

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

CHARLTON

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.

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: 1984

COMMUNITY: Charlton

I. TOPOGRAPHY

Charlton is situated in the southwesterly portion of the county, about thirteen miles from Worcester. The town contains some of the highest ground in southern Worcester County. A hill town with uneven ground formed by a concentration of drumlins, elevations range from about 600 feet above sea level in the river valleys in the southeastern corner of the town to more than 1,000 feet above sea level in the north-central portion of the town. Most hills range between 800 and 1,000 feet above sea level.

This high, uneven topography initially deterred settlement during the early 18th century. When the area was finally occupied and the land brought under cultivation, the soils were found to be very productive and rich. They consist largely of Charlton loams which take their name from the town and extend in a narrow band from the Connecticut border near Southbridge and Dudley north to Lunenburg, Winchester, and Winchendon. This is one of three major north-south soil zones in Worcester County, bounded on the west by Brookfield soils and on the east by Gloucester soils.

Except for the band of Brookfield loam and stony loam found along the western border of the town, Charlton's surface is covered by Charlton and some Paxton loams on the ridge and drumlin tops, and Charlton fine sandy loam and stony fine sandy loam on the hillsides and the few level areas. Except for the stony fine sandy loam, most of the soil types are free from stone and well suited to mowing, pasture, and cultivated crops of grains and potatoes.

Numerous streams flow among the hills in a north-south direction and provided many small water power sites utilized during the 18th and 19th centuries. The drainage of the town's streams is divided by the central north-south ridge. The waters to the west drain into Cady Brook and the Quinebaug River, and into the French River on the east.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Part included in large 1681 grant by the Nipmuck Indians to Joseph Dudley, William Stoughton, Robert Thompson, and others, later known as Oxford. Western part of Oxford and the County Gore set off as district of Charlton in 1755. Lands called "The Gore" annexed 1757. Made a town, 1775. Parts annexed to Oxford in 1789 and 1809. Part annexed to Sturbridge in 1792. Part included in new town of Southbridge in 1816. Bounds with Oxford and Southbridge established in 1907.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Agricultural and suburban hill town between the French and Quinebaug River valleys, on a primary, historic east-west corridor from Boston to the Connecticut River. Documented native burial site on Indian Hill in northeast. First European settlers ca. 1733, probably in the northern part of town. Meetinghouse site established by 1759, with secular 18th century center at Dresser Hill in south. Prosperous, dispersed, 18th and 19th century agricultural settlement, with numerous small-scale, water-powered industrial sites.

Late 18th century turnpike village at Northside rivals meetinghouse center as community focus. Boston and Albany railroad station locates at Charlton Depot (1838), but Charlton City, further south, becomes main industrial/commercial center after ca. 1850. Little late 19th and early 20th century development. Route 20 regional highway corridor (1930) continues to be a major stimulus of industrial/commercial/residential growth. Most recent suburban development is dispersed, with a clear preference for scenic ridge sites, and concentrations in the northeast from Worcester/Auburn and southwest from Southbridge.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes

Uplands between French and Quinebaug River valleys and upper Quabaug River Valley, with conjectured alternate east-west regional routes across the southern part of town, and connections from the Quabaug area to the northwest to the French River Valley to the east. Primary "Bay Path" probably southern route across uplands (Potter Road-Partridge Hill Road-Colburn Road-Schoolhouse Road-Sandersdale Road-Reynolds Road). Alternate route: Oxford Road-Mugget Hill Road-Burlingame Road-Hall Road-Berry Corner Road. Northwest Brookfield branch: Brookfield Road-North Main Street-Masonic Home Road. Branch to Northern French River Valley: North Sturbridge Road-Davis Road-Northside Road-Leicester Road.

B. Settlement Pattern

Consisting primarily of upland, it is not surprising that few sites are known from the town. The banks of the town's ponds--including Glenecho in the northeast, Prindle in the southwest, as well as the South Fork and its tributaries in the east--were probably locations for short-term occupations.

C. Subsistence Pattern

With so few terraced areas, the town was probably frequented only for short-term exploitation. Fishing on the ponds and South Fork, and hunting in the uplands, would be part of the seasonal rounds from larger, more permanent base camps to the south, east, and north.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes

Earlier trails continue in use. Southern "Bay Path" probably becomes early "Springfield Road."

B. Settlement Pattern

Continuation of Contact period pattern, with some reduction due to increased numbers of colonials and the formation of praying towns.

C. Subsistence Pattern

Continuation of Contact period patterns.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes

Native trails are developed as colonial highways. The north-south Main Street axis (North Main Street, Main Street, Dresser Hill Road) is laid out parallel to that of Oxford Village. Alternate regional east-west routes develop across town: a southern route from Oxford to Quinebaug Falls area in Sturbridge (Oxford Road-Putnam Road-Colburn Road-Schoolhouse Road-Hill Road-Reynolds Road) and a northern route to Sturbridge Center from Worcester (North Sturbridge Road through northeast corner of town). Other radial roads develop from the meetinghouse center to other surrounding towns, including Brookfield, Leicester, and Dudley.

B. Population

Settlement was slowed by proprietor ownership. Approximate figures include: 30 men in 1750, two-thirds of whom were located in the Gore; 53 in 1756 and another 39 added the next year. By 1765, the total figure equaled 741, but had nearly doubled ten years later to 1,310, when sales to individuals yielded higher numbers.

Seven years after parish status was achieved, residents formed a church (1761). The town also included a number of Baptists from the earliest years and in 1762 they too organized a society, located in Northside and serving the neighboring communities of Leicester and Spencer. Many of the settlers were originally from Salem. Schooling began in 1760.

C. Settlement Pattern

After King Philip's War, land in this area was purchased from Native Americans and granted as part of the town of Oxford to the east. While that section, designated the Village, was subdivided and settled, the western section remained in the hands of the original proprietors in large grants. These stretched east-west across this part of the grant, four containing 6,000 acres, two of

1,700, one of 2,600. In addition, a county gore was divided in 1719, and sold ca. 1735. Each of the proprietors eventually broke up and sold their holdings, primarily in the 1730s and 1750s. By 1754, there was sufficient settlement that a petition by 26 resulted in the formation of a district in 1754. An acre was set aside for the location of the meetinghouse at Charlton Center, and in 1763 a burying ground was designated nearby.

D. Economic Base

Primarily agricultural, with a tannery at Northside and a mill (1759). Discussion of a workhouse prior to the Revolution, but never implemented.

E. Architecture

Residential: Center chimney plan houses dating from the second and third quarter of the 18th century appear to be the predominant survivals. Both four- and five-bay examples were found. The earliest recorded standing structures is a 1726 one-story, "three-quarter house."

Institutional: The first meetinghouse, measuring 40 x 50 feet and located west of the 19th century Universalist Church, was erected between 1759 and 1761. By 1760, the town had constructed six schoolhouses.

Commercial: Reference is made to the inn of Ebenezer Mackintire as the location of the first town meeting in 1755.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes

The colonial highways continue in use. In addition, a new east-west route, the Stafford Turnpike (1810) is laid out through the northern half of town, particularly through Northside Village.

B. Population

Growth was substantial during the first fifteen years, from 1,310 in 1776 to 1,965 in 1790. Thereafter, the figure fluctuated slightly, but stayed just over 2,100 throughout the remainder of the period. Employment remained primarily agricultural.

The Congregational and Baptist societies remained strong, while Universalists at Northside and Methodists (1792-1810) in the southwest, formed societies. At the close of the period, when the First Society identified itself as Unitarian, the dissenters formed the First Calvinist Society in 1826.

During the 1780s, the town was active in movements to make taxation equitable and to reduce problems of debt brought on by the immature economy. In 1796, a lodge of Masons was formed within the town.

C. Settlement Pattern

Dispersed agricultural settlement continues with many small water powered grist and sawmill sites. A small concentration develops at the meetinghouse center, with Second Congregational Church (1798), and some linear residential development on Main Street between Masonic Home Road and Mugget Hill Road. A significant nucleation develops at Northside, stimulated by the location of the Stafford Turnpike and a number of small-scale industrial developments here and to the east at Millward. Development is primarily linear along the turnpike, and includes the second Baptist meetinghouse (1795) and the landmark Rider Tavern (1797). A third period nucleation develops in South Charlton, east of Granite Reservoir, where quarrying continues, scythe manufacturing locates in 1790, and a stone cotton mill is built in 1828.

D. Economic Base

Although Charlton's land was fertile, little was under cultivation at this period, with 83.5% unimproved and woodlot. Less than one percent was given over to tillage, 5.3% in pasturage, and 7% in meadow and mowing land. Although little was cultivated, very little was viewed as unimprovable.

Charlton's fine agricultural soils made it one of the more productive towns of the county from the 18th to the early 20th centuries. At the beginning of the 19th century, most of the town's occupants were farmers engaged largely in the raising of livestock. This included dairying and the making of butter and cheese, raising animals for sale of pork, beef, veal, mutton, and wool, raising large quantities of hay, and cultivation of corn, oats, rye, barley, and potatoes.

As the emphasis on livestock and the need for pasture land increased during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the town's forests were cut back as more land was improved. By 1795, 18 saw and grist mills operated on the town's numerous streams.

Several craft industries, closely tied to the agricultural economy, were begun during this period. Northside, or North Charlton, was established before the end of the 18th century as a center of manufacturing activity. A tannery and tan bark mill were erected before 1770, and in the 1790s a gin distillery, brewery, malt-house, and corn mill were added. The Rider Tavern was built in 1797 and became a major stop along the Stafford and Worcester Turnpike. Scythe manufacturing was undertaken there and in South Charlton in the early 1800s and boot and shoemaking utilizing leather from the Northside tannery was begun. Between 1815 and 1835 furniture, carriages, and farm implements were manufactured in a shop on Dresser Hill.

Fulling mills in Charlton City and Millward processed home-manufactured cloth through the early 19th century. In 1828, a cotton thread spinning mill was established at South Charlton,

and remained the only textile mill in Charlton until the 1840s, when a satinet mill was erected at Charlton City.

E. Architecture

Residential: A cross section of all types of period house types were observed or, from research, known to have existed. The center chimney plan appears to have been built most frequently. Double chimney plans also survive, including several double-pile Georgian plans. A brick, one-story, double chimney house was recorded. Several two-story, hipped roof, single-pile and end rear wall chimney houses survive, including at least one brick example.

Institutional: In 1796, the first meetinghouse was abandoned and work began on the second, which was completed in 1802. This structure was located on the site of the subsequent Universalist Church. In 1790, the Second Religious Society in Charlton built a meetinghouse which they then sold to the Baptists in 1806. A Baptist meetinghouse was built in Northside in 1795. In 1825, the orthodox church society split and the old society (minority) erected a new building in 1827.

Commercial: The Rider Inn in Northside, erected in 1797, is a two-and-a-half-story, nine-bay gabled structure. At one time prior to raising the roof in 1833, the inn boasted a roof garden. Evidence of such construction is evident in the attic of the building today.

Industrial: A stone cotton mill in the southeastern portion of the town, erected in 1828, was destroyed in 1849.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes

The Boston and Albany Railroad is built across the northern part of town in 1838, with a station at Charlton Depot, and a new road is built to connect Southbridge to this railroad center.

B. Population

During this period the town's population reduced steadily from 2,173 in 1830 to 1,878 in 1870. This decline, at a time when neighboring communities were experiencing growth, can be explained partially by the lack of industrial investment in the town and the continuation of an agricultural economy. Few migrants came to the town, so that the foreign-born remained well under 10%, a low figure within the county; native migrants were probably also few. Farming remained the primary employment, with only small growth in the number of manufacturing occupations. The Unitarian and Universalist congregations met together as a union church beginning in 1830, later reverting solely to the Universalists. Members of several denominations met together in Lelandville for a

short time at the period's end, while a group of Second Adventists was formed in 1865.

In 1836, the town purchased a farm for the poor.

C. Settlement Pattern

Dispersed, small-scale agricultural and industrial activities continue, but a number of new centers emerge, most notably the town's new industrial and commercial focus at Charlton City, and the depot village at Charlton Depot. Barber notes 15 dwellings in Charlton Center in 1839, and the area continues as an institutional focus, with the Third Congregational church (1827) and New Union Meetinghouse (1829). However, by 1850 the focus of local economic activity shifts north to Charlton City, with an 1848 textile mill, woodworking industries, and a number of stores, all located around several mill ponds, mostly north of the turnpike/Brookfield Road intersection. The Methodist Church locates here in 1855.

A smaller village develops at Charlton Depot after 1838, with a residential cluster north of the tracks on Curtis Hill Road, and the station and shoe shop (1867) along the rail corridor. Industrial activity continues at South Charlton (Lelandville). Although the stone cotton mill burns in 1848, Steven's Linen Works continues manufacturing here, and worker housing is built along Lelandville Road. A Union Church is built in 1858. An Advent Society Chapel is built west of Granite Reservoir in 1865. Of the smaller-scale industrial foci, the most notable are the boot and shoe shop concentration at Morseville, east of Charlton City, box manufactory at Putnamville, and the 1865 wire mill on Cady Brook west of Southbridge Road. Little development occurs at Northside, though a schoolhouse is located here in 1848. The poor farm is located at Millward in 1838, and a new house is built in 1864.

D. Economic Base

Agriculture remained the principal occupation and economic activity of the town's occupants through the period. Except for the mid 1850s, when shoemaking was at its peak in Charlton, the value of agricultural goods exceeded that of manufactured goods. By 1875, the town's 261 farms employed more than one half of the adult males of Charlton, while manufacturing and related employment totaled only 94 men and 4 women.

Although dairying and livestock remained the focus of agricultural activity, emphasis and methods changed somewhat through the period. The number of horses and horsedrawn mowing, raking, and cultivating machinery increase, while oxen declined considerably. Sheep herds shrank by several hundred head between 1830 and 1860, but still numbered almost 500 sheep in 1865. Cattle and hog raising increased and with them the amount of open land. During the 1860s, more than 9,500 acres of land were devoted to pasture and mowing and only 4,200 acres were in woodland. This continued land clearing supplied much timber to Charlton's flourishing

woodworking industries. By 1865, 14 sawmills and 3 box factories produced more than one million feet of boards, several hundred thousand shingles, boxes, and 4,698 cords of firewood, all worth nearly \$50,000. The 4,000 tons of hay grown in 1865 accounted for more than one half of the nearly \$200,000 value of agricultural goods that year.

The products of the dairy were mostly butter and cheese. It was not until the late 1870s with the availability and use of ice that whole milk and high grade butter could be transported safely to distant markets, despite the presence of the Boston and Albany Railroad after 1838. As a result, milk and butter sales and production remained relatively low through the period. In 1865, only 3,054 gallons of milk, 25,000 lbs. of butter, and 10,000 lbs. of cheese were sold.

Charlton experienced its first major expansion in the manufacturing sector during the 1850s. In 1845, 62 men and women produced \$33,000 worth of goods; by 1855, 223 men and women were employed in the production of goods worth \$142,450. The major growth occurred in the boot and shoe industry. Although nearly 50 men and women manufactured shoes during the 1830s, the Panic of 1837 hurt the industry in Charlton; by 1845, only four people were involved in shoemaking. Several new boot and shoe shops and small factories were erected in Morseville in 1850, and in Northside in 1850 and 1853. In 1855 they employed 169 of 223 men and women who worked in manufacturing, and produced 87,000 pairs of boots and shoes valued at \$96,000. An auger and bit manufactory operated between 1843 and 1865 in South Charlton, and in 1855 employed 20 men. During the Civil War, this firm produced ramrods on government contract. Lumber and woodworking shops, in addition to the sawmills and box shops, included at various times through the period a carriage shop, cabinet shop, sash, door, and blind mills, and a toy shop, and employed up to 40 men.

A small woolen mill was established at Charlton City during the late 1830s or early 1840s and wove several thousand yards of satinets and blankets annually with the warps produced at the former thread mill in South Charlton until the thread mill burned in 1848. Production remained low until the Civil War, when the manufacture of blankets in the mill increased to 78,000 yards in 1865.

Several quarries in South Charlton were worked intensively during the 1840s and 1850s, probably to supply the stone textile mills and houses being erected in Oxford, Dudley, and Webster during this time. The quarries also yielded granite for several stonecutters who produced monuments, tablets, and gravestones.

E. Architecture

Residential: There is little substantial development evident in domestic architecture. Scattered examples of period center and double chimney forms and the existence of side-passage plans characterize the period.

Institutional: The Unitarians and Universalists merge in 1839 and construct a one-story, three-bay, gable end Greek Revival meetinghouse with a three-staged tower and spire. This building also served as a town hall. A Methodist church was erected in Charlton City in 1855.

A gable end schoolhouse with recessed center entry dating from 1848 survives.

Commercial: The "old" Spurr Tavern pre-dates 1839. Known later in the 19th century as the Bellevue House, it was a two-and-a-half-story, five-bay, double-pile, end chimney structure with a hipped roof. Adjacent to it was a brick store.

Industrial: A woolen mill built ca. 1848 operated in Charlton City until 1855.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes

By the 1890s the Southbridge-Worcester electric street railway is running through Charlton City and the northern end of Charlton Center, with a branch line (New Spencer Road) to Charlton Depot. Main line: Southbridge Road-right-of-way west, then east of Southbridge Road-Carpenter Hill Road into Charlton City-Sturbridge Road-Masonic Home Road-right-of-way south to Charlton Center-Old Worcester Road-right-of-way south of Old State Road.

B. Population

During the first three decades of the period, total population figures remain stable. In 1870, the total was 1,878, in 1900 it was 1,860, with a total variation of only 77 from high to low totals. During the pre-World War I period, growth returned after the long century of stagnation, reaching 2,213 by period's end. The percentage of foreign-born within the town grew in a parallel fashion, staying below 10% until 1895, when it reached 15%, near where it remained. In that same year, French Canadians outnumbered the Irish immigrants, as they would continue to do. There were also small numbers from New Brunswick, England, and Sweden, and then later the new Italian, Polish, and Russian immigrants. Among the town's workers agriculture remained predominant, with comparatively small numbers in manufacturing. The increase in the Catholic population led to the formation of a parish here, with its church located in Charlton Depot in 1887.

The town's library became free and public in 1882.

C. Settlement Pattern

Charlton City continues to be the town's industrial focus, while institutional activities cluster at Charlton Center. New Charlton City textile mills are built in the 1870s and a satinnet mill is built west of Charlton City on the south side of Sturbridge Road.

A Masonic Home is built northwest of Charlton Center, and a town hall (1905), high school, and Grange hall are built in the Center. The shoe factory at Morseville burns in 1884, and a satinnet factory is built at Millward in 1887.

D. Economic Base

Few changes in Charlton's economy occurred during the decades following the Civil War. Shoemaking remained dominant, accounting for more than half of the nearly \$200,000 worth of goods produced in 1875 and nearly two thirds of all manufacturing employees. Small factories were located in Morseville and Charlton Depot, and several small shops were scattered throughout the town. Four mills produced wooden boxes for shoes, valued at \$17,000 in 1875. Textile manufacturing continued in Charlton City in the small woolen mill on Cady Brook, which produced cheap satinets. At South Charlton, the former Leland bit and auger manufactory was purchased by Henry Stevens of the Dudley Linen Works in 1865 and linen finishing was carried on there for several decades. The manufacture of iron and metal goods, despite the loss of the Leland manufactory, expanded during the late 1860s with the erection of a wire mill in 1865 along Cady Brook south of Charlton City. A second mill erected in Charlton City in 1871 by George Prouty replaced the first and continued for several decades in the production of about 160 tons of card wire annually. Shoe shaves for the shoemaking industry were also manufactured in Charlton during the 1870s and 1880s.

Charlton's manufacturing began its second period of expansion during the decade of the 1880s when the value of goods made increased nearly four-fold over that of the previous decade. Growth occurred in nearly every sector of the economy. By 1890, five small textile mills at Charlton City, Millwood, and at a site west of Charlton City produced woolen goods, largely satinets, worth \$147,000 and employed nearly 150 men and women. Shoemaking expanded through the 1880s until fire, retirement and death of owners, and depression in the early 1890s ended the industry. More than \$150,000 worth of boots and shoes were produced annually at the Morseville and Charlton Depot shops and factories before the industry's demise. Woodworking and the lumber trade became increasingly important. By the 1890s, four box shops, five carriage and wagon shops, a sash and blind mill, and a number of sawmills produced lumber and goods worth more than \$175,000 annually.

Growth in Charlton's manufactures continued into the early 20th century, though at a pace slower than that experienced during the 1880s. Despite the loss of the shoe industry and several textile mills and box factories to fire and relocation during the late 1890s, the eight remaining manufacturing establishments in 1905 produced \$600,000 worth of goods and employed 314 men and women.

Although the value of goods made overtook the value of agricultural goods during the period of growth in the 1880s, Charlton remained very much an agricultural town with the majority

of adult males still involved in farming. In 1885, the town ranked fourth among the towns of Worcester County in the total value of agricultural goods; by 1895, Charlton was second and trailed behind only Worcester in the number of farms. Dairying became the primary activity after a tremendous expansion during the early 1880s. Whole milk sales increased more than five-fold to 350,000 gallons and butter production exceeded 100,000 lbs. annually by 1885. Charlton ranked seventh in the county in milk production in 1895, producing 609,000 gallons of milk. Parallel to and to a large part responsible for this increase was the establishment of ice houses on many of the larger dairy farms. In 1885, 980 tons of ice were stored, a more than ten-fold increase from the previous decade. A cool dairy house was essential for the greatest quantity and highest quality of butter production and ice was required for the preservation of milk as it was shipped to urban markets.

The increased dairying and cattle-raising activity required large quantities of hay and large acreage of pasture land, totalling nearly 15,000 acres by 1885. By 1905, Charlton was second in the county in acreage devoted to hay and third in acreage devoted to pasture. Cropland was also very high in the 1880s (1,500 acres), ranking second behind the city of Worcester. By 1905 this figure had fallen to less than 800 acres, directed mostly to the growing of hay and increasing mowing land by 1,000 acres over the 1885 acreage.

Specialization occurred in other areas as well. Several poultry farms were created, and by 1905 accounted for 6% of the \$340,000 total of agricultural production. Hog-raising became popular by the end of the 19th century with more than 150,000 lbs. of pork marketed annually.

E. Architecture

Residential: There appears to be even less development during the Late Industrial period than in the preceding forty years. This fact is supported by the relatively stable population growth. Scattered examples of modest Colonial Revival influence and a few bungalows and Four Squares may be found.

Institutional: A one-story Colonial Revival high school was built. In 1906, the Dexter Memorial Town Hall was erected, designed by C. L. Chamberlain of Frost, Briggs & Chamberlain. The two-story, three-bay brick building has a projecting bay with quoins at each end, a hipped roof, and cupola.

Commercial: The shingled, fieldstone and brick structure built in 1901 just northwest of Charlton Center as the Overlook Hotel is now a Masonic Home.

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes

By the early 1920s, secondary automobile highways are established on the road from Southbridge through Charlton City to Charlton Depot (old Route 93, later Routes 169 and 31), and from Charlton City through Charlton Center to North Oxford (Masonic Home Road, Old Worcester Road-Old State Road). By ca. 1930, the new east-west regional highway, Route 20-Southwest cutoff, passes through Charlton City. Secondary highway improvements of the 1930s include the roads from Charlton Center to Dudley Center (Route 31) and to East Brookfield.

B. Population

Overall population growth was moderate, from 2,213 in 1915 to 2,557 in 1940. A brief dip to 1,995 occurred in 1920. The foreign-born within the population dropped from 17.3% in 1915 to 10.5% in 1940. A large segment of the town, 21.2%, was classified as rural in 1940.

C. Settlement Pattern

Little development occurs on the established centers. Recreational cottages are built on ponds in the northeast, particularly on the southeast shore of Cranberry Meadow Pond (Mystic Grove) and the west shore of Glenecho Lake (Glen Grove). Some early auto related commercial and residential development occurs along Route 20 after 1930.

D. Economic Base

As many of the smaller manufacturing establishments closed, relocated, or were destroyed by fire during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, textile manufacturing became the leading industry in Charlton. By the late 1920s, the Charlton City mills, under the company name of Charlton Woolen Co., were the largest manufacturers in town. The mills produced about a million yards of coating, cloaking, and suiting fabric annually, valued at \$750,000, and employed 180 operatives. A third mill, owned by the Aldrich Mfg. Co., produced satinets and employed 60 operatives. The only other manufacturing enterprises were lumbering and box-making.

Dairying, poultry farming, hog-raising, and fruit orcharding remained the major agricultural pursuits. Although total farm acreage decreased through the period, Charlton continued to be an important agricultural town.

E. Architecture

No significant development observed. A one-and-a-half-story Dutch Colonial house of 1931 is recorded.