

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## MIDDLETON

Report Date: 1986

**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 REPORT

Date: Aug. 1986

Community: Middleton

### I. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Middleton was originally part of several large grants made by the General Court to individuals early in the 17th century in the towns of Andover, Boxford, Salem and Topsfield. Middleton was incorporated from these towns on June 20, 1728. Boundaries between Middleton, North Andover and Boxford were established in 1904, and between Middleton and Topsfield were established in 1936.

### II. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Middleton is located in the central portion of Essex County along its western border. It is bordered on the north by North Andover and Boxford, easterly by Boxford, Topsfield and Danvers, southerly by Danvers and Peabody and westerly by Lynnfield, North Reading and North Andover. Physiographically the town lies within the New England Seaboard Lowland, a relatively smooth coastal strip of land with some hills usually below the 400 and 500 foot contours. Locally, the portion of Essex County is higher in elevation than more easterly coastal areas. In Middleton, land surfaces are hilly in the southern and eastern areas with elevations ranging from 50 feet or less in valleys to 200 feet or more on several hills. Will's Hill, the highest point in town at 253 feet is located near the town center. In western and northern portions of town land surfaces are somewhat level with few major hills. Elevations in this area average around 100 feet or less.

Bedrock deposits in Middleton are characterized by igneous density throughout the town. Andover granite is the most common formation present. Small distributions of Salem gabbro - diorite (diorite and gabbro - diorite) are found in eastern portions of town.

Soils in Middleton represent a mixture of types formed in glacial till, outwash, organic deposits, recent alluvium and disturbances through urban development. Soils of the Canton-Woodbridge-Freetown associations are the most common soil association in the town found along both sides of Boston Brook and in the southern portion of town east and west of Boston Street. These soils are found in deep deposits and nearly level to steep areas. They range from loamy soils formed in glacial till to very poorly drained mucky soils formed in organic deposits. Soils of the Chatfield-Hollis-Rock association outcrop are found in a strip-like distribution along most of the western, northern and northeastern town boundary. These soils are found in moderately deep or shallow deposits and gently sloping to steep areas. They are generally well drained loamy soils formed in glacial till and contain areas of exposed Bedrock. Three separate distributions of soils in the Merrimac-Hinckley-Urban land association are found in eastern Middleton near Rt. 95, near the juncture of the Ipswich River and Rt. 62 and in the extreme southern portion of town. These soils are found in deep deposits and nearly level to steep areas. They are excessively drained loamy and sandy deposits formed in outwash deposits and areas where natural soils have been altered by urban development. A small distribution of soils belonging to the Paxton-Montauk-Urban land association is present north of Middleton Center, west of Rt. 114. These soils are well drained loamy soils formed in glacial till and areas where natural soils have been altered by urban development. A second small distribution of soils belonging to the Freetown-Fluvaquents

associations is present north of Middleton Center, west of Rt. 114. These soils range from poorly drained mucky soils formed in organic deposits to poorly drained mucky and loamy soils formed in recent alluvium.

Major drainage in Middleton is through the Ipswich River which flows along near the entire eastern and southern town boundary roughly parallel with East Street and River Street. Boston River, a tributary of the Ipswich River, provides drainage in the northern portion of town. Major drainage is also present throughout extensive freshwater wetlands in most of the town. Several ponds are present including Middleton Pond, Creighton Pond, and Pout Pond.

The original forest growth in Middleton and Essex County in general, consisted of a mixed growth of white pine, oak, chestnut, poplar, maple, birch and some other hardwoods and conifers. However, secondary growth patterns characterize most of the town today, represented by second growth oak and chestnut in uplands as well as scrub oak and pine. Birch, cedar, juniper and white pine are also present.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes:

Native American transportation routes in the Middleton area likely emphasized water travel along the Ipswich River which drains from north to south in the western portion of town. Water travel may have also existed along portions of Pout Pond and Boston Brooks. Land based travel was also probably important, particularly along the margins of riverine areas noted above. A major trail is also reported cross cutting riverine areas in the vicinity of Liberty and Maple Streets. This trail likely served as a major corridor between Salem and the Merrimac River into the Andover area. Secondary trails extending to the town's numerous ponds and other wetlands likely spurred from major trails along the Ipswich River and inland route.

#### B. Population:

Middleton was inhabited by members of the Pawtucket group (often called Penacook) who inhabited the coast from the north side of Massachusetts Bay in the Saugus/Salem area to York Village, Maine. Locally, this group is commonly referred to as the Naunkeags who may have been a subtribe of the Massachusetts but seemed to be under the leadership of the Penacooks. Most seventeenth century colonists considered the Pawtucket and Massachusetts Indians closely related but separate entities. Both Swanton (1952) and Speck (1928) include Pawtucket Indians in the Salem area among the Massachusetts. Gookin (1792) lists ca. 3,000 men belonging to the Pawtucket group prior to the 1617-19 epidemics, while Mooney (1928:4) lists 2,000 men belonging to the Penacook group (probably Pawtucket), as many as 12,000 natives, probably exaggerated. During the same period, both Gookin and Mooney list ca. 3,000 men belonging to the Massachusetts which probably included some Pawtuckets. The Native American population in the Middleton area may have numbered in the vicinity of 200 individuals during much of this period. Following the epidemics, fewer than 50 individuals if any remained in the Middleton area.

#### C. Settlement Pattern:

Few Woodland but no Contact period sites are known for the Andover area. However, environmental variables and known Contact period sites in surrounding towns indicate sites of this period should be present. For example, locales along the Ipswich River may have been good site locations as well as other

areas along the periphery of major wetlands, streams and ponds. In addition to habitation and village type sites, special purpose sites such as fishing sites, shell middens and burials were also probably present. These sites may have been located in similar areas as those noted above. Contact Period sites have been recorded in several towns surrounding the Middleton area including Haverhill, Newbury, Newburyport, Ipswich, Salem, Marblehead, and probably Saugus. This factor plus the local environmental potential indicates the Middleton area is likely underreported for the Contact Period. Sites of the period should be present in the township.

#### D. Subsistence Pattern:

Native Americans in the Middleton area subsisted on a variety of seasonally determined activities including hunting, fishing, the collecting of wild plants and shell fish and horticulture. Hunting was a major activity focusing on larger mammals such as deer and smaller fur bearers. Natives in the Middleton areas may have also seasonally traveled to the Ipswich or Lynn/Saugus coastlines to exploit sea mammals such as seals and drift whales. Upland game birds and ducks were also hunted, particularly in wetlands and meadows surrounding riverine areas. Seasonal runs of shad, smelt, alewives, salmon and trout may have been available in the Ipswich River. Gathering activities probably focused on numerous species of terrestrial and freshwater plants. Seasonal exploitation of shellfish may have also been present on the coast. Domesticated plants such as corn, beans, pumpkins, squash and tobacco were important. Native fields were likely located along the Ipswich River or around the periphery of major ponds and wetlands.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes:

Inland trails likely continued in use in the Middleton area throughout most of the Plantation period. Water travel may have also been important along the Ipswich River which provided a corridor to the coast at Ipswich Bay. Although some lands were granted earlier, European transportation routes in Middleton probably did not develop before ca. 1650 as settlement was begun. Most routes were merely Indian trails upgraded to horsepaths and cartways. The first major route to develop in Middleton was a way linking Salem to Andover following an old Indian trail in the vicinity of Maple and Liberty Streets. This route crossed the Ipswich River at the Indian Bridge, actually a ford, about 1/4 mile upstream from the Maple Street Bridge. A second route also passed through Middleton connecting Andover with Salem Village. This route crossed the Ipswich River at the "log bridge", east of the Route 114 bridge and then probably followed the course of South Main Street and Essex Street through Will's Hill. The southern portion of the road was improved in the 1670's though it was still considered in poor condition for travel. At least one bridge was present over the Ipswich River by 1675. The Fuller Bridge (now Sunday Bridge) was present over Beech or Boston Brook by 1667. Two important bridges also probably existed over Pout Pond Brook at it's intersection with Liberty and Essex Streets.

#### B. Population:

Middleton was inhabited by Native Americans during this period since the Bellingham grant of 1639 noted an Indian Plantation, probably a village in the Middleton Pond area by that date. This population was rapidly declining and by 1675 probably did not contain more than a few individuals living in the Will's Hill area. European settlement in Middleton was made in ca. 1651 by

one or two families. By ca. 1665, five families (possibly 25 individuals) lived within the present limits of the town. In 1675 ten to fifteen families (possibly 50 to 65 individuals) may have resided in the town. Early residents in Middleton were of English descent and Congregational faith. Most residents worshipped at the Salem Village church in what is now Danvers Center. Many individuals had earlier settled in towns such as Salem, Dorchester and Boston.

#### C. Settlement Pattern:

At least two Native American sites have been noted in Middleton during this period. The first European land grant in the area, the 1639 Bellingham grant, mentioned an Indian plantation, probably a village, on the shores of Middleton Pond at the time the grant was given. A second, later site may have been present on Will's Hill. Old Will, the last Indian reported in Middleton, was purported to live and was buried on the summit of this hill.

During the period of early European settlement, Middleton was divided between the towns of Boxford, Andover, Topsfield and Salem. The eastern portion of Middleton was part of Topsfield and Rowley Village, now Boxford. The southern portion of Middleton was included in Salem Village District. North Middleton was part of Andover. Most of Middleton was included in three early grants made by the General Court. The first grant within the present limits of the town was made to Richard Bellingham. This grant was made in 1639 and included about 1200 acres in the Central Hill portion of town north of the Andover line. Major General Dennison also received an early 300 acre grant by the Court east and parallel to the Bellingham grant. The third grant was made to Henry Bartholomew near New Meadows. This grant was originally part of Topsfield and the first part of Middleton to be settled by William Nichols of Salem. In 1651 Nichols purchased about 500 acres of land from Henry Bartholomew of Salem (West Peabody) and built his home east of the bridge on Copper Mine Road near Locust Street. By 1675 at least five additional families had settled in the eastern portion of town between Nichols Brook and the Ipswich River and at least two families had settled in the northern portion of town.

Middleton remained a small and scattered community throughout the Plantation period. Inhabitants in the Middleton area were known as the farmers from Will's Hill, then part of Salem Village. Middleton settlers worshipped and attended civil matters at the Salem Village Church at what is now Danvers Center. Private cemeteries were used throughout the period.

#### D. Economic Base:

As Colonial settlers established themselves in the Middleton area, hunting and gathering wild foods were important to their subsistence. However, the combined use of agriculture and husbandry were clearly the most important aspects in the economic lives of the town's first settlers. Indian corn, wheat, barley and rye were the most important food crops. Fruit and vegetables were also grown but grains were the most important food produce. Hemp and flax may have also been important for home textile production. English hay was also probably grown, particularly since salt marsh hay was non-existent. Husbandry was an important activity in Middleton. Cattle, horses, sheep and swine were the most important animals on local farms; oxen and fowl were also present. Limited local industry also began by 1675. Early settlers cut and sold hand made barrel staves, clap boards and shingles. "Bolts" (probably dowels or pins) used for home construction were also hand made. The Thomas Fuller Sawmill may have been present by 1675 on the brook leading from Middleton or Wilkins Pond.

## V. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675 - 1775)

### A. Transportation Routes:

Native Trails had been upgraded to horsepaths and cartways by this time or had become overgrown. Three routes linked Middleton with Old Andover (Boxford and North Andover) during this period. The main corridor remained along Maple Street and South Main Street to Will's Hill, called the "way to Will's Hill", or the Andover Old Road, then ran along Essex Street to Andover (North Andover). Both Essex Street and Mill Street are referred to as the Andover Old Road during the period. A second route, Liberty Street, was an alternative route to Andover (North Andover) and was often spoken of as the Andover Highway. A third route developed during this period also linking Middleton with Old Andover (North Reading), following Forest Street and known as the Andover South Road. Boston Street was one of the last major Colonial period roads laid out in 1753. Other Colonial period roads laid out included Peabody Street, King Street, Lake Street, School Street, possibly East Street and numerous unnamed farm lanes. At least six bridges were present over the Ipswich River during this period. Causeways and bridges were also present at several points on Pout Pond Brook and Beech or Boston Brook.

### B. Population:

Middleton's population grew considerably during this period although compared to other Essex County towns it was small and remained mostly dispersed. In ca. 1675, 100 individuals may have resided in the town. In 1729, 111 individuals were rated to pay ministerial taxes in Middleton, but it is unlikely that 555 individuals resided in the township. Only 22 active townsmen are listed in 1729 (Watkins 1970:240). In 1765, 581 individuals are listed as residing in Middleton representing 1.33% of the Essex County total. In 1776, 650 individuals resided in the town representing a growth of 11.88% from 1765 and 1.28% of the Essex County total. In 1765, 35 negroes resided in the town representing 6.02% of the total population. In 1765, families in Middleton averaged 5.99 persons. Most residents in Middleton remained of English decent either born in the town or in neighboring Essex County towns. Middleton Congregational Church was organized in 1729, one year after incorporation of the town. In 1700 Salem granted money for a school at Will's Hill, Middleton, but a teacher was not engaged until 1712.

### C. Settlement Pattern:

Dispersed farmsteads continued to characterize most Middleton settlement throughout the Colonial period. While a concentrated village was not yet present, increases in Colonial period settlement and transportation routes were focusing village development in the area around Will's Hill. Middleton's first meetinghouse was built in 1726 at or near the site of the present church on Maple Street. A stocks and whipping post were set up near the meetinghouse in 1759. At first, school was held in private homes though a school was built near the meetinghouse by 1762. Several pounds were owned by the town during this period. The first pound near Pout Pond Brook and Liberty Street was taken over by the town in 1728. A new pound was built on King Street above Mount Vernon in 1730. A third pound was built in 1742 on John Estey's land. A fourth wooden pound (previous pounds were stone) was built in 1761 near the corner of Main and Pleasant Street. Public cemeteries were not present in Middleton during this period. Instead, deceased individuals were interred in private cemeteries of which 35 have been identified though only 18 have been accounted for. The oldest cemetery in Middleton was near the Samuel Symonds

house, originally part of Rowley Village (Boxford). Inhabitants living beyond the Ipswich River were buried in this cemetery. Some other cemeteries include the Smith tomb on Mt. Vernon Street, the Peabody Cemetery on East Street, the Fuller Burying Ground on Mount Vernon Street, the Flint Cemetery on Boston Street and the Merriam lot on South Main Street. Larger estates were split by inheritance and sale, smaller holdings were increasingly becoming popular. Early in the period some residents held estates totalling from 300 to 1000 acres or more, but farmsteads ranging from 100 to 300 acres were more typical of the period; smaller parcels of land usually ranged from 40 to 50 acres.

#### D. Economic Base:

Agriculture and husbandry continued to characterize most aspects of Middleton's economic base throughout the Colonial period. Grains remained the main focus of most agricultural production with corn as the chief crop. Husbandry also continued in importance. Numerous mills developed in several areas during this period. The Thomas Fuller sawmill was located on the brook flowing from Middleton Pond by 1690, between Mount Vernon Street and the river and gone by 1710; this mill was rebuilt by Fuller's grandson Timothy Fuller in 1756 and remained in operation until at least 1771. The stream from Middleton Pond was also used for grist mill production by John Esty east of Main Street just below the square by 1720. This mill was probably rebuilt or a new mill built in 1735 when Esty's son, Jonathan, sold his shares in land and the old mill to Issac Wilkins, and in 1770 was transferred to Silas Merriam; the dam for this mill was west of Andover Street (Main Street). At least one mill, the Nichols corn mill was built on Pout Pond Brook by 1733 near where Liberty Street crosses the brook, and continued under other owners through the Colonial period. Several mills were also present on Boston Brook (Beech Brook). Joseph Peabody built the first mill in this area, a sawmill in the area of the Mill Street Bridge in the late 17th or early 18th century, and continued throughout this period. A second mill was probably built by Jacob Fuller north of School Street around ca. 1700; this mill was in ruin by 1722. The Perkins sawmill was built by 1744 on a stream running into Boston Brook from the west under Essex Street. While the Ipswich River is the largest river in Middleton, it was not well suited for mills since it lacked falls and flooded extensively in spring and in some areas had little water in summer. The Phelps sawmill was built by 1679 and was followed by a fulling mill in the same area shortly thereafter. Upton's mill, probably a grist mill, was also built on the Ipswich River by 1704.

An ironworks was also developed in Middleton by ca. 1708 though at the time that portion of town was still part of Boxford. The ironworks was located near Pout Pond meadows on the south side of Pout Pond Brook west of where the stream runs under Mill Street. By 1712 the brook was often referred to as "Ironworks Brook". The ironworks was operated simply as a bloomery preparing iron by the direct process. Bog iron was incorporated from the low lying area around the mill throughout its operation until ca. 1780.

Blacksmiths were present in Middleton throughout this period. Weavers were present by 1708 and probably earlier. By ca. 1770, from 80 to 90 looms were in operation in 90 dwellings representing an important cottage industry in the town during this period. The Esty Tavern built on Middleton Square in 1753 was the first tavern built in Middleton.

#### E. Architecture:

Residential: The earliest houses in the town include the 1680 Thomas Fuller House, a hall and parlor house with added lean-to, and the unillustrated 1697

Thomas Putnam House, also including a lean-to. The town has an exceptional number of surviving and documented houses dating from early in the eighteenth century. Several of these began as leanto or saltbox houses but were later changed to symmetrical gable form, including the 1715 Timothy Perkins House. Others are only approximately symmetrical, including the 1759 Archelans Fuller and 1760 Daniel Fuller houses. Some symmetrical gable houses added leantos, including the 1701-03 Bray Williams, 1714 Joseph Fuller and 1719 Peabody-Wilkins houses with jogs. Examples following the classic New England center chimney form include the 1705 Edwin Putnam Jr. plank house built in two stages, the 1733 Ebenezer Stiles, 1746 Flint, and 1750 Andrew Fuller houses. Single pile houses with gambrel roofs included the 1714 Benjamin Peabody, and the 1760 Nathaniel Peabody houses and the two story 1714 Bayley-Bradstreet house. The 1770 Andrew Perkins house is four rather than five bays in width. The 1753 Philips Knight house "Twin Chimneys" has been greatly altered. The double interior chimney house of Jacob Fuller III is said to date from 1767.

**Institutional:** The town's first meetinghouse was constructed at incorporation in 1728, a square structure of 40 feet on a side and 20 foot posts; in 1763 its entry and stair locations were changed. By 1762 the town had a schoolhouse, located near the meetinghouse.

**Commercial:** The 1753 Estey Tavern is a large gable block with paired interior chimneys located on either side of the gable peak, with two primary facades of five bays with center entry, on a long and adjacent gable end wall and with several rear ells.

## VI. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775 - 1830)

### A. Transportation Routes:

Roadways laid out during the Colonial Period continued to characterize most of Middleton's transportation network. Main Street, Boston Street, Forest Street, Essex Street and Liberty Street continued to radiate to outlying settlements from the town center east of Will's Hill along Maple Street. Two new major roadways were constituted. River Street was laid out on the north bank of the Ipswich River connecting Boston Street and the South Main Street corridor. In 1800 the latter street was also redeveloped as the southern extent of the Essex Turnpike locally known as North Main Street north of Will's Hill. An important link between Boston and points in New Hampshire and Vermont, it became a free highway in 1829. Stage coach travel was important particularly after 1796 when systematic staging began.

### B. Population:

Middleton's population lost overall 6.6%, leaving it the region's smallest town at 607 in 1830. Loss was suffered primarily between 1790 and 1810 when the total dropped from 682 to 541. In spite of population loss, new school districts were established, in 1790 in the east, and in 1808 in the south, and two private academies also operated. A Social Library had been established early here in 1772. The town's minister (1793-1813) was an Arminian, and townspeople attended Christian, Baptist, and Episcopal churches in neighboring villages.

### D. Economic Base:

Federal Middleton was principally an agricultural town. Despite its small size -- the town contained only 8122 acres of agricultural land in 1791. Middleton was an active farming community. While land under tillage consumed



only 364 acres or a modest 4.4% of the land, cultivated land (tillage and haying land) totalled 1761 acres (21.5%). The addition of 2016 acres of pasturage brought the improved acreage to 46.3% of the total. The town's many streams and brooks and one river were the location of seven grist and saw mills in the late eighteenth century, a large number suggesting that Middleton may have also milled grain and cut lumber for neighboring towns. The town also had several resident blacksmiths who serviced the farm economy.

The Middleton economic base benefitted by the introduction of small-scale manufacturing beginning in the 1790s. While many farmers were already likely engaged in making shoes, the first significant shoe shop was not established until 1792. By 1798 there were six large shops. Other manufacturing activities included the iron works on Pout Pond Brook (though it ceased operations during the period), and a carding mill established ca. 1810 by a Mr. Gray. Despite some diversification, farmers outnumbered manufacturing workers 94 to 37, or by almost 3 to 1 in 1820.

#### E. Architecture:

**Residential:** Inventoried houses dating to this period are rare. Early in the period center chimney houses were still built including the 1782 John Flint and 1792 Symunds House. Large, paired chimney houses were also constructed, including several single pile, rear wall chimney houses, as well as an end wall and an interior chimney house.

**Institutional:** The meetinghouse was renovated in 1802, and a sketch shows a porch entry on the long, south side, a stairtower on the east, and a 70 foot belfry tower on the West. The town's 1790 south schoolhouse is of unknown appearance; its 1820 replacement measured 24 by 32 feet with 9 & 1/2 foot studs, 8 windows and 32 benches. The 1808 south school house measured 26 by 24 feet with a hip roof, porch entry, and interior gallery, to be painted Spanish Brown on the roof and back; on the front, green, straw or a light color. In 1811 the town built a brick powderhouse, and in 1829 a hearsehouse.

**Industrial:** Six large shoe shops were erected in Middleton by 1798, the first of them in 1792. A grist mill was erected prior to 1830 near So. Main Street on the stream flowing from Middleton Pond. A carding mill had occupied the site for a short time ca. 1810.

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

#### A. Transportation Routes:

Middleton's Colonial and Federal period roads continued in use with few additions or improvements. Railroads represented the major addition to the town's transportation network during this period. By 1848 the Essex Railroad began with Middleton station, to run an important meeting place for the up and down trains between Salem and Lawrence. The main truck line roughly followed Essex and Maple Streets. The station was located outside the village at the end of Central Street. By 1850 the Salem and Lowell railroad also began, a connector through South Danvers and Peabody to Wilmington on the Boston and Lowell line. Original plans for the Salem and Lowell line were to connect Salem via Lowell with points in New Hampshire, Worcester and even New York, but were never fully realized. Railroad travel through Middleton transformed the town from an isolated farming community to a town where industry began to develop. Both rail lines encouraged shoemaking. The Salem and Lowell line also provided a great stimulus to the paper industry through an additional route of travel with Boston. South Middleton station was also known as Oak

Dale though the stop was usually called South Middleton or Paper Mill Station.

#### B. Population:

The town returned to an era of growth, expanding from 607 in 1830 to 1010 in 1870, and no longer ranking among the region's smallest towns. The town's foreign-born population remained small, 4.8% in 1855 and 4.5 ten years later. Most were Irish, with half as many Canadians and English. A group separated from the First Parish to form an Evangelical Society ca. 1830, leaving a small group that voted themselves to be a Universalist society, dismantled their meetinghouse, and later met in school. A fourth school district was formed in 1834 in the southwest at Papermill Village but had only a few students. Schools were graded during the 1850s and higher grades attended in the center. A second Social Library was formed in 1838, and Library Association in 1865.

#### D. Economic Base:

While there was considerable growth in the agricultural sector during the Early Industrial period, even greater expansion occurred in the area of manufacturing, so that by 1865 there were more people employed in shops and factories (219) than on farms (193). Between 1840 and 1865, male employment opportunities in agriculture and manufacturing increased by 168% and 165%, respectively, indicating the overall expansion of the economic base.

In 1855, the first year for which such data is available, the value of all agricultural products was around \$35,000. One third of this total value was accounted for by hay, after which came potatoes, butter and corn. By 1865, when there were 71 farms, the product value had almost doubled to \$66,632. While hay still accounted for about 33% of the product value its cultivation expanded from 501 tons to 1344 tons. Following hay in order of product value came wood products, meat and animal products, potatoes, butter, fruit, and grains (whose acreage had dropped by more than 50%). Beginning ca. 1830 a butchery was established in Middleton and as the period advanced farmers from neighboring towns brought their livestock to Middleton for slaughtering. Between 1855 and 1865 the acreage devoted to grains declined from 163 to 73 acres and the yield from 4865 to 1737 bushels. In 1865 there was one sawmill.

The establishment of several new manufacturing operations during the Early Industrial decades brought economic vitality to this small farming town. The most important development was the introduction of the "putting-out" system of shoe manufacturing, and later the factory system of production. In the early 1830s Elias Ingalls established a central shop in Middleton, distributing leather and other materials to area farm families who then worked up the shoes and returned them to Ingalls. Unfortunately, Ingalls moved his firm to Haverhill before 1837 causing a temporary decline in Middleton's shoe industry. In 1837, only 40 people were employed making fewer than 1000 pairs of shoes. In the 1840s, however, the industry revived. Francis P. Merriam established a central shop ca. 1840. In 1845, 150 men and women manufactured 75,000 pairs of shoes for Merrimac and other firms. By 1855, 305 people were employed making 180,000 pairs, some of them working in the factory established by Merriam in 1853. Between 1855 and 1865, six other shoe factories were established in Middleton, all near the Middleton depot of the Essex Railroad running from Salem to Lawrence, thus gradually bringing an end to the "putting-out" system. Whereas, in the earlier decades shoe employment was equally divided among men and women, by 1865 the factory system had significantly reduced the real and relative number of women. A small shoe knife factory was established on Mill Street near Pout Pond Brook in 1849,

employing a few men and probably only serving the local shoemakers' needs.

Another significant, even if fledgling, industry was the paper factory established by Francis Peabody on the Ipswich River in South Middleton. Situated on the only Ipswich River privilege in Middleton and the former site of the Flint family grist mill. Peabody's paper mill employed an average of ten people and produced 100 tons of paper annually worth around \$25,000. The establishment of a depot of the Salem and Lowell Railroad on the paper mill's property facilitated transportation of paper to Boston and beyond. Less important was the soap and candle factory established by a Mr. Jefferson on Maple St. ca. 1850. In 1865 the firm employed five people and had a product value of \$12,000. The total value of manufactured goods was \$261,125 in 1865 compared to only \$36,500 in 1837 with the shoe industry accounting for 80% of the 1865 figure.

#### E. Architecture:

**Residential:** Little period housing has been inventoried. Small numbers of traditional house types were constructed, and as elsewhere 1 & 1/2 and 2 & 1/2 story gable front houses achieved popularity, and were ornamented with Greek Revival and Italianate elements. Isolated examples are known of Gothic Revival and Second Empire Cottages.

**Institutional:** After withdrawal of Evangelicals from First Parish the congregation diminished and the meetinghouse was dismantled in 1842. The Evangelical Society was built in 1832 on Maple St. of gable front form, and a new one in 1859, a two story gable front with a semi-projecting tower, belfry and spire, coins, round-headed windows with labels; it was burned and repaired in 1874, and raised for the addition of a vestry in 1933. The north school was built of brick in 1832. A second south school was built in 1837, with 11 foot posts, a 15 by 20 foot recitation room, 2 outer doors, painted pea green with "modern" color for the trim; in 1855 entries were added for each sex, and the schoolroom then measured 34 by 24 feet. A replacement was constructed in 1860, an Italianate 2 & 1/2 story structure with entry porch and cupola; a flat roof was added in 1928; now known as Memorial Hall, it has served as town offices and police station since 1937. The 1848 town house was 1 & 1/2 stories on a basement, with a gablefront and center entry, ornamented by bracketed cornice and labels; it was raised higher in 1873.

**Industrial:** A paper mill was erected on the Ipswich River in South Middleton in 1832. Most likely the building was a 3 & 1/2 story stone structure, five bays by sixteen bays, with a clerestory on a gable roof. Elias Ingalls' central shoe shop was erected in 1832 at an unknown location. The first shoe factory was erected in 1853 by F.P. Merriam. The 2 & 1/2 story frame structure, four bays by five bays, with gable front roof and porch around front and side of first floor, as well as a smaller 2 & 1/2 story wing to the rear stood at the corner of Main and Lake Streets. By 1865 six small factories had been erected, three in Middleton Square, two on Maple Street and one near Howe Station at the east end of town. A shoe knife factory was erected in 1849 near Mill Street. On Pout Pond Brook (on Maple Street near East Street at the site of the former iron works.) a soap factory, a 2 & 1/2 story frame building, was erected ca. 1850. In 1850 David Stiles erected a blacksmith shop, a 2 & 1/2 story frame structure with gable-end roof, on Maple Street.

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

### A. Transportation Routes:

Middleton's road networks changed little during this period. Main north/south corridors through the town continued along the Essex turnpike (Route 114) and Essex Street. East Street in the eastern portion of town also represented an important north/south route. Major east/west travel continued to focus on the Boston Street/Maple Street (Rt. 62) corridor through the center of town. Forest Street and River Street also represented important east/west routes. Railroad travel on the Salem and Lawrence and Salem and Lowell lines also continued in importance though freights were now less important than passenger travel. Street Railways developed in Middleton late in this period. The first electric rail car travel did not occur until 1901 though preparations had begun two years earlier. Initial ties were laid out along south Main street from the Danvers line to Middleton Square. Tracks were laid out on the sides of streets leaving room for other travel to pass. By 1902 rail lines were extended connecting Middleton with Lawrence and Salem along what would become the Bay State Street Railway. Main lines passed along the Route 114 corridor.

### B. Population:

Despite almost continuous decline between 1870 and 1900, Middleton's population expanded by nearly 30% during the Late Industrial period, increasing from 1010 in 1870 to 1308 in 1915. The foreign-born population experienced a much higher growth rate, increasing 142.5% from 108 in 1875 to 262 in 1915, thus enlarging its proportion of the total population from 9.9% to 20%. Canadians were the largest immigrant group throughout the period, followed by a steadily growing number of Irish and a smaller number of English.

A Methodist Church was established in 1878. From 1873 to 1880 the Congregational Church experimented with free pews, but the practice of selling pews was not completely given up until 1914. The town's public library, the Flint Public Library, was established in 1879.

### C. Settlement:

Economic decline, especially in the manufacturing sector, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century led to a sharp drop in Middleton's population, and consequently there was very little change in the pattern of residential, commercial and manufacturing settlement prior to 1900. The shortlived period of prosperity in the early 1870s enabled the town to enlarge the Town Hall in 1873 and to erect a new building for the North School in 1872, whereas economic depression was probably the catalyst for the erection of a tramp house (a lock-up for vagrants) in 1878. The Methodists built a church in 1881 on So. Main St. near the center, as did the Universalists, in 1884, just around the corner on Boston St. Other construction of institutional buildings did not occur until the early 1890s, when the Flint Public Library was erected. The high-style Romanesque building was erected in 1891 with money from Sylvanus Lint, a former owner of the paper mill in South Middleton. In 1893 a branch post office was erected near this mill. Significant construction of new residential buildings awaited the arrival of the street railway, which began carrying passengers between Salem/Danvers and Middleton, along So. Main St. in 1900 and between Middleton and Andover/Lawrence, along No. Main St. in 1902. Thereafter, single-family, middleclass homes were erected along Liberty St., between Maple and Peabody Sts. along Mill St. along

Forest St. near No. Main, while smaller homes were built along Center and Maple Sts. The Danvers Water Works/Pumping Station which also served Middleton, was erected during the period.

#### D. Economic Base:

Middleton remained a mixed agricultural and manufacturing community throughout the Late Industrial years. The number of farms increased dramatically in the first decades of the period, totalling 105 in 1875, only to fall slightly to 91 in 1895. Despite some expansion in the middle years, agricultural employment was the source of livelihood for an almost identical number of men in 1875 (132) and in 1915 (130). The value of agricultural products increased 81% from \$60,363 in 1875 to \$109,344 in 1905. Dairy products (especially milk) were the primary products throughout the period, followed by vegetables, hay, straw and fodder, and poultry. The importance of meat and non-poultry animal products declined after 1885.

Almost no change occurred in the kinds of goods manufactured in Middleton. Shoe production continued to be the principal source of manufacturing employment and the leader in product value. The firm of Merriam and Tyler expanded its facilities and production, employing more than 100 people in 1888 and still more following an addition to the factory at Main and Lake Street in the 1890s. Paper manufacture assumed greater importance in the years after 1885. Following a fire in 1871 the paper mill was rebuilt and sold to Ripley Brothers who did business until suffering bankruptcy in 1882. The following year the business was revived by Sylvanus Flint who improved the physical plant. Then in 1885 the firm was sold again, this time to Edward Hickey who ran the factory until at least 1908. In 1894 around 100 people were employed there. Early in the period there were two soap factories, a second one having been established ca. 1871 on Main Street. However, by 1900 soap manufacture had ceased in Middleton. A wooden box factory was also established early in the period, ca. 1872, near the Ipswich River, north of the Peabody St. bridge. In the 1880s there were around 40 men employed there, but following a fire in 1892 this business also ceased. The shoe knife factory continued to operate at least until ca. 1890. Between 1875 and 1905 the total value of manufactured goods declined by 47%, from \$304,336 to \$158,650. Retail employment in Middleton Village expanded from 26 in 1875 to 67 in 1915 despite the arrival of the Lawrence streetcar line in 1902.

#### E. Architecture:

Residential: Period housing has not been inventoried. Observed survivals include additional examples of both 1 and 1/2 and 2 and 1/2 story gable front forms from throughout the period, and later, isolated examples of 2 & 1/2 story, pyramidal roofed, four square houses.

Institutional: The town's Methodists built a meetinghouse of unknown appearance in 1881, but disbanded in 1906. The Universalists built a house of unknown appearance in 1886 which they sold in 1908. The north schoolhouse was rebuilt in 1872, an Italianate structure with paired entries, roundheaded windows with labels. In 1878 the town built a brick tramhouse, square under a hip roof, with an entry and window on the face. The library operated in a Federal period house of 2 stories under a hip roof, with double pile cross passage plan. The Flint Library was built in 1891, a Romanesque Revival design in brick and granite by Loring and Phipps; it is T-shaped, raised on a basement with hip roof, with a face gable with adjacent tower, as well as rear clock tower, and roundheaded doors.

Industrial: The paper mill in South Middleton was destroyed by fire in 1871 but was rebuilt by 1874. The new mill was a two-story brick building with slightly pitched roof. A second soap factory (of unknown construction) was erected on Main Street in 1871. The Maple Street soap factory burned in 1895, after having been converted to a residential building. A box factory, a large 2 & 1/2 story frame building with gable roof and a one-story brick and stone powderhouse with a large chimney, was erected on the Ipswich River north of the Peabody St. bridge in 1872; the factory burned ca. 1892. Another 2 & 1/2 story frame addition was attached to the Merrimac Co. shoe factory ca. the 1880s.

## IX. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915 - 1940)

### A. Transportation Routes:

Increased automobile travel encouraged several changes in Middleton's transportation networks during this period. On January 2, 1926 the Salem and Lawrence Railroad made its last run with the Salem and Lowell Branch ending soon afterwards. Street railway travel also ended in 1935, replaced by bus lines. Increased auto travel stimulated road improvements throughout this period. The degree of such improvements often indicated the relative importance of various roads for auto travel. For example, by 1939, "High Type" bituminous paved road, included the more important roads in the town such as South Main Street, North Main Street, Boston Street, Maple Street and Route 62 east of the town center. Other paved roads of "low type" paving (probably representing less traveled roads than those noted above) included Essex Street, School Street, Liberty Street, Forest Street and smaller portions of River Street and Peabody Street. Most other roads were gravel or stone surfaced and included most of Peabody Street, Mill Street, portions of Liberty Street, the northern portion of Essex Street and most of River Street and Lake Street.

### B. Population:

After losing 8.6% of its population between 1915 and 1920, Middleton's Industrial period growth continued uninterrupted. By 1940 the town's population equalled 2348, Middleton claimed a very limited range of nativities for an Essex town. It's population was 20% foreign-born in 1915, comprised mostly of Canadians (Nova Scotian, mainly - 40%) Irish (26%) and English (11%). By 1940 its proportion of foreign-born nativities had fallen to less than 16% of the whole.

### C. Settlement:

Significant population growth spurred residential construction in Early Modern Middleton. Infill of middle-class, single family dwellings occurred near town center on Maple Street and on King Street east of the village. There was also extensive construction of middleclass homes away from the center, along East, Forest and Maple Streets. A brick commercial block, a simple, unadorned two-story brick building with 4 or 5 storefronts, was erected in Middleton Square in 1954. Institutional building improvement and new construction was limited to enlargement of the Howe-Manning Center School in 1928 and erection of St. Agnes Catholic Church on Boston St. in 1948.

### D. Economic Base:

Middleton's economy continued to depend on a mixture of agricultural, manufacturing and retail firms. Manufacturing was the largest source of

employment with 75.7% of the workforce employed in four factories in 1952. The B.B. Chemical Company, owned by United Shoe Machinery Company of Beverly took control of the paper mill in South Middleton in 1928 and began manufacturing leather finishes, synthetic rubber cement and adhesives. In 1952 this firm employed the largest portions of those employed in manufacturing. The second leading firm was the Keddy Machine Co. Forty-six people (16% of total workforce) were employed in retail firms in 1952, and an unknown but certainly small number continued to farm. As the period advanced many of Middleton's farms gave way to residential development.

#### E. Architecture:

Residential: Period housing has not been inventoried. Pyramidal roofed four-square and related 1 & 1/2 story bungalows remain popular during the early years of the period. Historic revival styles were built in small numbers including gambrel front forms and Dutch Colonials. Lakeside cottages were constructed in the common gable roofed, single story form.

The Howe-Manning School apparently dates to this period, constructed of brick rising two stories over a basement with a flat roof.

Commercial: The Richardson Block apparently dates to this period, rising two stories under a flat roof and containing three or four stores.

Industrial: Additions were made at the B.B. Chemical Co. factories (formerly the papermill), including large buildings constructed of concrete blocks or corrugated metal. A two-story reinforced concrete factory with pitch roof and several ells was erected for an unknown firm on School St. during the period. (extant).

#### X. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

The inventory consists almost exclusively of pre-1830 houses, and pre-1900 institutional buildings.

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