

***Town of Walpole***

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***Communitywide  
Historic Properties Survey  
(Survey & Planning Grant)***

***Final Report***

***Submitted to***

***Walpole Planning Board  
Walpole Historical Commission  
Walpole, Massachusetts***

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Architectural Historian  
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July 25, 2008***

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The town of Walpole received a Survey & Planning grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) to conduct an intensive survey of historic and cultural resources in the town and identify resources that are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Eight (8) MHC area inventory forms and four (4) MHC building inventory forms were prepared, recording approximately 185 properties in Walpole. Area inventory forms include a detailed description of each area's architecture or landscape and historic development, a bibliography, a data sheet listing information on each property in the area, black and white photographs of street views and unique and representative buildings, and a map showing properties in the area. Building inventory forms describe each building's architecture and history, and include a bibliography, black and white photograph(s), and a location map. A large-scale base map of Walpole was prepared, showing areas and individual properties inventoried during the survey project. The Survey Final Report includes a description of the survey methodology, an alphabetical index of inventoried areas, a National Register of Historic Places context statement with recommendations for National Register listings, further study recommendations, and a bibliography.

Photocopies of all inventory forms are available locally, at the Walpole Historical Society (the town-owned Deacon Willard Lewis House, 33 West Street), and the Walpole Public Library, 65 Common Street.

Members of the Walpole Historical Commission  
during the 2007-2008 survey grant project

Michael Amaral  
Robert Boyd  
Emily Conrad  
Elizabeth Cottrell  
Helen Farinacci  
Mildred E. Rockwood (deceased)  
Roger Turner, Jr.

Michael Gallahue, Chairman

Donald T. Johnson, AICP  
Town Planner  
Town of Walpole

## **METHODOLOGY**

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### ***Survey Objectives***

The town of Walpole received a Survey & Planning grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) to conduct the Walpole historic properties survey. The survey project implemented one recommendation of the town's 2004 *Master Plan*, identifying historically and/or architecturally significant buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes that define the cultural history of Walpole.

Approximately 185 buildings and landscapes were recorded on MHC inventory forms, according to the survey methodology of the MHC. National Register of Historic Places criteria were applied to resources inventoried. A list of areas and individual properties recommended for nomination to the National Register was prepared.

The town of Walpole hired architectural historian and preservation consultant Kathleen Kelly Broomer to conduct the survey. The Walpole Planning Board, through Donald T. Johnson, Town Planner, administered the grant project on behalf of the town. In-depth review of work products was undertaken by the members of the Walpole Historical Commission, Michael Gallahue, Chairman. The survey project concluded in July 2008.

### ***Assessment of Previous Research***

Most of the early inventory forms for historic resources in Walpole were prepared between 1973 and 1985 for the Walpole Historical Commission. Like the inventory forms produced during this survey grant project, the early forms are filed in the statewide historic properties inventory maintained by the MHC in Boston. The Walpole inventory included a large number of forms prepared by the commission's consultant, Thompson S. Lingel, from 1977 through 1979. Other forms in the Walpole inventory were prepared in connection with the Dedham Grant Survey (1981), the Save Our Sculpture Survey (2001), the work of the Massachusetts Highway Department, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's survey of the Franklin commuter rail line. In 1986, Preservation Technology Associates Inc. prepared a detailed area inventory form for the Bird & Son industrial complex in East Walpole.

The town's historic properties inventory was quite comprehensive for its inclusion of historic resources in different sections of Walpole, from different historic periods, and associated with various themes in the town's history. The forms were prepared with the guidance of MHC staff and reflected the MHC survey methodology then in effect. Most of the forms, however, do not meet current MHC survey standards, as those standards have evolved over the last three decades. Therefore, the usefulness of the forms for present-day preservation planning efforts and environmental review is somewhat limited. Many of the forms lack architectural descriptions—now required—and detailed historical narratives. The form photographs, some now thirty years old, do not necessarily convey the current appearance and condition of the resources documented. The existing inventory provided an excellent building-by-building catalog of Walpole's historic development, but did not necessarily convey the significance of important clusters of historic development present in the town.

## ***Criteria for Selecting Properties for Survey***

A reconnaissance or “windshield” survey of Walpole conducted during Phase I of the project revealed at least five major types of historic (pre-1960) development:

- concentrated areas of residential, institutional, and/or commercial buildings, with minimal infill (post-1960) construction;
- linear groupings of high-style residential properties, and their associated outbuildings (*e.g.*, carriage houses, barns, other agricultural buildings) and landscapes, sometimes in estate or agricultural settings;
- industrial complexes in varying degrees of preservation, ranging from small groups of connected buildings set close to (and readily viewed from) the public way, to large multi-acre complexes with gated access;
- late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century residential subdivisions; and
- “stand-alone” resources meriting documentation individually, usually due to their location outside concentrated areas of intact historic resources.

Examples of these historic development types, as well as town-owned historic buildings and landscapes, were priorities for documentation.

Since constraints of time and budget necessarily limit the number of resources that can be documented in a survey grant project, the following criteria were used to select properties for documentation with MHC inventory forms:

- uniqueness in Walpole;
- good example of a particular building type or architectural style;
- prominence in the landscape;
- good example of historical development patterns (in areas of mixed historic and contemporary [post-1960] development); and/or
- association with important events or personalities.

Historic areas selected for documentation were distinguished by their visual cohesiveness and the common historic associations of their respective buildings or landscape features. Historic areas and buildings selected for survey retain a high degree of architectural integrity. Degree of alteration was a factor in selecting areas and individual resources for inventory. The priorities of the Walpole Historical Commission guided the selection of areas and individual resources for documentation. During Phase II of the project, the commission approved the list of properties selected for survey.

It was anticipated that a majority of the historic resources to be recorded with MHC inventory forms would be residential buildings, associated with the town’s agrarian or industrial history or, in some cases, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century suburban planning and development. Municipal, private institutional, and commercial/industrial buildings also would be recorded. Resources observed in the field were generally in good condition.

## **Survey Procedures**

### **Research Process**

Historic atlases and maps, including bird's-eye views and Sanborn fire insurance maps, together with Walpole resident and business directories, voting lists, town histories, and town reports were the principal sources for research on properties documented with MHC inventory forms. Also very useful were research collections and other historic data compiled by members of the Walpole Historical Commission. Specific collections are cited on the appropriate inventory forms. In general, research focused on establishing actual or estimated construction dates; names and occupations of property owners and/or occupants; and the role of the owners/occupants in the community. Estimates of construction dates were guided by the clearest documentary evidence located during the survey process. Estimates of construction dates were made conservatively, with the expectation that earlier construction dates may be pinpointed in the future with additional property-specific research.

Construction dates from town assessors' records were used to identify construction dates when those dates were consistent with the architectural style of a building. In the absence of local building permits predating the 1970s, building department records were not used to identify construction dates. Water service connection cards are available, dating to the start of the municipal system in 1895. These records, maintained by the sewer and water department, are not easily accessible. Department staff must search the cards, which are not stored in the office, using lists of addresses provided by researchers. Water service cards may provide information for more detailed research in future projects.

Constraints of time and budget in a survey grant project often preclude research in deeds and census records. Per MHC survey methodology, deeds normally are not consulted in a communitywide comprehensive survey project, as the task of researching titles is very time-consuming relative to the amount of information obtained for each property. When deed research would help to clarify the history of a particular property, a recommendation for future deed research was noted on the corresponding inventory form.

In addition, census records were not consulted in the preparation of the inventory forms. Census records are most useful only after the names of building owners or occupants are established through map research or, if necessary, deed research. Once names are established, town directories (organized alphabetically) and voting lists (organized by street address) provide readily accessible information on owners and occupants for the large number of properties targeted for documentation in the survey. It is expected that census records would be consulted in future property-specific research.

### **Recording of Resources**

Survey products were prepared according to MHC survey standards. Historic resources were documented individually, using MHC building inventory forms (Form B), or as part of historic areas or clusters of historic development, using MHC area forms (Form A). An area form provides a summary of the area's architectural character and history, highlighting unique and representative buildings. Each area form includes a locational map and a data sheet accounting for the historic buildings in the inventoried area. Data sheets record MHC inventory number, historic name, street address, architectural style, and approximate date of construction for each historic resource.

Photographs accompanying the inventory forms varied with the type of form prepared. Individual resources included exterior views of the building as seen from the public way. For area forms, photographs of street views and representative buildings were provided, as well as landscape views (in the case of historic open space). Photographs were taken with the black and white setting on a digital camera,

and printed using MHC-approved papers and inks. The Walpole town planner, the Walpole Historical Commission, and the MHC received CDs with copies of the digital images.

Each inventory form included a bibliography of research sources specific to the individual building or area being documented. National Register of Historic Places criteria were applied to each property, with eligibility recommendations noted on the appropriate forms. A list of properties recommended for National Register listing appears in this final report.

Completed inventory forms were lettered and/or numbered according to the recommendations of the MACRIS staff of the MHC. Inventoried resources were mapped on a large-scale base map of the town. The town of Walpole does not have a designated GIS staff person to undertake the mapping preferred by the MHC. Therefore, the Town Planner – in addition to his duties in administering the grant survey project – prepared the GIS maps for the area forms using draft maps provided by the consultant. The consultant produced the large-scale base map.

The National Register context, submitted herein, provides a brief overview of Walpole’s historic development, as evidenced by extant historic resources in the town that were documented in the survey project. As a planning document, the narrative establishes a framework for understanding the relative significance of the resources inventoried, by addressing specific themes in the town’s history. While not a definitive history of Walpole from its earliest settlement, the narrative provides a summary of historic trends in the town for local and state planning purposes.

### ***Accomplishments and Assessment of Survey Results***

The goals of the survey, as outlined in the Scope of Work, have been accomplished. MHC area inventory forms were produced for eight (8) areas and landscapes, and MHC building inventory forms were produced for four (4) individual properties, documenting approximately 185 historic properties in Walpole. The total number of properties documented exceeded the eighty (80) properties projected in the Scope of Work, in large part due to the number of significant and sizable historic clusters that were high priorities for documentation during this survey.

Certain limitations are inherent in a communitywide comprehensive survey of this nature. For many properties in Walpole, basic historical information has been combined with architectural analysis for the first time. Additional facts about the inventoried properties may be added at any time, using inventory form continuation sheets. Because constraints of time and budget permitted the documentation of only a small percentage of Walpole’s noteworthy historic resources, suggestions for additional survey work are listed in ***Further Study Recommendations***.

Aside from a difference in the number of properties documented, the survey results did not differ significantly from the expectations developed in Phase I of the project in terms of the location, concentration, and condition of historic resources in the town.

## ***INDEX OF PROPERTIES SURVEYED***

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The following areas and individual properties were inventoried during the survey project. Massachusetts Historical Commission area code letters or inventory numbers not included here have already been assigned to other historic resources in Walpole by the MHC. A list of all properties in Walpole inventoried through July 2008 will be available through the MHC website ([www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

| <b><i>Area Name (with address ranges covered by the area)</i></b>  | <b><i>MHC Area</i></b>   |
|--|--------------------------|
| South Walpole Area<br>Neponset Street, 2 to 67<br>South Street (Terrace Hill Cemetery)<br>Summer Street, 8 to 44<br>Washington Street, 1852 to 1928<br>Water Street, 8 to 54<br>Willow Street, 1 to 6      | <a href="#"><u>A</u></a> |
| Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area<br>East Street, 603 to 677<br>High Plain Street, 1, 2, 45, and 55<br>Peach Street, 1 to 166   | <a href="#"><u>B</u></a> |
| Walpole Town Forest<br>Washington Street, and off Common Street and South Street   | <a href="#"><u>E</u></a> |
| Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area<br>East Street, 400 to 470<br>Everett Street, 1 and 5<br>Plimpton Street, 1 to 129   | <a href="#"><u>G</u></a> |
| East Walpole Area<br>Chestnut Street, 15 and 57<br>Rhoades Avenue, 16 to 81<br>Union Street, 2 to 100<br>Washington Street, 176 and 183<br>Wolcott Avenue, 5 to 35   | <a href="#"><u>H</u></a> |
| Francis William Bird Park, Washington Street, East Walpole   | <a href="#"><u>I</u></a> |
| Town Center Municipal Area<br>Main Street, 980<br>School Street, 135 and 144<br>Stone Street, 20, 109-111, and 137   | <a href="#"><u>J</u></a> |
| Walpole Center-Common Street Area<br>Main Street, 979 to 1049 and Walpole Common<br>Common Street, 10 to 174<br>Front Street, 20 to Epiphany Episcopal Church<br>South Street, 3-5<br>West Street, 1 to 33 | <a href="#"><u>K</u></a> |



***Buildings Inventoried Individually***

| <b><i>Street Address</i></b> | <b><i>Historic Name</i></b> | <b><i>MHC #</i></b>        |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Common Street, 218           | ---                         | <a href="#"><u>181</u></a> |
| Common Street, 275           | Walpole High School         | <a href="#"><u>143</u></a> |
| Common Street, 319           | George A. Plimpton School   | <a href="#"><u>182</u></a> |
| West Street                  | Union Station               | <a href="#"><u>64</u></a>  |

## **NATIONAL REGISTER CONTEXT**

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*Note: This context provides a basis for understanding the historic and architectural significance of specific properties and neighborhoods inventoried during the 2007-2008 survey. The context is largely limited to the eight (8) areas and four (4) individual properties inventoried during the current project, encompassing approximately 185 resources.*

### **First Settlement and Colonial Period (through 1775)**

Located on the Neponset River nineteen miles southwest of Boston and twenty-six miles northeast of Providence, Walpole is an early industrial center on the outer limits of greater Boston, with later estate and suburban development. The territory of Walpole was originally part of the Dedham Grant (1636). Walpole at its southeast border preserves a segment of the dividing line between Dedham and Dorchester.

With the discovery of an extensive cedar swamp at the heart of Walpole's present territory, Joshua Fisher and Eleazer Lusher established in 1659 a sawmill at or near the junction of the Neponset River and School Meadow Brook, at the edge of the swamp and in the present town forest (Walpole Town Forest, MHC Area E). Though the lumber produced was for the use of the inhabitants at Dedham Village, Fisher and Lusher received favorable terms in the agreement reached with the Dedham proprietors, which prohibited the construction of any other sawmill on the Neponset in that area for ten years; allowed the sawmill owners to keep one-half of the pine or cedar boards cut for the owners of the timber; and gave the sawmill owners the rights to fix the price of lumber in the town for two years. [DeLue, 23-24]

To encourage growth, large lots of land known as the Sawmill Dividends were granted to the Dedham proprietors about 1715. This isolated community, known as the Sawmill Settlement, was "geographically and socially distinct" from Dedham Village, and many of the settlers were not Dedhamites by birth or family connection. As the population grew, the settlement separated from Dedham and incorporated in 1724 as the town of Walpole. The town was named for Sir Robert Walpole, a one-time prime minister of England who had been a friend to the American colonists. The old sawmill was still standing in 1723, when it was mentioned in the record for the laying-out of South Street that year. [West; DeLue, 51, 252] The Old Burial Place, Main Street at Kendall Street (1718), is situated on the road from Dedham to the sawmill. Walpole's population reached 785 by 1765.

Ten distinct locations for water privileges on the Neponset River in Walpole have defined much of the town's industrial history, and in certain cases fueled the development of surrounding villages. Stone's *History of Massachusetts Industries* (1930), borrowing from DeLue (1925), summarizes the activity at each privilege, which is presented here with additional information on location and products to provide a general outline of Walpole's industrial growth during the Colonial and subsequent historic periods.

1. *Elbridge Smith dam*, at Washington Street in South Walpole (see MHC Area A), with a fall of fourteen feet. This privilege supported a gristmill dating to 1814, as well as later cotton goods factories.
2. *Clark privilege*, with a fall of twenty-two feet, consisting of upper and lower privileges from Summer Street northward in South Walpole (see MHC Area A). Provided power for a fulling mill (ca. 1720), nail, cassimere, satinet, broadcloth, and stocking yarn factories, at various times.
3. *Old Rucaduc fall*, of twelve feet, northwest of the village at South Walpole, in manufacturing use by 1812. Supported saw, shingle, carding, cotton, boot and shoe plants, as well as Bird Machine Company in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

4. *Blackburn privilege*, with a seven-foot fall, consisting of upper and lower privileges providing power to saw, grist, machine, cotton yarn, batting, and lamp wick mills and factories (buildings removed by 1870s). See Town Forest Area (MHC Area E).
5. *Union Factory dam*, with a fall of 18½ feet at South Street near Common Street. Snuff (by 1812), tanning, iron, nail, cotton, and woolen factories were here, as well as fire hose and cotton belting in the 1910s, and asbestos brake and clutch linings. Limited industrial buildings survive.
6. *Walpole Center dam*, with a nine-foot fall, was also known as the Lewis privilege. A fulling mill was here by 1794. Thread, carpets, and cotton products (including lint bandages, absorbent gauze, and other hospital supplies) were manufactured here. Industrial buildings on West Street connected with this privilege are immediately adjacent to the Walpole Center-Common Street Area (MHC Area K) and merit survey in the future.
7. *Stetson privilege*, in the vicinity of Main Street and Kendall Street, had a twelve-foot fall and was in use by 1754 powering a sawmill. Later operations at this location included grist, tool (farm implements), cotton, card clothing and fur-napped (felt) hat factories.
8. The *Linden Spring* or *Plimptonville* fall of 18½ feet, consisting of upper and lower privileges at Plimpton Street. Tack, snuff, satinet, twine, tools (farm implements), and shoddy were produced here. No buildings survive. See Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area (MHC Area G).
9. The *Bird upper privilege*, northwest of the Washington Street-East Street intersection in East Walpole. The fifteen-foot fall powered a gristmill, cotton mills, and paper factories, associated from 1838 onward with Bird & Son. See also Bird & Son Complex (MHC Area F) and East Walpole Area (MHC Area H).
10. *Bird lower privilege*, northeast of the Washington Street-East Street intersection in East Walpole, with a fall of twelve feet. The first Bird paper mill was established here in 1817-1818; from 1871 onward, the privilege was associated with paper manufacturers Hollingsworth & Vose, 112 Washington Street. The Hollingsworth & Vose complex abuts the East Walpole Area (MHC Area H) and merits survey in the future.

While many of Walpole's industrial operations harnessed the power of the Neponset River, important industries were present on adjacent brooks, particularly Spring Brook and Mine Brook. Bog iron deposits along these brooks supplied Walpole forges for about a century. The *Diamond factory privilege on Spring Brook* supported cotton manufacturing from 1814, and later the manufacture of stocking yarn, twine, thread, and "Java canvas," a course stiff canvas with an open weave. Upstream, at what later became known as *Clark's Pond*, was the manufacture of cotton and woolen machinery (from ca. 1840) and later (ca. 1880) a sawmill operation started by the Clark family. The *Robbins privilege on Mine Brook* supported a sawmill, hammer mill, axle factory, and machine shop, consecutively. [DeLue, 242-243, 270-273]

Both industry and subsistence farming characterized Walpole's economy through the Colonial period. Well preserved Colonial-period farmhouses in Walpole survive at the core of later Federal-period clusters. The Robert Allen House, 2 High Plain Street (second quarter 18<sup>th</sup> cent.[?], see Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area, MHC Area B) is the oldest extant dwelling at Allen's Corner, situated on East Street midway between the town center and East Walpole. At South Walpole, the Col. Timothy Mann House, 40 Neponset Street (ca. 1770/1826, see South Walpole Area, MHC Area A), illustrates the Federal-period expansion of a Colonial house, and is further significant for its associations with the owner of the nearby fulling mill on the Neponset River.

### ***Federal Period (1775-1830)***

Walpole's population increased 49% during the Federal period, from 967 persons in 1776 to 1442 in 1830. Several adjustments were made to the town boundaries. Part of Walpole territory was included in the new town of Foxborough (1778) and part was annexed to Dedham (1784). Walpole annexed land from Sharon in 1804 and 1811, and re-annexed the land from Dedham in 1811.

Two regional turnpikes were constructed through the town in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Norfolk & Bristol Turnpike (1806), now Washington Street, passed through East Walpole and South Walpole. The South Walpole Area (MHC Area A) retains the best preserved concentration of Federal-period construction in the town, including Fuller Tavern, 1873 Washington Street (1807) and surrounding residential development. The East Walpole Area (MHC Area H) is largely significant today for its development from the 1880s through the 1930s (see below). A second turnpike, along Main Street (now Route 1A) through Walpole Center, opened in 1812, with frequent stage service from North Walpole to the Plain (West Walpole). Few buildings in the Walpole Center-Common Street Area (MHC Area K) pre-date 1830, making the Calvin Hartshorn House, 118 Common Street (1827) an important survival of Federal-period farmhouses in the area.

While not located on a regional turnpike, the Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area (MHC Area B) is another well preserved crossroads settlement from the Federal period. Much of the Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area (MHC Area G) developed as a result of the adjacent iron works, in operation from 1815 to 1894, and other businesses located on the Neponset River immediately to the northwest, though no industrial buildings are extant. Many of the houses in the area have been substantially expanded from their original form, typically reflecting a shift in their uses, from early 19<sup>th</sup>-century farm houses and company-owned boarding houses, to late 19<sup>th</sup>-century suburban estates and gentleman farms.

One of an early cluster of Allen family houses on East Street, the Abel Allen Cottage, 1 Peach Street (ca. 1780, see Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area, MHC Area B) served as a schoolhouse during the Federal period. The cottage has additional significance for its associations with Catherine Allen and the formation of the Orthodox Congregational Church Society of Walpole in 1826.

### ***Early Industrial Period (1830-1870)***

As in the Federal period, Walpole's population during the Early Industrial period increased 48%, from 1442 in 1830 to 2137 in 1870. The town had a small foreign-born population, mostly Irish who arrived in the 1840s and early 1850s. East Walpole had the most extensive manufacturing operations in the town. Further adjustments were made to Walpole's boundaries. In 1833 and 1834, Walpole annexed parts of Foxborough at South Walpole (see MHC Area A). Part of Dedham was annexed in 1852, while a portion of Walpole was included in the new town of Norfolk in 1870.

In 1839, the former First Parish Church, by then Walpole's Unitarian Church, moved the 1783 meeting house from the town common to its current location, 30 Common Street (see Walpole Center-Common Street Area, MHC Area K; now known as United Church of Walpole). The Greek Revival-style remodeling was undertaken in connection with the move. South Walpole's most prominent example of the Greek Revival style is the South Walpole Methodist Episcopal Church, 1886 Washington Street (1846, see South Walpole Area, MHC Area A; now known as United Methodist Church of South Walpole), which fronts the common. Methodist meetings were held in South Walpole as early as 1818, and the Methodist church here is the only one remaining in the town. A Methodist church built in the town center in 1886 is no longer extant. In another institutional development, the Daniel Allen House/

Walpole Almshouse, 663 East Street (1795, see Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area, MHC Area B) represents Walpole's almshouse era from 1850 through 1904. This Federal-period dwelling, one of the earliest extant at Allen's Corner, was the focus for municipal efforts to care for the poor in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Construction of the Norfolk County Railroad (1847-1849), the first through Walpole, bypassed East Walpole, but included stops at Plimptonville, the town center, and West Walpole. The twenty-six-mile line connected Dedham to Blackstone. MBTA commuter rail service to Boston runs on the line today.

The owners of at least two Early Industrial-period farmhouses were important in Walpole's history. The Sgt. William Lewis House, 1 Plimpton Street (1832), occupies a prominent site fronting Lewis Park in the Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area (MHC Area G), a farming and manufacturing community of great significance in Walpole from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The house was maintained as the family homestead by Walpole lawyer and historian Isaac Newton Lewis (1848-1937), who had a long record of contributions to Walpole, including the construction of Lewis Castle (see below). The Deacon William Rhoades House, 62 Union Street (ca. 1840, see East Walpole Area, MHC Area H) preserves a portion of the Rhoades farm from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Deacon Rhoades was a shoemaker, deacon of the Orthodox Congregational Church of East Walpole, and in the early 1880s gave the land for the construction of the congregation's chapel at 5 Wolcott Avenue (see below). Four generations of the Rhoades family lived in the house.

Some of Walpole's finest residences from the period were built for the town's industrialists. The Allen-Harkness House, 38 Peach Street (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 19<sup>th</sup> cent., see Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area, MHC Area B) is among the best examples of the Greek Revival style in Walpole, with likely Colonial Revival-style additions from later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Associated with the Allen family, who manufactured twine and fish lines nearby, the house was occupied for many years by Capt. Edward Harkness, a farmer. Also associated with an owner of the twine mill on Peach Street was the Samuel Allen House, 2 Peach Street (ca. 1858-1876, see Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area, MHC Area B), one of the most highly detailed Italianate houses in Walpole. Though sided in aluminum, the house retains much character-defining ornament. One of the better preserved Italianate houses observed during the survey is the J. Mann House, 1871 Washington Street (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 19<sup>th</sup> cent., see South Walpole Area, MHC Area A), believed to be associated with John Mann, the owner of the boot factory in South Walpole from 1849 through the 1870s. The most high-style Second Empire house in Walpole, and reportedly the largest house in Norfolk County at the time of its construction, is the Calvin G. Plimpton House (*The Homestead*), 79 Plimpton Street (1862-1863, see Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area, MHC Area G). Located in a former industrial village operated by the Plimpton Iron Works, the property maintains an estate setting, as well as the original iron fence along Plimpton Street that was manufactured at the works.

### ***Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)***

Walpole's population more than doubled during this period, from 2137 persons in 1870 to 4490 persons in 1915. Nearly half of the increase came from foreign-born residents, with the largest groups being Irish, Nova Scotian, and, after 1905, Italian. A portion of Walpole was incorporated as the new town of Norwood in 1872. The last adjustment to Walpole's boundaries occurred in 1874, when land east of Washington Street was annexed from Sharon. See Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area (MHC Area B) for more information.

In 1881, Walpole built its first Town Hall, 980 Main Street (listed in the National Register). The architect, J. Williams Beal of Boston, designed other public and private buildings in Walpole, among

them the first Stone School, Stone Street (1886, MHC #142, demolished 1981) and Lewis Castle (see below).

A neighborhood of largely residential and institutional buildings, the East Walpole Area (MHC Area H) complements development of two sizable industrial complexes devoted to paper manufacturing in the immediate vicinity: the Bird & Son Company complex, Washington Street (MHC Area F, from 1812 onward), and the Hollingsworth & Vose Company, 112 Washington Street (from 1871 onward, complex recommended for future survey). The neighborhood retains a well preserved concentration of buildings dating principally from the 1880s through the 1930s. Serving the East Walpole neighborhood as an important institutional building for over a century is the former Orthodox Congregational Church of East Walpole, 5 Wolcott Avenue (1882-1883, see East Walpole Area, MHC Area H). The building maintains several Victorian eclectic features, with Colonial Revival-style modifications made in connection with its subsequent uses as meeting space for the Wednesday Club women's group (1915-1934) and the East Walpole Branch Library from 1934 onward.

Much of the Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area (MHC Area G) developed as a result of the adjacent iron works, in operation from 1815 to 1894, and other businesses located on the Neponset River immediately to the northwest, though no industrial buildings are extant. Many of the houses in the area have been substantially expanded from their original form, typically reflecting a shift in their uses, from early 19<sup>th</sup>-century farm houses and company-owned boarding houses, to late 19<sup>th</sup>-century suburban estates and gentleman farms.

An important late 19<sup>th</sup>-century addition to the Lewis family holdings in the area was the Isaac Newton Lewis House, Lewis Castle, 470 East Street (1892-1896, see Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area, MHC Area G). Designed by J. Williams Beal, architect of the first Town Hall, this remarkable Victorian eclectic dwelling of rubblestone was inspired by castles Lewis had visited while touring the Welsh countryside. The castle property is unique in Walpole, encompassing not only the stone house but also approximately twenty acres of land that preserves some of the original Lewis family holdings in the town. The property remains in the family today.

The Late Industrial period brought railroad improvements to Walpole, chief of which was the construction of Union Station, West Street (1883, MHC #64). The station was built at a junction west of the town center, established in 1870 with the construction of the Mansfield & Framingham Railroad crossing the former Norfolk County Railroad, built in the late 1840s. With the completion of the second railroad line, the location of the passenger and freight depots at the town center were shifted a short distance to the west from their original location near Elm Street, and South Walpole received rail service for the first time. Two railroad-related buildings survive at South Walpole (see South Walpole Area, MHC Area A): the former New York, New Haven & Hartford Passenger Station, 44 Summer Street (ca. 1915), and the former freight house, now a private home at 1887 Washington Street (ca. 1915). East Walpole received its long awaited railroad connection in 1892, when the Old Colony Railroad constructed a six-mile segment between Norwood Junction and Walpole Junction (west of the present Town Forest). This line extended an earlier line between Walpole Junction and North Attleboro, completed in 1890. In 1893, the line was acquired by the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad. Passenger service on the line was eliminated in 1938, and the depot in the village was removed by 1944.

By the end of the Late Industrial period, the interests and contributions of prominent citizens shaped many civic improvements in Walpole. George A. Plimpton (1855-1936), a well known bibliophile, philanthropist, and the senior partner of Ginn & Company, a textbook publisher based in New York City, was a generous benefactor of the town, donating land not only for the Walpole Town Forest (1914-1916, MHC Area E), but also for the adjacent High School, 275 Common Street (1906-1907, MHC #143, see form) and the grammar school at 319 Common Street (1913, MHC #182, see form) that bears his name.

Plimpton also donated the fountain on the town common in memory of Walpole citizens who served in the French and Indian War (see form for Walpole Center-Common Street Area, MHC Area K). He maintained a summer residence at his mother's family home, Lewis Farm, 401 East Street (see form for Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area, MHC Area ).

Led by the Bird family of East Walpole, specifically Charles S. Bird (1855-1927) and his second son, Charles S. Bird, Jr. (d. 1980), the town of Walpole adopted in March 1914 a general plan to beautify the community, secure and improve open space, and guide future development. A five-member committee headed by Charles Sumner Bird, Jr. commissioned Cambridge-based town planner and landscape architect John Nolen to develop the plan. In addition to designing improvements for the layout and landscaping of Walpole Center, East Walpole, and South Walpole, Nolen recommended the acquisition of land in the Neponset River valley to create the River Valley Park System, a linear park reservation extending through the town from East Walpole to South Walpole. This reservation was not realized. Nolen's drawings for Walpole were published in an eight-page bulletin entitled *Walpole – Plan Today for Tomorrow* (1914), and profiled in Nolen's book, *New Towns for Old: Achievements in Civic Improvement in Some American Small Towns and Neighborhoods* (1927). In addition, Charles Sumner Bird, Jr. and the Walpole Town Planning Committee published *Town Planning for Small Communities* (1917), which places Walpole's experience in the context of broader town-planning issues of the day.

A Philadelphia native, John Nolen was a graduate of the Wharton School of Finance and Economy at the University of Pennsylvania and studied art and history at the University of Munich (1901-1902) before enrolling at the newly established Harvard University School of Landscape Architecture, from which he received a master's degree in 1905. Nolen established an office in Cambridge, and over the next thirty years designed over 400 projects in the realm of town planning or landscape design for both public and private clients. His work included planning projects for over fifty cities in twenty states, including plans for two entirely new towns: Kingsport, Tennessee, and Mariemont, Ohio. In addition to his town plan for Walpole (1913), Nolen's projects in the community include the East Walpole Playground (1913); the grounds for the Walpole High School, 275 Common Street (1914, MHC #143); the Walpole Town Forest, Washington Street (1914-1916, see below); the grounds of Endean, the Mylod Street estate of Charles Sumner Bird (demolished, project 1914); Memorial Park (1923-1924, see below); and Francis William Bird Park, Washington Street (1924, see below).

Norfolk County Agricultural School, 400 Main Street, was established in 1915 and acquired its first acreage on the present Walpole campus in May 1916. Providing a program of vocational agriculture to students of high school age, the "Aggie" schooled students in dairy operations, poultry science, floriculture, market gardening and fruit production, landscape gardening, and forestry and conservation. The Norfolk County Agricultural School is one of very few such schools remaining in the Commonwealth and its 97-acre campus is a high priority for documentation in a future survey project.

### ***Early Modern Period (1915-1940)***

The town of Walpole and the Bird family continued to work with town planning consultant John Nolen into the Early Modern period. Charles S. Bird, Jr. is credited with pursuing the idea of a town forest in Walpole. Bird was impressed by the communal forests he had seen in Europe, which provided not only recreation opportunities, but also wood needed for building, thereby generating revenue for their respective communities. Located in the vicinity of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century sawmill at the cedar swamp, Walpole Town Forest, Washington Street (1914-1916, MHC Area E) was the third Tree Farm in the Commonwealth recognized by the Massachusetts Forestry Association and the first town forest in Massachusetts to be managed for timber revenue. Establishment of the town forest was consistent with the objectives of the general town plan adopted in March 1914. It appears Nolen's role in the

development of the forest was limited to an early plan, while the specifics of planting and reforestation were supervised by consulting forester George T. Carlisle, Jr. of Boston.

The Nolen-designed Memorial Park (1923-1924) at the town center was planned in connection with the bi-centennial celebration of Walpole's incorporation in 1724. Nolen described the park initially as "Central Park," intended as a civic center, playground, and park. The park was projected to encompass about thirty-five acres on both the east and west sides of School Street, which would be extended southerly from East Street. The construction and dedication of Memorial Bridge (1923-1924) marked the first step in the town's development of Memorial Park. Further improvements were implemented in 1926, when Philip R. Allen, as a gift to the town, financed construction of the Swimming Pool and Bath House.

The best and most intact example in Walpole of the collaboration between the Bird family and John Nolen is Francis William Bird Park, Washington Street (1926-1927, MHC Area I). The park, at eighty-nine acres, is the largest in Walpole. Though conceived as a memorial to Francis William Bird, a son of park benefactors Charles S. Bird, Sr. and his wife, Anna, the park was also a key feature in the improvement plan for East Walpole. Creation of the park not only contributed to the beautification of Walpole, but also ensured recreation opportunities for the Bird & Son employees who lived in the vicinity.

Built to serve the growing Roman Catholic population in East Walpole and South Norwood, the Church of St. Mary, 176 Washington Street (1926-1927, see East Walpole Area, MHC Area H) was originally constructed as a mission chapel that predates the 1931 establishment of St. Mary's parish. The Moderne-style church also has significance for its design by architect Matthew Sullivan (1868-1948) of Boston, who specialized in ecclesiastical buildings and designed some of the most modern churches in the Archdiocese of Boston in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the most monumental examples of Colonial Revival institutional architecture in Walpole, and of great significance for its state of preservation, is Blackburn Memorial Hall, Stone Street (1929-1932, see Town Center Municipal Area, MHC Area J). Harriet F. Nevins of Methuen gave the town \$50,000 to construct the building, which was named in honor of her parents, George and Nancy Blackburn; George Blackburn was a cotton manufacturing who had once lived and worked in Walpole. The building's construction completed one component of John Nolen's plan for Memorial Park, the establishment of a town auditorium, function hall, and center for town organizations and social clubs. The architects, the Boston firm of William E. Putnam and Allen Howard Cox, were especially known for their work on college campuses. Mrs. Nevins also contributed \$2,500 to the town to build a fountain for dogs and horses on School Street (1930) in Memorial Park.

### **For More Information**

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- West, Karl H., Jr. "A Brief History of Walpole, Massachusetts." Undated typescript.
- See also MHC inventory forms as noted in text, and **Bibliography** at end of this report.



## ***NATIONAL REGISTER RECOMMENDATIONS***

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This list incorporates all properties in Walpole currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places, all properties for which preliminary action has been taken to achieve National Register listing, and properties documented in the grant survey project that are recommended for the National Register. Other noteworthy historic properties exist in Walpole that are likely eligible for the National Register and should be identified in future preservation planning projects. See also ***Further Study Recommendations*** in this report.

### ***Listed in the National Register of Historic Places***

|              |  |                 |
|--------------|--|-----------------|
| Main St, 980 | (First) Town Hall  | listed 10/08/81 |
| West St, 33  | Deacon Willard Lewis House<br>(Walpole Historical Society) | listed 12/29/75 |

### ***Eligible for the National Register (evaluated by the Massachusetts Historical Commission)***

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has evaluated the following properties and found them eligible for the National Register, meeting Criterion A (for historical significance to the community) and Criterion C (for architectural significance) at the local level.

|                       |                         |                             |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Main St at Kendall St | Old Burial Place        | MHC found eligible 10/15/03 |
| Neponset St, 40       | Col. Timothy Mann House | MHC found eligible 08/03/88 |
| West St               | Union Station           | MHC found eligible 05/02/03 |

### ***Recommended National Register Historic Districts***

The following inventoried areas are potential historic districts, meeting National Register Criterion A (for historical significance to the community) and Criterion C (for architectural significance) at the local level. Areas are listed here alphabetically by name. MHC staff must evaluate and concur with a recommendation before a National Register nomination is prepared.

|                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Allen's Corner-Peach Street Area  | MHC Area B |
| Bird (Francis William) Park       | MHC Area I |
| East Walpole Area                 | MHC Area H |
| Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area     | MHC Area G |
| South Walpole Area                | MHC Area A |
| Walpole Center-Common Street Area | MHC Area K |

### ***Recommended National Register Historic District (more information needed)***

The following inventoried area is a potential historic district, meeting National Register Criterion A (for historical significance to the community), but further research is needed to establish its historic integrity and archaeological significance. MHC staff must evaluate and concur with a recommendation before a National Register nomination is prepared.

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Walpole Town Forest | MHC Area E |
|---------------------|------------|

## **Recommended National Register Individual Listings**

The following properties are potentially eligible individually, meeting National Register Criterion A (for historical significance to the community) and Criterion C (for architectural significance) at the local level. Properties are listed here alphabetically by street name. Some properties are located in potential National Register districts (see above). MHC staff must evaluate and concur with a recommendation before a National Register nomination is prepared.

|                     |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Common St, 30       | United Church of Walpole                                       | see Walpole Ctr-Common St Area (MHC Area K)                      |
| Common St, 118      | Calvin Hartshorn House   | see Walpole Ctr-Common St Area (MHC Area K)                      |
| Common St, 319      | George A. Plimpton School                                      | MHC # 182  |
| East St, 663        | Daniel Allen House/<br>Walpole Almshouse                       | see Allen's Corner-Peach St Area (MHC Area B)                    |
| East St, 470        | Isaac Newton Lewis House                                       | see Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area (MHC Area G)<br>(Lewis Castle) |
| High Plain St, 2    | Robert Allen House   | see Allen's Corner-Peach St Area (MHC Area B)                    |
| Peach St, 1         | Abel Allen Cottage   | see Allen's Corner-Peach St Area (MHC Area B)                    |
| Peach St, 38        | Allen-Harkness House   | see Allen's Corner-Peach St Area (MHC Area B)                    |
| Plimpton St, 1      | Sgt. William Lewis House                                       | see Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area (MHC Area G)                   |
| Plimpton St, 79     | Calvin G. Plimpton House                                       | see Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area (MHC Area G)                   |
| Stone St            | Blackburn Memorial Hall  | see Town Center Municipal Area (MHC Area J)                      |
| Union St, 62        | Deacon William Rhoades House                                   | see East Walpole Area (MHC Area H)                               |
| Washington St, 176  | Church (Chapel) of St. Mary                                    | see East Walpole Area (MHC Area H)                               |
| Washington St, 1871 | J. Mann House  | see South Walpole Area (MHC Area A)                              |
| Washington St, 1885 | Fuller Tavern  | see South Walpole Area (MHC Area A)                              |
| Washington St, 1886 | South Walpole Methodist Church                                 | see South Walpole Area (MHC Area A)                              |
| Wolcott Ave, 5      | Orthodox Congregational Chapel/<br>East Walpole Branch Library | see East Walpole Area (MHC Area H)                               |

## ***FURTHER STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS***

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The survey project identified many opportunities for additional research and future survey work. As the first comprehensive update of Walpole's historic properties inventory conducted in about thirty years, the survey's coverage was limited to centers of concentrated historic development, town-owned historic buildings, Union Station, and two high-priority open spaces identified in the town's 2004 *Master Plan* as potential heritage landscapes. These recommendations for further study include general observations about Walpole's historic resources as well as property-specific recommendations available to date.

**Walpole Town Forest** (MHC Area E), recorded in this survey project, requires additional research and field investigation. The town forest appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based on historic significance (see ***National Register Recommendations***). However, more information is needed to establish its historic integrity and archaeological significance.

One area of Walpole's history that merits further study is **late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century estate development**. While the residences of several industrialists in Walpole have been identified – most located in the vicinity of the factory complexes with which they were associated – other examples of estate development existed, such as in the Elm Street corridor between Walpole Center and Medfield.

**Post-World War II historic resources** (to ca. 1960), particularly residential neighborhoods (including veterans housing complexes) and school buildings, should be investigated further for possible survey in the future. Currently, buildings constructed as late as 1958 may be listed in the National Register of Historic Places because their age meets the fifty-year cut-off normally required for National Register eligibility. Walpole has a large number of buildings, therefore, that potentially could be eligible for the National Register.

Further updating of the town's inventory should note **historic buildings demolished since MHC inventory forms were completed**. A number of buildings at the Bird complex in East Walpole, for example, have been demolished since they were surveyed, but the statewide historic properties inventory does not show these buildings as demolished because MHC was not notified. Building demolition has been noted, where appropriate, in those areas recorded in this survey project.

The following areas and properties merit attention in future surveys.

### ***Potential Area Inventory Forms***

Fisher Street-North Street Agricultural Area, North Walpole

This area includes the two potential heritage landscapes identified in the 2004 *Master Plan*: Adams Farm and Hilltop Farm.

Norfolk County Agricultural High School campus, 400 Main Street

This area also is a potential heritage landscape identified in the 2004 *Master Plan*.

Sunny Rock Farm, 654 North Street

Hollingsworth & Vose Co. industrial complex, 112 Washington Street, East Walpole

Union Street-Pleasant Street residential area, East Walpole

These areas about the East Walpole Area (MHC Area H) and Bird Park (MHC Area I), both recently surveyed.

### ***Potential Area Inventory Forms (continued)***

Kendall Company/Lewis Manufacturing Company, West Street, Walpole Center

Lewis Avenue residential area, Walpole Center

Residential side streets between Common Street and Stone Street, Walpole Center

These areas abut the Walpole Center-Common Street Area (MHC Area K), recently surveyed.

Lincoln Road Area at Walpole Plains/West Walpole

An alternative to an area form in this location would be documentation of the individual properties listed below under Lincoln Road.

### ***Potential Building Inventory Forms***

Continued updating of late 1970s inventory forms for significant “stand-alone” historic resources, as well as documentation of the following properties:

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Baker Street         | 125   |
| Bullard Street       | 198   |
| East Street          | 484, Fales Machine Shop (at East and Elm Streets) |
| Elm Road             | 464, 518  |
| Elm Street           | 605   |
| Fisher Street        | 36  |
| Grasshopper Lane     | 7 (house fronts East Street)                      |
| High Street          | 59, 423, and 435                                  |
| High Plain Street    | 45  |
| Lincoln Road         | 195 (burned), 235 (Glengreen Farm), 263, 319, 492 |
| Main Street          | 315, 644, 807, 1065 (Ten Pin Inn), 1082           |
| Massachusetts Avenue | 31  |
| Moose Hill Road      | 54  |
| Old Post Road        | 40  |
| Pleasant Street      | 91  |
| School Street        | 238   |
| Turner Road          | 10, 15  |
| Washington Street    | 53, 448, 784                                      |
| West Street          | 1007  |

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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The following bibliography includes major sources and collections consulted during the survey project. Sources specific to a particular property in Walpole are not included here, but will be referenced on the appropriate inventory form.

Key to locations of sources that are not available widely or through the Walpole Historical Society:

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>WPL</b>      | Walpole Public Library  |
| <b>MHC</b>      | Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston                         |
| <b>Archives</b> | Massachusetts State Archives, Boston                                |
| <b>SLSC</b>     | Massachusetts State Library, Special Collections Department, Boston |

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