



**FOSTER, RHODE ISLAND**

This report, published by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, in cooperation with the Town of Foster, is the result of a survey of historic, architectural, and archeological resources in Foster, Rhode Island. The survey and report are part of the on-going program set forth in Rhode Island's "Historic Preservation Plan," first edition, issued in 1970.

The Rhode Island statewide historical survey, inaugurated in 1969, is designed to locate, identify, map, and report on buildings, sites, areas, and objects of historical, architectural, and archeological value. Consideration is given to the total environment of the area being studied, not just to the outstanding structures and sites. Buildings of all periods and styles, together with such elements as siting, scale, landscaping, and natural features, are recorded and evaluated.

The activities of the Commission are supported by state and local funds and by matching federal funds, administered by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980.

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This document is a copy of the original survey published in 1982. It has not been corrected or updated.

Since the original publication:

- >additional properties have been entered on the National Register;
- >some financial incentives referred to in these pages are no longer available;
- >some new financial incentives are available.

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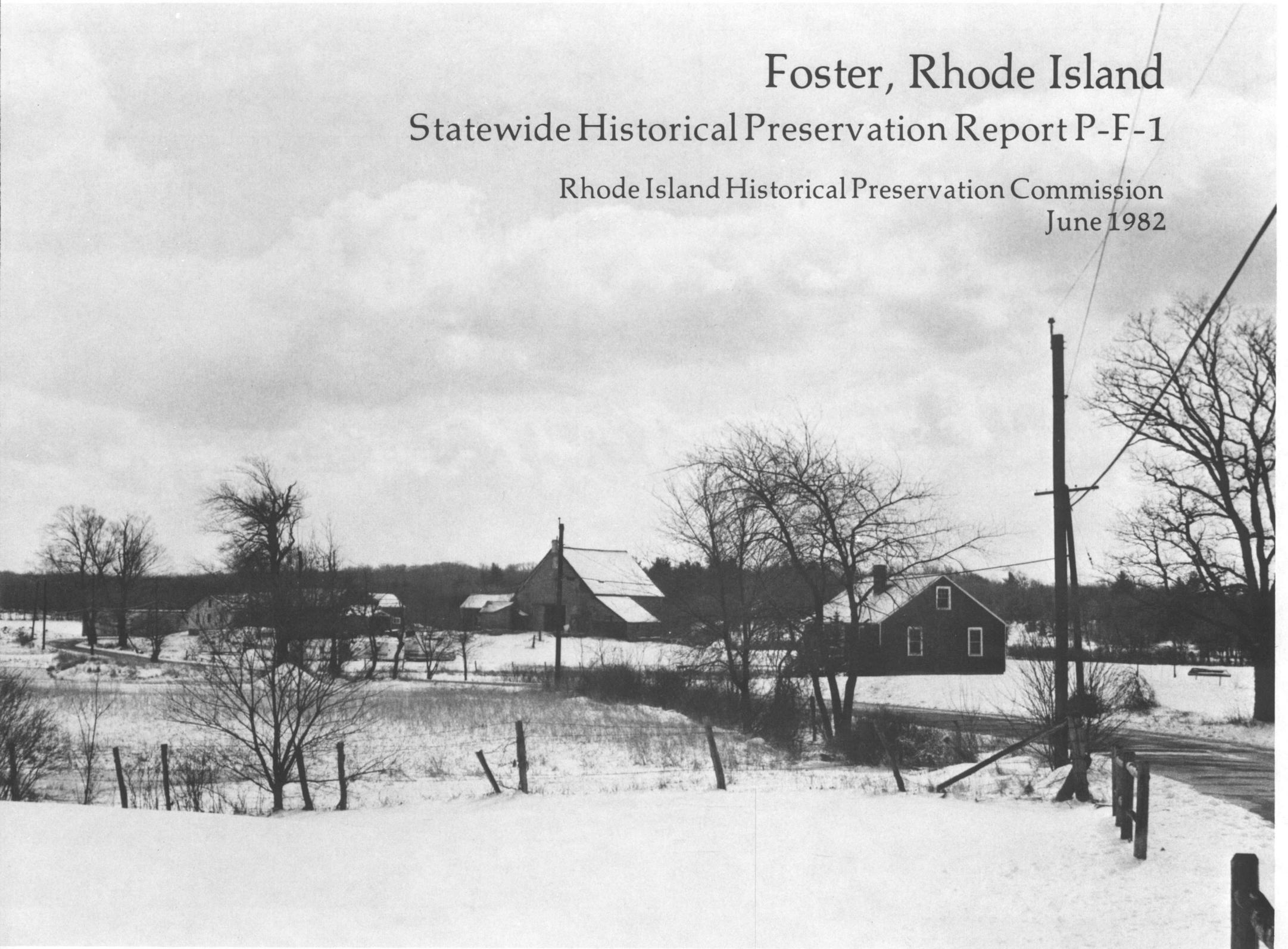
The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission is your state agency for historical preservation. The Commission identifies and protects historic buildings, districts, landscapes, structures, and archaeological sites throughout the State of Rhode Island.

Cover: Barn on Foster Farm (1885); Plain Woods Road; 1976. View from the south.

Title Page: Obadiah Harrington Farm/the "Diah" Place (c. 1760 et seq.); Johnson Road; 1975. View from the north.

Foster, Rhode Island  
Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-F-1

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission  
June 1982





STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Old State House  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, R.I. 02903  
(401) 277-2678

June 25, 1982

The Honorable J. Joseph Garrahy, Governor  
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
State House  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Governor Garrahy:

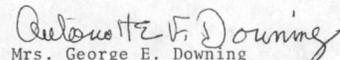
It is with pleasure that I transmit herewith Foster, Rhode Island--Statewide Preservation Report, P-F-1, the twenty-second in-depth publication in the Statewide Historical Preservation series.

The report provides a thorough analysis of the historical and architectural development of Foster and recommends preservation programs and procedures which can be incorporated into the town's overall planning program.

With the publication of this report, the Historical Preservation Commission is one step closer to fulfilling its goal of recording the full range of the state's historic resources and to publishing preservation reports on all thirty-nine Rhode Island cities and towns.

The Commission believes that its effort, including this and other reports, will further the cause of preservation in Rhode Island.

Very truly yours,

  
Mrs. George E. Downing  
Chairman



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Old State House  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, R.I. 02903  
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June 25, 1982

Mr. A. Edward Pearson, President  
Foster Town Council  
Town Clerk's Office  
South Killingly Road  
Foster, Rhode Island 02825

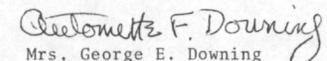
Dear Mr. Pearson:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission is pleased to submit in final published form this survey and report, Foster, Rhode Island--Statewide Preservation Report, P-F-1. The product of detailed survey and research--carried out chiefly by Ancelin Lynch of the Commission staff, and partially funded by the Town of Foster and the Foster Preservation Society--this report truly represents a joint effort on the part of the Town of Foster and the Historical Preservation Commission.

The people of Foster have much to be proud of in their history and much that is worthy of preservation--farmsteads, hamlets, churches, family cemeteries, one-room schoolhouses, and historic and prehistoric archeological sites, as well as valued or unique natural resources.

It is our hope that this report and the survey on which it is based will prove to be of lasting value to the entire Foster community, both as planning tools, useful in preserving the town's rich heritage, and as educational resources.

Very truly yours,

  
Mrs. George E. Downing  
Chairman

## PREFACE

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission was established by act of the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1968 and charged with developing and implementing a state preservation program, following the guidelines of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (administered by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior) and the provisions of the State Act Establishing a Historical Preservation Commission.

The specific federal responsibilities of the Commission include: conducting a statewide survey of historic sites and places; from the survey, recommending places of local, state, or national significance for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places; administering federal grants-in-aid for the preservation of National Register properties; reviewing federal, state, and municipally sponsored projects which may affect historic resources; certifying the rehabilitation of depreciable historic structures under provisions of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981; and developing a state historic preservation plan. State-mandated duties include compiling and maintaining a State register of historic places; regulating archeological exploration on State lands or under waters of State jurisdiction; assisting and advising State and municipal agencies in the area of historic preservation; administering the State-owned Historic Properties Program; taking title to and administering historic structures and sites; and holding historic preservation easements.

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission is composed of sixteen members. Citizen members are appointed by the Governor; serving ex-officio are the chairmen of the House and Senate Finance Committees of the General Assembly, the Director of the Department of Economic Development, the Director of the Department of Environmental Management, the Chief of the Division of Statewide Planning, and the State Building Code Commissioner. Mr. Frederick C. Williamson, the Director of the Department of Community Affairs, is the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for Rhode Island.

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Edith L. Knights and friends on Lyon Farm; Howard Hill Road; c. 1895. A typical farm view with stone walls, orchard, outhouse, and farm animals.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The survey of Foster's historic resources was begun in 1969 as part of a study of alternative alignments for the proposed Interstate Route 84 through western Rhode Island. The study was undertaken by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and included only those buildings and areas which fell within narrowly defined corridors passing through Foster, Scituate, Johnston, and Coventry. Some supplemental survey work was undertaken in 1973, but the scope of the survey was significantly expanded in 1976. A preliminary archeological survey was also completed that year.

Funding for the initial corridor study was provided by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. Subsequent survey work was supported by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, through a survey and planning grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, and by contributed services and funding from the Town of Foster, the Foster Planning Board, and the Foster Preservation Society.

The Foster survey is part of the Preservation Commission's on-going effort to prepare a statewide inventory of sites, buildings, districts, and objects important to Rhode Island's history and pre-history. The products of the survey—survey sheets, published survey report, and maps—are valuable resources for local, state, and federal planning. They indicate the districts, sites, and objects which should be taken into consideration when projects are undertaken which may affect them. The most significant sites and structures are included in the report inventory (Appendix E).

The Commission's surveys include four phases of work: field survey, preparation of maps, historical research, and preparation of a final preservation report. A standard survey form, which includes historical, pre-historical, and architectural/physical information and an identifying photograph, is prepared for each site, building, or object included in the survey. Historical information is obtained through the use of historic maps, published and unpublished histories, guide-

books, manuscripts, newspapers and periodicals, deed research, census materials, and local and state records, as well as from knowledgeable local residents.

Essential data is ultimately transferred from the survey forms to a townwide survey map which indicates location, style or period, map number, and architectural and historical ratings. Detailed maps for areas of special interest and density—Hopkins Mills, Foster Center, and Clayville—have also been prepared. (An explanation of the survey methodology and a sample "Historic Building Data Sheet" can be found in Appendix D of this report.)

The preservation report—this document—is based on the field survey and on additional historical research. Its core is a comprehensive history which focuses on the physical development of the town, from the time of aboriginal inhabitation to the present, as revealed in the town's present morphology, topography, and natural setting, as well as in such physical evidence of human settlement as aboriginal sites, roads and stone walls, farm complexes, hamlets, and individual buildings. The historical narrative is followed by an analysis of current and future development problems and opportunities and a series of preservation planning recommendations. Appendices include detailed information on: the National Register of Historic Places (A); financial programs available for historic properties including the U.S. Department of the Interior Grants-in-Aid (B) and the Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation (C); the survey methodology and mapping (D); the Inventory (E); and Bibliography (F).

The preservation report, and the planning recommendations it includes, were reviewed by local officials, including the Foster Town Council, the Planning Board, the Town Clerk, the Foster Preservation Society, and the Bicentennial Commission; knowledgeable local residents; planners at state agencies including the Department of Environmental Management, the Department of Community Affairs, Planning Division, and the Statewide Planning Program; and by the Commission and Commission staff. Upon publication of this report, a copy of all survey material is placed on public file at the Foster Town Clerk's Office, at the Foster Preserva-

tion Society, and at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 150 Benefit Street, Providence. Each set of materials includes the completed survey forms, a copy of the survey map, and the final report.

The objectives of this report are threefold: to provide a comprehensive planning tool for the preservation of Foster's cultural resources; to serve as an academic and educational resource, useful in the study of state and local history; and to make residents aware and proud of the historic and visual environment in which they live. Only informed and responsible local effort can ensure that the natural and man-made setting that is Foster's unique legacy will be wisely used and preserved.

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations for their generous assistance in completing the Foster survey: the Foster Town Council; Mr. Harry DeZoglio and members of the Foster Planning Board; Mrs. Margery Borders and the staff of the Foster Town Clerk's Office; Mr. Bruce Campbell; Mrs. Alberta Hopkins and members of the Foster Preservation Society; Mrs. Sarah Henderson; Mr. and Mrs. George Henshall; Mr. James C. Baird; Mr. Earl Johnson; Mrs. Hope Kennedy; Mr. Daniel Newman; Mrs. Jean McGrath; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Colwell; Mrs. Donald Gray; Mr. and Mrs. Otto Knight; Mr. John Rose; Mr. Willoughby P. Young; Mrs. Waldo Wright; Mrs. William B. Cowdey; Mr. David Abel of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island; Mr. Albert T. Klyberg and the staff of the Rhode Island Historical Society; Ms. Deborah Dunning and the staff of the Providence Preservation Society; Mr. Gary Kulik, formerly of Slater Mill Historic Site; Mrs. Martha Mitchell and the staff of the Brown University Archives; Mr. Robert Whritenour of the Rhode Island Department of Community Affairs; Ms. Susan Morrison of the Division of Statewide Planning; Mr. Michael Everett of Everett Associates, Inc.; and, most particularly, Mrs. Margery I. Matthews, Foster's unofficial town historian, who has given unstintingly of her time, enthusiasm, research, and constructive criticism. In addition, thanks are due the many Foster residents who graciously shared the information they had on their historic properties and who, in many cases, opened their homes for study.



## II. PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SETTING

Foster is a large, still-rural town located at the southwestern corner of Providence County on the Rhode Island-Connecticut line. Bounded on all sides by other rural towns—Killingly and Sterling, Connecticut, on the west, Glocester on the north, Coventry on the south, and Scituate on the east—Foster remains sparsely settled with a population density of only 64.5 per square mile. Almost four-fifths of the town's 52.2 square miles is hilly, and 88.2 per cent of the land is forested. The town's soil is primarily gravelly or sandy loam, more suitable for grazing than for cultivation. Farming and lumbering have formed the principal occupations of the inhabitants since the time of the first settlement.

The town's rugged topography, generally poor soil, and small-scale streams, coupled with its isolated location twenty miles west of Providence, have largely determined its historical and physical development, delaying the initial colonial settlement until c. 1704 and town incorporation until 1781 and contributing to a period of decline and outmigration which lasted from the late 1820s until the early 1950s.

The highest point in Rhode Island, Jerimoth Hill, 812 feet above sea level, is located in northwestern Foster. Other hills include Mount Hygeia, Pray Hill, and Oak Hill in the north; Round Hill (also called Dolly Cole Hill) east of Hopkins Mills; Howard and Bennett Hills south of Foster Center; Cucumber and Barb's Hills in the southwest; and Biscuit and Cranberry Hills in the southeast. Most of these hills are rocky, and two, Cucumber and Biscuit, are actually labelled "Poor Land" on a 1781 map.

A network of small streams and brooks feeds the town's two modest rivers, the Ponagansett and the Moosup. The Ponagansett, a branch of the Pawtuxet, meanders from Ponagansett Pond in Glocester south and east through Hopkins Mills to the Barden Reservoir on the Foster-Scituate line. The Moosup, a tributary of the Quinebaug, runs southward through western Foster into Coventry and thence into Connecticut. Elsewhere these rivers are industrially important for their power, but in Foster they are essentially headwaters, swift-flowing and relatively shallow, more sup-

portive of good fishing than of any substantial manufacturing.

The face of the town's landscape has changed dramatically in the last two hundred years. Originally covered with hardwood forests, Foster by the early nineteenth century was almost totally cleared, a result of both agricultural endeavors and forest-processing industries. Today much of the land has reverted to forest, and only the seemingly endless stone walls leading away from the roads, numerous scrub-grown cellar holes, and old photographs showing hayfields instead of trees indicate the extent of the change.

In the nineteenth century, farm complexes were spread across the landscape. At key focal points—pivotal cross roads usually near the local saw- or grist-mill—villages grew up. Hopkins Mills was the first to develop in the early 1700s. Foster Center, the present seat of government, developed later in the eighteenth century, and it was here that the first Foster town meeting was held in 1781. The village of Clayville took form in the early nineteenth century as did Moosup Valley, North Foster, and Mount Vernon.

These hamlets and villages were linked to each other by a series of roads which turned and jogged around bogs, rock outcroppings, and farmers' fields. Many of these roads have resisted modern straightening and about a third of them remain one lane wide and still unpaved; others are a minimal two lanes wide. Most are lined with stone walls and edged either by open fields or, more often, by fern- and wild flower-filled woods, and exist in relation to the land much as they did when first laid out in the last half of the eighteenth century.

Major roads connecting Foster with Providence to the east and Danielson and Hartford, Connecticut, to the west include U.S. Route 6, which approximates the course of the nineteenth-century Danielson Turnpike through Hopkins Mills, and Route 101, which follows the old Hartford Turnpike through northern Foster, occasionally veering over the line into Glocester. From these highways Foster Center and Mount Hygeia Roads (Route 94) and Cucumber Hill Road give north-south access to central and southwestern Foster, and Route 102 gives access to southeastern Foster, where it con-

nects with the Plainfield Pike (Route 14).

Foster's historic man-made environment dates primarily from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century; and within that time frame, many houses and farms date to the years between 1760 and 1820. The town's most dramatic population growth occurred between incorporation in 1781 and 1820; but by 1830 population was already in decline. The opening of rich agricultural lands in the West; the lure of whaling and other marine industries; the development of water- and steampowered manufacturing elsewhere in Rhode Island and in eastern Connecticut; and the rise of railroads in the late 1830s—which opened up Western lands for settlement and flooded Eastern markets with less expensive crops—contributed to a long period of decline in farm towns like Foster. Consequently, the last half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth were years of stagnation, a fact clearly reflected in the town's physical development. Except for a handful of Civil War era churches, a few early twentieth-century houses, and some small businesses spurred by the brief existence of the Providence and Danielson electric trolley (from 1902 to c. 1920) and by state and federal road improvement programs in the 1920s and 1930s, little building occurred after 1850 until almost a full century later. Only in the 1950s, when the ripples of twentieth-century and post-war suburbanization had finally spread beyond Johnston and Scituate, was Foster's steady population decline solidly reversed; only in the mid-1970s did population finally surpass its 1820 peak.

Foster is rich in historic resources—houses, farmsteads, stone walls, roads, and mill ruins—and in the natural beauty of its setting—brooks, waterfalls, woods, swamps, and the plant and animal life they shelter. All of these resources are fragile, and most of them are non-renewable. All of them are threatened by development pressures and the deepening energy crisis. Only informed citizens can make the hard decisions concerning the best response to these forces which will determine what of the town's natural and cultural legacy will survive. It is the intent of this report to document the history and physical heritage of Foster so that those elements which are valuable and unique will be recognized and preserved.

### III. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

#### ORIGINAL INHABITANTS

Human presence in Rhode Island, and probably in Foster, stretches back ten thousand years before Roger Williams was granted the land that became Rhode Island in 1636. Over this long period of prehistoric Native American occupation, substantial changes occurred in the physical environment and in human subsistence practices. The climate warmed, melting the last glaciers, causing sea level to rise as much as fifty feet, and transforming the landscape from spruce-dominated to deciduous forest. For most of this period the Indians relied on wild plants and animals for their sustenance, using the coast and interior areas, such as Foster, at different times of year to take advantage of the seasonal availability of different foods and other necessities. During the late spring and summer, prehistoric people lived along the coast, harvesting herring and shellfish. As fall set in and winter approached, the same group would journey inland for dependable supplies of firewood and favored hunting grounds. By 1000 A.D. the Indians were beginning to supplement their diet with domestic crops. As agriculture was gradually adopted, corn, squash, beans, and pumpkin were cultivated.

The greatest environmental changes occurred during the Paleo-Indian Period, from 8000 to 6000 B.C. As the climate warmed and the glaciers melted, sea level rose, inundating the coastal plain rivers and forming Narragansett Bay. Spruce forests gave way to pine and later to oak. Mastodon, caribou, moose, and giant beaver inhabited these forests and were hunted by the Paleo-Indians. Sites from the Paleo-Indian period are rare because there were relatively few inhabitants at this time; there is only one such site recorded in Rhode Island, in Lincoln on the Wenscott Reservoir.

During most of the Archaic Period (6000 to 500 B.C.) the climate continued to warm, becoming even milder than it is today between 3000 and 1000 B.C. Sea levels continued to rise, reaching a level close to today's by about 3000 B.C. This stabilization of the environment allowed the formation of extensive tidal mud flats

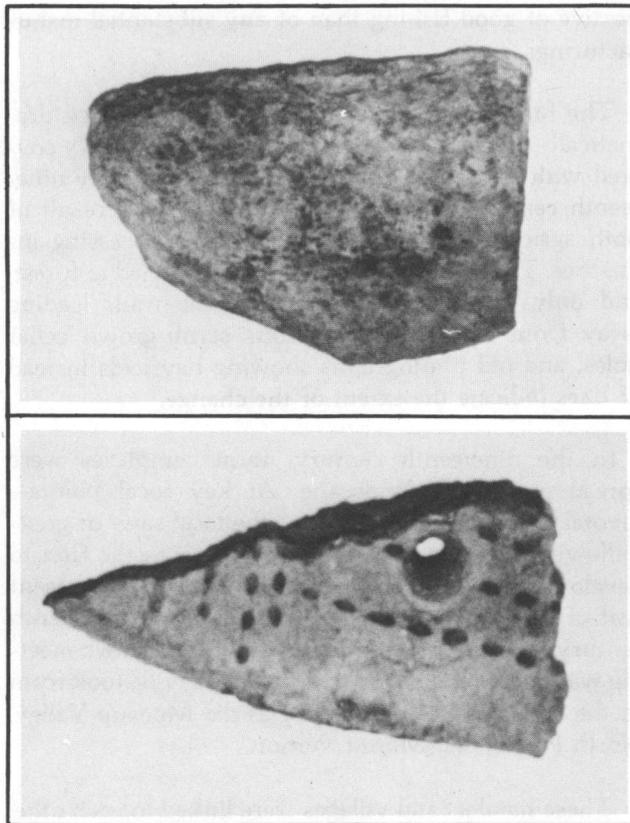


Fig. 2: Middle Woodland Period artifacts from a rockshelter on the Moosup River; 1977. Grit-tempered pottery with incised basket pattern and hole for handle, 300 to 1000 A.D. (bottom); quartzite scraper (top).

which supported the growth of abundant shellfish populations. Forests continued to change from the earlier conifers to a deciduous woodland which sheltered a greater variety of animals and plants, and thus a greater number of human beings. This increase can be read in the archeological record. There are more Archaic sites, located in a wider range of habitats and containing a far broader assortment of artifacts than in the Paleo-Indian period. Among these artifacts are tools for hunting deer, birds, and small mammals, for preparing nuts and other wild plant foods, and for working wooden objects; a variety of projectile points, some probably the first true arrowheads, typically fashioned of quartz, quartzite, or green shale; and scrapers and drills, probably used to prepare hides or other materials for clothing or adornment. Ground stone gouges and axes also appear for the first time.

Archaic sites are most commonly found on freshwater streams and salt-water inlets. At these locations, spring runs of herring or salmon were harvested and shellfish of various kinds were gathered in abundance.

There are at least two Archaic sites in Foster, along the floodplain of the Moosup River and in a rock shelter beside the Ponagansett River. Here projectile points used for spearing game and knives used to butcher meat have been found. The rock shelter was probably used as a temporary camp during interior hunting trips; the floodplain site is larger and may represent a more permanent winter camp, where bark houses may have been constructed and from which small hunting parties would have ventured forth.

During the Woodland Period (500 to 1500 A.D.) the climate cooled slightly and the forest took on a hickory-chestnut composition. Site size increased as larger groups began living together, managing and harvesting the abundant nut crops or exploiting the coastal shellfish and spring runs of alewife and other anadromous fish. The oil from nuts was probably extracted and stored for the winter in clay pots, while fish were dried and packed, enabling some groups to live in the same area year-round. When the climate warmed again slightly later in the period, the growing season increased, allowing a predictable yearly harvest of corn and other domestic crops. The use of these domestic plants helped ensure an adequate food supply and further encouraged year-round residence in one place, although inland hunting and gathering were probably continued. Woodland period sites in Foster, on floodplain terraces and in rock shelters along the Ponagansett and Moosup River, may represent inland hunting and gathering stations that complemented the coastal agriculture of the period. Artifacts found at one site dating to the Middle Woodland period (between 300 and 1000 A.D.) included several shards of grit-tempered pottery, one shard of cord-wrapped pottery, some white quartz chipping detritus, and a yellow quartzite blade.

Eventually the de-emphasis on seasonal movement to procure food and the growing emphasis on agriculture led to the establishment of permanent sites along the

coastal plain and fertile flood plain terraces along the rivers. By the time of the first European contact, in the early 1500s, the Indians were settled around a number of semi-permanent villages and organized into four tribes led by chiefs called sachems. They were subjects of the Narragansetts whose domain included all of what is now Rhode Island west of Narragansett Bay.

The boundary between Narragansett territory and one of their subject tribes, the Nipmucs, passed through Foster. The Nipmucs, known as the "Fresh Pond People," lived in interior sections of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. They apparently paid tribute to the Narragansetts, perhaps in exchange for access to spring and summer fishing grounds. The Nipmucs lived in prime hunting territory and it is possible that the Narragansetts granted fishing rights to the Nipmucs in exchange for rights to hunt in Nipmuc territory. It is known that Narragansetts hunted in Nipmuc territory as late as 1755.

Prior to permanent European settlement in New England, Indian contact with explorers and traders resulted in the spread of diseases for which the native peoples had no resistance. Between 1616 and 1617 these diseases struck the coastal tribes of southeastern New England with great severity, depopulating whole villages and upsetting traditional tribal boundaries and alliances. This tribal instability and the open fields created by Indian agriculture greatly assisted European settlement when it finally did come, following King Phillip's War in 1675. This outbreak resulted in the decimation of the native population and effectively broke Narragansett control of the area.

The Indians have left Foster an enduring legacy which includes more than archeological sites and artifacts. Many local place names are derived from the Narragansett language, among them Moosup, Ponagansett, Chopmist (Chapamisticook), and Westconnaug (Wishquatnoqke). These vestiges of the native culture are evidence of Foster's original inhabitants and remind us of the rich and complex pre-colonial history of the town, which can only be understood by carefully preserving and studying any remaining archeological sites.

### THE TAKING OF THE LAND (1659-1755)

The initial purchase of land in what eventually became Foster was made by the settlers at Providence in 1659. Authorized by the Colonial General Assembly to "buy out and clear off" the Indians inhabiting the area west of the so-called Seven Mile Line, Providence's western boundary at the time, the purchasers negotiated three separate deeds with the Narragansetts, between May and December of 1659. The land they acquired included most of what later became the towns of Foster, Scituate, Glocester, and Burrillville, and extended Providence's boundary to twenty miles west of Foxes Hill (present Fox Point). The Providence Proprietors appointed a committee to supervise the division of the "Providence Woods" or the "Outlands" as early as 1662, but it was not until 1694, well after King Phillip's War, that the first division of 150-acre shares took place. The actual surveying of these lots did not begin until 1705.

A second purchase of land in the area which became Foster was made in 1662 by William Vaughan of Newport, Zachariah Rhodes of Pawtuxet, and Robert Westcott of Warwick. The tract they bought from Narragansett sachems Newcome and Awashouse, known as "Wishquatnoqke" (soon anglicized to Westconnaug), was about fifteen miles square and included, approximately, the southern halves of the present towns of Foster and Scituate. Organization of the Westconnaug Company to apportion the land occurred in June, 1678, by which time a number of influential Newporters had joined the original purchasers. Among them were Samuel Cranston (Governor from 1698 to 1727), Weston Clark (Governor from 1696 to 1698 and Deputy Governor from 1700 to 1714), and then-Governor William Wanton. Not until 1707, however, was any formal action taken to divide the Westconnaug lands. That year the Company admitted seven new partners and appointed a surveyor.

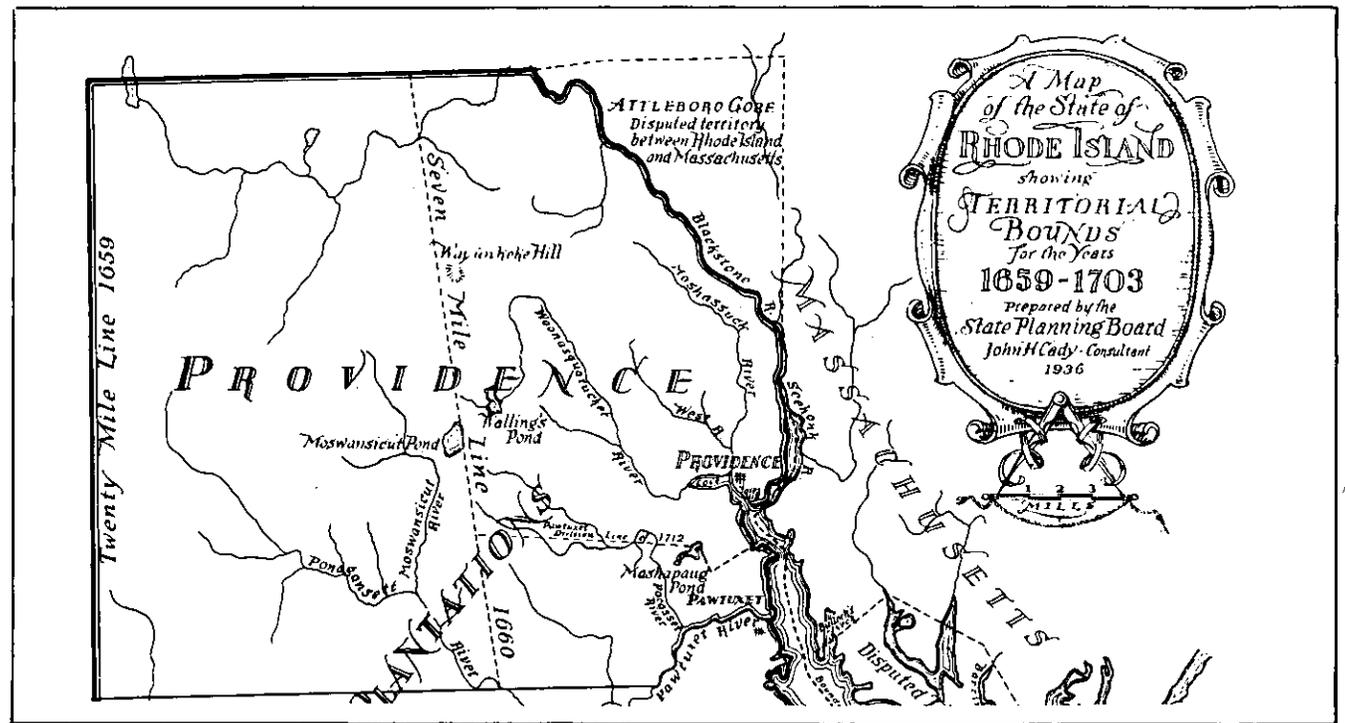


Fig. 3: Section of map showing Rhode Island territorial bounds 1659 to 1703; 1936. Providence divided by the Seven Mile Line and bounded on the west by the Twenty Mile Line.

Disagreements between the Westconnaug Company and the Providence Proprietors over ownership in the "Outlands" were resolved October 28, 1708, when the two companies agreed on the line between their lands: the line should run due west from the Pawtuxet River to the colony line (approximately the course of Central Pike today). All lands south of the line were under the jurisdiction of Westconnaug; all lands north of the line belonged to Providence. Titles to tracts already laid out south of the line to the Providence Proprietors were to be retained by Providence but compensated for by grants of equal lots north of the line to Westconnaug.

Following this agreement, the companies were quick to settle inhabitants on the land, partly because of the longstanding boundary dispute with Connecticut. This dispute dated back to the Rhode Island royal charter of 1663 and the Connecticut royal charter of 1662, which gave both colonies jurisdiction over all lands west of Narragansett Bay. Westconnaug's first division was in 1715 and a second division was authorized in 1718. In 1717, the Providence Proprietors ordered that all undivided land west of the Seven Mile Line be laid out as soon as possible and that the first division be for the lands in the westernmost part of the purchase, along the Connecticut border. By 1724, seven divisions by the Providence Proprietors had taken place. An eighth division, authorized in April, 1725, was halted until the boundary dispute could be resolved.

After years of bickering and appeals to the Crown, the colonies finally reached agreement themselves in September, 1728, and ran the line together, twenty miles west from Warwick Neck. This line terminated 194 rods farther west than previous Rhode Island surveys had fixed it, thus giving Rhode Island an additional strip of land nearly five-eighths of a mile wide. This strip was divided into "Head Lots" by Providence in 1728 and by Westconnaug in 1734, completing the apportionment of Westconnaug but not of Providence lands. It was not until 1755 that the Providence Proprietors made their final division, and all lands included in the future town of Foster were apportioned.

## SETTLEMENT (1690-1760)

The earliest settlement west of the Seven Mile Line took place between 1689 and 1694. By 1731, there was sufficient population in the area to necessitate the incorporation of three new towns: Scituate (of which Foster formed the western half until 1781), Glocester, and Smithfield. Three general patterns of settlement emerged which continued throughout the eighteenth century. The northeastern lands were settled primarily by men from Providence or its outlying areas; the southern lands drew men from Warwick (now Coventry), Pawtuxet, and Newport, as well as from Providence; and the western lands attracted, among others, a number of Connecticut men. European settlement, following the example of the earlier native population, generally concentrated along the Ponagansett River in the north and the Moosup River in the south.

The first known settler west of the Seven Mile Line was John Matthewson of Providence, who purchased land at the junction of the present towns of Scituate, Glocester, Smithfield, and Johnston in 1689 and by 1694 was living on and improving his holding. Joseph Wilkinson of Providence settled at "Chapamisticook" (present Chopmist Hill) just east of the present Scituate-Foster town line about 1703. His land extended to the foot of the present Dolly Cole Hill in Foster, but he only used this meadow for grazing and, possibly, haying.

John Harrington of Smithfield was the first person to settle actually in Foster. Although the earliest definite deed reference to John Harrington is dated 1714, family tradition holds that he came to southwestern Foster about 1704, sheltering in a cave in a rocky outcrop on the east bank of the Moosup River until he could build a house. The 1714 deed was for land in Westconnaug on the west bank of the Moosup, but its wording suggests that Harrington already owned adjoining land on the east bank of the river. By 1729 John Harrington was well established: he had acquired 670 acres of land; had erected a house, barn, and fences; had planted an orchard; and had otherwise improved his holdings.

His prosperity seems to have spurred development of the surrounding area. Thomas Parker, of Coventry, purchased or dwelled on land southeast of John Harrington before 1719. Thomas Bennett settled north of John Harrington at present Bennett Hill about 1723. Daniel Scott purchased land northwest of Thomas Bennett in 1729. Scott's name, along with those of John Harrington, Jr., Stephen Harrington, George Dorrance, and John Dorrance, appears on a 1731 petition to build a cattle pound for the use of the inhabitants of the western part of Scituate.

John and George Dorrance, of Voluntown, Connecticut, settled about 1720 somewhat west of John Harrington, near the Rhode Island-Connecticut line. The Dorrances emigrated from Ireland to Connecticut before 1719. Samuel Dorrance, as the first minister in Voluntown, was given and acquired much land. The parcel he gave to George and John Dorrance in 1726 lay on both sides of the present Jenks Road. It was originally in Connecticut but was transferred to Rhode Island by the boundary settlement in 1728. On this land the Dorrances built a house and set up a gristmill and a sawmill on the Quandoc River, a small branch of the Quinebaug which ran through their property. The house, used as a tavern in the late eighteenth century, is one of the oldest standing in Foster today. The mills, no longer extant, were owned and operated by members of the Dorrance family until 1808.

John and William Tyler were other Voluntown men who settled in southwestern Foster, making their first purchase in 1728. Thomas Foster, of Preston, Connecticut, bought 150 acres of land on the Moosup River south and east of John Tyler in 1738. The Blanchards, Moses and William, Jr., sons of William, Sr., a Huguenot weaver who left France late in the seventeenth century, also settled along the Moosup River, Moses in Coventry in the 1730s and William in Foster a little later. William, a weaver like his father, purchased thirty-nine acres of land from Thomas Foster on the east bank of the Moosup in 1744, apparently intending to build a gristmill there. His death in 1751 precluded this plan, but William's son Isaac did build the mill and

successive generations of Blanchards ran it almost continuously until 1886. The mill site, as reworked in the early nineteenth century, is one of the best preserved in Foster today.

Enoch Place purchased three hundred acres of land east and north of the Fosters and Blanchards in 1751. An impressive number of houses built by Enoch Place's sons and grandsons still stand along Moosup Valley Road. Reuben Weaver, descendant of original West-

connaug Proprietor Clement Weaver, also settled in southern Foster about the middle of the century.

In northern Foster, settlement began in the 1720s beside the Ponagansett River where land had already been cleared, perhaps by the Narragansett Indians. Here Joseph, Ezekiel, and William Hopkins settled on land partly inherited from their father Thomas Hopkins and partly purchased. Joseph Hopkins set up a horse-powered gristmill a little northeast of the junction of the

road toward Killingly and the Ponagansett River in 1721. By 1723 Ezekiel and William had built the town's first waterpowered gristmill and sawmill on the Ponagansett. A small hamlet soon grew up about these enterprises and is still known as Hopkins Mills. Ownership of the mills stayed in the Hopkins family until almost the end of the eighteenth century. Although many subsequent re-buildings and re-uses of the site have obliterated all traces of the original mills, Ezekiel Hopkins' house, much added onto over the years, still

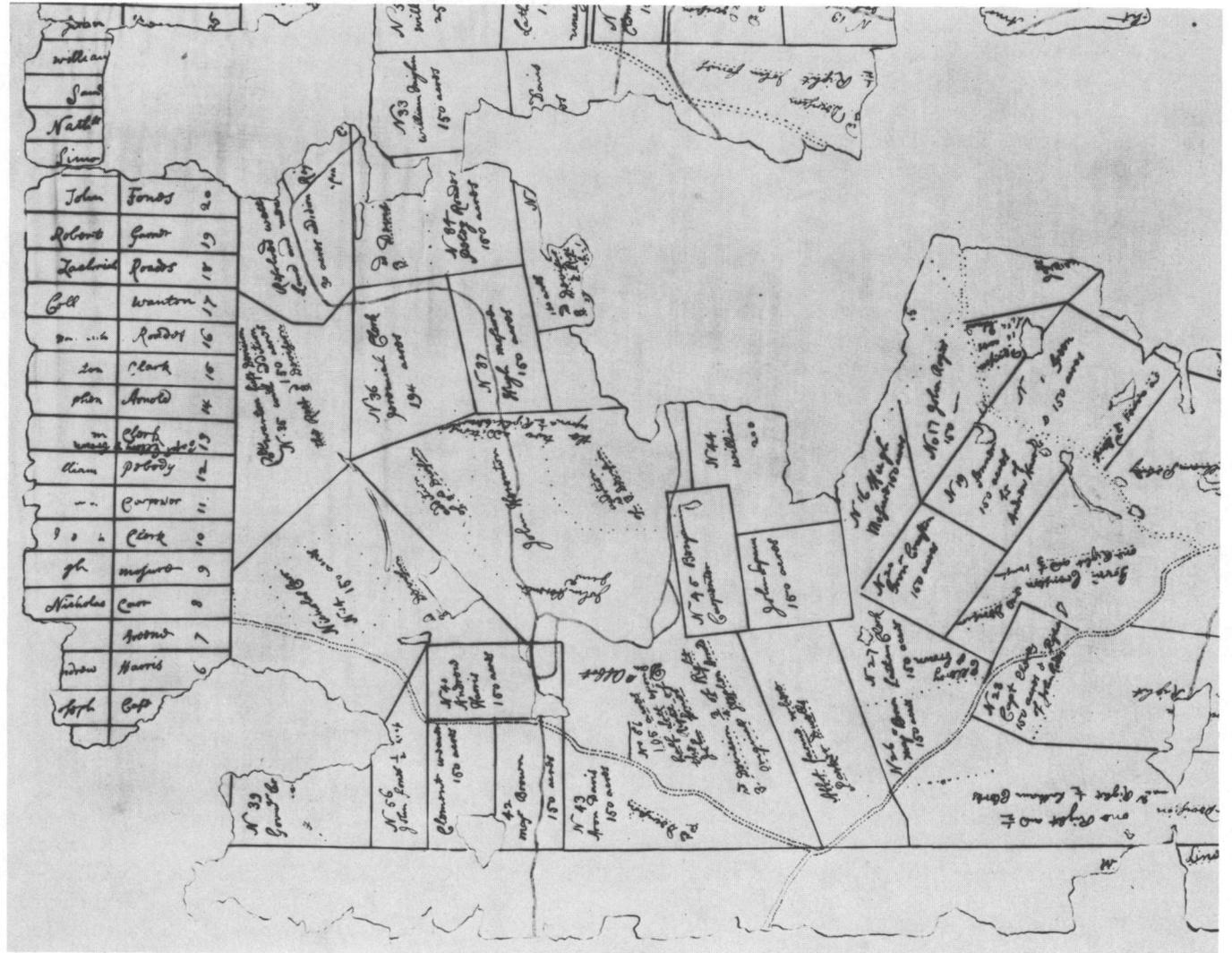


Fig. 4: Map of the Westconnaug Purchase; 1905 redrawing of 1734 original. This section of map shows southwestern Foster. The junction of Plainfield Pike and Moosup Valley Road is at the bottom. The "Head Lots," laid out after the settlement of the boundary dispute with Connecticut in 1728, form a grid at the left. Note the location of such early land owners as John "Haronton," Governor Cranston, and Major Brown.

stands at the corner of Winsor Road and the Old Danielson Turnpike, a little east of the mill pond.

Another early settler along the Ponagansett northwest of Hopkins Mills was Joshua Winsor, son of Samuel and Mary Winsor of Newport. In 1723 Joshua Winsor acquired three hundred and sixty acres of land a half mile south of Ponagansett Pond (in present Gloucester). The house he built still stands beside Winsor Road where it turns sharply to cross Winsor Brook.

Mid-century settlers in the vicinity of Hopkins Mills included members of the Rounds family who settled on both sides of the road through Hopkins Mills near the mill and stream which took their name; Hugh Cole of Swansea, Massachusetts; Hugh Pray, whose house still stands on Pray Hill just south of the Gloucester line; Bernard Haile, who built a house just east of Hopkins Mills about 1750 which was run by James Brown as a tavern during the Revolutionary War; and John, Daniel, and William Colwell, all of whom established farms near Oak Hill. All three Colwell houses survive.

One of the earliest settlers in central and eastern Foster was William Randall, a miller and yeoman who purchased a lot in Westconnaug southeast of Hopkins Mills on the present Foster-Scituate line in 1722. The so-called Fox Hill House on King Road may have been built by William Randall about this time.

Isaac Howard was among the slightly later settlers in east central Foster. Progenitor of one of the most numerous and prominent families in nineteenth-century Foster, Isaac Howard moved from Coventry to Foster about 1750. In 1752 he purchased 150 acres of land about three miles south of present Foster Center and in 1753 he bought an additional twenty acres of land on the east branch of the Moosup. Five of Isaac Howard's seven sons settled at least briefly in Foster; but by 1803, all but one, Daniel, had either died or moved to new frontiers in New York or Vermont. Daniel, whose heavily remodelled house still stands on Howard Hill Road, stayed in Foster as did his seven sons. The nearly contiguous farms owned by the Howards on both sides of Howard Hill Road gave the hill and road their nineteenth-century and present names.

## SCITUATE TOWNSHIP (1731-1781)

### Incorporation

By the third decade of the eighteenth century, the inhabitants of the still half-wild outer reaches of Providence were beginning to recognize that their needs and interests were different from those of inhabitants of the center of town. Difficulties in transacting community business within the "Outlands" were to some extent inevitable because of the rugged topography, the scattered population, and poor roads. These problems were magnified, however, by the fact that formal government transactions for the outlying areas were carried out at the Providence town meeting and at the Providence Town Clerk's office, more than twenty miles and a full day's journey away.

The compact central part of Providence by this time was well settled and its community needs and functions, fairly well structured. The "Outlands," in contrast, were still essentially wilderness. The two areas, thus, had relatively little in common when it came to the mundane but vital matters of everyday life. While central Providence merchants were already developing limited coastal shipping and were attempting to build a network of outlying produce sources, farmers in the hinterlands were struggling simply to survive on the land. There was scant thought of surplus west of the Seven Mile Line in 1720. Whereas Newport, Providence, Bristol, and Warren had developed shipbuilding industries and were already facing timber shortages, outlying settlements were being hand-hewn daily out of vast stands of hardwood forest. The need for direct political representation for the hinterlands was becoming increasingly clear.

In 1730, "Outlands" inhabitants petitioned the Rhode Island General Assembly to establish several new towns. A committee was appointed and on February 20, 1731, the General Assembly passed "An act for erecting and incorporating the "Outlands" of Providence into three towns; named respectively Scituate, Smithfield, and Gloucester." The boundaries were established March 11. As created, Smithfield included present-day Smithfield, North Smithfield, Lincoln, and

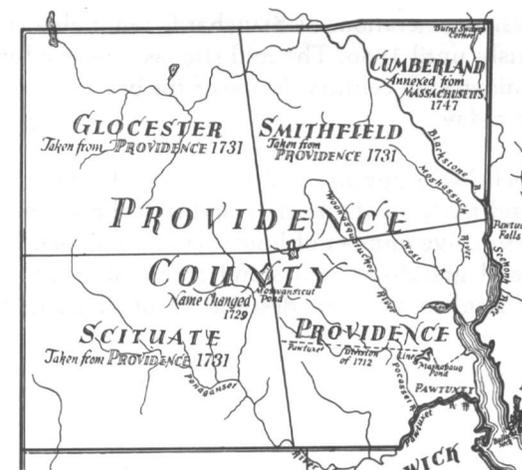


Fig. 5: Section of map showing Rhode Island territorial bounds 1703 to 1750; 1936. Providence divided into Providence, Scituate, Smithfield, and Gloucester in 1731.

western Woonsocket; Gloucester included present-day Gloucester and Burrillville; and Scituate included present-day Scituate and Foster.

The new town of Scituate contained almost 66,000 acres and population was estimated to be about six hundred. The first town meeting was held March 18th, 1731, at Captain Thomas Angell's tavern in west-central Scituate. Stephen Hopkins, later to be Governor of Rhode Island, was chosen Moderator. The roster of elected town officials included several men residing in the western (or Foster) part of Scituate: Councilman Ezekiel Hopkins, Town Clerk and Town Packer Joseph Brown, and Overseer of the Poor Joseph Hopkins.

Once accounts with Providence were settled, and Joseph Brown and Benjamin Fisk had been elected in August as Scituate's first deputies to the General Assembly, the functioning of the new town was fully underway.

### Impetus to Growth

By the time of the first Rhode Island census in 1748, less than a generation later, Scituate, with 1,232 inhabitants, had more than doubled in population. The second census, taken in 1755, recorded 1,813 inhabitants,

out of a total colony population of 40,636. While the population growth rate for the colony as a whole declined to barely two and a half per cent per year between 1750 and the Revolution, Providence and her hinterlands continued to grow rapidly, with the area comprised of Cumberland, Smithfield, Glocester, and Scituate showing the greatest increase of all. Between 1755 and 1774 the population in these four towns grew from 6,300 to a little under 11,200. Scituate's population in 1774 was 3,601.

Three factors encouraged the rapid development of the hinterlands. One major influence was the continuing expansion of maritime ventures in Newport, Provi-

dence, Bristol, Warren, and Wickford, as well as in Boston, Massachusetts. Increased commerce created increased demand for a wide range of products, some of them incidental to land clearing and thus an added inducement to settlement. Burnt lime, charcoal, potash, tar, shingles, and lumber were readily consumed by ship- and house-building endeavors as well as by the coastal trade itself. Scituate hardwood must have been in demand almost as soon as a way was found to transport it to coastal ship-building centers. Commodities such as pork, beef, and even butter and cheese, used to supply the New England fishing fleet, were transported overland by cart from eastern Connecticut to the ports at Providence (and probably Boston) as early as 1720.

Some of these staples were picked up from Scituate's more prosperous farms as well, particularly after mid-century.

A second stimulus to rural development, intimately related to the rise of commerce, was the concerted if not coordinated effort to build roads to link outlying areas, particularly fertile eastern Connecticut, to the Rhode Island coast. Roads laid out to connect existing population centers at the same time encouraged further settlement and the building of local roads. One of the earliest and most important routes through Scituate and the southern corner of present-day Foster was the road toward Plainfield, Connecticut, which began as an Indian trail and was first used by colonial settlers as a horse path; upgraded in both colonies by 1714, the Plainfield road became a major cart route. Entrepreneurs such as Major William Crawford of Providence were quick to build up a flourishing trade in rum, sugar, molasses, salt, wool, tobacco, and grain with the towns of northeastern Connecticut and western Rhode Island along its course. By 1752, this highway was described as "a great road for travel and trade." A second major route ran through the northern third of Foster through Hopkins Mills. In 1691 this road was only a bridle path through the forest, leading from Providence over Chopmist Hill to Pomfret and Killingly, Connecticut, but by 1721 it had been upgraded to a cart route in both Rhode Island and Connecticut. The Connecticut supervisor of the road, Nathaniel Sessions, is said to have used it that year to carry a load of West India goods from Providence to Connecticut. This road was labelled "North Road" on the 1799 map of Foster.

Local roads were gradually laid out to connect with these major thoroughfares. The present Moosup Valley and Plain Woods Roads developed as early adjuncts to the Plainfield Road, running west from it to the Dorrance Mills and the Connecticut line. The "road toward Killingly by Angells" (labelled thus on the 1781 map and as "the Killingly Road" on the 1799 map) was laid out well before mid-century. The eastern part (approximating the course of present Foster Center Road) existed by 1734; the western portion (present South Killingly Road) was laid out sometime after 1731. Sections of a road over Howard Hill, linking the Plainfield Road to the Killingly Road at Foster Center, existed

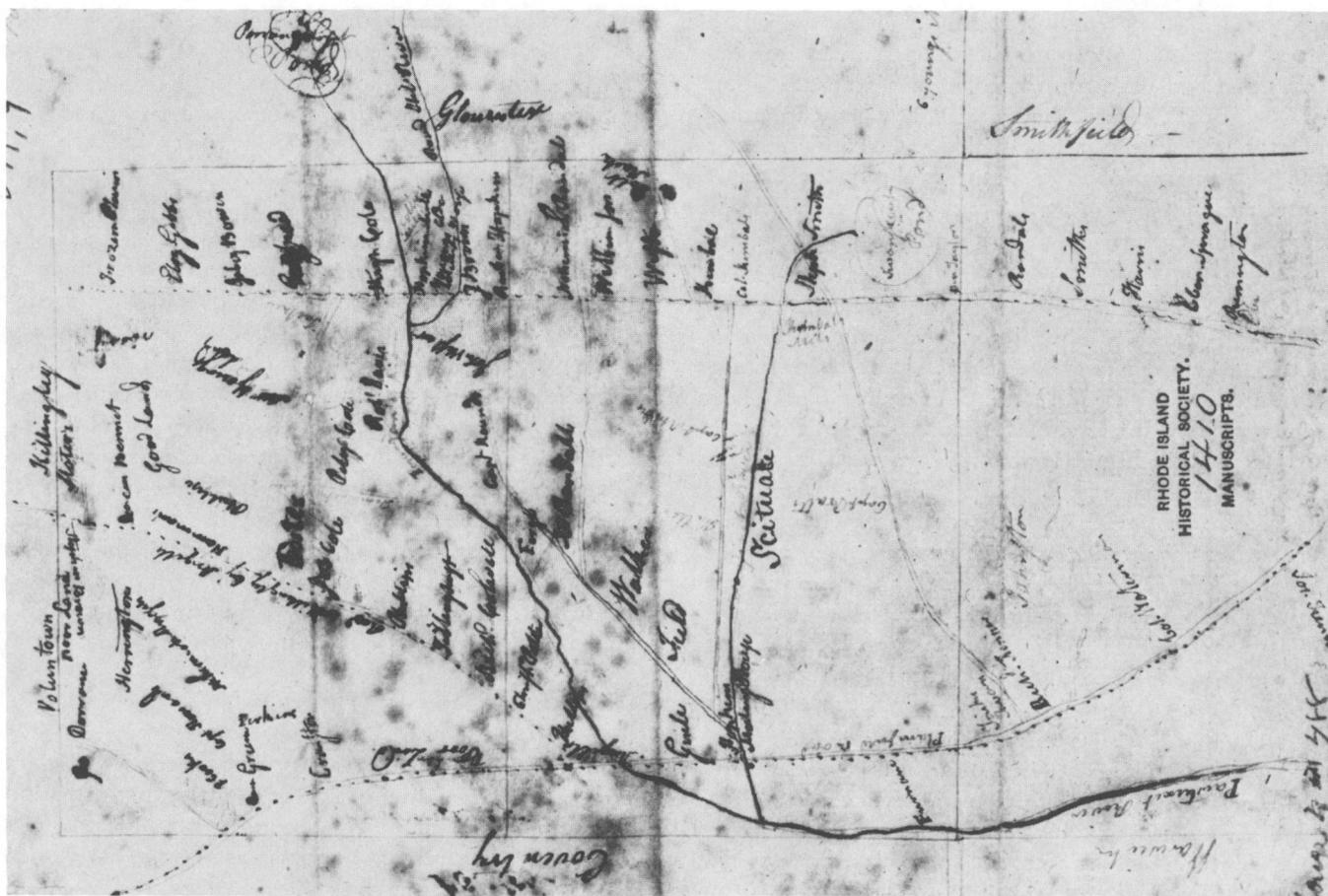


Fig. 6: Map of Foster and Scituate; 1781. Note major through roads in existence by this time: Plainfield Road in the south, the "Road toward Killingly by Angells" angling northwest from Plainfield Road, and the road over Chopmist Hill through Hopkins Mills to Killingly in the north.

before 1781. By this time, too, a road wound northeast from Foster Center, probably along the course of present Anthony Road, to the road through Hopkins Mills, and the northern portion of Cucumber Hill Road and Round Hill Road had also been built.

The third factor effecting the rapid growth of Scituate in the mid-eighteenth century was the increasing scarceness of unsettled land elsewhere in the colony. By 1750, agricultural settlement in Rhode Island was approaching its natural limits; the richest lands, lying primarily along the shores and on the islands of Narragansett Bay, were already in cultivation. The hinterlands, though much less well suited for farming because of their stony soils, hilly terrain, and more severe climate, offered the only available frontier for the offspring of old families and for new arrivals in the colony.

### Working the Land

When Scituate was set off from Providence in 1731, only six thousand of the town's sixty-six thousand acres had been cleared of their forest cover. This figure, though small, represented thirty years of considerable progress in turning the land to agricultural uses. The earliest settlers found a few clearings and meadows, some natural and some created by earlier native populations—Joseph Wilkinson, the Hopkinses, and the Harringtons among others probably settled where they did because of pre-existent open land—but, by and large, much of the labor of the eighteenth century was devoted to land clearing. Burning over was a clearing technique used by the natives and Europeans alike, but so hazardous that it was regulated as early as 1704 by act of the colonial General Assembly. Girdling and sawing were other slower but more productive methods of clearing, providing not only fields for farming but a number of forest materials which, when processed at local sawmills, could be sold as cash crops. Products such as "Hoops and Staves in plenty, timber fitting for House and Shipbuilding. . . in plenty. . . planks likewise suitable for either of the aforesaid purposes" were among those items listed in marginal notes on a map of Foster drawn by Theodore Foster in 1799. No concrete indication has been found that other forest products such as tar, pitch, and charcoal were processed at this

time, but it seems likely that commercial use of many of these commodities was increasingly common after mid-century.

Despite clearing and settlement, Foster's forest remained untamed almost till the end of the eighteenth century. Wildcats, bears, and wolves were a persistent hazard to livestock, and bounties were offered by the General Assembly as late as 1764. The last bear in Foster, sighted near the home of Joseph Tucker on Tucker Hollow Road, is said to have been killed about 1776.

Notwithstanding some trade in forest products, most Foster residents depended on agriculture for their subsistence. Although the topography was hilly and the soil generally a poor quality sandy loam, Foster farms produced a fairly broad range of crops. The 1799 map with its marginal notes indicates that by that time the town's soil had been found "tolerable" for cultivation and "good for Grasses, English grain, Maize, Potatoes, Mellons, etc." The "Quality of its Produce, in grain per Acre," was estimated to be about fifteen bushels and it was noted that the town "abounds with orchards of various kinds of fruit of excellent Quality." Apples predominated and most were turned into cider at local horse-powered cider mills. Howard Hill, in fact, was known in the eighteenth century as "Orchard Hill" for the extensive apple orchards planted there by members of the Fenner family. Land not suited for tillage was frequently used for grazing, primarily sheep, although most farms kept a few pigs and cows as well. The bulk of Foster's agricultural products, at least in the first decades of the eighteenth century, were raised for home or local consumption, but some commodities, such as corn and wool, were also used as barter items and for limited cash sale or payment of debts and taxes.

Most farms at this time included at least one hundred and twenty acres, and many holdings were considerably larger; Joshua Winsor's initial purchase in 1723 was of three hundred and sixty acres, and John Harrington by 1730 had amassed six hundred and seventy acres. The typical farmstead included a house, at least one barn, some fenced areas, an orchard, and a woodlot. As the century progressed and an individual's prosperity and family size increased, additional land was put into cul-

tivation and more specialized outbuildings might be added—corncrib; cow barn and separate horse barn; a small shed or two for functions such as slaughtering; an underground root cellar for cold storage; and perhaps an icehouse. Relatively few farm complexes in Foster survive in anything approaching intact condition and those that do generally have outbuildings dating from the first decades of the nineteenth century at the earliest.

Industry in Foster prior to the Revolution was limited nearly completely to the small seasonal grist- and sawmills which were established almost as soon as settlers were on the land. The Dorrance mills and the Hopkins mills, double ventures each, were among the earliest and best known, but there were many others. These small-scale mills were the prerequisite for continued and accelerated settlement, providing grist (for johnny-cakes, cornbread, puddings, and other corn-based dishes), and supplying lumber for house, barn, and mill construction as well as for trade.

One exception to the eighteenth-century pattern of raising and processing the products of forest and field, was the brief attempt to develop an iron extracting and smelting industry following the discovery of an ore deposit north of Hopkins Mills about 1730. In January 1735 a company composed of William, Ezekiel, and Stephen Hopkins purchased from Obadiah Jenckes all the ore contained in a twenty-eight-acre parcel on the northeast side of the Ponagansett about a quarter of a mile from the river. The company sold the mineral rights to Samuel Waldo, merchant, of Boston, later the same year, but retained the development of the bloomery or iron works for themselves. The bloomery apparently was in operation by 1747 but no further record of its activity or precise location has been found.

### Churches and Schools

By the middle of the century there were a sufficient number of inhabitants in Foster to make the formation of churches and some private schools possible. Foster's settlers were primarily Baptists, as were most Rhode Islanders at that time, and the first local congregation was organized in the 1750s in the southern part of

town, under the care of Elder Bennett. Before 1759 they had built a meetinghouse in the vicinity of Harrington Road. Little is known of this church beyond passing references to it in eighteenth-century road petitions and in early Baptist annals. There were two other Baptist churches in the northern part of town near Hopkins Mills: one organized before 1764 under the care of Elder Nathan Young, and the other gathered by Elder Josiah Bennett before 1769. Elder Young's congregation built a meetinghouse on a lot given them in 1764, a little west of the present Hopkins Mills Chapel. Elder Bennett's church suffered a severe internal controversy in the 1770s which caused a major schism and delayed the building of their meetinghouse until 1791.

The schism in Elder Bennett's Calvinistic church at Hopkins Mills over the issue of the Sixth Principle was resolved in 1780 when part of the congregation left to form a new Calvinistic church at Foster Center, the "Second Baptist Church," under the care of Elder John Hammond. The remaining believers in the Sixth Principle soon gained additional members and in 1791 built their meetinghouse on the summit of present Schoolhouse Hill a little west of Hopkins Mills.

Education in the eighteenth century was a private endeavor, usually undertaken by a group of neighbors who joined together to hire a school teacher for a few months out of the year. Some provisions for schooling were probably made before the middle of the century in Foster, but the first positive evidence of a school—a lease agreement between Amos Hamman and several of his neighbors for a schoolhouse lot with a schoolhouse standing on it in the northern part of town—is dated 1755. A schoolhouse in the southern part of town on the Foster-Coventry line known as "the Great Chestnut School" (abandoned about 1828) may have been built about the same time. There were probably one or two more.

### Building on the Land

Although the basic economic and building unit in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Foster was the

farmstead—the farmhouse with its outbuildings, fences, stone walls, fields, and woodlots—what remains today, in the majority of cases, is the farmhouse in isolation, or the farmhouse with one or two outbuildings, a few stone walls, and a few acres of land, most of it wooded. Where farm complexes do survive, their outbuildings generally date to the nineteenth or twentieth century and yield no solid evidence for an analysis of eighteenth-century farms. Moreover, it has not been possible to include in this survey the detailed structural analysis needed to date existing outbuildings accurately or to assess closely their functional evolution. For all these reasons, the present analysis of Foster's buildings focuses almost exclusively on houses while recognizing the historical importance and visual quality of the town's barns and other farm structures. Archeological remains of these structures probably survive on many farms, and, while not studied as part of this survey, have the potential for providing important information about Foster's early farmsteads.

By the early 1700s several house types were common in Rhode Island. One of the earliest, and one peculiar to Rhode Island, was the so-called "stone-ender," a compact story-and-a-half frame structure which had a large stone chimney exposed on the exterior forming all of one end. The "stone-ender" usually had few windows and was covered by a steeply pitched gable roof, sheltering a single, first floor room in which all family activities took place, with a half-story sleeping loft or garret above. Although no record of it survives, it is very likely that the house John Matthewson built west of the Seven Mile Line in 1698 was a one-room "stone-ender." The two-room-plan house, with one room on either side of a large central chimney and chambers or half-story garrets above, was another common form. Frequently, three smaller rooms were added across the back of the two-room house to make more space, thus creating a five-room plan. The Dorrance House on Jenks Road (c. 1720 and c. 1750), the only known example of the two-room plan in Foster, evolved in just this way. The center-chimney five-room plan became a standard pattern for eighteenth-century houses throughout Rhode Island after 1720.



Fig. 7: Typical stone-ender house c. 1650. This compact story-and-a-half house with exposed stone chimney forming all or most of one end, although not in Foster, is probably typical of many of Foster's earliest houses.

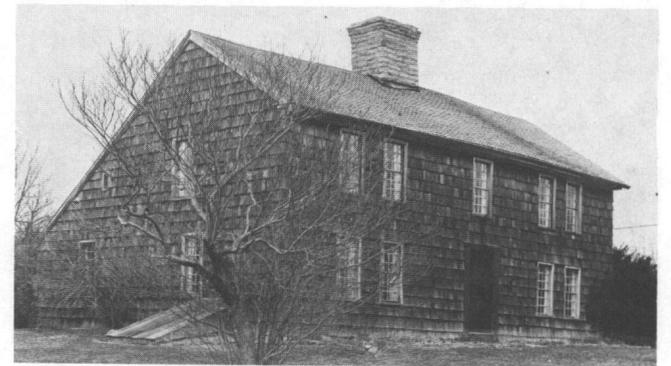


Fig. 8A: Dorrance House (c. 1720, c. 1750); Jenks Road; 1974. View from the southwest showing massive stone chimney and saltbox roofline.

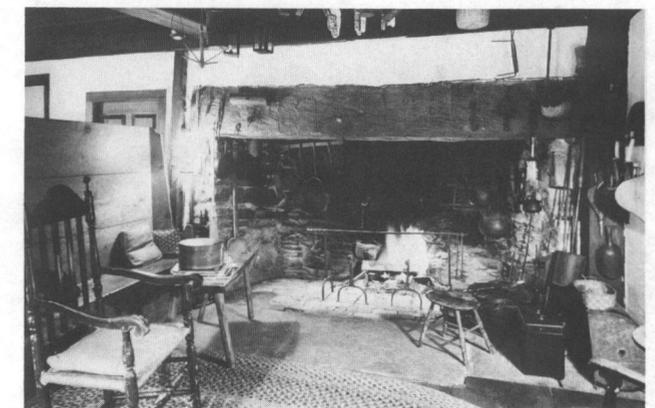


Fig. 8B: Dorrance House (c. 1720, c. 1750); Jenks Road; 1971. Interior view of keeping room looking west toward walk-in fireplace.

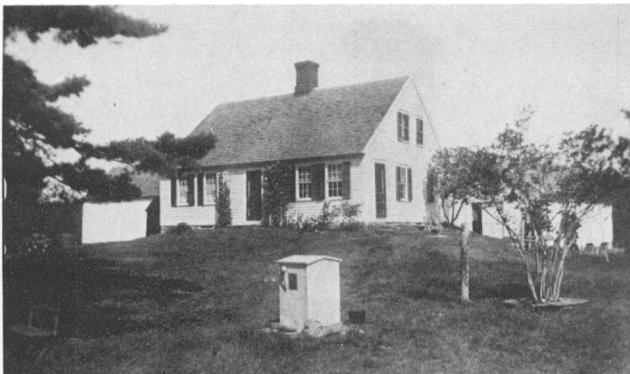


Fig. 9: Jacob Phillips House/James Manchester Wright House (c. 1770, c. 1820); Foster Center Road; c. 1910. Old postcard view from the south-east.



Fig. 10: Daniel Colwell House (c. 1755-1772); Theodore Foster Drive; 1973. From the south, showing reduced center chimney, narrow second-story windows.



Fig. 11: Maple Glen Tavern/G. Simmons House (c. 1760); East Killingly Road; c. 1910. View from the south. A tavern before 1799, this is one of two 18th-century gambrel-roofed houses still extant in Foster.



Fig. 12: Phillips-Wright House (c. 1765); Foster Center Road; c. 1920. View from the southwest showing this good example of a half house before 20th-century additions were built at the north and east.

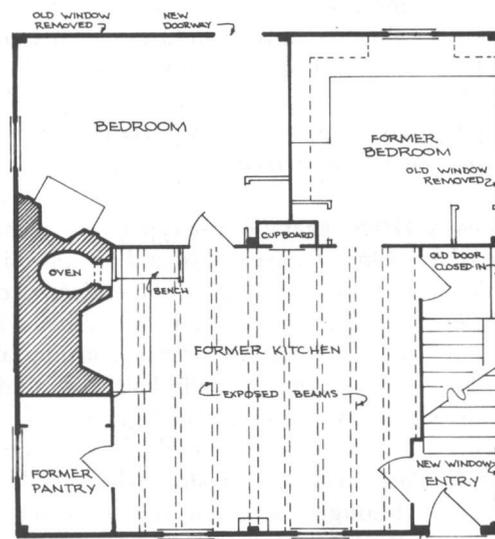


Fig. 13: Phillips-Wright House (c. 1765); Foster Center Road; 1981. Plan of original half house.



Fig. 14: Winsor House (c. 1720, c. 1740); Winsor Road; 1976. View from the south showing large, off-center chimney, asymmetrical facade, and ground-hugging profile of one of Foster's earliest houses.

Most houses built in Foster in the eighteenth century followed one of two forms: the center-chimney, five-room plan house with a four-bay or, more commonly, a five-bay facade or the half house with an end interior chimney and a three-bay facade. Both types were most often built a story-and-a-half high with a gable roof, but several variations did occur. The house might be two-and-a-half stories tall—as are the Colegrove-Hammond House (c. 1756) on South Killingly Road and the Daniel Colwell House (c. 1772) south of Hartford Pike—or it might be covered with a gambrel-roof—as is the original Maple Glen Tavern (c. 1760) on East Killingly Road.

An excellent example of the half house is the Phillips-Wright House (c. 1765), which faces south onto Foster Center Road near its junction with Victory Highway. Despite twentieth-century additions to the east and north (side and rear), the eighteenth-century portion retains almost all of its original exterior and interior configuration and finish. The front door, cased in a simple plank frame and set at the right in the facade with two windows to its left, opens directly into a small hall with a straight-run staircase leading to bedrooms in the half-story garret above. A doorway left of the hall opens into the main room of the house, the kitchen, which has a large stone fireplace with bake oven at its far end. Left of the chimney is a small room (now a bathroom) which probably served originally as a pantry or storage area. On the other side of the chimney stack, north of the kitchen, is a small room with a shallow corner fireplace. Between the doorway to this room and the doorway into the small, northeast corner room is a built-in cupboard of simple plank construction.

A great many Foster houses were built on this three-bay, end-chimney plan, but few retained their original size as years passed and family size and prosperity increased. The majority of the additions were made laterally, with the new facade built in the same plane as the old one. There were a number of ways of achieving this lengthened house form. A second half house of three bays could be added at either end, creating either a house of four to six bays with a chimney at each end or a center-chimney house, with the new section sharing the original chimney stack. The Oliver Arnold House (c. 1770 and c. 1790) on Danielson Pike is an example

of the former; the Winsor House on Winsor Road (c. 1720 and c. 1740) is an example of the latter. Two unusual versions of the center-chimney house formed by the addition of a half house to an existing half house are the Whidden-Fuller Farm (c. 1770 and c. 1800) on Plainfield Pike and the Beriah Collins House (c. 1760 and c. 1790) on Old Plainfield Pike. In both houses one section is two and a half stories tall and the other is one and a half stories. Another variation was to enlarge the original house by the addition of a full five-bay, center-chimney section, built either in the same facade plane or forward of it. Depending on how much if any of the original house was physically incorporated in the new section, the resulting house might be anywhere from six to eight bays long. Among the houses which appear to have grown this way are the Ezekiel Hopkins House in Hopkins Mills (c. 1720 et seq.) and the Henry Tyler House on Moosup Valley Road (c. 1760 et seq.). An example of the half house with a five-bay center-chimney addition in front of the original facade plane is the Paine House on Paine Road (c. 1785 and c. 1835). Few half houses in Foster appear to have been built after about 1790, although the form continued in use elsewhere in Rhode Island, particularly in mill villages, as late as 1830.

The basic and enduring Foster house type, however, is the center-chimney, story-and-a-half, gable-roofed, five-bay frame house. This form persists, with variations in scale, floor plan, and architectural detail, from 1720 or 1730 until 1850 or 1860. Typical of the period 1730 to 1770 were houses with low spreading eaves, an almost invisible foundation and slightly asymmetrical arrangement of bays. The same form with a higher eave-line and a moulded cornice, a visible cut-stone foundation, and a symmetrical five-bay facade, often with a transom over the door, appeared between 1770 and 1800. The more sophisticated Federal or Greek Revival style houses of 1800-1840 or 1830-1860 commonly had an even higher cornice, more elaborate doorway and window treatments, and foot-high dressed granite foundations.

In Foster, the house built on the center-chimney plan most often has the kitchen occupying one of the front rooms. This is a consistent local variation on the tradi-



Fig. 15: Beriah Collins House (c. 1760, c. 1790); Old Plainfield Pike; 1981. View from the south showing older section at right, newer section at left. Both sections share the central chimney.



Fig. 16: Ezekiel Hopkins-William Potter House (c. 1720 et seq.); Old Danielson Pike, Hopkins Mills; 1982. From the southwest showing typical lengthened house created by adding onto an original 3-bay half house.

tional Rhode Island five-room plan which normally has the kitchen in the back central position. The Foster five-room plan may have evolved as a local building tradition because so many of the earliest houses began as half houses, with the kitchen, of necessity, in the front main room. Perhaps as many of ninety-five per cent of Foster's center-chimney houses place the kitchen in a front room. The other rooms originally would have served a variety of functions, depending on the specific needs and size of the family living therein. However, rooms eventually came to have commonly assigned functions. The other front room might be used as a parlor or bedroom; the rear tier of rooms would,

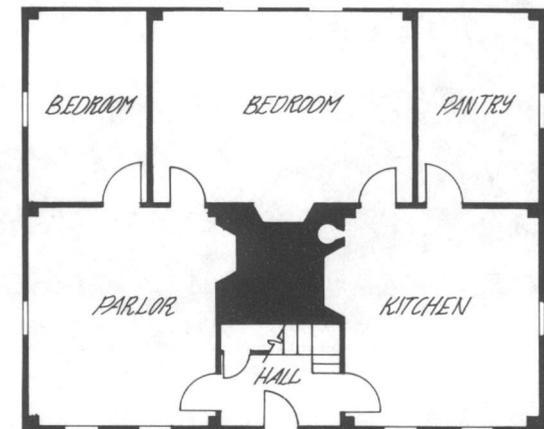


Fig. 17: Foster and northwestern Rhode Island variation on the five-room floor plan; 1981. Kitchen located in front room.

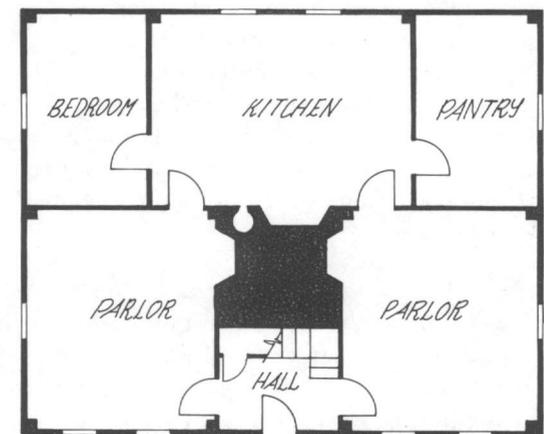


Fig. 18: Traditional Rhode Island five-room floor plan; 1981. Kitchen occupies back center position.

typically, include a pantry or storage area opening off the kitchen, a central bedroom or dining room, and an unheated corner bedroom or storage area. There was generally only one staircase to the garret or second floor, located almost always in front of the chimney; usually it was a single straight run of stairs tucked under the slant of the roof, with a few winders at either end and a plain open rail at the top. Often, the second story remained unfinished for many years. The J. Phillips House (c. 1780) on Foster Center Road is a good example of this form. Later houses of the Foster five-room plan include the two-and-a-half-story, Federal style Nathaniel Stone House (c. 1823) on Old Danielson



Fig. 19: "Stone House" (before 1806, 1815, 1974); Danielson Pike; 1981. From the west. Note orientation with house's north side built against a hill and the use of dressed stone for cellar and first story.

Pike and the one-and-a-half-story Greek Revival style Bennett House (1849) on North Road.

The few exceptions to the Foster variation of the five-room-plan, which place the kitchen in the rear center position, are all post-Revolutionary in date. Notable among them are the Artemas Fish-Samuel Bennett House (c. 1790) south of Old Plainfield Pike, the Deacon Daniel Hopkins House (c. 1810) on the western tag end of Central Pike, and the Iri Brown House (1817) on Plain Woods Road.

One other highly visible Foster variation on the standard house types was the house built into a south-facing hillside, with an exposed stone-walled cellar story beneath the main gable-roofed frame section. Most Foster houses were built facing south to take advantage of the winter sun; the hillside siting also took advantage of the insulating properties of solid earth on the north. Some of the earliest houses of this type had the kitchen, or a summer kitchen, in the basement story. An example is the Hopkins-Tucker-Gairloch House (c. 1720 and c. 1750) on Tucker Hollow Road; in the eastern (original) end of its stone cellar story is a large (5-by-6-by-3-foot-deep) stone fireplace with a brick bake oven set into the rear wall of the firebox. The south-facing John Lyon House (c. 1778), set far west of Howard Hill Road, has a cut-granite foundation story visible on the east and south. The so-called "Stone House" (c. 1800) on Route 6 west of Snagwood Road is probably the best known example of this type, although here the huge cut-granite blocks of the first and second story are sheltered by earth only on the north and east.

## The Revolutionary War

Scituate's involvement in the Revolutionary War was one of spirited support. Although no engagements were fought on Scituate soil, the town contributed men (among them Captain Isaac Paine, Major John Colwell, Jr., and Elder John Williams of the Six Principle Church) and supplies including corn, rye, finished woolen goods, pork, beef, and pots, as well as kettles and axes impounded by the Town Council for military use during the American attack on British forces in Newport in 1778.

Scituate's first official response to the events which led to commencement of hostilities was to join the rest of the colony in observing a day of fasting in sympathy for the closed Port of Boston, June 30, 1774. In August the Rhode Island General Assembly voted to send material aid to Boston; Scituate collected from her residents one hundred and twenty "fat sheep." Fourteen other Rhode Island communities made similar collections; the total was 447 pounds in cash, six hundred and ninety-eight sheep, and thirteen oxen.

Later in 1774 four militia companies were chartered in Scituate; these, with a company from western Cranston, formed the third Battalion of the Providence Brigade, under the command of Colonel Ezekiel Cornell (of Scituate) and Major John Colwell, Jr., (of what became Foster). An independent company, the Scituate Hunters, was chartered in December, 1774, and organized in April, 1775. In 1776 two of the original Scituate companies divided, making a total of six militia companies and one of independent minutemen. Most of the men from Foster served within Rhode Island, many of them at the Battle of Rhode Island in 1778 where Captain Isaac Paine distinguished himself. A few saw service in Vermont and New York; and at least one Foster man, John Davis, served in the fledgling American Navy.

Efficient communication of materiel and information within the colony and beyond was vital to the success of the war. Throughout the colonies committees of correspondence were set up. Scituate's committee was appointed in September, 1774. After a beacon and watch were set up on Tower Hill in North Kingstown in 1776,

a chain of such beacons were established in the northern part of the colony to warn of the approach of the enemy. Scituate's beacon, a pot of flammable pitch on an eighty-foot mast, was set up on Chopmist Hill, but lighted only once, to summon troops to honor General Lafayette. Chopmist Hill was known as Beacon Pole Hill for many years.

The townspeople faced other challenges too: arming and equipping Scituate's soldiers, managing farms in the absence of many of the town's men, and coping with smallpox epidemics and shortages of such necessities as flax and salt. The town government dealt directly with many of these problems, appropriating money to arm those inhabitants who were unable to do so themselves; appointing Captain Joseph Kimball in November, 1777, to supply the families of officers and soldiers in the continental service with the necessities of life; and designating two private homes—those of Mercy Angell and Peleg Fiske, Esquire—as hospitals for smallpox inoculations. The General Assembly and private individuals, among them some from Foster, dealt with the shortage of salt, which at this time was vital for food preservation. Before the War almost all salt was imported by the colony. After several salt-bearing ships foundered in 1776, the General Assembly established a bounty to encourage local production. Later that same year a group of seventy Scituate and Gloucester men formed a salt works company and purchased three lots on the cove at Pawtuxet where they could boil down sea-water. Salt-making commenced in the spring of 1777, but the output was less than anticipated and the operation was halted until May 1779 when Christopher Colwell (of Oak Hill in Foster) offered to run the works for a season. About 210 bushels of salt were produced; however, the colonial bounty on salt was repealed in 1779 and the works were sold in 1784.

One of the results of the war in Scituate, as elsewhere in Rhode Island, was a loss of population; the number of inhabitants dropped from 3,601 in 1774 to 3,391 in 1782 (in Scituate and Foster). Another result was a heightened awareness of local difficulties in transportation and communication. Increased realization of these difficulties, coupled with Scituate's relatively populous condition when compared to the rest of the colony, caused many Scituate inhabitants, well before the close

of the war, to begin arguing the merits of dividing the town. A final legacy of the war was a new awareness on the part of some inhabitants that greener pastures existed outside Rhode Island, and, especially, outside the uplands of Scituate.

**THE FLOWERING OF FOSTER (1781-1830)**

The fifty years immediately following the Revolution may well be spoken of, without risk of hyperbole, as the "flowering of Foster." In these five decades the town grew from incorporation in 1781 to maturity in the 1820s and incipient decline by 1830. In these years Foster reached its apogee in population, in prosperity, in material culture, and in contact with the outside world, attaining a level of communal vitality by 1820 which was not to be equalled again until the 1970s.

**Incorporation**

At a Scituate town meeting held in James Brown's tavern on Danielson Pike, near Hopkins Mills, December 25, 1780, the constituent members voted that "the said town be divided into two distinct and separate towns. . .and that a petition be presented to the General Assembly at their next session, praying that the same may be divided accordingly." A four-member committee was appointed to decide on the most suitable place for dividing the town and to draft the petition; this was approved by the voters January 3, 1781, and submitted to the General Assembly.

Three reasons were stated for proposing the division: that the town was "very extensive and inconvenient for transacting public business. . .it being near twelve miles in length and eight and a half in breadth;" that its size coupled with its "rough and indirect roads, bad traveling in wet seasons, and heavy falls of snow" made gathering enough voters to transact business on urgent occasions difficult, "not more than one eighth part of them having it in their power to assemble;" and, finally, that it was difficult to assess accurately and collect taxes in so extensive an area.

An unstated reason, probably of equal or greater weight, was Scituate's desire for increased representa-

tion in the General Assembly. Under the provision of the colony's royal charter of 1663, apportionment of Deputies to the General Assembly was set at six for Newport, four each for Providence, Portsmouth, and Warwick, and two each for all other towns subsequently created in the colony. By the time of the Revolution, considerable shifts in population had occurred. As early as April 28, 1777, the citizens of Scituate instructed their Deputies, Job Randall and Timothy Hopkins, to protest the continued apportionment of General Assembly seats by provisions of the 1663 charter and to recommend that an act be drawn up creating a new government and providing equal representation of all towns based on population and valuation of the estates in each. Although the proposed revision of representation was not accepted by the General Assembly, the petition for incorporation of a new town in 1781 was, effectively doubling the number of representatives for the area. The citizens of Scituate managed through geographical revision what could not at that time be achieved through political revision.

The General Assembly at its June, 1781, session appointed Dr. Caleb Fiske of Scituate, Theodore Foster of Providence, and Henry Marchant of South Kingstown to draft the bill incorporating the new town. Their bill followed the request to divide Scituate by a north-south line. A counter proposal calling for a division along east-west lines (so that the new town would include the southern third of Gloucester and the northern third of Scituate) had been approved by the freemen of Scituate in April; but the bill of incorporation passed by the General Assembly on August 24, 1781, followed the original request, dividing the town into eastern and western portions. The western section was named Foster, in honor of Theodore Foster, Providence Town Clerk and General Assembly Representative for many years, Secretary of Rhode Island's Council of War during the Revolution, and co-author of the bill of incorporation. In response, Theodore Foster gave the town a bookcase and thirty books, including eight blank volumes for keeping town records; these record books still survive.

The first Foster town meeting was held November 19, 1781, in Thomas Hammond's tavern in Foster Cen-



Fig. 20: Section of map showing Rhode Island territorial bounds 1750 to 1806; 1936. Foster was taken from Scituate and incorporated in 1781.



Fig. 21: Colegrove-Hammond House/Thomas Hammond's Tavern (c. 1755 et seq.); South Killingly Road, Foster Center; c. 1900. Site of Foster's first town meeting, from the northeast.

ter. At this meeting John Williams was named Town Moderator and John Westcott, Town Clerk. Other town officials—including General Assembly Deputies John Williams and Jonathan Hopkins, Jr., and Councilmen Timothy Hopkins, Christopher Colwell, William Tyler, Daniel Cole, Stephen Colegrove, and William Howard—were elected at a meeting November 24th. Joseph Davis, Peter Cooke, and John Cole were chosen to meet with the committee appointed by the General Assembly to ascertain the proportion of taxes, debts, and the poor between the towns of Scituate and Foster. The new town of Foster included farms and homes valued at 150,027 pounds (Scituate's valuation was

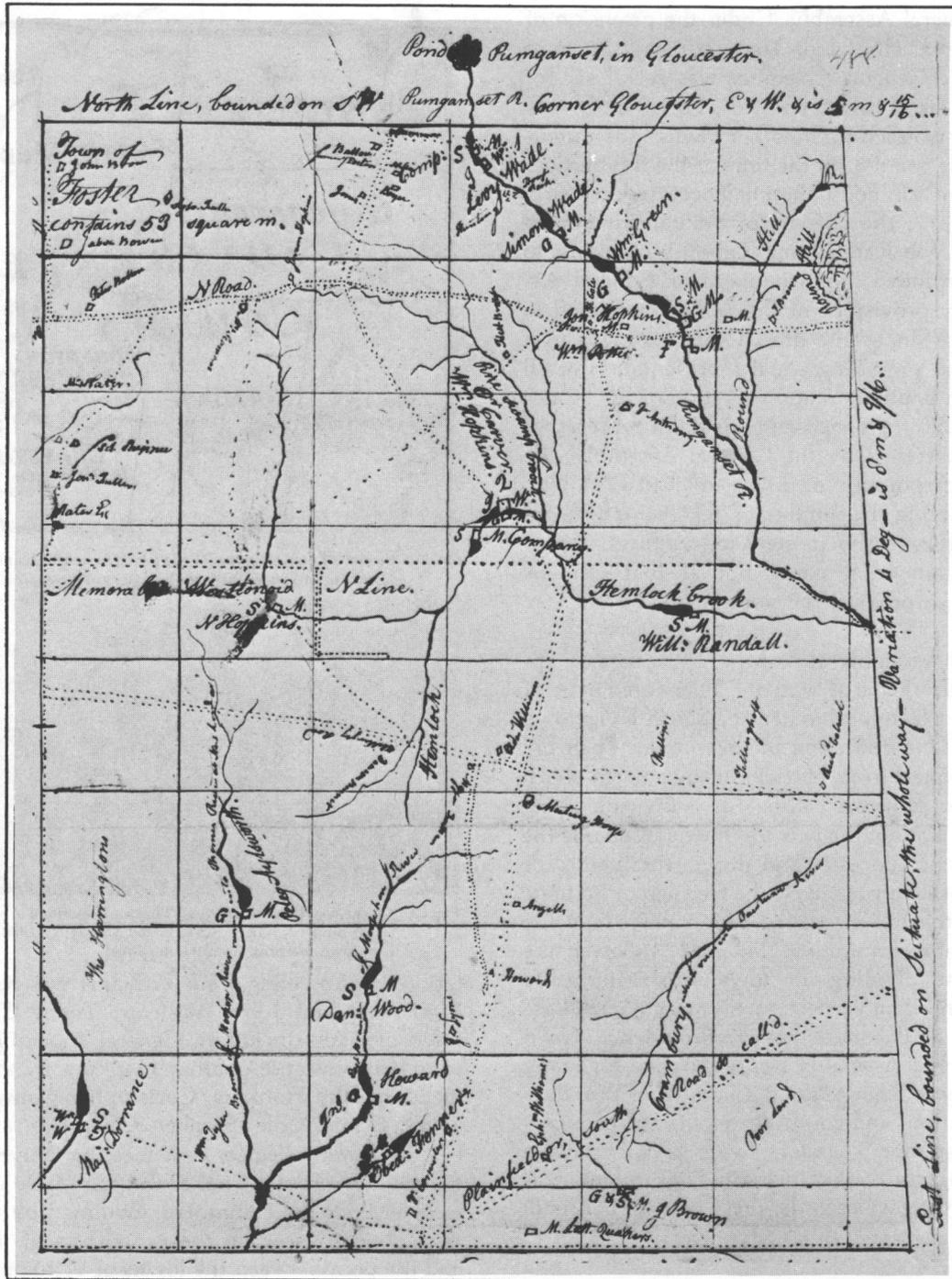


Fig. 22: Map of Foster drawn by Isaac Davenport and corrected by Theodore Foster; 1799. Note the roads, the hamlets of Hopkings Mills and Foster Center, and the widespread small-scale sawmills (SM), gristmills (GM), and ironworks (IW).



Fig. 23: Site of Peleg Aylsworth's Gristmill and Sawmill (gristmill before 1797; sawmill between 1797 and 1834); Moosup River; 1976. View west with gristmill foundation in foreground, dam at left, and sawmill foundation on the far side of the river. This site, now deep in woods, is typical of Foster's late 18th- and early 19th-century industrial ventures.

209,673 pounds) and an area of about fifty-three square miles. Population, when a census was taken in 1782, was 1,763 in Foster and 1,628 in Scituate.

Two maps of Foster drawn "from conjecture," one dated October 2, 1781, and a more detailed map dated June 20th, 1799 (drawn by Isaac Davenport and corrected by Theodore Foster), give a fairly clear picture of the town's physical, agricultural, and industrial development by that time. The maps show an identifiable grid of roads (although only the "North Road," "Killingly Road," and "Plainfield or South Road" are actually named), a scattering of public buildings and private dwellings, and a graphic inventory of industrial development: eight gristmills, ten sawmills, a trip-hammer shop on the Ponagansett, "Speedwell Forge" on Hemlock Brook, and a fulling mill, for processing woolen cloth, also on the Ponagansett. Marginal notes on the 1799 map—almost certainly provided by Theodore Foster, who was a serious early student and conservator of Rhode Island history—give further details on a number of the mills and also analyze the town's natural advantages, products, and religious institutions. A somewhat shortened version of these notes follows:

"There is some good Iron Mine, in Bog-Ore — Vegetable Productions in common with

other Parts of the State, or the Northern States in general. ... Cultivation, tolerable — Soil, good for Grass, English grain, Maize, Potatoes, Mellons, etc. etc. It likewise abounds with Orchards of various kinds of fruit of excellent Quality. The Ammount of its Produce, in grain, per Acre, may be estimated at about Fifteen Bushels. Manufactures, here are of a private Nature; except a small Branch of Nailing. — Woollens & lins are manufactured by housekeepers for internal Use mostly. ... Hoops & Staves in plenty. — Timber, fitting for House, & Ship-building, in plenty: Likewise suitable for Plank for either of the aforesaid Purposes. ... Religious Societies are, first a Baptist Church, incorporated about the Year 1763, under ... Elder John Williams, The second a Baptist, incorporated in 1791 under ... Elder John Hammond. — There is also a Society of Friends collecting & about to erect a house of Worship. — It has likewise been strongly agitated, and there is the greatest probability of a Society being shortly established, upon that most liberal & extensive Principle of Universal Salvation."

Town Council and Town Meeting records for the opening decades of Foster's incorporated existence reveal Foster as a community no longer engaged solely in scrabbling for subsistence based on agriculture and forest industries, but, rather, one consolidating its base of settlement and expanding its local industries and its network of contacts with eastern Connecticut and the rest of Rhode Island. To be sure, the town was at least peripherally involved in such larger issues as resolving the problem of the war debt and ratification of the proposed Federal Constitution (Foster representatives voted against it); but most of the town's business in the decades at the turn of the century was focused on growth and on the establishment and regulation of civic, social, and commercial institutions to support that growth. By 1820 Foster's population had reached 2,900. Prosperous farms, new buildings, better roads, thriving hamlets, and new industrial ventures were the physical manifestations of this period of expansion.

## A Farming Town

The basis of Foster's prosperity during its Federal era flowering was agriculture. Farming continued much as it had in the eighteenth century, but there were more farms settled and much more land was in cultivation. The landscape was one primarily of cleared and fenced fields with scattered woodlots or occasional stands of forest. The new turnpikes built at this time provided easier transportation of produce from rural towns to commercial and maritime centers; and, as industrialization began to take hold in Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut, the newly formed mill villages provided additional markets for farm products. These products included not only the traditional staples—corn, wool, pork, grain, apples, and root vegetables—but more perishable commodities such as cheese, butter, and a broad range of fruits and vegetables, which became saleable to markets closer at hand.

Farms generally were smaller than they had been in the eighteenth century as families divided their holdings and population grew; but many individual farms appeared to be more prosperous as special-use outbuildings and more elaborate fences and stone walls were built. The Paine Farm on Paine Road (house c. 1785 and c. 1835), with its cow barn, horse barn, corn crib, wash and ice house, and slightly later coffin-maker's shop, "hearse house," and canted stone walls, is probably the most intact farm complex of the early to mid-nineteenth century in Foster. The William Colwell-Aseph Saunders Farm (house c. 1765 and 1840) on Winsor Road, with its barn, tinsmith shop, and wash house is another good example of a farmstead with several early nineteenth-century outbuildings. The Rounds Farm on Ponagansett Road and the Paine-Bennett Farm on Old Plainfield Pike are other farm complexes notable for their nineteenth-century outbuildings.

Even within the town's most prosperous years it became apparent that farming generally was not a highly profitable occupation; the soil for the most part simply was not good enough. In the opening decades of the nineteenth century farmers began to try to overcome this problem in two ways. Some farmers began to spe-

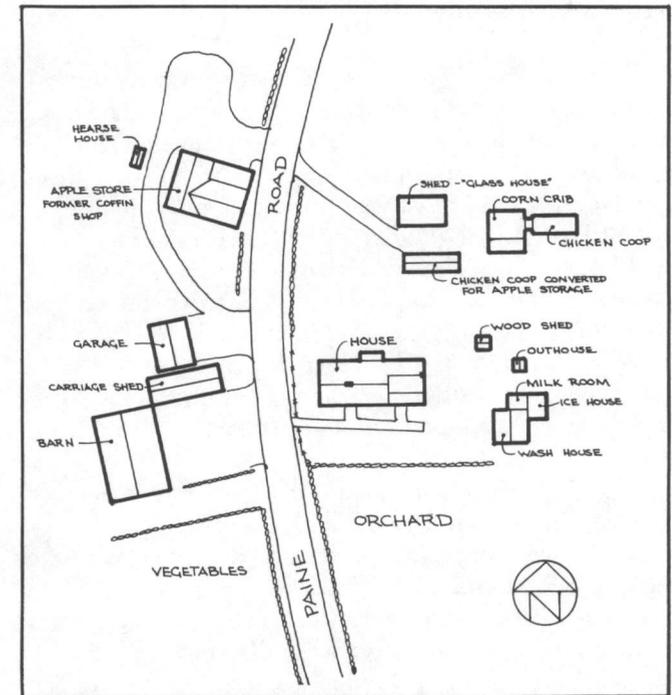


Fig. 24: Plan of Paine Farm (house c. 1785, c. 1835), Paine Road; 1981. This farm complex — with its house, wash house, ice house, corn crib, barn, carriage shed, apple store, and other outbuildings — is one of the most complete and well preserved in Foster. Its apple orchards, begun by Elmer Donald Ross in the 1920s, are still producing.

cialize and to seek out regional markets. Obadiah Fenner, for example, specialized in livestock, especially sheep, and frequented the cattle market in Brighton, Massachusetts. Thomas Fuller, toward the middle of the century, raised quantities of broom corn which he made into brooms on his farm on Plainfield Pike. Other farmers tried to combine farming with other more or less year-round endeavors such as coaling, quarrying, milling, coopering, blacksmithing, saddlery, and carpentry. Frequently the new occupation was more lucrative than farming and replaced it, either as the primary endeavor or entirely. Sampson Battey, for example, had what seems to have been a relatively poor farm in southern Foster, which included only forty or fifty acres of land on which he kept two cows and a single horse; however, he was also a house carpenter and miller. Such combinations of occupations became increasingly common as the nineteenth century proceeded.

## Federal Architecture

Because the early decades of Foster's townhood, 1781 to 1830, were years of considerable prosperity and population growth, they were also years during which a good deal of building took place. Today, this architectural legacy is the most visible indication of the flowering of Foster. In 1790 there were 2,268 inhabitants and 363 households in town; by 1820 there were 2,900 inhabitants and 421 households, with an estimated 400 dwellings. These figures do not reveal the full extent of building taking place, however, for many pre-existing buildings were upgraded and countless new out-buildings were added to existing farms.

Foster's apogee coincided with the first decades of United States' nationhood and the establishment of federal government, an era known by historians as the Federal period. Buildings of the Federal period reflected not only established practices but also new English and French architectural influences, disseminated chiefly through architectural handbooks such as Pain's *The*

*Practical House Carpenter* and Asher Benjamin's *The American Builder's Companion*. Federal structures were generally constructed on a larger scale than were earlier buildings—ceilings were higher and rooms and windows were larger. At the same time detail tended to be more delicately scaled and elaborate. The center-hall, four-room plan with two or four interior chimneys came to replace the traditional five-room center-chimney plan. Curving or spiral staircases appeared and, in the most sophisticated buildings, oval forms were introduced into the plan and occasionally imported wallpapers were hung.

As is the case with many architectural styles, buildings in the Federal style were generally less sophisticated in the country than in the city; but this is not to suggest that country Federal buildings lacked imagination in their ornamentation. Carpenter-builders used their gouges, augers, and other tools to create a whole gallery of decorative forms. They may have started with a design from one of the handbooks, but they interpreted and freely interpolated details which ap-

pealed to them or came more readily to their hand without apparent concern for formal correctness. In fact, the Federal era was one in which a particularly varied and localized architectural vocabulary evolved.

The Federal style in Foster, as shown in houses built between 1780 and 1840, is characterized by enlargement of scale, variations in the floor plan, and, most important, a far greater attention to and elaboration of architectural detail. Two-and-a-half story houses became far more common and story-and-a-half houses were built with more generous proportions. The Jeremiah Bennett House (c. 1790, South Killingly Road), the Nathaniel Stone House (1823, Old Danielson Pike), the Solomon Drown House (1807-1808, Mount Hygeia Road), and Mount Vernon Tavern (remodelled 1814-1815, Plainfield Pike) are among the best preserved of the sixteen two-and-a-half-story Federal houses still standing in Foster today. Examples of the one-and-a-half-story house with more generously scaled rooms and stairhall include the Potter-Hopkins House (c. 1812, Maple Rock Road), the Rounds House (c. 1820, Ponagansett Road), and the Ezekiel Hopkins, Jr., House (c. 1820 and c. 1840, Burgess Road).

Center-chimney houses of the Federal period were occasionally designed on the typical five-room plan with the kitchen in the center rear rather than the front as in earlier Foster houses. The Iri Brown House (1817, Plain Woods Road), the Deacon Daniel Hopkins House (c. 1810, Balcom Road), and the Captain Abraham Phillips House (c. 1821, Foster Center Road) all have the kitchen in this location. In Federal half-house additions or remodelings the design of the end-chimney fireplaces changed so that there were two relatively small angled fireplaces set back to back instead of the earlier form which had the cooking fireplace face squarely into the kitchen. The eastern end of the Potter-Hopkins House (c. 1812, Maple Rock Road), the southern end of the Randall-Howard Wagon Shop (c. 1800, Howard Hill Road), the eastern end of the Sweet Farm House (c. 1790 and c. 1820 Hartford Pike), and the eastern section of the Howard-Tillinghast House (mid-eighteenth century, c. 1815 and c. 1840, west of Howard Hill Road) all have this characteristic chimney form.

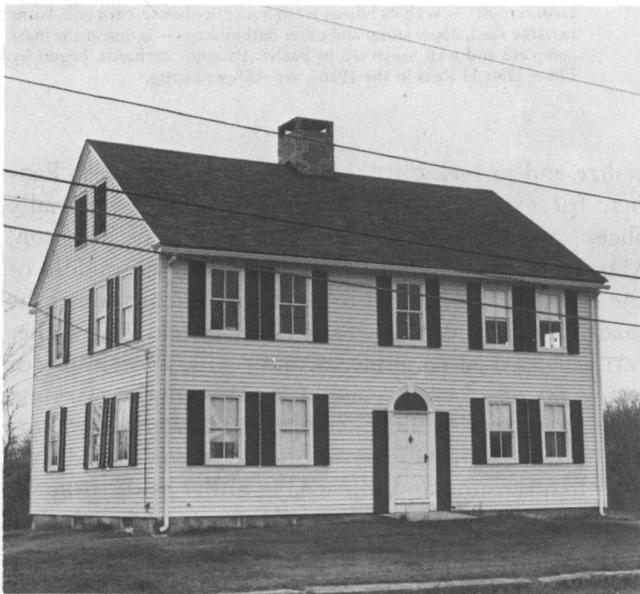


Fig. 25: Nathaniel Stone House (1823; rear ell mid-18th century); Old Danielson Pike; 1981. Main section from the northeast. Nathaniel Stone, Jr., who built this generous, center-chimney, Federal house, was a Justice of the Peace, Town Council member, and Deacon in the Baptist Church.

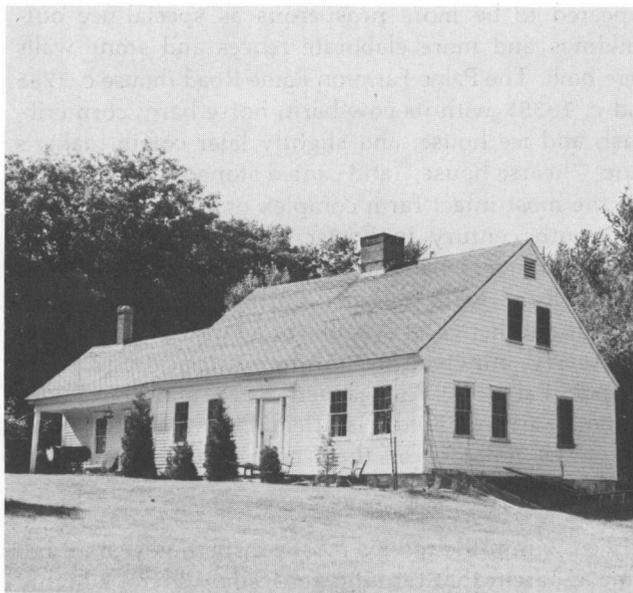


Fig. 26: Ezekiel Hopkins, Jr. House (c. 1820, c. 1840); Burgess Road; 1975. From the southeast. This house was lived in by Ezekiel C. Hopkins in the mid- and late 19th century. He carried on a lively blacksmith trade here and Burgess Road was known as "Ezechiels Road" at that time.

Increased emphasis on the elaboration of architectural detail is the single most obvious quality of Foster's Federal houses. On the exterior attention is usually focused on the cornice, windows, and doorway. At least two houses have dentil cornices, but most houses feature prominent cornices built up of a series of run mouldings. Among them, a simplified version of a rope moulded cornice, derived from a plate in Asher Benjamin's handbook and composed of auger holes in a running spiral pattern along a half- or quarter-round moulding, is the most ambitious. It appears on at least three Foster houses: the Gorton Howard House (1831, Howard Hill Road), the Howard-Tillinghast House (mid-eighteenth century, 1815, and 1840, Howard Hill Road), and the George Phillips House (1840, North Road). Most window caps were made of built-up mouldings as well, but at least one house with splayed lintels survives: Mount Vernon Tavern (as remodelled)

on Plainfield Pike. Federal doorways were often ornamented by a transom or, a little later, a fanlight above the door, which also illuminated the front stairhall. The Tyler House south of Plain Woods Road, the Martin Howard House on Howard Hill Road, and the Gorton Howard House on Howard Hill Road each have a different version of a transom doorway. The Paine-Bennett House (Old Plainfield Pike), Mount Vernon Tavern (Plainfield Pike), and the Deacon Daniel Hopkins House (Balcom Road) display three of the town's finest fanlights. The George Phillips House on North Road, built at the very end of the Federal era in 1840, uses the Federal fan motif in the form of a solid carved wooden fan above the door.

One of the most noteworthy and charming local architectural developments of the Federal period was the introduction of one-story, gable-roofed entry porticoes beginning about 1815. These porticoes were in reality pedimented doorway designs pushed forward and supported by free-standing columns. Although occasional examples of such porticoes are found in other parts of Rhode Island (including Pawtuxet, Providence, and East Greenwich), this form seems to be especially characteristic of northwestern Rhode Island. Union Village in North Smithfield has a particularly rich concentration of houses with porticoes; Scituate has at least one; and Foster has five: the Paine-Bennett House (Old Plainfield Pike), Mount Vernon Tavern (Plainfield Pike), the Gorton Howard House (Howard Hill Road), the George Phillips House (North Road), and the Samuel H. Hopkins House (Mill Road). The Eli Aylsworth House in Foster Center retained its portico until the early twentieth century and the Nathaniel Stone House on Old Danielson Pike near Hopkins Mills probably had one as well. The doorway of the Paine-Bennett House is the most elaborate with its

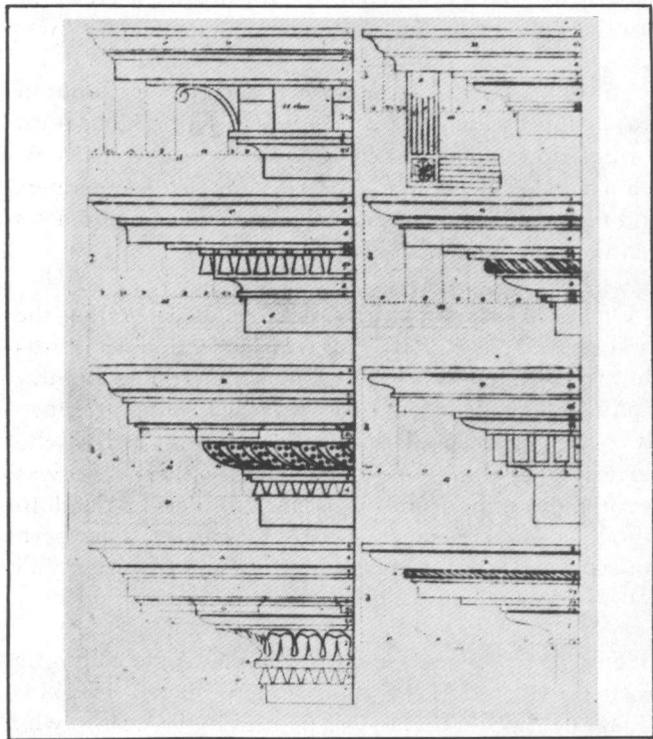


Fig. 27: Federal cornice designs, Plate 26, Asher Benjamin, *American Builder's Companion*; 1816, reproduced 1937. The third drawing from the top at the left shows a rope-moulded cornice, found on several Foster houses.

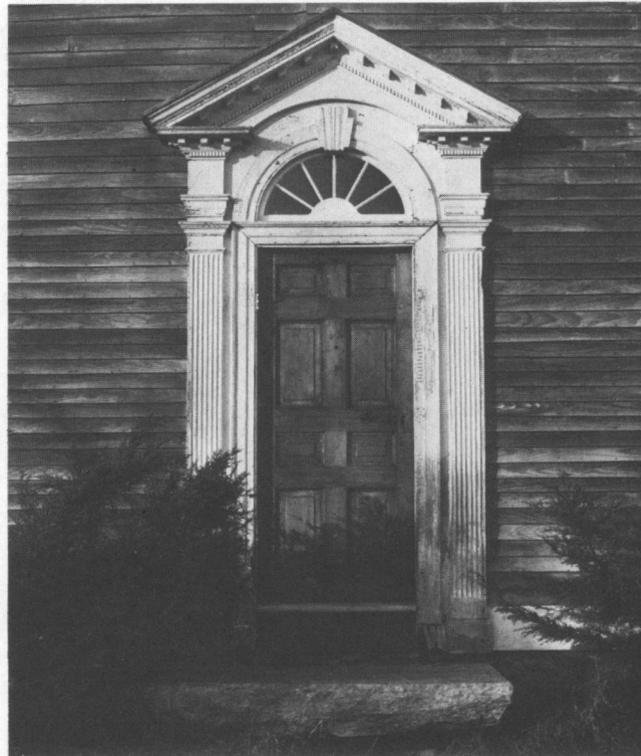


Fig. 28: Deacon Daniel Hopkins House (c. 1810); Balcom Road; 1976. Front door, elaborated with fanlight, keystone, pediment, fluted Doric pilasters, and bullet-moulded door fascia (visible at right side only).



Fig. 29: Paine-Bennett House (c. 1815); Old Plainfield Pike; 1975. View of doorway from the southwest showing Federal portico, elaborated with modillions and a running fret, and delicate, leaded-glass fanlight.



Fig. 30: Southwest parlor, Deacon Daniel Hopkins House (c. 1810); Balcom Road; 1976. From the southwest showing elaboration of woodwork and hand-painted stencils.



Fig. 31: Detail of woodwork, Deacon Daniel Hopkins House (c. 1810); Balcom Road; 1976. Mantel cornice and fascia as well as chair rail feature the running triglyph and flower motif popular in English designs.

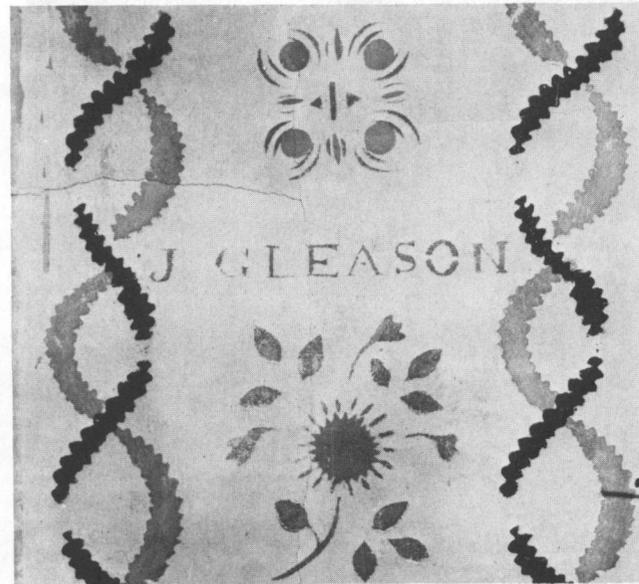


Fig. 32: Detail of wall stencil pattern, Deacon Daniel Hopkins House (c. 1810); Balcom Road; 1976. The "signature" of the stenciller, a rare find. Most stencillers have remained anonymous.

delicate leaded-glass fanlight, pedimented portico with curved soffit and modillion and running fret trim, and fluted Doric pilasters flanking the door. At Mount Vernon Tavern the doorway has a semi-circular fanlight capped by a keystone; the double-leaf door is flanked by Ionic pilasters with a bulls-eye motif in the frieze; and the whole is sheltered by a projecting pedimented portico supported on two slender posts turned to have a slight entasis.

Architectural elaboration on the interior, reserved primarily for the main first floor rooms other than the kitchen, was usually concentrated on the mantel, with some attention paid to chair rails and window and door frames. With one known exception (Mount Hygeia) all of the woodwork was lighter in scale and flatter in profile than eighteenth-century woodwork. Most of the ornamentation was made either by moulding planes or by the carpenter's gouge. One motif, an American carpenter version of the triglyph and single open flower pattern of English designs, was formed by a group of three or four gouged vertical lines and a gouged flower repeated the length of the border. It is found in a number of houses, usually on mantels and chair rails but in one instance (the Deacon Daniel Hopkins House) on cornice, door frames, and window frames as well. Mantels frequently featured crosssetted or "eared" corners and reeded, fluted, or plain pilaster forms. Sometimes a dentil cornice was also used.

One of the most popular methods of decorating the interior of houses between about 1815 and 1835 was the use of hand-painted wall stencilling. The country equivalent of the more costly imported wallpapers then in vogue, stencilling was done by itinerant artists who carried their paints and patterns with them, and was favored throughout the hinterlands of New England. In Rhode Island, Federal era stencilling seems to have been concentrated, for the most part, in the northwestern hill country towns.

The best preserved extant example of stencilling in Foster—two rooms in the Deacon Daniel Hopkins House on Balcom Road—was painted by J. Gleason who signed his name on one wall. Gleason probably did all the stencilling in Foster houses; his patterns appear, in



Fig. 33: Foster Town House/Elder Hammond's Meetinghouse/Second Baptist Church (1796-1797); Howard Hill Road, Foster Center; 1981. View from the southwest of one of Foster's most treasured landmarks.

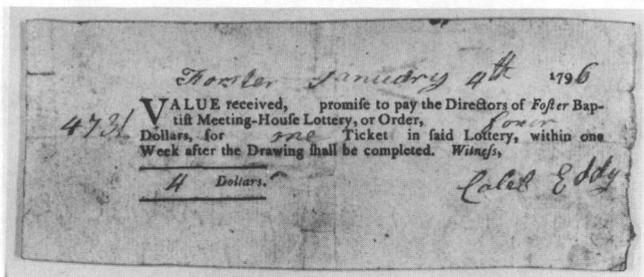


Fig. 34: Lottery Ticket (1796); 1981. Elder Hammond's Meetinghouse, or Second Baptist Meetinghouse, was built with funds from a public lottery.

various colors and combinations, in the house at Sweet Farm on the Hartford Pike (now painted over), the Job Hill House on Wetherbee Road (also painted over), and the 1824-1825 section of the Welcome Rood Tavern in Foster Center (painted over downstairs but partly preserved in the second floor meeting room). Gleason's work can also be traced through his stencils to houses in Scituate, Johnston, western Cranston, and the Smith-Appleby House in Smithfield.

The house Deacon Daniel Hopkins built about 1810, on what shortly thereafter became the Central Pike, is Foster's finest example of Federal interior embellishment. Almost deceptively quiet on the exterior with its weathered clapboards, dentil cornice, and central pedimented doorway with fanlight, the house follows, for Foster, a sophisticated center-chimney plan with the kitchen at the rear originally flanked by two pantries. A side entry hall, a rear staircase, and a small ancillary room opening from the southwest parlor are other un-



Fig. 35: Foster Town House (1796-1797); Howard Hill Road; 1981. Interior from the southeast showing plank pews and corner stairway to the gallery. Lectures, plays, country fairs, bicentennial observances, Town Council and financial meetings, militia drills, and religious services have taken place here.

sual features. The southwest parlor and the ancillary room which shares its ornamentation are masterpieces of folk art. The dark fragrant carved woodwork—mantel, deep cornice, chair rail, door and window frames—has never been painted and is ornamented with the carpenter's running triglyph and flower pattern used in combination with a fret pattern. The plaster walls retain their slightly-muted stencil designs of stylized flowers and vines above and below the chair rail in remarkably good condition.

A non-domestic masterpiece of Foster's Federal era, which does not reflect to any great degree the Federal style, is Elder Hammond's Meetinghouse (the Foster Town House) on Howard Hill Road in Foster Center. One of two eighteenth-century religious buildings still

extant in town, it was built using proceeds from a public lottery in 1796-1797. It follows the basic Puritan meetinghouse form: a nearly square structure of domestic appearance oriented with the pulpit and entrance facing each other on opposite long walls. This orientation was purposely designed to deny the typically Anglican church plan which focused on the altar at one end. Five bays long and three generous bays deep, the Elder Hammond Meetinghouse has a broad double door set in a flat entablature with panelled pilasters on the west and a smaller side door on the south. Inside, a raised dais occupies the long wall opposite the door (where a double pulpit originally stood), pews with galleries above surround the other three sides, and the building's heavy cased framing is exposed against the plastered walls.

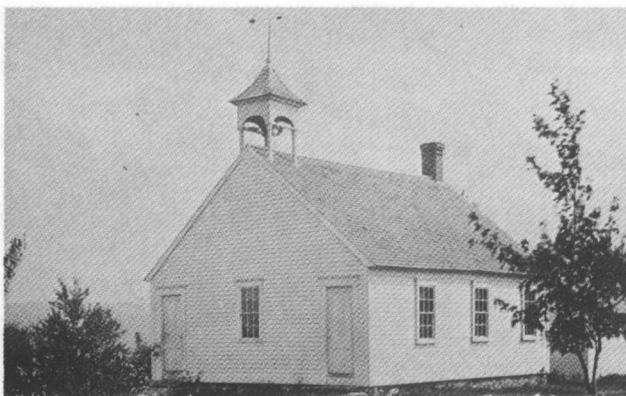


Fig. 36: Hopkins Mills Schoolhouse (c. 1820); Old Danielson Pike, Hopkins Mills; c. 1920. From the northwest. A typical 19th-century schoolhouse.

The emergence of a specific building form for schoolhouse use—a small, single-story, gable-roofed, frame building, sometimes with a belfry, sited gable end to the road with separate entrances for boys and girls—was another architectural development at this time. The schoolroom was one large open space with a wood-burning stove whose pipe often ran the length of the classroom to radiate all possible heat before it vented into a small brick chimney at the far end of the room. A woodshed often joined the boys' and girls' outhouses as outbuildings for a school.

The Rhode Island General Assembly stimulated the building of schoolhouses when it passed the Free School Act of 1800, requiring that a public education be made available to all white children in each town. The Act met with so much opposition that it was repealed in 1803, but in Foster there remained considerable interest in opening additional schools. In 1819 there were eleven schools; by 1828, there were fifteen. Some of the older schoolhouses were repaired; others were replaced by new buildings; and some new schoolhouses were erected in new locations. Among the new schoolhouses were the Dorrance Schoolhouse, built on the west side of Kennedy Road in 1805 (no longer standing); Moosup Valley Schoolhouse, built in 1811 on land given by Isaac Blanchard (used as a school until June, 1952 and now a part of the Tyler Free Library); a schoolhouse at Mount Vernon, built in 1814 on Plainfield Pike (demolished); Randall Schoolhouse (the first schoolhouse built on or near the site of the Wood Schoolhouse on

South Killingly Road, burned in 1840); Hopkins Mills Schoolhouse (c. 1820); and the Foster Center Schoolhouse (built before 1824). By 1844, school districting had been implemented and Foster had nineteen schools, supported by town and state funds.

### Roads and Turnpikes

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the increasing settlement and productivity of western farmlands, the expansion of Rhode Island's mercantile centers, especially Providence, and the business opportunities resulting from the wars in Europe between 1793 and 1815 (which increased consumption at home and demand abroad for farm products like butter, cheese, beef, and pork) made more efficient transportation important to local farmers and coastal entrepreneurs alike. The substantial upgrading and expansion of local roads and the development of turnpikes from Providence through outlying areas, including Foster, were the result.

New local roads included Barb's Hill Road (from James Tyler's house on present Plain Woods Road south to the Coventry line) laid out in 1785 and the middle portion of Cucumber Hill Road (between South Killingly and Harrington Roads) in 1791. Upgraded roads included the "Brooklyn Road" (leading west from Moosup Valley to Brooklyn, Connecticut, and later called Plain Woods Road) about 1792, Johnson Road in 1785-1786, and Winsor Road from Glocester to Hopkins Mills in 1800. Starting in 1788 the town submitted numerous petitions to the General Assembly asking permission to establish a better system of local road maintenance, based on more clearly defined road districts and funded by a tax on inhabitants within each district. The petition was finally granted in 1812 and road districting was implemented.

Between 1794 and 1837 the Rhode Island General Assembly granted charters to forty-three private turnpike corporations, of which seven intended to build through Foster. Generally, the turnpike corporations took over and upgraded existing roads, but sometimes

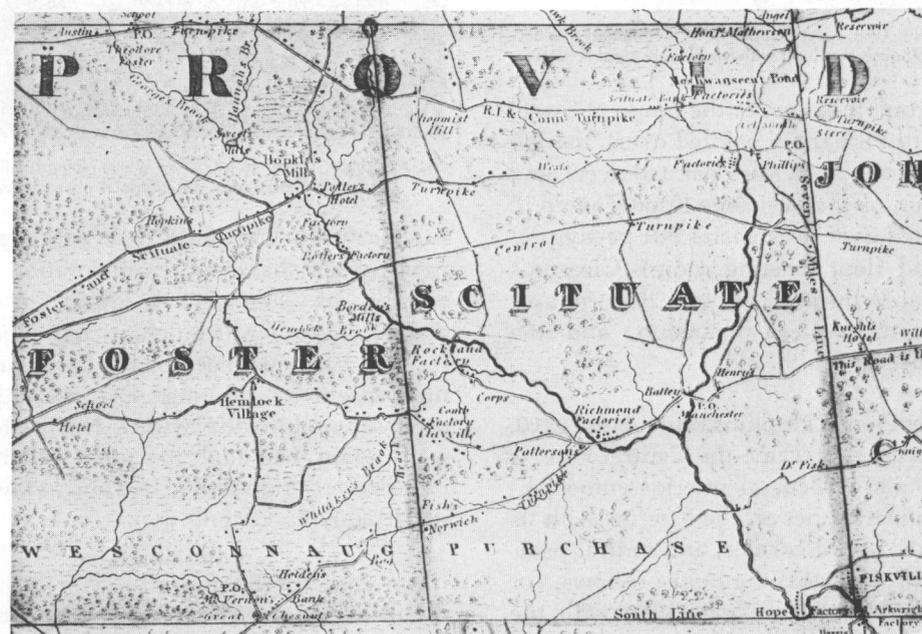


Fig. 37: Section of Rhode Island map; 1831. Foster and Scituate; the turnpikes which linked them to Providence and Connecticut; and Foster's hamlets: Hemlock Village (Foster Center), "Mt." Vernon, "Comb Factory" or Clayville and Hopkins Mills. North Foster is marked only as a post office; Moosup Valley is not indicated.

they laid out new alignments, improving on the directness or grade of the road. Frequently, when the turnpike was intended to link Providence with a town in neighboring Connecticut or Massachusetts, an associated corporation would be set up in that state.

All Rhode Island turnpikes led to Providence and, generally, Providence men and money were behind them. Despite the fact that the turnpikes had the potential to aid the hinterland farmer as well as the urban entrepreneur, there was considerable opposition on the part of Foster residents to the roads. Most of the objections were to poor maintenance and the institution of tolls, but some residents also objected to the taking of their land and to the inconvenience of having a road run through the middle of their fields. Nevertheless, many Foster residents would have agreed with the Connecticut farmer who complained late in the eighteenth century that "Our spring and fall are rainy—yet these are the seasons for going to market, and the poor farmer who lives thirty or forty miles from water, must risk his cattle and his carriage, or lose the benefit of market. Why must farmers drag their produce to market thro' deep mud to the axle-trees of their carts and wagons?"

The four most important turnpikes were the Plain-



Fig. 38B: Welcome Rood Tavern/Foster Center Store (c. 1780, 1824 et seq.); South Killingly Road, Foster Center; c. 1890. One of Foster Center's 19th-century focal points — tavern, store, Masonic hall, town clerk's office and residence, Town Council chamber, and post office — from the east.

field Pike, chartered in 1794, the first turnpike corporation in Rhode Island and the second in the nation; the Rhode Island and Connecticut Turnpike, later called the "Hartford Turnpike," chartered in 1803; the Foster and Scituate Turnpike, later called the "Danielson Turnpike," chartered in 1813 and 1814; and the Foster and Scituate Central Turnpike chartered in 1814 and rechartered in 1822. All of these turnpikes became locally important trade routes. Mail was carried on the Plainfield Pike and the Hartford Pike. The Central Pike was a favorite of Connecticut cattle drovers on their way to the Providence market. And the Danielson Pike, a favored route for travellers, had stagecoach service along it until the end of the nineteenth century.

Three other turnpike companies—the Foster and Gloucester Appian Way Society, the Foster Branch Turnpike, and the Foster Valley Turnpike—were incorporated but had little effect on the town.

### The Hamlets

One of the clearest signs of Foster's growth was the emergence of increasingly well-defined hamlets. Never very large or densely built-up, these small clusters of houses, taverns, and other buildings evolved over time, growing and changing as community needs and economic and social forces altered. All of the hamlets shared two features essential to their growth: road access and at least one place of public gathering, usually a tavern, but sometimes a grist-, saw-, or cider mill.

There were also a few houses and, perhaps, a forge or blacksmith shop. Other functional buildings—such as schoolhouses, stores, churches, and post offices—were generally later additions to an existing community cluster. By 1830 there were six such community clusters, including two mill villages, in Foster. The 1831 map of Rhode Island clearly shows "Hemlock Village" (Foster Center), Hopkins Mills, Mount Vernon, and the mill village at Clayville on the Foster-Scituate border. It does not show Moosup Valley, perhaps because this area was and is so spread out. The map indicates North Foster only by the presence of its post office.

Foster Center—called "Hemlock" in the early nineteenth century—grew up in the closing decades of the eighteenth century where the road by Thomas Angell's tavern in Scituate toward Killingly (present Foster Center and South Killingly Roads) met Howard Hill Road. No more than one or two houses in 1780, the Center developed rapidly after the first town meeting was held here, in Thomas Hammond's tavern, in 1781. Several new houses were built almost immediately and the Second Baptist Church, organized under the care of Thomas Hammond's son Elder John Hammond in 1780, erected their meetinghouse on Howard Hill Road in 1796. Town meetings were held here for the first time in 1801; in 1822 the town acquired the building, known thereafter as the Foster Town House. By 1819 Anthony Hopkins had built a store immediately north of the meetinghouse and by 1824 a schoolhouse stood north of that. In 1824-1825 Welcome Rood built a large

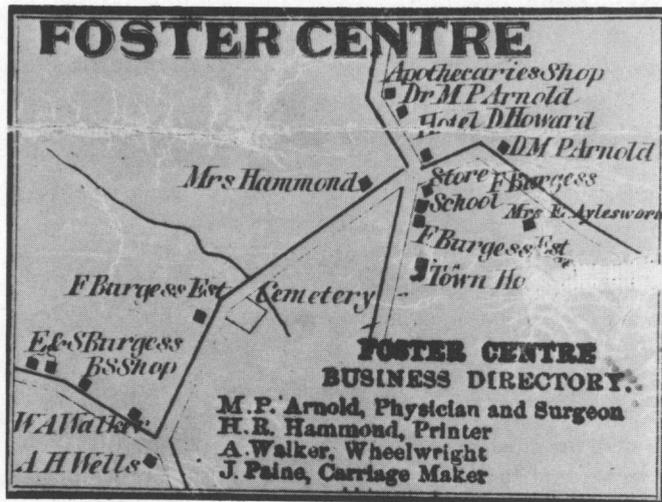


Fig. 38A: Map of Foster Center; 1862. Foster Center at mid-century. Hammond Tavern is labeled "Mrs. Hammond" and Welcome Rood Tavern shows as "Hotel D. Howard."

addition to his tavern to house a general store on the first floor and a Masonic Hall on the second floor. The store and tavern were run by various subsequent owners for most of the nineteenth century and the meeting hall served as Town Clerk's office for many years. By 1830 the tavern run by Eli Aylsworth and Nehemiah Angell and the services of physician Mowry P. Arnold were added to the range of social and civic amenities in the hamlet. Structures for other civic functions, including the town pound (1845), the Christian Church (1882), and the Town Clerk's Office (1904) were built through the years; but the basic shape and character of Foster Center were set by 1830. As the seat of government, the Center was and remains the town's principal hamlet.

Hopkins Mills grew up in the northern part of town where the early eighteenth-century road leading from Providence over Chopmist toward Killingly (approximately the course of the Old Danielson Pike) crossed the Ponagansett River. Here members of the Hopkins family built a sawmill and a gristmill by 1723, which encouraged further settlement and gave the cluster of farmhouses which subsequently developed their collective name. Sporadic growth occurred throughout the century—Bernard Haile built a house east of the mills, about 1750, in which he and subsequent owners kept a tavern, and Elder Young's Baptist Church built a meetinghouse near where Hopkins Mills Chapel stands today in 1764—but most of Hopkins Mills' growth took place between 1790 and 1830. In the 1790s William



Fig. 39: Aerial view of Hopkins Mills; 1976. Looking west along the arc of Old Danielson Pike with Hopkins Mills Pond at the upper right. Other landmarks: the Ezekiel Hopkins-William Potter House, at the corner of Winsor Road, and the Hopkins Mills Schoolhouse, just visible at the top of Schoolhouse Hill, upper left corner.



Fig. 40: Mount Vernon Tavern (c. 1760, c. 1814); Plainfield Pike; 1975. From the south. General store and post office ell at left; main section — Pardon Holden's tavern and Mount Vernon Bank (opened 1823) — at right.

Potter opened a store and tavern in the former Ezekiel Hopkins House and built a fulling mill just south of the saw- and gristmills. In 1791 the Baptists under Elder John Williams built a meetinghouse at the summit of present Schoolhouse Hill; about 1797 the schoolhouse which gave the hill its name was also erected. By this time, too, Richard Nash had opened a tanyard and shoemaking business a little west of the meetinghouse. After the road through Hopkins Mills was taken over by the Foster and Scituate Turnpike Company in 1813-1814 and the Foster Woolen Factory was begun in 1813, several new houses were built, additional taverns opened, a post office was set up (about 1816), and a new schoolhouse was erected (about 1820) near the site of the earlier school. Stagecoach service along Danielson Pike, with a stop in Hopkins Mills to exchange mail, refresh travelers, and change horses, gave the hamlet a measure of prosperity for most of the nineteenth century. The economic base provided by the coach line, the Ram Tail Mill, and the ongoing saw- and gristmills, is reflected in the general store Henry Davis opened in 1842, the last such establishment to be built for many years anywhere in town.

Mount Vernon, named to honor the country's first President and located at the foot of Howard Hill Road where it meets Plainfield Pike, grew up at the end of the 1700s around a few houses, the Old Chestnut School, Artemas Fish's Schoolhouse, taverns run by Benjamin Fry and Francis Fuller, and the Friends Meetinghouse,

built in 1795. In 1794 the Plainfield Road became the Plainfield Turnpike, spurring further growth. About 1815 Pardon Holden opened Mount Vernon Tavern. With a general store and post office in its western wing and a bar in its southwest parlor (still extant), the tavern quickly became the focus of community life for turnpike travelers and local residents alike.

Genial host Pardon Holden, an astute businessman, was involved in other ventures as well. With Dr. Thomas O.H. Carpenter, Daniel Wood, and Nathaniel Stone, he was an agent in securing a charter for the Mount Vernon Bank, which opened in October, 1823, in the upper west front room of the tavern. Moved to Dr. Carpenter's stone apothecary shop and store west of the tavern in 1824, the bank operated there until 1853, when it relocated to Providence. Mount Vernon Bank was the only bank ever to operate in Foster and its effect on the town's economy was limited. Banks were primarily useful to industrial interests and Foster, despite all attempts to the contrary, remained solidly agricultural.

A plow works to manufacture cast iron plows, a wagon shop, and a brickyard added to Mount Vernon's prosperity in the first decades of the century, but by mid-century the hamlet was in decline.

Clayville, on the Foster-Scituate line, developed around a small water-powered cotton mill on Westconaug Brook opened about 1822 by Edmund L. Smith. Josiah Whittaker of Providence purchased Smith's factory and general store from various owners in 1826, and in 1827 or 1828 began to manufacture imitation tortoise shell combs. "Combville" grew quickly into village size and was named, in 1829, at the inhabitants' request, for Henry Clay, protector of fledgling American industries and a strong advocate of tariffs on foreign manufactures. The Clayville factory employed between seventy and one hundred people and sent to market each week combs worth over \$1,000. Almost all phases of manufacture, from cleaning and cutting the raw cow horn to polishing the finished combs, were mechanized. A series of later industries used and improved the mill site, and Clayville remained a bustling mill village into the early twentieth century.

Moosup Valley, also called "Tyler" or Tylerville in the early nineteenth century, stretched along Moosup Valley Road between Johnson Road and Barb's Hill Road. At its western end James Tyler's general store, in operation from 1812 to 1890, and cider mill were the centers of activity. Judge Tyler's "Tavern Stand" just east of Cucumber Hill Road attracted trade from 1780 until 1815, when the Great Gale of that year leveled its second story. Blanchard's gristmill, a half mile south of Moosup Valley Road on the Moosup River, opened

about 1790, and in 1811 the schoolhouse was built. Several stores, two cemeteries, and a church were later nineteenth-century additions to the hamlet.

North Foster is located at the crossing of Hartford Pike and Mount Hygeia Road. Never larger than a handful of buildings, it included in its 1800-1840 heyday the North Foster post office, Theodore Foster's law office (later Cook's store), Mount Hygeia schoolhouse, and one or two houses.



Fig. 41: Moosup Valley; c. 1910. Postcard view west along Moosup Valley Road. Moosup Valley Church; behind it Judge Tyler's "Tavern Stand," tavern and Town Council meeting place at the end of the 18th century.



Fig. 42: North Foster; c. 1890. View west along Hartford Pike. James Cook's Store and Post Office at right; H.J. Paine House, with picket fence (demolished 1980), in middle ground; Mount Hygeia Schoolhouse in distance.

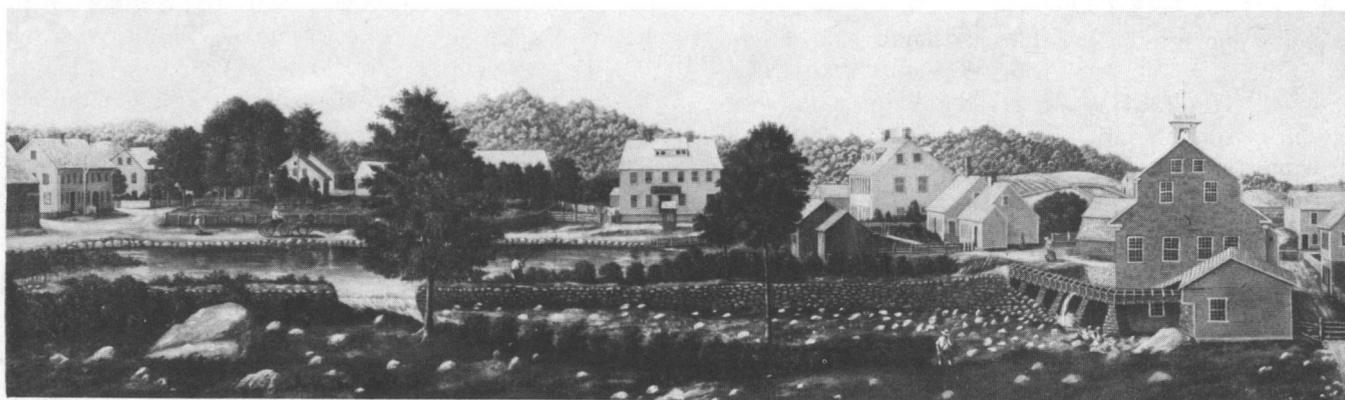


Fig. 43: Clayville; c. 1850. Clayville from the east, painted by an anonymous, mid-19th-century artist. Clayville Store is at the center with General Whitaker's ample, 2½-story house beside it. In the middle and right foreground are the mill buildings including the stuccoed stone mill with water conveyed to it via an elevated wooden sluice. At the far left are the Clayville boarding house and other dwellings. Josiah Whitaker converted the mill from the manufacture of tortoise shell combs to rubber shoes in 1847 and from shoes to cotton in 1853.

## Industrial Ventures

The industrial revolution which swept across and transformed nineteenth-century Rhode Island began at Pawtucket in 1790, when Samuel Slater succeeded in spinning cotton thread using waterpower for the first time in America. In the decades which followed this event, small-scale waterpowered mills were set up throughout the countryside wherever a likely site could be found. By 1810 there were cotton mills in nine towns; by 1815 there were mills in twenty-one. At first the mills only spun cotton or wool thread; after the introduction of the power loom in 1816, they also wove cloth. At the same time, the application of waterpower to manufacturing broadened to include other products as well.

Many of the small-scale mills begun in a flush of enthusiasm quickly proved unsuccessful, due to such problems as lack of sufficient waterpower, inefficient transportation, lack of technical or business expertise, or inadequate funding. Foster's small-scale textile ventures were no exception. Only one of the four textile mills begun between 1810 and 1825, the Foster Woolen Factory south of Hopkins Mills, is known to have lasted longer than four or five years.

William Potter ran a fulling mill (to clean home-woven woolen cloth) on the Ponagansett River just south of Hopkins Mills before 1799. In 1813 he took on partners and purchased additional land a half mile to the south. There he established the Foster Woolen Factory which, by 1831, was engaged in both spinning and weaving. With its mill, office, warehouse, and three or four mill houses, the Foster Woolen Factory (or Ram Tail Mill) was the most substantial attempt to develop waterpowered textile industry in Foster. However, it ceased operation before 1850, it is said, due to a falling out between William Potter and his partner and son-in-law Peleg Walker.

Edmund L. Smith started a cotton factory about 1822 in what shortly thereafter became the village of Clayville. Little is known about this venture, but it was probably not very successful, since the site was taken over and converted to comb manufacture about 1827.

Another cotton mill of which even less is known is the Chestnut Hill Mill begun about 1814 near Mount Vernon and the Coventry line. Stephen Potter established a short-lived cotton mill at the Dorrance Mill privilege in the western part of town in 1824. He continued the sawmill but introduced power looms to weave cotton cloth. In 1829 he had abandoned the mills, and only the sawmill was continued in operation by subsequent owners.

Other products manufactured using waterpower included imitation tortoise shell combs; metal products such as plows, wagon wheels, and nails; and more specialized wood products such as furniture and, probably, some architectural detail. Comb manufacturing at Clayville, carried on successfully from c. 1827 until 1847, spurred the development of other comb factories throughout Foster. These, however, operated on a much smaller scale and on a sporadic basis; one or two men might convert an existing saw- or gristmill for this use and run it for three or four years.

Speedwell Forge on Hemlock Brook northwest of Foster Center (c. 1789) and "a small branch of nailing" probably carried on at Levi Wade's triphammer shop on the Ponagansett north of Hopkins Mills were in operation before 1799, but several other waterpowered metal-processing operations were begun in the early nineteenth century. Among them were Walker Foundry on South Killingly Road, begun about 1800; a triphammer shop on Turkey Meadow Brook where it crosses Plainfield Pike in Mount Vernon, begun before 1820; and the Wood-Holden cast iron plow manufac-



Fig. 44: Ruins of Walker Foundry (c. 1800); South Killingly Road; c. 1920.

tory at Mount Vernon, begun about 1823, which may have re-used the earlier triphammer and site. The plows, cast from iron shipped by water from Albany to Providence and thence transported to Foster by horse-drawn sleds, were said to have been the first cast iron plows made in Rhode Island. The plow factory relocated to Providence in the 1840s.

Daniel Hopkins' mill on Hemlock Brook, in the elbow of Salisbury Road, is a good example of the application of waterpower to the production of more specialized wood products. The mill was begun and run by Daniel's father Nicholas Hopkins before 1792. By 1817 Daniel had acquired sole interest in the mill; that year he took on as partners William Stone, Benjamin Bennett, Jr., and George Phillips, and the company made substantial improvements to the mill to accommodate shingle making and wood turning. Some of the turnings were used by George Phillips to make chairs and bedsteads and probably other furniture as well. Wood turned on the water-driven lathe may also have been used for the turned posts supporting the gabled entry porticoes popular on Foster houses between 1815 and 1840.

Industries which did not require waterpower included brick making and stone quarrying. Brick making was a very small-scale endeavor carried on briefly by John Hammond at Foster Center and Benjamin Fry at Mount Vernon; but the industry never met even local demand, and bricks were "imported" from yards in Providence, Taunton, and elsewhere. Stone quarrying, in contrast, was a locally viable industry from the time of the earliest settlers into the 1970s. The supply of stone was seemingly endless and the transportation of the product was the only continuing difficulty. Most settlers probably cut, or had cut, stone on their land for foundation facings and hearths. Some barter of materials and certainly of labor was probably involved on occasion as well. One relatively large-scale enterprise was the Matthewson quarry located in a precipitous ledge a half mile east of Big Hill Road in the southeastern corner of town on the Foster-Coventry line. It was in use before 1825 when Joseph Parker sold it as a one-acre "Stone Pit" to Olney Matthewson, James Johnson, and Stephen Johnson, Jr., who apparently expanded the operation.

## Idyll at "Mount Hygeia"

Two of the most interesting and influential residents of Foster during this period were Theodore Foster and Solomon Drown. Fast friends from Brown University, Foster and Drown followed divergent paths for about twenty-five years between graduation in 1773 and settling in Foster about 1800.

Theodore Foster was busy as an attorney and scrivener, Providence Town Clerk (1775 to 1787), Secretary of the Rhode Island Council of War (1776 to 1781), and Representative to the General Assembly (1776 to 1782). In 1790 he was elected one of Rhode Island's first two United States Senators and served in that capacity until 1803.

Solomon Drown pursued a career as a physician. Following graduation and additional medical study in Pennsylvania and at Dartmouth, he served as a surgeon during the early years of the Revolution. In 1780, he settled in Providence, and tried to establish a medical practice there without success; later that year he became ship's physician on the privateer *Hope*. After the war, in 1784 and 1785, Drown toured medical schools and hospitals in England, Italy, Holland, and France, and further developed his interest in gardens and horticulture. He returned to Providence in 1785 and once again attempted to establish a medical practice. Drown's old friend Theodore Foster financed this attempt, underwriting the purchase of Drown's medical supplies, newspaper advertising, and even his office sign. Still, the attempt proved unsuccessful, and in 1788 Drown went as physician, proprietor, and land agent for the Ohio Land Company to the Northwest Territory where he was instrumental in founding Marietta, Ohio. Among his patients there was James Mitchell Varnum of East Greenwich, then Judge of the Territory. Drown returned to Providence briefly, moved to Virginia in 1792, and in 1794 settled with his family in Union, Pennsylvania.

Solomon Drown returned to Rhode Island in 1801, at Theodore Foster's urging, and purchased a farm in northern Foster adjoining property Foster had bought in 1799. Theodore Foster joined Drown in 1803 at the

end of his final term in the Senate. Both men had long talked of establishing themselves in a setting conducive to contemplation and the pursuit of their chosen studies, and the move to Foster was the beginning of nearly a twenty-year idyll of rural retreat.

Although they did find time for contemplation and study—Drown for botany, medicine, literature, and classics, and Foster for history, statistics, and literature—both men continued to practice their given professions. Drown ministered to the sick and injured, taught *Materia Medica* and botany at Brown University, and was an incorporator and active member of the Rhode Island Medical Society. As a member of the Rhode Island Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry, he spoke in 1823 and again in 1829 on improving agricultural knowledge and practice in Rhode Island. He also collaborated with his son William Drown in writing *The Compendium of Agriculture or the Farmer's Guide*, published in 1824, which outlined specific recommendations for such matters as crop rotation, soil improvement, increased and improved cultivation of fruit, and the proper cultivation of other crops. A noted orator, Drown was often called upon to make public speeches on other subjects as well. Perhaps his best known addresses were a eulogy delivered at Union, Pennsylvania, in 1800, on the death of George Washington, and his "Oration in Aid of the Cause of the Greeks" delivered February 23, 1824, in the First Baptist Meetinghouse in Providence, by invitation of the citizens of that city.

Theodore Foster maintained his law office in a small house near his farm, north of the Hartford Turnpike. As a country lawyer he was sometimes paid in cash, but more often in goods. This supply of agricultural products must have made cultivation of his own farm less important and allowed him to concentrate on serving as Foster's representative to the General Assembly from 1812 to 1816 and on maintaining Providence contacts and activities. He kept a law office in Providence, served as a trustee of Brown University, and was also a trustee and board member of the Providence Library Company, forerunner of the Providence Athenaeum.

The house Theodore Foster proposed to build in his

name-sake town was to have been three stories high, echoing the Federal mansions being built in Providence and in other centers with which Foster was familiar. The house, however, was never built; instead, Foster undertook extensive remodeling of the house which already stood on his farm. In 1820, Theodore Foster moved back to Providence; his house was thereafter used as a tavern and later moved to Danielson, Connecticut, where it still stands.

The house Solomon Drown had built in 1807 and 1808, which he named "Mount Hygeia" after the Greek goddess of health, survives on its original site, somewhat back from Mount Hygeia Road at the end of a lane, surrounded by remnants of what were once beautifully landscaped grounds. On the exterior, the house is typical of the period: a gable-roofed, two-and-a-half-story, five-bay structure with dentil cornice and a pedimented fanlit central entrance. Provision of a secondary entrance in the south gable end is not typical, however, and the cross-axial floor plan with four principal rooms and two interior chimneys is unique in Foster. The woodwork of the northwest parlor, a charming attempt at sophistication, is also unique, with its bold overscaled modillion cornice and swooping broken-scroll-pedimented mantel, said to have been modelled on one Drown had seen in George Washington's home at Mount Vernon in 1792.

Drown combined his physician's belief that natural remedies were best with a botanist's curiosity in discovering new kinds and qualities of plant life, and created extensive botanical gardens around his house. Here he grew medicinal plants and herbs, and ornamentals both native and imported; eventually his gardens were so extensive that two men were needed to maintain them. Along the lane leading to the house, in the fields, and along the stream which ran through his farm he planted many kinds of trees. He was particularly interested in the sugar maple for its sap which could be reduced to make sugar (which he encouraged as an alternative to the cane sugar produced by slave labor), and in the mulberry, which could be used to host silk worms. Like a number of other Rhode Island men at this time, Drown experimented with silk culture, with limited success.

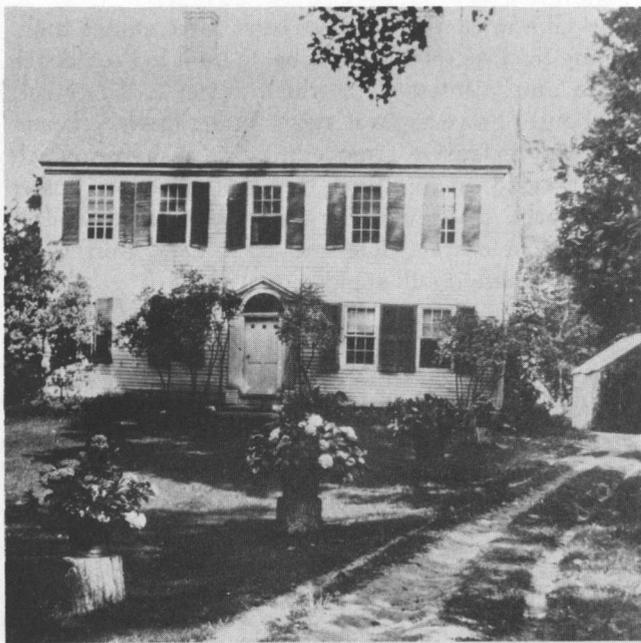


Fig. 45A: "Mount Hygeia"/Solomon Drown House (1807-1808); Mount Hygeia Road; c. 1900. The house, maintained as a family museum and nestled in the landscaped setting created for it by Dr. Solomon Drown's famous botanical gardens.



Fig. 45B: "Mount Hygeia"/Solomon Drown House (1807-1808); Mount Hygeia Road; c. 1950. The house, vacant and derelict after the death of the last direct descendant.



Fig. 45C: "Mount Hygeia"/Solomon Drown House (1807-1808); Mount Hygeia Road; 1975. The house restored.

The house and grounds were carefully maintained by the family after Solomon Drown's death in 1834 and were opened as a private museum in the late nineteenth century. From 1941 onward, however, as a result of innumerable inherited interests in the property, the house stood vacant for about twenty years, during which time it was subjected to vandalism and the grounds were obscured by surrounding woodland. Reclamation of the property from the snarls of entangled ownership and rampant undergrowth began in 1963, and restoration work is in process.

The effect of Solomon Drown and Theodore Foster on the town of Foster was great. Both men were involved in the improvement of their community and Foster, particularly, was full of plans and projects. In a letter to Drown written from Washington, December 25, 1801, Foster wrote:

"I was. . .greatly pleased with your expres-

sion in your letter. . .That you hoped to make the very rocks subservient to rural ornament.' . .Yes, my friend, we will make the very rocks of Mount Hygeia subservient to its improvement and ornament. . .We have a good soil—a healthy hill, and I hope and believe good hearted people around us. Let us endeavor to make a good and sensible, a well informed neighborhood there, BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOOD CIRCULATING LIBRARY. . .Let us also endeavor to obtain a Turnpike road by our TEMPE, from Hartford to Providence, to facilitate the intercourse between those rapidly flourishing towns; a direct line between which will pass very near the hill which we have chosen to improve. . .

In all these plans Foster succeeded, writing and securing a charter for the Hartford Turnpike in 1803

and establishing the Foster Social Library, one of the earliest rural libraries in the state, in 1806. In 1811 he served with Nathaniel Stone and William Potter on a local committee to resolve the problem of where the boundary between Foster and Gloucester lay, and in 1815 he secured a charter for the Foster and Gloucester Appian Way Society. This organization intended to construct a major north-south road from Plainfield Pike in Mount Vernon through central Foster north to Gloucester and beyond. Theodore Foster conceived of it as a magnificent wide thoroughfare to be paved with large well-fitting blocks of stone, similar to those with which the Roman road laid out by Appius Claudius had been paved. Very little, if any of this Appian Way was ever built, although the broad section of Mount Hygeia Road running through land formerly owned by Theodore Foster and Solomon Drown just south of the Hartford Pike may have been a part of it. In 1815 Theodore Foster also arranged postal service for Foster. His son, Ebenezer, became the first postmaster and Theodore

Foster himself held the position from 1816 until the time he left Foster in 1820, surfeited with rural isolation and tranquility and drawn by his Providence involvements.

Solomon Drown's civic activities in Foster are less well documented and were probably less extensive than those of Theodore Foster. He lent his support to Foster's plans, but his prime and frequently inseparable interests remained agriculture, botany, and medicine. Drown must surely have been thought of as a local "character." He frequently arrived late at a patient's bedside because he had stopped to collect botanical specimens along the way. South of his house, in the hemlock grove he planted, he planned to build a "Rotundo of Worthies," a building which, in European fashion, could be furnished with his favorite books and decorated with portraits of persons distinguished in literature and science and with tablets bearing inscriptions from his favorite studies. This project was cut short by Drown's death in 1834, but a circular stone foundation remains.

In May, 1820, Solomon Drown was responsible for one of Foster's more humorous events. Guests at a local wedding had apparently been discussing the newly-held theory that the wearing of corsets could be detrimental to a maiden's health and eventually lead, through various maladies, to consumption. Drown recorded in his journal the subsequent event which occurred at Mount Hygeia, the "Conflagration of Corsets." "With a little persuasion (sic) the ladies consented to the sacrifice, a procession was formed, a fire kindled & the articles from Pandora's box committed to the flames." Drown delivered an impromptu oration upon the occasion, typically full of classical allusions and good humor: "Let me observe to the honor, & for the satisfaction of this amiable group, thus laudably sacrificing to health, on Mount Hygeia: that this transaction may induce very many, now enslaved by fashion, to follow our flaming example. Assuredly, should another Phidias arise, and search our country for perfect models. . . he would sooner look among the uncorsetted daughters of the wilderness than amid large cities, where Nature's loveliest forms are distorted, and the bloom of health blasted, by accursed fashion."

## STAGNATION AND DECLINE (1830-1895)

By 1820 Foster's population was 2,900 and there were approximately 400 dwelling houses, one cotton and one woolen factory, one clothiers works, one carding machine, eleven gristmills, three tanneries, two trip-hammer shops, seven stores, a Society of Friends, two or three Baptist churches, eleven schools, and one library. This impressive inventory of progress, listed in the *Rhode Island Register* for 1820, belied the years of stagnation and decline which were to follow. With the advent of the large-scale industrialism in New England, the opening of fertile agricultural lands to the north and west, and the continued development of shipping and whaling along Narragansett Bay, farming Foster's poor and increasingly worn-out soil became less and less attractive, particularly to the young.

The town's population went into a precipitous decline between 1820 and 1830 which continued, almost without pause, until well past the turn of the century. The number of inhabitants fell 7.9 per cent between 1820 and 1830 and 18.4 per cent between 1830 and 1840. By 1895 the town's population had been reduced to 1,190, two-fifths of its 1820 peak. By 1895, too, Foster's average family size was the smallest in Rhode Island; the town's percentage of aged persons (sixty years and over) was the state's highest (22.1 per cent compared to the state average of 7.6 per cent); and its "productive class" (those between ages fifteen and fifty-nine) was the smallest of any Rhode Island community (56.56 per cent). Few new residents moved to Foster, yet elsewhere in the state and in neighboring Connecticut expanding mill villages and industrial cities were attracting not only country men and women but foreign-born workers in vast numbers. Foster, in 1895, with only half of one small mill village within its borders, had fewer inhabitants of foreign birth or parentage than any other Rhode Island town except West Greenwich and Exeter.

All of Foster's hamlets lost population during these years. By 1865 only Clayville, Foster Center, and Hopkins Mills were populous enough to be named as villages in the census. A few houses and stores and five or six churches were built between 1820 and 1870, but

there was almost no new construction thereafter. Farms throughout town stood abandoned. A contemporary chronicler writing of Foster in 1893 described "mouldering homesteads, widely scattered, many falling to decay" and a pervasive air of antiquity and abandonment. The same observer scorned the town's rock-strewn farms: "A farm in Foster. This is a term which in Rhode Island has grown to be synonymous with the acme of barrenness and sterility."

## The Outside World

The primary reasons for Foster's decline lay outside the town's borders. Chief among them was the transformation of Rhode Island into the most industrial state in the nation, beginning with the mechanization of textile manufacture in 1790. At first, water-powered spinning and weaving took place at small mill sites scattered across the countryside; Foster had several of such mills in the first decades of the nineteenth century. After 1830, however, the scale of manufacturing operations increased. Larger mill complexes were concentrated in areas which offered adequate and reliable waterpower and the best transportation for raw and finished goods, as well as for coal after steam power was introduced. Towns such as West Greenwich, Foster, and Exeter fell short on both counts: their waterpower was limited and seasonal and their isolation, temporarily mitigated by the advent of the turnpikes, became an even greater disadvantage with the rise of the railroads in the mid-1830s. Except for the Clayville factory, there were no textile mills operating in Foster after 1840, and only a few small-scale water-powered industries.

It is not surprising that many people sought mill work, for according to the United States Patent Office *Annual Report on Agriculture* in 1840, in Rhode Island "while farm laborers were receiving from \$12 to \$15 a month for ordinary farm work, and \$1 a day for mowing, mechanics were receiving from \$1 to \$2 a day through the year." To the young, mill villages and urban centers offered a more exciting way of life than that "down on the farm." As agricultural historian Percy Bidwell wrote, "the younger generation had the idea that farming was bound to be unprofitable and also were oppressed with a growing sense of social inferior-



Fig. 46: Homestrike Mining Company processing mill (1901, dismantled 1905); Goldmine Road; c. 1901. Gold fever hit Foster residents about 1850 and again in 1900, after John Avery Perry found gold on the Harrington Farm in southwestern Foster. This building embodied the dreams of Perry and his partners, but was soon dismantled. Only a stone dam across the brook, several deep, circular mine shafts, and a long cut through ledge rock known as "Poverty Gulch" today mark the the location of Foster's goldmine.

ity to city folks." Among the Foster farmers who chose to relocate to mill villages were Sampson Battey, who moved to Danielson, Connecticut, in 1815 or 1816; Anan and Abby Burgess Aldrich, parents of nationally prominent U.S. Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, who moved to East Killingly, Connecticut, about 1845; and Richard and Varnum Howard who worked in a variety of Rhode Island mills.

As early as the 1760s, some residents had turned their backs on the rocky uplands of Foster for greener pastures in New Hampshire and Vermont. In the 1780s veterans of the Revolution were authorized to claim bounty lands in both New York and Vermont. A sec-

ond "military" tract, set aside in the 1790s, included 1,500,000 acres of prime land in the eastern Finger Lake region. This land and the privately owned Genesee Country of 2,250,000 acres immediately to its west were both attractive and easily accessible via the Mohawk Trail. Some 60,000 people flocked to central and western New York between 1790 and 1810, and hill-country New Englanders predominated. Sometimes "Genesee Fever" struck and transported whole villages; more often the new pioneers moved in large family units. The Howards, the Yeaws, and the Harringtons were among the second- and third-generation Foster residents who migrated in this way.

The opening of the West promised both adventure and prosperity. In 1841, a New England farmer complained: "A great proportion of our young men, on arriving at the age of manhood, push their fortunes in the West, and take their farms on the rich bottom lands of the Mississippi, and its tributaries, leaving the agricultural portions of New England, with help scarcely sufficient to cultivate their lands in the ordinary way." These young people were leaving at a critical time, for farm labor in the East was already in short supply due to the rise of manufacturing. As a result, many farmers who stayed in Foster had the help neither of hired workers nor of older family members and thus were reduced to raising only as much as they and their wives and youngest children could harvest. For the prospective "hired hand" there was little inducement to remain in the East, working someone else's land, when farm labor in the West was in such demand and land there generally so inexpensive that, at least in the 1850s, the price of a day's labor would purchase an acre of land.

The increasing demand for skilled labor for small-scale industries on the edges of the sparsely settled new frontier—sawmilling, gristmilling, wagon making, and metal-working—drew ambitious New Englanders as did the railroads' need for men to lay out new western lines. According to *Hunt's Merchant's Magazine*, in 1857 construction and operation of the railroads drew 400,000 able-bodied men from other employment.

In addition, the discovery of gold in California in 1848 caused mass exodus from the East. In 1848 there were scarcely 15,000 white inhabitants in what became California; by 1857 there were half a million. A number of venturesome Foster men went to California and Australia seeking their fortunes. Thomas Hill, of Rockland, died in California in 1850. Samuel Bennett of Foster, faring better, made a substantial profit which he invested in the farm known as Cranberry Hill Farm on (Old) Plainfield Pike in 1858; the deeds show a purchase price of \$2,100, which Bennett is said to have paid in gold nuggets. Bradford Johnson, a mule skinner at the Rockland mill in 1850, left Foster for Australia in late 1850 or 1851. In 1858, flush with Australian gold, Johnson had a new house built, which still stands north of Moosup Valley Road.

"Gold fever" in Foster subsided about 1860, but not permanently. In the mid 1890s, John Avery Perry, a Tiverton native and a California Fortyniner, moved with his wife Ellatheia Harrington Perry, to the Harrington farm in southwestern Foster. There he found promising traces of gold in a vein of quartz. With his son, Adelbert Perry (who had spent some time in West Coast gold fields and had taken a course in mining engineering) and two neighbors, Clarke H. Johnson and Curtis Foster, John Perry incorporated the Homestrike Mining Company in February, 1900. By May, 1901, \$20,000 for the venture had been subscribed, and the mine was in operation. By April of 1902, however, it had become clear that the amount of gold present in the mine did not make continuing the operation worthwhile. The processing mill shut down immediately but mining continued until 1905. The buildings and machinery were subsequently dismantled and shipped via train to other New England mines. Only the stone dam across the brook, a number of shafts, and the long horizontal cut through ledge rock called "Poverty Gulch" remain today to underline the pathetic denouement of "gold fever" in Foster.

The lure of the sea, the fourth factor in the decline of towns like Foster, has been less thoroughly documented than that of western lands, perhaps because records of land transfers are more easily researched than are ships' logs and crew lists. It is clear, however, that the call of the sea was heard in New England hill country towns including Foster. Whaling, which rose to prominence in the 1820s and peaked in Rhode Island about 1843, engaged a number of Foster residents, among them Jefferson Spurr Howard (b. 1833) who went on a three-year whaling voyage in the Northern Pacific in 1851 and two subsequent voyages (which he sandwiched in between making wagons, brass combs, and cow horn chain jewelry) and Joseph Howard (b. 1823) who went on a two-year whaling voyage to the Pacific about 1845, thereafter returning to his Foster farm until after the Civil War, when he turned to work as a stone mason constructing cotton mills. Isaac Howard (b. 1819) went to sea at age fourteen, was a sailor for ten years, and then went west to Missouri, Arkansas, and finally, the Ozark Country, spending his time variously working in a wagon factory, farming, and clerking; just before the

Civil War he studied medicine and became a doctor. The restlessness and mobility embodied by these three men characterized the lives of many Foster residents and illustrate how little the hinterlands offered to the ambitious in an era of great opportunity.

#### Life and a Living in Foster

Those who were not lured by the promise of gold or the sea, by new lands or the steady wages and more sophisticated life-style offered by the mill towns, stayed in Foster working with the resources at hand—rocky land, limited streams, scattered farms, and a small, aged, but ever resourceful population.

Most of Foster's working population continued to farm. However, between 1830 and 1895 there was a steady decline in individual farm size and, except for

the Civil War years, in total farm acreage under cultivation. In 1850 total farm acreage reported was 27,681 acres, 15,385 acres "improved" and 12,296 acres "unimproved," divided among 284 farms; an average farm included 97.47 acres. By 1895, however, total farm acreage dropped to 24,134 and average farm size to 71.61 acres. In contrast, the number of individual farms continued to rise during the same period, to 377 in 1895; the only variation came in 1870, when the number of farms reported declined from 311 in 1865 to 293, probably due to disruptions resulting from the Civil War.

Agricultural land use also changed in this period. In 1840, grazing, especially the raising of sheep and hogs, was the focus of agriculture in Foster and elsewhere in southern New England. As large-scale agriculture developed in the West, grazing became less profitable

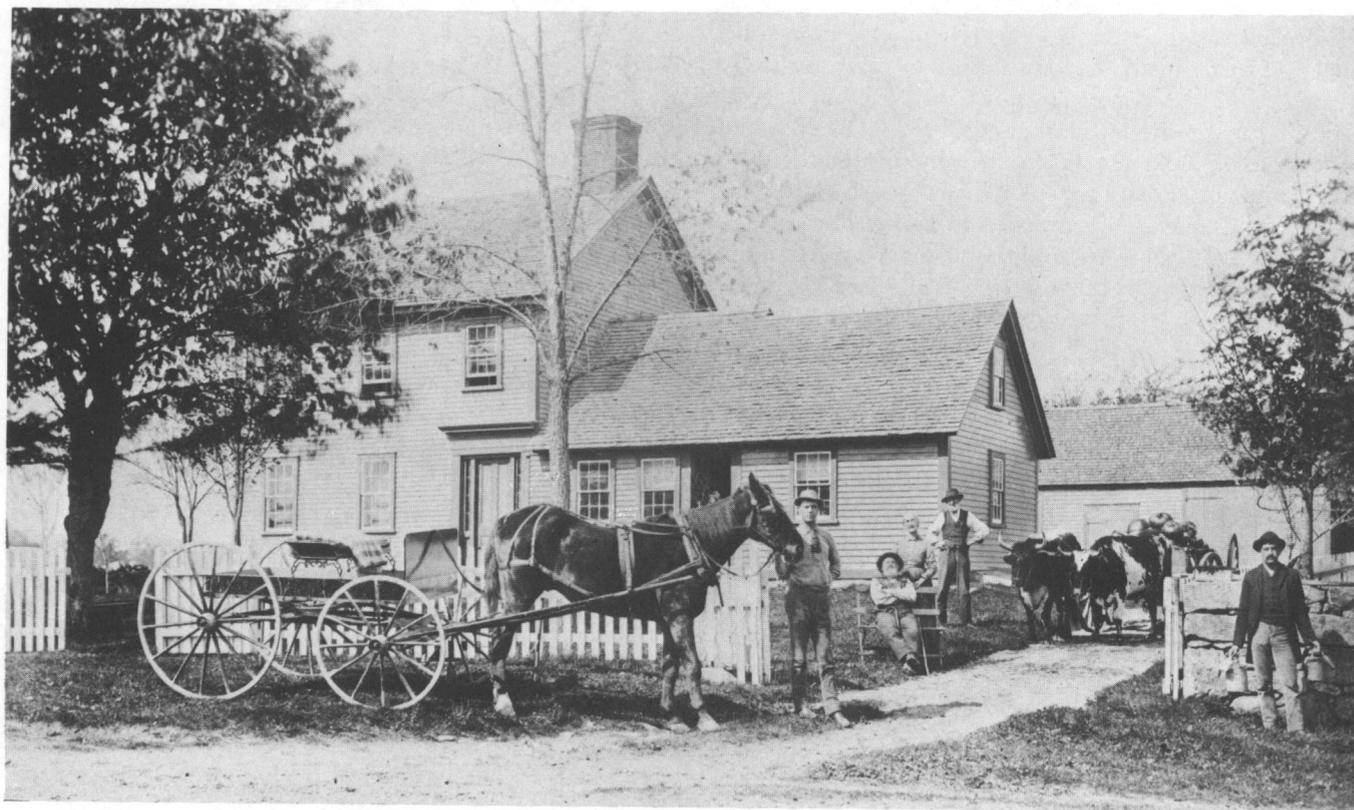


Fig. 47: Fuller family on Whidden-Fuller Farm (c. 1770, c. 1800); Old Plainfield Pike; c. 1890. From left to right: John Fuller (son of Thomas Fuller), Thomas Fuller's father (seated), Mrs. Thomas Fuller, Thomas Fuller, and hired man John Tanner (with jugs). Note oxen pulling the cartload of squash.

and less important in New England, as did the growing of wheat and other cereals.

The vast geography of the Western plains was conducive to lower land prices, larger individual farm holdings, and easier conversion to mechanized farming than in the East. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, plows, harrows, and two-wheeled carts were the only kinds of farm equipment to which animal power was applied. The ensuing years saw not only the introduction of more effective plow and harrow designs and the substitution of the four-wheeled horse-drawn wagon for the two-wheeled ox-cart, but also, particularly after 1840, the extension of housepower to other farm tasks, among them corn-planting, cultivating, hay-raking, reaping, and threshing.

In New England mowing and other horse-powered machines were not in use to any great extent until after 1850. The smallness of the farms and the stone-wall-enclosed fields made mechanization not only physically difficult but also, on first appearance, a poor investment. The traditional closeness of the New England farmer to his oxen was another major retardant to mechanization. Foster census figures reveal a late transition from dependence on oxen to dependence on the horse: in 1850 there were still 330 working oxen and only 209 horses; by 1895 the balance had changed: there were 161 oxen and 304 horses. A third factor delaying mechanization, and agricultural improvement



Fig. 48: William Harrington Farm (c. 1858); Harrington Road; c. 1890. View southeast across rock-strewn fields; Harrington's new barn is at left.

in general in New England, was the lack of ready capital.

As western agriculture supplied ever greater quantities of cereals, beef, and pork, shipping these products to eastern markets inexpensively over the new network of railroads, Eastern farmers turned to "market gardening," raising those perishable comestibles which could not be shipped from the West for consumption by the populace of the growing mill towns and urban centers. Those rural areas served by local rail service became flourishing collection centers for produce from a whole hinterland area. Centers such as Greene in Coventry prospered until the introduction of refrigerated freight

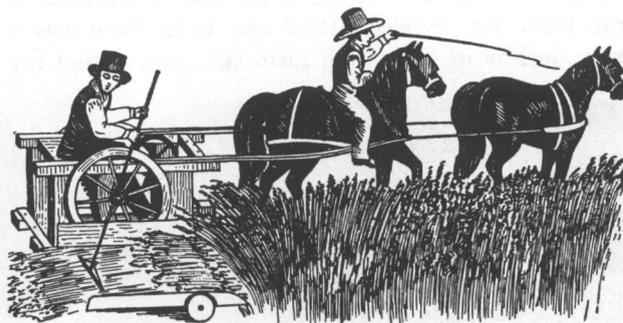


Fig. 49: The mechanization of agriculture: Hussey's reaper; 1837. Invented in Cincinnati in 1833, this was the most widely known reaper in 1840. Like other new farm machines, it used horses rather than oxen for power.

cars in the early twentieth century made many perishables, like grain and meat before them, the profitable province of western agriculture.

Greene Station was the closest railroad depot for most Foster farmers. However, the roads to Greene were rough, and rail transportation costs and handling fees cut into the thin margin of profits the farmer might expect. Many farmers chose instead to make the long jolting trip into Providence themselves, taking their produce to market in their wagons, a tradition which continued into the twentieth century.

In 1850 the prime crops in Foster were Indian corn, Irish potatoes, butter, cheese, and fruits and vegetables. Over the course of the next four decades production of

Indian corn, oats, barley, and other lesser cereals as well as sheep and swine, declined dramatically. Production of potatoes dropped off sharply, too—by about 50 per cent after 1875, partly as a result of persistent problems with blight but also because of Western competition. Hay continued in demand, although it was not as universally grown, and dairy products, market garden fruits, and vegetables were in ascendancy.

Beets, flat and French turnips, cucumbers, tomatoes, pumpkins, lettuce, parsnips, cabbage, asparagus, cranberries (first reported in the 1885 census), whortleberries (which appear only in the 1875 census), huckleberries, peaches, pears, quinces, currants, and strawberries were among the fruits and vegetables newly listed in Foster censuses, if not newly grown as well, after about 1875. Cucumbers flourished particularly in western Foster and were taken by wagon to a pickle factory in Providence; the name Cucumber Hill Road commemorates the trade. The attempt to develop a cranberry industry was common to a number of the hill towns in the 1880s. The industry in Coventry still survives in one location, but Foster's efforts proved relatively fruitless and were discontinued by the early twentieth century.

As market gardening grew in importance, increasing attention was paid not only to bush fruits but also to the development of peach and cherry orchards and to some improvement in apple culture. The temperance

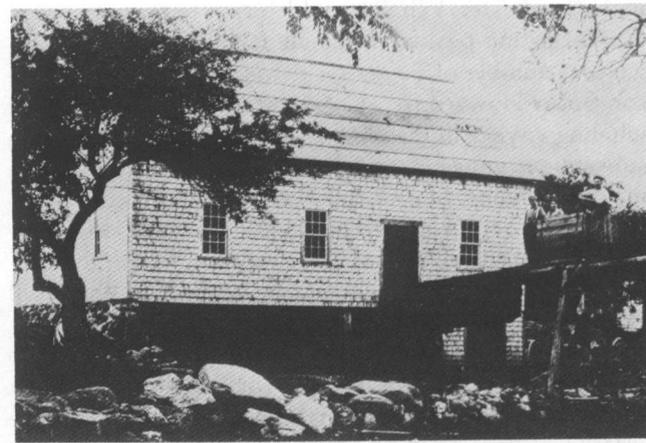


Fig. 50: Brayton Cider Mill (c. 1870); Howard Hill Road and Rock Brook; c. 1895. Moved from the Brayton Farm to this location about 1890.

movement of the 1830s had put a temporary damper on production of apples, which were mostly used for cider at that time, but by the 1840s apples had proved their staying power as an agricultural staple. With the rise of urban centers, hay and apples were both in demand as fodder for horses in liveries and private stables; and the introduction of the table apple about the same time also increased consumption. Despite the development of various horticultural societies throughout the nineteenth century, pomologists in the early twentieth century still found much to criticize in Rhode Island apple culture, including lack of adequate pruning, spraying, and soil cultivation.

Forest products assumed greater importance after 1875. As early as 1839 wood for fuel for industry as well as for home heating was cut as a cash crop; in 1850 fifty cords of wood were reported to the census; by 1885 over 5,000 cords of wood were reported. The 1885 census reported charcoal, railroad ties, and telegraph poles for the first time, in addition to greatly increased quantities of shingles, lumber, and cordwood.

Although the production of cheese declined sharply after 1850, as a result of the rise of dairying in New York and Vermont, production of butter, cream, and milk for commercial sale became increasingly important. In 1888 Cold Spring Creamery at Moosup Valley and the Ponagansett Valley Creamery in Hopkins Mills were organized. The Ponagansett Creamery, opened April 1, 1889, with nineteen patrons and one hundred cows; it separated milk and made and marketed both butter and cream, as well as the potash left over from the wood it burned. By 1895 various factors had combined to lead to the Creamery's demise: capital stock was limited to \$4,000, ice was hard to procure, storage was a continuing problem, and the flaxseed used with milk to form "oil meal," which was fed to dairy calves, was increasing costly. Only the incised stone door sill of the Creamery building is preserved today, re-used in a newer barn near the site of the Creamery on a hillside west of Hopkins Mills Pond. Moosup Valley Creamery was a larger, more carefully organized operation. Among its officers were several local residents noted for their forward agricultural

thinking: Clarke H. Johnson as President and Curtis H. Foster as Manager. The company erected a long low single-story building (which still stands though now used as a residence) and furnished it with up-to-date machinery. Supplied by about five hundred cows, the Moosup Valley Creamery is said to have made 47,000 pounds of butter in 1891. However, butter production dropped to only 25,981 pounds in 1895, due probably to the fact that the Ponagansett Creamery was about to fail and that greater emphasis was being placed on production of milk and cream as commodities in their own

right. In 1895, a total of 307,919 gallons of milk were produced in comparison to 188,538 gallons in 1885 and production of cream had increased from 1,064 gallons in 1885 to 10,631 in 1895.

The raising of poultry for eggs and meat increased steadily from 1865 onward. This branch of farming was especially important in the early twentieth century and is still carried on at two or three farms. Many early twentieth-century chicken coops still stand throughout town.

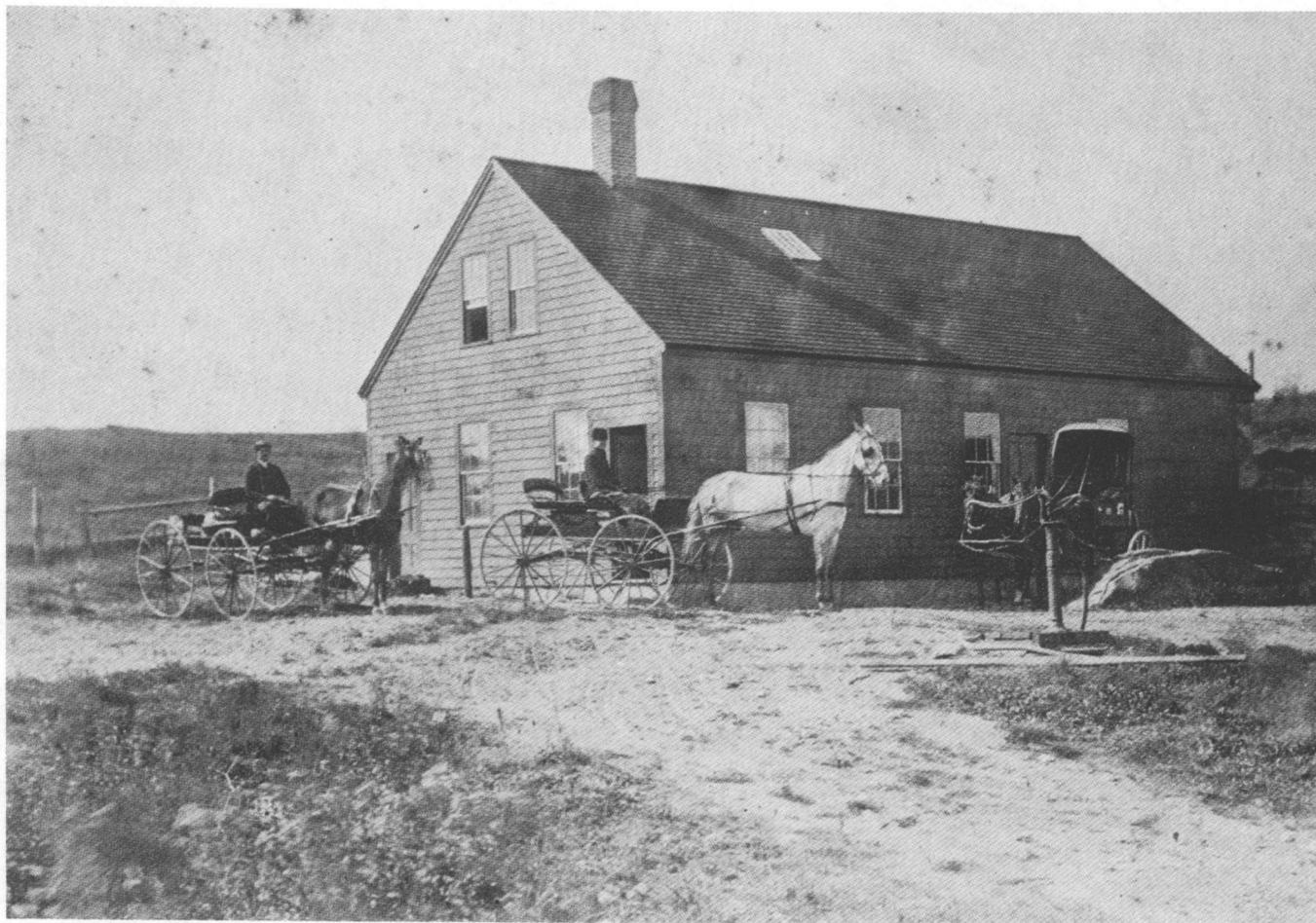


Fig. 51: Cold Spring Creamery (c. 1889); Moosup Valley Road; c. 1895. View south showing the creamery in its brief heyday. The hand pump in the front yard was connected to an underground storage vat for milk.



Fig. 52: W.H. Collins Bobbin Mill (c. 1865); Old Plainfield Pike; 1975. From the east.



Fig. 53: Unidentified gristmill on the Ponagansett River (c. 1880?); c. 1890.



Fig. 54: John T. Randall Wheelwright Shop (c. 1800 et seq.); Howard Hill Road; 1981. From the northeast. A large water wheel was in the near end of the building under which the brook still flows. The building at the left, now used as a garage, was built as a foundry about 1870. A paint shop stood north of it.

Increasingly, residents took on other types of work in addition to farming. Blacksmithing; wheel and carriage making; coopering; cutting cordwood for factory and domestic use; making charcoal, potash, and pearl ash for use in soap making and commercial dyeing, bleaching, and tanning; milling grain and sawing lumber; and small-scale manufacture of jewelry and combs—all were part-time alternatives followed more and more frequently after 1830.

Richard Howard, for example, whose house (c. 1820) still stands on Plainfield Pike, farmed, ran a general store and post office, was a Justice of the Peace and State Senator, and carried on a trade as a cabinet maker. Thomas Fuller specialized in manufacturing brooms out of broom corn he grew for that purpose on his farm on Plainfield Pike. The operation relocated to Providence between 1870 and 1891, but Fuller's farmhouse, the broom factory, and other subsidiary outbuildings still stand. Tanning operations about the middle of the century included Draper's tanyard west of Hopkins Mills and that of William Collins in the southern part of town, which was re-used after the Civil War for a bobbin works. The long nondescript two-story gable-roofed frame structure, which housed the works at least as late as 1895 and supplied bobbins for textile manufacturers elsewhere in Rhode Island, still stands, albeit in somewhat deteriorated and altered condition. The slope named "Pot Ash Hill," which rises north of Moosup Valley Road east of Johnson Road, commemorates the industry carried on there in the nineteenth century. None of these operations shows up in the nineteenth century census data.

Manufactories and mills large enough to merit inclusion in the census figures generally were foundries (listed either under blacksmiths or under carriage and agricultural implement making); a few shingle, stave, and sawmills; and several gristmills. An assessment of the relative scale of Foster's "industries" can be based on the fact that the gristmill run by Herbert A. Potter in Hopkins Mills, which produced 6,000 bushels of grist valued at \$6,400 in 1870, had by far the largest output of any gristmill in town that year and, moreover, had the most valuable product of any industry reporting. Of the eighteen manufacturing concerns reporting

products of value greater than \$500 per annum in 1870, all except one (run by manual labor) were powered by water. Only six—two blacksmiths, one stave mill, and three makers of agricultural implements and/or carriages—reported year-round operation; twelve other shingle, saw-, or gristmills operated for between two and six months each year.

Manufacture of combs and jewelry out of cow horn and brass was tried frequently from 1830 till about 1880. The 1850 census, for example, reported ten combmakers in town. The impetus probably came from Josiah Whitaker's comb factory at Clayville operating between 1828 and 1847. Stephen Yates and Jefferson Spurr Howard were among other local producers of combs and jewelry. Yates married the daughter of Richard Howard (store keeper and post master on the Plainfield Pike) in 1833 and set up a small comb factory. In 1854, Yates moved to Massachusetts, then to Providence in 1855 where he continued to make imitation tortoise shell jewelry out of cow horns. Jefferson Spurr Howard, returning from a youthful whaling voyage in 1855, married the daughter of prosperous farmer Joshua Paine and set up a waterpowered shop on Paine Brook beside the Paine House, where he had a wagon and blacksmith shop until 1860. In 1868, he re-used the shop for the manufacture of brass combs, and from 1873 to 1877 he made cow horn chains and jewelry. A section of the dry-laid stone wall of the shop rises beside Paine Brook today.

The single exception to this picture of essentially home-based small-scale industry was the mill at Clayville, which operated almost continuously, making one thing or another, from 1822 until 1922. One reason Clayville prospered was that Josiah Whitaker, and other men associated with the Remington and Rockland Mills downstream from Clayville in Scituate, secured an increased and more reliable water supply by building the Westconnaug Reservoir in the mid 1840s. Land was acquired in the name of the Westconnaug Reservoir Company in 1845 and the reservoir was actually built in 1846-1847. The massive stone and gravel dam at Clayville, downstream from the Westconnaug Reservoir dam, was probably built about the same time. The Clayville dam—two hundred and seventy-five feet



Fig. 55A: Upper Mill at Clayville (1857); Victory Highway; 1915. Demolished for the Scituate Reservoir c. 1923.

long, fifteen feet high and from fifteen to twenty feet wide on top, built of gravel faced with "a good substantial stone wall, and lined with sheet piling"—was quite an engineering feat for its day. The dam and mill pond still remain, as do two arched bridges of dry-laid stone immediately below the dam.

Josiah Whitaker converted the old comb factory into a rubber shoe manufactory in 1847 and in 1853 he converted it once again, this time into a cotton mill. A fire necessitated rebuilding the factory in 1857; a second mill was erected farther downstream in 1858. Both buildings were of stuccoed quarried granite and had broad gable roofs with long clerestory monitors. The upper mill had a frame Greek Revival foretower, with a belfry for the mill bell. In 1858 the mills were leased, and in 1860, bought by Lindsay Jordan, a maker of print cloths. His estate ran the mills from 1865 to 1875; thereafter Charles Jordan was in charge until the complex was purchased, about 1880, by S.R. Weeden and Son, manufacturers of cotton yarn. In 1878 the two mills had a capacity of one hundred and twenty horse power, contained one hundred and eight looms, and employed seventy-five hands—an impressive operation for Foster but a very small one in contrast to other mills in surrounding towns.

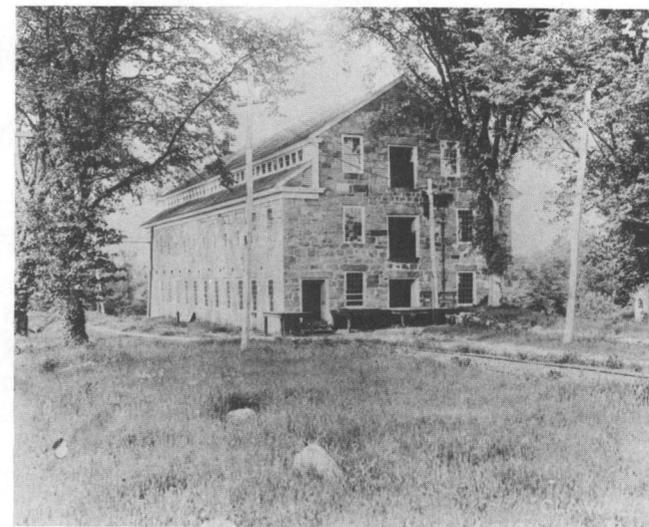


Fig. 55B: Lower Mill at Clayville (1858); Victory Highway; 1915. Demolished for the Scituate Reservoir c. 1923.

### Later Nineteenth-Century Architecture

New buildings in Foster from 1840 to the end of the century were relatively few. Those that were built, mostly schools and churches, with a few houses and stores, reflected a simplified version of the Greek Revival style. This style became popular after the Greek Wars of Independence from 1821 to 1827 with which the newly-independent Americans closely identified. Building forms were based on the idea of a Greek temple, with prominent pediment and columns; details echoed Greek motifs, most frequently the acanthus leaf and the key or fret. In sophisticated urban centers Greek Revival style houses and commercial buildings were usually sited gable end to the street; the resemblance of the gable to the temple pediment was emphasized by this orientation and by the use of pronounced cornices which came partly or all the way across the gable end. Columns—either free-standing and full-height or flattened and applied as pilasters to the facades or corners of buildings—were another hallmark of the style. The floor plan of most houses also changed, from the earlier center-chimney five-room plan or the center-hall four-room plan to a side-hall plan, with entrance to the left or right in the three-bay gable end facade opening into a side entry hall; major



Fig. 56: A. Bennett House (1849); North Road; 1981. The panelled doorway and corner pilasters and broad cornice frieze are typically Greek Revival.

rooms opened off the hall and were lined up one behind another. The massing and detail of Greek Revival buildings were noticeably heavier and generally less elaborate than in the earlier Federal style.

In Foster the Greek Revival style was reduced to a few basic references—broad flat friezes with partial or occasionally full return mouldings on the gable ends, corner pilasters, and heavy flat entablatures over doors and windows. Together these elements formed a vernacular style prevalent until the end of the nineteenth century and still occasionally used today.

The orientation and plan of houses, for the most part, did not change. Houses continued to be sited flank to the road and to follow a center-chimney or paired-interior-chimney floor plan. The traditional positioning of the kitchen in one of the two front rooms also persisted. The Bennett House of 1849 on North Road is typical of Foster's Greek Revival houses. The Henry Davis House in Hopkins Mills (c. 1865 et seq.), with its gable end orientation and side-hall plan, is atypical and shows a stylistic sophistication unusual for Foster. So, also, does the small Greek Revival style store Henry Davis built beside the house in 1842.

Churches and schoolhouses show the Greek Revival influence quite clearly. The tradition of siting schoolhouses gable end to the road had been established during the Federal period. Schools built after 1830 continued to follow this plan, with some refinements, such as



Fig. 57: Henry Davis House (c. 1865?); Old Danielson Pike, Hopkins Mills; 1981. A mixture of Greek Revival and Italianate elements unique in Foster.

the provision of separate coat rooms for boys and girls and of more windows for better ventilation and light, in line with recommendations made by Rhode Island educational reformer Henry Barnard in the 1840s. On the exterior, these buildings usually had flat doorway entablatures and corner pilasters. Mount Hygeia School on Hartford Pike (c. 1840) is the most intact surviving school from this period.

Churches followed a plan and form similar to those of schoolhouses, with a gable end orientation and paired entrances leading into a vestibule behind the pulpit and sanctuary. Simplified Greek Revival detail was generally focused on doorway entablatures, corner pilasters and doorway pilasters (some of which were panelled), flat friezes, and return mouldings. In a few cases—Morning Star Church, the Advent Church, and Hopkins Mills Union Chapel—the cornice moulding was carried across the gable end to make a completed pediment form. The short square belfries on the gable ridge were also ornamented with simplified Greek Revival detail.

With the exception of the mills at Clayville, mills and farm outbuildings showed very few Greek Revival stylistic elements. They continued to be built as utilitarian forms with little thought of ornament. The small, frame and stone Byron Angell sawmill and wagon shop west of Tucker Hollow Road was probably typical of mills of the period. Barns and outbuildings followed traditional forms, in most cases, although a number of large two-



Fig. 58: Mount Hygeia Schoolhouse (c. 1840); Hartford Pike, North Foster; 1981. Foster's only unaltered one-room schoolhouse, from the southwest.

and even three-level barns were built in the 1880s and 1890s. Each level could be used for a different function such as housing wagons, cows, horses, or sheep. The four-level barn built on the Curtis Foster farm on Plain Woods Road in 1885, is one of the town's most impressive agricultural buildings.

### Changing Religions

Foster's religious institutions also underwent significant changes in the nineteenth century. The Baptist Churches, Six Principle and Calvinistic alike, went into decline about 1800, as members and elders died or moved away. This religious vacuum was soon filled by the rise of the so-called Christian Church and of the Free Will Baptists, both beginning about 1812, and by a variety of smaller religious sects somewhat later.

The Christian Church, so named in rebuke of the divisive concept of denominations, was anchored in the belief that all worshipers should and could be included in one true "Christian" church, which based its tenets on the Bible and on complete freedom in its interpretation. Locally, the church began at Rice City just over the Foster line in Coventry and spread quickly throughout western Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut. In Foster, Christian churches were established at Foster Center (between 1824 and 1834), Clayville (1854), Moosup Valley (1868), and Mount Vernon (1887). Church buildings erected or taken over by all of these churches still stand.

The instability of many Foster churches in the nineteenth century is well illustrated by the Christians at Foster Center and at Mount Vernon. At Foster Center the church was so weakened by disagreements over the divisive issues of temperance and the Dorr War that it foundered in 1851, only to be reconstituted in 1881. The Christians at Mount Vernon made a rapid conversion to the Baptist faith in 1895 after the discovery of a local bequest to maintain a Baptist minister in the area.

The Free Will Baptist Church, the second religious movement to fill the void left by the earlier Baptist churches, reached Rhode Island via itinerant preacher John Colby in 1812. Free Will Baptists combined an Arminian faith with a belief in free will. In 1821 there were only three churches in the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Free Will Baptists, but by 1826 there were ten, and later there were twenty-eight, most of them concentrated in the western and northwestern part of the state. Among these were the Foster Free Will Baptist Church organized in 1824; the North Foster Free Will Church, which grew out of it and built its own church building in 1848; the South Foster Free Will Church, organized in 1851 in western Foster and merged with the South Killingly Church in 1868 to form the Union Free Will Church or Line Church; and the Second Free Will Baptist Church in Foster, organized in 1835. The Morning Star Free Will Baptist Church, organized in 1845 after dissension over the issue of slavery, was an offshoot of this church. The Second Free Will Church met in a variety of buildings in northern Foster and southern Glocester; the Morning Star built its own church in 1854 north of the Hartford Turnpike near present Anan Wade Road.

Among the other religious movements which enthralled Fosterites in the 1800s, was the Shaker excitement occasioned when missionary Enoch Pease came to southwestern Foster in 1826. Later that year members of the Foster family moved to the Shaker village at Enfield, Connecticut, and other residents soon followed, among them members of the Bennett, Blanchard, Burlingame, Damon, Fry, and King families.

Some who went to the Shakers, like Horace Foster, lingered only briefly before returning to the "outside



Fig. 59: Hopkins Mills Union Chapel (1869-1871); Old Danielson Pike; 1969. From the south. Cornice across gable front is typically Greek Revival.

world." Others were permanently attracted to the prosperity of the Shaker village and the peaceful, ordered, and productive existence led there. To be welcomed into a community which owned three thousand acres of prime land, had two hundred and sixty-two members (in 1828), successfully operated a large and valuable gristmill, three sawmills, three cider mills, one carding machine, a machine to manufacture pails, a triphammer shop, and a lead aqueduct manufactory, and had livestock including seventy cows, twelve horses, and twelve yokes of oxen, was to leave behind what for many was the struggle and travail of farming in Foster. The Shaker migration clearly embodied a search for earthly as well as heavenly salvation on the part of Foster residents.

Other religious sects which flourished in Foster, for a time, included the Perfect Zionists, who met in private homes on Cucumber Hill in the 1860s or 1870s and the Advent Christians, or Millerites, who believed in the second coming of Christ which their leader William Miller prophesized would occur in 1843. Much religious excitement was stirred up by this prophecy in Foster and across the nation; but 1843 came and went without

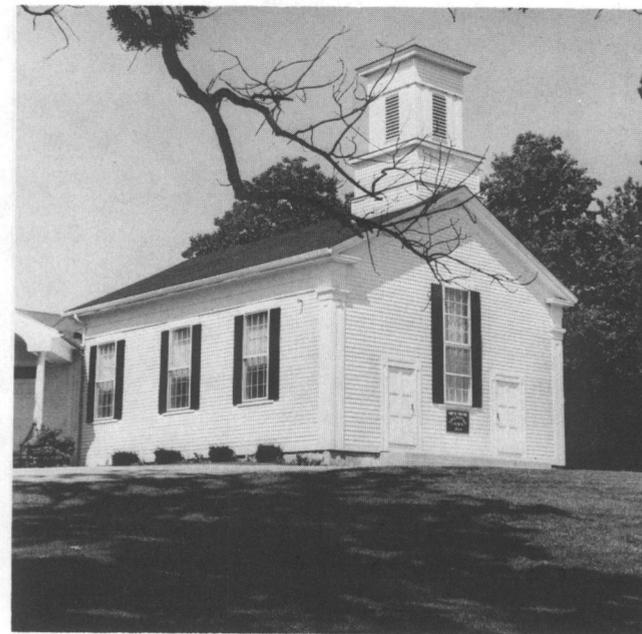


Fig. 60: North Foster Free Will Baptist Church (1848); East Killingly Road; 1975. From the southwest. A good example of a Greek Revival country church.

an appearance. After a second failure in 1844, much of the enthusiasm died. The Advent Church in Foster, nonetheless, continued, and about 1859 built a meeting-house north of the Hartford Turnpike near Morning Star Chapel, about where Route 101 Apartments stand today. One other nineteenth-century religious group in Foster was the Hopkins Mills Union Church, a non-denominational society which gathered in 1871 to erect a building for the use of all religious groups in the area; the church is still in use today.

The relative instability of many of Foster's nineteenth-century churches; the frequent schisms caused by disputes over religious doctrines and such social issues as temperance, enfranchisement, and slavery; and the sheer number of distinct religious groups all reflect the fact that the mid- to late nineteenth century was a period of significant economic and social change and readjustment in Foster. The promise of the years of Foster's flowering diminished throughout the century as the town was increasingly relegated by developments elsewhere to a position as a quaint, quiet, backwoods community.

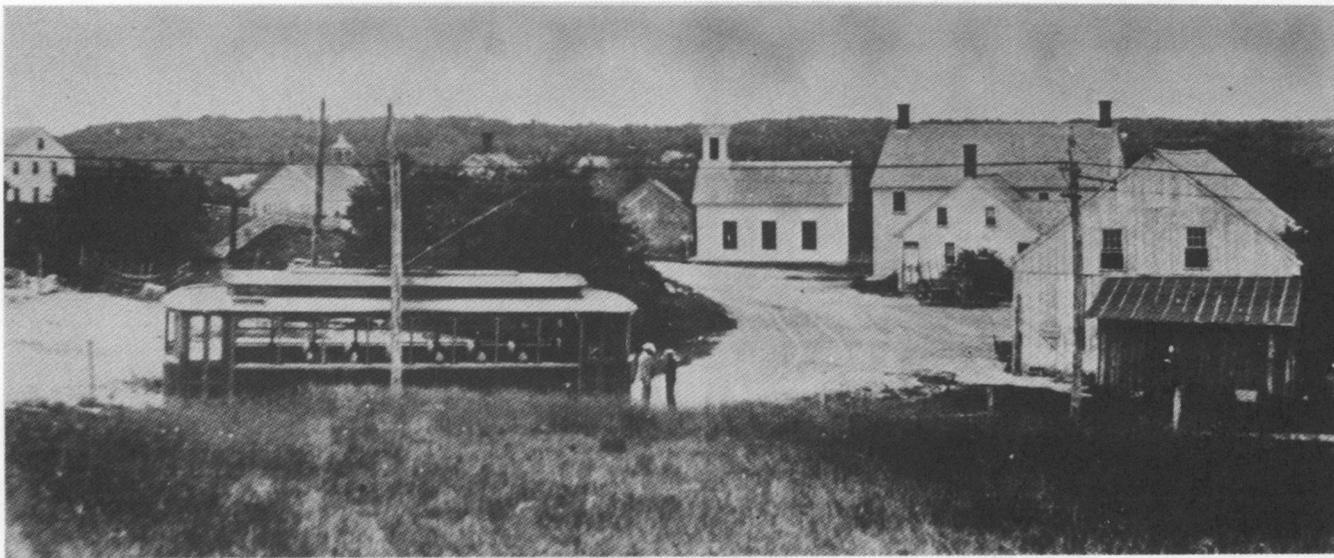


Fig. 61: The Providence and Danielson Electric Railroad; c. 1910. One of the railroad cars stopped in Foster Center. The "P and D" linked Foster to Providence and to Danielson, Connecticut, between 1902 and 1919. Its presence stirred a brief flurry of economic activity.



Fig. 62: Foster woodcutters using a portable, steam-powered sawmill; c. 1900. Products included oak masts, railroad ties, fence posts, wood for charcoal burning.

## NEW DEPARTURES (1895-1940)

Although population continued to decline, dropping 24 per cent between 1895 and 1920 when it reached its nadir of 905, a number of factors influencing Foster's development were beginning to change. The most important was the improvement of access to and within the town. The second was a slowly escalating desire of city-dwellers to live in the country; this change in attitude—from derision of country folk and rural places to admiration of them—led eventually to an influx of new residents. A third factor was the building of the Scituate Reservoir, which caused the closing of the mills at Clayville and the only railroad ever built through Foster. The positive and negative effects of these factors tended to counterbalance one another and life in Foster continued much as it had for some time; however, these developments laid the groundwork for future change.

### The Providence and Danielson Railroad

The telegraph (brought to town in the 1870s) and the telephone (installed primarily by the Coventry Telephone Company in the first few years of the twentieth century) did much to improve communication, but the technological innovation which had the earliest and most immediate impact on access to Foster was construction of an electric car railroad line, the Providence and Danielson Railway, familiarly known as the "P and D," about 1900. Horse-drawn trolley cars were in operation in other parts of Rhode Island as early as the mid-1860s. Not until the early 1890s, however, were electric cars introduced in Providence and plans made to extend car service west from Providence through Johnston, Scituate, and Foster to East Killingly and Danielson, Connecticut. An eastern section of the road opened in 1900; but the section which ran through Foster, snaking its way from Rockland (in Scituate, where a power house and major station were located) through Clayville, Foster Center, and North Foster to Connecticut, was not in operation until 1902.

The "P and D" arrived in Foster at more or less "the eleventh hour" and was abandoned by 1919; but its presence stirred a flurry of economic activity. Almost immediately there were increases in dairy and poultry

production. The lumber industry also took an upswing. Foster woodcutters and sawyers—now working their way through the woodland with portable steam-powered sawmills—provided oak masts for the Herreshoff Boat Yards in Bristol, railroad ties, cedar fence posts, and charcoal, among other things. The brick and concrete charcoal kilns along Salisbury Road, now in ruinous condition, probably date from these years. Other finished wood products included bobbins, produced at Blackmar Mill on Central Pike and W.H. Collins Bobbin Mill on Plainfield Pike, and pickersticks, produced at a mill on Paine Road. Both products found a ready market in the textile mills in Scituate.

The granite quarry between Walker and Howard Hill Roads, incorporated as the Smithfield Granite Company in 1901, increased production as a result of the railway. Simmons Braid Mill in Hopkins Mills was begun between 1905-1910 and made shoe laces, lingerie, cord, ric rac, and nylon thread in addition to braid. The shoestrapping mill run by Hardin Harris on Hartford Pike and a baby-shoe works on Tucker Hollow Road must also have been stimulated in part by the improved rail transportation. The mills at Clayville, at this time part of the Joslin Manufacturing conglomerate and used to manufacture shoe laces, took a new lease on life, and business picked up at the Ark Tavern (and brothel) on East Killingly Road near the Foster-Connecticut line.

The "P and D" also gave Foster residents easier access to the nearby manufacturing communities. This improved mobility may have encouraged some residents to relocate and thus have contributed to the still-steady decline in population, but it also allowed residents to live in Foster and work elsewhere.

### The Scituate Reservoir

The building of the Scituate Reservoir to supply the growing water needs of metropolitan Providence after the conclusion of World War I did not actually take any land in Foster; but its impact on Foster was marked. The land acquired for the reservoir by the Providence Water Supply Board (from 1916 to 1922) included sections of the Providence and Danielson Railroad track and right of way. Managers of the railroad, a marginal



Fig. 63: Simmons Braid Mill (c. 1905 - c. 1960); Old Danielson Pike; c. 1925.

operation at best, saw no economical means of relocating the line and consequently closed it in 1920. The demise of the line meant that a number of Foster residents had to relocate to be closer to their places of employment. The demolition of the mills at Clayville (1922 and 1923) and North Scituate Village, Rockland, and Kent, put many other residents out of work, both mill workers and those who supplied materials or tools for mill work. Warren Blackmar, for example, closed his bobbin-spinning operation on Central Pike when the Scituate mills closed.

### State Road Program

By 1897 the state of Rhode Island recognized the need to create a statewide system of roads and set up a committee to study the issue. A statewide program to upgrade major roadways was instituted in 1903. At the outset the project entailed grading and macadamizing existing dirt roads. Standard width for the roads was fourteen feet; any additional width had to be financed by the town requesting it. These improvements were minor by today's standards but they enabled vehicular traffic to circulate with relative ease year-round for the first time. As the use of the automobile spread, improved roads became even more important.

The Danielson Pike, from North Scituate west to the Connecticut line, was the only road in Foster proposed by the State Board of Public Roads in 1903 for inclusion in the state system and was the first paved road in Foster. The first half mile of road, between the Scituate

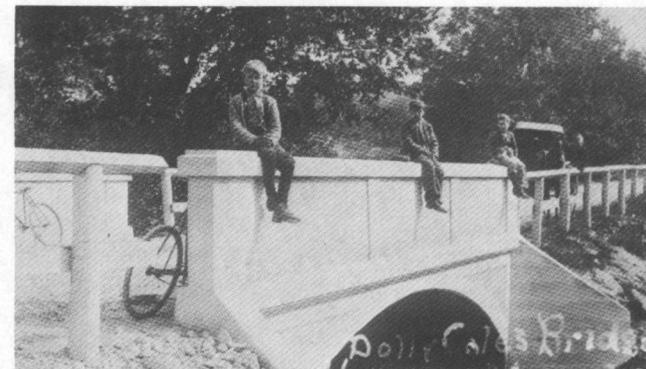


Fig. 64: Dolly Cole Bridge (1923); Old Danielson Pike, Hopkins Mills; c. 1925.

line and Hopkins Mills, was completed in 1904, only a year before Claude E. Pierce purchased the first car in Foster, a Stanley Steamer. By 1910 or 1911 the Pike had been upgraded as far as Hopkins Mills, and a very short section of the road leading from Rockland through Clayville had been upgraded and paved. Dolly Cole Bridge and Hopkins Mills Bridge, both simple reinforced concrete spans, were built in 1912. That year, too, a contract was let for completion of the road from the Hopkins Mills Bridge west to the state line, a distance of 4.88 miles.

Between 1922 and 1925 a new road was constructed from Rockland Road in Clayville southwest to the Plainfield Pike. The new road (present Route 102) was named Victory Highway in commemoration of World War I. Plainfield Pike was also reconstructed.

The 1925 report of the State Board of Public Roads indicated that there were still 36.6 miles of unimproved state roads in Foster. This probably reflected both the consistently high cost of grading roads in Foster because so much blasting was required and the continuing isolation and relative unimportance of Foster itself as a destination. Danielson Pike, Hartford Pike, and Plainfield Pike were upgraded not so much so that travellers could get to Foster but so that they could get through it going west to Connecticut and New York or going east to Providence, Boston, and Cape Cod. Route 101, Cucumber Hill Road, and Mt. Hygeia Road accounted for most of the 36.6 unimproved miles in 1925. Federal aid funds were used in 1934 to grade and gravel them.



Fig. 65: Town Asylum or Poor Farm (1790); Howard Hill Road; 1903. Obediah Fenner's large house was taken over for use as the town farm c. 1865, closed c. 1921, and, struck by lightning, burned c. 1931.



Fig. 66: Haying on the Olney Brayton Farm; Cucumber Hill Road; c. 1890. Grandpa Harrington is next to the horses and Olney Brayton stands next to him. The ladies are visitors boarding for a country summer.

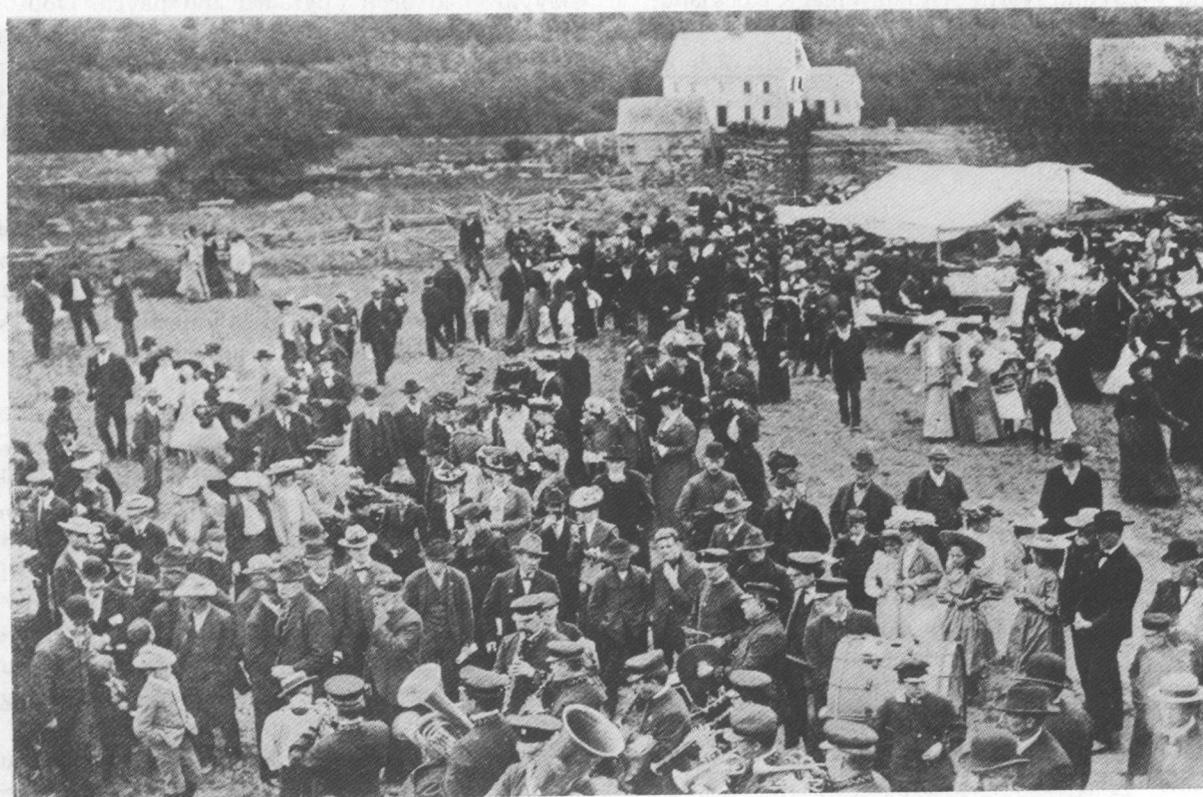


Fig. 67: Old Home Day at Foster Center; 1904. The first celebration of what became an annual social and fund-raising event through 1924. D.W. Reeves' American Band is in the foreground; the Colegrove-Hammond House is in the background.

## Quaint Foster

As early as 1893, Foster was thought of, by some people, as quaint township, remote in space and time, whose rock-strewn fields and old fashioned farmhouses were attractively picturesque. Marianna Tallman, in her romantic reminiscence *Pleasant Places in Rhode Island* published in 1893, described a stagecoach trip through Foster to Danielsonville, Connecticut. She mentioned the "quaint little hamlet" of Mount Vernon; the "neat little settlement of Foster Center. . . which dawns on us like a positive joy, so refreshing is the contrast of modern and prosperous humanity to the mouldering look of antiquity that lies even over the face of Nature herself in southern Foster;" Solomon Drown's house at Mount Hygeia (which was opened by the family to the public as a kind of museum); the Town Asylum at the Fenner Farm on Howard Hill Road; and the "queer door-yard decorations which strike the eye before the isolated farms and cottages, a favorite being a sewing machine body and a top on which gay flowers and vines disport." A *Providence Journal* article describing a trolley ride to Foster made by members of the Rhode Island Citizens Historical Society in 1913 used much the same tone. As late as 1934 the *Journal* published an article headlining Foster as "the town that doesn't change."

In the 1890s the first summer visitors began to arrive, either buying and living in their own "colonial" farmhouses or boarding with a family for a farming summer. The Solomon Drown House and Wheaton Harrington Farm on Harrington Road took in summer boarders. The Deacon Daniel Hopkins House on Balcom Road and the Joshua Jones House on Mount Hygeia Road were among those owned as summer homes in the teens. And the Fish-Bennett Farm on Old Plainfield Pike was used by the Rhode Island Girl Scouts as a summer camp in the 1930s.

The Ladies Home Mission Society of Foster in 1904 decided to capitalize on this public admiration for quaintness and picturesque antiquity and at the same time to raise money to repair and preserve the historic Town House, which had fallen into disrepair. They organized an "Old Home Day" on September 15, 1904,

one of the first such celebrations in the state. Replete with speakers, among whom was native son and U.S. Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, a concert by D.W. Reeves' American Band, a parade, and an old fashioned Rhode Island clam bake, the Old Home Day was so successful that money enough was raised to put the Town House into excellent repair, and the event became an annual tradition. The third celebration in 1906 drew 2,500 people, more than twice the number of residents in town at that time. Old Home Day continued through 1924 and was revived in 1981 to celebrate Foster's bicentennial.

### Farming

A "Descriptive Catalogue of Rhode Island Farms For Sale" published by the Rhode Island State Board of Agriculture in 1900 reported that there were at least 349 untilled or abandoned farms within the state and that Foster had forty-one of them. Only Coventry with 52 farms and West Greenwich with 68 farms had more. The problem of farm abandonment was clearly of concern to the State Board, which hoped to promote new ownership by publishing its catalogue. No records of the effectiveness of this program have been found, but one private solution worked remarkably well. In the late teens a real estate agent, anxious to sell some of his rural properties, put an advertisement in a Finnish newspaper for a single farm in Foster. As a result, between 1919 and 1926 fifty Finnish families settled in Foster along the western border, repairing or enlarging existing abandoned buildings or erecting new ones. They engaged primarily in raising poultry, although they also gardened and kept some cows and a few other animals. Often the women farmed while the men "worked away," sometimes in woodcutting or carpentering in Connecticut but more frequently on the docks in New York City. By 1926, the value of Foster farms was two to three times what it had been in 1906.

Other boons to agriculture were the Grange—with branches in Hopkins Mills, Moosup Valley, and Foster Center begun in the 1890s—and the formation of the Foster Farmers Local in 1917 to market milk and purchase supplies as a cooperative unit.

The movement to return to the land, found throughout Rhode Island and New England following the First World War and during the Depression, also added to the town's population. By 1930 the number of residents had reached 946 and by 1940 it had jumped to 1,231.

### Architecture

Although new buildings were relatively scarce in Foster during these years, a few houses were built along Victory Highway in the 1920s and in the western part of town by the Finnish. Most of them were modest frame structures of no particular stylistic reference except for an occasional nod to colonial antecedents or an echo of the bungalow style. One of the most interesting houses of this period is the Captain Randall House on Kennedy Road which is actually a remodelling of a late eighteenth-century, center-chimney house in the more up-to-date bungalow style. A few of the hen houses built at this time also show bungalow influences in their exposed ornamental purlin ends and stick work. In the 1930s and 1940s a few gas stations and "mom and pop" stores—such as Phillips Store (1930) at Simmons Corner (Routes 6 and 94), Elfgren's station and store (1938) on Route 101 at Mount Hygeia Road, and Sweet's Market

(1941) on Route 6 at Paris Olney Hopkins Road—were also built. These were simple utilitarian one-story gable-roofed frame structures. Elfgren's and Sweet's are still in operation.

### The Depression and the New Deal

The tendency for some city-dwellers to return to the land was only one effect of the Depression on Foster. Another was the availability of federal funding for road upgrading—Route 6 was realigned to by-pass Hopkins Mills in 1932—and for a proposed state park and scenic parkway on the western edge of Rhode Island, which would have taken land in eight towns including Foster had the conservative Republican residents not objected. The Civil Conservation Corps, established in 1933 to give young men aged eighteen to twenty-five work while conserving the nation's natural resources, established a camp in Foster in 1933, one of six in the state. The camp, which stood east of Howard Hill Road, housed between 150 and 200 workers who were employed clearing fire lanes, rebuilding several town roads, and constructing stone-lined water holes. Some of these men eventually made their permanent homes in Foster.



Fig. 68: Captain John Randall House (before 1784, c. 1920); Kennedy Road; 1975. From the southwest. This typical 18th-century, center-chimney house was modernized in the bungalow style about 1920.



Fig. 69: Elfgrén's (1938); Hartford Pike and Mount Hygeia Road, North Foster; 1981. Store, gas station, and house, from the northwest.



Fig. 70: Shady Acres Restaurant (1962); Danielson Pike; 1981. Opened July 1, 1962, when Route 6 was the major route to Cape Cod from points west, Shady Acres is a well-known 20th-century roadside landmark.

## CIVIC GROWTH (1940 TO THE PRESENT)

The period from 1940 to the present has been one of gradually accelerating growth. The upgrading of Routes 6, 101, and 102, which made towns such as Foster more accessible destinations for Sunday drives, also brought them into commuting range for a much broader radius of employment centers. Particularly from the 1950s onward, the increasing number of private cars and a general movement to the suburbs, characteristic of the state and nation at large, led to a steady migration of residents to areas outside but close to metropolitan centers. In the late 1960s and 1970s the popular philosophy of a return to a simpler way of living closer to nature, the perceived charm of the town's old houses and rural setting, and the still relatively low property values combined to strengthen the influx. Population grew steadily: 1,231 in 1940; 1,630 in 1950; 2,097 in 1960; 2,626 in 1970. In 1975, at a little over 3,000, Foster's population for the first time exceeded that of 1820. The 1980 census recorded 3,346 residents, an all-time high.

### Highway Development

Routes 6 and 101 became increasingly important, first as through routes, then as local feeders. Route 6, made a U. S. Route in 1926, was upgraded several times, and widened to its present four lanes in 1966. A 1963 *Providence Journal* article touted U.S. Route 6 as running "West—All the Way to California." Both roads suffered a considerable decline in use after the opening of Interstate Route 95 in the mid 1960s.

Commercial development in Foster concentrated mostly along Route 6 from Simmons Corner (where Mount Hygeia Road intersects) west to the Connecticut line, where a cluster of three gas stations and a diner mark the traveler's passage from rural western Rhode Island to even more rural eastern Connecticut. The bulk of the establishments built beside Route 6 from the 1940s through the early 1960s were oriented to the traveler: three motels, five or six gas stations, half a dozen or more lunch rooms and restaurants, a "trading post," and a flea market. In the late 1960s and 1970s more locally oriented establishments—such as a pharmacy,



Fig. 71: Captain Isaac Paine School (1952); Foster Center Road; 1975. View of main entrance from the southeast. The consolidation of schools in the early 1950s resulted in the building of this school and the closing of the seven one-room schoolhouses still in operation.



Fig. 72: World War II Airplane Spotter's Hut (c. 1942); Victory Highway; 1976. From the south. Built by Byron Hall, the hut was manned throughout the War.

professional offices, an electrical store, two new churches, and a family restaurant—were opened, primarily to serve the needs of the residents. Route 101, upgraded later than Route 6 and only two lanes wide, in Foster is not as important as Route 6 and has much less commercial development along it.

### A Changing Society

The increasing number of residents, coupled with the post-World War II "baby boom" and changes in educational philosophy, led to the reorganization of the school system in the 1950s. In 1952 the Captain Isaac Paine Elementary School opened and the seven one-room schoolhouses still in operation closed. In 1958 the

Foster - Gloucester Regional School District was set up to accommodate junior and senior high school students.

Other civic institutions also changed as population increased. The Foster Center Schoolhouse, closed in 1952, was converted to the Foster Center Library. A new post office was built on Foster Center Road in 1961. A full-time police force was instituted in 1974.

There were other indications of Foster's increased contact with more general development trends. During World War II an airplane spotter's hut was built and manned outside Clayville. In the early 1950s a site owned by Willoughby P. Young was briefly considered as a possible location for the United Nations. Between 1956 and 1958 a Nike Base was built south of Hartford Pike off Winsor Road at Oak Hill. The concrete missile hangars and office buildings have been re-used as a training center for the Rhode Island State Police since 1966; the base housing—the only tract housing so far built in town—was sold into private ownership in 1974; and other base buildings have been incorporated into Foster's school administration and kindergarten through second grade facilities, now the John E. Fогarty Regional Elementary School.

The "discovery" of Foster by outsiders accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s. To the population mix of old Yankee families, a small number of Finnish, and a few Poles (who seem to have followed the Finns' footsteps to settle on farms in western Foster), were added people of other ethnic backgrounds. A significant number of new residents commuted to jobs in Providence.

The results of this change in the composition of the town's population are evident in many things. The first Democratic Town Council in 48 years was elected in 1962. An Episcopal church, the Church of the Messiah, was built at Simmons Corner in 1966. Just across Route 6 the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, the first Catholic church in Foster, was built in 1973. In stark contrast to most other Rhode Island communities, which drew French-Canadian and European immigrants by employment opportunities in their mills, Foster had no sizeable population of Catholics until the 1960s and was the last town in the state to have a Catholic church.



Fig. 73: Church of St. Paul the Apostle (1973); Danielson Pike; 1981. Foster's first and only Catholic church, from the northeast.

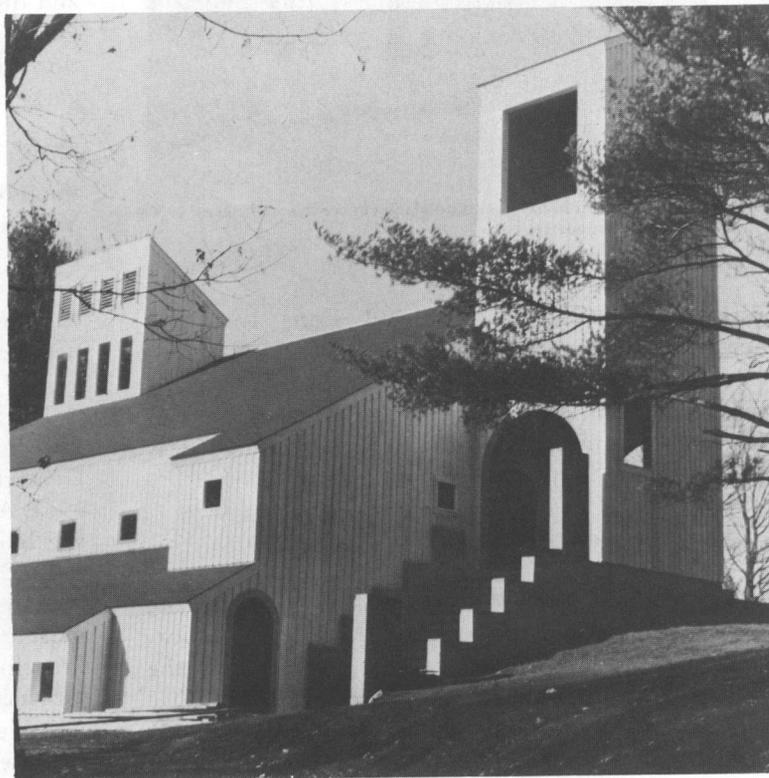


Fig. 74: Church of the Messiah (1966); Danielson Pike at Simmons Corner; 1966. From the southeast, showing stairway and tower entrance as originally built.

## Housing Stock

Many of the people who have moved to Foster have been drawn specifically by the town's stock of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century buildings. The Solomon Drown House, the Dorrance House, Mount Vernon Tavern, the Daniel Hopkins House, Beriah Collins House, Whidden-Fuller House, Obadiah Hopkins House, and the Hopkins Mills Schoolhouse are only a few of the ever-growing number of historic buildings rescued by private owners from deterioration, demolition, or unsympathetic alteration in the past two or three decades.

Other residents have chosen to build new houses. "Colonial" dwellings have been popular since the 1930s. One- and two-story ranch houses, with or without applied stylistic references, were common in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s. Many of them have been sensitively sited on the land, set back from the road and often at an angle to it and sheltered by pre-existent trees.

Houses built in the 1970s included more unusual types in addition to ranch and colonial. The former Oak Tree Tavern on Foster Center Road, originally a late nineteenth-century barn converted about 1915 into a tavern, was converted again in 1974 to a residence. Between 1973 and 1976 an experimental house, designed to use prefabricated components of industrial design and material, to be energy efficient and adapted for handicapped or elderly residents, was built on Balcom Road under the sponsorship of the International Lead and Zinc Research Organization and the Rhode Island School of Design. Throughout town new log cabins were built. A brick veneered "French chateau" on Johnson Road and a large reinforced concrete octagon house on Potter Road represent other architectural approaches. A few more free-flowing houses, which feature varying floor levels, irregular massing, angular roofs, and vertical natural wood sheathing, have also been built, combining rustic materials with modernistic forms in a manner popularized in California during the 1960s.



Fig. 75: Richard Colwell House (1972); Winsor Road; 1982. From the north. The gambrel roof is one of the most common "colonial" characteristics.



Fig. 76: The former Oak Tree Tavern (c. 1875, c. 1910, c. 1974); Foster Center Road; 1976. Originally a barn, then a tavern, now a residence.

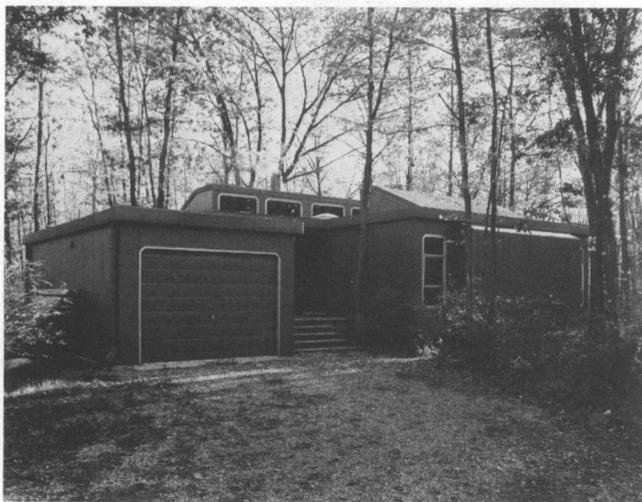


Fig. 77: International Lead and Zinc Research Organization House (1973-1976); Balcom Road; 1981. From the north. An experimental, pre-fabricated house.



Fig. 78: Alan Colwell House (1975); Winsor Road; 1982. Roofline angles echo those of Church of the Messiah, as well as other modern structures.

## Changing Land Use

As the number of housing starts escalated through the 1960s and into the 1970s, the need to plan for growth became clear. A zoning ordinance passed in 1967, including among other provisions a minimum residential lot size of 4.66 acres, was the town's first major response to this issue.

Lack of sewers and a high water table have made any extensive industrial development infeasible. Recreational land use, however, has increased, and the town today has a country club with a golf course, at least two rod and gun clubs, a fish and game association, two state-owned and managed fishing areas, a Green Acres area with a town beach in Moosup Valley, two public camping areas, and a nudist camp.

Only a small number of the town's residents today are employed in farming and farm-related occupations. There are fewer than thirty farms still operating, including a dozen dairy farms, eight to ten poultry farms, two apple orchards, one farm raising assorted fruits and vegetables, four Christmas tree farms, and one farm raising beef cattle on a small scale. Lumbering still plays a part in the town's economy—three saw mills process timber—but more and more Foster is becoming an exurban residential community.

The town has reached a turning point. The traditional occupations of the residents have altered almost completely and with them, the pattern of land use. Once isolated and agricultural, with a hundred-year history of population loss, Foster now faces major development challenges. Foster has a quietly rich and in many ways unique historical and natural heritage. The town's scattered farmhouses with their ever diminishing stock of outbuildings, the hamlets and churches, historic cemeteries, mill ruins and Indian sites, stone walls and dirt roads, and the stony, hilly land, rarely bountiful but always beautiful, give townspeople much to be proud of and to preserve.

#### IV. SUMMARY

First settled in the opening years of the eighteenth century as part of Providence, and incorporated as part of Scituate in 1731, the town of Foster experienced its greatest growth and vitality in the settlement and consolidation years after 1750 and in the five decades which immediately followed its own incorporation in 1781. The eighteenth century was taken up primarily with agricultural endeavors. By the end of the century, the viability of waterpowered industries—beyond the scope of the traditional small saw- and gristmills—was being explored, although family farms remained the basis of the economic and social fabric. Before 1825, new civic institutions—bank, library, post office, schools, and turnpike and stagecoach companies—were added to the town's existing framework.

The promise of the years of early townhood soon faded. By 1830, population was beginning to decline; and by mid-century, the bank, the turnpike companies, the plow manufactory, and most of the small textile mills had vanished. The three strongest factors in Foster's decline were the town's own mediocre and worn-out soil; the opening of the West for settlement and the subsequent rise of large-scale western agriculture; and the metropolitanization of Providence and other prosperous industrial communities in Rhode Island and adjacent Massachusetts and Connecticut. Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, Foster became more and more a backwater, an area with a dwindling, increasingly elderly population, whose once-cleared farm fields were already beginning to go to woods.

After 1920, the steady population decline was halted. Suburbanization became the dominant trend throughout Rhode Island, partly as a result of return to the land movements; partly as a result of steadily improving transportation facilities, the widespread use of the automobile, and the growth of a network of paved roads; and partly because people began to appreciate a rural setting in which to live. Both the rate and the physical reach of suburbanization have made steady progress throughout the state in the last two decades.

Foster's desirability as a residential area and state

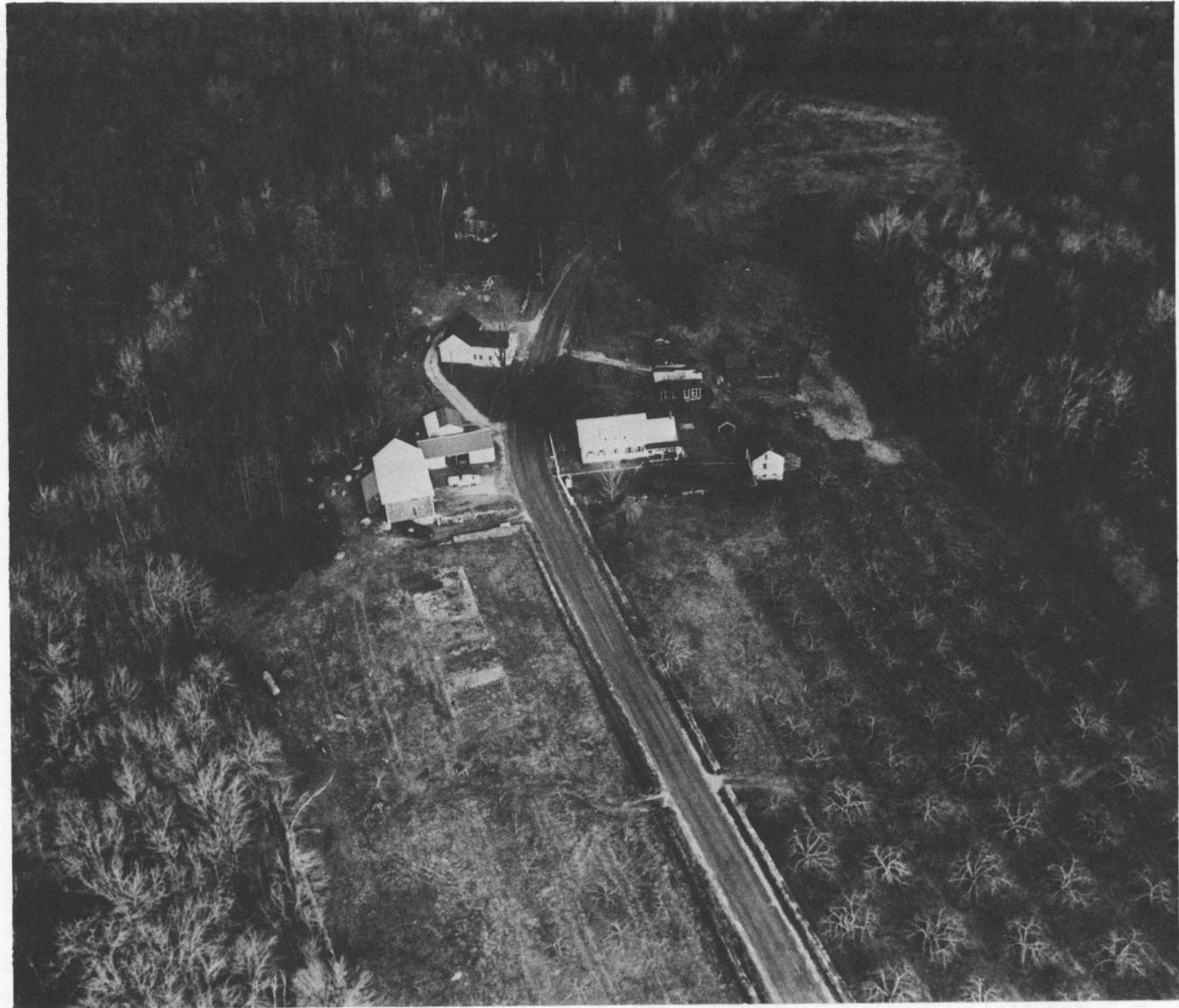


Fig. 79: Paine Farm (1785 et seq.); Paine Road; 1976. Aerial view from the south showing orchards (begun in the 1920s) in the foreground, the farm complex, and encroaching woodland. A good case study for changing land use pressures and problems.

proposals to upgrade roads through the town (rendering it even more accessible to metropolitan workers) promise continued and accelerating growth of population. The need to provide increased public services for new residents will undoubtedly generate additional tax pressures on undeveloped land and on the existing building stock. Private and public pressures together

will unavoidably affect the town's physical heritage.

After a century of decline and stagnation, it is time for the town to think in terms of growth. Forethought and active planning are in order now if Foster's unique physical character and quality of life are to be preserved in the face of inevitable change.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Changing land use patterns can alter the character of Foster in all too short a time unless careful consideration is given now to how, where, and especially why development changes are to occur. For example, Foster to date has only two subdivisions and no supermarket. Are such developments needed? Are they inevitable? Where should such changes be allowed? How can or should they be regulated? Completion of a comprehensive community plan becomes of primary importance in the face of population projections of 4,300 residents by 1990. Recognition and protection of the town's historic and cultural resources should be an important element within this plan.

Foster's heritage includes such man-made elements as Native American campsites, roads, stone walls, houses, outbuildings, mill ruins, churches, and other structures. It also includes the land itself, its areas of specific natural rarity or beauty, and its traditional relationship with the built environment. The total landscape, natural and man-made, is important in the context of Foster's historical development, for its present ability to evoke the past and to mirror and preserve a segment of early nineteenth-century, agrarian, small town New England, the physical evidence of which is diminishing daily.

The following recommendations are offered in the hope that they will be of assistance in planning for Foster's future and that they will contribute positively to local discussion and decisions concerning which of the town's historic features will be preserved and how best to achieve that goal.

### PLANNING FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

1. Archeological sites have the potential to yield information obtainable in no other way. This is particularly true in the case of prehistoric sites which are the only record we have of the pre-written human era. Once disturbed, archeological sites, historic and prehistoric, lose most if not all of their information value because artifacts can only be

fully understood and former lifeways researched in context. It is for this reason that owners and interested others who find an archeological site are encouraged to avoid disturbing it and to consult with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission can advise on the potential importance of the site, the possibility of listing it on the State or National Register, and the tax benefits which may be available to an owner in return for granting a preservation easement.

2. A program to ensure the preservation of Foster's historic built environment, including houses, stores, churches, barns and other subsidiary outbuildings, mill sites, and cemeteries, should be developed by the town in conjunction with the Foster Preservation Society and other interested groups and individuals. The following measures might be incorporated in such a preservation strategy:
  - a. A program to identify valued buildings, historic sites, and hamlets with a marker giving the name of the builder or founder, when known, and the date(s) of construction, settlement, or use would stimulate local interest and pride as well as outside recognition of the town's heritage.
  - b. A basic educational program in historic structures, their characteristics and value and basic preservation "do's and don'ts" could be prepared for use at both the adult and student level.
  - c. The Foster Preservation Society could act as a catalyst for restoration by assembling a collection of restoration reference material in the town libraries and by referring owners to the statewide Consultant Services Bureau of the Providence Preservation Society or to the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.
  - d. A program to maintain and record information in the town's many cemeteries could be developed in conjunction with the state's cemetery

program, Rhode Island Graves Registration Program, Division of Veterans Affairs.

3. Barns and outbuildings are Foster's most endangered species. They are an all too often overlooked and important part of the town's rural character and are especially vulnerable because maintenance costs and property taxes make them seem a luxury to preserve. Today in Foster only a handful of properties survive which can properly be termed historic farm complexes. The continuing loss of outbuildings alters irrevocably the present appearance and past record of the community. Their preservation could be encouraged by:
  - a. A local consultant service which could give basic advice on preventing buildings from falling into irreversible dereliction (mainly keeping a good roof on);
  - b. A change in tax policy to encourage their preservation by positive tax incentive or partial tax abatement;
  - c. Relocation or careful re-use when the only alternative is demolition or slow decay.
4. Another endangered building type is the one-room schoolhouse. Foster had eighteen schools in operation throughout the last half of the nineteenth century. Of a present total of seven schoolhouses, two are used for libraries, at Foster Center and Moosup Valley, and four are residences. Only Mount Hygeia Schoolhouse has not been recycled for other uses and remains in relatively unaltered condition. Some plan for its continued preservation should be developed.
5. Town ordinances could be enacted to protect stone walls and selected dirt roads; both form an important part of Foster's landscape. The ordinance might require some form of review for proposals to move or demolish walls. It might also protect designated sections of dirt roads from widening, straightening, or unnecessary culverting or paving. The additional cost of maintaining dirt roads under

modern usage conditions might make this infeasible, but it should be given some consideration on aesthetic and historic grounds. Sections of Round Hill, Maple Rock, Tucker Hollow, Salisbury, North, and Winsor Roads, especially where stone culverts or plank bridges still exist, might be considered for such protection.

6. Commercial development should be controlled and shaped through zoning and other forms of town regulation. Clear definition and regulation of design for commercial areas can prevent what has already happened along much of Route 6: the evolution of a strung-out, disorganized, and unsightly development which may be economically damaging to individual businesses and is already visually damaging to the town. Many people travelling through Foster know the town only by the appearance of Route 6, a relatively ugly face for a town with so much natural and man-made beauty. Re-examination of the areas currently zoned commercial may be in order as a first step. The whole length of Route 6 should not be susceptible to business development nor should the as yet almost untouched length of Route 101 be indiscriminately given over to commercial concerns.

If the proposal to build Interstate Route 84 is revived or if Route 6 is upgraded to Interstate status, with an interchange in Foster, special measures should be taken to limit and control the service facilities and fast food stands which inevitably mushroom in such locations. Zoning regulations and design review would be vital here.

7. The need to expand municipal facilities is a problem of growing magnitude. The concept of re-using and building in proximity to the existing historic buildings in Foster Center is a good one, for it reinforces the two-hundred-year-old tradition of Foster Center as the seat of town government and helps to ensure the survival and maintenance of some of Foster's key buildings: the Town House, the Town Clerk's Office, Hemlock School, and the Eli Aylsworth House. In planning for municipal expansion, the following recommendations should be considered:

- a. Relocate the town highway department facilities currently behind the Aylsworth House.
- b. Continue the re-use of existing historic structures wherever possible.
- c. Retain as many existing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings as possible, particularly the barn and shed of the Aylsworth House.
- d. Establish a specific group, a Friends of the Foster Town House, to ensure that a program for the maintenance and use of this local landmark is developed.
- e. Take into account the traditional relationship and orientation of existing buildings in planning any new construction, and design new buildings, whether in a modern or traditional style, to harmonize in scale and material with existing buildings.
- f. Carefully site any additional parking areas behind the buildings as much as possible, and screen them by indigenous plantings. Plantings can also be used to break up parking lots into smaller sections which is desirable since a vast paved expanse would be out of keeping with the visual character of the Center.

8. Local historic district zoning should be considered as a means of regulating new development and alteration of existing buildings within the town's historic hamlets and other specifically designated areas. Clayville (both the Foster and Scituate sections), Hopkins Mills, Foster Center, Moosup Valley, and sections of Paine Road, Winsor Road, and Plain Woods Road might benefit from such designation. If such zoning were to be adopted, it should include provision for individual historic structures or complexes as well as for historic districts.
9. Owners interested in conserving specific built or natural aspects of their properties should be encouraged to make use of preservation easements.

Such easements travel with the deed and are the most effective means available to ensure retention of buildings and/or valued natural features.

10. The preservation of materials which provide a better understanding of Foster's history could be ensured by:
  - a. Establishing procedures whereby town records including building permits and plans no longer needed by their respective agencies are preserved. In the past irreplaceable documents have been lost through routine house-cleaning projects;
  - b. Encouraging individuals to donate old letters, scrapbooks, photographs, architectural drawings, and other pertinent papers to an appropriate archive, such as the Rhode Island Historical Society;
  - c. Setting up a local museum where artifacts of local historic significance could be stored and displayed.
11. The National Register program for Foster should be expanded. See Appendix A for further information.

## PLANNING FOR THE LAND

Foster's natural legacy is a resource of more than local importance. Within Rhode Island and the southeastern New England region, Foster remains a green buffer zone for the ever growing coastal metropolis. It is an area of beauty and semi-wildness worthy of protection not only for its aesthetic and conservation values but also for its passive recreation potential and its ability to offer an alternative to urban or suburban living. For these reasons, preservation of significant portions of the town's natural setting should be an important consideration in any planning effort.

1. Specific areas of natural beauty or rarity should be safeguarded. The Audubon Society's Inventory of Unique Natural and Cultural Resources in Rhode Island (1972) provides a partial listing of such

areas. There are other areas as well, valuable not only for their forests and such herbaceous cover as princess pine, cardinal flowers, and cowslips, but also for the wild creatures — such as otter and the newly-returning beaver — they shelter. Some of these areas are not imminently threatened, but all should be safeguarded through conservation provisions in the town's comprehensive plan.

2. A number of natural scenery districts might be defined and set off for restricted development. Scenic areas already identified as likely candidates for such protection include stretches of Cucumber Hill Road and Kennedy Road, from which vistas into Connecticut are open; portions of Johnson and Howard Hill Roads where westward vistas are also valuable; sections of Round Hill Road and Hemlock Road, where the stone walls and forest growth lining them remain undisturbed; and the land surrounding Hopkins Mills Pond.
3. The topography and face of the landscape should not be altered permanently by such operations as topsoil removal or gravel, sand, or other extractive industries. Such industries, currently allowed as non-conforming uses, should be subject to careful regulation, stipulating, among other things, that topsoil stocking, regrading, and replanting with indigenous vegetation are required.
4. Foster's brooks, streams, and rivers remain remarkably clean. To ensure continuance of their present good condition, the Planning Board or other local agency should publicize, and police as necessary, the provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act and the Rhode Island Fresh Water Wetlands Act of 1971 (which regulates such areas as marshes, swamps, and bogs). Additionally, local zoning to regulate and limit future development along the waterways would be advisable. Such

regulation might be coordinated with preservation of mill sites and natural areas and limited development of passive recreation areas. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management can advise on these issues and others relating to the preservation and regulation of land and water resources.

5. Forest management provisions should be studied and developed for use in Foster. At a minimum, those forest areas listed in the Audubon Society's inventory should be protected from cutting or unauthorized trimming by local ordinance. Elsewhere, a more general program of education and encouragement designed to upgrade and replant town forests would be valuable. The Foster Preservation Society has already sponsored one such program. A program of forest management could vastly benefit the town, preserving an historical sense of the forest, improving an important economic and visual resource, and assuring replenishment of the forest supply to feed Foster's continuing timber industry.
6. The preservation of the town's rural character and open space deserves careful study. The town has already enacted a minimum lot size requirement of four and two-thirds acres, which is designed, at least in part, to achieve this end. Minimum lot size requirements can be a useful tool when used selectively. However, the present uniform lot size requirement may well result in a homogenized development of land regardless of natural features, and thus create, in effect, dispersed tract development. It may also limit land and home ownership in Foster only to those who can afford to buy at least 4.66 acres. There are other alternatives:
  - a. The town could develop a system of varied lot size requirements, consonant with the

comprehensive plan and with the land's ability and varying suitability to sustain development, to direct the town's growth.

- b. The town could permit some cluster development as an alternative to tract or dispersed tract residential development. Cluster development permits a developer to build houses on smaller lots than are normally allowed, providing that the remaining land in the development is kept as related open space. Although population and building density over the total area remains the same, the developer has much greater freedom in siting and can concentrate housing on the most appropriate portions of the land, and valued natural areas, such as wildlife habitats or wetlands, can be preserved.
- c. The town might consider programs to encourage owners to keep former farm fields open and to put some of them to agricultural use. The sense of Rhode Island's agrarian past is most palpable where farm complexes exist in continuity with expanses of cleared land. Moreover, where fields are kept open, and perhaps improved by "green" plantings, the option to farm them remains open as well. Two hundred thousand acres of farm land were taken out of production in Rhode Island between 1945 and 1976; between 1969 and 1974 the number of farms in Rhode Island dropped from 700 to 597; and the loss continues at an accelerating rate. Some kind of continued agricultural land use in New England may prove to be important in the future as population and energy costs continue to escalate. Foster, with its generally poor soil, may not be a prime candidate for commercial market gardening; but orchards, dairies, sheep, and chicken farms have proved to be viable in the past. The matter deserves further study, both on a local and a state level.

## APPENDIX A: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places is a federal inventory of buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects throughout the United States which are judged worthy of preservation. Maintained by the National Park Service, United States Department of Interior, the National Register includes buildings, districts, structures, sites, and objects of local, state, and national importance, as well as parks in the National Parks system and buildings and sites designated by the National Historic Sites Survey as National Historic Landmarks.

All properties entered in the National Register are protected, by review at state and federal levels, from the potential adverse effects of federally funded or licensed undertakings. Additionally, properties included in the Register are eligible to apply for matching grants-in-aid for restoration from the National Park Service. Owners of registered properties which are depreciable (income producing) are also eligible for certain tax incentives for rehabilitation provided by sections of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. The Grants-in-Aid Program and relevant provisions of the Economic Recovery Tax Act are discussed in Appendices B and C respectively.

Entry of a property or district in the National Register places no restrictions on the private owner of the property and is not a form of historic district zoning.

### Properties Entered in the National Register of Historic Places:

Foster Center Historic District, Foster Center, Howard Hill, and South Killingly Roads  
Captain George Dorrance House, Jenks Road  
Solomon Drown House / "Mount Hygeia," Mount Hygeia Road  
Mount Vernon Tavern, Plainfield Pike

### Properties Approved for Nomination to the National Register:

Hopkins Mills Historic District: Both sides of Old Danielson Pike from the "Dolly Cole House" west

to and including the Nathaniel Stone House, running south across present Route 6 to include Hopkins Mills Cemetery and north to include Hopkins Mills site.

Deacon Daniel Hopkins House, Balcom Road  
North Foster Baptist Church, East Killingly Road  
Phillips-Wright House, Foster Center Road  
Nathaniel Stone House, Old Danielson Pike  
Beriah Collins House, Old Plainfield Pike  
Paine Farm, Paine Road  
Iri Brown Farm, Plain Woods Road  
Whidden-Fuller Farm, Plainfield Pike

### Properties Recommended for Further Study for Possible Nomination:

Clayville Historic District (Foster and Scituate): Both sides of Victory Highway from Isthmus Road northeast to and including the Clayville Arch Bridge; all of Pleasant Lane, Cole Avenue, and Field Hill Road to and including the Clayville Schoolhouse; and the Clayville mill site.  
Moosup Valley Historic District: Both sides of Moosup Valley Road from just east of its junction with Potter Road west to its junction with Cucumber Hill Road.  
Gideon Burgess House/Nelson Aldrich Birthplace, Burgess Road  
Mount Hygeia Schoolhouse, Hartford Pike  
John T. Randall Wheelwright Shop and House, Howard Hill Road  
Carpenter Cemetery, Moosup Valley Road  
Asahel Crossman House, North Road  
Paine-Bennett Farm, Old Plainfield Pike  
Fish-Bennett Farm, Old Plainfield Pike  
Abijah Weaver Farm/Sweet Farm, South Killingly Road  
Colwell-Saunders Farm, Winsor Road  
Middle Woodland Rock Shelter  
Phillips-Battey Sawmill Site, Moosup Valley Road  
Blanchard's Gristmill Site, Potter Road  
Ram Tail Mill Site, Ram Tail Road

As additional research is conducted, new information may well come to light which would justify additional proposals for the National Register.

## APPENDIX B: GRANTS-IN-AID PROGRAM

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established a program of matching grants-in-aid for the acquisition and development of properties listed on the National Register, and for planning work related to the preservation of historic properties. However, federal funding for these activities has varied from year to year, and the 1982 federal budget temporarily prohibits the use of funds for acquisition and development projects. When funds are available, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission accepts applications once a year from individuals, public and private organizations, and State and local governmental units.

Acquisition and development grants have been used to acquire, protect, stabilize, rehabilitate, restore, and reconstruct National Register properties. Allowable work under the program includes exterior restoration, structural repairs, installation or upgrading of utility systems and fire and security systems, architectural fees, archeological work, and historical research related to construction projects. The use of these funds for interior restoration is not encouraged, except for work on museum-quality interiors which will be accessible to the public.

Planning grants have been used to prepare historic structure reports, plans, and specifications for preservation work on National Register properties. They have also been used to develop programs for the protection of historic properties, for archeological studies, and to research, compile, and publish preservation information.

Each year, the Commission has received many more applications than it has been able to fund. The applications are evaluated according to the following criteria: the architectural and historical significance of the property, the need for the work and the grant assistance, the impact of the project on its neighborhood and future preservation activities, the potential public benefit of the project, and the geographical location of the property. The Commission may fund up to half the cost of a project. Acquisition and development grant awards have ranged in size from \$3,000 to \$50,000; planning

grants are usually smaller. Matching funds can come from any non-Federal source; from Community Development Block Grant Funds; and in the form of donated services, real property, or equipment. All funds are provided on a reimbursement basis only.

Financial assistance for the acquisition and development of a property, and for planning work, is provided for the benefit of the general public. Therefore, upon accepting a grant, the property owner may be required to execute a preservation easement which is recorded with the deed to the property. The easement states that the owner agrees to maintain the property and not make any visual or structural changes without prior approval from the Commission. The number of years this agreement remains in effect depends on the amount of the grant received. If the grant-supported work is not visible from a public right-of-way, the property must be open for public view twelve days a year.

## APPENDIX C: TAX INCENTIVES FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 contains an important incentive for the rehabilitation of historic income-producing properties. The new 25 per cent investment tax credit for such projects replaces the old provisions of the 1976 Tax Reform Act. The Federal Tax Code has now been altered to remove the bias in favor of new construction.

Changes to the Tax Law in the Economic Recovery Tax Act include:

1. A new accelerated cost recovery system (effective retroactive to January 1, 1981) permitting recovery of capital costs of real property over 15 years, straight line.
2. A three-tiered investment tax credit (ITC) for substantial rehabilitation of older and historic buildings. A 15 per cent ITC is allowed to buildings over 30 years old, a 20 per cent ITC to those over 40 years old, and a 25 per cent ITC to certified rehabilitations of certified historic structures.
3. Repeal of the 10 per cent investment tax credit for industrial and commercial rehabilitations as well as of the five-year amortization and accelerated depreciation provisions of the 1976 Tax Reform Act.
4. Repeal of the demolition disincentive that required straight-line depreciation for new construction on the site of a demolished historic structure, but retention of the provision that denies deduction of demolition costs as a business expense.

A "certified historic structure," qualifying for the 25 per cent ITC, is defined in the law as a depreciable structure which is (A) listed in the National Register, (B) located in a National Register historic district and certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance to the district, or (C) located in a local historic zoning district certified by the Secretary of the Interior to be controlled by design review procedures which will substantially achieve the purpose of

preserving buildings of historical significance. Qualification for the 25 per cent ITC includes certification of the rehabilitation as meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Certification of significance and rehabilitation are granted through an application process with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 was signed into law by the President on August 13, 1981. It is possible that Congress will reassess some provisions of the Act during its first year of use. Please consult the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission for current information.

In addition to rehabilitation incentives, there are also a variety of tax incentives for the granting of preservation easements. A preservation easement is a transfer of a partial interest in real property to a qualified preservation organization which gives the holding organization the legally enforceable right to protect the natural or historic character and significance of the property. The donation of the easement enables the present owner to guarantee the future protection of his property. Preservation easements may be used to protect certified historic structures, environmentally sensitive natural or scenic areas, or significant open spaces.

The Federal Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980 authorizes a charitable contribution deduction for federal income, estate, and gift tax purposes for the donation of easements for "conservation purposes" to a qualified tax-exempt organization or public agency. To qualify for deduction, the easement must be in perpetuity. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission is studying the feasibility of establishing a state-wide preservation easement program and can provide interested owners with more specific information.





Fig. 82: Town Pound (1845); South Killingly Road, Foster Center; 1974. View of the lintel. The pound was erected by the town to contain errant livestock and originally had an iron gate beneath this lintel.

## APPENDIX E: INVENTORY

The inventory is a selective list of sites, structures, buildings, districts, and objects which are important to an understanding of Foster's history or pre-history, which are in a reasonable state of preservation, and which have historic, architectural, or archeological significance in themselves, by association, or, in the case of some buildings, as noteworthy examples of an architectural type. It should be noted that the archeological entries represent only a partial and preliminary survey of the town's archeological resources. Also, only a fraction of Foster's approximately 140 cemeteries, marked and unmarked, were included in the survey and only a few of these are included in the inventory. A more nearly complete record of Foster cemeteries is on file at the Veterans Administration, Division of Graves Registration in Providence.

Inventory entries are organized by road name, in alphabetical order, and are listed in a direction north to south or east to west along each road. Identification numbers beside each entry refer to the location number on the townwide survey map, copies of which are on file at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission office, the Division of Statewide Planning, the Foster Town Clerk's Office, and the Foster Preservation Society. Wherever possible, each entry is referred to by a historic name. When deed research has been done or local tradition is sufficiently strong, the name used is that of the original individual owner, builder, or family. In many cases, the historic name derives from a nineteenth-century map, which means that some eighteenth-century entries are referred to by nineteenth-century names. When the property has two or more significant or locally-accepted names, several names are listed. An additional name in parentheses beside the property name indicates the village or hamlet within which it is located.

In most cases, dating and stylistic analysis of buildings was done on the basis of exterior examination only, supplemented by historical information. All buildings are of frame construction and are sheathed in wood clapboard unless specified otherwise. The most common house type is the story-and-a-half, center-chim-

ney, gable-roofed house with a five-bay facade and a five-room floor plan; this will be referred to as a typical center-chimney house. Another prevalent type is the lengthened house, a story-and-a-half tall, gable-roofed, with one or more chimneys and a facade with a varying number of bays. A third typical form is the "half-house" which has an end interior chimney and a three-bay facade and is most often one-and-a-half stories tall. For further explanation of these architectural types and floor plans, please consult the section of this report called Building on the Land.

Selected historic archeological sites are included in the general inventory and referred to by the name of the earliest known owner and use plus any subsequent owners and uses of significance. Aboriginal archeological sites are not included in the inventory; information on them is available at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission office.

Brief entries for major roads and for the villages and hamlets of Clayville, Foster Center, Hopkins Mills, Moosup Valley, Mount Vernon, and North Foster are included, in alphabetical order, within the general inventory.

An asterisk (\*) next to an entry indicates that the property has received preliminary approval from the Rhode Island Review Board for nomination to the National Register. A dagger (†) indicates that the property is recommended for further study to determine if it meets National Register criteria. A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates that the property has already been entered on the National Register.

## ANTHONY ROAD

**Dr. Jonathan Anthony House (c. 1770) (#319):** This typical center-chimney house, the home of physician Dr. Anthony and his son, also a physician, was altered in the early 20th century by the addition of an enclosed porch and two shed dormers on the front of the house.

## BALCOM ROAD

**Jacob Hopkins House (c. 1780) (#140):** This typical center-chimney house has a small lateral ell at its east end (possibly originally a milk room) and a recessed transom above the door. It has been re-shingled on the exterior and the interior has been heavily altered. The house is sited gable end to Balcom Road and faces south to the abandoned course of Rickard Road. It may have been built by Nicholas Hopkins who ran a sawmill nearby in the closing decades of the 18th century; Jacob Hopkins owned it in the middle of the 19th century.

**International Lead and Zinc Research Organization House (Mark Harrison, Kent Keegan, and Bryan Fitzpatrick designers) (1973-1976) (#141):** This house was planned and built by faculty and students of the Rhode Island School of Design as an experimental project sponsored by the International Lead and Zinc Research Organization. It uses industrial materials, such as steel, lead, and zinc, prefabricated building components, and industrial design to achieve an energy-efficient, fire-safe, sound-proof, low-maintenance structure which is accessible to the handicapped as well. The house has a steel-column frame onto which are bolted prefabricated steel and insulating-foam plates. Both sides of the sheathing plates are prepainted; on the exterior the surface is baked-on and guaranteed for twenty years in an industrial atmosphere. The house is basically rectangular in shape, one story tall with a divided pent roof, and has a garage attached at one side. It is one of the most interesting late 20th-century houses in Foster.

\* **Deacon Daniel Hopkins House (c. 1790-c. 1810) (#142):** This 2½-story, center-chimney house, with 2-story, set-back ell added at the northwest corner c. 1980, is one of the finest examples of the Federal style in Foster. The south-facing, 5-bay facade of the original house has a finely-detailed pedimented central doorway with a semi-circular fanlight. The side entrance, in the eastern gable end, has a double (12-light) transom. The house follows the standard Rhode Island 5-room plan—with kitchen in the back central position—which was used in Foster only after the Revolution. A large, almost-square entry-stairhall opens into two parlors; behind the southwest parlor is a smaller ancillary room. The kitchen was flanked by pantries, which retained their original built-in shelving with ornamental curved ends until about 1980. Between the southeast parlor and the northeast pantry are a side entry hall and a rear staircase. The architectural detail throughout is characteristic of carpenter rendering of Federal motifs, finer than most in Foster. The southwest parlor is a noteworthy masterpiece of vernacular design. Its elaborate woodwork—complex cornice, moulded and incised

chair rail, eight-panel double-panelled doors, crosstetted door-frames, and single-story mantel with engaged columns—is said to have been carved at sea by a sea-captain brother of original owner Daniel Hopkins. The wood, which has never been painted, may be teak and, according to an early 20th-century owner of the house, gives off a strange fragrance on damp days. An incised decorative pattern of alternating triglyphs and stars or flowers repeats on the fascia of the mantel and doors as well as on the chair rail and cornice. Stencilled patterns, hand-painted by itinerant artisan J. Gleason on the walls above and below the chair rails, also incorporate a flower motif. Stencilling was commonly found in Foster houses between c. 1810 and c. 1835 but most has been destroyed or painted over. This parlor and the ancillary room off it retain the best preserved stencilling in Foster, and, indeed, perhaps anywhere in western Rhode Island. Local tradition dates the house about 1790; style, floor-plan, and inconclusive deed research suggest 1810 or a little later as a more plausible date. A rebuilt late 19th-century barn to the east across Balcom Road, a small Hopkins family cemetery in the woods northeast of the barn, and a 20th-century man-made pond south of the house make a picturesque setting for this important landmark. Daniel Hopkins (1758-1844), a man of substance, owned a nearby sawmill, a share of which he inherited from his father Nicholas, and was a Deacon in Elder Hammond's Meetinghouse at Foster Center. The Balcom (also Bolcom) family purchased the property in 1856 and, apparently, gave Balcom Road its name.

## BARB'S HILL ROAD

**James Tyler House (1763?) (#260):** This much altered, 1½-story, 4-bay house is traditionally said to have been built c. 1736. However, it seems more likely that it was built c. 1763, the year James Tyler married. A large 19th-century barn with an attached 20th-century shed stands across open fields to the south. James Tyler (b. 1736) was the son of original settler John Tyler. After c. 1794, the house was lived in by James' son Job; it passed to his children, Obadiah and Mary, by James' will in 1813. The house stayed in the Tyler family till 1865.

**Reuben Blanchard-James Boss House (c. 1797 and 1874) (#261):** Originally a standard, center-chimney house built by Reuben Blanchard, this structure was significantly altered by Civil War veteran James Boss who used his bonus to raise the roof and remove the fireplaces in 1874.

**King-Tyler-Johnson House (c. 1770, c. 1845, and 1880) (#262):** This 1½-story house, with its two interior chimneys and asymmetrical, 7-bay facade, is a typical example of the lengthened house form. It was built sometime before 1780 by Joshua King on land he had purchased from the heirs of Samuel Cranston, one of the original Westconnaug proprietors. John Tyler acquired the property in 1836; by 1862, Casey B. Tyler owned it. Both men kept the general store at Moosup Valley, or "Tyler," at the head of Barb's Hill Road. Casey B. Tyler was also a local historian; his "Reminiscences" of Foster and Scituate, published in the *Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner* in 1892 and 1893, are an impor-

tant, if not always reliable, source of information on Foster's early history. The Johnson family, who still own the property, bought it (88 acres and a house) for \$800 in 1868.

## BIG HILL ROAD

**Young-Matthewson "Stone Pit" (before 1815) (#S70):** This extensive quarry in a granite ridge in southeastern Foster and northern Coventry was operated by Stephen Young before 1815. Quarrying was expanded after Olney Matthewson, James C. Johnson, and Stephen Johnson, Jr., purchased it in 1825. It is now part of the Audubon Society's Parker Woodland.

## BISCUIT HILL ROAD

**Jonathan Brown Gristmill and Sawmill Site (before 1799) (#S67):** Between high shoulders of land along Turkey Meadow Brook are the remains of a dry-laid stone dam, a c. 250-foot sluiceway, a dry-laid, fieldstone mill foundation, and a well. Jonathan Brown operated a gristmill and a sawmill here by 1799. No 19th-century maps show the mills.

## BOSS ROAD

**Pray Hill Farm (c. 1750) (#343):** This typical center-chimney house has a late Federal doorway with sidelights, a 1-story, 3-bay, 19th-century kitchen ell at its south end, a broad 20th-century shed dormer on the front, and a modern picture window on the rear. It is sited on the crest of a hill, just south of the Hartford Pike facing west; to its south are two large, mid-to-late 19th-century barns. The house was probably built by a member of the Pray family, early settlers who gave the hill their name.

**Nike Missile Base Housing (1956 et seq.) (#345):** This tract of sixteen modest, 1-story "ranch" houses was built to house personnel for the Nike Missile Base which opened in this area in 1958 and was in operation until 1965. The housing was rented, then sold into private ownership in 1974.

## BURGESS ROAD

**Simon Hopkins Farm/"Spring Rock Farm" (c. 1821) (#190):** This typical center-chimney house has a simple portico sheltering its front door and an enclosed porch added to the eastern gable end in 1972. The farm includes several sheds, a barn, and a 20th-century garage. Simon Hopkins was one of the sons of Revolutionary War soldier Ezekiel Hopkins.

**Ezekiel Hopkins House (c. 1820 and c. 1840) (#191):** This typical center-chimney house is characteristic of many Foster homes built in the Federal era: it has a more spacious rendering of the 5-room plan with a more generous stairhall, larger rooms, and noticeably higher ceilings. The simple Greek Revival doorway with flat entablature and long, narrow sidelights probably dates from when the gable-roofed kitchen ell, fronted by an open porch, was added (c. 1840). The interior of the house has been moderately altered. The house stands on 201 acres of land with open fields defined by stone walls immediately surrounding it, backed by woods. South and east of the house are blacksmith

shop and barn foundations; northeast of the house is Foster Historical Cemetery #3, where Revolutionary War hero Ezekiel Hopkins (1757-1842) is buried. Ezekiel C. Hopkins ran a popular blacksmith shop here and the 1895 Foster map labels Burgess Road "Ezechiels Road."

† **Gideon Burgess Farm/Senator Nelson W. Aldrich Birthplace (c. 1820) (#192):** The Gideon Burgess House is a large, 2½-story, typical center-chimney house with a simple Greek Revival doorway on the south facade and a 1-story, 20th-century open porch across its eastern gable end. The Burgess family cemetery, Foster Historical Cemetery #2, is behind the house; also extant are a barn and a shed. Gideon Burgess purchased the farm from his father-in-law about 1805 and built the present house sometime after 1810. Gideon's daughter Abby and her husband Anan Aldrich rented the farm from Gideon Burgess and it was here that Nelson W. Aldrich, influential U.S. Senator from 1881 to 1911, was born in 1841. The Aldriches moved soon after to the mill village of East Killingly, Connecticut, where Anan appears to have been more successful at store-keeping than he had been at farming. Nelson Aldrich's daughter Abby married John D. Rockefeller, Jr.; their children included Nelson W. Rockefeller (Vice President of the United States and Governor of New York State) as well as philanthropists David and Lawrence Rockefeller.

## CALVIN FRENCH ROAD

**Southward Griffiths House (c. 1815) (#256):** This typical center-chimney house, with a set-back 1-story ell to the east, is noteworthy for its commanding site on a south-facing hillside amid broad open fields almost on the Rhode Island-Connecticut line. Southward Griffiths (1760 to 1837) fought in the Revolutionary War with the Scituate company commanded by Colonel Archibald Crary.

## CENTRAL PIKE

**The Foster and Scituate Central Turnpike (1814-c. 1824):** Built, as were all turnpikes, by a private corporation, the Foster and Scituate Central Turnpike ran from a point in Providence where it met the Providence and Norwich Turnpike through Johnston, Scituate, and Foster to the Connecticut line. Probably because its course lay between that of the Foster and Scituate Turnpike to the north and the Plainfield Pike to the south, it was called the Central Pike. Another name was the Saundersville Pike because it passed through the then-thriving village of Saundersville in Scituate. Central Pike is said to have been a favorite for Connecticut cattle drovers en route to the Providence market. The road fell into disrepair by 1842; the corporation charter subsequently lapsed; and sometime in the last half of the 19th century the residents of the Deacon Daniel Hopkins House are said to have built a chicken coop across that portion of the pike which passed their door. As a result Central Pike today is impassable from the Balcom Road west.

**Hopkins-Young Farm (c. 1810) (#128):** This farm includes a typical center-chimney house with a small open porch at the west

front corner under the main roof; an outhouse and sheds near the house; and a delapidated barn across the road.

**L.C. Hopkins Farm (1808, c. 1858, 1970) (#130):** Although the typical center-chimney house has had two additions and some alterations, two 19th-century barns, one of them a relatively small bank barn possibly built c. 1870 and the other a larger earlier structure, make this an architecturally noteworthy complex.

**Nathaniel Stone House (c. 1790) (#131):** This much-altered, twice-moved, lengthened, 1½-story house was the original home of the Stone family in Foster. It was probably built by Nathaniel Stone soon after he purchased a farm here in 1789. Foster Historical Cemetery #51, an early 19th-century cemetery enclosed by a stone wall with an iron gate, set several hundred yards north of Central Pike and containing the burials of numerous Stone family members including Nathaniel Stone, marks the original location of this house. Nathaniel Stone served as a Colonel in the Rhode Island Militia during the Revolution and as a Representative from Foster to the General Assembly. He was interested in securing common schools in the state and was instrumental in establishing the Mount Vernon Bank in 1823, serving as its first president.

**Walter Irving Stone House (c. 1891) (#132):** This 1½-story, T-shaped, gable-roofed, shingled house is one of the relatively few late 19th-century houses built in Foster and one of the best preserved. Walter Stone served as both a Representative and a Senator in the Rhode Island General Assembly and was also a Town Council member.

**Barton Randall House (c. 1810, c. 1838) (#133):** This is a typical center-chimney house with a slightly later set-back ell fronted by an open porch at its eastern end. An early 19th-century shingled barn across (south of) Central Pike was originally part of the Randall Farm, but is now separately owned. Barton Randall is said to have "kept the poor" in a corn crib behind the house (no longer extant) before the establishment of the Town Poor Farm c. 1865.

**Austin-Blackmar Farm (c. 1780) (#135):** This typical, lengthened, 1½-story house has an asymmetrical 8-bay facade (including one bay in the enclosed 20th-century porch at the eastern end), two front doors, and two irregularly spaced chimneys. A single gable dormer has been added on the south roof slope. North and east of the house stand two shingled 19th-century barns. The house was owned by Joseph Austin (c. 1850 - c. 1890) and later (c. 1895) by Warren Blackmar who operated a bobbin mill where Millstones Pottery is today across Central Pike.

**Blackmar Mill / Millstones Pottery (building c. 1865 and c. 1938; mill site late 18th century) (#136 and #S17):** This mid-19th-century, shingled gristmill, the only mill structure remaining in Foster today, was converted for residential use about 1938 and is now also a pottery. This site was used in the 18th century for a sawmill, in the 19th century for a gristmill, and in the 20th

century for a bobbin works which supplied the textile factories in Scituate until they closed in 1928 following the completion of the Scituate Reservoir. The mill was built over the course of a stone-lined sluiceway, and the potter's wheel once used the power provided by a turbine. The sluice leads to a mill-pond behind the pottery which is formed by a stone dam thought to date from the late 18th century. A late 19th- or early 20th-century sluice gate remains in place.

## † CLAYVILLE

**Clayville:** Clayville today is a quiet village on the Foster-Scituate line which includes about forty houses with a few outbuildings; the former Clayville Christian Union Church with its cemetery behind it enclosed by a granite post fence and an intricate cast-iron fence; a post office; two schools; and a former general store and former hotel, both now used as residences. The village spreads on either side of Victory Highway as it curves past the northern tip of the Westconnaug Reservoir, around the Clayville Mill Pond, and northeastward across Bear Tree Brook into Scituate, toward the site of the former mill village of Rockland, now beneath the waters of the Scituate Reservoir. Most of the houses—sited along Victory Highway, Cole Avenue, Pleasant Lane, and Field Hill Road (in Scituate)—date from the middle of the 19th century and are gable-roofed, a story-and-a-half tall, and have very simple late Federal, Greek Revival, or Victorian detailing. One of the earliest and most imposing buildings is the former Clayville General Store, a large, 2½-story, 6-bay, clapboarded house with a gable roof, a monitor-like shed dormer, and an elaborate late Federal doorway detailed with reeded pilasters and fretwork. This building, which may have been built as Edmund Smith's general store and factory about 1822, served as a general store into the twentieth century. The village has a picturesque setting overlooking the mill pond and the ruins of the mills, which are heavily overgrown. The physical remains of the mills include: the pond held in by a massive dam faced in cut stone built about 1847; fragments of the stone walls below the dam, presumably part of the 1857 Upper Mill; two arched bridges of cut granite a little farther downstream; two sluiceways, one of fieldstone leading to a small, dry-laid, stone and earth mill foundation and an apparently later one with cut-stone walls about fifteen feet high leading to a cut-stone mill foundation; and a series of concrete supports for a pipe conduit which, in the early 20th century, carried water to turbines in the hydroelectric plant which is still visible near the present Clayville Arch Bridge. Clayville developed into Foster's most ambitious and prosperous mill village when Josiah Whitaker of Providence purchased what had been Edmund L. Smith's small cotton factory and general store from various owners in 1826 and subsequently, in 1827 or 1828, began the water-powered manufacture of imitation tortoise shell combs. "Combville" grew quickly and was named Clayville in 1829 in honor of Henry Clay, a strong advocate of tariffs on foreign manufactures to protect fledgling American industries. By 1829 the factory employed between seventy and one hundred people and sent to market each week combs worth over \$1,000. Almost all phases of manufacture, from cleaning and cutting the raw cowhorn to

polishing the finished combs, were mechanized. By the 1850s, when an unknown artist painted Clayville, there were numerous small story-and-a-half mill houses clustered around the large stone mill with its elevated wooden sluiceway and smaller ancillary buildings. In 1847 Josiah Whitaker converted the factory for the manufacture of rubber shoes; in 1853 he changed to cotton manufacture. A fire necessitated rebuilding the mill in 1857, and in 1858 a second mill was erected a little downstream from it. Both mills were of stuccoed cut granite and had broad gable roofs with clerestory monitors. The Upper Mill (1857) had a frame Greek Revival style foretower with a belfry for the mill bell. In 1858 the mills were leased by Lindsay Jordan, a maker of print cloths. He bought the mills outright in 1860. From 1865 to 1875 they were run by his estate and they were run by Charles Jordan from 1875 until c. 1880 when they were purchased by S.R. Weeden and Son, manufacturers of cotton yarn. In 1878 the two mills had a capacity of one hundred and twenty horsepower, contained one hundred and eight looms, and employed seventy-five hands. In the early 20th century a cast-concrete hydroelectric plant was built below both mills near the Clayville Arch Bridge. The mills closed and were razed about 1922 by the Providence Water supply Board as part of their construction of the Scituate Reservoir and watershed. For further information see inventory entries for Cole Avenue, Field Hill Road, Pleasant Lane, and Victory Highway.

## COLE AVENUE

- † **A. Williams Farm (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1840) (#380):** This well-maintained center-chimney house with Greek Revival doorway and panelled corner pilasters is sited on a spacious hillside lot set back from Cole Avenue. A barn and several smaller outbuildings stand behind the house.
- † **T. Seamans House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1880) (#382):** This modest 1½-story, clapboarded house is sited gable end to the road with a small barn behind it.
- † **Richard Colwell-J.A. Hill House (Clayville, Foster) (c. 1750) (#384):** This altered 1½-story house built into a hillside, with a full basement story exposed on the south, appears to have begun as a half house. A small ell with its own chimney, offset from the main house, and a cut-stone barn foundation at the rear are other notable features. This house may have been built for Richard Colwell, a maker of felt hats, who purchased land in the area in 1738 and 1747 and whose name appears here on the 1799 map. The 1862 map designation for the property, "J.A. Hill," probably refers to James A. Hill, a carpenter, born in Foster in 1833, who moved to Clayville about 1858.
- † **House (Clayville, Foster) (c. 1845) (#385):** This 3-bay, south-facing house, with its small eastern ell, Greek Revival corner pilasters, broad frieze, and plain flat-headed doorway, is a mid-19th-century version of the half-house, and one of the most architecturally noteworthy houses in Clayville.

## CUCUMBER HILL ROAD

**Cucumber Hill Road:** This major north-south road in western Foster is so-called because in the late 19th and early 20th centuries farms on both sides of the road raised cucumbers which were sent by wagon to a pickle factory in Providence. The northern portion of the road, from the north end of present Shippee Schoolhouse Road south almost to present Harrington Road, was laid out in 1754; the southern portion was opened in 1787-1788. Cucumber Hill Road remained unpaved until about 1940.

**Abiel Slater House (c. 1770, c. 1820, and c. 1890) (#198):** This typical center-chimney, south-facing house has a symmetrical 5-bay facade, which has a transitional Federal/Greek Revival style doorway ornamented with simplified fretwork and channelling, and a late 19th-century ell sheathed in decorative Victorian shingling. A chicken coop still stands across the road but the barn and other buildings have been razed. The Slater family settled in this area before 1781.

**Matthewson Hopkins Farm (c. 1840, 1874, c. 1973) (#199):** The 1½-story shingled farmhouse has been twice rebuilt after fires in 1874 and c. 1973. It is said to have been built on the site of the so-called "Two-Chimney Schoolhouse." South and west of the house are several 20th-century chicken coops, used as part of Helfgott's Egg Farm, one of the few continuing poultry farms in Foster. No other farm buildings remain.

**Hale-Sweet-Burgess Farm/"Pleasant View Farm" (c. 1850) (#205):** The farm includes a simple, Victorian, 1½-story, 5-bay, center-chimney house with a flat, bracketed door hood; a 19th-century barn; a shed; and the remains of two other barns, one of which stood until the mid-1970s. Allen G. Burgess, who owned this farm by 1887, was a butcher and built one of the barns as his market; the building was also used for local dances. The farm was called Pleasant View Farm in the early 20th century and the brook behind is called "Dead Cow Brook" because of its patches of quicksand treacherous in the spring. The present owner raises beef cattle.

**Harrington-Sweet Farm/"The Bailey Farm" (c. 1820) (#206):** This typical center-chimney house, with its trellised early 20th-century front porch and set-back ell, has been heavily modernized within. It is sited kitty-corner to the road on a nicely landscaped lot with a small orchard, a garage, a late 19th- or early 20th-century barn, and chicken coops behind it. Stephen Harrington built the house on 35 acres of land given him in 1799 by his father Josiah Harrington. In the 20th century the farm was known as "The Bailey Farm."

**Stone Schoolhouse Site (c. 1836) (#525):** This jumble of rough-hewn foundation stone marks the site of a private schoolhouse built about 1836; it may have been used as a place of worship by the Kimballites, members of the Perfect Zion Church.

**Wright-Brayton-Spencer Farm (c. 1770, 1882) (#209):** This lengthened, 1½-story house, with exposed cut-stone basement

story, was moved from the Iri Brown Farm to its present hillside location by Benjamin Wright before 1851; subsequent owners added onto it at the western end about 1882. A massive cut-stone retaining wall west of the house, a barn site to the north-west, the fragments of a shed, and a delapidated outhouse are all that remain of the farm structures.

**"The Brayton Farm" (c. 1790) (#211):** This well-restored center-chimney house, with rear ell, was probably built by David Brayton of Pomfret, Connecticut, after he purchased 62 acres of land here in 1791 from Silas Harrington. The house faces south across open fields at the end of a dirt lane leading east from Cucumber Hill Road. Nearby are two 20th-century gambrel-roofed barns and a 19th-century corncrib.

**Tyler Farm/"Ledge Corner Farm" (c. 1767) (#212):** This restored, typical center-chimney house has a 1-story ell on its southern (front) facade, which was a 1-room schoolhouse moved here from Plain Woods Road sometime before 1895. Several sheds, a small early 20th-century frame guest-house, a c. 1970 gambrel-roofed barn, and a large man-made pond dug in the mid-1970s, complete the present farm complex. Esek Tyler lived here by 1809.

## DANIELSON PIKE/U.S. ROUTE 6

**Danielson Pike/U.S. Route 6:** This 4-lane, high-speed road, is the major east-west route through Foster, linking Connecticut and New York with Providence, Boston, and Cape Cod. It follows generally the course of the Danielson Turnpike, built as the Foster and Scituate Turnpike between 1813 and about 1815. It should be noted that Danielson Pike and its predecessor, "North" or "Killingly Road," were much more serpentine than Route 6 and in many places ran somewhat north of the present 20th-century alignment. Route 6 has the distinction of being the first Foster road paved as part of the state highway system; the first half mile, running from the Scituate line to Hopkins Mills, was paved in 1904. It was made a U.S. route in 1926.

**Joseph Arnold-Pardon Williams House (c. 1797 et seq.) (#1):** This long, shingled, much altered house at the top of Dolly Cole Hill apparently began as a typical center-chimney house; the eastern 3-bay section with corner fireplace, probably added about 1820, was used as a tavern room when the turnpike stagecoach stopped across the road in the mid- and late 19th century. A small flat-roofed addition at the west front corner of the house was used as the Dolly Cole Tea Room in the early 20th century.

**J.E. Rounds Farm (c. 1850) (#7):** The farm, sited far south of Danielson Pike on a dirt road called Rounds Lane, includes a simple, Victorian, 1½-story farmhouse with paired interior chimneys, a bracketed door hood, and an original set-back ell; a large shingled c. 1850 barn; and a small shed.

\* **"Dolly Cole House" (c. 1840) (#9):** This much-altered, asbestos-shingled, mid-19th-century local landmark stands with its garage, shed, large trees, and small pond near the foot of Dolly

Cole Hill. It stands near the site of a pre-Revolutionary gambrel-roofed tavern run at the turn of the 19th century by "Dolly" Cole, from which it takes its name.

**Dolly Cole Brook Bridge/Bridge #295 (1932) (#400):** This reinforced concrete bridge has a single, round-arched span, parapets ornamented by recessed, rectangular panels, and abutments faced in random ashlar. It was built by E. Turgeon of Providence, contractor, for the Rhode Island Board of Public Roads when the Danielson Pike was realigned in 1932 to by-pass Hopkins Mills.

\* **Hopkins Mills Cemetery/Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #45 (Hopkins Mills) (#C45):** This large cemetery, at the corner of Danielson Pike and Ram Tail Road, is bounded partly by a low stone wall and partly by a fence of iron rails and granite posts. The oldest burials, outside and north of the railing at the northeast corner of the cemetery, date from the 1760s; other burials date through the 19th century to the present.

**Ponagansett River Bridge/Bridge #296 (1932) (#401):** This impressive, reinforced concrete bridge spans the Ponagansett River in a single, broad, round arch. Its concrete parapet walls are ornamented by simple, recessed, longitudinal panels and the abutments are faced in random ashlar. The bridge was built by E. Turgeon of Providence, contractor, for the Rhode Island State Board of Public Roads when the alignment of the Danielson Pike was "improved" in 1932.

**Church of the Messiah (William D. Warner, architect; William Kite, project designer and manager) (1966) (#19):** This essentially rectangular church building with a shed roof and two shed-roofed towers, at altar and belfry ends, is covered in board and batten sheathing, which presumably was intended to match the building's rustic setting and modern informality of design but resembles sheet metal; the interior use of natural wood sheathing is considerably more successful. As originally built, the entrance in the foot of the belfry tower was a round arch open on both sides. The subsequent closing-in of this arch and the stairs on the south side detracts from the building's original clarity of design.

**Church of St. Paul the Apostle (Americo Mallozzi, architect) (1973) (#22):** The Church is formed by two low, gable-roofed buildings, residential in scale and covered in natural wood shingles, set at right angles and joined to one another by a breezeway-like enclosed connector. The larger section is the sanctuary; the smaller section houses other functions. This is the only Roman Catholic church in Foster, which was the last town in Rhode Island to have a Catholic Church. A mission was established here in 1970, a parish in 1972, and the Church itself in 1973.

**Sweet's Market (1941) (#23):** This relatively small, 1-story, match-boarded, gable-roofed building opened as Sweet's Market in 1941 and has dispensed groceries and sundries to residents ever since. It is one of a handful of such descendants of the general store in modern Foster.

**L. Smith House (c. 1830) (#26):** This 1½-story, gable-roofed house, with its large, off-center chimney and asymmetrical facade, may have been built as a half house and then enlarged c. 1830.

**Hopkins-Bowen House (c. 1750) (#31):** This 1½-story house, with its almost invisible foundation, very low roofline, window and door frames joined into the cornice, and asymmetrical facade, has a mid-18th-century appearance despite some later alterations. The house stands only 30 feet back from the road, with a small well house in front and a shed and a garage at the rear.

**Ballou-Pray-Tewgood House/"Stone House" (before 1806, 1815, 1974) (#33):** This 3-bay, gable-roofed house built into a south-facing hillside is called the "Stone House" because its basement and ground story are built of massive chunks of dressed stone. The gable peaks and small enclosed entry porch (c. 1974) on the eastern end are shingled. Despite the fact that the house lost its original top frame story in the Great Gale of 1815 and has been modernized on the interior, it remains an important architectural landmark in Foster. It is the most visually prominent example of an enduring building tradition: siting the house with a hillside at its back (north) and using a full exposed basement story of stone. The house was probably built by Asa Ballou who sold it in 1806 to Vincent and Rachel Bowen; the BOWENS sold it in 1817 to Alfred Pray who kept store here. Pray's heirs sold the property in 1840 to Daniel Tewgood. The house is now used as a residence and as the roadside sign for the Stone House Motel built behind it in the 1950s.

**Site of the Captain George Baker House (and Tavern) (c. 1765-1975) (#52):** The 2½-story Baker House, five bays wide by four bays deep, with a 3-bay 19th-century ell on the west, was one of the largest and most imposing houses ever built in Foster. Used as an inn, it stood just north of the Danielson Pike at its corners with Cucumber Hill and Shippee Schoolhouse Roads, near the Foster-Connecticut line. This spot was known in the late 19th century as "Little Rest Four Corners." The house remained a visually commanding landmark, through years of vacancy and dereliction, until its demolition in 1975.

## EAST KILLINGLY ROAD

**Simmons Cemetery/Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #31 (c. 1840) (#C31):** This medium-sized mid-19th-century cemetery, containing about ten markers for the Simmons family, is bounded on all four sides by a handsome dry-laid stone wall topped with large rectangular slabs of stone cut locally by mason Henry Blackmar. The Simmons Cemetery is one of the best-preserved from this era in Foster.

**Daniel Cole House (c. 1770) (#173):** This somewhat altered and partly restored, typical center-chimney house, with small set-back ell and doorway with transom, follows the Foster 5-room floor plan but also has a fireplace in the stone-walled cellar, a usage not so commonly found. Daniel Cole, son of Hugh Cole

(who settled in the area probably about 1750) built the house.

**Job Seamens House (c. 1760) (#175):** This good example of a half house retains its original size and shape and much of its original floor plan. It was owned before 1836 by Job Seamens and stayed in the Seamens family till 1872.

**William Hopkins Farm (house c. 1840, west ell c. 1875) (#177):** This farm complex includes a Greek Revival style, typical center-chimney farmhouse (c. 1840); a slightly larger store building (c. 1875) set at a right angle to the house and formerly connected to the house by a partly enclosed porch with elaborate Victorian diamond trellis railing and sawn-work cornice; a large 19th-century barn; and several smaller outbuildings including an outhouse and a bake house. During remodelling in the 1970s the Victorian porch, at that time a unique survivor of the type in Foster, was entirely removed. The house was built by William Hopkins. Sometime between 1870 and 1895 William's son Isaiah B. Hopkins built and opened the general store beside the house; he also ran a grain store in the barn.

\* **North Foster Baptist Church (1848, Nelson C. Bowen, builder, 1868 and 1955) (#183):** This 1-story, clapboarded country church, with its simple Greek Revival massing and trim (doorframes, panelled corner pilasters, return mouldings, and broad flat cornice frieze) and short square belfry tower, is one of Foster's most important architectural landmarks. Despite some interior remodelling and a small addition on the north in 1868, and the removal of part of the western wall of this addition to accommodate the connector to the parish house-kitchen wing added in 1955, the church retains much of its original fabric and character: long double-hung windows, plain plank wainscoting, and wooden pews (formerly box pews). It is sited commandingly on a hill overlooking East Killingly Road and Paine Road to the south. Fortunately, the long, 1-story, 20th-century parish house addition was built as far back from the road as possible and detracts very little from the visual impact of the church itself. The North Foster Freewill Baptists gathered in 1824 and soon outgrew the various schoolhouses in which they met. In 1844 Andrew Paine urged that a meetinghouse be erected; subscriptions were solicited, and building commenced May 5, 1848. North Foster Baptist Church is the oldest on-going congregation in town, and its building is the oldest continuously-used church.

**Jenks Hopkins House (c. 1799) (#184):** This is a good example of the lengthened house form, despite the addition of 20th-century dormer windows. It is sited gable-end to the road surrounded by broad lawns with a modern garage to the rear.

**William G. Stone House (1832) (#185):** This typical center-chimney house, with small set-back eastern ell, has the very plain architectural detail frequently found on farmhouses of this period: plain doorway with a flat moulded cornice, and flat plank water table and cornerboards. The house is sited on a slight rise, with a garage at the rear, an open well house to the southeast, and a small shed near the road which was used in the early 20th century as an ice cream shop. William G. Stone built

his house on land given to him by his father Colonel Nathaniel Stone. William Stone served as Captain of a company of cadets, Justice of the Peace (for over twenty years), State Representative (three years), State Senator (three years), and held various town offices. He also served as a delegate from Foster to the 1842 convention to form a State Constitution.

**Maple Glen Tavern/G. Simmons House (c. 1760) (#186):** This house, much altered in the 20th century, is one of two surviving examples of the gambrel-roofed house form in Foster. It stands far back from the present course of East Killingly Road on a hillside facing south across a small spring-fed pond; a garage and a 19th-century barn stand to the east. The house is said to have served as Maple Glen Tavern before 1799.

**Burgess-Morey Farm (house c. 1770, barn 1891) (#189):** The farm includes a much-altered center-chimney house and a magnificent large, late Victorian barn with a cupola ventilator. After Burgess died, the farm was owned for a number of years by Nelson W. Aldrich. Cy Morey, a farmer and a mason, purchased the farm at a public auction in 1884 and built the barn in 1891.

## FIELD HILL ROAD

† **Clayville Bridge (Clayville, Scituate) (Alston R. Spencer, designer and builder) (1954) (#391):** This small arched bridge of concrete faced in cut stone, carries Field Hill Road across the stream connecting the Westconnaug Reservoir to the south and Clayville Pond to the north.

† **A. Stone House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1840) (#392):** This center-chimney Greek Revival style house with a typical recessed entry, stands with a small shed, an outhouse, and a well house, on a visually prominent site, a cleared field overlooking Clayville Mill Pond to the west. The property stayed in the Stone family through the end of the 19th century.

† **J.D. Webster House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1855) (#393):** This long, 1½-story, clapboarded house with enclosed front entry appears to be one of the few mill-houses ever built in Clayville.

† **H. Hill Farm (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1840) (#395):** This picturesque, mid-19th-century farm complex, set amid cleared fields behind dry-laid stone walls, includes a 4-bay, 1½-story, Greek Revival house sited gable end to the road; several 19th-century sheds, one now used as a garage; and a mid-19th-century barn with an unusual Greek Revival style cupola ventilator. Despite a later addition to the west flank of the house, this is one of the most architecturally interesting complexes in Clayville.

† **Martin & Steere/J.T. Randall House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1790, c. 1830) (#397):** This 2½-story, 4-bay house with a 1½-story ell at the east, fronted by a small recessed entry porch, retains a significant amount of late 18th-century and Greek Revival detailing inside and out (mantels and cornerposts and exterior panelled corner pilasters) despite some remodelling and the application of aluminum siding in the 1960s. A small outhouse stands at its rear. This is one of the largest extant houses in

Clayville. The earliest map indication for it is 1862, Martin & Steere; by 1870 J.T. Randall owned it.

† **Clayville Schoolhouse/Clayville Community House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1845) (#399):** The 1½-story, Greek Revival schoolhouse has a wide 3-bay gable front which is treated as a pediment by the continuation of the cornice frieze across it. Two small enclosed entries flanking the rear corners and an enclosed portico on the front are later additions. The building is of particular interest for its clear and fairly formal display of the Greek Revival style. The building has been used as a Community House since about 1964.

## \*\* FOSTER CENTER

**Foster Center:** This small village of predominantly 18th- and 19th-century vernacular buildings is clustered around the intersection of Foster Center, Howard Hill, and South Killingly Roads. The village includes at least three former taverns (Thomas Hammond's Tavern, where the first Foster town meeting was held in 1781, Welcome Road Tavern, which was also a general store for much of the 19th century, and the Eli Aylsworth House); Elder Hammond's Meetinghouse, now the Foster Town House, the seat of all town meetings since 1801; the Foster Center Christian Church of 1882; the Town Clerk's Office, whose 1904 date is belied by its builders' use of traditional Greek Revival vernacular building form; and the Foster Center Schoolhouse, built before 1824 and remodelled several times since then (in the 1950s through the 1970s for use as the Foster Center Library). A dozen residences, some with outbuildings, a former blacksmith shop, and a former grain store fill in the existing fabric of the village. The Center, which began in the mid-18th century, and was known as "Hemlock" in the early 19th century because of its setting in a hemlock forest, has been the seat of town government since 1781. As Foster's most important community center and one of the best preserved, Foster Center was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

## FOSTER CENTER ROAD

**Foster Center Road:** This 2-lane road runs in a curving course south and then east from the Danielson Pike (U.S. Route 6) through Foster Center to Clayville on the Foster-Scituate line. Now part of R.I. Route 94, the eastern section of Foster Center Road developed in the early 1700s and was known for much of the 18th century as the road by Thomas Angell's tavern (in present day Scituate) toward Killingly, Connecticut. The section of the road north of Foster Center, incorporating two other 18th-century roads, has been considerably straightened in the course of 20th-century road improvements.

**Captain Isaac Paine School (1952) (#100):** This sprawling school complex of various connected, low, 1-story, gable-roofed and pent-roofed, stuccoed concrete sections was built when consolidation of the town's seven operating 1-room schoolhouses took place. It was built on land which was part of Revolutionary War soldier Captain Isaac Paine's original farm given to the town by Paine descendants.

**Whitman-Spears Sawmill/"Yell Mill" (c. 1890) (#102):** This small, late 19th-century, shingled, 1-story sawmill, with mid-20th-century additions, now used as a residence, occupies the seat of a mill built by William Whitman in the late 1700s and is near the site of Oliver Carver's and William Hopkins' "Speedwell Forge" begun about 1789. Whitman's sons Robert and Stephen sold the mill to Benjamin Bennett of Windham, Connecticut, and Nathaniel Phillips of Foster. In March 1860, Benjamin Bennett sold 2½ acres and a small mill and other buildings with water privileges and flowing rights to Sam and Saley Bennett who were deaf (or deafened) and yelled to each other over the sound of the mill, hence the familiar name "Yell Mill." The mill was rebuilt after a fire in 1860. By 1895 George and William Spears ran the sawmill. In the 20th century, Albert Card made furniture here.

**Captain Abraham Phillips House (1821) (#103):** This large, 2½-story, center-chimney house has been altered by early 20th-century interior remodelling and the addition of an enclosed porch on the mid-19th-century western ell. A shed to the northwest served as housing for the help when the tavern was in operation next door. Parallel 4-foot stone walls cross the front lawn of the property and mark the course of Foster Center Road before 20th-century straightening.

**Oak Tree Tavern (c. 1875, c. 1910, c. 1974) (#104):** This large, 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboarded and shingled, late 19th-century structure was built as a barn by James Bennett when he owned the Captain Abraham Phillips Farm. It was converted for use as Oak Tree Tavern in the early 20th century—the barn doors were removed, windows were added, and the 2-story section at the north was built—probably by James Seagraves who kept the tavern. The structure was converted into a residence, with a large, open, 2-story, galleried, central living space, by the Grays about 1974.

**Clarence Wetherbee House (1902) (#107):** This modest, 1½-story, shingled, Victorian cottage with gable-breaking-gable roof, and full-width, hip-roofed front porch, is the only one of its type in Foster. It is sited on a steep slope thoroughly screened by hemlocks.

\*\* **Grain Store (Foster Center) (c. 1928) (#110):** This large, frame building with broad saltbox roofline and horizontal matchboarded front sheathing, was built about 1928 as a grain store. It is one of the relatively few structures built in Foster in the early 20th century.

\*\* **Andrew Hopkins - Dr. Mowry P. Arnold Farm (Foster Center) (c. 1770, c. 1830 et seq.) (#111):** The farm includes a typical lengthened, 1½-story house, which has a full-width front porch and two rear ells joined to it at right angles, and one of Foster's most impressive barns, a large, mid-19th-century shingled structure which is, unfortunately, in poor condition. Dr. Mowry P. Arnold, a physician for over sixty years in Foster, began his practice in the town in 1828. In 1830 he purchased this farm from Andrew and Sally Hopkins. Arnold, who served as school

commissioner forty-six years and town treasurer twenty-three years, died in 1890. His son Mowry followed in his medical footsteps.

\*\* **Job Randall's Blacksmith Shop (Foster Center) (c. 1901) (#112):** This 1½-story, shingled, barn-like building was built by Job Randall as a blacksmith shop. The ox sling and bellows were still inside it in the late 1960s.

**Straight-Bennett Farm (c. 1800) (#116):** Despite the fact that the 3-bay, 1½-story house has been heavily altered, the farm retains some fine shingled outbuildings, among them a large barn, a carriage house, an outhouse, and several small sheds. This property does not appear on early maps. The 1862 map indicates Mrs. E. (for Eli) Aylesworth, a large land owner; the 1870 map shows J. Straight; and the 1895 map, Mrs. G. Bennett.

**Randall Farm (c. 1780) (#118):** The farm includes a typical center-chimney house with a 2-bay ell set back at the eastern end; a large, picturesque, early to mid-19th-century barn near the road; several small sheds behind and east of the house; and some large trees and stone walls. The house is sited at a three-quarter angle to the present road with a dirt lane passing immediately in front of it, probably marking the earlier course of the road. The farm was probably begun by William Randall about 1780. His sons, Zephaniah and Eddy Randall, owned and divided it in 1819. The farm (with two houses, a barn, and other buildings) passed from Zephaniah and Marcy Randall to their son Thurber in 1848. George and Elmer Hopkins purchased it from a subsequent owner in 1887.

**Jacob Phillips-James Manchester Wright House (c. 1770 and c. 1820, c. 1910) (#120):** This typical center-chimney house has a small set-back ell added on the east after 1910. Some interior remodelling has occurred; however the 5-room plan, narrow front staircase, and the Federal mantel in the west parlor remain intact. Jacob Phillips purchased land in 1761 and was living in this area as a yeoman (farmer) by 1778, presumably in this house. The heirs of Jacob's son Israel Phillips sold the property to Abner Winslow between 1869 and 1871; he sold it to James Manchester Wright in 1873. James M. Wright (1834-1907) was born and grew up in the nearby Phillips-Wright House. A friend of Senator Nelson Aldrich and a politician of statewide influence, Manchester was a Democrat until 1860, when he broke with the party over the issue of slavery. As a Republican he served as State Representative (1862, 1863, 1867, 1868); State Senator (1877, 1878, 1882, 1883, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1900, 1901); and Chairman of the Republican Town Committee for 47 consecutive years. As a member of the state Republican Central Committee he helped "Boss" Brayton get out the rural vote on a number of issues. Wright was made a member of the Rhode Island Shellfish Commission for 28 years, an oddly suited political reward for a hinterlands politician.

**Tillinghast-Wilbour-Randall Farm (c. 1770 et seq.) (#121):** This lengthened 1½-story house faces south away from the road and is set far back from it. A dirt lane leads to the barn and garage

which stand nearby. Sarah Wilbour, of Scituate (daughter of Samuel Tillinghast), purchased this farm from the heirs of Samuel Tillinghast c. 1845. She left it in her will (written in 1857 and proved shortly thereafter) to Job Randall.

**Tillinghast-Remington House (1800 and c. 1845) (#123):** This large, 2½-story, center-chimney house, five bays wide and two bays deep, has a simple Greek Revival doorway with sidelights and a 1½-story Greek Revival ell with a partial-width recessed porch at the east. The house faces south, set behind a grassy lawn; its barn still stands across the road. The house was built for Stephen Tillinghast. After his death, his granddaughter, Cynthia Tillinghast Remington, built the ell and did other remodelling.

\* **Phillips-Wright House (c. 1765) (#124):** Despite some 20th-century additions to the east, this house is one of the best preserved examples of the half house in Foster. The Phillips-Wright House follows a floor plan typical of many half houses: a narrow stairhall as one enters, and opening from the hall, a large keeping room with two smaller rooms behind it. Although no outbuildings remain, dry-laid stone walls front the road and large old trees shelter the house on the west. The house was probably built by Ezekiel Phillips who purchased forty acres of land from Peter Parker, Jr., in 1763 (no house mentioned); an 1801 deed for the property from Ezekiel Phillips to his son Augustus specifically cites the "½ house where I now live." Samson and Abigail Phillips Battey and Joseph Wells were subsequent owners. In 1847, Wells sold the property to his brother-in-law Benjamin Wright, Jr. Among the eight Wright children was James Manchester Wright, a local politician of statewide note. (See the entry for James Wright's House, Foster Center Road (#120), for further detail.)

## GENE ALLEN ROAD

**Hopkins-Tourtellot-Pray Farm (1831) (#299):** The farm includes a large, 2½-story, clapboarded, center-chimney house; a small, early 19th-century barn behind it; and, near the southwest corner of the property, a small cemetery (Historical Cemetery #14) which contains about twenty crudely-worked uncised stone markers and is said to be an Indian burial ground. The house is particularly noteworthy for its commanding siting—facing south across sloping fields defined by stone walls—and for its unique and handsome entrance, with fluted pilasters flanking the sidelights and a semi-elliptical carved wooden fan above the door. The house may have been built before 1831—the date proclaimed by a date stone in the chimney—but additional research will be required to verify this.

## GOLD MINE ROAD

**Foster Goldmine Site (1901-1905) (#538):** A stone dam across Dead Cow Brook, the remnants of a small building foundation, five or six deep mine shafts, a 30-foot cut into the hillside, and a much larger cut, varying from ten to thirty feet in depth, several hundred feet long east to west, known as "Poverty Gulch," are all that remain to mark the operations of the so-called Foster

Gold Mine. In the mid 1890s John Avery Perry, a former California "Fortyniner" who had married into the Harrington family, moved to a farm in southwestern Foster where he discovered gold. In February 1900, with his son Adelbert Perry and two neighbors, Clarke Johnson and Curtis Foster, John Avery Perry secured a charter for the Homestrike Mining Company giving them the right to mine, refine, and treat gold, silver, nickel, and other metals; Adelbert and Ezra Perry of Providence secured a charter for Pioneer Mining Company, for mining rights only, in April of 1900. By May, 1901, sufficient capital had been subscribed; the mill building and office had been completed; and machinery including a stone crusher, a pulverizer, a wood-burning boiler, an up-to-date steam engine, shafting, pulleys, leaching tanks, water pumps, and an ore elevator had been brought by railroad to Greene Station in Coventry and thence by oxen. Results soon proved disappointing. The processing mill shut down in 1902; mining ceased in 1905; and all the buildings and machinery were dismantled and shipped to other New England mines.

**Peleg Aylsworth Gristmill Site/Sam Davis Saw- and Gristmill Site (gristmill between 1773 and 1797; sawmill added after 1797) (#S39 and #S40):** A well-preserved, high, stone and earth dam with small, fieldstone mill foundations immediately downstream from it on both sides of Moosup River mark this presently remote but long-used mill site. Peleg Aylsworth built the gristmill sometime after he inherited the land from his father Chad Aylsworth in 1773. By 1797, when Peleg sold to Sam Davis, he had built both a house and the gristmill. When Olney Knight purchased the property from Davis' estate in 1834, it also included a barn and a sawmill. Later that year Olney sold half an interest in the parcel to Ezra Knight, and the mills were run by Knights almost to the end of the century.

## HARRINGTON ROAD

**William Harrington Farm (1858; barn 1917) (#271):** Harrington Farm includes a 1½-story, gable-roofed house with a 1½-story set-back ell fronted by an open Victorian porch; a large, gambrel-roofed, shingled barn just across Harrington Road built by Finnish carpenters in 1917 on the site of an earlier barn; and a 2½-story shed, originally used for butchering and processing hogs and storing dairy products, now used as a rental residence. The house was built by William Harrington, a farmer who raised, among other crops, potatoes and apples for cash sale in Providence, and who fought in the Civil War. In the twentieth century Herman Harrington had a dairy operation here. Members of the Harrington family were among the earliest settlers in southwestern Foster and the barn occupies the site of Revolutionary War era Captain Simeon Harrington's house.

**Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #72 (mid-18th century) (#C72):** This small, partly-enclosed cemetery immediately south of the road, now surrounded by the Foster Country Club golf course, includes about thirty-five marked graves, among them some of the oldest still-legible stones in Foster. The burials include numerous Harringtons and Bennets.

## HARTFORD PIKE/R.I. ROUTE 101

**Hartford Turnpike/R.I. Route 101:** This important east-west road, now two lanes wide with paved shoulders, was built as a private turnpike to link Providence and Hartford, Connecticut. The Company for "the Rhode Island and Connecticut Turnpike," as it was first known, received a charter from Rhode Island in 1803; a sister company in Connecticut received its charter in 1806; by 1816 both roads were under one management. Relatively little 20th-century commercial development has occurred along the road in Foster; however, such development has happened in Scituate and threatens to engulf Foster, too.

**Hardin Harris House and Mill Site (c. 1760; c. 1840 et seq.) (#78 and #S5):** This altered, lengthened, 1½-story house, originally four bays wide, has a transom above the door and a full basement story exposed on the south road side. The house is built into a small hillside, facing east; behind it are the mill pond, formed by a stone dam, and sections of sluiceway, the remains of the shoestring mill run by Hardin Harris in the mid-1800s and by C. Durfee in the late 1800s. Hardin Harris was a leader of the Advent Church which was built farther west on Hartford Pike in 1859.

**Sweet Farm (c. 1790 and c. 1820) (#80):** This lengthened, 8-bay, 1½-story house probably began as a center-chimney 5-bay house; the eastern 3-bay section with its end interior chimney was a slightly later addition. The rear ell, set at a right angle to the house, includes a 19th-century store building moved here from north of the house and the old course of the Pike in the late 19th or early 20th century. The house once had stenciling which has been painted over and recent interior remodeling has further altered its architectural integrity. A cow barn, a horse barn, and a shed flank the house and are sited close to the road. The house was probably built by a Hammond and was later owned by S. Wilmarth but by 1862 S. Sweet, a farmer and blacksmith, had acquired the property.

**Sweet's Sawmill (1953-1970s) (#81):** Two frame buildings with sheet metal roofs housed this mill, active until the 1970s.

**Seth Hopkins Farm (c. 1760) (#82):** Despite some alterations, particularly of windows, this 1½-story, gable-roofed house with off-center chimney retains its very small rooms and low ceilings. The present dining room was stencilled with a willow-tree pattern now covered over. The house is sited at the end of a long dirt lane facing south with a large, c. 1870, vertically sheathed barn to its east. Seth Hopkins owned this farm in the mid-19th century.

**J. Wood Farm (c. 1854) (#85):** The farm includes a 1½-story, Greek Revival farmhouse, with paired interior chimneys and a recessed, central, sidelit doorway, and two 20th-century barns.

**Elfgren's General Store, Gas Station, and House (1938) (#86):** These modest, shingled frame buildings—1-story store and gas

station and 1½-story, gable-roofed house with simple Colonial Revival trim—indicate both North Foster's continuing role as a local commercial center and the growing importance of the automobile in Rhode Island in the 1930s and 1940s.

**James G. Cook's Store and Post Office (c. 1855 and c. 1920) (#87):** This heavily altered house is composed of two sections remodelled and joined together in the early 20th century. The eastern 1½-story section, fronted by a full-width, 20th-century open porch, appears to be a rebuilding of Theodore Foster's law office building and the original North Foster Post Office (1815), a long, low, 1-story, gable-roofed, clapboarded, shed-like structure. The western section was originally a 1½-story Victorian house with a set-back ell, built c. 1855 for James G. Cook who kept a store and the post office. Old photos show the Cook house with a full-width sawn Victorian front porch and a picket fence along the road edge.

† **Mount Hygeia Schoolhouse (c. 1840) (#88):** This typical 1-story, 1-room schoolhouse, with paired entrances in the south gable end, is the only unremodelled schoolhouse in Foster and one of seven schoolhouses surviving in any form. In the last half of the 19th century Foster had eighteen school districts. By the time of school consolidation in 1952, however, only seven schoolhouses remained in use; Mount Hygeia was one of them. A 1755 deed for a schoolhouse lot in the Mount Hygeia area is the earliest known reference to any school or school building in Foster.

**Gideon Cornell House and Tavern (c. 1750 and c. 1840) (#89):** This large, 2½-story, mid-18th-century, center-chimney house is prominently sited facing south only twenty feet north of Hartford Pike. Despite mid-19th-century remodeling (which included the installation of the present Greek Revival doorway and wide cornerboards), the house retains much of its original architectural plan and detail including a large fireplace in the west front room, a tight, enclosed front staircase, and a fireplace in the basement (now closed in). Tradition claims that this house was built by Gideon Cornell and that he or a subsequent Cornell kept a tavern here, using the west front room as the public room.

## HOPKINS MILLS

\* **Hopkins Mills:** Hopkins Mills is a linear rural village of approximately twenty-five 18th- and 19th-century frame residences (including several formerly used as taverns and stage-coach stops), a 19th-century church, schoolhouse, store, and former post office, several farm outbuildings, the much re-worked site of Hopkins Mills, the mill pond, two cemeteries, and a dozen or so 20th-century houses. The village is ranged along both sides of Old Danielson Pike where it crosses the Ponagansett River. It was here that Ezekiel and William Hopkins established a sawmill and gristmill before 1723. The presence of the mills and of an early road linking this area to Providence encouraged settlement and Hopkins Mills had become an identifiable hamlet well before the Revolution. The conversion of the old "North" Road into the Providence and Danielson Turnpike in the early 19th century led to an increased concentration of

business and social activity in the village. Ram Tail woolen mill, operating a half mile south of the village from c. 1813 to c. 1840, and the stagecoach, which ran along the Pike with a stop in Hopkins Mills until the end of the 19th century, gave the village a measure of stability at least as late as 1880. The Ponagansett Valley Creamery (1889 to 1895) added, briefly, to the vitality of the village. From about 1870 into the early 20th century Hopkins Mills was also known as South Foster after the branch of the post office located there. Several early and mid-20th-century houses as well as the Ponagansett Grange building (c. 1928) indicate the continued attraction of this village for residential development. Industrial development, too, continued at the Simmons Braid Mill, which operated from c. 1910 to c. 1960. When a new alignment for Danielson Pike was laid out and built by the Rhode Island Department of Public Works in 1932, Hopkins Mills was removed from the steady flow of high-speed through traffic. Today the village is a pleasant residential area on a relatively quiet two-lane road.

## HOWARD HILL ROAD

\*\* **Foster Center Christian Church/Foster Center Baptist Church (Foster Center) (1882 et seq.) (#276):** The Church, four bays deep by three bays wide across its entrance facade (forty feet by thirty feet), is a modest vernacular clapboarded structure with a short square belfry tower on its gable peak. Its wide flat cornice frieze, pilaster-like cornerboards, and the pilasters and pediments ornamenting the belfry embody the continuing and late use of simple Greek Revival stylistic elements which is typical of Foster's 19th-century building tradition. Despite two 20th-century additions at the rear (in 1959 and 1972) and the fact that the church was turned in 1948 from its original southern orientation to face east (and a less busy road), the church building retains its interior finish intact. A Christian church had gathered at Foster Center in 1834 and reorganized in 1851. The congregation met in the Foster Center School and in the Second Baptist Church (the Town House). In 1881 a subscription was taken to build a Christian meetinghouse which was dedicated October 31, 1882. In 1927, the twelve remaining church members joined the Rhode Island Baptist Convention; in 1965 the Church became an independent Baptist Church.

\*\* **Foster Center School/Hemlock School/Foster Public Memorial Library (Foster Center) (c. 1822; 1964 and 1970) (#277):** This former 1-room schoolhouse, with paired entrances and open belfry, was somewhat remodelled in the 1830s or 1840s. It was used as a school until school consolidation in 1952. In 1957 it was reopened as the Foster Public Memorial Library. Two gable-roofed ells, carefully designed by Richard Colwell to be in keeping with the schoolhouse, were added in 1964 and 1970 to accommodate library expansion.

\*\* **Nehemiah Angell-Eli Aylsworth Tavern (Foster Center) (between 1819 and 1824) (#278):** This 2½-story, center-chimney house originally had a gable-roofed, Federal portico sheltering the central front door. Twentieth-century changes included removal of the portico, installation of two multi-pane picture win-

dows on the first floor, and complete gutting of the interior. A small shed and a medium-sized, 19th-century barn still stand with the house. Nehemiah Angell built the house on thirty-five acres of land he had purchased in 1819. After a series of owners, Eli Aylsworth purchased the tavern stand and building in 1831; he sold the tavern in 1841. It appears that Nehemiah Angell, Israel Manchester, William Kent, and Eli Aylsworth all operated a tavern here. The 1851 map indicates that the post office was located here which strongly suggests that then-owner Field Burgess also kept a tavern. The Town of Foster acquired the property in the 1960s and today it is used for Police Headquarters and for other town offices.

\*\* **Second Baptist Church/Elder Hammond's Meetinghouse/Foster Town House (Foster Center) (1796-1797) (#279):** This plain, clapboarded, 2-story, gable-roofed building is one of Foster's most important landmarks both for its architectural significance and its enduring role in the religious, civic, and social life of the town. Originally built as the meetinghouse of the Second Baptist Church, it is sited on an open hillside with its long entrance facade facing west. The main entrance, with a flat pedimented doorway and double-leaf door, is central in the broad 5-bay facade. A secondary entrance is in the center of the 3-bay southern gable end. Within, the meetinghouse follows a simple plan with a central aisle leading to a raised dais, where two pulpits, the Elder's above and the Deacon's below, originally stood. On either side of the aisle are plank benches with open rail backs. At each of the western corners a staircase leads up to the gallery above, which runs around three sides of the meetinghouse, supported by heavy evenly-spaced turned wooden posts with thick square bases. The facing of the gallery rail is solid horizontal planking and here, too, the pews are plank benches with open single-rail backs. The meetinghouse was built in 1796-1797 using funds raised by a lottery. The money proved insufficient and the interior remained unfinished until 1822 when church and town put up \$86.00 apiece for needed repairs, and the church deeded its meetinghouse to the town. Town meetings had been held here since 1801—as they are to this day—and it seemed more probable that the town could maintain the building than could the Calvinist Baptist Church membership, already in decline.

The Foster Center Baptist Church had split off from the First Baptist Church in Hopkins Mills in 1780 over the issue of the Sixth Principle. In 1791 the church, staunchly Calvinistic and Five Principle, incorporated under the care of Elder John Hammond. With Elder Hammond's departure from Foster in 1815 and the rise of the Christian Church (beginning locally in 1812 at Rice City just over the Coventry line), the life went out of the Second Baptist meeting. Throughout the 19th century the meetinghouse was used for public gatherings (including assembling militia for the Dorr War), performances, polling, and other social and political functions. By the early 20th century it had fallen into disrepair. Fortunately the Ladies Home Mission Society of the Foster Center Christian Church organized an Old Home Day in 1904, the proceeds of which went to repair the Town House. This quaint country gala proved so successful that

the meetinghouse was put in excellent repair. Long multi-purpose sheds—still standing—were erected soon thereafter to accommodate the Old Home Day crowds which continued to come until 1924. After World War II and into the 1970s a small country fair, begun by the Foster Center Church in conjunction with the northern Rhode Island 4-H clubs, was held on the Town House grounds each summer. In 1981 most of Foster's bicentennial celebrations were centered here, including a revival of the Old Home Day. The various uses of the Town House may change through time, but the building remains the town's most treasured public landmark.

† **John T. Randall Wheelwright Shop/The Ray Howard Place (c. 1800) (#280):** This long, clapboarded structure, built into a hillside flank to the road, combines a 1½-story house section at the south end with a larger 2½-story wagon shop at the north. The wagon shop is built over a branch of West Meadow Brook which cascades over a fieldstone dam behind the building and formerly powered a 12-foot waterwheel (given to Greene Herb Garden in Coventry in the late 1960s or early 1970s). A small building to the north, now used as a garage, was originally a foundry and north of it once stood a paint shop. West of the road is a small bridge over the brook formed by several large flat slabs of granite. The premises were owned in the 1850s and 1860s, if not earlier, by John T. Randall. Randall was listed in the 1860 census as a Master Wheelwright; his son James was listed as a Wheelwright. Abram Angell, blacksmith and wheelwright also worked here during the Randall tenure. John Randall left Foster about 1868 and from 1867 to 1873 George W. Phillips ran the foundry and made carriages here, employing seven or eight hands in the operation. Orrin Kinne, W.A. Stone, and Isaac Holden Yeaw (who sold the property in 1879 to go to Florida and then California) were subsequent owners. After 1879 Ray Howard (b. 1848) was the carriage maker and blacksmith on the premises. Howard was also Town Treasurer and a member of the School Committee.

**Smithfield Granite Company Quarry Site (c. 1870 - c. 1920) (#544):** Several large excavations, now filled with water and lined by piles of cut-granite scrap, mark the site of this quarry which may have begun as early as 1870. About 1901 the Smithfield Granite Company, Inc., founded by John L. Eddy and Alby Matthewson, took over the operation. John Eddy's son Ben managed the quarry through 1907. That year \$25,000 worth of granite was quarried. The granite was used for foundations, bridges, and the steps of the Hopkins Mills Church, and was shipped elsewhere by the Providence and Danielson Railroad. The quarry ceased operation after the "P and D" was abandoned in 1920.

**J.T. Randall House (c. 1810) (#281):** This much altered, typical center-chimney house was the home of carriage maker John T. Randall who owned the wagon and wheelwright shop just to the north. George W. Phillips, a subsequent owner of the business, also succeeded Randall in owning this house.

**Martin Howard Farm (c. 1783) (#282):** The farmhouse is a typical center-chimney house with a 2-bay ell at the east end; it has a complex moulded cornice, which breaks out around the window and door caps, and a 5-light transom above the door. A large, mid-19th-century barn (probably used as a slaughterhouse) and a shed stand across the road from the house. In the dooryard is a well house and to the south, the remains of an orchard. The house may have been built by a Howard and Howards owned it for most of the 19th century. Martin Howard (1790-1865) lived here by 1851 and probably well before that, for he married in 1821. He worked as a blacksmith at his father Daniel Howard's homestead, then became farmer and neighborhood butcher; he also served as Town Treasurer from 1829 to 1852. Martin's son Whipple Howard (b. 1834)—a farmer, cooper, butcher, and accomplished fiddler—lived here through the end of the century.

**W. Hill Farm (c. 1770 et seq.) (#283):** Hill Farm includes a typical center-chimney house, which has suffered alterations to doorway and chimney and has a set-back, 2-bay ell; a large shingled barn of two adjoining sections east of the house; a Victorian barn (c. 1870) across (west of) the road; and well preserved, 3-foot, dry-laid stone walls along the road. W. Hill lived here by 1851.

**Judge Daniel Howard House (c. 1805 and 1856 et seq.) (#284):** This large, 2½-story, clapboarded house was rebuilt in the mid-19th-century. It has an off-center, rebuilt chimney and a symmetrical 5-bay facade with a central door in 20th-century frame with sidelights and semi-elliptical wooden fan. The long, 1½-story ell at the western end, now fronted by an enclosed pent-roofed section, once a porch, was originally a store and grain room. About 1805 brothers Gorton and Daniel Howard built this house and a barn. In 1811 Daniel bought out Gorton's share of the farm and in 1856 he rebuilt the house. Daniel assisted his father, the first Daniel Howard in Foster known as "Honorable Daniel," after he became Town Clerk in 1803, and succeeded his father as Clerk in 1827. He served as Clerk twenty-five years, as State Representative for thirteen terms, was Tax Assessor and local Justice of the Peace, a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (1834-1848), and an Associate Judge of the Rhode Island Supreme Court (1844-1848). Judge Daniel Howard (d. 1879 at age 93) is buried across the road from his house in the small stone-wall-enclosed family cemetery, Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #71.

**Gorton Howard House (1831) (#290):** This typical center-chimney house is noteworthy for its Federal portico with carpenter's version of a rope-moulded cornice, which matches that of the house itself. It has an unusually high cornice and was built in 1831 by Gorton Howard, on the site of his grandfather Isaac Howard's house. Isaac Howard (d. 1776), the progenitor of the Howard family in Foster, purchased 150 acres of land here in 1752 and in 1755 built the house which Gorton Howard later razed. Gorton Howard was a farmer, cooper, Town Clerk (1834-1837), and member of the School Committee. Gorton's son John, who inherited the farm, was also a farmer and cooper and made charcoal for the Providence market.

**Howard Memorial Cemetery/Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #80 (late 18th century et seq.) (#C80):** This large, rectangular family cemetery enclosed by a rough fieldstone wall of varying height (2½ to 4 feet) is entered by stone steps ascending and descending the wall. It contains Howard burials dating from the late 18th and early 19th centuries including modern memorial markers for Honorable Daniel Howard (1752-1827) and James Howard (1756-1846) both Revolutionary War veterans and for Isaac Howard (d. 1776). The cemetery is sited about two hundred feet east of the road and is reached by a tree-lined lane.

**G.S. Tillinghast House (mid-18th century, c. 1815, and c. 1840) (#292):** This lengthened, 1½-story house (c. 26 feet deep by 50 feet long) includes a 3-bay half house section at the east with an end interior chimney and back-to-back corner fireplaces and a typical center-chimney, 5-room-plan house at the west which has been so remodelled that it is difficult to date with any accuracy. (The center chimney, fireplaces, and woodwork have been removed and the front stairs have been rebuilt.) The exterior of the house has fine vernacular late Federal and Greek Revival detailing including a carpenter's version of rope moulding for the cornice and a doorframe with panels beneath the sidelights, channelling, and fretted cornerblocks. Both this door and the door in the eastern section are obscured by trellises. The house faces south and is reached by a long dirt lane running west from Howard Hill Road. Nineteenth-century maps show G.S. Tillinghast here and perhaps Pardon Tillinghast owned the house before. George Spooner Tillinghast (b. 1809 in West Greenwich - d. 1884) married Phila Howard of Foster in 1834. He combined farming with teaching school in the winter months in Foster and adjoining towns for fifty years; he was also a Justice of the Peace for forty years and a School Committee member.

**John Lyon House (c. 1778) (#294):** This south-facing, 1½-story, 4-bay house with reduced central chimney has a full cut-stone basement (exposed on the east and south) with a stone fireplace. The fireplaces on the main level have been removed or completely covered over. The house is set far west of the road at the end of an almost impassable dirt lane. John Lyon purchased land here from Stephen Fenner from 1775 to 1778. The house remained in the Lyon family until c. 1974.

**Site of Foster Town Asylum (c. 1790, 1865) (#S46):** On this site was Obediah Fenner's farm which was sold by David and Lucinda Phillips to the town of Foster for use as a poor farm in 1865. The deed for this transaction mentions land, a large and small dwelling house, two barns, and other buildings. The larger house, built by Obediah Fenner c. 1790, stood into the 20th century. A report on the Foster Asylum for the Poor for the year ending April 1, 1870, indicated that there were an average 23 paupers on the farm kept at a cost of \$1.18 per person per week. The principal articles of produce included 13 tons of hay, 2½ tons of oats, 280 bushels of potatoes, 84 bushels of corn, 2 loads of pumpkins, 46 bushels of French turnips, 44 bushels of round turnips, 4 bushels of beets, 4½ bushels of beans, 225 heads of cabbage, 1106 pounds of pork, 502 pounds of beef, 55 chickens,

and 2 barrels of cider. The farm stock included 1 pair of oxen, 1 pair of steers, 3 cows, 1 horse, 4 shoats, and 24 hens. The Asylum was closed in the early 20th century.

**Brayton Cider Mill (moved here 1891) (#296):** This 1½-story, gable-roofed, frame building, now remodelled for use as a residence, was moved from William Blanchard's Farm in 1891 to its present location beside Rock Brook on the Brayton Farm. As late as the 1930s, Francis or Irving Brayton made cider here. Despite 20th-century alterations, the Brayton Cider Mill is the only surviving representative of a once very prevalent building form.

**Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #87 (19th century) (#C87):** This large, open, raised cemetery beside Howard Hill Road is fronted by a 3-foot retaining wall of cut-granite blocks capped with dressed granite slabs. An iron gate opens onto stone steps leading up through the wall to the grassy burial ground above, which is enclosed by a similar stone wall on the other three sides. Headstones date from c. 1829 and include those for members of the Fenner, Titus, Luther, Brayton, and Fry families. Obediah Fenner (d. 1858) is buried here. He owned a nearby farm (no longer extant) used by the town as the Poor Farm after 1865.

## ISTHMUS ROAD

**Joseph P. Card Gristmill Site (1867) (#S68):** The present Isthmus Road runs through this mill site across the top of the mill dam. West of the road is the mill pond. To the east is a stone sluice leading about two hundred feet through the woods to a small cut-stone mill foundation. Joseph Card had a new gristmill built here in 1867 by builder Leonard Hopkins at a cost of about \$500. It may have re-used an existing mill site, for one is shown here on the 1862 map.

## JENKS ROAD

\*\* **Dorrance House (c. 1720 and c. 1750) (#257):** This large, shingled house with saltbox roofline and massive, stone, center chimney was originally 5 bays wide and 1 bay deep with a single room on either side of the chimney on each floor. About 1750, following a building pattern typical throughout New England, the owners added a tier of three rooms across the rear on the first story and extended the gable roof over this addition, giving the house its present saltbox form. The house has a fine broad staircase with balustrade, a keeping room or kitchen to the east, and a parlor with c. 1750 woodwork to the west. The house was knowledgeably restored in the 1950s and 1960s. It still stands, with several early 20th-century farm sheds and barns, on a sizeable piece of land. The house was built by a member of the Dorrance family who had emigrated to the Connecticut Colony sometime before 1719. Samuel Dorrance, as the first minister in Voluntown in eastern Connecticut, was given and also acquired a considerable amount of land, part of which then bordered on and in 1728 was adjudicated to be in Rhode Island. Dorrance land lay on both sides of Jenks Road. Samuel gave part of the tract to his brothers George and John who by then had established a sawmill and a gristmill here on the Quandoc River. In

the late 1700s the house, then owned by George Dorrance, was used as a tavern and the Marquis de Chastellux stayed here several times in November 1780. The Dorrance House is historically and architecturally one of Foster's most important buildings, and was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

## JOHNSON ROAD

**Obadiah Harrington Farm/"The Diah Place" (c. 1762 et seq.) (#265):** The complex includes a greatly altered, 1½-story, lengthened house, a large, shingled barn built in 1892, a silo, and several sheds of varying sizes (one of which is said to be an earlier house on the property). Open fields on all sides plus the cluster of buildings make this one of the most picturesque farm complexes in Foster. The house was built for Obadiah Harrington (known as "Diah") who acquired 87 acres of land along the Moosup River in 1762 and died in 1765. His son Obadiah inherited the farm. About the mid-19th century it was sold to William P. Blanchard, who owned several farms in this area and ran a gristmill west of Potter Road.

**John Johnson House (between 1813 and 1832) (#267):** This 1½-story, center-chimney house with small, 1-bay ell at the west end has been moderately altered—windows have been enlarged, the transom has been covered over, and the walls have been shingled, and on the interior, the staircase has been rebuilt—but much good Federal woodwork (including a fine mantel in the parlor) and most of the original plan remains. The house was probably built by John Johnson sometime between 1813 and 1832. John Johnson sold the farm to Reuben Harrington in 1865 who three days later sold it to William P. Blanchard. The Blanchards owned the property until 1945.

**Wanton Johnson-Sarah Johnson House (c. 1780? and 1840) (#268):** This 1½-story farmhouse has a late Greek Revival doorway with a flat pedimented frame and sidelights in the center of the 5-bay facade of the northern section. The set-back, 3-bay ell on the south end is said to be the earliest part of the house and to have been reworked when the main section was built. It seems likely, on the basis of deed research and local tradition, that this ell was a 3-bay half house; that the roof was raised and the interior end chimney removed during rebuilding; and that this is, in fact, the first house John Johnson built after he purchased land here in 1778. John Johnson ran a gristmill on "Stone Dam Brook," now called West Meadow Brook. The farm passed from John Johnson to his son Wanton, then to Sarah Johnson in 1838. Sarah sold it to William P. Blanchard before 1851.

**Benajah Place Farm (c. 1760 et seq.) (#269):** This lengthened, 1½-story, south-facing house, sited on a hillside, has an uneven 6-bay facade (at least one window has been closed in) and two end interior chimneys. It was built in two or three sections. Behind it stand a shed and a 20th-century barn; south of it is a small, stone-wall-enclosed graveyard (Foster #86) (c. 50 feet by 90 feet) containing 19th- and early 20th-century burials for members of the Place and Phillips families. The house was built

by Benajah Place and later owned by Job W. Place, Horace Lester Place, and in the 20th century by the Phillips family.

**Place-Phillips Farm (c. 1810) (#270):** The complex includes a generous, somewhat altered, 1½-story house with a mid-19th-century, set-back ell fronted by a Victorian porch, and several barns west of the house. John or Abraham Place probably built the house. J. Whipple Phillips married a Place girl and owned the farm from the mid-1800s through the rest of the century. Whipple Phillips' daughter married a Lovcraft and their son, H.P. Lovcraft, became a noted Rhode Island author of fantasy/horror stories. H.P. Lovcraft visited here and across the road at the Place Farm.

## KENNEDY ROAD

**Captain John Randall House (before 1784 and c. 1920) (#254):** This typical center-chimney, 5-bay house was significantly remodelled in the early 20th century by the addition of a pent-roofed front porch, a broad dormer on the front roof slope, and picturesque ornamental purlin brackets under the roof overhang and under the slanting window hood on the western gable end. Ornamental shingles were also used to make the house look even more like a bungalow. This house was one of those in western Foster acquired after 1917 by immigrant Finnish farmers.

## KING ROAD

**William Randall Sawmill Site (before 1799) (#560):** This large, old, overgrown, stone and earth dam originally held back water not forest. Traces of the sluiceway seem to exist north of the brook, but the mill foundation has yet to be found; it may well have been destroyed by the building of the present bridge across this branch of Hemlock Brook. The 1799 Foster map shows that William Randall was running a sawmill here by this time. The mill was probably in operation as late as 1862 but the 1870 map fails to indicate it.

**John Randall-Amos Jenckes House (c. 1720, c. 1790, and c. 1870) (#325):** This house is composed of two sections set at right angles to each other—a 3-bay, early 18th-century section reworked c. 1790 and a 19th-century, 5-bay section facing the road. It may have been built about 1720 by John Randall. Early deed references for this area mention the so-called "Fox Hill House." According to tradition the house was remodelled about 1790 by Amos Jenckes and the Jenckes family owned it till at least the middle of the 1800s. If research can vindicate the traditionally ascribed date, this is one of the oldest known houses in Foster.

## MAPLE ROCK ROAD

**Paddin Hopkins Farm/"Witch Hill Farm" (c. 1815) (#300):** The farm includes a typical center-chimney house with set-back, 3-bay ell at the eastern end, damaged by fire in 1975, and two 19th-century sheds to the west. The house is sited facing south, gable end to the road, and is reached by a slightly curving dirt lane. Paddin Hopkins owned the farm in the mid-19th century.

**William A. Potter Farm/William Anthony Hopkins Farm (c. 1812) (#301):** This 1½-story house has a broad 5-bay facade with a c. 1840 Greek Revival doorway with sidelights and a flat pediment. The eastern end of the house has the back-to-back corner fireplaces typical of many Federal houses in Foster just inside its end wall; the chimney above the roofline has been removed. West of the generous stairhall, so much alteration has occurred it is impossible to ascertain the original configuration or age. A 19th-century shed stands north of the house near the road. The house was built by William A. Potter, son of William Potter, Esquire (of Hopkin Mills and Ram Tail Mill fame), and purchased about 1820 by William Anthony Hopkins.

**Joseph Hopkins Farm (c. 1821) (#302):** The farm includes a typical center-chimney house with two set-back ells, two frame outbuildings, and a stone root cellar dug into the side of a hill about two hundred feet southwest of the house. The house was built by Joseph Hopkins. Some renovation occurred in 1952. Part of the acreage is presently used as a tree farm.

## MILL ROAD

**Samuel H. Hopkins Farm and Mill Site (c. 1830 and c. 1880) (#328 and #561):** The farm, located in the elbow of Mill Road as it runs across and then beside Paine Brook, includes a clapboarded, 1½-story farmhouse composed of two off-set sections, one with a fine Federal portico, 5-bay facade, and two end interior chimneys, and the other a nondescript later 19th-century ell. A large, late 19th-century, shingled barn stands nearby. Immediately east of the complex is a sprawling junkyard. Behind—south of—the house are the impressive remains of Samuel Hopkins' gristmill: a 600-foot, stone-lined sluice, wheel pit, two cut-stone foundations, and stone footings for a bridge. Hopkins' gristmill was in operation by 1851. By 1870 E.V. Searle was in charge of milling here and had added a sawmill.

## MOOSUP VALLEY/"TYLER"

† **Moosup Valley:** This dispersed agricultural community follows the length of Moosup Valley Road, from a little west of Route 14 to just west of Cucumber Hill Road at Tyler's Store; it spreads north on Johnson Road and south on Potter Road. Many of the earliest farmsteads are gone and relatively few farm outbuildings of any age remain, but most of the land is still open between the houses strung like unevenly spaced beads long the road. Most of the houses date from c. 1760 to c. 1860 and follow the traditional story-and-a-half, center-chimney form; a few 20th-century houses and one Quonset hut have been introduced in the 1950s and 1960s. Although there were historically other community focal points—Tyler's General Store and Cider Mill at the western end of the area, Phillips sawmill, Greene's Store, and Blanchard's Mill on Potter Road—Moosup Valley presently centers around the cluster of public buildings between the Fire Station and cemetery at the east and the Grange and the Christian Church at the west. Included also are the schoolhouse and Tyler Library and the Green Acres area behind the church, developed as the town beach in the 1960s.

## MOOSUP VALLEY ROAD

† **Carpenter Cemetery/Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #94 (c. 1827) (#C94):** This small cemetery is unique in Foster and perhaps in Rhode Island. It is walled on all four sides by slabs of granite—hailed here by ten yoke of oxen from the Oneco, Connecticut, quarry—which measure twelve feet by six feet by eight inches in thickness. No gate is provided and so, walled off from the world, Dr. Thomas O.H. Carpenter and the second and preferred of his three wives lie for eternity, undisturbed by wives one and three. Much elaborate local story-telling has evolved since Dr. Carpenter was buried here in 1839.

† **Phillips-Batthey Sawmill Site (c. 1862) (#S31):** This mill site, one of the best-preserved in Foster, includes a broad stone dam forming Porter's Pond to its east, a c. 110-foot-long stone-lined sluice, a small foundation for a mill house, and a larger foundation for a mill building with a 32-foot cut-stone wheel pit, which held a waterwheel c. 28-foot in diameter. It appears to have been an undershot wheel, i.e. with the water passing beneath rather than across and over the wheel. Undershot wheels required a considerable force of flow and drop in elevation to be successful. The mill was built by David Phillips who with his wife Lucinda acquired the 2½-acre-site from Bradford Johnson in 1862 with the express purpose of constructing a sawmill. Lucinda Phillips owned the so-called Fenner farm which abutted the property on the northeast and the Phillips mill may have re-used the site on which Obediah Fenner had established his sawmill before 1799. Lucinda alone sold the mill in 1870 to Reuben Johnson who subsequently defaulted on his mortgage. In 1882 Henry Batthey bought the mill lots at public auction and ran a successful shingle mill here for many years; he was also a cattle dealer and superintendent of the Town Poor Farm (the former Obediah Fenner farm).

**Bradford Johnson Farm (1858) (#228):** The 1½-story Greek Revival house with set-back ell (fronted by a later enclosed porch) has a typical 5-bay facade with flat pedimented doorway with sidelights and wide cornice frieze. Behind it stands a large barn. Brad Johnson built this house in 1858 after returning from the Australian gold rush. He had previously worked as a mule skinner, and his wife had been a weaver, at Rockland. John F. James, a late-19th-century owner, came to Foster to work in the Moosup Valley Creamery.

**Moosup Valley Creamery (1888) (#230):** This plain, late 19th-century, clapboarded, 1½-story building with two small interior brick chimneys was remodelled for use as a residence about 1972. Old photos show the Creamery with only the eastern chimney and one door in the east gable end (not in front as at present); a milk pump stood in the front yard above an underground storage tank. Moosup Valley Creamery, one of two such dairy companies organized by Foster residents in the late 1800s, had Clarke Johnson as President, Curtis Foster as Manager, William Harrington as Vice-President, and Silas Griffiths as Secretary-Treasurer. Charles Bassett was the butter maker. By 1891 the Creamery served 300 cows and made 47,000 pounds of but-

ter annually. The attempt to mix old cheese with new (and thus extend the marketable new cheese) as well as dairy competition from Vermont and New York cut the market for "Cold Spring Cheese" and the Creamery's other products. By c. 1900 the operation had folded.

† **Place-Dexter Farm (Moosup Valley) (c. 1760 et seq.) (#232):** This much altered, lengthened, 1½-story, south-facing house, with its large, ramshackle, 19th-century barn at the rear, has long been a landmark in Moosup Valley, located as it is at the corner of Moosup Valley Road and Johnson Road (originally called the Moosup Valley "North Road"). The house may have been built as early as c. 1760 by Enoch Place who bought land here from Stephen Harrington in 1751. Enoch's grandson George Place owned the farm in the mid-1800s; the Dexter family acquired it about 1880 and ran a general store here in the early 20th century.

† **Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #90 (Moosup Valley) (early 19th century) (#C90):** This small cemetery beside the Moosup Valley Fire Station is enclosed by massive cut-stone walls and entered through an iron gate. It contains burials of the Place family (from 1822) as well as of Battheys, Blanchards, and Salisburys.

† **Stephen Place-Henry Batthey Farm (Moosup Valley) (1769 et seq.) (#234):** This lengthened, 6-bay, 1½-story house, with southern 1½-story ell, originally stood north of the road facing south. It was moved to its present site south of the road and a mid-19th-century doorway with sidelights was installed on the north facade. A mid-20th-century barn stands across a small field to the west. The house was built by Stephen Place and owned by Stephen Place, Jr., until the 1860s when Henry Batthey, miller, cattle dealer, and Poor Farm Superintendent, purchased it.

† **Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #83 (Moosup Valley) (early 19th century) (#C83):** This large cemetery just east of Moosup Valley Church stretches several hundred feet along the north side of Moosup Valley Road. Along the road a handsome 2½-foot wall of quarried granite blocks, pierced by iron gates, defines the cemetery; the other three sides are enclosed by a fieldstone wall topped with cut-stone caps. The earliest burials, mostly for Blanchards and Tylers, date from the beginning of the 1800s and include some of the finest Federal headstones in Foster; there are several incised with angel's heads, sunbursts, or weeping willow patterns. Potters, Browns, and Johnsons (including Clarke Howard Johnson, former Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court from 1913 to 1917) are also buried here.

† **Moosup Valley Schoolhouse/Vestry School/Tyler Free Library (Moosup Valley) (1811, 1900, et seq.) (#236):** The 1-story, 1-room schoolhouse with paired entrances and raised flat lintels, built in 1811 on land given for that purpose by Isaac Blanchard, was closed in 1952. In 1965 the structure, built just across the road in 1900 to house a library given by local historian and

store-keeper Casey B. Tyler, was moved and joined to the schoolhouse by a large modern addition. The whole building was then opened as Tyler Free Library. The schoolhouse is sometimes called the Vestry School, because Christian church services and Sunday school were held here in the mid-19th century.

† **Moosup Valley Church (Moosup Valley) (1864-1865) (#237):** This vernacular, late Greek Revival, 1-story, gable-roofed church, with paired entries on the south and a short square belfry tower (rebuilt in 1974 and formerly ornamented by acroteria at the four corners), was built by local residents for use as a church, meeting place, and school. For a number of years Christians in the Moosup Valley area had met at Rice City, Foster Center, the Line Church, and the Moosup Valley Schoolhouse. In 1868 the Moosup Valley Christian Church was organized and began meeting in the Moosup Valley Church. In 1931 the Christian Church merged with the Congregational denomination and in 1961 both became part of the United Church of Christ.

† **Moosup Valley Grange, #26 (Moosup Valley) (1926) (#238):** This long, plain, 1-story, gable-roofed building set on a raised basement is sited gable end to the road. To the east is an open field with a long open shed set back from the road used for socials and for the Moosup Valley Clambake, a traditional country celebration held here each year (except two) since 1928. The Grange was organized in Moosup Valley in 1891 and met in the Moosup Valley Church until 1926.

† **Judge Tyler's Tavern Stand (Moosup Valley) (c. 1780, rebuilt 1815) (#239):** This center-chimney, 1½-story house, with set-back ell at the west, was originally 2½ stories tall but had to be lowered after the Great Gale of 1815. Built by William Tyler, Jr., Justice of the Peace and Town Councilman, the house served as a public tavern and a council meeting place. In a meadow west of the house the militia drilled during the Revolution. North of the house on "Potash Hill" a profitable business in tanning and potash was carried on in the 19th century.

† **Henry Tyler-Mason Hopkins Farm (Moosup Valley) (c. 1785 et seq.) (#242):** This somewhat altered, 1½-story, lengthened house is sited gable end to the foot of Cucumber Hill Road. Its uneven 7-bay facade with two entrances faces east. Farther south are a large barn and an outhouse. The house was begun by Henry Tyler soon after his father, John Tyler, Jr., deeded him the land here in 1784. Nathan Hopkins bought the farm in 1798 and it subsequently passed to his son Mason Hopkins, noted as a preacher at Rice City Christian Church in the 1840s and at the Church at Foster Center a little later.

## MOUNT HYGIEIA ROAD

**Mount Hygeia Road:** This 2-lane road runs from the Hartford Pike (R.I. Route 101) south to the Danielson Pike (U.S. Route 6). Its northern section approximates, in straightened fashion, the course of a road in existence before 1799 which appears to have been upgraded in the early 19th century as part of the

Foster and Gloucester Appian Way, a toll road proposed and incorporated by Theodore Foster in 1815; it was known as the "North Road" at the end of the 19th century. The southern section of the road was built in the 20th century. Mount Hygeia Road today forms part of R.I. Route 94.

**Site of Theodore Foster's House (c. 1800) (#59):** This overgrown cellar hole with central stone chimney base marks the site of Theodore Foster's house, moved to Danielson, Connecticut, probably in the late 19th century, and still standing there at 214 Main Street.

**Drown Cemetery/Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #6 (1834 et seq.) (#C6):** This small family cemetery, fronted along the road by a fieldstone wall, contains burials for Drown family members including Solomon Drown. His marker reads:

"Solomon Drown, M.D. was born in Providence 1753: graduated at R.I. College 1773: studied medicine in Providence: and Philadelphia: commenced practice in his native place: served as surgeon in the army of the revolution: visited the hospitals, and medical schools of Europe 1785: was present at the first settlement of Marietta 1788: moved to Pennsylvania 1792: returned to New England 1801 and settled in this place: was appointed Professor of Botany and Materia Medica in Brown University, and continued the practice of medicine till his death, which occurred February 5th 1834 in his 81st year.

Dr. Drown was a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, an honorary member of several other learned bodies, a good scholar, a man of very extreme reading and information, a great admirer of the works of nature, a skilful [sic] and eminent Physician, a distinguished Botanist, a sincere Patriot, and an honest man."

**\*\* Solomon Drown House/"Mount Hygeia" (1807-1808, c. 1845) (#93):** This 2½-story house, with paired interior chimneys, central pedimented doorway (whose original semi-circular fanlight has been covered over by a semi-circular wooden fan), dentil cornice, and mid-19th-century rear kitchen ell, is one of the finest, most stylish Federal houses built in Foster. It was constructed, following plans drawn by Solomon Drown (still preserved in the Drown Collection at Brown University), at a cost of about \$1,500. Only one outbuilding survives with the house—a rustic late 19th-century gazebo/waiting station near the road, designed by Joseph B. Cay, who married into the family. The present owners have built a small horse barn, of appropriate heavy timber-frame construction, on the site of an earlier shed southeast of the house. Some of the plant material from Dr. Drown's botanical gardens survives as does a circular stone mound built as the base of a projected outdoor study, which Drown referred to as a "Rotundo of Worthies." Solomon Drown, an early graduate of Brown University (1773), Revolutionary War surgeon, and peripatetic physician in Providence; Marietta, Ohio; Virginia; and Union, Pennsylvania, finally settled in Foster in 1801 on a farm adjoining that purchased by his

old college friend U.S. Senator Theodore Foster. Both men sought a retreat of rural isolation in which to pursue their studies, Drown's being botany, literature, and medicine. Drown practiced medicine, was the first professor of botany and materia medica at Brown University (1811-1827), established an extensive botanical garden on his estate, and with his son William wrote a treatise on improving agricultural practices published as *Compendium of Agriculture, or The Farmer's Guide* in 1824. He was also a noted orator. The Drown estate was operated by the family as a private museum and was also opened to summer boarders in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By the 1950s, due to various legal inheritance entanglements, the house stood vacant and prey to vandals. Restoration began in 1963 and has been continued by the present owners. "Mount Hygeia," named by Drown for the Greek goddess of health, was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 in recognition of its historic and architectural importance.

**Joshua Jones House (c. 1780 and c. 1845) (#94):** This 1½-story, 5-bay, center-chimney house was rebuilt and remodelled about 1845. The roof was slightly raised and Greek Revival trim—flat pedimented door, panelled corner pilasters, and flat cornice frieze—applied. A 1-story, set-back ell to the west, now fronted by a 20th-century open porch, may have been added at this time. A c. 1918 garage, a 1950s gardener's cottage, and several small sheds stand behind and west of the house. In front are a beautifully maintained shrub-studded lawn and garden put in in the 1950s by owner Ruth Ely, who employed two full-time gardeners on the grounds. Built as a farmhouse, probably by Joshua Jones, the property (house, ruinous barn, outhouse, and 102 acres) was purchased by Phillip Abbott about 1913 for use as a summer residence.

**Ponagansett River Fishing Area (#S10):** This tract of seventy acres of forested land, with a small branch of the Ponagansett River flowing through it and a pond, was acquired by the State of Rhode Island in 1958. The trout stream and pond were developed by the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife using Federal Fisheries Funds.

**Levi Wade Sawmill and Triphammer Shop Site (before 1799) (#S11):** Within the Ponagansett Fishing Area are the remains of a large stone dam, almost coincident with the road, a 120-foot stone-lined sluice north of the road, and south of it on the east bank, the remains of a small mill foundation. Levi Wade had a sawmill and triphammer shop (water powered forge) in operation here by 1799.

**Obadiah Hopkins House (c. 1800) (#97):** This typical center-chimney house has a central doorway with sidelights. It was built by Obadiah Hopkins, whose sawmill stood beside Hopkins Pond (now known as Shippee Saw Mill Pond) to the south in the mid-19th century. The house was moved in 1975 to its present location when the Rhode Island Department of Natural Resources planned an expansion of the parking lot near the pond.

## MOUNT VERNON

**Mount Vernon:** Mount Vernon, located on Plainfield Pike at the foot of Howard Hill Road, is hardly identifiable as a hamlet today. Its presence is marked only by the Friends Meetinghouse of 1795 (now the Mount Vernon Baptist Church), with a small cemetery to its east, two houses (one of them formerly Mount Vernon Tavern), and a few outbuildings. Woods and tall grass obscure fragments of the foundation of a former schoolhouse and a triphammer site. The hamlet, named to honor the nation's first President George Washington, grew up at the very end of the 18th century around the Quaker meetinghouse and nearby schoolhouse and three or four houses. After the Plainfield Road was made a private turnpike in 1796 and Pardon Holden opened Mount Vernon Tavern and store in 1815, the hamlet increased in importance as a center for local social and economic activity. In 1823 Mount Vernon Bank, the only bank ever to operate in Foster, opened in the front west chamber of Mount Vernon Tavern. It relocated in 1824 next to Dr. Carpenter's apothecary shop which stood immediately to the west. In 1823, too, Daniel Wood and Pardon Holden became partners in a firm which manufactured cast iron plows, probably re-using an earlier triphammer site for its operations. By the middle of the 19th century, Mount Vernon was in visible decline. Between 1840 and 1857, the bank and plow shop relocated to Providence, the turnpike company relinquished its charter, Mount Vernon Tavern closed, the post office relocated to Moosup Valley, and the Foster Friends Meeting disbanded, selling their meetinghouse to a local farmer who used it to store hay. A temporary resurgence of activity occurred near the end of the century when neighborhood residents acquired and remodelled the former meetinghouse for use as a Christian Church (which soon became a Baptist Church), and a post office returned to the area.

## NORTH FOSTER

**North Foster:** Located at the junction of Hartford Pike and Mount Hygeia Road, North Foster today includes the mid-19th-century, 1-room Mount Hygeia schoolhouse, a single 19th-century residence, and a mid-20th-century gas station, store, and house. Such as it was, the hamlet of North Foster grew up around a crossroads and a late 18th-century store which Theodore Foster took over for a law office upon his arrival in town in 1803. Beginning in 1815, this building also housed the North Foster Post Office, which gave the hamlet its name. About 1855 James G. Cook, proprietor of the store and post master, built the house which still stands east of the schoolhouse. Cook's house and store building were heavily remodelled and joined together in the early 20th-century. Elfgren's gas station, store, and house, built here in 1938, reflect the upgrading of Hartford Pike as part of the state's 20th-century road development program and North Foster's traditional role as the seat of local small-scale commerce.

## NORTH ROAD

**A. Phillips House (c. 1782 and c. 1830) (#337):** This 1½-story house, originally five bays long with a center chimney, has a

3-bay, set-back ell with full-width porch and Greek Revival trim added about 1830. A rear ell was built in the 1960s. Two small sheds stand near the house. A. Phillips owned the property in the mid-19th century. Emeril Hopkins bought it in 1865.

**A. Bennett House (1849) (#338):** This 1½-story, center-chimney house with small flush ell at the east is a typical Greek Revival Foster farmhouse. The flat pedimented doorway with sidelights, the broad flat cornice frieze, and the corner pilasters show the Greek Revival influence; within, the traditional Foster 5-room plan, with kitchen in the front east room, is still followed. Built by A. (possibly Asher) Bennett in 1849, the house remained in the Bennett family until 1938.

**George Phillips Farm (1840) (#339):** This typical center-chimney house, despite several later ells, is an unusually late and fine example of the Federal style in Foster. It has a carpenter's version of a rope-moulded cornice (formed by a spiralling pattern of augur holes) and a pedimented portico with a matching cornice sheltering a doorway with sidelights and a carved semi-elliptical fan above the door. Inside, the Foster 5-room plan is followed. Behind the house a small early 20th-century barn was remodelled for use as an antique shop in 1976. Surrounding the house and barn are cleared rocky hilly fields. George Phillips, said to have been a sea captain in his youth, built this house in 1840. From 1817 onward he ran a nearby sawmill where he made furniture (chairs and possibly bedsteads) and shingles. His son, George W. Phillips, born in 1822, took over both the house and the business about mid-century.

**Allen Hill Farm (c. 1800 et seq.) (#340):** This typical center-chimney house has been somewhat altered by the addition of mid-19th-century trim and a 20th-century columned full-width front porch and eastern 1-story ell. A barn and several sheds still stand nearby south of the road.

† **Asahel Crossman House (c.1850) (#341):** This center-chimney, 1½-story, Greek Revival farmhouse with flush, lateral, 2-bay ell is typical in its massing and trim, but atypical in that a narrow window has been inserted in the cornice frieze directly above the flat entablature of the front door.

## OLD DANIELSON PIKE

**Old Danielson Pike:** This narrow, 2-lane road runs in a slightly winding arc westward from Route 6 at the foot of Dolly Cole Hill through the village of Hopkins Mills to rejoin Route 6 somewhat west of the foot of East Killingly Road. It is a fragment of the original alignment of the early 19th-century Danielson Turnpike, which was by-passed during state highway upgrading and straightening in 1932.

\* **Dolly Cole Bridge/Bridge #95 (Hopkins Mills) (1923) (#44):** This plain, reinforced concrete bridge carries Old Danielson Pike across Dolly Cole Brook in a single, flat span and was built for the Rhode Island Board of Public Roads.

\* **South Foster Union Chapel/Hopkins Mills Union Church (Hopkins Mills) (1869-1871) (#48):** This 1-story, late Greek Revival, clapboarded church, with pedimented gable front and short enclosed tower, stands on a rise, gable end to the road, near the eastern end of Hopkins Mills. It was built as a place of non-denominational worship and public gathering by the South Foster Union Chapel Society which was formed by local residents in 1868. A successful subscription campaign led by Mrs. Esek Walker raised the necessary \$2,000 and local carpenters donated their labor. The cut-granite steps, quarried by the Smithfield Granite Company west of Howard Hill Road, were installed in 1910. Despite the organization of a Union Church in 1945, the Church remains non-denominational to this day.

\* **Cyrus Arnold House (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1845) (#49):** This typical center-chimney, late Greek Revival style house with central front doorway with flat entablature and sidelights was probably built by Cyrus Arnold who kept the Hopkins Mills/South Foster post office here in 1870.

\* **John Fenner Hopkins Farm (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1910) (#50):** The complex, set on a rise about sixty feet back from the road, includes a simple 1½-story, center-chimney house with a high cornice line and an unusual arcaded porch which wraps around three sides, and a small shed with a cupola to the west. John Hopkins, who was a carpenter, built the house and shed himself as well as other houses of this vintage in Hopkins Mills. Hopkins also had a wagon rental business.

\* **Barnet Hopkins House (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1810) (#51):** This long, gable-roofed, 1½-story house has end interior chimneys sometimes found in Foster houses built during the Federal period. Built by Barnet Hopkins, it was purchased by the Richard and Stone Stagecoach Company sometime before 1870; they used the basement for a tavern.

\* **Henry Davis House (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1865) (#53):** The Henry Davis house, with its picket fence along the road, bracketed, lattice-enclosed, Victorian well house, and sheds and outhouse at the rear, forms one of Foster's most unusual and picturesque complexes. The house is composed of a main section, 2½ stories tall, sited gable end to the road, and a western ell, originally 1½ stories tall but later raised to two stories, flank to the road and fronted by a 1-story open porch. Greek Revival details, such as the completed gable pediment, corner pilasters, and porch piers, are intermingled with Italianate details, such as the round-headed double-hung window in the gable peak and the flat-roofed hood with dentil cornice and sawn brackets over the door. Both styles may have been used contemporaneously on this house, but further research is needed to determine when the house was built. It does not appear on maps of Hopkins Mills until 1870. Henry Davis built and ran the store which still stands west of his house.

\* **Henry Davis Store/Hopkins Store (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1842) (#54):** This 1½-story, gable-roofed, clapboarded store with simple Greek Revival detailing (corner pilasters, wide flat frieze,

and semi-circular gable vent capped with a keystone) has multi-pane display windows flanking the central front door and is sited gable end to the road. It is one of only a handful of 19th-century store buildings extant in Foster today. Henry Davis built it and ran it as a temperance store for several years, then let it to store-keepers Albert and Philip Curtis, and later sold it to J.F. Hopkins. The Hopkins Store was also the post office in 1895. In the early 20th century it was used as a meeting place for the Ponagansett Grange, before the group had its own building, and the first gas pumps in town were installed here.

\* **Bennett Holden House/South Foster Post Office (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1770 and c. 1810) (#55):** This 1½-story house, with asymmetrical, 5-bay facade and two small off-center chimneys, appears to have been built in two stages. The house functioned as both a store and post office in the middle of the 19th century, and was kept first by Bennett Holden, then by Henry Davis. It is now a private residence.

\* **Curtis Hall (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1830, c. 1850 et seq.) (#58):** The first part of this much altered, essentially 1½-story frame structure set into a hillside, was probably built about 1830; it is a narrow, 3-bay, frame section at the west end, set on a full cut-stone basement with an end interior chimney. The eastern six bays were probably added about 1850 and the roofline raised thereafter. Lewis Curtis bought land here in 1830 and soon opened a turnpike toll station and tavern in the stone basement section. When tolls were discontinued, the stagecoach stopped here so that passengers could refresh themselves and horses could be changed. On the second floor of the eastern section was a large double parlor known as Curtis Hall and used for dances and other social gatherings. Lewis Curtis was a blacksmith as well as tavern keeper.

\* **Ezekiel Hopkins - William Potter House (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1720 et seq.) (#61):** This 1½-story, lengthened, 6-bay house is said to have begun as a single room with a large chimney at one end. It may have been a typical Rhode Island "stone ender," with chimney exposed as the end wall, or it may have been a half house with the chimney just inside the gable end. The house was built by Ezekiel Hopkins who inherited land west of the Seven Mile line in 1723 from his father Thomas and who by that time had established a gristmill and sawmill at the south end of the present Hopkins Mills Pond. The house and mills remained in the Hopkins family until almost the end of the century, when they were purchased by William Potter of Warwick. Potter began a fulling mill, the first in Foster, before 1799 and was a partner in the Foster Woolen Factory, also called Ram Tail Mill, a half mile south of Hopkins Mills. The house passed to William A. Potter after William, Sr.'s death in 1837. In 1842, Law and Order Forces, en route to fight the decisive battle of the Dorr War at Acote Hill in Gloucester, stopped here for a meal. Herbert A. Potter owned the house after William, and ran a general store on the premises, until he sold house, barn, and store to Catharine Baxter in 1881. The house and adjacent mills were a center of community activity for almost two centuries.

\* **Hopkins Mills Pond Site (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1723 - c. 1960) (#S4):** The large mill pond is contained by a stone dam with a stone sluiceway leading south. There are two small building foundations near the road, but these are probably for the store and basket shop which stood here in the late 19th century. The grist- and sawmill sites, begun by Ezekiel Hopkins and his brother William before 1723, were continuously used and rebuilt through the 18th and 19th centuries into the early 20th century. The last use of the site was by Simmons Braid Mill built between 1910 and 1920 and operating here into the 1950s.

\* **Hopkins Mills Bridge (Hopkins Mills) (1912) (#63):** This reinforced concrete bridge reuses the fieldstone pier and abutments of an earlier bridge across the Ponagansett River. It was built as part of Rhode Island's program to upgrade state highways in the early 20th century.

\* **Nappin Mill Site (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1850) (#S5):** This isolated site, on a now wooded hillside west of Hopkins Mills Pond, includes a large, stone-lined wheel pit, a long winding sluiceway, and a short underground channel for water between the sluice and the wheel. A house foundation and well are nearby. Far upstream to the west are the remnants of a dam. The use of the mill is not known. A Mr. Nappin is said to have built the wheel pit and ditch but they never worked properly.

\* **Hopkins Mills Schoolhouse (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1820) (#66):** This 1-story schoolhouse with open belfry astride its gable roof has two widely separated entrances (one now a window) with a double-hung window between them on its north-facing gable front. A semi-circular fan-shaped window in the gable peak and a 1-story ell at right angles at the rear were added when the schoolhouse was closed (1952) and remodelled for use as a residence. The schoolhouse occupies a commanding hillside site above the road reached by a straight steep flight of stone steps. It was built on or near the site of an earlier c. 1797 school.

\* **Nathaniel Stone House (1823) (#68):** This generously proportioned Federal house faces north onto the Old Danielson Pike. Two-and-one-half stories tall, with a 1½-story rear ell, the house has a large, central, brick chimney laid up with cut-granite quoins and a symmetrical, 5-bay facade with paired windows and a central doorway with semi-circular fanlight (covered over by a wooden fan) capped by a keystone. The rear ell appears to predate the main section. Within, the house follows the traditional Foster variation of the 5-room plan. Two barns remained on the property until the 1970s when they collapsed. A small shed and the barn foundations are still extant. One of Foster's most ambitious houses, it was built for Nathaniel Stone, Jr. (b. 1789), on land acquired by the Stones before 1823. Nathaniel, Jr., was a Justice of the Peace, Town Council member, commander of an independent company of cadets, and a Deacon in the Baptist church. The house stayed in hands of descendants of the Stones—the Simmonses who ran the braid mill in Hopkins Mills—until 1977.

**E. Hopkins House (c. 1820) (#78):** This typical center-chimney

house with slightly asymmetrical, 5-bay facade combines traditional 18th-century elements (heavy plank window frames in front and moulded window caps on the north), with a Federal doorway (featuring panelled pilasters, sidelights, and corner-blocks) and broadened massing. A date of 1775 is traditionally given but 1820 seems more probable. The interior detail where it survives suggests the later date. The 1851 map indicated E. Hopkins lived here then.

## OLD PLAINFIELD PIKE

**Old Plainfield Pike:** This road is a fragment of the 18th-century Plainfield Road, later the Plainfield Turnpike, which was truncated and re-routed by the building of the Scituate Reservoir in the 1920s. It runs from the Reservoir southwesterly to and beyond the 20th-century Victory Highway, passing through some of the most picturesque farmscapes and most desolate, hilly, rocky land in town, running as it does between Big Hill and Biscuit Hill to the south and Cranberry Hill to the north.

**W.H. Collins Bobbin Mill (c. 1860) (#215):** This long, gable-roofed, 2½-story building with irregular flank fenestration and asbestos shingle siding is sited end to the road beside a small dammed pond. The mill was built near the site of an earlier tanyard and supplied bobbins for the textile industry in Scituate until about 1920; it has since been remodelled for residential use.

\* **Beriah Collins House (c. 1760, c. 1790) (#216):** This unusual house, composed of a 2½-story, 3-bay section and a 1½-story, 2-bay section, both sharing a single central chimney, is said to have been built in two stages, the ell being a later addition. Beriah Collins, who owned this property in the middle of the 19th century, was clerk of the East Greenwich Friends Meeting and a member of Foster's first school committee.

† **Artemas Fish-Samuel Bennett Farm (c. 1790) (#218):** The farm includes a typical center-chimney house with transom over the door, splayed window lintels, and moulded cornice; two out-houses; a 19th-century shed; a cider mill foundation; a bank barn foundation, dated 1888, with a connected stone-wall-enclosed pig run; the remains of several orchards; and, everywhere, fine stone walls, many of them of cut granite with canted sides. Artemas Fish, who built the house between 1786 and 1793, was an early Quaker who gave land for both a schoolhouse and the Friends Meetinghouse and cemetery but was read out of the East Greenwich meeting in 1794 for his pugnacious ways. The Providence textile firm Almy and Brown owned the farm between 1815 and 1840, possibly in conjunction with the so-called Chestnut Hill cotton mill, thought to have operated in this vicinity about 1815. Samuel Bennett bought the farm in 1858 for \$2,200 (paid for in nuggets he brought back from the California gold fields) and built most of its walls, the barn, the pig run, and, probably, the cider mill. Used in the 20th century as a camp by the Rhode Island Girl Scouts and Rhode Island School of Design, it has been a private residence since 1949.

† **Paine-Bennett Farm (c. 1815) (#219):** This nearly complete farm complex, at the intersection of Victory Highway and Old Plain-

field Pike, includes one of Foster's finest Federal farmhouses and many 19th- and early 20th-century outbuildings, among them a gable-roofed carriage and horse barn, a long shed, a small shed, corncrib, a large gambrel-roofed, shingled barn, and an attached cobblestone dairy house built in 1888. The property is enclosed and divided by well built stone walls, some of them with canted sides. The house, 2½ stories tall with a 1½-story ell set at a right angle at the rear, is five bays wide by three bays deep. It has a particularly fine gable-roofed portico, with an elaborate modillion cornice, sheltering a delicate leaded fanlight above the door which is flanked by Doric pilaster responds. The farm, owned until after 1862 by the Paines and before 1895 by the Bennetts, is one of the most complete in Foster today.

## PAINE ROAD

\* **Paine Farm/"Ross Orchard" (c. 1785 and c. 1835) (#194 and #C32):** One of the finest, best preserved, and most scenic farms in Foster and indeed in the state, Paine farm includes a modest 1½-story, 5-bay, center-chimney, Greek Revival house, with a 3-bay set-back ell (the original part of the house) east of the road; an outhouse, washhouse, corncrib, and several other sheds east and north of the house; and a 1½-story, gable-roofed coffin-maker's shop (used for apple sales and storage), a long, low shed open at both ends built as a hearse house, and a large barn and carriage shed set at right angles to each other all west of the road. Almost without exception the outbuildings date to about 1840 or earlier and are in a remarkably good state of preservation. Orchards, closed in by superb battered stone walls, stretch southward on both sides of the road. At the southern edge of the orchards east of the road is Paine Cemetery (Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #32), a relatively large, grassy plot, immaculately kept and enclosed by low, flat-topped cut-stone walls. It contains burials from 1822 to the early 20th century for Paines, Rosses, and a number of other families. The first part of the house was built by Zuriel Paine; the main part, by Zuriel's brother Andrew Paine, a farmer and coffin-maker who was instrumental in the erection of the nearby North Foster Baptist Church in 1848. Andrew's son Isaac (one of twelve children) built the stone walls and did some finish work on the house. The grandson of Andrew Paine, Elmer Donald Ross, inherited the farm, moved here from Providence about 1925, and began the orchards, still producing today.

**Joshua Paine House and Mill Site (c. 1840 and c. 1855) (#195 and #S23):** This 1½-story, Greek Revival house with flanking set-back ells, was heavily altered in the mid-20th century. Beside it on Paine Brook are a stone dam with a waterfall, the remains of a sluiceway, and a small mill foundation. Joshua Paine used this site for his wheelwright shop and foundry beginning about 1855. In 1868 his son-in-law Jefferson Spurr Howard made brass combs here; from 1873 to 1877 both men in partnership manufactured imitation tortoise shell combs out of Texas cattle horn at this location.

**Pickerstick Factory Site (c. 1862 - c. 1915) (#524):** A 70-foot dam with a small, stone foundation and a reinforced concrete, free-

standing wall are all that remain to mark the site of this sawmill used into the 20th century to make pickersticks (components of mechanized looms) for the Scituate textile mills.

**Bowen-Smith House (c. 1780, c. 1855) (#196):** This 1½-story, center-chimney house is of interest for its Victorian cross-gable and hip-roofed porch and because Mr. Chase, stagecoach driver on the Danielson Pike, lived here in the mid- or late 19th century.

## PARIS OLNEY HOPKINS ROAD

**Paris Olney Hopkins House (c. 1750) (#342):** This somewhat altered, typical center-chimney house with mid-19th-century doorway and late 19th-century ell, was built by a Rounds but owned through the last half of the 19th century by Paris Olney Hopkins, who ran a general store and a blacksmith shop on the premises. Though the buildings no longer survive, some of the store ledgers do.

## PLAIN WOODS ROAD

**Captain James Tyler House (c. 1794 and c. 1830) (#243):** This typical center-chimney house, with later 2-bay ell fronted by a porch under the main gable roof, heavily remodelled on the interior, stands on the site of John Tyler's c. 1728 house, which was torn down c. 1790. John and William Tyler were early major landowners and settlers in southwestern Foster; James Tyler was John's son.

**Tyler Store (1834, east end; c. 1870, west end) (#244):** This plain, 2½-story, gable-roofed, frame building, 6-bays long by three deep, has a 2-story porch on the eastern end and decorative cut shingling on both gable ends. Two 19th-century barns stand west and north of the house. This store was built by John Tyler, son of James (who sold his store of 1812 in 1830), and was a center for community activity throughout the 19th century. The Tyler family, their store, and their cider mill, which operated nearby, gave the name "Tyler" to this vicinity in the last half of the 19th century. Tyler store may well have been the longest continuously operating store in town.

- \* **Iri Brown Farm (house 1815, c. 1850, c. 1875; barn 1885) (#245):** The farm includes a typical center-chimney house with 2-story rear ell built in two stages; a magnificent 4-story barn built into a hillside and accessible on four levels; a 19th-century shed and corncrib; a 20th-century garage; and such landscape elements as a small pond, numerous stone walls defining still-open fields, and a fenced-in dooryard in front of the house. The barn, built in 1885 at a cost of \$3,000, used fifty thousand feet of plank, cut on the property, and is unparalleled in western Rhode Island. It was built, tradition says, to keep Iri Brown's grandson Curtis Foster (b. 1861) "down on the farm" and represents a major and unusual capital investment at that time. It may well reflect the influence of Shaker barn construction which was typified by multiple levels and hillside orientation; several members of the Foster family "went to the Shakers" in 1826. Iri Brown (b. Foster 1785) was a school teacher, a farmer, and a director of the

Mount Vernon Bank. With his son-in-law Sterry K. Foster, he helped found the Moosup Valley church. Curtis Foster, convinced by the barn, stayed in Foster and was manager at the Moosup Valley Creamery.

**Tyler House (c. 1740) (#246):** This typical center-chimney house has a large, stone, kitchen fireplace with bake oven in the rear wall and originally had a summerbeam as well. It was restored from a shell in 1972 and stands, with several outbuildings, far south of the road on part of the land purchased by William Tyler in 1728. It was later lived in by members of the Fuller family.

**Dorrance Mills/Potter's Mills Site (c. 1726, sawmill and grist-mill; rebuilt early 19th century) (#532):** The remains of a stone dam cross the Quandoc River and part of a fieldstone mill foundation on the river's east bank mark the site of milling activity begun about 1726 by James and George Dorrance. The Dorrance grist- and sawmills were sold to Whitford Johnson in 1808, to Peleg Place in 1813, and to Stephen Potter in 1824. Potter continued to run the sawmill and added a water loom for making cotton cloth. He ran both operations until 1829 when his son Stephen was killed by the saw. The grist- and sawmill were still in operation in 1870, and the mills stood at least as late as 1881.

## PLAINFIELD PIKE

**Plainfield Pike:** This road follows, approximately, the course of the Plainfield Road, which began as an Indian trail, and was upgraded into a cart route by both Rhode Island and Connecticut as early as 1714. It was part of the Old Post Road and in 1794 became the first chartered toll road in Rhode Island. The Providence and Norwich Turnpike, familiarly called the Plainfield Turnpike, led from Providence through Cranston, Scituate, Foster, and Coventry toward Norwich and Plainfield, Connecticut, and, ultimately, New York. The turnpike was truncated and rerouted by the building of the Scituate Reservoir in the 1920s.

**Richard Howard House (1821) (#221):** This 2½-story, center-chimney, heavily altered house was built by Richard Howard, who ran a tavern and general store (no longer standing) to the east. Richard Howard, a member of the ubiquitous Howard family, was also a cabinet maker, postmaster (two years), Justice of the Peace (thirteen years), Town Council member (two years), Clerk of Town School Committee, State Representative (1837 and 1852), and State Senator (1853 and 1854). His daughter, Abby, married Stephen Yates of Scituate in 1833; Yates made combs nearby at a mill site on Turkey Meadow Brook before 1854.

- \* **Whidden-Fuller Farm (c. 1770 and c. 1800) (#222):** This complex includes an unusual house composed of a 1½-story, 4-bay section and a 2½-story, 3-bay section, both sharing a single central chimney; a large barn built in the 1940s on the site of an earlier barn; a 19th-century outhouse; a 1965 forge building; and a modest, mid-19th-century broom factory building and carriage

house, now used for a garage and guest house. Fine stone walls and wooden fences plus traditional 19th-century plantings (lilacs, day lilies, and trumpet vine) make a picturesque setting which was used to advantage in the filming of television's "The Adams Chronicles" in 1976. The first part of the house, a 1½-story, 3-bay half house, was probably built by Major James Brown. Charles Whidden, a blacksmith, built the 2½-story portion of the house after he purchased it in 1800. Thomas Fuller acquired the farm in 1857, after a trip to the California gold fields in 1851. Fuller raised corn used for making brooms and processed it on his farm. The 1860 census indicated that he employed a broom-maker, an apprentice broom-maker, and a farm laborer. The broom factory relocated to Providence sometime after 1870.

- \*\* **Mount Vernon Tavern (c. 1760 and c. 1814) (#224):** The tavern is a 2½-story, center-chimney house, with a 1½-story ell at its western end, noteworthy for its Federal portico sheltering the fanlight above the central front door and for its tavern room bar still extant within. The ell, portico, and bar were part of the remodelling of the farmhouse Pardon Holden carried out after he purchased it in 1814. The ell functioned as a general store and, after 1828, as a post office; the main house served as Mount Vernon Tavern, a gathering place for turnpike travellers and residents alike, and briefly housed the Mount Vernon Bank (in the upstairs front west chamber) when it first opened in 1823. Pardon Holden was one of 67 petitioners for the bank charter and served as its second president from 1828 until his death in 1831. The bank relocated in 1824 to Dr. Thomas Carpenter's stone office building just west of the tavern; in 1853 the bank moved to Providence. Pardon Holden with partner Daniel Wood made cast iron plows (perhaps at the triphammer site a little west of the tavern, south of the Pike, #528), beginning in 1823. The enterprise moved to Providence about 1850 where it operated as the High Street Foundry Company, later and still known as Builders Iron Foundry (B.I.F.). The tavern and farm—of which only one outbuilding remains today—were sold to the Frys in 1842; they closed the tavern but continued the general store. In the 1860s and 1870s George Fry ran a printing press in the southeast parlor. In 1888, the house became a private residence which it remains today. It was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

**Friends Meetinghouse/Mount Vernon Baptist Church (1795 and 1887) and Friends Cemetery/Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #95 (c. 1790 et seq.) (#226 and #C95):** This small, 1-story clapboarded building, with paired entrances in the north gable end facing the road, was built in 1795 by the Foster preparatory meeting of the Greenwich monthly meeting of Friends. It was remodelled extensively in 1887 for use as a Christian church. Beside the building to the west is the small, stone-wall-enclosed cemetery containing the unmarked stones for a number of Friends. The number of Quakers in Foster and nearby Coventry was growing strongly around the end of the 18th century; but by 1843 membership had dropped to seven, and most of them were infirm. Consequently, the Foster preparatory meeting

was annexed to the Coventry meeting in 1843 and the meeting-house was sold to a local farmer in 1850. It was used for various purposes, including the storage of hay, until 1887 when a resurgence of religious interest led to the formation of the Mount Vernon Christian Society and their purchase of the building. Remodelled, it was dedicated as a Christian Church in 1889. In 1895, because funds were available through a bequest to hire a Baptist preacher, the church became Baptist, which it remains to this day.

## PLEASANT LANE

† **Mill House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1850) (#389):** This long, gable-roofed, 1½-story house has a central entrance with a transom, a modern central chimney, and raised eaves. Built before 1862 as an adjunct to Clayville's industry, this is one of the few mill houses surviving in the village.

† **Kelley-Pierce House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1770) (#390):** This typical center-chimney house has a central door framed by a simple entablature and sidelights, moulded window caps framed into the cornice, and a 1-story ell at the rear. Several sheds and an outhouse stand behind the house.

## PONAGANSETT ROAD

**P. Rounds Farm (c. 1820) (#326):** This somewhat isolated but essentially intact farm in eastern Foster near the Scituate Reservoir watershed, includes a generously proportioned, typical center-chimney farmhouse with a Victorian porch and set-back ell; three barns, an outhouse, and an icehouse, all dating from the 19th century; and a 20th-century sugarhouse still in use. The present owners raise Christmas trees and make maple syrup and sugar, continuing a centuries old tradition of marketing forest products.

**Hill Farm (c. 1780) (#327):** This somewhat altered, 2½-story, 4-bay house stands very near the reservoir woods; a small early 19th-century bank barn with attached chicken coop and several 20th-century outbuildings stand behind it. Well maintained stone walls, rail fences, and old sugar maple trees are important elements of this agricultural landscape.

## POTTER ROAD

† **Blanchard Gristmill Site (c. 1796 and 1867) (#549):** This site includes the ruins of two mills which used the same dam and sluices: a fieldstone foundation and, immediately southeast of it, a later massive, cut-stone foundation about twenty feet by thirty feet. The first mill, erected c. 1796 by William Blanchard on his father Isaac's land, passed to William in 1809; after William's death in 1833, the mill was purchased by Jeremiah Phillips, who ran it until 1849 when he drowned while repairing the water-wheel. William Penn Blanchard bought the property about 1850, and had a new mill built in 1867 by Leonard Hopkins, millwright and carpenter. The 1886 freshet washed out the dam and the mill never operated again.

## RAM TAIL ROAD

\* **Ponagansett Grange, #54 (Hopkins Mills) (c. 1928) (#321):** This long, low, 1-story building, sited gable end to the road, was built to house the Hopkins Mills branch of the agricultural and social organization known as the Grange. The organization functioned until 1978 or 1979.

† **Potter Mill/Ram Tail Mill/Foster Woolen Factory Site (c. 1813) (#559):** The site of Ram Tail Mill includes the remains of a dam and a sluiceway, a mill foundation, and the cellar holes for three mill houses on a hillside above the Ponagansett. William Potter purchased the sawmill in Hopkins Mills in 1790 and by 1799 had also built a fulling mill, to process and clean home-spun wool, a little to the south. In 1813 William Potter, Peleg Walker, and several partners acquired a site a half mile south of the Hopkins Mills. They subsequently expanded operations to include the mechanized spinning and weaving of woolen cloth, hence the names Foster Woolen Factory and the colloquial Ram Tail Mill. William Potter's sons, William and Herbert, in partnership with Peleg Walker, ran the mill; but Walker committed suicide and rumors arose thereafter that the mill was haunted. The mill was abandoned, partly burned in 1873, and was listed as "haunted" in the 1885 census.

## SALISBURY ROAD

**Asher Bennett House (c. 1840) (#331):** This typical center-chimney house with Greek Revival trim has a 1-story ell at the east, panelled corner pilasters, and a wide frieze.

**Hopkins-Phillips Mill Site (before 1799) (#562):** The remains of this extensive mill complex include a large overgrown dam east of the mill pond, a half-mile diversion trench, a second dam and sawmill foundations near junction of Salisbury and Balcom Roads, and southeast of the bridge, some indication of a gristmill. The sawmill was begun by Nicholas Hopkins before 1799; it passed to his son Daniel, who leased a half right in it to William Stone, Benjamin Bennett, Jr., and George Phillips in 1817. The deed mentions the sawmill, pond, and two dams, and gave permission to enlarge the mill. This transaction probably marks the expansion of the operation from a simple sawmill to include wood-turning and shingles. George Phillips made furniture here (chairs and bedsteads), and perhaps some of the fine Federal portico columns and cornices used in Foster in the 1820s and 1830s as well. George Phillips' son, George W., made carriages here; the 1850 and 1870 census list him as a maker of carriages and farm implements. The mill stood until about 1921.

**Ruins of Charcoal Kilns (c. 1900) (#563):** These five small, rectangular structures, three of concrete block and two of brick were used for "burning" charcoal well into the 20th century. Charcoal was used in jewelry manufacture and the metals industries in Providence, and "burning" charcoal was carried on in a number of Foster locations. Kilns were necessary to maintain the long steady heat which converted logs into charcoal.

## SHIPPEE SCHOOLHOUSE ROAD

**Thomas Burgess Wagon Shop Site (before 1870) (#533):** A small (20-by-30-foot), cut-stone mill ruin and a short sluiceway leading north to the pond are all that remain of this water-powered mill where Burgess made wheels and wagons in the 1870s. The mill was used to produce shingles as late as the 1920s.

## SOUTH KILLINGLY ROAD

**South Killingly Road:** This road, so-named because it was the most southern of several local roads leading toward Killingly, Connecticut, existed by 1781. It was labelled on a map of that date, "the road toward Killingly by Angell's" (tavern).

\*\* **Welcome Rood Tavern (Foster Center) (c. 1780 and 1824) (#144):** This rambling, clapboarded building, a focus of community life in Foster Center throughout the 19th century, is composed of a 1½-story half house with a long, 1½-story ell adjoining it and a 2½-story section, sited gable end to the road, with a 1-story ell, originally a grain shed, to its west. The earliest section is probably the 1½-story ell. The main 2½-story section was built by Welcome Rood in 1824 to serve as a store, tavern, and on the second floor, a Masonic meeting hall. The hall, with its barrel vaulted plaster ceiling and former exuberant wall stencilling, was used by the Masons until they were evicted at the height of anti-Masonic sentiment in 1834. The building was used as a hotel, residence, Town Clerk's home and office, post office, store, and the location of many Town Council meetings for the remainder of the 19th century. In the 1940s it housed the Health Examiner's Office. Today it is a private residence and the Welcome Rood Studio, where a potter lives and sells her work. Despite the fact that all the outbuildings, including a large 19th-century arcaded carriage house to the east, are gone, Welcome Rood Tavern remains a key historical and architectural focal point in Foster Center.

\*\* **Town Clerk's Office/Benjamin Eddy Building (Foster Center) (1904) (#146):** This small, 1-story, gable-roofed building, with later 1-story, flat-roofed vault addition at the rear, follows Foster building traditions in its modest size, frame construction, and simple vernacular trim: doorway with flat moulded cap, cornerboards and water table, and 6/6 double-hung window sash. Built in 1904, it was later named in honor of Benjamin Eddy, long-time Town Clerk in the opening decades of the 20th century.

\*\* **Colegrove-Hammond House (Foster Center) (c. 1755, remodelled c. 1840 and c. 1920) (#147):** This large, much altered, 2½-story, center-chimney house, with Greek Revival trim and kitchen ell, stands with its large 19th-century shingled barn, slightly south of the crossroads at Foster Center. Built as a farmhouse by Stephen Colegrove about 1755, it was sold by a subsequent owner in 1767 to Thomas Hammond, who with his son John kept a tavern here. Hammond's Tavern was the location for the first Foster Town meeting November 19, 1781, and many subsequent Council meetings were held here. Hammond sold

the property in 1783 to John Williams, an Elder in the Baptist Church at Hopkins Mills, the first Town Moderator, and one of Foster's first two Deputies to the General Assembly. Elder Williams lived here till his death in 1817. The property returned to the Hammond family in 1825 when Reuben Hammond bought it and set up his blacksmith shop on the premises.

\*\* **Town Pound (Foster Center) (1845) (#148):** This small, nearly-square pound, 48½ by 48 feet, is formed by fieldstone walls four to five feet high and 2½ feet wide. A large flat slab of unworked granite forms a lintel above the opening for the iron gate which once hung here. A small brook flows through one corner of the pound.

**Walker Farm (c. 1780) (#151):** This generously proportioned, typical center-chimney house with set-back eastern ell was restored in the 1960s. Several small sheds at the rear, a well house in front, and a 19th-century shingled barn with a square cupola ventilator at the west maintain the agricultural flavor of the setting which has been somewhat suburbanized by the loss of stone walls, the building of a pond and swimming pool, and the installation of expansive lawns. The house was built by one of the Walker brothers, Stephen or Abram, sons of Abram Walker who moved to Foster before 1781. The house of the other Walker brother, now altered almost beyond recognition, stands west of this farm. Stephen and Abram ran a blacksmith shop and foundry at a site on a nearby brook. This site (#518) still shows remnants of sluice, mill foundation, wheel pit, and dam with pond. The foundry building stood until about 1900 and in it were made wagons and plowshares among other items.

**Jeremiah Bennett Farm (c. 1790) (#153):** The farm includes a large, 2½-story, center-chimney house with some Greek Revival remodelling (sidelighted doorway, corner pilasters, and small ell), a large barn, several sheds, numerous well-built stone walls, large maple trees, and active hayfields, all well maintained. Built by Jeremiah Bennett, the farm was owned by Francis Bennett, a stone mason, in the mid-19th century.

**Reuben Weaver Farm (c. 1770) (#158):** The complex of house and farm buildings is set far south of the road at the end of a dirt lane. The typical center-chimney house has been re-sided with patterned asphalt shingles and faces south away from the road. Several 19th-century sheds or small barns and an outhouse are grouped nearby. Reuben Weaver, a Revolutionary War veteran (born in 1757), Deacon in the Hammond Church at Foster Center, and descendant of Westconnaug Proprietor Clement Weaver, owned the farm around the end of the 18th century. The original owner may have been Reuben's father John and the house may predate 1770.

† **Abijah Weaver Farm/Sweet Farm (1809) (#159):** The farm begun by Abijah Weaver, Reuben Weaver's son, but owned and lived in by members of the Sweet family for most of the 19th century, includes a well cared for typical center-chimney house with a set-back kitchen ell (fronted by a porch) and a small rear

ell; a large barn; and several smaller outbuildings including chicken coops. Abijah Weaver married a Sweet girl.

**Jonathan Randall-Daniel Wood Farm (c. 1780, c. 1820) (#161):** This farm—including a typical center-chimney house with ell, late 19th-century barn, and outhouse—has a commanding view southwesterly across open fields and down a wooded hillside to the shores of Clark Pond. Built by Jonathan Randall, the house was sold by his son Richard to blacksmith Daniel Wood before 1851.

**Levi Wood Farm (c. 1810, et seq.) (#164):** The farm includes a large, much altered, 2½-story, center-chimney house with a 1½-story ell, fronted by a porch; two large barns (one formerly a blacksmith shop) east of the house; one barn south of the road; and the ruins of two large barns with a silo west of the house. The house is sited facing south at the cross roads of Cucumber Hill and South Killingly; the western barns are west of Cucumber Hill Road; the house is east of it. Levi Wood, a mason and farmer, built the house which was later owned by Hiram Wood and George Wood (1860s and 1870s). The ell sheltered the local school after the Randall schoolhouse was burned in the 1840s until the so-called Wood Schoolhouse was built a little east of the farm in 1859. Later on the ell was used as a store, perhaps at the same time that George Wood ran his blacksmith shop.

**Union Free Will Baptist Church/Line Baptist Church (1867) (#165):** This modest, 1-story, late Greek Revival country church, with open square belfry and paired entrances, is sited gable end to the road and has a modern, cinderblock parish house addition to the east. The South Foster Free Will Baptist Church gathered in this area (next to the Rhode Island-Connecticut line) under the leadership of Reverend Daniel Greene in 1851. They built the present meetinghouse in 1867 and in January of 1868 they merged with the South Killingly, Connecticut, Free Will Baptist Church, becoming the Union Free Will Baptist Church. The small, 1-story parsonage the church built in 1890 (#167) still stands west of the church, straddling the state line on the site of the former Line general store. This was probably the first parsonage built in Foster.

**H. Smith House and C. Corey General Store (c. 1820 and c. 1885) (#168):** The house is a 2½-story, 3-bay, center-chimney house with Greek Revival panelled corner pilasters, wide frieze, and door frame with sidelights and flat entablature. A set-back, 1-story ell at the west connects the house with a 1-story store building built by Corey about 1885. A small grain store was added at the rear about 1915.

**Rhode Island - Connecticut Boundary Marker (c. 1728) (#169):** This 2½-foot granite boundary marker with "R.I." inscribed on one side and "CT." on the other, was probably erected following the final settlement of the boundary dispute in 1728. The settlement placed the line five-eighths of a mile farther west than previous Rhode Island surveys had indicated. Another quartzite marker about 600 feet east of this marker may indicate the earlier bound.

## THEODORE FOSTER DRIVE

**Daniel Colwell Farm/"Cherry Farm" (c. 1772) (#304):** This farm complex includes spreading fields defined by stone walls, several orchards, a large, 2½-story, gable-roofed farmhouse, a well maintained 19th-century barn, a small Colwell family cemetery containing Revolutionary War era burials, and a 20th-century garage. It is located on the crest of Oak Hill in northern Foster somewhat south of the Hartford Pike. Daniel Colwell is said to have built the house in 1772 on land given him by his father in 1765. The farm acquired its name "Cherry Farm" in the mid-19th century when J. White owned it and had large cherry orchards here. A later owner, L. Grinnell, made charcoal on the premises in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**John E. Fogarty Elementary School and Regional School Department Office (1956) (#305):** This complex of single-story, flat-roofed brick buildings, originally used as offices for the Nike Missile Base, was acquired by the Town of Foster in 1965.

**John Colwell House (1759) (#306):** This 1½-story gambrel-roofed house was lengthened by the addition of a pantry and kitchen on the western end sometime after about 1850 and was further remodelled in 1976. The barn on the property burned in the 1950s but an outhouse and several small sheds remain. John Colwell built this house in 1759 on land he had purchased at Oak Hill in 1754. His son Christopher Colwell, a founder of the salt works at Pawtuxet during the Revolutionary War, also lived here. In 1956 the property became part of the Nike Missile Base. The house has a breathtaking view southward across the descent of Oak Hill, which is at present heavily forested.

## TUCKER HOLLOW ROAD

**Hopkins Cider Mill and Tucker Gristmill Site (c. 1800) (#552):** This long, narrow pond is contained by a massive stone dam, now grown over with trees. The mill foundation has not been found, but deeds and maps indicate that this site was used by Jonah Hopkins about 1800 for a cider mill and by Tuckers somewhat later for a gristmill. The pond was known in the late 19th century as "Elder's Pond" after Elder Henry Hopkins who preached in the Hopkins Mills Church and was noted for the fine axe handles he made.

**Hopkins-Tucker-Gairloch House (c. 1720, c. 1750, et seq.) (#303):** This typical lengthened, 6-bay house, sited against a south-facing hillside on a full cut-stone basement, was built in several segments. A large (five by six by three foot deep), stone fire-place, with brick bake oven in the rear wall, in the eastern end of the basement and exposed, finished but not chamfered ceiling beams support the tradition that the eastern end of the house was built first, probably as a 1-room house with a second story or garret above. The present main floor of the house appears to have been reworked several times—once, at least, due to fire, and again in the 1930s and 1940s when the house had fallen into considerable disrepair—which makes accurate structural analysis difficult. The middle section of the basement was open in the

19th century and was used at that time for wagon storage. A corncrib was added on the north side of the house in the 1930s to form a kitchen. The house was built by a Hopkins, possibly Joseph, and passed to Jonah Hopkins. Jonah's daughter Drusilla married Joseph Tucker and, after Jonah Hopkins' death in 1805, Tuckers lived here through most of the 19th century. Jonah Hopkins' cider mill stood near the pond north of the house as did the mid-19th-century Tucker gristmill. A long shed at the rear housed a small-scale shoe-making operation in the early 20th century.

**Bucklin Hopkins - Byron Angell Mill Site (c. 1860) (#553):** A stone mill foundation, filled with fragments of the wooden mill still standing in 1974, and a long, stone-lined diversion are still extant at this site. Bucklin Hopkins amassed considerable acreage on Round Hill River between 1808 and 1822 and about that later date he constructed a sawmill and started a blacksmith shop and wagon business. Upon his death c. 1860, the property passed through several owners until Byron Angell purchased it in 1872. Byron Angell, using the basement for a blacksmith shop and the main story for carpentry, repaired wagons and wheels and built timber sledges or "jumpers," shipping them to other parts of the state via the Providence and Danielson Railroad.

## VICTORY HIGHWAY/R.I. ROUTE 102

**Victory Highway/R.I. Route 102:** This relatively high speed artery runs from Clayville west and south through the southeastern corner of Foster, crossing the Plainfield Pike and continuing south into Coventry. It was built between 1922 and 1925 following World War I, hence its name, and incorporated part of the 19th-century Briggs Road in its northern section.

- † **Clayville Arch Bridge/Bridge #90 (Clayville, Scituate) (1932) (#346):** This handsome, reinforced concrete bridge with a single, tall, round arch, is entirely faced in random ashlar and carries Victory Highway from Clayville across Bear Tree Brook toward the former village of Rockland. It was built by the Rhode Island Board of Public Roads, Clarence L. Hussey, Bridge Engineer. The footing for the earlier, stone, arched Clayville Bridge remains northwest of the present bridge.
- † **House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1855 et seq.) (#347):** This 1½-story, clapboarded house with wrap-around, Victorian porch has two eyebrow windows in its wide cornice frieze and is sited gable end to the road. It was probably built as mill housing and was included in the estate of mill owner Lindsay Jordan in 1870.
- † **Clayville Store (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1822) (#352):** This large, 2½-story, gable-roofed structure with two interior brick chimneys and a monitor-like shed dormer was built as a store and as some part of Edward L. Smith's cotton factory. The rather naive but elaborate Federal entrance features corner frets, stylized reeding, and sidelights surrounding a recessed door. The building was purchased in 1826 by General Josiah Whitaker who used it as a store, housing, and part of his comb factory. The

building continued as a general store (kept 1855 to 1869 by Casey B. Tyler, who also ran the store in "Tyler" or Moosup Valley), apartments, and occasionally as a post office.

- † **S. Hoyt House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1855) (#354):** This cross-gabled, Early Victorian cottage with a symmetrical, 5-bay facade, central double door with bracketed doorhood, and round-arched window in the gable peak, is one of a kind in the area. A well house beside the house, a small barn and attached shed with a chimney at the rear, and old trees enhance the picturesque setting of this well-maintained property directly across the road from the mill pond.
- † **Phillips Hotel/Lafayette Lodge (Clayville, Scituate and Foster) (c. 1860) (#355):** This much altered, 2½-story, frame building, now aluminum sided, is historically important as a boarding house for Clayville mill workers, as Phillips Hotel (in 1862), and as Lafayette Lodge 100F in 1895. It was also used as a public dance hall, bar, and, in the early 20th century, as a machine shop. Its ell was moved to Danielson Pike c. 1920 and re-used as a residence.
- † **S.H. Hopkins House (Clayville, Scituate) (c. 1840) (#356):** This 1½-story, Greek Revival, center-chimney house has a central doorway with sidelights, panelled pilasters, and flat pediment, and wide frieze and cornerboards. A full-width front porch with Queen Anne turned wooden posts was removed c. 1980.
- † **C.E. Nichols Farm (Clayville, Foster) (c. 1770) (#358):** The complex includes a typical center-chimney house with window caps and door casing framed into the cornice; a small shed, which may have been a store building or a toll booth, at the front of the property; and a large mid-19th-century barn, in fair condition, at the rear. C.E. Nichols, physician and surgeon, owned the property in 1862.
- † **Clayville Christian Union Church (Clayville, Foster) (1867-1871) (#365):** This modest, gable-roofed, frame church (now covered with aluminum siding) with its gable-end orientation and ridge-mounted, short, square belfry is much like all of Foster's 19th-century churches: the form is essentially that of a schoolhouse enlarged in scale. The Clayville Church achieves some added monumentality by virtue of its high, stuccoed stone basement and double flight of massive concrete steps. Behind the church is the large Clayville Cemetery. The Christian Church gathered in the area about 1851; in 1859 the Clayville Christian Society Union was incorporated and by 1871, they had built this church. In 1947 the Union became the Clayville Community Church. In 1961 the church separated from any denominational affiliation, but as a Separatist Church joined the International Council of Christian Churches in 1973.
- † **Clayville Cemetery/Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #68 (Clayville, Foster) (before 1870) (#C68):** This extensive 19th-century cemetery behind the Clayville Church is partly enclosed by an ornate, Victorian, cast-iron fence and is, unfortunately, quite neglected.

**Wells Farm (c. 1770) (#371):** The farm owned by the Wells family in 1851 includes a heavily remodelled, typical center-chimney house with set-back ell, fronted by a porch at the east, an 18th- and 19th-century cowbarn, a 19th-century farmer's shed, and a 20th-century cinderblock horse barn. In the 20th century the Hall family established a large cattle farm here. The present owners raise Arabian horses.

**World War II Spotter's Hut (c. 1942) (#372):** This 1-story, frame building with southeast-facing windows and metal compass set into concrete outside the door was built by Byron Hall on his farm in 1942 and manned by volunteers throughout World War II.

**Jenks Schoolhouse (1847) (#373):** This small, 1-room schoolhouse, three bays wide and two bays deep, was used until school consolidation took place in 1952. A 1-story addition was built at a right angle to the schoolhouse when it was converted into a residence in the 1970's.

## WALKER ROAD

**Daniel Wood-Jerah Hill Farm (c. 1780) (#273):** The farm includes a typical center-chimney house with a Greek Revival doorway, a large barn built about 1870 on the site of an earlier barn which burned, and well preserved fieldstone walls. Daniel Wood served in the Revolution and ran a sawmill on the east branch of the Moosup River before 1799. Jerah Hill bought the farm from William Wood in 1832 and remodelled the house. Hill made coffins on the premises.

**Hopkins-Bennett House (c. 1800) (#275):** This typical center-chimney house has a set-back ell fronted by a porch and a Greek Revival door frame formed by panelled pilasters with a transom above.

## WETHERBEE ROAD

**Wetherbee House/J.W. Hill Farm (c. 1820) (#332):** The complex includes a typical center-chimney house with an ell, somewhat altered on the interior but noteworthy for the wall stencilling which survived in two rooms until 1976 or 1977; an early 19th-century barn to the east; and a shed and a 1-room store to the west. The house was built by the Wetherbee family, for whom the road was named, and owned from about 1850 until the end of the century by Job W. Hill. Andrew Hopkins' store, formerly in Foster Center, was relocated here and is the only early 19th-century store building known to survive in Foster today. An 1819 ledger for the store indicates that Hopkins sold coffee, tea, sugar, flour, and quantities of alcohol (but in small individual amounts) as well as other goods.

## WILLOUGHBY YOUNG ROAD

**Sweet-Young Sawmill Site (19th century) (#S12 and #S13):** The frame ruin of Young's early 20th-century sawmill stood until the mid-1970s near the site of the early 19th-century Sweet's mills. Both sites are within the Department of Environmental

Management's Shippee Mill Pond Recreation Area which includes the mill pond, dam, and eighteen acres. Sweet's Mills, begun in the early 19th century (1831 and 1840 maps), was later (c. 1870) run by Obadiah Hopkins and by Searles H. Young. Young used the site into the 1920s.

**Young House (c. 1870 and c. 1920) (#99):** This 1½-story, Victorian house with early 20th-century, columned porch was moved from nearer the sawmill site to its present location about 1880. Lived in by mill owner Searles H. Young, it was the birthplace of Willoughby P. Young, the noted Foster resident and source on local history for whom the road was named.

## WINSOR ROAD

**O. Williams Farm, Store, and Mill Site (c. 1750 and c. 1850; mill c. 1820) (#308 and #554):** This complex includes a house composed of two sections joined at right angles to one another, a south-facing, mid-18th-century half house, now the rear ell, and a 5-bay, center-doorway, late Greek Revival section forming the main part of the house and facing east toward the road; two long barns sheathed in vertical planking near the road; and to the west, behind the house on the Ponagansett River, one of Foster's most picturesque mill sites. The barns are said to have housed a post office and general store c. 1870. The mill site includes a tall, dry-laid stone dam about 250 feet long (now partly demolished), the remains of a stone foundation on the west bank and a larger foundation on the east bank, both immediately below the dam. They mark the location of the sawmill and gristmill run by O. Williams from before 1851 to after 1870. The complex is interesting visually and clearly illustrates what must have been a typical commercial and agricultural operation, where the owner did some farming, some retail trade, and held a minor government post.

**Former Nike Missile Base/State Police Academy (1956 et seq.) (#311):** This large, concrete block building, four visible dependencies, and garage, are all surrounded by locked chainlink fence. The complex was built as part of the Nike Missile Base and acquired by the New England State Police Administrators Conference in 1965 for use as a regional education center for commissioned officers.

**Ira Winsor Farm (c. 1780, c. 1850, c. 1890) (#313):** The farm includes a 1½-story, south-facing, half house on a full-story stone basement, with a Victorian ell at a right angle to the west, which has late 19th- or early 20th-century wrap-around porch; an outhouse; and several sheds.

**Winsor Cemetery/Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #17 (early 19th century) (#C17):** This cemetery, prominently sited on a hilltop in a sharp bend in Winsor Road, is surrounded by well built fieldstone walls with flat caps and contains burials from the early 19th century to the mid-20th century. It is one of Foster's handsomest cemeteries.

**Wade-Farrow Gristmill Site (before 1799) (#557):** A deep, cut-stone mill foundation in a hillside northwest of the Ponagansett River (probably a 19th-century rebuilding); a small house foundation overlooking the mill at the top of the hill with a well nearby; and a stone-lined sluice running across the flank of the hill to the remains of a stone dam about one thousand feet upstream mark the location of Simon Wade's gristmill, in operation here before 1799. Gristmilling was carried on here by Enos Farrow from about 1862 till the end of the 19th century.

**Winsor House (c. 1720 and c. 1740) (#314):** This 1½-story, ground-hugging house with off-center brick chimney, uneven 4-bay facade, and a 1-story shed-like addition at the east end, despite interior remodelling, retains exposed chamfered beams with lamb's tongue stops and other early 18th-century features. It is one of the earliest houses still standing in Foster.

† **William Colwell-Aseph Saunders Farm (c. 1765 with some remodelling c. 1840) (#315 and #C18):** This exceptionally well preserved complex includes a typical center-chimney house with a Greek Revival doorway and a long, 1-story addition at the east; several 19th-century outbuildings including a barn, shed, tinsmith shop, and wash house; and a family cemetery (Rhode Island Historical Cemetery, Foster #18) across the fields southwest of the road near the river. The house was built by William Colwell on land purchased in 1765. Aseph Saunders, the 19th-century owner, was a prosperous farmer and is buried in the cemetery. Ora Clemence, who lived here by 1895 and probably earlier, was a peddler and tinsmith and his shop adjoins the woodshed.

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