, particularly livestock production. Emphasis was placed on the raising of beef cattle, sheep, and pigs. The hills adjacent to Route 9 and South Street were particularly well suited for livestock grazing. Fishing probably took place on Williamsburg's streams and the Miller River. John Miller trapped for beaver on Beaver Brook. Lumbering occurred throughout the town's extensive woodlands. Period industrial development was limited to several small scale operations. In c.1770, a sawmill was erected on Beaver Brook while a grist mill was built on Meekin's Brook southeast of Walcott Hill. Locally produced potash was sent out to Boston. Rufus Hyde established the first blacksmith shop in c.1774. Samuel Fairfield opened the settlement's first tavern in c.1752 in Haydenville on Route 9. A second tavern was established by Josiah Dwight on Village Hill in c.1774.

E. Architecture:

Residential: The comparatively late settlement of the town is responsible for an almost total lack of Colonial residences. The only Colonial period houses known to survive are one-story, center chimney cottages which survive as ells of later houses. Houses which incorporate 18th-century ells include the Hyde House (1821) with a c.1760 ell, and the Josiah Hayden House (1839) with a mid-18th century ell.

F. Observations:

Williamsburg was one of the most sparsely populated settlements within the Connecticut River Valley study unit. The community's

late settlement date and small population were largely due to Williamsburg vulnerability to native attack and its limited resource base. The town's limited agricultural and industrial base probably resulted in the development of close economic ties with the more prosperous river communities such as Hatfield and Northampton. Archaeological remains of the Village Hill settlement node probably still survive in addition to period homes established adjacent to the village of Haydenville and the Meekin Brook sawmill.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes:

Location of meeting house at Village Hill (1779) fostered local radial network along Old Goshen and Nash Hill Roads. Settlement of Williamsburg Center created secondary system of connecting highways along East and South Main Streets, Petticoat Hill Road and Williamsburg Valley Road to Ashfield-Conway Roads.

B. Population:

Williamsburg in the Federal period had many of the population characteristics of a hill town. Its population peaked in 1800 and began a decline which probably would have continued had not the industrial development -- probably mostly at Haydenville -- attracted operatives from nearby communities. Williamsburg's overall growth rate, 1790-1830, of 17.8%, was well below the 60% county average, but typical of hill towns like Chesterfield (19.6%) or Middlefield (18.4%). But Williamsburg's growth in the 1820s left it in 1830 with a population of 1,236, some 60 persons higher than its premature "peak" thirty years earlier.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Civic focus maintained on Village Hill around upland farming district on Goshen Road. Significant economic development of Mill River with primary industrial site at Haydenville around textile mill (1809) and commercial focus at Williamsburg Center extending upriver to Searsville mills. Agriculture expanded on upland vales of Beaver Brook to Hatfield and Unquomok Brook to Northampton.

D. Economic Base:

Although Haydenville may have been the location of the town's earliest settlement, its industrial development was later than that of both Searsville and Williamsburg village, where clothiers' mills and later woolen factories were begun probably as early as the last decade of the 18th century. Searsville after 1795 also contained several prominent axe manufacturers. Haydenville's prominence, but for a small cotton mill, did not occur until the mid '20s, probably coinciding with the appearance of the cottage industry in button making.

The development of the woolen industry in Williamsburg is obscure at best; the principal secondary sources, Deming, and Sylvester's 1879

History of the Connecticut Valley, are frequently vague or imprecise in distinguishing the sites of separate industrial activities. (e.g., did a particular fulling mill precede a woolen mill at one site, or were they separate activities carried on perhaps contemporaneously at distinct sites?) Hannay (p.17) notes that Williamsburg "seems to have been the center for clothiers," at least as early as 1793. Several woolen manufacturers were attracted there from nearby towns: Ambrose Stone from Goshen; Enoch James from Whately; and probably others. The first carding machine (in the Connecticut Valley?) was installed by Roger Wing in 1803, only a short time after its first appearance in the Berkshires with Schofield. With the restrictions on imports imposed by the Embargo, several firms started up about 1806. One was A. H. Bodman & Co., founded as a partnership of clothiers in 1805; by 1813 they had built a woolen mill at the Unquomunk privilege in the village (not to be confused with the later Unquomunk Silk mill privilege in Skinnerville), apparently taking over Ambrose Stone's clothiers mill. At Searsville were several clothiers mills; Versell Abell, Lewis Bodman, and Stephen Graves were all mentioned as having mills there. But it was Nathaniel Sears, fresh from Cambridgeport where he learned the dyers trade, that came to dominate Searsville and give his name to the village, sometime after the construction of his mill in 1819. By 1832 the product of the woolen mills (only two were listed that year, and Sears' mill was absent) was valued at \$83,500 -- nearly half the recorded product value of the town. Though cotton spinning mills were also tried (during the War of 1812 there were two in Williamsburg village, one in Searsville, and one in Haydenville), their prosperity did not extend much beyond the war years, and all had closed by 1818.

Searsville seems also to have been the origin of the axe industry in western Hampshire County. Rufus Hyde, a blacksmith from Norwich, Connecticut, established a triphammer shop in Searsville in 1795, and with his son Stephen established a regional reputation for quality blades. Sharing in the reputation after about 1811 were Joseph Hannum (an axe-making Hannum was also reported in Huntington about this time), Levi Hitchcock (1824?), and Benjamin Baker (c.1835). The value of axes produced in 1832 was \$11,600, its peak recorded value.

Williamsburg was also the center of the nascent button industry in Hampshire County. Credit for the cottage industry in cloth buttons has generally been given to a Mrs. Elnathan Graves. The early buttons were made of wooden "button moulds" (eventually turned out by small woodworking shops all over western Hampshire County), covered with cloth. About 1826 Levi Hitchcock in Searsville invented for Mrs. Graves a round chisel to cut the cloth which cut the waste and greatly speeded her production. Mrs. Graves' son-in-law was Samuel Williston of Easthampton, who through the 1820s watched the cottage industry of his wife and mother-in-law expand dramatically. In 1827 Williston established agencies in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and other large cities for the sale of buttons. Within a short time more than a thousand families in Hampshire County were said to be turning out buttons for the Willistons.

In the meantime, Joel Hayden had taken over his uncle's defunct cotton mill in Haydenville and established, about 1822, a machine shop to make power looms for weaving woolen broadcloth. (J. & S. Hannum had begun making carding machines two years earlier (in Haydenville?).) Hayden had served his apprenticeship in Middletown, Connecticut at a time when the brass region of the Naugatuck Valley was the center of the button industry. (Another Hayden, Festus, patented a button machine in Waterbury in 1830.) Probably about 1826 Williston brought several English-made "Florentine flexible-shank buttons" to the Haydens with the offer to share the profits if they would discover a process, construct the apparatus, and manufacture buttons by machinery. It was with some difficulty, however, that the work was undertaken, and not until Williston met an English mechanic, Francis Sidney, whom he induced to come to Haydenville, that button machinery, in 1834, was successfully produced and put in operation (Lyman, 57; though Hayden had received a patent on flexible-shank buttons in 1831). By 1832 Hayden was the largest factory employer in town, with a work force of 30 women and 12 boys.

E. Architecture:

Residential: There are approximately a dozen Federal houses surviving at the town centers of Williamsburg and Haydenville. Comparatively few of these date from the early years of the period. Most of the houses were built after 1815, with a large concentration of houses of the 1820s. To some extent, the lack of period houses at the town center reflects the destruction of the area in the Flood of 1874. Thus, it is not surprising to find Federal houses surviving in some numbers in the outlying hills. Period houses were noted on Hemenway, Depot and Petticoat Hill Roads. The majority of the town's period structures are double interior chimney, center hall plan houses. A few twin rearwall chimney center hall plan houses are also extant; twin rearwall chimneys were not common in the region but were also built in Northampton and Hatfield. One of these, the hip roofed Ely House at Haydenville, is dated c.1790, a comparatively early date for the form. Of the houses built in the period, at least two follow a nearly identical form with double interior chimney, center hall plans, hip roofs and modillion cornices. These are the Ely House (c.1790) and the Bodman House (1818). One brick house (Hyde House, 1821) is known as well. All are typical Federal houses. By 1830, however, two innovative Greek Revival houses had been built. The first, the Joel Hayden House (1828), features a temple front center main block, with sidehall entrance and Doric portico, flanked by one-story colonnaded wings. The other, on Main Street at Williamsburg Center, was also built in 1828. Built of brick, the house features end chimneys, gable front orientation and Greek Revival proportions.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse, for which the name of the builder (Captain Jonathan Warner) is the only construction detail known, was built c.1778. In 1830, four schoolhouses stood in the town.

Commercial: Secondary sources (Sylvester 1879:409) indicate that as many as seven taverns or public houses may have operated in the

period. Of these, only one (Williams House, 1812), a double interior chimney Federal structure with a two-story veranda, survives.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes:

Mill River corridor remained as primary route axis with significant improvement of Williamsburg branch railroad (1868) through Haydenville to Williamsburg Station (now abandoned). Extension of highways from Williamsburg Center to Searsville as Route 9 and to Chesterfield as Route 143.

B. Population:

The development, particularly of Skinnerville, and the expansion of Haydenville in the Early Industrial period probably accounts for a good part of the town's growth rate. Between 1830 and 1870 the town grew by 74.6%, sixth fastest growing town in the county, and well above the 46.7% county average. Much of this growth occurred in the 1850s, when the town grew on average by over 55 persons per year. By 1870, after a decline in the Civil War years 1860-65, Williamsburg's population stood at 2,159.

Williamsburg's immigrant population, three points above the 13.3% county average, was the fifth highest percentage in the county in 1855. Of this number, in addition to the Irish (70%), substantial numbers came from Germany (13%) and England (10%).

C. Settlement Pattern:

Relocation of civic focus from Village Hill to Williamsburg Center in Mill River valley (1834). Primary industrial center expanded at Haydenville mills with secondary center at Searsville. Agriculture limited to Beaver Brook valley and upland districts of Goshen-Ashfield road.

D. Economic Base:

The Early Industrial period saw the peak and dominance of the button industry until it was moved to Easthampton in 1847 by its chief promotor Samuel Williston. Woolens, however, remained an important product, as did the growing production of the Hayden Brass Foundry, by 1865 the largest employer in Williamsburg. The new village of Skinnerville developed around William Skinner's silk mill after 1853, which, like Hayden's 1847 cotton mill, were the major textile employers by the end of the period.

Although Hitchcock continued making chisels (for the button industry?) well into the period, the axe business of Searsville, on the whole, declined. Nathaniel Sears' own woolen mill prospered, though he sold out early to Thomas Nash at the height of his prosperity, producing Civil War blankets.

In Williamsburg village, as in Searsville, were small button factories, but the largest business, by 1855, appears to have been in carpenters' tools. Ezra Thayer had begun making clock cases in 1831. His brother, Williston Thayer took over the business, changing gradually over to furniture and hardware. By 1855, 43 men were employed making mechanics tools (bench and molding planes) in the village, worth \$25,000. The other major employer in the village, the Unquomunk Woolen Mill, incorporated in 1847, was taken over by H. L. James in 1853. Two years later its satinet was valued at \$40,000.

Haydenville until 1847 was dominated by the association of Joel Hayden and Samuel Williston. In both census years, 1837 and 1845, the value of covered buttons was more than that of all the other manufactured products combined. This major industry was removed from Haydenville when Williston bought out Hayden in 1848 and relocated the business in Easthampton. But Hayden, in company with A. D. Sanders, already had other manufacturing interests. Chief among these was the construction of a new cotton mill in 1846-47 (Hayden, with Williston, was also an incorporator at the same time of the Bensonville Mfg. Co. in Florence); by 1855 cotton sheeting, well received in Boston and elsewhere, was valued at \$80,000. With 80 operatives, it was then the largest single industry in town. The brass works also found a new product in plumbers goods, and by 1855 it had an employee roster and product value only slightly less than the cotton mill.

Beginning in the 1840s in Goshen, Williamsburg mill owners began constructing storage reservoirs to supplement the Mill River flow at dry periods. The Mill River itself, by 1855, was reputed to be the site of 74 separate manufacturing plants -- 25 percent of all the plants in the three-county Connecticut Valley.

A second reservoir was constructed in 1865 about three miles north of Williamsburg village, and a third in Goshen in 1873. Joel Hayden was himself largely responsible for the extension of the New Haven & Northampton Railroad to Williamsburg in 1867, though a projected line to North Adams remained unrealized.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Many houses were built at Williamsburg Center, Searsville and Haydenville as industries along the Mill River expanded. One-to-two story sidehall plan Greek Revival and Italianate cottages were built along Main and South Main Streets at Haydenville and on Main and Village Hill Streets at Williamsburg Center. Most of these were built in the 1850s and incorporate end gable pediments (some with roundhead windows), side verandas and rear ells. A number of one-and-a-half story Italianate/Gothic Revival sidehall plan workers' cottages were built on High Street in Haydenville in 1867. Multiple family housing is uncommon; however, two outstanding examples at Haydenville should be noted: these are a Greek Revival double house at South Main and High Streets and a Stick Style double house on Main Street. The Greek Revival house, with stylish details, features two three-bay sidehall units, one at the front and one at the side of the long, rectangular structure. The Stick Style house appears to date from

the 1860s and includes board and batten siding and deep, overhanging eaves. Of note are a Gothic Revival board and batten cottage on Kingsley Road, the Second Empire Spelman House (1864) and the Josiah Hayden (1839) House, a temple front Greek Revival house nearly identical to the 1828 Joel Hayden House next door.

Institutional: Many of the institutional buildings in the two villages date from the Early Industrial period. The First Congregational Church at the town center, built in 1835, is the oldest of these. Subsequent alterations to the building include raising it one story in 1859 and adding a new facade in 1897. As built, the structure appears to have been a three bay facade, one-and-a-half story Greek Revival building with a one-stage square belfry. In 1848, the Haydenville Congregational Church was organized with a two story Greek Revival church built in 1851. Other notable buildings of the period are the Greek Revival Town Hall (1841) with a heavy octagonal domed cupola, the Greek Revival High School (1850; now Grange Hall) with a Doric portico and St. Mary's Catholic Church (1868, O'Keefe and Hogan, Springfield), a two-story Gothic Revival structure with side aisles and an offset belfry and spire tower. Other surviving institutional buildings include the Greek Revival Haydenville Central School (1859, William F. Pratt) and the brick Searsville (1844) and South Street (1842) shools.

Commercial: Several commercial buildings of the period survive at the town center including an 1830 brick tavern and several stores. The Hampshire House tavern is a two-story brick Greek Revival building with end chimneys. Other commercial buildings are two story frame structures built in the 1850s.

Industrial: The Williamsburg Blacksmith Shop (c.1840), formerly a clock shop, is one of a few industrial buildings known extant. The shop, a frame building two stories tall and six bays wide by fourteen long, stands at the town center. Also standing at Haydenville on Lower Main Street was the Corticelli Silk Mill, a four story brick structure with six over six sash, built in 1847 by the Hayden and Sanders cotton company; it was recently destroyed by fire.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes:

Continued improvement of Mill River corridor with extension of suburban street railway route from Northampton to Haydenville and Williamsburg Center along Route 9 (by 1900).

B. Population:

The collapse of much of Williamsburg's manufacturing economy with the Mill River flood of 1874 began a long trend of declining census years. But an unexplained rise in the late 1870s (associated with reopening the brass works, or the revitalization of Leeds?), together with the suburban Northampton growth 1900-10, connected with the opening of the street railway, lessened the net effect of the declining reports. In 1915, as a result, Williamsburg was only 41 persons less than the figure 45 years earlier.

Though the town's foreign-born population was four points above the county average in 1880, for much of the period (1905, 1915), the percentage was six points below it. In 1880 the largest immigrant group were the French Canadians, who made up slightly more than half. A 1971 account writes that they came to work in the silk mills and so established "Frenchtown" in the Haydenville area. If this is so, however, it must have been to work in the main Leeds plant nearby, since the old Haydenville mill was not acquired by Nonotuck Silk until 1884. By 1915, Poles were the largest immigrant group (43%), probably indicating an increased emphasis on farming over manufacturing.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Civic and commercial focus maintained at Williamsburg Center with expansion of activity to Williamsburg Station (1868). Industrial center maintained at Haydenville along Mill River valley with rebuilding of factories after 1874 Flood. Farming districts remained around Beaver Brook and Ashfield Road.

D. Economic Base:

Though the orderly development of Williamsburg economy both before and after 1874 may be imperfectly chronicled in the secondary sources, there is no mistaking the devastating effect the flood of May 19, 1874 had on the townspeople and industry of the town of Williamsburg. The accounts of the breaking of the 1865 dam on the East Branch and the subsequent loss of life and property are told in graphic detail. (Curiously, the flood was followed less than two months later by the breaking of another reservoir dam in Middlefield, and the destruction of the mills in Factory Village there.)

Searsville escaped the impact of the flood, but industry had already moved out of that village. Parts of Williamsburg village escaped; Thayer's Williamsburg Tool Factory and the Hill Brothers Button Co. both survived for much of the period. Skinnerville was devastated, however, and William Skinner, instead of rebuilding, accepted a promising offer of the Holyoke Water Power Co. to build a new mill in the Paper City. At Haydenville, the brass works was at once rebuilt, and it seems to have gone through several changes of ownership. Though the cotton mill survived, it had failed financially by the 1880s, and was taken over by the successful Nonotuck Silk Co., headquartered in Florence immediately to the south.

In 1897 the button business got a fresh start when Herbert A. Smith removed the business of the Hampshire Pearl Button Co., from West Chesterfield to Haydenville.

A gazetteer of 1885 reported 13 manufacturers in Williamsburg. Of these the largest was the brass works, employing 210 persons, and the James woolen, employing 52 operatives.

E. Architecture:

Residential: Comparatively few houses were built in the Late Industrial, although some rebuilding of houses destroyed in the 1874 Mill River Flood took place in the 1880s and '90s. Most of the houses built at Williamsburg Center and Haydenville are sidehall and L-plan one and two story structures in simple Stick Style or Queen Anne designs. Only a very few more substantial houses were built. Among these is the Lyman James House (1892, E. C. and G. C. Gardner), a Shingle Style/Queen Anne Structure. Other Queen Anne houses were observed on South Street.

Institutional: Several important municipal buildings were built in the period, most at Williamsburg Center. Among these are the Helen James School (1914), a two story brick Georgian Revival building, and the Meekins Library, (1897, Putnam and Bayley), a two-story hip roofed Renaissance Revival building of rock faced sandstone ashlar laid in narrow courses. In 1897-98, the First Congregational Church acquired its current Colonial Revival facade. Renovations were designed by Springfield architects, E. C. and G. C. Gardner, who added a full two-story porch with pediment, Ionic pilasters, Palladian window and triple entrances. The Gardners also embellished the belfry with carved leafage, a balustrade and an open octagonal domed cupola. In addition to these buildings, a very well detailed Stick Style fire station was built on Village Hill Road in 1887. The station features a hip roof and chamfered stickwork applied to the walls. In Haydenville, a small one-story neoclassical library with an Ionic portico was donated to the village in 1900 by Anna Hayden. Alterations were made to the Haydenville Church in 1873 and 1886.

Industrial: The most outstanding industrial building in the town is the Victorian Gothic Haydenville Brass Works (1875). A three story brick building with hip roof pavilions interrupting a gable roofed Main block, the Brass Works is architecturally one of the finest mills in the Connecticut Valley.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes:

Abandonment of trolley route to Williamsburg and improvement of Mill River corridor as Route 9 with secondary highway along Chesterfield Road as Route 143 from Williamsburg Center.

B. Population:

In the Early Modern period, Williamsburg, despite some suburban development in the early 1920s, lost over one-fifth of its population between 1915 and 1940. In the latter year, the town had 1684 residents.

C. Settlement Pattern:

Williamsburg Center maintained as civic and commercial focus with industrial activity at Haydenville. Gradual expansion of highway

commercial activity from Northampton along Route 9 (Mill River) to Williamsburg Center. Agriculture remained limited to Beaver Brook valley and upland farms along Ashfield Road.

D. Economic Base:

The development of Williamsburg in the Early Modern period is obscure at best. In Haydenville, the brass works, probably the town's largest employer (175 operatives in 1930) survived throughout the period, though Nonotuck Silk closed in 1931. The Thayer Mfg. Co., in Williamsburg village, after several changes in ownership, was taken over by a manufacturer of reproduction hardware.

E. Architecture:

Construction in the Early Modern period was generally confined to the Route 9 axis and consisted of a few garages, including one buff brick service station, and a few cottages.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

General: National Register districts have been completed for both Haydenville and Williamsburg Center; survey in those two areas of greatest settlement concentration is virtually complete. Areas which remain to be surveyed include South Street, Williamsburg Station and the outlying roads of the town. Additional inventory might include area and individual forms for South Main and Mountain Roads in Haydenville.

XII SOURCES

A Full and Graphic Account of the Terrible Mill River Disaster Caused by the Breaking of a Reservoir in Hampshire County, Massachusetts, May 16, 1874... (Springfield, 1874).

Deming, Phyllis Baker, comp., A History of Williamsburg in Massachusetts, 175th Anniversary (Northampton, 1946).

Hanney, Agnes, "A Chronicle of Industry on the Mill River," Smith College Studies in History 21 (1935-36).

O'Connor, James P., Williamsburg, Massachusetts, 1771-1971. Commemorating the First Two Hundred Years (Williamsburg, 1971). (not examined).

Williamsburg, Mass. Bicentennial Committee, Williamsburg Bicentennial, 1771-1971 Souvenir Program (n.p., 1971?).