

**PHASE II HISTORIC PROPERTIES SURVEY
TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS**

FINAL SURVEY REPORT

Prepared for

Northborough Historical Commission
63 Main Street
Northborough, MA 01532

by

Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc.
569 Middle Turnpike
P.O. Box 209
Storrs, CT 06268
(860) 429-1723 voice
(860) 429-1724 fax
info@past-inc.org

Author:
Bruce Clouette, Ph.D.

October 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparers of this survey would like to thank the citizens of Northborough for welcoming us into the community. Even though we came walking through their neighborhoods with clipboards and cameras, we were universally greeted with friendly smiles and received whatever assistance was requested. At the Town Offices, Town Administrator John W. Coderre and Executive Assistant Mary Jean “MJ” Fredette took care of contractual matters and other administrative issues, and the Northborough Police Department was helpful in issuing us identification badges and offering to field any inquiries from the public regarding our activities.

The Town of Northborough showed exceptional foresight in making available on the Internet a great deal of information needed for this survey. In particular, the staff at the Board of Assessors is to be congratulated for the completeness and ease of use of the public database, which provides photographs, measured floor plans, ownership information, deed references, and a wealth of other data. Also, the MIS/GIS Department’s online map services are, in the experience of the consultant, unsurpassed. This resource allowed the survey forms to have consistent, detailed maps showing the properties in the context of surrounding buildings and streets. The GIS database also facilitated the preparation of another survey product, the map that locates all of the inventoried properties.

On the state level, Michael Steinitz and Peter Stott of the Massachusetts Historical Commission greatly assisted us by answering technical questions and reviewing sample forms, and Stephen Roper of the Massachusetts Highway Department was helpful in regard to historic-bridge matters. We are confident that consultation with these individuals has resulted in a better product.

No one could expect to complete a survey of Northborough’s historic properties without tapping into the archives and other resources of the Northborough Historical Society. In addition to the usual files on families and industries, the Northborough Historical Society maintains extensive files on historic buildings and sites *arranged by street address*, an invaluable tool which the consultants, in over thirty years of experience, have not previously encountered in a local repository. Curator Ellen Racine generously opened the Society’s library to us whenever we asked and made available the Society’s holdings of historical maps, photographs, and public records. The writings of Society Historian Robert Ellis provided much of the meat for the historical narrative sections of the forms; it would be impossible for anyone working over a period of twelve months to in any way approach the wealth of knowledge he has accumulated through many years of diligently researching the town’s history. Both Mr. Ellis and Ms. Racine generously took the time to review many of our forms and made suggestions that were always helpful and in some cases, vital to place the property in its proper historic context.

Brian Smith, a Northborough resident who is exceptionally knowledgeable about Daniel Wesson and his Northborough estate, made valuable suggestions for several of the forms.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of the Northborough Historical Commission, the sponsors of this survey. The Commission was prompt in answering our questions and reviewing our work, and our several meetings with the members of the commission were enjoyable for their productivity and cordiality. Their enthusiasm for the historic resources of Northborough and the many hours they volunteer to protect those resources are making Northborough a better place.

ABSTRACT

The second phase of the Northborough Historical Commission's inventory of historic resources was undertaken in 2009 by the Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc. of Storrs, Connecticut. Fieldwork and photography occurred in February and March 2009, with form-preparation carried out over the next few months. The first phase concentrated on properties in the town center, particularly on Main Street, and pre-1860 properties townwide. This phase of the survey provides comprehensive coverage for the period from 1860 to about 1906. In addition, it fills in a number of pre-1860 properties that were not included in the first phase, and it includes a number of later 20th-century properties that were added at the request of the Northborough Historical Commission.

A total of 98 buildings, 6 structures, and 5 areas were identified, resulting in the preparation of 109 forms. Because four of the area forms included detailed information and photographs for buildings for which individual forms were not prepared, a total of 133 unique individual street addresses were included in the survey. In addition to the paper versions of the forms and this report, the survey products include a large-scale map of Northborough on which the locations of inventoried properties are plotted, and digital versions of the forms, photographs, map, and this report. Two copies of the survey materials will be available in Northborough: a paper copy and an electronic version in the files of the Northborough Historical Commission, located in the Northborough Town Hall at 63 Main Street, and a paper copy in the archives of the Northborough Historical Society, 50 Main Street.

The survey was performed in accordance with the standards in *Historic Properties Survey Manual: Guidelines for the Identification of Historic and Archaeological Resources in Massachusetts* and in consultation with Peter Stott and Michael Steinitz of the Massachusetts Historical Commission staff.

This report contains a statement of survey objectives and methodology, a narrative history identifying the relevant historic contexts for evaluating Northborough's resources, a bibliography of sources used in preparing the forms, a street index to the forms, recommendations for National Register of Historic Places and Local Historic District/Property designations, and recommendations for further study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. SURVEY METHODOLOGY	3
III. NARRATIVE HISTORY	6
IV. NATIONAL REGISTER RECOMMENDATIONS	12
V. FURTHER STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS	18
VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY	19
APPENDIX A:	
INDEX TO INVENTORIED PROPERTIES	21

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the second phase of inventorying Northborough's historic properties, a project being undertaken by the Northborough Historical Commission with the assistance of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), a state agency. The first phase was completed in 2008 by Boston Affiliates, Inc. and concentrated on properties in the town center, particularly on Main Street, and pre-1860 properties townwide. This phase of the survey provides comprehensive coverage for the period from 1860 to about 1906. In addition, it fills in a number of pre-1860 properties that were not included in the first phase, and it includes a number of later 20th-century properties that were added at the request of the Northborough Historical Commission. A total of 98 buildings, 6 structures, and 5 areas were identified, resulting in the preparation of 109 forms. Because four of the area forms included detailed information and photographs for buildings for which individual forms were not prepared, a total of 133 unique individual street addresses were included in the survey (some properties had more than one street address). The forms were printed on heavyweight, acid-free paper and the photographs were prepared according to national archival standards, helping to assure their long-term stability.

The format of this report, like other aspects of the survey, follows the requirements given in the MHC's *Historic Properties Survey Manual: Guidelines for the Identification of Historic and Archaeological Resources in Massachusetts*. In addition to a statement explaining the survey methodology, the report includes a brief narrative history that identifies key historic contexts for understanding the inventoried properties; recommendations regarding which properties, in the opinion of the consultants, meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and/or designation as local historic districts/properties; recommendations for further study; and a detailed bibliography listing the sources of information used to prepare the survey forms. An index to the inventoried properties, arranged by street address, appears as Appendix A. Other survey products, in addition to this report and the inventory forms, include a 30-inch by 40-inch map of Northborough on which the inventoried resources are located and a DVD-ROM containing digital copies of the forms, this text, the street index, the survey map, and all the photographs that appear on the forms.

Two copies of the survey products were provided to the Northborough Historical Commission and a third copy to the MHC. The purpose of the survey is to provide these agencies with information to assist them with local and state planning activities. The information from this phase of the Northborough inventory will be included in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), a digital database that will eventually make all of the information available online.

The survey was undertaken by the Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc. (PAST), a nonprofit research and educational organization located in Storrs, Connecticut, that specializes in the history and archaeology of southern New England. Senior Historian Bruce Clouette, Ph.D. was responsible for the greater part of the survey, with assistance from Ross K. Harper with the fieldwork and photography. Staff members Robyn Beausoleil and James Poetzingler helped with form preparation, copying, and other logistical matters. PAST Director Mary K. Harper was responsible for the administrative aspects of the contract; she also read all the draft forms and text, resulting in numerous corrections and other useful revisions.

Two copies of the survey materials will be available in Northborough: a paper copy and an electronic version in the files of the Northborough Historical Commission, located in the Northborough Town Hall at 63 Main Street, and a second paper copy in the archives of the Northborough Historical Society, 50 Main Street.

II. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed for the Phase II of the Northborough survey followed the requirements given in the MHC's *Historic Properties Survey Manual: Guidelines for the Identification of Historic and Archaeological Resources in Massachusetts*. The purpose of the Phase II, as specified by the Northborough Historical Commission, was to "continue a comprehensive inventory of Northborough's historic resources with the goal of having the majority of properties 100 years or older documented upon completion of the project." Phase I concentrated on properties that dated from ca. 1860 or earlier; this phase focused on the second half of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century.

The Phase II survey began with a list of 225 pre-1906 properties generated from the town's assessor records*. The list was pared down somewhat by eliminating duplicate addresses and properties that were inventoried in the first phase, and it was augmented by adding in three properties that appeared in the MHC's MACRIS database but for one reason or another did not appear in the list generated by the assessor records. Two publicly owned 20th-century buildings, as well as an outstanding private residence from the 1950s, were also included because of local priorities.

In order to target the survey effort on the most important of these properties, criteria were developed to choose the properties for which inventory forms would be prepared. In consultation with the Northborough Historical Commission, the following prioritization was developed:

1. Buildings that appear to be National Register-eligible, either individually or as part of eligible districts.
2. Buildings that appear to contribute to potential Local Historic Districts.
3. Buildings already included in the MHC MACRIS database (within the period defined for this project). With few exceptions, the existing MHC forms, most prepared in the 1970s, provide only a minimum of historical information.
4. Buildings with special local historical associations, particularly buildings that are associated with agriculture and the town's industrial heritage, two themes that appear to have dwindling numbers of associated historic resources.
5. Buildings that have moderate to good integrity (relatively few alterations from their historic appearance).

The properties were given a preliminary grade of A, B, or C based upon descriptive and photographic documentation in the assessor records, with the goal of having all the first and second-priority properties (the As and Bs) recorded with inventory forms. The properties were then checked in the field to assure that the assigned grades were appropriate. Field-checking identified a number

* Normally, the date field in assessor records is not considered a reliable means of forming a preliminary study list. In the case of Northborough, however, it is apparent that at some point a knowledgeable person or persons contributed to or checked this information. Many of the assessor dates are specific—1866, 1883—indicating that they were not simply assigned generic dates by an inspector untrained in historic architecture. Most other dates—1860, 1875, 1890—appear to be reasonable estimates based upon physical form or stylistic details, even though they are round numbers.

of addresses for which apparent historic buildings had been replaced by modern construction. Also, a few historic buildings that were thought to retain substantial architectural detail were found to have been modernized to the point of a complete loss of integrity, and so were excluded from further consideration. A final result of the field-checking was the inclusion of four additional structures and one building that had not been previously identified.

Inventory forms were then prepared for the priority properties, primarily using the individual building form (Form B). The properties were inspected in the field, and detailed notes were taken in order to prepare the architectural description portion of the form. Dimensional data was taken from the measured outline plans in the assessor database. At least two photographs were taken so as to show all elevations, as well as additional photographs of important details. The historical backgrounds of the properties were researched using a series of 19th-century and early 20th-century maps of Northborough, census returns and other biographical sources that yielded information about the buildings and their early occupants, and the archives of the Northborough Historical Society*. Compiling a chain of title was beyond the scope of the survey for most properties, but ownership information about many houses built around the turn of the century could only be compiled from research at the Worcester County Registry of Deeds. The sources of information are noted in the Bibliography section of the form and in Section VI of this report.

Area forms (Form A) were prepared for five groupings of buildings, including a potential historic district. Three of the areas were groups of mill-related houses. Because of their similarity, and because all the houses were described in detail on the area form, along with a photograph, no individual building forms were prepared for the mill-related houses. The same reasoning was applied to the River Street Neighborhood, an area of similar late 19th and early 20th-century houses that were built as rental properties targeting the industrial working class. Individual building forms were included for most of the houses in the proposed historic district, since the houses' architectural details and their specific historical associations were all different. Regardless of whether individual forms were prepared, all historic buildings within inventoried areas were assigned an inventory number.

Structure forms (Form F and Form F - Bridge) were prepared for six structures. The inventory and evaluation of archaeological sites was beyond the scope of this survey. However, a number of building forms do include information on industrial-archaeology features such as dams, sluices, and mill ponds.

Four addresses on the list had forms that had been recently prepared by members of the Northborough Historical Society. The forms were edited and formatted so as to be compatible with the other Phase II inventory forms, and additional material uncovered in the course of research was included on a continuation sheet. The four properties were also photographed and mapped in accordance with the rest of the properties.

As noted in the acknowledgements, the sketch maps on the forms were prepared using data from the Town's Geographical Information System (GIS), to which were added a north arrow, street

* The files of the Society were checked for all properties on the list regardless of priority. As a result, two properties that were owned by important Northborough shoemakers were moved up in priority, despite the extent of modern alterations.

names, historic name (if any), address, and inventory number. The overall survey map was created using the following layers from the Town's street map: streets, street names, parcel boundaries, and building outlines. For readability of the inventory numbers, the survey map was printed as a 30"-by-40" paper copy; a Portable Document Format (.pdf) version was included with the survey's other digital materials.

A note about the historic names used on the inventory forms: in general, the forms follow the longstanding practice of identifying a house by the name of the male head of household (unless it was owned by a widow or other single woman). This was the way that houses were usually identified in the historic period, in early histories of Northborough, and in contemporary biographical sources. This convention also avoided the difficulties presented by the situation of multiple successive wives, which, while not common, was much more frequent than in modern times because of the dangers of childbirth. In those cases in which it could be determined that wives owned the property, either as a joint owners or in their own names, the name of the wife was of course included in the historic name, as it was in cases in which the wife, in addition to all her family duties, played a public role in the life of the community. In most cases, the historic name reflects the original owner of the house, but in a few cases in which the house was first built by someone else and then became the longtime residence of an individual, the latter's name is given as the historic name. In a few cases, early successive owners result in a hyphenated historic name, and in cases of multiple successive owners from the same family, just the family name is used as the historic identifier.

As a partial antidote to the gender bias of this approach, the forms reflect a concerted effort to identify as many family members as possible, including (when known) the wife's family name. Historians have shown that the family economy in this period was usually a combined effort with contributions from the husband, wife, and, often, adult children living at home. Non-family members are also identified when known. In the period represented by this survey, boarders were common in households from all social classes; the care and feeding of boarders fell upon the wife and, particularly in working-class households, was a major source of cash income. Finally, the forms attempt to recognize the contributions of live-in servants and farm hands, citing them by name whenever possible.

For the vast majority of the properties, a historic name reflecting its original or early ownership was assigned. Some properties, especially those built as rentals, could not be associated with particular residents, so the historic name field was left blank.

III. NARRATIVE HISTORY

Northborough is a town of 18.8 square miles in Worcester County, Massachusetts, situated about 8 miles east of Worcester and 35 miles west of Boston; the population at the last census (2000) was 14,013. Although some settlement occurred in the late 17th century, English occupation of what would become the town of Northborough principally occurred in the early 18th century, after hostilities with Native Americans had ended. A Congregational society was established in 1744, giving it a separate identity, but until 1766 Northborough remained a part of the adjacent town of Westborough. Throughout much of its history, the economic base of Northborough has been agriculture. After 1800, some “cottage industries” developed into factory-based production, most notably the making of shoes and combs, and along the Assabet River there were a few small-scale woolen mills. The center of Northborough developed as an institutional focus for the town, along with a small commercial district, a settlement pattern further encouraged by the completion of a railroad to Northborough in 1856. During the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, Northborough experienced both a population increase and an increase in ethnic and religious diversity, and relatively densely built residential neighborhoods, some with concentrations of particular ethnic groups, clustered around the town center. As the woolen mills prospered, the stock of company-built housing increased, creating small mill villages at Woodside and Chapinville. In this period, Northborough developed some of the institutions characteristic of larger towns and small cities: consolidated schools, a high school, a public library, and fire and police services. After World War II, suburban-type residential development began to alter Northborough’s predominantly rural character, but even today Northborough retains much of its small-town feel.

Reading in general works on Northborough history, as well as the site-specific research undertaken to complete the forms, identified a number of historic themes or contexts:

Agriculture. Agriculture formed the basis of Northborough’s economy and social structure from the inception of English settlement until the second half of the last century. A settlement pattern of widely dispersed family farms characterized the 18th and early 19th centuries and is still evident today in the old houses and barns that appear scattered among modern residential development. The agricultural economy also gave rise to the institution of the one-room district schoolhouse: a centralized system of education was not appropriate for a community in which people lived long distances from the town center.

Agriculture in Northborough evolved over time, particularly in the period (ca. 1860–1906) covered by Phase II of the survey. The generalized, near-subsistence agriculture practiced in the colonial and early national eras was supplemented in the second half of the 19th century by market-oriented production. With railroad connections to Boston and beyond, Northborough farmers were able to produce dairy and orchard products for sale, as well as eggs and tomatoes, asparagus, celery, and other vegetables. Some Northborough farmers supplemented their income by renting out teams of horses and equipment for reservoir construction, and others benefited from selling their timber for use as ties by the railroad and trolley line.

The survey identified scores of houses associated with farming families, as well as a number of properties that retain sizeable barns: 363 Crawford Street (NBO.242), 110 Howard Street (NBO.250), 87 Pleasant Street (NBO.289), and 536 West Main Street

(NBO.326). The building at 10 Blake Street (NBO.235) recalls the increasingly market-oriented activities of Northborough's farmers: it appears to be a substantially modernized incarnation of the Northborough facility of Deerfoot Creamery, a major supplier of milk and other dairy products to the greater Boston region.

Industry. Like most Massachusetts towns, Northborough developed an industrial sector in the 19th century. However, the waterpower available from the Assabet River and other Northborough streams, while useful for the gristmills, sawmills, and fulling works that were part of the agrarian economy, was inadequate for large-scale manufacturing, and so most industries remained small, with relatively few employees and modest production. Valentine's 1830 map of Northborough identified 14 buildings as shops or factories, besides textile mills.

The production of textiles in Northborough was centered at two locations that eventually became known as Woodside and Chapinville. The Northborough Cotton Manufacturing Company, chartered in 1814, began both cotton and woolen manufacturing at a site on the Assabet River that had earlier been exploited for a gristmill. The company remained in operation for 20 years and then went through repeated changes in ownership; the mill itself burned in 1860. In 1866, David F. Wood bought the property and erected a woolen mill on the site of the old cotton mill. He successfully manufactured woolens until his death in 1900, and his company gave the name "Woodside" to the vicinity. Later textile manufacturers at the site include the Woodside Woolen Company, the Taylor Manufacturing Company, the Chilton Company, and the Northborough Textile Fibre Company. The mill complex, dating from 1888, survives (200 Hudson Street, NBO.266), as do a number of associated areas of mill-owned houses (NBO.N, NBO.O, and NBO.P).

Another former gristmill site was developed for textile manufacturing by Phineas, Joseph and Isaac Davis 2nd, beginning in 1832. The Davis brothers built a brick cotton mill and three brick worker tenements, hauling cotton to the site from Boston by ox teams. From 1859 to 1864 the mill was run by L. S. Pratt of Grafton, and then by Caleb T. Chapin, who gave the name Chapinville to the area. When the cotton mill burned down in 1869, Chapin replaced it with a much larger brick woolen mill. The mill was operated by Ezra Chapin, the son of Caleb T. Chapin, and then by the Northborough Woolen Mills. In addition to the three brick former tenements inventoried in the first phase, surviving resources formerly associated with the Chapinville mill include the 1882 office (7 Chapin Court, NBO.52) and the former company store and post office (317 Hudson Street, NBO.41).

In addition to these small textile operations, Northborough residents created many different manufacturing enterprises, at one time or another producing shoes, combs, jewelry, piano keys (the sharps and flats), furniture, carriages, spokes, leather products, baked goods, creamery products, ice, bricks, firearms, dyes and other chemicals, drop forgings, cash registers, movie projectors, and camera equipment. Indeed, the sheer variety of Northborough products is one of the chief defining characteristics of the town's industrial history. Of these, perhaps the most distinctive was the town's involvement with comb-making, which began in 1839 with the Bush and Haynes shop on Whitney Street, with power supplied by Howard Brook. Soon other comb-makers set up shop wherever space and power

for machinery was available; the business directory accompanying the 1857 map of Northborough listed five separate comb-making enterprises. The combs were chiefly made from horn and hooves that were byproducts of local slaughterhouses, with some manufacturers also turning the material into buttons. The largest-scale comb-making enterprise was the Walter M. Farwell factory on Hudson Street south of River Street (NBO.255), which is said to have employed as many people as ever worked in comb-making in Northborough before. In addition to horn, some of which was imported from South America, the Farwell plant made combs out of celluloid, an early plastic. In the 1920s, the plant was converted to textile production by Whitaker & Bacon of Boston, which operated it as the Arlington Shoddy Mill.

The survey documented two former shop buildings, the “Old Barn Shop” (11 Blake Street, NBO.236), where combs, jewelry, shoes, corsets, and buttons are all known to have been made at one time or another, and the former E. H. Smith bone and gristmill (88 Main Street, NBO.95). Northborough’s small-shop industrial history is also recalled by the ca. 1860 stone dam on the Assabet River just south of Main Street (NBO.906) and by the numerous houses associated with the shops’ owners: for example, 47, 55, and 110 Hudson Street and 130 and 140 Main Street (NBO.110, 254, 259, 276, and 277). The survey included dozens of houses associated with individual sawmill operators, comb-makers, and other factory workers. The River Street Neighborhood (NBO.Q) was developed in the late 19th-century predominantly as rental properties targeting the industrial working class.

Commerce. Although most residents in the period pursued agriculture as the chief source of their livelihood, Northborough developed a small commercial center at the junction of Main Street, West Main Street, and Church Street. As early as 1830, there were two taverns and three stores along what is now modern-day Route 20, and by 1873 the village center could boast of several general stores, a bank, an insurance agency, a saloon, a meat market, a cigar shop, a shoe store, a hotel, two livery stables, and a tin shop. Later commercial enterprises include a Chinese laundry, millinery shops, a jewelry store, a hardware store, pharmacies, and a bicycle shop. Several historic resources associated with the town center’s commercial life were inventoried in the first phase of the survey. Additional resources from this phase include a former general store and bakery (19 Blake Street, NBO.237), the former Northboro Hardware store (17 South Street, NBO.312), and the homes of numerous livery operators, store owners, and bank employees whose livelihoods were derived from Northborough’s commercial prosperity.

Transportation. Transportation improvements have played a steady role in sustaining the life of Northborough. Although only present-day Route 9 in the southwest corner of Northborough was part of the early 19th-century turnpike system, the road represented by Route 20 and East Main Street was an important road in the colonial period and it remained a busy road throughout the 19th century and even down to the present; the taverns, shops, and stores shown on Valentine’s 1830 map can be attributed in part to business generated by the road. In the railroad era, Northborough was initially passed by in the construction of the first railroad between Boston, Worcester, and points west, as was Framingham Center. But in 1849 the Boston and Worcester Railroad constructed a spur to Framingham Center, and the Agricultural Branch Railroad extended it further westward, completing it to Northborough in

December 1856. When this line was further extended to Pratt's Junction in 1866, Northborough shippers and travelers had not only a direct route to Boston, but also connections to Fitchburg and Worcester. The line became the Boston, Clinton and Fitchburg Railroad in 1869 and, following additional mergers, was renamed the Boston, Clinton, Fitchburg and New Bedford Railroad in 1876. In 1879, it became part of the Old Colony Railroad's system, which in turn was absorbed by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad in 1893.

In addition to economically sustaining Northborough farmers and merchants, the railroad altered the geography of the center of the village, where it built a passenger depot, freight station, and engine house. Businesses, especially those dealing in bulk products such as lumber, coal, creamery products, and grain, gravitated toward the freight station area, and businesses that catered to travelers, such as a barber shop, livery stables, restaurants, and a pool hall, were located across Main Street from the passenger depot. Today, the importance of the railroad in Northborough's history is memorialized by two 19th-century stone-arch bridges (NBO.923 and 924) and a crossing shanty relocated as an outbuilding at 44 School Street (NBO.307).

Northborough was also served by an electric railroad. The Worcester and Marlborough Street Railway was chartered in April 1897 and began operating in the middle of August. The line connected with another street railway in Framingham, thereby allowing one to travel between Boston and Worcester entirely on the electric cars; in Northborough, the line followed Main Street, where there was a small passenger station opposite the steam railroad's depot. The steam-powered electric generating plant (inventoried in the first phase) and a car barn were located on Hudson Street in Northborough, and there was another large car barn and office on South Street. Later known as the Worcester Consolidated Street Railway, the line continued in operation through the 1920s. In addition to carrying passengers, street railways of the period usually offered limited freight and express service, which appears to have benefited many Northborough farmers.

Military Service. During the period represented by this phase of the survey, Northborough experienced the momentous effects of the Civil War. Out of a population of 1,500, Northborough furnished 143 soldiers for the Union Army. Twice as many Northborough men died in the Civil War as in all subsequent wars combined, and for many of those who survived, their service remained an important part of their identity. Northborough had a G.A.R. hall on Main Street until 1922, when it was destroyed by fire. Phase I of the survey inventoried the Northborough Soldier's Monument, the town's chief historic resource associated with the Civil War, but many of the houses in town also have an association with men who served, and their service is noted on the forms. Another aspect of this theme was the home-front effort during World War One. The forms note the many contributions of Northborough residents to Liberty Loan and other war-related activities

Ethnic Diversity. Like much of New England, Northborough became more ethnically diverse during the period covered in Phase II of the survey. The town remained predominantly "Yankee" and Protestant, but after mid-century the population began to include people of immigrant heritage as well: Irish-Americans who came to work on the

railroads, French-Canadians associated with the woolen mills, and people from maritime Canada, such as camera-innovator Thomas H. Blair. Around 1900, additional immigrant families from Eastern Europe, Italy, and Armenia added to Northborough's cultural mix. While there are no historic resources associated with specific ethnic identities (the present Roman Catholic Church is a modern building), the owners or occupants of many of the houses included in the survey reflect the range of Northborough's ethnic origins. The houses also document the economic success of some individuals of immigrant heritage, such as the home of Irish immigrant and plumbing-supply merchant Thomas Brennan (50 School Street, NBO.309). Northborough did not have ethnic neighborhoods as clearly defined as those in the cities, but small concentrations of particular ethnic groups could be found, such as Irish homeowners on Pleasant Street, French-Canadians in the houses nearby the mills, and people from maritime Canada on East Main Street.

Education. Northborough's remaining one-room district schools and the brick Center School on School Street were inventoried in the first phase. This phase continues the history of the community's efforts to provide its children with appropriate settings for education with its inclusion of the Northborough High School (63 Main Street, NBO.97), built in 1939 as a completely modern facility with large, bright classrooms, laboratories, a library, and an auditorium/gymnasium.

Community Planning and Development. In the early 20th century, Northborough developed some of the institutions characteristic of larger towns and cities in order to meet the needs of its growing population. In addition to the public library inventoried in the first phase, this theme is embodied in the building at 11-13 Church Street (NBO.64), built in 1926 to house the town's fire department and police services.

Architecture. In addition to their historical associations, many if not most of the resources included in this phase of the survey also are notable as examples of particular styles of architecture popular in the period. Because Northborough was predominantly a rural community, dwellings are mostly modest, vernacular interpretations of popular styles, rather than extravagantly detailed high-style examples. Greek Revival-style houses have pilastered corners and pilaster-and-lintel entries, rather than full porticos, and Victorian houses tend to be eclectic, with brackets, window trim, porch-post turnings, and gable-peak ornaments freely drawn from a variety of more formal styles. Still, Boston and Worcester were not far away, so there are a few surprises, such as the extraordinary portico of the Greek Revival Wilder Bush House (27-29 Whitney Street, NBO.80); some well-preserved, densely-bracketed Italianate houses (31 Pleasant Street, NBO.286, and 220 Whitney Street, NBO.327); and small 1 ½-story houses that incorporate the distinctive Mansard roof of the Second Empire style (234 Whitney Street, NBO.328). Three of the Victorian houses inventoried in this phase have exceptional Queen Anne-style detailing; all were associated with the former Daniel Wesson estate known as "The Cliffs" (NBO.278, 279, and 280). Twentieth-century architecture is represented in Northborough by the Art-Deco detailing on the former Northborough High School (63 Main Street, NBO.97) and by the Vera Green House (333 Howard Street, NBO.251), an outstanding example of the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's "organic architecture" in the post-World War II era.

Two notable aspects of Northborough history are associated with activities whose main focus was outside the town's borders: the creation of reservoirs and aqueducts for the Boston metropolitan water system, and the establishment of the Westborough State Hospital, the grounds of which extended into Northborough. Because both are represented by existing National Register of Historic Places listings (Wachusett Aqueduct Linear District, Water Supply System of Metropolitan Boston Multiple Property Submission, 1990; Westborough State Hospital, Massachusetts State Hospitals and State Schools Multiple Property Submission, 1994), no additional resources associated with these two historical developments were included in this phase of the survey.

Although the main purpose of the survey was to identify the properties' associations with important Northborough historical themes, the forms also endeavor to include "local color" whenever known. Examples include the barn located near the field where the "Northborough Mastodon" was discovered in 1884 (536 West Main Street, NBO.326), the gym where numerous notable early 20th-century boxers trained (11 Blake Street, NBO 236), and the home of blacksmith/homing pigeon-breeder George Burgoyne (157 South Street, NBO.317).

IV. NATIONAL REGISTER AND LOCAL-DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

One purpose of a survey such as this is to identify properties that meet the National Register of Historic Places criteria of significance. Historic-preservation statutes and regulations require federally funded projects to assess their effects on properties that are eligible for listing on the National Register and to mitigate adverse effects whenever possible. Similar provisions on the state level provide for consideration of the effects of state-funded activities on eligible properties. National Register listing is also a prerequisite for certain tax-incentive programs. Finally, National Register listing is an honor that recognizes both the property itself and the community's commitment to identifying and preserving its significant historic resources.

The National Register eligibility criteria, which are intended to identify properties that are significant on the national, state or local level, state the following:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

In addition to the criteria for significance, National Register eligibility requires that a property have *integrity*. Integrity is defined as the ability of a property to convey its significance. A National Register-eligible property will retain most, if not all, of the seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The historic contexts developed for this survey identified a number of areas of significance that qualify properties in Northborough under National Register Criteria A or C (or both):

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Commerce
- Transportation
- Military Service
- Ethnic Diversity
- Education
- Community Development and Planning

- Architecture

Criterion B, significant persons, is used much less often than Criteria A or C, in part because we now recognize that our history is the result of the efforts and aspirations of large numbers of people, both well-known and virtually anonymous, rather than a few individuals of transcendent importance. Criterion D is most often used in evaluating archaeological resources, which are outside the scope of this survey. Criterion D may apply, however, to properties that are also eligible under Criterion C in that the distinctive characteristics that make them eligible may also have information value.

Each of the properties that were inventoried for this phase of the survey has been evaluated for its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places using the criteria listed above. In most cases, the properties' significance is mostly on the local level, that is, for the role they played in Northborough's history or for their architectural qualities in comparison with other examples in town, but a few were judged to also have significance on the state level as well. Following is a summary of the recommendations as detailed on the National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Forms that accompany the inventory forms.

NATIONAL REGISTER RECOMMENDATIONS: DISTRICTS

Woodside Mills Historic District. A potential historic district was identified that would include as contributing components the Woodside Mills (NBO.266) at 200 Hudson Street and the buildings within three areas of former mill houses:

- Allen Court Mill Houses (NBO.N)
- Allen Street Mill Houses (NBO.O)
- Hudson Street Mill Houses (NBO.Q)

As noted below, the Woodside Mills complex has local historical significance because of its associations with a major theme in the town's economic development, textile manufacturing (Criterion A). The former mill houses, both individually and as groups, probably do not meet the threshold for National Register eligibility because of the extent of modern alterations. They would, however, collectively enhance a listing for a Woodside Mills Historic District. One defining characteristic of 19th-century New England textile mills is that, almost without exception, they were accompanied by adjacent areas of multi-family houses for mill operatives. These areas, even if the houses have been modified over time, help indicate the scale of operations of the textile mill and the effect it had on its community. (Ideally, the Woodside Mills district would have also included the mansion of the proprietor, David F. Wood, but this building was lost to fire many years ago). In addition to housing the mill's workers, one of the buildings (2-4 Allen Court, NBO.224) also accommodated a store. The Woodside area, including the mill and groups of mill houses, was previously designated Historic Area NBO.F in the MHS database.

School Street – Summer Street Historic District (NBO.R). A potential historic district was identified east, west, and south of the intersection of School and Summer streets. This assemblage of turn-of-the-century houses represents an unusual concentration, for Northborough, of well-preserved houses from a particular period. While few of the houses are completely original in their appearance, taken as a whole the assemblage preserves a rich variety of Victorian vernacular elements: peak ornaments, wood shingles in various patterns, bay windows, brackets, and

decorative porch elements such as turned posts, Tuscan columns, and various types of railings. Most houses exhibit the irregularity of form that was part of the Victorian architectural aesthetic, creating asymmetry by means of bay windows, cross-gable wings, cut-away first-story corners, and porches. As such, the district embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction (Criterion C).

The potential district also has local historical significance as a middle-class neighborhood of mostly single-family homes that recalls Northborough's early 20th-century identity as a small commercial and industrial center (Criterion A). The owner-occupants of these houses were proprietors of small businesses, white-collar workers, and the skilled members of the working class. In addition to contributing to the economic prosperity of the town, many were active in community organizations, musical groups, and home-front activities during World War I, and not a few served their neighbors in local political offices. Many were from long-standing Northborough Yankee families, but others were immigrants from Canada, Ireland, and Germany, reflecting the town's growing ethnic diversity in the early years of the 20th century.

Meetinghouse Common Historic District. Phase I of the survey identified the existing Meeting House Common Local Historic District as eligible for the National Register and recommended expanding its boundaries to include additional properties. The following buildings identified in this phase of the survey should be considered for inclusion as contributing buildings in any Meeting House Common National Register district:

Unitarian Parsonage (NBO.239), 33 Church Street
Walter & Lucy Paul House (NBO.240), 39 Church Street
Walter & Lottie Bigelow House (NBO.70), 64 Church Street
Eliab Wood House (NBO.72), 76 Church Street
Francis & Mary Atwood House (NBO.241), 86 Church Street
Duplisse House (NBO.73), 87 Church Street
Wilder Bush Barn (NBO.79), 25 Whitney Street
Wilder Bush House (NBO.80), 27-29 Whitney Street

Main Street Historic District. Phase I of the survey identified Main Street (Route 20) between 4 West Main Street and 110 Main Street as a potentially National Register-eligible historic district. The following buildings identified in this phase of the survey should be considered for inclusion as contributing buildings in such a district:

Old Barn Shop (NBO.236), 11 Blake Street
C. Brigham & Co. Store (NBO.237), 19 Blake Street
Northborough High School (NBO.274), 63 Main Street
E. H. Smith Bone & Grain Mill, 88 Main Street
Rev. Samuel S. Ashley House, 100 Main Street
Charles A. Rice House (NBO.83), 4 Patty Lane (12) Main Street
Northboro Hardware (NBO.312), 17 South Street

NATIONAL REGISTER RECOMMENDATIONS: STRUCTURES

Cold Harbor Brook Railroad Bridge (NBO.923) and **Assabet River Railroad Bridge** (NBO.924). These two mid-19th-century stone arches recall the importance of the railroad in Northborough's commercial and industrial development (Criterion A) and stand as relatively unaltered examples of stone-arch bridge construction, a vernacular technology widely used for bridges of moderate span and of sufficient importance to warrant the extra expenditure of funds over wooden bridges (Criterion C). They may also be associated with a nationally prominent railroad contractor, George W. Phelps (1820-1899).

The **Church Street Stone-Slab Bridge** (NBO.921) could not be evaluated for its National Register eligibility because there is insufficient information on the number, distribution, and comparative integrity of this type of bridge.

NATIONAL REGISTER RECOMMENDATIONS: BUILDINGS

Vera Green House (NBO.251), 333 Howard Street. This 1953 house is a virtually untouched example of the wave of Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired houses that hit American in the post- World War II period (Criterion C). More or less resembling Wright's "Usonian" designs or his larger commissions such as "Fallingwater," these houses were characterized by an overall horizontality, flat or low-pitched roofs, expansive area of glass, free-form open plans, and the use of "natural" materials such as stained wood, brick, stone, or textured concrete blocks. An important aspect of the type, clearly exhibited by this house, is a close relationship of the house and its surroundings, a relationship mediated by the glass walls that bring the outdoors inside. Designed by Worcester architect Doak Martin (1917-1998), the house may have significance on the state level as well.

Woodside Mills (NBO.266), 200 Hudson Street. The Woodside Mills have local historical significance because of the building's associations with a major theme in the town's economic development, textile manufacturing (Criterion A). In a town in which most industrial enterprises were of the small-shop type, the textile mills stood out for employing as many as 100 workers and, in two cases, for leading to the creation of villages surrounding the mills. This mill, dating from 1888 and enlarged during the prosperous years of the World War I period, is the town's preeminent heritage resource illustrating this theme. The Chapinville mill exists only as an archaeological site, and the Farwell Comb Factory, which operated for a time as a shoddy mill, is both later in origin (1900) and in a more highly-altered condition. A secondary area of significance is the building's embodiment of the key elements of late 19th-century industrial architecture. As noted above, the mill could be the centerpiece of a **Woodside Mills Historic District** that includes both the mill and three areas of former mill houses, but it also stands as an individually eligible building.

Northborough High School (NBO.97), 63 Main Street. The former Northborough High School has local historical significance in the educational history of Northborough; for three decades, the building served as the community's high school and then a junior high school (Criterion A); it represents the community's response to growing enrollments, higher state standards for ancillary facilities such as gymnasiums, libraries, and science laboratories. The building also has local historical significance as the community's most visible reminder of the public-works programs of the 1930s (Criterion A). Finally, the building is significant because it embodies many of the

characteristics of early 20th-century school architecture (Criterion C).

“The Cliffs,” Daniel B. Wesson House (NBO.168), 167 Main Street. This large and elaborate Queen Anne-style mansion was not among the recommendations for National Register listing in the first phase of the survey, which cited alterations such as the enclosure of its porches. The consultant for this phase of the survey would recommend reconsideration. Even with alterations, the Wesson mansion stands as the most elaborate house in Northborough from the Victorian period (Criterion C), an excellent example of the asymmetry of form introduced as part of the Queen Anne style. Other defining characteristics of the style abundantly evident in the house include richly detailed chimneys and variegated exterior materials, including wood shingles in an impressive range of patterns. The house also has historical significance because of its associations with Daniel B. Wesson (1825-1906). As an inventor, Wesson played a major role in the development of the American firearms industry, and his factory in Springfield was a major Massachusetts manufacturer (Criterion A).

This phase of the survey identified three additional nearby buildings formerly associated with the Wesson estate: **“The Cliffs” Cottage** (NBO.278), 154 Main Street; **“The Cliffs” Superintendent’s Residence** (NBO.279), 13 Maple Street; and **“The Cliffs” Employees Residence** (NBO.280), 25-27 Maple Street. It is recommended that “The Cliffs,” including the mansion and the three other buildings, be collectively considered for National Register listing.

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Local Historic Districts are established by communities under a state enabling statute (MGL Ch. 40C) with the purpose of protecting the distinctive characteristics of important areas and encouraging new structural designs that are compatible with the area's historic setting. Local Historic Districts in Northborough are administered by the Northborough Historical Commission. Many of the same characteristics that make an area a candidate for listing as a National Register district also make it an appropriate Local Historic District. The **expanded Meetinghouse Common Historic District** and **Main Street Historic District** recommended in the Phase I should consider the inclusion of the properties inventoried in this phase, as noted above under National Register recommendations. In addition, the **School Street – Summer Street Historic District** is a strong candidate for consideration as a Local Historic District because of the richness of surviving architectural elements, exactly the type of physical characteristics intended for protection under the enabling legislation.

Some localities, noting that the definition of district includes the possibility of a single building, have designated individual buildings for protection under the Local Historic District process. The Phase I of this survey recommended that the Northborough Historical Commission consider such an approach, given the scattered distribution of the town’s historic resources among much more modern residential and commercial development. The following individual properties are well-preserved examples of particular type, styles, and period of construction that would be appropriate for such a designation:

Walter & Lottie Bigelow House (NBO.70), 64 Church Street
Ezra H. Bigelow House (NBO.71), 70 Church Street
Eliab Wood House (NBO.72), 76 Church Street
Vera Green House (NBO.251), 333 Howard Street
Woodside Mills (NBO.266), 200 Hudson Street
Charles C. Murray House (NBO.250), 110 Howard Street
Northborough High School (NBO.274), 63 Main Street
“The Cliffs” Cottage (NBO. 278), 154 Main Street
“The Cliffs” Superintendent’s Residence (NBO. 279), 13 Maple Street
“The Cliffs” Employees Residence (NBO. 280), 25-27 Maple Street
John & Esther Allen House (NBO. 286), 31 Pleasant Street
Curtis H. Burdett House (NBO.289), 87 Pleasant Street
George Barnes House (NBO.315), 120 South Street
Edwin Corey House (NBO.327), 220 Whitney Street
Corey Family House (NBO.328), 234 Whitney Street

V. FURTHER STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

The first phase of the Northborough inventory concentrated on the Main Street area in the center of town and pre-1860 properties townwide, though some outstanding post-1860 properties were also inventoried, such as the Walter Farwell House (NBO.161), 114 Hudson Street, and the Daniel Wesson House (NBO.168), 167 Main Street. This second phase filled in some pre-1860 properties, comprehensively covered properties from 1860 to about 1906, and included a number of later 20th-century properties at the request of the Northborough Historical Commission. In terms of comprehensive survey, it appears that only the period from 1906 to 1960 remains unsurveyed. From the field-checking that was undertaken as part of this survey, it can be estimated that fewer than 50 later 20th-century properties would need to be inventoried in order to provide a full picture of Northborough's historic resources. Specifically:

- Hip-roofed houses of the "Foursquare" type, many of which have Colonial Revival detailing, dating from the 1910s and 1920s. One of these was identified as part of the River Street Neighborhood (37 River Street, NBO.300), and several others were observed on School Street near its intersection with Summer Street.
- Craftsman or Bungalow-type houses, such as the exceptionally well-preserved one at 37 School Street.
- Colonial Revival and Tudor-style houses from the 1930s.

Northborough has an exceptional number of Techbuilt™ prefabricated houses, a type developed by architect Carl Koch (1912-1998) of Belmont, Massachusetts. Koch was a student of Walter Gropius at Harvard, and his designs reflected both the International Style modernism taught at that institution and the "organic" principles of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Techbuilt system was developed in 1953 and over 3,000 were sold in the United States before 1963. Many of Northborough's Techbuilt houses are late examples dating from the 1970s, but it would be worthwhile to see if there are any earlier examples of this iconic suburban form.

The Phase I included a recommendation for collective consideration of the town's farmland and agricultural buildings. To that should be added consideration of portions of certain town roads for Scenic Road designation under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 15C. Such a designation would provide recognition and help preserve trees and stone walls. It was not within the scope of this survey to inventory potential candidates for Scenic Road designation, but Green Street north of Church Street appeared to deserve consideration.

It is not recommended that any of the 19th and early 20th-century properties that were identified as third-priority (those graded a "C") be included in any future inventory efforts except in the case of 1) some exceptional historical association that has not been previously considered, or 2) reversal of the loss of integrity through credible restoration efforts.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Materials

American Textile History Museum. Northborough textile-mill insurance drawings and photographs, Lowell, MA.

Northborough Historical Society. Historic building files, Northborough, MA. Includes clippings of the Robert Ellis columns in the *Northbrough Record*.

Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Worcester County Deeds, Worcester, MA.

Published Local Histories

Allen, Joseph. *History of Northborough, in Various Publications and Discourses*. Worcester, MA, 1980.

The Centennial Celebration of the Town of Northborough, Mass., August 22, 1866. Northborough, MA: Northborough Centennial Committee.

Dutton, Henry F. "Northborough," in *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts*. Boston: C. F. Jewett and Company, 1879.

Ellis, Robert P. *Northborough in the Civil War: Citizen Soldiering and Sacrifice*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2007.

_____. *Not Quite a Genius: From Nova Scotia to Northborough with Thomas H. Blair*. Northborough, MA: Northborough Historical Society, 2003.

The Hourglass. Monthly publication of the Northborough Historical Society.

Karr, Ronald D. *The Rail Lines of Southern New England: A Handbook of Railroad History*. Pepperell, MA: Branch Line Press.

Kent, Josiah C. *Northborough History*. Newton, MA: Garden City Press, 1921.

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Northborough. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1983.

Mulligan, William H. *Northborough: A Town and its People, 1638-1975*. Northborough, MA: Northborough American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1982.

Northborough Historical Sites. Northborough, MA: Northborough Historical Society, 1966.

Map with text and photographs on reverse.

Northborough Historical Society, 1906-1966. 200th Anniversary, Town of Northborough, 1766-1966. Northborough, MA: Northborough Historical Society, 1966.

Parmenter, Janice B. "A Record of Two Hundred Years of Activities in Northborough, Mass." In *Two Hundredth Anniversary, Town of Northborough, 1766-1966.* Northborough, MA: Northborough Town Bicentennial Committee, 1966.

Racine, Ellen, and Robert P. Ellis. *Images of America: Northborough.* Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008.

Two Hundredth Anniversary, Town of Northborough, 1766-1966. Northborough, MA: Northborough Town Bicentennial Committee, 1966

Biographical Sources

Biographical Review, Containing Life Sketches of Leading Citizens of Worcester County, Massachusetts. Boston, MA: Biographical Review Publishing Company, 1899.

Crane, Ellery B. *Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs of Worcester County, Massachusetts.* New York, NY: Lewis Publishing Company, 1907.

Eliot, Samuel A. *Biographical History of Massachusetts.* Boston, MA: Massachusetts Biographical Society, 1909.

Hurd, D. Hamilton. *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men.* Philadelphia, PA: J. W. Lewis, 1889.

Massachusetts Register for the Year 1853. Boston, MA: George Adams, 1853.

Resident and Business Directory of Westborough, Northborough and Southborough, Massachusetts, 1905. Hopkinton, MA: A. E. Foss & Co., 1905.

U.S. Census Office [name varies]. Census of population, manuscript schedules, 1850-1930. Microfilm, Massachusetts State Library, Boston.

Maps and Views

Beers, F. W. *Atlas of Worcester County, Massachusetts*. New York, NY: F. W. Beers & Co., 1870.

Hopkins, G.M., Jr. *Map of the Town of Northboro, Worcester County, Mass.* Philadelphia, PA: Richard Clark, 1855.

New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad. Valuation Section 7.28, Northborough, Valuation maps, 1915-1916. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut.

Norris, George E. *Northboro, Mass., 1887*. Troy, NY: Burleigh Litho. Establishment.

Richards, L. J. *New Topographical Atlas of Worcester County, Massachusetts*. Philadelphia, PA: L. J. Richards & Co., 1898.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company. Insurance maps of Northborough, 1910, 1921, 1928, 1941. Microfilm, University of Massachusetts Library, Amherst, MA.

Valentine, Gill. *Map of Northborough, 1830*. Northborough, MA: Northborough Historical Society, 1968.

View of Northborough, Massachusetts, 1887. Original in Library of Congress.

Walling, Henry F. *Map of Worcester County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Wm. E. Baker & Co., 1857.

APPENDIX A: INDEX TO INVENTORIED PROPERTIES