

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

MENDON

Report Date: 1984

Associated Regional Report: Central Massachusetts

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

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

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

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

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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: Mendon

I. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Mendon lies within the Blackstone River drainage basin. Its high hilly surface rises to more than 500 feet above sea level in the north and northwest portions of town, to more than 400 feet above sea level in the west, while reaching heights of only 300 feet above sea level in the east and southeast areas of town.

One major river, the Mill River, a tributary of the Blackstone, flows north to south in the eastern end of town through a wide, low floodplain. Because of its slow, level course, it was not adaptable to water-powered industrial development within the town's limits, and as a result, the town remained largely agricultural through the 18th and 19th centuries. Several streams flow into the Mill River, most notably Muddy Brook, which did provide several small water-power sites for grist and sawmills and small-scale manufacturing. In the western third of the town, several small streams flow westward into the West River in Uxbridge, separated from the Mill River Valley by a central plateau on which sits the town center.

Mendon's soils are derived from glacial tills composed largely of granite and gneiss, and range from fine sandy loam to coarse gravels. The soils of the gently rising central plateau and the soils along the Mill River are the best agricultural lands in the town, well suited for cultivation with good yields of hay, grains and vegetables. More than 50% of Mendon's hilly surface is composed of stony loam, best suited for woodlands, pastures, and orchards.

II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Established as a town from "Quinshapage" Plantation, 1667, with additional grants (1669), annexations (1710), and purchases (1691). Part included in new town of Bellingham, 1719. Part established as Uxbridge, 1727. Part included in new town of Upton, 1735; bounds with Upton established in 1754. Part of Uxbridge annexed in 1770. Part established as Milford, 1780. Part established as Blackstone, 1845. Bounds with Bellingham established, 1872.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Suburban, agricultural hill town, set in highlands between Blackstone, Mill, and Charles rivers. Possible native sites east and northeast of Nipmuck Pond. Frontier European settlement (ca. 1660s) abandoned after native attack of 1675; settlement resumed

by late 17th century. Dispersed 18th century agricultural settlement, mostly north of meetinghouse. Outlying areas of large original grant hive off during 18th century. Dispersed small-scale manufacturing and major industrial development along Blackstone bring prosperity until southern industrial complex area gains independence in 1845. Mid 19th century town center with landmark Elias Carter (1820) meetinghouse. Center area and North Avenue retain many good examples of Federal and Greek Revival houses. Lack of railroad connections results in relatively little late 19th and early 20th century development, leaving much of the 19th century landscape intact, although pressures of suburban residential development are increasing.

IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

A. Transportation Routes

Highland between the Charles and Blackstone river valleys, with intersection of primary north-south and east-west trails. Main conjectured east-west trail skirts southern base of Neck Hill, passes up and across Muddy Brook tributary (Hartford Avenue, Providence Street and Emerson Street). Branches conjectured north over highlands east of Miscoe Hill (Washington Street) or southwest past Nipmuck Pond (Uxbridge Road, Park Street). Inferred southern alternate loop west of Quisset Hill, along southern base of Inman Hill to south end of Nipmuck Pond (Providence Street, Quisset Hill Road, Blackstone Street, Lovell Street, Pleasant Street). Conjectured southern branch west of Muddy Brook to Mill River Valley (Providence Street).

B. Settlement Pattern

The area now Mendon served as an area for seasonal hunting and gathering from the large base camp to the west, now in Uxbridge. The Mill River site, between Providence and Thayer Streets, represents the type of use of river and brook terraces that continued in upland regions through the Woodland and Contact periods. Other areas include Nipmuck Pond, and "Wigwam Hill" in the southwest.

C. Subsistence Pattern

Seasonal exploitation for fishing on ponds and brooks, agriculture on terraces, and hunting in uplands.

D. Observations

The density of sites located during the Route 146 survey in Uxbridge, etc. to the west suggests a number of sites in this area far greater than has been predicted in the literature for this inland area.

V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

A. Transportation Routes

Contact Period trails remain in use. East-west trail improved as road from Medway (ca. 1670).

B. Population

Initial petition for plantation by 13 men from Braintree and 10 from Weymouth. By 1669, 22 sign document for settlement of minister. By King Philip's War, 38 families.

C. Settlement Pattern

Initial grant for township in 1659 was eight miles square and included the present towns of Millville and Blackstone to the south and portions of Uxbridge on the east, and Milford and Hopedale to the east. With the first land division in 1662,ouselots of 30 acres were laid out in the northern part of the grant, along the north-south artery; grants of meadow, upland, etc. followed, based on estate holdings, in units totalling 105 acres.

D. Economic Base

Primarily agricultural, with some complaints over insufficient meadow. An early mill on the Mill River, in what would become Hopedale, 1664, and on Muddy Brook in 1674.

VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

A. Transportation Routes

After resettlement (ca. 1680), a radial network develops from the meetinghouse center to outlying areas, in addition to earlier routes. Roads include Uxbridge Street, North Street to Upton, George Street to Milford, Millville Road and Blackstone Street to South Parish, and Thayer Road to Bellingham.

B. Population

Twenty families had resettled the town by 1680. Growth during the next thirty years was irregular; based on ministerial rates, taxpayers rose and fell while gradually expanding, to 75 in 1707. In spite of territorial losses, population grew greatly during the 18th century, from 120 taxpayers in 1719 to 336 families, total population 1,843, in 1765. Proximity to Rhode Island probably accounts for the number of Quakers in the town who were affiliated with the Smithfield Monthly Meeting. They constructed a meetinghouse in 1729 and numbered 10 (probably taxpayers) in 1732, 26 in 1756, 33 in 1758. It was also attended by Uxbridge residents until their house was constructed in 1770. In the 1740s, disagreements arise between church and their minister Dorr,

but issues are unknown. In 1751 he helped to form the Mendon Association of ministers, a theologically Hopkinsian group, that is Calvinist, Evangelical, pro-Great Awakening.

First school mentioned in 1709, a grammar school available from 1749.

C. Settlement Pattern

Town meetings resumed by 1680. Municipal structures continue to cluster together in the north, including a pound (1701).

An additional grant of land, totalling three square acres, known as the Noah Purchase, in 1692. Agitation for independent status by outlying areas begins in the west in 1720, culminating in the incorporating in 1727 of Uxbridge, taking four miles from that side. By 1722, schoolteaching location identifies two additional settlement nodes, in the east and southeast. The most protracted debate broke out over the construction of the fourth meetinghouse and the determination of its location, in 1730. Out of this debate emerged a group east of the Mill River that wanted independent status; it became the second parish (precinct?) in 1741 and the town of Milford in 1780. A portion in the northwest went to the formation of the town of Upton in 1735.

Population clustered in the north in what is now Mendon, and also around the Blackstone River in the south. This section became third parish in 1766, and the town of Blackstone in 1845.

D. Economic Base

Early in the period the town's frontier position hurt its economy due to large amounts of time guarding, plus crop problems due to blast and frost; assessments were suspended by General Court. After Queen Anne's War, 1713, and population increase, agriculture improves, focusing on hay and grains. Mills rebuilt quickly, but present bounds excluded most productive privileges. Some concern over increasing poor by third quarter of the 17th century expressed in warnings out (12 in 1764) and discussion of implementation of workhouse system the year before. Characterized by Pruitt as Egalitarian Farm Town by 1771.

E. Architecture

Residential: Relatively little appears to remain from the Colonial period; two one-story, five-bay center chimney plans (one with lean-to) were observed, and a two-story, four-bay and a two-story, five-bay center chimney plan were recorded. Several five-bay, one-story center chimney plans of indeterminate age (possibly late 18th century) were also noted.

Institutional: The first meetinghouse was erected in 1668 and measured 22 x 22 feet. A later 19th century source (Hurd) describes the building as having a roof that was gathered to a

seven-foot square with a turret. This meetinghouse was burned by Indians and replaced in 1680 with a structure measuring 26 x 24 feet. A third meetinghouse was erected ca. 1692, which measured 30 x 30 feet. This structure was enlarged by 20 feet in 1709. The fourth meetinghouse, which remained standing until 1846, was completed in 1730 and measured 50 x 45 feet and was 24 feet high. By 1718, one school building had been erected. Between 1747-1751, a second schoolhouse measuring 20 x 16 feet was erected and the original building was sold. By 1756, the town had two schoolhouses. The first Quaker meetinghouse was erected in 1729 and survived until ca. 1850.

VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

A. Transportation Routes

The Colonial period highways continue in use, with two important routes emerging: the north-south post road from Worcester to Providence (North Avenue, Main Street, Providence Street), and the east-west road from northern Connecticut to Boston, chartered in 1800 as the Ninth Massachusetts Turnpike (Westcotts Road, Maple Street, George Street, Neck Hill Road, Hartford Avenue).

B. Population

With the incorporation of Milford in 1780, formerly second parish of Mendon, approximately one third of the town's population was lost. During the next four decades, population growth was moderate, doubling from 1,555 in 1790 to 3,152 in 1830.

Several ministers in succession due to problems with salary, accompanied by shift to Arminian and Unitarian preaching. In 1828, the orthodox Calvinists formed a church of their own.

Quakers continue to be numerous. With Uxbridge, the group shares Monthly Meeting status after 1783. In 1812, a second house was built in South Mendon, now Blackstone. Continued concern over care of the poor, with votes for workhouse (1786), search for house to rent (1805), decision that one person can care more economically (1818), poor farm purchased 1830.

C. Settlement Pattern

Continued dispersed agricultural settlement, with Unitarian and Friends meetinghouses in the center, notable linear farmstead concentration along North Avenue, and beginnings of residential concentration in center. New meetinghouse relocated to north (1820) on Maple Street. Brick bank on Main Street, 1825.

D. Economic Base

Mendon was primarily an agricultural town through the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1794, four grist mills, four sawmills, and an ironworks (now in the village of Waterford in Blackstone) were

located in the town, which included the territory now occupied by Millville and Blackstone until their separation from Mendon in 1845. The town also contained two clothiers' works, several pot and pearl ash works, several small distilleries, and at least one brick kiln during the late 18th century. The brick kiln, located in Albeeville, continued in operation into the early 1840s. A sign of Mendon's agricultural prosperity was its 12th place ranking among Massachusetts towns in the amount of state tax paid during the early 1790s.

During the first three decades of the 19th century, Mendon experienced large-scale industrial development along the Blackstone and Mill rivers in the villages of Blackstone, Millville, and East Blackstone. In 1800, a large cotton spinning mill and village were built by a group of prominent and wealthy Providence merchants and investors in Blackstone. By 1825, a second mill was erected by the Blackstone Manufacturing Company. In Waterford, just downstream from the Blackstone Mfg. Co. mills, a satinnet mill was erected in 1825 by Welcome and Darius Farnum, followed by a second mill in 1828. Upstream at Millville, the first woolen mill on the Blackstone River was built in 1814, with a second stone mill added in 1825. An axe and scythe factory was also located in Millville during this period. In East Blackstone on the Mill River, a cotton mill was established in 1809 by Seth Kelley and James Paine. In 1823, a machine shop for textile machinery was added and in 1828 two additional cotton mills, one brick and one frame, were built. Thus, most manufacturing during the early 19th century was located in the south half of Mendon where the Mill and Blackstone rivers experienced considerable falls in elevation.

The industrial and economic development and dominance of the southern half of Mendon (Blackstone and Millville) was secured and reinforced by the completion of the Blackstone Canal in 1828 along the Blackstone River between Providence and Worcester. Conceived and financed by wealthy Providence merchants wishing to tap the interior trade and divert it to Providence from Boston, the canal provided a cheaper and easier method of transporting raw materials, produce, and manufactured goods to and from the interior lands between Worcester and Providence. The villages and towns along its route grew in local importance at the expense of villages such as Mendon Center, located several miles from the canal.

By 1830, the area comprising present-day Mendon contained only one grist mill, four sawmills, and an axe manufactory. Boot and shoe making were carried on in numerous homes and small shops; by 1837, more than 22,000 pairs of boots were made. The manufacture of straw braid and bonnets and hats was also a widespread cottage industry begun in the second decade of the 19th century. Straw was distributed for braiding and sewing into hats to hundreds of straw braiders within a five-mile radius of South Milford by a dry goods merchant in that village who did a very large business as a distributor and dealer in straw goods. The establishment of the

Ninth Turnpike through South Milford and Mendon in 1800 stimulated communication and aided in the distribution of the straw and transportation of the finished goods.

In contrast, the portion of Mendon that became Blackstone and Millville contained in 1830 three woolen mills, eight cotton mills, a scythe factory, machine factory, four sawmills, two gristmills, and the Blackstone Canal with three locks.

Agriculture: Although agriculture remained the primary employment of the population, over half of the town's land, 56%, remained unimproved and woodland. Of the remaining land, 3% was in tillage, 13% in mowing and meadowlands, and 17% in pasturage.

E. Architecture

Residential: Development increases during the Federal period. One-story, five-bay center chimney dwellings continue to be popular, as do two-story examples; however, there is a noticeable shift toward two-story, five-bay, double chimney houses, many with hipped roofs. One brick two-story, double-pile houses with double chimneys was also noted. Doorways with pilasters surmounted by a full entablature in which there is an elliptical fanlight are common, dating from 1815-1825. A two-story, six-bay structure with two interior chimneys suggests the structural configuration of a four-bay (three-quarter) house with an additional two bays at one gable end. A similar example is the two-story, seven-bay tavern in the town center which embodies the form of a standard five-bay center chimney dwelling with an additional two bays on one gable end and a chimney located at the point where the two end bays "join" the five-bay segment. Of special note is the two-story, five-bay Flemish bond (principal facade only) end chimney brick house on Millville Road near the town line. The house likely dates from the late Federal period as it has granite lintels and sills.

Institutional: The fifth meetinghouse (First Parish Church) was constructed in 1820 solely as a place of worship, thus indicating the separation of religious and secular affairs in Mendon. Designed by Elias Carter, noted regional architect, the two-story, gable end structure is three bays wide with a monumental Tuscan portico containing a center entrance with arched openings; a central Palladian window; and a square tower with quoins which comprises a two-staged belfry and spire. In 1830, the Congregational and Unitarian factions formally separated, and the Congregationalists built a gable end meetinghouse (subsequently known as North Congregationalist Church). The Quakers built a second meetinghouse (now in Blackstone) in 1812. By 1800, school districts had been established with schoolhouses; none are known to survive.

Commercial: Two one-story, three-bay brick structures ca. 1825 survive; one with Flemish bond and jack arches was built as a tailor shop and converted to use as the town records office in

1872. The second structure, which lacks the jack arches and Flemish bond brickwork, was originally constructed as a bank and may date as late as ca. 1840.

VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

A. Transportation Routes

The early 19th century roads remain in use. The town is bypassed by railroad lines, although the Airline (1868) from Blackstone to Bellingham does pass through the southeast corner.

B. Population

Mendon's population continued to grow with industrialization, from 3,152 in 1830 to 3,524 in 1840. However, when its second or south parish became the town of Blackstone in 1845, the majority of its population, clustered around mill privileges on the Blackstone River, went with it, so that population in 1850 was only 1,300. Immigration brought some growth during the 1850s, with population reaching its highest until post-World War II expansion, a figure of 1,351. Stagnation, even decay, characterized the population during the remainder of the period, falling to 1,175 in 1870.

With few factories, Mendon attracted few of the period's immigrants. The town's Irish population peaked in 1855 at 150, and throughout the period it remained small.

The town's Unitarians called Hosea Ballou 1831-1842 (for more information, see Hopedale report), while the Calvinists languished somewhat, calling once a Methodist minister and finally selling their building to them in 1865. The Quakers discontinued use of their meetinghouse, in favor of Blackstone's, in 1841. Much disagreement accompanied discussion over the discontinuation of school districts. A high school was begun in 1869.

C. Settlement Pattern

The center is established as the institutional/residential focus. Dispersed, small-scale industrial activity develops in the southern half of town. Evangelical Congregational meetinghouse built on Main Street, 1830. Harrington Hall built ca. 1841, at Maple/Main Street intersection; purchased by town for town hall, 1850. Barber notes 50 houses within a half mile of meetinghouse, 1839. Dense residential/institutional cluster at Hastings-Maple-Main Street triangle by period's end. Retail and manufacturing focus develops at Maple/Main Street intersection. Linear residential extensions on Uxbridge Street, Washington Street, North Avenue and George Street. Small industrial nucleations develop at shoe shops at Pleasant Street/Millville Road, and west of Charles River at Hartford Avenue/Route 140 (extension of South Milford).

D. Economic Base

The first census taken after Blackstone's separation from Mendon was taken in 1845. With its textile manufacturing districts located in the new town of Blackstone (this included Millville), Mendon was left with only several small-scale manufacturing establishments, composed largely of leather and woodworking trades. The largest industry was the manufacture of boots and shoes. That year, 39,400 pairs of boots and 300 pairs of shoes worth nearly \$60,000 were made by 193 men and 33 women. A small harness, saddle and trunk manufactory rounded out the leather trades.

Following boot and shoe making in importance were lumbering and woodworking. Nearly 150,000 feet of lumber and over 1,200 cords of firewood were cut in 1845. Woodworking trades included four wagon and sleigh shops, a chair and cabinetmaker, a small boot box mill, and small boatbuilding shop. A stone quarry and straw braiding by about 50 women rounded out the economic activities in Mendon, with total manufactured goods valued at less than \$70,000.

Agriculture, although pursued by the majority of townspeople produced goods valued at only \$37,000 and included butter and cheese, fruit, grains, potatoes, hay and livestock.

Boot- and shoemaking and woodworking related trades dominated Mendon's economic activities through the 1870s. Between 1845 and 1879, six boot and shoe manufactories were established in the town. Most were concentrated in and around Albeeville, but two manufactories, operating between the 1840s and 1879, were located in the town center. Manufacture peaked in the 1850s with over 94,000 pairs of boots and 32,000 pairs of shoes made by 182 men and 93 women, valued at \$209,000. By 1875, however, only one factory of 16 employees and a number of small shops employing under 100 persons produced only \$57,000 worth of boots. This decline was largely the result of the tremendous growth of large-scale boot and shoemaking in nearby Milford and to the fact that railroads, built to Uxbridge and Milford by the 1850s, had completely bypassed Mendon.

During the 1860s a shoddy mill was erected on the Mill River near the Hopedale line and in 1875 it produced \$20,000 worth of shoddy. Brickmaking was carried on in the 1850s; in 1855, 175,000 bricks were made. However, the works closed in the next decade. Lumbering and woodworking increased in importance during this period, accounting for nearly one-fourth of the value of manufactured goods in 1875. That year, five sawmills cut over 1,500 cords of firewood, 5,900 railroad sleepers, and several hundred thousand feet of boards. Also operating were a boot box manufactory and a furniture maker.

While overall manufacturing production decreased from a high of \$261,000 in 1855 to only \$115,537 in 1875, the value and quantity of agricultural goods steadily increased to about \$100,000 in

1875. Milk production increased nearly 11-fold between 1865 and 1875 as more farmers turned to dairying as a major activity, although it still provided only about 15% of the total agricultural production. Hay, straw, and fodder raised in 1875 were the largest category of agricultural goods raised, valued at \$32,000, followed by vegetables (\$9,000), meat products (nearly \$7,000), and fruits, led by apples and cider (\$12,000).

E. Architecture

Residential: Although common, one- and two-story Greek Revival and Italianate detailed side-passage plans are not as frequent in Mendon as in most other towns in the eastern section of the study unit. The predominant house form observed was the one-story, five-bay center chimney plan with Greek details and trim. The most unusual example of this type is the rare granite dwelling located on Inman Hill. The only end chimney house observed from this period is also constructed of coursed granite blocks. It is a two-story, five-bay, double-pile structure (1830) located on Providence Road near Spring Brook. A later 19th century frame wing is attached to the southwest and a stone (presumably granite) outbuilding is adjacent to the house. One- and two-story double chimney plans were noted; with the exception of a three-bay, double-pile example, all were five bays in width. Three Greek five-bay, two-story gable and center entrance dwellings were also observed, one single-story and two two-story examples. One of the latter two, built in 1830, retains the chimneys in the gable end wall, creating an asymmetrical facade and suggesting that this arrangement is simply an exterior aesthetic reorientation of the more traditional center-passage, end chimney plan. A moderate number of one- and two-story, three-bay Greek Revival side-passage plans survive, including a one-and-a-half-story example in the town center constructed of coursed granite blocks with a Greek door surround and cornice (1825). Development in the latter half of the period seems to have been rather limited. A surprisingly low number of Italianate period side-passage plans were observed. One center entrance, three-bay, one-story, Second Empire house was noted.

Institutional: The Methodists assume control of the 1830 Congregational meetinghouse, but by ca. 1855 have erected their own meetinghouse which is subsequently sold in 1859. The 1729 Quaker meetinghouse is demolished ca. 1850. Harrison Hall (ca. 1840), a two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, gable end building with a Greek temple front is purchased by the town in 1850 for use as a town hall. This also serves as the second district schoolhouse and remains a combination school and town hall until 1902 when classes cease to be held there.

IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

A. Transportation Routes

Electric streetcar service established through town from Uxbridge to Hopedale/Milford. Line runs on Uxbridge Road north of Nipmuck

Pond, then through center (Hastings Road), turns onto North Avenue, and then veers northeast on a new right-of-way into Hopedale.

B. Population

Without the impetus of industrial growth, the town's population continued to decline, from 1,175 in 1870 to 933 in 1915. Mendon received some late 19th century immigration, but primarily from northern European countries, including, in 1905, England, Ireland, Sweden, plus French Canadians. Its foreign population remained small, however, lowest in 1885 at 7.4%, and highest in 1915 at 15.96%.

With its comparatively homogeneous population, still heavily rural, the town underwent few structural changes. The Methodists discontinued in 1879, the Baptists formed in 1897. A library was formed in 1881, followed by an historical society in 1896. The Grange was founded in 1887. Complaints over tramps early in the period, and was accompanied by discussion of instituting a lock-up.

C. Settlement Pattern

Taft Public Library constructed in center, 1881. Recreational cottage development begins around Nipmuck Pond ca. 1880. Lake Nipmuck Park established in 1882, with further development after streetcar service begins in 1901. Granite Aldrich house (1830) on Providence Road becomes Episcopal school for girls (ca. 1900) with chapel.

D. Economic Base

Through the end of the 19th century, Mendon's manufacturing continued to decline while agricultural production increased. By 1888 the last shoe factory, located in the town center, was taken down and boot and shoemaking ceased. Only 11 wage earners were recorded in Mendon in 1895. Two woolen shoddy mills and a blacksmith were all that were listed in the 1895 manufacturing census.

In agriculture, production increased to \$170,000 in 1905. More than 300,000 gallons of milk were produced that year, with dairying accounting for the largest share of agricultural goods produced at 35% of the total. Hay and fodder accounted for 22%, while poultry increased to 7% of the total. Improvements in agricultural production and changes in methods through the 19th century are illustrated by the change in the number of horses and oxen used. In 1855, 119 horses and 136 oxen were used on Mendon's farms; by 1885, there were 154 horses and only 58 oxen. This gap was even wider at the start of the 20th century as horses continued to replace oxen because of their speed, flexibility, and adaptability to new agricultural machinery.

The introduction of electric streetcars through Mendon in 1901 stimulated new jobs and markets in town as Nipmuck Park, a recreational area on the shores of Lake Nipmuck, was built, owned and controlled by the trolley company. Thousands of visitors were annually brought to the Park by trolley to be entertained at the large ballroom, dining room, and beach. When the trolley was discontinued in 1928, it had begun the gradual transformation of Mendon from an agricultural to a residential town, as it made possible easy commuting from Mendon to the factories of Upton, Hopedale, Milford, Northbridge, and Uxbridge.

E. Architecture

Residential: Very little development observed for this period. Traditional two-story, five-bay forms and a pyramidal-roofed Queen Anne structure were noted. Nipmuck Pond in the western section of the town appears to have developed as a resort spot in the late 19th century; a few cottages survive from before the turn of the century. Significant numbers of Four Square plans were observed; bungaloid house types begin to appear infrequently for the latter portion of the period.

Institutional: Union Chapel is constructed in 1896, a one-and-a-half-story shingled, Colonial Revival/gable end structure with a square belfry over a side entrance. The following year, 1897, a Baptist congregation was formed and purchased the 1830 former Congregational meetinghouse. A frame, two-story Colonial Revival L-shaped school with hipped roof (demolished) was constructed during the period. A ca. 1900 one-story, frame boathouse is recorded (possibly on Nipmuck Pond?).

X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

A. Transportation Routes

Streetcar service discontinued, 1928. Local roads improved as auto highways. By mid 1920s, major routes are Uxbridge-Milford Road (Route 126, later Route 16), and Cape Road (Route 140 along eastern border). By mid 1930s, secondary roads are improved to Upton, Northbridge, Millville, and Blackstone.

B. Population

After five decades of decline, population growth returns to the town. It remains, however, one of the county's persistently rural communities, fourth in rank, with 433 of its 1,315 population in 1940 classified as rural, 32.9%.

C. Settlement Pattern

Continued recreational cottage development around Nipmuck Pond. Little other significant growth.

D. Economic Base

Mendon settled into a quiet agricultural and residential community in the early 20th century. Population began to rise in the 1910s after a steady decline to its lowest point in the 19th and 20th centuries in 1940. By 1940, it reached the level of population present in 1860.

Manufacturing was virtually nonexistent during this period and part-time farmers and non-agriculturalists commuted to work outside of Mendon. Dairying, poultry-raising and orcharding continued to be the main agricultural pursuits.

E. Architecture

Residential: Residential development appears to have declined; a few bungalows from the early years of the period, a one-story stuccoed 1930s dwelling, and some 1930-1940 one-story, three-bay center entrance gabled units were noted. Cottages from the 1920s through the end of the period remain, many as year-round residences now, on Nipmuck Pond.

Very little growth evident in other areas. A 1920s frame skating rink is no longer extant. The 1896 Union Chapel was converted to use as a library in 1920.

XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

The town center has received adequate attention, but aside from a couple of houses on Providence Road just southeast of the center, it appears that the remainder of the town has not been surveyed. Further documentation of this town's resources are definitely necessary.