

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## NEW SALEM

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.



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## MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

Date: 1982

Community: New Salem

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### I. TOPOGRAPHY

New Salem's area of            square miles is the largest total for Franklin County towns. The town is situated on the county's eastern border with Worcester County. Local terrain consists primarily of moderate uplands that generally reach between 850 feet and 1200 feet above sea level. The greatest elevations occur in western New Salem. The highest point is the northern peak of Poor Farm Hill (1300 feet). Other notable elevations are Harris Hill (996 feet) south of the village of North New Salem, Rattlesnake Hill (838 feet) east of the village of New Salem, Packard Hill (1281 feet) east of the village of Cooleyville and Prescott Hill (1048 feet) north of the Prescott Peninsula. Rattlesnake Hill is the site of a soapstone outcrop. Northeastern New Salem moderates into swampy lowlands and isolated hills. The latter are probably the remnants of glacial outwash deposited during the last glacial episode. Three glacial kettle holes (North and South Spectacle ponds, Bassett Pond) are situated in the southern portion of these lowlands. The Quabbin Reservoir demarcates most of New Salem's eastern border and a portion of the town's western border. Establishment of this reservoir in the late 1930s resulted in the inundation of the fertile Swift River Valley, originally located immediately east of New Salem's eastern uplands. Locally, the Quabbin is fed by the West and Middle Branches of the Swift River and several brooks.

### II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Originally granted as township of New Salem in 1734 from Salem (Essex County) with additional grant in 1742 extending south from Millers River (Orange) to North Prescott as oblong tract bounded on the southeast by Nichewoag (Petersham), northeast by Peyquague (Athol) and west by Roadtown (Shutesbury). Established as New Salem district in 1753 defined on southeast by Petersham, on south by Pelham (Prescott, now Quabbin lands in New Salem), on west by Shutesbury (Wendell) and on the north by Warwick (Orange). Incorporated as town of New Salem in 1775 with additional lands granted from Shutesbury in 1824. Southern section included as town of Prescott in 1822 (with Pelham) defining boundary at North Prescott. Northern section to Millers River included with town of Orange in 1837 defining boundary at North New Salem and adjustment of eastern boundary with Athol in 1830. Significant annex of Quabbin Reservoir lands in 1927 including majority of Prescott and considerable section of Enfield (1816) with portions of Greenwich (1754) defining eastern boundary along Middle Branch of Swift River (Petersham) and western boundary along the West Branch of the Swift River (Pelham) of Prescott Peninsula.

### III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

A rural recreational hill town on the primary corridor between Amherst and Orange, New Salem is located in the central uplands

with native sites reported at Bear's Den and Spectacle Ponds, including suspected locations in the Swift River Valley now flooded by the Quabbin Reservoir.

Settled during mid 18th century, with a garrison site and half cottages around Poor Farm Hill and meeting house site at New Salem Center, including an original burying ground and restored Colonial house. Limited agricultural potential on the uplands to North Prescott expanded after the Revolution with well preserved Federal cottages in Morse Village, New Salem Center and especially in North New Salem, including stylish houses and landmark church in a street village setting. Highland farming continued through the mid 19th century with Greek Revival houses on Poor Farm Hill and Shutesbury Road with broad gable examples. Extensive network of early highways remains on Prescott Peninsula from the Quabbin Reservoir lands, including original stone walls. New Salem town center suffered fires with remaining civic buildings of modest Greek Revival style, including local academy with later building of Romanesque concrete block design. Limited industrial potential in the Swift River Valley, with original mill dam at Cooleyville and flooded sites of factory villages at Millington and Enfield in the Quabbin Reservoir.

Present development most evident along Route 202 from Amherst with suburban housing on scenic lands and the restoration of historic period farmsteads. New Salem town center suffers from vacancy of civic buildings, while North New Salem retains authentic character as preserved village.

#### IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

##### A. Transportation Routes

Regional corridor from the Quabbin valley to central highlands and the Connecticut River. Probable north-south trail from West Branch of Swift River (Cooleyville) to Lake Mattawa (Orange) likely followed axis of Route 202 as Shutesbury-Whitaker Road to Main Street (New Salem Center). Other north-south routes seem logical along the West and Middle Branch of the Swift River Valley from a conjectured fordway site at Enfield, now flooded by Quabbin Reservoir, with possible north-south route along Prescott Peninsula following course of Prescott Hill Road to Mount Ram. East-west routes appear likely from Spectacle Ponds, possibly at Blackington Road to Brown's Hill and Bear's Den (North New Salem). Alternate route around Rattlesnake Hill may have followed fragment of Moosehorn Road to Fisk Hill. Other possible trail locations may be conjectured from Millington ford site (Quabbin Reservoir) to East Main Street and Poor Farm Hill.

##### B. Settlement Patterns

There were no reported native Contact period sites. Two undated sites were exposed in the former Swift River Valley immediately east of the present Prescott Peninsula. Both have since then

been inundated by the Quabbin Reservoir. Period settlement was probably heaviest in the fertile Swift River Valley (presently under the waters of the Quabbin) and the lowlands in the vicinity of North Spectacle Pond, South Spectacle Pond, Bassett Pond and adjacent to Blackington Swamp. Additional native sites may have been established on New Salem's town green (northern half of South Main Street), the gentle uplands east of Lighthouse Hill and Prescott Hill.

#### C. Subsistence Patterns

The lower Swift River Valley was probably the focal point of native horticulture. Additional horticultural tracts may have been situated north of Blackington Swamp north of the junction of Moosehorn Road and North Main Street, New Salem's town green and Prescott Hill. Native fishing most likely occurred primarily in North Spectacle Pond, South Spectacle Pond, Bassett Pond and Hop Brook Pond, formerly located in the Swift River Valley immediately east of the present mouth of Hop Brook. Hunting probably took place in the Swift River Valley, the general vicinity of the previously mentioned ponds and on the town's gentler uplands.

#### D. Observations

New Salem's fresh water ponds and fertile lowlands were probably capable of supporting a substantial native population. Political/cultural orientation appears to have been toward the native groups inhabiting central Massachusetts rather than those of the Connecticut River Valley. The greatest potential for extant period sites should be in the vicinity of New Salem's three existing natural ponds, the Swift River Valley, the lowlands in the general vicinity of and north of Blackington Swamp and Prescott Hill. The present shore of the Quabbin Reservoir should be examined for evidence of native period sites, particularly during periods of drought.

### V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

#### A. Transportation Routes

Native trails remained as regional routes from Connecticut to the Quabbin valley.

#### B. Population

The New Salem area probably continued to be inhabited by a relatively substantial native population.

The town lacked a colonial population until the late 1730s.

#### C. Settlement Patterns

The only reference to a native period site was one situated in the Bear's Den. This location was reputedly an important native meeting place. Traditional lore states that King Philip met here with area native leaders in an attempt to gain their support in fighting the English during King Philip's War (N.A.

1904:14). The native camp was abandoned during the Anglo-Indian conflict.

#### D. Economic Base

Native subsistence patterns were likely similar to those suggested for the Contact period. Development of the Anglo-Indian fur trade in the middle Connecticut River Valley probably encouraged increased native hunting and trapping for fur-bearing animals in the New Salem area.

Colonial settlers from settlements such as Hadley and Sunderland may have occasionally hunted or fished in New Salem.

#### E. Observations

New Salem appears to have remained essentially the site of moderate to large seasonal native hunting and fishing sites. Secondary sources suggest this area probably fell on the western periphery of the Nipmucs of central Massachusetts.

### VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

#### A. Transportation Routes

Significant improvement of east-west corridor with Lancaster highway (1735) apparently following Shutesbury Road from Cooleyville to Millington (Quabbin Reservoir). Location of New Salem meeting house (1739) established radial highway system from the town center, including East-West Main Street and North-South Main Street. Other period highways included east-west Moosehorn Road from native trail to Spectacle Pond and division rangeways to Prescott Road (North Prescott). Settlement of Equivalent Lands (Pelham) established a highway network on Prescott Hill and Mount Pleasant, now unnamed private roads in Quabbin Reservation with similar network extending south on Prescott Peninsula to Mount Ram (Enfield) from Greenwich divisions (1754), also Quabbin Reservation. Location of highway system along the Swift River Valley from Mount Ram to Mount El remains unclear, now flooded by the Quabbin Reservoir.

#### B. Population

New Salem probably was occupied periodically by native hunting and fishing bands well into the 18th century.

In ca. 1750, the colonial settlement consisted of approximately 250 residents. Community growth was modest between this date and 1765, when the population stood at 375 inhabitants (including one black), 69 families and 62 houses. However, the colonial settlement had almost tripled in size between 1765 and 1776. By the latter date, New Salem had 910 inhabitants. Period settlers were primarily former residents of Salem and Middleboro (Barber 1839: 201, N.A. 1904:16). Others moved from Danvers. The vast majority of the local inhabitants were Congregationalists. However,

a small Baptist faction existed in the town by the early 1770s.

### C. Settlement Patterns

As mentioned previously, some native settlement probably continued in present New Salem into the 18th century.

Colonial settlement was relatively dispersed throughout most of the Colonial period. Period settlement was encouraged when the Massachusetts General Court issued a grant to 60 Salem residents for a 6-square mile township in 1734. The first reputed settler was Jeremiah Meacham, who established a home in New Salem's northwestern uplands on North Main Street in ca. 1737. He was followed by others such as Samuel King and Benjamin Stacy, who built homes in central New Salem in the vicinity of Cooleyville and on the western portion of Shutesbury Road (east of its junction with Hop Brook). By ca. 1740, a small settlement node had begun to develop in the village of New Salem. The town's first meeting house (completed in ca. 1739) was situated on South Main Street on the site of the present Unitarian Church. A pound was also established on South Main Street slightly south of the meeting house in ca. 1737. In ca. 1740, a fort was erected on South Main Street, slightly southeast of the meeting house. A second fort was constructed at an undetermined location, probably at about the same time. Additional contemporary homes were constructed on Prescott Hill and north and east of the village of North Prescott as part of settlement expansion from present Pelham. A district (Pelham) school house was built on Prescott Hill in ca. 1754, while a Baptist church was erected slightly southeast of North Prescott in ca. 1772. Some period homes were probably established in the Swift River Valley (east of the eastern shore of the Prescott Peninsula) as settlement expanded west from Greenwich.

### D. Economic Base

Local residents focused on agriculture, particularly livestock production. Crop production was inhibited by the area's hilly terrain and generally gravelly soil. Industrial development was poorly documented. The earliest documentation of a period mill was ca. 1740, when James Cook began operation of a grist mill two miles south of the village of New Salem, probably on Hop Brook. Until this date, local residents carried their grain to North Hadley where it was ground (Sylvester 1879: II, 667). Jeremiah Ballard and Jeremiah Meacham began operation of a sawmill in the "eastern part of New Salem on the Middle Branch of the Swift River" in ca. 1750 (N.A. 1904:17). The first local tavern was probably established by James Cook after 1740, two miles south of the village of New Salem. A second tavern was put into operation in ca. 1758 by William Conkey between Prescott Hill and Pelham (the site was probably inundated by the Quabbin Reservoir). The latest documented period tavern was opened in ca. 1773 by Benjamin Haskell in the village of North New Salem.

### E. Architecture

Of 62 houses standing in the town in 1765, none are known to survive. Only one house of the period (Haskell-Phelon House, 1773) is recorded in local inventory. The Haskell-Phelon House exhibits the standard post-1750 plan with a center chimney, five-bay front and two-bay depth; the entrance surround appears to date from the Federal period. The fact that the first meeting house was described as being "planked" may suggest that plank construction was employed in the earliest houses constructed. The Greek Revival Oliver House (MHC B62) is plank framed and might in fact date from the Colonial period. In 1736, the town's Salem proprietors voted to build a 40' x 30' x 18' meeting house. One was not constructed, however, until two years after settlement of the area in 1737. The 1739 meeting house had dimensions of 45' x 35' x 20'. Holland states that "the walls of the first meeting house were planked so as to be impervious to musket balls, in case of an attack while the people were assembled within" (Holland 1855:399). Reference to planking may indicate plank construction (thick structural planks rabbetted into a groundsill and a plate and braced from within) or it may simply indicate the use of an extra layer of plank sheathing. In 1772, a Baptist Society was organized and a meeting house built on the Prescott/New Salem line. Neither of the town's two meeting houses still stand.

### F. Observations

New Salem was one of a number of period upland towns established in the Connecticut River Valley study unit through land grants made to King Philip's War and later Indian war veterans. The settlement's Baptist population was part of a Baptist faction scattered throughout this town and the adjacent communities of Shutesbury, Leverett, Montague and possibly Sunderland. Research should be undertaken to determine if there was a religious and social network connecting the Baptist residents in these settlements. The basic layout of the original center (village of New Salem) of New Salem appears to be relatively intact. This location also has good archaeological potential for period sites along with Prescott Hill and Prescott Peninsula. The latter two areas are especially promising, since little development has occurred there since the razing and removal of buildings during construction of the Quabbin Reservoir.

## VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

### A. Transportation Routes

Local highway system focused on New Salem Center on East-West and North-South Main Street. Primary east-west highways to Wendell from Petersham followed Moosehorn Road from Spectacle Ponds around Rattlesnake Hill and Blackington-Fay-Neilson Road to North New Salem. Local connector from town center to North New Salem extended from North Main Street with Wendell Road to northwest. Location of Prescott meeting house (1790-1822) apparently established local highway connectors on Prescott

Hill with similar network from Enfield Center (1787) along the Swift River Valley (Quabbin Reservoir).

#### B. Population

In 1776, with a population of 910, New Salem was the largest town in Franklin County. In the succeeding fourteen years, the town grew by another 70%. In 1790, with a population of 1,543, it was second only to Conway. Although New Salem continued to grow until 1820, after the census year 1800, the rapid rise slackened. Between 1810 and 1820, the town grew by only 4 persons a year, down sharply from the rate of over 40-per year average of 1776-1800. In 1820, New Salem reported 2,146 residents -- over three times the population in 1775. With the taking of the southern part of New Salem for the new town of Prescott in 1822, New Salem lost substantially. By 1830, the town reported only 1,889 residents. However, because of the declining numbers in much of the county in the last decades, New Salem was still the second largest town in the county, after Deerfield.

#### C. Settlement Patterns

Civic activities remained in New Salem Center with additional focus of academy (1795) around town common extended along the Main Street axis. Secondary village centers developed at North New Salem with attempted meeting house (1807) and at South New Salem (North Prescott) with Baptist church (1800). Formation of Pelham East Parish (1786) established meeting house focus at Prescott Center and expanded with incorporation of town (1822). Upland agriculture continued as primary activity from Prescott Hill to Poor Farm Hill around New Salem Center with lowland farming along the Swift River Valley (Quabbin Reservoir) to North New Salem. Highland areas continued as lumbering district with continued expansion of local mill sites along Swift River branches at Millington and Cooleyville. Formation of important economic focus at Enfield lower village on Swift River dam with South Greenwich meeting house (1787) and textile factory (1813) expanded as civic focus with formation of town (1816). Secondary center formed as Enfield upper village (Smith's) with mill dam and textile factory (1812-13) on Swift River.

#### D. Economic Base

Predominantly agricultural economy with small saw and grist mills established. The making of palm-leaf hats, a major industry by the 1830s, was begun in what is now Orange (probably then the northern part of New Salem) in 1805 by Abner and Jacob Whitney. About 1826, the business was begun in Enfield, where three traders were located; and in 1832, John Fairbank opened a shop in Ware. Thus, the spread of the business in New Salem and Prescott (now part of New Salem) was assured. In 1832 New Salem reported production of palm-leaf hats valued at \$27,500, the highest value reported in the county. (Much of the production, however, may have been in what is now the town of Orange, for after the boundary lines were adjusted in 1837, Orange became the leading town in palm-leaf hat production).



## E. Architecture

**Residential:** Approximately three dozen houses and cottages of the Federal period survive in New Salem. These include structures at New Salem and at North New Salem, which began to develop in the period. These include approximately equal numbers of houses and cottages. For houses, double interior chimney, center hall plans predominated, while for cottages, the center chimney plan was standard. Several houses appeared to have been enlarged in the period and may have originated (some perhaps in the Colonial period) as half houses; houses exhibiting signs of having been enlarged are the Hillman House (ca. 1785) and the Adams-Coolidge House (ca. 1811). In the former instance, mismatched chimneys, and in the latter, unevenly set fenestration, suggest enlargement or some other alteration of the original build. Of special note are several houses in the town exhibiting high quality details of which the salient element is a deep and fully-expressed Doric architrave; use of the full Doric architrave was noted on both the Samuel C. Allen (1809-1816; HABS MASS 846) and the Foster-Hunting (ca. 1793) Houses and may indicate the work of an individual local builder. Other notable houses are the Hillman House with a pedimented Connecticut Valley entrance surround, and the Cogswell-Stowell House (1808), an end chimney brick house with end gable overhang and framed attic.

**Institutional:** Meeting houses were built at the town center and at North New Salem in the period. In 1794, "a new and commodious house of worship, - probably the best in the county of Hampshire at that time" (Holland 1855:401) was built by the First Parish. The present Unitarian church is that structure: a two-and-a-half story building, it features Gothic Revival lancet windows and a two-stage belfry with spire. A meeting house was built north of the center in 1806, but it was not until 1824 that the Second Congregational at North New Salem was organized as a result of the Trinitarian/Unitarian schism. The North Congregational Church, moved and enlarged in 1836 but retaining the elements of the 1806 building, still stands. A Universalist Society had been founded at North New Salem in 1800, but never flourished; in 1829, Methodists organized in the southern half of town. In 1795, the New Salem Academy was established and an academy building, which stood until 1837, constructed. Other educational buildings of the period still standing are the Center Grammar School, a one-story side-entered structure with a 1941 addition and a three-by-three bay side-entered building (MHC 63) which was probably a school, on Neilson Road.

**Commercial:** The only "commercial" structure of the period is the Allen Law Office (1829-34), hip-roofed, one-story one-room building with a center entrance. The Perry-Marshall House (ca. 1785), a half-hip roofed house with double five-bay facades which burned in 1929, probably was constructed as a tavern; the half-hip roof form and double facades generally indicate use as a tavern.

## VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

### A. Transportation Routes

Local highway system remained focused around New Salem Center with connections to Prescott and North New Salem. Expansion of local street grid around Enfield Center to Smith's Village along the Swift River (Quabbin Reservoir) with projected railroad to Athol.

### B. Population

New Salem lost more territory and population in 1830 and 1837 when parts were annexed to Athol and Orange. And but for a brief rise during the Civil War years, New Salem, like most of the county hill towns, continued to lose residents. Prescott, which first reported a population figure in 1830, peaked a decade later at 780, and, like New Salem, declined thereafter. Neither town had more than five foreign-born residents.

### C. Settlement Patterns

New Salem Center remained as the local civic focus of the upland farming district, with a secondary center at North New Salem around the meeting house (1836) extending to Morse Village. Prescott Center likewise continued as the focus of civic activities with a secondary center at North Prescott. Mill villages maintained at Cooleyville and Millington with continued expansion of Enfield Center as the economic and civic focus of the Swift River Valley farming district (Quabbin Reservoir), including secondary center at Smith's Village.

### D. Economic Base

Predominantly agricultural economy with tanning, lumbering, and home manufacture of palm-leaf hats the principal auxiliary activities. Millington and Cooleyville developed as small mill communities.

With the coming of the railroad through Orange, New Salem's lumber production increased by a factor of 21 by 1855. In that year, New Salem sent to market 2,505,000 feet of lumber, second highest quantity in the county after Montague.

Two tanneries in 1837 produced \$10,000 worth of leather, second highest leather value in the county. The leather, like the palm-leaf hats, was taken overland to Boston for sale. Tanning remained the second largest industry in town (judged by product value) until the Civil War. Though New Salem temporarily lost its primacy in palm-leaf hat making to Orange, in 1865 the business employed 300 women making hats valued at \$11,097 -- much the highest value reported by any Franklin County town. A hat shop in North Dana supplied much of the palm-leaf used.

## E. Architecture

**Residential:** Steady expansion of the villages of New Salem and North New Salem occurred through the 1840s, while new villages developed at Cooleyville and Millington. Rural roads outlying the village centers continued to develop with scattered cottage farmsteads. Relatively little new construction appeared to have taken place after 1850, however, and in general, the houses and cottages of the period are modest and conservative in comparison with those of the Federal period. Cottages are by far the predominant house type, with the conservative center chimney plan being the most common plan employed. Of note is the relatively common incidence of the gable front, five-bay wide center entrance form. Far less numerous are sidehall or center hall (double interior or end chimney) plan houses and cottages. Almost all the houses of the period are Greek Revival in style. Despite the apparent overall architectural conservatism of the town, there are a number of particularly substantial Greek Revival houses, including the Cook Eastman cottage (ca.1840), the Whipple House (1854, Porter Eaton, builder), the Burrage-Harris House (ca. 1840) and the Ellis-Spaulding House (ca. 1837), a rare double house.

**Institutional:** Several important institutional buildings were constructed at the town center. These include the present Center Congregational Church (1854) organized as the Third Congregational Society in 1845, the Academy (1837) and the Town Hall (1839). Of these, the Town Hall, a gabled one-story center entrance building, is the simplest. The Academy is a two-story center entrance Greek Revival building with a two-stage center entrance Greek Revival building with a two-stage square belfry with pinnacles and a fretwork balustrade. The Greek Revival Center Congregational Church incorporates double entrances with peaked lintels, a pilastered facade and a two-stage square belfry with spire. Of several schools built in the period, none are known to survive, but most were end gabled frame one-story buildings with double entrances. A brick school was built at Millington in the period.

**Commercial:** No commercial buildings of the period are known to survive. In 1840, a brick hotel (burned 1903) was constructed at Millington.

## IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

### A. Transportation Routes

Significant improvement of north-south corridor along Swift River Valley from Enfield to Millington with Springfield, Athol and Northeastern Railroad (1872) now abandoned with portions of roadbed intact from South Athol (Quabbin Reservoir). No street railway lines through area.

## B. Population

Both New Salem and Prescott continued to decline throughout the period, losing 36% and 45% of their respective populations. New Salem's greatest loss came in the five years 1900-1905, when the town lost 135 residents. In 1915, New Salem's population stood at 625, Prescott's at 299. Neither town reported any significant immigrant groups.

## C. Settlement Patterns

Local civic centers maintained at New Salem and Prescott with secondary villages at North New Salem and North Prescott in upland dairy farming district. Primary economic focus expanded at Enfield Center with regional railroad connections (1873) along the Swift River Valley (Quabbin Reservoir) with secondary focus at Millington around local creamery (1894).

## D. Economic Base

Predominantly agricultural economy with marked increase in dairy production. Cheese factories established in both New Salem and Prescott. In 1880, New Salem's cheese made it the leading cheese producer in the county. A creamery built in Millington in 1895 shipped butter to various parts of the state. In the 1890s, several residents began commercial floral production. Walter Crowl specialized in bedding plants, pansies, tomatoes, and geraniums; Cyrus Crowl began the Crowl Fern Company, which, before it closed about 1930, sent laurel, ferns, and greenery to decorate the Capitol buildings for two presidential inaugurations. A paper mill established near the New Salem depot about 1898 by Harry Carlisle of Shutesbury and Edwin Stowell of New Salem survived only two years before being destroyed by fire.

Uncharacteristic was the Climax Electric Works of Levi Flagg. Some time after 1900, Flagg began producing one-cylinder gasoline engines, cycle, and automobile parts, constructing about 1909 [?] a machine shop near the town center. The building was reputedly constructed of cement blocks made for the new Academy building.

## E. Architecture

Very little construction took place in the Late Industrial period. Only a few scattered cottages and two institutional buildings of note were observed. The institutional buildings, both built for the New Salem Academy, are Academy Hall (1871) and the new Academy building (1908). Academy Hall is a three-and-a-half story frame bracketted Italianate dormitory building with a mansard roof. The new Academy is a hip roofed, two-and-a-half story Romanesque Revival building of concrete block construction with an arched entrance and three-story domed tower; it is notable as one of the largest and most elaborate buildings of concrete block construction in the county. Other buildings of the period are a gabled Italianate store (1876) and the concrete block

Climax Electric works (as early as 1909). One other concrete block structure (Moore's Hall) was built at Millington in the period.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes

Improvement of north-south corridor with regional auto highway as U. S. Route 202 from Amherst to Athol bypassing New Salem Center and crossing the Swift River at Harris Hill. Secondary north-south auto highway located along the Swift River Valley as Route 21 from Enfield to Athol, abandoned with the railroad route for Quabbin Reservoir (1938). Secondary east-west connector located across Quabbin Reservation as Route 122 from Orange to Worcester at Route 202 junction (North New Salem).

B. Population

But for a short period in the early 1930s, New Salem's population continued to decline despite the 51.6% increase in its territory in 1938. In 1940, New Salem reported 357 residents, the town's population nadir. Prescott continued its slow decline until 1925 when it reported 230 residents. In 1927, land acquisition by the Metropolitan District Commission was begun. Three years later only 48 persons were left in Prescott; in 1935 only 18. And then there were none.

C. Settlement Patterns

Significant alteration of the settlement pattern occurred with the flooding of the Swift River Valley farming district (1927-1937) for the Quabbin Reservoir, including clearance of the Enfield industrial center and Millington, and the dislocation of Prescott Center and North Prescott village on the upland plateau. Local civic focus remained intact at New Salem Center with commercial expansion along Route 202 bypass and secondary focus at North New Salem.

D. Economic Base

No new industries identified. Although New Salem lost one community, Millington, to the waters of the Quabbin Reservoir, it gained some 15.34 square miles of what had been Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield, giving the town the largest amount of territory of any in the county.

E. Architecture

Almost no construction took place in the period. A Colonial Revival Town Hall (1937; Jones A. Britton, Greenfield) with round arched first floor windows, projecting gabled center entrance bay and octagonal cupola. In 1941, a Colonial Revival addition was made to the Center Grammar School. A few commercial buildings

were built along Route 202 in the 1920s and 1930s.

## XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

General: Inventory forms documenting the local historic district at New Salem were fully researched and thoroughly completed with dates, original use and owner and historic and architectural significance sections filled in. The remaining inventory forms, done by the Franklin County Arts Council, are highly inadequate and often contain no more than a photograph and brief architectural description. Of particular note is the excellent state of preservation of the two villages of New Salem and North New Salem; while North New Salem retains much vitality, the town center suffers from vacant and abandoned buildings.

## XII. SOURCES

### New Salem

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### Prescott

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